



THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

STEEPLE

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

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Music Director: Will Duchon
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October 1, 2019

God: "There's a man down on earth that needs our help."

Clarence, the Angel: "Is he sick?"

God: "No, worse, he's discouraged." – from "It's a Wonderful Life"

We might not like to admit it, but nearly every aspect of our lives is influenced by our society's financial system. No matter how much money people have in the bank or their retirement fund, or whether they grew up in a mansion, a one-room cabin, or somewhere in between, most have a complex and emotional relationship with money - *often accompanied by deep wounds.*

What we have, and what we believe about what we have, greatly influence the decisions we make about how we live our lives and who we think we are. If we want to live a spiritually abundant life, it can be instructive to begin to think about how money has influenced and shaped us - *being careful to do this with compassion and without judgment.* Once we are honest about our history and relationship with money, it becomes easier to connect this relationship to the larger tapestry of our spiritual journey.

Think, for a moment, about that beloved classic holiday movie, "It's a Wonderful Life" and the characters we see portrayed. Nearly each one resembles an archetypal pattern of how we handle what we have, and what meaning it brings to our lives.

- There's the **Innocent** Uncle Billy, whose approach to money is like the ostrich with its head in the sand. They may be happy-go-lucky on the outside but are a little fearful and anxious on the inside.
- There's the **Victim** Ma Bailey, who is quick to remind us that our problems are not our fault. Sometimes we really are dealing with financial and other types of difficulties outside of our control, but often we have a part in it we don't want to admit.
- And then there's the **Warrior** Sam Wainwright, who is focused, decisive, and gets things done. Sometimes people who resemble this mindset can get into the "sport" of having it all and forget that finances can be related to anything meaningful in their lives.



- The **Martyr**, George Bailey Jr., tends to be self-sacrificing and long-suffering. Often perfectionists, they expect a lot from themselves and others. On the outside they may be smiling, but inside they're resentful. Certainly, there is nothing wrong with caring for others, or giving of our time, energy, and money. The problem comes when we take away the recipient's opportunity to help themselves, or when our giving comes at too high an expense.
- It's not hard to see who the **Tyrant** is in *It's a Wonderful Life*, it's Mr. Potter! People who resemble this archetype use money to control people, events, and circumstances. He has a lot of money and uses it to get more. With no family, he seems to care about nothing but control over all the businesses in Bedford Falls.
- Everyone loves a **Fool** like Guardian Angel Clarence Odbody, because they are so fun and spontaneous! They also tend to be very generous. Sometimes, his "live for today" attitude isn't quite grounded in reality. When Clarence is told he'll be returning to earth to help George, he has no clue how difficult it's going to be to convince him that he shouldn't throw away his life.
- Finally, there is the **Artist**, Mary Hatch Bailey, who radiates spirit and creativity. These folks tend to be internally motivated and non-materialistic. They like the freedom that money brings, but don't want to be "sullied" by the material world. Mary doesn't mind living in a drafty, leaky house, as long as she can pursue her joys: raising her family and helping others. We don't know from the movie whether Mary is disdainful of money and the material world or whether she worries about "selling out".

What aspects of yourself do you see in each of these characters? Although there is no completely "right" perspective, some positive aspects and some more negative. Myself? I'm usually tottering between being George (a Martyr) and Mary (an Artist)! Maybe if we're honest, we can admit that all of us have at least a little bit of each in us. It's helpful to be aware of these tendencies so we can work to change those aspects that aren't as healthy, as we strive for fulfillment in all aspects of life.

In peace, Pastor Jenn

Just for fun... Read Gary's excellent *Elisha's Corner* article at the back of the Steeple for information on our church's bell. He states that there is small piece of graffiti on it that says 'H.F.F.G. 1916'. What do YOU suppose that means? Slip a note to the office, we'll share results with everyone in next month's publication of "The Steeple"

Safety for All

In September, 2018, Cady Gingras, Don Parker-Burgard, and I embarked on a journey to update the church's Safe Church Policy to what is now a SafeConduct Policy. We spent a long time in lengthy discussions, pouring over lots of documents, and attending workshops, etc. The end result was approval of an updated policy by Church Council on September 23, 2019! Woo hoo!

