



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
Director of Faith Formation: Debi Mastroni-Kenyon
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April 1, 2017

The Price of Love

"Grief, sorrow, and sadness are the price of love," said a trusted friend of mine last week. She was responding to my telling her about illness in my family with my brother's upcoming immunotherapy treatment for Prostate Cancer, and my eighty-nine-year-old aunt being hospitalized up in New London, Connecticut recently. During our conversation, I had to admit that I am out of my depth when illness comes upon our family. Even though I am a certified grief therapist, as well as licensed counselor, when circumstances become personal rather than professional, I feel vulnerable. Being vulnerable opens the door to the depth of emotion that connects us with those we love. To have been able to love deeply and passionately is a gift we are given by God's grace. I was reminded this idea in the film *Marvin's Room*.

In the last scenes of the movie, *Marvin's Room*, (1997), Bessie played by Diane Keaton, recently diagnosed with Leukemia, has a conversation with her sister Lee, played by Meryl Streep. The two sisters have been estranged for seventeen years until the onset of Bessie's Leukemia, which has necessitated finding a family member who could possibly become a bone marrow donor. Lee travels with her sons, Hank and Charlie to Florida from Ohio, and they reunite with Bessie who has been caring for the sisters' father, Marvin and Aunt Ruth. Dr. Wally eventually tells Bessie that a suitable donor in the family could not be found. She knows the prognosis is not good for her life expectancy. Now realistically faced with her own death, Bessie reflects on how her life spent caring for her father, Marvin and Aunt Ruth has blessed her. To an outsider, caring for an elderly man whose physical condition has slowly deteriorated over twenty years, and an elderly Aunt fascinated with afternoon soap operas, might seem unrewarding at

best. But for Bessie, to have had the capacity to love deeply, gave her a purpose for living. At the end of the film she explains to her sister, Lee, how grateful she feels for her life.

“Oh, Lee, I’ve been so lucky to have had Dad and Ruth. I’ve had such love in my life. I look back and I’ve been so lucky to have been able to love them.”

Having a purpose in life may be fulfilled by making a commitment to care for others, and love others deeply as Bessie was able to do with Marvin and Aunt Ruth. In a paraphrase of words by Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971), “The Serenity Prayer” could be used to describe Bessie’s ‘serenity to accept the things she cannot change in her health condition, along with the courage to change what she can’ before she dies. Her attitude has a life changing influence on her sister, Lee, who rethinks her plan to return to Ohio, and decides to stay and help with the care of Marvin and Aunt Ruth in Florida. The film ends with Lee stepping into Bessie’s role and as she prepares the combination for her father’s mid-day medication.

Marvin’s Room has provided a contemporary illustration for me during this Lenten season of the kind of deep love that Jesus carried into the world and for which we hunger. There is a price for this love even though we may not realize what is being asked of us at first. Yes, I feel the cost of love for my family members! I felt relief and gratitude when I heard that my brother could eat the granola I sent him a week after the intensive radiation left him barely able to swallow. And on my second hospital visit to my aunt, I was heartened to see her sitting up, eyes open when she recognized me! But today her prognosis was not good. We yearn to achieve serenity in an acceptance of “both and thinking.” Richard Rohr explains it this way. “This calm allows you to confront what must be confronted with even greater clarity and incisiveness” (Rohr, 146).

May grace strengthen all of our commitments to continue on our pilgrimage together as we draw nearer to Jerusalem.

Blessings, Rev. Susan M. Pfeil

Rohr, Richard. *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2011.

Mission is the Flower of Discipleship



Greetings MCC! It has dawned on me that month after month I have been putting a lot of information out and asking y'all to journey with me and you don't really know anything about me. I firmly believe that our sojourn together rests firmly on relationships so I want to tell you a bit about myself.

Besides being your Director of Faith Formation I am also a Member in Discernment at MCC and have an appointment with the Fairfield East Association in April. I am in discernment to become a Commissioned or Ordained Minister – hence discernment. I have a clear call from God to be

doing what I do and the understanding of my call is directly related to discipleship and mission. I believe that discipleship isn't about being perfect, it's about following. By definition, a disciple is "a follower, one who accepts and assists in spreading the principles of another". A Christian disciple is a person who accepts and assists in the spreading of the good news of Jesus Christ. In Christian discipleship, we grow in Jesus Christ and are equipped by the Holy Spirit to overcome the pressures and hardships of life and become more and more like Christ. We all follow God through the example of Jesus Christ and we also in turn support and follow each other.

