

February 21, 2021

The First Sunday in Lent

10:00 am

*Monroe Congregational Church is an Open and Affirming congregation.
Our deacons and pastors hope you will feel at home here. No matter who you are or
where you are on life's journey, we welcome you in Christ's name*

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Prelude

Sarabande

J.S. Bach, 1722

Welcome & Announcements

Opening Prayer

Vinay Sampson, Deacon of the Day

***Our Church's Covenant**

*We declare our faith in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
In Holy covenant, we bind ourselves to God and each other, becoming
devoted disciples and active apostles.
We promise each other to be faithful in worship and in support of this
church, whose Savior and Lord is Jesus Christ.
In Christian love, we will care for and support each other.
With the Bible as our guide, we willingly promise all that we are and all that
we have, to the fulfillment of God's Kingdom.
Freely we say these things, glorying in the joy of our salvation.*

***Passing the Peace**

*In order for those tuning in from home to feel included,
please turn and greet the webcam as you share signs of peace with one another.*

Call to Confession– Unison Prayer - Silent Prayer

*Lord, sometimes we are confused. The whole world seems to be shrieking in pain.
Disease reigns supreme in too many communities, near and far. We turn an
indifferent ear to the cries of others because we are so overwhelmed by the need.
We feel helpless in the face of such chaos. Help us, O Lord. Heal our spirits as well
as our bodies. Open our hearts and our eyes to see, so that we may be empowered
to service rather than apathy. Make us ready to truly become your disciples. Amen.
~silence~*

Words of Assurance

Morning Prayers

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will
be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us
our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us
from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

Offertory

Love Song

Lesley Duncan, 1970

*Our offering plate may be found on the hospitality table as you leave worship today.
You may also choose to give online at www.mcc-ucc/donate.*

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

Sermon Neighbor Care Rev. Jennifer Gingras

Benediction

Postlude Give Me Love. *George Harrison, 1973*

God is still speaking, welcome to all who are worshipping with us today, in-person and online!

Our Pandemic Commandments

In order to keep our community members safe, please follow these gathering guidelines:

- Thou shalt stay home if you feel sick or have a fever (and catch us on YouTube/Facebook)
- Thou shalt wear a mask (if you need one, just ask!)
- Thou shalt maintain a holy distance of 6 ft from a neighbor (even when passing peace)
- Some pews are taped off, to allow space between the seating of households. Please respect the tape, enter/exit from the side of the pew that is open.
- We have provided hand sanitizer and tissues in the pews, please use carefully as the chemicals are corrosive on wood and other surfaces
- We have slightly propped open the two front windows and church doors to allow for optimum air circulation and HEPA filtering, the heat is on and lap blankets are available

Worship is live streamed on church's You Tube Channel under CCLI Streaming License #2169137 on: <https://www.youtube.com/monroecongregationalchurchucc>, as well as on our Facebook page "Monroe Congregational Church, UCC"

We offer a virtual zoom coffee hour at 11:30:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81347810863?pwd=SERMb1ILNUZLdHVNc3VMcmswcEthUT09>

✦ We are an **Open & Affirming** congregation of the United Church of Christ, and we invite everyone to join in the full life and ministry of this church. We strive in word and deed to be faithful to Jesus' model of loving acceptance and welcome to all persons, inclusive of every age, race, ability, economic and social status, nationality, faith background, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital standing and family structure.

Thank you for assisting in this morning's worship!

- **Deacon:** Vinay Sampson
- **Usher:** Susie Cuseo
- **Trustee:** Mark Barnhart
- **Counter:** John O'Rourke



to the following people and to anyone we may have missed, we will keep you in our prayers. (Number is birth date)

Casey McCormick ⁽²²⁾

Barbara Pellegrino ⁽²⁵⁾

Gerrit Wissink ⁽²⁶⁾

Jacob Parker-Burgard ⁽²²⁾

David Allen ⁽²⁶⁾

Maggie Fraser ⁽²⁸⁾

Emma Campbell ⁽²³⁾

Mark Andrejczyk ⁽²⁶⁾

Lucy Kaminski ⁽²⁸⁾

Eric Grundt ⁽²⁴⁾

Vaughan Askue ⁽²⁶⁾

Happy Anniversary to the following people and to anyone we may have missed, we will keep you in our prayers. (Number in parenthesis is anniversary date):

