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**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

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# STEEPLE

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

**June 1, 2022**



Yesterday, during a break in PF programming, I had the opportunity to sit down and talk to some of our young people about my upcoming sabbatical from July 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30<sup>th</sup>. The realization that I won't be on their summer mission trip has been difficult for some of them. It's hard for me too. I will miss being there for our seniors as they get nostalgic and talk about their experiences and memories of our time together. I

will miss the excitement of our freshman as they travel a long way to repair housing for folks in West Virginia. I will miss the adults and college students as we work together bringing the group ever closer to their goal of helping people.

As I tried to explain to them the purpose of pastoral sabbaticals, it occurred to me that maybe they aren't the only ones that are wondering about why we do it. In part, this time away is supposed to help the community 'own' more of their ministry and learn ways we may be more effective in working together. Sabbaticals have a way of breaking unhelpful patterns in church systems, to make room for creativity and joy.

Pastors tend to be workaholic people pleasers who want to be there for our community as they experience crisis, even on our days off or late at night when we should otherwise be resting. And yet, congregations may suffer from ministry by ministers who experience prolonged periods of stress. To lead effectively, clergy must be able to emotionally handle periods of extended burnout and compassion fatigue.

Reentry from a sabbatical takes a time of adjustment – I won't know everything about MCC that happened while I was away. One wise seminary professor once remarked, *"It is not possible to board a moving train with a perpendicular leap."* I may need to run alongside you for a while to catch up with the church's momentum.

The sabbatical is an important event in the life of both pastor and congregation. It is one of the most effective ways for clergy and congregation to develop and maintain a long-term relationship. It can be a vital ingredient in a mutually beneficial relationship. Ultimately, may we all find a new sense of refreshment, so that we can be ready to take on new tasks in growing the kin-dom.

You will all be in good hands with our excellent church council, key volunteers, and sabbatical supply pastor, Rev. Peggy Allen. I greatly look forward to hearing how you took the summer to rest and recuperate from a busy season of being church, and how you started the program year off in September. See you in October!

*In peace, Pastor Jenn*

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## The 50<sup>th</sup> Strawberry Festival is right around the corner!

**As a matter of fact, it's just a little over 2 weeks away! We hope everyone will come out and give as much time as they can to make this 50<sup>th</sup> Strawberry Festival one for the record books!**

**Come for the fellowship – Come to support MCC – Come to build community – Come to work hard, make memories and join in the fun!**

**See you on Father's Day Weekend June 17, 18 & 19. Don't forget to wear your Strawberry Festival t-shirt, or red, to worship on Sunday!**



***May I take your order?***



## Christian Education

### Congratulations to our 2022 Confirmands

#### Confirmand

Stephen Sentementes

Joselyn Allen

#### Sponsor

Andy Nivison

Kelsey Kaminski



# SUNDAY SCHOOL

#### Sunday School

May 29 - No Sunday School (Memorial Day Weekend)

June 5 - The Holy Spirit

June 12 - Final Sunday School of the season (fire drill)

#### This Month in Jr PF:

May 29 - No Jr PF (Memorial Day Weekend)

June 5 - Nailed It! PF Edition

June 12 - End of Year Party- Final Jr PF Meeting until the fall

**This Month in Senior PF:**

June 5 – PF Elections (location TBD)

June 12 – Smoothie Booth Training / Prep

June 17 – Picking, Set-up for 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Strawberry Festival

June 18, 19 – 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Strawberry Festival! Picking, Smoothies, Runners, Trash Team

June 26 – Trust & Teambuilding



**Spring Study: Discovering Our Roots** Three study sessions on the MCC history book **Binding Covenant** written by our own church historian, Gary Thompson will be held this spring. A second publishing run was recently completed, so if you do not already have a copy and would like to join the study, please contact Pastor Jenn:

- Virtually on Zoom (June 7<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm)  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2038955607?pwd=bWxMMDRXN3d6emJNZ2JsVzlsTFp3dz09> Meeting ID: 203 895 5607 Passcode: MeetMe

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**Deacons**



**Calling All Graduates:** If you are graduating this year from high school, college, a university, graduate school, or another program, we want to recognize you and celebrate your achievements at the June 12<sup>th</sup> worship service. Please let the church office ([secretary@mcc-ucc.org](mailto:secretary@mcc-ucc.org), 203-268-9327) know if you or anyone in your family is graduating, along with the details of your degree, school, etc. **by June 6<sup>th</sup>**  
Thank you!



