



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
Secretary: Melissa Rosenberg
Church e-mail: secretary@mcc-ucc.org

February 1, 2017

Growing Our Faith

“Getting to know you, getting to know all about you,” are the familiar words sung by Anna in *The King and I*. I am indeed getting to know you as a unique and stimulating worship community. After my first visit with you last Sunday, January 29, I am confident that we will work well together during Pastor Jenn’s ministry in the Holy Land. In that spirit, Pastor Jenn suggested I share some of my own story with you in this issue of *The Steeple*.

My faith journey began at the Indian Hill Episcopal-Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio. Caring faith communities across the globe have shaped my faith over the years. I was living in London, England when I recommitted my life to Christ in March 1979. Ten years later, 1989, I began my studies at Yale Divinity School after a life-changing trip to Nicaragua during the Contra War, 1988. Mission trips to Central America almost every year since then have deepened my sense of call for returning three times to Gulfport/Biloxi Mississippi after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

One image was particularly strong during my recent trip to Nicaragua January 15-22. I began to wonder how growing our faith today was like being a farmer working with the Finca Modelo or Model Farm?¹ This is a question that formed in my mind as I listened to The Rev.

¹ The farm offers farmers an opportunity to come to the Model Farm, and actually plant their own crops in order to learn to generate practices and techniques for permaculture planting. Or to explain it another way, they would develop ways to cultivate crops under challenging weather conditions including the increasingly dry climate. A learning Center would be created to educate participants at the Farmer Field School. Farmers would also explore ways to “build water harvesting systems” as they simulate and innovate with traditional and nontraditional crops. These crops would not only meet their food needs, but at the same time, replenish and nourish the soil. When farmers would return to their own farms with what they had learned, they would be able practice “small scale replications,” to use an image by environmental designer, David Holmgren, an expert on the idea of permaculture.

Leslie Penrose, Executive Director of JustHope, when she took a small group of us to the middle of an eight-acre farm project that began six months ago in Chacraseca, Nicaragua. The Finca Modelo or Model Farm is part of JustHope’s vision for “Creating global partnerships that combat extreme poverty and nurture sustainable community.”

As six of us and Leslie looked out over a portion of the farm already being prepared to grow papaya, chilies, and chiltomas, we could not help but notice the panoramic view in the distance of the majestic volcanic mountains: Telicia, San Cristobal, Casita, and Santa Rosa. Leslie continued to explain how the Model Farm will focus on “four critical areas: Generate, Innovate, Simulate, and Educate,” or “GISE” which is “an older English word that means ‘to feed or pasture.’”

So, how might we use the image of a Model Farm to grow our faith today? How do we ‘feed or pasture’ our faith practice? We ‘feed or pasture’ our faith as we build trust in a worshiping community, almost like a farmer coming to a Model Farm to cultivate a season of crops. Our participation in this worshiping community helps us to generate creative ways to live in an increasingly dry, spiritual climate. We educate and are educated with the proclamation of the Word of God and celebration of the Sacraments, the Lord’s Supper and Baptism. When we work together to practice our traditions we invite others to come to church to see what we are doing. And when we carry a new harvest of hope and care for our own intergenerational community out into the larger world, we simulate what we have learned about how to be flexible and we are more innovative with others different from ourselves.

Thus, we are prepared to witness daily to our faith in every imaginable setting. And through it all, we continually thank God that the Holy Spirit challenges us to travel near and far to different pastures in mission, where we become learners all over again, and come back with a new story to tell.

Peace, Rev. Susan Pfeil

Call to Annual Congregational Meeting, Continued February 19, 2017

The members of Monroe Congregational Church are hereby called to attend the conclusion of the Annual Meeting of the Congregation to be held in the meeting house immediately following worship on Feb 19. The agenda will include a motion to amend our constitution and the election of an additional board member. See text of the amendment below:

Amendment I: Extending Term of Board and Committee Members by One Additional Year

In the event and upon specific occasion or circumstances it is deemed necessary for the good of the congregation and its work, the Church Council may take exception to the provision of Article X, Section 1, and extend the term of office of any Board or Committee member or members for an additional one time, one (1) year. Following an affirmative two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Council quorum, the Church Moderator shall instruct the nominating committee to include the affected board or committee member or members on the list of recommended candidates for

election at the annual meeting, or subsequently scheduled special general meeting of the congregation. An affirmative two-thirds (2/3) vote by the quorum of the congregation at its annual meeting or special general meeting shall be required to elect the affected board or committee member or members. Such action shall not establish a precedent and shall be justified on its own individual merits.

A word of explanation:

Our Annual Congregational Meeting of January 29 ended in recess, rather than adjournment. We did that because we propose to re-elect Mark Barnhart to an additional term as Trustee, which he has graciously agreed to serve – but he has already reached the term limit for that office. To make an exception we need this amendment to our Constitution, and an amendment requires two weeks’ notice prior to the meeting. In order to provide the two weeks’ notice, we recessed our meeting to reconvene on February 19 immediately after worship. Since we already agreed to do this, it will only take a few minutes to reconvene, pass the amendment, and confirm Mark’s election. We thank you for your patience, understanding, and especially for your participation as we complete this work and adjourn our annual meeting.

- Dave Walker, Moderator

Faith Formation



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.

I will be leading a mission trip from June 24th – July 1st to the Cheyenne River Reservation in La Plant, South Dakota and we will be having an informational meeting on Sunday, February 12th, after worship to discuss planning, fundraising, and other particulars about the trip. This trip is open to all people age 15 and over. Please contact me if you have any questions – debi@mcc-ucc.org or 203-444-6760.

