



New Milford United Methodist Church

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



January 2014

Pastor's Message

I'd Like the Combo, and Please, God-Size It!

Anyone that knows me knows I'm a fan of fast food. And they always ask me when I'm going through the drive through if I'd like to up-size my meal. Of course! Who doesn't know that bigger is better!

Last Sunday I challenged you, rather than making the same old resolutions (just to be broken or easily attained because they are not big enough for us) to live into a God-sized vision and mission for yourself and your life. We will engage in a new sermon series starting on Epiphany Sunday that explores how you can live into a better, God-focused, God-sized mission for yourself and your life.

The beginning of a new calendar year is a time when we often reassess direction and ask questions yet again about who we are and where we are going in life. We make resolutions, we sign up at the gym (again), we vow to be better people. This year we will take a deep journey into the question, "Who Are You?" We will discover that "who we are" is indelibly linked to "Whose we are." What amazing things could happen if you lived into your best, most passionate, loving self? Let's find out what transformations can happen in just nine weeks!

Follow Your Star (Epiphany Sunday)

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
— Isaiah 60:1

. . . there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. — Matthew 2:9-10

The Wise Ones found what they were looking for by following the lighted path. When we trust the "star" that God hung out for us, we move toward life in its fullest and discover joy beyond imagining. What paths is God shining light upon for you? We will take the next nine weeks to implement movement toward a brighter future than we can imagine.

Connect With Your Belovedness (Baptism of the Lord Sunday)

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. — Isaiah 42:1

And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." — Matthew 3:16-17

Pastor's Message continued

Can you imagine what relationships could be like without the human fear of rejection? This Sunday we remember our baptism and the voice of God which proclaims to all of us, "You are my beloved." Let's live in the abundance of grace and acceptance and just see what happens when we offer that to others!

Know Your Name (2nd Sunday After Epiphany)

Listen to me, O coastlands, pay attention, you peoples from far away! The LORD called me before I was born, while I was in my mother's womb God named me. – Isaiah 49:1

When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" . . . "We have found the Messiah." – John 1:38, 41

The question of "who are you" often starts with a name. In the scriptures, people begin to describe Jesus by many names—Rabbi, Messiah, Lamb of God—as they tried to understand who this special person was. What descriptors do you want to be known by? Who has God called you to be?

Claim Your Vocation (3rd Sunday After Epiphany)

For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. – Isaiah 9:4

And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. – Matthew 4: 19, 20

We continue this Sunday with the idea that God has called us, not just by name, but to a special purpose. When we find and claim our own vocation—that which fulfills us and creates good in the world—we are freed from the bonds of what others may expect of us or claim for us. Discipleship comes in many, and sometimes unlikely, forms.

Embody Beatitude Living (4th Sunday After Epiphany)

God has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? – Micah 6:8

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: "Blessed are . . ." – Matthew 5:1-12

Two of the most powerful and poetic lessons for life appear in the scripture readings this Sunday. The definition of beatitude is "supreme blessedness and happiness." In our search for happiness among the "stuff" of life, have we missed the point? What difference would it make to embody a love for justice and kindness in our everyday lives?

So don't just make resolutions this new year: God-size them! Throughout this series we want you to examine how you can incorporate a God-sized mission for your life and ministry. Incidentally, if you want to assist us in implementing these worship experiences, you can always join us on the Worship Team to do so. Just contact Pastor Paul at pastorpaul@newmilfordumc.org or 860/354-4596 to become involved!

Peace and Blessings,



Rev. Paul A. Fleck, Pastor

THANK YOU NOTES

Dear Friends,

Many thanks for the Love Basket you gave me this year. Everything was wonderful.

God Bless you all,
Dottie Stone
PS: I'm enjoying the fruit very much.

Dear Church Members,

Thank you so much for remembering my 94th birthday and your Love Basket. Your thoughts are greatly appreciated.

With love,
Mary Gunther
George Perry

Thank you all for the lovely love basket, also to the children who made the ornaments, they are on the tree.

Ed Whaley

Dear Love Basket Makers,

Thank you very much for the lovely Love Basket I received. It contained so many delicious and helpful items. I especially enjoyed the wide variety of delicious cookies and candies.

Thelma Neufeld

To Everyone!

Thank you for the "love" basket sent to my dad, John Farrell, last week. He loves the cookies, fruit, and goodies! Also, thank you all again for the support when my mom left us for Heaven!

