



THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

STEEPLE

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Office Hours:
Monday – Friday
9:00a.m. - 3:30p.m.

Senior Pastor: Rev. Jennifer Gingras
Music Director: Will Duchon
Secretary: Melissa Rosenberg
Director of Faith Formation: Debi Mastroni-Kenyon
Church e-mail: secretary@mcc-ucc.org

June 15, 2016

Reconcile

I wanted to write something for this Steeple that will inspire you to be here this weekend at the Strawberry Festival. But you know what? You will be. You are committed to something larger than yourself. And even if something prevents you from being physically present this year, you will be present in spirit.

This year, as I dig through my dresser to find my stash of red shirts, I do so with a heavy heart. Many of us do, in fact. Our nation has been watching in horror as families pick up the pieces of their loved ones lives in the wake of the Orlando shooting. One of the big questions buzzing around asks whether this was a violent crime perpetrated against Latinos and/or the LGBTQ community or an act of terrorism from a homegrown religious extremist. Any way we look at it, it's a hate crime. Bickering over semantics hardly helps fix the problem.

I've been listening to the news reports while meditating on [2 Corinthians 5:16-21](#) in preparation for the sermon this weekend. Paul says,

"So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." NRSV

...a ministry of reconciliation...That is easier said than done. Our nation is bitterly divided over partisan politics and (it seems) completely stuck on what the best thing would be to make us all safer. Our churches are divided over theological and social justice ideologies, unsure on whether or not they can truly affirm ALL God's children. Our families are divided over many of these same issues, and more. And we can be divided internally and "beside ourselves" over all of the above. I know that's how I feel right now. To re-concile is to make this true once again: to re-do it. How? Again, easier said than done. So I pray: *Lord, give us the wisdom to know how to be reconciled to one another. And give me the wisdom to know the words to say this coming weekend as we gather together. Amen.*

In peace, Pastor Jenn

Strawberry Festival News

Just a few days until the 45th Annual Strawberry Festival on June 18th and 19th !

Strawberry Festival



Please remember that Everyone is invited to the Celebration Dinner immediately following cleanup on Sunday evening. Generally when we get the break-down done quickly, we eat at around 6. This is a wonderful time for all of us to relax after our fun filled weekend, share a meal together and celebrate! We look forward to working with all of you the weekend of the festival! Yours in service and fellowship, Clark Gingras and John Maiolo

Calling All Bakers!! We Need You!! Strawberry Festival -June 19th & 20th The Strawberry Festival depends on your homemade baked goods to stock the Country Store. Please bring your cookies, breads, cakes, & other goodies to: Dineson Parlor by Friday, June 18th (please, no frosted items)



Thank you, *Strawberry Festival Committee*

Deacons

Summer Worship with St. Peter's Episcopal Church!

One of the highlights of every summer is joining in worship with our friends from St. Peter's in an outdoor setting. Please bring a lawn chair



- On **July 24th at 10AM** We will host St. Peter's on our side of the green
- On **August 21st at 9AM**. St. Peter's will host us on their side of the green

Outreach

It's that time again...the next St. George's supper is on June 20th. Please bring all food to the church by June 19th at 11am. If you take a tag and are unable to fulfill your commitment please contact the church office 203-268-9327.



Dress A Girl Around The World Sew-A-Thon Returns July 16th from 10am-

3pm~ Join Liz Skarzyinski from Dress A Girl Around The World on July 16th in Wilton Hall to create dresses for little girls overseas. There has been a request from India for dresses for girls there. Our goal will be to make 50 T-shirt dresses, a different style than the sun-dresses but in some ways is a little easier to make. Thank you for your generous donations of fabric. If you would like to contribute we need small toys that can fit in a 2-3 inch square pocket. Dress A Girl is part of Hope for Women International a non-profit, nondenominational independent Christian organization. If you would like to help or join the team, please call Liz 203-257-7174 or email Liz1202us@yahoo.com.



Fellowship

Please join us for the MCC Book Club!

- ✚ **July 13th – 7:30pm** The Summer Before the War by Helen Simonson. Sue Smelzer is hosting
- ✚ **August 17th – 7:30pm** Where'd You Go, Bernadette by Maria Semple. Sue Smelzer is hosting
- ✚ **September 21st – 7:30pm** The Girl Who Wrote in Silk. Location TBD

young
at heart

It is time for Young at Heart to gather together again for food, fellowship, fun, and a little laughter (or at least some chuckles). **We will be meeting at Valley Diner 636 New Haven Ave in Derby on Thursday, June 23.** Please call Marian Schmitz by June 21st at 203-929-4802 so we know how many will be joining us. If you have never attended before, please come so you can be part of this group. See you there!

