

January 10, 2021

Epiphany

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 *Brightest and Best (J. Harding, 1892)*

Welcome & Announcements

Opening Prayer Susie Cuseo, 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.*

Call to Confession– Unison Prayer - Silent Prayer

*We know what it is like to be burnt by the flames of life, Holy God. We look for
ourselves in all the wrong places. We have gone through the waters of baptism, but
still live as if they have not changed us. We need to hear your words of hope,
Shaper of our lives. Help us to know that our failures do not cause you to stop
loving us, for you continue to claim us, gathering us up in your compassionate
arms. May we re- discover the steps of our journey with You. Amen. ~silence~*

Words of Assurance

***Passing of the Peace**

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 *We Three Kings (John Henry Hopkins, 1857)
John O'Rourke, guitar and vocalist*

*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.*

Scripture *Luke 3:15-22*

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not

worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people. But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, added to them all by shutting up John in prison.

Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

Sermon *Called by Name* Rev. Jennifer Gingras

Benediction

Postlude How Brightly Shines the Morning Star (*Philipp Nicolai, 1598*)

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 (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

This morning's 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"

Please join us for a time of fellowship following the service in Wilton Hall.

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

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81347810863?pwd=SERMb1LNUZLdHVNc3VMcm5wcEhUT09>

✦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.

Nativity Poem - Joseph Brodsky (1940-1996)

Imagine striking a match that night in the cave:

Imagine crockery, try to make use of its glaze

To feel cold cracks in the floor, the blankness of hunger.

Imagine the desert – but the desert is everywhere.

Imagine striking a match in that midnight cave,

The fire, the farm beasts in outline, the farm tools and stuff;

And imagine, as you towel your face in the enveloping folds,

Mary, Joseph, and the Infant in swaddling clothes.

Imagine the kings, the caravans' stilted procession

As they make for the cave, or, rather, three beams closing in

And in on the star, the creaking of loads, the clink of a cowbell;

(No thronging of Heaven as yet, no peal of the bell

That will ring in the end for the infant once he has earned it).

Imagine the Lord, for the first time, from darkness, and stranded

Immensely in distance, recognizing Himself in the Son

Of Man: His homelessness plain to him now in a homeless one.



Thank you for assisting in this morning's worship!

- **Deacon:** Susie Cuseo
- **Trustee:** Fred Dubois
- **Counter:** Tom Briggs

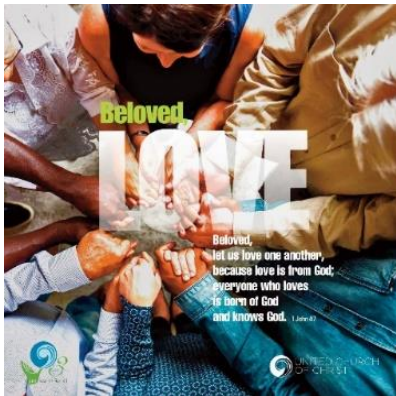


to the following people and to anyone we may have missed, we will keep you in our prayers. (Number is birth date)

Susan Granello ⁽¹⁰⁾
Alia Aguilar ⁽¹¹⁾
Joshua Correll ⁽¹¹⁾

Finlay Oatis ⁽¹¹⁾
Danielle Adams ⁽¹²⁾
Joanne Malia ⁽¹⁴⁾

David Coffey ⁽¹⁵⁾
Thomas Culp ⁽¹⁶⁾
Ann Zeiner ⁽¹⁶⁾



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. Generosity towards the annual pledge campaign assures that our congregation can faithfully answer God's call to love, because it enables us to plan for the next year's needs. You should have received our 2021 Stewardship Drive mailer, which includes a pledge card. Our hope is that you can complete and return it by the end of November to the church office, either by mailing it to MCC at 34 Church Street, Monroe CT 06468 or

dropping it in the plate on Sunday. For contact-free submission, 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 e-mail him at jorourke224@gmail.com.

Campaign update:

as of 1/7/2021, 61 pledges have been received for a total of \$165,215.00

Please visit our church's YouTube page to see testimonials from Don Parker-Burgard, Arlene Redmond, and Katherine & Kristina Logan.

