



**THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

STEEPLE

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Office Hours:

Mon. & Wed. 9 am – 5:30 pm

Fri. 9am – 5 pm

Senior Pastor: Rev. Jennifer Gingras

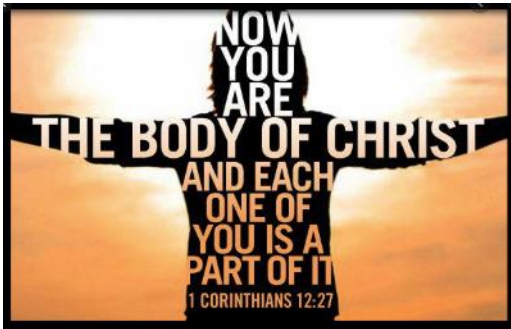
Director of Faith Formation: Debi Mastroni-Kenyon

Music Director: Will Duchon

Administrator/Bookkeeper: Diane Prall

Church e-mail: secretary@mcc-ucc.org

May, 1 2020



Resetting Expectations

If there is one thing I am certain of now more than ever is the patience, grace and resiliency of the people of our church and the wider community through this pandemic. Thank you for your compassion towards others in a time when so many people are on the edge. Staying connected despite our physical distance has been a key for maintaining spiritual and emotional health.

We're beginning to see some good news. As I write this note, CT has experienced 6 days of decreased hospital admissions –we pray this trend continues! Those in the public health sector are paying close attention to this metric, because when we reach 14 consecutive days, we may begin a phased re-opening of the state, currently expected to happen on May 20th. For those small business owners and employees who have had to shutter their operations, re-opening will be a welcome change.

Here at MCC, I've had many conversations with our church's leaders to decide when and how we should reopen our campus. My concern is that we may reopen and resume gatherings prematurely, which can unfairly force our more vulnerable members to choose between keeping themselves and others safe and participating in congregational life like everyone else.

In consultation with our local health department and judicatory leaders, we will continue to suspend public worship for the month of May. Online worship will continue on YouTube, followed by a zoom coffee hour and faith formation. Our staff continues to work remotely from home. The following events, which we had planned to happen in May, will be shifted accordingly:

- The Mother's Day Tea will be postponed until next year.
- The Outreach Tag Sale will be postponed until Saturday, September 12th
- Confirmation Sunday will be postponed until Sunday, June 21st
- The Prayer Partner Lunch will be postponed until Sunday, June 28th

Our hope is to resume public worship on June 7th, following the best practices and guidelines for in-person gatherings. If the health department recommends we not open yet, we will have to make other arrangements. Thank you for your understanding and flexibility. We pray for a spirit of discernment, for wisdom, and patience as we navigate these waters. We pray for researchers and medical professionals; for the planners; for the

ill and recovering; for those grieving and struggling with the weightiness of these times. May the Holy Oneguide all of our decisions in these times.

In peace, Pastor Jenn



Greetings! This article begins with a confession. I sent out two emails in April and left out the name of the author of two reflections. I am a subscriber of "Godspace" on Godspacelight and am sent reflections, poetry, music, etc. daily. I used two reflections by Carol Dixon and neglected to mention her name. I will make sure I double check everything I send out.

When our time of physical distancing began, I spent a lot of time thinking about not only what to do and which programs to make available to you, but how to effectively bring them. At times for me there was no distinction between days and nights or even days of the week. I met with colleagues, attended workshops, and did a lot of research and reading. There was a lot of screen time!

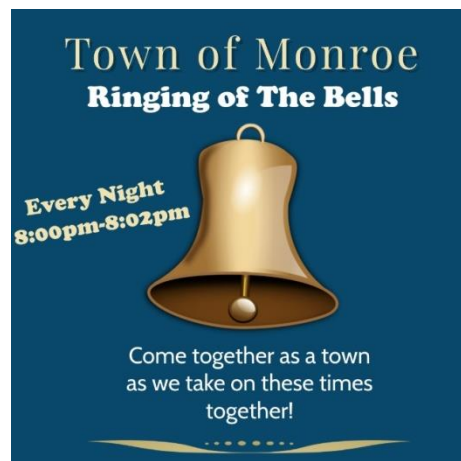
After about 6 weeks of this it got to me as I am sure it has gotten to you too; I can't even imagine having a school age person in my household having to home school. It was time to find what I am calling my rhythm and set some guidelines for myself. It does not do me or anyone else any good to overwork and burn my candle at both ends. Sure, the light might burn a little brighter, but the candle and the light do not last.

Some of the guidelines I have for myself are not checking any screen until 11:00 am every day, having at least one screen free day, moving away from my screen every 90 minutes and taking a walk, eating three meals a day, drinking lots of water, getting outside for a few minutes (or more) every day. This has much improved not only my thinking, but my work too. I tend to make mistakes when I push myself too much.

I hope you can find a rhythm for yourself during this time. Know that I am praying for all of you and if there is anything I can do for you please let me know. I look forward to when we are all together again.

