



New Milford United Methodist Church

68 Danbury Road, New Milford, Conn. 06776 • (860) 354-4596 • www.NewMilfordUMC.org • Office@NewMilfordUMC.org



January 2012

Pastor's Message

Becoming a Vital Congregation: It Starts With All of Us!

One of the privileges I have as your pastor is to help you as a community of faith discern who God is calling us to be. As you will recall from one of my early sermons at New Milford United Methodist Church, the most deadly words you can hear in a church are “this is the way we have always done it,” as if the community around us does not change or as if we are not called by the Holy Spirit to engage in new forms of ministry. I believe that God is calling us to something far greater: a community that flourishes in bringing about God’s kingdom.

To that end, as your leader I have engaged in two activities which I hope will lead to greater flourishing for this community of faith. I am committed to the implementation of the United Methodist Church’s Vital Congregations Plan that is being used in churches throughout the New York Annual Conference and beyond. As a part of that I have been selected among 24 pastors in the Conference to participate in the Vital Congregations Incubator group. It will be my mission to learn about the key drivers that make a church effective, teach other pastors about those drivers, and assist them in implementing them in our churches—as well as implement them in our own church.

To quote Matt Curry of Mount Kisco UMC: “The UM Vital Congregations Plan is a denomination-wide effort to ‘redirect the flow of attention, energy, and resources to an intense concentration on fostering and sustaining an increase in the number of vital congregations effective in making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.’” The 2010 Call to Action Report demonstrated that the UMC is facing unsustainable conditions due to declining membership. The Vital Congregations Plan is designed so that “Clergy and laity leaders at all levels of the United Methodist Connection are called to work together in this opportunity to cast vision and set directive goals for our congregations. As each congregation sets reasonable, accessible, and achievable goals based upon its individual context, and is equipped and resourced to meet those goals, the congregation readies itself to receive the fruits of God’s harvest. (2 Cor. 9:5-7) We become a church united by a common vision, striving to reach the goals uniting us for the transformation of the world through God’s power and grace.”

Your church will need your help as we engage in this process. We will need your prayers and participation. Pray and discern how God is calling you to take action and become involved. One way to become involved is to share your experiences and views in the enclosed form and return them to me or the church office. Some of you may have already returned the form and for that we thank you.

This is how the process will work: starting this month a leadership team will be assembled to meet over the next February, March, and April to discuss the Context, Content and Conduct of our ministry as a congregation. Everyone in the congregation will be engaged at the outset through constant communication that will involve not only surveys but progress reports, feedback sessions at church council and an opportunity to join work-groups around the goals that will be set.

Pastor's Message continued



Newsletter deadline and production dates

The next newsletter deadline will be **Friday, Feb. 10 at noon** and we will be preparing it for mailing on Thursday, Feb. 16.

The end product will be a set of measurable and actionable goals related to our congregation's vitality with trained teams committed to meeting these goals. We hope that a necessary by-product of all of this will be a greater level of engagement from all members of the congregation in helping us to meet these goals that we have all set. In the meantime, we hope you will continue to stay involved in making this a thriving church!

Peace and God's Blessings,

Rev. Paul A. Fleck, Pastor

¹ Much of this month's Pastor's Message was drawn from Rev. Matt Curry's newsletter article at Mount Kisco United Methodist Church.

Youth Group Activities for January 2012

The deadline for signing up for Ignite Retreat is Jan. 2. Please sign up for UMARMY ASAP by contacting Pastor Paul.

- Jan. 8 – UMYF Meeting at Gaylordsville UMC (2 to 3:30 p.m.)
- Jan. 15 – Bowling in New Milford (2 to 3:30 p.m.)
- Jan. 20 to 22 – Ignite Youth Retreat
- Jan. 22 – UMYF Cancelled (@ Ignite Retreat)
- Jan. 29 – UMYF Meeting at New Milford UMC (2 to 3:30 p.m.)



For more information on UMYF, contact Gilim Jung at 973-902-9719 or via email at gilimjung@yale.edu.

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To receive the
newsletter
via email, in full color,
please contact the
Church office at
Office@NewMilfordUMC.org

the Education Center

December was a wonderful month! We began our month with the hanging of the greens and had a nice turn out. The tree in fellowship hall is so festively decorated with ornaments made by the children. All of the children spent a lot of time discovering and learning about holidays around the world. They made Menorahs for Hanukkah, Kinaras for Kwanzaa and ornaments for Christmas. The children read stories and learned songs that honor each of these exciting festivities. Our holiday party was a huge success; Thank you so much to everyone who was able to participate in some way. The children enjoyed lots of goodies and had a wonderful time. There was a lot of laughter and joy to be heard throughout the Education Center!

