



Niantic Community Church

Tidings

September 2026

Monthly news for members & friends
of Niantic Community Church

MARTELL'S IT LIKE IT IS!

As the summer winds down (although the humidity refuses to relinquish it's hold), we start a brand new program year. It promises to be a busy one! Kaleigh and I were discussing how most weekends have some special event, but that is not new for this active church.

I appreciate this busy church. I appreciate all of the opportunities to fulfill the goal of "making community our middle name". I appreciate the time, talent and treasure that we all offer to en flesh the Body of Christ in our world today. I also realize how much more we need to grow to continue our mission of faith in a world that is: hungry for real connection, hungry for affordable nutrition, and hungry for truth.

Here are some ways to get involved at the Niantic Community Church:

1. Church Leadership: With so many committees and teams to run and operate a busy church, there are numerous leadership positions. If you are good with finances, we have a finance committee. If your love of all things technology is what you want to share, check out the tech team. If you love to structure personnel, offer support for ministers, or help with building projects, there is a group for you. Please check our website/bulletin and see how you can get involved. Where is the Holy Spirit calling you?
2. Christian Education, especially children's education: In a world that teaches many things better than honesty, integrity, theology and morality, we have the opportunity to teach our children a better way of being and a better way of loving. We can teach invaluable lessons of mercy and justice through bible stories, where the Holy Bible is a tool for goodness and not a weapon of judgement. Through imagination, art, music and story telling, you can enlighten our youth to bring forth hope in our world. If interested in helping, contact Kaleigh.
3. DINE, is part of a Food Justice Movement that works to ensure universal access to nutritious, affordable, and culturally appropriate food for all, while advocating for the well-being and safety of those involved in the food production process. The purpose and business of this non-membership and nonprofit corporation is to provide nutritious meals, and offer comfort, and hope for the future in an atmosphere of dignity and respect regardless of race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, marital status, national origin, mental or physical disability, political belief or affiliation, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression. *continued->*

MARTELL'S IT LIKE IT IS!

The Food Justice Movement aims to address disparities in food access, particularly for communities of color and low-income communities, by examining the structural roots of our food system. Food Justice addresses questions of land ownership, agricultural practices, distribution of technology and resources, workers' rights, and the historical injustices communities of color have faced. If interested in preparing meals, please contact Terri McTigue.

4. The New London Homeless Hospitality Center (NLHHC) is a place of safety and community for adults experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity in southeastern Connecticut. Founded in 2006, NLHHC collaborates with dozens of public and private programs and agencies to address the systemic causes of homelessness and impoverishment. Whether it's a warm place to sleep, help finding permanent housing, employment coaching, or support through life's toughest challenges, we walk alongside our guests every step of the way. If interested in preparing meals, please contact Terri McTigue.
5. Fundraising opportunities are plentiful with engagement in the Rummage Sale, Jack Frost Bazaar, and Summer Suppers. Each of these fundraisers need many hands to make the work light. Getting involved in this way also builds community and is a lot of fun.

The list continues. If none of these opportunities piques your interest, please contact me and I will help you discern your missional placement in NCC.

Thank you for all that you do to help the mission of Christ through this church reach out to our community.

