



Tidings

Monthly news for members & friends from Niantic Community Church

March 2010

FROM THE PASTOR AND TEACHER

Dear Friends,

As you may know, Angela and I are in the process of building a house. It's a fascinating, consuming, exciting process, and it's giving me a fresh understanding of Lent.

The house is going up in Great Barrington, MA, on land that we purchased a year before coming to Niantic. For many months, we dreamed about what we'd like to build. The dream began to take on shape as we worked on a design. When Angela's two-year search for work resulted in the job at Camphill Village, the dream became still more real (which is to say, the banks would consider us for a mortgage). Now the house is framed; the roof is on; the windows will probably go in this week. Then plumbers and electricians come in, giving the skeleton of the house all its inner workings, while the outside gets covered with siding. Soon enough will come wall-board and appliances and finishes.

Incidentally, I should make it clear that we're not moving anywhere! Since Angela's work is located near the Hudson Valley our house, which we originally planned for vacations and retirement, will be her weekday residence. But Niantic is home. I continue to be enormously grateful for the calling to be pastor and teacher in this place. I continue to be deeply fulfilled by our shared ministry. We continue to delight in our deepening relationships. We continue to call the parsonage on Dodge Pond, "home."

So what's the "fresh understanding of Lent"? It's simply that a couple of days ago at home, near the kitchen window that's been leaking (until our faithful Maintenance ministers took care of it), we noticed a couple of ants. Not a big problem, just a minor nuisance. A minor nuisance the way a tiny pebble in your shoe is a nuisance: easily remedied, but an an-

noying interruption. As I removed the ants and mused about what part of our home they were claiming for their home, I thought about the brand new house underway — blissfully free of ants, at least for the time being.

The desire to be free of nuisances, and the dream of having a simpler, cleaner, neater existence, was right in front of me. Who wouldn't wish for that? But Lent reminds me that faith is about negotiating life with ants, not about a nuisance-free existence.

Lent is for recognizing that annoyances are not only an inevitable part of life, they open me up to fresh awareness of the presence of the Holy One. A psalm that we read at this time of year says, "You will not fear the terror of the night, or the arrow that flies by day, or the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or the destruction that wastes at noonday" (Ps 91:5-6). Lent is for remembering that we won't ever be free of terrors, or arrows, or pestilence, or destruction, or disappointing political shenanigans, or unjust immigration policies, or illness, or hurt, or fear — or ants. Instead of longing for a house or a life that is completely free of nuisance and pain, Lent helps us look at all the mess of life and then remember that the reality of God is infinitely more powerful and more vast and more gracious.

Before long the house will be finished — one dream come true — and we'll be eager to show it off to you.

Of course there will be ants there, right where we wish they weren't. And they'll be giving us a new opportunity to remember that God shows up mostly where life is messy, from ants to injustice, with a redeeming dream of joy and abundance and grace.

Pastor John

Worship in February

Sundays at 9 & 11:15am

March 7th: Third Sunday in Lent

Texts: Isaiah 55:1-9; Psalm 63:1-8; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9

Pastor John A. Nelson, preaching: "You Can Party Now"

March 14th: Fourth Sunday in Lent

Text: Matthew 16:24-26

Youth Sunday: Worship designed and led by the church's youth

March 21st: Fifth Sunday in Lent

Texts: Isaiah 43:16-21; Psalm 126; Philippians 3:4b-14; John 12:1-8

Pastor John A. Nelson, preaching: "Manifesto: Open Wide"

March 28th: Palm / Passion Sunday

Liturgy of the Palms: Luke 19:28-40; Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

Liturgy of the Passion: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 22:14-23:56

From celebration to passion: a dramatic re-telling of the story of Jesus' last week in Jerusalem.

Sundays at 5:00pm

**Seashore Praise
Contemporary Worship
All ages welcome**

**HOSANNA
IN THE HIGHEST!**



M A R K 11 : 10

Sunday School for Adults

Between Sunday morning services

March 7th

- "Countering Pharaoh's Production-Consumption Society Today"
- Seasons of the Spirit Bible Study

March 14th

- "Countering Pharaoh's Production-Consumption Society Today"
- Seasons of the Spirit Bible Study

March 21st

- "Countering Pharaoh's Production-Consumption Society Today"
- Seasons of the Spirit Bible Study
- Sermon Talkback

March 28th

- Palm / Passion Sunday: No classes, but be sure to enjoy our annual Waffle Breakfast between services!

