



**THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

---

**STEEPLE**

34 Church Street  
Monroe, CT 06468

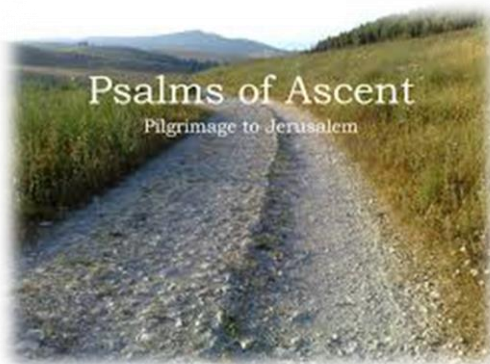
Tel.: (203) 268-9327  
Fax: (203) 268-3153

**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

**March 15, 2017**

“On Pilgrimage: Psalms of Ascents” Psalms 120-134



The Season of Lent invites us to think of going on a journey. Author, Eugene H. Peterson reminds us as we travel to Jerusalem together, we are ascending since “Jerusalem was the highest city geographically in Palestine, and so all who traveled there spent much of their time ascending” (Peterson, 14). Peterson identifies the Psalms of Ascents, Psalms 120-134, in relationship to the journey to Jerusalem. “These fifteen Psalms were likely sung, possibly in sequence, by Hebrew pilgrims as they went up to Jerusalem to the great worship festivals” (14).

The pilgrimages took place “three times a year” and this included “the Feast of the Passover in the spring; ... the Feast of Pentecost in early summer; ... [and] the Feast of Tabernacles in the autumn” (14-15). Imagine a family coming to Jerusalem for one of these festivals, walking all day with their belongings, setting up for the night, and gazing at the mountains in the distance as the sun would set. I have wondered whether Psalm 121 was created with that inspiration? Though majestic, even breathtaking, the mountains did not hold the source of help for the Hebrew believer. Psalm 121 proclaims, “My help comes from the LORD,...” (121:2)

I turn my eyes to the mountains;  
from where will my help come?  
My help comes from the LORD,  
maker of heaven and earth.  
He will not let your foot give way;  
your guardian will not slumber;  
See, the guardian of Israel  
neither slumbers nor sleeps! (Psalm 121:1-4 TANAKH)

Peterson reminds readers that,

In going to God Christians travel the same ground that everyone else walks on, ...

The difference is that each step we walk, each breath we breathe, we know we are preserved by God, we know we are accompanied by God, ... the Lord will preserve us from evil, he will keep our life. (40-41)

This does not mean we will be absolved from disappointment, or suffering, or even injustice. We are all aware of circumstances in this church community and among our families and friends, where loved ones are experiencing serious health and other challenges. At times like these we may feel powerless to help those we love. We may perceive God as having abandoned us. At just such a time, it is a comfort to remember that our Guardian, the Holy Spirit, "neither slumbers nor sleeps" and is "at [our] right hand" (Psalm 121:4-5). We are never alone. Never!

Blessings, Rev. Susan

Peterson, Eugene H. *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction: Discipleship in an Instant Society*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1980.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Mission is the Flower of Discipleship**



Greetings MCC! It has dawned on me that month after month I have been putting a lot of information out and asking y'all to journey with me and you don't really know anything about me. I firmly believe that our sojourn together rests firmly on relationships so I want to tell you a bit about myself.

Besides being your Director of Faith Formation I am also a Member in Discernment at MCC and have an appointment with the Fairfield East Association in April. I am in discernment to become a Commissioned or Ordained Minister – hence discernment. I have a clear call from God to be doing what I do and the understanding of my call is directly related to discipleship and mission. I believe that discipleship isn't about being perfect, it's about following. By definition, a disciple is "a follower, one who accepts and assists in spreading the principles of another". A Christian disciple is a person who accepts and assists in the spreading of the good news of Jesus Christ. In Christian discipleship, we grow in Jesus Christ and are equipped by the Holy Spirit to overcome the pressures and hardships of life and become more and more like Christ. We all follow God through the example of Jesus Christ and we also in turn support and follow each other.

I believe that that mission is the flower of discipleship. By definition, a flower is "the seed-bearing part of a plant", so if Christ is the root of the disciple and the disciple is the plant, mission is the flower. Through mission work I am able to spread the example of Jesus Christ through my actions and the work of my hands and heart. For me mission is

not just about serving in Boston, South Korea, West Virginia, or on the Cheyenne River Reservation in La Plant, South Dakota, it is also about serving the people at church through actively sharing my knowledge, experiences, and witness as well as modeling the Christian life to the best of my ability. It's about inviting others to participate on the journey together.

