



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.

March 1, 2016

Senior Pastor: Rev. Jennifer Gingras
Associate Pastor of Faith Formation: Rev. Barb Frey
Music Director: Will Duchon
Secretary: Melissa Rosenberg
Church email: secretary@mcc-ucc.org

RIMACT: The UCC in New England

It is no secret that we are living in a time of change, especially in the area of organized religion. The witness of the United Church of Christ is important, and as one of the leadership churches of the Connecticut Conference, we have been invited into a conversation about the partnership that has begun to happen among our three Conferences (*informally we have given them the acronym "RIMACT", which covers the geographic areas of Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut*).

In September 2015 the Boards of the Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts Conferences each voted unanimously to initiate a "season of discernment" as we listen to how God may be calling our three conferences to engage in a deeper partnership, including the possibility of a federation or merger. I have attached that resolution in this Steeple, along with a copy of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).

Conference staff are contacting Association leaders and encouraging individuals, churches and communities of practice to participate in this discernment. This will also be a focus at our Conference Annual Meetings. The hope is that through these multiple conversations will help us discern where God is leading the Connecticut Conference in this time. What are the crucial ministries we must continue to support? In what ways can we live more sustainably? What top issues do our local churches struggle with that need attention from a central regional authority/expert?

Whether or not you participate in one or more of these conversations, please take a few minutes to respond to this survey that has been created so that the conference can hear from a wide variety of local church folk: <https://www.research.net/r/RIMACT>

Please check out the Frequently Asked Question Page
<http://www.macucc.org/seasonofdiscernmentfaq>

Thank you for the faithful way you witness to the values and vision of the United Church of Christ. We are honored to be among the leaders of the UCC in Southern New England, and look forward to engaging with our wider church community as we discern together how God may be calling us to live into Jesus hope "that they may all be one."

In peace, Pastor Jenn

AWAKENING: A SEASON OF DISCERNMENT FOR A FUTURE OF SHARED MINISTRY

A Resolution Proposed for Endorsement by the RI, MA & CT UCC Boards

That they may all be one... -- John 17:21

Even though it has many members, all the members of the body, though many, are one body. -- I Corinthians 12:12

Believers know that while our values are embodied in tradition, our hopes are always located in change.

-- William Sloane Coffin, Jr.

BACKGROUND

On August 25, 2015 Kent Siladi, Barbara Libby, Jim Antal, Angie Menke Ballou, George Peters and Jocelyn Spencer (representing CTUCC Board) met to discern what next step God might be calling our Conferences to undertake as we continue to explore the opportunities for strengthening the mission of the UCC in Southern New England by embracing our interdependence. In a spirit of prayer, we reviewed the recent history of cooperation among our Conferences, along with the larger contexts of our denomination, examples of transdenominational mission, and God's ongoing, compelling call to share the Good News with a world in desperate need of the Gospel. Led by the Holy Spirit and the momentum of this and previous conversations, the following proposal won our enthusiastic support. We now bring it to our three Conference Boards in the hope that you will join us by endorsing this resolution and leading our three Conferences in a season of discernment.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the historic origins of what would become the United Church of Christ are found in Southern New England, and that story of origin includes Roger Williams, who declared that in the Gospel, there is no justification for the uniformity of churches – but only for their unity (“that they may all be one”); and

WHEREAS that story of origin also includes Pastor John Robinson, who reminds us that there is still more light and truth to break forth from God's Holy word (“Never put a period where God has put a comma!”); and

WHEREAS that story of origin also includes Pastor John Winthrop, who calls us to be a city on a hill (As we declare that “God is still speaking!”); and

WHEREAS in the birthplace of independence we are being led to proclaim interdependence, recognizing that while independence has brought us safe thus far, God is calling us to live out a more interdependent Gospel; and

WHEREAS we have been learning that the effectiveness of our local churches and the impact they are called by God to have in their communities can best be amplified when those local churches have ready access to resources and opportunities for learning that no one Conference can offer; and

WHEREAS we recognize the economic benefits that would result from sharing staff, sharing technology and implementing best practices across the region; and

WHEREAS by creating and pursuing a robust partnership, we may increase the likelihood that 15 years from now, a vital expression of the progressive church movement will be alive and well in America; and

WHEREAS our enhanced partnership would benefit the whole UCC by modeling adaptive change that actively seeks a more vital future by leading from strength; and

WHEREAS many in our Conferences have been asking the question, “What would we do if we were brave and faithful?”;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of the _____ Conference UCC commits to joining with the other two UCC Conferences in Southern New England to issue a common invitation to the pastors, leaders and congregations of our three Conferences to use the 2015-2016 program year as a season of discernment as we listen to how God may be calling our three conferences over 2016-2017 calendar years to either federate or merge. We do this seeking to advance the mission of the UCC in Southern New England and beyond, and as a sign of faithfulness to God's call.

