



THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

STEEPLE

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Monroe, CT 06468

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Office Hours:
Monday – Friday
9:00a.m.- 3:30p.m.

Senior Pastor: Rev. Jennifer Gingras
Director of Faith Formation: Debi Mastroni-Kenyon
Music Director: Will Duchon
Secretary: Melissa Rosenberg
Church e-mail: secretary@mcc-ucc.org

November 1, 2017

Money & Relationships

Here is the thing about money – it is just a tool. We use this tool to get the things and services we need. Sometimes we all go through periods when our budgets are stretched. And it's not always easy to talk about; even with those we love and trust the most in this world. This is because money issues can be so deeply rooted we may not even be aware of how money or talking about money even affects us.

Many of our attitudes about financial matters come from our parents and our upbringing. Maybe growing up you heard things like..." Money doesn't grow on trees!" or "Don't carry cash, you'll either spend it or get robbed!" Maybe your parents argued constantly about money. Perhaps your family of origin never talked about money in front of you, and you had to learn all about it all on your own, which you kind of resent. This sensitivity about money can continue through adolescence into adulthood. Especially if money matters are a sore spot with your partner today, or you were ever taken financial advantage of by someone you once trusted. That hurts, and the pain is real.

Becoming aware of our own attitudes about money and recognizing how these beliefs influence our relationships with others can help us work through some challenging issues. It may not be an easy thing to do. The first step of a journey towards awareness can begin when we are rooted in prayer.

In the book [Healing the Eight Stages of Life](#) Linns and Fabricant offer a wonderful way of visualizing prayer. They call it the "*Prayer of Creative Imagination*" There are four parts that can be used for healing any hurtful experience, not just around money:

1. Recall a time when you felt deeply loved. Re-experience that scene, breathing that love into yourself again.
2. Now recall a time you were hurt. Perhaps you are sitting around the dinner table and your tired parents arguing over money. Get in touch with those feelings.
3. Let Jesus join the scene. Imagine what he might say. Watch as he adds to the conversation.
4. Breathe in all the ways Jesus loves you, and breathe out any hurt.

There now, doesn't that feel better? When we find a way to shift our thinking from fear to generosity, we can better make a pathway for gratitude.

In peace, Pastor Jenn



Fall Back! Don't forget to turn your clocks back one hour before you go to sleep this Saturday, November 4th!

Stewardship 2018: Journey to Generosity

Accepting the command of Jesus to bring wholeness to a fragmented world is a mission that matters! Investing in the work of ministry and mission on behalf of others improves the quality of life in our community and beyond. Being generous with our time, treasure and talents gives us a sense of purpose, a feeling of overall well-being, and an opportunity to be a part of something that is larger than ourselves, which has long-term positive consequences for ourselves, our families and our church community.



It's time for the Monroe Congregational Church's annual stewardship drive! Please consider prayerfully your financial commitment to MCC's ministry and mission and let the generosity of God inspire you to be generous in return. Special speakers will offer testimony beginning today through Commitment Sunday on November 19th.

We hope that that these personal testimonies inspire you to join us on the journey by completing a pledge card and placing it in the offering basket or dropping it off at the church office. Please let us know if you have any questions and thank you for walking alongside us at the Monroe Congregational Church.

Your Stewardship Committee: Scott Young (Chair), Roy Nealon, John O'Rourke (Receiver)



Fall Workday Saturday, Nov. 4th at 8:00 am - We have plenty of fall cleanup jobs to tackle so please come out and spend a few hours helping to spruce up our campus. Breakfast will be provided. Please contact Dave Allen at dallen9457@att.net.

Church Council

Congregational Conversation: Nov 12th Each fall we enter our church's budgeting season in preparation for the next year of ministry at the Monroe Congregational Church. We hold this informal congregational conversation in November so that everyone has a chance to ask questions about the process, individual board allocations and even make recommendations which help shape our priorities as a plan is developed. No votes are taken, but ideas are shared. Knowing this financial information ahead of time helps us be better informed prior to our Annual Congregational Meeting in January. Please join us in Wilton Hall on Sunday, November 12th, 2017 at 11:15 and join in on the discussion!

Faith on Tap, Friday November 3rd: Come talk about life and current events from a spiritual perspective at a local pub. We meet on the first Fridays of the month from 7:30 - 9pm at VERACIOUS BREWING COMPANY! No formal presentations - just people kicking around a topic, sharing honestly what really matters to them. Anyone is welcome at the table. No topics are off limits. Agreement is not required, but civility is essential. Tea-totelers and soda drinkers welcome too! Call/text Clark ([203-895-5604](tel:203-895-5604)) or Rev. Jenn ([203-895-5607](tel:203-895-5607)) Gingras with any questions.



