



# THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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# STEEPLE

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

Senior Pastor: Rev. Jennifer Gingras  
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Music Director: Will Duchon  
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**July 1, 2018**

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*"The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing... not healing, not curing... that is a friend who cares."* - Henri Nowen



Consider this.... All human beings need healing. We need healing of our experiences of loss, of our sense of moral failure, greed, and brokenness of body, mind, spirit, and relationships. We need social transformation and planetary healing and so we need to pray for personal, congregational, community and national healing.

I believe that Jesus' healing ministry represents a heightening of the energy that created the universe and that is resident in our cells and souls. Jesus' healing ministry –and our own – is an expression of the powers available to us when we are fully in synch with our deepest selves, God, the well-being of others, and our environment. Then and now, Jesus' healing ministry is more than sociological and political, although it includes these factors, but it is also spiritual and physical in the most holistic ways possible.

In Mark 5:21-43 we hear two healing stories: the healing of Jairus' daughter and the healing of the woman with the flow of blood. One is wealthy, the other is impoverished. Both feel powerless as they call upon the only one who can help.

Jarius may have been suspicious of Jesus, but his daughter's condition broke down any sense of judgment he felt toward the healer from Nazareth. Jesus felt Jairus' pain, and nothing would stand between him and restoring this young girl to health.

The path to healing is often surprising and unexpected. On the way, a woman reached out to Jesus and is healed from what most scholars describe as a gynecological ailment. The woman's illness had alienated her from husband (if she had one) as well as family, community, and religion. She was a social and spiritual outcast (and, like so many people today), impoverished by the cost of health care. The woman thought that perhaps God was punishing her for some sin of which she was unaware. For her, the healing moment was now! In her desperation, she found the courage to face the crowds, the stares, and comments, and the risk of rejection from the healer. When she touched Jesus, the healing energy of the

universe was released. The power was so great that it unsettled the healer, who looked all around for the recipient of his energy. Healed, she approaches him elated but filled with fear and trembling at what she just experienced and how he might respond to her. She receives his final blessing, "Daughter, your faith has made you well."

Like so many of Jesus' healings, this story is many-faceted. Her faith is a factor, but not the only one. Healing is not about us, but a synergetic connection of our faith, the faith of others, our condition and previous behavior, the nature of the illness and medical responses, and God's ever-present goal of abundant life.

The healing of Jairus' daughter is also the result of the interplay of faith and divine power. Jesus dismisses the naysayers and allows only those who trust his diagnostic (she is not dead, but asleep) and healing power. Jesus creates a healing circle to bring about her recovery. In this we are reminded that healing is always a communal event, grounded in a community of faith that believes on our behalf. Our trust in God can be a tipping point from illness to health, opening up new pathways for God's healing power.

Can our church become a healing circle, opening us to God's energy of love that transforms cells and souls alike? When we say "yes" and let go of our fears and need for control, miracles occur, energies are released, not contrary to the laws of nature, but in accordance with God's vision of abundant life for all creation. May it be so, and may it be soon.

*In peace, Pastor Jenn*



## What is Faith Formation?

Matthew 28:19-20 says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you."

*What is a Disciple?*

A disciple is a follower of Christ. It is more than simply knowing or doing. It is building a devoted and healthy relationship with our Lord and Savior.

*Then what is "Faith Formation?"*

Faith-formation is the life-long process of making ourselves and others into disciples.

*What do we work on in Faith Formation?*

We develop four areas of our lives: wider **knowledge**, **discipleship** habits, **maturity** in our walk and healthy **relationships** with Christ and others. Faith formation is applicable to our entire lives not just up until Confirmation.

Studies today show that teenagers forget most of the bible stories, lessons, etc. that we teach them as children because they need to make room for other information so ongoing,

lifelong Formation is vital. I have curated some books, children's and adult's, for you to borrow over the summer to hopefully help you along the way. I encourage you to look at them on the cart outside of my office and if you want to borrow one, just sign it out and be sure to return it when you have finished reading it.

It might just seem like a few words, but what we say and what we mean are important. I encourage all of you to think about this, especially this summer as the CE Board contemplates some new opportunities for the fall.

*"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."* Isaiah 43:19

Peace and blessings to you, Debi

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### **Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island Conferences vote to go forward Together, As One**

6/16/2018 By Tiffany Vail, Associate Conference Minister for Communications

The Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island conferences of the United Church of Christ made history on June 16, voting overwhelmingly to form a new unified Conference in which they will not only do ministry together, but to which they will invite other religious and secular organizations to join.



