



THE CIRCLE CHURCH NEWS

May 2020

North Madison Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
1271 Durham Road
Madison, CT 06443

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Link to Sunday's Virtual Worship

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84536179298>

If you have problems logging in please contact:

Sandy Dickson 203-376-7075 -- Orlene Gallops 860-339-5844 - Carol Luckenbach 203-530-9903

We will celebrate Communion during Sunday's Virtual Worship. Please gather some Communion elements near your screen. These may be bread, a bagel or muffin, saltines, juice, wine, tea, whatever you have at home that speaks to you. Consider placing them on a special cloth, a bloom from your garden, a candle, or near a photo of someone important to you.

- Pastor's Note -

Happy May Day!

For over a month now, we have been living into a phrase many of us had never used before – “social distancing” – and learning what our lives and our *selves* look like within this new context of isolation.

This taste of isolation, as a community of mostly “majority,” “mainline,” “privileged” folks, may be unprecedented in our lives; and, for most of us, thankfully, it will likely prove only temporary.

There are those, however, who are not self-isolating – some for irresponsible reasons, many for reasons of significant responsibility.

To our neighbors who cannot self-isolate because this pandemic has established them to be essential, we are grateful.

Today is May Day. May Day is a century-old international celebration of the worker, a day to honor those who serve society's needs with their hands, minds, sweat, and time. May Day was, in fact, born in the struggle to establish the eight-hour work day. Over the last century, each May Day has seen workers and those who stand in support of their cause continue to advocate for healthy rights and appreciation.

This year, it is fitting that May Day falls during our COVID-19 quarantine. The self-isolation so many of us are engaging in order to save our own and others' lives is a privilege we are enjoying at the expense of many hourly workers now deemed "essential."

Such hourly workers, however, are paid infinitely less than many of our non-"essential" employers and employees. CNA's, bus drivers, grocery store workers, and hourly laborers of all sorts are keeping our communities afloat in order for the rest of us to keep safe at home.

These hourly workers' pleas for fair wages, adequate health care, safe working conditions, paid health leave, and quality, affordable child care, have been politicized and gone largely unheeded by corporate board members, CEO's, stockholders, elected officials, and citizen neighbors. As a society in flux now, this moment holds some stark lessons for us to reconsider.

We owe a great debt to all of our essential workers as they put their lives, and the lives of their families, on the line to serve us. Don't we owe an especially great debt to those who are doing this without appropriate safety protections, living wages, adequate health care or paid time off?

This May Day falls in a poignant season – one in which we are invited to consider with fresh, humble eyes how wealth and safety are distributed across our society. Should compensation not better reflect "essential workers'" value to our society?

How do these days of isolation call us to consider how we may repay this debt going forward? As Jesus followers, our God, our scripture, and our messiah/teacher call us, as a core principle and practice, to love and serve "the least of these" with the best of ourselves. What a mirror has been held up to us in this pandemic to reflect upon. May God help us look into the painful truths reflected there with brave, humble, and loving eyes. May the Spirit inspire us to find new ways to ensure the protection, safety, and vitality of all God's beloved – and essential – children.

A blessed May Day to us all!

Love & Blessings,

Heather

- Children and Youth Ministries -

A Note from Sue Timony-Hall



I, like lots of us, have been zooming often lately - and not in the way that we just a mere six weeks ago would have thought it meant to zoom around. Instead of running all around town and meeting friends and colleagues in our church, homes and coffee shops, we now zoom into each other's homes virtually. I wonder if you are finding this way of connecting with each other to be more personal than you anticipated?

For me, one of the unexpected ways that this mode of communication is personal is that we get to see one another at home - in favorite rooms, drinking out of favorite mugs, with pets and children nearby. We've learned the names of pets we might otherwise never meet, and we share the history on interesting furniture and pieces of art that we display in our homes. We discover in which room the sun shines most brightly in each other's homes during certain times of the day. We also wear comfortable clothing and often come out of the garden and onto these calls, ready to share what is on our minds and in our hearts as we look for ways that we may serve our community during this time.

