



New Milford United Methodist Church

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



March 2015

Pastor's Message

Resurrection Faith Because We Serve a Living Savior

“Never happened!” I’ll never forget someone yelling this as they drove by those participating in the Good Friday Cross Walk on the Green. Come on. This is a story I’ve devoted my life to. I wanted to yell back, “Did too!”

I’m not about to tell you I haven’t experienced doubts. I hedged my bets before committing to Christ. I remember telling my youth leader as a Confirmant that I thought that being a Christian meant “trying to have faith in God and Jesus.” He confronted me about my doubt. He gently told me, “Paul, being a Christian isn’t trying to have faith. You either have it, or you don’t.” I prayed to God and Jesus to help my unbelief. I took a leap of faith. My life has never been the same.

That is not to say I don’t still experience doubt. There is a necessary tension between faith and doubt, isn’t there? I love the biblical account in Mark where a man asks Jesus to help his son suffering from life-threatening convulsions. The boy’s father pleads “if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.” Jesus replies, “[i]f you can? Everything is possible for one who believes.” Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” That is my constant prayer as well. I believe; help my unbelief.

Great servants of Jesus’ movement always struggle with issues of faith. The disciples who witnessed the Resurrection miracle struggled with doubt. Mother Theresa herself wrote, “My own soul remains in deep darkness and desolation... the silence and emptiness is so great that I look and do not see, listen and do not hear.” Jesus experienced dark nights of the soul.

Am I surprised that the woman in the car shouted out what she did at those of us gathered on the Green? I suppose I shouldn’t be. Resurrections are not rational! There will never be absolute scientific proof of Jesus’ Resurrection. Science explores the natural; God and Jesus’ Resurrection are outside of that. There will never be a substitute for deciding to believe.

Yet, on the basis of the illogical claim of Jesus’ Resurrection, the illegal renegade movement spread rapidly through the Roman Empire. And in spite of persecutions and, yes, even doubt, the movement continues to grow.

Jesus-followers are a people of Resurrection faith and Resurrection life. To be raised to a new way of living, you have to die to an old way of thinking. Jesus taught that you can move mountains with faith the size of a mustard seed. Paul wrote, “I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”

The resurrected Jesus made it clear it’s impossible to know and have faith in him apart from the commitment to become intimately involved in his life and mission. He taught us that ultimately the measure of our lives as people of faith will be based on what we do for the least and the lost.

Peace and Blessings,

Rev. Paul A. Fleck

the Education Center



This past month has been very busy at The Education Center! The Ready Set for Kindergarten (RSFK) class has started a building project to further investigate how things are built. The children are looking at pictures of places around the world, including Arendele from Frozen, and trying to recreate them with blocks. They have built with different materials such as cups, tooth picks and sugar cubes, and Popsicle sticks. They have also explored tools and blueprints. Hammering golf tees into Styrofoam was a favorite activity this month. Some of the building going on in the classroom is quite impressive. Check out our Facebook page to see pictures!

In the Toddler 2 room this month the children have enjoyed exploring lots of fun art activities from painting recyclables to using shells and apples to paint. They have also been turning the classroom into a dance floor, enjoying dancing to music from The Little Mermaid and The Lion King. They have even broken out the instruments to march around the room. The Toddler 2 class also went on an adventure to Fellowship Hall on one of the cold days this month to play with a parachute!

The Toddler 1 class enjoyed exploring with their 5 senses. They observed how the snow melts in the sensory table while using their sense of touch to explore the snow and build a snowman. They discovered that painting with watercolors on the snow makes the color spread very wide. A favorite activity this month was telling stories with felt board pieces.

The Infant room was busy this month growing by leaps and bounds! There are so many infants crawling, rolling, and walking! They are all on the move. Some favorite activities this month were blowing bubbles and waving hello and good-bye.

We would like to also extend an invitation for volunteers to come in and read a story to one of the classes or help our school age program with homework. If you are interested please contact me, we would love to have you!

April 13-17 is the Week of the Young Child. We would like to invite volunteers to come in and share a story or activity with the young children of the Education Center and celebrate with us. If you are interest please contact me at 860-354-2941 to set up a time.

Kristin Austin
Director



March Birthdays:

3 – Cindy B., Art P.
4 – Bob D.
5 – Ryan D.
8 – Kevin H.
13 – Peter D.
17 – Desirae S., Lynn S.
18 – Samantha M.
29 – Jen B., Noelle H.
31 – Dawn N.

Attendance & Offerings

Feb. 1	104	\$3,882
Feb. 8	89	\$2,680
Feb. 15	27	\$2,984
Feb. 22	54	\$1,600
Monthly Giving		\$11,146
YTD Giving		\$27,541
YTD Giving		\$26,808
		<i>(Budgeted)</i>

SMILE, SAY CHEESE!

We're beginning to think about having a new Photo Directory done for our congregation. We have 3 folks willing to help so far but would like 2 or 3 more. Please speak to or call Pat Tripp 860-354-8720 if you're willing to join in this endeavor.



