



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

January 1, 2017



Some Things to Keep in Mind During a Sabbatical

On February 1st in which I will travel to the West Bank and serve as an Ecumenical Accompanier with the World Council of Churches through Global Ministries (<https://www.eappi.org/en>). I'm grateful for the opportunity to learn more about the people and culture, and I hope to contribute a peaceful presence to my placement. Soon I will learn my placement location, and I am working on building a reading list. A team of deacons have

worked diligently on setting up a part time sabbatical supply pastor, Rev. Susan Pfiel, whose bio follows. I will miss you all very much, but I'm quite certain that it will be an enriching season for MCC. Here are some simple church life suggestions that may help while I'm away.

Please Communicate! Don't take it for granted that everyone knows what is supposed to happen, or who is supposed to do it. Contact Melissa in the office directly about dates for meetings, events, and other building use (secretary@mcc-ucc.org). When putting an article in the Steeple or bulletin please include your contact information. When planning events, please keep Melissa, Rev. Susan (revspfeil@aol.com), Debi, Will, Council and other team members in the loop.

Welcome Visitors! Look around on Sunday mornings to see who is near you that you haven't seen before, or people who have recently started to attend. Say hello when passing the peace. Invite them to coffee hour. Bring them to an usher who will help them. You will meet some very nice people. Use your nametags – it so much more welcoming to get in the habit of going to church when you know the people's names!

Show up! I know everyone is busy, try to be here whenever you can.

Worship – During sabbatical time there is the temptation to 'wait it out' until the pastor returns. But the church is really the people, so don't take the chance on getting disconnected from everything that is happening at MCC.

Events – Being the church isn't just about Sunday mornings. Show up for events, continue to bring items for covenant to care or the food pantry. Support the efforts of the children and youth.

Helping Out – Commit to supporting your church as a volunteer. Don't assume someone else will do it. When everyone pitches in, the responsibility doesn't fall on the same people. Who knows, you may even have a lot more fun!

Engage other church members - If/when your board/committee is doing an event or planning a program, personally invite other people to get them involved. You'll find that most are more than willing to help or to attend something if they are personally invited.

Please Be Kind – Not only to Susan, but to each other. In times of change, nerves get frazzled, and it's easy to point fingers or place the blame on someone else. Susan will need to get to know all of you and how things work within a short frame of time. Be patient. Allow time for her to get to understand who you are and who MCC is. She may do things differently that I do, and that's ok. Keep an open mind.

Be Helpful - Don't assume Susan will know how everything works. Stop by the office to say, 'hi!' during her office hours. Invite her for coffee or lunch. Take time to introduce yourself. Invite her to your meetings, and explain what your team does, and how, and why it does it the way it does. How and why things are done a certain way is not always obvious to someone coming from outside. Give her as much information as you can.

Be Direct - If you don't like or understand something bring your concern, compliant, suggestion to the person directly. Don't engage in parking lot gossip. If you can't bring yourself to go directly to Susan with an issue, the Sabbatical Supply Pastoral Relations Team (David Bailey, Heather Henning, Frank Wittenauer) are the folks that can help.

Keep bringing it back to God - In all your planning and discussions remember to start first with God. MCC is here to spread God's message of love. You are here to figure out the best way to serve God and neighbor as the church, but also to find the best way you can be nurtured in God's love. What speaks to your soul? Bring that to God in prayer.

As we draw closer to my time away, I'm sure there will be more to say. May this new year of 2017 be one of peace and growth for us all! *In peace, Pastor Jenn*



Introducing Rev. Susan Pfiel

MCC Sabbatical Supply Pastor, February 1 – April 30, 2017

The Deacons would like to introduce to you Rev. Susan Pfiel, who is coming to MCC as a Sabbatical Supply Pastor while pastor Jenn is away.

Susan has completed five interim pastorates, a specialization that has become more and more vital for the wider church. Most recently she served as Stated Supply Pastor at the First United Church of Christ, a primarily Hungarian congregation in Bridgeport. After 122 years of ministry, the Church closed its doors at the end of December 2016.

Susan believes that the heart of ministry is mission, which makes her a great fit for MCC. Mission is more than traveling with a group to developing countries. Mission is living with the awareness that all of life is an opportunity to reach out to others and relate to them. Acceptance of differences between cultures in travel or groups in churches can bring incentives to work for social justice in new and creative ways.

Since 1988, Susan has embarked on many mission trips in Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Southern Mexico. In 2005, Susan traveled to Gulfport/Biloxi Mississippi to participate with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. She returned twice with groups from First Congregational Church, Stamford, to serve at Back Bay Mission.

In November 2007 her first article was published in the Journal of Religion and Abuse entitled, "A New Understanding of Clergy Compassion Fatigue for Facilitators of Trainings for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct." Susan has been a facilitator for the Healthy Boundaries Workshops, and has also served on the Committee on Ministry for the Presbytery of Southern New England.

Susan regularly visits her daughter, Anneliese, and son-in-law, David, and her step-grandson, Jim, 24, when he returns twice a year from San Francisco; and her three grandchildren: Devin, 11 yrs., Natalia, 9 yrs. and Tyler, 5 yrs. who all live in New York City.

Her first Sunday leading worship at MCC will be February 5th, which is also Scout Sunday.