Merry Christmas,
Cindy and Jack Agati

I would like to thank the ladies who worked so hard to get those love baskets filled and delivered and filled. They were thoughtful and delicious.

Thanks,
Kitty

A sincere thank you to Patty Jacobson and all her blessed "bees" – the buyers, the bakers, the baggers and the bearers – for the bag of Christmas goodies I received. It is much appreciated.

Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas,
Art Carlson

Many thanks to everyone who supported the Giving Tree and the Love Baskets during the Holiday Season. The generosity of all was greatly appreciated.

Thank you,
Patty Jacobson



January Birthdays

- 2 – Jerry J.
- 4 – Karen P.
- 8 – Ed H., Amanda S.
- 12 – Valorie K.
- 17 – Steven K.
- 18 – Laurie G.
- 19 – Jennifer M.
- 21 – Kimber M.
- 25 – Rita I.
- 26 – Liz B., Sue P.
- 30 – Joan H., Jennifer M.

Attendance & Offerings

Dec. 1	113	\$2,964
Dec. 8	117	\$5,652
Dec. 15	—	\$165
Dec. 22	104	\$4,153
Dec. 24	234	\$5,399



Newsletter deadline

The next newsletter deadline will be **Friday, Jan. 31 at noon** and we will be preparing it for mailing on Thursday, Feb. 6.

Joys & Concerns

Congratulations to . . .

Lu Vivona on becoming a great grandmother for the second time.

We are thankful for. . .

Dave Kullgren and Ralph Williams who put in so much time selling Christmas trees. They are ambassadors of our church.

Our prayers are with . . .

Ellie Middleton as she prepares for knee replacement surgery on Jan. 10.

The Birsen family as they grieve the passing of Ken.

The Martin family on the loss of Roxanne's aunt.

Millie, who has been diagnosed with breast cancer.

Nancy Mascio who is having trouble with her legs.

Church News

Friendship Lunch

You're invited to lunch on January 19 (the third Sunday of the month) at 1 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. We'll be having homemade soup AND homemade bread plus some other good food.

During January, we'll have a box in the kitchen to collect mugs or small soup bowls that you may want to swap on that day — you can choose any mug/bowl and keep filling it until you try all five kinds of soup. We'll have something for children (and adults) who may not like soup.

Any questions please speak to Pat Tripp or call her at 860-354-8720. Please plan to join your church friends!



Donations Needed

Once a month we bake a birthday cake for the Birthday Party at Village Crest Health Center. We also supply birthday presents to the residents who have a birthday that month, we are in need of clean or new small stuffed animals to give as presents. Also needed are items for men, such as after shave lotion, cologne or books with pictures that they might like. Lastly, small gift bags are needed to put the presents in. For more information please contact Bonnie Knapp at 860-355-0559 or e-mail bonnieknapp@charter.net.

LOAVES AND FISHES MISSION PROJECT

Looking for a small mission project? Loaves and Fishes could use one or two folks to make lunches for the third Friday of each month. After having dinner at Loaves and Fishes, each guest can request a bag lunch which includes a sandwich a drink, a cookie or sweet and sometimes fruit. We need 24 lunches.

Lunches can be placed in the church's refrigerator or brought to Loaves and Fishes in the basement of the Richmond Center around 3:30 p.m. on that Friday.

To volunteer call either Ann Tibbatts at 860-868-0413 or Pat Tripp at 860-354-8720.

ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS GIFTS

We wish to thank everyone who participated in the 2013 Alternative Christmas Gift program. Christmas Cards were offered beginning on November 18 and during the four Sundays in Advent and \$3,105.00 was raised for the six missions. This amount represents an increase of \$1,280.00 over last year.

Mozambique Orphanage received \$680.00, Our Daily Bread received \$640.40, the Heifer International received \$395.00, U.M. ARMY Adopt-A-Ramp Program received \$360.00, Loaves & Fishes received \$395.00, and Imagine No Malaria received \$635.00. In addition, several people donated online through the Global Board of Ministries Giving Tuesday Program on December 4, where donations were matched. Your generous donations will have a meaningful impact on each of these organizations.

If you would like more information on the Alternative Christmas Gift program, or becoming involved with any of the missions you see here, please contact Tracie Nixon at tracienix@gmail.com or (860)355-8628.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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