



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

October 15, 2017

What Would John Calvin Post?

It's tempting to feel cynical about the effect of cell phone technology's on our lives. Don't you hate it when your friend breaks eye contact with you to check their latest text message vibrating on their Apple Watch? I know that I do.

Look at this photo of a Philadelphia commuter train in 1955. There are dozens of businessmen sporting suits, ties, and hats, headed to work on the crowded train. In seat after seat, each commuter is holding up a newspaper and reading silently. Perhaps what is true now was true back then, too - all this technology is making us antisocial!



Perhaps what is true now was true back then, too - all this technology is making us antisocial!

At their core, social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have to do with maintaining human relationships and how we engage with one another. Perhaps the point of social media is not how many people hear your voice, but to connect you in meaningful, personal ways with other living, breathing people.

Rarely a day goes that I fail to send a text message to friends, family and church members. I'm also part of several text message groups in which groups of friends send fun, humorous messages or support one another in difficult times. Long before Facebook, Protestant reformer John Calvin wrote, "*man's nature, so to speak, is a perpetual factory of idols.*" Perhaps because of our propensity to create gods of our own making, the technologies we shape often have a particularly enchanting magical quality to them. And I'll be the first to confess: my cell phone sometimes doubles as an idol.

Craig Detweiler warns in his book, *iGods*, "*Idols serve our needs according to our schedule. When we call, they answer. They give us a false sense of being in control. But*

over time, the relationship reverses. We end up attending to their needs, centering our lives on their priorities and agendas. Most idols begin as good things..." Maybe it's possible to celebrate the gift of technology, and take care not to become so entranced by its glow that we lose perspective.

Lately I've even heard of several churches that have developed liturgies for the blessing of cell phones. I'm not sure I'm there yet. I'd much rather throw mine in a box like we do at PF on Sunday nights. But maybe there is a way to steward their potential for faithful use in the future, one click at a time.

In peace, Pastor Jenn

Liturgical Arts Team

The term **liturgy** is derived from the composite Greek word λειτουργία, **meaning** a public duty or a work undertaken by a citizen for the state. Today the term **liturgy** is applied to the public worship of the Church and is generally distinguished from private devotion, which occurs outside of the official community worship. Liturgical Art is any art media (painting, dance, music, photography, poetry, etc.) that is themed around liturgy. Just think about the hymns we sing every week – they are Liturgical Art. Notice the banner that is hanging in the Meetinghouse that the Sunday school students made – that is Liturgical Art.

I would like to form a team at MCC that will work quarterly to engage our liturgy through artistic means and bring that to the congregation and worship space. Jenn and I use a wonderful resource called "Spill the Beans" that has many suggestions during each quarter for enhancement of worship and sacred space and I would like to begin using them.

If you would like to come on this journey with me and be a part of the team, please contact me at debi@mcc-ucc.org or 203-444-6760. Advent is right around the corner and wouldn't this be great to celebrate this season!

Peace - Debi

Trustees



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. If you are able to assist, please contact Dave Allen at dallen9457@att.net.

Help MCC Pave Its Way to a Brighter Future! Here is your opportunity to help upgrade the MCC campus and ALSO honor a local business, friend, colleague, family member, or loved one by sponsoring the installation of a personalized, engraved brick! Each standard-size, 4" x 8" brick is \$125, and allows three lines of text comprised of eighteen characters each. Your



donation helps finance the cost of replacing a deteriorated walkway between the Meetinghouse and Rexford House, making the path safer and more pleasing for everyone.

Did you know that small groups from within the church can also collect funds and buy a brick in celebration of their ministry? Thanks to Sunday School and MusicFest for their contributions.

A PDF Order form is available on our church's home page, www.mcc-ucc.org . For further information, please contact the church office or Mark Barnhart at msbarnhart515@gmail.com. We are hoping to complete sales by the end of October, so please don't delay!



A Note from the Receiver: We all miss a church service from time to time. Scheduling routine, automated weekly or monthly contributions online is a good 24/7 alternative for those who are unable to give in person. Most importantly, electronic giving supports a consistent giving pattern, which helps our church better plan our ministry financial plan (budget) by providing steadier funding over time. Electronic giving to MCC is easy to set-up, just go to the "Donate" page on our web site (www.mcc-ucc.org/donate) or arrange for electronic payment from your bank. In worship, simply place a recyclable "Alternative Giving Card" in the offering plate. As always, thank you for your support of the Monroe Congregational Church! Sincerely, John O'Rourke - Receiver

Outreach

Neighbors in Need (NIN) Thanks to your generous donations we have received \$395 for Neighbors in Need. We will receive the NIN offering until October 22nd.



