



# THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST STEEPLE

34 Church Street  
Monroe, CT 06468

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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  
Church email: [secretary@mcc-ucc.org](mailto:secretary@mcc-ucc.org)

**April 15, 2016**



**A New Beginning** - At our annual meeting in January, I suggested a new direction in staffing at MCC. The last time we called an associate pastor, it took a year to fill the position. The reason it took so long is partly the nature of search and call in the United Church of Christ. A search committee takes time to organize and accomplish its task. Once they have made a decision, it takes more time to schedule a Candidating Sunday and hold a congregational vote. The process of selecting someone who will be leading public worship takes time – and it should.

But what if we focused more intently on Faith Formation as a specialized ministry? Perhaps there was a certified church educator (not ordained) with lots of church experience and a solid training in Christian Education who could take MCC's faith formation programs to the next level. The candidate would have to be someone who could direct and support the needs of our volunteer leaders, teachers, youth advisors (and most importantly, learners)... someone with a heart for outreach and putting faith in action... someone who could meet the activity level of a typical middle schooler and yet also appreciate the unique humor and wisdom found in older adults.

When hiring an unordained staff person, MCC's Constitution allows us some flexibility. Many of you may remember when Trustees and the pastors found and hired Melissa Rosenberg, our church's excellent office administrator. Or perhaps you recall when the Deacons and pastors hired Will Duchon, our incomparable Music Director. In both cases, the current leadership who would deal with the staff member the most worked directly with the pastors to find the best person for the job.

And so, I sat down in mid-January and discussed the needs and strengths of our education programs with the co-chairs of CE, Kyla Allen and Kate Briggs. They shared valuable information with me as I worked towards developing a job description. With budgetary input from the Trustees and approval from Church Council, we moved ahead to find a candidate. In the end, we decided to invite the strongest candidate, Debi Mastroni-Kenyon, to MCC as our Director of Faith Formation.

I am delighted that God has answered our prayers for new faith formation leadership with Debi's arrival in July. She is both a gift and a blessing, and I am so excited to work with her. In the meantime, Debi is finishing up her ministry in North Haven and leading a Simply Smiles Mission trip to Mexico with her youth group. Meet and greet opportunities will be announced as Debi's start with us draws nearer. Please help me, Kyla, Kate and the rest of the CE board welcome Debi to our faith community! In peace, *Pastor Jenn*

## Hi, I'm Debi Mastroni-Kenyon



And I am the Monroe Congregational Church's newly hired Director of Faith Formation! The first thing people usually want to know about a new staff member is their background and experience. I have a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Education at Defiance College in Defiance, Ohio. I earned an Associate of Science in Psychology at Gateway Community College in 2006. I also have 23 years of experience in Youth Ministry and 9 years of experience in Faith Formation for all ages. Currently I am wrapping up the program year with the North Haven Congregational Church. Before that, I served the Woodmont United Church of Christ in Milford, alongside your friend Rev. Cynthia Robinson.

I have a true passion and love for Faith Formation and service which reaches across the generations. One of my colleagues likes to say that I have Faith Formation in my DNA. I also have a strong connection to my friends on the Cheyenne River Reservation, where I have volunteered with Simply Smiles over 5 work trips. I have also served the CT Conference UCC in a variety of settings. My home is in Milford with my husband Wayne, and we have one adult daughter. In my spare time I like to cook, garden, spoil my cat (Holly), volunteer at the Simply Smiles office and sing with the New Haven Chorale.





**The next St. George's Supper is April 18<sup>th</sup>:** We still have tags for week's meal – if you can help out, please call the church office (203-268-9327 ) by 4:30 on Friday to receive a tag. Please remember to **bring all food to the church by April 17<sup>th</sup> at 11am** so that outreach can prepare the meal.

**CROP Walk: May 22<sup>nd</sup> from 1:30 to 5pm** Spring is finally here. The weather may change, but hunger stays with our brothers and sisters locally and around the world. Each May your Board of Outreach sponsors the CROP walk at Seaside Park to raise funds to end hunger. This is how it works: If you want to walk, please take an envelope from Trees Whitbeck and start collecting sponsors to pledge money to you. If you cannot walk but want to participate, please sponsor a walker. All contributions are tax deductible.



### Christian Education

*On May 1<sup>st</sup>, our **third graders** will be taking **communion** together in worship for the very first time. They will be sitting in the second pew so that they can hear Pastor Jenn and view the table up close. Please take a moment to welcome and congratulate them on this important step in their faith formation.*

### Junior Pilgrim Fellowship Future Plans

**4/17: Earth Day Clean Up at Great Hollow Lake** - From 12-3, Jr. PFER's will clean up trash they find around the lake. We will also have a picnic when we finish, so bring a snack to share. Advisors will supply grabbers to *pick up the bits!*



**4/24: Stress Night:** Jr. PFER's will discuss their stresses and learn ways to cope.

**5/1: Minute to Win It:** A rousing game, we will have a ton of fun!

**5/8: Food Pantry:** We meet at the Monroe Food Pantry to help sort items (time tbd)

**5/14 to 5/15: Jr. PF Lock-In:** We meet in Rexford at 6:00 pm on Saturday. Bring a sleeping bag, pillow, change of clothes, snacks, and a game that can be shared (not electronic, please!) We will sleep over and attend church together in the morning!

