



Niantic Community Church

Tidings

April 2024

Monthly news for members & friends
from Niantic Community Church

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GREETINGS FROM NCC!

We are an Open, Affirming, Reconciling Congregation.

A Federated Church of the United Church of Christ and
the United Methodist Church.

No matter who you are, and where you are on your life's
journey, you are welcome here!



A Message from Rev. Erica Avena

Dear Niantic Community Church friends and members:

This is the Easter season and the season of mysterious resurrection. Jesus encountered many people in his resurrected form and had a profound effect on them. They report that he still had his wounds, yet he walked and moved among them, even eating with them. The gospels record that Thomas needed to see Jesus' hands and feet with his own eyes, to touch the wound in Jesus' side with his own hand -- to believe it. And he did. There's a good story there about faith, but there is also a story about Jesus' identity after his resurrection. He remained wounded.



Ascension, Father George Saget, Senegal 1963 Note Jesus' pierced feet, ascending

(continued)

Rev. Erica Avena April Message, cont.

I have learned a lot about “the disabled God” from members of my churches who have told me about their own experiences with disabilities. About all of us are disabled at least temporarily during our lives – minor injuries, pregnancies, recovery from illnesses, accidents, as well as longer term and chronic conditions – mean we need to make appropriate accommodations. And there are just as many hidden disabilities as there are visible ones.

While the story of Jesus’ resurrection is surely an account of his strength, it is also an account of what he did after being wounded. Jesus walked the road to Emmaus on feet which had been pierced in crucifixion. All of what he did in resurrection would have been made harder for him by the presence of his wounds. Taking the disabled Jesus seriously means understanding that in his disabled body, Jesus was able to continue his ministry, and to reveal God’s love. The disabled Jesus appeared to the first disciples, walking with them on the road, the disabled Jesus cooked breakfast for them on the beach. His wounds witnessing to the fullness of his life and identity.

Maybe it is time to re-think who embodies the spirit of the risen Lord. Maybe we do not need to hold ourselves to impossible standards of perfection, rather maybe it is exactly the lives that we have led which prepare us to share the good news authentically.

It is the season of mysterious resurrection. Halleluiah, Christ is risen!

Rev Erica

Reading this month: poet Christian Wiman’s 2023 book: *Zero at the Bone: Fifty Entries Against Despair*; and *Disability and the Way of Jesus: Holistic Healing in the Gospels and the Church* by Bethany McKinney Fox

SPRING CLEAN UP

SATURDAY APRIL 27 9AM-NOON

OR ON A DATE/TIME OF YOUR CHOOSING

BRING
YOUR
OWN
RAKE +
GLOVES

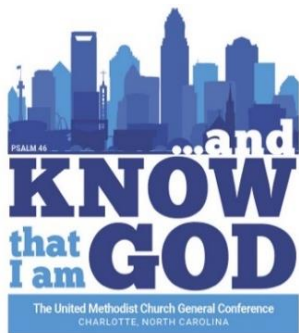


CONTACT
ELLEN
ASHBURN

Contact Ellen Ashburn if you’d like to help with a Spring Clean Up at the Old Stone Church Burial Ground, at the corner of Society and River Road. You can arrange a time according to your own schedule, or come out on Saturday, April 27, 9am – Noon. Bring your own rake and work gloves. Leaf bags will be provided. Contact:

info@nianticcommunitychurch.org

April Message from Rev. Kaleigh Rasmussen



In 2019, I was elected by the Greater New Jersey Conference to serve as a delegate to the 2020 United Methodist General Conference, which is the highest legislative body of the United Methodist Church. This body meets every 4 years and clergy and lay delegates are elected from their respective annual conferences (NCC is part of the New England Annual Conference). In 2020, in case you forgot, there was a global pandemic which caused the General Conference to be postponed to 2021..and then again to 2022...and then finally the global meeting is happening this year from April 22-May 4 in

Charlotte, North Carolina with 860 delegates from around the world, and I am honored to be one of them.

