



THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

**January 1, 2018**

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### What's a Resolution?



Happy New Year! This is the January 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the Steeple, and many of us are probably thinking about our New Year's resolutions and behaviors we'd like to change about ourselves. For example, drink water. Read more books. Spend quality time with those we love. Get active. The start of the year gives us a golden opportunity to place our best efforts on that which can only make us healthier and happier.

A **resolution** is a formal expression of an opinion. Sometimes a resolution is personal, like those I mention above. Other time, a resolution can be created to express the opinion of a group. These formal resolutions are made after a voting process according to the by-laws of the organization, legislature, club or other group.

In the United Church of Christ, churches like ours may choose to create something called a '*Resolution of Witness*', a statement that addresses a problem which affects our broader society. It begins with concerned individuals who draft a statement they take to their representative body. Once the local church agrees that the statement is adequate, they vote to send it on to the Conference, whose board of Directors decides on whether to bring it to a conference annual meeting for a vote by its clergy and delegates. If the resolution passes the CT Conference, it is often referred to our General Synod and acted upon by the national setting.

Why are these resolutions important to a church like ours? Simply put, resolutions are one way of representing our Christian witness to the world. These formal statements may not make a huge splash in the news, but they set the direction for the ministries of the wider church. David Bailey, a member of our Board of Deacons, has drafted a resolution for our church to consider entitled "*A Resolution of Witness Denouncing Acts of Violence, Hatred and Racism Carried Out by Members of Neo-Nazi and White Supremacist Groups*". His concern

about the rise of the Nazi-inspired behavior, and his fear that the behavior may spread, caused him to ask what we can do about it.

*A Resolution of Witness* is a formal expression of concern about a moral, ethical, or religious matter confronting the church, the nation, or the world. When adopted by General Synod, these resolutions guide the actions of the United Church of Christ: our national officers, Associated, or Affiliated Ministries, and other UCC bodies. When a resolution is adopted by the national setting, it is taken under consideration by local churches, Associations and Conferences.

While a formal statement like this may not put an end to the problem, it does help the church focus. May we all follow Christ by loving our neighbor and standing in solidarity with those on the receiving end of hate and violence. We'll be talking about this at the next Congregational Conversation on January 7<sup>th</sup> following the morning worship, and you can read it for yourself in draft form later in this Steeple. If you have any concerns, please contact the author of the resolution, David Bailey, our church's Moderator, David Walker or myself. Thank you for your time and consideration, we look forward to hearing from you.

In peace, *Pastor Jenn*

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### **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 6<sup>th</sup>. 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 6<sup>th</sup>, 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 2017 was with your gift.

So bring your star gifts, and a dish to share, wear clean socks and sign up for January 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm. Drinks and dessert are provided!

Here's to a great year together, Debi

**Moderator**

**Annual Reports Due January 5<sup>th</sup>**  
Please submit your annual report to the church office by Friday, January 5<sup>th</sup> Please call the church office with any questions. 203-268-9327 or email mccsecretary123@gmail.com

**Congregational Conversation: January 7<sup>th</sup>**

We hold this informal congregational conversation so that everyone has a chance to ask questions about the process, individual board allocations and even make recommendations which help shape our priorities as a plan is developed. No votes are taken, but ideas are shared. Knowing this financial information ahead of time helps us be better informed prior to our Annual Congregational Meeting in January. Please join us in Wilton Hall on January 7<sup>th</sup> at 11:15am and join in on the discussion!

**Call to Annual Congregational Meeting \* January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

The members of Monroe Congregational Church are hereby called to attend the Annual Meeting of the Congregation to be held in the Meeting House at 11:15am on Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The agenda will include the following: Receiving of Reports; Electing Officers, Board Members and Delegates; Adopting the 2018 budget and any other business that must properly come before the Congregation. Child care will be available.

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**Stewardship 2018: Journey to Generosity**



Good News! We are getting very close to completing our 2018 Stewardship Campaign, with 76 families or individuals committed to giving \$177,000 in support of the 2018 mission and ministry of the Monroe Congregational Church. Thank you! Our congregation's goal is \$200,000, so we are only \$23,000 away. If you haven't yet had a chance yet to complete a pledge card, simply and place it in the offering basket or drop it off at the church office. Please let us know if you have any questions and thank you for walking alongside us on the journey at the Monroe Congregational Church! Your Stewardship Committee: *Scott Young (Chair), Roy Nealon, John O'Rourke (Receiver)*

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**Trustees**

**Helping 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. **A PDF Order form is available on our church’s home page, [www.mcc-ucc.org](http://www.mcc-ucc.org)** . For further information, please contact the church office or Mark Barnhart at [msbarnhart515@gmail.com](mailto:msbarnhart515@gmail.com).