There are some changes I want you to know about before we begin full implementation of the policy:

1. **What's with the new name?** Some years ago another Christian denomination trademarked the term "Safe Church" so only that denomination can use the term. From now on we are to use the term SafeConduct, which is actually better because the policy addresses behavior and not the "church".

2. **For Volunteers with Minors and Vulnerable Adults.** We will have applications, background checks, and trainings on an annual basis due to continued changes to SafeConduct policies and best practices.
3. **Signage.** You will see signs around the MCC campus informing everyone that uses our spaces that we employ best practices when it comes to SafeConduct. This is to create and foster an environment of safety for all.

More information is forthcoming as the SafeConduct Committee and I work to implement the new guidelines. As always, if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact myself or Don Parker-Burgard.

Yours in Christ, Debi

Blue Sky Brainstorm – Sunday, October 6th!!!



Since last spring, a small group of church members have been working with Rev. Suzi Townsley (Southern New England Associate Minister for Innovation, Leadership and Change) to think about ways to serve our community that are fresh and inspired. One idea that has bubbled up is to share the gathered wisdom of MCC members and friends in a (curated) public blog. Our hope is that the publication and sharing of such a blog would spread good news and hope, while also informing our neighbors about MCC. Please join us after worship on Sunday, October 6th in Wilton Hall for a little coffee and conversation, as we discuss content and contributors.

Deacons

In Memory of Nils Wiberg



As many of you know, our dear friend and long-time church member Nils Wiberg passed away on September 26th. The family is planning a memorial service on Saturday, October 12th at 11 am. Following the service, a light luncheon will be held in Wilton Hall.

If you are able to assist with the luncheon, either as a kitchen helper or by bringing a dessert, please sign up in Wilton Hall or speak with Fellowship Chairs Jeannette Combs or Michelle Cardentey. Thank you.

New Member Informational Meeting, October 20 ~ Join the deacons for an informational meeting at 11:15 in Dineson Parlor. Find out more about the history (how we got here), theology (what we believe) and ways you might connect with others and learn more about faith doing so. New Members will join the church during worship October 27th.



Pastor Jenn is now podcasting! If you miss a Sunday sermon, you can find a recording of it on <https://pastorjenn.podbean.com/>

Christian Faith Formation



Fruits of the Spirit (Sunday school)

- 6th – Joyful Watermelons (K-2nd grade) gather
- 13th – ALL Groups Gather
- 20th – ALL Groups Gather
- 27th – ALL Groups Gather

Jr. Pilgrim Fellowship

- 6th – Gather from 6:00-7:30 pm
- 12th – SATURDAY Haunted Hayride 6:30 pm
- 20th – NO Gathering
- 27th – Gather from 6:00-7:30 pm



Pumpkin Carving Party, October 26th ~ Please join the Christian Education Board on Saturday, October 26th, for a Pumpkin Carving Party! We will gather at 5:00 pm and have pizza and other goodies. We will be taking an offering for the pizza. After we dinner we will carve pumpkins in preparation for Halloween festivities and decorations.



This is a BYOP – Bring Your Own Pumpkin – event. We have patterns and tools, but if you have your own tools, feel free to bring them. After carving we can take our works of art outside, light them up, and see how they glow!

Please bring a pumpkin to carve and a dessert to share! ALL are welcome to join in the fun and fellowship!

Bible Sunday, October 27th ~ Bible Sunday will be celebrated on Sunday, October 27th! On that day our 3rd Grade Sunday school students will be receiving their Bibles. If you have a 3rd Grader please call the Church Office with your child's full name for the Bible plate inscription.