I believe that that mission is the flower of discipleship. By definition, a flower is "the seed-bearing part of a plant", so if Christ is the root of the disciple and the disciple is the plant, mission is the flower. Through mission work I am able to spread the example of Jesus Christ through my actions and the work of my hands and heart. For me mission is not just about serving in Boston, South Korea, West Virginia, or on the Cheyenne River Reservation in La Plant, South Dakota, it is also about serving the people at church through actively sharing my knowledge, experiences, and witness as well as modeling the Christian life to the best of my ability. It's about inviting others to participate on the journey together.

I have lead numerous trips out to the Cheyenne River Reservation over the years and am scheduled to lead one with you from June 24th – July 1st. The way I lead these trips starts months before the trip happens by fundraising to pay for the trip so it is not a burden on folks who would like to attend. I also understand that asking folks to pay the Simply Smiles Fee and flight is a lot to ask – hence the fundraising and I have never had a participant pay more than \$200 toward their trip! I have some good fundraising ideas, but so far am the only person from MCC signed up. I am hoping more of you might be interested in going now that you know that cost shouldn't be a factor. Please contact me at debi@mcc-ucc.org or 203-444-6760 if you have any questions or would like to attend!

Here's to the journey!

Debi M-K



Sunday, April 9th, 10am – Palm Sunday: Join us in our historic Meetinghouse to celebrate Palm Sunday. Our Adult Choir, Junior Choir and several soloists will offer sacred music.

Thursday, April 13th, 7:30pm - Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service: A candlelit evening worship service remembering Jesus’ mandate to love one another. This service of shadows features sacred readings that anticipate Jesus’ Passion and Holy Communion by intinction.

Saturday, April 15th, 11am – Senior PF Easter Egg Hunt: Meet us in Wilton Hall with your little one for a few games followed by an egg hunt. Hop on over and join the fun!

Sunday, April 16th 6:30am Easter Sunrise Service-United Methodist Church will be having Easter Sunday Sunrise Service Easter morning at Great Hollow Lake (accessible via the Purdy Hill entrance) at 6:30 am and will be followed by refreshments at the pavilion. All are invited to bring something to share

Sunday, April 16th, 8:30 and 10am – Easter Celebration Services: Join us at MCC for the Great Easter Celebration! At 9:30, we will share a festive Easter Coffee Hour. We will also join in singing the Hallelujah Chorus. Christ is Risen indeed AND Everyone is Welcome!



It’s Time For Easter Flowers! We have a choice of Double Daffodils or Double Tulips. Each plant is \$25.50. Please make checks payable to MCC with “Easter Flowers” in the memo field. Please mail checks to Ann Zeiner, 78 Twinbrook Terrace, Monroe or drop off in the church office. Orders for Easter Flowers must be placed **by Sunday April 10th** . Order forms can be found in Wilton Hall, Church Office and in the Narthex.

Christian Education

Lenten Study

There will be a Lenten study each Sunday morning at 9:00 am. This will be a Bible Study what follows the Narrative Lectionary, which is what we use for worship. The Schedule is as follows:

- April 2nd – Luke 18:31-19:10 – Zacchaeus
- April 9th – Luke 19:29-44 – Triumphal Entry



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Saturday, April 15, 11am – Senior PF Easter Egg Hunt Easter is on the way, so let's have some fun at the Senior PF Easter Egg Hunt! If you have a little one and would like to join in the fun; please join us in Wilton Hall for a few games followed by an egg hunt. Hop on over and join the fun!

Save the Date! Vacation Bible School ~July 31st- August 4th



“Superheroes of the Bible”

Moses? Deborah? David? Jesus? Superheroes? Absolutely! All children age 5-6th grade are invited to Vacation Bible School at Monroe Congregational Church July 31st-August 4th to participate in Superheroes of the Bible – a sort of Justice League of our own.

Registration Forms will be available soon and if you have any question, please contact Debi Mastroni-Kenyon at debi@mcc-ucc.org.