"Seasons of the Spirit" Bible Study

"Seasons of the Spirit" will help to deepen our engagement with the Word of God that we receive in worship. If you happen to have children in Sunday School, their curriculum follows the same scripture readings, giving you an opportunity to discuss the Bible as a family.

"Countering Pharaoh's Production-Consumption Society Today"

"Countering Pharaoh" is a four week study ideal for the Lenten season. Featuring the preeminent Bible scholar Walter Brueggemann, the class encourages us to take a deeper look at the slavery of consumerism and reflect on the true meaning of covenant. *Warning: this program could help restore the true meaning of covenant for each of us!*

Sermon Talkbacks

Each month we offer one "sermon talkback": an opportunity to discuss the sermon and God's Word for the day, to voice our agreement or disagreement, and to talk together about how the preached word has meaning in our lives outside of worship.



Patty Chaffee
Community Minister

“Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart,” writes William Wordsworth. And so it is on the third Thursday of each month when a group of writers called “Spirited Pens,” come together at NCC to share their craft, to guide each other and to be inspired to continue their process. From the office of Parish Life Ministries comes a vast assortment of opportunities to explore the deepest workings of our soul and the complimentary roles that creativity and spirituality play within our lives.

One week we paint, the next we write. We explore The Awakened Heart and introduce Kundalini yoga to those looking to integrate movement and meditation into their lives. On first Fridays we celebrate prayer in a special way with a Taize’ service filled with candlelight, the music of chant, and the song of silence. Soup and Soul is in full swing, expressing yet another invitation for folks to join in the journey with a warm meal and warm discussion about the writings of Julian of Norwich. Through the many gifts offered by members and friends of NCC we are blessed with the opportunity to experience much.

During our Peace Labyrinth Walk in February, a visitor shared how much she enjoys the varied programs offered at NCC. The ways we explore our faith journey, be it through writing, painting, book discussion, yoga or any number of other programs offered here, are beautiful expressions of our ministry as we reach out to people to connect with them in ways that speak to them in a special way.

Theologian David Steindl-Rast wrote, “Wherever we may come alive, that is the area in which we are spiritual.” Where do you come alive?



Anyone interested in coordinating coffee hour hosting is invited to call the Parish Life Ministry office. Free coffee and donut will be awarded with this new position. 860-739-6208.

CALLING ALL COOKS....Parish Life is putting together a cookbook and we need your help. A small group is forming to spearhead this project so if you would like to get involved, please let us know....there are many ways to help including making phone calls, coordination and computer work. Call Patty Chaffee (860) 739-6208 or email Patty@NianticCommunityChurch.org



Children’s Center

The Niantic Community Church Children's Center is currently accepting enrollments for all age groups. We serve children 6 weeks to 5 years in our Infant, Waddler, Toddler and Preschool classrooms. Six of our full time staff recently received their CDAs and the remaining two are currently in the process. We are also in the process of applying for NAEYC (The National Association of Education for Young Children) Accreditation. We are fully licensed by the State of CT. DPH. For an appointment for a tour or a brochure please call Kathy at (860)739-0877. We look forward to serving your childcare needs.

Join us for fellowship, relaxation, and a great time!

Sign up now for the
NCC Women's Retreat
April 23 - 25, 2010
Camp Wightman
Rev. Pat Liberty. leader

\$115 for the weekend

See Carol Donovan, Diane Blair or Ocean Pellet

Middle School Fellowship Schedule

High School Fellowship Schedule

March 7 from 12:30pm-2pm

YouthWorship Practice

Youth Sunday Practice and Decorating with
High School Students

*** YOUTH SUNDAY IS MARCH 14th**

**You will also receive your Rock-aThon Pledge
Forms to start collections**

March 14 from 8:30am-12:15pm

Youth Sunday

Meet to prep for leading worship at both services.

March 21 from 12:30pm-2:00pm

Egg Decorating!

Egg Decorating and Scheduling/prepping for Rock-a-
Thon. Please bring one dozen hard boiled eggs to
decorate.

March 28 from 6:30am-6:30pm

Waffle Breakfast and Rock-a-Thon

Bring whatever you will need for the day (minus
food) as this will be a long day of rocking and serving
waffles! Bring all of your Rock-a-Thon Donations.

March 7th

Sunday School

10:15am-11am

YOUTH SUNDAY

Planning Meeting

12:30pm-2pm

Shelter Night

6:00pm-8:00pm

Bring a dessert

March 14th

YOUTH SUNDAY

8:30am-12:15pm

Sunday School

10:15am-11am

March 21st

Sunday School

10:15am-11am

UNKNOWN but AWESOME Activity

6pm-8pm

March 28th

Sunday School

10:15am-11am

Music & Worship Arts

Mary Mirecki

A digital piano is making it's way to our sanctuary! Many
thanks to the anonymous donor for this gift that will always
be in tune. The addition of this instrument will allow us
to move one of our existing pianos to our dining hall for both
planned and impromptu music-making.