In other news, enrollment at the center has increased by five children since November. Our facebook page is up and running and our new website will be published by the end of the month.

Warm regards,
Jennifer Pennucci

Love Baskets & Giving Tree

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the collection of gift cards for the Giving Tree. Thirty-six cards were given to Peg Molina for distribution to people within the New Milford community. Thank you also to all those who contributed to the Love Baskets. We assembled 19 baskets and enjoyed our visits with our senior church members when we delivered them.

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. 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.

Gift Cards/Scholarships Program

Throughout the new year, you can still purchase gift cards at face value (and redeem them for face value) and the scholarship fund receives a percentage of the sale. Use these gift cards for hundreds of retailers for your everyday shopping needs while helping the scholarship fund. Please contact Heather Morin at (860) 354-8406 or hmorin218@yahoo.com. Orders with payment can be placed in the Scholarship mailbox.

Attendance & Offerings		
Dec. 4	112	\$7,428
Dec. 11	116	\$3,844
Dec. 18	133	\$2,54
Dec. 24	277	*see below
Dec. 25	22	*see below
Monthly total		\$16,657
*Christmas Giving		\$3,103
2011 Total Giving		\$206,636

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...

Alma Hough who is recovering from an infection following hip surgery, at Village Crest.

The Williams Family as they welcome Rebecca Grace who was born on December 6. Proud parents are Priscilla & Ralph, big sister Emma and Grandparents Barbara and Ralph.

Kathy Kullgren who is recovering from hip replacement surgery at home.

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

Walter Tripp who is having medical issues, he is Larry Tripp's brother.

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

Bill Babbino who was hospitalized with heart problems.

George Perry who has moved into the Masonic Homes.

Barbara Williams who is recovering from a severe asthma attack.

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 Birsan 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.

Sharon Kresl who is having health issues.
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

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

Ed Hastings who is undergoing dialysis.

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

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.



Dear Church Family,

I have been in Billings and at Family Support Network for four months, and these four months have been a blessed experience. My job at Family Support Network is a combination of Home Visits where I assist families as a preventative measure of NOT having their children taken out of the home, and Supervised Visits, when I am present during visits between parents and children when the children have been taken out of the home for whatever the reason is, and I work with that family on various issues with the ultimate goal of reunification. Right now I am working with sixteen families, four home visit families and twelve supervised visit families

There are five United Methodist Churches in Billings. I started off going to Grace UMC for the first two months, but I now go to Evangelical UMC, and I think that is the congregation that I will be calling my Billings Church Home. I have really felt welcomed there, and there are a TON of missions opportunities for me! I have really been getting involved and have been having a great time with the church!

Being a US-2 Missionary has been amazing so far! I have loved it. Some days at work have been incredibly stressful and others are very joyous! But everyday has been truly a blessing, and an incredible learning experience. So as I continue on with the next two years of this awesome journey that I am on, I ask for your generous gifts of prayer for me as I am a long way from home, the families that I am working with as they work through their struggles, and also for the twenty-five other US-2's and Mission Interns as they also continue their journeys.

And also, if you, or a group or committee that you belong to, feel called to financially support me in my work as a US-2 please go to www.advancinghope.org click on the box on the right hand side that says "Give now to The Advance of your choice." Type in 3021354 into the "Find project" field and click search, then click on my name. If you and or your group would like to mail the check in, follow the following instructions: Make your check payable to ADVANCE GCFA. Write "Brinna Kolitz 3021354" on the memo line of the check. Send your check to:

Advance GCFA
P.O. Box 9068, GPO
New York, NY 10087-9068

Or if you find it easier you can send in your checks (with my name and advance number in the memo line) into the church office and Tracie Nixon has generously offered to collect any checks that come in and send them in together. 100% of your gift reaches my mission.

On Sunday January 15th at both services, I will be speaking at NMUMC! I will be updating you all on what I have been doing for the past four months. I will be sharing stories about some of the families that I have been working with, connections that I have been making, and how my time away from home has been! I really hope that you all can come and hear about my mission work.

