

THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

STEEPLE

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

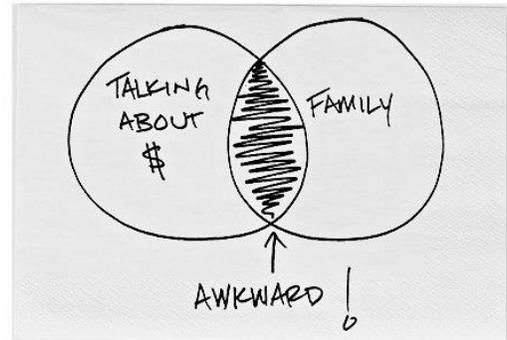
Senior Pastor: Rev. Jennifer Gingras
Director of Faith Formation: Debi Mastroni-Kenyon
Music Director: Will Duchon
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October 1, 2018

The "M Word"

"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?" Luke 14:18

Recently I mentioned cutting our household cable TV service to save money in a sermon. I was surprised by the number of folks who came forward to talk about why they did the same thing or mention other household money saving tips. It's refreshing to be open with people about something many of us have grappled with... money and finance.



In some instances, talking about money can be really helpful. For example, if I'll be paying a higher price for rent than you are, or I paid less than you are about to for a car, perhaps talking about can help us both pay what's fair.

Why the taboo? It all goes back to the colonial era. Back in merry old England, the wealth of others was estimated based on the amount of land they owned. A person's wealth (and the status, power, and prestige it implied), was self-evident. This meant that people who had money didn't need to talk about it. Therefore, those who talked about money were (obviously) the ones who didn't have it. And thus, the discussion of money became associated with those in a "lower class" and taboo.

To oversimplify hundreds of years of social development, to be "classy" (polite, genteel, respectable) meant not talking about money—and so our current social norm was established. How prevalent is this cultural taboo against talking about money?

- According to Lizzie Post (of the Emily Post etiquette dynasty), the ranking of topics from easiest to most difficult to talk about is: weather, entertainment, food, hobbies, sports, politics, religion, and relationships/sex. And **then money**.
- Studies have determined that close to 3/4 of Americans think **talking about money is rude**.

- A study in London revealed that people were seven times more likely to talk with a stranger about sex, affairs, and their medical consequences **than to discuss their salaries.**

The upshot for the church? We don't really want to talk about money. I don't mean the polite and commonplace sermon about how it's "*harder for the rich to get to heaven than for a camel to pass through the eye of the needle*". I mean the real talk about where our treasure lives and what holds us back.

Practically speaking, this traps us in ignorance, stress, and scarcity... *and here's why that's a bad thing...*

- **Financial illiteracy** leads to uninformed consent and unwelcome surprises when the bills come due.
- As a country, we continue to amass the greatest amount of **personal debt** in the history of the world
- College grads might amass loads of **student loan debt** without calculating whether a chosen profession provides an adequate salary to pay it off
- Financial distress is a factor directly correlated with **domestic violence**
- Women and minorities continue to experience **pay inequity** out of ignorance of what others are paid, making it impossible to know if they're paid the same

Money itself is neither evil nor good. But our perspectives toward it can be. As church, we have a responsibility to disrupt the "*don't ask, don't tell*" culture of silence around money, so that we might cast a sacred vision and usher in shalom for our neighbor.

In peace, *Pastor Jenn*

Help Us Paint a Labyrinth!

When: Saturday, October 20, 9 am – 12:30 pm in Wilton Hall

Who: Anyone able to spend some time on their knees (*and paint carefully within the lines*)

This spring, Pastor Jenn, Julia Gutierrez and Betsy Gilberti applied for a church vitality grant from the Fairfield East Association and were given \$700 to implement a labyrinth here at MCC. After much investigation, we've determined that the best kind for MCC would be a portable canvas one.



Thought to be a representation of the spiritual quest of the pilgrim traveling to the holy land, labyrinths began appearing in Europe in the 12th century. The one set into the stones in the nave of the Chartres Cathedral is a little over 42 feet in diameter. Today, replicas of that design (seen here) are used by many communities to embody and enhance an individual's Christian spirituality.

We anticipate that church members and friends will use the labyrinth during Advent and Lent as a seasonal devotion and prayerful addition to traditional forms of worship. We also plan to host quarterly "*Open Labyrinth*"

Walk Nights", inviting guests and members of the community to experience a spiritually enriching time of body movement and prayer.