Paul & Marc Cardentey ⁽²⁸⁾



We are offering an in person, outdoor gathering today, February 21st, from 10:00-11:00 am for children in K-5th Grade. We will have outdoor activities and an opportunity for the kiddos to see each other. If there is bad weather this event will be canceled. With safety in mind, we are asking you to:

- make sure your child(ren) is/are masked
- make sure to drop off and pick up your child(ren) at the benches outside of Rexford House (please do not bring them to the Meetinghouse first)
- make sure your child(ren) is/are wearing weather appropriate clothing

As the new year begins, we hope that our friends and loved ones listed on our weekly prayer list have found healing of both body and soul. If you or your loved one finds you are no longer in need of our weekly prayer, please let Diane know so we may rejoice in the good news and remove the name making room for those who may need to be added. secretary@mcc-ucc.org or call the office 203-268-9327

In Our Prayers

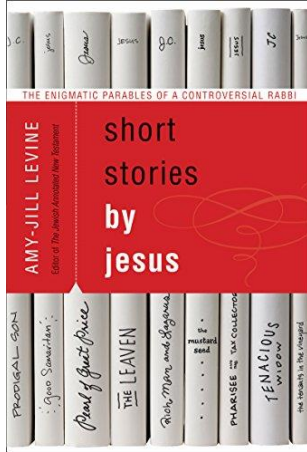
Susan Walker, Jackie Ajello (Michele Mount's mother); **Michael Barresi** (Maria's Son); **Jennifer Bittar** (Loraine Zeiner's friend); **Jackie Bleakney; Byron Brown & Bruce Bryant** (friends of Will Duchon); **Cheryl Ciambriello** (Wendy Colegrove's friend); **Dot Dralus; Matt Duchon; Dave Fuller** (Gail Olson's brother); **Meredith Gibson** (Paul & Judy Coward's niece); **Lily Grace** (Maria Barresi's baby cousin); **Fern Griffith** (Ashley Levin's friend); **Karen Guinness** (Jennifer Nivison's friend); **Rachel Fracassini** (Jack & Linda Fracassini's niece); **Gary & Julie Hedine** (Nancy Hedine's son & daughter-in-law); **Mary & Rachel Heerema** (Julia Gutierrez's mom and sister); **Bob Heffernan** (Ann Zeiner's son-in-law); **Brian Hopkins** (Donna Konkol's cousin); **Vera James** (Jenn Wissink's mother); **Heather Joyce** (Paul & Judy Coward's daughter); **Kelti** (friend of Liska Gutierrez); **Walter Lane** (Marge Fox's brother-in-law); **Mary-Margaret Logan** (Andrew's mother); **Beverly Lowrey** (Jackie Bleakney); **Jacque MacLean** (Jennifer Nivison's friend); **Nicole Malia; Mike** (Janie Allen's son); **Rev. Jonathan Miller** (Paul & Judy Coward's friend); **Olivia Morrison** (Donna Nickdow's niece); **Joe Mumper** (Julie McClenathan's friend); **Kathy Nivison** (Andy's mother); **Pat Nugent; Ocampo family** (friends of Liska Gutierrez); **Olson Family; Ray Osborne** (Colegrove's Family friend); **Dean Perosino** (Gayle Hammond's brother); **Geno Piacentini** (Karen MacDonald's husband); **P.T. Philip** (Liz Sampson's father); **Norman & Jan Ricker** (Linda & Jack Fracassini's friend); **Barbara Rivel** (Judy Coward's friend); **Regina Roberts** (Kathy Maiolo's niece); **Kelly Rodman** (Angela Cross' friend); **Alfredo Rodriguez** (Osirus Gutierrez's cousin); **Roshong** (Judy Coward's nephew); **Noah Santiago** (Shari Carrano's great-grandson); **Connor Scalia** (Jen Nivison's friend); **Carlos Serrano** (Kathy Maiolo's cousin); **Al Shaeffer; Yessika Siccardi** (Sampson family friend); **Bernie Sippin; John Skarupa** (Barb Pellegrino's brother); **Christine Stadler; William Stadler** (Jessica Pfalzgraf's nephew); **Tom & Jane Steen** (Jessica Pfalzgraf's father & step-mother); **Christian & Dain Steiner** (Julie McClenathan's nephews); **Claire Stenzel** (June & Myron Winger's granddaughter); **Ellie Swindlehurst** (Joanne Malia's mother); **Olga Terwilliger** (Nancy Hedine's sister-in-law); **Ian Thompson** (Gary's cousin); **Dick Thompson** (Gary's cousin); **Meg Trogolo** (Paul & Judy Coward's niece); **Richard Turco** (Jack Fracassini's cousin); **Walker Family; Margaret Woodruff** (Mike Pfalzgraf's mother); **Charles L. Wynn, Sr.,** (and his mother) **Alleane Wynn** (friends of Will Duchon); **Allen Zeiner** (Ann Zeiner's son); **Ann Zeiner**