Young Adult & Adult Mission Trip to Puerto Rico ~ Summer, 2018 – Despite the island's stunning natural beauty and vibrant cultural identity, it's hard to see the news about Puerto Rico's storm recovery without feeling a spirit of heaviness. As a faith community, we'd like to be directly involved when the time is right. If you are interested in coming on a mission trip to Puerto Rico this summer, please sign your name on the list in Wilton Hall. As information is gathered, partners are identified and a plan begins coming together, we'll share it with you. Contact Pastor Jenn with questions at 203-895-5607 or jenn@mcc-ucc.org.



Do you have old prescription glasses you no longer use? If so, donate them in the collection basket on the coffee table throughout the month of October. They will be processed, cleaned and brought to places far and wide to provide sight to those who cannot afford it. Give an elderly person the gift of seeing their grandchildren clearly, a mom the ability to read to her children and a father the confidence to do his job with efficiency. Contact Susie Cuseo at [203-268-0280](tel:203-268-0280) or at thecuseos@yahoo.com with any questions.

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. Check your pockets and collect the coins found in your couches, then bring them in during coffee hour and place whatever you can give into the 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.



Thank you for signing up, Prayer Partners!!! I have 33 volunteers who will be receiving the name of another member to pray for and to keep in their thoughts by the end of this week. They will continue to do so until May 2018 when we meet for the "Big Reveal" potluck luncheon. I have a wonderful mix of young folk partnered with our slightly older members of the congregation. If you do not get your mailing, please contact Susie Cuseo at thecuseos@yahoo.com.



In keeping the campus neat and tidy, please check the lost and found area across the men's room. All unclaimed items will be brought to the Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe by the end of October. Contact Susie Cuseo at [203-268-0280](tel:203-268-0280) with any questions.

The Bridgeport Rescue Mission fights poverty from the inside out as they embrace the urban poor and addicted with the compassion of Christ, offering hope and healing for a changed life. We provide more than 450,000 meals each year through our dining room, food pantry, and mobile kitchens. Can you help? There is a bin located in Rexford Hall to drop off donations. Thank you for your generosity.



We are in need of:

Canned green beans, peas, & corn
 Canned sweet and white potatoes
 Canned tuna & chicken

Boxed macaroni & cheese
 Boxed rice
 Boxed cold cereal
 Pasta and sauce



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

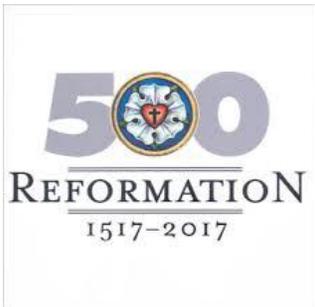
Christian Education

Pumpkin Carving Party, Saturday, October 28th

Please join the Christian Education Board on Saturday, October 28th, 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!



Reformation 500!

The Reformation was a powerful movement of church reform and renewal – and a whole lot more. It was both cause and effect of sweeping changes in European culture and society. These changes shaped modern Europe and America and influenced the entire world.

MCC will be celebrating the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation throughout the month of October. There will be special moments in worship, an adult study, and a special Anniversary Party on Sunday, October 29th. You never know, Martin Luther himself might even show up!

For the Reformation Party we will be having a potluck lunch. We are asking for some of you to bring 16th century German foods or your favorite potluck dish. There is a sign up in Wilton Hall for the potluck Please sign up if you are able!

The Adult Study will be held on Sunday October 22nd beginning at 11:30. You'll find us in the parlor, hope to see you there!

Sunday School - Mission in Motion



What a great time we are having in Sunday school already this year. We made a \$270 donation to Heifer International and purchased a paving brick for MCC's sidewalk. This year the 5th-8th Grade Sunday School class will be helping Outreach prepare the meals for St. George's Supper in the Kitchen each time it's MCC's turn.

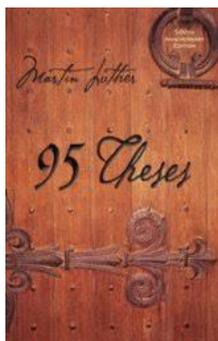
We also will be donating our offering to a new mission called "The Shoe That Grows". Their story began in Kenya in

2007. One day while out walking with the kids, a man who was volunteering there, Kenton Lee, noticed a little girl in a white dress next to him had shoes that were way too small for her feet. That led to an idea: "What if there was a shoe that could adjust and expand—so kids always had a pair of shoes that fit?" After returning to the States and five years or trial and error, the Show That Grows was born. This shoe adjusts five sizes and is strong enough to last many years.

