

January 4, 2026

Epiphany

10:00 am

Communion ~ New Member Sunday

*Monroe Congregational Church is an Open and Affirming congregation.
Our deacons and pastor 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.
May we be aware of others and feel the Spirit of God.*

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Gathering Music

Rise Up Shepherd and Follow

Spiritual

Welcome & Announcements

Moment of Silence & Lighting of the Candles

Call to Worship

Leader: Arise and awaken, children of God!

People: For our light has come, and the glory of the Holy One shines out!

Leader: Lift up your eyes! Look around you!

People: The people of all nations gather together to worship God

Leader: You shall see and shall shine with God's light

All: Let us rejoice and praise God, whose love shines forth into the world.

Prayer of Preparation

Michelle Correll, Deacon of the Day

*UCC Statement of Faith

Reading #885 in hymnal

Reception of New Member

Michael B. Ganino, Jr.

Pastor: Let us affirm our faith together as we receive these new members into our church.

Congregation: We believe in God who has created and is creating.

Deacon: God has come to us in Jesus Christ to reconcile and make us new.
God works in us and others by the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: We trust God. God calls us to be Christ's body in the world.

Pastor: Michael, will you promise to support this congregation with your time, talents and resources, participating regularly in the worship and work of the Monroe Congregational Church, United Church of Christ and contributing to our life and ministry in this place as best you are able?

New Member: I do promise. With you, we will celebrate God's presence, love and serve others, care for creation, seek justice and resist evil.

Deacon: With your love, God will love. With your hands, God will touch this community. With your lives, God will bring justice and compassion to the world. We will make mistakes, but in those moments, we will learn the power of forgiveness and grace. Congregation, what is your promise to our newest member?

Congregation: We welcome you with joy as a partner in the common life of Monroe Congregational Church, United Church of Christ and we promise you our love, support and care. We promise to pray, serve and laugh with you as we share the hopes, labors and joys of the church of Jesus Christ. We promise to look forward with you in hope as we strive to be Christ's witnesses in the world.

All: Together we will proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope. In life and death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God!

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Communion Hymn (*seated*)

Many Are the Lightbeams, v. 1-3

NCH #163

Invitation and Prayer

Sharing the Bread and Cup

Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give thanks, Almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Students may transition to Sunday School with their teachers.

Call to Confession – Unison Prayer - Silent Prayer

You call us to come and see, and then to go and tell. There are times when we are looking the other way; away from your image shining in the face of another, away from your people in need, away from the things we would rather not see. Forgive us for praying for vision while holding our eyes closed. Forgive us for holding firmly to the logs in our own eyes even as you offer us lenses to see what you see. Forgive us for keeping silent, and for speaking our own desires rather than yours. Give us courage to witness your glory and testify to your good news. Give us grace to admit our shortcomings and still point to you. Give us strength to follow you, wherever you might lead. Amen. ~silence~

Words of Assurance

***Passing of 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.*

***Hymn**

Immortal Love, Forever Full, v. 1-3

NCH #166

Pastoral Prayer – Silent Prayer -- Lord's Prayer

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.

Time for Giving

Invitation

Offertory

Cherubim Song D. Bortniansky, 1810
Our offering plate will be passed among us today.
You may give online at www.mcc-ucc/donate.

*Doxology and Presentation

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Christ, the Word in flesh, born low,
Praise Holy Spirit, evermore,
One God, triune, whom we adore. Amen!*

*Prayer of Dedication

Scripture

John 1:35-51, page 967

If you would like to read along, Bibles may be found underneath the pew in front of you.

Sermon

Come and See

Rev. Jennifer Gingras

*Closing Hymn

There's a Sweet, Sweet Spirit in This Place

NCH #293

*Benediction

Postlude

Arise, Your Light Has Come!

**Please rise, in body or in spirit*

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

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



If you'd like to **give online** during worship (or anytime), simply scan this QR code, which will take you to our VANCO electronic giving page. Thank you so much for your support.

Assisted Listening Devices: As part of the ongoing Homeland Security grant project, we added four wireless assisted listening units to our sound system in the Meetinghouse. We are thrilled to be able to enhance the experience of those needing greater accessibility. If you are interested in trying one out, asking Scott Young or an usher is a perfect way to get started!



Thank you for assisting in this morning's worship!