In Linda's house, for example, she often sits in her sunroom, enjoying her tea as we talk. Behind her is a sign that says, "Be still." I read it and finish the line from Psalm 46 (line 10) in my head every time I see it. "Be still, and know that I am God." Usually it is just what I need to be reminded of in that very moment.

The concerns of this time weigh heavily on each of us every day. I see us searching to make meaning out of what is happening, sometimes reeling because of all of the unknowns and what we see as a loss of control over our lives - of our very society. Pastor Heather and I attended a grief workshop last week, and a few points that I found most helpful are quickly becoming a sort of coping framework for this time for me. I am sharing with the wish that it will also bring you reassurance and a sense of hope, of opportunity even.

As we watch the news or talk with each other and our children, let us remind each other that we are in a temporary situation. When we know people who are sick, let us remind each other that this virus is survivable for the majority of people. Let us remember that even though we are physically distant from each other we are still very much socially connected, and here to support each other. Although we are in troubled times, we still have individual and communal agency. There are opportunities to exercise our agency - our freedoms are not lost.

So, be still. Breathe into this pause and let's begin to imagine. What aspects of our daily lives and our society from the time before COVID do we want to take with us into the future? What still feels right and good? What no longer serves us well? What kinds of things can we co-create to help each other and our world right now? How can we advocate to bring equity into our neighbors' lives as we move forward? How can we heal and protect our planet, and each other?

As we begin to imagine and co-create, I am also keeping a look out for the silver linings. To me, they are the gifts sent to fortify us and signal God's unending, all encompassing, love. For me, these silver linings are most apparent when I heed the advice to "Be still, and know I am God". Those words are a balm to my soul - both permission to rest and a reminder that the only place we really can be is here

in this moment. So, be still. Put the worry and restlessness down for the moment. Breathe in God's love. Be still. Look out the window and see the greenery deepening with each passing day. Walk and see the flowering trees. Sit with God for a while and feel peace. Be still. And begin to imagine what can be.

With love,
Sue



Saturday Stories: Please join us! We are looking for youth & adults to make videos of themselves reading favorite books for our littlest church friends to enjoy. A new video will be posted to our North Madison Congregational Church Facebook page every Saturday. Please contact Sue if you'd like to share in this ministry.

Youth Groups



Youth Group Zoom Meetings: 3-6th graders: JUNIOR JYG: Wednesdays, 4-430pm on zoom. Join us for community building activities and conversation

Junior & Senior Youth: Sundays, 5-6pm on zoom. Check in with your friends and share in conversations about faith, current challenges, and where you are finding hope and joy these days.



Parent Gatherings: Every other Monday, 7-8pm. Join other parents to share challenges, to decompress and connect. Some of us are reading *The Gifts of Imperfection* by Brené Brown, so discussion welcome. Next gatherings May 4 & 18.

Please contact Sue for current zoom links, to suggest topics to discuss or other ways to connect us all.

- Music Notes from Linda -



Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)



Charles François Gounod
(1818-1893)

FUN FACT: These two composers collaborated on the same musical composition!!

Wait WHAT???

It's true! In 1722, Bach wrote Prelude in C – the first composition in a series of 48 pieces called THE WELL TEMPERED CLAVIER. Then, in 1853 – 131 years later! – Gounod was inspired to compose a beautiful melody to be superimposed on Bach's PRELUDE and played by a violin or cello.

He called it "Meditation" at first but later it was paired with Latin words and it became a vocal solo – and the resulting "AVE MARIA" became one of the most well-known works EVER.

Our own amazing Ann Clemmons and I have played this many times at church.

Since COVID isolation, we have missed playing with each other!! So – we decided if Bach and Gounod can collaborate over a period of years, we can collaborate over a separation of miles!! I recorded the PRELUDE and (with help from Scott Chassé) sent it to Ann, who played her violin along with it.

CLICK <https://youtu.be/LGzx2JnhUvs> – and you can hear our duet.... Across the centuries and over the miles – we play it for you with much LOVE.

