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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
Church e-mail: secretary@mcc-ucc.org



THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

STEEPLE

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

January 1, 2022



Guided by a STAR

The premise is this: the magi followed the star to find baby Jesus, bringing their gifts. We are also seeking Jesus, trusting God can/does use many signs (or stars) to guide us closer to the Divine presence. On Sunday, January 9th, all are invited to take a star in worship. On each of the stars is a word to think and pray about over the course of 2022. Those who are not comfortable or able to be with us in person can call or text me and I will draw one for you.

You can choose to trust the word that selects you, but if you need to trade out a word, you are free to do so. When we first started doing this a few years ago, people weren't sure they wanted to trust the words they drew.

In 2021, the word that I drew was UNITY, which is defined by freedictionary.com as "The state or quality of being one or united into a whole". Not only did I need this word in my own personal life this year, but I think seeing it every day taped to my desk lamp was a great motivator for me as the pastor of MCC.

For so many months we have been disrupted, doing our best to keep ourselves and our world safe from Covid-19. We've been weighed down by so many small decisions that have felt so large. Our loved ones, and ourselves have suffered. Even though the pandemic is still widespread, our church is continuing to adapt. Like the little seedling, we keep reaching toward the sun (or Son in our case!), as the light of Jesus Christ guides us forward. We are heirs to a great legacy, and I believe that we can live up to our storied history as we move boldly into the future, together. What better gift could we ask for this Epiphany?

Here is a little prayer for discernment, as you consider your 2022 STAR word... *Holy One, we are not always ready to receive your best gifts for us. It is often our habit to turn aside, stumble over, or even reject experiences and encounters that we later understand to have been precious blessings. Help us to be open to the gift that you offer us this season through our star words. We receive them with gratitude and pray that your Spirit will enable us to live into our word with intention and faithfulness. Amen.*

In peace, Pastor Jenn



Call to Annual Congregational Meeting * January 23rd, 2022

The members of Monroe Congregational Church are hereby called to attend the Annual Meeting of the Congregation to be held in the Meeting House at 11:15 am on Sunday, January 24th, 2021. The meeting will be hybrid this year (on Zoom and in person in the Meetinghouse).

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83783604562?pwd=L2dSUUpEQ3dYUnNBcUJZUHRKMnBxQT09> Meeting ID: 837 8360 4562, Passcode: Rexford

The agenda will include the following: Receiving of Reports; Electing Officers, Board Members and Delegates; Adopting the 2022 budget and any other business that must properly come before the Congregation.

Top 10 reasons to Attend the Monroe Congregational Church Annual Meeting on January 23rd after worship (11:15 A.M.)

10. That is when it is scheduled.
9. To get to know what is on other people's minds.
8. Because we are Congregationalists (see below***) and that is what we do.
7. To speak your mind have a say in how things are at MCC.
6. To be a good citizen – "to elect officers, boards, committees, and delegates to the Association and Conference to which this church belongs; to adopt an annual budget; ... and to transact such other business as may be set forth" (from the MCC Constitution).
5. To see if the Moderator can manage Robert's Rules of Order.
4. To understand where your money goes and to move to redirect, if so moved.
3. To postpone getting home to do chores.
2. To get to know other MCC members and make friends.
1. Free chocolate (calories do not count on Annual Meeting Day).

*** Many of us at MCC grew up in other religious traditions (or none). Congregationalists are pretty unique in how the church is managed. We, the congregation, run the show. We are the ministers, the managers, and the masters of our fate as a church. We run it. We finance it. Without us, it does not exist. This is what Congregational polity ("the form of government of a religious denomination" – Merriam Webster) means. We are autonomous; we are in charge of ourselves. The way to have a say in how we are run is to attend congregational meetings, e.g., the Annual Meeting. See you on the 23rd. The hybrid meeting will take place in person in the Meeting House and also via Zoom for those who cannot attend in person.

From: The Moderator



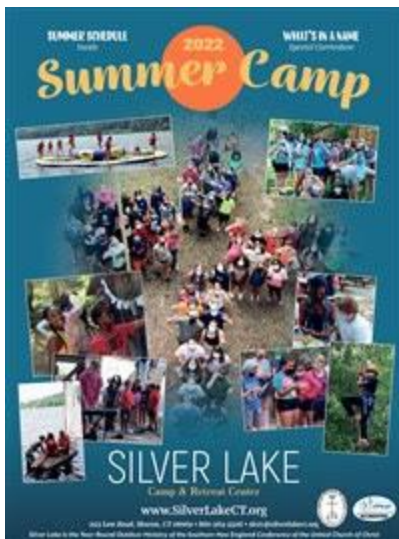
2022 pledge envelopes

are ready for pick up at in Wilton Hall!

