

34 Church Street
Monroe, CT 06468
Tel.: (203) 268-9327
Fax: (203) 268-3153
www.mcc-ucc.org

Office Hours:
Mon. 9am – 5:30pm
Wed. (remotely) 8am - 6pm
Fri. 9am – 3:30pm

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

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



THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST STEEPLE

June 1, 2025

Milestones & Movements

Dear Church Family, the season of transitions is upon us. Caps are flying, diplomas are being handed out, and suddenly the little ones who once toddled down our church aisles during the Children's Message are packing for college, heading into the workforce, or discerning what comes next. Kindergarteners are now middle schoolers. Eighth graders are now high schoolers. And some of us are blinking back tears wondering where the time went.

Graduation season is about more than just tassels and celebrations—it's about thresholds. Sacred ones. Whether it's graduating from preschool or earning a graduate degree, these moments mark not just what we've completed, but who we are becoming. And as a church, we have the sacred joy of standing with each other on the thresholds of life: cheering, blessing, and sometimes holding each other steady when the next step feels uncertain.

In Scripture, God's people were often on the move—from Egypt to the wilderness, from Babylon to home, from Galilee to Jerusalem. And through every change, every new chapter, the message is clear: *God goes with us.*

To all our graduates: We see you. We bless you. We are so proud of you. This church has been one of your many classrooms, and we hope the lessons of faith, hope, love, and grace will go with you wherever you journey next. Know that you are never alone.

To those transitioning in other ways—changing careers, retiring, moving to a new home, or navigating a life stage change—this is your season, too. We honor your courage to grow and trust in the Spirit's leading. Let's be a community that blesses both the "going out" and the "coming in." And may we always remind each other: No matter how many transitions we face in this life, God is already there—in the next hallway, the next job, the next town, the next version of ourselves.

A Blessing for Graduates and All in Transition

May you go forth with courage, rooted in love, surrounded by grace, and carried by hope. May you remember who you are, whose you are, and that you are never, ever alone. And as you step into what's next, may this reminder guide you: "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."¹ Amen.

Blessings always, Pastor Jenn

¹ Frederick Buechner

53rd Annual Strawberry Festival
Saturday, June 14 (10 am-5 pm) & Sunday, June 15 (12 pm-5 pm)

Monroe Congregational Church

Strawberry Festival Kick Off

Our kickoff will be on Sunday, June 1 when our youth from Senior PF will serve biscuit communion! After worship we will have cake, sell jam and festival paraphernalia! Please contact Clark Gingras, Pastor Jenn, Frank Wittenauer or Susie Cuseo with any questions, comments or concerns.



The Strawberry Festival is just two weeks away. The jams have been made, strawberry bread has been baked, Fireman's Field has been claimed, co-chairs have met and the area chairs have come together to discuss what can make this year's festival even

better than the last. A couple of new items have been added: Fireman's Field parking attendants and Handicap Transportation (must be 25+).



This is a time of community, service and strength as a church family. Without the help of all our volunteers, the festival would not be as successful. We need your help throughout the whole weekend whether it's picking, sorting, working in the kitchen, dipping, shortcake making, country store, face painting, working at games,

helping with prizes, making smoothies, grilling at the PF food tent, managing the bounce house, cleaning tables, removing the trash bags and so much more. Show up and there'll be an area that you'll be needed. Please contact any of the co-chairs for questions or concerns: Clark Gingras, Rev. Jenn Gingras, Frank Wittenauer or Susie Cuseo.



Please sign up.

of MCC in our largest fundraiser of the year. The sign-up sheets have been posted in Wilton Hall or please use the link below!

Strawberry Festival Volunteer Signup Link!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E094CAEAA22A4FB6-56666921-strawberry>

Sign up for a wonderful weekend of community and camaraderie in support

Calling all MCC Bakers: The **Country Store** will need **baked goods to sell!** Please bring in your delicious homemade goodies! Please do not send in things that will melt.



Trustees

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. 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 use the walkie-talkie provided to notify the camp director, Karen, of your presence. Thank you!