Peace,

Debi





Elisha's Corner

By Gary Thompson, Church Historian

Ye Olde Centre Green Revisited

Part I: The Lay of the Land

It has been six years since we wrote anything about the Monroe Centre Green. In this span of time new information has been uncovered; starting with the location of the Meeting House built between 1763 and 1769. Declared here in this "Corner" last September 1, 2019, that it was definitely built on the north end of the present Green may have been erroneous. The source of that claim was the deed from Deacon Nathaniel N. Wheeler to the Congregational Society for one dollar on August 7, 1847, which stated:

*".....The front of said tract being nearly in line with the front of said church extending Easterly from the eastern side of said Church twenty-two and one half feet, and Westerly from the western side of said Church twenty-two and one half feet, and said tract running back in a uniform breadth one hundred feet from the front line thereof bounded as follows **Southerly by the highway and the site of the Society's old church** and on all other sides by land of grantor....."*

Just what does "Southerly by the highway and the site of the Society's old church" actually mean? It means that we needed to do some measuring. From the Society's minutes of February 25, 1847, we learned that our current Meeting House was built 25 feet behind the old Meeting House, which measured, according to the Society's 1768 minutes 36 feet in width going north and south. Measuring from the front of the current building out toward the Green, 25 feet puts the foundation of the back of the old Meeting House just a little passed the flood light on the front lawn. Another 36 feet puts the southern side and the front of the building about in the middle of our current Church Street. Yet it would fit, because the old "wide track" wagon wheels were only five and a half feet wide and a Conestoga wagon only six and a half feet wide. That gives plenty of room for the single lane dirt road shown in pictures of the Green and the current Meeting House around the turn of the century; 1890 to 1910. These pictures by the way also show that the dirt road slopes upward past the Meeting House toward what became Monroe Turnpike (Rte. 111), and there are no steps at the road's edge. Measuring to scale the fifty foot length of our Meeting House in one of the pictures to the distance shown from the front of the building to the edge of the road at that time, there is easily sixty-one feet or more of lawn in front of the current Meeting House shown in the picture. In this scenario the old building definitely fits.

The only close-up pictures available of the 1763 Meeting House are the sketches provided by artist John Warner Barber in 1836. One sketch depicts the view of the building and the Centre Green looking east from Fan Hill Road with all of the houses (still standing) along Monroe Turnpike. If the Meeting House was on the Green the house at the corner of Church Street and Monroe Turnpike (McGoldrick's) that is clearly shown in the sketch would not have been seen. The most compelling evidence though was discovered by the

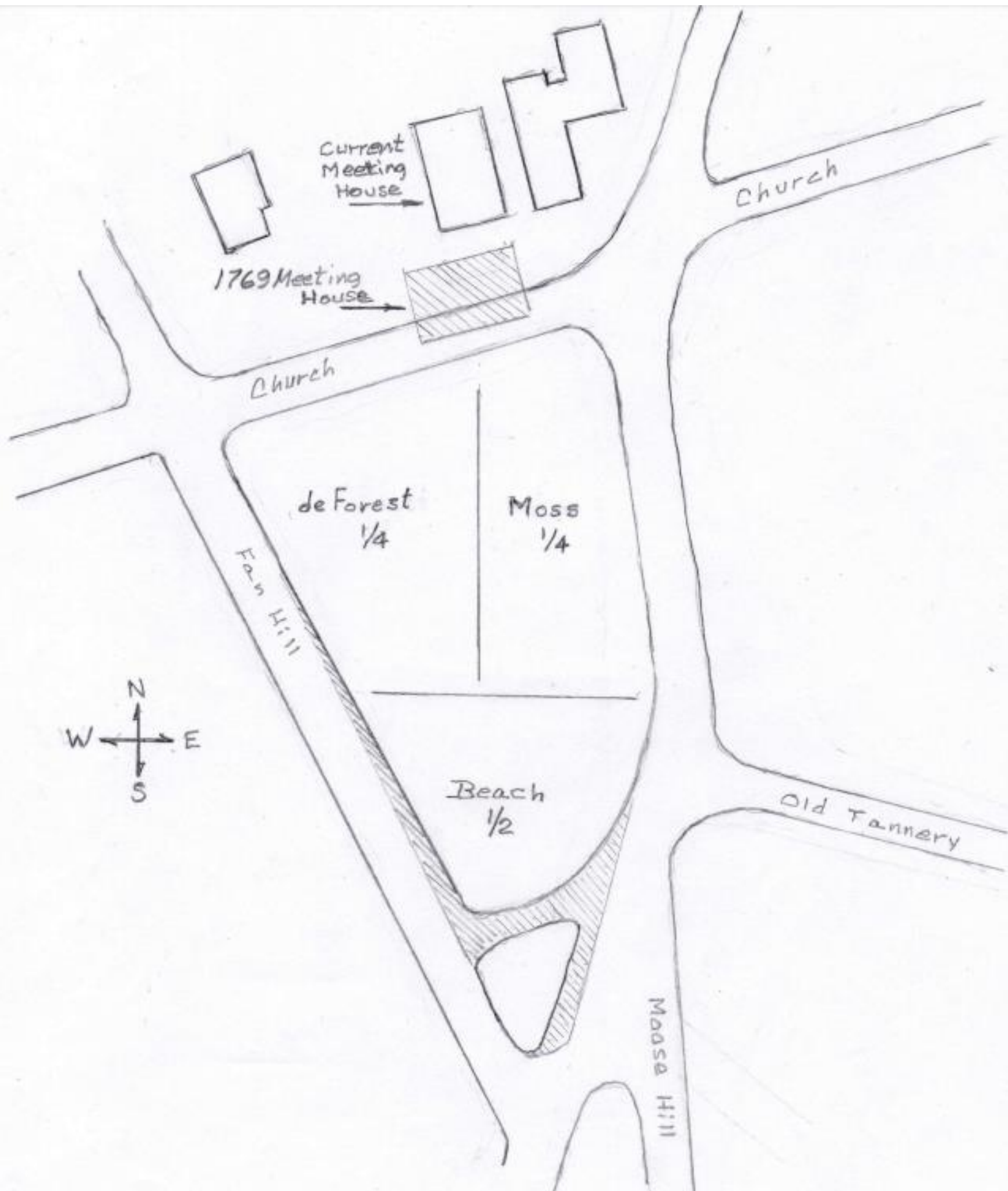
second set of eyes of our friend, Kevin Daly, who noticed that the sketch has thin pencil lines detailing the road, Church Street, passing between the Meeting House on the left and the Centre Green on the right; a heretofore overlooked and important detail.