[THIS \(bit.ly/UMCGCVideo\)](https://bit.ly/UMCGCVideo) is a great video highlighting what the General Conference is and does, but I'll also explain here. The UMC General Conference is the body that sets official policies for the church and the body that speaks as the entire denomination. It is the body that makes changes to our Book of Discipline and Book of Resolutions. We will spend the greater part of the first week going through over 1,000 pieces of legislation in our assigned legislative committees, and then the second week in a larger plenary session where most of the voting will happen. Legislation is submitted by United Methodists worldwide and by various boards and agencies. A fun fact – any member of the United Methodist Church can submit legislation to change the Book of Discipline! We will also spend time in worship, eating meals together, and hearing reports, and I'm told there might be some fun as well. They expect nearly 10,000 United Methodists to descend on Charlotte for this conference.

There are three major legislative priorities coming to the floor at General Conference this year, and we call them the three R's: Regionalization, Revision, and Removal.

1. **Adopt worldwide regionalization** -- This plan restructures the UMC based on equity and respect for missional context, creating regional conferences and is a **critical** first step toward decolonizing both polity and relationships. It keeps us connected as a global church and offers autonomy in regional decision-making as well as allowing future
2. **Adopt revised Social Principles** – The Social Principles are a prayerful and thoughtful effort on the part of the General Conference to speak to the human issues in the contemporary world. The proposed revisions are more succinct, more theologically grounded, better reflect the nature of the global Church. They include removing “The practice of homosexuality is incompatibility with Christian teaching” and changing the definition of marriage from “one man and one woman” to “two people”
3. **Remove anti-LGBTQ+ language and discrimination** – The Goal is to leave the 2024 Book of Discipline void of any language that targets LGBTQ+ persons. This goal honors regionalization and create a blank slate for a new structure and future regional conferences.

(continued)

April Message from Rev. Kaleigh Rasmussen (cont.)

I am also excited and honored to be a member of the steering committee for the Queer Delegate Caucus, which you can find more about here: www.qdcumc.org but is a group of over 50 out LGBTQIA+ delegates who are an official caucus for the first time in UMC history. You can read more about us and our dreams for the church at the website above.

If you want to learn more about the UMC General Conference, I would love to meet with you and share more. To learn more and find out what's happening, you can visit www.umcgc.org or follow the proceedings at www.umnews.org. Please be in prayer for all of the delegates in the weeks leading up to General Conference as well as when we are there at the end of April. I can't wait to share more with you when I return.

With Love,

Pastor Kaleigh

Are you interested in learning more about our church and what it means to become a member?



On Sunday, April 21, We will offer a class for anyone who is interested in learning more about becoming a member of the Niantic Community Church.

Led by Pastors Erica and Kaleigh, with help from NCC lay leaders, we will introduce our core values and provide a time to get to know many of the lay leaders who make things happen here.

We will meet after worship on April 21 from 10:15am - 1:00pm
Lunch and childcare will be provided.

There will be an opportunity to join the church on April 28.

Please RSVP with Theresa in the office at: info@nianticcommunitychurch.org

“Working from within” is a series in Tidings to highlight faithful church members who provide sustained contributions to the missions of the Church without fanfare.

Liza Dalrymple



This month, we feature Liza Dalrymple, shown arm-in-arm with Judy Snitkin and Lee Wilkerson (more about them another day!) Liza and family have been in Niantic and widely connected to the church since 1966. Father – past president of NCC; niece and nephew – baptized here; sister was married at NCC, and Liza’s Mom, (who was involved with the nursery and 3rd graders, along with Edna Gilstad) funeral took place at NCC.

Liza worked many years for SNET, not in the office, but up on the telephone poles! When posted in Middletown, she was the one woman among 75 male outside workers. She also worked as a cable splicer, including time as a supervisor. In Willimantic, she was in engineering as the “Loop Electronics Coordinator and Schedule Administrator for the East” (whew).



Liza has contributed to nearly every part of Maintenance at NCC. She has painted pretty much anywhere you look, inside and outside our church. Additionally, she’s been seen up on the roof more than once!