Vive Jesu,

Martell

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WAYS TO CONNECT

9/11

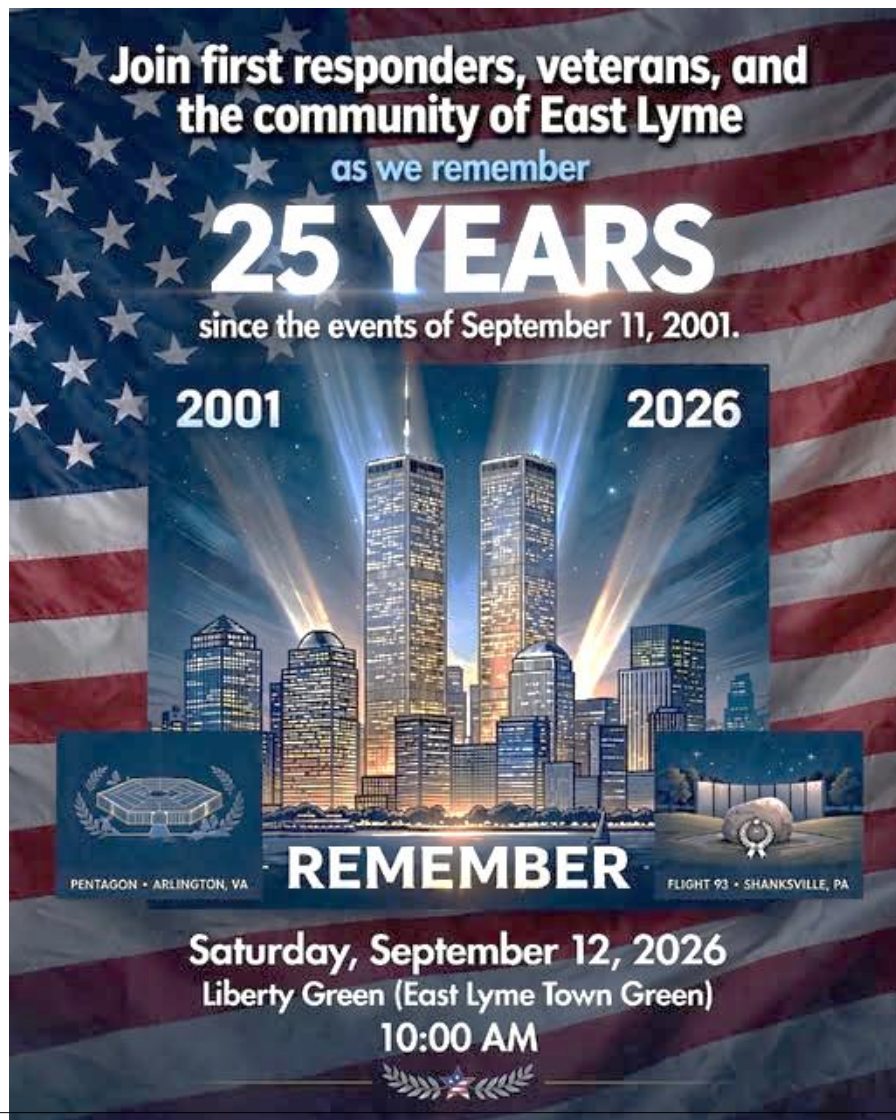
2001 – 2026

25-year Remembrance Ceremony

On Saturday, **September 12th at 10:00am** at Liberty Green in Niantic, join the East Lyme Fire and Police Departments, VFW Post 5849, American Legion Post 128, Vietnam Veterans Association and the Auxiliaries to remember the heroes and tragic victims of September 11th, 2001.

Sponsored by the East Lyme Veterans Council.

Pastor Martell has been asked to deliver a prayer and remarks.



WORSHIP WITH US

September Worship at Niantic Community Church

6

Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

Communion Sunday

- Matthew 18:15-20
- Communion Sunday
- Nursery Care in room 4 for infants and children up to 5yrs.
- Coffee Hour with birthday cake following worship.
- No Summer Sunday School or Faith Forum

13

Friendship Sunday!

- Matthew 18: 1-14
- Chancel Choir sings
- Blessing of Backpacks
- Sunday School Registration kick off
- Sunday School held in new room on lower level!
- BBQ + potluck after worship with intergenerational fun
- No Faith Forum

20

Worship & More

- Matthew 20:1-16
- Stewardship 2027 launch, packets available in Narthex
- Faith Forum continues new curriculum 'Genesis'
- Sunday School teacher meeting after worship
- MLK Scholarship Dinner ticket table at coffee hour
- Rummage Sale intake begins after coffee hour

27

Worship & More

- Matthew 21:23-32
- Stewardship moment in worship
- Nursery care and Sunday School
- MLK Scholarship Dinner ticket table at coffee hour
- Faith Forum continues their study of 'Genesis'

WORSHIP WITH US



September 13th is Friendship Sunday!

Join us in worship with a blessing of the backpacks for teachers and students.

Children's Ministry will kick off a new program year with Sunday School registrations, and the children will meet in the newly refurbished Sunday School Classroom in room 5 on the lower level.

Students and teachers, bring your backpacks to be blessed.

After worship we will gather for a church picnic! The grilled items will be provided, we invite you to bring your favorite SALAD, SIDE, OR DESSERT to share. Ingredient cards are available to identify allergens (such as: gluten, shellfish, dairy, or peanuts.) We hope to see you.

Children & Family Events

FALL 2026

10/2

Dog Treat Baking

5PM in the Dining Hall

10/16

Trunk or Treat

5PM in the Back Parking Lot

11/6

Thanksgiving Fun

5PM in Dining Hall

12/19

Caroling & Cookie Swap

Time TBD

12/20

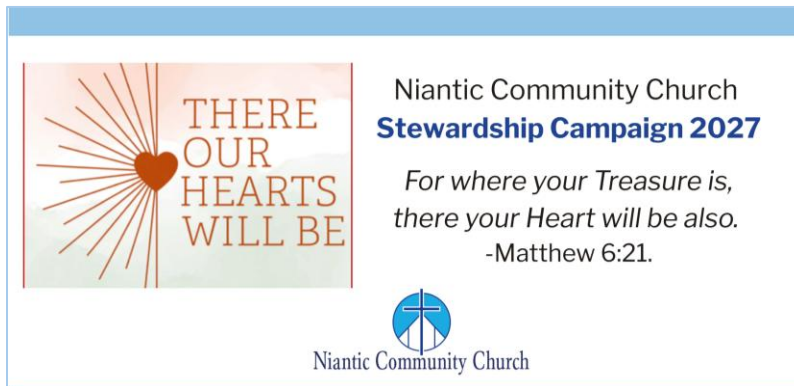
Pop Up Pageant

During Worship!