With the old Meeting House off the north end of the Green the parcels making up the total current Green are three, not four as previously presumed. The parcel that disappears is the one that the Meeting House would have been on and the question as to who owned the land after it was razed in 1874, the Parish (Stratford Township) or the Congregational Society, disappears. We have known that when Captain Joseph Moss and Nathaniel de Forrest deeded portions of their properties in 1784 to formally establish the Centre Green that in combination it was one half acre and more rectangular than triangular in shape. What has not been clear is how much property was given up by each and what the dimensions were. The Stratford Town Clerk's land records, Vol. 21, page 520 (a photo copy will go into our archives) provides an answer. On December 5, 1780, Joseph Moss gave to the Parish of North Stratford by quick claim deed;

a "... certain track of land situated in (Said) Parish near the Meeting House, being a part of my home lot (viz). Beginning at the Southwest corner thereof Running near North 2 rods and four feet [that is 37 feet] to a heap of stones y. [and] Easterly in a straight line to the highway west of my house, Said tract contains forty Rods"

The forty rods means forty square Rods, equivalent to one quarter acre. It could not have meant forty linear Rods, for at 16.5 feet per rod it would be equivalent to 660 feet, which is twice the length of the Green. "...to the highway west of (his) house" would be the current Church Street. We cannot determine where his "southwest corner" was, and the heap of stones is long gone. Given that the original northeast end of the Green had lost about twelve feet due to the widening of Route 111, Moss' quarter acre most probably ran north about 190' at a northerly angle up to Church Street and in a straight line to the west side of the front door of our Meeting House. Because the Green frontage along Church Street is at an angle west-south-west to east-north-east, Moss' share of the Green would have had a shorter frontage than that of de Forest's. In contrast, de Forest's southern boundary would have had a shorter distance than that of Moss' to provide his quarter acre. The westerly boundary of de Forest's quarter acre would have also been shorter than Moss'. Unfortunately the deed from de Forest remains to be found (it is probably somewhere in the Stratford land records of the City Clerk). For now it is enough to know that both gentlemen gifted the land to, as Moss' deed states, "... in consideration of love, Good will, and Episcopal Regard" to the Parish of New Stratford "... and the inhabitation therein..." Moss' deed, by the way was not recorded until April 12, 1784. The postponement of over three years may have been due to the requirement that the General Assembly had to establish the Green as the Centre of New Stratford Parish, as the Ecclesiastical Society minutes of October 25, 1784 indicate; "*That we have a Centre within Forty rod [660 feet] of this Meeting House and that this Centre Shall be Established by the General Assembly.*" The important fact is that the land was deeded to the Parish and not to the Society. Thus, when the Township of Monroe was established in 1823, the property belonged to the Township.

In 1872, eighty-eight years later, the Congregational Society's Ladies Improvement Society, under the auspices of The Park Association of Monroe provided the funds to purchase the remainder of the current Centre Green. The *Monroe Historic District Manual*, dated June 15, 1977, indicates that it was "an additional one-half acre. This land was annexed to the south end of the [then existing] Centre Green called The Park ..." But that will be discussed in the second part of this three part series next month at [Elisha's Corner](#).



Dear Fan of the MCC Strawberry Festival,

Well, it's been quite a spring, hasn't it? Clark, Jenn and I have been using our time to chat about the viability of an in-person Strawberry Festival, given the situation with public health this year. We've asked ourselves:



- Will festivals and large gatherings be prohibited this June by state or local authorities? (*answer – we don't know.*)
- What might attendance look like? Will people take a chance and come? (*answer – we don't know.*)
- What will be public perception be, should we move ahead? Do we want to be the first to try it, after a few months on lock-down, with a nervous crowd? (*answer – it's probably more risk than we want to take on*)

As a church, we're ultimately about keeping our volunteers and guests safe. So, weighing the risks to everyone's health and safety, and with the heaviest of hearts, we (and church council) have decided to not have an in-person Strawberry Festival this June on Father's Day weekend.

