



# New Milford United Methodist Church

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December 2011

Pastor's Message

## *Prepare the Way of the Lord, or, What to Expect If You Are Expecting*

I can recall all of the preparation involved with expecting a new baby to come into our lives. There were the obligatory visits to the doctor, where we looked with wonder at the sonogram screen and the little heart beating up there. There was a baby shower with gifts that we never even knew we would need (but many of which ended up coming in very handy!) We had to come up with a name. And finally, we regularly consulted the book, *What to Expect If You Are Expecting*.

Many people wish they had just such a handbook to get them through the Christmas season and the coming of Jesus into our lives. Fortunately, we have one that has stood the test of time: the Bible. The Bible not only tells the miraculous story of how Jesus was born into a difficult world, but also relates his ministry in that world and how he overcame the difficulties of this world through his death and resurrection. The Bible will tell you of the life-changing impact accepting Jesus into your heart can have, not just during the Christmas season, but every day of your life.

Presently, we are celebrating Advent, a season of preparation and expectation. The very word "Advent" is derived from the Latin word *adventus* which means "coming." How will you prepare for the coming of Christ into your life? I hope that you will start by joining us for regular worship during the season of Advent. Perhaps you can join the adults for Sunday School between services or be in attendance at the Christmas Pageant. Maybe you will engage in mission to help those on the margins.

My Christmas wish is that you will prepare for the coming of a very special baby into your lives. The Bible tells us "What to Expect If You Are Expecting." You can expect nothing less than a transformed life.

Peace and God's Blessings,

Rev. Paul A. Fleck, Pastor

# Church News

## Attendance & Offerings

Nov. 6	167	\$9,927
Nov. 13	114	\$2,841
Nov. 20	112	\$2,997
Nov. 27	86	\$2,378

**Monthly total**      **\$18,143**  
**YTD Offerings**    **\$189,979**

**Nov. Budgeted Giving**    **\$16,507**  
**YTD Budgeted Giving**   **\$182,113**

## Christmas Pageant

In this season of Advent it is time to reflect on our Lord's birth and our children will studying about the meaning of Advent in Sunday School. On Sunday, Dec. 4, we began rehearsals for our Christmas pageant to be held on Sunday, Dec. 18 between our two services. This year the pageant will be a dramatic interpretation of the story, "The Legend of the Candy Cane," with a Holy Nativity narrative. We will have rehearsals on Saturday, Dec. 10 from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., a rehearsal during the Sunday school hour on Dec. 11 and a dress rehearsal on Sat. Dec. 17 from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. followed by refreshments. We will then gather at Sunday school time on Dec. 18 to get ready for the pageant that will begin about 10:30 a.m. All children, whether or not they regularly attend Sunday school are welcome to participate, and if they cannot make a rehearsal, but still want a part please just let me know so I can include them. I would say that the dress rehearsal is a must for anyone who wishes to participate. I also do not want parents to feel that children must participate if they might rather just watch the pageant.

We have a couple high schoolers who have volunteered to assist with the pageant, and I'm open to any middle school or high school students who still might wish to participate. As for adults, there is plenty of help that you can provide, too. I will need assistance planning out the set, which will be basic and simple, but will still require some staging. We also will need assistance on pageant day getting children into costumes and where they need to be. As the story revolves around a candy store, I would also invite anyone who wishes to donate a bag of candy or jars to put candy in, or has some empty boxes around the house, to bring them and put them in the hall near the coat racks and I will pick them up. Candy canes would also be appreciated. (If anyone has any large candy cane decorations, we could use those, too).

Any questions about the pageant please feel free to contact Nanci Hutson at (860) 354-3250 (home) or on her cell at (203) 770-4788.



## Newsletter deadline and production dates

The next newsletter deadline will be **Friday, Dec. 30 at noon** and we will be preparing it for mailing on Thursday, Jan. 5.



To receive the newsletter via email, in full color, please contact the Church office at [Office@NewMilfordUMC.org](mailto:Office@NewMilfordUMC.org)

# the Education Center

November was a great month! The weather has been beautiful so we have been able to utilize both playgrounds just about every day. The children have enjoyed the fresh warm fall air and watching the trees lose their leaves. The toddlers had a blast painting with pine cones and the RSFK program made some beautiful glitter turkey feathers.

