



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
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June 1, 2017



The Wolf We Feed

You've probably heard the story about the Native American grandfather talking to his young granddaughter. She tells him, *"it's like I have two wolves inside me, one that is mean and angry and wants to eat everyone I meet, and another that's friendly and kind and gentle."* Then she asks, *"which one of them will rule my personality, which one controls me?"* After a moment the grandfather wisely answers, *"the one you feed."*

I don't mean to add to it by pointing it out, but sometimes it seems like negativity is a pond too many of us are swimming in. Some of us are even prone to be proactively negative. We won't wait to be bruised, hurt or offended, we're even going to be ready to make a first strike if necessary. That'll show them!

Some have said that our culture's current negativity has more to do with the economy than anything else. Even though there are some signs of recovery, higher prices for gas and food along with uncertainty about economic markets and employment prospects can lead a lot of us to feeling uncertain. The result can lead to greater suspicion, declining civility and even less recognition of the positive things happening all around us.

Yes, negativity can be a challenge for those of us who claim to take our lead from the life and teachings of Jesus. Writing to the Galatian church, the Apostle Paul suggests that the fruit in the lives of those who are living in Christ's Spirit would be: *"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things... If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another (5:22-26)."*

Paul seems to be warning the church about not letting the negative spirit of their age infiltrate and diminish their precious spirit and faith. Then and now, when we learn to trust the "yes" of faith, life opens up for us. The possibility of God's Spirit working in and through us makes us bear such impossibly strange fruits as the one's named above... kindness, gentleness, patience and generosity, love and peace and joy. As individuals and as a church community, finding ourselves on this path of renewal and rebirth gives us an opportunity to rejoice!

With the scent of strawberry wafting through the halls, our church year moves from Spring to Summer. As we make that transition, let's not lose sight of the new life breaking forth around us and (if we let it!) within us. Remember to give thanks for all that we have been given in each other and this amazing community.

At the Monroe Congregational Church, we seek to feed that which is positive, that which nurtures our spiritual growth and mission in the world. Here we strive to feed the wolf that points in the direction of faith, hope and love. This is the journey we are on, and it's always easier, better, more fun, when we're on the road together. Hope to see you at Strawberry Festival! In Christ's peace, *Pastor Jenn*

Above & Beyond!



Our deepest thanks to **Fellowship & Friends** who offered ice cold freeze pops to the people who marched in the Monroe Memorial Day Parade! Also, for setting up, designing centerpieces, serving, hosting and cleaning up the Fairfield East Association Spring Annual Meeting! Wilton Hall was beautiful and our 100+ guests appreciated feeling right at home.

We'd also like to thank chef **Fred Dubois and Jane Allen** for preparing a wonderful celebration meal for the youth confirmands, their families, sponsors, teachers and adult confirmands on May 24th AND the Fairfield East Association's Annual Spring Meeting on May 31st!

Also, thanks to the **Deacons & friends** who helped to setup, breakdown and serve the confirmation meal. All events were wonderful moments of celebration!

Deacons

On June 11th we are happy to welcome Rev. Loren McGrail as a guest preacher. Rev. McGrail is the Communications, Advocacy, and Church Relations Officer for the YWCA of Palestine in Jerusalem. Her four-year missionary appointment is supported by Our Churches Wider Mission's international missionary program in the United Church of Christ. She writes and edits newsletters, statements, and Action Alerts. She also coordinates the advocacy projects which include: The Fabric of Our Lives, Breaking Down the Wall, The Wise Women Also Came, and The Flight into Egypt. She meets with church groups/ delegations that are visiting the Holy Land. She is also the Advocacy Officer for the Joint Advocacy Initiative (JAI) and edits their on-line newsletter Eye on Palestine and works with the Olive Tree Campaign. She also serves the Church of Scotland in Jerusalem as one of their ecumenical partners. Pastor Jenn met her while on sabbatical in Jerusalem. Welcome Loren!



