



THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST STEEPLE

34 Church Street
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

September 1, 2018

Rededication of Rexford House: Sunday, September 30

Sometimes, as I enter the building and pass between the portraits of the Reverend Elisha and Mrs. Rexford I wonder what they might think of the building that was dedicated in his name 50 years ago. Just imagine their reaction to seeing Wilton Hall filled with people enjoying shortcake. Would they want to have a seat in the circle with PF on a Sunday night and talk about faith and other things that are on our teen's minds? My office, which currently holds my library of about 600 churchie-type books, might easily overwhelm a man whose personal library was only a dozen (and yet, the most extensive in town at that time!). As the 50th Anniversary of the original dedication of the building draws near this September, we'd like to give thanks for our current blessing, and re-dedicate the building for the future. Please mark your calendars for a **Re-Dedication of Rexford House** following worship services on September 30th in Wilton Hall. It's a party, and All are welcome!

- Since it's a long standing church tradition to cook for each other, we'll share a **pot-luck luncheon**. Indeed, the first churches learned that "breaking bread together" gave them as much a sense of identity as did the teaching, the praying, and the sharing with one another. Being together at table is essential to church as any prayer, hymn, or sermon.
- Gary Thompson (our church's Historian) has been gathering documents and photos of the construction for a **display table** so we can learn more about how it was built (make sure you take a moment and read his article later in this Steeple), and Arlene Redmond has been making a **timeline** so we better understand what was going on in the world around us.
- We'll also put together a **time capsule**, to help the church 50 years from now know more about who we are. If you are a member of a board, committee or group and you want to put something that represents your ministry into the capsule, please bring it with you to the luncheon.

Those who had the dream and motivation to bring Rexford House to fruition 50 years ago were addressing a community need for programming space. It was a time of growth, and the congregation needed to stretch and have room for Sunday school classes, offices and other gatherings. Today's Rexford House still provides us with a wealth of space in which we minister to the community. The trustees met recently to discuss some physical plant improvements that are needed in the kitchen and restrooms, and we are confident that with a little tender, loving care our beloved Rexford House will continue to meet the congregation's needs well into the future.

In peace, Pastor Jenn

Greetings from the Cheyenne River Reservation!



As I write this article I am sitting in the Sam D. Horse Community Center on the Cheyenne River Reservation listening to the camp plans for the upcoming week for the children living here.

Each year I learn something new about this land and the people who live here. I would like to share this opportunity with you by having a Mission Trip in 2019! Some of you have expressed interest in attending next year so we are going to have an informational meeting on **Sunday, September 23rd, at 11:15**

At this meeting we will discuss the costs of the trip and ways we can work together to defray the individual cost of the trip. This meeting and the trip are open to all people age 15 and over.

If you have any questions or would like more information please email me at debi@mcc-ucc.org.

Thanks, Debi

Elisha's Corner

By Gary Thompson, Church Historian

..... And So We Celebrate

If you ask any of the few remaining members of the 1965 – 1968 congregation as to why Rexford House was built, you would be told that they had to; no more room to put a growing Sunday school enrollment and attendance. In the Spring of 1967, the Executive Building Committee for the Rexford House distributed their project brochure, *and we shall build*. It clearly stated that need; “Every nook and cranny is being used twice each Sunday. There is no place left to expand ... no way to meet the new enrollment needs ...no way to keep up with the growth of the community without additional facilities.” In the brochure, the new minister, Rev. Robert W.



Keeling, wrote, “To maintain the ministry of this church in this community at this time, this job must get done. If we are to be prepared for the tasks which God will give us in the future, preparations must be made now. The need is so insistent that no other alternative can be contemplated. In my few weeks among you, I have been greatly impressed by the eagerness of the people here to see a task and get it done.” And get it done they did, ... but not without a few modifications and setbacks to the plan along the way.

As early as September 1966, the 600 square foot addition to the parsonage bit the dust and was relegated to “future parsonage addition” on the October 1966 and June 1967 site plan map. Focus was keenly set on the space for the church children. There was an \$800 parsonage renovation in late 1967 (\$6,000 in today’s market) in anticipation of the arrival of Rev. Keeling, his wife Connie, and their young son in April 1968. In that same month, the roof caved in; literally and over the (Dineson) parlor. This was not what you would call a very warm welcome for the new pastor. In a May 2nd letter to the Executive Building Committee, architect Harry Moeckel wrote, “On Wednesday evening, April 24th, at approximately 9:00p.m., during a heavy wind and rain storm, the roof construction failed and collapsed.” This setback in the building program is probably the most remembered and talked about today; small wonder. The letter goes on, “To say that it was indeed an unusual stormy night is borne out by the fact that the official weather bureau for the Bridgeport area [Sikorsky Airport] reported between two and three inches of rain with steady

