



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
Secretary: Melissa Rosenberg
Church e-mail: secretary@mcc-ucc.org

May 1, 2017



A Love that Crosses the Divides

Throughout his ministry of preaching and healing, Jesus invited people into the joy of the kin-dom by inviting them to the table. All were welcome – even the ones whom the religious authorities of the day might turn away. Jesus lived and related to people who were undergoing a process of dying away to an old reality yet on the cusp of being born into a new life of grace.

We recognize that this transformative process is rarely an easy one.

I found myself experiencing something of this struggle while on sabbatical in Jerusalem. Challenged by the suffering and hope arising from those on the margins of life, the reality of war and rumors of war, the cycle of violence and mistrust between Israelis and Palestinians has brought enormous suffering. The effects of this suffering will require generations to heal (if ever). And my time there left me with a big hairy question: How do people who are so entrenched in a history of suffering find the grace and strength to even begin to talk about peace, let alone actively foster it?

But guess what? It's not just this conflict in the Middle East that seems so intractable. I am sure that you can list many others. I wonder, in our little neck of the Connecticut woods, are we capable of co-creating the reign of God on earth as it is in heaven? Do we focus too heavily on the little surface stuff; which a wise friend calls "re-arranging the furniture" of our faith? Do we open ourselves to the way of transformation which calls us to face the forces of death and destruction, both small and systemic, from within us and around us?

Jesus actualized Gods' reign on earth by preaching a message of God's love towards everyone. Jesus' love crossed boundaries and reached people in all the varied aspects of their human conditions. He treated women with respect, acknowledging their rights within a society of unequal standards. He repeatedly expressed his love for children, even making one a model of how we might be present in God's kin-dom.

Then on Good Friday, stripped of all human dignity, exhausted by prolonged torture, helpless before his executioners, deserted by his friends (and seemingly by God, as well), Jesus could have been reduced to a helpless victim. His great suffering, however, did not deprive him of the spiritual strength to publicly express loving concern for others. Nor did it turn him blindly inward, as we so often are tempted to do. With tremendous strength of faith, Jesus prayed for his executioners that they might be forgiven. This is the inspiration we choose to carry in our efforts to change the world that leads to transformation.

On a personal and much lighter note.... Thanks again for all the prayers and warm meals for my family while I was away. God bless you! I am looking forward to catching up with all of you as time allows. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you'd like to meet for coffee and a chat. *In peace, Pastor Jenn*

Pastor Jenn has returned home and will be back leading worship again this Sunday, May 7th. She is looking forward to sharing some of her experiences as an Ecumenical Accompanier at coffee hour following worship. Please submit any questions you would like to ask in advance to Melissa (mccsecretary123@sbcglobal.net), or just ask as she gives the presentation. All are welcome, always!

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 will be available soon and if you have any question, please contact Debi Mastroni-Kenyon at debi@mcc-ucc.org.



Senior PF will be hosting a super awesome dog fundraiser on Saturday, May 20th from 11 AM-1 PM in Wilton Hall to support our summer mission trip to



Chicago! There will be prizes for dogs entered in the dog show competition, a place where we will wash your dog for you, homemade dog treats, and hot dogs and hamburgers for sale for the humans! It is \$10 to enter your dog in the dog show and \$5 for us to wash your dog! Also, the winner of the most blue ribbons from the competition will receive a \$35 gift card to a local pet store! Please come out and bring your pup!

We would like only NICE dogs!!!! They need to be good around young children and other dogs! Thanks!

Trustees



Spring Workday Saturday, May 6th at 8:00 am - We have plenty of spring cleanup jobs to tackle so please come out and spend a few hours helping to spruce up our campus. Breakfast will be provided. If you are able to assist, please sign up in Wilton Hall. Any questions, please email Dave Allen dallen9457@att.net

Outreach



CROP Walk: May 7th from 1:30 to 5pm Join us at the CROP walk at Seaside Park and raise funds to end hunger for our brothers and sisters locally and around the world. Options include a short, 3.7k walk and a long, 8 k walk.



Food Pantry Donations Needed

Donations needed for the Monroe Food Pantry With the colder weather upon us the demand for food is greater than ever. We have almost 300 registered Monroe families who are eligible to receive assistance from the Monroe Food Pantry.

