



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
Director of Faith Formation: Debi Mastroni-Kenyon
Secretary: Melissa Rosenberg
Church e-mail: secretary@mcc-ucc.org

December 15, 2016

Start Close In

Advent is a time of hopefulness when we in the church are beginning again, starting over, renewing our journey in the faith. Living in a world of uncertainty, we are hopeful that new life will be born in and around us. Some are glad for the newness of change, some are fearful; some are exuberant, and some are sad. Of course, this is also a time when we get so busy preparing food, shopping, addressing cards, that we may actually miss the coming of Christ. Hurt feelings, anger, impatience, grief, stress... the list goes on and on... and we become blinded to the very birth that we await. I encourage you, in the next few weeks, to '**start close in**'. Don't be afraid of what the future holds because in the very midst of our conflicted feelings, Christ is still calling us now, today, to love each other, in spite of all our differences. Go easy. Go gently. Go in peace. ~ Pastor Jenn

Start Close In

Start close in, don't take the second step
or the third, start with the first thing close in,
the step you don't want to take.

Start with the ground you know,
the pale ground beneath your feet,
your own way of starting the conversation.

Start with your own question, give up on other people's questions,
don't let them smother something simple.

To find another's voice, follow your own voice,
wait until that voice becomes a private ear listening to another.

Start right now, take a small step you can call your own
don't follow someone else's heroics, be humble and focused.

Start close in, don't mistake that other for your own.

Start close in, don't take the second step or the third,
Start with the first thing close in, the step you don't want to take.

~David Whyte, *River Flow: New and Selected Poems*



2017 Advent, Christmas & Epiphany "Dreams & Visions"

Sunday, December 18th - Fourth Sunday in Advent (Love)

- 8:15 am **Traditional Advent Worship**, featuring worship drama "Mary's Dream of Love Fulfilled"
- 9 am **Special Christmas Coffee Hour** in Wilton Hall: Please bring a baked good, fruit or other item to share!
- 10 am **Christmas Pageant Service**
- 5-8:30 pm **Community Christmas Caroling** with Junior & Senior PF, we gather at 5pm in Wilton Hall for pizza (\$5/per caroler), then go bring some musical joy to those in our community! Dress warmly.

December 19th at 3:45, **St. George's Supper**

Saturday, December 24th - Christmas Eve

- 4:00 pm **Quiet Christmas Service**, a contemplative, prayerful service
- 7:00 pm **Family Christmas Service**, a service for all ages, come 20 minutes early to enjoy all the opening music
- 11:00 pm **Lessons & Carols by Candlelight** with traditional readings, candlelight and special music. Arrive 20 mins early to enjoy all the opening music

Sunday, December 25th - Christmas Day

- 10:00 am **Christmas Casual Service**, featuring worship drama "Bartholomew's Visit", come as you are to sing and rejoice!

Friday, December 30th at 1 pm, **Christmas Brunch for College Students/Young Adults** at the Parsonage

Sunday, January 1st - **New Year's Day Communion Service**

Sunday, January 8th – Epiphany, **Young Adult/College Student Service**, worship led by members of our congregation who are older than high school (18+), yet still in their 20's. They might be undergrad or graduate students, or starting a career or family.

The **Christmas Poinsettias** are ready to order! All poinsettias are red double plants. The cost is \$25.00. **All orders must be received no later than December 16th** to ensure delivery by December 23rd. Please make your check payable to Monroe Congregational Church with "poinsettia" in the memo line. The check may be dropped off in the church office, left in the offering plate or given to Ann Zeiner. Questions? 268-5302



Moderator

Annual Reports Due December 30th

Please submit your annual report to the church office by Friday, December 30th. Please call the church office with any questions. 203-268-9327 or email mccsecretary@sbcglobal.net

2017 Stewardship Campaign "Go and Do the Same"

It's time for each of us to make a difference for our church and the broader community through our pledged financial support! We are off to a good start and have received 78 pledges for a total of roughly \$157,000 towards our goal of \$250,000 for a fully-funded 2017 operating budget.

Together, we can support MCC's ministries and programs, care for our staff, keep our facilities pristine and be generous in our mission and outreach. Please take some time to reflect on God's blessings in your life and what MCC means to you and consider making a pledge commitment for 2017 if you haven't already. Thank you and please contact any one of us if you have questions.

~ Your Stewardship Committee, Scott Young (Chair), Roy Nealon, John O'Rourke (Receiver)

Outreach



The next St. George's supper is December 19th

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 December 18th 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**



Socks, Gloves, and Scarves for St. George's We will serve a special Christmas dinner at St. George's on December 19th and we will be collecting new men's and women's socks, gloves, and scarves. **Please drop off your donations by December 16th** so the girl scouts can assemble a care package for our guests. There is a bin outside of the church office for sock donation.

Covenant to Care Christmas Gift Drive: The Department of Children & Family Services has asked for the MCC community's help with their Christmas gifts for children. **This year we have many children in need.** Gift tags will be in Wilton Hall. Shop for your gift, attach the gift tag to your wrapped gift and bring it to the Covenant to Care collection area in the Rexford House just inside the doors, on your left, **by Sunday, December 18th.** No time to shop - No Problem! You can still bring some Christmas joy to a child in DCF's Care, because we'll do the shopping for you!

Donations needed for the Monroe Food Pantry With the colder weather upon us the demand for food is greater than ever. We have almost 300 registered Monroe families who are eligible to receive assistance from the Monroe Food Pantry.



