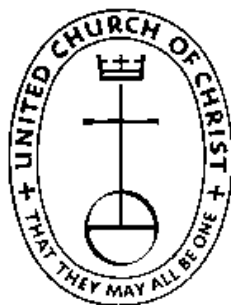


2020 Book of Reports
DRAFT 1/15/21

As Presented at the
2021 Annual Meeting of the Monroe Congregational Church

Held Sunday, January 24, 2021



34 Church Street
Monroe, Connecticut 06468

The Reverend Jennifer Gingras
Senior Pastor

Website: www.mcc-ucc.org
Church E-mail: secretary@mcc-ucc.org

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Monroe Congregational Church
United Church of Christ

Annual Meeting Agenda
Sunday, January 24, 2021

Opening

- Orientation to the Zoom Meeting
- Call to Order
- Reading of the Call
- Establishment of a Quorum
- Opening Prayer
- Adoption of Agenda

Annual Addresses

- Moderator - David Walker
- Senior Pastor - Rev. Jennifer Gingras

Adoption of Minutes and Reports

- 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes
- 2020 Reports of the Boards, Committees & Pastor
- 2021 Narrative Budget
- Election of 2021 Officers, Board Members & Delegates

New Business

Benediction

Adjournment

Social Time / Breakout Rooms

2020 Annual Meeting Minutes

Monroe Congregational Church Annual Meeting, January 26, 2020

Opening

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Moderator, David Walker at 11:22 am with the establishment of a quorum (confirmed by the clerk) of over 47 people.

Call to the Annual Meeting

Clerk, Kate Parker-Burgard read the Call to Annual Meeting

Opening Prayer

Senior Pastor, Jennifer Gingras opened the meeting with prayer.

Adopting the Agenda

Mark Barnhart made a motion to accept the agenda. Joyce Rousseau seconded the motion. It passed with unanimous vote.

Moderator's Address

Moderator David Walker called our attention to the revised order of the agenda beginning with the annual address of the Moderator (attached)

Pastor's address:

Pastor Jenn talked about the role of MCC in our community and how we are called to be the salt of the earth and a lamp to the world. Our ministry is increasingly being noticed. How welcoming we are, generous with outreach, vibrant faith formation--especially with youth, extraordinary music, MCC Strawberry Festival. MCC is increasingly known as the "The Community's Church."

We are witnessing amid a changing religious landscape. Churches like ours are rapidly closing. Roughly 75-150 per week are shutting their doors.

There are still things we need to do and our willingness to adapt will make us most able to continue to address our community's needs. "We do church like we mean it."

We are blessed.

2019 Annual Meeting minutes

Mark Barnhart made a motion to accept the minutes from the 2019 meeting. Gary Thompson seconded the motion.

It passed with unanimous vote.

Budget Presentation

Trustee Chair Frank Wittenauer presented the budget.

He reviewed how we funded our budget in 2019: we spent about \$20K more than projected. We had to draw \$53,000 from our investment accounts, which is not sustainable. Our 2020 budget also has about a \$25K gap.

Frank suggested several options that the Trustees have brainstormed to close the gap:

- Collect prior year's pledges and follow up with those who haven't pledged this year.
- Pastor Jenn has offered to decline her 2% salary increase
- If each pledger gave \$60 more this year that would give us \$5K
- More rentals
- Reduction in OCWM
- Add raffles and fundraisers

Fall Stewardship drive was very successful. We are only \$4,142 away from our goal of \$200,000

Frank gave us a narrative overview of the budget

Outreach is an important part of our work. In addition to the money we budget for community donations, there are additional fundraisers that pass through our church to help the community (for example, the tag sale). There are also other outreach activities (Dress a Girl, walkathon, St. George's supper, Giving Garden, etc) that positively affect our community.

There was an overview of the Worship, Pastoral Care, and Faith Formation.

Staff Compensation accounts for most of our budget.

Buildings and Grounds--buildings are historic which requires some special care to keep them warm, dry, and functioning efficiently, so that also requires a nice portion of our budget.

David Allen, our property manager has identified a number of projects that need to be done.

Volunteers are always welcome.

Office and communication account for a smaller portion of the budget.

Adoption of the Budget

Mark Barnhart made a motion to adopt the 2020 budget. David Bailey seconded the motion.

Jacob Parker-Burgard asked for further explanation of the \$25K deficit in the 2020 budget. Frank said that they don't want to have to draw that from the investment account, so having it as a deficit that underlines that we need to make up that gap.

Gary Thompson asked for clarification on the \$25K from investments that's written in as an income line. Frank clarified that we've been advised that we can draw down the \$25K from the accounts and still be sustainable. It's when we have to draw that additional \$25K that our money starts to dwindle.

David Walker pointed to the summary of our investment activity and noted that there has been significant growth in them this year, even with the additional drawdown from this past year. We recognized that we can't count on a strong market every year.

Joyce Rousseau noted that lowering our contribution to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) often comes up and it comes at a great cost. The money is really needed by our wider community. Can we as a community do something more productive to make up that money? "Let our consciences be our guide," she said.

Julia Gutierrez said that when we look at places where we cut the budget, we should consider bumping up both OCWM and Jenn's salary to include the 2% cost of living increase.

Debi Mastroni-Kenyon affirmed the suggestion to increase Jenn's salary as it will have a cumulative effect in subsequent years as she will build on this year's reduced salary.

Jacob Parker-Burgard went back to Joyce's comment suggesting that our actual outreach expenses last year were around \$30,000 so perhaps we have fully funded that contribution. Frank Wittenauer clarified the line for Outreach is for their whole budget not just for OCWM.

Andrew Logan asked how our OCWM contribution compares to the conference recommendation. Frank Wittenauer said that we're at about 9.1% contribution which is admittedly below the recommended 10%. Nevertheless, we're higher than most churches in our conference.

Don Parker-Burgard echoed the sentiments regarding Jenn's proposed sacrifice but the only way to be comfortable with it is for it to be an example for all of us. Can we all make the same sacrifice that Jenn is? He pointed to the Trustee suggestion that everyone increase their pledge by \$60. We can certainly do that, if Jenn is willing to forego \$2000. Recognizing that not everyone will have an increased salary this year, Don asked if those of us getting a COI increase in our jobs adopt the spirit of Jenn's example? Can we approach her sacrifice as a shared sacrifice?