We know that some of you will be very disappointed, and for that - we apologize. We also guess that some of you will be happy to have a peaceful Father's Day without straining your back and ankles, and we hope that you make the most of it. Do rest up, because we're planning to GO BIG for next year's 50th Anniversary!

Please let any of us know if you have questions. Thanks so much for your help, we know that when we pull together we can do great things.

Strawberry Fields Forever,
Johnny Maiolo & Clark Gingras, Co-chairs for the 49th Annual Strawberry Festival



Your **MCC worship video production team** hopes that you have appreciated the "Peace be with you" videos that we have included in some of the online worship services. We'd like to keep doing that, but we need some fresh faces!

If you have access to a smartphone, making one of these videos is really simple:

1. Start the recording.
2. Smile and wait for 2 seconds.
3. Say, "Peace be with you," and wait for 2 seconds.
4. Stop the recording.
5. Text your video to Don Parker-Burgard: 203-260-1487.

We would love to have a bank of videos we can include in the next several services, so please contribute. Your fellow MCCers will be glad to see you!



Dear Congregation,
I hope all of you are staying safe and healthy during this pandemic. Our congregation is having to stay connected and engaged in different ways. We can attribute many of those to our dedicated staff and members that are dedicated to making every opportunity matter.

The Trustees are going through the Small Business Administration (SBA) payroll loan program to help manage our costs and potential for loan forgiveness during this crisis. SBA loan is targeted towards small businesses and 501c3 charities covering their employees payroll, and is forgiven at a later date if used for payroll purposes, and as a reminder, church workers are not eligible for unemployment. During this time, we wanted to make it clear to the congregation and our staff, we will not have any layoffs. Our staff has done a great job in coming up with creative ways to engage the congregation, our church school, various boards, Jr. & Sr. PF, and others.

We want to keep all of you informed and current on the information as we proceed. If you can, please stay current on your pledges and use electronic payment via your bank or via the Donate button on our web site. If you have any questions about your pledge payments, please inform John O'Rourke, our Receiver.

If you have any concerns or questions, please reach out to the Trustees or myself.

Thank you and stay healthy, *Frank Wittenauer, Chair of Trustees*



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. Our church office is still 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 through April - 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

Church Spring Clean-up



This year, instead of a one daygroup effort, we are asking for volunteers to pick a project and a day to come to the church and complete it. This way we can get our much needed church spring cleanup completed in a safe manner! Would you please look at our MCC property manager, Dave Allen's list of jobs, choose one and call him to sign up for a day/time that is convenient for you! Maybe you have the time to complete a whole job, maybe you can give two hours, or ½ a day. Whatever you can do will be appreciated by all.

1. Clean and rake out the plantings
2. Install new Mulch
3. Sweep & organize church basement
4. Clean & organize church pews
5. Repair driveway
6. Help to replace light bulbs in Wilton Hall
7. Clean and organize nursery
8. Clean & organize class rooms
9. Clean & organize Dineson Polar

Dave will be available to answer questions and give guidance as needed. Call (203-767-0883) or email (dallen9457@att.net) him to schedule your job!

**Congrats, Monroe Congregational
Church, UCC!**
You passed 100 subscribers

MCC Church YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/monroecongregationalchurchucc>



Did you get a new phone number/cell phone, or email address? Did you move? Did you update your information with the MCC office? Staying connected, now more than ever, has its challenges. It is important to the church leadership that you know that we are here for you. We want to keep you informed and in touch with all that MCC has happening during these strange and difficult times and beyond. So, if you have had changes, or haven't been receiving weekly emails, Giving Statements, and the monthly Steeple letter, please contact Diane in the office at secretary@mcc-ucc.org and update your information –thank you! Stay healthy, safe, informed and MCC Strong!

Outreach



John and Trees Whitbeck have been keeping busy during "social distancing" making free cloth CORONAVIRUS MASKS and are offering them to anyone who would like one. These are not the N95 masks for hospital use, they are for regular people who want to stay safer (and keep others safer, when they go out for groceries, etc.) They are reusable - just throw them in the washing machine on hot, or

boil them on your stove for 10 minutes, between wearings. If you are interested in receiving a mask, please email Diane at secretary@MCC-UCC.org. Thank you John and Trees!

Donations to the **Monroe Food Pantry** are way down. How about showing our town that at MCC we're about sharing not hoarding? Here's a list of needed items posted on the pantry's Facebook page:

- canned fruit - mandarin oranges, peaches
- canned vegetables - low sodium corn, carrots, beets, Sauerkraut, spinach
- canned beans - low sodium black beans, cannellini, pinto, chickpeas, and kidney beans, refried beans
- baked beans - pork baked beans, chili with beans, chili without beans, vegetarian chili
- canned pasta - Beefaroni, Beef Ravioli, Spaghetti O's
- canned meat - solid white tuna in water, chicken
- jarred pasta sauce - regular and low sodium
- broth - vegetable, chicken, beef
- canned tomatoes - (regular and low sodium) tomato puree, diced, crushed, whole, paste
- pasta - egg noodles, elbows, linguine, etc.
- Ramen - beef, shrimp
- baking supplies - bread crumbs, brownie and cake mix, flour, sugar, pancake mix
- packaged meals - Hamburger Helper, Knorr pasta and rice sides, Pasta-roni, Rice-a-roni
- salad dressing - balsamic, blue cheese, French, Italian, ranch
- -condiments - ketchup, mayo, yellow mustard, pancake syrup, sugar free pancake syrup
- crunchy peanut butter
- strawberry preserves/jelly
- ground coffee - regular, decaf
- raisins
- HOUSEHOLD CLEANING PRODUCTS
- LAUNDRY DETERGENT
- paper towels