November 3rd theme: "What Would Jesus Buy?" Of course we all have bills to pay, necessities, and we all like to buy things from time to time for fun. Do you think there is a connection between how we prioritize our spending and what we value in the world? What's the relationship between justice, charity, conscientious consumerism and faith?

Outreach



All Scouts associated with MCC are teaming up to help support Bridgeport Rescue Mission's Coat Drive portion of their "Great Thanksgiving Project". Scouts from Boy Scout Troop 63, Cub Scout Pack 262, Crew 63 and all Girl Scouts from MCC can help with this project by collecting new or gently used coats. The goal is to stuff a tent full of coats by Thanksgiving. Ask your family, friends, neighbors and co-workers if they have any coats they would like to donate! Please place your coats in the tent set up in Wilton Hall at MCC.

Bridgeport Rescue Mission's annual Great Thanksgiving Project is widely recognized as our region's most impactful holiday hunger relief outreach effort. Serving more than 3000 families each November, the event distributes frozen turkeys, and warm winter coats. The Mission teams up with the Bridgeport Webster Bank Arena, various corporate partners and more than 300 volunteers and over a six day period in 2016 distributed 3200 turkeys and 15,000 coats to our neighbors in need. Thank you for your help and if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Yours in Scouting and Service, Rich Correll, Troop 63 Service Coordinator

Dress A Girl Around The World Sew-A-Thon Returns

November 11 from 10am- 3pm~ Join Liz Skarzyinski from Dress A Girl Around The World on November 11th 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.



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!



Heifer International is a global nonprofit group working to eradicate poverty and hunger through sustainable, values-based holistic community development. With your spare change, we can help families support themselves and others through the purchases of livestock and plants that will go to bettering their present situation and then providing for a future that allows them to work on their own. Money will be collected during coffee hour and can be placed in collection jar on the coffee table. By the end of December, Morning Circle will pool the change and send out a check. This is a great way to start off the holiday with a donation to something special with the help of everyone from the congregation. Please contact Susie Cuseo with any questions at [203-268-0280](tel:203-268-0280) or at thecuseos@yahoo.com.

Christian Education



MCC Sunday school will be having a bake sale on Sunday, November 5th, during Coffee Hour to benefit Church World Service Hygiene Kits. We collected many items for kits during VBS, but only have enough supplies to make 15 kits. We would like to purchase the remainder items so we're having a bake sale. On that day, all children and youth will report to Wilton Hall when they arrive at the church.

Confirmation News: An important part of the **Confirmation** experience at MCC is the Confirmand / Sponsor Team. This year our 8 confirmands have been paired with these adult sponsors:

Confirmand	Sponsor
Jack Campbell	Will Duchon
Josh Correll	Paul Coward
Olivia Cross	Christine Hare
Declan Riffard	Paulette Obertz
Kyra Sicilano	Julia Gutierrez
Gerritt Wissink	Mike McEvoy
Lydia Aguilar	Kathy Allen
Abby Clausen	Ruth Wakeley

You may be thinking "What is a SPONSOR?" It is an adult friend who is a member of the church and can act as a companion for the confirmand as he/she prepares to make a decision about joining the church. A sponsor provides support and encouragement and is available to the confirmand as a sounding board, a spiritual friend, and a model for faith. Throughout the confirmation journey a relationship develops as the sponsor shares some of their own life and

faith experiences to affirm the confirmand's wrestling with the questions about his/her religious beliefs and his/her own unique faith journey.

We'd like to give special thanks to this year's sponsors and all who have been sponsors in previous years. Sharing your faith, your time and making this commitment is a BIG DEAL. You make a difference to our confirmands!

Sunday School Schedule
November 5th all classes baking for bake sale
November 12th Regular Classes
November 19th Regular Classes
November 26th No Sunday school



The Fellowship Committee would like to invite members and friends to "Supper and Song", November 18th at 6pm in Wilton Hall-

Please bring a favorite entrée, casserole or side dish to share and join your MCC friends in Wilton Hall to enjoy food, fellowship AND a musical treat from our very own Lisa Burke. Dessert and beverages will be provided by the Fellowship Board. Sign-up sheet posted in Wilton Hall.

Please join us for the MCC Book Club!

- ✚ **November 15th-7:30pm** The Other Einstein by Marie Benedict~Host TBD
- ✚ **December-date TDB**-The Book That Matters Most by Ann Hood~Host TBD
- ✚ **January 17th-7:30pm** A Gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles~Hosted by Sue Smelzer
- ✚ **February 21st-7:30pm** The Women in the Castle by Jessica Shattuck~Host TBD



Rachel's Well, November 6th at 7:30 in Dineson: What are the difference between an Ask and a Guess culture? In an Ask culture, people grow up believing they can ask for anything – a favor, a pay raise, etc. fully realizing the answer may be no. In a Guess culture, by contrast, you avoid putting a request into words unless you're pretty sure the answer will be yes. Neither is "wrong", but when an Asker meets a Guesser, some unpleasantness may result, in addition to confusing expectations. Come join us to talk about it! All post high school age women are welcome.