Fellowship

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

- 🇺🇸 **October 21st-7:30pm** Pachinko by Min Jin Lee ~ Host: Gayle Hammond in Dineson Parlor
- 🇺🇸 **November 18th-7:30pm** My Brilliant Friend by Elena Ferrante ~ Host: Jeanette Combs in Dineson Parlor

Prayer Partners Needed!! Thank you Prayer Partners!! For those of you who have signed up (37 of you!!) you will be receiving your letter and the information sheet of the person to pray for in the mail at the beginning of October. Please contact Susie Cuseo if you have not received yours. Remember to use the church's address as the return if you choose to mail a note or card. Seek out your prayer partner at the start of church and start up a conversation. Perhaps you will join them



during coffee hour or find them to shake hands during the passing of the peace. When you see that smiley face looking at you, wish your partner a wonderful day or blessings for a great start. I look forward to sending you emails so that you know that I am thinking of you and to seeing you at the "Big Reveal" potluck in May. If you do not know who you're looking for, please find me and I'll do my best to point them out for you. thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280.

Mark your calendars for the following Morning Circle meeting dates:



- Wednesday, October 9 at 11AM in Dineson Parlor - Trick-or-Treat bags for Food Pantry
- Wednesday, November 13 at 11AM in Dineson Parlor - Specialty Thanksgiving Food Pantry collection and Bean Soup Jars

Do you know someone who's expecting a baby and you can't figure out a wonderful gift for the new parents?



How about a beautiful baby blanket crocheted by the caring hands of the Morning Circle ladies? These blankets come in lovely colors and are of varying sizes. Please find Jackie Bleakney during coffee hour and she'll show you what's in stock in Dineson Parlor. The cost is very affordable: \$10-15.

Help needed at the Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe!!! If you have some free time during the day, we need help with sorting, tagging and hanging merchandise on Tuesdays every week at 1:00PM. Any help you can offer would be greatly appreciated. It's very easy to do! Questions? Contact Jan Pearson at jtpearson118@gmail.com.





Friday, October 4th at 7:30 pm at Veracious

Join us at Faith on Tap, where we sit together and talk about life and current events from a spiritual perspective. No formal presentations - just people kicking around a topic, sharing honestly what really

matters to them. Good ol' Martin Luther is reported to have said, "*God is at work, even when we are drinking beer*" (or your favorite beverage, because tea-totelers and soda drinkers are welcome too!) Anyone is welcome at the table. No topics are off limits. Agreement is not required, but civility is essential. Just place an order, draw up a seat and join the conversation. Hope to see you there!

October Theme: I Ain't Afraid of No Ghosts! Bring a favorite ghost story to share, we'll talk about supernatural encounters in the Bible, the origins of Halloween and it's connection to the Christian celebration of All Saints.

Will Duchon Concert

Saturday, October 26, 2019, 7:30 PM
Norwalk Concert Hall, 125 East Avenue, Norwalk, CT
American Chamber Orchestra. Chris Hisey, conductor
Will Duchon, pianist

Rachmaninov: Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 18

Tickets available online: <http://americanchamberorchestra.com/tickets-donations/4544852425>

Outreach

Have you recently cleaned out your junk drawers? Have you found used prescription glasses/cases or prescription sunglasses? You can donate them so that others may have the Gift of Sight. They will be able to read the newspaper again or see the beautiful faces of their loved ones. Glasses are cleaned and checked for their proper use and sent to places where people who can't afford them have the opportunity to see life clearly and positively. Consider donating your used glasses in the basket on the serving table at coffee hour during the month of October. So do some fall cleaning and give the Gift of Sight to someone who would appreciate it. Please contact Susie Cuseo at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280 with any questions or comments.

Thank you to Linda and Jack Fracassini for hosting our annual Wine & Beer Tasting on September 21st! We enjoyed tasting wines selected by Roy Nealon and beers selected by All Jesulaitus and provided by our friends at Veracious Brewing on Main Street in Monroe. *In total, we raised \$635 which we are sending to Church World Service for Hurricane Dorian Relief.*



It's that time again...the next St. George's supper is October 21st Please look for the poster in Wilton Hall to sign up to help. We have a variety of needs, including shoppers, and servers. Simply take a tag (or two!) and you will be making a difference for those in need. Please bring all food to the church by October 20th at 11am. If you take a tag and are unable to fulfill your commitment please contact the church office 203-268-9327 Or if you would like a tag but cannot make it to church please call Melissa in the office.