Julia G said that she would give her \$60 at the end of this meeting and pointed to some engagement from the Fruits of the Spirit. The children of the congregation have pledged to raise \$200 toward the budget by the end of the year.

Debi Mastroni-Kenyon talked about the lesson on stewardship in the Fruits of the Spirit today and the children have great ideas for fundraising. The kids have created a thermometer to keep track of their \$200 pledge. They filled out pledge cards and will get envelopes.

Gary asked if we had to withdraw the \$25K from the investments where would it come from? Frank pointed to the unrestricted funds. John O'Rourke added that fund is also where the \$25K in the budget comes from, so to take both the \$25K in the budget and the \$25k deficit from it would nearly deplete that fund that has \$53,000 in it.

David Bailey talked about his plans to start a Tai Ch'i class after church. People can donate what they want and that money will go directly into the church budget.

Vaughan Askue agreed with everything that was said. Jenn's giving up 2% is a crime but we're here to support and give direction to Trustees. This our survival. If they don't play their cards right then we go broke. We have to change the budget on the floor as a motion if we want to make an adjustment to the motion.

David Walker brought us back to our order of business. The motion on the floor is to adopt the budget. We can either vote on it as it stands or make an amendment.

Mark Malia made a motion to end discussion. Joyce Rousseau seconded the motion. It passed with a more than two-thirds vote.

We voted on the budget and it passed with a clear majority (4 opposed).

Gary Thompson made a point of order clarifying that the budget can be altered as more money comes in.

Andy Nivison asked we keep the congregation informed on where we are throughout the year so that we can see how we're trending? Frank Wittenauer said that they would.

Reports of the Boards, Committee, and Pastor

Joyce Rousseau made a motion to accept the Book of Reports. Marian Schmitz seconded it. It passed unanimously.

Election of Officers. Board Members and Delegates

Kate Briggs presented the Nominating Report.

She thanked the many members who are willing to serve in leadership roles. The slate is in the 2020 Book of Reports. Named the people who have completed their service on Boards as well as those who said yes to invitations to join them.

There are openings in Trustees (2), Outreach (1)

Julia Gutierrez asked to add a couple of slots for Christian Education.

Jenn Gingras reminded us that people can volunteer for positions throughout the year. Those positions can be approved by the Church Council.

Betty Heiney made a motion to close the nomination. Frank Wittenauer seconded it.

Thanks to Kate Briggs and nominating for all of their work.

New Business:

Arlene Redmond presented the work so far of the Women's Bathroom committee: herself, Dave Allen, Julie McClenathan.

They have decided to have a professional redo the bathroom, which is long overdue for an update. They have gotten 2 estimates and are waiting on a third. They are looking at doing things as economically as possible and estimate it'll come in just under \$20K. A letter will go out detailing the renovations.

Closing of the meeting

Joyce Rousseau made a motion that we adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Mark Barnhart and unanimously accepted

Pastor Jenn sent us forth with a prayer at 12:37

2020 Annual Report of the Senior Pastor, Rev. Jennifer Gingras - Looking Back to Look Ahead

Our Christian tradition depends on remembering the past. Throughout the Scriptures, God urges people to recall where they came from, what God has done, how they have responded, and who they are as a result. We are regularly invited to reflect, repent, and remind each other of the life Jesus calls us toward. Accepting this invitation requires us to pause and look back on our lives, whether it be yesterday, last week, or last year. And goodness gracious, 2020 was a year! We've been through a lot – as individuals, as family and friend groups, and as a church community. Here are some highlights:

January began predictably enough, with a wonderful Young Adult Worship on Epiphany and an uplifting Annual meeting in which we celebrated the good work of our people in 2019.

In February, the MCC Coffeehouse brought performers out of the woodwork, and we enjoyed their talents. Senior PF held their annual Chili Cookoff with much success, and hoped to travel to Washington, D.C. on their mission trip. Our Strawberry Festival chairs began work on planning for the 49th Annual Strawberry Festival and accepting crafter deposits. The Women's Retreat group was planning for their annual weekend away at Silver Lake Conference Center. Outreach was looking ahead to a spring Tag Sale. We began Lent with Ash Wednesday soup and service, a labyrinth walk, and a very successful "Ashes to Go".

In March, reports of a novel coronavirus began to swirl around the news. Church leadership decided to follow our governmental leaders' suggestion and take a two week break in public events. On March 15th, a very small group of worship leaders met in Dineson Parlor to record an abridged worship service. By the end of March we learned that this international global pandemic was more disruptive than we initially anticipated.

I began researching what other faith communities were doing, and what those in the medical field were recommending, and together with church leadership we pivoted to pre-recorded worship. Kate Parker-Burgard was instrumental in helping us make that shift by editing weekly worship videos, and Don Parker-Burgard and Will Duchon helped to gather recorded bits from the congregation just as we would do in-person. Besides the weekly challenge of learning the technology, I will always cherish in my heart the ways that so many of you contributed from home, sending us clips and making the Lent and Easter season memorable in so many ways. Of particular joy was our "Holy Humor" Sunday, produced by the creative genius of Noah Friend.

When Monroe Public Schools went full remote, so did our Confirmation Class, Fruits of the Spirit, Senior, Jr and Adult PF's. I am grateful to Debi Mastroni-Kenyon for learning with me the Zoom technology and leading programs from her home. We also started a zoom coffee hour, whose leadership I passed to Arlene Redmond after the summer. All committee and council meetings were held on zoom, too. The Adult Choir, under the guidance of Will Duchon, Katherine Logan, and Noah Friend, offered three pre-recorded anthems that held our Spirits high. All of this helped us stay connected, and I believe that video conferencing is one of the gifts to come out of this time.

When the CT stay-at-home orders were administered, our church joined others in ringing our bell at 8pm every night from March 26th – May 20th. It was a surreal experience to go over in the dark every night,

sometimes in my PJ's, and go live on Facebook so that our community could hear the bell toll. I am grateful to Diane & Tony Prall and Sue Waters for filling in these duties on the nights I was unable.

We closed the office, and the staff showed amazing flexibility in adapting to working from their home. They have been patient, accommodating, creative and compassionate amidst the circumstances. I'm especially grateful for Diane Prall's management of the virtual office – she is so dedicated, and we are blessed! Members and friends in the congregation kept giving financially, and we were very careful about managing our finances, thanks to the leadership of John O'Rourke, Bill Stadler and Fred Dubois for managing it all.