In Our Prayers

The Walker Family on the loss of Susan's mother Amy Lee; **Jackie Ajello** (Michele Mount's mother); **Michael Barresi** (Maria's Son); **Jennifer Bittar** (Lorraine Zeiner's friend); **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); **Donnajean & Ken Fredeen; Gary & Julie Hedine** (Nancy Hedine's son & daughter-in-law); **Mary Heerema** (Julia Gutierrez's mom); **Rachel Heerema** (Julia Gutierrez's 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); **Susan Walker; Margaret Woodruff** (Mike Pfalzgraf's mother); **Charles L. Wynn, Sr.,** (and his mother) **Alleane Wynn** (friends of Will Duchon); **Bill Zaleha; 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** (Lorraine 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**

Church Council



Call to Annual Congregational Meeting * January 24, 2021

The members of Monroe Congregational Church are hereby called to attend the Annual Meeting of the Congregation to be held ONLINE at 11:00 am on Sunday, January 24th, 2021.

On December 22, 2020, Council voted unanimously the following stipulation for the meeting: Due to continuing risk of COVID-19 and prohibition on large gatherings, and on advice of the UCC and the State of Connecticut, that the MCC Annual Congregational Meeting on January 24, 2021 shall be conducted as a virtual meeting open to participation of all members, with provisions to attend in person for members unable to join online.

The Zoom link for the meeting is: <https://stlukesct.zoom.us/j/95692371244>. Should you wish to attend in person, you may do so in Wilton Hall with current safety protocol.

The agenda will include the following: Receiving of Reports; Electing Officers, Board Members and Delegates; Adopting the 2021 budget and any other business that must properly come before the Congregation.

STAR Words Are Here!



At church today we'll have a table spread with STAR words for 2021 for you to choose from. Acknowledging that many of our folks are remaining safe at home, should you want a STAR word to reflect upon for the coming year, please let Pastor Jenn know and she will draw one for you. We hope that you find time to marvel at God's spirit working through these paper stars. Like the magi, may these words allow us all to go home by another road, our eyes opened to God's presence in and around us.

Christian Education



Fruit of the Spirit Sunday School: Faith, Fellowship and Fun will not be gathering in person through the end of January. Out of concerns for safety we are pivoting Sunday school to a Zoom format with gatherings from 11:00 am - 11:30 am on January 17th, and 31st. If you would like to volunteer to read or help with Zoom lessons or have any questions, please contact Debi

Nursery Closed Out of an abundance of caution, nursery services are closed at this time.



Jr. PF

01/10 Gathering from 3:00-4:00 pm

01/24 Gathering from 3:00-4:00 pm

01/31 Gathering from 3:00-4:00 pm

Worship Bags

We are offering "Worship Bags" for all children and youth from age 4 through 8th Grade! Bags can be colored and personalized and will become their bag, please put their name on it. You will leave the bags in the Narthex and pick it up there each Sunday too. Inside each bag is a Worship Journal with prompts, games, and coloring pages for each week, a "Bendy Jesus" and Stress Balls too. I would even encourage you to bring something that doesn't make noise from home to keep in the bag too! Lastly, if there are any needs for the bags (broken pencil, markers that don't work, etc.) please just let me know by emailing me at debi@mcc-ucc.org.

Peace, Debi



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

VIANA CHOCOLATES

It's time to celebrate MCC, a community where we can practice to love one another and carry what we learn into our everyday lives. So let's have some yummy Viana Chocolates! Trees will be at church this Sunday, January 10th from 11:30 till 12:30 for drive up delivery (1 box per family).

Box 1: Amaretto (Lieselot), Banana (Johnny), Coconut (Liz), Hazelnut (Hilde), Orange (Frank), Vanilla (Christoph)

Box 2: Cappuccino (Trees), Coconut (Liz), Ginger (Kate), Pomegranate (Clara), Raspberry (Katrien), Wildberry (John)



Just for Fun – Jigsaw Puzzle Exchange Jigsaw puzzle consumption has increased wildly during the pandemic. People have turned to tiny, brightly colored, irregularly shaped slices of cardboard to provide them with a sense of control over a chaotic world. Retailers can't keep puzzles in stock, manufacturers can't keep up with increased orders.