Elisha's Corner
By Gary Thompson, Church Historian

The Story of the Bell

More often than not when you are missing or overlooking something you find it when you are looking for something else. So it has been with the story of the bell in our Meeting House steeple. Like that jigsaw puzzle piece that is the lynchpin to bring the top, bottom, and both sides of the total puzzle into focus it was found while looking for the origins of the Centre Green and the boundaries of the first Meeting House which opened for worship in June of 1769. The story of the bell begins in 1792 when a steeple was added to the west gable side of the old Meeting House. Planed by Daniel Morse Esq., construction started in November 1792. A little more than two years later, January 1795, inhabitants of New Stratford, "Voted that the Society will purchase a bell with the money subscribed for that purpose" A committee was appointed to purchase the bell. The bell was installed in 1796. No account or minutes give evidence that a bell was actually purchased. But there is an account entry that the bell irons were repaired by Beardslee and Wheeler in 1797. Some 20 years later, on December 7, 1815, there was an accounting entry made by Nathan Hubbell (Treasure of the Society) for a bill of \$12 for "**For making of a bell yoke** by agreement with Etnathon Clarke one of the Society Committee". The bill was paid to Beardslee & Wheeler on Dec 11th. This bill was a very important find.

Between 1806 and 1826 invoices, bills and chits give account of the multiple repairs to the bell assembly; straps, wheel, frame, and rigging. Yes, unlike our present bell assembly, the original bell in the old Meeting House was activated by a rope slung wheel. But the number of repairs indicated by all these bills over a span of twenty years must have led the Society committee to take some punitive action to cut costs and resolve some persistent problem. The last bill on file for the bell was for **fixing the bell to the yoke**, dated 1830. again, a very important find.

Now came the finding of the missing piece; the lynchpin. On April 22, 1826, 31 years after the bell's initial installation, a subscription for the bell was "filled up" to have the bell recast for \$150. The document in the archives provides a detailed list of the subscribers. An invoice from **Lyon, Mix & Bradley Co. of New Haven, CT, dated July 25, 1826**, itemizes to work performed on the original bell from the 1796 steeple:

		<u>Current \$</u>
Cost of the recast 428 pound bell	\$355.32	\$9,909
Cost to repair the bell tongue	<u>4.00</u>	<u>112</u>
	359.32	10,021
Credit for 775 pound old bell at 25% per pound	<u>- 193.75</u>	<u>- 5,403</u>
Balance due	\$ 165.57	\$ 4,618

The September 19, 1820 edition of the "*Columbian Register*" (New Haven, CT newspaper) carried an ad for the New Haven Bell Foundry, solicited by "Nehemiah Bradley, Nath'l (Nathaniel) Lyon, and William Mix.

The original bell weighed 775 pounds, but keep in mind that the steeple was larger than our current one. The size, however, may have caused the need for the frequent care and repair indicated by the many invoices, bills, and chits. So, the frugal citizenry of the Congregational Society had it melted down and re-cast to a 428 pound bell. Makes sense. The **bell tongue**, however, was repaired and **restored in the new bell**.

The provisions of the contract with Hotchkins Clarke & Co. when our current Meeting House was built in 1847, declared that the bell, yoke and rope, was to be salvaged and retained by the Society. This fact however, does not necessarily prove that they installed it in the new structure.



However, after taking a picture of our current bell in the Meeting House steeple, Nicholas Caballero reported the following on December 12, 2013 by e-mail;

“Unfortunately, not the bell from the 1791 steeple (on the old Meeting House). Might be re-use of a bell from another church. The cast inscription on the bell reads, **‘Lyon, Mix New Haven. G. Bradley Maker, 1826.** The bell is bronze with an iron clapper. Again the yoke appears to either be designed to hold two different bell sizes or at one time held a different bell, so it might be the yoke from the 1791 steeple. As a side note, there’s a bit of graffiti on the bell. Perhaps painted on, but very faint at this point: **‘H.F.F.G. 1916’**”

Ergo, the search for the lynchpin, the missing piece – the **Lyon, Mix, & Bradley – the New Haven Foundry** invoice.