Retired Men's Breakfast-Wednesday November 8th at 9:30am in Dineson Parlor. If you would like a ride please call the church office by Monday Nov. 6th.

Morning Circle will meet Wednesday November 8th at 11am in Dineson Parlor.





The following was shared by Pastor Jenn with the congregation as a stewardship testimonial on October 22nd.

Getting into Hot Water

Today marks the beginning of our annual stewardship campaign (*Journey to Generosity*), when we begin to plan our budget for next year, and talk as a church about why it's important to give generously, so that we can do more of God's work and do it better than we've ever done before.

As a church, we get a little rent money, and we get some proceeds from fundraising efforts, and we get a little income from investments, but it's your willingness to share some of what you earn each week that really makes this community tick.

If you've been around MCC a while, you are used to me saying a quick sound bite every week in worship about giving right before we take an offering. But the time has come for me to get a little deeper into the fray.

The leadership of this church has been talking for months now about promoting greater transparency and openness in our giving habits. We, as a church, are healthy in so many ways, and this is one way we can be healthier: to give up the shame and secrecy about money and charitable giving.

Each week during this campaign, a different person is going to stand up in front of you and tell, as they always do, why they give. But this year, our speakers are also going to tell you something about what they give. And I decided to go first.

I came to this decision with a little fear and trembling. After participating in 11 stewardship drives at MCC, I've never spoken about my families giving until now. What if, in your eyes, I give too little... and then I feel ashamed? Or worse... what if, in your eyes, I give too much... and then you feel ashamed?

If we are ever going to get beyond our shame entirely, we must move through it; and if I'm going to ask you to be more open with me, then, it stands to reason that I need to be more open with you. Because that's what leaders do. So here goes...

In 2017, my husband Clark and I plan to give 9.6% of our take-home pay away. About 2/3 of that goes towards our church pledge, to the faith community that we love, the Monroe Congregational Church. This amounts to about \$96 a week, or \$5,000 a year. So, if you are

looking at your handy dandy bulletin insert, you can see that puts the Gingras family in the "Voyagers" category along with eight others.

The other third of our charitable giving we have available for other important causes we support, like the Center for Family Justice, Hurricane Relief, the United Way, Silver Lake, the American Cancer Fund, One Great Hour of Sharing and many others.

In 2018, we'd very much like to become tithers and give away 10% of our after tax income. Because we want to give until it feels good. So I'm planning on increasing our pledge to MCC accordingly which moves us into the "Sojourners" category. I think another \$500 a year will bring us to 10%, so I'm placing a pledge card for \$5,500 in the plate today.

Is it hard to do? To be honest, it has taken a few years for us to get to almost 10%. What helped for us the most was paying our pledge electronically. We became accustomed to giving every week, and not having to remember an envelope helped us stay on track. So that the church could count on what was needed. Because that's important.

The way I see it, pledging is kind of like taking a hot, hot bath. Maybe it's a little shock to the system getting in, but if you take your time and step in gradually you realize it's the most amazing feeling.

And here's the thing, saying YES has become not only what we like to do, but what we LOVE to do. It feels so good that even when Clark was between jobs and money got really tight we stepped out in faith to complete our pledge – our promise to this church that we love. To do otherwise would have been a decision based in fear, not in faith and love.

Why do we give? We give because God tells us to, but we also give because we know it's not really ours to begin with. We believe profoundly in the people we are giving to: This church, that is so full of visionary people, loving people, servant people, changed people, people who can be brought to tears when they talk about the place that this church has in their hearts.

I hope that what I've shared with you today doesn't get me in hot water. Or maybe I do? Because the water feels too healing, too beneficial, too right to want to do otherwise. If you are ready to get into some hot water with us, and join us on this stewardship journey, simply complete a pledge form and place it in the offering plate. Pledge cards can be found in your pews. Stewardship season has begun, so let's celebrate this journey that we are taking together, and the hope my family has in what God is doing in this place.

**Please Join Us In Welcoming These Newest
Members Of Our Church Community**



Brian and Melissa join us today with their daughters Emily and Abigail (Abby). Brian is an SEO Specialist at Brandshop and Melissa is the Operations/Project Manager at SiriusDecisions. Brian's interests include sports trivia, current events, movies, reading, and cooking. Melissa's interests include completing triathlons, cycling, coaching youth soccer, reading, and baking. Emily likes playing soccer, tap and ballet, running, reading, and drawing. Abby likes to tell knock-knock jokes, dance, play soccer, sing, and is learning to read. The Coleman's love to spend time together as a family playing games, watching movies, traveling, and walking their dog Larry. Welcome Coleman family!