Deacon: Michelle Correll **Usher:** Clark Gingras
Lay Reader: David Walker **Trustee:** Mark Barnhart
Counter: Bill Brett **Web Steward:** Scott Young
Sunday School Teacher: Michelle Cardentey
Coffee Host: Jen Wissink

Communion Team #2
Michelle Correll, Larry Wissink,
Michelle Cardentey, Arlene Redmond,
and Mike Pfalzgraf



Flowers for Worship: Would you like to honor or remember a loved one, or celebrate a milestone? You can do so, while also helping Monroe Congregational Church continue its tradition of fresh **flowers** on the communion table. You can sign-up in Wilton Hall or online! You may choose to arrange flowers from your garden, purchase an arrangement, or send a check (\$25) to Monroe Congregational Church (memo: "flowers" & the date) or use our website to pay online, and we will order for you. If you are supplying the flowers yourself, please set them up between 9:30am and 9:45am, before worship. Thank you!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C48ADAC2CA5FEC61-flowers> or [MCC-UCC.org](https://www.monroecg.org)



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

John Hastedt ⁽⁰⁴⁾

Ryan Snyder ⁽⁰⁴⁾

Katerina Vargovchik ⁽⁰⁷⁾

Chris Pearson ⁽⁰⁴⁾

Don Parker-Burgard ⁽⁰⁶⁾

Susan Granello ⁽¹⁰⁾



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

Larry & Jennifer Wissink ⁽⁰⁷⁾

Church Council



**Call to Annual Congregational Meeting
January 25, 2026**

The members of Monroe Congregational Church are hereby called to attend the Annual Meeting of the Congregation to be held in the Meeting House at 11:00 am on Sunday, January 25, 2026.

The agenda will include the following: Receiving of Reports; Electing Officers, Board Members and Delegates; Adopting the 2026 budget and any other business that must properly come before the Congregation.



STAR Words are HERE! We have a basket of STAR words for 2026 for you to choose from. 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.

2026 MCC Stewardship Campaign



In November, we kicked off our annual stewardship campaign, **"Dreaming God's Dream,"** a season when we intentionally reflect on how our shared gifts support the ministry and mission of the Monroe Congregational Church. Throughout worship, we've heard stories of how God is working through this congregation—how your generosity helps us serve our neighbors, strengthen our community, and make a real difference in people's lives. Each of us is invited to take part in shaping the church God is calling us to be. This is a season of great possibilities and hope for our future.

So far, 71 households have pledged a total of \$181,688.00 — thank you!

If you haven't yet responded, we hope you will prayerfully consider your 2026 pledge and return your card soon. You may mail it in, place it in the Sunday offering plate, or e-mail your intended pledge to John O'Rourke at jorourke224@gmail.com. Thank you for considering how you will help sustain and strengthen the Monroe Congregational Church in 2026. With gratitude, Your Stewardship Committee John O'Rourke (Receiver), Diane Prall, and Rev. Jenn Gingras

Outreach



There is a **meal train** to support Linda Resnick's family as she continues to fight metastatic breast cancer. Thank you in advance for your support!

Signup here: <https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/qge0d8>

Deliver here: 520 Barn Hill Road, Monroe CT



Use your change to make a change in the world.

Your spare change can alter the life of an international family through a donation to Heifer International whose mission is to end global hunger and poverty by supporting and investing in farmers and their communities. They do so by partnering with farmers (especially women farmers) to improve their families' food security and increase their incomes by offering tools, training and resources that help them work together to build profitable, sustainable businesses with strong market linkages. So, the next time you find change lying around in your house, pocket or in the small spaces of your couch; consider dropping it into the collection bottle that will be out on the serving table during coffee hour.



The **Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe** seeks volunteers to help out on Tuesdays at 1:30pm. Just show up at the door and the ladies will show you how to sort, tag and hang. The Shoppe also needs helpers who can man the counter in two-hour shifts either on Fridays or Saturdays. It's easy to open or close the Shoppe by visiting while it's open and the volunteer would gladly show you the ropes. A document with the process can also be sent to you for your perusal. Working the counter gives you the opportunity to chat with visitors and help MCC by accruing monies that helps the church and its members in many ways. Please contact Marge Fox with any questions, comments or concerns at 203-706-2132 or mccmustardseed@yahoo.com.



Fellowship

Young at Heart will meet again at noon on January 22, 2026 at the Little Barn, 901 Bridgeport Ave, Shelton CT. Our host is Juliana Lavitola, please RSVP at jsl.lavitola@gmail.com or 203-445-0284

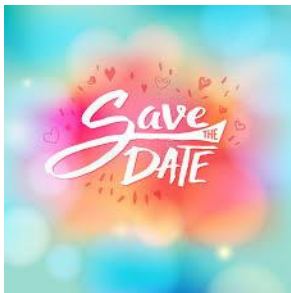


Join us for the monthly Book Club on the **3rd Wednesday of the month**. We will continue to meet via zoom so that all members can join from wherever they may be. Questions can be sent to Paula via email pjsh55@gmail.com or home phone or 203-452-0850.

