



THE CIRCLE CHURCH NEWS

March 2021

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

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Karen Miller

- Pastor's Note -

Well, Friends, here we are at the threshold of our second COVID-19 March.

It is said, "**March** comes in like a **lion**, out like a **lamb**." These days, we might say March comes in like a pandemic and never leaves! This March will come and go, though, as last March did, and, as vaccinations are distributed, at long last, bring us within view of the end of our isolation. Hallelujah! (Pastoral note: please hang in there with your precautions! The end is near – don't let down your guard now!)

As a new March dawns, I am thinking about lamb and lion imagery. The phrase above, of course, is an old saying about the weather. It may refer, actually, to March constellations. Leo (the lion) is followed in its rising by Aries (the ram).

In Christian and Jewish symbolism, lamb and lion point to the Messianic Age. We may be familiar with the words of Isaiah 11:6-7:

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;
and a little child shall lead them.

Lion and lamb imagery are common biblical tropes; lion symbolizing God and conqueror, and lamb, political and spiritual peace and salvation. In Exodus 12:1-7 God's people are instructed to apply lambs' blood to their door lintels to guard from Egyptian infanticide. This is the powerful cultural symbol upon which the story of John the Baptist crying out, "Behold, the Lamb of God (Agnus Dei in Latin), who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29) is predicated. Jesus, for Christians, is the new salvific pascal lamb. Saint Augustine preached that Christ "endured death as a lamb; he devoured it as a lion." (Sermon 375A).

Woody Allen quipped: "Someday, the lamb will lay by the lion...but it won't get much sleep." Kidding aside, what do lamb and lion have to teach us this March?

I wonder, rather than focusing on the dualities of conqueror/savior or what arrives and what departs in our lives, if perhaps we are being invited to notice and appreciate our capacity to hold both together, like Christ, or like March (during which the lion has entered and the lamb has not yet departed). What is it to hold our grief and our hope simultaneously? To hold our pursuer and our prey? For our courage and might AND peace and forgiveness to lie gently together within us? Perhaps it is not in pursuing (or resisting) the binary of one or the other, but in embracing the two within our spiritual selves, that cultivates the mystical soil in which the spiritual seeds of spring's new growth may be sown.

- Children and Youth Ministries -



Hi Friends & Welcome, March!

We are now a year into the pandemic - something we never could have imagined would have lasted this long as it made its approach to us this time last year. The other unimaginable development at this time last year for me, was that the scientific world was days away from beginning to band together in a race to create a vaccine to fight the virus. Even more astonishing is that they would be successful in under a year's time. So, now as warmer weather approaches and our world begins to wake up again, I am filled with hope that we are going to be entering a season in which the pandemic will recede. As with most anniversaries, I find myself looking back at the past year and invite you to join me in considering the following questions:

A year into the pandemic:

What are you GRATEFUL FOR?

What do you APPRECIATE MORE?

What have you learned to LIVE WITHOUT?

What has become MORE IMPORTANT?

How are you STRONGER?

WISER?

BRAVER?

I'd love to hear your family's answers!

Children & Youth Ministries Updates:



Confirmation "Journey" Group - next zoom gathering with mentors - Sunday, March 7th, 12:30-2:00.



Save the Dates! Virtual Church School Zoom Sunday, March 14 & March 28th - 2 age groups: 11:30-11:50 PreK-2nd grade, 12:00-12:20 3rd-6th grade. Parents can choose to keep siblings together in one age group. I will send out RSVPs to sign up week of March 1st. We will be exploring our Lenten theme of roots and rootedness. Join us!



SYG: Sunday, March 14th, 4:00-5:00pm Conversation on Diversity with other local high school students engaged in racial justice work.

We hope to resume programming outdoors as the weather warms and will keep updating the schedule as we go forward. For now, a closing thought:

As we head into Spring and witness our natural world beginning to awake, I invite you to consider the hidden possibilities around us. As Michelangelo once said: "Every block of stone has a statue inside it, and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it." And again: "I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free." What do almost you see? What is just waiting for you to begin creating this month?