I have lead numerous trips out to the Cheyenne River Reservation over the years and am scheduled to lead one with you from June 24<sup>th</sup> – July 1<sup>st</sup>. The way I lead these trips starts months before the trip happens by fundraising to pay for the trip so it is not a burden on folks who would like to attend. I also understand that asking folks to pay the Simply Smiles Fee and flight is a lot to ask – hence the fundraising and I have never had a participant pay more than \$200 toward their trip! I have some good fundraising ideas, but so far am the only person from MCC signed up. I am hoping more of you might be interested in going now that you know that cost shouldn't be a factor. Please contact me at [debi@mcc-ucc.org](mailto:debi@mcc-ucc.org) or 203-444-6760 if you have any questions or would like to attend!

Here's to the journey!

Debi M-K

\*\*\*\*\*



**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>, 8:30 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. We will also join in singing the Hallelujah Chorus. Christ is Risen indeed AND Everyone is Welcome!



**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 April 10<sup>th</sup>**. Order forms can be found in Wilton Hall, Church Office and in the Narthex.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Christian Education

### Lenten Study

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

- 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



### Jr. Pilgrim Fellowship Calendar

#### March

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

### Sunday School Calendar

#### March

- 19<sup>th</sup> – Regular Sunday school Classes
- 26<sup>th</sup> – Regular Sunday school Classes



over and join the fun!

**Saturday, April 15, 11am – Senior PF Easter Egg Hunt** Easter is on the way, so let's have some fun at the Senior PF Easter Egg Hunt! If you have a little one and would like to join in the fun; please join us in Wilton Hall for a few games followed by an egg hunt. Hop on

### Save the Date! Vacation Bible School ~July 31<sup>st</sup>- August 4<sup>th</sup>



#### “Superheroes of the Bible”

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

## 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

\*\*\*\*\*

## Outreach



**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.

## People Helping People Sunday



Greetings MCC! We'll be having another People Helping People Sunday on April 30<sup>th</sup>. On this Sunday we will have an abbreviated worship service and then engage in service projects after church. The service projects this time will be:

- Planting seedlings for the Giving Gardens (making the pot out of newspaper and planting seeds)
- Property clean up projects (raking and preparing the Giving Garden)
- Making activity bags for children in the hospital Emergency Room (melting and molding old crayons into new ones, writing jokes and riddles on craft sticks and index cards, and assembling the bags)

We are looking for donations of newspaper, small toys, old crayons, and old muffin tins that you don't want back.

Please give your donations to Debi and most importantly plan to join us in this great day!





**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. If you have any questions please contact Miriam Zalenski at 203-261-8550 or [bigred722@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bigred722@sbcglobal.net)

**“Dress a Girl Around the World is a Campaign under Hope 4 Women International (a 501 (c) 3 organization) bringing dignity to women around the world since 2006.** Hope 4 Women International is a nondenominational independent Christian organization.

We dream of a world in which every girl has at least one new dress. We want girls to know that they are worthy and respected, and that they are loved by God.”

In support of this organization and girls around the world the Monroe Congregational Church is hosting a Sew-A-Thon on March 18th from 10:00am until 3:00pm. This is the first of four planned events. All sewers and those who want to help are invited. If you would like to help but can't attend, there are several ways to contribute:

- Donate fabric to help make the dresses
- Ask for a dress kit to make one or more at home
- Donate tax deductible funds to-
- HOPE 4 WOMEN INTERNATIONAL P.O. BOX 8061 • TEMPE, AZ 85281 or
- To <http://www.dressagirlaroundtheworld.com/donate>

\*\*\*\*\*

### Fellowship

**Young at Heart will be meeting on Thursday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>** for fellowship and fun. We will be meeting at noon at Old Town Restaurant in Trumbull. Please RSVP to June Winger by March 21<sup>st</sup> to let her know if you will be able to join us. 203-268-4422 or [jw633@outlook.com](mailto:jw633@outlook.com). Hope to see you there.

*young at heart*

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

**✚ April 17-7:30pm** Then Women by T.C. Boyle. Host TBD

### **Please join The Rainbow Connection on Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 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!



**Calling All Bakers!! We Need You!! Special Easter Fellowship Hour, April 16th 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.

## Community News

### Official Press Release: For Immediate Release

Subject: Emergency Preparedness Training -- Free!!!!

