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<p><b>Office Hours:</b> Mon. 9am – 5:30pm Wed. (remotely) 8am - 6pm Fri. 9am – 3:30pm</p>
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Senior Pastor: Rev. Jennifer Gingras  
Music Director: Will Duchon  
Administrator/Bookkeeper: Diane Prall  
CE Coordinator: Jeanette Cardentey-Morales  
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**Find us on YouTube** <https://www.youtube.com/monroecongregationalchurchucc>



**THE** MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
**STEEPLE**

**November 1, 2023**



*There is a balm in Gilead  
To make the wounded whole  
There is a balm in Gilead  
To heal the wounded soul...*

In the 2007 apocalyptic film "I Am Legend" fictional character Lieutenant Colonel Robert Neville is a military virologist and the last surviving uninfected human in a city that is overrun by vampires. Neville believes that every other non-vampire human

being in the world has died. Even though he is surrounded by death, Neville persists in his search for a cure to reverse the plague. With an insane and desperate optimism, he speaks as if death and destruction can still be reversed, saying "I'm not leaving...I'm not going to let this happen...."

It might be true that Neville was partly driven by his own hubris and post-traumatic stress (*having lost his wife, daughter and finally his beloved dog to the virus*). But on the positive side, Neville was certainly not paralyzed by the destruction found all around him. He refused to spend much time wringing his hands in despair because the world had changed dramatically beyond his control.

Instead, he was both resolute and uncompromising, believing he was personally responsible for transformation in the place where his feet touched the ground. Inspired by the life and love of his family and by Bob Marley's musical vision of a dying world transformed to life, Neville continued to push himself to survive, devoting weeks and months to discovering a cure. And in his dying moments, he authorized others to carry forward the work of healing and transformation he would never see completed.

The other day I was thinking about the similarities between the group-thinking of some congregations in what feels like a little bit like a real-life zombie movie. We who love the church have deeply felt the impacts of a global pandemic along with a host of other worries, including but not limited to political unrest, economic upheaval, wars in multiple places around the world and so many others.

And there is some truth to what commentators have been reporting about the Western Christian Church in general. Many of our congregations are quite tired, with little activity beyond worship. For these faith communities, the reasons for sticking with it may be less about ministry and mission and more about how uncomfortable it can be for a person who loves their church to lose it: *I've been a member here for 40, 50 or 60 years. I want my funeral to be in this church. If more of those young families would just come, they would love this place the way we love this place.*

I don't think that early commentators tell the full story of this challenging but ultimately transformational season. It turns out, there is a remnant of the faithful who are not easily moved. Modest bands of believers in urban, suburban, and rural communities continue living out their faith. While sober about their future, they are still disciplined and intentional about their ministries.

To those of you who have not given up; to those of you who are committed to your church; to those of you who believe that God is not through with us yet, this message is for you: *There is a balm in Gilead; there is a physician there.* And indeed, your Dr. Neville-thinking is indicative of the commitment of your time, talent and treasure which has enabled us to endure this season. So, thank you.

It's been said that radical love demands radical commitment, and that every neighborhood church is at ground zero in the economy of God. We are called to reverse the trajectory of despair and refocus on the opportunities for peace, love and abundance in our neighborhoods, our country, our planet, and even our beloved Monroe Congregational Church.

And I'm curious... in what ways have you witnessed our church change lives? In what ways do you hope for us to continue to do so together in the future? Have a blessed November, everyone!

*In peace, Pastor Jenn*

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**Because of YOU, our church changes lives.** It is a statement that is both bold and simple in expressing the truth about the ultimate nature and the purpose of the church: *to engage in acts of transformation.*

At MCC, we see our mission as one that gives assurance to every individual that their life matters, not because we say so, but because the gospel does. We can be bold about that because we know it is true. Our own journeys bear witness that being a part of a beloved community has either made us different; or causes us to fervently believe that it will.

A community of faith like ours gives us hope, reminds us of our value, calls us to discover and claim our purpose and motivates us to be a part of something larger than ourselves. And it's all for the sake of a love that mirrors the values of the Realm of God. In the month of November, you will be hearing from a variety of speakers about how our church changes lives as we ask our members and friends to make a commitment towards the future with a pledge of financial support.

At the end of the day, what it comes down to is that our church matters because of you. Each of us, by the gifts and the decisions we make, power our sacred work to make ministry happen. The arithmetic is not complex: making a choice to grow in generosity enables MCC to increase the impact of the difference we make. Together, we expand our shared quest to change lives – even our own. So be bold! Take a step forward in your generosity.

