

34 Church Street
Monroe, CT 06468
Tel.: (203) 268-9327
Fax: (203) 268-3153
www.mcc-ucc.org

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
CE Coordinator: Jeanette Cardentey-Morales
Church e-mail: secretary@mcc-ucc.org



THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

STEEPLE

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

April 1, 2022



Pastoral sabbaticals are meant to help called pastors rest, get emotionally and spiritually recharged, and reconnect with family. Some pastors choose to do a little studying while they're away, but unlike academic sabbaticals, researching and publishing are not the goals.

I've enjoyed two pastoral sabbaticals during my time at MCC. The first was an intentional pause between being an Associate Pastor and returning as MCC's 50th called Senior Pastor. I remember it as a time of deep rest in which I did a lot of reading, engaged in a professional seminar, hit the gym almost daily and took a short trip to the Holy Land.

The second was five years ago when I served as an Ecumenical Accompanier in East Jerusalem with the World Council of Churches, helping to keep the fragile peace of the area, getting children to school safely, monitoring checkpoints from Israel to the West Bank and visiting with Bedouins in the desert. This second sabbatical was not exactly a time of rest, but it was very educational.

I've been working with church leadership to prepare for my third sabbatical, which will take place from **July 1 – September 30, 2022**. The deacons plan to welcome a part-time sabbatical supply pastor, Rev. Peggy Allen, whose bio follows this article. Rev. Peggy will be leading worship on Sundays and available for emergency pastoral care. I am grateful for her willingness to serve with you while I am away.

My theme will focus on **Discovering Our Roots**; both the church's and my adoptive family's. In preparation, I will hold three study sessions on the MCC history book **Binding Covenant** written by our own church historian, Gary Thompson. Sessions will take place virtually on Zoom (May 10th, 24th and June 7th) and in person during Thursday morning Bible Study (May 5th, 12th and 26th).

A second publishing run of Binding Covenant was completed this spring, and if you do not already have a copy and would like to join the study, I'd like to give you one (while supplies last!). Other plans for my sabbatical include a week serving as Silver Lake's chaplain (a place where I first felt called to ministry), a trip to Puerto Rico (to find where Sophina's bio-family came from), and a visit with Cady to England (to see some of the places our forefathers and mothers came from). When I am not travelling, I will be resting and helping our son Zack transition from active military to civilian life in our new home.

Pastoral sabbaticals not only serve the clergy who take them; they also protect and grow the investment the church has made in educating, training, and building up its clergy so that they are healthy for the long haul. And besides, it's good for churches and pastors to occasionally be reminded that the good news of Jesus Christ is larger than any one person. I am grateful for this opportunity and look forward to sharing with you more as plans progress.

In Peace, Pastor Jenn

Rev. Elizabeth D. Allen (Peggy)

Education: Yale College (BA Music); Yale Divinity School (Master of Divinity)

1988 – 2002 North Guilford Congregational Church

1988 – 1996 – Minister of Christian Education, led a Christian Education program birth through adult with between 140 and 190 young people enrolled in a church of about 325 members. Established two youth groups and a confirmation program, vacation church school, annual musicals and adult programming. Also regularly led worship and covered pastoral needs, weddings, funerals, etc.

1996 – 2002 – Title changed to 'Associate Minister'

2002 – 2011: Completed several sabbatical or maternity coverages (Second Manchester, Plantsville, Naugatuck) and a lot of pulpit supply. Served as the registrar of the New Haven Association, the chair of the Connecticut Conference Committee on Church and Ministry and one of the Connecticut Conference's representatives to the New England Council for Theological Education.

2012 - 2021 Minister of the Milton Congregational Church in Litchfield

Milton is a church of about 35 members, which sustained its membership during her tenure despite about a third of the congregation passing away. Added adult education opportunities (there were no families with children), enhanced the music program and increased outreach work. Served in the Litchfield South Association as chair of the Committee on Church and Ministry.

In her semi-retirement, Rev. Allen continues to stay active by engaging in regular pulpit supply and sabbatical coverage around the conference. She currently chairs the Connecticut Conference Committee on Church and Ministry which transitioned to the Southern New England Conference Committee on Church and Ministry.

She is married to Ken and has three adult children and one new grandchild, with whom she delights to spend her free time.



Board of Deacons Covid-19 Update, 3/22/22

We appreciate your patience as we determine how to best move forward when it comes to masking and other pandemic precautions. As deacons and your pastor, we keep care for each other at the root of our decision making.