Some of the saddest moments were when we lost people dear to us and were unable to grieve them in the way we had in the past. Some have chosen to postpone their loved one's celebration of life, some have settled with the appropriate in-person restrictions. We even held one memorial service over zoom. Being unable to hug our friends and loved ones has been painful, but we've kept each other safe.

As the weather turned warmer, and the community restrictions began to lift, we planned to phase forward in mid-June to in-person, outdoor worship with safety protocols in place. Our worship space (Pierce Lawn) was transformed by the addition of Josh Correll's Eagle Scout Project, outdoor benches and a pulpit! Worship continued outside, featuring a number of individual musicians and a "Gospel Goes to Broadway" series. Although it was often very sunny, we were only rained out once.

Our confirmands were able to gather in person for their confirmation dinner in June, and we celebrated their confirmation that next Sunday. This was the first Sunday we began using a MEVO camera and streaming to the web. Youth Sunday was also held during the summer, giving our teens the opportunity to share their considerable gifts with the church. And we held our first pandemic-safe baptism of Lucy Rae Kaminski, with her parents using a few drops of the water from the Jordan to mark her forehead.

Although I was unable to visit anyone in the hospital in the traditional sense, I engaged in pastoral care with lots of phone calls, texts, FB message and outdoor porch visits. You shared with me your frustration AND your hope as we laughed and cried together. Many of you checked in on folks as well, which really helped stave off the isolation. My thanks to Heather Henning for leading our weekly Bible study's prayer chain while we were unable to gather in person.

Regretfully, Senior PF had to cancel our mission trip to Washington D.C. due to health concerns, as well as our fall retreat. We have gone through periods of in-person, outdoor programming and times when we've had to take a break. In August, a half dozen PF'ers joined me at NOURISH Bridgeport to prepare their community (to-go) suppers. Over 2 days, nearly 500 people were fed due to their efforts. In October, we held our first ever Trunk or Treat fundraiser. I am continually impressed with the maturity of our high school leadership in dealing with the disappointments of the year, and with our adult leadership team, led by Kelsey Kaminski, in addressing their needs for spiritual and emotional support.

Over the summer, I was glad to take 2 weeks off, thanks to the leadership of Debi and Rev. Dr. Sheldon Smith. It has been difficult finding coverage due to the pandemic, so I regret that for the first time ever at MCC I did not take all off my vacation time. Trustees have agreed to allow me to move two weeks vacation time over into 2021, with hopes that we'll find a creative way to meet the church's needs.

Late September brought with it the opportunity to transition back into the Meetinghouse for Sunday morning worship, with many protocols in place. I am grateful to Jeanette Cardentey and Frank Wittenauer for helping me discern how to implement appropriate measures and prepare the space. We also held an outreach Wine & Beer Tasting around a newly installed fire pit, we were grateful to Roy Nealon for presenting wines from Chile along with some lovely brews from Veracious. More information will be in Kathy Maiolo's report, but we hit a record high for fundraising. It was good to gather again, safely, for service and fellowship. I look forward to more of that in 2021, as I'm sure you do too.

By Advent, the church pulled off two tremendous feats: The first, a total makeover of the ladies room (have you seen it?), thanks to the vision and hard work of Arlene Redmond, Julie McClenathan, Kyla Allen and Dave Allen (no relation). The second, a major upgrade of our broadcasting abilities, from a MEVO camera to a PVX hard wired webcam (with a sound upgrade). I am grateful to Andy Nivison and Dave Spence for planning and running wires, but also for the work of Scott Young on learning the software and the hardware and bringing us to "the next level" of our capabilities to reach people on YouTube with worship and other church content.

Which brings me to December, and the Advent/Christmas season. My concern heading into the season was whether or not we would be able to meet people's spiritual needs, given the challenges. I learned that my doubt was misplaced when it came to the gifts and talents of our church, even in a time of disruption. The Logans decorated the Meetinghouse, which was lovely to see either in-person or over the livestream. Bonnie Schneider got the Jim Royle Assembly (a group of high school drummers) to play at our Community Tree Lighting, and we DANCED!

I added a casual 4 pm vespers service outdoors at the fire pit for people who were unable to join us on Sunday morning. At the 10 am service, Will engaged musicians who were able to sing or play our favorite music of the season. Noah approached me early in the season, offering to record a Lessons & Carols service for YouTube with a small number of readers and singers that we released on YouTube. As part of that service, members of the Adult choir recorded an anthem that Katherine Logan wove together. Katherine also led the effort to record a virtual Christmas Pageant, which brought joy to many people. Members of the congregation went above and beyond in collecting socks and scarves for St. George's Supper gifts. Adult PF cooked and gathered treats for members of the congregation who live alone and may not be able to gather with family at Christmas Dinner that they delivered early in the week. How wonderful it is to be in a church that cares about people with the love of Jesus in their hearts.

The close of a calendar year is only as meaningful as the memories we hold from that year. Upon reflection, we may learn that bad experiences taught us something, or that good experiences may be worth celebrating but not repeating. If there's one thing for certain, MCC has not been on auto-pilot. Neither have we defaulted to reactive leadership, which only clouds our thinking, dulls our empathy, and robs us of our passion. I'm grateful for all of that. So, I want to close this long-winded 2020 report by sharing this simple prayer...

God, I'm grateful for our church community, and the many people I have the blessing to work alongside. I'm sorry for the times I thought too small, or was too tired or confused to offer my best as a pastor - please forgive me. I'm afraid of losing my patience during this long haul, of becoming too cynical. I'm hopeful for what the new year will bring, and for the ways in which our community has been proactive

and empathetic. What awaits us are new challenges, new opportunities, and new surprises. Give us creativity and courage that matches our call to reach people in this community and beyond. Amen!

In peace, Pastor Jenn

Director of Faith Formation 2020 Annual Report

When 2020 began I don't think any of us could have imagined how the year would unfold and, in some ways, it seems like it was a long time ago. At times, the Covid pandemic has given my faith a bit of a shake up, but I am still here, faith intact, and hopeful for 2021.