**Jim & Gretchen Davison’s Memorial Service**

The lives of long-term MCC members Jim and Gretchen Davison will be celebrated on Saturday, June 11<sup>th</sup> at 11 am in the Meetinghouse. A luncheon will take place immediately following in Wilton Hall, please sign up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D44A8AC22A2FB6-davison>. Interment will be held privately. We hope that you are able to join their children Karen and Jay and their families in remembering and celebrating their cherished parents. Please see Pastor Jenn with any questions.

## Outreach

### St George's Supper - Monday, June 13<sup>th</sup>



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-stgeorges7>

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!

**Thank you to all who contributed to the 2022 CWS/CROP fund raising effort.** Team Monroe Congregational Church members were **Gayle Hammond, Cheri Irwin, Stefanie Olivares, Maria Barresi, and me.**



**Our church members and friends raised \$3,404 and we couldn't have done it without your generosity and participation.**

We raised more than any other church in the Bridgeport area and rank 57th in the whole US. That's impressive. Think of what good that money can do in the world! I am proud to be your team captain. *With gratitude, Julie McClenathan*

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### Trustees



**A big "thank you"** to everyone who came out to help with our Spring Cleanup last Saturday!

Jim Brown, Scott Young, Rob McClenathan, Julie McClenathan, John O'Rourke, Maria Barresi, Bill Stadler, David Walker, Myron Winger, Jenn Gingras and Dave Allen.

The **Monroe Summer Day Camp** will be renting our MCC campus again this year. The camp will provide added income for the church during the months of June, July and August paying \$550 per week for 65 campers and \$10 more for each additional camper with a cap of 75 campers this year. If you need to enter the building between 7:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday – Friday please stop into the office and ask Diane to notify the camp director. If the office is closed, please ask someone to notify the camp director, Karen, of your presence.



**For the safety of all, the Board of Trustees will conduct a fire/emergency safety drill at the end of our worship service on Sunday, June 12.**

## Fellowship



**Children Snacks are Needed.** Those young-at-heart love the treats they get during coffee hour. So while the adults enjoy coffee/tea and a little treat, the kids enjoy theirs. Juice bottles, juice cups and juice bags are also welcomed. Please drop off your donations on the serving counter clearly labeled "Children's Snack". Thank you in advance for your generosity and kindness.



## MORNING CIRCLE

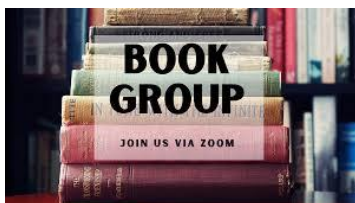
Morning Circle invites the ladies of the congregation to our meeting on Wednesday, June 8th at 11AM at June Winger's house located at 204 Church Street in Monroe. It will be catered affair so those attending can bring an appetizer or dessert to share. We will have a monetary collection for the Center for Family Justice's Camp Hope America.

Last month, the ladies put together 31 birthday bags for the Food Pantry. Children visiting with their parents would receive a gift bag containing a box of cake mix, frosting, birthday candles and birthday napkins. They really appreciate the attention during the visit. Thank you to all the ladies for making them feel important. Please contact Susie Cuseo with any questions or comments at [thecuseos@yahoo.com](mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com) or 203-268-0280.



### Young At Heart

Next luncheon will be on Thursday, **June 23<sup>rd</sup> at 12 pm**  
**Old Towne Restaurant**, 60 Quality St, Trumbull, CT 06611  
**Please RSVP** to Carol Viellette at (203)268-2565 or  
CV31@gmail.com



### MCC Book Club is open to all church members.

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

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

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

August 10<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm - The Giver of Stars by Jojo Moyes, Host: TBD



**Prayer Partners  
"Big Reveal"  
Potluck Luncheon**

Many thanks to my 25 Prayer Partners who signed up to keep each other in their thoughts. Please continue to do so during the summer. You are all treasures and gifts to be cherished. Look for signups in August. It's so easy to do: complete the sign up sheet, receive a letter in the mail from Susie Cuseo with the name of who to pray for, share a conversation with them during coffee hour, send them a card or note in the mail using the church's address as the return and then meet in May 2023 at the "Big Reveal" potluck to find out who's been praying for you.

Contact Susie Cuseo with any questions or comments at [thecuseos@yahoo.com](mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com) or 203-268-0280.