Jan. 21 My Friends, by Fredrik Backman

Feb. 18 The Frozen River, by Ariel Lawhon

2026 MCC Women's Retreat Friday, April 10 – Sunday, April 12, 2026
The Lodge at Silver Lake, details to follow.



Sacred Pause

Join us on 1st Wednesdays from 7–8 pm for a time of guided Christian meditation, prayerful stillness, sound bath and reflection. Dress comfortably, bring a yoga mat and water bottle. Everyone is welcome!

7 pm Wed, Jan 7, Rexford House

Christian Education



Join us **January 18th** in Dineson Parlor at 11:15 for ***Cheddar Together***: 45 minutes of faith, fellowship, and finger foods. We'll share charcuterie, open up a conversation about life and faith, and simply enjoy being together. Because everything really is better when we're Cheddar Together!

Weekly Bible Study ~ All Are Welcome! We gather in Dineson Parlor, on **Thursdays** from **9:30-11 am**, to learn with and through one another. After a time of fellowship and prayer concerns, we read and discuss upcoming scripture texts or other faith-related topics. Bring your favorite Bible (whatever version you prefer) and a small notebook. Come as you are!



Do you enjoy spending time with teens and helping them feel connected, confident, and cared for? Our **Senior PF** youth group is looking for **adult advisors**! It's a chance to share stories, laughter, and life lessons while building lasting relationships that strengthen our church family and our wider community. If you'd like to learn more, talk with Kate Goyette or Michelle Correll, they'd love to hear from you!

MCC's handmade jam: SALE! \$7/jar, 3 for \$20



Just think of the possibilities, you can put it on toast, add it to your smoothies, make a glaze for pork or chicken, add it with cream cheese and crackers to make a yummy appetizer, top it on ice cream, pancakes or waffles and even spread it between layers of cake. There are so many things you can use the jam for. Get some, share some, and enjoy!! Strawberry Jam is available for sale online at <https://monroe-strawberry-festival-since-1972.square.site/>

New Member at MCC * January 4, 2026



Please join us in welcoming the newest member of our church community. We hope you'll take the time to get to know Mike personally.

Michael B. Ganino, Jr.

3 Canterbury Lane, Trumbull, CT 06611

Home: (203)452-9019

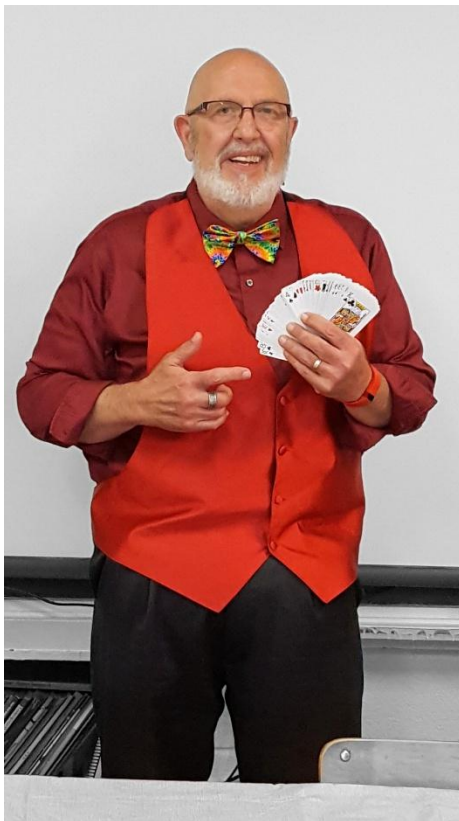
Cell: (203)767-0608

Email: MagicMike118@gmail.com

Birthdate: April 4

Anniversary: November 23

We are very excited to welcome Michael B. Ganino, Jr., Patriarch of the MCC Ganino family, into our church family! Michael and his wife, Pat, live in Trumbull and have been married 57 years! Mike is a retired postal worker and Vietnam Army Veteran; his interests include collecting coins, performing magic, gardening and volunteering 3 days a week at the Trumbull senior center. He is also a drummer!



Mike would like to work with outreach on food collection and peace, justice and environmental issues. He'd also like to help the office with random tasks like preparing mailings to go out. He is also looking forward to attending monthly luncheons with the Young at Heart.

And it is with a glad and joyful heart that we welcome Mike to MCC!