HOW TO DONATE TO THE MONROE FOOD PANTRY

- Bring food directly to the Monroe Food Pantry at 980 Monroe Turnpike, Monroe. Drop non-perishable food in the beige donation box on the left side of the house.
- Participate in the Postal Workers' food drive (held the third Saturday in May) by putting unexpired, non-perishable foods in plastic bags by your mailbox for the Postal Workers to pick up.
- Purchase extra food at Big Y and drop it in the box located at the service desk.

- Purchase gift cards at Big Y, Stop & Shop, or other area grocery stores and donate them to the Food Pantry.
- If you wish to make a monetary donation (which will be used to purchase fresh foods, meat, eggs, paper products, and extras like coffee and tea, flour, sugar, or laundry detergent) please make your check out to "Monroe Food Pantry" and mail to: Department of Community and Social Services, Monroe Food Pantry, 7 Fan Hill Road, Monroe, CT 06468

Hours: Monday 10:00 am - 1:00 pm; Wednesday 9:30 am - 1:00 pm; & Thursday 9:30 am - 1:00 pm & 2:00 pm - 6:00 pm Please call for Saturday hours

Kathleen Turner Food Pantry Coordinator **Phone:** (203) 452-2817
Email: foodpantry@monroect.org or ktturner@monroect.org

HOW TO GET HELP FROM THE FOOD PANTRY

ELIGIBILITY

Monroe residents who have been determined eligible by the Director of Community & Social Services, the Social Services Coordinator or the Food Pantry Coordinator are eligible to access food at the Food Pantry either one time a month at our regular distribution times, or in an emergency if they call to make an appointment. Priority will be given to households that are having difficulty meeting their necessary living expenses and medical bills with the income available to them. Eligibility will be re-determined each year. Proof of income and expenses for household will be required.

HOW TO APPLY

Call and make an appointment with any of the following Social Services employees:

Food Pantry: Kathleen Turner: (203) 452-2817

Senior Center: Kim Cassia: (203) 452-2815

Town Hall: Mary Ann Kalm: (203) 452-2813

They will be happy to meet with you to discuss Food Pantry eligibility and other programs that may benefit you.

FURTHER HELPFUL INFORMATION

We are happy to deliver food to residents who are unable to drive, are not feeling well, have difficulty finding transportation or are unable to manage the ramp. Please call us ahead of time so we can plan our delivery schedule.

Information we have on file for you and your household is kept confidential within the Monroe Department of Social and Senior Services.

We ask that you give us updated household and financial information once a year. We expect that you will also seek other assistance that is available, such as Energy Assistance. If you apply for Energy Assistance at Town Hall or through the Monroe Senior Center, that is adequate for "re-registration" and we will update your information at that time.



Dress A Girl Around The World Sew-A-Thon

Saturday May 2nd is cancelled New Date: Saturday, September 26

Questions please call Liz 203-257-7174 or email Liz1202us@yahoo.com



This year's **CROP WALK and rally will be delayed.** Applying a cautionary approach and adherence to state guidelines regarding gatherings. Although this situation is temporary, we the CROP organizational committee, will postpone the walk to **late October** (~18th-25th). We are looking at having the rally on September 13th, 2 P.M., at Unity Hill UCC, 364 White Plains Rd, Trumbull. In the time being C.W.S. websites will be updated to reflect the finalized dates. Please be safe. Care for family, the community, and yourself. Thank you for your patience. Quintin Brantley, Town of Monroe Recruiter, qibb@sbcglobal.net 203-258-3101



The Annual MCC Tag Sale is rescheduled for September 12!

Please hang on to your donations a little longer, if you can! If not, we'll understand!

Fellowship

The Young at Heart, Book Club & Morning Circle will not be meeting in May. Future events will be determined and communicated when we are able.



Your Women's Retreat planning team is hoping to bring you a day retreat with some of the activities and discussions we have already prepared. We have tentatively selected **Saturday, June 6th** for this day retreat. We did this at Jessica's house a couple of years ago when we were snowed out of our original retreat date, and it was a great day. We will ask for a \$10 donation to cover the cost of the activity supplies.

Ladies Room Renovation Capital Campaign Project

Dear MCC Members,

We are grateful and humbled by the donations that have rolled in, even since the coronavirus pandemic became a very serious concern.

Through your generosity, we are up to \$11,900, including the \$2,200 from Gingerbread fund raising. We still need \$6,325. It would be great to get this done while MCC is essentially closed (closed from a building point of view, not a spiritual point of view!!). However, we have been instructed to not start until we have all the money. Shopping for items now could be hard also although Home Depot seems to be an essential business (??).