LENTEN ALL-CHURCH MISSION PROJECT

The Mission Committee is sponsoring our second annual All-Church Lenten Mission project to put together Health Kits to be used by UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief). Last year, we worked with the Confirmation Class to assemble personal needs bags for the Danbury Women's Crisis Center and because of the generosity of our congregation; it was a very successful project.

UMCOR's website states: "Relief-supply Kits help provide care for the most vulnerable people during times of crisis. Kits help sustain everyday life for people who lack ready access to essential supplies. They provide vital support for UMCOR's global development work and make a tangible difference in people's lives." We decided to put together Health Kits for two reasons: the first is that UMCOR announced that they are in urgent need of Health Kits; the second reason is that the items needed for the kits are affordable and easy to find, in fact most can be found at a "dollar" store.

We will begin collecting supplies beginning on the first Sunday in Lent, February 22 and will assemble the kits on Sunday, March 29 at 1:30 pm. I will place a well-marked a box in the lobby of the church.

Below is a list of the contents of a Health Kit.

1 hand towel

- 15" x 25" to 17" x 27" kitchen cleaning and microfiber towels not acceptable

1 washcloth

1 comb

- comb needs to be sturdy and at least 8" long
- no pocket combs or picks please
- rattail combs and combs without handles are acceptable

1 metal nail file or clipper

- no emery boards or toenail clippers please

1 toothbrush

- adult size only
- do not remove from original packaging

1 bath size soap

- 3 oz. and larger sizes only
- no Ivory soap due to moisture content
- do not remove from original packaging

6 adhesive bandages

- 3/4 " to 1 " size
- common household band aids

1 plastic bag

- one gallon size sealable bags only

Monetary donations

- to purchase toothpaste (\$1 per kit)
- processing & shipping costs (\$1 per kit)

Important Notes

- All items must be new.
- Do not wash any of the items, as they will be considered used.
- Please remove all packaging.
- All emergency kits are carefully planned to make them usable in the greatest number of situations. Since strict rules often govern product entry into international countries, it is important that kits contain only the requested items – nothing more.
- DO NOT include any personal notes, money or additional material in the kits. These things must be painstakingly removed and will delay the shipment.
- UMCOR is now purchasing toothpaste in bulk to be added to health kits before shipping to ensure that the product does not expire before they are sent.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Tracie Nixon at 860-355-8628 or by email at tracienix@gmail.com.

Congregational Care Committee

The Congregational Care Committee would like to remind all members that if you would like a birthday card sent to you on your birthday, please sign the yellow pad at the entrance of the church with your name and birthday.

Also, if any members knows of someone who needs a get well or thinking of you card, please let Bonnie Knapp (860) 355-0559 or bonnieknapp@charter.net know. The Committee is always looking for new members. We meet once per quarter, the third Thursday of the third month at 6 p.m.

Advent Giving Program 2014

We wish to thank everyone who participated in the 2014 Advent Giving Program. Christmas Cards were offered beginning on November 16 through the Advent season and \$3,040.00 was raised for the 6 missions.

Mozambique Orphanage received \$530.00, Our Daily Bread received \$655.00, the Heifer International received \$515.00, U.M. ARMY (United Methodist Action Reach-Out Mission by Youth) received \$645.00, Loaves & Fishes received \$485.00, and our Covenant Relationship with Dieudonne Karihano received \$210.00.

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.

Thank You

I would like to thank everyone for the prayers, cards, thoughts, kind words of comfort, and hugs that I have received during this difficult time. My gratitude goes to everyone that participated in the service. I especially want to thank Helen Leary, the funeral care committee, and everyone who helped with the reception. Everything looked lovely and the food was delicious. But even more important, it gave us time to be with friends. I cannot tell you how much it meant to me and my family.

I feel truly blessed to be a part of this caring church. Thank you and God bless all of you!

Marlene Davis

UPCOMING EVENTS

Something for Seniors

Join us on Wednesday, March 11, 2015, in Fellowship Hall, at 2 p.m. for "Something for Seniors." All seniors and Baby Boomers are invited. This will be a very casual get together to discuss topics that we face as we get older. If you have any questions, please contact Bonnie Knapp at 860-355-0559.

Spaghetti Supper

The next Spaghetti Suppers will be Saturday, March 14 at 5 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Please join us for spaghetti with home-made meat sauce (vegetarian or butter available upon request), plus salads, homemade desserts, and soft drink. If you would like to volunteer to assist or see what items need to be donated, please contact Bonnie Knapp at 860-355-0559.

Bowling

Family Bowling Night will be held Saturday, March 21, at 7:15 p.m. at Lore's Lanes (145D Danbury Road, behind Goodwill). Please RSVP to Linda Slater at 860-354-6180 or lslater0256@yahoo.com no later than March 19 to ensure adequate lane space.

Family Game Night

Join us for a casual Family Game Night on Saturday, March 28 at 7 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. This is a perfect event to invite a friend or neighbor to church with you! Each attending family is asked to bring a snack to share while we play. For more information contact Roxanne Martin at mrm189@att.net or 860-355-4118.

Joys & Concerns

we are thankful:

For the birth of Emily Margret and Charlotte Genevieve, daughters of Robert and Jennifer Mayette, and grandchildren of Herb and Janice Mayette. Both girls and mom are doing well.

