



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

**March 1, 2017**

## **“Some Thoughts for the Lenten Journey”**

From Ash Wednesday, March 1, until Passion/Palm Sunday, April 9, we travel on a Lenten journey together and observe forty days when we engage in some sort of a spiritual discipline to prepare our hearts and minds for Holy Week. During Lent this year I am rereading *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* (2011) by Franciscan Priest, Father Richard Rohr. One of the most provocative ideas in the book includes the concept of having the awareness of a “stumbling stone” in our lives. Author, Rohr, describes it this way.

Sooner or later, if you are on any classic “spiritual schedule,” some event, person, death, idea, or relationship will enter your life that you simply cannot deal with, using your present skill set, your acquired knowledge, or your strong willpower. Spiritually speaking, you will be, you must be, led to the edge of your own private resources. At that point you will stumble over a necessary stumbling stone, as Isaiah calls it; or to state it in our language here, you will and you must “lose” at something. This is the only way that Life-Fate-God-Grace-Mystery can get you to change, let go of your egocentric preoccupations, and go on the further and larger journey. I wish I could say this was not true, but it is darn near absolute in the spiritual literature of the world. (Rohr, “Stumbling Over the Stumbling Stone,” Chapter 5, pp. 65-66)

Since rethinking this concept in the last few days, I am wondering what is the “stumbling stone” that has brought me “to the edge of [my] own private resources?”

Could it be when I forget to slow down and take one-day-at-a-time when family, school, and work responsibilities accumulate too quickly? Do I think I am so important that everything depends on me? Or am I willing to let go and surrender to God's power, infinitely greater than myself, that will bring balance and regulation back into my life? The journey through Lent is a time when we can take a deep breath, move a step back, slow down, and remember that we are never alone on the journey to Jerusalem. Others will go with us, side by side, or even a little ahead of us.

Blessings, Rev. Susan

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### Living Stewardship Next Steps



I would like to update the 95 of us who have already pledged. 95 of us have pledged to bring us to a total of \$190,626! Bravo – yay us!

Now let's imagine what more we can do! If we increased by \$105 per year, or just \$2.20 per week, that is \$10,000! If we increased by \$600 per year, or just \$11.54 per week, that is \$57,000! Imagine just \$11.54 per week can bring us where we need to be! I'm up for that challenge so I am

increasing my pledge from \$176 per month to \$222 per month. Now, what do I do about it? It's super simple – contact either the Receiver, John O'Rourke or the Office Administrator, Melissa Schiavone and let them know!

Let's imagine together!

Debi Mastroni-Kenyon

Director of Faith Formation

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### Deacons



#### Ash Wednesday Supper and Worship

Please join us at MCC on Wednesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, for Supper and Worship. We will gather at 6:30 pm for a simple Soup and Bread Supper followed by worship at 7:30 with the imposition of ashes. This evening is jointly sponsored by the CE Board, Diaconate, and Fellowship Committee and ALL are welcome!!!

#### *Holy Week at the Monroe Congregational Church*

**Sunday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 10am – Palm Sunday:** Join us in our historic Meetinghouse to celebrate Palm Sunday. Our Adult Choir, Junior Choir and several soloists will offer sacred music.

**Thursday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 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.

**Saturday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 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, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 8:15 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. We will also join in singing the Hallelujah Chorus. Christ is Risen indeed AND Everyone is Welcome!

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### Christian Education

#### Lenten Study

There will be a Lenten study each Sunday morning at 9:00 am starting March 5<sup>th</sup>. This will be a Bible Study what follows the Narrative Lectionary, which is what we use for worship. The Schedule is as follows:

- March 5<sup>th</sup> - Luke 10:25-42 - The Parable of the Good Samaritan
- March 12<sup>th</sup> - Luke 13:1-9, 31-35 - Lament Over Jerusalem
- March 19<sup>th</sup> - Luke 25:1-32 - Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, Son
- March 26<sup>th</sup> - Luke 16:19-31 - Rich Man and Lazarus
- April 2<sup>nd</sup> - Luke 18:31-19:10 - Zacchaeus
- April 9<sup>th</sup> - Luke 19:29-44 - Triumphal Entry



**2017 Women's Retreat:** As the dark days of winter leave and spring starts to break through what will be your beacon of light?