Thank you again. Be safe. Stay well. Peace.
Arlene Redmond for Your Ladies' Room Repair & Improvement Team

STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH ANXIETY DURING THE PANDEMIC

*Courtesy of Middlebury Congregational Church.
Compiled by Janine Sullivan-Wiley, M.A., and Kent Sullivan-Wiley, PhD.*

Living during a time such as this is extraordinary. The last time such a pandemic swept the entire world was in 1918-19, so this is not a situation that any of us has learned how to cope with before.

How people respond to such a situation will vary greatly from person to person, but for most people, stress and anxiety are pretty normal reactions. Some people, however, are simply more vulnerable to feeling a higher level of anxiety and having a stronger stress response.

There are three questions to ask yourself about the level of anxiety you are feeling: is it interfering with what you need to do each day? Interfering with your work? Interfering with your relationships? If you answered yes to any or all of these, it is time to do something about it. But what to do?

If you have struggled with anxiety before, you should try to use what was helpful the last time anxiety reached a problematic level. That should be your first "go to." For each of us, what works can be different, so regardless of what else is suggested, whatever worked for you before is likely to work again. That might be things you do for yourself, or connecting with a professional. If self-help isn't enough, it's time to consider getting professional help.

Even though everyone is social distancing, there are still services available. Some in-person help may be available, and many mental health services can now be accessed virtually, through something called "telehealth." Check first, but most insurance now covers that.

If anxiety is a new experience for you, there are a variety of things that can be effective in managing it. That doesn't mean you will feel no anxiety; some anxiety is normal and can actually be helpful. But if it needs to be brought down a notch or two, below are some things you can try at home.

Some possible ingredients for your own personal recipe for the management of stress and anxiety are:

- First and foremost, **routine, structure and schedules are now your friend**, not an annoyance. The schedule should include regular things like bathing/showers, getting dressed, and meals. Each day should include some kind of contact with the outside world (think phone calls, letters, email, Skype, talking to your neighbors from a safe distance.)
- **Turn off the news.** Too much news can be toxic. Pick a time limit (say 30 minutes a day total) and stick to it.
- **Limit time on devices.** Yes, we all need them now more than ever but take breaks to look out at the world around you.
- **Focus on what you can control**, and let go of the rest.
- **Cultivate gratitude.** It's a powerful strategy. At least once a day catalogue whatever you might still have, starting with the basics we should never take for granted: shelter, food on your table, any person who is a positive in your life, pets that give comfort, skills or strengths that you have.
- **Do something for others.** Expressing kindness is also a very powerful agent for our own happiness.

- **Spiritual practice.** Prayer, meditation, reading scripture can all bring peace and comfort.
- **"Fake it until you make it."** Smile even if you don't feel happy. That body-mind connection is a real thing. If you fake being happy, you'll find yourself feeling happier. If you pretend to be calm, your body will become calmer.
- **Focus on the positive:** Focus on what you *can* do and what you *do have* in your life, rather than what you can't do or don't have now.
- **Get things done.** The feeling of accomplishment can be an antidote to anxiety. Make a list of things you can actually accomplish (keeping in mind the constraints we all have now), then check them off when they're done. Look at the list of what you did and congratulate yourself. Well done!
- **Physical activity** is a great antidote to anxious feelings. Some possibilities that are still an option are walks, stretching, yoga, tai chi. If you're more ambitious you can find online resources for other at-home and more physically demanding workouts. Try to get a buddy for this, either someone at home or via the internet. It can be more fun and easier to stick to.
- **Clear away clutter.** This doesn't mean you have to renovate your closets.... just pick an area or surface to tidy up and clear off. For some people this is very calming.
- **Try to get outside,** and take time to savor it. Take some really good deep breaths. Appreciate the trees and plants. Listen for a bird singing. Watch for other living things from bugs to animals to people. Look at the sky, whether its stormy, cloudy or clear blue.
- **Say "hi" to someone.** Wave at someone when out walking. Call someone you haven't spoken to in a while. Social connection is a powerful mood lifter.
- **Watch or listen to comedy.** Laughter is great medicine!
- **Do something creative.** Drawing, painting, writing, coloring, gardening, making some music. Now is a great time to try a new skill or practice one you left behind.

A COUPLE OF CAUTIONARY POINTS:

Be very careful about ways of coping that can by themselves become a new problem. This includes:

- **Drinking** and the use of "**recreational**" drugs. During times like this, these can very quickly turn into a serious problem.
- **Online shopping.** It can be very easy to run up debt you might not have otherwise.
- **Gambling.** Keep track of this both in terms of money and time spent gambling.

Above all, be kind to yourself. Dump the guilt. These are extraordinary times but you are not expected to be extraordinary. OK is good enough!

IF you find yourself overwhelmed, please do call 211 or go to 211ct.org. Call 911 if you think you need serious help right now. There is a toll-free parent stress line available for parents and caregivers who need someone to listen, to understand and to talk their feelings out www.talkitoutct.com. Some online apps for reducing stress and anxiety are:

www.headspace.com User-friendly app for mindfulness activities and the cartoons they use are attractive to youth and many adults. A significant number of mindfulness exercises are free, but to stick with it long-term, a subscription fee is required.

