

December 1, 2024

**First Sunday of Advent: Hope  
Communion, Victorian Worship Service**

10:00 am

*Monroe Congregational Church is an Open and Affirming congregation.  
Our deacons and pastors hope you will feel at home here. No matter who you are or  
where you are on life's journey, we welcome you in Christ's name*

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**Musical Call to Worship**

Rise Up Shepherd

Arr. Tim Sharpe

**Welcome & Announcements**

**Lighting of the Advent Candle of Hope**

Dylan & Sara Alvarez

**Unison Prayer**

*Holy God, we know you are near. We know that every step along the way to  
Bethlehem in this Advent season is a step closer to renewed life in Jesus, the  
Christ. We know that your Spirit resides within us, growing day by day into the  
fullness of Hope. In this moment, we ask you to fill and guide us, along our  
journey. Amen!*

**Musical Response**

*O little town of Bethlehem,  
how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
the silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
the everlasting light;  
the hopes and fears of all the years  
are met in thee tonight!  
We're on our way  
We're on our way  
Dream of the day  
When hope holds sway  
With all the earth  
In all our hearts  
We're on our way  
This is the day.*

**Sacrament of Holy Communion**

*The communion table is open to all who wish to partake. The cup that we offer is grape juice.  
If you require gluten-free elements, please take from the paper cups on the plate.*

**Invitation & Words of Institution**

**Sharing the Bread and Cup**

**Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving**

*We give thanks, Almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting  
us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one  
another, and send us into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of  
the Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.*

*Students may transition to Sunday School with their teachers.*

**\*Hymn**

Come, O Long Expected Jesus (vs 1&4)

NCH #122

**Call to Confession – Unison Prayer - Silent Prayer**

*Holy and Living God, we pray for the renewal of our world. Too often, we let fear or complacency prevent us from calling out the injustices of our time. Give us courage for action, even in the midst of our longing. Call us to a "census of hope." Call us to our senses so that we may see, hear, know, the power of your presence with us, Emmanuel. We pray this in the name of your Son, Jesus, the Christ, the Hope of Our Lives. Amen.*

**Words of Assurance**

**\*Passing the Peace**

*In order for those tuning in from home to feel included,  
please turn and greet the webcam as you share signs of peace with one another.*

**Pastoral Prayer – Silent Prayer -- Lord’s Prayer**

*Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

**Time for Giving**

**Invitation**

**Offertory**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel Peter Paul Olejar  
*Our offering plate will be passed among us today.  
You may give online at [www.mcc-ucc/donate](http://www.mcc-ucc/donate).*

**\*Doxology and Presentation**

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise Christ, the Word in flesh, born low,  
Praise Holy Spirit, evermore,  
One God, triune, whom we adore. Amen!*

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

**Scripture Readings**

Luke 2:1-3, pg 933 Romans 8:18-25, pg 1030  
*If you would like to read along, Bibles may be found underneath the pew in front of you.*

**Sermon**

*The Gospel of Love* Rev. Henry Ward Beecher  
*\*excerpts from a sermon preached in 1869 in Brooklyn, NY*

**\*Closing Hymn**

Keep Awake, Be Always Ready NCH #112

**\*Benediction**

**Postlude**

My Soul Gives Glory to My God Miriam Therese Winter  
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*Please rise, in body or in spirit.*

**1800-1830 Revival in Connecticut: The Second Great Awakening:**

The Victorian era (1837-1901) would have coincided with a religious revival in Connecticut Congregational Churches known as the Second Great Awakening. Though this revival began as a clarion call to holiness it also produced the great social movements of the 19th century including the Temperance movement, the Women’s movement and the Abolition movement. Famous

examples of those leading the movement include Noah Webster, Rev. Lyman Beecher, Charles Finney, Rev. Henry Ward Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe.

**God is still speaking, welcome** to all who are worshipping with us today, in-person and online! Worship is live streamed on church's You Tube Channel under CCLI Streaming License #2169137 on: <https://www.youtube.com/monroecongregationalchurchucc>, as well as on our Facebook page "Monroe Congregational Church, UCC"

We are an **Open & Affirming** congregation of the United Church of Christ, and we invite everyone to join in the full life and ministry of this church. We strive in word and deed to be faithful to Jesus' model of loving acceptance and welcome to all persons, inclusive of every age, race, ability, economic and social status, nationality, faith background, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital standing and family structure.

Please join us for a time of **fellowship** following the service in Wilton Hall.