The year began as any other year with Fruit of the Spirit Sunday school, Junior PF, Senior PF, Confirmation, and other gatherings taking place as well as plans for Lent when in March the decision was made to suspend physical gatherings.

With that decision Jenn and I began crash courses in Zoom, and I attended many webinars to equip myself to effectively serve you. I quickly pivoted Fruit of the Spirit, Junior PF, and Confirmation to a Zoom format which was well received. The focus of the Zoom gatherings was to keep the church's children and youth connected to each other. I also made many phone calls and sent many cards. At Easter, all MCC children and Junior PFers received cards and activities in the mail.

Once the warm weather came Sunday worship began to meet in person on the Pierce Lawn and we had an in-person Confirmation service as well as others. Junior PF met at Great Hollow Lake and on the church grounds outdoors, but we decided to have a virtual Vacation Bible School. MCC partnered with the Bloomfield Congregational Church and it was well received. I had readers for VBS and dropped off books to people's homes. Readers were Heather Henning, Susie Cuseo, Julia Gutierrez, Mia Briggs, Evelyn Goyette and I would like to thank them! I would also like to thank John O'Rourke for recording the VBS songs that I could share with participants and Emma Campbell for being the VBS Snack Master researching snacks that went with our stories and recording herself making them. I also dropped off teacher's gifts to their homes as well.

As September came around, we decided to have a hybrid Fruit of the Spirit Sunday school where we would gather once a month and then send related activities during the weeks in between. Melissa Coleman led our first and only gathering in October because unfortunately due to the rise in Covid cases we decided to pivot Fruit of the Spirit to Zoom through January. Junior PF met outdoors through November and has since moved to Wilton Hall for their gatherings.

It certainly has been an interesting year and at times difficult to be your Director of Faith Formation from a distance. I have received cards, emails, and texts from some of you and I can't tell you how much I appreciate it as the connection is most welcome.

Lastly, I recently read one of my reflections which reminded me of this Scripture passage: "For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you." May we all take these words into the new year and may nothing be impossible for us.

Yours in Christ, Debi Mastroni-Kenyon

Historian's Annual Report 2020

Very little was accomplished with the review and audit of the files that was started in 2018 due to the self imposed protocols made necessary to control the spread of the corona virus. Access to the archives was limited to facilitating responses to inquiries for information about people, events, and things in our history. There were a few more than normal this past year. One was for a marriage record to support documentation for a DAR application. Another was for verification of Rev. Joseph Vectis Harrison tenure from 1931 to 1936. The response to this one evolved into the January 2021 *Steeple* article *A Tale of Two Pictures* at "Elisha's Corner".

Land record deeds recorded in the Stratford and Monroe Town Clerk offices enabled us to clearly define the actual location of the congregations first Meeting House and the origins of the Monroe Centre Green. This, along with other information already in our archives and a little bit of genealogy research, provided the input for a series of three articles about the Green for the *Steeple* at the beginning of the year. An account of the 1784 pandemic by Yale College professor Rev. Ezra Stiles and information acquired on the 1918 influenza pandemic provided the information for two more *Steeple* articles.

Two new projects were started in 2020 that will be carried forward into 2021; a file on the Pandemic 2020 at MCC and computerization of membership records from 1810 to 1936. The computer file will also contain baptism, marriage, and death records when it is finished.

There was an historical first in our congregation this past year. Lucy Rae Kaminski was baptized by her mother, "Deacon" Kelsey (Maiolo) Kaminski. The sacrament was conducted by Pastor Jenn. Water from the River Jordan was used.

Submitted by Gary Thompson, Historian

Usher Report 2020

	2015 (1,2,3)	2016	2017 (4)	2018	2019
Sunday Attendance (worship services and church school)	7238	6968	6310	5953	5704
Average Attendance Per Sunday (worship services & church school)	139	134	121	114	110
Worship Service Attendance only (not incl church school)	119	116	105	99	95
Summer Average Attendance Per Sunday (not incl church school)	83	67	83	66	61
Ash Wednesday	115	115	53 (4)	101	130
Palm Sunday	205	178	153 (4)	136	80
Maundy Thursday	72	82	35 (4)	80	54
Good Friday with Monroe Clergy Association	14	5	0 (4)	0	0
Sunrise Service	79	78	0 (4)	0	27
Easter Sunday	264	247	234 (4)	287	216
Advent Season Average Per Sunday (incl worship services and children)	195	158	143	120	138
Christmas Eve	424	366	374	403	307
(1) We only had three Christmas Eve services in					

2015					
(2) We had three snowstorms in 2015					
(3) We switched to one service in 2015					
(4) Pastor Jenn on Sabbatical					

2020

A special thank you to all who volunteered in assisting with ushering responsibilities in 2020. This was a challenging year in many respects and tracking attendance was certainly no exception! Pastor Jenn worked hard bringing new and innovative ways for all of us to “attend” worship this year. Below are 9 columns representing the ever evolving ways in which we “came together” for worship in 2020.

**Due to the nature of sharing worship videos, YouTube and Facebook views are an evolving statistic and should only be used to understand general trends. Counts were tallied and recorded the Monday or Tuesday following the respective Sunday.

Services Attended Via:	Meeting House	Virtual	Summer Chapel	FB	FB Live	YouTube Live	YouTube O.D.	Vespers	W H	Total
Sunday Attendance (worship services and church school)	1993	1148	446	1435	100	1270	764	74	13	7243
Average Attendance Per Sunday (worship services & church school)										134
Worship Service Attendance only (not incl church school)										1868
Summer Average Attendance Per Sunday (not incl church school)										146
Ash Wednesday	62									
Ashes To Go	46									108
Palm Sunday		10								10
Maundy Thursday		5								5
Good Friday with Monroe Clergy Association –N/A										
Sunrise Service –N/A										
Easter Sunday		25								25
Advent Season Average Per Sunday (incl worship services and children)	184			102		177		51		588
Christmas Eve	86			166		259				511

*FB Face Book *O.D. On Demand *W.H. Wilton Hall

Respectfully submitted, by Diane Prall

Board of Deacons Annual Report 2020

The Board of Deacons works with the Senior Pastor to assist with the worship service and as appropriate, to assist with the pastoral cares of the church community. Worship service assistance is provided through our welcoming of all individuals to worship and the role of the Deacon of the Day every Sunday in providing an opening prayer. A Communion team of deacons provides communion assistance on the first Sunday of every month. Deacons also participate in special services such as Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Christmas Eve.

