

February 18, 2024

First Sunday of Lent

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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Gathering Music Rejoice With Gladness *Phylissia Diller, 1974* *The Bell Choir*

Welcome & Announcements

Moment of Quiet & Lighting of the Candles

Call to Worship

Leader: Come, with your gifts and your needs,

People: to take your place in beloved community.

Leader: Come, with your accomplishments and your failures,

People: to be real with each other and to learn interdependence.

Leader: Come, with your plans and your questions,

All: Empowered by Jesus to let go, to make space, to see God's kingdom here.

Opening Prayer

Owen Correll, Deacon of the Day

***Our Church's Covenant**

inside front cover of hymnal

Sacrament of Baptism

Blakely Pearl Stock

Invitation, Welcome & Address

Pastor: Members and friends in Christ, we gather to celebrate the gift of grace in the sacrament of baptism.

People: There is one body and one Spirit. There is one hope in God's call to us.

Pastor: There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Creator of us all.

Questions of the Parents & Sponsors

Congregational Assent

People: We promise our love, support and care.

Affirmation of Faith

Pastor: Let us unite with the church in all times and places in confessing our faith in the Triune God. Do you believe in God?

People: I believe in God.

Pastor: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

People: I believe in Jesus Christ.

Pastor: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

People: I believe in the Holy Spirit.

Prayer of Baptism * Act of Baptism * Prayer for the Baptized

Introduction of the Baptized and Congratulations

***Hymn**

The Church's One Foundation

NCH 386

Students may transition to Sunday School with their teachers.

Call to Confession – Unison Prayer - Silent Prayer

Loving God, you offer us life in your kingdom, beginning today. We've learned to always be the ones who help, but never the ones who need help. We like to think we can do anything, that our lives are in our control, but the truth is that we cannot make our way on our own. Give us minds ready to let go of the things that allow us to hedge our bets. Give us hearts ready to love our neighbors in tangible ways, even when it costs us dearly. Look on us with a love that makes us courageous enough for true community, as we learn to depend on you and one another. Amen. (silence)

Words of Assurance

***Passing of 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

Lamb of God

Twila Paris, 1985

*Our offering plate will be passed among us today.
You may give online at 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

Mark 10:17–31, page 921

If you would like to read along, Bibles may be found underneath the pew in front of you.

Sermon

The One Thing

Rev. Jennifer Gingras

***Closing Hymn**

Jesus Keep Me near the Cross (verses 1 & 4)

NCH 197

***Benediction**

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"

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

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.

Health & Safety: In order to keep our community members healthy (*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)
- We have provided hand sanitizer and tissues in the pews, please use carefully as the chemicals are corrosive on wood and other surfaces

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!

- **Deacon:** Owen Correll
- **Usher:** Susie Cuseo
- **Lay Reader:** Melissa Quinn
- **Trustee:** Frank Wittenauer
- **Counter:** Bill Stadler
- **Coffee Host:** Trustees
- **Web Steward:** 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](https://www.monroecongregationalchurchucc.org)



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

Jean Moffat ⁽¹⁹⁾

Nancy Smith ⁽²⁰⁾

Emma Campbell ⁽²³⁾

Ashley Malia ⁽²⁰⁾

Holy Week at the Monroe Congregational Church



Palm Sunday, March 24th, 10 am –Join us in our historic Meetinghouse to celebrate Palm Sunday. We will begin with a festive procession around the green.

Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service, March 28th, 7:30 pm: A candlelit evening worship service remembering Jesus’ mandate to love one another.

Easter Sunday, March 31st

6 am – Sunrise Service on Pierce Lawn: Dress warmly and join us outside at the fire pit to welcome the resurrection!

10 am – Easter Celebration Service: Join us at MCC for the Great Easter Celebration! We will also join in singing the Hallelujah Chorus. After worship we will share a festive Easter Coffee Hour. Christ is Risen indeed AND Everyone is Welcome.

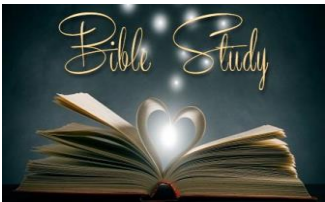
2024 Member Directories are available!

You may pick up a copy in the Narthex on Sunday morning or from the rack outside the office. Large print directories are also available.

Call 203-268-9327 or email secretary@mcc-ucc.org and Diane will email a directory to you!



Deacons



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! **Mar 17 – OPEN, Apr 21 – STORE**

Trustees



2024 MCC Stewardship Campaign In the fall we began our annual pledge drive, an intentional period of stewardship commitment entitled "Because of YOU, our church changes lives".

To date, we have received 83 pledges totaling \$193,250.68 against our goal of \$200,000 - Thank you!

We hope that if you haven't responded yet you will complete and return your 2024 pledge card as soon as possible, either by mail, in the giving plate on Sunday, or by e-mailing your intentions to John O'Rourke at jorourke224@gmail.com. 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

Outreach

Save the Date!

MCC Outreach Tag Sale

March 23, 2023

Stay tuned for more details!



The Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe is looking for volunteers to help sort, tag and hang donated merchandise on Tuesdays at 1:15 PM. Sales associates are needed on Fridays for shifts from 10-12:30 and 12:30-3 and on Saturdays from 10-12 and 12-2. It's easy to do with a list of procedures that you can read over or visit a volunteer during business hours and they'd be glad to help you with any questions regarding opening or closing. Please contact Susie Cuseo with any questions at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280.

