



New Milford United Methodist Church

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October 2014

Pastor's Message

First: putting GOD first in living and giving

In our October stewardship sermon series you'll be challenged to do hard things. You will be asked to:

- reject the “shiny gods” or idols that lead you away from God, keep you in debt, and render you ineffective in serving the Kingdom;
- see work as a gift, not a curse, and deploy it powerfully, not just to earn an income but to bring about God's desired outcome;
- fully release all your resources—time, money, and talents—into God's hands for his purposes.

It's a long journey from shiny gods to a life well lived and a world well served. It isn't a journey for the faint of heart, but it is a journey of hope. Let's get started.

October 5: Naming Our Idols

*The nations' idols are just silver and gold—
things made by human hands.*

They have mouths, but they can't speak.

They have eyes, but they can't see.

They have ears, but they can't listen.

No, there's no breath in their lungs!

*Let the people who made these idols
and all who trust in them*

become just like them! (Psalm 135:15-18)

Got idols? It's hard to believe there are perfectly sane people who dress up and chant out in obsessive worship toward inanimate objects. We are so beyond that. Right? Nope. We still seek life from non-lifegiving sources, don't we? Shiny things still dazzle and lure us in.

Let me give you my definition of an idol: anything, or anyone, that receives the primary focus of my energy or resources, which should first belong to God. The Bible calls this having a divided heart. Instead of making it our primary life passion to worship the Lord our God and to serve only him, we begin to separate our spiritual life from the practical aspects of life. We use our idols, instead of God, to provide identity or meaning in our lives. This is especially easy to do when those idols are positive things, or even people we love. The danger is that even our virtues can become vices—or idols—if they are not directed toward God.

October 12: Money, Work, and Debt

A good reputation is better than much wealth;

high esteem is better than silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1)

Exactly how much is enough? In a culture guided chiefly by shiny, life-promising distractions, “enough” seems elusive and keeps us indebted to that next source of satisfaction. What if the Giver of Life offered freedom from this downward spiral? Would you take it?

We are not designed to avoid work. Look at Genesis 2:15. We see that

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Pastor's Message *continued*

God created humans and placed them in the garden of Eden “to farm it and take care of it.” We have been created to till God’s soil, to work God’s creation. Work is something bigger than simply earning sustenance. Our work is not primarily for the income; we work for the outcome. We work to find significance through serving God’s creation.

October 19: Be Faithful, Save, and Give

“Collect treasures for yourselves in heaven, where moth and rust don’t eat them and where thieves don’t break in and steal them. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:20-21)

Earning money? Check. Saving money? Check. Giving money? Really? The call of God on our lives invades our finances, urging us toward healthy practices that extend our life influence beyond what we ever thought possible. “This most generous God is more than extravagant with you. He gives you something you can then give away . . .”

Why is giving so important? Giving is the nature of God. Our God is a God who gives. “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won’t perish but will have eternal life” (John 3:16 CEB). God expects his people to respond by giving. Generosity is evidence of the Spirit’s work in a person’s life. As I submit more and more of myself to Jesus, there will be less of me and more of him. His character will be demonstrated through me. As my heart beats more in unison with the heart of Jesus, then the purpose of Jesus will be released in my life. As a matter of fact, for those of us who follow Jesus, giving is a way of life. Notice in Matthew 6:2 that Jesus didn’t say “if you give.” He said “whenever you give.” Every time I give, it serves as intentional exercise toward spiritual health.

October 26: Heart Giving

“Instead, desire first and foremost God’s kingdom and God’s righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Matthew 6:33)

So, brothers and sisters, because of God’s mercies, I encourage you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice that is holy and pleasing to God. This is your appropriate priestly service. (Romans 12:1)

What we do with what we’ve got makes all the difference in the world. In fact, what we do with what we’ve got has the power to change the world. True worship calls us to offer our lives, gifts, and resources to God, for use beyond our wildest dreams.

God’s word doesn’t direct us as the church to build cathedrals but to bring our tithe to God’s storehouse as God’s mean of provision. We are the only hands that God has to rebuild the places long devastated. We are the only feet to carry the good news to the poor. We are the only bank account that God has to save people on the planet. We are it! That’s why the tithe matters. On Oct. 26 we will make our pledges to God and the mission and ministry of Christ’s church in the world.

Join us for the service of worship on the 26th; stay for the celebration afterwards of the good gifts we have pledged to God! We will be having a lasagna luncheon after the Open Door Service at 1:15 p.m. to celebrate our pledges and the success of our stewardship campaign. Please join us!

Conclusion: What’s Next?