## Strawberry Festival **JAM Session** Leaders & Volunteers Needed!

It's time to make the JAM and we need your help! All the supplies have been purchased and the kitchen prepared. The kitchen has been reserved for the dates below. Each date needs a *Session Leader* and should have at least 4-5 more volunteers. Please sign up in Wilton Hall or call Diane in the office and she will add your name for you!

**Let's make our 50th Strawberry Festival a huge success for MCC!**

Friday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> 7pm

Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup> 9am-12pm & 12pm-3pm

Sunday, June 5<sup>th</sup> 12pm-4pm

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## **Come Sing with the Chancel Choir!**

Have you ever considered joining the Chancel Choir? Or at least giving it a try? If so, now is a great time to do so. The church year is winding down, and before the choir takes its "summer recess" why not come out to a Thursday night rehearsal and see what it's all about?

Some "don'ts" to consider:

**You don't have to audition.** Formal singing training and/or experience is not a requirement!

**You don't necessarily need to know how to read music.** Formal music training is not a requirement!

**What is required?** A love of music and fellowship. A sense of humor wouldn't hurt either. The MCC Chancel Choir offers a strong sense of fellowship and the satisfaction of preparing beautiful music with which to express God's gifts and faithfulness. In the process, we have a good time, despite our (my) imperfections.

Choir rehearsals are on Thursday evenings from 7-8:30 PM. Our final one for the season is June 16<sup>th</sup> and we start up again in early September. I hope you will take a chance and "try it out". Don't take my word for it: ask a choir member!

*Sincerely, Will Duchon*

**WMNR**  
Fine Arts Radio



WMNR Fine Arts Radio is an independent public radio station in Connecticut that produces most of its own programming. Come and visit their studio at 731 Main Street, in Monroe and learn more and their **Open House on Saturday, June 12th, from 1-4 PM.** MCC's Music Director, Will Duchon, is a volunteer broadcaster at WMNR, with Friday Evening Classics from 6 - 10 PM and The Night Café, Fridays at 10 PM.



**Elisha's Corner**  
**By Gary Thompson, Church Historian**

**Strawberry Festival's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Fifty years doesn't seem like very long ago, but as an anniversary it is worth the celebration! Fifty years ago this June, knowing the story of how money was raised to purchase the Centre Green one hundred years earlier in 1872, Connie Keeling, wife of our then Pastor Rev. Robert Keeling, was instrumental in resurrecting the Strawberry Festival in 1972. The purpose was to raise money to support the payments for the Rexford House mortgage. It was held on a Saturday, June 24<sup>th</sup> with a rain date Sunday, the 25<sup>th</sup> from noon to 7 P.M. It was the weekend after the Father's Day weekend, to coincide with the Monroe Arts Exhibit held on the Centre Green. The event was scheduled for both Saturday and Sunday the following year and then latter to the two days of the Father's Day weekend when the berries were the ripest. From the beginning, committees were manned to pick strawberries at Jones' Family Farm in Huntington, sort them, and hull them for sale in quarts, in pies, and in shortcake. The kitchen was manned by the ladies of the Church and the special biscuits, from a close kept secret recipe, were baked by Sue and Joyce (Zaleha) Rousseau (mother and daughter) for the short cake served on the parsonage lawn. In subsequent years the Fellowship Hall in Rexford House served as the shortcake serving venue.

Lori Sippin remembers when Connie Keeling suggested it to the Women's Fellowship. She made dolls and worked that first festival year as a waitress, as did many of the ladies of the Morning Circle. Young girls of the church were not enlisted back then. "The first year the Festival was held only on Saturday", she says. Over the past forty-nine Festivals she has work on most every committee. And she has taken her turns at picking berries. When asked if there is a fondest memory of the Festival she replied, "No, not really, I liked them all." It rained during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Festival, "we held it anyway, and everyone still had a good time".

There are more than a few fondest memories for Joyce Rousseau. She was in the hospital during the first Festival recovering from an auto accident she was in on the way home from her college graduation, but her mother, Sue, was. Sue was "the biscuit chairman", quoted the Newtown Bee on June 8, 1972. Joyce has been present in the kitchen for the last forty-eight years, though, working side by side with her "mom" for as long as Sue could do the baking. "It was always biscuits and pies," she says. The biscuit recipe was printed in the Festival's *Out of the Strawberry Patch* cook book in 1974. Her mom was the baker in the Fawn Hollow School cafeteria. That is where she got the recipe; and .... that is the close kept secret. Joyce remembers that the original pies were strawberry-rhubarb; but that they were so hard to make that they later used another recipe that they got from Jones' Tree Farm. As the story goes, Jim Davison went around to the houses of the ladies making the pies and transported them back to Rexford House in his station wagon. On one occasion, when his daughter was driving, she made a sudden stop and the fluid filling from the pies spilled all over the back of the wagon. It was incentive enough for Jim to find a better recipe.