Christian Education

Summer Camp at Hogwarts: Vacation Bible School, Aug 1- 5, 2016



Have you ever wanted to experience the wonder of Hogwarts, the deliciousness of Butterbeer, the excitement of magic classes? Our week in the wizarding world will provide all that with other fun activities like House Sorting, Quidditch, Potions Class, and more. If your child is a Harry Potter fan, our VBS will be an incredible chance to indulge his/her love for one of the most iconic series of this generation (and learn a bit more about our faith as we do!) Registration forms are online at mcc-ucc.org/ministries/vacation-bible-school.html and in the church office. Volunteers also needed, please contact VBS co-chairs Lani Siciliano lanimsis@yahoo.com or Liska Gutierrez at liskag7@gmail.com for more information.

May We Borrow?

The parents, professors and administrators at Hogwarts are in need of some supplies. If we can use or borrow anything on this list, we would be ever so grateful. If you would like an item we borrow to be returned, please mark it with your name before turning it into the office:

- Black graduation gowns
- Brooms and tiki lamps (without lamp part) for Quidditch
- A mortar and pestle for Potions Class
- Toilet paper tubes for O.W.L.S.
- Any general Harry Potter decorations

Gratefully, Prof. Minerva McGonagall

Community News

Bible Reading Marathon: The Monroe Clergy Association is coming together for a Bible Reading Marathon this August at the town gazebo. Pastor Jenn invites everyone (of any age) to join the MCC team during our assigned spots: Thursday, August 18th from 10am to noon and Saturday, August 20th from noon until 2pm. As is our congregational tradition, the team will discuss what we've read following the group read. Sign-up in Wilton Hall, and bring your Bible on the day of the event. Let Pastor Jenn know if you have any questions, jenn@mcc-ucc.org.

The Greater Bridgeport Tent of Abraham
A community of religious leaders building bridges with people of
all religious and spiritual traditions.

Learning Together and Eating Together
Community Interfaith Iftar

Sunday, June 26, 2016
6:30 pm—9:30 pm
At the University of Bridgeport
John Cox Student Center
244 University Ave, Bridgeport

Theme of the Year:
My Holy Book...My Daily Life

We will gather to break the fast (Iftar) in Islamic tradition during the Holy month of Ramadan.
There will be an opportunity to learn about fasting practices from each faith, to participate or observe
Muslim prayer and feast together. **Free event!**



Summer 2016 at MCC!

June 17th

Strawberry Festival Set Up
(All Day, Senior PF reports by 5pm)

June 18th

10am-5pm ~ 45th Annual Strawberry Festival

June 19th

10am ~ Strawberry Festival Worship
12pm-5pm ~ 45th Annual Strawberry Festival
6pm ~ Celebration Dinner! (Wilton Hall)

June 20th

3:45pm ~ St. George's Supper

June 26th

Summer Sunday School Begins

July 3rd

6pm ~ Senior PF Mission Trip 101/102 Mtg

July 5th

*Debi Mastroni-Kenyon's first day in the office as our new
Director of Faith Formation!*

July 9th -17th

Senior PF Mission Trip to Henderson, Kentucky
(<http://hendersonsettlement.com>)

July 13th

7:30pm ~ Book Club, The Summer Before the War,
by Helen Simonson @ Sue Smelzer's

July 16th

10am Dress A Girl Work Day (Wilton Hall)

July 20th

7pm Harry Potter Movie Night (side lawn)

July 23rd - 30th

Adult Mission Trip with Simply Smiles to the
Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation, SD

July 24th

10am ~ Summer Worship with St. Peter's
(on the Green, MCC Hosts)
11:30am ~ All-Church Read Convo "Why Did Jesus,
Moses, the Buddha, and Mohammed Cross the Road?" by
Brian McLaren

August 1st -5th

9am-12pm ~ "Summer Camp at Hogwarts"

August 15th

3:45pm ~ St. George's Supper

August 17th

7:30pm ~ Book Club, Where'd You Go, Bernadette,
by Maria Semple @ Sue Smelzer's

August 18th -20th

Bible Reading Marathon (more info to come)



August 21st

9am ~ Summer Worship with St. Peter's
(on the Green, St. Peter's Hosts)

September 11th

10am ~ Homecoming Sunday
1pm ~ Welcome Home Picnic (Wolfe Park)

All are welcome, always.

For more info, see www.mcc-ucc.org
or call 203-268-9327

Summer Camp at Hogwart's
August 1st to August 5th, 9 AM to Noon
2016 Vacation Bible School Registration



Ready to head to Hogwarts? Platform 9 and 3/4 has just opened. Register now for this can't-miss-it experience. Ages 4 through entering 5th grade welcome. \$10 per child to cover supplies. Now accepting counselors in training in 6th & 7th grade. CIT's will work with staff but also be able to participate for crafts and snack. Cost is \$5 each CIT.

Attach a check payable to Monroe Congregational Church with "VBS 2016" in memo line and return to the church office with this form. Please also complete The Hogwarts Sorting Hat Questionnaire on the back of this form. We do not wish to exclude any interested child(ren) due to financial considerations. Please contact Rev. Jennifer Gingras regarding scholarship assistance at (203) 268-9327.

Parent/ Guardian: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Emergency Contact: _____ Phone: _____

I give my child(ren) permission to participate in the MCC 2016 VBS _____

Name of child	Age	Grade in fall	Allergies, other?

