

THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

STEEPLE

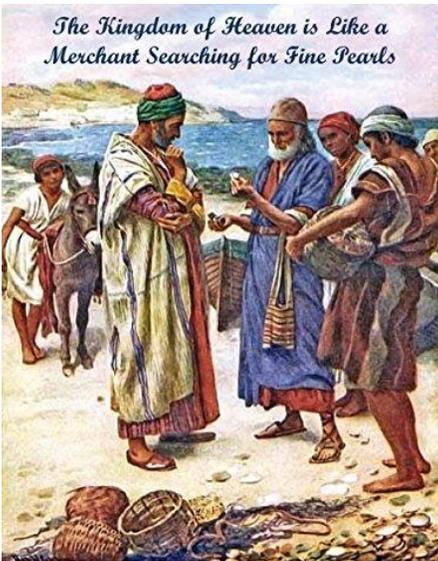
34 Church Street
Monroe, CT 06468

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

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

January 1, 2019



Watercolor Illustration: The Pearl of Great Price by Harold Copping (1863-1922)

"the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls..."
Matthew 13:45B

In Kathleen Norris' book *Amazing Grace: A Vocabulary of Faith* she tells "the scariest story I know about the bible". Norris recalls a conversation she and her husband once had over dinner with one of their South Dakota neighbors, a grandson of "dirt-poor immigrants" who now owned several thousand acres and bought new cars for his family every year, but who also had begun treatment for a cancer that would turn out to be terminal. That night, he told her about receiving a wedding gift, many years before, from his devout grandfather.

His wedding present to Arlo and his bride had been a bible, which he admitted he admired mostly because it was an expensive gift, bound in white leather, with their names and the date of their wedding set in gold lettering on the cover.

"I left it in its box and it ended up in our bedroom closet," Arlo told us. "But," he said, "for months afterward, every time we saw grandpa he would ask me how I liked that bible. The wife had written him a thank you note, and we'd thanked him in person, but somehow he couldn't let it lie, he'd always keep asking about it." Finally, Arlo grew curious as to why the old man kept after him. "Well," he said, "the joke was on me. I finally took that Bible out of the closet and found that granddad had placed a twenty-dollar bill at the beginning of the Book of Genesis, and at the beginning of every book ... over thirteen hundred dollars in all. And he knew I'd never find it."

Sometimes when we are covering the Bible in confirmation class, I'm asked by our students if I've ever read the whole thing. My answer is, "sure, but only about a dozen times." We talk about how the Bible is an anthology made up of 66 shorter books and letters (more in Catholic and Orthodox bibles) that were written by many different authors over a long period of time.

To be honest, some of what I read in the Bible makes sense immediately. Other parts only make sense with prayer and more thought. Still other bits make little sense even after quite a bit of pondering (the Book of Revelation, for one!). I don't usually mind pondering, but I also realize my habit is to read the parts I like often, the other parts less often... and maybe a few parts not at all.

I still don't understand all of the bible, but I have come to believe that when I read it prayerfully and in study with others it helps. There is a group of us that meet every Thursday morning from 9:30-11 am in the parlor for study and conversation, you are most welcome to join us! May God grant us grace to open wide the scriptures – and find treasure far beyond price.

The grace and peace of Christ be with you in 2019, *Pastor Jenn*

Church Council

Congregational Conversation: January 6th Each year we develop a budget for the next year of ministry at the Monroe Congregational Church. 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 on January 27th. Please join us in Wilton Hall on Sunday, January 6th, 2018 at 11:15 and join in on the discussion!

Annual Reports Due January 10th

Please submit your annual report to the church office by Friday, January 10th. Please call the church office with any questions. 203-268-9327 or email mccsecretary@sbcglobal.net

Call to Annual Congregational Meeting * January 27th, 2019

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 27th, 2019. The agenda will include the following: Receiving of Reports; Electing Officers, Board Members and Delegates; Adopting the 2019 budget and any other business that must properly come before the Congregation. Child care will be available.

