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Office Hours:
Mon. 9am – 5:30pm
Wed. (remotely) 8am - 6pm
Fri. 9am – 3:30pm

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

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



THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
STEEPLE

April 1, 2024

*"In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, charity."
St. Augustine of Hippo (and others)*

Happy Eastertide! I hope that you had a chance to join us this Lenten season for worship, fellowship or service opportunities. I'd like to especially thank Will and our musicians for making the time so meaningful. And to Bill and Cheri for creating MCC's new art installation, Angel Wings, which is available at coffee hour to take selfies with (#MCCUCC).



For this pastor, it seems like every April begins a headwind rush towards our next Strawberry Festival! Lots of good ideas and energy have been shared with me and our co-chairs, thanks for that.

Have you ever noticed that as we grow closer with one another, the things that make each one of us unique become more and more a part of who we are as a church? Sometimes, that means we don't see eye-to-eye on things. We might think we know the best way to do something, but others may also have equally good (often untried) ideas. Or, we might not have all the information yet. There will be times when we believe something is just so super important that it cannot wait, but it just has to. That's how life can be.

These are the types of things Paul saw in the church at Corinth. Everybody thought they knew what was best, so they bickered with each other and stopped working together well. They forgot that the Body of Christ works better when it functions as a single organism, with many distinct and important parts. Just as the human body has eyes and ears and internal organs, so, too is the Body of Christ made up of unique members. When the members work together, remembering that we all have our unique gifts, the Kingdom of God flourishes.

That also means that we won't always get to do things the way we'd personally like to do them. We won't always hear the sermons we'd like to hear or sing the hymns we'd like to sing. Those are the days when we can all lean into this truth: in this and all seasons, we are in it together. Jesus offers his love and grace to all of us equally, and we are called to extend that same love and grace to one another (even when we really do believe our way is better).

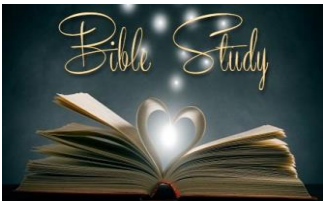
Unity, Liberty, but above all... Peace and Love,

Pastor Jenn

Deacons



On April 7th, please welcome our guest preacher, Antonio Vargas, Jr., (M.Div, Second Year, Yale Divinity School 2025) who is the product of both a Puerto Rican household and of New England winters, most recently serving as Church of the City's English Pastor in New London, Connecticut. A second-year Master of Divinity student, Antonio is a Raymond Preaching Fellow and focuses his scholarship on religious education and organizational leadership for the local church to practice and express a liberating Christian faith.



Weekly Bible Study We cordially invite you to join us each week as we gather together to learn with and through one another. All are welcome in Dineson Parlor, from **9:30-11 am**. After a time of fellowship and prayer concerns, we read and discuss upcoming scripture texts or other faith-related topics. Bring your favorite Bible (whatever version you prefer) and a small notebook.



Snack & Chat with NOOMA: NOOMA is a series of 24 short films (less than 14 minutes each) that "blend [events of] everyday with discussion about God". Each short story covers a specific topic on a real-life situation, usually by relating the various experiences from a Christian perspective. The series features Rob Bell, the author of Love Wins. The name NOOMA comes from a phonetic spelling of the Greek word πνευμα (pneuma), meaning "wind or spirit". Join us in Dineson Parlor to enjoy some snacks, a video and light discussion – no prep necessary and all are welcome! **Apr 21 – STORE**

Outreach



Thank you to all of our volunteers who helped or donated to the **Outreach Charity Tag Sale!** All the hard work paid off in profits of **\$2,571.75** going to **MCC missions!**



One Great Hour of Sharing® is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. This Lenten Offering supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ within Wider Church Ministries.

To date we have received donations totaling \$920 –thank you to all who gave.