In separate plenary sessions held at their second joint Annual Meeting, the three conferences voted to approve a covenant agreement and new set of bylaws establishing the new conference, and they elected a new united Board of Directors.

"UCC History was made today," said the Rev. John Dorhauer, UCC general minister and president. "Signaling to the wider church that we can accomplish more together than apart, that we live in an interdependent world in which we all need each other, and looking to maximize the use of precious mission resources, delegates to this tri-conference annual meeting voted to carve out a new pathway for what we hope will be new life, new vitality, and new relevance."

"It is my fervent hope and prayer that covenant partners around the life of this denomination will likewise test their own vision and courage in response to a Holy Spirit who is inviting us to join Her in explorations and innovations that open us up to new possibilities," he continued.

A year ago, delegates from the three conferences voted to pursue the possibility of uniting; this year, they voted to give official form to the new, combined entity.

"Today we affirmed that we need each other," said Connecticut Conference Minister the Rev. Kent J. Siladi. "We attended to the Holy Spirit's movement in our gathering and we moved forward with a commitment to making an impact and making a difference in this God-so-loved world in which we live. Let it be said that at this gathering people of faith were filled with hope and joy, peace and love, and agreed that together we are called to live the love and justice of Jesus," Siladi said.

The Rev. Barbara Libby, Interim Rhode Island Conference Minister, said the vote shows that “in spite of all sorts of other differences, we do share the notion that following Jesus Christ does and will continue to transform us, our churches, and even our planet.”

The Rev. Traci Blackmon, UCC Executive Minister of Justice & Local Church Ministries, preached at the Annual Meeting on Friday evening, and asked those gathered: “Have you ever trusted God enough to step into the water, not knowing how you would make it across?”

Her words resonated with many in attendance, who time and again the next day referred to getting their feet wet as a metaphor for daring to step into a new future together.

Before she left Saturday, Blackmon called the vote exciting and unprecedented. “It marks a change in ministry that’s going to be needed for church to move beyond the walls again,” she said. “We are fortunate that these three conferences are courageous enough to lead us in this.”

The three historic conferences will remain in existence as voting members of the new conference, tentatively being called the Together, As One Conference. The new conference will need to be approved by the UCC’s national governing body, General Synod, in June of 2019. The conferences will move to a single staff and budget starting Jan. 1, 2020.

The new Board of Directors – which consists of five members and two officers from each of the three Conferences - will now begin the task of determining how the new entity will be structured.

Conference leaders point to one aspect of the new conference as unique and unprecedented: it allows for other bodies who share in the vision, mission and purpose of the new conference to join as non-voting associate members. For example, the Annual Meeting of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts last fall passed a resolution calling for a "Deeper Community, Service and Engagement" with "United Church of Christ Partners." Down the line, the Diocese could become an associate member of the new conference.

“For over 200 years Protestantism in America has offered a denominated witness to Christ’s call for justice and love,” said Massachusetts Conference Minister and President the Rev. Jim Antal. “Going forward we have an opportunity to come together. What we did today was a first step. We need institutions to carry the weight of social change. They also offer symbols that can bring people together. That’s our profound hope.”

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**Mission Possible Summer Photo Challenge:**

Starting NOW and continuing through this summer, look for those places where God's kingdom is sneaking in, or spreading out, or taking over little corners of our world. Take some pictures of those places, people or moments and send them to Pastor Jenn via text (203-895-5607) or e-mail (Jenn@mcc-ucc.org). Please include a few words of why the scene gives you HOPE. We'll have an opportunity to share in September.



## Deacons

**Summer Worship with St. Peter's Episcopal Church!** One of the highlights of every summer is joining in worship with our friends from St. Peter's in an outdoor setting. Please bring a lawn chair.



- On **July 29<sup>th</sup> at 10AM** we host St. Peter's on our side lawn (weather permitting), stay for an ice cream social in Wilton Hall following worship!
- On **August 12th at 9AM** St. Peter's will host us on their side of the green



**Friday, July 6th:** Come talk about life and current events from a spiritual perspective at Veracious Brewing Company's from 7:30 - 9pm with your friends from MCC! No formal presentations - just people kicking around a topic, sharing honestly what really matters to them. Anyone is welcome, and no topic is off limits. Agreement not required, but civility is essential. Tea-totelers and soda drinkers welcome too! Call/text Clark ([203-895-5604](tel:203-895-5604)) or Rev. Jenn ([203-895-5607](tel:203-895-5607)) Gingras with any questions. **July Theme:** GAME NIGHT! Bring your favorite board game and we'll have some fun!

