



THE CIRCLE CHURCH NEWS

October 2020

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

In this Newsletter:

Pastor's Note

Children and Youth Ministries

A Note from Sue - How to Think Like a Fact-Checker

Music

Choir Rehearsals to Resume - Invitation from the Music Team

Community Outreach and Fundraisers

Ministry Resource Team: Raise the Roof - CT Quest for Peace -

Mask Making Ministry - Fire in the Kitchen

Get Involved / Stay Connected

Men's Retreat - Gathering Sunday - COVID 19 Property Use Guidelines -

Book Discussion Group - Thank you for your Support in these Strange Times -

Ongoing Ways to Stay Connected - Have you "liked" us on Facebook

In the News and Noteworthy

Bob Blundon - Emily Shaefer

- Pastor's Note -

I am writing to you on October 2, the first day of the Festival of Sukkot. The word "Sukkot" is Hebrew for "booths" or "tabernacles." One of the most joyful of the Jewish holidays, Sukkot is celebrated at the conclusion of the High Holidays, after Rosh Hashanah [a time of prayer, self-reflection, and *t'shuvah* ("return," repentance, new beginnings)], and Yom Kippur (the day of atonement). It is a time of thanksgiving for the fall harvest and of remembrance for the 40 years God's people spent wandering in the desert after receiving the Torah.

On Sukkot, families build booths, often with open walls and doors (so there is room for all!) in which to celebrate, and decorate these sukkahs with the fruits and symbols of the harvest. Family, neighbors, and friends are invited to share in the harvest celebration and visit the booths for special meals. Sometimes families even sleep in their sukkah. Perhaps you have had the joy of celebrating with family or friends in Sukkot celebration – it is a wonderful time.

Sukkot is the only Jewish holiday that celebrates an explicit commandment to rejoice. Isn't that interesting? This year, it seems to me the world needs Sukkot more than ever. It warms my heart to know friends are gathering in their booths and sharing meals and warmth and laughter. As I look out my window to a cold, damp, dreary day, reflecting on the losses of this

season of COVID, the death of RBG and impending changes in the Supreme Court, the uncertainty (to say the least) of the upcoming election, the losses in the life of our church and in my own life, and on all that comes with all of this, it touches my heart deeply that God commanded a celebration of in-gathering and joy, even in the midst of uncertainty and mourning, and that faithful Jews and their friends and neighbors are gathering joyfully to celebrate together, even today.

The road ahead is uncertain. And, the seasons of life keep on. The seeding, the growth, the harvest, the seasons of joy and of mourning...all of it is part of our human evolution, and of the circling of years, of lives, and of empires.

We sit at a crossroads, perhaps close to a culmination of something that has been growing in our nation, in our peoples, for generations. God is just as close to us now as s/he has ever been. Even as we lean in, hunker down, or rev up for what is to come, we are reminded, we are commanded, to make time for gratitude, and to make room for joy. Indeed, it is the only way through. "Moadim L'simcha!" In the midst of life's valleys and challenges, may you find courage, may you find rest, may you find community, **may you find time for joy.**

Love & Blessings,

Heather

- Children and Youth Ministries -

Welcome home, NMCC family!

Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here! We are so eager to begin gathering in small groups after being physically apart for so long. Over these months, I've been talking with lots of people in our community and it is more apparent to me than ever that we truly are the church - and we miss each other when we are not together. We find meaning in our lives through our relationships to ourselves, to each other, and to God. Our CE

Board and I recognize that our kids are spending more time than ever in front of screens in order to learn and connect with teachers and peers. We also see parents juggling work responsibilities with supporting children who are learning remotely at least part of each week. Due to these changes in the way we are all living our daily lives right now, we have discerned that our children and youth ministries should also look - but most importantly, feel - different this Fall as well. We have been



developing activities and lessons to share with our church school children, preteens, teens, and their families that will encourage faith formation and deepen relationships - both in person and virtually. As a church community we will be exploring the theme of Love and what it means to be a disciple in today's world. Please join us this Sunday, Oct. 4 for Worship and then at NMCC from 12:30-2:00 for Kindness Rock Painting as we welcome our church school kids and youth groups back in person. Our Fall schedule will be shared then. Please remember that we are here to support you and your family as we navigate this unusual time together.

With love,
Sue



Here is an article from the Screenagers website that teaches teens (and us all) how to catch misinformation and not spread it on social media. With the ease of access to all sorts of information on social media, how can we be reasonably sure that we aren't being influenced by misinformation?