Joyce says that "she kept a count on a piece of paper she kept in her apron pocket for Jim of the biscuits and pies they made. He wanted an accurate count. It was difficult taking the trays out of the oven while putting trays in and keeping a tally, too. She told him, "Forget it, Jim." Joyce's sister had made aprons for all the "kitchen ladies". What she remembers most fondly is how hard everyone worked year after year.

That memory was echoed by Ann Zeiner, who didn't start working in the kitchen until she retired about ten years after the Festival's start, but she was there every year after that. She cut berries, filled the pies, boxed them, and stored the pies in the "cooling room". She wasn't there yet when, as Joyce related, the pies were put on a ping-pong table in the "cooling room". The legs collapsed and the pies covered the floor. There were years when Ann's son, Allan, worked with her in the kitchen. It was from watching Sue Zaleha that he decided to go to culinary school and become a professional chef. Ann says that "it was just a real good time working in the kitchen." Jackie Bleakney, like Ann, didn't start working the Festival until she too, retired. She says that she's "worked at most of them if not all of them since."

In addition to the pies and the strawberry short cakes, the arts and the crafts were the inspirations of June Wilkes and Connie Keeling. June had been running the Monroe Arts Exhibit on the Centre Green each June. So for the first Strawberry Festival she says she required all of the exhibitors to include a strawberry theme in their works. In the following years it was opened to all types of art and crafts, and she became busy organizing and scheduling the crafters for many years. Connie organized the church women to make Raggedy Ann, sock monkey, and clown dolls which were sold from the large "Ye Olde Doll Shoppe" (a doll house) made by Jack Abbott. This was repeated for a number of the following years. The Men's Club was not to be outdone. Rip Ripley and Vern Nelson supervised a men's assembly line that produced bird houses made from scrap lumber obtained from the Monroe Lumber Yard (it used to be on the site of the Stepney shopping plaza). Don Whitely says he remembers that. He says that he was probably there with his wife, Janice, in the "sorting room".

Myron Winger remembers the bird houses, too. He says that his contribution was providing the camping tarp that shaded the workers at the "servicing table" and picking berries. He also remembers taking his two hour shift at serving the shortcakes and then cleaning the tables. His wife, June, was the chairwomen for shortcake serving, and she says she was a waitress, like many of the Morning Circle ladies. She chaired the doll making, too. "There was so much work put into it", she says, "that we decided to hold it two days instead of the one." Over the last forty-nine years they both say that they may have missed only two Festivals.

As successful as the 1972 Strawberry Festival was and has become over the last forty-nine years it is hard to imagine that it almost did not happen at all. When Connie Keeling took her idea to the Board of Trustees in February of 1972, it was not well received at all. She was told that it was not worth the effort, but was finally told by a woman on the Trustees that if she thought it was such a good idea, "why don't you do it yourself". And so she did, to our lasting reward. Let that be a lesson to us. *Happy 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Strawberry Festival!*

## **Grandmas Apron Poem**

(Author Unknown)

The principal use of Grandma's apron was to protect the dress underneath, because she only had a few, it was easier to wash aprons than dresses and they used less material, but along with that, it served as a potholder for removing hot pans from the oven.

It was wonderful for drying children's tears, and on occasion was even used for cleaning out dirty ears...

From the chicken coop, the apron was used for carrying eggs, fussy chicks, and sometimes half-hatched eggs to be finished in the warming oven.

When company came, those aprons were ideal hiding places for shy kids.

And when the weather was cold grandma wrapped it around her arms.

Those big old aprons wiped many a perspiring brow, bent over the hot wood stove.

Chips and kindling wood were brought into the kitchen in that apron.

From the garden, it carried all sorts of vegetables.

After the peas had been shelled, it carried out the hulls.

In the fall, the apron was used to bring in apples that had fallen from the trees.

When unexpected company drove up the road, it was surprising how much furniture that old apron could dust in a matter of seconds.