Graduation Celebration Sunday is June 11th Is anyone in your family graduating? In worship on June 11th we will celebrate the accomplishments of graduates (high school, technical/trade school, college or graduate programs). Please e-mail Melissa at mccsecretary123@gmail.com with the graduate's name, school and degree program and plans for next fall.

For sermons & other musings, visit Pastor Jenn's blog at: <http://loveshoutingstones.blogspot.com>

Christian Education

**Save the Date! Vacation Bible School ~July 31st- August 4th
"Superheroes of the Bible"**

Moses? Deborah? David? Jesus? Superheroes? Absolutely! All children age 5-6th grade are invited to Vacation Bible School at Monroe Congregational Church July 31st-August 4th to participate in Superheroes of the Bible – a sort of Justice League of our own. Registration Forms are available at mcc-ucc.org and if you have any questions, please contact Debi Mastroni-Kenyon at debi@mcc-ucc.org.



Sunday School Teacher Appreciation Sunday June 11th



Sunday, June 11th, we will be having Sunday School Teacher Appreciation! We will be honoring our Sunday School Teachers during worship and heading off for some fun and games during Sunday School Time. We'll also be having a cake during Coffee Hour. This year's Sunday School Teachers and helpers have been:

- K-2nd Grade – Kyla Allen, Teacher and Todd Heffelfinger, Helper
- 3rd Grade – Kate Briggs, Teacher and Jeff Smith, Helper
- 4th & 5th Grade – Fred DuBois and Denise Sentementes, Teachers
- 6th – 8th Grade – Michelle Correll, Julia Gutierrez, and Liz Sampson, Teachers
- Substitute – Ann Marie Campbell

Also, for the 2017-18 Sunday School year we are asking for help from all church members and friends to be helpers in the classrooms. You can sign up for one Sunday, one week, one month or more in Wilton Hall or talk with Debi if you need more information.



Jr. PF End of Year

The Jr. PF year is quickly coming to an end and there are just two more gatherings. Next Sunday, June 4th will be a regular gathering and Sunday, June 11th will be an end of year party – time and location TBD.

Outreach



Please Help Support A Project From The Heart. It Would Mean So Much For Our Soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan To Receive Care Packages From MCC. We need toiletries such as deodorant and shampoo, toothbrushes, and non-perishables items such as cookies (in boxes) beef jerky, puzzle books, playing cards and snack items.

We are running low on baby wipes and toothpaste. We are also in need of monetary donations for postage to send the packages to the troops. If you can help it would be very much appreciated. If you have any questions please contact Miriam Zalenski at 203-261-8550 or bigred722@sbcglobal.net

Dress A Girl Around The World Sew-A-Thon Returns June 10th from 9am- 3pm~ Join Liz Skarzyinski from Dress A Girl Around The World on June 10th in Wilton Hall to create dresses for little girls overseas. Thank you for your generous donations of fabric. 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.

Thank you to all who contributed to CWS/CROP to help stop hunger locally, nationally and internationally. Walkers from Monroe Congregational Church joined with many churches and organizations in the greater Bridgeport area to walk at Seaside Park on May 7. MCC's team was Rob and Julie McClenathan, Don, Kate, and Jacob Parker-Burgard and Kathy Maiolo. Together we raised \$1535.00.



Strawberry Festival

Strawberry Festival



Two weeks to go until the 46th Annual Strawberry Festival on June 17th and 18th! The MCC Strawberry Festival is the single largest church service and fundraising event, providing funds for outreach, faith formation and events throughout the year. It presents an opportunity for us to interact with the broader community and - most importantly - it is a weekend full of laughter, fun and fellowship! Please sign up in Wilton Hall today!

Don't forget the 6pm Sunday Night Celebration Dinner! Everyone is invited to the Celebration Dinner immediately following cleanup on Sunday evening. This is a wonderful time for all of us to relax after our fun filled weekend, share a meal together and celebrate! We look forward to working with all of you the weekend of the festival!