How to Think Like a Fact-Checker

Helping our kids find reliable information in the vast swamp of misinformation, disinformation, conspiracies, and propaganda on the internet and social media right now is crucial.

I recently spoke to Joel Breakstone, director of the [Stanford History Education Group](#) (SHEG). SHEG is studying and teaching young people to be discerning consumers of information online. Breakstone told me that what worries him most is “the ease at which information is spread. Anybody who has a digital device has the opportunity to reach millions of people potentially.”

Disinformation is not new. But the speed at which it spreads is. Young people are struggling to tell the difference between unreliable information and legitimate sources. And here is the thing, so much of disinformation on the internet is from kids and adults reposting.

This TTT is about giving our kids skills to better understand what they are seeing and not passing on anything suspect. I write here about evidence-based techniques that are very effective. What is great is that kids and teens are natural questioners, and they don't like to get duped. So empowering them to help stop these problems and be a part of the solution can resonate with them.

Last year the Stanford History Education Group completed a study of more than 3,000 representative high school students across the United States. The study asked students to complete a series of tasks that relied on information sources from the internet. These tasks were done on school computers, and students were allowed to search online while answering the questions.

One of the tasks showed the students a Facebook video claiming to document voter fraud in the United States during the 2016 presidential primaries. The videos showed people allegedly stuffing ballots into ballot boxes. The students were asked whether they thought this was a trustworthy source of evidence of voter fraud.

More than half of the students, 52 percent, said that the video, indeed, was strong evidence of voter fraud. They didn't ask where the video had come from and who posted it on Facebook. In fact, the

video came from an anonymous source, and there was no indication that these videos were filmed in the United States.

Even among the students who rejected the video as good evidence for voter fraud, almost none questioned **where** these videos came from. They gave no ideal reasons for rejecting the videos saying things like they wanted to see other videos like these, or they wanted there to hear the audio on the videos.

Shockingly, out of the 3,000-plus students who participated, only three students left the website, opened a new tab, and did a search to help them evaluate the source video. They quickly found out that the videos were from Russia and had nothing to do with voter fraud in the United States.

Joel Breakstone and SHEG are figuring out how to teach information validation skills to young people. For this, he is enlisting help from professional fact-checkers who approach validation this way.

What professional fact-checkers do:

- Leave unfamiliar websites and search for other sources on the internet to validate what is being said or shown.
- Employ “click restraint.” Instead of immediately clicking on the top of the first page of a search, take 15 or 30 seconds and scan down the page for other search results. They read the snippets, the name of the website, and the title to decide which of these results would be the best starting place for their research.
- Three big questions guiding fact-checkers as they evaluate online sources are: Who's behind this information, and what's their evidence? 2. What's the evidence, or is there even evidence being presented? 3. What are other sources saying? So as not to rely on a single source, look for multiple sources, and do they say something similar?

So how do we apply this all to social media? I talked to a junior in high school who told me that she thinks.

“The issue on all social media platforms is that information from various sources appears the same,” she said. “And so there isn't necessarily a clear way to distinguish between types of sources or the quality of information when you are engaging with it.

“Sometimes on Instagram, you can at least see who the person is who is posting the information if they have a big following and are ‘verified.’”

She said the most common misleading posts she sees are about presidential candidates and Black Lives Matter.

Stanford History Education Group has a comprehensive website with lessons and tips for evaluating information sources on the internet. Watching [their videos](#) — and of course, talking about them — as a family can be a great activity to do together.

Here is a link to a [free online curriculum](#) from the SHEG. This curriculum is not just for teachers — it is for all of us! This is a crucial time to do exercises like these in our homes right now.

Questions for starting a conversation with your family:

1. Where do you get your news?
2. Is there a person, famous or not, that you follow and trust whatever they post?
3. How do you evaluate information on the internet and social media to make sure it is actually true?
4. Have you ever been “fooled” by something online? How did they do it, and what did you learn for next time?

- Music -



Choir Rehearsal

Choir Rehearsals to Resume!: The best part of our Thursday night rehearsals is being together to make music and even if the “be-ing” has to take a different form this Fall, we are going to give it a try on ZOOM!

Choir folks will not be able to hear each other, but will SEE each other on the Zoom screen. After a time of greeting one another, they will then listen to Linda as she leads warm ups and singing of familiar pieces as well as playing all the different parts for new pieces they will work on individually. Questions and comments can be shared in “chat.”