Are you interested in helping or teaching Sunday School? Come to our teacher information session on Sunday, Sept 20 at 10:30am in room 5 (our new Sunday School room!) Contact Pastor Kaleigh with questions.

We are looking for a caring and dependable childcare provider (paid position) for our Nursery on Sundays from 8:30am-10:30am. If you or someone you know is interested, contact Pastor Kaleigh.

WAYS TO SUPPORT



Dear Church Members and Friends,

As we begin our annual stewardship campaign, we invite every member to reflect on Jesus' words in Matthew 6:21: *"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* Where is our treasure? How can our hearts more fully align with God's?

"Where Our Hearts Will Be" reminds us to:

- Reflect on the blessings that God has given us.
- Re-center our lives on God's quiet, faithful presence.
- Let our giving reflect our deepest values and commitments.
- Align our practices, priorities, and resources with our confession of Christ.
- Allow God to transform, heal, and renew our hearts.
- Practice a generosity that is not performative, but rooted in joyfulness and spirit.

Our annual financial pledge is more than a commitment to support the church's operating budget. Every gift sustains the ministries that nourish our congregation, care for those in need, support Christian education, maintain our place of worship, and enable us to share God's love with our community. May our shared commitment strengthen the ministries and mission of our church for the year ahead.

Pledge card packets will be available in the Narthex September 20th and following Sundays. Please discern prayerfully and renew your commitment to NCC.

We invite all to come together on Sunday October 25th, when we will dedicate our pledges.

Thank you for your faithfulness!

The 2027 Stewardship Campaign Committee

WAYS TO SUPPORT

Rummage Sale

**Saturday
September 26
9am-Noon**

Accepting donations Sept 21-24

Donation drop off to the Dining Hall

Monday through Thursday 10am - 3pm

(check in with the office first)

& Thursday 5-6pm Dining Hall entrance

YES

Gently used clothing of all
types, seasons and ages
Household items
Kitchen dishes, pots + pans,
cutlery, china, glasses
Home decor, collectibles
Toys, Board games

NO

No Furniture
No rugs
No Electronics
No Sports Equipment

*If you need help with your
items, please call ahead to
Jeannette 860-389-4057*

**Sign up to volunteer for a 2-3 hour shift, or more, on Thursday and
Friday for prep, and Saturday morning at the sale.**



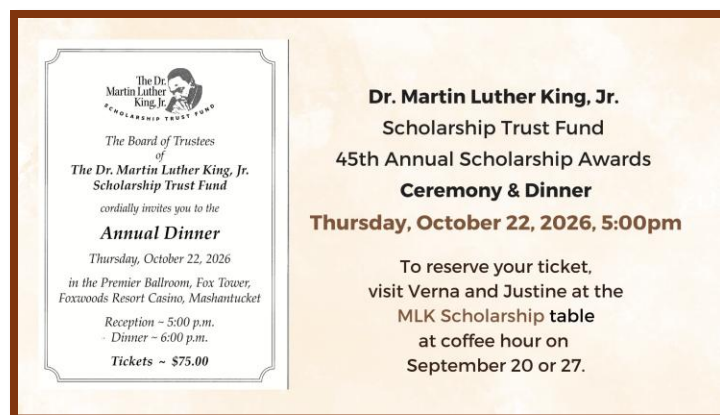
De-clutter Alert! Do you have housewares, home decor, clothing, shoes, pots, pans or dishes you no longer need? Put them aside for our Fall Rummage Sale.

We begin accepting donations after coffee hour on Sept. 20, and
during the week 21st through 24th

We need volunteers during the week for sorting, and especially Friday Sept 25 and
Saturday Sept 26 at the sale. See Jeannette or Edie for info.

Thank you for your support!

JOIN IN CELEBRATION



The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship Trust Fund cordially invites you to the Annual Dinner, Thursday, October 22, 2026 in the Premier Ballroom at Foxwoods Resort Casino, Mashantucket.