STAR Words are Coming! At church on Epiphany Sunday (January 9th), we'll have a basket of STAR words for 2022 for you to choose from. We hope that you find time to marvel at God's spirit working through these paper stars. Like the magi, may these words allow us all to go home by another road, our eyes opened to God's presence in and around us.



Christian Education



Summer 2022 at Silver Lake Conference Center:

Registration for summer programs opens January 15!

[Check out the summer brochure online](#) & look for it on the church bulletin board in early January!



Weekly Prayer & Bible Study Group! Every Thursday from 9:30-10:30 in Dineson Parlor, everyone is cordially invited and welcome to join us! Bring your favorite Bible (whatever version you prefer) and a small notebook. Let Pastor Jenn know if you have any questions.

In 2022, we are following **The Woman's Lectionary** and highlighting the stories of two Biblical women a week, some with names, some without.

January 6	Epiphany Party! 220 Webb Circle
January 13	Psalm 131, Luke 2:22-38 (Anna Sees Jesus)
January 20	Isaiah 60:1-6, Luke 2:41-52 (Mary Loses Jesus in the Temple)
January 27	Isaiah 62:1-5, John 2:1-11 (Mary Attends Wedding at Cana)



Join us for Young Adult Sunday on January 2th at 10 am.

Deacons



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. Please review the available slots on Sign Up Genius and click on the button to sign up. If you do not have access to a computer, call Diane in the office 203-268-9327, and she will help you sign up!

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>

Stewardship



The 2022 MCC Stewardship campaign "Rooted in Love" update

Our goal this year is to increase our pledge base by 10%, so that we can decrease our reliance on the endowment to fund operating expenses. To date we have received **65 pledges** for a total of **\$174,100**. If you haven't done so already, please complete and return an estimate of giving card for 2022 in the plate or through the mail, or send your pledge via email to jorourke224@gmail.com. Thank you for prayerfully considering how to financially support the Monroe Congregational Church in 2022!

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



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!

Outreach



A huge thank you from the children in the care of our DCF social worker and myself, to everyone who purchased, wrapped and delivered a gift this Christmas.

Diane Prall, MCC Liaison Covenant to Care for Children

Fellowship



Morning Circle would like to thank those who took tags for the town's Giving Tree program. With your kindness and generosity, you've made the day of the person who will receive your gifts. We will not meet during January or February.

Please mark your calendars for the following dates:

Wednesday, March 9th at 11AM in Wilton Hall - Birthday bags for Food Pantry
Wednesday, April 13th at 11AM in Wilton Hall - Hygiene kits for Church World Service
Wednesday, May 11th at 11AM in Wilton Hall - Collection of women's products for Food Pantry
Wednesday, June 8th at 11AM - Annual Luncheon



Much gratitude to those who donated their spare change for Heifer International. Morning Circle matched the collection for a total of \$100 that went to purchasing chicks, honeybees and goats for families who will use them to make a better life for themselves. Please contact Jackie Bleakney

with any questions or comments at 203-268-5275. On behalf of all the members of Morning Circle, we wish you a safe and wonderful holiday season.



Fall Adult PF 1st & 3rd Sundays 5pm –all adults are welcome

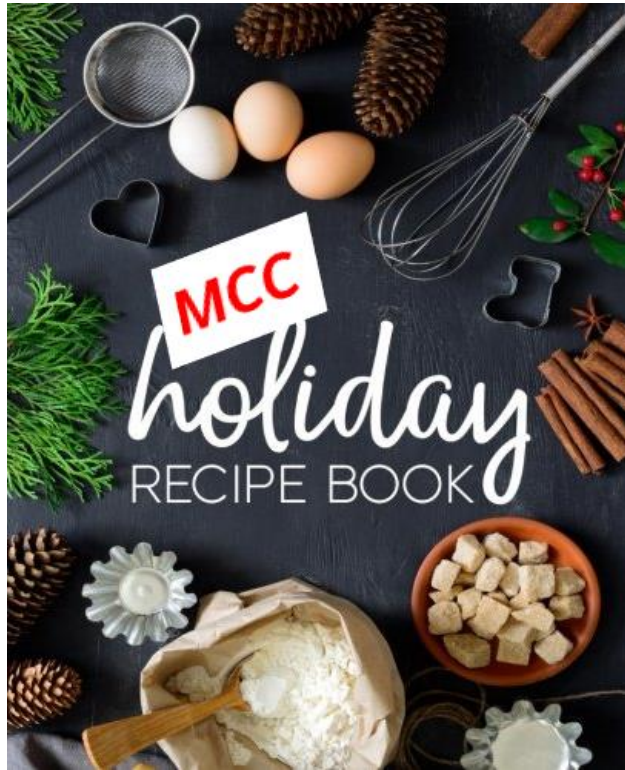


MCC Book Club is open to all church members. For more information, please call Paula Haggstrom 203-452-0850 email: pjsh55@gmail.com We will continue meet via Zoom.