It seems as though the month of December crept up very quickly! We anticipate the weather will quickly begin to change and the children can start to learn about snow, ice, temperature and all of the fun things that can happen in the winter months. The center as a whole will be exploring different holidays around the world with a major focus on Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, and Christmas. If your family has a special tradition that you would like to share with the rest of us please let your child's teacher know. Learning is a process that involves all of the senses requiring a variety of opportunities and experiences before a concept can be understood. Therefore; It would be wonderful to hear about, taste, see,

or smell all of the differences that we can share! Please check the December calendar for some very important dates throughout the month. For example, on Friday, Dec. 16, your child can bring \$2 to school and enjoy a hot pizza lunch from the Brick-house. The center will be having a holiday party on Wednesday, Dec. 21 at 10:30 a.m.; parents/family members are encouraged to join us as we celebrate all of the special holidays and traditions we have learned about throughout the month.

I personally would like to thank the families, and staff for welcoming me into the Education Center. I am really looking forward to seeing the center flourish as we embark upon a new journey together.

Warm regards,  
*Jennifer Pennucci*

Best wishes for the New Year!  
The Education Center Staff

## Love Baskets

Our annual tradition of preparing Love Baskets for the senior members of our church will take place on Monday, Dec. 12 at 7 p.m. in the church kitchen. We will be preparing 20 baskets. In addition to the gift bag, we also give our members fruit and homemade cookies. Donations of fruit, small gift items, snack foods and three dozen cookies for the baskets are needed. All members are invited to participate in the basket preparation.

## The Giving Tree

Our tradition of requesting gift cards on our Giving Tree continues. As in the past, we are asking for gift cards to local stores and shops such as Wal-Mart, Stop & Shop, Big Y, CVS, Home Depot, etc. in the amounts of \$20 or \$25. The gift cards will be given to Peg Molina, Director of Social Services for the Town of New Milford, for distribution to those in our community who are in need and who have so very little. Please return the gift cards to the church by Dec. 12. There will be a marked box for them on the table by the door to the office. Thank you in advance for your support of this holiday tradition at our church.

## Alternative Christmas Gifts

If you are looking for a Christmas gift that keeps on giving you may want to consider an Alternative Christmas card. For a donation amount of your choice you may receive a card(s) for a mission of your choice. A table with the cards available will be in the entry each Sunday during Advent and in the church office during office hours. Missions available again this year are: Heifer, Kairos, Mozambique Orphanage, and Our Daily Bread food barn. We have 2 new offerings: Brinna Kolitz's US-2 missionary support and UMC ARMY's Adopt-a-Ramp program. For more information, please contact Tracie Nixon in the church office or Rita Iverson at (860) 355-1252.

## Thank You, Church Family

To My Dear Church Family,  
Thank you all for the prayers, well wishes and lovely cards. Thanks for all your prayers. I am feeling well and on the mend.

Blessings to All,  
Phyllis Franz

## Can you help?

As the winter season begins, the New Milford Homeless Shelter is looking for overnight volunteers. NMUMC would like to provide volunteers for one full week in January. We would be looking for two adult volunteers (one male, one female) per night for one week. We are planning on the third week of January (15-21). If you have never served as a volunteer, we can arrange training or put you with a seasoned volunteer. Questions? Please don't be afraid to ask. If you would be willing to serve as an overnight volunteer please contact Rita Iverson (860-355-1252). Please consider this act of sharing. Your overnight presence allows a warm night's shelter for someone who might not otherwise have shelter from the cold.

## Joys & Concerns

*Our prayers are with...*

Bill O'Rourke who is recovering from hip replacement surgery.

Kathy Kullgren who is recovering from hip replacement surgery.

Kay Jones who is at home in Florida recovering from Shingles and undergoing medical tests.

Bill Babbino who was hospitalized with heart problems.

Rose Ann Hastings, who will be donating a kidney. This will move her husband Ed up the list for a kidney transplant and they are looking for a kidney that would be suitable for Ed.

June Hudak who is undergoing her 4th round of chemotherapy treatment for cancer and was recently hospitalized.

Kim Birsen who is having health issues

George Perry who has moved into the

Masonic Homes.

Sharon Kresl who is having health issues.

Rev. Ken Kieffer who is undergoing chemotherapy and radiation treatments.

Those affected by Hurricane/Tropical Storm Irene.

Winnie Farrell who home with her husband and daughter in Sherman, but is still having medical issues with Alzheimer's and Parkinson's Disease.

Jim Ferlow as he recovers from a stroke at home.

Dee Yukon, the wife of Rev. Matt Yukon of the Northville Baptists church, who was diagnosed with breast cancer.

Kathleen Whitfield who has health concerns. She is Sue Whitfield's mother and lives in Scotland

Rev. Bob Johnson, retired from the Bethel

UMC, who is being treated for cancer.

Ed Hastings who is undergoing dialysis.

Tom Gaynor, Sr., who is having health issues.

Jack Orr who is recovering from Myelodysplastic syndrome. He is a friend of Joe & Nora Tigner.

