



THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

STEEPLE

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

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Music Director: Will Duchon
Director of Faith Formation: Debi Mastroni-Kenyon
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August 1, 2017



Talking to Kids About Tough Stuff... Like Homelessness

This week at MCC (if you haven't heard) is all about Vacation Bible School! Wonder Woman, the Flash, Batman & Robin are introducing the children in our care to Bible verses and stories about Superheroes in the Bible like Jesus and Moses. This summer, I was invited to participate in our "Mission Center" (A.K.A., the Bat Cave) by teaching the children about some of my mission work.

I was given Monday and Wednesday to present to three age groups – ranging from 4 years old to fifth grade. How hard can that be? Heck, I've been involved with VBS since my 23 year old daughter was a little kid. No problem, right? Easy-peasy!

On the first day of VBS, I centered the conversation on the work Senior PF did on their Chicago Mission trip. One of the issues that we encounter most on an urban trip is homelessness (you might have read about that in last month's Steeple). Unfortunately, as VBS drew closer I ran out of prep time and had to figure out my lesson on the gorgeous summer Sunday afternoon before VBS was to begin!

As the minutes ticked away I began to feel a creeping panic... exactly how do I talk to a four year old from Monroe about what it's like to be a person experiencing homelessness? What is age appropriate? Will they get it? How do I frame the conversation without terrifying the child? And, how might the conversation shift when I would focus on older VBS participants?

For starters, kids of all ages need to know the appropriate terms. The younger ones couldn't tell me what a mission was, but the older ones knew it had something to do with "helping people". Then, we focused on a tent that I had set up as I told them about the tent cities of people experiencing homelessness in Chicago, and how PF went to visit them and bring some bag lunches we had made. Not too many of the children had ever been camping, so we imagined what it might be like to live in a tent instead of a house. Where would we store food or take a shower?

Then, we talked about what they can do, even at their age, to help people. We brainstormed what we might put in a "blessing bag" to give to someone who needs help (with our parent's supervision, of course). In the older group, we watched a short video featuring an 18 year old

young man living in tent city and some of his struggles. And we talked about the importance of treating other human beings with dignity. I didn't share with them Chicago's statistics:

- The average age of a person experiencing homelessness is 9!
- There are over 80,000 people in need of permanent affordable housing
- On any given night, 2,000 youth look for a place to lay their head, but there are only 360 shelter beds to accommodate them
- Today across our nation there are more Vietnam vets experiencing homelessness than were American casualties from that war

I told myself "they wouldn't understand", and maybe that's true. To be honest, there is a part of me that knows I didn't share the numbers because they make me angry. I'd rather be hopeful. Or maybe it's because the numbers always remind me that we have such work ahead of us to **really** love our neighbors and we love ourselves.

OK, so tomorrow? That's the day I share my sabbatical work, monitoring human rights violations in Jerusalem with the World Council of Churches... with 4-11 year olds. Pray for me? On other days in Mission Central kids will learn about the work of Simply Smiles, MCC's Giving Garden, and Empowering Children & Families – three very important initiatives with connections to MCC.

Thanks to Liska, Julia, Betsy, all the volunteers and my colleagues Debi and Melissa for taking on the lion's share in creating another awesome VBS experience for our community's kids and their friends! You all put your heart in what you do; you are all superheroes to me!

In peace, Pastor Jenn

Back to the Reservation



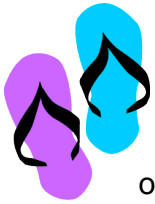
Hi All! I wanted to take a quick minute to say a big thank you to those who helped make VBS so wonderful this year. Liska Gutierrez, Julia Gutierrez, and Betsy Gilberti were my "holy trinity" so to speak, along with their support team of Osiris Gutierrez and Joe Gilberti. I was on vacation in sunny Bermuda the week before and these folks really came together to get things done.