**5/22: Crop Walk:** Team Jr PF encourages church members to donate to us for the Crop Walk. Wear active clothing, a hat and sneakers as the walk is quite lengthy!

**5/29: NO Jr. PF:** Happy Memorial Day Weekend!!!!





## 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!) Because we expect the 60 openings to be snapped up soon, registration for church members only will run until April 30. The general public may begin registering on May 1. Registration forms are online at [mcc-ucc.org/ministries/vacation-bible-school.html](http://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](mailto:lanimsis@yahoo.com) or Liska Gutierrez at [liskag7@gmail.com](mailto:liskag7@gmail.com) for more information

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### Deacons

#### April 24th is Youth Sunday!!!!



Each spring, our high school youth group (Senior PF) leads worship on Youth Sunday. They craft the experience themselves, choosing a different theme each year, which arises from conversations and experiences they have had. In keeping with our orientation towards open hearts and minds, Senior PF welcomes ALL high school students, regardless of affiliation with MCC. We hope that all who attend will feel free to explore what it means to live a life of covenant and faith. Thank you for your support, and we hope you will join us for 10am worship on April 24th.



#### Spring 2016 New Members Class: Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup>

The desire to be a part of something larger than ourselves isn't an accident. We were created to need community, a place to belong. The local church can not only meet that need, but it can also be a place to discover, develop and use our gifts. Our next New Members Orientation Class at the Monroe Congregational Church will take place on Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at 11:15 in Dineson Parlor. New Members will join the church in worship on Sunday, May 8<sup>th</sup>. Please RSVP with Melissa in the office (203) 268-9327.

**Funeral Pre-Planning Workshop, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 11:30 am in Dineson Parlor** On Sunday, May 1<sup>st</sup> Spadaccino's Funeral Home will be here to give an informational session about memorial and funeral service pre-planning. There are many emotions that happen during the time of loss. We are providing this workshop to help plan ahead and reduce the stress on family and loved ones.



USHERS & GREETERS

**We need ushers and greeters** to welcome folks to services and hand out bulletins. It's a great way to meet new friends or perhaps brighten someone's day. Please add your name to the sign-up sheet in Wilton Hall or contact Jessica Pfalzgraf [jspfalzgraf@gmail.com](mailto:jspfalzgraf@gmail.com). Your help will be very much appreciated.

## Fellowship

**Please join us for the MCC Book Club!**

**April 27<sup>th</sup> - 7:30pm** Host: Paula Haggstrom ~ We are reading Fever by Mary Beth Keane

**May 18<sup>th</sup> - 7:30pm** Host: Gayle Hammond~ We are reading The Art Forger by Barbara Shapiro



**Young at Heart:** The next Young at Heart gathering will be on Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup> at noon at We will be going to going to Country Pizza at 418 Main St. Monroe, CT. Please RSVP by Tuesday April 26<sup>th</sup>. Please contact us at 203-880-5228 or by email at [nancy.s.smith66@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.s.smith66@gmail.com)

## IT'S TIME TO MAKE THE JAM!



It's time for weekend JAM-A-THONS! It's a huge task and I know with YOUR help we'll get it done. We work in two shifts on listed Saturdays: 9:00am-12:30pm and 1:00pm-5:00pm. You can work one shift or both! Look for the sign-up sheet in Wilton Hall and mark your calendars...

Saturday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>

## Strawberry Festival



Mark your calendars for the **45th Annual Strawberry Festival June 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>**! The MCC Strawberry Festival is the single largest church fundraiser and service event, providing funds for outreach, faith formation and church events throughout the year. It presents an opportunity for us to interact with the broader community as representatives of Monroe Congregational Church and - most importantly - Strawberry Festival

weekend is full of laughter, fun and fellowship



**Strawberry Festival Kids Game Area:** In need of easy pop up tents to cover the area from hot sun. **We need 5 (five)** 12'x12' pop up tents or smaller to borrow for the weekend. Please contact Kyla Allen [Kylawa@earthlink.net](mailto:Kylawa@earthlink.net)

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## Trustees

**Spring Workday Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 am** - We have plenty of spring cleanup jobs to tackle so please come out and spend a few hours helping to spruce up our campus. We need volunteers to clean the inside of the meeting house. We are also in need of a pick-up. Breakfast will be provided. If you are able to assist, please sign up in Wilton Hall. Any questions, please email Dave Allen [dallen9457@att.net](mailto:dallen9457@att.net)