I invite you to follow my blog at kolitzb.wordpress.com which I regularly update as well as my Facebook. I have really enjoyed updating my blog, and have had a tremendous response to it! And also, feel free to email me at kolitzb@gmail.com with any questions, comments, and warm wishes from home, they will be GREATLY appreciated, and I would be more than happy to fill you in on how things are going that way as well. If you would like to send me anything, my mailing address is:

2222 Wingate Ln.
Billings, MT 59102

Lastly, I want to thank you so very much for all of your support in the past, present and future! I would not be where I am today if it were not for this church community.

In God's Love,

Brinna Kolitz



Greetings everyone,

Hello, my name is Gilim Jung. I am the new youth pastor for United Methodist Youth Fellowship. It is a pleasure and honor to be serving the community at New Milford. Since this is my first newsletter article, I'd like to briefly introduce myself before talking about how our youth group has been doing for the past few months. I've been an avid churchgoer since before my birth. My parents are engaged church members, and I have grown up going to church every Sunday. In high school, I was an active member of my church's youth group, and was confirmed at a Korean United Methodist Church in New Jersey. In college, I was involved in several campus ministries, including Intervarsity Multiethnic Fellowship, In Christ Ministries, and several local churches near Rutgers University. I studied Philosophy, Religion and Music in my undergraduate years, and was actively involved in a worship ministry I cofounded with my friends, called Untitled Praise. After graduation, I started attending Yale Divinity School this past fall. I am continuing to serve with my brothers and sisters in Untitled Praise, serving as role models and worship leaders for small churches in New Jersey.

The past few months have been very exciting for UMYF. In November, we took a hike to Lover's Leap in New Milford together. On December 2nd, we had a lock-in at NMUMC. We had over 10 students attend, and had a lot of fun playing games and spent time together learning about God through worship and devotionals. It was great to see the students get involved at Spaghetti Supper on December 10th, which was a fundraiser for our Ignite Retreat in January 20th-22nd. I encourage all the youth students to sign up for the retreat. Retreats were an important part to my spiritual formation as a youth, as well as a great opportunity to have fellowship and build friendships with peers in the area that I normally would not have had a chance to meet. Not only are retreats great places to get to know God better, but each other in the youth group. On December 18th, we had a great Hot Chocolate Social and went caroling at two nursing homes in New Milford. All of us had fun singing to our favorite tunes, and bringing a bright cheer to all the elderly people at the nursing homes. We also enjoyed hot chocolate and ice cream after we got back to NNMUMC.

This month, we have several exciting activities planned for youth group. On January 15th, we will go bowling together. On January 20th-22nd, we are going to the Ignite Retreat. Check out umyouth.com for more details about Ignite 2012: Raising the Belief. Also, be sure to come to our regularly scheduled meetings on January 8th and 29th. We will continue with the UP series.

I know that God has great things planned for our youth group this year. I hope we can get to know each other better this year, and share our life experiences together as we grow in Christ! Have a blessed New Year, and hope to see you all on Sunday!

Gilim Jung

For more information on UMYF, contact Gilim Jung at gilim.jung@yale.edu or the church office.

2012 UMC Vital Congregations Planning: A Strategic Plan for United Methodist Congregations

The United Methodist Church is being called to join in God's plan for transforming the world by increasing the number of disciples of Jesus Christ through vital United Methodist Congregations. Clergy and laity leaders at all levels of the United Methodist Connection are called to work together in this opportunity to cast vision and set directive goals for our congregations. **As each congregation sets reasonable, accessible and achievable goals based upon its individual context, and is equipped and resourced to meet those goals, the congregation readies itself to receive the fruits of God's harvest. (2 Cor. 9:5-7)** We become a church united by a common vision, striving to reach the goals uniting us for the transformation of the world through God's power and grace.

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH'S THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world
Matthew 28:19-20 –The Great Commission and Matthew 22:36-40–The Great Commandment

Disciple making and world transformation occurs through vital congregations

Vital congregations are Spirit-filled, forward-leaning communities of believers that welcome all people (Galatians 3:218), make disciples of Jesus Christ (Matthews 28:18-20), and serve like Christ through justice and mercy ministries (Micah 6:8; Luke 4:17-21)

A vital congregation has

*Inviting and inspiring worship
Engaged disciples in mission and outreach
Gifted, equipped and empowered lay leadership
Effective, equipped and inspired clergy leadership
Small groups and strong children's programs and youth ministry*

A vital disciple is a changed follower of Jesus

Matthew 22:36-40 - The Great Commandment
*Disciples worship
Disciples make new disciples
Disciples engage in growing their faith
Disciples engage in mission
Disciples give to mission*

16 KEY - MINISTRY STRATEGIES

Engagement of disciples on small groups and the number of ministries for children and youth

1. Vital churches have more small groups for all ages.
2. Vital churches have more programs for children.
3. Vital churches have more programs for youth.