Community Outreach and Fundraisers –



Ministry Resource Team: "... now our service begins!" During these challenging times we've had to step back from some of our Outreach Ministries and for others we've been able to identify areas where we can continue to make a difference and serve our community.



Columbus House: Many thanks for your donations to provide food support for Columbus House. While they have been able to move all of their clients to other safe-distance housing, they still need to provide food for many clients! We sent them a generous check from donations by our congregation, along with several bags of travel-size health care items collected by the Chasse family. In their most recent e-newsletter, Columbus House included NMCC in a thank you to some of partners "who have gone above and beyond helping us to end homelessness since our January e-News." Cash donations are always welcome either directly on their web page or through on-line giving at NMCC. Our mask sewing ministry can also help Columbus House staff and clients with, so we've registered the need with our newly-formed Mask Making Ministry. Many thanks for your support. Roberta Hanlon, robertahanlon@msn.com, Columbus House Champion.



Continuum of Care Needs Face Masks: Thank you all for your help in making face masks – we have donated 155 masks so far!!

Some of the staff are quite anxious about going into the group homes and potentially exposing the clients given staff are out and about in the everyday world. So many of the clients have not only developmental or psychiatric disabilities or histories of substance use but many also have underlying medical conditions putting them at higher risk. Many of the staff members at Continuum are concerned that if they can't keep the clients safe and inadvertently infect them, the clients could end up in the hospital taking up beds that they could otherwise have prevented.

If you're interested in joining out the COVID-10 Mask Ministry, check out their article, with mask-making suggestions and how to donate to Continuum of Care. Thank you so much and stay healthy and safe! Jim Farrales, farnavos@comcast.net, Continuum of Care Champion.



Youth Continuum: We sent a generous outreach ministries donation to this ministry to help the kids directly, supplying them with cleaning items and games/activities as suggested by the director of housing operations.

We received a note from Tim Maguire: "Wow! You guys are really too good to us. We are so thankful for the relationship. I will definitely earmark some of this money for activities. Keep in touch and stay safe! Please thank your entire congregation for me." Lyn Boling, Youth Continuum Champion

- Get Involved / Stay Connected -



There are many ways to be involved in NMCC's vibrant community – serving in an Outreach Ministry, mentoring and teaching our children, joining in musicmaking or worship planning, helping out around the church building, sharing the gifts God has given you, learning new skills from others, enjoying the fellowship of working on projects together. Visit our [Get Involved](#) page for opportunities at northmadisoncc.org.



Tuesdays in the Garden: As the world slowly unfurls with the magic of Spring, we invite you to continue walking with us as we explore the gardens and the garden expertise of members of our NMCC community. Each Tuesday we launch a new video that provides an intimate view of shoreline gardens with information on what's blooming and how to tackle a variety of gardening issues. Here's a sneak preview of what to look forward to in the coming weeks: invasive species; how to transplant; how to divide perennials; shade gardening; community gardening; and gardening with the moon.



Stay tuned and visit our website for each new, [Tuesdays in the Garden video](#). If you would like to participate as a gardener in our series please contact: Melissa Blundon: pmlundon@aol.com



Bible Study with Pastor Heather: Join us Thursday mornings at 10am. No previous scripture knowledge required--just bring a Bible (any translation), your questions, and your curiosity. The study will follow our lectionary reading schedule, and we will reflect each week on the coming Sunday's readings.

Here is the link to join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87259524756>

Meeting ID: 872 5952 4756

You may also phone in from a landline at (646) 558 8656

Meeting ID: 872 5952 4756



Racial Justice Ted Talk: The Congregational Life Ministry Team would like to invite you for a zoom conversation. The topic will be racial justice discussing a Ted Talk called Lucky Zip Codes by Amy Hunter. We will watch an excerpt from the Ted Talk but if you would like to view the entire presentation ahead of time, you can visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdX8uN6VbUE>

There will be three dates for this conversation. Please register for one of the designated times below by clicking on the link next to that time. Each group will be limited to 8 participants. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. If you do not receive a confirmation within 24 hours then the discussion group for that date has reached its capacity.

