

January 26, 2025

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

10:00 am

New Member, Heritage & Annual Meeting Sunday

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

Praise the Lord

W.A. Mozart, 1780

Welcome & Announcements

Moment of Quiet & Lighting of the Candles

Call to Worship

Leader: Come into the presence of the Holy One

People: We are only human, imperfect and unsure

Leader: Come, and do not be afraid

People: We are only human, easily paralyzed by fear or by awe

Leader: Come just as you are!

All: We are only human, but since Christ calls, we will follow!

Opening Prayer

Marc Cardentey, Deacon of the Day

***Our Church's Covenant**

inside front cover of hymnal

Reception of New Members: *Jeff & Meghan Cooper, Mary & Rick Erdmann, Molly Kinahan, Amy & Matt Matejek*

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 God. God calls us to be Christ's body in the world.

Pastor: Jeff, Meghan, Mary, Rick, Molly, Amy & Matt, will you promise to 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, what is your promise to our newest members?

Congregation: We welcome you with joy as partners in the common life of Monroe Congregational Church, United Church of Christ and 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!

Students may transition to Sunday School with their teachers.

***Hymn**

God is Here! As We Your People Meet (vs 1-2)

NCH #70

Heritage Sunday Celebration

Eternal and Gracious God, we are so thankful for these long-term members who have given their time, talents and gifts to this congregation and the wider church. The world is a better place because of their dedication. We thank you for the lives that have been transformed through them. Amen!

***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

Non Nobis, Domine *Rudyard Kipling & Roger Quilter, 1934*

*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

Luke 5:1-11, page 937

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

Sermon

In Over Our Heads

Rev. Jennifer Gingras

***Closing Hymn** Called as Partners in Christ's Service (verses 1 & 4) NCH #495

Benediction

Parting Music Redemption Song *Bob Marley & the Wailers, 1980*

**Please rise, in body or in spirit*

<i>Non nobis Domine!— Not unto us, O Lord! The Praise or Glory be Of any deed or word; For in Thy Judgment lies To crown or bring to nought All knowledge or device That Man has reached or wrought.</i>	<i>And we confess our blame— How all too high we hold That noise which men call Fame, That dross which men call Gold. For these we undergo Our hot and godless days, But in our hearts we know Not unto us the Praise. O Power by Whom we live—</i>	<i>Creator, Judge, and Friend, Upholdingly forgive Nor fail us at the end: But grant us well to see In all our piteous ways— Non nobis Domine!— Not unto us the Praise!</i>
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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.

**Call to Annual Congregational Meeting
TODAY, January 26, 2025**



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 11:00 am on Sunday, January 26, 2025.

The agenda will include the following: Receiving of Reports; Electing Officers, Board Members and Delegates; Adopting the 2025 budget and any other business that must properly come before the Congregation.

*This meeting will be HYBRID; on zoom and in-person.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89652939434?pwd=KQWkE1X0ZOCW2NIDWcVaaA2S1bPvYc.1>

Meeting ID: 896 5293 9434 Passcode: 067229



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:** Clark Gingras **Lay Reader:** David Walker
Trustee: Dave Allen **Counter:** Tom Briggs **Web Steward:** Scott Young
Coffee Host: Marc Cardentey and Jen Wissink

**The flowers this morning are given
in honor of Marian Schmitz's Birthday, with love from her family.**



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)

Ariana Moss ⁽²⁶⁾

Jonathan Ganino ⁽²⁷⁾

Robert Gauthier ⁽⁰¹⁾

Marian Schmitz ⁽²⁶⁾

Margaret Villani ⁽²⁷⁾



STAR Words are HERE! Pastor Jenn has a basket of STAR words for 2025 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.



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.

Heritage Sunday * January 26, 2025

Today we honor and celebrate the ways in which these long-term members have engaged in the mission and ministry of the Monroe Congregational Church. Through their contributions of time, talent and treasure, they have helped the Monroe Congregational Church thrive as a vibrant faith home. They have nurtured children and youth. They have offered gentle hands and hearts in times of need. They have stood on the side of love and justice in our community. We are grateful for their presence and for all the ways they have participated in this congregation. Thank you for your example and for staying, serving, and growing with us. Our church is a better place because you have been here!