Creating our own **portable canvas labyrinth** involves drawing the pattern, then painting onto canvas. It also involves some needlework, as Velcro strips will need to be stitched into four separate canvas pieces. Our first build day will be October 20th in Wilton Hall. Lunch will be served. Come and help us make this vision a reality. If you have a specific skill to share (or any questions) please speak with Pastor Jenn.



Monroe MusicFest 2018 – *the 4th annual* Sunday, Oct. 7, 2018, 1 to 7 pm

MusicFest 2018 is fast upon us and it is going to be a good one!

Tickets are \$15/person or \$30/ family, and available **online** at

<https://monroemusicfest.blogspot.com/> Admission can also be paid at the door. Here is a sneak preview of the performance schedule.

	WILTON HALL	CHURCH	DINESON PARLOR
1:00		Danbury Music Centre	
1:30			Cameron Chase, violin
2:00	Silver Steel Band	Larry Wissink, cello/Donald Alfano, piano	
2:30			Just Voices
3:00	Ed Chervansky Jazz Group		
3:30		The Bossa Nova Group	
4:00			Nicole Pasternak, jazz vocalist
4:30	Goldrush		
5:00		The Beekeepers	
5:30			Open Road
6:00		Silver Threads Band	
6:30			





Pumpkin Carving Party ~ Saturday October 27th

Please join the Christian Education Board on Saturday, October 27th for a Pumpkin Carving Party! We will gather **at 5:00 pm** and have pizza and other goodies. We will be taking an offering for the pizza. After we dinner we will carve pumpkins in preparation for Halloween festivities and decorations.

This is a BYOP – Bring Your Own Pumpkin – event. We have patterns and tools, but if you have your own

tools, feel free to bring them. After carving we can take our works of art outside, light them up, and see how they glow!

Please bring a pumpkin to carve and a dessert to share!!! ALL are welcome to join in the fun and fellowship!

Outreach

The Wine & Craft Beer Tasting Saturday, October 20th 6:30pm at the

Fracassini's house. This annual event is a wonderful opportunity for fellowship with each other and new friends. Everyone is asked to bring a donation of at least \$20 per person, an appetizer or dessert, and a wine glass. For more information please speak with Kathy Maiolo. kmaiol@gmail.com



Dress A Girl Around The World Sew-A-Thon Returns November 3rd from 10am-3pm

~ Join Liz Skarzyinski from Dress A Girl Around The World on November 3rd in Wilton Hall to create dresses for little girls overseas. Thank you for your generous donations of fabric. 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.



Neighbors in Need (NIN) October 7th

- is a special mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through NIN grants which are awarded to churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. Projects range from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice. Funding for grants is provided through donations to the Neighbors in Need offering. We will receive the NIN offering October 7th as part of our World Communion Sunday observance.



It's that time again...the next St. George's supper is October 15th

Please look for the poster in Wilton Hall to sign up to help. We have a variety of needs, including shoppers, and servers. Simply take a tag (or two!) and you will be making a difference for those in need. Please bring all food & monetary donations to the church by the morning of October 14th. If you take a tag and are unable to fulfill your commitment please contact the church office 203-268-9327. If you would like a tag but cannot make it to church please call Melissa in the office.



Help is needed at the Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe - If you are free on

Thursdays between 12-3, Fridays from 10-12:30 or 12:30-3 or on Saturdays between 10-12 or 12-2, I need your help manning the counter. If you are interested, come during one of these shifts and someone will show you what to do. You can also reply to me and I'll give you a tour and put you on the schedule. Please email Susie Cuseo at thecuseos@yahoo.com or call 203-268-0280 with any interest or questions.



The Bridgeport Rescue Mission fights poverty from the inside out as they

embrace the urban poor and addicted with the compassion of Christ, offering hope and healing for a changed life. We provide more than 450,000 meals each year through our dining room, food pantry, and mobile kitchens. Can you

help? There is a bin located in Rexford Hall to drop off donations. Thank you for your generosity.



We are in need of:

- Canned green beans, peas, & corn
- Canned sweet and white potatoes
- Canned tuna & chicken

- Boxed macaroni & cheese
- Boxed rice
- Boxed cold cereal
- Pasta and sauce

Interfaith Partnership for Refugee Resettlement (IPRR)

An Interfaith Partnership for Refugee Resettlement (IPRR) family needs assistance with gently used winter clothing. Members of MCC assisted when IPRR sponsored their first family and found the experience very rewarding. The family would appreciate your help. Please go to

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0C4EABAF2EABFC1-winter> where you can sign up and will find a list of items needed. You can drop off donated clothing/outerwear at 6 Valley View Road, Newtown in gray bin on porch. If you need a pick-up of your items it can be arranged. Please direct questions to cindylou722@gmail.com.

