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

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

September 1, 2023



"The morning had dawned clear and cold, with a crispness that hinted at the end of summer." – George R.R. Martin

As families resume the rhythms of another school year, I remember my own back-to-school adventures. Going to Bradlees for a few new clothes, including sneakers, which my brother and I seemed to outgrow every summer. Getting a hot pink

Trapper Keeper with a bunch of new folders that I'd decorate for each class, does anyone else remember that satisfying Velcro rip? Scanning the newspaper for my bus route, which was always the same, bus 9. Calling my friends to see what teachers and classes we might have together. And the beginning of another year of Sunday school at the North Madison Congregational Church, helping my mom and other teachers organize the classroom supplies. These memories are precious to me, I'm sure that yours are to you as well. Relationships ARE the heartbeat of the community. To be sure, school spirit plays a role in bringing everyone back together. But even more than that, September is the time of year when so many of us return to regular routines as we begin to feel like we're back "home" again.

The start of our fall programming at MCC is another version of homecoming. The resumption of Sunday School and our music ministries, Junior and Senior PF, weekly Bible study and Confirmation, the sharing of table and fellowship with one another—these events remind us of the relationships that are the heartbeat of our community. It's more than just adding traditional church events back on the calendar—it's a challenge for us to seek to live our primary identity as disciples.

Whether you've been able to be with us in person this summer or not, popping in every once in a while, or remaining solely online, I want to invite you to: *"come home."* We want to see your face this September, as the choir sings and our children head off to Sunday School. We want to see you at our Homecoming Picnic at Wolfe Park as we catch

up with one another. We want to see you because you are the Church! Let's make this fall our own Homecoming in the sense that we step up to the challenge of our mission and discover God together. Let's equip one another for life together. Let's reach inward and outward to serve together. Let's show up and strengthen each other through the power of presence.

The congregation does not exist without its members. And membership cannot exist without each other. Gathering for worship reminds us of who God calls us to be—it reminds us that we're not in this alone. Worship reminds us that we belong to a community, and then we are sent out to live in that community. But without this practice, without this gathering, we won't know who we are and most importantly, WHOSE we are. So come on home, MCC. You are loved, you are welcome, you are needed. We'll see you Sunday.

In peace, Pastor Jenn

Pledge Envelopes

If you pledge to the church and would like to use pledge envelopes please call 203-268-9327 or email Diane at secretary@MCC-UCC.org **before the September 30th order deadline** –thank you! (Offering envelopes are available in the pews.)



Trustees



2023 Capital Campaign Update

Earlier this year, the MCC Board of Trustees launched a capital campaign designed to raise funds needed to support the painting of the Meeting House and the front of Beardsley Hall. With the goal of raising \$25,000 to complete this project, the campaign has progressed well, but we are a bit short of our goal with \$17,476 donated from 47 MCC members or families as of mid-August. If you haven't donated to this campaign, please consider making a donation in September to help us

complete the campaign. If you have already donated to this campaign, but would like to make an additional donation that would be appreciated as well. Donations can be sent to the church office to the attention of the Receiver, online via the Donate button on our web site or via the offering plate at Sunday service.

Thanks for your donations and consideration and please contact MCC Receiver John O'Rourke (jorourke224@gmail.com) if you have any questions.



Outreach

Wine Tasting Fundraiser

October 14th

at the Fracassini's home, 55 Misty Lane, Monroe

The **Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe** is looking for **volunteers** to help sort, tag and hang donated merchandise on Tuesdays at 1:15 PM after Labor Day. Sales associates are needed on Fridays for shifts from 10-12:30 and 12:30-3 and on Saturdays from 10-12 and 12-2. It's easy to do with a list of procedures that you can read over or visit a volunteer during business hours and they'd be glad to help you with any questions regarding opening or closing. Please contact Susie Cuseo with any questions at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280.



Did you know that your spare change can help those in need in faraway lands? A collection jar found on the table during coffee hour will be available for your change. This monetary donation purchases animals and plant products that help families make a living and any offspring from those animals will go to other neighbors making the community stronger and financially fit.

Morning Circle matches a majority of the donation from the generosity of the congregation. Please contact Susie Cuseo at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280 with any questions.

Have you cleaned out your junk drawers this summer and found several prescription glasses, glass cases or sunglasses? Your used glasses can be donated to give the gift of sight. They will be cleaned, checked and given to someone in need of reading the newspaper or a book, watching the sun rise or simply seeing the smile on a loved one's face.