Jr. Pilgrim Fellowship Calendar

April

- 2nd** – Regular Gathering at 6:00 pm
- 7th-8th** – Spring Lock-In
- 16th** – NO Gathering – Happy Easter
- 23rd** – Regular Gathering at 6:00 pm
- 30th** – Regular Gathering at 6:00 pm

Sunday School Calendar

April

- 2nd** – K-2 Sunday school Classes
- 9th** – Palm Sunday Special
- 16th** – NO Sunday school
- 23rd** – Regular Sunday School Classes
- 30th** – NO Sunday school

Musicfest Committee

Save the date! The 3rd Annual Monroe MusicFest is in a new month at a new time on a new day. This year, MusicFest is on SUNDAY, September 24, 2017 from 1 to 7. As before, keep in touch through: <http://monroemusicfest.blogspot.com/> or <https://www.facebook.com/MonroeMusicFest/> . This year in addition to talented musicians, MusicFest will have local artists and artisans displaying and selling their art. Mark your calendars and come enjoy this fun event



Fellowship

Morning Circle invites all the ladies to their next meeting on Wednesday, April 12 at 11:30AM in Dineson Parlor. Pastor Susan Pfiel will be speaking with the ladies regarding the numerous trips she's made. Please bring a bag lunch while we have a business meeting as well as a donation for the Food Pantry. We will also be putting together hygiene kits for Church World Service. They include the following items:

- One hand towel measuring approximately 15" x 28" to 16" x 32" (no fingertip, bath, dish towel or micro-fiber)
- One washcloth
- One wide-tooth comb removed from the package
- One fingernail or toenail clipper removed from the package
- One bath-size bar of soap in the wrapper
- One toothbrush in the package
- Ten standard size Band-Aids

These items will be placed in a gallon baggie and shipped to struggling families who face natural disasters, violence or grinding poverty. Your help with these kits can make the difference between sickness and health for many families internationally. The value of each

kits is \$15 if you choose to make a monetary donation. Please make out your check to MCC with ""CWS Hygiene Kits" on the memo line. We thank you ahead of time for your generous contributions. Donations of items can be left in the bin outside the office in the hall. Please contact Susie Cuseo at [203-268-0280](tel:203-268-0280) or thecuseos@yahoo.com with any questions or comments.

Prayer Partners Unite - We will meet on Sunday, May 21st at 11:30AM in Wilton Hall for our "big reveal" potluck luncheon. A sign up sheet will be posted in the Hall a couple of weeks prior to the event. Childcare will be available to those 2 years and younger. Older children can dine with us. Please keep your partner in your thoughts and prayers. If you wish you can send them a card or note in the mail using the church's address as the return. Seek them out during the passing of the peace or strike up a conversation during coffee hour. Learn something interesting about them. I look forward to seeing everyone that Sunday. I will keep all of you in my thoughts and prayers in the meantime. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [203-268-0280](tel:203-268-0280) or thecuseos@yahoo.com. Thank you for participating with this wonderful program.



Susie Cuseo

Outreach

Have you seen the collection bottle on the serving table during coffee hour? It's for Heifer International which is a global nonprofit agency working to eradicate poverty and hunger through sustainable community development by distributing animals and agricultural training to families around the world as a means of providing for themselves. Those who receive our gifts must agree to "pass on the gift" by sharing animal offspring as well as the skills and knowledge of animal husbandry and training with other impoverished families around the area. Your spare change goes a long way in helping those who in turn will help others. So search your pockets, your couch corners and your junk drawers for those extra coins and drop them into the collection bottle. Last December Morning Circle donated your spare change and increased the amount to \$100 to purchase numerous animals and tree seedlings. Thank you for your support of this great program. Please contact Jackie Bleakney with any questions at [203-268-5275](tel:203-268-5275).



People Helping People Sunday



Greetings MCC! We'll be having another People Helping People Sunday on April 30th. On this Sunday we will have an abbreviated worship service and then engage in service projects after church. The service projects this time will be:

- Planting seedlings for the Giving Gardens (making the pot out of newspaper and planting seeds)
- Property clean up projects (raking and preparing the Giving Garden)
- Making activity bags for children in the hospital Emergency Room (melting and molding old crayons into new ones, writing jokes and riddles on craft sticks and index cards, and assembling the bags)

We are looking for donations of newspaper, small toys, old crayons, and old muffin tins that you don't want back.