The concerns of our world: *Those who serve or live in war or conflict zones; first responders and those who serve in law enforcement; those who suffer discrimination; those who struggle with mental illness, addiction, divorce or separation; Caregivers; the homeless, homebound and refugees; Our friends living on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation and in Oaxaca, Mexico*

Those serving in the military, veterans & their families: South Korea: **Zachary Gingras**, Washington: **Rachel Hoffman** (Vaughan Askue's daughter), Virginia: **Chris Meneses** (Loraine Zeiner's friend), Georgia: **Zachary Peters** (Jacob Parker-Burgard's cousin), Kuwait: **Steven Roshong** (the Coward's nephew), South Carolina: **Bob Peters** (Don Parker-Burgard's brother-in-law), Afghanistan: **Samuel Siciliano**, North Carolina: **Jake Terifay**

Deacons

Lenten Opportunities:



Lenten Zoom Study – “Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi” by Amy Jill Levine. **Tuesday nights, 7:30-8:30 pm**

For those that like to study and discuss with a community of learners, but also want to follow safest pandemic protections. In this wise, entertaining, and educational book, Dr. Amy-Jill Levine offers a fresh, timely reinterpretation of Jesus' narratives. Levine reveals the parables' connections to first-century economic and agricultural life, social customs and morality, Jewish scriptures, and Roman culture. With this revitalized understanding, she interprets these moving stories for a contemporary listener, showing how the parables are not just about Jesus, but are also about us - and when understood rightly, still challenge and provoke us 2,000 years later. *Dr. Amy-Jill Levine is University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies and Mary Jane Werthan Professor of Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt Divinity School* This will be led by Pastor Jenn with a distanced learning format. You may choose to purchase the book from any preferred seller and read along, or just come as you are.

Zoom Meeting ID: 896 6457 2134 Passcode: 815586

- February 23 - The Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, Lost Son
- March 2 – The Good Samaritan
- March 9 – The Pearl of Great Price
- March 16 – The Mustard Seed
- March 23 – The Laborers in the Vineyard
- March 30 – The Widow and the Judge

Where Your Heart Is: An Illustrated Ministry Family Prayer Devotional. An all-ages curriculum resource in which you can work at your own pace. Each week features a short passage of scripture, reflection, coloring pages, and an activity to do with others. You may choose to work on it with the people in your household, extended family that lives far away, or other friends. Perhaps you'd like to plan a weekly Zoom gathering with your siblings who live far away, grandkids, or best friends from college days? Or maybe you'd like to find a couple of friends from our church family you can meet with on a weekly basis? Available for pick-up at Ashes to Go or the Open Labyrinth Walk on February 17th. Or you can e-mail Pastor Jenn (jenn@mcc-ucc.org) to get a PDF sent to you or arrange to pick up a printout.

Daily Meditations or Devotionals via E-mail or App. For those who love words, deep thoughts, theology and contemplating their faith, sign-up for a daily devotion sent to your e-mail. Use on your own or you might want to find a friend to partner with for discussion. Recommendations:

- 1) The United Church of Christ offers a daily devotion written by the Still Speaking writers group <https://www.ucc.org/daily-devotional/>
- 2) Franciscan Friar Richard Rohr and friends provide a short, thought-provoking text each day from the Center for Action and Contemplation www.cac.org
- 3) d365.org is a daily devotional technically designed for youth, but it is great for all ages. Access via their website OR you can download a free app on your tablet or phone www.d365.org .