Give the gift the sight by donating your prescription glasses/sunglasses and cases. A labeled basket will be in Wilton Hall during the month of September and October. Contact Susie Cuseo at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280 with any questions.



COVENANT TO CARE Essentials Drive

Help children entering emergency foster care with essential hygiene items and make their landing a little softer.

Most needed (new, full-sized): deodorant, body wash, shampoo/conditioner.

Also needed: toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush, baby wash/shampoo, hair & skin care products, shaving cream, razors, feminine products, diapers/pull-ups, wipes.



Christian Education

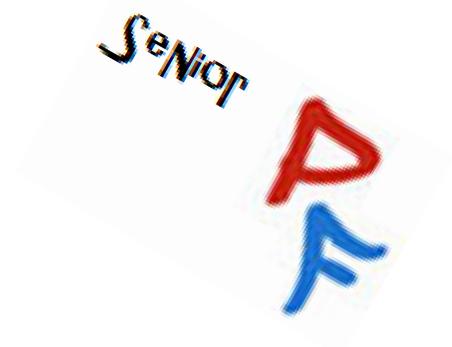


Register Now for 2023/2024 Children & Youth Programming at MCC!

We are planning this year's programming! Please sign up your child(ren) and youth for the 2023/2024 season.

Sign up here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C48ADAC2CA5FEC61-youth1>
or on our website: **MCC-UCC.org**





As we embark on a new season of growth and learning, we are excited to invite interested members to join our Sunday School Team and play a vital role in nurturing the hearts and minds of our youth.

The Opportunity:

Our Sunday School program is more than just education; it's an avenue to share God's boundless love with the younger members of our congregation. We are searching for enthusiastic individuals who enjoy spreading the love of our God and Jesus Christ and who possess a genuine love for working with children and pre-teens. By becoming a Sunday School teacher, you will have the opportunity to make a lasting impact on young lives, fostering spiritual growth, and helping to build a strong foundation of faith.

Requirements:

- A strong desire to share God's love and teachings with our youth.
- Patience, understanding, and a compassionate heart for children of all ages.
- Commitment to serving on Sundays during the Sunday School hours – teachers share responsibility and rotate weekends so no one is left teaching every Sunday, unless they wish to!
- A willingness to collaborate with fellow teachers and align with the curriculum.
- A background check and Safe Church Training.

Benefits:

- Deepen your own faith through the process of teaching and guiding young believers.
- Develop leadership and mentoring skills in a supportive environment.
- Join a community of like-minded individuals who share your passion.
- Witness the growth and transformation of the children under your guidance.

How to Get Involved:

- If you feel called to this important work and have a desire to impact the lives of our young members, we encourage you to join us! Whether you have prior teaching experience or are simply eager to invest in the future of our church, your dedication will be warmly welcomed.
- To express your interest or to learn more about becoming a Sunday School teacher, please reach out to Jeanette Cardentey Morales our Director of Christian Education who can provide further insights into the curriculum, expectations, and answer any questions you might have.
- jeanettemcardentey@gmail.com or 203-257-9637



Our beloved Youth Group, JR PF, dedicated for 6th to 8th graders, is in need of advisors for the upcoming 2023-2024 school year. We are looking for individuals who are passionate about working with middle schoolers, who can embody God's love, and who are willing to be dedicated and reliable Youth Group advisors. If you have a heart for this age group and a desire to invest in their spiritual growth, we would love for you to join us!! Jr PF is a vibrant space where young minds gather to build lasting friendships, navigate the challenges of adolescence, practice philanthropy in our community, learn to love each other with grace and make memories for a lifetime.

Regrettably, the current lack of advisors is putting the future of this program in jeopardy. The role of an advisor extends beyond guidance; it's an opportunity to mentor, inspire, and connect with our youth. By becoming a Jr PF advisor, you can make a profound impact on the lives of these young individuals during a crucial phase of their journey as they navigate the challenges of growing up. We are looking for 3-4 advisors. We ran last year with 3 full-time and 1 substitute advisor and that was not sustainable. The more advisors we have the more flexibility in scheduling and less time commitment required. All advisors will be required to have a background check and participate in our safe church training. We sincerely hope that you will consider joining us so we can continue providing a safe, fun, and nurturing environment for our middle schoolers. If you are interested becoming an advisor or would like to learn more, please reach out to Jeanette Cardentey Morales at jeanettemcardentey@gmail.com or 203-257-9637.

