

March 22, 2020

Fourth Sunday of Lent

10:00 am

The 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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Welcome!

Hymn

The Love Round

(sung once together, twice as a round)

Love, Love, Love, Love,

Christians, this is our call,

Love your neighbor as yourself,

For God loves us all!

Announcements

Hymn

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

NCH 43

Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven on earth be found,

Fix in us a humble dwelling, all your faithful mercies crown;

Jesus, you are all compassion; pure, unbounded love impart.

Visit us with your salvation, enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver; let us all your life receive;

Suddenly return, and never, nevermore your temples leave.

You we would be always blessing, love you as your angels love,

Pray and praise for your unfailing, wounded arms outstretched above.

Unison Opening Prayer

Holy One, Bridger of Distance, Connector of Being, hear our prayer. In the midst of non-stop news stories about illness and scarcity, press conferences and cancellations, grant us quiet in our minds. In the midst of heightened anxiety about caregivers and caregiving, about health and hygiene, grant us calm in our hearts. In the midst of distance in our families, our faith communities, in our relationships with others, grant us connection during our physical separation. In the midst of our lives, in our gratitude and concerns, in our hopes and longings, grant us an abiding sense of Your Comfort. Amen.

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.*

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.*

Scripture Reading

The First Commandment

Mark 12:28-34 (NRSV)

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, 'Which commandment is the first of all?'

Jesus answered, 'The first is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."

The second is this, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.'

Then the scribe said to him, 'You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that "he is one, and besides him there is no other"; and "to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength", and "to love one's neighbor as oneself",—this is much more important than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.'

When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.' After that no one dared to ask him any questions.

Sermon

Back to the Basics

Rev. Jennifer Gingras

Closing Hymn

Blessed Be the Tie That Binds

NCH 393

*Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
The sharing of a common life is like to that above.
Before our God we come, and pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.
We share each other's woes, each other's burdens bear,
And often for each other flows a sympathizing tear.
When we are called to part, it gives us inward pain,
But we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet again.*

Benediction

Gathering in Prayer

Often, the problems we face seem too big for us. No matter how much we try, we cannot solve them on our own. It's times like these when we need to turn to the Lord in intercessory prayer.

Every evening at 7 pm Pastor Jenn holds intercessory prayer. If you know of anyone in need of prayer, please let her know by calling or texting 203-895-5607.

In addition, everyone in the community is invited to join her in the Spirit of prayer at this time and know that we are gathered across the miles.

Stewardship in a Time of Disruption

The mission of our church to incarnate God's love and work for a more compassionate, just and peaceful world is as important as ever. During this time of disruption of Sunday church services, it will be important to maintain our giving so the church can continue to operate. For now, the church office is closed and our staff is working remotely to continue the church's mission. Now is the time for all of us to do our best to continue our donations so that we ensure the smooth operation of our church's ministries.

The good news is that heading into this time we have received over \$202,000 in pledges for 2020, a goal we have been trying to reach for several years. And collections on pledges have been strong from January to March - thank you! There are several ways you can continue giving to MCC, including:

- Mail or drop off your donations to the church office mailbox at 34 Church Street, Monroe CT 06468, attention MCC Receiver. Mail is being collected on a daily basis, and checks are being counted and deposited on a weekly basis.
- Arrange for electronic automatic payment to MCC via your bank
- Make electronic payments via Vanco, by clicking on the "Donate" link on our [web site](http://www.mcc-ucc.org/donate.html), <http://www.mcc-ucc.org/donate.html>

I hope to see you all soon. In the meantime, thanks for your support of MCC and feel free to contact me if you have any questions at jorourke224@gmail.com . John O'Rourke – MCC Receiver