If you haven't done so already, please complete and return a pledge card for the upcoming year in the plate or through the mail, or send your intentions via email to [jorourke224@gmail.com](mailto:jorourke224@gmail.com). Thank you for prayerfully considering how to financially support the Monroe Congregational Church in 2024!

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

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# Prayer for Peace


Two peoples, one land,  
Three faiths, one root,  
One earth, one mother,  
One sky, one beginning, one future, one destiny,  
One broken heart,  
One God.

We pray to You: Grant us a vision of unity.  
May we see the many in the one  
and the one in the many.

May You, Life of All the Worlds,  
Source of All Amazing Differences.  
Help us to see clearly.  
Guide us gently and firmly toward each other,  
Toward peace. Amen.

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Rabbi Sheila Weinberg  
Jewish Community of Amherst, Amherst, MA





**Remember to turn your clocks back 1 hour on  
Sunday, November 5 at 2 am!**

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**Trustees**

A poster for a 'Fall Clean Up' event. It features a large, bold, cyan-colored 'JOIN US!' at the top. Below this, the text 'WHETHER YOU CAN GIVE AN HOUR, OR A MORNING, PLEASE COME HELP MAINTAIN OUR CHURCH CAMPUS!' is written in white. To the left of this text is a photograph of a young child in a blue jacket and jeans, playing in a large pile of autumn leaves. Below the photo, the event details 'Fall Clean Up Nov 4, 8:30-noon' are written in a large, bold, orange font. At the bottom, the tasks 'Rake, patch walls, trim shrubs, clean windows, replace lightbulbs, etc.' are listed in white.

**JOIN US!**

**WHETHER YOU CAN GIVE  
AN HOUR, OR A MORNING,  
PLEASE COME HELP MAINTAIN  
OUR CHURCH CAMPUS!**

**Fall Clean Up  
Nov 4, 8:30-noon**

Rake, patch walls,  
trim shrubs, clean windows,  
replace lightbulbs, etc.

Call Dave Allen with any questions: 203-767-0883 Thank you!



Don't miss the **MCC "Thank you" Pancake Breakfast** following church on **November 19<sup>th</sup> - Commitment Sunday!**

**Annual Reports are due Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup>**

Please submit your annual report to the church office by Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup>  
Please call the church office with any questions: 203-268-9327 or email [secretary@MCC-UCC.org](mailto:secretary@MCC-UCC.org)



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**Outreach**



**Thank you** to everyone who came out to enjoy some good wine and fellowship at this year's **Outreach Wine Tasting**. **Your support raised \$815.00** for **Church World Service's Disaster Relief** efforts. If you'd like to donate, but haven't yet had the chance, you can do so online or through the offering,

simply write "CWS Disaster Relief" on your envelope and in the check memo. Thank you so much!

Many thanks to Roy Nealon for providing the wines for the evening, and our gracious hosts Linda and Jack Fracassini!

**Thanksgiving Baskets**



The **MCC Covenant to Care Thanksgiving Fundraiser** is back! Please see the poster and donation basket at coffee hour. You can also donate from our website -please memo **Covenant to Care!**

<https://mcc-ucc.org/donate.html>

Thank you for your past and present support!  
Diane Prall, Covenant to Care Liaison



**Heifer International** is a charity Morning Circle collects spare change for. This year we have sent \$100 in gifts to families in need around the world. Bees and goats are a couple of gifts that can help families support themselves. Offspring of the animals are given to neighbors so that they too can sustain themselves making the community stronger and self-supporting. **A collection jar is set out on the table during coffee hour.** Contact Susie Cuseo at [thecuseos@yahoo.com](mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com) or call 203-268-0280 with any questions.

**OUTREACH**

**BINGO & SPAGHETTI NIGHT**

**SATURDAY, NOV 18** In MCC's Wilton Hall

*Save the Date!*

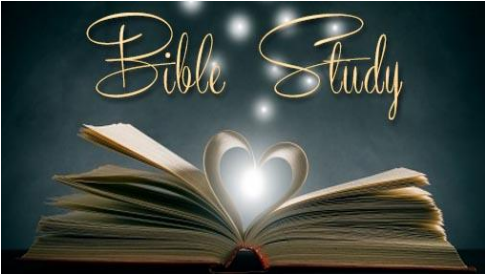


Sending out a HUGE "thank you" to our Mustard Seed volunteers! The Mustard Seed Shop raises funds that are donated to many wonderful outreach programs! Above is a photo of some of our awesome volunteers "sorting and tagging" ~ join them on Tuesdays at 1:15 pm or become a sales associate! Shifts are available on Fridays from 10-12:30 and 12:30-3 and on Saturdays from 10-12 and 12-2. A list of procedures is available or just come in and visit a volunteer during business hours and they'd be glad to help you with any questions. Please contact Susie Cuseo with any questions at [thecuseos@yahoo.com](mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com) or 203-268-0280.