Based on preparatory work from past boards of deacons, a Pastoral Care team has been established, trained and commissioned and will be coordinated by Deacon Rev. Sheldon Smith in conjunction with our Sr. Pastor. Adapted from the Stephen ministry model, the pastoral care team will visit care receivers such as the elderly, shut-ins, and the sick on a periodic basis. This will allow care receivers to be connected to the life of the church and allow the pastoral care team to bring care receiver needs to the attention of the Sr. Pastor and deacons.

We all know that 2020 brought many changes to worship at MCC. The pandemic accelerated our move to a digital format for worship. We are thankful to the efforts of Pastor Jenn, Don & Kate Parker-Burgard, Scott Young, Noah Friend and many others in filming, editing, and managing the streaming and upload of our services to YouTube and Facebook. While we had discussed moving our services to the internet before the pandemic to allow our diaspora audience (college students or those who moved elsewhere) to virtually attend our services, the halting of in-person worship forced us to adapt. In June, we learned how to worship outdoors and socially distanced. In September we cautiously brought the service indoors. Also in the fall, we invested in better video equipment to improve our streaming capabilities. With the coming of winter, we have been carefully evaluating the health situation while trying to keep our in-person service as an option. We all look forward to a better situation later this year after members have been vaccinated, but we are thankful that we have learned how to be together in an online format as well.

Respectfully submitted, Larry Wissink

2020 Annual Memorial Fund Report

In 2020, \$2,755.00 was donated in memory of loved ones. Activity in the Memorial Fund account was as follows:

Beginning Balance on January 1, 2020		\$7,321.22
Deposits to Memorial Fund		
In Memory of James Davison	\$400.00	
In Memory of Raymond Wilkes	\$25.00	
In Memory of William Wakeley	\$1080.00	
In Memory of Rita Wissink	\$1,250.00	
Total Deposits in Memorial Fund 2020		+\$2,755.00
Total Withdrawals from Memorial Funds in 2020 (Tables \$837.90, Silver Coffee Pot \$407.27, Chapel Benches \$400.00 Live Streaming Equipment \$2,427.00)		- \$4,072.17
Balance as of December 31st, 2020 in Memorial Fund		\$6,004.05

2020 CLERK REPORT

Birth (1)

Lucy Rae Kaminski 2/28/2020

Baptism (2)

Lucy Rae Kaminski 7/26/2020

Lyla Gracelyn Blaiotta 8/16/2020

Confirmation (5)

Mia Briggs 6/21/2020

Evelyn Goyette 6/21/2020

Gregory Nivison 6/21/2020

Caroline Wittenauer 6/21/2020

Kathryn Wittenauer 6/21/2020

Death of Loved Ones (5)

Frank Pinto 2/6/2020

George Moffat 3/8/2020

Raymond Wilkes 4/28/2020

Bill Wakeley 10/2/2020

Jean Weicker 12/7/2020

*Death of Loved Ones,
Non-members*

Jim Davison 6/3/2020

Rita Wissink 11/21/2020

New Member (0)

Reinstated Membership (0)

Marriage (0)

Removed from Membership After Inactive

19

- David Ward
- Jacque Ward
- Jennifer Nikola
- Marian Hampel
- Matthew Hampel
- Jacob Hampel
- Joan O'Mara
- Lani Siciliano
- Joe Siciliano
- Kyra Siciliano
- Karen Manuzzi
- Nick Manuzzi
- Daniel Manuzzi
- Kristen Manuzzi

- Kenneth Fredeen -Transferred
- Donna Jean Fredeen -Transferred
- Elissa Fredeen -Transferred
- Andrew Fredeen -Transferred
- Anna Fredeen - Transferred

Active Members as of January 2020

469

New Members 0
 Confirmands 5

Summary

Reactivation, Confirmands & New Members 5
 Removed after Inactive 14
 Deaths of Loved Ones 5
 Transferred 5
Active Members as of January 2021 was 466 **450**

Respectfully Submitted By Diane Prall

Faith Formation Annual Report 2020

As every part of our lives have been affected by the COVID-19 virus, the Faith Formation Committee attempted to offer stability in the religious education of our congregation while upholding the fluid protocols being set by the state of Connecticut. The health and safety of our parishioners and volunteers was at the forefront of every decision made for the reduced activities.

In January 2020 we were in regular Sunday school and Youth groups; planning for Lent. By March, Debi pivoted Sunday school and Jr. PF to Zoom which lasted until June.

Debi offered a Virtual VBS in partnership with Bloomfield Congregational Church in July and August, and during September and October, Debi was meeting with Jr. PF outdoors. We decided to begin having hybrid Sunday school due to the cooler weather.

In October Jr. PF went on a Haunted Hayride and had the first in-person Sunday school, but due to the increasing virus numbers in town, in November we decided to pivot Sunday school back to Zoom twice a month through January. Also, for some fun and safe social distancing, Jr. PF went to Silver Lake for an outdoor Adventure Day in November.

December followed with Zoom Sunday school and Jr. PF held a Nativity Presentation at the Fireside Vespers on the 20th.

Respectfully submitted, Jessica Pfalzgraf – Co-Chair, Melissa Coleman – Co-Chair, Korene Dahl, Kelsey Maiolo, Mike McEvoy, Jeff Smith

Senior Pilgrim Fellowship Report 2020

Senior PF started off our 2019-2020 year strong with a new leadership in place (Abby Clausen, President, Lydia Agular, VP, Josh Corell, Treasurer, Amanda Cohen, Secretary, and Grace Callanan as Minister of Outreach). We planned out a great year of discussions for our regular Sunday night meetings where we share our highs & lows of each week, discuss relevant issues, current events, explore more about faith and our lives, sing, and pray. We live by our covenant: learning to love, keeping an open mind, and welcoming every single person who comes our way with open arms, all while becoming important young members of our greater community.

Our adult advisors continued to be a cohesive team helping to make PF a group that continues to grow; lead by Kelsey Kaminski (16 years), along with Joe Gilberti (23 years) , Pastor Jenn Gingras(10 years) , Joshua Post (12 years) , Kiersten Rooney (16 years), and Pauley Cardentey (2years).