Blessings and peace to you,

Debi M-K



2017 Women’s Retreat: As the dark days of winter leave and spring starts to break through what will be your beacon of light?

The Women's Retreat, “Lighthouses” will be held on March 24-26 at Silver Lake Conference Center. Please sign up by March 19th in Wilton Hall or by calling the church office. The cost is \$140 per person and scholarships are available. Please contact Debi M-K for scholarship information. All women over 18 are welcome!

Jr. PF Calendar

February

- 5th – NO Regular Gathering
- 12th – Regular Gathering at 6:00 pm
- 19th – NO Regular Gathering
- 26th – Regular Gathering at 6:00 pm

Sunday School Calendar

January

- 5th – Sunday school grades K-3rd
- 12th – Regular Sunday school classes
- 19th – NO Sunday school
- 26th – Regular Sunday school classes

Outreach



It's that time again...the next St. George's supper is February 20th. 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 February 19th 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

Mustard Seed Worker’s Meeting after worship on February 5th ! - We are going to be discussing new procedures so attendance is important. I promise we will keep it short. Get a cup of coffee or tea and join us in Dineson. Thanks, Peggy Villani



The Annual MCC Tag Sale is coming! Please mark your calendars for March 11 from 9 am-1 pm (early birds at 8) in Wilton Hall. This is an enormous event, requiring many people to help with set up, sale and clean up. There are will be all sorts of shifts to suit all schedules, so please consider donating a few hours of your time that week. How you can help:

1--Donate your gently used items. Please do not donate anything broken or old TVs, computer monitors, large upholstered furniture or clothing. All other donations can be dropped off at the church starting after noon on Sunday 3/5 and continuing until Thursday 3/9. Drop off during the week is during office hours, and then on Thursday we will have extended drop off hours until 9 pm. Please do not drop off items on Friday.

2--PLEASE sign up to help. This is an enormous event, requiring many help with set up, sale and clean up. There are all sorts of shifts to suit all schedules, so please donate a few hours of your time that week. In addition to being a great help for us, it is a wonderful time for fellowship and fun with each other, so don't miss out. A signup sheet will be posted in Wilton Hall.

3--Spread the word. There are always terrific bargains (and we mean BARGAINS) at this tag sale, so the more people that come, the more successful we will be. 100% of the money earned that day goes to support mission, so everyone benefits from this event.

Dress A Girl Around The World Sew-A-Thon Returns March 18 from 10:00am-3:30pm~

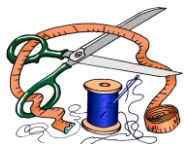


Join Liz Skarzyinski from Dress A Girl Around The World on March 18th in Wilton Hall to create dresses for little girls overseas. Thank you for your generous donations of fabric. If you would like to contribute we need small toys that can fit in a 2-3 inch square pocket. Dress A Girl is part of Hope 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.

Fellowship

Please join us for the MCC Book Club!

- ✚ **February 15th -7:30pm** The Japanese Lover by Isabel Allende
Hosted by Julie McClenathan-RSVP 203-261-0360
- ✚ **March 15th-7:30pm** The Unseen World by Liz Moore Location TBD



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.

Sponsor a Month of Coffee Hours Would you like to help the people who come to worship get to know each other? What if we told you that sponsoring a month of coffee hours at the low, low price of \$40? Our coffee is fair trade certified through Equal Exchange. You can use your sponsorship to honor loved ones – a dedication goes on a plaque and in the bulletin. Please make checks payable to MCC with "coffee sponsor" in the memo field. Thank you.

MCC Community Calendar

Thurs. Feb. 2nd

9:30am Bible Study
7:00pm Adult Choir

Week of Feb. 5th

Welcome Rev. Susan Pfeil

Scout Sunday

10:00am Worship with communion
11:15am Junior Choir
11:15am Mustard Seed Meeting (Dineson)
6:00pm Adult, Junior & Senior PF

Mon. Feb 6th

7:30pm Rachel's Well (Dineson)

Tues. Feb. 7th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Feb. 8th

6:30pm Youth Confirmation Class (Dineson)

Thurs. Feb. 9th

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

Week of Feb. 12th

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

Wed. Feb. 15th

6:30pm Youth Confirmation Class (Dineson)

Thurs. Feb. 16th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)
6:30pm CE Meeting (Dineson)
7:00pm Adult Choir

Sat. Feb. 18th

6:00pm Sr PF Chili Cook Off (Wilton Hall)

Week of Feb. 19th

10:00am Worship
11:15am Annual Meeting Continuation
11:15am Junior Choir
6:00pm Adult, Junior & Senior PF

Mon. Feb. 20th

Office Closed in Observance of President's Day
3:45pm St. George's Supper

Tues. Feb. 21st

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Feb. 22nd

6:30pm Adult Confirmation (Dineson)

Thurs. Feb. 23rd

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)
12:00pm Young at Heart location TBD
7:00pm Adult Choir

Week of Feb. 26th

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

Tues. Feb. 28th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Mar. 1

Ash Wednesday
7:30pm Ash Wednesday Worship

Thurs. Mar. 2nd

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

Week of Mar. 5th

10:00am Worship w/communion
11:15am Junior Choir
6:00pm Adult, Junior & Senior PF

Mon. Mar. 6th

7:30pm Rachel's Well (Dineson)

Tues. Mar. 7th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Mar. 8th

6:30pm Youth Confirmation Class (Dineson)

Thurs. Mar. 9th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)
7:00pm Adult Choir
7:30pm Parent's Support Group (Dineson)

Fri. Mar. 10th

Tag Sale Set Up

Sat. Mar. 11th

8:00am Tag Sale