Lenten Photo-A-Day Challenge (with thanks to the UMC) For visual learners and creative types who like to share posts on social media. Take a photo every day in Lent, with a daily prompt according to the list below. Share with the community how you perceive each word of the day by posting that photo on Facebook and Instagram, tag The Monroe Congregational Church, include #MCCUCC and #LentenPhotoADay and #DigDeep

RETHINKCHURCH[®]

Lent 2021

Photo-a-Day Challenge

<p>February</p> <p>2/17 - Covenant 2/18 - Living 2/19 - Sign 2/20 - Remember 2/21 - Celebrate 2/22 - Walk 2/23 - Name 2/24 - Everlasting 2/25 - Call 2/26 - Bless 2/27 - Rise 2/28 - Celebrate</p>	<p>March</p> <p>3/1 - Spoke 3/2 - Words 3/3 - Steadfast 3/4 - Labor 3/5 - Rested 3/6 - Honor 3/7 - Celebrate 3/8 - Thanks 3/9 - Endures 3/10 - Gathered 3/11 - Healed 3/12 - Delivered 3/13 - Wonderful 3/14 - Celebrate 3/15 - Days 3/16 - Coming 3/17 - New 3/18 - House 3/19 - Write 3/20 - Teach 3/21 - Celebrate</p>	<p>3/22 - Given 3/23 - Sustain 3/24 - Weary 3/25 - Wakens 3/26 - Gave 3/27 - Together 3/28 - Celebrate</p> <p>Holy Week</p> <p>3/29 - Dark 3/30 - Removed 3/31 - Loved 4/1 - Following 4/2 - Reached 4/3 - Why 4/4 - Celebrate</p>
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Each day during Lent , we will post a word of the day. We invite you to pause, reflect and post a response on Instagram, Twitter or Facebook. Your post should illustrate how you perceive each word of the day. No explanation needed.
 You can share a photo, poem or even a simple thought.

Beloved, Love MCC's 2021 Stewardship Campaign

At the Monroe Congregational Church, we give ourselves to answering God's call to love. Our annual stewardship campaign provides the resources our congregation needs to answer God's call. If you haven't had a chance to submit your pledge for 2021 yet, please go to our church's donate page (www.mcc-ucc.org/donate) and download an editable PDF to e-mail to our Receiver, John O'Rourke at jorourke224@gmail.com.

Campaign update: As of 2/20/2021, 76 pledges have been received for a total of \$177,099.00

Updating Electronic Payments for 2021

Over the past year, an increasing number of MCC members have switched to electronic payments of their pledges. This has been very helpful in maintaining our cash flow during the pandemic and disruption of in-person services. If you are making electronic payments via Vanco (www.mcc-ucc.org/donate), or your own bank, please note that if you increased your pledge to MCC for 2021, you'll need to update your Vanco payment information on our web site, or via your bank.

Also, if you are making donations to MCC via Vanco (i.e. the Donate button on our web site), and if the donation is to fulfill a pledge please be sure to select "**Pledge**" for your payment so it will be recorded properly on your Giving Statement and in our records.

Thanks for your support of MCC! John O'Rourke – Receiver

Christian Education

February Senior PF Service Project



This month's service project is donating clothes to the Bridgeport Rescue Mission! PF will be collecting clothes until the end of February but try to bring donations in ASAP! Please bring gently used/relatively new clothes (pants, shirts, coats, gloves, hats, shoes, etc.) or new underwear/socks. There is a bin located outside the front doors of Rexford House that is emptied regularly. If you have any questions please reach out to our Minister of Outreach, Vee Sampson. Thank you for your support!

Adult PF meets via Zoom the first and third Sundays of the month. For information about Adult PF please contact Don Parker-Burgard. dpburgard@sbcglobal.net





MCC Book Club Questions -contact Mary Unger (203) 268-5754

March 10th The Gown: A Novel of the Royal Wedding by Jennifer Robson.
Host: Trees Whitbeck

April 14th The Children Act by Ian McEwan.
Host: Arlene Redmond

MORNING CIRCLE

Morning Circle will not meet during the month of February. We invite all the women of the congregation to attend our **first meeting of 2021 on Wednesday, March 10** at 11AM in Wilton Hall. We will be gathering donations for birthday bags for the Food Pantry. Items include cake mix, frosting, birthday napkins and birthday candles. The

children who visit the Pantry with their parents truly love receiving these items and appreciate our efforts for making it a special time for them. Thank you for your generosity and kindness. A catered luncheon is scheduled to be provided during our short business meeting. More information will be forthcoming. Morning Circle hopes that you have a wonderful holiday and wishes that 2021 brings you much happiness, health, joy and success.