The earth is the LORD’s and everything in it. (Psalm 24:1a)

I want to know at the end of my life that I did something more than eat the food, breathe the air, and have a pretty good life. I want to know that I left it all on the field, sowed all that I was given, and reaped a harvest that will continue to improve lives for the Kingdom long after I have physically left this place.

What about you? Join me. Let’s lose our lives, only to find them, in God’s love.

Peace and blessings,



Rev. Paul A. Fleck, Pastor



Food Barn Needs

Canned Fruit • Black Pepper • Jelly

Thanks to all who participated in National Hunger Action Month by participating in our food drives either at Big Lots or bringing items from home. Check out the progress of a building expansion to Our Daily Bread. Ralph Williams and Gene Parsons are working on this project in hopes of completion by November.



October Birthdays:

- 2 Don H.
- 3 Martha M.
- 5 Marilyn F., Nanci H.
- 6 Sarah T.
- 7 Martin M.
- 9 Ralph W. III
- 14 Art C.
- 16 Robert M.
- 18 Terri H.
- 21 Jean L.
- 22 Sue F.
- 30 Tyler P., Charlie C.
- 31 Christopher B.,
Nicholas B., Joy H.,
Mary M.

The youth group is back in action after our summer hiatus!! And let me tell you....I am excited! The first two weeks have been very fruitful. We have had awesome numbers, and the youth have come up with some awesome ideas for different discussions, activities, and mission ideas; everything from dissecting the Seven Deadly Sins to visiting hospital patients to a lock-in, to discussing stereotypes. We're going to be doing some amazing things this year!



Youth meetings are Sunday afternoons 2:30 to 4 p.m. in the conference room, found in the lower level of the Education Center. Please email me at the email address listed below to be included in my email list

I am interested in members of our church that participant in different missions, ministries, and activities of the church that would be interested in coming to a youth meeting one Sunday afternoon, to talk with the youth of our church about how they can get involved! Please email me at youthminister@newmilfordumc.og or give me a call at 203-770-2881.

Peace,
Brinna Kolitz, Youth Pastor

Attendance & Offerings

Aug. 31	67	\$2,988
Sept. 7	84	\$3,753
Sept. 14	98	\$4,081
Sept. 21	129	\$2,166
Monthly Giving		\$12,989
YTD Giving		\$127,107
YTD Giving		\$140,308
		<i>(Budgeted)</i>

Joys & Concerns

Our prayers are with . . .

The family of Bishop Martin McLee upon his passing.

Kay Jones, who had hand surgery.

Giovanni and his family, as his treatment for cancer continues.

Charlie Chapin, as he heals.

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

Lisa Best, who was recently hospitalized and released with diverticulitis and heart failure.

Mary Gunther, who had abdominal surgery, and is in Danbury Hospital

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

Steve and Adrienne Kern's friend, Steve, who has prostate 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.



Dementia, Alzheimer's and memory loss. If you're over 50, these words are probably more than a little scary. If you have a friend or relative, especially a parent, that has, or had, the disease you're fervently hoping that dementia is not hereditary or familial. If you are a caregiver dealing with this problem on a daily basis, you are probably reading everything you can to find something, anything, that will help. I know exactly how you feel. My dad had dementia. It took his mind, his body years later, and ultimately his life. For purposes of this article, I will use memory loss, dementia and Alzheimer's interchangeably.

The most difficult time for the afflicted person can be when memory loss is suspected, but medically unconfirmed. Everyone loses their keys and forgets why they went to a specific room, don't they? Is it happening too much? What if I have Alzheimer's? Have to hide it, can't let anyone know. What if they don't let me drive anymore? Heartbreaking and terrifying. Early in his disease, my dad told me he felt like the village idiot. This was excruciating for me, as my dad was one of the brightest men I'd ever known. His career was with the NYFD. He rose to the rank of Battalion Chief and was in charge of Community Relations for some years before he retired. His office was located in the World Trade Center and its bombing and collapse, where he lost so many firefighter brothers, was I believe, the precipitating event for his dementia. Certainly it changed him forever.

Memory loss, most commonly the loss of short term memory, is not a hallmark of normal ageing. Being forgetful at times most definitely is. A diagnosis of dementia is not made on memory loss alone. Other symptoms such as difficulty solving problems and completing tasks, personality changes, confusion as to time and place and difficulty holding conversations may be present. In dementia, there is damage to the nerve cells in the brain.

There are risk factors for dementia. Heredity and family history play a role in incidence, but having a relative with the disease does not mean that you are going to get it. Risk increases as we age. Diabetes and being obese can increase the chances of dementia. There are some things that you can do to protect yourself. Stop smoking. Do not use alcohol in excess. Keep your blood pressure, cholesterol, weight, and blood sugar in the normal range. Keep your mind busy. Playing games, doing puzzles, reading, being physically and socially active all can help. Take a walk in the sunshine. Some studies suggest that vitamin D levels are higher in people without dementia.