Heartfelt 
THANKS
TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

The Board of Trustees received lots of help this year and completed many important tasks for the benefit of our MCC community. Below is a list of all that was accomplished: Cleaned up gardens & install new cedar mulch, trimmed shrubs around the church and parsonage, fixed broken fence section and installed a new post in overflow lot, cleaned up parking lots, patched pavement in driveway, cleaned up the broken pavement in Gingerbread/Mustard Seed driveway, removed AC covers, turned on power and checked A/C systems thermostats in the church, cleaned widows in classrooms and office, replaced ceiling light bulbs in the kitchen and Wilton Hall, replaced broken ceiling tiles, cleaned up the basement doorway to the Meeting House, cleaned vines off of shrubs on the church green and vacuumed church pew cushions and fixed buttons.

Thank you to the volunteers who came out and accomplished so much! David Allen, Mark Barnhart, Glen Brigham, Bill Brett, Michelle Cardentey, Mike Ganino, Andrew Logan, John O'Rourke, Bill Stadler, Frank Wittenauer, Scott Young, Lisa Bauerle, Janie Allen, Bob Hammond, Julie McClenathan, Rob McClenathan, Mike, and David Waker

Labors of Love

Have you been wanting to help out during one of our spring or fall church clean up days, but they haven't lined up with your availability? Have you spotted something that's been really bugging you – like that cobweb in the Rexford House entry, dirty windows, a dead light bulb, or you'd really love to have the ladies room looking spic and span like when it was new? The Trustees have too, but there is only so much that can get accomplished by a handful of busy people. That's why we have created **Labors of Love**. As church property needs arise they will be posted in the Steeple, bulletin and/or on the Wilton Hall bulletin board. Keep an eye out for upcoming Labors of Love lists and please help out where you can, when you can!



Contact Dave Allen, dallen9457@att.net (203)767-0883, or the office, secretary@MCC-UCC.org, with any questions, comments or ideas.

1. repairs on the grass edging strip running alongside the church
2. deep cleaning of restrooms



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.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C48ADAC2CA5FEC61-flowers_or_MCC-UCC.org)

Fellowship



MCC Summertime Coffee Hour Hosts: Are you interested in providing refreshments for our church members and friends following Sunday worship! All you need to do is arrive at the kitchen by 9:45 to get the coffee going (instructions found on kitchen wall). Providing baked goods or other snacks are always welcome (but not mandatory). Please sign up in Wilton Hall. (Although one can do it, it's fun to serve with a friend). Thank you!

Young At Heart will meet at noon on June 26th

Details to be announced



Morning Circle will meet on Wednesday, June 11 at 12pm at Sal's Family Pizza on Rt. 25 for their June picnic luncheon, celebrate someone's birthday and collect items for the Home for the Brave. There will be carpooling or lifts from residences if needed from the church's parking lot by calling Amy at 203-243-7033. Many thanks to our members for donating over 50 women's hygiene products for the Food Pantry. Morning Circle will not meet during July or August. Keep your eye out on the Steeple for upcoming meetings. Please contact Susie Cuseo at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280 with any questions, concerns or comments.

Join us for the monthly **Book Club on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 7 pm.** 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 203-452-0850.



June 18th The Berry Pickers by Amanda Peters Host: TBD

July 16th Brave New World by Aldous Huxley Host: TBD

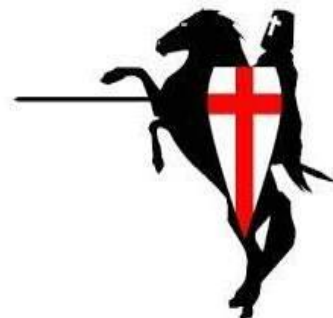
Outreach



Help Needed for the **Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe!** Do you have spare time on Tuesdays at 1pm? Volunteers come to the back entrance of the Shoppe to help sort, hang and tag merchandise that has been donated. It's easy to and fun to do! Donations of gently used clothing, toys, shoes, book and small household products can be left in the collection box just outside the Shoppe. These donations are brought in on Tuesdays while the volunteers are sorting or during business hours: Fridays 10-3 or Saturdays 10-2. Sales associates are also needed during two-hour shifts when the Shoppe is open. Shop volunteers will gladly show you what needs to be done. A procedure list can be sent to you via email by contacting Susie Cuseo at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280, if you need more information or have questions or comments.

St George's Supper – Next Monday, June 9th

Please join us for sandwich making in the kitchen following worship on Sunday, June 8th. Please consider a cash donation this month to help us feed our neighbors, look for the basket at coffee hour to contribute. Any amount would be gratefully received. Please memo on checks: "St George's Supper". Please contact Stacy at 203-500-1279 with questions. Thank you!