There is an option to donate gift cards too. If you are donating new clothing, please leave tags on for easier exchange.

Fellowship

Friday, October 5th: Come talk about life and current events from a spiritual perspective at Veracious Brewing Company's from 7:30 - 9pm with your friends from MCC! No formal presentations - just people kicking around a



topic, sharing honestly what really matters to them. Anyone is welcome, and no topic is off limits. Agreement not required, but civility is essential. Tea-totelers and soda drinkers welcome too! Call/text Clark ([203-895-5604](tel:203-895-5604)) or Rev. Jenn ([203-895-5607](tel:203-895-5607)) Gingras with any questions. This month, we meet in the back room. Hope to see you there! **October Theme:** *The Secret to Happiness is...*

Retired Men's Breakfast: Retired Men will meet for breakfast at 9:30am on **October 10th** in Dineson Parlor, with Ron Villani serving as host. Please call the office with any questions, 203-268-9327.



Prayer Partners WANTED!! I have 8 volunteers who will be praying for a secret someone in the near future. All you have to do is sign up by providing some information in Wilton Hall. In early October you will receive a letter from me with the name of someone who you will keep in your thoughts. This does not require a lot of time or effort. Give them a moment of your day to wish them a great day. Seek them out during coffee hour or at the passing of the peace. If there's a special day they are celebrating, you could send them an anonymous card or note using the church's address as the return. This all culminates in May when we meet for a potluck luncheon where we do a big reveal and finally find out who was praying for whom. It's a piece of cake. Here's a testimonial from a previous volunteer:



"I felt praying for my prayer partner was something that made me concentrate on someone else besides myself. I was glad when I got to find out who she was."

Prayer is one of the most important things a Christian can do. It is a time they are communicating with God and it should be taken very seriously. It doesn't have to be something that is complicated and difficult. It's something anyone can do anywhere at any time. It's impossible to know someone if you don't spend time with them. Prayer is an opportunity to spend time with God. To really understand the heart of God, you need to pray.

If you have any questions, please contact Susie Cuseo at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280. Thank you to those who've already signed up.

Please join us for the MCC Book Club!

- ✚ **October 15th -7:30pm** Cooking for Picasso by Camille Aubray ~Hosted by Julie McClenathan
- ✚ **November 12th-7:30pm** Where the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens~Hosted by Paula Haggstrom
- ✚ **December 17th -7:30pm** How to Find Love in a Bookshop by Veronica Henry ~Hosted by Mary Unger

MCC Community Calendar

Week of Sep. 30th

Tues. Oct. 2nd

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Oct. 3rd

6:30pm Confirmation Class (Dineson)
7:15pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Oct. 4th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

Week of Oct. 7th

Neighbors In Need

Baptism of Lilly Cimeno

10:00am Worship w/Communion
1:00pm MusicFest

Mon. Oct. 8th

Office Closed in Observance of Indigenous People Day and Columbus Day

Tues. Oct. 9th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Oct. 10th

9:30am Retired Men (Dineson)
11:00am Morning Circle (Dineson)
6:30pm Confirmation Class (Dineson)
7:15pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Oct. 11th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

Week of Oct. 14th

10:00am Worship
11:15am Trustees Meeting (classroom 4)
5:00pm Senior PF
6:00pm Junior PF

Mon. Oct. 15th

3:45pm St. George's Supper
7:30pm MCC Book Club at the McClenathan home

Tues. Oct. 16th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag
5:00pm Safe Conduct Committee (Classroom 4)
7:00pm Bereavement Group (Dineson)

Wed. Oct. 17th

6:30pm Confirmation Class (Dineson)
7:15pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Oct. 18th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

Sat. Oct. 20th

9-12:30 Labyrinth Build (Wilton Hall)
6:30pm Wine Tasting (Fracassini home)

Week of Oct. 21st

Third Grade Bible Dedication

10:00am Worship
5:00pm Senior PF
6:00pm Junior PF & Adult PF

Tues. Oct. 23rd

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Oct. 24th

6:30pm Confirmation Class (Dineson)
7:15pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Oct. 25th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

Sat. Oct. 27th

5:00pm Pumpkin Carving (Wilton Hall)

Week of Oct. 28th

First Sunday in Stewardship

10:00am Worship
5:00pm Senior PF
6:00pm Junior PF

Tues. Oct. 30th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Oct. 31st

7:15pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Nov. 1st

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

Fri. Nov. 2nd

5:00pm Senior PF Retreat at Silver Lake
7:30pm Faith on Tap

Sat. Nov. 3rd

10:00am Dress A Girl