With love,
Sue

- Music -

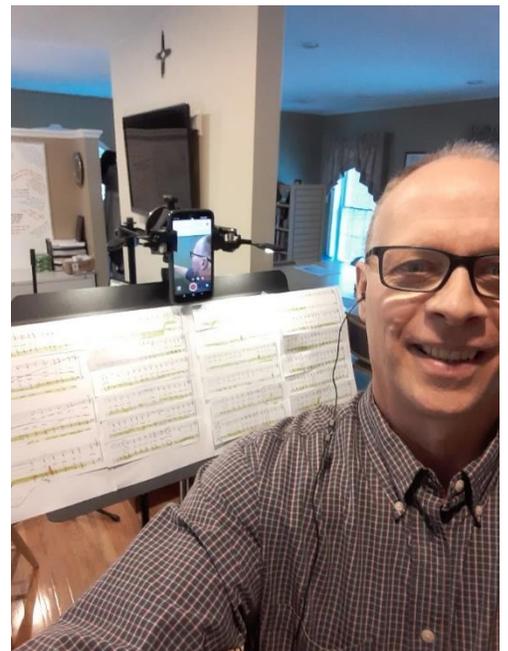


"Music speaks what cannot be expressed
Soothes the mind and gives it rest
Heals the heart and makes it whole
Flows from heaven to the soul"

Every Sunday, we hear music from our amazing choir which does exactly as the quote suggests! In "normal time" Sunday morning's music is prepared in the community room at Thursday night rehearsals with a warm-up in the sanctuary before worship.

These days, the procedure is quite different!! After a ZOOM rehearsal on Thursday night (during which choir members cannot hear each other singing, but practice alone in their homes) they each record their voices in the song for the week.

The photos show the ingenuity of some of their recording "studios" 🎧 🎹 🎸 🎛 which include computer or iPad with my instructions and the part they are to sing playing through their earphones – the music – and their phone to make the recording.





Easier “said” than “done” though –
One person told me last week it had taken 20 “takes” to get a perfect recording!

After Scott Chassé receives all the recordings, he and his assistant Jack DiMatteo spend MANY hours combining/editing all the voices to produce the finished product you hear during the worship service.

Although usually only one name is listed as NMCC’s “Minister of Music,” the real truth is that this title applies to EVERY SINGLE MEMBER of our choir. Heartfelt thanks to each of them for all they are doing to create the music which so beautifully feeds our spirits each week.



- Community Outreach and Fundraisers -



SAVE THE DATE!
Saturday, June 12, 2021
Goodness Grows
Garden Walks to Nourish the Soul
An NMCC Spring Fundraiser



Ministry Resource Team: In February we continued focus on Columbus House with food purchases and deliveries using donations collected in December and January, along with additional donations for the purchase of gift cards for Clinton Social Services. Our Community Yoga series on Mondays and Thursdays continues to enjoy strong participation.



Columbus House

Columbus House: We made 2 large food deliveries to Columbus House in February (for a total of 4 since January) and plan a final one next week using funds and food donated in January and February. The food is cooked at the main shelter and then brought to several locations where clients are housed in hotels. Kitchen Services provide meals daily to well over 200 people in New Haven hotels and other shelters. If you would like to donate cash or other food items (pasta - no spaghetti please, oatmeal packets, Pasta Sauce, Rice, Fresh fruit (especially oranges), ground beef or turkey, frozen meatballs, chicken, packaged/individually wrapped granola or cookies, all beef hot dogs, individual fruit cups, individual yogurt, sliced bread, ground coffee, hot chocolate (packets), tea), please contact Roberta Hanlon robertahanlon@msn.com or text 203-500-8311 to coordinate purchases, reimbursement and delivery.