If you'd like to **give online** during worship (or anytime), simply scan this QR code, which will take you to our VANCO electronic giving page. Thank you so much for your support.



**Assisted Listening Devices** As part of the ongoing Homeland Security grant project, we added four wireless assisted listening units to our sound system in the Meetinghouse. We are thrilled to be able to enhance the experience of those needing greater accessibility. If you are interested in trying one out, asking Scott Young or an usher is a perfect way to get started!

### Thank you for assisting in this morning's worship!

- **Deacon:** Marc Cardentey
  - **Usher:** Rob McClenathan
  - **Trustee:** Frank Wittenauer
  - **Counter:** Scott Young
  - **Web Steward:** Scott Young
  - **Coffee Host:** Lisa Bauerle and Juliana Lavitola
- Communion Team #1**  
Jessica Pfalzgraf, Rebecca Cicarelli,  
Jennifer Wissink Marc Cardentey and  
Jim Hisey

**The flowers this morning are given by Holly Owen Hallgren  
in loving memory of her son, Kyle Owen**

**and**

**Kate & Tom Briggs in celebration of Lily's 10<sup>th</sup> birthday!**



**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. You can sign-up in Wilton Hall or online! 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> or [MCC-UCC.org](https://www.mcc-ucc.org)



to the following people and to anyone we may have missed, we will keep you in our prayers. (Number is birth date)

Lily Briggs <sup>(02)</sup>  
Michael Snyder <sup>(02)</sup>

Frank Wittenauer <sup>(02)</sup>  
Jeremy Young <sup>(03)</sup>

Mathew Colegrove <sup>(06)</sup>  
Larry Wissink <sup>(06)</sup>



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

Cindy and John O'Rourke <sup>(07)</sup>



## VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS FAIR

**MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH \* 34 CHURCH ST  
10 AM WORSHIP, 1-5 PM FAIR, 5 PM TREE LIGHTING  
DECEMBER 1, 2024**

Visit us for local crafters, historical church tours,  
homemade soups, wreathes & advent candles.

Purchase a time travel passport for the Victorian train display,  
children's activities, and a visit with Father Christmas.

Unwrapped toys gratefully received for Covenant to Care.



## Deacons



Join us **Christmas Eve!** All services in person and livestreamed on YouTube: [MonroeCongregationalChurchUCC](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMnroecCongregationalChurchUCC)

**4 pm** Quiet Worship (Communion, Candles & Carols)

**7 pm** Worship (Chancel & Chime Choirs, Guest Musicians)

**11 pm** Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols by Candlelight

Visit the **Advent table** at coffee hour for home observe materials:

- Advent candle set
- Devotional
- Calendar



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## Christian Education

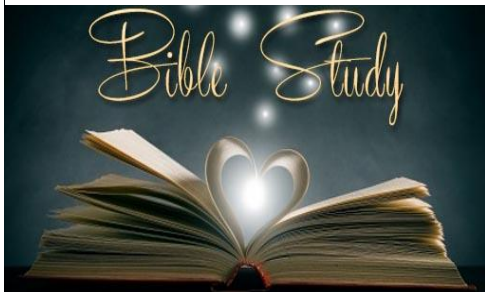


### "Almost Instant" Christmas Pageant

December 22 at 10 am in worship!

Rehearsal - Sat, Dec. 21 1-3 pm

Youth of all ages welcome to participate!



**Thursday Morning Bible Study** - Join us in Dineson Parlor at 9:30 am every Thursday\* for prayer, conversation and discovery. As we approach Advent, we will begin reading together On the Way to Bethlehem by Rob Fuquay, available on Amazon (paperback or kindle).

*\*except when it's a holiday or school is delayed or closed for weather.*

## Snack & Chat with NOOMA

Join us in Dineson Parlor after worship on these dates to enjoy some snacks, a short video and light discussion about life's big questions.

No prep necessary and all are welcome!

Sep 29 - SUNDAY  
 Oct 27 - YOU  
 Dec 29 - NOISE  
 Feb 23 - RAIN  
 Mar 30 - DUST  
 Apr 27 - FLAME



## Fellowship



**Morning Circle** invites the women of the congregation to join them every second Wednesday of the month (except January, February, July and August). Please contact Shari Carrano at 475-342-8145 with any questions, comments or concerns. Mark your calendars for the following:

- Wednesday, Dec 11, 12PM - **Christmas luncheon** at Little Barn in Shelton
- Wednesday, Mar 12, 11AM Dineson Parlor - Birthday bags
- Wednesday, Apr 9, 11AM Dineson Parlor - CWS hygiene kits
- Wednesday, May 14 11AM Dineson Parlor - Women's hygiene products collection
- Wednesday, Jun 11 12PM - June Picnic Luncheon - Location TBD

**Giving Tree gifts** need to be wrapped, tagged with the gift request and dropped off in the church office by Sunday, December 1st. Morning Circle will not meet in January or February. Please contact Susie Cuseo with any questions, comments or concerns at [thecuseos@yahoo.com](mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com) or 203-268-0280.