January 12th, 7 pm - *The Exiles* by Christina Baker Kline, 389 pg, Host: Linda Fracasini
February 9th, 7 pm - *Slow Fire Burning* by Paula Hawkins, 316 pg, Host: Gayle Hammond



Young at Heart: Next luncheon will be at Jennie's Pizza in Monroe on January 27.



Click on this link to go to our website where you can enjoy and share the MCC Holiday Recipe Book! <https://www.mcc-ucc.org/>

Thank you MCC contributors for sharing your favorite recipes and Michelle Cardentey for putting them all together for us in this lovely, yummy recipe book!

Happy Holidays!

*A heartfelt
Thank You* ❤️

Thank you to Trees Whitbeck for the “sweet” expression of her love for the members of MCC with the gift of her delicious VIANA CHOCOLATES last Sunday! If you were unable to pick yours up,



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

Pulpit Suppliers – Peter and Jonathan Curtiss

After those assembled at the home of Henry Hawley for the first organizational meeting of Ecclesiastical Society of New Stratford Parish had selected the five member committee, on June 21, 1762 “... to take care of ye prudentials of Sd Society”, they turned their attention to the pulpit. Another five member committee was selected to, “... provide a Minister or Ministers to preach ye Gospels among us”; the first pulpit suppliers and forerunners of the Board of Deacons. The first identified in the meeting minutes was Deacon, Peter Curtiss, and the last was his second cousin Jonathan Curtiss (III), whose grandfather, Jonathan Curtiss (Sr.), was a brother to Peter’s father, Capt. Josiah Curtiss. The brothers were sons of Capt. William Dawson Curtiss.

Peter was born on April 1, 1707, in Stratford. A veteran of the French and Indian War, he was fifty-five years old when selected to the committee and died

almost four years later on March 30, 1766; just two years after Elisha Rexford was settled as our first minister. He had married Hester Clarke of Stratford on November 4, 1728 when he was twenty-one and she nineteen. They raised a family of three daughters and three sons. Their oldest son, Elihu, died in infancy. The daughters were all married at the time; Bethiah to Able Hawley, Mehitabel to Samuel Blackman, and Martha to Samuel Adams. His oldest surviving son, Peter (Jr), was elected the following year; at age twenty-six, to the School Committee. He received a commission as Captain in the Continental Army in 1777 at age forty-one. A year after his wife Hester died on July 6, 1744, Peter married Mary Hawley, ten years younger. They had two sons and a daughter. Their oldest, Elijah, became a Deacon like his father. Peter's Will testifies that he was a substantial farmer and citizen of the Parish. His dwelling on seven acres was in the East Village section of Barn Hill Road near David Willcockson and Boys Halfway River. He had over 600 acres of "plow field" including apple orchards, a "cydar" (cider) mill, and "weavers shop". Part of his land was scattered around Great Ring and Turkey Roost swamp. He raised cattle, sheep, and swine and grew wheat, rye, oats, and corn. The inventory lists three Negro women slaves; an older woman named Dancer, a "wench", and a young girl, probably all related. His total estate value of £47,510 would be worth well over \$2 million today.

His second cousin, Jonathan (III), born in 1710 in Stratford, was the seventh child of thirteen to Jonathan (Jr.) and wife Hannah Hoyt. At age thirty-eight he married Eunice Hawley, twenty-nine at the time. They had a family of three sons and two daughters. Their oldest, Mary, was the wife of Ephraim Judson. Their second daughter, Sarah, was married to Gideon Hawley. It may be that his farm was in the Elm Street section of the parish, for when he died on September 8, 1787, at age seventy-seven, he was buried in the cemetery on Cross Hill Road. He was fifty-three when he was selected to the committee.