When dinner was ready, Grandma walked out onto the porch, waved her apron, and the men-folk knew it was time to come in from the fields to dinner.

It will be a long time before someone invents something that will replace that 'old-time apron' that served so many purposes.



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

Rebecca	Cicarelli	06/02	Andy	Nivison	06/17
Jill	Sapak	06/03	Kathryn	Young	06/19
June	Wilkes	06/05	Scott	Young	06/19
Fred	Dubois	06/06	Chantal	Crosnier	06/20
Bill	Brett	06/08	Meg	Sullivan	06/20
Kyle	Konkol	06/08	Juliette	Nealon	06/21
Jeanette	Cardentey	06/09	Julia	Gutierrez	06/23
Jim	Gill	06/09	Hannah	Halloran	06/23
Cynthia	Kovacs	06/10	Sarah	Post	06/29
June	Winger	06/11	Dan	Sullivan	06/29
Rich	Correll	06/14	Jennifer	Gingras	06/30
Paul	Cardentey	06/15	David	Walker	06/30
Gregory	Nivison	06/16			



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

Richard & Lynda Bauer <sup>(01)</sup>	Kathy & David Allen <sup>(03)</sup>	Christopher & Julie McHugh <sup>(05)</sup>
Scott & Katie Young <sup>(05)</sup>	Paula & Carl Haggstrom <sup>(06)</sup>	Chuck & Bonnie Schneider <sup>(13)</sup>
Don & Kate Parker-Burgard <sup>(16)</sup>	Ron & Peggy Villani <sup>(24)</sup>	and Stacy & Mark Andrejczyk <sup>(29)</sup>

## **MCC Community Calendar**

### **Thur. June 2<sup>nd</sup>**

6:00 pm Chimes & Bells Rehearsal  
7:00 pm Chancel Choir

### **Week of June 5<sup>th</sup>**

*Communion - Pentecost*  
10:00 am Worship  
5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF's

### **Mon. June 6<sup>th</sup>**

7pm Outreach (Zoom)

### **Tue. June 7<sup>th</sup>**

100th Anniversary of MCC Incorporated  
1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag  
7:00 pm Binding Covenant Study (ZOOM)

### **Wed. June 8<sup>th</sup>**

11:00 Morning Circle  
7:00 pm Book Club (Zoom)

### **Thur. June 9<sup>th</sup>**

6:00 pm Chimes & Bells Rehearsal  
7:00 pm Chancel Choir  
7:30 pm Constitutional Committee

### **Sat. June 11<sup>th</sup>**

11:00 am Davison Memorial Service

### **Week of Sun. June 12<sup>th</sup>**

*Graduate Sunday / Fire Drill*  
10:00 am Worship  
5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF's

### **Mon. June 13<sup>th</sup>**

3:00 pm St. George's Supper

### **Tue. June 14<sup>th</sup>**

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

### **Thur. June 16<sup>th</sup>**

6:00 pm Chimes & Bells Rehearsal  
7:00 pm Chancel Choir

### **Fri. June 17<sup>th</sup>**

Strawberry Festival Setup

### **Sat. June 18<sup>th</sup>**

10 am – 5:00 pm Strawberry Festival

### **Week of Sun. June 19<sup>th</sup>**

*Father's Day & Strawberry Festival Sunday*  
10:00 am Worship  
12:00 – 5:00 pm Strawberry Festival

### **Mon. June 20<sup>th</sup>**

7:30 pm Council

### **Tue. June 21<sup>st</sup>**

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

### **Thurs. June 23<sup>rd</sup>**

*175 Year Anniversary of the Meetinghouse*  
11:30 am Young @ Heart

### **Week of Sun. June 26<sup>th</sup>**

10:00 am Worship  
11:30 am Trustees (Zoom)  
5:00 pm Senior PF

### **Tue. June 27<sup>th</sup>**

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

*Pastor Jenn is on sabbatical from  
July 1 – Sep 30*

### **Week of Sun. July 3<sup>rd</sup>**

*Welcome Rev. Peggy Allen*  
*Communion*  
10:00 am Worship  
5:00 pm Senior PF

### **Mon. July 4<sup>th</sup>**

*Independence Day – Office Closed*  
7pm Outreach (Zoom)

### **Tue. July 5<sup>th</sup>**

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

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

10:00 am Worship  
5:00 pm Senior PF

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

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

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

7:00 pm Book Club (Zoom)