Save the Date: April 18 An afternoon of fine music from the
joint choirs of NCC and St John's Episcopal - right here in our
own sanctuary. Watch for details.



Outreach Update

Sandy Spencer

The Anthropologist, Margaret Mead once said, "A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Winston Churchill once said, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

One call for help for the people of Haiti resulted in approximately \$6,000.00 collected for Earthquake relief for that devastated country. Your Outreach dollars also support scholarships for students in Haiti. Recent Grads of this program were attending the University in Port-u-Prince and all survived except for one bright student whose body was not recovered and presumed to be among the victims of the Earthquake.

Mission Moments – We are looking for speakers to present a 2-3 minute speech at upcoming Sunday services regarding their personal journey with mission work and those organizations that they serve. This is more to highlight how doing God's work in the world relates to you as a Christian and in living the gospel than spending the time promoting the actual organization. Please contact John Nelson if you are interested in participating as a Mission Moment speaker in 2010.

At the Annual Meeting in January you had requested details as to what your Outreach dollars would be spent on this year. Bear in mind the numbers below are only a small portion of the actual outreach. It doesn't include gifts in kind, staff time, or use of our facilities to support outreach missions. It also doesn't include the more than \$36,000 that is split to our UCC/UMC denominational support. A large portion of these funds are also used for our Denominational outreach ministries.

The budget below reflects some organizations that we have been supporting for many years and some that are fairly recent additions to our missions such as the Becky Crosby Haitian Scholarship Fund and support for the Honduras missions where both our Church and the one in Gales Ferry have completed recent mission trips over the last two years.

If you have any questions regarding the outreach budget or new missions you would like to be brought before the committee, please feel free to contact me.

Cell Phone: (860) 460-4601 or E-mail:
ctbeachgirl@yahoo.com

<u>DISBURSEMENT</u>	
Covenants:	
Bread for the World	\$100
Habitat for Humanity of S.E. CT	\$1,000
L & M Chaplancy	\$100
NCC Children's Center	\$25,200
Mission Priorities:	
Karen Emergency Relief Fund	\$0
Martin House	\$500
United Action of SECT	\$1,000
Hunger Programs:	
New London Food Coalition	\$25
New London Soup Kitchen	\$1,000
Supplies for Serving Meals	\$500
First Church Breakfast Program	\$500
Homeless Hospitality (St .James Monthly Meal)	\$700
Gemma Moran Food Bank	\$0
Prison Ministries:	
Christmas Toy Project	\$1,000
Fellowship House	\$500
Katy Blair House	\$500
Emergency Assistance (Pastor's Fund)	\$2,000
Local Area Needs:	\$2,625
Care and Share	\$500
Supportive Housing (Homeless Hospitality)	\$1,000
Seabird Enterprises	\$500
Women's Center	\$500
Thames River Family Program	\$500
Interfaith Refuge Committee	\$0
Alliance For Living	\$500
MLK Scholarship	\$500
Youth Missions /NCC Youth	\$500
Overseas Schools and Missions:	
Honduras (St. Luke's Mission -Gales Ferry)	\$500
SERRV (A Greater Gift)	\$500
CROSBY - Haitian Scholarship Foundation	\$550
Promotion of Outreach Missions	\$0
Total Outreach	\$43,300

Spirited Pens

- a writer's group



Meeting the third Thursday of each month from 12:00-2:00 p.m. Bring a bag lunch and writing to share, or arrive at 11:30 and respond to a writing prompt. All genres and levels of ability are welcome. Please call Parish Life Ministry for more information.

Facilitated by Community Minister, Patty Chaffee.

(860)739-6208

Kundalini Yoga Class
Thursdays, starting Feb. 25th
5:15- 6:30pm
Multi-Purpose Room at NCC



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: So, what *is* Kundalini Yoga anyway?

A: In short, Kundalini Yoga is the yoga of awareness. It includes breath, physical exercises, meditation, relaxation, and some chanting.

Q: I'm not flexible AT ALL, can I still do yoga?

A: Kundalini yoga is non-competitive. In fact, most exercises are done with the eyes closed, so you can focus on your Self and not others around you. You should do what your body feels comfortable doing. During physical exercises, the Kundalini Yoga Teacher will provide options for modifications.