Katie, Gene and Jan Parsons granddaughter, no longer needs crutches.

our prayers are with:

The Panessa family whose son was killed by a hit and run driver.

The O'Malley Family, friends of the Martin Family, as they grieve the loss of a loved one.

Jim, neighbor of the Martin Family, who is recovering from a heart attack.

Diane Jones, a relative of Linda and Alex Slater, who had a tumor removed from her bladder and will be undergoing chemotherapy.

Ray O'Brien, who is facing serious health issues.

Bill Phillips, who is ill with pneumonia.

Pat, Roxanne Martin's neighbor, who is facing health issues.

Alexis, Chris Martirano's niece, who is going through chemotherapy.

Chris Martirano's father-in-law, who is having open heart surgery.

Lynn Hayes, who broke a rib after falling on the ice.

The Davis family as they grieve the loss of Walter.

Harry, friend of Ralph Williams III, who had a quadruple bypass surgery and is having a difficult recovery.

Adrienne Kern's friend, Scott J., as he deals with health concerns for him and his family.

Bonnie Knapp's sister-in-law, Linda, who is experiencing kidney problems.

Terri Hudak's cousin, Julie Spence in Virginia, who is battling cancer.

Terri Hudak's aunt in California who has been diagnosed with breast cancer and had surgery in February.

Jeanne Johnson, friend of Laurel Par-

trick, who has been diagnosed with liver cancer.

Steve Bowers, who is now on dialysis and has been added to the transplant list.

Anne Meehan's nephew, Scott, whose brain tumor was found to be malignant, but treatable.

Roberta Buddle's niece, Cindy, who is undergoing chemotherapy.

Roberta Buddle's niece, Wendy (Cindy's sister), who had a double mastectomy.

Laurel Partrick's cousin, Cynthia, is facing her third recurrence of cancer.

Emily Nixon's cousin, who has been diagnosed with cancer.

Marlene Davis' son, who is undergoing chemotherapy.

Kay Jones' niece, Sherri, whose cancer has returned.

Jan and Gene Parsons' friend, Brad, whose cancer has returned.

Sue Sterling's cousin, Mary, who has lung cancer.



GERD (gastro esophageal reflex disease)

All hospice care is palliative; however, not all palliative care is hospice care.

I'm generally a pretty healthy person, a few aches and pains every once in a while, but nothing major. However for the last 6 months I have been having issues with GERD (gastro esophageal reflex disease) - what used to be known as "heartburn". This is not an unusual disease. 60% of the population experiences it sometime during

their lives, while 20 -30% have symptoms weekly. It occurs when the sphincter muscle in the lower esophagus malfunctions for one reason or another and the stomach acid then backs up into the throat.

My kind is a bit different. It's called silent reflux, meaning I don't get the burn, just the damage. I had problems with a sore throat, nothing really major. It did not progress to a cold, just kind of hung around for weeks. Being the good RN that I am, I put off a doctor's visit for as long as I could. Finally went to see an ENT and was given the news that there was a lot of damage and inflammation in my esophagus which could lead to much worse things.

Symptoms of GERD can include heartburn, chest pain, difficulty swallowing, dry cough, hoarseness, sore throat, or the feeling of a lump in the throat. Two or three of these together would make me think GERD. Untreated it can cause reflux esophagitis (ulcerations), strictures (narrowing of the esophagus), and other things like Barrett's esophagus. Heredity plays a large role in who will have the disease, probably the single most important factor. Other predisposing factors are being overweight or having been diagnosed with a hiatal hernia. If you have a few of the symptoms listed, a trip to your doctor is probably the best thing you can do for yourself.

These are some of the things you can do to help yourself if you happen to have symptoms. None of this however is a substitute for an MD visit.

- Most importantly, no smoking.
- Alcohol consumption should be kept to a minimum.
- No chocolate, caffeinated beverages (hot or cold), citrus fruits, spicy foods, or tomatoes.

The list of dietary restrictions was truly heartbreaking to me. I really don't think the doctor expects anyone to really follow these restrictions to the letter, but cutting them down in your diet has been proven to help the condition.

I asked what foods were good for GERD. Breakfast is your friend, I was told - pancakes, waffles, bagels and English Muffins are all good. Pasta without the tomato sauce is fine. Basically all the carbohydrates that you've been trying to cut out are now the best things to eat for this. Don't lay down within 3 hours of eating. Of course this does away with any bedtime snacks. Eating just before bed gets those digestive juices going, and by laying down the chances of backup into the esophagus are greater.

I've also been told that NSAIDs can be very damaging to your esophagus. The gastroenterologist suggests Tylenol for pain. The addition of a "proton pump inhibitor" daily may also ease symptoms. Omeprazole seems to be the one in favor right now and can be purchased over the counter, but not in prescription strength. These medications cut down on the acid production in your system and in turn cut down on the damage it can cause. Evening is the best time to take any medications you have for GERD. It is recommended that you sleep with the head of your bed elevated.

So if you have frequent heartburn, (more than 2x week) or any of the other symptoms, you might want to see your doctor.

Gail Abernethy RN