She loves sports, including basketball, snowboarding, tap-dancing, rowing, and likes bike-tour vacations. She has coached rowing , sculling and sweep (each rower has one oar held with both hands) at all levels – youth, high school, college and more.

Fun Fact: at least 12 members of Liza’s family attend each Summer Supper. Liza, with her great sense of humor and willingness to pitch in, is a valuable member of our NCC family.

Submitted by Nancy Hunt



A Sacred Place is offering a wonderful volunteer opportunity. We truly make a difference in the lives of the women at York and their children by providing a way through a **Storybook Project** and a **Caregiver and Me** gathering for parent and child to stay connected. [We need your assistance](#) to make the greatest impact for these families.

Please help by volunteering your time so that this ministry continues to be a blessing and success! And you'll have the opportunity and pleasure of volunteering with Juanita Durham, and Verna Swann! Please contact either of us for questions and details, or the church office.

Pastor Kaleigh announced this reinvigorated partnership with A Sacred Place in our January Tidings, here is an excerpt:

Exciting NEW Partnership with A Sacred Place

NCC is excited to share the great news that in partnership with A Sacred Place, we have received a \$2,500 grant from the New England United Methodist Conference's Board of Church and Society to reenergize and support the Storybook Project at York Correctional Institution (CI) right here in Niantic!

A Sacred Place is a local nonprofit supported by many of our congregation members, that provides programs to incarcerated women at York CI. Due to the pandemic, many of those programs were no longer active, but in the last few months the prison has re-opened to volunteers and A Sacred Place's programs are once again kicking off.

Update: Pastor Kaleigh has been teaching the "Houses of Healing" program weekly at the prison since January (which has just concluded). This program helps inmates to identify, express and manage their feelings. It fosters self-understanding, emotional and spiritual growth along with encouraging responsibility and accountability toward one's self and others.

We are so excited about this reimagined and reenergized partnership and look forward to having church members join in the partnership!

Faith Formation for Children & Youth

Palm Sunday at Niantic Community Church March 24, 2024



STOCK SALE

APRIL 28 & MAY 5
COFFEE HOUR

In support of
NCC Youth Mission Trip
Woonsocket, R.I.
July 14 - 20, 2024
The Stock dinner
will be held in August.



Our Youth group will hold a Stock Sale (donation) to support the Youth Mission Trip on Sundays **April 28 & May 5** – during coffee hour. The Youth Mission Trip to Woonsocket, R.I. will take place July 14-20. Thank you for your support in NCC Youth helping and impacting the lives of those in need.



**Special Offering #2: Homelessness and Hunger
CALENDAR**

First, a huge "THANK YOU!" to all who gave so generously to the Special Offering #1: The Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship Fund.

We were able to raise enough in donations to reach our very ambitious goals! I will be able to give more exact numbers toward the end of the month at the Quarterly Meeting.

Faith in Action (formerly Outreach) now turns its attention to the Niantic Community Church's second Special Offering on Homelessness and Hunger. This offering will last three Sundays in April, and will focus on three ministries we have with New London Homeless Hospitality Center (NLHHC), the Anne Davis Meal Ministry (DINE), and Care & Share of East Lyme. The Faith In Action leaders heading up these efforts are Sandy Tarallo, Donna Hathaway, and Sharon Kittel. These amazing women give many many hours to these causes and we are lucky to have them as representatives of NCC.

April 14: Moment for Mission during Worship by the Executive Director of NLHHC, Rev. Cathy Zall. During the Coffee Hour, we will have a table to help sign people up to walk in or sponsor NCC in the Walk to End Homelessness, and to make overall donations for the Special Offering. These donations will be split evenly between the three ministries mentioned in the above paragraph.

April 21: We will simply have a table at Coffee Hour, though the focus will be Care & Share of East Lyme. Please stop by to pick up a flyer, to ask questions, and if you wish, make a donation for the Special Offering.