The Women's Retreat, "Lighthouses" will be held on March 24-26 at Silver Lake Conference Center. Please sign up by March 19th in Wilton Hall or by calling the church office. The cost is \$140 per person and scholarships are available. Please contact Debi M-K for scholarship information. All women over 18 are welcome!

#### Jr. Pilgrim Fellowship Calendar

##### March

- 5<sup>th</sup> - Regular Gathering at 6:00 pm
- 12<sup>th</sup> - Regular Gathering at 6:00 pm
- 19<sup>th</sup> - Regular Gathering at 6:00 pm
- 26<sup>th</sup> - Regular Gathering at 6:00 pm

#### Sunday School Calendar

##### March

- 5<sup>th</sup> - Classes for K-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade
- 12<sup>th</sup> - Regular Sunday school Classes
- 19<sup>th</sup> - Regular Sunday school Classes
- 26<sup>th</sup> - Regular Sunday school Classes

## Outreach



**Dress A Girl Around The World Sew-A-Thon Returns March 18 from 10:00am-3:30pm~** Join Liz Skarzyinski from Dress A Girl Around The World on March 18th in Wilton Hall to create dresses for little girls overseas. Thank you for your generous donations of fabric. If you would like to contribute we need small toys that can fit in a 2-3 inch square pocket. 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](mailto:Liz1202us@yahoo.com).

**The Annual MCC Tag Sale is coming!** Please mark your calendars for March 11 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 3/5 and continuing until Thursday 3/9. 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 will be 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 26<sup>th</sup>:** On March 26th, our congregation will receive the annual One Great Hour of Sharing Offering. Each year, people all over the world receive real blessings from this offering: emergency assistance in times of disaster, access to clean water and sanitation, basic health care, and support for sustainable agriculture. Many of the folks blessed by our offerings live in countries we have barely heard of. Others may live next door. All are our neighbors and sisters and brothers in Christ. 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 for as long after other organizations have moved on. 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.

## Strawberry Festival

### IT'S TIME TO MAKE THE JAM!

It's time for weekend JAM-A-THONS! It's a huge task and I know with YOUR help we'll get it done. Look for the sign-up sheet in Wilton Hall and mark your calendars...

Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup>: 8:00am-6:00pm

Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup> : 8:00am-6:00pm

Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup> : 8:00am-6:00pm

Saturday, May 13<sup>th</sup> : 8:00am-6:00pm

Saturday, April 29<sup>th</sup>: 8:00am-6:00pm

Saturday, May 27<sup>th</sup> : 8:00am-6:00pm



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### Fellowship

**Retired Men's Breakfast** Retired Men will meet for breakfast at 9:30am on March 8<sup>th</sup> in Dineson Parlor. Please call the office by Tuesday if you need a ride. 203-268-9327



**Please join The Rainbow Connection on Tuesday, March 7 at 7:30 PM in Dineson.** We are an open forum support group for those under the LGBT umbrella, as well as for their families and friends. We welcome all beautiful people of the rainbow spectrum. For information, please email Lisa Burke at [lisa.burke.love@gmail.com](mailto:lisa.burke.love@gmail.com), or call her at 203-864-5919. See you soon!



### Morning Circle, March 8<sup>th</sup> at 11:00am

On March 8th, Fran Harmeyer, an Occupational Therapist (OT) at Griffin Hospital, and Len Berger, a Trustee of the Lions Low Vision Centers (LLVC) of Fairfield & New Haven Counties, will present a seminar at the Monroe Congregational Church. This program was started by the Lion Clubs in Connecticut in 1990 and provides anyone with low vision issues FREE devices which could improve his/her vision and quality of life.

"Low vision" is that degree of vision loss that can no longer be corrected by eyeglasses, contacts, medicine or surgery. These conditions are usually age-related including macular degeneration, glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy.

After visiting an ophthalmologist or optometrist and receiving a low vision diagnosis, the eye professional will send a prescription form to one of six LVCCs. The closest one is in Griffin Hospital, Derby. After meeting with the OT, appropriate devices are obtained from the Lions and provided FREE by the OT.

This dynamic program is provided by the Morning Circle and will be held on 3/8/2017 at 11:15AM. All members of the Monroe Congregational Church are welcomed!