I will be willing to help before VBS with preparations: ___Y ___N

I will be willing to help during VBS ___Y ___N (circle days) M T W Th F All

In order to volunteer, I will need childcare for my child age 3 or under ___Y ___N

Name and age of child(ren) _____

Please let us know about any health concerns or physical limitations we need to be aware of.

My child will bring an epi pen to VBS. ___Yes ___ No

Our Sustenance Director will contact parents of those with food allergies regarding the snacks provided prior to the event. Please let us know a direct number to reach you: _____

The Hogwarts Sorting Hat Questionnaire

The Sorting Hat, bless its frayed brim, is taking a quick rest. So in the interim, we think a placeholder is best. New Hogwarts students, worry not! We'll find a home for you. But instead of that charmed chapeau, this quiz will have to do.

1.) You are given a test at school that has questions that teacher hasn't covered yet. In the middle of the test you notice that your friend next to you has a cheat-sheet. The teacher doesn't notice.

- Ask to share the cheat-sheet. This test isn't fair, so why should you be?
- Good for them, they beat the system.
- Confront them after the test and try to convince them not to cheat anymore. You don't want them to get in trouble.
- Confront them after the test and force them to tell the teacher they cheated, or you will tell on them. They must pay for their misdeeds.
- Inform the teacher right in the middle of class that they are cheating. Cheaters never prosper!

2.) While walking down the street you see a wallet on the side of the road. It has a small amount of money in it, but no identification of any kind. There is nobody in sight.

- Leave it there. Someone is probably looking for it.
- Pocket the money. You don't know who it belongs to, so finder's keepers.
- Take it to the police in case anyone ever reports it.
- Take the wallet, and go around the area asking anyone if they have lost a wallet recently.

3.) Someone has played a prank on you which involves your public embarrassment and everyone begins laughing at you. However, you doubt they meant any harm by it.

- Laugh along with the crowd. You love a good joke even if it's at your expense.
- On the outside you'll laugh because you don't want anyone to know that they really hurt your feelings by making you look stupid in front of everybody.
- You get upset and run away from the crowd. How could they be so mean?
- Pretend that all is well, but you won't forget this. They're going to pay for what they did! How dare they publicly humiliate you.

6.) A kid accuses you, in front of a whole crowd people, of stealing his toy which you did not do. You are twice his size, but he won't back off.

- How dare he insult me in front of all these people? I'll show him how things work in the real world!
- Explain to him that I didn't take his toy and give him fair warning that he'll have a black eye if he doesn't drop it.
- Try to rationalize with the kid. Tell him you didn't take the toy and refuse to fight him even if he takes a few swings at you.
- Tell him you didn't take the toy and direct him to someone who can help him find it.
- Explain to him you didn't take the toy and offer to personally help find the person who did.

MCC Community Calendar

Week of June 19th

Strawberry Festival Celebration Worship

10:00am Worship

6:00pm Strawberry Festival Celebration Dinner

Mon. June 20th

3:45pm St. George's Supper (Bridgeport)

Tues. June 21st

7:30pm Bereavement Group (Dineson)

Thurs. June 23rd

12:00pm Young at Heart (Valley Diner in Derby)

Week of June 26th

10:00am Worship, Summer Sunday School begins

11:15am Deacons Meeting (Dineson)

6:00pm Senior PF (New Leaders Lead)

Mon. Jun. 27th

7:30pm Council Meeting (Dineson)

Tues. June 28th

7:30pm Divorce Support (Dineson)

Week of July 3rd

10:00am Worship w/Communion

6:00pm Senior PF (Mission Trip 101/102)

Mon. July 4th

Office closed in observance of Independence Day

Tues. July 5th

Debi Mastroni-Kenyon's first day in the church office

Sat. July 9th – Sun. July 17th

Senior Pilgrim Fellowship Mission Trip to Henderson, Kentucky

Week of July 10th

10:00am Worship with *Guest Preacher Katrina Manzi*

Sat. July 16th

10:00am Dress A Girl (Wilton Hall)

Week of July 17th

10:00am Worship with *Guest Preacher Katrina Manzi*

Wed. July 20th

7:00pm Harry Potter Family Movie Night (Side lawn)

Sat. July 23rd –July 31st

Adult Mission Trip to Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation with Simply Smiles

Week of July 24th

10:00am Worship with St. Peter's

11:30am All-Church Read Conversation (Dineson)

Sat. July 30th

Vacation Bible School

Week of July 31st

10:00am Worship

Mon. Aug. 1st -Fri. Aug. 5th

Summer at Hogwarts Vacation Bible School

Week of Aug. 7th

Rev. Doug Halley, guest preacher

10:00am Worship

Week of Aug. 14th

10:00am Worship

Mon. Aug. 15th

7:30pm Council Meeting (location TBD)

Thurs. Aug. 18-Sat. Aug. 20th

8am Bible Reading Marathon

Thurs. Aug. 18th

6:30pm Deacons Planning Meeting @ the Sampson's home