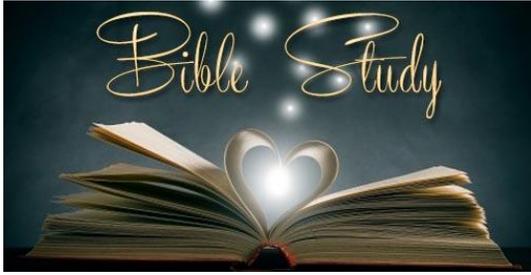
Deacons



Youth Confirmation Begins! Freshman year of high school is the traditional time for Confirmation at MCC (although, we are also open to having older students participate!). In Confirmation, participants build a supportive covenant community with the other members of the class; they explore, understand and own the vows of baptism; and they discover and assume the privileges and responsibilities of adult church membership. Confirmation is an important rite of passage, but we hope it is more than that for them. We hope it is the beginning of a wonderful life-long adult spiritual journey.

A **Confirmation Orientation Meeting** for parents and confirmands will be held on Wednesday, September 20th at 7 pm in Dineson Parlor. There will be a **Dedication** moment during worship on Sunday, October 1st. **Classes**

are held from 7:00-8:00 on most Wednesdays beginning October 4th. If you have any questions or concerns, please let Pastor Jenn know.



Weekly Bible Study Begins Thursday, September 7, 9:30-11 am: We cordially invite you to join us each week as we gather together to learn with and through one another. All are welcome in Dineson Parlor, from 9:30-11 am beginning Thursday, September 7. 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!

Snack & Chat with NOOMA: During this program year, Pastor Jenn will be offering a snack and chat group after Sunday Worship once a month. NOOMA is a series of 24 short films (less than 14 minutes each) that "blend [events of] everyday with discussion about God". Each short story covers a specific topic on a real-life situation, usually by relating the various experiences from a Christian perspective. The series features Rob Bell, the author of Love Wins. The name NOOMA comes from a phonetic spelling of the Greek word πνευμα (pneuma), meaning "wind or spirit". Join us in Dineson Parlor to enjoy some snacks, a video and light discussion – no prep necessary and all are welcome!

Sept 24 – NAME

Oct 29 – SHELLS

Nov 19 – TOMATO

Dec 10 - SHE



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

Fellowship



Prayer Partner Signups are in Wilton Hall. What's a Prayer Partner? you might ask. This is the person you've been assigned to pray for and keep in your thoughts. All you have to do is sign up and you'll get an information sheet through the mail with the name, address, hobbies, etc. of the person you are to pray for. Meanwhile someone else receives your information and they'll keep you in their thoughts. You can send them a note or card in the mail for special events signed "Your Prayer Partner" and use the church's address (34

Church St Monroe, CT 06468) as the return. In May 2024 we'll meet for the "Big Reveal" potluck luncheon held in Wilton Hall at 11AM. Praying for each other connects us spiritually and with empathy, strengthens our relationships, promotes healing and well-being, offer support and encouragement and cultivates a sense of unity. Contact Susie Cuseo with any questions or comments at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280.



Sign-up Sheet in Wilton Hall!

Or

Homecoming picnic signup link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d44a8ac22a2fb6-mcchomecoming>

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 with any thoughts or questions. Our **next meeting will be Saturday, 9/23**. Come check it out!





Book club for September will be the usual 3rd Wednesday, **September 20th** and we will discuss Lessons in Chemistry. Due to it being a popular book it has been difficult to get it from the library. Hopefully we can all get a copy to read by the September meeting.

October 18th - 7 pm - The Second Mrs Astor by Shana Abe'

As always we encourage anyone to join us. 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 or home phone. pjsh55@gmail.com or 203-452-0850

Thank you to the 21 members of Young at Heart who celebrated another luncheon in August at Sal's Family Pizza in Monroe. On **Thursday, September 28 at 12PM** we will meet once again for lunch. Contact Shari Carrano at 203-400-3563 to sign up or for more information. Location TBD.



Morning Circle's first meeting of the church year will be on **Wednesday, September 13 at 11AM** in Dineson Parlor where we will have Ray Giovanni speak about local scams. He will be providing a sandwich lunch for the group. We meet every second Wednesday of the month with the exception of January and February. We work in collaboration with the Food Pantry providing bean soup jars for Thanksgiving, birthday bags for children who visit with their families, collect women's hygiene products and make trick-or-treat bags in October. We put together Church World Service hygiene kits for international families in crisis and collect spare change for Heifer International.

Our calendar of meetings

- Wednesday, October 11 - Trick-or-treat bags for Food Pantry
- 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 contact Shari Carrano with any questions or comments at 203-400-3563.