April 28: We will have a table at Coffee Hour with the focus on DINE. DINE needs your attention as a volunteer for the community meals they serve on the 4th Saturday of every month. We will also be accepting donations for the last time for the Special Offering at this time. This will have to be short due the quarterly meeting happening at 10:30, so please make your time count.

Following the quarterly meeting, those who have signed up for the Walk to End Homelessness will be heading over to New London at noon.

To get an early jump on the Walk to End Homelessness, please refer to the article in this week's and next week's Wednesday Email Note.



A New and Different Kind of Special Offering for April

On December 20, 2023, the Hartford Courant wrote that “...From city streets to the rural woods, new data from the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness revealed that more than 1,000 people are currently living without shelter in the state — a level that they say is the highest ever recorded.”

According to the Low Income Housing Coalition, “...In the Norwich-New London metropolitan area, the Fair Market Rent for a two-bedroom apartment is \$1,145. In order to afford this rate, a household must earn \$22.02 an hour; a minimum-wage earner would have to work 107 hours per week.”

Fox 61 reported on January 11, 2023 that “In New London County, 12.2% of families face food insecurity,” and Feeding America reported that in New London county in 2021 there were 29,440 people who were food insecure, and that it would cost an estimated \$21 million dollars to make up the food budget shortfall.

So what can the Niantic Community Church do for our community? For three Sundays in April (4/14, 4/21 & 4/28), NCC pays special attention to the issues of Homelessness and Hunger with our 2nd Special Offering. This offering is about marching, collecting groceries, sponsoring marchers or donating, and as many have already begun doing in our congregation, we can volunteer our time:

1. **We turn to DINE!** which you have heard about already through the Youth’s Club 26 pantry awareness, and by the tireless NCC volunteers who monthly buy and prepare meals for the Hungry in New London in the Anne Davis Meal Ministry.
2. **We turn to the Care & Share of East Lyme**, whose volunteers take in locally collected food and make sure it is distributed to those most in need in our area.
3. **And we turn to NLHHC (New London Homeless Hospitality Center)** who provide a safe place out of the weather for those who have no where to call home. They are holding the March to End Homelessness on 4/28. beginning April 14th at Coffee Hour, you can sign up to walk in or sponsor our marchers.

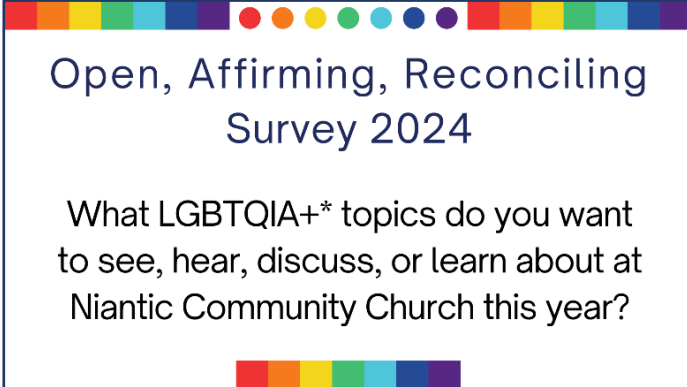


The Faith In Action Bulletin Board in the Dining Hall downstairs Check It Out!

Submitted by Peter Heaney, Faith in Action chairperson

**Open, Affirming, Reconciling
Survey 2024**

What LGBTQIA+* topics do you want to see, hear, discuss, or learn about at Niantic Community Church this year?




The O.A.R Ministry Team would like to find out what YOU may be interested in for LGBTQIA+ programs at Niantic Community Church this year. Please see the Wednesday Note or the office for a printed survey, to answer a few short questions. Thank you!

(*LGBTQIA2S refers to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Two spirit.)

On Sunday, April 14 David Brule and Dr. John Pfeiffer from the Nehantic Tribal Council will give a presentation on the history of the Nehantic Native Nation and its current activities. Please join us for an informative talk at 10:30 a.m. in the Multipurpose room, in partnership with Faith Forum.