winds of 29 miles an hour and reported gusts as high as 60 miles per hour. The entire responsibility for the (collapse was) with the General Contractor (Byron Hodges and he)... assumed complete responsibility ...” The cause for the collapse was an accumulation of roofing felt and pea gravel weighing over five tons that had been stored on the roof a few days before the storm. This was four times the designed load. Consequently, the section of the roof over the parlor sagged, filled up with water, and “the already ruptured truces failed”. Within a day or two the debris was cleared away, and a design and consulting engineer, Joseph Carlson, Jr. of Shelton, conducted a load test of the rest of the roof trusses and found them to be structurally sound. The Contractor and the architect decided, however, to reinforce all the trusses in the center bay. The fix was in place and construction continued to its completion in September.

On Sunday, September 8th the congregation convened at a special meeting to adopt the name of the new fellowship building. It was George Zaleha who made the motion to name the new building “Rexford House”, as suggested by the Executive Building Committee. Bud Morvec, Committee Chairman, explained at the meeting that it was more than a “hall”. It had all the attributes of a “house”; kitchen, parlor, separate rooms, office, and lots of closets for storage (never enough). The parlor was named in posthumous honor of Hans Dineson, an active deacon for many years and major church benefactor. Two weeks later the celebration began. On Sunday, September 22nd, Rev. Robert Keeling was installed as the new Pastor. A choir program, including ensembles from Yale University School of Music, was performed, and an “open house” for the community was held that Wednesday, September 25th hosted by the Sr. PF. And on Friday the Women’s Fellowship hosted a “fellowship” dinner. That Saturday, the 26th, the Couples Club sponsored a “Family Barbeque”. Dedication Sunday was September 29, 1968, following the worship service.

And so we, too, celebrate its 50th year; to re-dedicate and reaffirm the vision of the “dream build”... for our future.

Deacons



Youth Confirmation Informational Meeting September 16th!

Confirmation is the act of a young person affirming his/her baptism and formally stating that s/he wishes to be affiliated with this faith tradition. Our confirmation class, open to high school freshman and interested older high school students, meets with Pastor Jenn and Debi most Wednesday evenings beginning September 19th from 6:30-7:30 pm. To learn more, please attend a parent/confirmand informational September 16th at 11:30 in Dineson Parlor.

Office Schedule Change Many of you know that our office administrator, Melissa, is working on a graduate degree. This year, she is required to participate in an internship and has had to cut her hours accordingly. Pastor Jenn is usually in the office from Monday through Thursday, but her schedule changes often as she visits members, meets with new families, participates in community events or drops by the hospital. If you need to see someone, it may be best to call the church office (203-268-9327) and make an appointment. Until further notice, the hours when the church office is certain to be open (pending illness or weather) are:

| | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|------------------|-----------|
| Mondays | 8:30-2:30 | Thursdays | 8:30-3:30 |
| Tuesdays | <i>closed</i> | Fridays | 8:30-3:30 |
| Wednesdays | 8:00-1:00 | | |

As always, in an emergency please contact Pastor Jenn on her cell at 203-895-5607. Thank you and let us know if you have any questions!

Christian Education

Help Form Faith

Hey everyone! Have you ever had a spare minute or two on your hands and wondered what you can do with that extra time? Well, I have two opportunities for you!

1. We are always in need of help on Sunday mornings helping with our children at church with lessons and activities. We have two different age groups and any help is appreciated. Our lessons are very user friendly with step by step instruction. If you can bake a cake, you can help us out!
2. Adopt a Space! Our spaces could use some TLC on a regular basis. You can adopt a space as an individual, family, or a group of friends and just check the space on a regular basis for cleanliness and organization.

If you can spare some time please contact Debi at debi@mcc-ucc.org. THANKS!

Jr. PF Calendar

September

16th – Regular Gathering/Welcome new members from 6:00-7:30 pm

23rd – Regular Gathering from 6:00-7:30 pm

30th – Service Trip to the Farm from 1:00-5:00 pm (tentative)



Homecoming Sunday is September 9th and we will have an all ages gathering for Sunday school and a getting to know you day. Regular classes begin on the 16th. Our theme this year will be "What Shall I Bring?"