59 Big Horn Rd
Shelton, CT 06484
203-560-0060
Melissa's Email: melgoodcole@yahoo.com
Brian's Email: colemanproducer@sbcglobal.net

Birthdates:

Brian April 5
Melissa May 31
Emily May 22
Abby June 11



Eric and Daniela join us today with their daughter Gabriela. Eric is a financial planner with Barnum Financial Group. Daniela is a business resource facilitator with Barnum Financial Group. Eric enjoys making wine, traveling, and spending time with family. Daniela's interests include scrapbooking, reading to Gabriela, traveling and spending time with family. Daniela and Eric expressed an interest in volunteering with the Strawberry Festival. Welcome, Gerhard family!

10 Percheron Drive
Monroe, CT 06468
203-927-9508

Daniela's email: dgerhard15@gmail.com

Eric's email: ericgerhard@yahoo.com

Birthdates

Eric March 6

Daniela December 13

Gabriela January 22

MCC Community Calendar

Thurs. Nov. 2nd

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)
7:15pm Adult Choir

Fri. Nov. 3rd

7:30pm Faith on Tap: What Would Jesus Buy?
(Veracious)

Sat. Nov. 4th

8am Trustees Fall Clean Up

Week of Nov. 5th

10:00am Worship w/Communion
5:00pm Senior PF Halloween (Cross home)
6:00pm Junior & Adult PF

Mon. Nov. 6th

7:30pm Rachel's Well: The Ask or Guess
Culture (Dineson)

Tues. Nov. 7th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Nov. 8th

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

Thurs. Nov. 9th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)
7:00pm Parent Support Group (Dineson)
7:15pm Adult Choir

Fri. Nov. 10th

Office Closed in Observance of Veteran's Day

Sat. Nov. 11th

10:00am Dress A Girl (Wilton Hall)

Week of Nov. 12th

10:00am Worship
11:15am Congregational Conversation Budget
Meeting
2:00pm Senior PF
6:00pm Adult PF

Tues. Nov. 14th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Nov. 15th

7:30pm Book Club location tbd

Thurs. Nov. 16th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)
7:15pm Adult Choir
7:15pm CE Meeting (Dineson)

Fri. Nov. 17-19th

Confirmation Retreat at Silver Lake

Sat. Nov. 18th

6:00pm Supper & Song (Wilton Hall)

Week of Nov. 19th

10:00am Worship
11:15am Stewardship Pancake Breakfast
2:00pm Senior PF
6:00pm Adult PF & Junior PF

Tues. Nov. 21st

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

Thurs. Nov. 23rd & Fri. Nov. 24th

Office Closed for the Thanksgiving Holiday

Week of Nov. 26th

Pulpit Swap with Unity Hill UCC
Rev. Dr. M. Todd Shipley preaching
10:00am Worship
5:00pm Senior PF
6:00pm Junior PF

Tues. Nov. 28th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Nov. 29th

6:30pm Confirmation Class (Dineson)

Thurs. Nov. 30th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)
7:15pm Adult Choir

Fri. Dec. 1st

7:30pm Faith on Tap (Veracious)



MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Help MCC Pave Its Way to a Brighter Future! "BUY A BRICK" CAMPAIGN

The MCC Board of Trustees is pleased to extend this unique opportunity to help upgrade the MCC campus and honor a local business, friend, colleague, family member, or loved one by sponsoring the installation of a personalized, engraved brick. The Trustees are launching a "buy a brick campaign" to help finance the cost of replacing a deteriorated walkway running alongside Rexford House. Each standard-size, 4" x 8" brick is \$125, and allows three lines of text comprised of eighteen characters each. To sponsor a commemorative brick, please complete the following information and return to the address provided below.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Each commemorative brick measures a standard 4" x 8" and allows up to 3 lines of 18 characters per line (including spaces) of engraved type. Each brick is \$125.00.

Examples:

*In Loving Memory
Of Our Parents
Jones Family*

*Best Friends
Forever
Kathy & Jodi*

In the space provided below, indicate the wording of your inscription as you would like it to read on your personalized brick. Please print clearly and use block letters, one letter per block. (For additional bricks, please use multiple forms).

Hand-deliver or mail in this form with a check made payable to Monroe Congregational Church to: "MCC Campus Buy a Brick Campaign" c/o Monroe Congregational Church, 34 Church Street, Monroe, CT 06468. Please contact the church office at (203) 268-9327 or secretary@mcc-ucc.org with any questions.