1.5 billion people suffer from soil transmitted diseases worldwide. Without shoes children are especially vulnerable to such diseases and parasites that can lead to illness and death. Children who get sick miss school, can't help their families, and suffer needlessly. And since children's feet grow so quickly, they often outgrow donated shoes within a year, leaving them once again exposed to illness and disease. The Shoe That Grows can change all that!

We also 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!!!

This is an exciting time to be a part of MCC's Sunday school and we look forward and thank you for your support! If you have any questions or would like to help out, please contact Debi M-K at debi@mcc-ucc.org.



From the Introductory Letter to the Theses: *"Papal indulgences are being carried about, under your most distinguished authority, for the building of St. Peter's. In respect of these I do not so much accuse the extravagant sayings of the preachers, which I have not heard, but I grieve at the very false ideas which the people conceive from them, and which are spread abroad in common talk on every side – namely, that unhappy souls believe that, if they buy letters of indulgences, they are sure of their salvation; also, that, as soon as they have thrown their contribution into the chest, souls forthwith fly out of purgatory; and furthermore, that so great is the grace thus conferred, that there is no sin so great – even, as they say, if, by an impossibility, any one had violated the Mother of God – but they may be pardoned; and again, that by these indulgences a man is freed from all punishment and guilt."*

Thesis 1 - *Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, in saying "Repent ye," etc., intended that the whole life of believers should be marked by repentance.*

Thesis 43 - *Christians should be taught that he who gives to a poor man, or lends to a needy man, does better than if he bought pardons.*

Thesis 45 - *Christians should be taught that he who sees any one in need, and passing him by, gives money for pardons, is not purchasing for himself the indulgences of the Pope, but the anger of God.*

Thesis 84 - *As for instance: Why does not the Pope empty purgatory for the sake of most holy charity and of the supreme necessity of souls – this being the most just of all reasons – if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of that most fatal thing, money, to be spent on a basilica – this being a very slight reason?*



Cell Phones for Soldiers As a fall service project, Senior PF is collecting used phones for Cell Phones for Soldiers (<https://www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com/>), a nonprofit that has provided over 300 million minutes of free talk time by recycling more than 15 million used cell phones.

To donate, place your used cell phones in the decorated box at coffee hour or anytime during the week in the church office. **So far, we have collected 30 phones – that's 7,500 minutes of free talk time!!!** Every one of these precious minutes is only made possible through your help. We will stop collecting phones at the end of October. If you have any questions, please call or text me at [203-895-2871](tel:203-895-2871). Thank you, Zach Gingras - Senior PF Minister of Outreach

Sunday School Schedule

October 15th Sunday School
October 22nd Sunday School
October 29th NO Sunday School - Reformation Celebration!

Jr. PF Schedule

October 15th NO Jr. PF
October 20-22nd retreat to Silver Lake
October 29th Halloween Party



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?

Fellowship



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.



Young at Heart will be meeting at Outback Steakhouse, 698 Bridgeport Ave, Shelton at 12:00 noon on October 26. Please contact Bill & Ruth Wakeley by Monday October 23rd at 203-225-6166 We hope to see you there!

Please join us for the MCC Book Club!

- ✚ **October 18th-7:30pm** Beneath a Scarlet Sky by Mark T. Sullivan~Hosted by Gayle Hammond
- ✚ **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

MCC Community Calendar

Tues Oct. 17th

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

Wed. Oct. 18th

6:30pm Confirmation Class (Dineson)
7:30pm MCC Book Club (Gayle Hammond's home)

Thurs. Oct. 19th

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

Fri. Oct. 20th-Sun. Oct. 22nd

5:30pm Junior PF Retreat (Silver Lake)

Week of Oct. 22nd

10:00am Worship
11:30am Reformation 500 Adult Study (Dineson)
5:00pm Senior PF
6:00pm Adult PF

Tues Oct. 24th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag
7:15pm Christian Ed Meeting (Dineson)

Wed. Oct. 25th

6:30pm Confirmation Class (Dineson)

Thurs. Oct. 26th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)
7:15pm Adult Choir
12:00pm Young at Heart (Outback in Shelton)

Sat. Oct. 28th

5:00pm Pumpkin Carving Party (Wilton Hall)

Week of Oct. 29th

Reformation Sunday/New Member Sunday

10:00am Worship
11:15am Intergenerational Reformation Party (Wilton Hall)
5:00pm Senior PF Halloween Party (location TBD)
6:00pm Junior PF Halloween Party

Tues Oct. 31st

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

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
6:00pm Junior & Adult PF

Mon. Nov. 6th

7:30pm Rachel's Well (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)



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.