If you are concerned that you may have symptoms, talk with your family or friends and please see your doctor. You may then be referred to a neurologist. Cognitive and neurological testing or a brain scan may be ordered. Being diagnosed early can lead to treatment that can delay symptoms or have them decrease. Medications used for dementia include Cholinesterase Inhibitors like Aricept and Exelon, or Memantine (Namenda). Although there is no cure for dementia, having an early diagnosis can give you and your loved ones more time to plan for the future.

Be aware that there are other things that can cause symptoms that mimic dementia. Infections, metabolic illnesses, nutritional deficiencies, and reactions to medications can cause confusion and memory loss. These can all be treated and symptoms reversed.

If you are dealing with dementia in any way there are many excellent web sites for information. The Alzheimer's Association has a help line 24/7 at 800-272-3900 and a website at Alz.org. Mayoclinic.org also has great information. I used both of these sites in preparation of this article.

Gail Abernathy



Bowling Night

Family Bowling Night will be held on Saturday, Oct. 18 at 7:15 p.m. at Lore's Lanes (145D Danbury Road, behind Goodwill). Please RSVP to Linda Slater at lslater0256@yahoo.com or 860-354-6180 no later than Oct. 15 to ensure adequate lane space.

Thank you

I would like to thank my church family for all the cards, phone calls and prayers since my last hospital stay. Thank you for your thoughtfulness!

Lisa Best



NMUMC HELPING SANDY RECOVERY AGAIN

The devastation left by Super Storm Sandy which occurred over almost 2 years ago still exists. There are still people living in conditions beyond belief and many still not back in their homes. The Early Response Team (ERT) members of the New Milford United Methodist Church are working towards scheduling support efforts to Long Island to work on the needed projects. At this time we are looking to collect names of people that would be interested in joining as part of a team to work on a 1 or 2 day trip. To join the team, you DO NOT need to be a trained ERT to make the trip. There will be ERT trained members going to lead the efforts.

To sign up, please contact Steve Kolitz at sbkolitz@sbcglobal.net (preferred) or 860 355-8416, Tracie Nixon at tracienix@gmail.com (preferred) or 203-994-7763 or include your name on the clipboard on the desk outside the Church office labeled SANDY RELIEF. Once we confirm a group to go a date or dates will be confirmed. We are mainly looking for able-bodied folks interested in helping.

Thank you and I look forward to your joining in on a journey that will be rewarding for you as well as those we help.

NEW MILFORD HOMELESS SHELTER

Winter will be arriving soon and to assist those individuals who don't have a safe, warm, and dry place to spend the cold nights, the New Milford Homeless Shelter will once again be open. The shelter will open in Late November and continue to be open nightly through March. The shelter rotates monthly among four churches in town and is staffed entirely by volunteers. Overnight volunteers are needed to staff the shelter - both a male and female volunteer are needed nightly. NMUMC has had a number of dedicated volunteers involved since the Shelter's beginning. We would like to increase the number of volunteers who serve. If you would be interested in volunteering and/or would like more information on this volunteer opportunity, please contact Rita Iverson at 860-355-1252. Volunteer training will be scheduled soon.

Volunteers are scheduled throughout the season but for several years NMUMC has also tried to staff the shelter for a full week in January. If you are already a volunteer, we would like to have you sign up for an evening that week. You may contact the scheduling coordinator, Gerri Holland, at 860-354-5917 or contact Rita Iverson at (860) 355-1252. Thank you.



Newsletter deadline and production dates

The next newsletter deadline will be **Friday, Oct. 31 at noon**, to posted and be emailed electronically the following week.

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM CHURCH COUNCIL

The members of the Church Council have great faith and belief in the mission, vision and values of the NMUMC and are committed to assuring it continues to be a vital entity in our community. As a testament to our faith in this church, its members, programs and missions, the Leaders of your church have made personal commitments to make, maintain or increase their pledge commitments in the coming year. We hope that you will prayerfully consider doing the same as you reflect upon your giving commitment during our stewardship campaign.

Your Church Council members:

Stacey Didato, Heather Morin, Pete DelMastro, Dave Kullgren, Steve Kolitz, Valerie Kolitz, Traci Nixon, Emily Nixon, Helen Leary, Roberta Buddle, Pat Tripp, Larry Tripp, Ralph Williams, III, Priscilla Williams, Marlene Davis, Marilyn Fuller, Mary Prause, Bonnie Knapp, Martha McMahan, Carolyn Dion, and Paul Fleck

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