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**Office Hours:**  
Mon. & Wed. 9 am – 5:30 pm  
Fri. 9am – 5 pm

Senior Pastor: Rev. Jennifer Gingras  
Music Director: Will Duchon  
Administrator/Bookkeeper: Diane Prall  
Church e-mail: [secretary@mcc-ucc.org](mailto:secretary@mcc-ucc.org)



THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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# THE STEEPLE

Find us on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/monroecongregationalchurchucc>

**April 1, 2021 Happy spring!**



Re-Discovering Our Identities: 2022 Sabbatical Plans

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. - Psalm 139:14

Last month I shared with a few people my sadness when handling one of my daughter's recent "Spirit Day" assignments about her heritage. Her teacher asked everyone in her class to bring in something

about their heritage. It could be a food item, a traditional dress, or anything we could come up with to display where her people come from. The problem was, besides the "we think she's Hispanic" note in her DCF file, our adopted daughter has no idea about her roots. We tried to suggest she use ours – Irish, French Canadian, English (we are her family, after all) but it just didn't seem right so she chose to not participate. Not knowing your roots is a difficult thing for adoptees to handle. It wasn't until 2 years ago that I was able to have my heritage confirmed through 23 & Me (I am half adopted, which is a story for another day). We've done the same for her, and hope to get the results back any day now.

My reflection upon this matter got me to dreaming about my next sabbatical, which is due to come up next year in 2022. What if I used that time to research our combined family roots and visit some of the places she and I are from? To not only take in the sights, but experience the culture, art, food and recreation? And then, stick our toes in the sand for a good long time and just rest, because this has been a challenging time in the life of the church, and I need it.

And then I got to thinking about what the church might do while I was away. It would probably work out best to be gone over the summer, right after the 50<sup>th</sup> Strawberry Festival in late June when things are a little quieter. We'll need a good interim, one that can manage the day-to-day pastoral needs of the church and offer thoughtful and uplifting worship. As I will be working on my family's identity, I'm proposing this as a wonderful time to re-discover MCC's congregational identity. My hope is that our congregation's leaders will find an interim who is able to hold conversations about who we are, in order to define and celebrate the identity that emerges. Upon my return, we will engage in conversations together about what we learned about our roots. How exciting!

In order to support these lofty goals, I am applying for The Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs at Christian Theological Seminary. Lilly supports grants that seek to strengthen Christian congregations through renewal and reflection, providing an opportunity for pastors to step away from the persistent obligations of daily parish life and engage in a sabbatical period of renewal and reflection. The program is designed for those congregations and pastors who have a strong relationship with one another, a high degree of mutual trust and support, and are eager to see their relationship strengthened, renewed and continued. Eligible congregations may apply for grants of up to \$50,000 each to support a renewal program for their pastor. Up to \$15,000 of the grant may be used for congregational expenses associated with the renewal program (this would be helpful to cover the interim's compensation). The deadline for 2022 grants is April 21, 2021, so if you see me muttering to myself about the rather arduous task of grant-writing please throw a "you can do it, Jenn" my way!

Peace, Pastor Jenn



**Please note:**

*Pastor Jenn will be on vacation from April 7 – April 16<sup>th</sup>.*



**Welcome Zak Carroll, M. Div '22, Yale Divinity School,  
Raymond Fellow, Congregational Church of New Canaan  
Guest Preacher, April 11<sup>th</sup>**

A native of the Ozarks in Southwest Missouri, Zak is a recent but glad convert to the Northeast. After studying Politics and International Relations in college, Zak followed his call (and his wife) to Yale Divinity School, where they are both second-years pursuing their Master's. Alongside his studies, Zak has enjoyed interning at the Congregational Church of New Canaan for the past two years, where he has been able to preach, help facilitate Confirmation, and work with the Children's Ministry. A cradle Baptist, current Congregationalist, and enthusiast for wherever the Lord leads, Zak is passionate about sharing the Gospel and being an agent of change in others' lives."



**New Member Informational Zoom, Tuesday April 27<sup>th</sup>, 11 am**  
*~ Has the Monroe Congregational Church ministered to you during this last year of pandemic? Are you interested in learning more about membership? Join Pastor Jenn and deacons to find out more*

about the history of our church (how we got here), our theology (what we believe) and ways you might connect with others. New Members will join the church during worship on Sunday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Zoom Meeting ID: 842 5241 1976

Passcode: 778189

## Deacons



### ***Holy Week at the Monroe Congregational Church***

#### **Thursday, April 1st, 7:30pm - Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Watch Party on Zoom:**

A candlelit evening worship service remembering Jesus' mandate to love one another, please have some communion elements ready. PLEASE NOTE: If you do not have access to Zoom, you may join with Pastor Jenn in person in Rexford House.