Faith Formation

Let's have an Epiphany – Party!



Greetings and Happy New Year! I don't know if you realize it or not, but it's still Christmas! Hence the popular song "The Twelve Days of Christmas".

Thousands of children in Latin America and Spain are anxiously awaiting "El Día de los Reyes" celebration on January 6th. The holiday marks the biblical adoration of the baby Jesus by The Three Kings. According to the Gospel of Matthew, the men found the divine child by following a star across the desert for twelve days to Bethlehem. Melchior, Caspar, and Balthazar — representing Europe, Arabia, and Africa — travelled by horse, camel, and elephant in order to present baby Jesus with three symbolic gifts.

We don't necessarily celebrate this day as others do, but I'm always looking for a way for us to have some fun together. **On Saturday, January 7th, we'll be having an Epiphany Party beginning with a potluck supper at 5:00 pm.** We'll be having a meal, playing games, singing songs, and having a great time together. We'll also be doing star gifts as we did last year so if you received a star gift last year bring it with you so you can share how your 2016 was with your gift. Here's to a great year together, Debi

Are you ready for summer?

It's cold outside, but we at Silver Lake are already dreaming of summer 2017. Check out the [2017 Summer Conference Brochure](#) and start dreaming of which conference you will attend. Please share this brochure with your friends! Tell them all about the life-changing ministry of Silver Lake, where we encounter God's love in creation. Download the brochure online at www.silverlakeect.org. Registration opens January 15, 2017! Start looking for the brochure in your mailbox the first week of January. Save \$50 if you register by January 31! Use coupon code EARLY17 at check out. We can't wait to see you back at The Lake! *The Staff of Silver Lake Conference Center*



Jr. Pilgrim Fellowship Calendar

January


1st – NO JPF
 8th – Regular Gathering at 6:00 pm
 15th – Regular Gathering at 6:00 pm
 22nd – Regular Gathering at 6:00 pm
 29th – Regular Gathering at 6:00 pm



Sunday School Calendar

January

1st – NO Sunday school
 8th - Regular Sunday school classes
 15th - Regular Sunday school classes
 22nd - Regular Sunday school classes
 29th – Regular Sunday school classes



Save the Date: Senior PF Chili Cook-off Fundraiser 5pm-8pm on February 18th! Senior PF is preparing for our big mission trip to Chicago this July! We are excited and looking forward to new experiences, hard work, helping others and being in community with one another. Please join us for a chili cook off where we will have several contestants competing for the title of Chili Master! There will be music and raffles. We are also working on sharing several past mission trips so people can get a glimpse into our week and how important these trips are to our evolving spiritual growth and being of service to others. Please join us and see who should be crowned the Chili Master...





Outreach

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.

Fellowship

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



Community News

Congratulations to Matthew & Ellen Fracassini and big sister Margaret Grace on the birth of Eleanor Frances Fracassini , born December 18 (7 lbs and 3 ounces) Jack & Linda Fracassini are the proud grandparents.

Congratulations to Aaron & Paige Ribaud-Smith and big sister Lilly on the birth of Lark Cleo Ribaud-Smith , born December 22(8 lbs and 2 ounces). Rev. Sheldon & Nancy Smith are the proud grandparents.



Please come get your Viana chocolate box Sunday Jan 8th after the service in Wilton Hall. If you cannot make it Sunday, please swing by the office later in the week, or ask a friend you know who can make it to bring you your box. Thank you and your family for being part of this adventure we call MCC.

Love Trees

MCC Community Calendar

Week of Jan. 1st

Wed. Jan. 4th

6:30pm Youth Confirmation (Dineson)

Thurs. Jan. 5th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:00pm Adult Choir

Sat. Jan. 7th

5:00pm Epiphany Party (Wilton Hall)

Week of Jan. 8th

Young Adult Sunday

10:00am Worship

11:15am Jr Choir Practice

6:00pm Adult, Junior & Senior PF

Tues. Jan. 10th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Thurs. Jan. 12th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:00pm 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

11:15am Jr Choir Practice

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

7:00pm Bereavement Group (Dineson)

Wed. Jan. 18th

6:30pm Youth Confirmation (Dineson)

Thurs. Jan. 19th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

6:30pm CE Meeting (Dineson)

7:00pm Adult Choir

Week of Jan. 22nd

10:00am Worship

11:15am Jr Choir Practice

6:00pm Adult, Junior & Senior PF

Tues. Jan. 24th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Jan. 25th

6:30pm Adult Confirmation (Dineson)

Thurs. Jan. 26th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

12:00pm Young at Heart Location TBD

7:00pm Adult Choir

Week of Jan. 29th

Heritage Sunday

10:00am Worship

11:30am Annual Meeting

6:00pm Junior & Senior PF

Tues. Jan. 31st

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Feb. 1st

6:00pm Youth Confirmation (Dineson)

Thurs. Feb. 2nd

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:00pm Adult Choir

Week of Feb. 5th

Welcome Rev. Susan Pfiel, Scout Sunday

10:00am Worship

11:15am Jr Choir Practice

6:00pm Adult, Junior & Senior PF

Tues. Feb. 7th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Feb. 8th

6:30pm Youth Confirmation (Dineson)

Thurs. Feb. 9th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:00pm Adult Choir