That being said I will also be heading back to the Cheyenne River Reservation, leaving on August 5th and returning on the 12th. While I was out there in June my main construction project was to create and map out an electrical plan for the new Volunteer Bunkhouse and next week my brother and I will be electrifying the building. I will also be piloting an adult outreach program with the folks who live there which will hopefully expand for next year. Please send your prayers to us and the fine people we serve.

Right after I return from the Reservation, I will be leading worship as Jenn will be on vacation. This service will be a service for all ages, so plan to come and bring your families!!!

Many blessings to you MCC and I will see you on the 13th! Debi M-K

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. **This Sunday, August 6th at 10AM** We will host St. Peter's on the parsonage side lawn, with an ice cream social following service (thanks, Fellowship!)

Summer Sermon Series



2017 Summer Sermon Series, "Our UCC Faith" explores in depth the UCC Statement of Faith's seven theological statements that every UCC church holds in common. Included are some scripture texts, which can be used for advance study and reflection.

Aug 6 - Jesus Christ, Human + Divine

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

- John 1:1-18; Mark 6:30-32; John 2:1-11, 13-16

Aug 20 - God Loves, Pushes (and Judges?)

You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

- Micah 6:6-8; Psalm 130; Matthew 25:31-40

Aug 27 - A Seeking, Saving, Still-Speaking God

You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

- Romans 5:12-21; Mark 10:35-45; Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75; Jeremiah 2:4-13

Sep 10 - Created in the Image of God

You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death.

- Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Genesis 2:4b-25; Deuteronomy 30:11-20

Christian Education

Summer Sunday School at MCC

We once again will be having Summer Sunday School for children in Pre-K thru 3rd grade. This will be a one room Sunday School set up so all of the children will be together. Our theme this year is "Do What Matters – the United Church of Christ".



August 6th – "Learning with St. Peter's"

August 13th – "All Ages Extravaganza"

August 20th – "We Give Thanks by Working for a Just and Loving World"

August 27th – "We Listen for a Still-speaking God"

Back By Popular Demand: MCC MidSummer Movies!



On Sunday, August 6th at 7:00pm we invite you, your kids, your family and friends to a fun & free night at the MCC Midsummer Movies! We will be showing two films simultaneously in two locations on our church's campus. Popcorn and beverages will be served. All are welcome, always!

The Color of Friendship by Disney is a G-rated family friendly film. In 1977, two girls from opposite sides of the world come together and change each other's lives as a white South African girl finds herself spending a term with a black family in America. Each girl questions the assumptions she had as a friendship is built between them.

Disturbing the Peace by Reconsider Films follows the journey of former enemy combatants; Israeli soldiers from elite units and Palestinian fighters who have joined together to say "Enough". This documentary follows their transformational path to becoming active participants in the Middle East non-violent peace movement.

Trustees



Help MCC Pave Its Way to a Brighter Future!

Here is your opportunity to help us upgrade the MCC campus and ALSO honor a local business, friend, colleague, family member, or loved one by sponsoring the installation of a personalized, engraved brick! The Trustees are launching a "buy a brick campaign" to help finance the cost of replacing a deteriorated walkway running alongside Rexford House. Each standard-size, 4"



x 8" brick is \$125, and allows three lines of text comprised of eighteen characters each. Order forms (and an online option) will be available soon. For further information, please contact the church office or Mark Barnhart at msbarnhart515@gmail.com.



It's summertime, and while many of you will be enjoying summer vacations, the work of MCC continues. Please do what you can to stay current on your pledge payments over the summer months, even though you might not be able to attend Sunday services. You can arrange for electronic payment from your bank, or via the "Donate" page on our web site: <http://www.mcc-ucc.org/donate.html>

Thanks for your support of MCC and have a great summer! Sincerely – John O'Rourke, Receiver

Outreach



It's that time again...the next St. George's supper is August 21st . 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 August 20th 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**

Dress A Girl Around The World Sew-A-Thon Returns September 23 from 9am- 3pm~

Join Liz Skarzyinski from Dress A Girl Around The World on September 23 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.