After planning a successful Fall Retreat to Silver Lake, and multiple community service projects, we got the ball rolling on our big fundraising event, the Senior PF Chili Cookoff! This year we also added a special twist and included a rent of PF her portion to our chili cook off which also was a huge success! We are so proud to announce that this was the most successful cookoff in PF history, almost doubling our profits from years past and we are so proud of all of the PFers efforts in putting the event together! All of the proceeds were supposed to go towards our annual summer mission trip, which would have been located in Washington DC!

Like everything else happening in the church, we had to change gears and shift our weekly meetings to zoom calls for the safety of our PFers. Once we got the all clear to me in person, we began returning to our weekly meetings outdoors all masked and remaining socially distant. We were also able to continue a yearly PF tradition and successfully planned a youth Sunday that occurred in late July.

In the fall, we brought in our newly elected leadership team Which consist of Josh Correll (senior) as president, Jake Minch (senior) as vice president, Grace Callanan (senior) as treasurer, Josie Kelman (senior) as secretary, and Vee Sampson (junior) as our minister of outreach. We are so proud that this leadership group has been able to adapt to all of our new protocols and continue to be doing the best they can to make sure that PF traditions continue, even through these tough times.

We are always grateful that MCC supports Senior PF and we love that this group brings so many youth members from our church and outside of our community together in a loving and safe environment, especially during this past year. We are extra thankful for technology, and now being able to meet as often as we can in person, and still feel supported and heard by those who love and care for us. We can't thank you enough for the love, support and care! We are hopeful that the year 2021 will be better and brighter and hopefully filled with more exciting opportunities to grow and love with each other, our community and with Christ.

- Kelsey Kamisnki, Lead Advisor of Senior Pilgrim Fellowship

Junior Pilgrim Fellowship Annual Report 2020

Our year began with our regular gatherings on Sunday evenings, but in March pivoted to a Zoom format. We were able to gather this way every other week from 8:00-9:00 pm on Sundays and had some good discussions, had Scavenger Hunts, and played Scategories and Pictionary. We had a mission trip planned to volunteer and sleep at Nourish Bridgeport in June, but we also had to cancel that due to the pandemic.

Over the summer we met in person at Great Hollow Lake and the Monroe Green and decided that we would continue to gather outdoors until the weather became cold. In September we had two movie nights. In October we went on our annual Haunted Hayride and had a Halloween Party. In November we moved into Wilton Hall and gathered from 3:00-4:30 pm. In November we also went to Silver Lake in Sharon, CT for an Adventure Day which was a great day! In December the group offered a Nativity Presentation at the Advent Fireside Vespers. They planned and created the presentation which was well received.

We said "Goodbye" to Jacob Parker-Burgard as he moved to New York for work. While we are happy for his job and new life, we miss him a lot. Unfortunately, Marc Cardentey was also not able to return as an Adviser which once again left that gap for this program. Thanks goes to Jessica Pfalzgraf for being our substitute as well as Ann Marie Campbell who has agreed to be an Adviser. We could always use another Adviser or two!

Hopefully 2021 will be a better year, but Junior PF has shown me that nothing can stop these Epic Humans!

Peace, Debi Mastroni-Kenyon

Board of Christian Outreach Report 2020

2020 challenged us in ways we were never thought possible, but we were able to find a few opportunities to support our wider church community.

In February, we were able to serve our normal meal of chili, vegetables, salad, and dessert, but for April we needed to pivot to a COVID19 safety protocol. Pastor Guy requested that we provide a bagged lunch of a sandwich, chips, apple and water, ensuring that a meal was available and able to be distributed in a safe way. Thanks to our congregation and Outreach board, we continued providing that meal throughout 2020, and will continue into 2021 until further notice. In December, through the generosity of our congregation, we added scarves and socks, as well as some hats for the over 100 clients of SGS along with the bagged lunches.

Unfortunately, we cancelled our annual Tag Sale, but we are hopeful that we will be back in 2021!

Crop Walk was virtual and incredibly awesome! Julie McClenathan and her team of Rob, Kristine Logan, Don & Kate Parker-Burgard, and Chuck & Bonnie Schneider raised over **\$2,100!!!** Thank you to all who donated!

Despite the pandemic, we planted our **Giving Gardens** at MCC and Good Shepherd led by Rob McClenathan! We are in our 7th year of providing fresh vegetables for those in need at the Monroe Food Pantry, Pivot Ministries, Bridgeport Rescue Mission, Prospect House, Merton House and nOURish Bridgeport. We are actively looking for folks to help maintain the gardens as we continue to see an increase in need for fresh vegetables. We could not continue these efforts without the continued and constant support from Pat & Donna O'Hara, who provide both soil and plants for our gardens. _Thanks to Pat & Donna!

In July, LEEANNE McEvoy learned of a fire at the PT Barnum apartments in July, which displaced over 40 people and 14 families. Through her efforts and your contributions and support, we were able to donate \$520 to help provide gift cards for food, clothing and some furnishings to replace what was lost to those families. Thank you!

Our fall **Craft Beer & Wine Tasting** was held on Pierce Lawn with proper social distancing and mask wearing and was attended by about 25 folks, raising a whopping **\$1,035!** Thank you to Roy Nealon, who wowed us with excellent vintages of wine and incredible knowledge! Our craft beer was chosen and shared by Al Jesulaitis and donated by Mark & Tessa at Veracious. A wonderful time of fellowship was had by all! We split the proceeds equally between Geraldine Johnson School in Bridgeport and nOURish Bridgeport food pantry.

This year has been long and incredibly difficult, but as a church family we figured out how to continue to support each other and those around us. Sharing in the work of the Outreach board is a gift. Thank you for allowing me to serve.

Peace, Kathy Maiolo, Chairperson

Covenant to Care Annual Report 2020

Sadly, due to pandemic restrictions, there has been no Covenant to Care activity to report for this year.
Diane Prall, Monroe Congregational Church Liaison Covenant to Care for Children

Centre Green Committee Annual Report 2020

The activities on the Centre Green were significantly curtailed this year due to adherence to the corona virus recommended protocols. Both our Strawberry Festival and St. Peter's Apple Festival were cancelled, and our Boys Scout Troop 63 cancelled their usual February overnight campout. However, in January the Scouts did use the Green to test run their station skills in preparation for the Klondike Derby that they co-hosted with a group of Girl Scouts from Stratford; about 50 scouts participated. Through the year the Scouts used the Green for their outdoor (social distanced) meetings along with the use of the fire pit on the Pierce Lawn.