Monroe Community Events

Monroe Farmers' Market: Every Friday, 3-6 through October at the Town Gazebo.

St. Peter's Apple Festival: on Saturday and Sunday September 9-10th - one of the best ways to start the fall season is to support our neighbors across the green at their annual event which is always filled with food, vendors and fun!

Lion's Blood Drive: On September 26th the Lions will be hosting another Red Crossw Blood Drive in Wilton Hall from 11 am – 7 pm.

In Our Prayers

Charlie Schwartz (Carol Kelly's friend); **Alison Abrams** (Jessica Pfalzgraf's sister); **Griffin Allen**; **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); **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); **Mary & Rachel Heerema** (Julia Gutierrez's mom & sister); **Heidi** (Diane Prall's sister); **Bob Heffernan** (Ann Zeiner's son-in-law); **Brian Hopkins** (Donna Konkol's cousin); **Vera James** (Jenn Wissink's mother); **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**; **Betty McKeown** (Donna Konkol's mother); **Mike** (Janie Allen's son); **Jean Moffat**; **Olivia Morrison** (Donna Nickdow's niece); **Joe Mumper** (Julie McClenathan's friend); **Bert Muizilis**; **Pat Nugent**; **Ocampo family** (friends of Liska Gutierrez); the family & friends of **Jennifer Olson** (Gail Olson's daughter-in-law); **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: **CPL Zachary Gingras**, 395th Combat Sustainability Support, Middletown. **Joel Smith** (250th Engineering Company)



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

Mia	Briggs	09/02	David	Rooney	09/19
Liska	Gutierrez	09/02	Jeff	Swift	09/19
Vinathi	Sampson	09/02	Colleen	Konkol	09/20
David	Bailey	09/03	Marisa	Pinto	09/20
Paul	Adams	09/08	Vandana	Sampson	09/20
Lorraine	Sippin	09/08	Mary	Massar	09/21
Becky	Unger	09/08	Kristen	Prall	09/24
Edward	Dotoratos	09/09	Nancy	Hedine	09/26
Laura	Cuseo	09/10	Priscilla	Cunningham	09/29
Andrew	Logan	09/14	Katherine	Logan	09/29
Joshua	Post	09/16	John	Esposito	09/30
Ronald	Villani	09/16	Heather	Henning	09/30
Julie	McHugh	09/17	Laurel	Post	09/30



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

Jenna & Stephen Rice⁽⁰⁴⁾ Cheramie & Victor DiMenna⁽⁰⁸⁾ Kim & Mike Riffard⁽¹⁴⁾
 Reggie & John Hastedt⁽¹⁶⁾ Julia & Osiris Gutierrez⁽¹⁶⁾ Shirley & Jamie Dotoratos⁽¹⁶⁾
 Jenn & Andy Nivison⁽¹⁹⁾ Marilyn & Robert Schultz⁽²⁰⁾ Gay & Hubert Muizulis⁽²⁵⁾
 Jan & Chris Pearson⁽²⁹⁾ Kate & Mark Barnhart⁽²⁹⁾ and Donna & Jim Gill⁽³⁰⁾

September MCC Community Calendar

Week of Sun. Sept 3rd

Communion

10:00 am Worship

Mon. Sept 4th

Labor Day - Office Closed

Tue. Sept 5th

9:30 am Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Thurs. Sept 7th

9:30 am Bible Study

Fri. Sep. 8th - Sun. Sept. 10th

St Peter's Grace Apple Festival

Week of Sun. Sept 10th

10:00 am Worship

11:00 Music Committee (Dineson)

11:30 Trustees (Conference Room)

Mon. Sept 11th

Diane on Vacation - Office Closed

7:30 pm Deacons (Zoom)

Tue. Sept 12th

1:15 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Wed. Sept 13th

11:00 am Morning Circle

Thurs. Sept 14th

9:30 am Bible Study



Week of Sun. Sept 17th

Homecoming Sunday

10:00 am Worship

12-4 Picnic at Wolfe Park

Mon. Sept 18th

7:30 pm Council

Tue. Sept 19th

1:15 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Wed. Sept 20th

7:00 pm Book Club

7:00 pm Confirmation Orientation

Thurs. Sept 21st

9:30 am Bible Study

Sat. Sept 23rd

5:30 pm Adult PF

Week of Sun. Sept 24th

10:00 am Worship

Tue. Sept 26th

11:00 am – 7 pm Lion's Blood Drive

1:15 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Thurs. Sept 28th

9:30 am Bible Study

12 pm Young @ Heart