Knowing we are there together helps to keep us “in tune” (🎵) with each other and connects us in the best way we can be right now !

We all will do our part to continue to work hard to bring you music which uplifts, inspires and brings glory to our God

Thank YOU ALL for your continuing \$\$ donations which help make our Sunday music possible !!! ♥



Invitation from The Music Team! We would like to invite our members and friends to sponsor the music for a service in the same way that folks have previously sponsored flowers or a coffee hour. We anticipate a cost of about \$45 per song, but any gift is welcome! You can even designate your music support in honor or memory of a person or event, just as you would do if you provided flowers. Checks made out to NMCC can be sent to the church office, with “service music” on the memo line. Online you can make a donation on our website and write “service music” in the donation box. Thank you in advance for your support of our virtual music ministry!

- Community Outreach and Fundraisers -



Ministry Resource Team: “. . . now our service begins!” Your generosity is amazing.



Connecticut Quest for Peace: The Quest for Peace Continues - We're off to a good start with donations to Nicaragua, Paraguay and Appalachia. Items needed are warm and cold weather clothing, shoes, plastic dishware, pots and pans, tools, hygiene supplies, medical supplies (such as walkers, crutches, dressings, bandages etc.), student and classroom supplies, musical instruments, sports equipment, sewing items (such as material, thread etc.) and linens (such as towels and bed sheets).

Please place items in bags or boxes and label the content. Place warm and cold weather clothing in separate containers and label them WARM or COLD weather clothing. CT Quest for Peace is a non-profit organization assisting people experiencing poverty and homelessness in Nicaragua, Paraguay and Appalachia. Our collection period will continue through October and our donations will be shipped sometime in November.

Donations can be dropped off at Karen Miller's home - 7 Godman Road, Madison, on October 5, 19 and 30 and she will notify you of more dates for donation in November. If you have any questions, please call Karen at 203-915-2989 or e mail her at dksamiller@msn.com. Thank you for your generous donations!



Raise the Roof/Shoreline Habitat Connection:

Remembering Frank Walsh, NMCC Champion for Raise the Roof/Shoreline Habitat Connecting: Frank suffered a catastrophic stroke on Saturday, September 19th while working on a ladder at the

Habitat Raise the Roof build, wearing his red NMCC T-Shirt. Frank cared deeply about helping others, and particularly about Raise the Roof. It was too soon, but what a gift that he died doing what he loved – helping a family to have a home.



We already miss Frank's joy, his twinkly blue eyes, and his passion for justice and the many causes he so lovingly supported with action, personal involvement and engagement with those he served. We now have a wonderful angel watching over us and prodding us on to keep doing good in the world.



Heather and Barb Join Raise the Roof/Shoreline Habitat Connection 2020 Gala of the Stars, Dancing for the Cause! Raise the Roof and our group of community leader stars will continue the building, the dancing, and the joy of community in the must-watch, must-cheer, must-vote, not-to-miss online happening on **November 13 at 7:30 pm.**

What better way to celebrate Frank's life, support our outreach ministry and help Heather's dream to learn how to ballroom dance come true?! Thanks to Raise the Roof, Barb said "Yes" (who could say no??) and they're dancing to help a family build a home.

Let's support our dynamic duo!!!! We "vote" by making donations - first for our favorite couple BEFORE the gala and then by voting for their performance on the night of the event.

To get started on the “before” vote, Heather and Barb have their own [donation page](#) that features their stories and why they support this cause. Their goal is to raise at least \$10,000 and we need your help! Simply visit the above link and make a donation! Any amount is great!

For the past 4 years this event has been a fun evening at the Woodwinds with dinner, the competition with local celebrity judges and all enjoy dancing after. This year? No need to purchase a ticket. Everyone is invited to watch, cheer, and "vote" in this year's virtual format for one, some, or all of the dance couples, and...more to be announced. Let's honor our dear Frank and support our brave and wonderful Heather and Barb in their efforts to house a family through the awesome, life-changing ministry of Raise the Roof!

Outreach Ministries - Contact [Roberta Hanlon](#) if you would like to learn more our other Outreach Ministries whose Champions are working with other organization to identify how we can support them this fall.



