Branches on the Vine

NEWS FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD NOVEMBER 21 - 27, 2026

East Windsor Cemetery Creates Serene Space for *Our Lady*

- Story by Karen A. Avitabile



Barbara Sherman, chairwoman of the St. Catherine Cemetery Association for St. Marianne Cope Parish, stands with Father Ronald Zepecki, pastor, on a new walkway leading to a statue of the Blessed Mother.
PHOTO BY KAREN A. AVITABILE

Amid the stillness of St. Catherine Cemetery in East Windsor's Broad Brook section of town, Father Ronald Zepecki walks the grounds, offering prayers to the Blessed Mother.

"It is very conducive to prayer," he says of his cemetery walks. "I pray the breviary and the rosary. I pray for everyone here." Father Zepecki serves as pastor of St. Marianne Cope Parish which is made up of St. Catherine of Siena Church in Broad Brook and St. Philip the Apostle Church in East Windsor.

With its recent improvements, the cemetery offers a peaceful, parklike setting that provides a solemn resting place for loved ones. The cemetery is located at 30-76 Rye St.

"It's a picturesque cemetery," says Barbara Sherman, chairwoman of the St. Catherine Cemetery Association, a small group which oversees the five-acre cemetery upkeep with Father Zepecki. "People comment that it looks like a park."

In early August, a new paver walkway was installed and leads to a statue of the Blessed Mother. The sacred space, adorned with granite benches purchased last year, invites everyone to sit, reflect and pray. For many years, the Blessed Mother statue stood prominently outside of St. Catherine of Siena Church.

"Many people are stopping to see the statue of Mary," Sherman says. Next year, she notes, this statue is expected to be repainted.

Future enhancements to the Mary grotto are planned. They include landscaping the area and installing a new bronze plaque with the words "Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy" to be placed alongside the statue.

"We tried to make the cemetery more presentable in this grotto area," Sherman says.

Each May, parishioners of St. Marianne Cope Parish crown a statue of Mary in St. Catherine Cemetery. On Memorial Day, Father Zepecki celebrates Mass in the cemetery to honor military personnel who died while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Next year, from May through October, the pastor plans on leading the rosary on the 13th day of each month, inviting parishioners and guests to gather at the cemetery to pray.

Catholics often pray the rosary to honor Our Lady of Fatima. She appeared to the three shepherd children in Portugal on the 13th of each month from May 13 through Oct. 13, 1917.

Over the years, members of the cemetery association have dedicated countless hours to enhancing the grounds. Visitors will notice recent updates to the cemetery entrance, including the sandblasting and the restoration of the marble statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and a new sign.

Also in the cemetery, the historic altar dating back to the 1950s has been preserved and is used during Masses. New Montgomery spruce shrubbery has been added around the grounds.

The cemetery gives family and friends a place to visit and grieve, Father Zepecki says, noting that it reflects the Catholic faith and traditions of the area's residents.

"People who have loved ones buried here feel good about it," the priest adds.

Upcoming Events

DECEMBER 12 @ 9:00AM - 12:00PM
BE STILL: ADVENT MORNING OF REFLECTION
Mount Sacred Heart, Hamden

Enjoy a quiet morning of prayer, reflection and discussion as we prepare our hearts for the coming of our Savior at Christmas! Light refreshments will be provided. Register online for free by December 5 through the QR code.

DECEMBER 4 @ 7PM - 9PM
YOUNG CATHOLIC PROFESSIONALS NETWORKING HAPPY HOUR
East Rock Brewing Company, New Haven

Join Young Catholic Professionals Central CT for a special Networking Happy Hour with Networking Bingo and an early celebration of St. Nicholas' Feast Day! Come network and connect with young adult Catholic professionals from all over Central CT. YCP Belong Members will receive a free drink ticket, as will the first 10 people to register online.
We look forward to meeting you there!

JANUARY 6 6:30 - 8:30PM
APOSTOLATE FOR LAY MINISTRY CERTIFICATE PROGRAM
Bl. Michael McGivney Parish, St. Joseph Church, New Haven

The Archdiocese's Certificate in Lay Ministry program begins a new class in January 2027. This two-year program provides in-depth spiritual, theological, and pastoral formation for lay people seeking to serve in any Catholic ministry or apostolate. The program also provides mentorship and immersion experiences for the students' ministry of choice.
Call the Office of Missionary Discipleship for more information or to apply: **860-913-2651**.

JANUARY ENROLLMENT
NEW SPANISH LANGUAGE BIBLICAL SCHOOL
St. Augustine Church, Hartford

Earn a certificate in advanced biblical studies through this accredited four year, Spanish language program. Learn about all 73 books of the bible with credentialed instructors. This is an in person learning program sponsored by the St. Thomas Seminary and the Office of Missionary Discipleship. For more information or to apply: **860-913-2651**.

JANUARY ENROLLMENT
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES: MODEL FOR MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP

This minicourse offered by the Office of Missionary Discipleship is an eleven week Spanish language mini course designed to explore the book of the Acts of the Apostles with an emphasis on learning the original vision for missionary discipleship and Catholic community. Call the Office of Missionary Discipleship for more information **860-913-2651**.

JANUARY 13 @ 7PM
SAVE THE DATE
REBOOT: A LIFE-CHANGING EVENT
St. Margaret Church, Madison

This high-energy, 2 hour event with internationally acclaimed speaker Chris Stefanick will awaken your faith, reignite your joy, and equip you with tools to live the life God created for you: A life of JOY! Event is perfect for everyone: friends, family, children (12+), and those who may not be actively practicing their faith.
Scan the QR code to secure your spot!

2026 ARCHBISHOP'S ANNUAL APPEAL

As of today, 16.95% of all Archdiocesan parishioners raised $10 million for our Archdiocesan ministries.
Imagine the difference if one in four parishioners joined in.
Help us reach 26% participation in 2026!!

WE ARE ONE

www.archdioceseofhartford.org/appeal