Join us for the monthly Book Club on the **3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:pjsh55@gmail.com) or home phone or 203-452-0850.

- December 18<sup>th</sup>** The Women by Kristin Hannah
- January 15<sup>th</sup>** The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store by James McBride
- February 19<sup>th</sup>** The Keeper of Hidden Books by Madeline Martin

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### Attention MCC Leadership!

**Annual Reports are due Friday, December 13<sup>th</sup>**

Please submit your annual report to the church office by Friday, December 13<sup>th</sup>

Please call the church office with any questions: 203-268-9327 or email [secretary@MCC-UCC.org](mailto:secretary@MCC-UCC.org)



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## Outreach



**Heifer International** is a charity Morning Circle collects spare change for. Bees and goats are a couple of gifts that can help families support themselves. Offspring of the animals are given to neighbors so that they too can sustain themselves making the community stronger and self-supporting. **A collection jar is set out on the table during coffee hour.** Contact Susie Cuseo at [thecuseos@yahoo.com](mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com) or call 203-268-0280 with any questions.



**Covenant to Care Christmas Gift Collection!** It's that time of year again! Like last year we are collecting **unwrapped** gifts for children! Our CAFAF (Connecticut Alliance of Foster & Adoptive Families) social worker, Samantha Heltke, will have her case workers meet at her office and "shop" the donated gifts for the ones that are a good fit for the children on their case load. **Remember we will no longer need to wrap the gifts.** Easy peasy! Just **purchase as many gifts as you like and bring them (unwrapped) to the church office by Friday, Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>!**

**No Time to Shop –No Problem!** Monetary gifts are also very much appreciated. Please make checks payable to MCC and Memo: C2C Xmas and Diane will do the shopping for you! Thank you so much for being such an awesome, generous resource for so many children, year after year! Diane Prall - Covenant to Care Liaison Check out CAFAF <https://cafafct.org/>



**Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe needs VOLUNTEERS!** Do you have a couple of hours to spare on Tuesdays, Fridays or Saturdays? We sort, tag and hang donated merchandise in the Shoppe on Tuesdays at 1:30PM while on Fridays we are open from 10-3 and Saturdays from 10-2. It's easy to do. Just pop on over during any of those timeframes and the volunteers(s) would gladly show you the ropes. For opening or closing the Shoppe, a list of responsibilities can be emailed to you for your perusal. You can always shadow a volunteer for a couple of shifts until you get the hang of it and then when you're ready, you will be put on the schedule. Monies collected from shoppers' purchases go to mission trips, outreach programs and many more. Please contact Susie Cuseo at [thecuseos@yahoo.com](mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com) or 203-268-0280 with any questions.

# Special Christmas Coffee Hour

11 am December 22 Wilton Hall

\* Join us for a special Christmas coffee hour, to share some fellowship and holiday cheer! If you are able to bring a something to share, please drop it off in the kitchen between 9-9:45 that morning, thank you!



**IT'S HERE!**

Limited Edition MCC Pewter Christmas Ornament



*buy yours at the Victorian Christmas Fair or at coffee hour (\$20 each)!*

Add a Splash of Color to Our Meeting House for Christmas!



**Christmas Poinsettia  
Order Form**



| Quantity | Cost Each | Total Cost |
|----------|-----------|------------|
|          | \$ 25.00  |            |

**Given by** (PRINT your name): \_\_\_\_\_

**In Memory of:** \_\_\_\_\_

**In Honor of:** \_\_\_\_\_

**In Celebration of:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Orders must be placed no later than Sunday, Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024** to ensure delivery by December 24<sup>th</sup> and inclusion in the bulletin dedication. Please make your check payable to Monroe Congregational Church with "poinsettia" in the memo line. The check & **order form** may be dropped off in the brass mail box outside of the office, put in the offering plate, or mailed to the church. You can also donate through our website at [mcc-ucc.org/donate.html](http://mcc-ucc.org/donate.html) Choose OTHER and **memo poinsettias** - **be sure to still turn this form into the church office.**