Q: Is there a fee?

A: There will be a donation box. Suggested donation is \$10.

Q: What should I bring?

A: Comfortable clothes, a yoga mat (if you have one, I have a few available), and a blanket for relaxation. You may also want a firm pillow to sit on.

For more information please contact:
Patty Chaffee at (860) 739-6208 or
Sukh Aman Kaur, 860-287-1824,
sukhamankaur@aol.com

Historical Trivia

In January a gentleman, who collects old documents, shared with me an item he had purchased in California. The item concerned the 2nd Society of Lyme and was written in 1789. At that time our church was struggling to stay alive. We had not had a settled minister since 1761. Our membership had declined as many members began attending the Baptist Church.

I think you will enjoy reading the authors thoughts from 200 years ago.

THE LAST WILL & TESTAMENT OF THE 2ND SOCIETY OF LYME SURNAMED NIANTIC

In the name of Wonder, Amen. I, old Niantick considering ye uncertainty of life & having groaned these 40 years in great distress in my Body Politic with various theological distempers with mortal symptoms which impress on my mind the thought of speedy annihilation, therefore, I Will myself to Chaos, King of Uproar & Lethe of Oblivion, as touching those wondrous faculties I have been possessed of, dispose of them as follows:

IMPRIMIS: I give and bequeath to my darling Daughter Chesterfield all my Ignorance with 1/4 of my Folly & 1/8 part of my Religion with 1/4 of my Enthusiastic & Fanatic Possessions with the full one half of my Knavery with all my Inhumanity which may be seen at my Burying Yard. Then I give & bequeath unto my legal Mother the 1ST Society of Lyme, 1/2 of my folly & 1/2 of my Religion with 1/2 my enthusiasm & fanaticism & 1/4 of my Knavery with 1/2 my ancient quarrel about the settling a Minister with 1/2 my Bigotry & Superstition which my loving Mother well deserves. Also I give my said Mother all & singular my Distempers not particularly bequeathed in this my Will. Then I give my loving Sister, ye No. Quarter 1/4 of my folly & 3/8 of my Religion 1/4 of my enthusiasm & fanaticism & 1/4 of my Knavery & the other Moiety of my Ministerial Quarrel & 1/2 my Bigoted & Superstitious complaint with all my feminine preachings & indecent noise in Religious Assemblies. Lastly, my Bride poverty arrogance & illiberality, I give to be divided between my said Relatives allowing my 1/2 Sister Hadlyme 1/8 part, hereby ratifying pronouncing & declaring this to be my Last Will & Testament this Seventeenth of Oct., 1787

Niantic (seal)

In Presence Of: Grange
Oswegotche
Spithead



From the Parish Nurse
Marie LaTourette

SERAC (Southeastern Regional Action Council) will be providing a between service forum on **Youth Issues and Teenage Gambling** on March 14th approximately 10:15- 11:00 A.M. Rayallen Bergman will be presenting. Please plan to attend as a family and bring your questions.

Childhood Vaccinations - there is a myth out there that we should not be immunizing our children because the diseases do not exist anymore. There has been a recent outbreak of Varicella (chicken pox) in New London. This means your child is out of school for 7-10 days with a mild case and miserable. Traditional vaccine schedules are much safer than alternative ones. Choosing to not vaccinate on schedule affects him and his friends. Measles is alive and well in this county so we need to have a healthy respect for that and don't postpone vaccination.

Calorie Guidelines

<150 lbs eat about 1,050 calories a day
150-300 lbs calculate your present weight X 7 = your daily calorie needs
>300 lbs - 2,100 calories a day.

Happy St. Patrick's Day
Marie



Congratulations to Karen Peacock & Carol June for assuming the shared Presidency of WCSA !!!

Another in a series of Occasional Letters to the Churches of the New London Association, United Church of Christ

“The Church exists by mission as fire exists by burning.” (Emil Brunner)

In recent weeks we have been vividly reminded of the need to help our brothers and sisters—not only locally, but around the world. The earthquake in Haiti prompted us, as individuals and as members of local churches, to help in almost unprecedented ways.

Now, I can't fly a plane; I can't speak Creole. There's no way I would know local networks, or even local roads. Much as I wanted to help in a personal way, I would have been more of a hindrance than a help had I even managed to get to the island. Our Congregational ancestors understood their limitations. They could bring food for a family in a time of illness, or provide shelter for someone whose home had burned down. But as they became aware of needs further afield, they knew they had to band together to provide any kind of effective help. It's the same in our global village of today. As individuals and as members of local churches, we are very good at local missions. But we need to band together to provide assistance in natural or manmade disasters across the globe.