We sent these dresses to the girls via Haitian Health Foundation in January. HHF waited to have a full container of goods before shipping it to Haiti. Time passed with offloads and transportation around the country. Finally the girls are pleased and smiling in their new dresses with stuffies. Thanks to all!

Vacation Bible School



Campers working on Crafts



**Campers posing in front of the
Wall of Justice**



Liska Gutierrez as Wonder Woman





Debi, Maya, and Owen



Gotham City Skyline



Snack Time with Brian Correll, Alex Gutierrez, and Campers



Superman is in Charge of Snack at Mess Hall

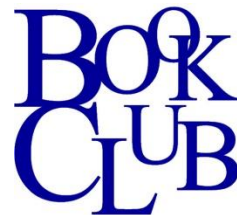


Crafts



Outdoor Activities

Fellowship



Please join us for the MCC Book Club!

- ✚ **August 16th- 7:30pm** Victoria by Daisy Goodwin ~ Hosted by Peggy Villani
- ✚ **September 20th-7:30pm** The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane by Lisa See~Host TBD
- ✚ **October 18th-7:30pm** Beneath a Scarlet Sky by Mark T. Sullivan~Host TBD

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

Thank you from MCC Green Committee



We are grateful for the work of Eagle Scout candidate Zack Gingras and Boy Scout Troop 63 for cleaning up the wood chips left from the ground up tree stumps on the Centre Green. This project prepared the four sites for the laying of new loam and grass seeding that took place this past week. Great job, guys!

MCC Community Calendar

Mon. July 31-Aug. 4th

9-12 "Superheroes of the Bible" Vacation Bible School

Tues. Aug. 1st

9:30am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Week of Aug. 6th

MCC Hosts Worship with St. Peter's on the parsonage side lawn

10:00am Worship

11:00am Ice Cream Social

7:00pm Movie Night at MCC

Tues. Aug. 8th

9:30am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Thurs. Aug. 10th

10:00am Bible Reading Marathon

Pastor Jenn and her family will be on vacation from August 11-19

Sat. Aug. 12th

12:00pm Bible Reading Marathon

Week of Aug. 13th

Guest Preacher: Debi Mastroni-Kenyon

10:00am Worship

Tues. Aug. 15th

9:30am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Aug. 16th

7:30pm MCC Book Club at Peggy Villani's home

Week of Aug. 20th

10:00am Worship

Mon. Aug. 21st

3:45pm St. George's Supper

Tues. Aug. 22nd

9:30am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

6:00pm Council Planning Meeting (Parker-Burgard Home)

Week of Aug. 27th

Baptism of Gabriela Gerhard

10:00am Worship

12:30pm Outreach Planning Meeting (Maiolo Home)

Tues. Aug. 29th

9:30am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Week of Sept. 3rd

10:00am Worship with Communion

Mon. Sept. 4th

Office Closed in Observance of Labor Day

Tues. Sept. 5th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Thurs. Sept. 7th

7:15pm First Adult Choir Rehearsal

Week of Sept. 10th

Baptism of Burton Francis V

Homecoming Sunday

10:00am Worship

11:15am Confirmation Informational Meeting (Dineson)

6:00pm Jr & Sr PF

Tues. Sept. 12th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Sept. 13th

9:30am Retired Men's Breakfast (Dineson)

11:00am Morning Circle (Dineson)

Thurs. Sept. 14th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:15pm Adult Choir

Week of Sept. 17th

Confirmation Dedication Sunday

10:00am Worship

11:15am Outreach Meeting (Dineson)

6:00pm Adult, Jr & Sr PF

Tues. Sept. 19th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

7:00pm Bereavement Group (Dineson)

Wed. Sept. 20th

6:30pm First Confirmation Class (Dineson)

7:30pm MCC Book Club (Location TBD)

Thurs. Sept. 21st

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:15pm Adult Choir