	<i>Joined in...</i>
June Winger	1947 (78 Years)
Franklin Renz	1954 (71 Years)
Jackie Bleakney	1958 (67 Years)
June Wilkes	1959 (66 Years)
Myron Winger	1960 (65 Years)
Lorrie Sippin	1964 (61 Years)
Joyce Rousseau	1965 (60 Years)
Mary Massar, Gay Muizulis, Gary & Gail Thompson, Don Whiteley, Ann Zeiner, Vaughan Askue	1969 (56 Years)
Carol Kelly	1974 (51 Years)
Gail Olson	1975 (50 Years)
Tony Prall	1976 (49 Years)
Donna Jones Parratt	1977 (48 Years)
Loraine Zeiner, Ron & Peggy Villani	1978 (47 Years)
Andrea Crosnier	1980 (45 Years)
Marge Fox, Julie & Rob McClenathan, David & Lois Spence, Hubert Muizulis, Mary Renz	1982 (43 Years)
George & Priscilla Cunningham, Gayle & Robert Hammond	1983 (42 Years)
Linda Fracassini	1988 (37 Years)
Jane Allen, Ginger Bartlett, Paula Haggstrom	1994 (31 years)
David Walker, Diane Prall	1995 (30 years)
Paul & Suzanne Adams, Julie Heussner, John & Kathy Maiolo, David & Linda Rooney	1996 (29 years)
Joe & Betsy Gilberti, Osiris & Julia Gutierrez, Jim & Jennifer Halloran	1997 (28 years)
Nick & Linda Caballero, Ken & Pam Kelly, Roy & Jenn Nealon, Laurel & Ken Post, Scott & Katie Young	1998 (27 years)
John & Leslie Sekelsky, Jim Vance, Sue Waters	1999 (26 years)
Mark & Stacy Andrejczyk, Rich & Michelle Correll, Josh & Carrie Friend, John & Cindy O'Rourke, Marian Schmitz	2000 (25 years)
Eve Balestriere, Andrew & Kristina Logan	2001 (24 years)
Lynda & Richard Bauer, Cliff & Susie Cuseo, Joanne Malia, Mary Unger	2002 (23 years)
Susan Granello, Mark Malia, Linda Resnick, Bonnie & Chuck Schneider, Christine & Frank Wittenauer	2003 (22 years)
David & Kathy Allen, Ann-Marie Campbell, Jamie & Shirley Dotoratos, Don Elmendorf, Nancy Hedine, Joseph & Donna Konkol, Jean Moffat	2004 (21 years)

Trustees

2025 Stewardship Campaign: Better Together We're making progress with **71** pledges received totaling over **\$188,111.57**, but there are still a number of members who we haven't heard from yet regarding their donation plans for 2025. If you have pledged in prior years, we're counting on your pledge for 2025 and hope you will consider increasing your pledge to help us achieve our goals.

If you have not pledged before, but contribute to the church, please consider making a pledge for 2025, as this will help the church maintain our outstanding programs and meet our budget goals. And if you provide a recurring donation via Vanco, we still need confirmation of your donation plans for next year.

Please fill out your pledge card and bring it to worship this Sunday or return it via mail to the church office Attention: Receiver. Alternatively, you can email your pledge commitment to me at jorourke224@gmail.com Thank you for considering a financial commitment to MCC for 2025 and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Thank you for prayerfully considering how to financially support the Monroe Congregational Church in 2025!

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

Deacons

Snack & Chat with NOOMA The name NOOMA comes from a phonetic spelling of the Greek word πνευμα (pneuma), meaning "wind or spirit". Join us in Dineson Parlor after worship for a series of short films (less than 14 minutes each), snacks and a light discussion about life's big questions – no prep necessary and all are welcome! **Feb 16 –Rain**, Mar 30 – Dust, Apr 27 – Flame

Outreach

Join the fun group of women that keep the Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe open and thriving! 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 time frames 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 or 203-268-0280 with any questions.





Let's feed hungry neighbors!

The **Feel The Warmth mobile community hot supper** needs 6-8 volunteers to cook a delicious and nutritious meal for 250 hungry neighbors on Thursday, February 20th.

Prep time in the kitchen is at **nOURish's** main headquarters, 2200 North Avenue, Bridgeport from 3 to 5:30 pm.