From the Moderator Kate Parker-Burgard

The Church Council was delighted to add Henry Bergeron and Marge Fox to the Outreach Board and Amanda Dube and Elizabeth Bevaqua to Christian Education. There are still several board spots that need to be filled, however. *If you are willing to serve on either Christian Education, Deacons, Fellowship, or Outreach*, please speak with either me or Pastor Jenn. Thanks for considering this request!



It's the Return of Sr. PF "Shleppers & Movers" Sat. March 5: 11-3 and Sun.

March 6: 1-4 Do you have a load of good stuff for our church's tag sale (on March 12th), and need some help getting it here to the church? Our PF fundraising team is here to help. Call the church office (203-268-9327) to sign up for a time when we can come by with a truck and move your tag sale donations to the church. For this service, PF will gladly accept a gratuity that will go directly to our Mission Trip funds. Please speak with Christian Rohach, PF Treasurer, for more information.



It's Time For Easter Flowers! We have a choice of Double Daffodils or Double Tulips. Each plant is \$25.50. Please make checks payable to MCC with "Easter Flowers" in the memo field. Please mail checks to Ann Zeiner, 78 Twinbrook Terrace, Monroe or drop off in the church office. Orders for Easter Flowers must be placed **by Sunday March 14th**. Order forms can be found in Wilton Hall, Church Office and in the Narthex.



A Special Thanks to Dave Allen, Matt Cacace, Scott Young, and Clark Gingras for cutting and removing the fallen trees after last week's storm

Outreach



The Annual MCC Tag Sale is coming March 12th! Please mark your calendars for March 12 from 9 am-1 pm (early birds at 8) in Wilton Hall. This is an enormous event, requiring many people to help with set up, sale and clean up. There are will be all sorts of shifts to suit all schedules, so please consider donating a few hours of your time that week. How you can help:

1--Donate your gently used items. *Please do not donate anything broken or old TVs, computer monitors, large upholstered furniture or clothing.* All other donations can be dropped off at the church starting after noon on Sunday 3/6 and continuing until Thursday 3/10. Drop off during the week is during office hours, and then on Thursday we will have extended drop off hours until 9 pm. Please do not drop off items on Friday.

2--PLEASE sign up to help. This is an enormous event, requiring many help with set up, sale and clean up. There are all sorts of shifts to suit all schedules, so please donate a few hours of your time that week. In addition to being a great help for us, it is a

wonderful time for fellowship and fun with each other, so don't miss out. A signup sheet is posted in Wilton Hall.

3--Spread the word. There are always terrific bargains (and we mean BARGAINS) at this tag sale, so the more people that come, the more successful we will be. 100% of the money earned that day goes to support mission, so everyone benefits from this event.



One Great Hour of Sharing: March 6th: On March 6th, our congregation will receive the annual One Great Hour of Sharing Offering. Each year, people all over the world receive emergency assistance in times of disaster, access to clean water and sanitation, basic health care, and support for sustainable agriculture from this offering. Gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing make it possible for the United Church of Christ and our ecumenical partners to respond immediately, wherever the need is, and to continue long term recovery work. May God continue to bless each of our churches and the whole United Church of Christ as together we strive to bring God's love to a hurting world.