Tuesday, May 19th at 7 pm; register at

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tj0vcOisrD8jGNTs-yrpnFpPAcoEqw-RCOQN>

Friday, May 22nd at 7 pm; register at

https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tjYucOCgrTIH9YNIP2VzTphD_IT50GORSFj

Wednesday, May 27, 2020 at 7 pm; register at

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tjcsce2pqz8uGdxjQTmQBUojO74SNAIwFGJS>



Book Discussion Group: The next NMCC book discussion will be held on Tuesday, May 26th at 7 PM. The book is a fictionalized version of Jesus' 40 days of fasting in the wilderness after his baptism. Several other characters are with Him in the desert wilderness and their stories complement (or contrast) his experience. Jim Crace (an agnostic) is the author, and the title is "Quarantine" (how appropriate). Crace won a Whitbread award as the 1998 novel of the year, and the book was a finalist for the Booker Prize. It is a quick 243-page read. The San Francisco Chronicle called "Quarantine", "A brilliantly unusual, entertaining, and profound book." You are invited to read and join us or just listen in as it is discussed on May 26th. Shortly before the meeting, The Zoom link information will be sent to all interested participants. Contact Peter Meier with any questions, peterm190@yahoo.com.



Sharing Your Gifts: Would you like to offer something in worship? Music, a prayer, a children's story, a stewardship moment, a poem that has inspired you, a question or thought you would like to see Pastor Heather talk about? Please email Heather or the Church Office and let them know!

Would you like to feature your garden in an upcoming Tuesdays in the Garden episode (on Facebook, our YouTube Channel, and the NMCC website)? Please let Kate Summerlin know.

As we create together what our congregation is and does in this time of COVID-19 and the months ahead, have you got an idea for us to think about?

We'd love to hear from you--don't be shy!



URGENT NEED - COVID Mask Making Ministry:

You are invited and very much needed! Join our fabric mask making ministry! Sewers needed! We have been asked by local organizations, church members and friends to provide sewn fabric masks for added personal protection during this COVID crisis. The need is now. For example, Continuum of Care needs 500 masks for their employees and clients as soon as we can make them. Currently, we have 5 people sewing and have collected 154 masks so far. We need many more to meet the expressed needs.

To become a sewer, you will need fabric and supplies. We have some cotton fabric available to share, but will also need people to source their own. Joann Fabric has a special of 40% off their sale prices to assist with the cost of supplies that can be found at www.joann.com and in their stores. We also put a bin outside the Circle Nursery entrance with donated supplies. Please feel free to add and take supplies to use. We will also have blue paper towels that can be used as filters in the bin. Also, Kate Summerlin received 100 yds of 1/4" elastic and is happy to supply other sewers with yardage if they need it. Please let her know (her email is below).

Here is a pattern that can be used (with a tutorial): Please note that face masks with pocket for filter are preferable. A variety of items may be used as a "filter", for further protection (e.g. cotton shirts, coffee filters): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYMkW469NNc>

Completed masks should be left in the bin by the Circle Nursery entrance as well. Place finished masks in Ziploc gallon bags. If child-sized, please bag separately and label Ziploc bag accordingly. Please email Jackie in the church office to let us know how many completed masks you have left in the bin, office@northmadisoncc.org. Please also let Jackie know if you are going to sew. (Thank you! Thank you!)

If you have questions as you begin to sew, you may reach Kate Summerlin at summerlin.kate@gmail.com.

Ideas for sourcing elastic & elastic substitutions:

- * Pull elastic from seam of a fitted sheet. If elastic is wider than 1/4", cut down with pinking shears to avoid unraveling; it will unravel with a straight shear
- * Thin elastic removed from paper party hats
- * Thin sport, flat, headbands; cut in 6" lengths
- * 1/4" ribbon, seam binding or fabric ties (adjustable for head size)
- * Make T-Shirt "yarn" for ties - <https://www.infarrantlycreative.net/how-to-make-t-shirt-yarn/?crlt.pid=camp.No06n1b3bqta>
- * Take apart bungy cords and they are filled with many elastic bands (untested)

If you/your organization need masks, please reach out to Robin Chase: rsncob@allpointstech.com

Thank you for sharing your love with for our first responders and vulnerable population by making masks!