His father, Jonathan (Jr.), and Peter's first cousin, was age eighty-four and probably living in Durham, CT when the committee was formed. He had married his first wife, Hannah, in Stratford in 1702 when they were both twenty. When Hannah died a year after the birth of her thirteenth child, Steven, widower Jonathan (Jr.) married Mary Summers on December 24, 1718, when he was thirty-nine and she forty-three. They may have had a daughter and a son. Jonathan (Jr.) was the youngest of four children and the second son to Jonathan (Sr.) and Abigail Thompson who were married in Stratford in 1669 when he was twenty-five and she twenty-three. They had two daughters and then two sons. He received land gifts in Huntington from his father, William, and his father-in-law John Thompson. Born on February 14, 1644, he died at the early age of thirty-seven on October 10, 1681; only two years after the birth of this son, Jonathan (Jr.). Widowed at age thirty-five, Abigail remarried, first to Nicholas Hughes, from whom she gifted property to son Jonathan (Jr.) in 1709 when he was twenty-nine and married. Following Hughes' death, she married her third husband, Samuel Sherman on August 1, 1695. She died March 2, 1731 and is buried with husband Jonathan (Sr.) in the Old Congregational Burying Ground.

Jonathan (Sr.) was the oldest son of Captain William Curtiss and Mary Lewis and eighteen years older than his brother Captain Josiah Curtiss, Peter's father. Born on August 30, 1662 in Stratford, Captain Josiah Curtiss was the youngest

child and their seventh son. At age twenty-nine, Josiah married Abigail Judson in July of 1692. She was age twenty-three and the daughter of Lieut. Joseph and Sarah Judson. They had one son and three daughters before she died at the age of thirty-five on November 21, 1697, almost five months after giving birth to their daughter, Anna. In March the following year, Josiah married twenty-two year old Mary Beach, daughter of Benjamin and Mary Beach. In the sixteen years between 1699 and 1715 they had three daughters and eight sons; one died at four months and the last two were twins; daughter, Mehitabel (Mehitibell in Will), and son, Charles. In May of 1714, at age fifty, he was appointed Captain in the "Train Band" (militia) of Stratford. Two years later he was also appointed a Deputy to the General Court. Josiah and John Willcockson, Jr. were granted the "liberty" in 1725 to establish the first saw mill in what would be the New Stratford Parish on the Halfway River (just north of Hammertown Road). In the Same year, at age sixty-two, he had finished and was living in a three story house on Ferry Road in Stratford. Captain Josiah Curtis died at the age of eighty-three, leaving Mary a widow; she outlived him another fourteen years. He and his wives are buried in the Old Congregational Burying Ground in Stratford.

Peter's grandfather and Jonathan (III)'s great-grandfather was Captain William Curtiss, born in the village of Nazeing, Essex, England, and baptized on June 21, 1618. His father, John, and his mother, Elizabeth Hutchins having most common and multiple used names among a very large Curtiss family in the area makes the tracing of his genealogy most challenging. But, his story has been carefully constructed by multiple matches of seventeenth century data. William arrived with his parents in Roxbury, MA at an age of fifteen to seventeen between 1635 and 1637; by what ship is questionable. They settled in Roxbury with his brother John who had settled there a few years earlier. A few years after arrival they all moved to Wethersfield in the Connecticut colony with Joseph Hawley. His father, John (Sr.) died there in July of 1639. So, with his widowed mother Elizabeth, brother John, and Joseph Hawley they resettled in the new Cupheag Plantation of Stratford where they became original proprietors. At the age of twenty-three he married Mary Lewin of Stratford. They raised six sons and three daughters until Mary died at age forty-six, two years after the birth of son Josiah, on November 26, 1664. By 1650 William was a sergeant in the militia. He represented Stratford in the General Court (Assembly) from 1667 to 1686. In June of 1672 he was promoted to the rank of Captain and command of the "Train Band" of Stratford. The following year he commanded a force against the Dutch at New York and was appointed to the six man war commission. Two years later he was ordered to enlist a compliment of sixty soldiers, which included two of his sons, to assist General Treat in the King Philip's War. Following the war in 1676 he became a member of the Governor's Council. That same year, at age fifty-eight, he married the widow Sarah Marvin Goodrich. His youngest son, Josiah, was fourteen, she was forty-five. William and Sarah had no known children.

At the age of eighty-four, Captain William Curtiss died on December 21, 1702, in Stratford. He is buried at the Old Congregational Burying Ground. Nazeing, where he was born, is in the shire of Essex on the east coast of England, northeast of London. It is approximately four miles north of Waltham Abbey, one mile south-west of Harlow, and is bounded on the west by the River Lea. It has a Congregational Church on Middle Street, founded in 1795.