April 2017

Want to help?? Not sure where you can help in our community?? For a good introduction to the emergency services in our community you might consider a twenty-hour training program for our local Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)!!

The Department of Emergency Management for the Town of Monroe is announcing another training program for persons interested in being part of a local CERT. Training sessions will be held on two Friday evenings and two Saturdays in April. Most of the training sessions will be held at the Monroe Senior Center at 235 Cutlers Farm Road.

This class is for you! Become trained to help your family, friends, neighbors and the community as you actively assist Monroe's Emergency Services during emergencies such as snowstorms, floods or natural and man-made incidents. Monroe Emergency Management Director (EMD) David York said that "In the several years since CERT volunteers have been active, they have assisted at summer concerts in Wolfe Park, assisted at other events in town, also helped Newtown CERT with an activity there, and most importantly helped for many hours with sheltering townspeople at the Senior Center during our several serious storms and power outages." CERT members have provided assistance to our first responders since they have been trained and are able to help Monroe Police, Fire, Volunteer Emergency Medical Services (VEMS) along with shelter personnel, as well as residents and neighbors when a disaster strikes."

These training sessions will be conducted by four local members of the Monroe CERT, all of whom have been certified as CERT Instructors by the Connecticut Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. Other local instructors from our Town Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Service will assist in the training. Persons interested in being certified as CERT members need to be trained for a minimum of 20 hours. There is no cost for this training.

CERT volunteers are trained in a variety of emergency skills such as disaster psychology, first aid, CPR and AED, fire safety, traffic control, hazardous materials awareness, emergency shelters, light search and rescue, disaster scenarios and terrorism. For more information and registration form, please visit the website [www.monroect.org/Monroe-CERT](http://www.monroect.org/Monroe-CERT). Those interested in looking for further information should contact EMD York by email at [dyork@monroect.org](mailto:dyork@monroect.org) or call him at 203.650.8474 or Deputy EMD Captain White at 203.261.3622.

The class is limited to 25 people so interested persons should register as soon as possible. The only requirement is that participants must be 18 years or older.

The class schedule begins with an Orientation on Thursday, April 6 at 7:00 pm at the Monroe Senior Center. Training sessions will be held on Friday evenings from 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm and Saturdays, from 8:00 am – 4:00 pm on April 21 and 22 and also April 28 and 29. The Graduation for the course will be on Thursday, May 25 at 7:00 pm at the Monroe Senior Center.

Location: Monroe Senior Center – 235 Cutlers Farm Road – also Monroe Fire Station # 1 -- other locations to be announced

Eligibility: 18 years or older

Cost: Free! No charge for training or materials

Sponsors: Town of Monroe Emergency Management, Monroe Police Department

## 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 **Monday, April 10th**.





## MCC Community Calendar

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

10:00am Dress A Girl Wilton Hall

### **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

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

9:00am Lenten Study (Dineson)

10:00am Worship

11:15am Junior Choir

6:00pm Adult, Junior & Senior PF

### **Tues. Apr. 4<sup>th</sup>**

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Wed. Apr. 5<sup>th</sup>**

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

### **Thurs. Apr. 6<sup>th</sup>**

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:00pm Adult Choir

### **Sat. Apr. 8<sup>th</sup>**

8:00am Jam Making (Kitchen)

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

*Palm Sunday*

9:00am Lenten Study (Dineson)

10:00am Worship

6:00pm Junior & Senior PF

### **Tues. Apr. 11<sup>th</sup>**

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

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

9:30am Retired Men's Breakfast (Dineson)

11:00am Morning Circle (Dineson)

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

*Maundy Thursday*

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:30pm Maundy Thursday Worship

### **Fri. Apr. 14<sup>th</sup>**

*Good Friday*

Office Closed

### **Sat. Apr. 15<sup>th</sup>**

11:00am Senior PF hosts the Easter Egg Hunt

### **Week of Apr. 16<sup>th</sup>**

*Easter Sunday*

8:30am Easter Worship

9:30am Special Easter Coffee Hour

10:00am Easter Worship

Mon. Apr. 17<sup>th</sup>

3:45pm St. George's Supper

7:30pm Council Meeting (Dineson)

### **Tues. Apr. 18<sup>th</sup>**

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

7:00pm Bereavement Group (Dineson)

### **Wed. Apr. 19<sup>th</sup>**

6:30pm Adult Confirmation (Dineson)

### **Thurs. Apr. 20<sup>th</sup>**

*Maundy Thursday*

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:00pm Adult Choir