Give the Gift of Sight by donating your used prescription glasses, sunglasses and cases. Throughout the month of October a basket will be available by the coffee table. Your gifts will be cleaned, measured and given to someone who will see the world clearly when reading or seeing the face of a loved one. Contact Susie Cuseo at [thecuseos@yahoo.com](mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com) or call 203-268-0280 with any questions.



## Deacons



**Weekly Bible Study, Thursdays 9:30-11 am:** We cordially invite you to join us each week as we gather in together in Dineson Parlor to learn with and through one another. After a time of fellowship and prayer concerns, we read and discuss upcoming scripture texts or other faith-related topics. Bring your favorite Bible (whatever version you prefer) and a small notebook. Let Pastor Jenn know if you have any questions!



**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.monroecongregationalchurch.org)

## Snack & Chat with NOOMA

Join us in Dineson Parlor after worship on these dates to enjoy some snacks, a short video and light discussion about life's big questions.

No prep necessary and all are welcome!

Oct 29 – SHELLS  
Nov 12 – TOMATO  
Dec 10 - SHE





## Fellowship



The Monroe Congregational Church, UCC and St. Peter's Grace Episcopal Church invite you to save the date of **Sunday, December 3 for our Annual Tree Lighting Celebration on the Monroe Centre Green at 5 pm.**

MCC will be hosting the fellowship time following the lighting this year, if you are able to help out by bringing a plate of cookies or goodies, our fellowship friends would sure appreciate it!



Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, Young at Heart will meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday this month, November 16 at noon.

Location TBD

Please RSVP to Arlene Redmond 917-370-4711, or [arleneredmond@gmail.com](mailto:arleneredmond@gmail.com)



**We encourage anyone to join us on the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:pjsh55@gmail.com) or home phone or 203-452-0850

The book club selections for upcoming months:

November 15<sup>th</sup> - 7 pm - Come Fly the World by Julia Cooke

December 20<sup>th</sup> - 7 pm - The Book of Longings by Sue Monk Kidd

January 17<sup>th</sup> - 7 pm - The Magnificent Lives of Marjorie Post by Allison Pataki

February 21<sup>st</sup> - 7 pm - This Tender Land by William Kent Kreuger



**Morning Circle** invites the women of the congregation to attend their next meeting on Wednesday, November 8 at 11AM in Wilton Hall. We'll be putting together bean soup jars for the Food Pantry. Monetary donations are accepted to cover the cost of seasonings. Many thanks to Monroe Stop & Shop for covering the costs of the beans. Please leave any gifts in the collection bin marked Morning Circle located across from the men's room. Please contact Shari Carrano with any questions or concerns at 203-400-3563.

### **Our calendar of meetings**

Wednesday, November 8 - Bean Soup Jars for Food Pantry - Gift tags

Wednesday, December 13 - Annual Christmas luncheon - Location TBD

Wednesday, March 13 - Birthday bags for Food Pantry

Wednesday, April 10 - Church World Service hygiene kits

Wednesday, May 8 - Collection of Women's hygiene products

Wednesday, June 12 - Annual June picnic - Location TBD



**Please join us for Adult PF the fourth Saturdays of the month in Dineson Parlor from 5:30 to 8pm!** Bring your own beverage and a snack to share. We are excited to bring Adult PF back to MCC in a new format! Each month will be led by different members of the group. It could a discussion of an article or movie, a game night or a service project for MCC or the greater community, or an outing etc.

Your presence and ideas are wanted and welcome. All adults young and old are encouraged to attend. Please reach out to Janie Allen via phone/text/email at 203-522-3686 or [janeEallen@sbcglobal.net](mailto:janeEallen@sbcglobal.net) with any thoughts or questions. Our **next meeting will be Saturday, 11/25**. Come check it out!