Help Needed for the **Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe!** Do you have spare time on Tuesdays at 1pm? Volunteers come to the back entrance of the Shoppe to help sort, hang and tag merchandise that have been donated. It's easy to do and any of the ladies can help you figure it out. Donations of gently-used clothing, toys, shoes, book and small household products can be left in the collection box just outside the Shoppe, brought in on Tuesdays while the ladies are sorting or during business hours: Fridays 10-3 or Saturdays 10-2. Sales associates are also needed during two-hour shifts when the Shoppe is open. You can either open or close and it's easy to do. Come visit the volunteer and she'll gladly show you what needs to be done. A procedure list can be sent to you via email by contacting Susie Cuseo at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280, if you need more information or have questions or comments.

Fellowship

Please join us for Adult PF the 1st Saturday of the month in Dineson Parlor from 5:30 to 8pm!



Bring your own beverage and a snack to share. We are excited to bring Adult PF back to MCC in a new format! Each month will be led by different members of the group. It could be a discussion of an article or movie, a game night or a service project for MCC or the greater community, or an outing etc. Your presence and ideas are wanted and welcome. All adults young and old are encouraged to attend. Please reach out to Janie Allen via phone/text/email at 203-522-3686 or janeAllen@sbcglobal.net with any thoughts or questions.

Our next meeting will be Saturday, 4/6. Come check it out!



Morning Circle invites the ladies of the congregation to their next meeting on **Wednesday, April 10th** at 11AM in Dineson Parlor. **We will be putting together Church World Service hygiene kits** that go internationally to locations that are suffering through a catastrophe. These 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 (Must be sturdy with at least 6 inches of teeth. No pocket combs or picks, rattail and combs without handles are acceptable)

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

Any donations can either be dropped off in the bin across from the men's room or brought to the meeting. Monetary donations would be greatly appreciated to offset the cost of purchasing some of these items. Item line should read "Morning Circle CWS Hygiene Kits". Thank you in advance for your generosity. Please contact Susie Cuseo at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280 for more information or comments.



Young at Heart will meet Thursday, April 25th at noon

Details to be announced



We encourage anyone to join us on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. We will continue to meet via zoom so that all members can join from wherever they may be. Questions can be sent to Paula via email pjsh55@gmail.com or home phone or 203-452-0850

The book club selections for upcoming months:

April 17th 7 pm The Queens Fortune by Allison Pataki Host: TBD

May 15th 7 pm Master Slave Husband Wife by Ilyan Woo Host: TBD

June 19th 7 pm Horse by Geraldine Brooks Host: TBA

52nd Strawberry Festival 2024

will be held on Saturday, June 15 (10am-5pm) & Sunday, June 16 (11am-5pm).



Have you marked your calendars? It's been said that our event is a highlight for many people, including those who come to taste the shortcake, as well as the connoisseurs of strawberry pie and jam. Our crafters note that we are very friendly and that there are numerous volunteers who help out that weekend. That's the success of the festival: our volunteers. They are the heart and soul; a family



who comes together to serve the community and reconnect with each other while doing so. There's so many ways to help out: berry picking, jam making, face painting, being a runner for orders, sorting, hulling, dipping those beautiful berries, and then there's making pies, shortcake or smoothies. You can also help out by baking some yummy goodies that will be sold at the Country Store: breads, cookies, etc. Please consider that it will be hot under the tent, so please do not send donations that may melt with the heat.

co-chair, Susie Cuseo



Jam sessions are in full swing. You can volunteer for any area in May when signup sheets go up in Wilton Hall. Our kickoff day is Sunday, June 2 where we will have communion with the biscuits used for the shortcake. Let's make this another successful event!!! Please contact our co-chairs (Susie Cuseo, Clark/Jenn Gingras, Josh Post or Frank Wittenauer) with any questions, comments or concerns. You can sign up using this link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E094CAEAA22A4FB6-48041861-jamsessions>.