Canned fruit: peaches, pineapple etc.	Canned beans: black, pinto etc.	Cake mixes, brownie mix, cookie mix
Pumpkin pie filling	Canned chili	Tea & Coffee
Condiments: mayo, mustard, ketchup, syrup	Spaghetti O's: meat & plain	Peanut butter & jelly
Cooking oil	Dry pasta and sauce	Stuffing

Salad dressing-any kind	Noodles and rice	Jar gravy
Canned vegetables: corn, mixed, peas etc.	Canned potatoes	Individual snacks: chips, pretzels, etc.
Canned tuna or chicken	Canned soup: assorted	Pet supplies: cat food, dog food, litter

To donate perishable items such as eggs or milk please call 452-3770 to arrange a drop off time. For nonperishable items please place in the bin in the Rexford House-Thank you for your generosity!

Christian Education

The Birth of Christ – As Told in Scripture, Carols, and Tableau



This year’s Christmas Pageant will be a retelling of the Birth of Christ through a series of readings, song, and action.

Rehearsal is Saturday, December 17 at 10am in the Meetinghouse

No production is complete without people there to watch so plan to attend church on December 18th at 10:00 am!

Christmas Caroling with Junior & Senior PF, December 18th @5! Bring

some joy into the lives of others by singing Christmas Carols at their doorsteps! Pizza and drinks will be served at 5pm in Wilton Hall, caroling caravans will leave promptly at 6pm. But first, we’ll sing a warm-up song around the new outdoor nativity set! Please remember to dress warmly, bring a flashlight and a \$5 donation to help offset the cost of food



Epiphany Potluck Dinner~ Saturday , January 7th 5pm-8pm A potluck dinner to celebrate the gifts of the Maji! Please bring a supper dish to share. Drinks and dessert will be provide. Please contact Debi with any questions debi@mcc-uc.org.

Jr. Pilgrim Fellowship Calendar



December

18th – Pizza Caroling meet at 5:00 pm
25th – NO Regular Gathering – Merry Christmas

Sunday School Calendar

December

18th – Pageant Sunday – NO Sunday school
25th – NO Sunday school – Merry Christmas

Fellowship

Your Board of Christian Fellowship is asking for baked goods for the special 9am Christmas coffee hour between worship services on December 18th. Please drop off your goodies in the kitchen and join us in Wilton Hall for fellowship and Holiday cheer.

Please join us for the MCC Book Club!

- ✚ **January 18th -7:30pm** The Book of Speculation by Erika Swyler
Hosted by Sue Smelzer
- ✚ **February 15th -7:30pm** The Japanese Lover by Isabel Allende
Location to be determined

2017 MCC Men's Weekend Retreat ~ Friday, January 13 through Sunday, January 15 Silver Lake Conference Center, Sharon CT. Registration is \$140, checks can be made out to MCC with Men's Retreat in the memo section. Scholarship help is available. Please sign up in Wilton Hall or contact the church office.

Community News

Margie's Sewing Room Seamstress Marge Fox, would like to help you with your sewing needs. She does simple alterations, pillow covers, and buttons. Please call or email her for a quote 203-706-2132; mfox08@snet.net or take a tag on her poster in Wilton Hall.

Lifetouch Photo Directory

If you missed the opportunity to sit for a photo session with Lifetouch last weekend, and you would like to appear in our 2017 Photo Directory, here's how:

1. Please take a horizontal picture of yourself (and your family, if so desired)
2. Send that photo electronically as an attachment (not in the body of the e-mail) to Judy Coward at jcoward46@comcast.net by January 15th.

Thank you, MCC Office

Thank You from Shari Carrano

I would like to thank Allen Crosnier, Boy Scout Troop #63, Brian Correll, and the Senior PF for doing a wonderful job cleaning up the leaves in my yard. Thank you, Shari Carrano

Thank You!

Parking is limited during the holidays. If you are able to park at Town Hall and walk over it would be very much appreciated. We would like to free up some spaces for families with small children and folks who have difficulty walking. Thank you!

MCC Community Calendar

Thurs. Dec. 15th

9:30am Bible Study
12:00pm Young at Heart @ Valley Diner
Derby

Week of Dec. 18th

Fourth Sunday in Advent

8:15am Traditional Advent Worship
9:00am Special Christmas Coffee Hour
10:00am Christmas Pageant
5:00pm Christmas Caroling with Jr and Sr PF

Mon. Dec. 19th

3:45pm St. George's Supper

Tues. Dec. 20th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Thurs. Dec. 22nd

7:00pm Adult Choir

Sat. Dec. 24th Christmas Eve

4:00pm Quiet Christmas Service
7:00pm Family Christmas Service
11:00pm Lessons & Carols by Candlelight

Week of Dec. 25th

Christmas

10:00am Christmas Casual Worship

Tues. Dec. 27th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Fri. Dec. 30th

Annual Reports Due to Office
1pm Christmas Brunch for Young Adults
(Parsonage)

Week of Jan. 1st

10:00am Worship with Communion

Mon. Jan. 2nd

7:30pm Rachel's Well (Dineson)

Tues. Jan. 3rd

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Jan. 4th

6:30pm Youth Confirmation (Dineson)

Thurs. Jan. 5th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)
7:15pm Adult Choir

Sat. Jan. 7th

Epiphany Party (Wilton Hall~time tbd)

Week of Jan. 8th

Young Adult Sunday

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

Tues. Jan. 10th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Jan. 11th

6:30pm Youth Confirmation (Dineson)

Thurs. Jan. 12th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)
7:15pm Adult Choir
7:30pm Parent's Support Group (Dineson)

Fri. Jan. 13th –Sun. Jan. 15th

Men's Retreat at Silver Lake

Week of Jan. 15th

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

Mon. Jan. 16th

Office Closed in Observance of Martin Luther King Jr.
Day

Tues. Jan. 17th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Jan. 18th

6:30pm Youth Confirmation (Dineson)

Thurs. Jan. 19th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)
6:30pm CE Meeting (Dineson)
7:15pm Adult Choir