NOW SEEKING: A Habitat for Humanity Coordinator: The Board of Outreach is looking for someone to keep the members and friends of MCC informed about volunteer builds with the Bridgeport chapter of Habitat for Humanity. Our congregation has worked with Habitat for many years as a member of the Sound Coalition partnership. Together with prospective homeowners we have built over 13 homes in the Greater Bridgeport Area. As coordinator, you will attend Sound Coalition meetings (1-2 times a year), inform the congregation of build dates (now scheduled for April 9 and May 7) and housewarmings and encourage them to attend, and check-in with Outreach when other needs become known. Please contact Pastor Jenn with questions or to volunteer: 203-895-5607 or jenn@mcc-ucc.org



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 an URGENT need for the following items: (all items needed are for men, women, and children)

Gently used jeans or slacks	New or gently used coats in all sizes
Gently used shirts-especially Men's 2x-5x	Boots, shoes, and sneakers in all sizes
New Briefs & Boxers for men	Diapers, wipes, and training pants
New underwear for women-all sizes (no bras)	Blankets, sheets, and towels
New underwear for children- all sizes	Detergent, soap, toothpaste & toothbrushes
New socks in all sizes	Non-perishable food items

Please consider donating one (or more!) of these items. There is a bin located in Rexford Hall to drop off donations. Thank you, Julie McClenathan



Time to "HOP TO IT"!

The board of Christian Outreach has received a request for Easter baskets again this year from DCF. Last year we supplied Easter Baskets for a 22 children in the care of the CT Dept. of Children & Family Services, that's a LOT of delighted children -thanks to all of YOU! We hope everyone will make at least 1 basket again this year. It's a great opportunity to get your children involved in a mission project. (If you would like to participate, but can't get out to shop etc., you may donate \$25.00, and a basket will be made in your behalf! Please make your check payable to M.C.C, and note: "Covenant to Care - Easter Baskets" -THANK YOU!) Please see the poster at coffee hour to pick a tag for a child you would like to make a basket for, or make a donation! Please deliver your basket to the Dineson Parlor BY **Sunday, Mar. 20th.** - THANK YOU! Diane Prall~ Monroe Congregational Church Liaison Covenant to Care for Children

Teen Easter Basket Suggestion: sketch book, colored pencils/markers, books, magazine, deck of cards, jewelry, stuffed animal, comb, brush, socks, hair accessories, hand lotions, nail polish, deodorant, Frisbee, Nerf ball, chap stick, small calculator, chocolate bunny, Easter candy, plastic eggs filled with coins!

Or a Gift Card is always appreciated by teens!

3 - 11 year old Easter Basket Suggestion: crayons, color book, story books, paint book, small toys, jewelry, stuffed animals, comb, brush, socks, hair accessories, chap stick, Frisbee/ball, lotions, nail polish, small calculator, yo-yo, chocolate bunny, Easter candy (all candy must be wrapped), plastic eggs filled with coins!

Toddler Easter Basket Suggestion: picture book, sip cup, bib, stuffed animal, socks, diapers, blanket, tee shirt, baby toys. Please avoid candy for babies' baskets. Hint: check out the dollar stores!

Junior Pilgrim Fellowship

March 13 "GROG" Night 6:00-8:30pm

March 20 A "Bake-Off with a Jr PF twist"--Help create some Delicious Fun! 6:00-8:30pm

Fellowship



Calling All Bakers!! We Need You!! Special Easter Fellowship Hour, March 27th at 9:30am in Wilton Hall. We need your help with donations of baked goods. Please bring baked goods to the church kitchen by 8:45am Easter morning. We hope you can join us for this special fellowship event.

Please join us for the MCC Book Club!

March 23rd - 7:30pm Host: Julie McClenathan We are reading A Man Called Ove by Fredrik Backman



Morning Circle invites the ladies of the congregation to their first meeting of the year held on Wednesday, March 9th at 11:00am in Dineson Parlor. We will have Pastor Jenn speak about the Simply Smiles program that brings bright futures for impoverished children, their families and their communities. Please bring a sandwich for lunch as well as a donation for the Food Pantry. We will complete this event with a short business meeting. If you have any questions, contact Jackie Bleakney at 203-268-5275.

Sad News from Church World Service - CWS has worked for nearly seven decades with one goal: building a world where there is enough for all. Morning Circle has aided in that goal by providing layette kits over the past ten years. However, this will be the last year we will be putting them together. We are asking for your help in donating several gowns and cloth diapers. An easier way to help us with the cost of the diapers is to donate a check with CWS in the memo line. This would greatly help us in completing our goal of 33 kits. Clothing donations can be left in the Morning Circle bin outside the church office during business hours. Please contact Susie Cuseo at 203-268-0280 or thecuseos@yahoo.com with any questions. Thank you so much for helping us with our last series of layette kits.