To join:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84880232868?pwd=dllYVdBTjB5cG5lRGgyMGZlRdEJOdz09>

Meeting ID: 848 8023 2868, Passcode: 299414

**Saturday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> 12pm – Senior PF Easter Egg Hunt:** Meet us with your little ones (up to age 12) for a few games followed by an Easter Egg hunt. Bring your basket, hop on over and join the fun!

Signup here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d44a8ac22a2fb6-senior>

**Sunday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 6am –Easter Sunrise Service on Pierce Lawn:** Dress warmly and join us early at the firepit to welcome the resurrection!

***Due to current physical distancing requirements, we are asking EVERYONE who would like to attend an in-person, indoor Easter worship or the Easter Brunch to please sign-up (yes, this includes all musicians, staff and volunteers). To leave room for others, please sign-up for only one of the in-person, indoor services (either 10 or 12). Easter signup here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d44a8ac22a2fb6-easter>***

**Sunday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 10am – Easter Celebration Service:** Join us at MCC for the Great Easter Celebration! Overflow seating will be accommodated in Wilton Hall.

**Sunday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 11am - Easter Brunch Coffee Hour:** On Pierce lawn around the fire pit. Fellowship is handling food so that it is in guidelines with current restrictions. Please wear your Easter Bonnets!

**Sunday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 12pm – Easter Lessons & Carols Service:** Featuring special music and readings. Overflow seating will be accommodated in Wilton Hall.

*\*Please Note: If you need assistance or guidance on any of the electronic sign-ups, contact Pastor Jenn at 203-895-5607.*

## Trustees



### **MCC Spring Cleanup on May 1<sup>st</sup> 8:30 – noon**

Whether you can give MCC an hour, or a whole morning, please come and help us beautify and maintain our campus!

Outdoors: Rake, install new mulch, and trim shrubs  
Inside work: clean windows and replace lightbulbs in Wilton Hall

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## Christian Education

**Junior PF** is starting up in-person regular meetings again! Pastor Jenn and a rotating group of adult volunteers will be getting together with middle schoolers (6-8 grade) on most Sunday afternoons from 4-5 in Wilton Hall, unless otherwise noted. Pandemic commandments (masks, social distancing, handwashing, etc.) are in place. Here are some upcoming events:

- March 28, 4-5 pm – Goofy Game Night
- April 4, 11 – No Jr PF (Spring Break)
- April 18, 3:30-4:30 pm – Hike at Webb Mountain
- April 25, 3:30-4:30 pm – Earth Day Clean-up of Rails to Trails



### **Outdoor Sunday School**

From the Creation Story, to the Parable of the Sower, we know that engaging the Bible requires tangible experiences. That means sunlight, water, soil, plants, rocks, and seeds! We also know that time outdoors can provide a calming place to nurture reflection and prayer. School age children, join us at 10 am for our monthly Outdoor Sunday School on Sunday, April 25 (Creation Care), May

16th (Communion) and June 13th (Serving Others)! Pandemic commandments are in place. Please drop off and pick up from the benches in front of Rexford House.

*God of All Creation, open our eyes to your wonders around us. Help us to embrace a bit of mess, that we might lead children to the beauty, peace and joy that exist in your amazing world. Amen!*



Prayer Partners Unite!!! We will be meeting on Sunday, May 23rd between 10:45-11 in Wilton Hall. Depending on the restrictions placed on us regarding bringing food and sharing dishes, we may meet on Pierce Lawn with individual chairs and sharing our experiences as a Prayer Partner. Please mark your calendars!! It's just 52 days away. Keep your partner in your thoughts and prayers. Remember that you can send them a note or card in the mail using the church's address as the return (34 Church St. Monroe, CT 06468). Please contact Susie Cuseo at [thecuseos@yahoo.com](mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com) or 203-268-0280 with any questions or comments.