Susan Lynch's brother, Richie, who is recovering from surgery and her mother who is having health issues.

Laurie Gaudette who is having health issues.

The leaders in our church.

Financial health of our church.

Our Bishop, Jeremiah Park, our District Superintendent, Ken Kieffer and all the churches in our Methodist Connection in the New York Annual Conference and beyond.

## Congregational Care Committee

A congregational care committee is forming. We are looking for volunteers who are interested in visiting shut-ins, or people in the hospital and also to serve communion to shut-ins, send get well cards and to help in any other small services that may be needed. A meeting will be held on Thursday, Jan. 5, 2012 at 6 p.m. at the church. If you are interested or would like more information, please come to the meeting. You can contact Bonnie Knapp at (860) 355-0559 or the church office at (860) 354-4596.

## Missions Update

Our monthly meeting was held on Nov. 28. Thank you to all those who attended. Our main focus of the meeting was Alternative Christmas Gift giving. Cards may be purchased each Sunday during Advent. A donation can be made in any dollar amount with a card or cards representing a mission(s) of your choice. These cards can then be given as gifts and the recipient knowing where your donation went. This is a great way to support our missions at NMUMC I would like to take this opportunity to remind our members that the missions booklets are now available outside the church office. If you have not picked up a copy, I encourage you to do so. There are many missions and ways to become involved. If you have any questions, please call Sue Whitfield at (203) 417 0435.

Our next meeting will be Monday, Jan. 23. There will be no meeting in December.

## Community Garden Harvest 2011 Recap

Well, the summer is over and our initial season was moderately successful, starting from a side-hill patch of grass and ending with 10 garden plots producing a variety of (mostly organic) herbs & veggies. In the Spring, we said the goals of this project would be to form a small group of people with shared interests in gardening (12 folks or so actually pitched in); produce nutritious foods on currently vacant land (everyone grew something good); and use the produce for common needs as well as individual purposes (we made contributions to the food pantry). We hope to build on the garden next year improving our techniques and hopefully our yield. Next year we hope to get an earlier start and do more group work sessions as well as improve watering & weeding skills. Thanks to Bill Weed for tilling the land & providing fertilizer, the Trustees for allowing the project, Pastor Paul for his support, Tom for his creative lawn mowing, Taylor's True Value Hardware for free/reduced price supplies, Home Depot and the farmers/helpers -- Pat & Larry, Rita & Paul, Terry, Marilyn, Jane, RuthAnn, Alex & Steph, and the Day Care staff & kids. You can contact Bill or Jody Ihlo if you are interested in getting involved with next year's garden. Call (860)355-1767, send an email (billihlo@gmail.com) or contact the church office.

## Join the Group Going to the Catskills

There will be another trip to the Prattsville and Lexington, NY area on December 17 and 18 in order to continue to support the area devastated by hurricane Irene. Several people have already been and additional people have signed-on. The actual job we will be doing is still to be determined but it will be meaningful to the people of the area for sure. Please confirm as noted below by Monday, December 12. The cost for the trip will be \$15 for the accommodations on Saturday, Dec. 17. Beyond that, plan on meal money for breakfast and lunch on Saturday and breakfast and a late lunch Sunday on the way home. The dinner Saturday night is usually a good-will donation at the Cristian Training Center where we will stay the night. If you have questions or would like to sign up, please contact Steve Kolitz at sbkolitz@sbcglobal.net or (860) 355-8416 or the contact the church office.

**The Fay & Art Carlson Scholarship Committee enthusiastically announces the launching of the GLSCRIP Program.**

**A WIN-WIN FOR ALL! Purchase Gift Cards (from us) at FACE VALUE and REDEEM AT FACE VALUE!**

**There are hundreds of retailers to select from, and the scholarship fund receives a percentage of the sale from the various retailers.**

**The goal of the Scholarship Committee is to run this program year-round so members can purchase the cards from us any time for nearly all of their normal purchases/shopping needs!!**

**Please see Heather Morin or contact her at (860) 354-8406 or hmorin218@yahoo.com.**

**Orders with payment can be placed in the Scholarship mailbox! The Committee would like to thank everyone for participating!**

## Charge Conference scheduled

Save the date: Our next Charge Conference will be held on Thursday, Jan. 19, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Reports are due to the church office no later than Thursday, Jan. 5.

### Christmas Eve Candlelight Services



5:30 p.m. Contemporary Service  
7:30 p.m. Worship Service  
9:30 p.m. Worhsip Service

### Christmas Day Service

10 a.m. Combined Service of  
Lessons & Carols

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

68 Danbury Road, New Milford, CT 06776



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