## Help Needed!



As we all know, Pastor Jenn is away on sabbatical serving as an Ecumenical Accompanier in Israel. We all send our love and prayers for a safe and fulfilling experience. And we are most grateful for Pastor Susan being here to provide us with leadership in worship while Pastor Jenn is away.

As a supporting and caring community, I am reaching out to our congregation to see who would like to assist in providing a meal for her family while she is away

I am coordinating this effort so please email me at: [jspfalzgraf@gmail.com](mailto:jspfalzgraf@gmail.com) if you can help by making a dinner for Clark, Cady and Zack. I will then reach out to you with a date

Thank you in advance for your support.

Kindest regards, Jessica Pfalzgraf [203-414-6874](tel:203-414-6874) (cell)

## 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 will not only get that warm and fuzzy feeling of doing something generous, but 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.

## Please join us for the MCC Book Club!

🇺🇸 **March 15<sup>th</sup>-7:30pm** Standing in the Rainbow by Fannie Flagg. Hosted by Gayle Hammond

### Thanks from Nils Wiberg

I would like to extend my sincerest and most heartfelt thanks to everyone at church for celebrating my birthday. I would like to give a special thanks to the choir for singing in Swedish! Everyone at MCC made me feel very special and I am truly grateful.

Nils Wiberg

### Thank you from Miriam Zalenski

I would like to thank everyone who has donated to Project from the Heart. You have all been so generous and our overseas troops are extremely grateful. It helps their spirits to receive a care packages from MCC.

Peace, Miriam Zalenski

## **MCC Community Calendar**

### **Wed. Mar. 1**

6:30pm Lenten Supper  
7:30pm Ash Wednesday Service

### **Thurs. Mar. 9<sup>th</sup>**

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)  
7:00pm Adult Choir

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

9:00am Lenten Study (Dineson)  
10:00am Worship w/communion  
11:15am Junior Choir  
6:00pm Adult, Junior & Senior PF

### **Mon. Mar. 6<sup>th</sup>**

7:30pm Rachel's Well (Dineson)

### **Tues. Mar. 7<sup>th</sup>**

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag  
7:30pm The Rainbow Connection (Dineson)

### **Wed. Mar. 8<sup>th</sup>**

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

### **Thurs. Mar. 9<sup>th</sup>**

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)  
7:00pm Adult Choir  
7:30pm Parent's Support Group (Dineson)

### **Fri. Mar. 10<sup>th</sup>**

Tag Sale Set Up

### **Sat. Mar. 11<sup>th</sup>**

8:00am Tag Sale

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

9:00am Lenten Study (Dineson)  
10:00am Worship  
11:15am Junior Choir  
11:15am Pastoral Visitation Committee Meeting (Dineson)  
6:00pm Junior & Senior PF

### **Tues. Mar. 14<sup>th</sup>**

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

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

6:30pm Youth Confirmation Class (Dineson)  
7:30pm MCC Book Club (Gayle Hammond's home)

### **Thurs. Mar. 16<sup>th</sup>**

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)  
6:30pm Christian Education Meeting (Dineson)  
7:00pm Adult Choir

### **Sat. Mar. 18<sup>th</sup>**

9:00am Dress A Girl Sewathon

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

9:00am Lenten Study (Dineson)  
10:00am Worship  
11:15am Junior Choir  
11:15am Outreach(Dineson)  
6:00pm Adult, Junior & Senior PF

### **Mon. Mar. 20<sup>th</sup>**

7:30pm Council Meeting (Dineson)

### **Tues. Mar. 21<sup>st</sup>**

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

### **Wed. Mar. 22<sup>nd</sup>**

6:30pm Adult Confirmation Class (Dineson)

### **Thurs. Mar. 23<sup>rd</sup>**

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)  
7:00pm Adult Choir

### **Fri. Mar. 24-Sun. Mar. 26**

Women's Retreat to Silver Lake

### **Sat. Mar. 25<sup>th</sup>**

8:00am Jam Making (Kitchen)

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

*One Great Hour of Sharing*  
9:00am Lenten Study (Dineson)  
10:00am Worship  
11:15am Junior Choir  
6:00pm Junior & Senior PF

### **Tues. Mar. 28<sup>th</sup>**

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Wed. Mar. 29<sup>th</sup>**

6:30pm Youth Confirmation Class (Spadaccino's)

### **Thurs. Mar. 30<sup>th</sup>**

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)  
7:00pm Adult Choir