Fellowship



Young at Heart will meet Thursday, February 22th at noon

Old Town Restaurant, 60 Quality St, Trumbull
RSVP to Nancy & Sheldon Smith
(203)880-5228 or revsheldonsmith@yahoo.com



Sign up for the MCC Women's Retreat at Silver Lake Conference Center

"Peace Like A River"

Leaving Friday Evening, **April 5** and
Returning Sunday afternoon, **April 7**

\$150 per person

Sign up in Wilton Hall
or call the office 203-268-9327

A team is being organized to plan the retreat. We hope you'll join in and add your thoughts and ideas!

See Pastor Jenn or e-mail her

at jenn.gingras@gmail.com



Morning Circle meets on the second Wednesday of the month with the exception of January and February. We work in collaboration with the Food Pantry providing bean soup jars for Thanksgiving, birthday bags for children who visit with their families, collect women's hygiene products and make trick-or-treat bags in October. We put together Church World Service hygiene kits for international families in crisis and collect spare change for Heifer International. Please contact Shari Carrano with any questions or comments at 203-400-3563.

Our calendar of meetings

Wednesday, March 13 - Birthday bags for Food Pantry
Wednesday, April 10 - Church World Service hygiene kits
Wednesday, May 8 - Collection of Women's hygiene products
Wednesday, June 12 - Annual June picnic - Location TBD



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 janeEallen@sbcglobal.net with any thoughts or questions. **Our next meeting will be Saturday, 3/2. Come check it out!**



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:

February 21st - 7 pm - This Tender Land by William Kent Kreuger
March 20th - 7 pm- Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver

Prayer Partners

Supporting Others with Prayer

Prayer Partners Unite! There's only four more months to pray for our partners anonymously. We will meet on Sunday, May 19th in Wilton Hall at 11:15 for the "Big Reveal" potluck luncheon. This is where we'll find out who's been praying for whom. In the meanwhile, find out more information about them by striking up a conversation during coffee hour, give them the peace sign during that time of the service or send them a card in the mail for that special occasion or just because you feel like it. Don't forget to sign it, "Your Prayer Partner" and use the church's address as the return (34 Church St. Monroe, CT 06468).

Consider this: If praying out loud makes you nervous, here are seven tips to pray out loud with confidence:

- 1 - Take a deep breath and invite the Holy Spirit to speak.
- 2 - Remember it's OK to keep it short.
- 3 - Focus on just one thanksgiving or need.
- 4 - Be open to the Holy Spirit's lead for other prayer topics.
- 5 - Be you. Pray in your own voice.
- 6 - Remember God wants to hear YOUR voice as much as anyone else's.
- 7 - Keep practicing!

Please contact Susie Cuseo at 203-268-0280 or thecuseos@yahoo.com with any questions or comments.



Lost and Found items that could be yours. Have you checked out the lost items that are hung up across from the men's room? Some of these were in the Narthex of the Meetinghouse. Come and take a look to see if any of these stray clothing items are yours. By the end of February, they will be brought to the Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe. Please contact Susie Cuseo at 203-268-0280 or thecuseos@yahoo.com with any questions



Are you creative or handy with tools? The Strawberry Festival Committee is bringing back the Gaming Alley. However, some of the original games need to be revamped and we are looking to build new ones.

If you are interested in helping out with this wonderful task, please contact Susie Cuseo at 203-268-0280 or thecuseos@yahoo.com.



SR PF PRESENTS



CHILI

COOK-OFF

BRING THE HEAT! 6-8 PM

Saturday March

2nd

Monroe Congregational Church
Rexford House

34 Church St. Monroe, CT



**\$8/PERSON
KIDS UNDER
5 EAT FOR
FREE**

- 10+ Contestants
- Raffle baskets
- Bake Sale
- Mission trip slide show over the years

All Proceeds benefit our 2024 youth mission trip!

?s-Mccuccsrpf@gmail.com



As the new year begins, we hope that our friends and loved ones listed on our weekly prayer list have found healing of both body and soul. If you or your loved one finds you are no longer in need of our weekly prayer, please let Diane know so we may rejoice in the good news and remove the name making room for those who may need to be added. secretary@mcc-ucc.org or call the office 203-268-9327

In Our Prayers

Alison Abrams (Jessica Pfalzgraf's sister); **Allie** (Colegrove's friend); **Henry Bergeron** (on the loss of his sister); **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**; **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**; **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**; **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**; **Tom Steen** (Jessica Pfalzgraf's dad); **Rev. Dr. Sheldon Smith**; **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); **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: 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)

MCC Community Calendar

Week of Sun. Feb 18th

10:00 am Worship

5:00 pm Senior PF

Mon. Feb 19th

Presidents Day - Office Closed

7:30 pm Council

Tue. Feb 20th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Wed. Feb 21st

7:00 pm Book Club Zoom

Thurs. Feb 22nd

9:30 am Bible Study

12 pm Young @ Heart (Old Town, Trumbull)

6:00 pm Confirmation Class

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Week of Sun. Feb. 25th

10:00 am Worship

5:00 pm Junior & Senior PF

Tue. Feb 27th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Thurs. Feb 29th

9:30 am Bible Study

6:00 pm Confirmation Class

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Sat. Mar 2nd

1:00 pm Sr PF Setup for Chili Cook off

5:30 pm Adult PF

6:00 - 8:00 pm SR PF Chili Cook Off

Week of Sun. Mar 3rd

Communion Sunday

10:00 am Worship

11:30 am Trustees

5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

Mon. Mar 4th

7:00 pm Outreach

Tue. Mar 5th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Thurs. Mar 7th

9:30 am Bible Study

6:00 pm Confirmation Class

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Week of Sun. Mar 10th

Daylight Savings Time

10:00 am Worship

11:30 am Trustees

2:00 pm Crop Walk Rally

5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

Mon. Mar 11th

7:30 pm Deacons