Sunday School Calendar

September

9th – Homecoming Sunday/Registrations/All Ages Class

16th – Regular Classes for All Groups

23rd – Regular Classes for All Groups

30th – Regular Classes for All Groups



Outreach

Covenant to Care Book Bags Needed We have children who need our help to give them a good start to the new school year! If you can't shop, please consider a donation to supply a child in the care of our DCF social workers with much needed school supplies & a book bag. Suggested donation for Book Bag with



Supplies is \$25.00 each. Checks should be made out to M.C.C. and "memo-ed" for Covenant to Care/School. Check for the children's "tags" in Wilton Hall. Please attach the "tag" to your Book Bag and leave it in/by the blue, collection bins outside the church office by Sunday, September 9th -Thank you!

Dress A Girl Around The World Sew-A-Thon Returns Sept 15 from 10am- 3pm~

Join Liz Skarzyinski from Dress A Girl Around The World on September 15th 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.



Have you done some summer cleaning of your drawers and found prescription glasses or sunglasses?



I will be collecting them during the month of October with a basket on the serving table at coffee hour. They will be cleaned, checked and delivered to low income communities where they will have the greatest impact. Give the gift of sight to someone so that they can see the faces of their families or be able to read a newspaper or a prescription label. Please contact Susie Cuseo at thecuseos@yahoo.com or at 203-268-0280 for more information.

Fellowship

Rachel's Well Begins Again on September 11th:

Cooking meals, loading the dishwasher, doing the laundry, taking kids to activities, preparing for the next day at work and the next and the next...the average woman's daily routine can leave her craving time for self-development, personal exploration or just plain fun. We all need intellectual stimulation and companionship from time to time!



Rachel's Well is a women's spirituality group that meets on the second Tuesday of every month during the school year at 7:30 in Dineson parlor. Members of the group have encountered many transitions and change, and have given and received support during grief and loss. We believe in the practice of staying connected with what makes us alive, with our own selves, with one another and with the Divine. We are an inclusive circle. Our meetings are open, but we expect participants to maintain confidentiality and hold one another's trust.

Women have been bonding together in groups for centuries. Coming together brings a wealth of wisdom and insight for discovering how God's Spirit is manifesting in your life. Are you a teacher, a healer, a writer, a mother, an artist, a businesswoman, an activist, a civic leader? What is your contribution, your voice? Our next meeting, "Fear & Faith" will be led by Marian Hampel and is on Tuesday, September 11th at 7:30pm in Dineson Parlor.



Retired Men's Breakfast: Retired Men will meet for breakfast at 9:30am on **September 12th** in Dineson Parlor. Please call the office

Morning Circle invites the ladies of the congregation to our next meeting on Wednesday, September 12th at 11AM in Dineson Parlor. We will have Ray Giovanni



come to speak with us regarding the recent telephone scams in the local area. Please bring a sandwich for lunch during a short business meeting and a donation for the Food Pantry. Contact Jackie Bleakney with any questions at 203-268-5275. Mark your calendars for the

following dates:

Wed Oct 10 at 11AM in Dineson Parlor - Trick or Treat bags for Food Pantry

Wed Nov 14 at 11AM in kitchen - Soup Jars for Food Pantry

Wed Dec 12 at 11:30AM carpool from MCC for Christmas luncheon at location TBD

Friday, September 14th: Come talk about life and current events from a spiritual



perspective at Veracious Brewing Company's from 7:30 - 9pm with your friends from MCC! No formal presentations - just people kicking around a topic, sharing honestly what really matters to them. Anyone

is welcome, and no topic is off limits. Agreement 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. **September Theme:** *Urban Myths & Conspiracy Theories*

Re-Dedication of Rexford House September 30th at 11:15am

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- We'll also put together a **time capsule**, to help the church 50 years from now know more about who we are. If you are a member of a board, committee or group and you want to put something that represents your ministry into the capsule, please bring it with you to the luncheon.

If you have any questions please speak with Pastor Jenn or Gary Thompson

What Shall We Place in the TIME CAPSULE?