Loaves & Fishes: In January we donated 13 gift cards (\$25) with funds you donated in January to Clinton Social Services. In March we plan to purchase and donate an additional 12 cards (\$25) to Clinton as well using budgeted Ministry Resource Funds.



NMCC Virtual Community Yoga: Our next 5-week Yoga series begins on Monday, March 15 at 6:00 pm and the Thursday series begins on March 18, also at 6:00 pm. Why not join - especially on those cold evenings when you need exercise but it's too cold to go out? Cost for each series is \$35 and the classes. We recommend you have previous experience taking Yoga classes. To sign up, please contact Roberta Hanlon robertahanlon@msn.com or text 203-500-8311.

Ministry Resource Team: If you are interested in starting a new Outreach Ministry, the Ministry Resource Team can help you with ideas, best practices, funding and resources to help you design and engage our NMCC community in supporting your ministry Contact Roberta Hanlon robertahanlon@msn.com if you would like to learn more.



Free Forever Prison Ministry: "I choose to give my life for the hungry. I choose to give my life for those who have been left out of the sunlight of opportunity... I heard a voice saying DO SOMETHING FOR OTHERS." - Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dear NMCC members and friends. On January 17th of this year, we celebrated our annual Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend. Little did we know we'd still be in a life challenging year with the Covid 19 virus pandemic. This year's event was somewhat different, but ever so more meaningful. We were delighted to have Rev. Darrell Goodwin, the Executive Conference Minister of the Southern New England Conference as our special guest minister live via zoom during our church service. What an inspirational message! We had outstanding music from our choir, readings and videos. And our beloved Pastor Heather warmly and directly reflected on the teachings of Rev. King. However, because of Covid, we didn't have the opportunity to fellowship and break bread together at our sit-down brunch with delicious foods. And so, we took another path. This was an opportunity to feed others as we've done many times in the past. There was a way to pass it forward in honor of Rev. King to those who need basic necessities and food. That's what he would have done. The Worship Team discovered an agency who could surely use food, items and monetary donations and so we reached out to Free Forever Prison Ministry. Upon the first phone call, the coordinator and founder, Rev. Brixaida Marquez, couldn't believe how we found them. God answered their prayers. NMCC and the Prison Ministry has developed a caring and positive relationship during the last month. The story and donations continue to unfold and grow . From the MLK event, we've continued to donate so many items through February, Black History Month.

Thank you, thank you NMCC for your food donations, household supplies, generous monetary gifts and miscellaneous items. You've reached out once again and collected from friends and neighbors, too. Our youth group's participation was incredible!

NMCC you're a family I'm so proud and blessed to be a part of. You shine, you care, you love! Rev. Brixaida Marquez, coordinator and founder of Free Forever Prison Ministry also sent NMCC a letter with these sentiments, thanking us for our generous donation and delivery.

Yours in peace and love,
Nora Price, on behalf of the Worship Team.

- Finance Notes -



Staffing - A Critical Part of Any Church's Operating Budget: We are blessed to be part of a very vibrant, united, loving, and caring congregation. The Covid-19 challenges we faced at the start of 2020 and continue to face in 2021 have been extraordinary. Our congregation and our staff, however, has risen to the occasion and can be proud of our accomplishments. Our Pastor Heather, having completed her first year, has been an inspiring leader for the congregation. Her early commitment to keep us and our staff safe during the Covid-19 pandemic, along with her extraordinary creative talents and caring for all of us have inspired our staff and worship team to bring a fun, intimate, profound and very creative worship experience to all of us.

Our Minister of Faith Formation and Youth Ministries, Sue Timony-Hall, has matched that creativity and offered programming and outings for our youth and children keeping them inspired and engaged. The choir under the direction of our Minister of Music, Linda Juliani, has learned many new skills and continue to enrich our weekly worship, now with virtual music. Our Office Manager, Jackie Fix, and our new bookkeeper, Rhonda Spencer, have dealt with many challenges and changes working remotely and yet continued to provide a high level of support keeping our office running smoothly. Our property manager, Tom Lauher, has maintained the church and grounds, the Summer Hill Cemetery, and Circle Nursery while also ensuring compliance with required municipal and state inspections. And our Circle Nursery staff has done an extraordinary job of providing a safe and engaging environment for children in the community.