**Adult PF meets via Zoom the first and third Sundays of the month.**

For information about Adult PF please contact Don Parker-Burgard. [dpburgard@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dpburgard@sbcglobal.net)

## MORNING CIRCLE

All the ladies of the congregation are invited to the Morning Circle meeting being held on Wednesday, April 14 at 11AM in Wilton Hall. We will be putting together Church World Service hygiene kits that go to struggling families where the kits can mean the difference between sickness and health in the face of natural disasters, violence or grinding poverty in locations nationwide or worldwide. Kits contain the following items:

- One hand towel measuring approximately 15" x 28" to 16" x 32" (no fingertip, bath, dish towel or micro-fiber)
- One washcloth
- One wide-tooth comb removed from the package
- One fingernail or toenail clipper removed from the package (either one is acceptable)
- One bath-size bar of soap in the original package
- One toothbrush in the original package
- Ten standard size Band-Aids

We are looking for donations to create as many kits as we can. Please leave them in the bin across the hall from the Men's room. Monetary donations are also accepted. To do so, please include CWS Hygiene Kits in the subject line of your check. Thank you in advance for your generosity and kindness. Please contact Susie Cuseo at [thecuseos@yahoo.com](mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com) or 203-268-0280 with any questions or comments.



**MCC Book Club** Questions -contact Mary Unger (203) 268-5754  
**April 14<sup>th</sup>** The Children Act by Ian McEwan. Host: Arlene Redmond  
**May 12<sup>th</sup>** The Clockmaker's Daughter by Kate Morton  
**June 9<sup>th</sup>** The Four Winds by Kristin Hannah



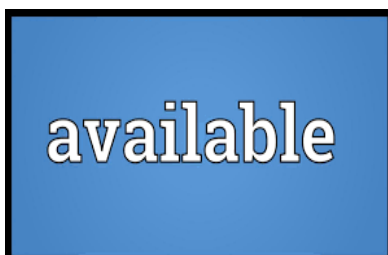
### Mustard Seed Reopening Soon!

We are happy to report that the Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe is reopening on Fridays 10-3 and Saturday 10-2, beginning April 23 and 24. To protect our volunteers and clients, all current health and safety guidelines for the retail sector will be in place.

In preparation, we are regularly sorting/tagging/hanging every Tuesday from 12:30 – 1:00 pm. We are also accepting gently used clothing, shoes, handbags, books, jewelry and household items (smaller than a breadbox) from church members. To volunteer as a sorter or a cashier, please contact Susie Cuseo at [thecuseos@yahoo.com](mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com). Thank you for your support!

Thank you for all your thoughtfulness with my recent illness with COVID-19. It is very appreciated!  
Love, Jacque Bleakney

Dear MCC friends,  
I would like to say a heartfelt thank you for all the love and support you showed me during this difficult time of coping with the loss of both my mother and brother. Your cards, prayers, and calls were very much appreciated.  
With love, Susan Walker



Prevail Per-fit, daily briefs –Large  
Prevail Total Care Under Pads –Extra Large 30”X30”  
For Men & Women Rite Aid Pharmacy Adjustable Briefs, Dri-Fit size S/M  
For Men, Dri-fit Underwear Rite Aid Pharmacy, size S/M

Anyone in need please see Pastor Jenn.



MCC SENIOR PF

# MOTHER'S DAY CRAFT FAIR

Saturday, May 8th

11am-1pm

Monroe Congregational Church

FIND YOUR MOM THE PERFECT LOCAL GIFT

hand-made jewelry, candles, decorated wine  
glasses, baked goods, and more!

PRE-ORDER/PICK-UP ORDERS AVAILABLE

to pre-order, email us at  
[mccuccseniorpf@gmail.com](mailto:mccuccseniorpf@gmail.com)





## *Easter Flowers Are Given with Love by the Following People*

The Andrejczyk family	In memory of loved ones
Jackie Bleakney	In celebration of loved ones
Jeanette Cardentey	In memory of Eleanor Lavalla
Michelle Cardentey	In memory of Eleanor and Joseph Lavalla
Dorothy Dralus	In memory of parents, Frank and Ginny Dralus and brothers, Joey and Don Dralus
Amy Duva	In memory of Helen Feller
Rev, Jennifer and Clark Gingras	In memory of Rita and Armand, and in celebration of Cady, Zack and Sophina
anonymous	In celebration of the Muizulis family
anonymous	In memory of David and Merolyn Graham Parker
Mike and Jessica Pfalzgraf	In memory of Doreen Steen, and Jessica Moore In honor of Jane Steen, and Marge Woodruff
Joyce and Gilles Rousseau	In memory of George & Susan Zaleha, Lauren, and Adolphe and Jeanne Rousseau
The Sampson family	In memory of Margaret Philip
Rev. Sheldon and Nancy Smith	In celebration of our granddaughters: Aubrey, Kylie, Leah, Lilly and Lark.
Susan and David Walker	In celebration of the lives of Amie and Dick Lee
The Whiteley family	In memory of Janice
Myron and June Wininger	In memory of friends and loved ones
Ann Zeiner	In memory of Bob, Carol and Val

The Easter bouquet is given by the Sampson family in loving memory of Liz's mother, Margaret Philip, on the anniversary of her passing.