In Our Prayers

Alison Abrams (Jessica Pfalzgraf's sister); **Allie** (Colegrove's friend); **Jennifer Bittar** (Loraine Zeiner's friend); **Jackie Bleakney**; **Shari Carrano**; **Lisa Cody & Dave Barton** (friends of Julie & Rob McClenathan); **Bonnie** (Gayle Hammond's cousin); **Ed Burke**; **Carter & the Harbron Family** (Kate Goyette's friend); **Cathy** (Julie McClenathan's Friend); **Kevin Daly** (Gary Thompson's friend); **Dealmira** (Jonathan Ganino's grandmother); **Dot Dralus**; **Matt Duchon**; **Elaine** (Wendy Colegrove's Aunt); **Bruno Forte** (Nancy Hedine's friend); **David Fischman** (Sue Granello's Friend); **Donnajean Fredeen**; **Dave Fuller** (Gail Olson's brother); **Mary & Rachel Heerema** (Julia Gutierrez's mom & sister); **Bob Heffernan** (Ann Zeiner's son-in-law); **Heather Henning**; **Brian Hopkins** (Donna Konkol's cousin); **Vera James** (Jenn Wissink's mother); **John** (Donna's father); **Jonathan** (Matt Colegrove's brother); **Josh** (Mary Erdmann's 2nd cousin); **Samia Khoury** (Will Duchon's friend); **Cindy Kovacs**; **Betsy Streck & Keith Law** (Nancy Hedine's friends); **Lori** (Amy Matejek's friend), **Monica Lynch** (Bethany Dupuis' friend); **the Manuzzi Family**; **Mary** (Kate Brigg's Mother); **Mary Massar**; **Betty McKeown** (Donna Konkol's mother); **Meghan** (Mary Unger's niece); **Mike** (Janie Allen's son); **Nancy Olofson**; **Missy & Gail Olson**; **Donna Parratt**; **Diane Prall**; **Amy Reber** (Pfalzgraf family friend); **Linda Resnick**; **Regina Roberts** (Kathy Maiolo's niece); **Alfredo Rodriguez** (Osirus Gutierrez's cousin); **Noah Santiago** (Shari Carrano's great-grandson); **Palma Senatore** (Sara Alvarez's grandmother); **Carlos Serrano** (Kathy Maiolo's cousin); **Ed Simonovich** (Nancy Hedine's friend); **Bernie & Gary Sippin**; **Cliff Smith**; **Sheldon & Nancy Smith**; **Spencer** (Matthias Aough's roommate at Brown), **Christine Stadler**; **Chuck Stearns** (Cheri Irwin's cousin); **Claire Stenzel** (June & Myron Winger's granddaughter); **Timara** (Mary Unger's friend); **Tom** (Wendy Colegrove's dad); **Wayne Thompson** (Gary Thompson's brother); **Richard Turco** (Jack Fracassini's cousin); **June Wilkes**; **Natica Williams** (Will Duchon's friend); **Jim Woolley** (Jen Nealon's Dad); **Allen & Ann Zeiner**

The concerns of our world: **Humanitarian** efforts and sustained peace around the world; **LGBTQ+ children and their families** facing discrimination; **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 **unhoused**, **homebound** and **refugees**

Silver Lake Conference Center & the historic CT Missionary Society

Those serving in the military, veterans & their families: **Lt. Col. Rachel Hoffman**, Tacoma, Washington (Vaughan Askue's daughter), **Zachary Gingras**, 395th Combat Sustainability Support, **Joel Smith**, 250th Engineering Company, **Chris Meneses** (Loraine Zeiner's friend), **Corporal Taylor Smith** (Cheri Irwin's Nephew)

MCC Community Calendar

Week of Sun. Jan 4th

10:00 am Communion Worship & *Star Words*
11:30 am Trustees
5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

Mon. Jan 5th

7:30 pm Outreach

Tue. Jan 6th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Jan 7th

7:00 pm Sacred Pause (Dineson)

Thur. Jan 8th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)
6:00 pm Bell Choir
7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Week of Sun. Jan 11th

Penelope Alvarez Baptism

10:00 am Worship
5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

Mon. Jan 12th

7:30 pm Deacons

Tue. Jan 13th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Thur. Jan 15th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)
6:00 pm Bell Choir
7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Week of Sun. Jan 18th

10:00 am Worship
11:15 Cheddar Together
5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

Mon. Jan 19th

Martin Luther King Jr. Day ~ Office Closed

Tue. Jan 20th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Jan 21st

7:00 pm Book Club

Thur. Jan 22nd

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)
12:00 pm Young at Heart,
Little Barn Shelton
6:00 pm Bell Choir
7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Week of Sun. Jan 25th

10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Annual Meeting
5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

Mon. Jan 26th

7:30 pm Council Meeting

Tue. Jan 27th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Thur. Jan 29th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)
6:00 pm Bell Choir
7:00 pm Chancel Choir