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## Christian Education



### **Hygge Women’s Retreat: March 2-4, Silver Lake Conference Center**

For over 40 years in a row, Denmark has been voted as one of the happiest countries in the world. What is the secret to the emotional success of this small Northern European country? At least part of the answer lies with the Danish way of “hygge”—pronounced “hooga.” The word dates back to the 19th century. It is derived from the Germanic word *hyggja*, which means to think or feel satisfied. There are no exact translations of hygge but some attempts are “cozy” or “homey”—words that do little to encompass the full spectrum of what it is.

Try to imagine going to a drama-free family gathering. There are no divisive discussions about politics, family issues, or Aunt Jenny’s dysfunctional kids. No snide comments, complaining, or heavy negativity. Everyone helps out, so that not one person gets stuck doing all the work. No one brags, attacks anyone, or competes with another. It is a light-hearted, balanced interaction that is focused on enjoying the moment, the food, and the company. In short, a shelter from the outside world. For some, that may sound normal for family gatherings. For most of us, it isn’t.

Hygge is essentially drama-free togetherness time. It is cozying around or “at hygge sig,” but more than that, it is being aware that that cozy time is sacred—and treating it as such. Because Danes see hygge as such a fundamental aspect of good living, they all work together to make it happen. Hygge is “we time,” not “me time”. If you’d like to come away with some of the women of MCC and engage in some good hygge, please sign up in Wilton Hall. Registration is \$140 and scholarship help is available. Questions? Speak with Pastor Jenn.

### **Jr. PF Calendar**

#### **January**

**7<sup>th</sup>** – Regular Gathering at 6:00 pm

**14<sup>th</sup>** – NO Jr. PF

**21<sup>st</sup>** – Regular Gathering at 6:00 pm

**28<sup>th</sup>** – Regular Gathering at 6:00 pm

## Sunday School Calendar

### January

7<sup>th</sup> – Sunday school classes for Grades PreK-2

14<sup>th</sup> – Special Program for all grades

21<sup>st</sup> – Regular Sunday school classes

28<sup>th</sup> – Regular Sunday school classes

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## Deacons



**January 7<sup>th</sup> 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.



Come talk about life and current events from a spiritual perspective on **Friday, January 19, 7:30 – 9 pm (Location TBD) with Faith on Tap!**

Are you confused about what you hear in the recent news about **Jerusalem** and the embassy move? Would you like to learn more? Mark your calendars and join the conversation! And if you have a friend who may like joining us, please bring them along! Agreement is not required, but civility is essential. Tea-totelers and soda drinkers welcome too! Call/text Clark (203-895-5604) or Rev. Jenn (203-895-5607) Gingras with any questions.

**Join Katrina Manzi as she celebrates her ordination on January 21, 2018** at Killingworth Congregational Church. The ordination begins at 3pm. If you would like to car pool with Pastor Jenn please contact her at 203-895-5607.

### A Note from Bob Olson



Thank you for your thoughts and prayers. They have been greatly appreciated by me and my family. Bob Olson

### A Note from the Olson Family

We want to thank all those who came to our home caroling on December 17<sup>th</sup>. What a wonderful it was! We sure did enjoy it immensely. Gail, Bob, & Missy Olson

### Special Prayer Request from Shari Carrano

Please prayer for my cousin Art Monsanto, his wife Stephanie and daughter Heather on the loss of their son/brother Jamie. Please keep his girlfriend Olivia Channon in your prayers as well. Thank you

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## Outreach

**The Bridgeport Rescue Mission** fights poverty from the inside out as they embrace the urban poor and addicted with the compassion of Christ, offering hope and healing for a changed life. We are collecting sample size toiletries such as soap, shaving cream, and shampoo to help support their mission. There is a bin located in Rexford Hall to drop off donations.



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## Fellowship



**2017 MCC Men's Weekend Retreat** ~ Friday, January 12 through Sunday, January 14 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.

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

- ✚ **January 17<sup>th</sup>-7:30pm** A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles ~ Host TBD
- ✚ **February 21<sup>st</sup>-7:30pm** The Women in the Castle by Jessica Shattuck ~ Host TBD
- ✚ **March date TBD** Under Heaven's Shining Stars by Jean Grainger~Host TBD

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## Community News



The Connecticut Chamber Choir presents Sacred Salzburg on January 14, 2018 at 4:00pm at St. Theresa Church 5302 Main Street, Trumbull. Featuring the music of Mozart and Johann Michael Haydn with the Connecticut Chamber String Ensemble and Galen Tate, Organ. Tickets available at the door: Adults \$20~Seniors \$15~Student \$5~Under 12

Free. [ctchamberchoir.org](http://ctchamberchoir.org) or 203-261-0360

### Eagle Scout Court of Honor for Zachary Gingras

Please join us at 6 pm on Friday, January 5th in the Meetinghouse to celebrate the achievements of MCC's newest Eagle Scout, Zachary Gingras. A light reception will follow in Wilton Hall.