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## Stewardship

Summer is here. While you may be on vacation, MCC will continue to need funds to support our ongoing operations. Please make sure to stay current on your pledge payments over the summer months. You can make your payment via the weekly Sunday collections, via electronic payment from your bank, or via the "Donate" section of our web site.



Thanks for your support of MCC and enjoy your summer!

In Christ's Service - MCC Stewardship Committee

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## Outreach



**Interfaith Partnership for Refugee Resettlement (IPRR)** The Interfaith Partnership for Refugee Resettlement (IPRR) has welcomed its second refugee family. They are originally from the Congo and spent the last 21 years in a Rwandan refugee camp. The family consists of the mother and her 3 sons. The youngest son is hearing impaired and non-verbal. The family is very

happy to be here and anxious to begin their new life. They are currently learning or enhancing their English, getting health exams and settling in to a new environment. IPRR is looking for gift cards for Price Rite, Walgreens, Visa or clothing discount stores. Additionally, they are looking for drivers and possible contacts for employment . Further information may be found on the IPRR website <http://www.iprefugeer.org/>, or by contacting the church office or Joanne Malia.



**Help is needed at the Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe** - If you are free on Thursdays between 12-3, Fridays from 10-12:30 or 12:30-3 or on Saturdays between 10-12 or 12-2, I need your help manning the counter. It's really easy to open or close the Shoppe. If you are interested, come during one of these shifts and someone will show you what to do. You can also reply to me and I'll give you a tour and put you on the schedule. Please email Susie Cuseo at [thecuseos@yahoo.com](mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com) or call 203-268-0280 with any interest or questions.



**This is the last weekend for donations of items for Camp Hope.** Please drop off any items in the Morning Circle bin outside the Men's room. Thank you for giving children of abuse a chance to have a time outdoors free of judgement and pressure.

- Large duffel bags
- Pillows
- Sunscreen
- Water bottles w/handles
- Shoes
- Backpacks
- Pajamas
- Swimtrunks
- Adult sleeping bags

- Bug spray
- Flashlights w/batteries
- Sneakers-closed toed
- Heavy jacket
- Water shoes/shower shoes
- Ponchos
- Caps/hats



**BRIDGEPORT RESCUE MISSION**

**Help 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. **During the summer months, donations slow down** but we still provide more than 450,000 meals each year through our dining room, food pantry, and mobile kitchens. Can you help? There is a bin located in Rexford Hall to drop off donations. Thank you for your generosity.

**We are in immediate need of:**

- Canned beans, peas, & corn
- Canned sweet and white potatoes
- Canned tuna & chicken & ham
- Peanut Butter
- Jelly in plastic jars
- Boxed macaroni & cheese
- Boxed rice

- Boxed cold cereal
- Pasta and sauce
- Ramen noodles
- Diapers
- Wipes
- Pull-Ups
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes

**Donations needed for the Monroe Food Pantry-Food donations tend to run low-**

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

## Christian Education



**Vacation Bible School 2018!** The theme is "God's Big Backyard"; the dates are August 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>; open to all children age 4 thru 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Registration is available online now at [www.mcc-ucc.org](http://www.mcc-ucc.org).

**Planning and Training Meeting:** we will be having a Planning and Training meeting for ALL volunteers on Wednesday, July 11<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 pm. Please contact Debi at [debi@mcc-ucc.org](mailto:debi@mcc-ucc.org) if you are unable to attend.



Thanks to our wonderful volunteers we will have six weeks of **Summer Sunday school** this year! Summer Sunday school is available to children in PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade on **July 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup>, and August 5<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup>.**

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### Fellowship

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

- ✚ **July 18<sup>th</sup>-7:30pm** The Alice Network by Kate Quinn~Host Peggy Villani
- ✚ **August 15<sup>th</sup>-7:30pm** The Avalon Ladies Scrapbooking Society by Darien Gee~ Host TBD
- ✚ **September 19<sup>th</sup>-7:30pm** Lillian Boxfish Takes a Walk by Kathleen Rooney~ Host TBD

**Morning Circle** will not meet during the summer months of July and August. Mark your calendars for our next meetings and special events on Wednesdays at 11AM in Dineson Parlor on September 12 (speaker on current local scams), October 10 (Trick-or-Treat bags for Food Pantry), November 14 (bean soup jars for Pantry) and December 12 (Christmas Luncheon - location TBD). All women of the congregation and their friends may attend. Please contact Jackie Bleakney at 203-268-5275 with any questions or comments.