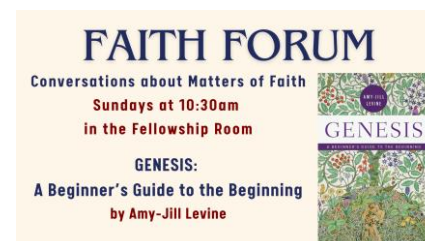
Reception begins at 5pm, dinner at 6pm. Tickets are \$75.00. Dinner choices are chicken or vegetarian. Verna and Justine will have an info table at Sunday coffee hours on Sept 20 and 27. Our goal is to fill 4 tables this year. The RSVP deadline is Oct 2.

The Niantic Community Church has proudly donated to help sponsor students of color to pursue higher education and understand and advance the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. These local students have been selected for their community engagement, leadership, academic excellence, and financial need. Come celebrate their academic journey while enjoying good company and a delicious dinner. Thank you for your support of this important mission.

-Verna and Justine

GROW WITH US

- **Wednesday Bible Study begins on Sept. 16 at 10:00am** with a new curriculum, 'Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith'.
- **Exploring the Bible resumes Tuesday, Sept. 22 at 6:30pm** with the study of the Gospel of Matthew, led by Pastor Martell in the Multipurpose room.
- **Sundays at 10am, Faith Forum** is studying Genesis: A Beginner's Guide to the Beginning by Amy-Jill Levine.
- **Tuesday Morning Bible Study** meets online at 10:00am to discuss the scripture scheduled for Sunday's worship.



HIGHLIGHT REEL

Youth Mission Trip 2026 in the books!



GETTING TO KNOW YOU – WHO’S WHO AT NCC

“Getting to Know You – Who’s Who at NCC” is a series in Tidings to highlight faithful church members who provide sustained contributions to the missions of the Church without fanfare.

Cheri and Lew Meier

Take a good look on the left side of the photo: you will see our friends, Lew and Cheri Meier, along with their family. The Meiers are the focus of this month’s article. Cheri is from Camden, Maine and later moved to Santa Cruz, CA. Lew is from Speedway, IN, then went west to attend Stanford University. They met on a softball team and teamed up for life in 1969!



They started attending NCC in 1985 on their real estate agent’s recommendation. Lew is an electrical engineer with degrees from Purdue and Stanford. He worked on sonar signal processing and was involved in an earlier form of AI called heuristic programming. He worked in Signal Processing at the Stanford Research Institute in Menlo Park, and then for the NATO Research Center in La Spezia, Italy from 1974-1980. He retired in 2012.

Cheri says she has a “checkered past” of degrees, beginning at San Jose State University with a B.A. in Interior Design. She then earned an MAT (masters degree in teaching), and an MAT-X (masters of teaching) as an experienced teacher in the Classics. She studied summers in Florence, Italy, and on a Fulbright Scholarship in Rome at the American Academy. She taught in several area high schools, and retired in 2023 after 33 years at East Lyme High School.

They have both been involved in many church activities over the years. Lew- past Vice President and President, Search Committee for John Nelson, PPRC, Personnel, teaching Sunday School, running Dinner Groups, and currently on Endowment. Cheri has been the Chair of Jack Frost Bazaar, PPRC, Personnel, Sunday School teacher, Dinner Groups and Endowment.

They enjoy lots of free-time activities as well: photography, bread-baking (hello, Jack Frost!), Bible studies, and anything outdoors. They have camped and hiked in the Sierra Nevada mountains, and the Olympic Range of Washing State. Cheri says the hiking and camping have morphed into walking and “glamping” Cheri says she tries to control nature in her garden!

The Meiers have two children, a daughter born in Italy who didn’t speak English until she was 6 years old. Their son is a native Californian, who currently lives in Mt. Pleasant, SC working for a Fire Safety Company. Two grandchildren round out the family.

Lew and Cheri have enjoyed an active and interesting life, and continue to be involved in church and family. How blessed we are to have them in our NCC fellowship!

Submitted by Nancy Hunt

NCC Pastors and Staff

Senior Pastor – Rev. Dr. M G Martell Spagnolo	martell@nianticcommunitychurch.org
Associate Pastor – Rev. Kaleigh Rasmussen	kaleigh@nianticcommunitychurch.org
Communications/Office Manager – Theresa Cleary	theresa@nianticcommunitychurch.org
Music Director – Lynne Floyd	lynne@nianticcommunitychurch.org
Men’s Choir + Bell Choir Director – Nan Rigdon	nan@nianticcommunitychurch.org
Organists – Mary Mirecki and Richard Schenk	info@nianticcommunitychurch.org
Gospel Choir - Lee Wilkerson	info@nianticcommunitychurch.org
Financial Secretary – Ted Montgomery	ted@nianticcommunitychurch.org
Bookkeeper – Robin Goldschlager	robin@nianticcommunitychurch.org



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

We are an Open, Affirming, Reconciling congregation of
the United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church



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www.nianticcommunitychurch.org