2022 Inclement Weather Policy

Here in New England we get to enjoy seasonal weather changes. At MCC, we have learned to be flexible and make safe choices about our scheduled plans. The safety and well-being of our people is one of our most important concerns.

This is our inclement weather policy, including who makes decisions about closings and how the decision is spread in the community. If you serve in a position of responsibility, please find your leadership role below.

In Person Sunday Worship Services:

1. **At 7 am**, Pastor (Jenn Gingras, 203-895-5607) and the current Chair of Deacons make the decision whether or not to cancel in-person worship. If in-person worship is cancelled, Jenn will record and upload an abbreviated worship service on <https://www.youtube.com/monroecongregationalchurchucc> by noon (sermon, prayer, announcements)
2. **Jenn** notifies staff and key volunteers (who in turn notify those they work with), including Jeanette Cardentey-Morales (203-257-9637), Will Duchon (203-615-3908), Reader, Usher and Trustee of the Day. Jenn sends a church-wide e-mail and posts on FB (MCC-UCC Conversation and Monroe Cong Church Page)
3. **Chair of Deacons** notifies CT Weather/IAN Snap, Channel 8 & Channel 3
4. **Committee meetings** are cancelled at the discretion of committee chair, although many are held on Zoom at the moment, so weather shouldn't be a problem!

Sr. & Jr. PF groups will be notified of any changes or cancellations by e-mail, phone tree and/or Facebook notifications as appropriate.

1. Jenn Gingras (203-895-5607)– Makes and communicates Sr PF decision
2. Jeanette Cardentey-Morales (203-257-9637) – Makes and communicates Jr PF decision

Evening Meetings: It is the responsibility of the convener to notify the meeting participants of any changes or cancellations.

Midweek Morning Programs: If the Monroe School district either delays or cancels school, morning Bible studies and other church-sponsored morning programs are cancelled.

Church Office: If the Monroe School System is closed, and staff members are able to travel, they may choose to do so if conditions are safe. Otherwise, they may choose to work remotely.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the church office at 203-268-9327.

For info on parking lot conditions, our plow guy's name is Adam, his cell is 203-258-8382.



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

Chad	Bauer	01/02	Ann	Zeiner	01/16
John	Hastedt	01/04	Jaclyn	Birn	01/18
Chris	Pearson	01/04	Clark	Gingras	01/18
Don	Parker-Burgard	01/06	Christine	Williams	01/18
Molly	O'Hara	01/09	Nancy	Olofson	01/19
Susan	Granello	01/10	Susan	Grundt	01/20
Alia	Aguilar	01/11	Rebecca	Williams	01/20
Joshua	Correll	01/11	Max	Williams	01/22
Danielle	Adams	01/12	Harper	Matejek	01/23
Joanne	Malia	01/14	Marian	Schmitz	01/26
David	Coffey	01/15	Margaret	Villani	01/27
Thomas	Culp	01/16	Sue	Crea	01/31
Braden	Goyette	01/16			



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

Karen & David Coffey ⁽⁰¹⁾ Jen & Larry Wissink ⁽⁰⁷⁾
and Mike & Barbara Pellegrino ⁽²⁴⁾

MCC
January
Community Calendar

Week of January 2nd

Communion Sunday - Young Adult Sunday

10:00 am Worship
5:00 pm Senior PF
5:00 pm Adult PF

Tue. January 4th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag
7:00 pm Outreach

Wed. January 5th

6:30 Confirmation (Dineson)

Thur. January 6th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)
7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal

Week of January 9th

Epiphany - STAR Words

10:00 am Worship
5:00 pm Junior PF
5:00 pm Senior PF

Mon. January 10th

7:50 pm Deacons Zoom

Tue. January 11th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Wed. January 12th

6:30 pm Confirmation (Dineson)
7:00 Book Club Zoom

Thur. January 13th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)
7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal

Week of January 16th

10:00 am Worship
5:00 pm Junior PF
5:00 pm Senior PF
5:00 pm Adult PF

Mon. January 17th

Martin Luther King Day -office closed
7:30 pm Council Meeting

Tue. January 18th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag
7:00 pm Bereavement Group

Wed. January 19th

6:30 pm Confirmation (Dineson)

Thur. January 20th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)
7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal

Week of January 23th

10:00 am Worship
11:15 am **ANNUAL MEETING**
5:00 pm Junior PF
5:00 pm Senior PF

Tue. January 25th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Wed. January 26th

6:30 pm Confirmation (Dineson)

Thur. January 27th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)
11:30 Young At Heart
7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal

Week of January 30th

10:00 am Worship
5:00 pm Junior PF
5:00 pm Senior PF