Because singing is an important worship experience AND we know it is effective at spreading the virus, we have decided to continue to mask in the Meetinghouse on Sunday morning until the numbers in Monroe reach GREY (the lowest benchmark at less than 5 cases per 100,000) and have remained there at least a week.

At that point, we will move to mask-optional (some may continue to mask for their own protection). At this time, the town of Monroe has moved to YELLOW status, with 5-9 cases per 100,000. This is good news, and we hope and pray that the trend continues!

To follow the metrics, visit <http://www.monroect.org/covid-19> . Thanks as always for your support!



Palm Sunday, April 10th - 10 am

We'll begin worship outside and parade around the green (weather permitting), remembering Christ's entry into Jerusalem which began Holy Week.

Celebrating Pastor Jenn, April 10th

Following our Palm Sunday Service stay for a **special Potluck Luncheon celebrating the ministry of the Rev. Jennifer Gingras**, who recently completed ten years as our Senior Pastor!



Maundy Thursday, April 14th - 7:30 pm

An evening service in which to remember the commandment Christ gave us to love one another. Join us for candlelit readings, deeply moving music and a celebration of the Lord's Supper, remembering the meal Christ shared with his disciples before his death.



PF Easter Egg Hunt, April 16th - 12 Noon

Senior PF invites all our children to come and play games and hunt for candy-filled eggs. Grab your basket and hop on over to MCC and join us!



Easter Sunday, April 17th We'll begin our celebration with a **Sunrise Service** (Pierce Lawn) **at 6 am.** Followed by a **10 am Traditional Celebration Service** and an **11 am Special Easter Coffee Hour.**



Our **Easter Celebration Coffee Hour** will be held on **Sunday, April 17th at 11 am** in Wilton Hall. We hope you can join us for this special annual event! Fellowship needs your help with donations of refreshments to share with the congregation on our festive table. Please sign up online <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D44A8AC22A2FB6-easter1> or through the office (203-268-9327) and bring your contribution to the church kitchen by 9 am on Easter morning and thank you!



Help us beautify the Meetinghouse with **Easter Flowers.** Order them in memory, honor, or celebration of a loved one! We have a choice of Daffodils, Lilies, Hyacinths, or Tulips. Each plant is \$20. Please make checks payable to MCC with "Easter Flowers" in the memo field. Please be sure to **complete an order form** (which can be found at the end of this Steeple Newsletter) **and send it to the office** (mail, scan & email, or put into the brass mailbox outside of the Rexford House front doors) with a **check** for the total amount, made payable to Monroe Congregational Church. Memo: Easter flowers.

You can also pay online: <https://www.mcc-ucc.org/donate.html> (choose flowers) Please be sure the office still receives an order form so that we know how to list your name and honorarium in the bulletin.

****All orders must be received by Sunday, April 3rd. ****



Flowers for Worship: Would you like to honor or remember a loved one, or celebrate a milestone? You can do so, while also helping Monroe Congregational Church continue its tradition of fresh **flowers** on the communion table. Please review the available slots on Sign Up Genius and click on the button to sign up. If you do not have access to a computer, call Diane in the office 203-268-9327, and she will help you sign up! You may choose to arrange flowers from your

garden, purchase an arrangement, or send a check (\$25) to Monroe Congregational Church (memo: "flowers" & the date) or use our website to pay online, and we will order for you. If you are supplying the flowers yourself, please set them up between 9:30am and 9:45am, before worship. Thank you!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C48ADAC2CA5FEC61-flowers>

Outreach

Time to "Hop to It": Easter Baskets for DCF Kids!

Easter Baskets are back!!!! Come to coffee hour and choose a child (or more!) to make a basket for! It's a great opportunity to get your children involved in an Outreach project. Please deliver your basket to the Dineson Parlor BY **Palm Sunday, April 10th.** (If you would like to participate, but can't get out to shop etc., you may donate \$25.00, and a basket will be made in your behalf! Please make your check payable to M.C.C, and note: "Covenant to Care - Easter Baskets")



Thank you for bringing a little Easter joy to a DCF child!

Diane Prall ~ Monroe Congregational Church Liaison Covenant to Care for Children



St George's Supper Monday, April 11

Items needed:

- 10 turkey & cheese wheat bread sandwiches (x3)
- 10 ham & cheese wheat bread sandwiches (x2)
- 12 apples (x4)
- 25 packs of chips or snack pack (x2)
- 25 cereal bars (x2)

Sign up Link <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F054AADAF2EA2F85-stgeorges6>

Please consider signing up to help us serve those in need. All items need to be delivered to the MCC kitchen by 3:00 pm on Monday, April 11. Sandwiches may be placed in the refrigerator. Please contact Stacy at 203-500-1279 if you need to help with sign-up or if you have questions. Thank you!