1       **A RESOLUTION OF WITNESS DENOUNCING ACTS OF VIOLENCE, HATRED, AND**  
2       **RACISM CARRIED OUT BY MEMBERS OR SUPPORTERS OF NEO-NAZI AND WHITE**  
3       **SUPREMACIST HATE GROUPS**  
4

5       Submitted by the Board of Deacons of Monroe Congregational Church, Monroe CT  
6

7       **PREAMBLE:**  
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9           In the past year (2017), we have witnessed a significant increase in the  
10          incidents of hate speech, hate crimes, assault and harassment directed at  
11          immigrants, as well as towards members of the Islamic and Jewish faiths.  
12

13          We would be remiss to remain silent in the light of such outrages, for, *as*  
14          *Christians*, we are commanded by Scripture to: “do to others what you would  
15          have them do to you” (Matthew, 7:12), and we are asked by God to: “act  
16          justly and to love mercy” (Micah 6:8).  
17

18          Such are the circumstances that compel us to submit this Resolution:  
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20       **WHEREAS** such incidents as the open display of Nazi and white supremacist regalia  
21          (swastika flags and confederate flags, for example) and the overt display of  
22          Nazi-inspired behavior (as was witnessed in the white nationalist “Unite the  
23          Right” demonstration in Charlottesville, VA on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017) are  
24          becoming disturbingly more prevalent, and  
25

26       **WHEREAS** on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017, both Houses of the United States Congress  
27          unanimously passed a joint resolution condemning neo-Nazi groups, the Ku  
28          Klux Klan, and other white supremacists, and  
29

30       **WHEREAS** Jesus teaches us that those *least* favored in society are often those *most*  
31          favored by God (John, 4: 4-30, for example, tells of Jesus’ encounter with a  
32          Samaritan woman at a well), and  
33

34       **WHEREAS** the church strives to be inclusive of individuals “from every nation, tribe,  
35          people, and language” (Revelation 7:9), recognizing that God is the God of all  
36          people, and that distinctions of race and heritage do *not* make one more  
37          favored in the eyes of God.  
38

39 **THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that we, the Board of Deacons of the Monroe  
40 Congregational Church, Monroe CT, stand in solidarity with those who are  
41 most often the targets of neo-Nazi, KKK, and white supremacist hatred: the  
42 Jewish and Muslim communities, people of color, and immigrants, and  
43

44 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that we abhor acts of hatred and violence perpetrated  
45 on those with whom we stand, and offer to them instead our acts of love,  
46 peace, and support, and  
47

48 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that we call upon other communities of faith – Christian,  
49 Jewish, and Islamic alike – to be equally committed to this faith-based stance  
50 against neo-Nazism, the KKK, and white supremacy, and  
51

52 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that this resolution, if affirmed, be put into proper format  
53 for submission to the Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference for  
54 consideration and future submission to the 2019 General Synod of the United  
55 Church of Christ.  
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## MCC Community Calendar

### Week of Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>

10:00am Worship with Baptism

### **Tues. Jan 2<sup>nd</sup>**

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Wed. Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup>**

6:30pm Confirmation Class

### **Thurs. Jan. 4<sup>th</sup>**

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:15pm Adult Choir

### **Fri. Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>**

6:00pm Zachary Gingras Eagle Court  
of Honor (Meetinghouse, Wilton)

### **Sat. Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>**

5:00pm Epiphany Party (Wilton Hall)

### Week of Jan. 7<sup>th</sup>

*Young Adult Sunday*

10:00am Worship

11:15am Congregational Conversation

6:00pm Adult, Junior, & Senior PF

### **Mon. Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>**

7:30pm Council Meeting (Dineson)

### **Tues. Jan 9<sup>th</sup>**

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Wed. Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>**

6:30pm Confirmation Class

### **Thurs. Jan. 11<sup>th</sup>**

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:00pm Parents Support Group  
(Dineson)

7:15pm Adult Choir

### **Fri. Jan. 12<sup>th</sup> –Sun. Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>**

5:00pm Men's Retreat @ Silver Lake

### Week of Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>

10:00am Worship

6:00pm Senior PF

### **Mon. Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>**

*Office Closed in Observance of Martin  
Luther King, Jr. Day*

### **Tues. Jan 16<sup>th</sup>**

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

7:00pm Bereavement Group (Dineson)

### **Wed. Jan. 17<sup>th</sup>**

6:30pm Confirmation Class

7:30pm MCC Book Club (Location TBD)

### **Thurs. Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>**

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:15pm Adult Choir

### **Fri. Jan. 19<sup>th</sup>**

7:30pm Faith on Tap (location TBD)

### Week of Jan. 21<sup>st</sup>

8:45am Deacons Meeting (Dineson)

10:00am Worship

3:00pm Katrina Manzi Ordination  
(Killingworth Congregational)

6:00pm Adult & Senior PF

### **Tues. Jan 23<sup>rd</sup>**

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Wed. Jan. 24<sup>th</sup>**

6:30pm Confirmation Class

### **Thurs. Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>**

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:15pm Adult Choir