*Thank you and have a blessed holiday!*



## In Our Prayers

**Alison Abrams** (Jessica Pfalzgraf's sister); **Allie** (Colegrove's friend); **Jennifer Bittar** (Lorraine Zeiner's friend); **Jackie Bleakney; Kevin Daly** (Gary Thompson's friend); **Dawn** (Donna Konkol's Friend); **Dealmira** (Jonathan Ganino's grandmother); **Dan and Laura Dimauro** (Cuseo friends); **John Dominic** (Pfalzgraf's neighbor); **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); **Holly Hallgren; Mary & Rachel Heerema** (Julia Gutierrez's mom & sister); **Brad Heines** (Susie Cuseo's friend); **Bob Heffernan** (Ann Zeiner's son-in-law); **Heather Henning; Brian Hopkins** (Donna Konkol's cousin); **Vera James** (Jenn Wissink's mother); **Jonathan** (Matt Colegrove's brother); **Kelti** (friend of Liska Gutierrez), **Samia Houry** (Will Duchon's friend); **Monica Lynch** (Bethany Dupuis' friend); **Nicole Malia; Mary** (Kate Brigg's Mother); **Betty McKeown** (Donna Konkol's mother); **Mike** (Janie Allen's son); **Jean Moffat; Olivia Morrison** (Donna Nickdow's niece); **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); **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); **Sheldon & Nancy Smith; Christine Stadler; Christian & Dain Steiner** (Julie McClenathan's nephews); **Claire Stenzel** (June & Myron Winger's granddaughter); **Tom** (Wendy Colegrove's dad); **Wayne Thompson** (Gary Thompson's brother); **Richard Turco** (Jack Fracassini's cousin); **June Wilkes; Natica Williams** (Will Duchon's friend); **Don Whiteley; Allen Zeiner** (Ann Zeiner's son); **Ann Zeiner**

**The concerns of our world:** The people of **Gaza; Israeli hostages** and their families, the people of **Ukraine, Sudan** and the **Middle East; 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**.

### **Those serving in the military, veterans & their families:**

Stateside: **Lt. Col. Rachel Hoffman**, Tacoma, Washington (Vaughan Askue's daughter), **Justin Rifflard**, Pensacola Naval Air Station, **Zachary Gingras**, 395th Combat Sustainability Support, **Joel Smith**, 250th Engineering Company, **Chris Meneses** (Lorraine Zeiner's friend)

## **MCC Community Calendar**

### **Week of Sun. Dec 1<sup>st</sup>**

*Advent 1*

10:00 am Victorian Christmas Worship

1:00 pm Victorian Christmas Fair

5:00 pm Tree Lighting

5:00 pm Senior PF

### **Tue. Dec 3<sup>rd</sup>**

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Thur. Dec 5<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

7:30 pm Confirmation Class

### **Fri. Dec 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup>**

Senior PF Retreat

### **Week of Sun. Dec 8<sup>th</sup>**

*Advent 2*

10:00 am Worship

11:30 am Trustees

1-2:30 pm Junior PF Caroling

### **Tue. Dec 10<sup>th</sup>**

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Wed. Dec 11<sup>th</sup>**

11:45 am Morning Circle Carpool

12:00 pm Morning Circle Christmas Luncheon (Little Barn, Shelton)

### **Thur. Dec 12<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

7:30 pm Confirmation Class

### **Week of Sun. Dec 15<sup>th</sup>**

*Advent 3 (deadline to order Poinsettias)*

10:00 am Worship

11:30 am Trustees

5 pm Jr PF Christmas Party

### **Tue. Dec 17<sup>th</sup>**

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Wed. Dec 18<sup>th</sup>**

7:00 pm Book Club

### **Thurs. Dec 19<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study Christmas Party

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

### **Sat. Dec 21<sup>st</sup>**

1-3 pm Christmas Pageant Rehearsal

### **Week of Sun. Dec 22<sup>nd</sup>**

*Advent 4*

10:00 am Worship with Almost Instant Christmas Pageant

11:00 am Special Christmas Coffee Hour

### **Tue. Dec 24<sup>th</sup>**

*Christmas Eve*

4 pm Quiet Christmas Eve

7 pm Intergenerational Christmas Eve

11 pm Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols

### **Wed. Dec 25<sup>th</sup> & Thur. Dec 26<sup>th</sup>**

*Christmas Holiday – office Closed*

### **Week of Sun. Dec 29<sup>th</sup>**

10 am Casual Christmas

*New Year's Eve and Day – Office Closed*