## Community News



**The Monroe Lions Club will be hosting a pancake breakfast from 8:30am – 11:00am on Saturday, April 16<sup>th</sup> in Wilton Hall.** The breakfast includes pancakes, sausage, and a choice of juice, coffee or tea. Tickets are sold at the door. \$10 per person. All proceeds support Monroe residents including the food pantry, Operation Warmth, Edith Wheeler Library, and other local projects. For more information contact Jessica Pfalzgraf at 203-414-6874 or [www.monroelionsclub.com](http://www.monroelionsclub.com)

**Our own Director of Music, Will Duchon,** will be performing Beethoven's Choral Fantasy, Op. 80 (aka: Fantasia for Piano, Chorus and Orchestra) with the Danbury Symphony Orchestra and Chorus on May 8<sup>th</sup> at 3 pm at the beautiful WestConn Visual and Performing Arts Center, 43 Lake Avenue Extension, Danbury, CT. Free concert. Reviews of past concerts include:



- "Duchon Dazzles in Danbury" (we kid you not).
- "Duchon rippled through the technically challenging 'Etude pour les octaves' seemingly effortlessly."
- "Soloist (and WMNR program announcer) Will Duchon brought the house down in a commanding presentation of 'Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 18' by Sergei Rachmaninov (1873 - 1947)."
- "Suffice it to say that I was stunned when I listened to Duchon's masterful interpretations of these solo classics..."

In the past, upwards of 30 MCC'ers have swelled the ranks of concert-goers when Will has performed. Come join the fun and enjoy some music for the soul.

# Summer Camp at Hogwart's



August 1<sup>st</sup> to August 5<sup>th</sup>, 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 5<sup>th</sup> grade welcome. \$10 per child to cover supplies. Now accepting counselors in training in 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> 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 Monroe Congregational Church, UCC \* 34 Church Street, Monroe CT 06468**

[www.mcc-ucc.org](http://www.mcc-ucc.org), [secretary@mcc-ucc.org](mailto:secretary@mcc-ucc.org)

## 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 Apr. 17<sup>th</sup>**

10:00am Worship  
11:15am Junior Choir  
11:15am Deacons (Dineson), Outreach (Kitchen)  
11:30am T'ai Chi (Side lawn)  
12-3pm Junior PF Clean Up @ Great Hollow  
6:00pm Adult and Senior PF

### **Mon. Apr. 18<sup>th</sup>**

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

### **Tues. Apr. 19<sup>th</sup>**

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

### **Wed. Apr. 20<sup>th</sup>**

6:30pm Confirmation Class

### **Thurs. Apr. 21<sup>st</sup>**

9:30am Bible Study  
6:30pm Bell Choir  
7:30pm Adult Choir

### **Sat. Apr. 23<sup>rd</sup>**

8:00am Jam Making  
11:00am Youth Sunday Rehearsal

### **Week of Apr. 24<sup>h</sup>**

#### *Youth Sunday*

10:00am Worship  
11:15am Junior Choir  
11:15am New Member Meeting (Dineson), Trustees (4)  
11:30am T'ai Chi (Side lawn)  
6:00pm Adult, Junior and Senior PF

### **Tues. Apr. 26<sup>th</sup>**

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag  
7:30pm Divorce Support (Dineson)

### **Wed. Apr. 27<sup>th</sup>**

6:30pm Confirmation Class

### **Thurs. Apr. 28<sup>th</sup>**

9:30am Bible Study  
12:00pm Young at Heart (Location TBD)  
6:30pm Bell Choir  
7:30pm Adult Choir

### **Sat. Apr. 30<sup>th</sup>**

8:00am Jam Making

### **Week of May 1<sup>st</sup>**

#### *3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Communion*

10:00am Worship  
11:30am Preplanning w/Spadaccino (Dineson)  
11:30am T'ai Chi (Side lawn)  
6:00pm Adult, Junior and Senior PF

### **Tues. May 3<sup>rd</sup>**

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag  
7:30pm Rachel's Well (Dineson)

### **Wed. May 4<sup>th</sup>**

6:30pm Confirmation Class

### **Thurs. May 5<sup>th</sup>**

9:30am Bible Study  
6:30pm Bell Choir  
7:30pm Adult Choir

### **Sat. May 7<sup>th</sup>**

9:00am Dress A Girl Charity Event (Wilton Hall)

### **Week of May 8<sup>th</sup>**

#### *New Member Sunday*

10:00am Worship  
11:15am Junior Choir  
11:30am T'ai Chi (Side lawn)  
(TBD) Junior PF at the Food Pantry  
3:00pm Will Duchon Concert @Western Ct State  
University Visual Performing Arts Center  
6:00pm Senior PF

### **Tues. May 10<sup>th</sup>**

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Wed. May 11<sup>th</sup>**

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

### **Thurs. May 12<sup>th</sup>**

9:30am Bible Study  
6:30pm Bell Choir  
7:30pm Adult Choir

### **Sat. May 14<sup>th</sup>**

8:00am Jam Making  
6:00pm Junior PF Lock-In