UCC Ukraine Emergency Appeal The United Church of Christ's Global Ministries are collaborating with the Reformed Church of Hungary to bring aid to Ukraine. Hungarian Reformed Church Aid has been offering humanitarian assistance since Russian troops first attacked on Feb. 24, working with elderly and other vulnerable communities inside the country who have not been able to leave. Gifts to the UCC Ukraine Emergency Appeal will provide shelter, food and other care to war refugees and internally displaced people. The quickest way to donate is online at

<https://www.ucc.org/ucc-issues-appeal-for-ukraine-calls-on-u-s-to-provide-humanitarian-aid/>, but if you'd prefer to write a check to MCC or donate through our giving page, please write "Ukraine Aid" in the memo field. Thank you!

One Great Hour of Sharing

Each year, people all over the world receive real blessings from this offering: emergency assistance in times of disaster, access to clean water and sanitation, basic health care, and support for sustainable agriculture. Gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing make it possible for the United Church of Christ and our ecumenical partners to respond immediately, wherever the need is, and to continue long term recovery work for as long after other organizations have moved on. May God continue to bless each of our churches and the whole United Church of Christ as together we strive to bring God's love to a hurting world.



Christian Education

Hello MCC Families -

Please join us Sunday May 1st as we celebrate the First Communion of:



Abigail Coleman
 Carmela Combs
 Marlo Duva
 Lainey Duva
 Kaelyn McEvoy
 Avrie Sheppard

We are looking forward to welcoming these youth to our table and to sharing God's love with them today and always. If your child is making First Communion please have them dress in their Sunday best as this is an important milestone on their faith journey. All white is not required, nor are veils. God's love embraces us as we are for who we are and so their attire should be a reflection of them and what makes them feel good.

A cake will be cut during Coffee Hour immediately following Worship in their honor.



Weekly Prayer & Bible Study Group! Every Thursday from 9:30-10:30 in Dineson Parlor, everyone is cordially invited and welcome to join us! Bring your favorite Bible (whatever version you prefer) and a small notebook. Let Pastor Jenn know if you have any questions.

Date	Text
April 7	Witness At the Cross: Chapter 6, Joseph & Nicodemus
April 14	<i>No Bible Study – Maundy Thursday</i>
April 21	<i>No Bible Study – Pastor Jenn vacation</i>
April 28	Esther 1:10-22, Matthew 28:1-10 (Mary Magdalene & Mary)



Do you enjoy working with children? Would you have an interest in sharing the love of God with the youth of our congregation? Please reach out to Jeanette Cardentey-Morales to find out how you can become part of our amazing group of Volunteer Sunday School Teachers!

Sunday School

Apr 3 - Jesus is Sentenced
 Apr 10 - A different Kind of King
 Apr 17 - No Sunday School (Easter Break)
 Apr 24 - No Sunday school (Easter Break)

This Month in Jr PF:

Apr 3 - April Fool's Game Night
 Apr 10 - Easter Egg Hunt & Party
 Apr 17 - No Jr PF (Easter Break)
 Apr 24 - No Jr PF (Easter Break)

This Month in Senior PF:

Apr 3 – Drug & Alcohol Awareness
 Apr 10 – Youth Sunday Planning
 Apr 16 (Sat) – Easter Egg Hunt setup 11 am
 Apr 17 - No Jr PF (Easter Break)
 Apr 24 – Youth Sunday Planning / Classic PF

Fellowship



Mother's Day Tea

In Honor of all the wonderful Mother's, please join us for some tea and goodies on **May 8, 2022** directly following service.



Adult PF meets the first and third Sunday of the Month

Join us at 5pm, 274 Wheeler Road or via Zoom.



All the ladies of the congregation are invited to the Morning Circle meeting held on **Wednesday, April 13th 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, as well as the **birthday bags** from our canceled meeting in March.

- 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
- One bath size bar of soap in the wrapper
- One toothbrush in the package
- Ten (10) 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 and leave in the Morning Circle mail slot in the church office. Please bring a sandwich luncheon while we hold a short business meeting. Thank you in advance for your generosity and kindness. Please contact Susie Cuseo at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280 with any questions or comments.