It's then transported to the Harrison Apartments on 651 State Street, Bridgeport and served to the displaced and homeless population from 6 to 7 pm.

Please join us! Sign up in Wilton Hall

Fellowship



Silver Lake Retreat Center - weekend of May 2-4, 2025

Soon a team will be 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 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, 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

Young At Heart will meet at noon on February 20th at TBD



Join us for the monthly Book Club 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.

February 19th The Keeper of Hidden Books by Madeline Martin



**VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS
FAIR RE-CAP MEETING!**

FEB | 23 | 11:15

DINESON PARLOR

Please join us for a quick meeting to discuss what went well, what needs a little work and dream up new ideas for next time!

⚡ MCC SR PF PRESENTS ⚡

CHILI

COOK-OFF

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 22

5:30-7:30 PM

The Monroe Congregational Church
Rexford House
34 Church St. Monroe CT
Live Music!

\$8/person
Kids
Under 5
Free!!



Between the Keys
Playing Live!

- 12 Contestants
- Raffle baskets
- Bake sale
- Band Between the Keys playing Live!

All Proceeds benefit our 2025 youth mission trip!

?s - mccuccseniorpf@gmail.com

PHILLY SOFT PRETZEL

Step up your Super Bowl Sunday with Authentic Philly Soft Pretzels and Sweet and Salty Little Kernel's Kettle Corn! Dough-y inside, crusty on the outside, nothing beats a Philly Soft Pretzel!

Coming at you straight from the pretzel factory... pickup at MCC from 11:30am till 1:30pm on Super Bowl Sunday, Feb 9, 2025!

ORDER ONLINE

<https://pretzels.monroenonprofit.org/>
BY NOON ON SUNDAY, FEB 2, 2025.

*Proceeds benefit MCC youth programs
& Cub Scout Pack 262!*



In Our Prayers

Cindy Kovas; Dot Dralus, on the loss of her brother Franny; Congratulations to **Rev. Dr. Sheldon Smith** for his 55-year anniversary of ordained ministry; **Alison Abrams** (Jessica Pfalzgraf's sister); **Allie** (Colegrove's friend); **Jennifer Bittar** (Loraine Zeiner's friend); **Jackie Bleakney; Kevin Daly** (Gary Thompson's friend); **Dealmira** (Jonathan Ganino's grandmother); **Dan & Laura Dimauro** (Cuseo friends); **John Dominic** (Pfalzgraf's neighbor); **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 Khoury** (Will Duchon's friend); **Monica Lynch** (Bethany Dupuis' friend); **Jonathan Malia; Nicole Malia; the Manuzzi Family; Mary** (Kate Brigg's Mother); **Betty McKeown** (Donna Konkol's mother); **Meghan** (Mary Unger's niece); **Mike** (Janie Allen's son); **Jean Moffat; Olivia Morrison** (Donna Nickdow's niece); **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); **David Schoen** (Pastor Jenn's Uncle); **Carlos Serrano** (Kathy Maiolo's cousin); **Yessika Siccardi** (Sampson family friend); **Ed Simonovich** (Nancy Hedine's friend); **Bernie, Lori & Gary Sippin; John Skarupa** (Barb Pellegrino's brother); **Sheldon & Nancy Smith; Christine Stadler; Claire Stenzel** (June & Myron Winger's granddaughter); **Timara** (Mary Unger's friend); **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 & the West Bank; Israeli hostages** and their families, the people of **Ukraine, Sudan, Syria** 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: **Lt. Col. Rachel Hoffman**, Tacoma, Washington (Vaughan Askue's daughter), **Justin Riffard**, Pensacola Naval Air Station, **Zachary Gingras**, 395th Combat Sustainability Support, **Joel Smith**, 250th Engineering Company, **Chris Meneses** (Loraine Zeiner's friend), **Lance Corporal Taylor Smith** (Cheri Irwin's Nephew)

MCC Community Calendar

Week of Sun. Jan 26th

Annual Meeting~New Member~Heritage

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am Annual Meeting

5:00 pm Junior & Senior PF

Tue. Jan 28th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Thurs. Jan 30th