In 1865 the Steeple fell down during a severe storm and was rebuilt. Among the invoices, bills, and chits for work and materials for its reconstruction, no repair was made to the bell, its frame, or yoke. If there was, it was not detailed and accounted for. The bell, tongue, and yoke were reinstalled in the reconstructed steeple that same year, and there it has remained. It has stayed in its current position unaffected by the steeple repairs during the Meeting House expansion in 1985/86, nor when some of the steeple’s internal support beams were replaced and/or shored up in 1989.

On November 20, 2017, after Bob Hammond, Myron Winger, and Rob McClenathan inspected the bell and support structure, Bob Hammond reported in an e-mail that,

“The bell is exactly as it was when I last was up there in the 1990’s. The bell and its structure seem fine and secure. To ring it, take the rope off that brass hook in the balcony and let the rope hang straight down from the hole in the balcony ceiling. It takes 3-4 long and slow pulls to get the bell’s momentum sufficient to pull the heavy bell into the clapper which hangs straight down from the center of the bell. The bell is at rest tipped approximately 30 degrees on its side. This is how it is designed to work. Since there are three layers of ceilings between the balcony and the bell, it is difficult to hear it ringing while pulling the rope in the balcony. However, outside it rings loud and clear.”



If there is any epilogue to this story it is this; the bell that rings in our belfry every Sunday morning and on all other special occasions may not be the original bell of the old Meeting House, but we can say with certainty that it is from the old Meeting House and contains the same bronze metal that made up the 775 pounder. The tongue and the yoke, however, are original, repaired and reworked to fit to the 428 pound bell. To the left and right of the huge U-bolts that hold the bell to the yoke are the impressions of the huge U-bolts that held the old bell to the

yoke.

T’s it not wondrous that we still worship today under the same “yoke” of the founders of this congregation. So be it, and may it always be so!



MCC Community Calendar

Week of Oct. 6

Neighbors In Need

10:00 am Worship w/Communion

11:15 am Blue Sky Brainstorm (Wilton)

5:00 pm Adult & Senior PF

6:00 pm Junior PF

Tues. Oct. 8th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Oct. 9th

11:00 am Morning Circle (Dineson)

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

7:00 pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Oct. 10th

9:30 am Bible Study

Sat. Oct. 12th

6:30 pm Jr. PF Haunted Hayride

Week of Oct. 13

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am Safety Meeting for Ushers (Dineson)

2:00 pm Senior PF @ Corn Maze

Mon. Oct. 14

Office Closed

Tues. Oct. 15th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

7:00 pm Bereavement Group (Dineson)

Wed. Oct. 16th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

7:00 pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Oct. 17th

9:30 am Bible Study

Week of Oct. 20th

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am New Member Informational (Dineson)

11:30 am Trustees (Classroom 4)

5:00 pm Senior PF & Adult PF

Mon. Oct. 21st

3:45pm St. George's Supper

7:30 pm Book Club (Dineson Parlor)

Tues. Oct. 22nd

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Oct. 23rd

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

7:00 pm Adult Choir

Sat. Oct. 26th

5:00 pm Pumpkin Carving (Wilton Hall)

Week of Oct. 27th

New Member Sunday

3rd Graders Receive Bibles

8:45 am Deacons

10:00 am Worship

5:00 pm Senior PF

6:00 pm Junior PF

Mon. Oct. 28th

7:30 pm Council Meeting (Dineson Parlor)

Tues. Oct. 29th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Oct. 30th

7:00 pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Oct. 31st

9:30 am Bible Study

Fri. Nov 1st

7:30pm Faith on Tap (Veracious)

Week of Nov. 3rd

10:00 am Worship

5:00 pm Adult & Senior PF

Tues. Nov. 5th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Nov. 6th

7:00 pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Nov. 7th

9:30 am Bible Study

Fri. Nov.8th-Sun. Nov. 10th

Senior PF Retreat

Week of Nov. 10th

Rev. Sheldon Smith, guest preacher

10:00 am Worship

11:15am Book Fair (Wilton Hall)

Mon. Nov. 11th

Office Closed in Observance of Veteran's Day

Tues. Nov. 12th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Nov. 13th

11:00am Morning Circle (Wilton Hall)

6:30pm Confirmation Class (Dineson)

7:00 pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Nov. 14th

9:30 am Bible Study