Yours in Strawberries, Service and Fellowship; *Clark Gingras & John Maiolo*

Strawberry Pancake Breakfast, 11am Sunday, June 4th : Co-chairs Clark Gingras and John Maiolo would like to Thank you Berry Much in advance for volunteering for the 2016 Strawberry Festival. Take time to review the festival signup sheets, ask questions about volunteering...all while enjoying delicious pancakes featuring a 'strawberry pancake'. Will Berry the festival mascot make a special appearance?





Calling All Bakers!! We Need You!! The Strawberry Festival depends on your homemade baked goods to stock the Country Store. Please bring your cookies, breads, cakes, & other goodies to Dineson Parlor by Friday, June 16th (please, no frosted items). Thank you, *Strawberry Festival Committee*



Strawberry Festival Kids Game Area: In need of easy pop up tents to cover the area from hot sun. **We need 5 (five)** 12'x12' pop up tents or smaller to borrow for the weekend. Please contact Kyla Allen Kylawa24@gmail.com

Fellowship

Please join us for the MCC Book Club!

- ✚ **June 21st -7:30pm** Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania by Erik Larson, Hosted by Julie McClenathan
- ✚ **July 19th-7:30pm** Small Great Things by Jodi Picoult~Hosted by Sue Smelzer
- ✚ **August 16th- 7:30pm** Victoria by Daisy Goodwin~Hosted by Peggy Villani
- ✚ **September date TBD-** The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot

Morning Circle will meet on June 7th at 11am at June Winger's house-204 Church Street

MusicFest Committee



Save the date! The 3rd Annual Monroe MusicFest is in a new month at a new time on a new day. This year, MusicFest is on SUNDAY, September 24, 2017 from 1 to 7. As before, keep in touch through: <http://monroemusicfest.blogspot.com/> or <https://www.facebook.com/MonroeMusicFest/> . This year in addition to talented musicians, MusicFest will have local artists and artisans displaying and selling their art. Mark your calendars and come enjoy this fun event

MCC Community Calendar

Thurs. Jun. 1st

7:00pm Adult Choir

Week of June 4th

Communion

Confirmation Sunday

Baptism Savannah Grace Bleakney

10:00am Worship w/Biscuit Communion

11:15am Thank you Berry Much Breakfast

6:00pm Junior & Senior PF

Mon. June 5th

7:30pm Rachel's Well (Parsonage Porch)

Tues. June 6th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. June 7th

11:00am Morning Circle (June Winger's house)

Thurs. June 8th

9:30am Bible Study End of Year Party
(Parsonage Porch)

7:00pm Adult Choir

Sat. June 10th

9:00am Dress A Girl (Wilton Hall)

Week of June 11th

Baccalaureate Sunday

Sunday School Teacher Appreciation Sunday

Guest Preacher Rev. Loren McGrail

10:00am Worship

6:00pm Junior PF

6:00pm Senior PF Elections (Gilberti home)

Tues. June 13th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. June 14th

8:00am Strawberry Festival Baking in Kitchen

9:30am Retired Men's Breakfast (Location TBD)

Fri. June 16th

Strawberry Festival Set Up

Sat. June 17th-Sun. June 18th

Strawberry Festival

Week of June 18th

Strawberry Festival Sunday

10:00am Worship

Mon. June 19th

7:30pm Council Meeting (Dineson Parlor)

Tues. June 20th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. June 21st

7:30pm Book Club at Julie McClenathan's house

Thurs. June 22nd

6:30pm Christian Education Meeting (Dineson Parlor)

7:00pm Adult Choir

Week of June 25th

Guest Preacher Rev. Marilyn Kendricks

10:00am Worship

6:00pm Senior PF

Tues. June 27th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Thurs. June 29th

7:00pm Adult Choir

Week of July 2nd

10:00am Worship with Communion

6:00pm Senior PF

Mon. July 3rd

3:45pm St. George's Supper

Tues. July 4th

Office Closed in Observance of Independence Day

Fri. July 8th-16th

Senior PF Mission Trip to Chicago