Retired Men's Breakfast Retired Men will meet for breakfast at 9:00am on March 9th in Dineson Parlor. Please call the office by Tuesday if you need a ride. 203-268-9327

2016/17 Deacon Flocks

Each member of the board of Deacons is assigned a "flock", a group of people that they care for through regular communication and prayer. If you have requests or concerns that you would like to share, your deacon is available. Such requests or concerns might include:

- a need for prayer
- a request for help (transportation to a doctor's appointment or church function, etc.)
- a sorrow (illness, accident, death or other crisis)
- a joy (a birth, graduation, upcoming wedding, etc.)
- something that particularly pleases you, or would better meet your needs in the worship service

Naturally, if you are more comfortable with contacting one of the other deacons, or one of your pastors, please do so. If you do not know your Deacon, ask someone to introduce you. He or she looks forward to meeting you and getting to know you better.

(A-B)	Brian Correll	203-400-2891	bcorrell13@yahoo.com
(C)	Heather Henning	203-543-3126	Heather.henning@sbcglobal.net
(D-Ga)	Jessica Pfalzgraf	203-261-3678	jspfalzgraf@gmail.com

(Gi-Hed)	David Bailey	203-261-5940	davidjbaileyinct@gmail.com
(Hef-Kos)	Joanne Malia	203-270-6697	joanne.malia@pharma.com
(Kov-Ne)	Vinay Sampson	203-880-9232	evksampson@yahoo.com
(Ni-Pr)	Frank Wittenauer	203-445-8670	fwittenauer@outlook.com
(R-Sh)	Barbara Pellegrino	203-261-6270	Mpellegrino6270@charter.net
(Si-Sw)	Vaughan Askue	203-345-3637	vaughanaskue@gmail.com
(T-Wib)	Sheldon Smith	203-880-5228	revsheldonsmith@yahoo.com
(Wil-Z)	Paulette Obertz	203-216-4183	auggietoto@aol.com

Community News

Taize Prayer During Lent: The Trumbull Congregational Church invites you to experience contemplative prayer in the style of Taize from 6:30-7pm on Monday nights in the Round Room of the sanctuary. Taize prayer is both beautiful and simple, featuring candle light, iconography, and a quiet space for worship. It cultivates intimacy with God through meditative singing, scripture reading, silence, and intercession. Prayer services at TCC begin on Feb. 15 and continue on Monday evenings through March 21. For more information please contact Pastor Tim at tim.hare@trumbullcc.org.



Need A Babysitter? Experienced mother looking to care for 1 to 2 children on a part time basis. I am a recently retired Monroe resident. Having raised my son on my own, I feel that I am very qualified to take care of children. A great conversationalist, I am a hard worker who would bring creativity, a sense of humor and a nurturing approach in spending time with your children. References available upon request. Contact Information: Margery – (203)-706-2132 or email - mfox08@snet.net.



at the Monroe Congregational Church

Sunday, March 20th, 10am – Palm Sunday: Join us in the Meetinghouse to celebrate Palm Sunday. If the weather cooperates, we will march around the Green. Our Adult Choir, Junior Choir and several soloists will offer sacred music.

Thursday, March 24th, 7:30pm - Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service: A candlelit evening worship service remembering Jesus' mandate to love one another. This service of shadows features sacred readings that anticipate Jesus' Passion and Holy Communion by intinction.

Friday, March 25th, 12pm – Prayer Walk at Great Hollow Lake. We meet in the Gazebo.

Saturday, March 26th, 11am – Senior PF Easter Egg Hunt: Meet us in Wilton Hall with your little one for a few games followed by an egg hunt. Hop on over and join the fun!

Sunday, March 27th, 6:30am – Monroe Clergy Association Easter Sunrise Service at Great Hollow Lake: We'll meet on the grass in front of Great Hollow Lake as the shadows shorten and the sun rises. Together we will celebrate that God has conquered death itself, and Jesus is risen! Children are welcome. Please dress warmly, and bring something to share in fellowship afterwards!!

Sunday, March 27th, 8:30 and 10am – Easter Celebration Services: Join us at MCC for the Great Easter Celebration! At 9:30, we will share a festive Easter Coffee Hour. Our 10am worship features the Junior Choir. We will also join in singing the Hallelujah Chorus. Christ is Risen indeed AND Everyone is Welcome!