Easter Flowers Are Given with Love by the Following People

Kathy & Dave Allen	In memory of Don and Lillian Allen
Vaughan Askue and Arlene Redmond	In celebration of the MCC community
Michelle Cardentey	In memory of all our loved ones
Rev. Jennifer & Clark Gingras	In memory of Rita, Armand, Mildred and Michelle
Cheri Irwin	In memory of my parents, Neil & Dorothea Streans
Mike and Jessica Pfalzgraf	In memory of Thomas Steen & Marge Woodruff In honor of Jane Steen & Alison Abrams
Joyce and Gilles Rousseau	In memory of their parents, George & Susan Zaleha, Adolphe and Jeanne Rousseau, and daughter, Lauren
Rev. Sheldon & Nancy Smith	In memory of Donald A Spargo, Elsie F. Hedges, Horace S. Smith and Marjorie H. Smith
Aaron, Paige, Lilly and Lark Ribaud-Smith	In memory of Theodore N. Ribaud
Anson, Corryn, Aubrey, Kylie, and Leah Smith	In memory of Maude (Nana) Voigt and Gail Eileen Voigt
Ruth Wakeley	In memory of Bill Wakeley
The Walker Family	In memory of Susan Walker
Myron and June Wining	In memory of Lew and Jean Wining
Don Whiteley	In celebration of all my grandchildren
Ann Zeiner	In memory of Bob, Val and Carol