COVID Mask Making Ministry: Since launching this Ministry, our Angel mask makers have made 484 masks, all but 6 of which have been in response to a request of 500 masks for Continuum of Care, an NMCC Outreach Ministry. Let Karen Miller be your inspiration to begin or resume making masks - this month she delivered 39 more masks for a total of 371 out of the total number produced. And many thanks to Robin Chasse and Jackie who make sure the masks are collected, counted and delivered. Sewers needed! Join our fabric mask making ministry! It's making a huge difference. [Click Here](#) for full information.



Fire in the Kitchen Concert: Yup, we're doing it again, and in a highly limited, COVID-friendly way. It's an outdoor show, limited to 75 people, in an obscure location in a private field in North Madison (avoiding the walk-in crowd that could send us over the maximum number of allowable people).

It could be the last concert of the year, as when the weather closes in, th th th that's all, folks (Porky Pig reference there, for those who need a visual). What's on tap for next year? Does anyone know anything anymore?

The music is by Damn Tall Buildings (possibly a trio, as one banjo dude is stuck in Oregon dealing with his family and fire aftermath, but he might be out in time) a Fire In The Kitchen favorite with killer tunes, vocals, fancy fiddling, and all that.

Click links to right for some sample music --> ["Words to the Song"](#) and ["Location"](#)

Proceeds get split between the band and local non-profits talking care of food needs, school supply needs, whatever is lacking in some families' lives. Originally, it was all going to turkeys, but sourcing that many all at once proved challenging for even the biggest outlets. So we'll be working with Madison Community Services, Guilford Interfaith, etc.

What's the deal?

1. Bring your own chairs.
2. Social distancing between groups is obviously a must.
3. We'll obviously follow the mask guidelines, when within 6 feet of others, wear 'em.

4. Have fun.
5. Eat ice cream after the show.
6. There may be a special beverage or food option to raise additional funds. I'll follow up when I know.
7. Once we have our 75 reservations, I'll email all the location details.

So, the specifics that you can know right this moment, Sunday afternoon, October 11, 3-5:00 p.m.. Damn Tall Buildings. \$30 per person. Time to rock, one more time before the weather does us in.

Let me know, Charlie Shafer, workdog@mindspring.com

- Get Involved / Stay Connected -



There are many ways to be involved in NMCC's vibrant community – serving in a missional outreach ministry, mentoring and teaching our children, joining in musicmaking or worship planning, helping out around the church building, singing in the choir, 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.



Men's Retreat: Peter Haff will be hosting a Men's Retreat on October 3 from 12:00 - 5:00 p.m. It will take place outdoors, rain or shine at his house at 20 Griswold Point Road in Old Lyme. Bring your lunch and something to drink, and join us for some socially distanced fellowship. Contact Peter at pbhaff@sbcglobal.net, 203-415-2773 with any questions.



Gathering Sunday: We are so excited to welcome our kids, preteens, teens and families back to NMCC after the summer! **PLEASE JOIN US October 4 on Gathering Sunday, 10:00am Virtual Worship!**

12:30-2:00 p.m.: JOIN Sue and our CE team when we will welcome our church school students and youth group members (and friends) back IN-PERSON after Worship in the NMCC parking lot by the Circle Nursery entrance. We will paint kindness rocks with Sue Kenney, and then place them around the church yard and hiking trail to brighten a neighbor's day when discovered.

This is a socially distanced event. We must wear masks and keep 6 feet between each of us. If you haven't RSVP's, please contact Sue immediately (see below). Please eat lunch before arriving. Our littlest church friends are invited to bring a parent (or grandparent) or two along, kids 3rd grade and above, please plan to be dropped off and picked up after the event.

Junior and Senior Youth - we are so excited to kick off our JYG & SYG year at this event. Please plan to join us!

Please RSVP to Sue at ce@northmadisoncc.org or text 203-843-6206. We will share more details about our fall programming on Oct. 4. Looking forward to seeing you!!!



COVID 19 Property Use Guidelines: Please note that use of the Circle Nursery School space (whether school is in session or not), and the church kitchen are off limits until further notice in compliance with COVID guidelines. All meetings on the church property must be approved by our COVID 19 Property Usage Task Force and entered on the church calendar. Please contact the church office at office@northmadisoncc.org with any questions and [click here to see our full COVID church usage guidelines](#).



Book Discussion Group: For our next Book Discussion, we have selected "Eva's Cousin" by Sibylle Knauss. It is a memoir and novel based on true experiences of Eva Braun's cousin, Gertrude Weisker, who shared her memories with the author after more than fifty years of silence.