9:30 am Bible Study

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

7:30 pm Confirmation

Week of Sun. Feb 2nd

10:00 am Worship

11:30 am Trustees

5:00 pm Jr & Sr. PF

Mon. Feb 3rd

7:30 pm Outreach

Tue. Feb 4th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Thurs. Feb 6th

9:30 am Bible Study

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

7:30 pm Confirmation

Week of Sun. Feb 9th

10:00 am Worship

5:00 pm Sr. PF

Mon. Feb 10th

3 pm St. George's Supper

7:30 pm Deacons

Tue. Feb 11th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Thurs. Feb 13th

9:30 am Bible Study

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

7:30 pm Confirmation

Week of Sun. Feb 16th

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am NOOMA

5:00 pm Sr. PF

Mon. Feb 17th

Presidents Day – Office Closed

7:30 pm Council

Tue. Feb 18th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Feb 19th

7 pm Book Club

Thurs. Feb 20th

9:30 am Bible Study

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

7:30 pm Confirmation

Sat. Feb 22th

5:30-7:30 pm Chili Cook Off

New Members at MCC * January 26, 2025

Please join us in welcoming the newest members of our church community. These short introductions 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 their families personally.



Jeffrey and Meghan Cooper

23 Pilgrim Lane, Monroe CT 06468

Anniversary: June 9

Jeff Cooper

Cell: (203)650-3054

Email: jcyankees320@gmail.com

Meghan Cooper

Cell: (203)610-2513

Email: meghancooper910@gmail.com

Birthdates:

March 20 (Jeff), Sept. 10 (Meghan), May 10 (Nathan), March 20 (Evelyn)

We are delighted to introduce the Cooper family! Jeffrey "Jeff" Cooper is the Managing Director of Accenture. His interests include technology and carpentry. He is eager to get involved in various volunteer activities, including St. George's Supper, Habitat for Humanity, preparing meals during times of need, and providing snacks for children during coffee hour. Additionally, Jeff has a truck and is willing to help move items for MCC.

Meghan Cooper, who you can call Meghan or Meg, is the Senior Director of Research Engagement Services at Gartner. Meghan enjoys spending time with family and friends, reading, skiing, swimming, and running. She looks forward to volunteering with Outreach as her schedule allows.

Jeff and Meghan have two children. Their son, Nate, is 6 years old, and their daughter, Evelyn, is 2 years old. Evelyn and her daddy share a birthdate!

Molly Kinahan

Molly is a junior at Masuk. She is the former Minister of Outreach and current Treasurer for Senior PF, charged with leading her fundraising team to raise money for their 2025 summer mission trip. Welcome to the MCC family Molly!



Mary and Richard Erdmann
2 Southridge Road, Prospect, CT

Anniversary: July 8

Mary Erdmann
Cell: (203) 982-4132
Email: Maryerdmann@yahoo.com

Rick Erdmann
Cell: (203) 233-5401
Email: rickerdmann55@yahoo.com



Birthdates: April 22 (Mary), April 23 (Rick), Jan. 26 (Ariana)

Rick and Mary Erdmann are joining us from Prospect. Rick and Mary bring with them a wealth of experiences and a deep commitment to family. Rick, a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel, has a rich history of service to our nation, shaped by his upbringing as a military child who moved frequently. Mary, a retired registered nurse, has dedicated her life to caring for others and now finds joy in nurturing their grandchildren, including their granddaughter, Ari. The Erdmanns are looking forward to participating in the upcoming Strawberry Festival. Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Rick, Mary and Ari, as well as a very "happy birthday" to Ari!



Matt and Amy Matejek
10 Spinning Wheel Road, Monroe, CT 06468

Anniversary: Sept. 10

Amy Matejek
Cell: (203) 243-7033
Email: amym92@gmail.com

Birthdays: July 10 (Amy), April 10 (Matt), Jan. 23 (Harper), Nov. 12 (Delilah & Ramona)

Amy is the daughter of Rick and Mary Erdmann. She and Matt, a police officer in Fairfield, and T-ball coach who also enjoys golf, have 3 children, Harper (6) and twins Delilah and Ramona (4). You may remember their Christmas pageant debut last year! Amy expressed an interest in helping in the MCC nursery, with holiday projects and serving at St. George's Supper. Welcome Matejek family, we are thrilled to have you join us!