Lay leadership

4. Vital churches focus on increasing the effectiveness of lay leaders (understand their role and carrying these roles out effectively).
5. Vital churches have lay leaders who demonstrate a vital personal faith (regular worship, intentional spiritual growth, personal devotional life, and giving of financial resources).
6. Vital churches place an emphasis on rotating lay leadership in order to involve more people over time.
7. Vital churches call, equip, use and support more lay leaders than non-vital churches. (Twenty percent or more of their worship attendees describe themselves as current or past leaders in their church).

Pastor

8. Vital pastors give attention to developing, coaching, and mentoring lay leadership to enable laity to increase their ability to carry out ministry.
9. Vital pastors use their influence to increase the participation of others in order to accomplish changes in the church.
10. Vital pastors motivate the congregation to set and achieve significant goals through effective leadership.
11. Vital pastors inspire the congregation through preaching.
12. Vital pastors, **when they are serving effectively**, stay for a longer period of time. (Short-term appointments of effective pastors decrease the vitality of a congregation).

Worship

13. Vital churches offer a mix of contemporary (newer forms of worship style) and traditional services.
14. Vital churches have preachers who tend to use more topical sermon series in traditional services.
15. Vital churches use more contemporary music (less blended music that includes traditional tunes) in contemporary services.
16. Vital churches use more multi-media in contemporary services (Some congregations in other parts of the world may have limited access or do not use multi-media to the same extent and therefore it may not be as important as it is in some cultures.)

Mission

In conversations with vital congregations, they tell us that mission is an important aspect of their ministry. Directly related to the giving to mission is in all matters fostering a spirit of generosity both giving and serving in individuals and in congregations.

A PROCESS FOR BECOMING A VITAL CONGREGATION: Developing a Ministry Plan for Vitality and Fruitfulness

Vital congregations are ministries that recognize a clear calling from God and develop plans and ministries to achieve God's purposes for their congregation. Part of the plan calls for setting goals. The Call to Action report indicated that there was a lack of measures within United Methodism

and that goals or clear and recognizable fruit was essential for the health of a congregation, a conference and the denomination.

I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. (Jeremiah 29:11).

God desires the best for The United Methodist Church and its congregations. God has planned a future with hope for us. God's plans flow from the Holy Spirit and therefore all involved in this process are called to immerse planning in prayer, Bible study, Christian conferencing and testimony.

VITAL CONGREGATION PLANNING GUIDE — INDIVIDUAL RESPONSE FORM

Please attach additional pages/responses as necessary

Date: _____

Participant's Name:	Position in the Church:
Church Name:	Annual Conference:
Address:	Country:
Lead Pastor:	

A. CONTEXT FOR MINISTRY — THE COMMUNITY AND PEOPLE GOD HAS CALLED YOU TO SERVE

1. **Community** - Describe the community surrounding your church — the community your congregation is called to partner with and serve.

Who are the people (age, race, educational background, etc.)?

What are the current needs of your community?

What changes are occurring in your community that may impact your future ministry?

2. **Your Church - *the body of Christ God has formed you to be and is calling you to become***

Which of these qualities of a vital congregation is your church **most** attentive to? (circle all that apply)

- Inviting and inspiring worship
- Engaged disciples in mission and outreach
- Gifted and empowered leadership
- Small groups and strong children's programs and youth ministry

Which of these qualities of a vital congregation is your church **least** attentive to? (circle all that apply)

- Inviting and inspiring worship
- Engaged disciples in mission and outreach
- Gifted and empowered leadership
- Small groups and strong children's programs and youth ministry

What are the strengths of you church?

What are your challenges? (for example: loss of key givers, needed building repairs, declining worship attendance, few professions of faith, changing community, etc.)

What are the opportunities for ministry with children, with youth, with adults?

What does your congregation currently value as its most important ministries? Would anyone miss these ministries if your church ceased to exist?

CHARGE CONFERENCE

Our next Charge Conference will be held on Thursday,
Jan. 19, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary.
All are welcome and encouraged to attend!

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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