As part of our Rededication Celebration on September 30th, we will fill and bury a time capsule, to be found and opened in the year 2068 (50 years from now and the building's 100th year anniversary). What do we want our future congregation to know about us? Bring your objects (small, non-perishable) to our



Prayer Partners are needed!! "What is a prayer partner?" you may be asking yourself. A prayer partner signs up in Wilton Hall and returns a completed information sheet. In a few weeks another person's information is mailed to you with a letter from me. You will keep your prayer partner in your thoughts and prayers. It doesn't take a lot of time or effort; just a moment in the day to consider that they are healthy, happy and that they are having a great day. You can send them a note or card in the mail using the church's address as the return. Perhaps you'd like to get to know them better or seek them out during the passing of the peace or during coffee hour, maybe even share a story or start up a conversation before service. It all culminates on May 19, 2019 when we meet for the Prayer Partner Potluck luncheon in Wilton Hall. Nursery services will be available for those under 2 years of age while older children can dine at the table. Here's a testimonial from a previous participant: "I enjoyed the prayer partner experience because it's nice to think of someone and get to know them. It is also nice to know there is someone thinking of you."

Sometimes the most valuable thing we can do for a person is to pray for them. Prayer is significant, vital, imperative, essential, critical, crucial. The one thing prayer never is; is a waste. I look forward to sending you someone's name to pray for. Please contact Susie Cuseo with any questions at thecuseos@Yahoo.com or at 203-268-0280

MusicFest News

We have all probably been to school or community musical or theater productions where we have seen VISUAL (block) ads that say something like: "Break a leg, Johnny! Or, "Congratulations, Rydell High, on what is sure to be another great production!" See below for samples. This year the Monroe MusicFest committee is offering two ways to support MusicFest. One is the donor list with simple text dedications we have done for the past 3 years and the other is a visual ad. All the details will be spelled out in the form to fill out – forms will be placed in the pews in colorful envelopes. Donation period will be from August 19 to September 16. So start thinking about your creative ad!





Have a wonderful Monroe MusicFest!

*Best wishes,
The Shaffers*

I hear music in the air!

Betty Heiney



***MusicFest is OCTOBER 7
(Sunday) 1 to 7 p.m.***

WHAT TO DO WITH THE ADS & CHECKS:

- Make check out to **Monroe Congregational Church** (or MCC)
- In memo line: "MusicFest Ad"
- If sending an electronic ad, send to: musicfestmonroe@gmail.com or arleneredmond@gmail.com
- Or put in collection plate
- Or give to Arlene/Vaughan

MCC Community Calendar

Week of Sep. 2nd

Labor Day Weekend

Guest Preacher – Rev. Dr. Sheldon Smith

10:00am Worship w/ Communion

5:00pm Senior PF

September 2 – 8 Pastor Jenn on vacation

Thurs. Sep. 6th

7:15pm Adult Choir

7:30pm CE Meeting (Dineson)

Week of Sep. 9th

Homecoming Sunday: Mission Possible!

10:00am Worship

5:00pm Senior PF

Tues. Sept. 11th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

7:30pm Rachel's Well

Wed. Sep. 12th

9:30am Retired Men (Dineson)

11:00am Morning Circle (Dineson)

Thurs. Sep. 13th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:15pm Adult Choir

Fri. Sep. 14th

7:30pm Faith on Tap @ Veracious

Sat. Sep. 15th

10:00am Dress A Girl (Wilton Hall)

Week of Sep. 16th

10:00am Worship

11:15am Confirmation Informational for Parents & Confirmands (Dineson)

5:00pm Senior PF

6:00pm Junior & Adult PF

Tues. Sep. 18th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

7:00pm Bereavement Group (Dineson)

Wed. Sep. 19th

6:30pm Confirmation Class (Dineson)

Thurs. Sep. 20th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:15pm Adult Choir

Week of Sep. 23rd

Confirmation Dedication

10:00am Worship

11:15am Adult Mission Trip Informational (Dineson)

5:00pm Senior PF

6:00pm Junior PF

Tues. Sept. 25th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Sep. 26th

6:30pm Confirmation Class (Dineson)

Thurs. Sep. 27th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:15pm Adult Choir

Week of Sep. 30th

Rexford Hall's 50th Anniversary!

10:00am Worship

11:15am Rededication Party

1:00pm Junior PF at the farm

5:00pm Senior PF

Tues. Oct. 2nd

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Oct. 3rd

6:30pm Confirmation Class (Dineson)

Thurs. Oct. 4th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:15pm Adult Choir

Week of Oct. 7

Neighbors In Need

10:00am Worship w/Communion

1:00-7:00pm MusicFest

Mon. Oct. 8th

Office Closed in Observance of Indigenous People Day and Columbus Day

Tues. Oct. 9th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Oct. 10th

9:30am Retired Men (Dineson)

11:00am Morning Circle (Dineson)

6:30pm Confirmation Class (Dineson)

Thurs. Oct. 11th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:15pm Adult Choir