<https://insighttimer.com> Free guided meditation, grouped by category so you can find activities for anxiety and depression, sleep, boosting self-esteem etc. It has an upgrade option with fees.

You can find other at www.healthline.com/health/anxiety/top-iphone-android-app



Happy May Birthday to the following people and to anyone we may have missed, we will keep you in our prayers.

Alexa	Adams	05/01	David	Spence	05/13
Steven	Andrejczyk	05/01	Elyse	Smith	05/14
Debi	Mastroni-Kenyon	05/01	Jeff	Smith	05/14
Chuck	Schneider	05/01	Tyler	Smith	05/14
Allen	Crosnier	05/02	Nicole	Williams	05/14
Joyce	Rousseau	05/03	Mark	Barnhart	05/15
Brendan	Dahl	05/05	Joan	O'Mara	05/16
Matthew	Hare	05/05	Shaina	Stamp	05/16
Jenna	Rice	05/05	Marissa	Maiolo	05/18
Hank	Allen	05/06	Linda	Caballero	05/20
Jonathan	Culp	05/06	Emily	Coleman	05/22
Kristina	Logan	05/06	Susan	Walker	05/23
Gay	Muizulis	05/06	Bethany	Dupuis	05/24
Gilles	Rousseau	05/06	Lily	Forte	05/24
Gary	Thompson	05/06	Linda	Rooney	05/24
Will	Duchon	05/07	Stacy	Andrejczyk	05/25
Alexa	Unger	05/07	Debra	Vaglivello	05/26
Tyler	Vaglivello	05/07	Colton	DiMenna	05/27
Corey	Schneider	05/08	Justin	Riffard	05/27
Bernard	Sippin	05/08	Muriel	Hastedt	05/28
Kelly	Halloran	05/09	Rebecca	Young	05/28
Megan	Molloy	05/11	Kaelyn	McEvoy	05/30
James	Fraser	05/12	Kristen	Provost-Switzer	05/30
Jonathan	Hyde	05/12	Scott	Whiteley	05/30
Daniel	Manuzzi	05/12	Melissa	Coleman	05/31
Cindy	O'Rourke	05/13	Melanie	Hare	05/31
			Warren	Stamp	05/31



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

Josh and Carrie Friend⁽¹⁰⁾ Brian and Ann-Marie Campbell⁽¹⁷⁾ June and Myron Winger⁽²⁴⁾
 Sheldon and Nancy Smith⁽²⁸⁾ Scott and Kristen Provost-Switzer⁽³⁰⁾

In Our Prayers... **June Wilkes & family** on the loss of Ray on Tuesday, April 28; the **Coward family** in the loss of Paul's brother, Chuck, and sister-in-law, Elaine; **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); **Karen Guinness** (Jennifer Nivison's friend); **Meredith Gibson** (Paul & Judy Coward's niece); **Lily Grace** (Maria Barresi's baby cousin); **Rachel Fracassini** (Jack & Linda Fracassini's niece); **Donnajean & Ken Fredeen; Gary & Julie Hedine** (Nancy Hedine's son & daughter-in-law); **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); **Kelti** (friend of Liska Gutierrez); **Mary-Margaret Logan** (Andrew's mother); **Beverly Lowrey** (Jackie Bleakney); **Jacquie 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); **Bob & Melissa Olson; Jason Olson; Mark Olson; 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); **Noah Santiago** (Shari Carrano's great-grandson); **Connor Scalia** (Jen Nivison's friend); **Hunter Scalzo** (Angela Cross's nephew); **Carlos Serrano** (Kathy Maiolo's cousin); **Al Shaeffer; Bob Sherbo** (Jack Fracassini's cousin); **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); **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); **Bill & Ruth Wakeley; Susan Walker; Rita Wissink** (Larry's mother); **Margaret Woodruff** (Mike Pfalzgraf's mother); **Charles L. Wynn, Sr.**, (and his mother) **Alleane Wynn** (friends of Will Duchon)

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)

Japan: **Chris Meneses** (Lorraine Zeiner's friend)

Georgia: **Zachary Peters** (Jacob Parker-Burgard's cousin)

Kuwait: **Steven Roshong** (Judy & Paul Coward's nephew)

Bob Peters (Don Parker-Burgard's brother-in-law)

Afghanistan: **Samuel Siciliano**

North Carolina: **Jake Terifay**

MCC May

*Worship may be found on our new YouTube Channel, posted Sundays by 9am:

<https://www.youtube.com/monroecongregationalchurchucc>

**Please note that many zoom links have been updated.

Week of May 3rd

10 am Communion Sunday* (Communion Bread Recipe on last page of the Steeple)

10:30 am virtual coffee hour

<https://zoom.us/j/460134127?pwd=cjYrUDhSSkppdjNMYjhvQ0ZDci9hUT09>

11:30 am Fruit of the Spirit Gathering

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/873010680?pwd=L1B4VUpKTmcwakZochRyOU13YWhMZz09>

5 pm Senior PF <https://zoom.us/j/700088164>

5 pm Adult PF <https://zoom.us/j/527377480>

8:00 pm Jr. PF Gatherings Sundays

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/217631626?pwd=RXNzeUdWMEk5WERCYmJUcUd4L1BxZz09>

Tues. May 5th

7:30 pm Weekly Social

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/300032649?pwd=Z0FuazhTQ1FpVmFSejZvcmt5SG5sQT09>

Wed. May 6th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88591738022?pwd=LzhKMHo0eCtWbUJnckY1SU1KODdyUT09>

Week of May 10th

Happy Mother's Day!