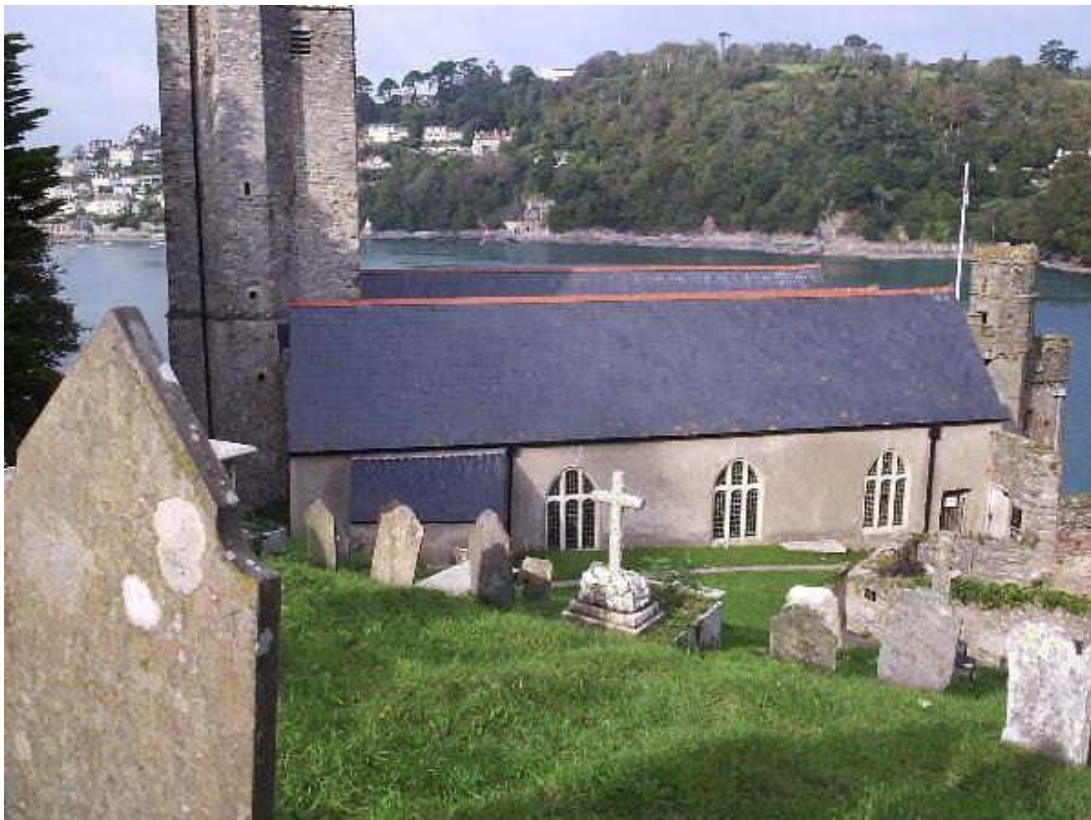
Elisha's Corner

By Gary Thompson, Church Historian

Rexford's Roots

Three years ago the family roots were traced for the first leaders and formers of New Stratford Parish Ecclesiastical Society established in 1762. Their ancestors were all from England, of course, by way of our "mother town", Stratford, or through New Haven. David Willcockson's family was from Killingworth, Northumberland. Henry Hawley's family was from Derby, Derbyshire. Samuel Beardslee's (Beardsley) family was from Ilkeston near Nottingham, Andrew Hubbell's from Ribbesford in Worcestershire, Nathan Booth's from Parwich in Derbyshire, and John Moss' family migrated from Manchester. Jonathan Curtiss' family came from Nazeing in Essex and John and Joseph Johnson's originated from Canterbury in Kent. All of these locations are in the "middle region" of England, except for Canterbury which is in the south east on the English Channel coast, and they all migrated in the mid 17th century to create or enhance the colony of Stratford Plantation. It was not that way with the family of our first minister, Rev. Elisha Rexford, who ultimately solidified our congregation into the New Stratford Ecclesiastical Society on December 26, 1764.

Elisha's grandfather, Arthur Rexford I, came from Dartmouth in Devon, England, which is on the southwest peninsula on the coast the English Channel, and he did not migrate to the colonies until 1700. Dartmouth is situated on the west back of the River Dart estuary emptying into the Channel (ergo Dart-mouth). It was an established deep harbor parish as early as the 12th century with a population of a few hundred. Today the population is only a little over 5,000 people. Trade was naturally its main industry. It was from this port that many of the first Puritans embarked to the Massachusetts colony. Arthur Rexford I was born 19 June 1677 and baptized the following month in St. Petrox, an Anglican Church, on 1 July 1677. He was the eldest child of five sons and one daughter born in Dartmouth to Daniel John Rexford (1652 – 1696 of Plymouth) and Sarah Kelly (1655 – 1691 of Dartmouth). All of his siblings lived to adulthood and had families of their own.



St. Petrox, Dartmouth, Devon, England on the banks of the River Dart. This is the Anglican Church in which Rev. Elisha Rexford's grandfather, Arthur Rexford I, was christened on July 1, 1677.

It is not surprising that Arthur I became a mariner, trader, and later a successful mercantilist, given his early exposure to the harbor life. Early colonial records for the Connecticut colony indicate that he showed up in New Haven in 1700. Two years later, at age 25, he was married to Elizabeth Stevens, age 24 and daughter of Henry Stevens and Joanna Leek, both of New Haven. They were married on 3 September 1702 by John Alling, Justice of the Peace. Between 1703 and 1722, they had three sons and three daughters; Arthur II, Sarah, Philip, Daniel, Sr., Mary, and Elizabeth. They all lived to adulthood and had large families in the Connecticut colony. To maintain a prosperous family life in New Haven, Arthur I eventually became master of the trading sloop *Rose* that shuttled goods between the Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut ports and the West Indies (frequently Antigua). It is not clear that the goods for trade included slaves. As "master" (owner), Arthur I needed to travel these routes only twice yearly at most in order to set up and manage the sales and contracts of the cargo exchanges among the contracted customers. He rendered his maritime enterprises until he died at the age of 51 in New Haven on 1 February 1728. His wife, Elizabeth, died at age 63, in 1741.

Arthur I's second son, Philip, was Rev. Elisha Rexford's father. Philip was born in New Haven on 19 June 1708. However, there is no record of baptism until 26 September 1734, when he was age 26. He was admitted to the First Congregational Society of New Haven (where it stands today at the New Haven Green) three days earlier. It was at this church where he was married on April 15th of that year to Anna Beecher, age 24 and daughter of Joseph Beecher and Lydia Roberts, both of New Haven. Like his siblings he was a landowner and had an estate of undefined size in England, which he ordered to be disposed in his will. Also like them he may have engaged in land investments in the hinterland of Connecticut at the time. He remained a prominent figure in New Haven as a mercantilist. It is recorded in Connecticut Colonial records that he was a signer of the First Congregational Society of New Haven's petition to establishing the White Haven Society in order to handle their growing membership. Since his son, Elisha was baptized at the First Congregational Society, Philip and his wife, Anna, most probably remained members there. Elisha and his first wife, Lydia Munson, are shown to have been members of the White Haven Society in April of 1758. They were married at the White Haven Congregational Church on 30 January 1765, within six weeks of his ordination.