Have you “liked” us on Facebook?: Please share the love and a glowing review there~tell our neighbors what you love about being part of NMCC and what God is doing here. You never know who may be looking for a welcoming church home as Easter approaches, or whom you may inspire!



Another Way You Can Serve NMCC - Treasurer: Are you looking for a new way to serve NMCC? Has God gifted you in the area of finance or accounting? NMCC is looking for a new Treasurer. As an officer of the church, the Treasurer must be a member in good standing and have a general understanding of generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). Your time and talents will be needed at least two hours per week to review timesheets, sign paychecks and checks, review A/R for coding and proper documentation, and read and address the Treasurer’s email. An additional 2-4 hours per month would be invested in reviewing bank reconciliation reports and the general ledger (including income and expenses) and preparing monthly reports and meetings with the Board of Finance and the Executive Committee. At year end, the Treasurer prepares annual financial reports and works with the Board of Finance in developing annual budgets with each of the Teams/Committees and Boards, and works with the Audit Committee in carrying out an annual audit. If you are interested or would like to learn more please contact John Gallops, Chair of the Board of Finance, jgallops@aol.com.

- In the News & Noteworthy -



NMCC and Members in the News: We often spot an article in the local paper, *Patch* or in other news outlets, and have been posting them on our bulletin board and our Facebook page. We'd like to expand the coverage and add a feature about this type of news in the monthly newsletter. Please send or drop off the news articles you find to the office at office@northmadisoncc.org and we'll be sure to include them.

Office, Board and Committee Contacts:

Senior Minister: Rev. Dr. Heather Arcovitch	203-421-3241
Office: Jackie Fix, Office Manager; Rhonda Spencer, Bookkeeper	203-421-3241
Minister of Music: Linda Juliani	860-399-0210
Choir Director: Bill Clemmons	203-421-3484
Minister of Faith Formation & Youth Ministry: Sue Timony-Hall	203-245-1531
Circle Nursery School: Kathy Niejadlik	203-421-0997

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Executive Committee Chair, Jim Farrales	203-421-9323
Executive Committee Vice Chair, Tom Lauher	203-530-7467
Board of Deacons Members*:	See Below
Clerk, Eileen McCann	203-623-9155
Assistant Clerk, Kate Davis	203-421-5848
Treasurers, Michele Mauro and Keith Luckenbach	860-663-8009 203-421-5054
Assistant Treasurer, John Gallops	860-460-8573
Financial Secretary/Disbursements, Open	
Asst. Financial Secretary/Disbursements, Open	
Financial Secretary/Receipts, Susan O'Connor	203-457-1559
Asst. Financial Secretary/Receipts - Calvin Price 2	03-245-8566

* Kate Summerlin 203-453-0700; * Sandy Dickson 203-421-1178; Susan Christiano, 203-314-8853; Peter Haff, 203-415-2773; Melissa Blundon, 203-421-4465; Orlene Gallops 860-339-5844; Dawn Barber, 203-457-1868; Susan Kenney 203-530-1153

BOARDS/COMMITTEES/TEAMS

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Human Resources Chair, Jim Farrales	203-421-9323
Ministry Resource Team Leader, Roberta Hanlon	203-500-8311
Music Chair, TBD	
Pastoral Relations Contact, Carol Luckenbach	203-530-9903
Property & Planning Chair, Tom Lauher	203-530-7467
Quiet Ministry Chair, Linda Young	203-457-0723
Cong. Life Ministry Team Co-Chair, Ken Nichols Co-Chair, Jim Farrales	860-346-2000 203-421-9323

Make a Gift on our Website! It's easy! Have a special occasion for which you'd like to thank God? Want an easy way to make your weekly offering? Like to establish a monthly automatic donation as a sustaining member? Visit www.NorthMadisonCC.org, click "Online Giving" at the top of the page, and just follow the instructions! Thank you for your love and support of NMCC and our ministries. Or, just scan here with your phone →