In August the Town's Park and Recreation Department crew removed a huge tree branch and debris downed by a tropical storm that damaged the large maple tree in the center of the Green. They also provided the mowing and fall clean-up during the year. In October the Think Pink Committee in Town provided a luminaries display for Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

The only social gathering events held this year was the mid-afternoon Ice Cream Social on September 13th, sponsored by our congregation and that of St. Peter's to support a Monroe Playground Foundation fundraiser, and our annual Christmas tree lighting held on the first Sunday evening in December. The tree lighting included live metal drum music provided by the Jim Royle Drum Studio of Bridgeport.

Submitted by Gary Thompson, Committee Representative

Monroe Green Committee Treasurer's Report Covering December 31, 2019, to December 31, 2020

<u>Balance on December 31, 2019</u>	\$199.61
<u>Receipts</u>	
Monroe Congregational Church	\$250.00
St. Peter's Episcopal Church	\$250.00
<u>Total Receipts</u>	\$500.00
<u>Subtotal</u>	<u>\$699.61</u>
<u>Disbursements</u>	
Eversource (electric utility bills)	\$535.36
<u>Total Disbursements</u>	\$535.36
<u>Balance on December 31, 2020</u>	<u>\$164.25</u>

Respectfully Submitted by, Joshua Friend, Treasurer

Board of Christian Fellowship Annual Report 2020

Fellowship kicked off the year with a hugely successful Coffee House event in Feb. Shortly after COVID 19 it and caused Fellowship to be relatively inactive until September 2020. We shut down right before Easter and remained shut down through Mother's Day - preventing us from celebrating some of our more popular springtime events. We brought back coffee hours in September by providing outdoor refreshments which was well received. These moved indoors in Nov 2020 once the weather no longer permitted outdoor gatherings, and continued through Dec 2020. Despite hosting coffee hours we felt due to the increasing numbers, a thanksgiving and Christmas coffee hour were not feasible just yet. However, to maintain a sense of fellowship during Christmas, we worked with the congregation to create an MCC Holiday Cookbook which was distributed at church to our members. We hope to have more fellowship activities in 2021.

Morning Circle Report 2020

Officers: Chair – Jackie Bleakney Secretary – Susie Cuseo Treasurer – Ann Zeiner

Activities for 2020:

Morning Circle members meet the second Wednesday of each month at 11:00AM in Dineson Parlor with the exceptions of January, February, July and August. Numerous cancelled meetings due to COVID virus.

March – Ten members put together 27 birthday bags for the Food Pantry. A representative from Spadaccino and Gallagher's Funeral Home came to speak about future planning in case of death.

April – Cancelled.

May – Cancelled.

June – Cancelled.

September – Ten members put together 22 birthday bags for the Food Pantry. Jenn spoke about strategies for coping with anxiety during the pandemic.

October – Ten members put together 84 Halloween bags for the Food Pantry. Fifteen gift tags for the Giving Tree were given out.

November – Cancelled.

December – Cancelled.

Treasurer's Report: \$587.41 Dec 2019

Donation: Monroe Food Bank	-\$100	Sunshine Fund Collection:	+\$145
Donation: Memory of Bill Wakeley	-\$ 25	Dues:	+\$50
Donation: Memory of George Moffat	-\$ 25	Interest:	+ .25
Heifer International Donation:	-\$100	Heifer International:	+\$29

Total (as of 10/20) \$588.61

The Morning Circle directory contains 15 members. We have an average of 10 members attending each meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Susie Cuseo, Morning Circle Secretary

Mustard Seed Shoppe Report

2020 started as a good year for the Mustard Seed Shoppe. We were open, the customers came, and we made money. Our church pledge (\$6,500) and the Pastor's Purse (\$300) were paid. Then March arrived and unfortunately our doors had to be shut. After many closed months we had planned to open again in November, but that was not to be.

Even though we have been closed most of the year our donations have continued. \$1,000 each has been given to Monroe Project Warmth and the Monroe Food Pantry. On Tuesdays clothes donations have been continued to be sorted. And some clothing and household goods have been given to the Center for Family Justice and Goodwill. Julie McClenathan and Lois Spence packed up 10 boxes (157 lbs.) and shipped them to a South Dakota Reservation. The Board of Outreach paid the postage (\$200.97).

And finally, because we all needed a bit of cheer, the Mustard Seed once again paid for the Christmas Wreaths on all of the church's buildings.

We look forward to 2021 and the wonderful news of our grand re-opening!
The Mustard Seed Committee

Music/Choir Report 2020

Obviously 2020 was a very unusual year for our Choir due to the pandemic. In mid-March we enjoyed a casual choir party following a Wednesday evening rehearsal, unaware that this would be our final rehearsal of the year. Up to that point, the Choir sang at all regular services, and was about to begin work on Lenten/Easter music.

Thanks to the technical and artistic abilities of Katherine Logan and Noah Friend, the Choir was able to produce three video performances: "River In Judea", "He Never Failed Me Yet", and a special anthem for Christmas, "Celtic Christmas Lullaby" (which was enhanced by the flute playing of Bethany Dupuis). The results were beautiful, and although nothing can compare with the experience of singing together, these videos provided an opportunity for "virtual fellowship" and music making. As an added bonus, our friends Cady Gingras, Cynthia Robinson, her child Renn, and Karen Manuzzi joined us, which was wonderful. Dave Walker even added his virtuosic euphonium skills to the mix!

One of the lessons of this pandemic has been a reminder of how important and nurturing music is to the life of MCC. Our services definitely were missing something without the Choir, and the fellowship we enjoy each week at rehearsal was also greatly missed. Fortunately, MCC has a wealth of gifted and generous musicians, all of whom helped to provide music throughout the year. I am especially grateful to Katherine Logan for adding her beautiful voice to many of our services, including the "Gospel Goes to Broadway" series during the summer. Julie McClenathan and the MCC Band (John O'Rourke, Rob McClenathan, Don Parker-Burgard) also provided music on multiple occasions, always enjoyed and appreciated by the congregation. I also want to thank Ed Burke, Larry Wissink, Jack Campbell, Olivia Scoppetto, Janie Allen, Kate Parker-Burgard (at the organ!) Alex Gutierrez, Cady Gingras, Bethany Dupuis and Bill Stadler for their musical contributions throughout the year. Thanks also to Debi

Mastroni-Kenyon for her creative Bible/Music studies, as well as her enthusiasm for choral music and singing.