Canned fruit: peaches, pineapple etc.	Canned beans: black, pinto etc.	Cake mixes, brownie mix, cookie mix
Pumpkin pie filling	Canned chili	Tea & Coffee
Condiments: mayo, mustard, ketchup, syrup	Spaghetti O's: meat and plain	Peanut butter & jelly
Cooking oil	Dry pasta and sauce	Stuffing
Salad dressing-any kind	Noodles and rice	Jar gravy
Canned vegetables: corn, mixed, peas etc.	Canned potatoes	Individual snacks: chips, pretzels, etc.
Canned tuna or chicken	Canned soup: assorted	Pet supplies: cat food, dog food, litter

To donate perishable items such as eggs or milk please call 452-3770 to arrange a drop off time. For nonperishable items please place in the bin in the Rexford House-Thank you for your generosity!

Strawberry Festival

Strawberry Festival



Mark your calendars for the **46th Annual Strawberry Festival June 17th & 18th**! The MCC Strawberry Festival is the single largest church fundraiser and service event, providing funds for outreach, faith formation and church events throughout the year. It presents an opportunity for us to interact with the broader community as representatives of Monroe Congregational Church and - most importantly - it's a weekend full of laughter, fun and fellowship!

It's time to make the Jam! May 6th, 13th & 27th

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...We will be working on Saturdays in shifts. 9:00am -12:30pm & 1:00pm-5:00pm



Fellowship

Retired Men's Breakfast Retired Men will meet for breakfast at 9:30am on May 10th in Dineson Parlor. Please call the office by Tuesday if you need a ride. 203-268-9327



Morning Circle will meet on May 10th at 11:00am in Dineson Parlor. Please call Jackie Bleakney with any questions. 203-268-5275

Please join The Rainbow Connection on Tuesday May 2nd 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, or call her at 203-864-5919. See you soon!

Prayer Partners Unite - We will meet on Sunday, May 21st at 11:30AM in Wilton Hall for our "big reveal" potluck luncheon. A sign up sheet will be posted in the Hall a couple of weeks prior to the event. Childcare will be available to those 2 years and younger. Older children can dine with us. Please keep your partner in your thoughts and prayers. If you wish you can send them a card or note in the mail using the church's address as the return. Seek them out during the passing of the peace or strike up a conversation during coffee hour. Learn something interesting about them. I look forward to seeing everyone that Sunday. I will keep all of you in my thoughts and prayers in the meantime. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [203-268-0280](tel:203-268-0280) or thecuseos@yahoo.com. Thank you for participating with this wonderful program. Susie Cuseo



Please join us for the MCC Book Club!

- ✚ **May 15th -7:30pm** The Valley of Amazement by Amy Tan, Hosted by Paula Haggstrom
- ✚ **June 21st -7:30pm** Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania by Erik Larson, Hosted by Julie McClenathan

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



Maya O'Mara was born on April 25, 2017 in Seattle, WA. Parents are Tsion Toma and John O'Mara. Grandparents are Joan and Kevin O'Mara

MCC Community Calendar

Tues. May 2nd

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag
7:00pm Rainbow Connection (Dineson)

Wed. May 3rd

6:30pm Youth Confirmation (Dineson)

Thurs. May 4th

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

Sat. May 6th

8:00am Trustees Spring Clean Up
9:00am Jam Making in the Kitchen

Week of May 7th

Crop Walk

10:00am Worship
11:15am Sabbatical Presentation
1:30pm CROP Walk
6:00pm Adult, Junior & Senior PF

Tues. May 9th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. May 10th

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

Thurs. May 11th

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

Sat. May 13th

9:00am Jam Making (Kitchen)

Week of May 14th

10:00am Worship
6:00pm Junior & Senior PF

Mon. May 15th

7:30pm Council Meeting (Dineson)
7:30pm Book Club Location TBD

Tues. May 16th

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

Wed. May 17th

6:30pm Youth Confirmation (Dineson)

Thurs. May 18th

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

Sat. May 20th

11:00am Senior PF Fundraiser (Wilton Hall)
Senior PF Lock-in

Week of May 21st

10:00am Worship
11:15am Prayer Partner's Potluck Lunch
11:15am Deacons Meeting (Classroom 4)
11:15am Outreach Meeting (Dineson)
6:00pm Adult, Junior & Senior PF

Tues. May 23rd

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. May 24th

6:30pm Confirmation Dinner Celebration

Thurs. May 25th

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

Sat. May 27th

9:00am Jam Making (Kitchen)

Week of May 28th

10:00am Worship
6:00pm Junior & Senior PF

Mon. May 29th

Office Closed in Observance of Memorial Day

Tues. May 30th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Thurs. Jun. 1st

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