**Have you come across used prescription glasses or sunglasses** while cleaning out your drawers and wondered what you can do with them? Well, you can drop them off in the kitchen and I will pick them up and bring them to the appropriate collection place. They will be cleaned and checked for their strength and then sent to low and middle income communities where they will go to someone who will be given the gift of sight. Please contact Susie Cuseo at 203-268-0280 or [thecuseos@yahoo.com](mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com) with any questions.

**The time to sign up for Prayer Partners** will be coming before you know it. But there's plenty of time to consider what a small amount of effort it takes to keep someone in your prayers. Here's a testimonial from a previous prayer partner: "It's a pleasure to keep connected with a prayer partner through prayer and fellowship." Look for the sign up sheet in September in Dineson Parlor. I hope that my partners from this year will continue to keep theirs in their thoughts throughout the summer and so on. Please contact Susie Cuseo at 203-268-0280 or



[thecuseos@yahoo.com](mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com) with any questions.

## 4<sup>th</sup> Annual MusicFest

**SAVE THE DATE:** Sunday, October 7, 1 pm to 7 pm - Monroe MusicFest 2018 - MCC's 4th annual MusicFest



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### Dress A Girl News



Thank you to all DAG Sewers & Supporters! June 9<sup>th</sup> was wonderful. We packed out 127 dresses, made 18 tee-shirt dress kits, and 21 Fat Quarter dress kits and welcomed several new sewers to our group. I hope all who were able to attend enjoyed your day, thank you for participating. I have posted our day's activities to the Dress A Girl Connecticut FB page, if you get a moment check it out and give it a like.

I added up how many dresses we have packed out year to date and we have reached 700 as of the June 9th Sew-a-Thon. Thank you all for this amazing number! Just to give you a point of reference, the first year I started having Sew-a-Thons we packed out 250 - so we have come a long way ladies - thank you all for your help and support.

Liz Skarzynski, Ambassador Southern Connecticut  
Dress A Girl Around The World, [dressagirlsouthernct@yahoo.com](mailto:dressagirlsouthernct@yahoo.com)

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### Elisha's Corner

Gary Thompson, Church Historian

#### **"..... and We Shall Build"**



This year, 2018, marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the construction completion, opening, and dedication of our Rexford House. The actual dedication ceremony took place on Sunday, September 29, 1968; a quick eleven months after the ground breaking ceremony that took place the previous year on a Sunday, November 19, 1967. The ceremony also dedicated the renovations made to Beardsley Hall and the Dineson Parlor. It was a weeklong celebration of a long, long awaited program completion that started formally five and a half years earlier on March 6, 1963 with the formation of a study committee by the Church Council. The acting chairman was Rev. W. Raymond Ward (1956 to 1966).

In January of 1964 the Survey Committee, headed by June Wilkes, presented their findings to the Council. In May of that year the members of the committee selected Curtis



"Bud" Morvec chairman of the group. By this time the Church Council was locked into "the dream built", as the Executive Building Committee later referred to the project. In June a Fellowship and Recreation report was presented by Max Hauenstein and a Christian Education report by Shirley Tibbits. Shirley also chaired the Furnishing and Equipment Committee. One can only assume that the survey and subsequent committee reports reflected the needs, desires, and expectations of the congregation for their recordings have yet to be found in the church archives. Maybe they will be in time for next month's story.

By July, 1966, the selection process for an architect was underway, and on September 13<sup>th</sup> Moderator Max Hauenstein assembled the congregation to hear the Building Committee's progress and results to date. By unanimous vote "...the meeting approved Mr. Henry Moeckel (and Associates) as architect." Serious attention was then initiated In November for the fund raising effort. After twelve weeks of preparation, the "Executive Building Committee became Project Executive Committee as requested in (a) letter from Board for Homeland Ministries of (the) United Church (of Christ) accepting our reservation for a fund program." Bud Morvec became the chairman, and the supportive Executive Building Committee was retained.