10 am Worship*

10:30 am virtual coffee hour

<https://zoom.us/j/460134127?pwd=cjYrUDhSSkppdjNMYjhvQ0ZDci9hUT09>

5 pm Adult PF <https://zoom.us/j/527377480>

Tues. May 12th

7:30 pm Weekly Social

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/300032649?pwd=Z0FuazhTQ1FpVmFSejZvcmt5SG5sQT09>

Wed. May 13th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88591738022?pwd=LzhKMHo0eCtWbUJnckY1SU1KODdyUT09>

Sat. May 16th

7:30 pm Weekly Social <https://zoom.us/j/377990591>

Week of May 17th

10 am Worship*

10:30 am virtual coffee hour

<https://zoom.us/j/460134127?pwd=cjYrUDhSSkppdjNMYjhvQ0ZDci9hUT09>

11:30 am Fruit of the Spirit Gathering

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/873010680?pwd=L1B4VUpKTmcwakZochRyOU13YWhMZz09>

11:15 am Trustees

Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/591991278?pwd=SVlkazlRNUdhWmpGN01CTytNSjJWZz09>

5 pm Adult PF <https://zoom.us/j/527377480>

5:00 pm Senior PF <https://zoom.us/j/700088164>

8:00 pm Jr. PF Gatherings Sundays

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/217631626?pwd=RXNzeUdWMEk5WERCYmJUcUd4L1BxZz09>

Mon. May 18th

7:30 Council Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84076273441?pwd=OWQ4LyszdVNaYkdxNDdaZEhtaUF6UT09>

Tues. May 19th

7:30 pm Weekly Social

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/300032649?pwd=Z0FuazhTQ1FpVmFSejZvcmt5SG5sQT09>

Wed. May 20th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88591738022?pwd=LzhKMHo0eCtWbUJnckY1SU1KODdyUT09>

Thurs. May 21st

7:00 pm Board of Christian Faith Formation

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81713665326?pwd=Y0hZQmIOSS9MSmlaaGdGVUp5WTNCdz09>

Week of May 24th

10 am Worship*

10:30 am virtual coffee hour

<https://zoom.us/j/460134127?pwd=cjYrUDhSSkppdjNMYjhvQ0ZDci9hUT09>

11:30 am Fruit of the Spirit Gathering

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/873010680?pwd=L1B4VUpKTmcwakZochRyOU13YWhMZz09>

5 pm Adult PF <https://zoom.us/j/527377480>

No 5:00 pm Senior PF <https://zoom.us/j/700088164>

8:00 pm Jr. PF Gatherings Sundays

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/217631626?pwd=RXNzeUdWMEk5WERCYmJUcUd4L1BxZz09>

Mon. May 25th

Memorial Day

Tues. May 26th

7:30 pm Weekly Social

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/300032649?pwd=Z0FuazhTQ1FpVmFSejZvcmt5SG5sQT09>

Wed. May 27th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88591738022?pwd=LzhKMHo0eCtWbUJnckY1SU1KODdyUT09>

Week of May 31st

10 am Worship*

10:30 am virtual coffee hour

<https://zoom.us/j/460134127?pwd=cjYrUDhSSkppdjNMYjhvQ0ZDci9hUT09>

11:30 am Fruit of the Spirit Gathering

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/873010680?pwd=L1B4VUpKTmcwakZochRyOU13YWWhMZz09>

5 pm Adult PF <https://zoom.us/j/527377480>

Communion Bread Recipe

I have shared this Communion Bread Recipe with you all before, but I thought it would be great if you could make some with your household members and use it for our Sunday Service! Debi

For use in your household, I would suggest making only half of this recipe. (dividing each measure by half)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees Bake 12-15 minutes

Mix Together:

- 3 cups flour - plus ¼ cup for kneading (I use my dough hook so I don't knead)
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- ½ cup honey
- ½ cup milk
- ½ cup water
- Warm honey (microwave 30 seconds on high).

Mix honey, oil, milk and water together. Add to flour mixture a small amount at a time, mixing after each addition. Dough may be a bit sticky. Turn dough onto lightly floured surface (using small part of ¼ cup flour) knead and add flour as needed to have smooth, soft dough. Take approximately 1/3 of the dough and roll out to ½ inch thickness. Use pan cover approximately 7 inches in diameter to cut circle. Place cut circle on cookie sheet. Repeat with remaining two thirds of dough. Score each circle to form small squares with knife with serrated edge. Bake and then let cool about one hour. Place in plastic bag once the bread is cool to retain freshness.

This is the beloved, traditional Communion Bread which is used at Woodmont United Church of Christ in Milford, CT