Unlike his older brother, Arthur II, who had 6 sons and 2 daughters that lived to adulthood, and his younger brother, Daniel, who had 3 sons and a daughter who lived to adulthood, Philip had only 3 sons and no daughters. His eldest son Elisha, born 9 January 1735, was baptized in the First Congregational Society of New Haven two days later. He died the following year. His second son - also named Elisha and who became our first minister - was born 24 October 1737, and was baptized in the same church six days later. His third son, Hezekiah, was born 9 October 1745, but only lived for less than three years. Twenty-four years late, in 1766, Philip's wife Anna died. On May 22nd of that year Philip remarried Mary Blakesley Ball, a widow of a recently deceased John Ball of New Haven. Philip died 30 May 1798 at the age of 90 and outlived his second wife by a few months. He was buried six days later, not three (interesting for the times).

Rev. Elisha Rexford was thus his father Philip's sole heir at the age of 61 and living in Huntington Township with his second wife Sarah and second daughter Lydia Mary. The total estate, not counting the estate in England, was approximately £200, which equates to \$6,360 today. By this time, though, Elisha was well established financially in his own right and he would only live another ten years. Sadly, Elisha had no sons of his own. He had another daughter, Ann Abigail (aka Nancy) Fenn, by his first wife, Lydia. Unless she had children Elisha's line ends, because his daughter Lydia Mary never married. Current Rexford descendants would have to be traced through his Uncle Arthur II's or Uncle Daniel's line, or through the line of his aunts Sarah, Mary, or Elizabeth; stories for another day.

Faithful in History, Gary Thompson, Church Historian



Historian's Notebook:

Please keep an eye open for any **Annual Reports and Budgets for the years between 2006 and 2014.** These are missing from our archives and I would greatly appreciate receiving any that you no longer have a need. Leave them in the Historians mail slot in the Church Office.

Gratefully, Gary Thompson

New drain pipe installed in back parking lot. The installation of the new pipe should ensure that the lot doesn't get flooded during rain events. -Dave Allen



In Our Prayers

June Wilkes; Judy Davis; Alison Abrams (Jessica Pfalzgraf's sister); **Allie** (Colegrove's friend); **Jennifer Bittar** (Lorraine Zeiner's friend); **Jackie Bleakney; Byron Brown & Bruce Bryant** (friends of Will Duchon); **Lori Cimeno** (Peggy & Ron Villani's Daughter); **Dave Coffey; Kevin Daly** (Gary Thompson's friend); **Dawn** (Donna Konkol's Friend); **Dot Dralus; Matt Duchon; Elaine** (Wendy Colegrove's Aunt); **Bruno Forte** (Nancy Hedine's friend); **David Fischman** (Sue Granello's Friend); **Dave Fuller** (Gail Olson's brother); **Lehre Fuller** (Gail Olson's sister-in-law); **Clark Gingras; Peter Hallgren; Carter Harbron** (Katie Young's neighbor); **Mary & Rachel Heerema** (Julia Gutierrez's mom & sister); **Heidi** (Diane Prall's sister); **Brad Heines** (Susie Cuseo's friend); **Bob Heffernan** (Ann Zeiner's son-in-law); **Heather Henning; Brian Hopkins** (Donna Konkol's cousin); **Bill Irwin** (Cheri's husband); **Vera James** (Jenn Wissink's mother); **Joey** (Calvert Locks); **Jonathan** (Matt Colegrove's brother); **Kelti** (friend of Liska Gutierrez); **Walter Lane** (Marge Fox's brother-in-law); **Monica Lynch** (Bethany Dupuis' friend); **Nicole Malia; Edith Maclean, Jean & Ben Schweid** (Marge Fox's mother, sister, and nephew); **Betty McKeown** (Donna Konkol's mother); **Mike** (Janie Allen's son); **Jean Moffat; Olivia Morrison** (Donna Nickdow's niece); **Bert Muizulis; Joe Mumper** (Julie McClenathan's friend); **Pat Nugent; Ocampo family** (friends of Liska Gutierrez); **Nancy Olofson; Missy & Gail Olson; Dean Perosino** (Gayle Hammond's brother); **Geno Piacentini** (Karen MacDonald's husband); **P.T. Philip** (Liz Sampson's father); **Regina Roberts** (Kathy Maiolo's niece); **Alfredo Rodriguez** (Osirus Gutierrez's cousin); **Noah Santiago** (Shari Carrano's great-grandson); **Carlos Serrano** (Kathy Maiolo's cousin); **Yessika Siccardi** (Sampson family friend); **Ed Simonovich** (Nancy Hedine's friend); **Bernie Sippin; Gary Sippin** (Lori Sippin's son); **John Skarupa** (Barb Pellegrino's brother); **Christine Stadler; Christian & Dain Steiner** (Julie McClenathan's nephews); **Claire Stenzel** (June & Myron Winger's granddaughter); **Wayne Thompson** (Gary Thompson's brother); **Richard Turco** (Jack Fracassini's cousin); **Charles L. Wynn, Sr.,** (and his mother) **Alleane** (friend of Will Duchon); **Allen Zeiner** (Ann Zeiner's son); **Ann Zeiner**