At coffee hour on October 22 **MCC bid a fond farewell to Carol Vielle**. Carol is returning to Arizona to reside with her daughter. Carol is a generous person with a heart of gold and a beautiful soul to match. We will all miss her. Good luck, Carol!

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## Community News

### Happening at the Monroe Senior Center



- Nov 7<sup>th</sup> – sign up at the front desk for the **Thanksgiving Luncheon by Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>** - \$10pp. It's always a fun time!
- **Vascular/Circulation Testing** – coming off the success of the Health Fair, it's a painless, non-invasive test to screen for heart disease before it becomes a problem – sign up in the Senior Center lobby.
- **AARP Smart Driver Course** is in the house on Nov 14<sup>th</sup>. Lower your auto insurance by taking a refresher course.

This is just a sampling of what is going on at Monroe Senior Center in November. Hope to see you here frequently!

Warm regards, Jean G Gardino, Administrative Assistant  
Town of Monroe Senior Center, 235 Cutlers Farm Rd 203.452.2815 x1

## **In Our Prayers**

**Alison Abrams** (Jessica Pfalzgraf's sister); **Allie** (Colegrove's friend); **Jennifer Bittar** (Loraine Zeiner's friend); **Jackie Bleakney; Byron Brown & Bruce Bryant** (friends of Will Duchon); **Lori Cimeno** (Peggy & Ron Villani's Daughter); **Kevin Daly** (Gary Thompson's friend); **Dawn** (Donna Konkol's Friend); **Dot Dralus; Matt Duchon; Elaine** (Wendy Colegrove's Aunt); **Bruno Forte** (Nancy Hedine's friend); **David Fischman** (Sue Granello's Friend); **Dave Fuller** (Gail Olson's brother); **Clark Gingras; Mary & Rachel Heerema** (Julia Gutierrez's mom & sister); **Heidi** (Diane Prall's sister); **Brad Heines** (Susie Cuseo's friend); **Bob Heffernan** (Ann Zeiner's son-in-law); **Brian Hopkins** (Donna Konkol's cousin); **Vera James** (Jenn Wissink's mother); **Joey** (Calvert Locks); **Jonathan** (Matt Colegrove's brother); **Kelti** (friend of Liska Gutierrez); **Walter Lane** (Marge Fox's brother-in-law); **Monica Lynch** (Bethany Dupuis' friend); **Nicole Malia; Ron McGlinchey** (Pastor Jenn's dad); **Betty McKeown** (Donna Konkol's mother); **Mike** (Janie Allen's son); **Jean Moffat; Olivia Morrison** (Donna Nickdow's niece); **Bert Muizulis; Joe Mumper** (Julie McClenathan's friend); **Pat Nugent; Ocampo family** (friends of Liska Gutierrez); **Nancy Olofson; Missy Olson; Osborne** (Colegrove's Family friend); **Dean Perosino** (Gayle Hammond's brother); **Geno Piacentini** (Karen MacDonald's husband); **P.T. Philip** (Liz Sampson's father); **Regina Roberts** (Kathy Maiolo's niece); **Alfredo Rodriguez** (Osirus Gutierrez's cousin); **Noah Santiago** (Shari Carrano's great-grandson); **Carlos Serrano** (Kathy Maiolo's cousin); **Yessika Siccardi** (Sampson family friend); **Bernie Sippin; Gary Sippin** (Lori Sippin's son); **John Skarupa** (Barb Pellegrino's brother); **Christine Stadler; Tom Steen** (Jessica Pfalzgraf's dad); **Rev. Dr. Sheldon Smith; Christian & Dain Steiner** (Julie McClenathan's nephews); **Claire Stenzel** (June & Myron Winger's granddaughter); **Olga Terwilliger** (Nancy Hedine's sister-in-law); **Richard Turco** (Jack Fracassini's cousin); **Ruth Wakeley; Charles L. Wynn, Sr.,** (and his mother) **Alleane** (friend of Will Duchon); **Allen Zeiner** (Ann Zeiner's son); **Ann Zeiner**

**The concerns of our world:** The people of **Ukraine; LGBTQ+ children and their families** facing discrimination; those who serve or live in **war or conflict zones** around the world; **first responders** and those who serve in **law enforcement**; those who suffer **discrimination**; those who struggle with **mental illness, addiction, divorce or separation; Caregivers;** the **homeless, homebound and refugees;** Our friends living on the **Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation** and in **Oaxaca, Mexico**