DRESS A GIRL AROUND THE WORLD SEW-A-THON



*Imagine a World where every little girl
owned at least one dress!*

What if that dress was made you ?

When: May 7, 2016 10:30am-3:30pm

Contact Liz Skarzynski to register

203-257-7174 or Liz1202us@yahoo.com

**Congregational Church
34 Church Street
Monroe, CT 06468**

CALLING ALL CRAFTERS OR WANT-TO-BE CRAFTERS!

Materials List:

- Lightweight fabric, but not see-through, double wide bias tape, ½" elastic, and any decorative trim you have hanging around.

Extra Materials Needed:

- Sewing machines, irons, ironing boards & cutting boards.

Materials Provided:

- Patterns. Scissors, & Power Cords .
- All the support you need and some chow to keep us going.



Hope 4 Women International
P.O. Box 8061
Tempe, AZ 85281

MCC Community Calendar

Tues. Mar. 1st

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag
7:30pm Rachel's Well (Dineson)

Wed. Mar. 2nd

6:30pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. Mar. 3rd

9:30am Bible Study
6:30pm Bell Choir
7:30pm Adult Choir

Week of Mar. 6th

One Great Hour of Sharing

10:00am Worship w/Communion
11:15am Junior Choir
11:15am Generations Together Lenten Study
6:00pm Adult, Junior & Senior PF

Tues. Mar. 8th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Mar. 9th

9:00am Retired Men's Breakfast (Dineson)
11:00am Morning Circle (Dineson)
6:30pm Confirmation Class
7:30pm Christian Ed Meeting (Dineson)

Thurs. Mar. 10th

9:30am Bible Study
6:30pm Bell Choir
7:30pm Adult Choir

Fri. Mar. 11th

Tag Sale Set Up (all day)

Sat. Mar. 12th

8:00am MCC Tag Sale (Wilton Hall)
6:00pm Senior PF Lock-in (Wilton & Dineson)

Week of Mar. 13th

Baptism of Henry Rampant

10:00am Worship
11:15am Junior Choir
11:15am Trustees (classroom 4)
11:15am Deacons (Dineson)
11:15am Generations Together Lenten Study
6:00pm Junior & Senior PF

Tues. Mar. 15th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag
7:00pm Bereavement Group (Dineson)

Wed. Mar. 16th

6:30pm Confirmation Class (Spadaccino's)

Thurs. Mar. 17th

9:30am Bible Study
6:30pm Bell Choir
7:30pm Adult Choir

Sat. Mar. 19th

8:00am Jam Making (kitchen)

Week of Mar. 20th

Palm Sunday

10:00am Worship
11:15am Junior Choir
6:00pm Adult and Senior PF

Mon. Mar. 21st

7:30pm Church Council (Dineson)

Tues. Mar. 22nd

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag
7:30pm Divorce Support (Dineson)

Wed. Mar. 23rd

7:30pm MCC Book Club @ Julie McClenathan's home

Thurs. Mar. 24th

9:30am Bible Study
7:30pm Maundy Thursday Worship

Fri. Mar. 25th

12:00pm Good Friday Prayer Walk @Great Hollow
7:00pm Cantata @ Trumbull Congregational

Sat. Mar. 26th

11:00am Senior PF Easter Egg Hunt
8:00am Jam Making (kitchen)

Week of Mar. 27th

Easter

6:30am Easter Sunrise Service @ Great Hollow Lake
8:30am Easter Worship
9:30am Special Coffee Hour
10:00am Easter Worship

Tues. Mar. 29th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Mar. 30th

6:30pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. Mar. 31st

9:30am Bible Study
6:30pm Bell Choir
7:30pm Adult Choir

Fri. Apr 1st-Sun. Apr. 3rd

5:00pm Women's Retreat

Easter Flowers Order Form

Quantity	Plant	Cost Each	Total Cost
	Double Daffodils	\$25.50	
	Double Tulips	\$25.50	
Sub total			\$
*Total to be paid			

Given by _____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

In Celebration of: _____

*A check for the total amount, made payable to Monroe Congregational Church, may be given or mailed to Ann Zeiner (78 Twinbrook Terrace, Monroe) or placed in the "flower" mailbox in the church office. The **last day** to place an order is **Sunday, March 14th**.