In the category of “Behind The Scenes”: Many thanks to our Music Librarian Emeritus Betty Heiney and her associate Jim Vance for keeping our choir music organized and accounted for each week, a nearly impossible task if there ever was one.

I want to thank Pastor Jenn Gingras for the privilege of working with her. I am grateful for Jenn’s unique combination of wisdom and a sharp sense of humor, as well as her creativity during this stressful year.

Music in church provides fellowship and gives expression to our deepest emotions and spiritual selves. Above all, we offer music in the spirit of gratitude and deep joy to God, for the glimpses of our best selves that music offers.

Respectfully submitted, Will Duchon

**Monroe Congregational Church
2021 Officers, Boards and Committees**

Officers		Term	Ends
Moderator	Arlene Redmond	First	January 2023
Treasurer	Bill Stadler	First	January 2023
Asst. Treasurer	Fred Dubois	First	January 2023
Receiver	John O'Rourke	Third	January 2022
Clerk	Barbara Pellegrino	First	January 2023
Historian	Gary Thompson	Second	January 2023

Diaconate (12)		Term	Ends
1. Michael Pfalzgraf		Second	January 2022
2. Susie Cuseo (chair)		Second	January 2022
3. Vinay Sampson		Second	January 2022
4. Caleb Nealon (Youth)		First	January 2022
5. Catherine Gingras		First	January 2022
6. Deborah Vargovchik		First	January 2022
7. Linda Fracassini	First	January 2022	
8. Joanne Malia		First	January 2022
9. Don Parker-Burgard		First	January 2022
10. Nancy Smith		First	January 2022
11. Katherine Logan		First	January 2022
12. Jim Vance		First	January 2023

Friends of the Board: Trees Whitbeck (Communion, DOD alternate), Gay Muizulis (Pastoral Care)

Music Committee (appointed by Deacons)

1. Will Duchon
2. Rev. Jenn Gingras
3. Jim Gill
4. Jim Vance
5. Betty Heiney

Trustees (7-12)		Term	Ends
1. Mark Barnhart		Second	January 2022
2. Andy Nivison		First	January 2022
3. Maria Barresi		First	January 2023
4. Scott Young		First	January 2023
5. James Brown		First	January 2023
6. Open		First	January 2023
7. Open		First	January 2023

Friends of the Board: Tom Briggs, Rich Correll, Bob Hammond (property), David Allen (property)

Christian Education (6-9)	Term	Ends
1. Jessica Pfalzgraf (chair)	Second	January 2022
2. Mike McEvoy	Second	January 2022
3. Korene Dahl	First	January 2022
4. Kelsey Kaminski	First	January 2022
5. Meg Sullivan	First	January 2023
6. Open	First	January 2023

Friends of the Board: Betsy Gilberti

Christian Education Ex-Officio positions:

Junior P.F. Advisors	Ann Marie Campbell Debi Mastroni-Kenyon	
Senior P.F. Advisors	Kelsey Kaminski (lead) Joe Gilberti Kiersten Rooney	Rev. Jenn Gingras Joshua Post Paul Cardentey

Senior Pilgrim Fellowship Officers (elected by Senior PF)

President:	Josh Correll
Vice President:	Jake Minch
Secretary:	Josie Kelman
Treasurer:	Grace Callanan
Minister of Outreach:	Vinathi (Vee) Sampson

Christian Fellowship: (6-9)	Term	ends
1. Michelle Cardentey (co-chair)	Second	January 2022
2. Jeanette Combs (co-chair)	Second	January 2022
3. Dot Dralus	Second	January 2022
4. Marge Fox	First	January 2021
5. Lisa (Ed) Burke	First	January 2023
6. Open	First	January 2023

Friends of the Board: Carol Kelly

Christian Outreach (6-9)	Term	Ends
1. Linda Resnick	Second	January 2022
2. Vaughan Askue	First	January 2022
3. Donna Konkol	First	January 2022
4. Leanne McEvoy	First	January 2022
5. Julie McClenathan	First	January 2022
5. Kathy Allen	First	January 2023

Friends of the Board: Covenant to Care Coordinator: Diane Prall, St George's Supper: Stacy Andrecyk, Kate Parker-Burgard, Rob McClenathan, Dave Allen, Lois Spence, Kathy Maiolo

Giving Garden Friends of Outreach (no term)

1. Donna Konkol
2. Rob McClenathan
3. Lois Spence

Nominating Committee (one 2-year term)

	<u>Ends</u>
1. Kyla Allen	January 2022
2. Jane Allen	January 2022
3. Frank Wittenauer	January 2023

UCC CT Conference Delegates

	<u>Term</u>	<u>Ends</u>
1. Nancy Smith	Second	January 2023
2. Rev. Sheldon Smith	Second	January 2023
3. David Bailey (alternate)	Second	January 2023

Fairfield East Assoc. Delegates

	<u>Term</u>	<u>Ends</u>
1. Nancy Smith	Second	January 2023
2. Rev. Sheldon Smith	Second	January 2023
3. David Bailey (alternate)	Second	January 2023

Mustard Seed Committee (self-appointed, no term)

1. Peggy Villani (chair)
2. Ann Zeiner (treasurer)
3. Kate Parker-Burgard
4. Lois Spence
5. Jackie Bleakney
6. Jan Pearson

Safe Conduct (2 + 2 appointed by Council)

	<u>Term</u>	<u>Ends</u>
1.		
2.		

Monroe Green Committee (appointed by Council)

- 1.
- 2.

Senior Pastor PRC (appointed by Council)

1. Kim Riffard (convener)
2. Mark Malia
3. Ann Zeiner
4. Wendy Colegrove

Director of Faith Formation ERC (appointed by Council)

1. Rev. Jennifer Gingras
2. Jessica Pfalzgraf (convener)
3. Christine Wittenauer
4. Roy Nealon

Strawberry Festival Co-Chairs

1. John Maiolo
2. Clark Gingras