Please mark your calendars for the following dates:

Wednesday, April 13th at 11AM in Wilton Hall - Hygiene kits for Church World Service

Wednesday, May 11th at 11AM in Wilton Hall - Collection of women's products for Food Pantry

Wednesday, June 8th at 11AM - Annual Luncheon



Prayer Partners Unite!!! Can you believe that it's already April? We will meet for our **"Big Reveal" potluck luncheon on Sunday, May 22nd at 11AM in Wilton Hall.** Please provide something yummy to share with everyone. Continue to keep your Prayer Partner in your heart. Send them a note or card in the mail using the church's address (34 Church St, Monroe, CT 06468) signed "Your Prayer Partner". Make eye contact with them when passing the peace. If they attend coffee hour, strike up a conversation and find out something new about them. I look forward to seeing you in May. Please contact Susie Cuseo at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280 with any questions or comments.

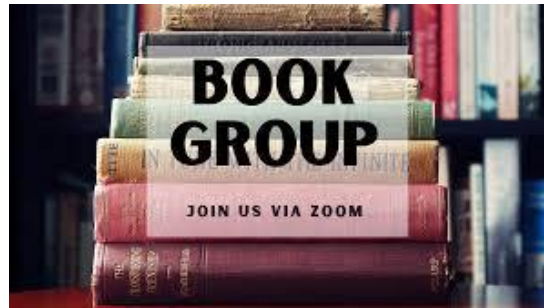


Young at Heart

Next luncheon will be on Thursday, **April 28th**

Location to be determined

Please RSVP to Cheri Irwin at (817)682-0274 or cdirwin2@msn.com



MCC Book Club is open to all church members.

For more information, please call Paula Haggstrom 203-452-0850
email: pjsh55@gmail.com We will continue meet via Zoom.

April 13th, 7 pm - The Lobotomist's Wife by Samantha Greene Woodruff, Host: TBD

May 11th, 7 pm - The Indigo Girl by Natasha Boyd, Host: TBD

June 8th, 7 pm - The Island of Sea Women by Lisa See, Host: TBD

July 13th, 7 pm - The Last Mona Lisa by Jonathan Santlofer, Host: TBD

August 10th, 7 pm - The Involuntary American by Carol Gardner, Host: TBD



The **Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe** needs YOU! If you have a couple of hours to spare either on Tuesdays, Fridays or Saturdays, we are looking for your help. Sorting, tagging and hanging happens on Tuesdays at 1PM. Volunteers will help you with what needs to be done. Sales associates are needed for two-hour shifts starting from 10AM to 3PM on Fridays and Saturdays. A procedure list can be emailed or you can visit the Shoppe when someone is manning the counter. It's fun and quite rewarding. Please contact Susie Cuseo with any questions or comments at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280.

THANKS A LATTE



If you enjoy your MCC coffee on Sunday mornings, please thank Kathy and John Maiolo for donating a new 50 cup coffee maker to replace our recently deceased one! Thanks Kathy & John!



Let's celebrate Pastor Jenn who has been with Monroe Congregational Church for 10 years as Senior Pastor. On **Sunday, April 10 at 11AM in Wilton Hall** we will have a potluck luncheon with coffee. **Please bring your food donation to the kitchen by 9:45AM.** Cards will be available to sign on Sunday during coffee hour. She will be presented with gifts, cake, flowers with our heartfelt thanks for the time, dedication and strength she has shared with us over the decade of time she's served as our Senior Pastor.

**WE WANT YOUR
JAM JARS!**

THE JAMMERS CAN USE YOUR EMPTY JARS.
PLEASE BRING THEM TO THE CHURCH KITCHEN.
NO LIDS OR RINGS, PLEASE!

On March 20, New Member Sunday, MCC welcomed the newest members of our church community. These short introductions will help you to learn a little more about them. We hope you'll take the time to get to know them and their families personally, and tuck this insert into your church directory.

Rebecca Cicarelli

25 Russett Road, Sandy Hook, CT 06482

Home: (203) 270-7655 Cell: (203) 948-6674

Email: rcicarelli5@gmail.com

Birthdate: June 2

Rebecca began regularly worshipping with us during the pandemic, having known Pastor Jenn through Silver Lake Conference Center. She is the director of Vertical Marketing at Convergent. In her free time, she enjoys reading, spending time with her adult children and long hikes in the woods. A passion of hers is volunteering with a non-profit that serves unhoused women and their families in Danbury.



Rebecca has many talents that she is willing to share with MCC including computer, web, and publicity skills! She is interested in Outreach programs such as Covenant to Care, Habitat for Humanity, and St George's Supper. She would like to serve as a Lay Reader and in Pastoral Relations. Welcome Rebecca, we look forward to getting to know you!