The History of the Nehantic People

April 14
10:30am



Multipurpose room

David Brule and Dr. John Pfeiffer from the Nehantic Tribal Council will give a presentation on the history of the Nehantic Native Nation and its current activities.



As we gather this day, we acknowledge that we are on land where Nehantic and other Indigenous people first gathered, lived and cared for the land. We give thanks for the strength and resilience of the early Indigenous peoples. -from NCC Land Acknowledgement

April 20, 2024, St. James Episcopal Church, New London
Hedwig and the Angry Inch is a 2001 Musical Drama which is rated R. This event is free and open to all. There may be snacks available and you can bring your own beverage but alcohol is not permitted. A discussion will follow. If you have any questions or need additional information contact at transgroups1gf@gmail.com.



**SE/CT
TRAVELING QUEER
MOVIE NIGHT**
 April 20 @ 7:00 PM
 'Hedwig and the Angry Inch' R
 Location: St. James Episcopal, New London
 Free Viewing - Open to Everyone
 Time for Discussion Following Movie
 Bring Your Own Snacks
 Alcoholic Beverages Prohibited
 Email: transgroups1gf@gmail.com



PARISH LIFE

Spring

RUMMAGE SALE

- **DONATIONS + VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!**
- **Accepting all family clothing and housewares.**
- **NO rugs/ winter sports equipment/ electronics or furniture.**
- **Drop off dates 4/21 to 4/25.**
- **Volunteers needed for 4/26 set up and 4/27 sale.**

**Saturday
April 27
9am-Noon**

Contact Jeannette Woodworth or Theresa in the church office, and watch for more details in the Wednesday Note. Drop off does **not begin until** Sunday, April 21st.

Looking ahead– Save the Dates!



Handbell Concert
Saturday, May 4
7:00pm at NCC



Featuring the EmBELLish
Handbell Choir

- EmBELLish Bell Choir Concert – May 4
- Blanket Sunday – May 12
- Memorial Day Observances – 5/26
- Confirmation Sunday – 6/2
- Farewell Potluck for Jeff Birch – 6/8
- Children’s Sunday – 6/16
- Summer Suppers!!
- Tuesdays 7/9, 7/23, 8/6

Congregational Potluck

Congregational Potluck Dinner (Italian Night theme!)

Bring your favorite Italian-themed dish

and enjoy the great food & fellowship!

Sign up with Sue Smith at coffee hour

or the church office.



Saturday April 20, 5:30 p.m.

Set up at 5:00 p.m.

GOVERNANCE NEWS

PRESIDENT/VICE PRESIDENT OFFICE HOURS

Carol Donovan (president) and Nancy Hunt (vice president) will be holding office hours on Tuesdays from 1 -3 pm starting April 9, in the Fellowship room.

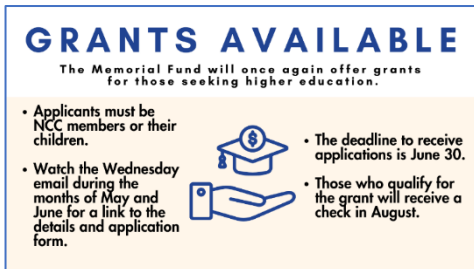
Our Quarterly Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, April 28 following worship. All are encouraged to attend. All Governance meetings are held in-person on the 3rd Monday of each month. All are welcome to attend. The meeting minutes are posted on our website here:

[Governing Board Documents 2024 — Niantic Community Church](#)



Frank Chan has started his Leadership Development Workshops – contact him or the church office if you’d like to participate.

Gail SanJuan is putting together two new Ad-hoc committees – Fundraising and Cost-Savings. Join in and share your creative ideas to help the church.



A note from the Legacy Ministry regarding the Memorial Fund. The Memorial Fund will once again offer grants for those seeking higher education. Applicants must be NCC members or their children. Watch the Wed email during the months of May and June for a link to the details and application form. The deadline to receive applications is June 30. Those who qualify for the grant will receive a check in August. Stay tuned!