Ravensburger isn't even taking orders. So, let's help each other out by having a jigsaw puzzle exchange. Do you have a jigsaw puzzle that you no longer need, and does it have all its pieces? Do you want to exchange it for one you haven't tried yet? Bring it to MCC. We've set aside a corner of Wilton Hall as a place to find your next diversion. When you've completed your puzzle, take a picture and post it on our facebook page, MCC-UCC Conversation. Contact Pastor Jenn with any questions, or to coordinate a time to browse. Happy Puzzling!



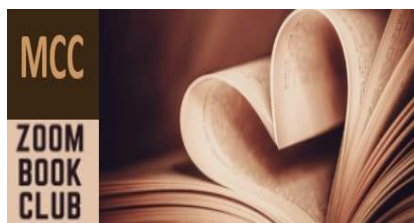
Prayer Partner Update - My prayer partners have been keeping their other half in their thoughts throughout the holiday season. Your random acts of kindness during that time are appreciated. I'm sure that it made someone happy as well as yourself. Please continue show that kindness every day. We will come together on Sunday, May 23 at 11:15AM in Wilton Hall for our "Big Reveal" luncheon. Emails and Steeple articles will notify

you of any changes for this event.

So give your Prayer Partner a moment of your time during your busy day and hope that they are have a great moment and wish them a fantastic day. There's plenty of time to send them a card offering well-wishes for 2021 using the church's address as the return (34 Church St., Monroe, CT 06468).

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280. I look forward to seeing all of you in May.

Yours in Prayer, Susie Cuseo



MCC Book Club

January 13 th	The Accidental Empress by Allison Pitaki. Host: Linda Fracassini
February 10 th	The Book of Lost Friends by Lisa Wingate. Host: Peggy Villani
March 10 th	The Gown: A Novel of the Royal Wedding by Jennifer Robson. Host: Trees Whitbeck
April 14 th	The Children Act by Ian McEwan. Host: Arlene Redmond

Questions -contact Mary Unger (203) 268-5754



Morning Circle will not meet during the months of January and 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.

MCC Community Calendar

Week of Jan. 10th

Epiphany Sunday

10:00 am Worship
11:30 am Zoom Coffee Hour
11:30-12:30 Viana Chocolates (drive thru)
12:00 pm Senior PF (Pierce Lawn)
3:00 pm Junior PF

Mon. Jan. 11th

7:30 pm Church Council

Wed. Jan. 13th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. Jan. 14th

9:30 am Bible Study

Week of Jan. 17th

10:00 am Worship
11:00 am Faith, Fellowship & Fun via Zoom
11:15 am Outreach
11:30 am Zoom Coffee Hour
12:00 pm Senior PF (Pierce Lawn)
4:00 pm Adult PF

Wed. Jan. 20th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. Jan. 21th

9:30 am Bible Study
7:00 pm CE

Week of Jan. 24th

10:00 am Worship
11:00 am Annual Meeting
12:00 pm Senior PF (Pierce Lawn)
3:00 pm Junior PF

Wed. Jan. 27th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. Jan. 28th

9:30 am Bible Study

Week of Jan. 31st

10:00 am Worship
11:00 am Faith, Fellowship & Fun via Zoom
11:30 am Zoom Coffee Hour
12:00 pm Senior PF
3:00 pm Junior PF

Wed. Feb. 3rd

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. Feb. 4th

9:30 am Bible Study

Week of Feb. 7th

10:00 am Worship - Communion
11:30 am Zoom Coffee Hour
12:00 pm Senior PF (Pierce Lawn)
4:00 pm Adult PF

Wed. Feb. 10th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. Feb. 11th

9:30 am Bible Study

Week of Feb. 14th

10:00 am Worship
11:30 am Zoom Coffee Hour
12:00 pm Senior PF (Pierce Lawn)
4:00 pm Adult PF

Wed. Feb. 17th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. Feb. 18th

9:30 am Bible Study
7:00 pm CE

Week of Feb. 21st

10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Outreach
11:30 am Zoom Coffee Hour
12:00 pm Senior PF (Pierce Lawn)
4:00 pm Adult PF