What Shall We Bring? 2019 Stewardship Campaign



Jesus invites us to bring all that we are and all that we have when we become a disciple. Our generosity funds the mission and ministry of putting our faith in action, as God's realm grows among us here at the Monroe Congregational Church. Some of you have already submitted commitment cards with your pledge for 2019, and we are grateful for your support! **To date, we have received 74 pledges for a total of \$159,747** against our goal of 100 pledges for a total of \$200,000. *If your monthly or weekly pledge goes through Vanco, please fill out a pledge card so we can update our records for 2019.* ~ Your Stewardship Committee, John O'Rourke (Receiver), Roy Nealon, Liz Sampson, Pastor Jenn

Christian Education



Epiphany Party, Saturday, January 5th On January 5th, 2018 we will be celebrating the Epiphany, or the arrival of the Wise Ones to present their gifts to Jesus. This arrival brought about the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles, validating Jesus as the Messiah. We will be having a potluck supper at MCC starting at 5:00 pm and ending at 7:30. We will sing songs, play games, do crafts, have King's Cakes, receive our Star Word for 2019, and send the Christmas season out with a bang! Please

join us – ALL are welcome!

January Sunday school schedule

6th – Gathering for children in PreK-2nd grade

13th – All groups gather

20th – All groups gather

27th – All groups gather

January Jr. PF Schedule

6th – Regular gathering, 6:00-7:30 pm

13th – Regular gathering, 6:00-7:30 pm

20th – No Jr. PF

27th – Regular gathering, 6:00-7:30 pm

Fellowship

Please join us for the MCC Book Club!

✚ **January 21st-7:30pm** Before We Were Yours by Lisa Wingate ~ Host TBD

✚ **February 18th-7:30pm** Varina by Charles Frazier ~ Host TBD



Faith on Tap, Friday, January 4th: Come talk about life and current events from a spiritual perspective at VERACIOUS BREWING COMPANY from 7:30 - 9pm. All are welcome. Agreement is not required, but civility is essential. Tea-totelers and soda drinkers

welcome too! The January theme is "*Post Christian Spirituality*" Call/text Clark (203-895-5604) or Rev. Jenn (203-895-5607) Gingras with any questions.

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.

Outreach

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. Non-perishable food items and pet supplies can be left in the bins in front of the church office. To donate perishable items such as eggs or milk please call 452-3770 to arrange a drop off time. Thank you for your generosity!



Food Pantry Donations Needed

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.



MCC Community Calendar

Tues. Jan. 1st

Office Closed in Observance of New Year's

Thurs. Jan. 3rd

9:30am Bible Study

Fri. Jan. 4th

7:30 pm Faith on Tap (Veracious)

Sat. Jan. 5th

5:00 pm Epiphany Party

Week of Jan. 6th

10:00 am Worship with Communion

11:15 am Junior Choir (Meetinghouse)

11:15 am Congregational Conversation (Wilton Hall)

5:00 pm Senior PF

6:00 pm Junior & Adult PF

Tues. Jan. 8th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Jan. 9th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

7:15 pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Jan. 10th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

Sat. Jan. 12th

10:00 am Dress a Girl (Wilton Hall)

Week of Jan. 13th

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am Junior Choir (Meetinghouse)

5:00 pm Senior PF

6:00pm Junior PF

Tues. Jan. 15th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

7:00 pm Bereavement Group (Dineson)

Wed. Jan. 16th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

7:15 pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Jan. 17th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

Week of Jan. 20th

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am Junior Choir (Meetinghouse)

5:00 pm Senior PF

6:00 pm Adult PF

Tues. Jan. 22nd

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Jan. 23rd

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

7:15 pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Jan. 24th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

Week of Jan. 27th

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am Junior Choir (Meetinghouse)

11:15 am Annual Meeting

5:00 pm Senior PF

6:00pm Junior PF

Tues. Jan. 29th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Jan. 30th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

7:15 pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Jan. 31st

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

Week of Feb. 3rd

10:00 am Worship w/Communion

11:15 am Junior Choir (Meetinghouse)

11:15 am Annual Meeting

5:00 pm Senior PF

6:00pm Junior & Adult PF

Tues. Feb. 5th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Feb. 6th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

7:15 pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Feb. 7th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)