What a wonderful time had by all at the **Prayer Partner "Big Reveal"** luncheon held on Sunday, May 18th. Fifty members prayed for each other and they finally found out who was praying for whom. I hope that even though the event is officially over that my prayer partners continue to keep each other in their thoughts and prayers. Thank you to all of those who've signed up over the last several years. It has been fun emailing and texting everyone reminders or just to wish them a happy day and for every one of the luncheons I've hosted of the last several years. Thank you for your dedication to each other by sending notes or cards in the mail remembering them on special occasions or just for the fun of it. I am

grateful for each and every one of you for making this a wonderful program that does not take a lot of time or effort to do. All it takes is a moment out of your day to mentally think of that one person and I hope that it brought a smile to your face. I am also pleased to have Michelle Cardentey take over the running of this great program and hope that you all return to sign up again.

I leave you with this prayer for you:

Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us to thy never-failing care and love, for this life and the life to come, knowing that thou art doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for; through Jesus Christ our Lord. ... Lord please give my treasured friends love and blessings without end. Amen. Susie Cuseo



Deacons

Smash the 100 Ceiling: A Talk by Jim Hisey, June 8th after worship in Dineson Parlor



Like many churches today, we find ourselves at a pivotal moment. We have a strong, loving congregation, but how do we grow? How do we invite more people into our community while deepening our impact? In my upcoming presentation, *Smash the 100-Member Ceiling*, we'll explore these questions together. This is a conversation about **building a thriving church that grows, welcomes, and sustains new members in meaningful ways.**

During this session, we'll talk about: **Why churches hit attendance ceilings** – and how to break through them. **The power of invitation** – practical ways every member can help grow our church. **The mindset of a thriving congregation** – shifting from "small church" thinking to "big impact" vision. **Simple, actionable strategies** – easy-to-implement steps to help Monroe Congregational Church flourish.

This event is for **church leaders, long-time members, new attendees, and anyone who believes in the future of our congregation.** No matter your role, you have a place in this movement. The goal isn't just about numbers—it's about creating a **strong, engaged, and spiritually vibrant church** that continues to serve and inspire for generations to come. I invite you to join us for this vital discussion. Blessings, Jim



Graduate Sunday, June 8, 2025

Have you or a loved one recently completed high school, college/ university, graduate school, or another educational program?

Join us for Worship on June 8th so we can celebrate your achievement!

Contact the church office with the details, and let us know where you are headed next!



June 1st is Youth Sunday! Senior PF is looking forward to sharing their gifts in leading worship. We hope you'll join us!



Senior PF is holding a bottle drive to raise money for our Mission Trip to NC in July. We're collecting returnable bottles until after Strawberry Festival. **Donation containers are in Rexford Hall.** Thanks so much for supporting us and letting us take your returnables!



*Please join Don Whiteley's friends and family
for a celebration of his life,
followed by a luncheon in Wilton Hall*

**SATURDAY, JUNE 7, 11AM
THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
34 CHURCH STREET**

*The Monroe Congregational
Church Presents*

***STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL
CRAFT & FINE ART SHOW
CELEBRATING SINCE 1972!***

Join us Father's Day Weekend
Saturday, June 14th, 10 am - 5 pm
Sunday, June 15th, 12 pm - 5 pm

Over 100 Juried Crafters & Artisans, plus
Homemade Strawberry Shortcakes, Pies,
Jams & Dipped Berries, Food Tent, Kid's
Games, Face-Painting, Country Store,
Smoothies and so much more!

Featuring Live Entertainment by:

Saturday: Gunsmoke 11-1,
The Other Four 2-5

Sunday: Half & Half 11:30-12:30
Silver Steel Band 1-4

**34 Church Street * Monroe, CT
203-268-9327 * mcc-ucc.org
www.facebook.com/MCCSF1972**

***Free admission and parking
at Fireman's Field***



In Our Prayers

Alison Abrams (Jessica Pfalzgraf's sister); **Allie** (Colegrove's friend); **Jennifer Bittar** (Loraine Zeiner's friend); **Jackie Bleakney**; **Lisa Cody & Dave Barton** (friends of Julie and Rob McClenathan); **James Brown, Debbie Cuseo** (Cliff's sister-in-law); **Kevin Daly** (Gary Thompson's friend); **Dealmira** (Jonathan Ganino's grandmother); **Dan & Laura Dimauro** (Cuseo friends); **Dot Dralus, Matt Duchon**; **Elaine** (Wendy Colegrove's Aunt); **Bruno Forte** (Nancy Hedine's friend); **David Fischman** (Sue Granello's Friend); **Donnajean Fredeen, Dave Fuller** (Gail Olson's brother); **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); **John** (Donna's father); **Jonathan** (Matt Colegrove's brother); **Kelti** (friend of Liska Gutierrez), **Samia Khoury** (Will Duchon's friend); **Cindy Kovacs**; **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); **Olivia Morrison** (Donna Nickdow's niece); **Pat Nugent**; **Ocampo family** (friends of Liska Gutierrez); **Nancy Olofson**; **Missy & Gail Olson**; **Donna Parratt**; **Regina Roberts** (Kathy Maiolo's niece); **Alfredo Rodriguez** (Osirus Gutierrez's cousin); **Noah Santiago** (Shari Carrano's great-grandson); **Palma Senatore** (Sara Alvarez's grandmother); **Carlos Serrano** (Kathy Maiolo's cousin); **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 Wininger'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); **Allen & 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), **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)



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

			Betsy	Dutton	06/16
			Danielle	Smith	06/17
Rebecca	Cicarelli	06/02	Kathryn	Young	06/19
Jill	Sapak	06/03	Scott	Young	06/19
Jaxon	Sullivan	06/04	Chantal	Crosnier	06/20
Glenn	Brigham	06/05	Meg	Sullivan	06/20
June	Wilkes	06/05	Edan	Yang	06/20
Bill	Brett	06/08	Juliette	Nealon	06/21
Kyle	Konkol	06/08	Michael	Ganino	06/23
Jeanette	Cardentey-Morales	06/09	Julia	Gutierrez	06/23
Cynthia	Kovacs	06/10	Molly	Kinahan	06/23
Abby	Coleman	06/11	Sarah	Post	06/29
June	Wininger	06/11	Dan	Sullivan	06/29
Rich	Correll	06/14	Jennifer	Gingras	06/30
Paul	Cardentey	06/15	David	Walker	06/30

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⁽⁰¹⁾ Kathy & David Allen⁽⁰³⁾
 Joel & Danielle Smith⁽⁰³⁾ Scott & Katie Young⁽⁰⁵⁾
 Paula & Carl Haggstrom⁽⁰⁶⁾ Chuck & Bonnie Schneider⁽¹³⁾
 Don & Kate Parker-Burgard⁽¹⁶⁾ Ron & Peggy Villani⁽²⁴⁾
 and Stacy & Mark Andrejczyk⁽²⁹⁾

June 2025 MCC Community Calendar

Week of Sun. June 1st

Communion & Youth Sunday

10:00 am Worship

11:30 am Trustees

Mon. June 2nd

7:30 pm Outreach (Zoom)

Tue. June 3rd

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. June 4th

6:30 pm Confirmation Celebration
(Dineson)

Thurs. June 5th

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Sat. June 7th

11:00 am Don Whiteley's Celebration of Life

Week of Sun. June 8th

Confirmation Sunday

10:00 am Worship

11:00 am 'Crush the 100 Ceiling' (Dineson)

5:00 pm Sr. PF

Mon. June 9th

3 pm St George's Supper

7:30 pm Deacons (Zoom)

Tue. June 10th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. June 11th

12:00 pm Morning Circle Picnic (Sal's)

Thurs. June 12th

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Fri. June 13th

Strawberry Festival Setup



June 14th & 15th



523rd Annual Strawberry Festival

Week of Sun. June 15th

Father's Day, Strawberry Festival Sunday

10:00 am Worship

Tue. June 17th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. June 18th

7:00 pm Book Club

Week of Sun. June 22nd

10:00 am Worship

5:00 pm Senior PF

Pastor Jenn is on vacation June 24 – July 30

Tue. June 24th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Thurs. June 26th

12:00 pm Young @ Heart

Week of Sun. June 29th

Rev. Ed Rawls, Guest Preacher

10:00 am Worship

5:00 pm Senior PF

Mon. June 30th

Diane Vacation - Office Closed