The concerns of our world: The people of **Ukraine; LGBTQ+ children and their families** facing discrimination; those who serve or live in **war** or **conflict zones** around the world; **first responders** and those who serve in **law enforcement**; those who suffer **discrimination**; those who struggle with **mental illness, addiction, divorce** or **separation; Caregivers; the homeless, homebound** and **refugees**; Our friends living on the **Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation** and in **Oaxaca, Mexico**

Those serving in the military, veterans & their families: Stateside: **Justin Riffard**, Pensacola Naval Air Station, **Zachary Gingras**, 395th Combat Sustainability Support, **Joel Smith**, 250th Engineering Company Germany: **Rachel Hoffman** (Vaughan Askue's daughter), Chicago: **Chris Meneses** (Lorraine Zeiner's friend), Kuwait: **Jon Sanchez** (Don Whiteley's grandson-in-law)



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	Sara	Whiteley	04/22
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	Donald	Elmendorf	04/29
Adam	Bartlett	04/19	James	Hisey	04/29
David	Bartlett	04/19	Michelle	Correll	04/30
Joseph	Bartlett	04/19			



Happy Wedding Anniversary to 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⁾ Melissa & Brian Coleman ⁽¹⁷⁾
Joanne & Mark Malia ⁽²⁰⁾ and Jennifer & Jim Halloran ⁽²⁹⁾

April 2024
MCC Community Calendar

Mon. Apr 1st

7:00 pm Outreach (Zoom)

Tue. Apr 2nd

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Thurs. Apr 4th

9:30 am Bible Study

6:00 pm Confirmation Class

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Women's Retreat Apr 5th-7th

Sat. Apr 6th

1:00 pm JAM Session

5:30 pm Adult PF

Week of Sun. Apr 7th

10:00 am Worship

11:30 am Trustees (Hybrid)

5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

Mon. Apr 8th

7:30 pm Deacons (Zoom)

Tue. Apr 9th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Wed. Apr 10th

11:00 am Morning Circle

Thurs. Apr 11th

9:30 am Bible Study

6:00 pm Confirmation Class

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Week of Sun. Apr 14th

10:00 am Worship

1:30 pm Junior PF (Movie Matinee)

5:00 pm Senior PF

Mon. Apr 15th

7:30 pm Council (Zoom)

Tue. Apr 16th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Wed. Apr 17th

7:00 pm Book Club

Thurs. Apr 18th

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Fri. Apr 19th

11:30 am JAM Session

6:00 pm JAM Session

Sat. Apr 20th

Junior PF Lock-in

Week of Sun. Apr 21st

10:00 am Worship

5:00 pm Senior PF

Tue. Apr 23rd

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Thurs. Apr 25th

9:30 am Bible Study

6:00 pm Confirmation Class

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Sat. Apr 27th

9:00 am JAM Session

Week of Sun. Apr 28th

10:00 am Worship

11:00 am Lincoln at Coffee Hour

5:00 pm Junior & Senior PF

Tue. Apr 30th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag