

December 10, 2023

**First Sunday of Advent: Peace**

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**                      There's a Star in the East                      *Spiritual*

**Welcome & Announcements**

**Lighting of the Advent Candle of Peace**      James, Chris, Heather, Grace & James Hisey

**Unison Prayer**

*Holy One, we believe that peace is a sacred gift, stemming from the truth that we  
belong to you. And when peace feels impossibly out of reach, we believe that part  
of being sacred community is leaning on one another. So together we say: I will  
share my peace when yours runs out. You will share your peace when mine runs  
out. And in doing so, we will both see God. Amen!*

**Musical Response**

*O, Holy Night*

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

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

*God of laughter, open front doors and family reunions, we confess that there are  
times we doubt the good news. We move through this world waiting for the other  
shoe to drop, waiting for life to fall apart, waiting for our humanity to get the best  
of us. Instead of leaning into peace, we lean into fear, scarcity and even isolation.  
Forgive us for forgetting that joy is amplified when shared. Heal the wounds we  
have from past hurts and show us how to find peace in connection. 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.*

**\*Hymn**

*O How Shall I Receive You*

NCH #102

**Reception of New Members:** Holly Owen Hallgren & Peter Hallgren

Pastor: Let us affirm our faith together as we receive these new members into our church.

*Congregation: We believe in God, who has created and is creating.*

Deacon: God has come to us in Jesus Christ to reconcile and make us new.

God works in us and others by the Holy Spirit.

*Congregation: We trust in God. God calls us to be Christ's body in the world.*

Pastor: Peter and Holly, will you promise support this congregation with your time,  
talents, and resources, participating regularly in the worship and work of the  
Monroe Congregational Church, United Church of Christ and contributing to our  
life and ministry in this place as best you are able?

*New Members: I do promise. With you, we will celebrate God's presence, love and serve others, care for creation, seek justice and resist evil.*

Deacon: With your love, God will love. With your hands, God will touch this community. With your lives, God will bring justice and compassion to the world. We will make mistakes, but in those moments we will learn the power of forgiveness and grace. Congregation, please rise and tell us, what are your promises to our newest members?

*Congregation: We welcome you with joy as partners in the common life of Monroe Congregational Church, United Church of Christ! We promise you our love, support and care. We promise to pray, serve and laugh with you as we share the hopes, labors and joys of the church of Jesus Christ. We promise to look forward with you in hope as we strive to be Christ's witnesses in the world.*

*All: Together we will proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope. In life and death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God!*

### **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.*

### **Offering Invitation**

#### **Offertory**

O Come, Emmanuel

12th Century Melody

*Our offering plate will be passed among us today.*

*You may also choose to 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**

Luke 1:24-45, pg 931

#### **Sermon**

Peace in Connections

Rev. Jennifer Gingras

#### **\*Closing Hymn**

*We Hail You God's Anointed (verses 1 & 4)*

NCH #104

#### **\*Benediction**

#### **Parting Music**

People, Look East!

English Carol

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*\* Please rise, in body or in spirit.*

**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.

**COVID-19 Safety:** In order to keep our community members safe (*including children under 12, the immune-compromised and those not yet fully vaccinated*), please follow these guidelines:

- Please stay home if you feel sick or have a fever (catch us on YouTube/Facebook)
- Masks are optional, yet encouraged
- We have provided hand sanitizer and tissues in the pews, please use carefully as the chemicals are corrosive on wood and other surfaces

**Please join us today** for a time of fellowship in Wilton Hall following worship.



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.

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

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|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • <b>Deacon:</b> Jessica Pfalzgraf | • <b>Counter:</b> Zach Gingras        |
| • <b>Usher:</b> Arlene Redmond     | • <b>Coffee Host:</b> Melissa Coleman |
| • <b>Lay Reader:</b> Cliff Cuseo   | • <b>Web Steward:</b> Scott Young     |
| • <b>Trustee:</b> Scott Young      |                                       |



**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>



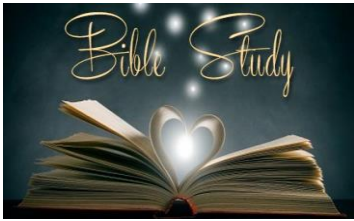
to the following people and to anyone we may have missed, we will keep you in our prayers. (Number is birth date)

Bill Allen <sup>(11)</sup>  
Lisa Burke <sup>(11)</sup>

Kiersten Rooney <sup>(11)</sup>  
Kathryn Maiolo <sup>(14)</sup>

Paulette Obertz <sup>(14)</sup>  
Tom Briggs <sup>(17)</sup>





**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.

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### Trustees ~ 2024 MCC Stewardship Campaign



In worship this fall you have heard stories about how we as a congregation are responding to God's invitation to serve our neighbors. Each of us will be invited to invest in becoming the church God is urging and encouraging us to become. It is a time of great possibility for our congregation and the future of its mission.

We hope you will respond to this invitation by completing and turning in your 2024 pledge card as soon as possible, either by mail, in the giving plate on Sunday, or by e-mailing your intentions to Receiver John O'Rourke at [jorourke224@gmail.com](mailto:jorourke224@gmail.com). If you've misplaced your stewardship mailer, there are also extra cards in the pews.

Thank you for prayerfully considering how to financially support the Monroe Congregational Church in 2024!

Your Stewardship Committee, John O'Rourke (Receiver), Diane Prall, Rev. Jenn Gingras

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### Attention Board Chairs

Please submit your **annual report** to the church office by **Friday, December 8<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. This year we have sent \$100 in gifts to families in need around the world. 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/>

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### Fellowship



**Young at Heart will meet Thursday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at noon.**  
Housatonic House Restaurant/Bar, 337 Roosevelt Dr., Seymour  
Please RSVP to Peggy Villani (203)452-1505 or [rvillani293@charter.net](mailto:rvillani293@charter.net)



**We encourage anyone to join us 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

The book club selections for upcoming months:

January 17<sup>th</sup> - 7 pm - The Magnificent Lives of Marjorie Post by Allison Pataki

February 21<sup>st</sup> - 7 pm - This Tender Land by William Kent Kreuger



**Update:** Please join us for Adult PF which will now meet on the **FIRST 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 [janeEallen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janeEallen@sbcglobal.net) with any thoughts or questions. Our next meeting will be Saturday, 1/6. Come check it out!



**Morning Circle invites all the women of the congregation** to join them at **Sal's Pizza** for their last meeting of the year for their annual Christmas luncheon on **Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at noon.**

## A Note From Our Moderator



Dear MCC Family:

Thanksgiving Day has just passed and gratitude is in the air. I hope you had a good one with family/ friends. It is also a time of giving and receiving.

Our amazing staff gives to us all year. It is traditional that we give a special gift to them at year end in recognition of their remarkable service to us.

We are blessed to have Pastor Jenn, Will Duchon, Diane Prall and Jeanette Cardentey-Morales devoting their considerable talents to taking care of our individual and collective souls, children, spirituality, faith, growth, education, serenity, enjoyment, church operational needs and more.

How wonderful that they create a space for us to find some peace and tranquility amidst our troubled world.

Your gift in *ANY AMOUNT* will combine with others and will help show our appreciation for all Jenn, Will, Diane, and Jeanette do for all of us.

Please consider a contribution in *ANY AMOUNT* as a gesture of support for this team we are so lucky to have.

1. **Online is the best way**, because it's hassle-free and it's done right away!
  - a. Go to the MCC website "Donate" page (<http://www.mcc-ucc.org/donate.html>)
  - b. Click To Donate through VANCO, Click Here.
    - i. If you don't have a login and profile set up already, it's easy and you can use it for your pledge or other donations to MCC.
    - ii. Scroll down to the "Other" block and then follow the prompts.
  - c. Write **2023 STAFF GIFT** in the **Notes** box so we know what it's for.
2. **By check:** Write your check to MCC and write **2023 Staff Gift** in the memo line.
  - a. You can *mail* that to Receiver, MCC, 34 Church St., Monroe, CT, 06468,
  - b. Or *drop it off* in the office in the Receiver mailbox.
  - c. Or *put it in the collection plate* on Sunday (be sure to indicate "**2023 Staff Gift**").

**Now is a good time to show your appreciation of Jenn, Will, Diane and Jeanette by making a donation to the Staff Gift fund in advance of getting ourselves lost in busy-ness.**

We will recognize the team with an announcement at our Christmas Coffee Hour (December 17<sup>th</sup>) – one of the loveliest events of the year. Don't miss it or the pageant which is also that morning.

May the peace of the Advent and Christmas season be with you, Arlene Redmond, Moderator

**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 Monday, Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023** 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**



***Thank you and have a blessed holiday!***



## **MCC Community Calendar**

### **Week of Sun. Dec 10<sup>th</sup>**

#### *Advent 2*

10:00 am Worship  
11:15 am Snack & Chat NOOMA  
11:30 am Trustees  
5:00 pm Junior PF  
5:00 pm Senior PF -Caroling

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

7:30 pm Deacons (Zoom)

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

1:15 am Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

#### **Wed. Dec 13<sup>th</sup>**

12:00 pm Morning Circle

#### **Thurs. Dec 14<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study  
12:00 pm Young @ Heart  
6:00 pm Confirmation Class  
6:00 pm Bell Choir  
7:00 pm Chancel Choir

### **Week of Sun. Dec 17<sup>th</sup>**

#### *Advent 3*

10:00 am Worship & Christmas Pageant  
11:00 am Special Coffee Hour  
5:00 pm Junior PF – Christmas Party!  
5:00 pm Senior PF

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

7:30 pm Council (Zoom)

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

1:15 am Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

#### **Thurs. Dec 21<sup>th</sup>**

6:00 pm Bell Choir  
7:00 pm Chancel Choir

### **Week of Sun. Dec 24<sup>th</sup>**

#### *Advent 4 ~ Christmas Eve*

10 am Worship *Advent 4*  
7 pm Intergenerational Christmas Eve  
11 pm Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols

#### **Mon. Dec 25<sup>th</sup>**

*Christmas Holiday –office Closed*

### **Week of Sun. Dec 31<sup>th</sup>**

#### *New Year's Eve*

#### **Mon. Jan 1<sup>st</sup>**

*New Year's Day –office Closed*

## **In Our Prayers**

**Alison Abrams** (Jessica Pfalzgraf's sister); **Allie** (Colegrove's friend); **Jennifer Bittar** (Loraine Zeiner's friend); **Jackie Bleakney**; **Byron Brown & Bruce Bryant** (friends of Will Duchon); **Lori Cimen** (Peggy & Ron Villani's Daughter); **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); **Giovanni J. Fracassini** (Jack's Uncle); **Dave Fuller** (Gail Olson's brother); **Clark Gingras**; **Heather Henning**; **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); **Brian Hopkins** (Donna Konkol's cousin); **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**; **Ron McGlinchey** (Pastor Jenn's dad); **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 Olson**; **Osborne** (Colegrove's Family friend); **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); **Marian Schmitz**; **Carlos Serrano** (Kathy Maiolo's cousin); **Yessika Siccardi** (Sampson family friend); **Bernie Sippin**; **Gary Sippin** (Lori Sippin's son); **John Skarupa** (Barb Pellegrino's brother); **Christine Stadler**; **Tom Steen** (Jessica Pfalzgraf's dad); **Rev. Dr. Sheldon**

**Smith; Christian & Dain Steiner** (Julie McClenathan's nephews); **Claire Stenzel** (June & Myron Wininger's granddaughter); **Olga Terwilliger** (Nancy Hedine's sister-in-law); **Richard Turco** (Jack Fracassini's cousin); **Ruth Wakeley**; **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:** Germany: **Rachel Hoffman** (Vaughan Askue's daughter), Chicago: **Chris Meneses** (Loraine Zeiner's friend), Kuwait: **Jon Sanchez** (Don Whiteley's grandson-in-law) Stateside: **Zachary Gingras**, 395th Combat Sustainability Support, Middletown, **Joel Smith**, 250th Engineering Company

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### **New Members at MCC \*December 10, 2023**

Please join us in welcoming the newest members of our church community. This short introduction will help you to learn a little more about our new members. We hope you'll take the time to get to know them and personally.



#### **Peter and Holly Hallgren**

14 Riverbend Drive, Oxford, CT 06478

Tel: 203-751-6535

Anniversary: December 22, 2023

#### **Peter Hallgren**

Cell: 203-885-5884

Email: Hallgren.P@sbcglobal.net

Birthdate: July 12

#### **Holly Owen Hallgren**

Cell: 772-539-1890

Email: RuthOwen41@gmail.com

Birthdate: December 24

Peter and Holly met and dated in high school. They reconnected 60 years later through mutual friends and married last year - happy 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary Peter and Holly, and happy birthday Holly! Holly majored in Preschool Education and ran the Head Start program in Yorktown, NY then moved to Vero Beach, Florida where she ran their Head Start program and was a member of the First Presbyterian Church. Holly has a daughter and 2 grandsons. Peter has 2 sons and was an Electrical Engineer with Norden Systems in Norwalk for 45 years. They are both retired and enjoy the outdoors, hiking, and reading. Holly loves the beach and Peter likes Musicals! They both look forward to participating in the Strawberry Festival and Holly expresses an interest in helping with Outreach projects. Welcome to the MCC family Holly and Peter, we are happy you choose to be members of this congregation!