Community News



COVID-19 Vaccinations

The Monroe Health Department would like town residents age 65 and over to know that they may now register for the next available vaccine clinic at the Monroe Senior Center. Call and leave a message at the Monroe Health Department at 203-452-2818 and someone will get back to you with an appointment time.



Annie C

In CT, there are more than 4000 children in foster care, and the need for **Foster/Adoptive Families** is growing! Older children are especially difficult to place with either foster or adoptive families.

The Annie C Courtney Foundation conducts informational meetings for adults on how you can help by becoming a foster or adoptive parent or mentor. Meetings are held virtually all month long. Reservations are available upon request. To reserve a "seat" at a virtual meeting or to find out more information about becoming a foster or adoptive parent, check out their website at: www.AnnieC.org or call Celeste Burnett at 203-439-1733.

Please remember these children in your prayers in the hopes that they will find the love and support they need in foster, kinship and adoptive homes. Please also pray for the families who come forward to parent these special children, that all will receive the love and support from their communities. Thank you!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET TO KNOW SOMEONE OF A DIFFERENT FAITH?



"We are not meant to go to God alone, no matter who we are. We are meant to go together, enriched by one another's faith and wisdom and insights into the ways of God."~ Sr. Joan Chittister, OSB

You Are Invited

- to meet in groups of 4-6 on Zoom with members of other faiths
- to build community by building relationships
- we connect you with each other, and you decide the date, time, and frequency of the meetings
- there is no set agenda, but we will offer some suggested questions and discussion options to get you started



Let's see what we can build over a simple, virtual cup of coffee!

Please call or email Frank Basler and he'll connect you with a group:
203-345-5682 or frank.basler@gmail.com

MCC Community Calendar

Week of Feb. 21st

10:00 am Worship
10:00 am Outdoor Sunday School
11:00 am Trustees (zoom)
11:30 am Zoom Coffee Hour
5:00 pm Adult PF
5-6:30 pm Senior PF (Wilton)

Tues. Feb 23rd

7:30 pm Lenten Zoom Study

Wed. Feb. 24th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. Feb. 25th

9:30 am Bible Study

Week of Feb. 28th

10:00 am Worship
11:30 am Zoom Coffee Hour
5-6:30 pm Senior PF (Wilton)

Tues. Mar. 2nd

7:30 pm Lenten Zoom Study

Wed. Mar. 3rd

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. Mar. 4th

9:30 am Bible Study

Week of Mar. 7th

10:00 am Worship - Communion
11:30 am Zoom Coffee Hour
4:00 pm Adult PF
5-6:30 pm Senior PF (Wilton)

Tues. Mar 9th

7:30 pm Lenten Zoom Study

Wed. Mar. 10th

11:00 Morning Circle
6:30 pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. Mar. 11th

9:30 am Bible Study

Week of Mar. 14th

Day LIGHT SAVINGS

10:00 am Worship
11:30 am Zoom Coffee Hour
5-6:30 pm Senior PF (Wilton)

Tues. Mar 16th

7:30 pm Lenten Zoom Study

Wed. Mar. 17th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. Mar. 18th

9:30 am Bible Study
7:00 pm CE

Week of Mar. 21st

10:00 am Worship
11:30 am Zoom Coffee Hour
12:30 am Trustees (zoom)
5:00 pm Adult PF
5-6:30 pm Senior PF (Wilton)

Tues. Mar. 23rd

7:30 pm Lenten Zoom Study

Wed. Mar. 24th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. Mar. 25th

9:30 am Bible Study

Week of Mar. 28th

10:00 am Worship
11:30 am Zoom Coffee Hour
5-6:30 pm Senior PF (Wilton)

Tues. Mar. 30th

7:30 pm Lenten Zoom Study

Wed. Mar. 31th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. Apr. 1st

9:30 am Bible Study