**Happy Birthday** to the following people  
and to anyone we may have missed we will keep you in our prayers.

Brian	Coleman	04/05	Joseph	Bartlett	04/19
Kyla	Allen	04/08	Jessica	Mount	04/19
Donna	Gill	04/08	Samantha	Post	04/19
Vida	Stone	04/08	Albert	Jesulaitis	04/21
Linda	Fracassini	04/09	Todd	Heffelfinger	04/24
Evelyn	Goyette	04/10	Juliana	Jesulaitis	04/24
Julie	McClenathan	04/10	Jennifer	Nivison	04/24
Noah	Friend	04/13	Donna	O'Hara	04/25
Alysha	Griffiths	04/14	Emily	Rooney	04/27
Marissa	Swift	04/14	Joseph	Konkol	04/28
Myron	Wininger	04/14	Jessica	Pfalzgraf	04/28
Adam	Bartlett	04/19	Donald	Elmendorf	04/29
David	Bartlett	04/19	Michelle	Correll	04/30
Joseph	Bartlett	04/19			

**Happy Wedding Anniversary** the following couples and to anyone we may have missed,  
we will keep you in our prayers. (Number is anniversary date)

Deborah & Jeff Vargovchick <sup>(07)</sup> Ryan & Dana Firmender <sup>(10)</sup> Melissa & Brian Coleman <sup>(17)</sup>  
Joanne & Mark Malia <sup>(20)</sup> and Jennifer & Jim Halloran <sup>(29)</sup>

**MCC**  
**April**  
**Community Calendar**

**Thurs. Apr. 1<sup>st</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study  
7:30 pm **Maundy Thursday** Tenebrae Watch  
Party (Zoom) Meeting ID: 848 8023 2868,  
Passcode: 299414

**Sat. Apr. 3<sup>rd</sup>**

12:00 Sr PF Hosts Easter Egg Hunt

**Week of Apr. 4<sup>th</sup>**

**EASTER SUNDAY**

6:00 am **Easter Sunrise Service** (Pierce  
Lawn)  
10:00 am **Easter Celebration Worship**  
11:00 am **Easter Picnic Brunch** (Pierce  
Lawn)  
12:00 pm **Easter Lessons & Carols**

**Tues. Apr. 6<sup>th</sup>**

12:30–1:00 pm Sort and Tag  
8:00 pm Outreach

***Please note:** Pastor Jenn is on vacation from  
April 5-17<sup>th</sup>*

**Week of Apr. 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Guest Preacher: Zak Carroll**

10:00 am Worship  
11:30 am Zoom Coffee Hour  
5-6:30 pm Senior PF (Wilton)

**Tues. Apr. 13<sup>th</sup>**

12:30–1:00 pm Sort and Tag

**Wed. Apr. 14<sup>th</sup>**

11:00 am Morning Circle

**Week of Apr. 18<sup>th</sup>**

10:00 am Worship  
11:30 am Zoom Coffee Hour  
3-4:30 pm Junior PF (Hike Webb Mtn.)  
5-6:30 pm Senior PF (Wilton)  
5 pm Adult PF

**Mon. Apr. 19<sup>th</sup>**

7:30 pm Council

**Tues. Apr. 20<sup>th</sup>**

12:30–1:00 pm Sort and Tag  
8:00 pm Deacons

**Wed. Apr. 21<sup>st</sup>**

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

**Thurs. Apr. 22<sup>nd</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study

**Week of Apr. 25<sup>th</sup>**

10:00 am Worship  
11:30 am Zoom Coffee Hour  
3-4:30 pm Junior PF (Rails to Trails)  
5-6:30 pm Senior PF (Wilton)

**Tues. Apr. 27<sup>th</sup>**

12:30–1:00 pm Sort and Tag

**Wed. Apr. 28<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

**Thurs. Apr. 29<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study

**Fri. May 1<sup>st</sup>**

8:00 am – Noon MCC Spring Clean Up Day