Faith & Fellowship

<p>In silence we come to know and love the Divine Mystery that is within us.</p>  <p>Centering Prayer</p> <p>The Centering Prayer group meets each Tuesday 4:30 – 5:50pm (Hybrid) in the Fellowship Room. All are welcome. Contact daveoat@gmail.com</p>	 <p>Prayer Shawl Ministry Tuesday 4/23 1:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Room. All are welcome!</p>	
<p>Dating Under God's Guidance A workshop Presenter Carol Vara MSW Saturday April 20 12-2pm Fellowship Room Come explore some tips and tools about dating with grace, confidence and faith. Contact the church office to RSVP</p>	<p>Dating Under God's Guidance - Saturday, 4/20 from Noon - 2pm. Workshop by Carol Vara, (MSW). Come explore some tips and tools about dating with grace, confidence and faith. RSVP with the office.</p>	 <p>DRUM CIRCLE 1st & 3rd Fridays 6:00pm-7:00pm Multi-purpose Room, April 5 & 19 Led by Karen Fox</p>
<p>Bible Study (Hybrid) Wednesdays at 10am Led by Rev. Erica Avena</p> <p>Journeys booklet available in the church office for a suggested donation of \$13.00</p>	 <p>Journeys</p>	<p>ANYTHING GOES... minimize, simplify, organize! Letting go of what we no longer want/need, makes room for what IS important. Bring unwanted items to the group & give away. Unclaimed items are donated to charity immediately following our gathering. 10 a.m. / 3rd Monday of each month in the Fellowship room.</p>

Tidings Schedule:
May Issue Articles due April 20
June Issue Articles due May 20

Community member Maureen Cavanaugh shares this poem which she wrote after the death of her husband Stephen Hathaway in 2020:

When Things Get Rough

For today
Right here, right now
I am alive
I have consciousness
What will today look like?
Yesterday is gone
Tomorrow may not arrive

What will today look like?
I have free will
What colors shall I choose?
What can I choose to strive for?
Perfection?
Or peace?
Loss?
Or gratitude?

What will today look like?
Where will I know joy?
Will peace come by?
Will it stay?
If I chase it, will it run away?

What will today look like?
Just for today,
I will choose to be where my feet are
Just for today,
I know God does not forsake me
He knows my sorrow
He gives me life
He will bring me home

What will today look like?
Today I seek discernment of God's will for me
I ask for His power to give me the strength to carry it out

Just for today?
I am ready to receive God's grace
I pray that in my weakness,
I may bear witness to his undying love

I pray that I don't dismiss this gift of a brand new day
I pray that my faith be strengthened
I pray that I trust the still, small voice of Wisdom that leads me through the fog laden path before my feet

Just for today, I choose courage in the face of my nightmares that have arrived in living color

So I pray, in the wee hours of this brand new day
"Good morning Lord,
What will today look like?"

*Written by Maureen E Cavanaugh
(10/2/2020)*

NCC Pastors and Staff

Interim Minister - Rev. Erica Avena erica.avena@nianticcommunitychurch.org

Associate Pastor, Congregational Care – Rev. Kaleigh Rasmussen
kaleigh@nianticcommunitychurch.org

Music Minister– Lynne Floyd lynne@nianticcommunitychurch.org

Men’s Choir & Bell Choir Director– Nan Rigdon nan@nianticcommunitychurch.org

Seminarian/Student Minister – Jeff Birch jeff.birch@lextheo.edu

Children & Youth Faith Formation Coordinator – Marsha Swan
marsha@nianticcommunitychurch.org

Communications/Office Manager – Theresa Cleary theresa@nianticcommunitychurch.org

Financial Secretary – Ted Montgomery ted@nianticcommunitychurch.org

Bookkeeper – Robin Goldschlager robin@nianticcommunitychurch.org



Niantic Community Church

A federated congregation of the United Methodist Church
and the United Church of Christ.

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www.NianticCommunityChurch.org
info@nianticcommunitychurch.org



“Whoever you are,
wherever you are on your life’s journey—
you are welcome here.”

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the United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church