Please give your donations to Debi and most importantly plan to join us in this great day!



It's that time again...the next St. George's supper is April 17th .

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 to the church by April 16th at 11am. If you take a tag and are unable to fulfill your commitment please contact the church office 203-268-9327 Or if you would like a tag but cannot make it to church please call Melissa in the office**



One Great Hour of Sharing: Thanks to your generous donations, we have collected \$536.00 for One Great Hour Sharing. We will be collecting donations until April 23rd . Giving envelopes can be found in the pews, bulletin or in the church office, or you can donate online through our website by going to <http://mcc-ucc.org/donate.html>.

Fellowship

Please join us for the MCC Book Club!

✚ **April 17-7:30pm** Then Women by T.C. Boyle. Hosted by Linda Fracassini

Please join The Rainbow Connection on Tuesday, April 4th at 7:00 PM in Dineson.

We are an open forum support group for those under the LGBT umbrella, as well as for their families and friends. We welcome all beautiful people of the rainbow spectrum. For information, please email Lisa Burke at lisa.burke.love@gmail.com, or call her at 203-864-5919. See you soon!



Calling All Bakers!! We Need You!! Special Easter Fellowship Hour, April 16th at 9:30am in Wilton Hall. We need your help with donations of baked goods. Please bring baked goods to the church kitchen by 8:45am Easter morning. We hope you can join us for this special fellowship event.

Retired Men's Breakfast Retired Men will meet for breakfast at 9:30am on April 12th in Dineson Parlor. Please call the office by Tuesday if you need a ride. 203-268-9327



MCC Community Calendar

Week of Apr. 2nd

9:00am Lenten Study (Dineson)
10:00am Worship
11:15am Junior Choir
6:00pm Adult, Junior & Senior PF

Mon. Apr. 3rd

7:30pm Rachel's Well (Dineson)

Tues. Apr. 4th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag
7:00pm Rainbow Connection (Dineson)

Wed. Apr. 5th

6:30pm Youth Confirmation Class
(Spadaccino's)

Thurs. Apr. 6th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)
7:00pm Adult Choir

Sat. Apr. 8th

9:00am Jam Making (Kitchen)

Week of Apr. 9th

Palm Sunday

9:00am Lenten Study (Dineson)
10:00am Worship
11:15am Outreach Meeting (Dineson)
6:00pm Junior & Senior PF

Tues. Apr. 11th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Apr. 12th

9:30am Retired Men's Breakfast (Dineson)
11:00am Morning Circle (Dineson)

Thurs. Apr. 13th

Maundy Thursday

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)
7:30pm Maundy Thursday Worship

Fri. Apr. 14th

Good Friday
Office Closed

Sat. Apr. 15th

11:00am Senior PF hosts the Easter Egg Hunt

Week of Apr. 16th

Easter Sunday

6:30am Sunrise Service @ Great Hollow Lake
8:30am Easter Worship
9:30am Special Easter Coffee Hour
10:00am Easter Worship

Mon. Apr. 17th

3:45pm St. George's Supper
7:30pm Council Meeting (Dineson)

Tues. Apr. 18th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag
7:00pm Bereavement Group (Dineson)

Wed. Apr. 19th

6:30pm Adult Confirmation (Dineson)

Thurs. Apr. 20th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)
7:00pm Adult Choir

Week of Apr. 23rd

10:00am Worship
11:15am Junior Choir
6:00pm Junior & Senior PF

Tues. Apr. 25th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Apr. 26th

6:30pm Youth Confirmation (Dineson)

Thurs. Apr. 27th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)
7:00pm Adult Choir

Sat. Apr. 29th

9:00am Jam Making in the Kitchen

Easter Flowers Order Form

Quantity	Plant	Cost Each	Total Cost
	Double Daffodils	\$25.50	
	Double Tulips	\$25.50	
Sub total			\$
*Total to be paid			

Given By _____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

In Celebration of: _____

*A check for the total amount, made payable to Monroe Congregational Church, may be given or mailed to Ann Zeiner (78 Twinbrook Terrace, Monroe) or placed in the "flower" mailbox in the church office. The **last day** to place an order is **Monday, April 10th**.