Mary Jo and Bill Brett

19 Hundred Acres Road, Newtown, CT 06470

Mary Jo Cell: (203) 241-8551

Email: melharry9388@Yahoo.com

Birthdate: January 17

Bill Cell: (203) 241-8761

Email: wrbmjb@sbcglobal.net

Birthdate: June 8

Anniversary: July 1

Mary Jo and Bill are both retired science teachers – it must have been chemistry! The couple have 3 children; Richard, Linda and Judy who each have 2 children of their own. Presently, Bill is a free-lance writer whose interests include model railroading, history and the Newtown Lions Club. Mary Jo enjoys gardening, bookkeeping for special events with the Newtown Lions Club, and volunteering at Newtown Congregational Church's Cornerstone Thrift Shop.



She and Bill are looking forward to helping at the Mustard Seed! Mary Jo and Bill also express an interest in volunteering to usher and greet at worship. They have already made friends at Young at Heart. Bill would like to serve as a Lay Reader and help with St George's Supper. He has carpentry skills he is willing to share and Mary Jo office skills (that makes Diane happy!). Welcome to MCC Mary Jo and Bill - we are blessed to have you with us!



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

Brian	Coleman	04/05	Samantha	Post	04/19
Kyla	Allen	04/08	Albert	Jesulaitis	04/21
Donna	Gill	04/08	Todd	Heffelfinger	04/24
Vida	Stone	04/08	Juliana	Jesulaitis	04/24
Linda	Fracassini	04/09	Jennifer	Nivison	04/24
Evelyn	Goyette	04/10	Emily	Rooney	04/27
Julie	McClenathan	04/10	Joseph	Konkol	04/28
Noah	Friend	04/13	Jessica	Pfalzgraf	04/28
Myron	Winger	04/14	Aiden	Clausen	04/29
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 ⁽⁰⁷⁾ Ryan & Dana Firmender ⁽¹⁰⁾
Melissa & Brian Coleman ⁽¹⁷⁾
Joanne & Mark Malia ⁽²⁰⁾ and Jennifer & Jim Halloran ⁽²⁹⁾

Easter Flowers Order Form

Monroe Congregational Church
34 Church Street, Monroe, CT 06468

Help us beautify the Meetinghouse
in memory, honor, or celebration of a loved one!

Plant	Cost Each	Quantity	Total Cost
Daffodils	\$20.00		
Lilies	\$20.00		
Hyacinth	\$20.00		
Tulips	\$20.00		
		Check Total	\$

Given by _____

In Memory, Honor or Celebration of (**circle one**):

*Please send the office **this form** (mail, scan & email, or put into the brass mailbox outside of the Rexford House front doors) with a **check** for the total amount, made payable to Monroe Congregational Church. Memo: Easter flowers

You can also pay online: <https://www.mcc-ucc.org/donate.html> (choose flowers) Please be sure the office still receives this form.

The **last day to place an order is **Sunday, April 3rd**

MCC Community Calendar

Week of April 3rd

Communion Sunday

10:00 am Worship

5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

5:00 pm Adult PF

Mon. April 4th

7:00 pm Outreach ZOOM

Tue. April 5th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

7:00 pm Witness at the Cross Lenten Study

Wed. April 6th

6:30 pm Confirmation (Dineson)

Thur. April 7th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

6:00 pm Chimes & Bells Rehearsal

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Week of April 10th

Palm Sunday

10:00 am Worship

5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

Mon. April 11th

3:00 pm St. George's Supper

7:45 pm Deacons ZOOM

Tue. April 12th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Wed. April 13th

11:00 am Morning Circle

7:00 pm Book Club Zoom

Thur. April 14th

Maundy Thursday

7:30 pm Tenebrae Worship

Fri. April 15th

Good Friday

Sat. April 16th

12:00 pm PF Easter Egg Hunt

Week of April 17th

Easter Sunday

6:00 am Sunrise Service (Pierce Lawn)

10:00 am Traditional Worship Service

11:00 am Easter Celebration Coffee Hour

Pastor Jenn is on Vacation April 18-24

Mon. April 18th

7:30 pm Council (ZOOM)

Tue. April 19th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

7:00 pm Bereavement Group

Wed. April 20th

7:00 pm Fellowship Meeting

Thur. April 21st

6:00 pm Chimes & Bells Rehearsal

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Week of April 24th

10:00 am Worship (*Guest Preacher Susie Cuseo*)

11:30 am Trustees (ZOOM)

5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

Tue. April 26th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Wed. April 27th

6:30 pm Confirmation (Dineson)

Thur. April 28th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

12:00 pm Young @ Heart

6:00 pm Chimes & Bells Rehearsal

7:00 pm Chancel Choir