In addition to our staffing, the church budget supports our Deacons who, through Caring Ministries provides our congregation with calls, visits, meals, prayer shawls and special prayers. Our Outreach Ministry program has continued to reach out to the community increasing support to community partners: Columbus House, Connecticut Quest for Peace (Nicaragua), Continuum of Care, Loaves & Fishes (food pantries in both Clinton and Madison) Raise the Roof, Saint Martin de Porres, and Youth Continuum.

To position the church for the future, there is a need to diversify our income as we face continued pressures financially. We've agreed we need invest in staffing because it is vital for our future. NMCC will not be able to continue withdrawing from our endowments at current levels to balance the budget and still remain solvent. The current budget requires us to use almost \$149,000 of our investment fund. If we continue to withdraw at the current amount, unrestricted funds will be completely depleted in five (5) years unless we take action now. To that end, two ad hoc teams were announced at the January 30th congregation meeting, one focusing on stewardship, led by John Gallops and one focusing on fund raisers led by Cal Price.



Financial Planning for our Church: As we start a new year, the Board of Finance wanted to take a moment to thank you for your support of the budget conversations and meetings held to date. Following the budget conversation held in January, we had two members join the Board of Finance (BOF) including Scott Chasse and Susan Kenney. As a result of those conversations, the BOF has appointed two ad-hoc committees with members of our congregation to address the financial challenges.

John Gallops is chairing the committee on stewardship giving, new member growth, and legacy giving. The group has met twice with members including Scott Chasse, Peter Meier, Meredith Young, Dwight Juliani, Jim Farrales, and John Gallops. Calvin Price is chairing the committee on fund raising and facility usage with members Peter Meier, Kate Summerlin, Jules Abbott, Charlie Schafer, Laura Prohaska, and Lyn Boling.

Please consider emailing John at jgallops@aol.com or Calvin at wildwood9@msn.com and join one of these groups as we continue financial planning for our church. To ensure our beloved church's financial stability, we would like to be able to count on everyone's help and gift of time in the near future in implementing the revenue generating plans that are a result of these committees' work; many hands make light work.



NMCC's Treasurer: After serving as NMCC's Treasurer since July 2020, Ryan McMillian has to unfortunately step-down given other work and family. Ryan has committed to remain in the role through June 2021. On behalf of the congregation, the Board of Finance thanks Ryan for his service and looks forward to his family's continued commitment and involvement with NMCC.

For the continued financial planning of our church, filling the role of Treasurer is vital. Has God gifted you in the area of finance or accounting? Are you looking for a new way to serve NMCC? As an officer of the church, the Treasurer must be a member in good standing and have an understanding of generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). Your time and talents will be needed at least 2 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 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.

- 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.



Movies for Black History Month: We gathered virtually to view, discuss and celebrate Black History Month in February with a variety of movies. For those of you who joined in the discussion, many thanks for your insight and enthusiasm for our selections. If you missed the first two and would like to watch, they were: "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks" and "The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind." Join us for the remaining movies:

Becoming rated: PG (running time: 1:29)
Viewing date/time: Friday, February 26/6:30 pm
Discussion: 8:10 pm
Available on Netflix

This exclusive documentary follows former first lady Michelle Obama on her sold-out book tour *Becoming*, inspired by her best-selling memoir. Not only does it bring the words of her inspiring story to life, but we also get a few cameos from her husband President Barack Obama and daughters Malia and Sasha.

Black Panther rated: PG 13 (running time: 2:15)

Viewing date/time: Sunday, February 28/2:30 pm

Discussion: 4:45 pm

Available on Amazon, Disney +

Prince T'Challa returns home to become king of Wakanda, a high-tech African utopia. He is challenged by an old nemesis, Erik Killmonger, who seeks revenge and power. The two battle for the throne, but the fate of the world is also at stake. The fight divides the nation, and T'Challa, with his allies by his side, must use his power as Black Panther to defeat their enemies.

