



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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May 15, 2017

Just What I Can Carry for 3 Miles

The day after I returned from sabbatical I opened the door of the small, densely packed closet in the parsonage kitchen (where Clark and I keep our clothes) and stood there stunned. For the first time in months I had to think about what to wear! In Jerusalem, I didn't have to give it much thought. All I brought with me was the recommended week's work of clothes, so choice was usually either wearing what I wore the day before, or maybe pulling something out of the laundry bag.

Living in a more conservative area of the world, it wasn't important for us to be stylish – just covered. We dressed practically, so that our skin was shielded by the desert sun and protected from the sharp things found at a demolition site. Accordingly, my wardrobe rotated between a few pairs of long tan cargo pants, a clergy collar shirt, long sleeve T and work boots.

We were allowed to bring as much as we wanted, as long as we were able to carry it ourselves for three miles. So I left many of my usual creature comforts behind: no hair dryer, no large fluffy towels, no multiple changes of shoes or big bag of cosmetics. I had with me just the basics, nothing more. I like to think that the simplicity helped me focus on what was within and around me in the moment.

When I came home, the overstuffed closet reminded me that we have so many options available to us in this part of the world. I felt a little giddy from the newness and a little guilty for the excess. Who needs three different black cardigans, anyway?

Jerusalem taught me that I can live with less stuff and be more than satisfied. And it's not just a question of physical materials, but emotional ones too. How much energy am I giving to people-pleasing as I try to consistently exceed the expectations of others? Am I working so much so that I am neglecting my health and those most precious to me, my family? Are there any persistent thoughts and attitudes I carry that get in the way of growth and need to be tossed: anger, fear, mistrust, self-pity?

Of course, these questions are teeny-tiny in the light of global issues like justice and peace. Travelling light is easy when we're less concerned on the shallow stuff so that we can focus on what truly counts.

Peace, Pastor Jenn



Packing Just What I Could Carry

P.S. Thanks for listening!

Many, many thanks to all of you who made time to attend my presentation about my sabbatical in Jerusalem. I was humbled and grateful for your attention, respect and thoughtful questions. My hope is to be able to present on the topic of "Seeking Peace in the Holy Land" in the future, so if there are any groups that you can think of who may be interested in hearing more please let me know! In the meantime, here are some suggested action steps you may be interested in:

- When you hear simplistic arguments about Israel/Palestine remember there are many sides to an issue, questioning Israel's human rights record does not make you anti-Semitic (*don't friends tell friends when they are behaving badly?*)
- Financially support humanitarian, non-violent NGO's that work directly with affected people: Church World Service (CWS), UCC's Global Ministries, UNICEF
- Request that US policy makers maintain or increase humanitarian aid in Gaza and the West Bank
- Join the UCC Palestine Israel Network (PIN) at <http://www.uccpalestineisraelnetwork.org>
- Sign the petition in support of Bedouin community Jaba Al Baba at https://secure.avaaz.org/en/stop_the_bulldozers_loc/
- Follow Combatants for Peace, Pope Mountain Community on Facebook
- Sign up for Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) Action Alerts at <http://www.cmep.org/tools>
- Go and see! CMEP Annual Holy Land Journey, Sept 30 through Oct 9, 2017 or Pilgrimage with St George's College <https://www.saintgeorgescollegejerusalem.com/>

Christian Education

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!

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.

Trustees

Thank you to Dave Allen, Mark Barnhart, Jim Gill, Rob & Julie McClenathan, Scott Young and Zack Gingras for helping with the annual spring clean-up. Your help is very much appreciated!

Outreach

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.



Food Pantry Donations Needed

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!



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.

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 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

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

♥Walk for Hope♥



In an effort to raise awareness and reduce the stigma of Opioid Abuse, Masuk High School would like you to participate in the Walk for Hope.

Where: Masuk Track

Adults: \$10

When: Monday, May 22

Students: \$5

Registration: 5:30 pm

<5 yrs: walk free

Vigil: 6:00 pm - 6:45 pm

Walk: 6:45 pm - 7:45 pm

All proceeds from the walk will go to the Chris Herren Project to help those who struggle with opioid addiction.

First 200 people to register get a free t-shirt.

Concession Stand will be open for this even.

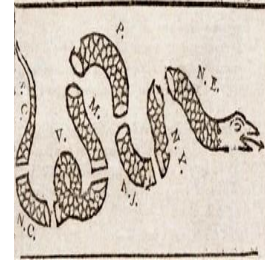


A New Holiday for the UCC



Sir John Hargrave

3/15/2017



In 1754, Benjamin Franklin published this famous drawing in his newspaper, the *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Until that point, the early American colonies were operating like independent fiefdoms, and Franklin was encouraging the colonies to come together to form something greater than the sum of their parts.

Because it's the earliest graphical representation of a united America, some call it the first American political cartoon. That simple line drawing was reprinted countless times, because the message was so easy to understand: *united we are powerful, but divided we are dead*.

In America, we value independence. We celebrate our great leaders, inventors, and businesspeople for their independent thinking. Our favorite movies are about rugged individualists, from outlaw cowboys to space fighters. Our biggest national holiday is even named Independence Day.

But the truth is that we're not just independent, we're also *interdependent*. Our churches are deeply connected with our communities. Our communities are connected with our country. Our country is connected to a global economy, a global internet, and a global environment.

Why is it that we have Independence Day, but no *Interdependence Day*? Where is the holiday to celebrate our connection with each other, and the world?

For those of us within the Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island conferences of the United Church of Christ, our Annual Meeting is that day. It is a time to come together as a wider church: to learn, network, laugh, pray, sing, and worship together. It is a time to celebrate our interdependence.

At this year's Annual Meeting, we'll be combining these three conferences for the first time. Like Franklin's cartoon, we'll be combining forces to create something more powerful than we've ever seen.

The Annual Meeting is a chance to deepen your faith, to be inspired, and to learn what your fellow UCC churches are doing. This year's meeting, like those revolutionary meetings of the early American colonists, will be historic.

Like the early American colonists, together we can do amazing things. Join us and celebrate Interdependence Day.

The Tri-Conference Annual Meeting will be held on June 16th and 17th at the Hartford Convention Center

MCC Community Calendar

Mon. May 15th

7:30pm Council Meeting (Dineson)

Tues. May 16th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

7:00pm Bereavement Group (Dineson)

Wed. May 17th

2:30pm 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)

6pm Senior PF Lock-in

Week of May 21st

10:00am Worship

11:15am Prayer Partner's Potluck Lunch

11:15am Deacons Meeting (Dineson)

11:15am Outreach Meeting (Classroom 5)

11:15am Trustees Meeting (Classroom 4)

6:00pm Adult & Junior PF

Tues. May 23rd

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. May 24th

6:30pm Adult & Youth Confirmation Dinner
Celebration

Thurs. May 25th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

12:00pm Young at Heart (Vazzy's in Monroe)

7:00pm Adult Choir

Sat. May 27th

9:00am Jam Making (Kitchen)

Week of May 28th

10:00am Worship

Time to be Determined Senior PF (at the park)

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

Week of June 4th

Confirmation Sunday

Baptism Savannah Grace Bleakney

10:00am Worship w/Communion

6:00pm Adult, Junior & Senior PF

Mon. June 5th

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

Tues. June 6th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Thurs. June 8th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

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 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)

11:00am Morning Circle (Location TBD)

Fri. June 16th

Strawberry Festival Set Up

Sat. June 17th-Sun. June 18th

Strawberry Festival