The media has reminded us to be sure we are giving our dollars to the most effective organizations. Unfortunately, not many of us understand how our mission dollars work. Susan Sanders, Team Leader for Global Sharing of Resources in our UCC Wider Church Ministries, came to Mystic last month to share about the programs and the work we are doing together. She assured us that 100% of funds donated to a specific cause go directly there, since administrative costs are already covered by our UCC regular support. Our funds also go to work with local, faith-based groups; nothing is ever given to governments. In the UCC we hold special offerings during each year, providing each of us opportunities to choose where we want to donate. One Great Hour of Sharing is one of these offerings, usually held in the month of March. We are joined in this offering by eight other denominations, creating a network for response to disasters, to refugee needs, and to work

long-term on health care, education and agriculture development.

Through OGHS we also participate in Church World Service. You may already be familiar with CWS because of local involvement in CROP walks, Blanket or Tool Sundays, or hygiene, school, baby or cleanup kits. CWS, founded in 1946 and supported by Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican denominations, works with local interfaith groups for immediate disaster response. But they are also committed to stay long after the headlines fade, supporting local initiatives and helping communities re-develop. Through UCC support, we also work with ACT International (Action by Churches Together.) This is a global alliance, originally founded by the World Council of Churches and Lutheran World Federation. In recent years they have been active responding to the genocide in Rwanda, as well as natural disasters around the world. Through ACT we are able, not only to provide immediate help in times of crisis, but to recognize and affirm the gifts those communities share with us—survival skills, wisdom, resilience. If you or your church is interested in “hands-on” opportunities, there are many foreign and domestic opportunities listed on the UCC website. Meanwhile, be assured that your assistance is well-used through our global, interfaith connections. I thank God for those who are able to do what I cannot!

Blessings,
*Rev. Dr. Mobby Larson, “Ambassador” to and
among the Churches of the New London Association*





Taize

Prayer Service

Niantic Community Church
1st Friday of each month
7:00-7:30 PM
in the Fellowship Room
(no Taize on Good Friday April 2)

What is Taize ?

Taize is a meditative prayer service that incorporates simple repetitive songs, chants, scripture reading, and periods of group silence in a setting of peace and soft light that fosters communion with God. Through Taize, participants can worship in a community setting, yet remain open to the voice of God and discover the prayer within themselves.

Taize Prayer is a form of prayer meant to foster reconciliation and peace among all people. Traditionally, Christians gather in the presence of Christ, but everyone is welcome at Taize meditative common prayer. We sing uncomplicated repetitive songs, uncluttered by too many words, allowing the mystery of God to become tangible through the beauty of simplicity.

This is a time for you “just to be” in the presence of God with others, in an atmosphere of love and peace....a perfect place to invite someone you love, or someone seeking a spiritual connection, or someone in need of hope and healing.

Right at the depth of the human condition, lies the longing for a presence, the silent desire for a communion. Let us never forget that this simple desire for God is already the beginning of faith. Brother Roger, founder, (Taize, France 1940s)

For questions or weather concerns contact: Sue Robinson
860-444-6503 restingwings@sbcglobal.net

To learn about the history of Taize Prayer or about the worldwide Taize Community: <http://www.taize.fr/en>

Niantic Community Church

170 Pennsylvania Avenue
Niantic, CT 06357

(860) 739-6208

NianticCommChurch@sbcglobal.net

www.NianticCommunityChurch.org



Sunday Morning Schedule

8:45AM Nursery care begins

9:00AM Worship service I
(Pre-K to 4th graders may leave after ~20 minutes for “Divine Activity Time”)

10 – 11AM “Between Hour” Café

10:15AM Sunday school for all ages

11:15AM Worship service II
(Pre-K to 4th graders may leave after ~20 minutes for “Divine Activity Time”)

12:30PM Nursery care ends

Pastor & Teacher: John A. Nelson
Community Minister: Patty Chaffee
Dir. of Religious Education and Youth Ministries:
Jess Bunger
Church Secretary: Judy Snitkin
Parish Nurse: Marie LaTourette
Children’s Center Director: Kathleen Tiller

Tidings Volunteers:
Rachel Ayer, Clara Ball, Jan Brentlinger,
Jennifer Datum, Jeanne McNeil, Eleanor Shoop,
Jean Stamm, LouAnn Wilson

Deadline for the April edition of Tidings is March 15th. Please e-mail submissions to Tidings@TheDatums.com