She is invited to a beautiful Bavarian retreat (Berchtesgaden) in the Alps by her cousin Eva Braun, Adolph Hitler's mistress, while the Fuhrer is off trying to turn the tides of war in 1944. Gertrude accepts the invitation against her father's wishes.

The discussion will be held on Tuesday, October 13 at 7:30 p.m. by ZOOM. A link will be sent a day or so before the meeting.

Please let Peter Meier (peterm190@yahoo.com) know if you would like to join with us...all are welcome.



Thank you for your Support in these Strange Times: Especially now, it's so important to support our church's financial health. Please keep your giving up to date, and purchase grocery cards which support our church, at no extra cost to you. [Click here to give online](#), or mail your check to the church office. [Click Here](#) to see more ways to give and other options to send your contribution.

Ongoing Ways to Stay Connected

Please let us know if you need help connecting with virtual ministries – we can walk you through logging onto Zoom, Facebook, etc. – we want you to be able to participate!

Please contact the office and we'll have a deacon call you to help.

Tuesdays in the Garden: Posted Tuesdays on Facebook and also available on [YouTube](#) or our [Church Website](#).

NEW! October Wednesday Virtual Office Hours with Pastor Heather: Drop in virtually and visit with Heather. Share your ideas, questions, thoughts, or just say, "hello!" No appointments needed, and no agenda provided – we'll talk with whomever turns up about whatever comes up. The Zoom link can be found in the Friday all church email.

Wednesday Evening Vespers Prayer: Join us Wednesdays at 9:00 p.m. on Facebook. If you don't have Facebook you can view them later on our [Church Website](#).

Thursday Bible Study: Join Pastor Heather Thursdays at 10:00 a.m. The week's passages and Zoom Link to join is in the Friday all church email each week. Absolutely no previous scripture knowledge is required.

Sunday Virtual Worship: Live streamed at 10:00 a.m. on Sundays on Zoom and Facebook. The Zoom link can be found in the Friday all church email. The service is posted afterwards on Facebook, [YouTube](#) and our [Church Website](#). Virtual fellowship time is held immediately following the service for those who wish to participate – see and talk with your church friends near and far (in tiny but amusing little boxes on your screen!).

If you have problems logging into worship, please contact: Sandy Dickson 203-376-7075 -- Orlene Gallops 860-339-5844 – Carol Luckenbach 203-530-9903 for tech support.



Have you “liked” us on Facebook or subscribed to us on YouTube?

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, or whom you may inspire!

- 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.

Congratulations Bob Blundon - Madison Chamber Citizen of the Year!! On September 23, at the Madison Chamber of Commerce 2020 Annual Awards and Installation Dinner Bob Blundon was awarded as the Citizen of the Year!

“Emily Shafer Blazes Her Own Trail” Learn how Emily went with a team of Connecticut firefighters to help battle wildland fires that continue to rage in California. [Click here](#) to read the article that was featured on Zip06 on October 1.

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
Property Manager: Tom Lauher	203-530-7467
Circle Nursery School: Kathy Niejadlik	203-421-0997

OFFICERS

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
Treasurer, Ryan McMillian	203-895-2611
Assistant Treasurer, John Gallops	860-460-8573
Financial Secretary Receipts/Disbursements, Susan O'Connor	203-457-1559
Asst. Financial Secretary, Receipts/Disbursements, Calvin Price	203-245-8566

* 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

Board of Christian Ed Chair, Janice Wolf	203-809-0877
Board of Deacons Co-Chair, Kate Summerlin	203-988-1993
Co-Chair, Sandy Dickson	203-421-1178
Board of Finance, John Gallops	860-460-8573
Circle Nursery School, Laura Prohaska	203-467-2558
Communications Team Leader, Roberta Hanlon	203-500-8311
Cong. Life Ministry Team Co-Chair, Ken Nichols	860-346-2000
Co-Chair, Jim Farrales	203-421-9323
Generosity Team, Jim Farrales	203-421-9323
Hospitality Chair, Christine Farrales	203-421-9323
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
Vibrant Faith Nominating Team, Carol Luckenbach	203-530-9903

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



Please donate to support our Virtual Choir! We estimate that each anthem costs us approximately \$45 to produce. Donations in all amounts are welcome. If you would like to honor, remember, or celebrate someone, we will prepare a worship slide naming this in worship. Thank you!