**Those serving in the military, veterans & their families:** Germany: **Rachel Hoffman** (Vaughan Askue's daughter), Virginia: **Chris Meneses** (Loraine Zeiner's friend), Georgia: **Zachary Peters** (Jacob Parker-Burgard's cousin), Kuwait: **Jon Sanchez** (Don Whiteley's grandson-in-law) Stateside: **Zachary Gingras**, 395th Combat Sustainability Support, Middletown. **Joel Smith**, 250th Engineering Company



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

James	Allen	11/03	Jonathan	Malia	11/18
Mark	Malia	11/07	Madison	Caballero	11/20
Jack	Campbell	11/08	Tess	Bauer	11/21
Catherine	Goyette	11/09	Robert	Hammond	11/21
Dorothy	Dralus	11/10	Trees	Whitbeck	11/22
Diane	Prall	11/10	Ruth	Wakeley	11/24
Gail	Olson	11/11	Abby	Clausen	11/26
Linda	Resnick	11/11	Gail	Thompson	11/26
Jordan	Vaglivelo	11/11	Marc	Cardentey	11/27
Osiris	Gutierrez	11/14	James	Brown	11/28
Michelle	Cardentey	11/15	Katherine	Hyde	11/28
Kathy	Allen	11/17	Henry	Bergeron	11/29



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

Gilles & Joyce Rousseau<sup>(02)</sup>      Karen Matysczak & James Brown<sup>(04)</sup>      Laurel & Ken Post<sup>(05)</sup>  
 Andrew & Kristina Logan<sup>(09)</sup>      Paul & Susan Granello<sup>(12)</sup>      Debra Hansen & Alan Vaglivelo<sup>(21)</sup>  
 and Dana & Al Jesulaitis<sup>(29)</sup>

**November  
MCC Community Calendar**

**Thurs. Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study  
6:00 pm Confirmation Class  
6:00 pm Bell Choir  
7:00 pm Chancel Choir

**Sat. Nov 4<sup>th</sup>**

8:30 am Fall Church Work Day

**Week of Sun. Nov 5<sup>th</sup>**

*Communion ~ New Member Sunday ~ Day  
Light Savings*

10:00 am Worship  
11:30 am Trustees  
5:00 pm Junior PF  
5:00 pm Senior PF

**Mon. Nov 6<sup>th</sup>**

7:00 pm Outreach Zoom

**Tue. Nov 7<sup>th</sup>**

*Election Day*

1:15 am Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

**Wed. Nov 8<sup>th</sup>**

11:00 am Morning Circle

**Thurs. Nov 9<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study  
6:00 pm Confirmation Class  
6:00 pm Bell Choir  
7:00 pm Chancel Choir

**Week of Sun. Nov 12<sup>th</sup>**

10:00 am Worship  
11:15 am Snack & Chat NOOMA  
12:00 pm Senior PF  
5:00 pm Junior PF

**Mon. Nov 13<sup>th</sup>**

*Office Closed for Veteran's Day*  
7:30 pm Deacons (Zoom)

**Tue. Nov 14<sup>th</sup>**

1:15 am Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

**Wed. Nov 15<sup>th</sup>**

7:00 pm Book Club

**Thurs. Nov 16<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study  
6:00 pm Confirmation Class  
6:00 pm Bell Choir  
7:00 pm Chancel Choir

**Sat. Nov 18<sup>th</sup>**

5:00 pm Spaghetti & Bingo Night

**Week of Sun. Nov 19<sup>th</sup>**

*Stewardship Sunday*

10:00 am Worship  
11:00 am Pancake Breakfast  
11:15 am Music Committee  
5:00 pm Senior PF  
5:00 pm Junior PF

**Mon. Nov 20<sup>th</sup>**

7:00 pm Council (Zoom)

**Tue. Nov 21<sup>th</sup>**

1:15 am Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

**Thurs. Nov 23<sup>rd</sup>**

*Thanksgiving Day – office closed*

**Fri. Nov 24<sup>th</sup>**

*office closed*

**Sat. Nov 25<sup>th</sup>**

5:30 pm Adult PF

**Week of Sun. Nov 26<sup>th</sup>**

10:00 am Worship  
12:00 pm Senior PF  
5:00 pm Junior PF

**Tue. Nov 28<sup>th</sup>**

1:15 am Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

**Thurs. Nov 30<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study  
6:00 pm Confirmation Class  
6:00 pm Bell Choir  
7:00 pm Chancel Choir