Hidden Figures rated: PG (running time: 2:07)

Viewing date/time: Friday, March 5/6:30 pm

Discussion: 8:45 pm

Available on Amazon, Disney +

Three mathematicians, all African American women, work as 'human computers' for NASA at the height of the space race in the 1960s. They struggle with segregationist policies and chauvinism in the male-dominated aerospace field. Their ingenious contributions prove invaluable in this true story about the outsized impact of people overlooked by history.



Book Discussion Group: The NMCC Book Discussion Group is reading Barack Obama's "A Promised Land" (sounds very Biblical, doesn't it?).

We'll join together on March 16 at 7:00 p.m. via ZOOM. Should you wish to join with us and are new, please e-mail Peter Meier at peterm190@yahoo.com.



Holy Week Schedule:

Palm Sunday March 28 at 10:00 a.m via Zoom we will celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Our virtual choir will offer *Sanctus* (No. 4) from St. Cecilia Mass by Charles Gounod.

Good Friday Tenebrae April 7 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. *Tenebrae* means "shadows." We will read the story of Jesus' walk to the cross and crucifixion as we extinguish candles, accompanying him into the darkness of the tomb.

Easter Vigil April 2 (following Tenebrae) to April 4 (Easter Dawn). Our tradition is to take shifts alone or with friends or family in the sanctuary, keeping watch while Jesus is entombed. Planning is underway about how we may hold this this year (virtually, in-person, or both).

Easter Sunrise Service April 4 at 6:30 a.m. Planning is underway to determine how to safely hold this NMCC tradition.

Easter 10:00 a.m. Worship April 4 at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom, with all the NMCC music, art, excitement, prayer, preaching, and celebration we have come to expect from our virtual celebrations.



New Email Address for Pastor Heather: Pastor Heather has a new email address. Please replace her previous email with pastor@northmadisoncc.org. Thank you!



Text Your NMCC Donations: Did you know you can text NMCC your donations for your pledge, grocery cards, missions, etc. Just follow the steps below and you'll be connected to our Vanco system.

Step 1: Text **833-948-2188** (this is for NMCC only)

Step 2: You will receive a text link to follow

Step 3: Complete credit card and donation amount information

Step 4: Submit

Receipt will be texted to you. Done



Looking for NMCC Photos: We've begun the exciting journey of updating and reformatting our webpage and social media platforms. This means we need photos that reflect our NMCC community and property. If you have high quality NMCC photos taken in the past year or so, we would love to see them as we select the images for our new platform. Please email or text them (with highest available resolution) to robertahanlon@msn.com or 203-500-8311.

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.

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.



Roslyn Young Memorial: Due to the pandemic, Linda Young and her family will not have their live annual memorial concert in memory of their sister Roslyn. However, they will hold a virtual concert and have created a website, roslynyoungmemorial.org. Please visit it, and stay tuned for concert information.



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.



Our own **Karen Miller** was highlighted as Person of the Week again in Branford's newspaper, *The Sound* and Zip06. She presented such a rich story that we previously shared it when it ran in *The Source* (Madison) and *The Courier* (Guilford)! It highlights, Karen as the hospice nurse, NMCC Deacon and as Sarah Tuxis board member. Read it here:

[Karen Miller: Knowing Her Values and Living Them | Zip06.com](#)

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, Carol Luckenbach	203-530-9903
Pastoral Relations Contact, Carol Luckenbach	203-530-9903
Property & Planning Chair, Tom Lauher	203-530-7467
Quiet Ministry Chair, Linda Young	203-457-0723

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 \$75 to produce. Donations in any amount are welcome. If you would like to honor, remember, or celebrate someone, we will prepare a worship slide naming this in worship. Thank you!