Meetings were held with the Board of Religious Education; Couples Club; Senior P.F.; Women's Fellowship; Church Council; Deacons; Trustees; Treasurer; and Financial Secretary to review "preliminary plans" for comments and suggestions on Feb 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of 1967. By unanimous vote, the slogan "... and we shall build" was adopted at a special meeting on April 10<sup>th</sup>, the same month Rev. Robert Keeling (1967 to 1974) started as our new pastor.

Forty-four men comprised the family pledge canvas team. Canvas Sunday was on June 18, 1967. The goal was to raise \$60,000 over a three year period from 1967 to 1970 to insure commencement of the building. A Men's Breakfast served by the Women's Fellowship was held on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Leaving nothing to chance, Bud Morvec was chairman of the Building Fund Campaign. The campaign was a success and "exceeded (its) goal of \$60,000. As a result the congregation was called to a special meeting held on July 7, 1967 to accept the "master plan" proposed by the architect. It called for two phases. Phase 1 was the new construction of our 7,860 square feet Rexford House, a 600 square foot addition to the parsonage, and Beardsley Hall renovations and equipment. The total cost of Phase 1 was \$185,000. Phase 2 was for a 4,600 square foot addition to the Rexford House costing \$75,000. Phase 2, obviously was never started and remains on the drawing boards.

As you can imagine, accepting all of this planning was not without some misgiving and apprehension. In today's constant dollars the \$60,000 campaign goal converts to \$457,000, and the \$185,000 project cost of Phase 1 coverts to \$1,409,000. How strong their faith was that it could be done? 'Twas "the dream built"!

## **MCC Community Calendar**

### **Week of July 1<sup>st</sup>**

10:00am Worship  
11:15am MusicFest Meeting (Dineson)  
5:00pm Senior PF

### **Mon. July 2-7<sup>th</sup>**

*Adult Mission Trip to Puerto Rico*  
3:45pm St. George's Supper

### **Tues. July 3<sup>rd</sup>**

10:00am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Fri. July 6<sup>th</sup>**

7:30pm Faith on Tap (Veracious)

### **Week of July 8<sup>th</sup>**

10:00am Worship  
5:00pm Senior PF

### **Tues. July 10<sup>th</sup>**

10:00am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Wed. July 11<sup>th</sup>**

7:00pm VBS Training (Dineson)

### **Sat. July 14-22<sup>nd</sup>**

*Senior PF Mission Trip to Vicksburg, Mississippi*

### **Week of July 15<sup>th</sup>**

10:00am Worship with guest preacher Rev.  
Susan Pfiel

### **Tues. July 17<sup>th</sup>**

10:00am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Wed. July 18<sup>th</sup>**

7:30pm MCC Book Club at the Villani's

### **Week of July 22<sup>nd</sup>**

10:00am Worship with guest preacher Rev.  
Susan Pfiel

### **Tues. July 24<sup>th</sup>**

10:00am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Week of July 29<sup>th</sup>**

10:00am Worship with St. Peter's  
(we host)  
11:15am Ice Cream Social

### **Mon. July 30<sup>th</sup>**

6:30pm Council Planning (parsonage)

### **Tues. July 31<sup>st</sup>**

10:00am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Week of Aug. 5<sup>th</sup>**

10:00am Worship with Communion  
5:00pm Senior PF

### **Mon. Aug. 5<sup>th</sup>-Fri. Aug. 10<sup>th</sup>**

9:00am Vacation Bible School

### **Week of Aug. 12<sup>th</sup>**

**\*9:00am\*** Worship with St. Peter's

### **Wed. Aug. 15<sup>th</sup>**

7:30am MCC Book Club (location TBD)

### **Week of Aug. 19<sup>th</sup>**

10:00am Worship  
5:00pm Senior PF

### **Week of Aug. 26<sup>th</sup>**

10:00am Worship  
5:00pm Senior PF

### **Week of Sep. 2<sup>nd</sup>**

10:00am Worship w/ Communion  
5:00pm Senior PF

### **Week of Sep. 9<sup>th</sup>**

10:00am Worship  
5:00pm Senior PF

### **Wed. Sep. 12<sup>th</sup>**

9:30am Retired Men (Dineson)  
11:00am Morning Circle

### **Thurs. Sep. 13<sup>th</sup>**

9:30am Bible Study

### **Sat. Sep. 14<sup>th</sup>**

10:00am Dress A Girl (Wilton Hall)

