



MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE STEEPL

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Monroe, CT 06468

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Office Hours:
Monday – Friday
9:00a.m.- 3:30p.m.

Senior Pastor: Rev. Jennifer Gingras
Director of Faith Formation: Debi Mastroni-Kenyon
Music Director: Will Duchon
Secretary: Melissa Rosenberg
Church e-mail: secretary@mcc-ucc.org

April 1, 2018



April Fool!

You must be joking! Given that Easter is April Fools' day perhaps "You must be joking!" is the perfect response to the good news that Jesus Christ is risen.

Resurrection is usually treated very seriously in the church. It's a story told in whispers, under the half-light of morning. Behind the resurrection stories is the question: What does this mean? The anxiety of Mary

not recognizing the gardener who returned to the garden in John's gospel; the ending of Mark, so sudden and the real fear of the women: what if this is true? It seems like the Christian faith has as its foundation a series of pretty un-believable events when seen from the perspective of what is practical and true.

But does that miss the point? Might a good belly laugh be the appropriate response not just because God has played the final trick on death, but because resurrection is not some intellectual exercise, but a way of affirming life and confidence in the world when everything else seems to say the opposite?

Easter Day may be a good time to let go of taking ourselves and our faith too seriously. Let the message be heard less through reason and argument, but rather, let it be the way we respond to death, oppression and darkness. Let's dare to trust what resurrection can do among tombs and gravestones and dead ends as we giggle ourselves away from the direction of all that binds us and embalms us. Resurrection can be an ongoing experience of affirmation rather than a one-time event.

With a joke, things are not as they first seem. This is Mary's experience staring at the gardener, asking him where the body was only for the twist to be revealed: "I'm not the gardener!" The Bible, alas, does not record any laughter at that moment but in the years of retelling you can hear it, the unexpected revelation, the April Fool. The fact that we can still laugh proves that we are prepared to believe in what is unexpected, in what defies how we normally experience the world. This is what makes us ready for resurrection, for new possibilities, for revelation. That we can still be surprised is *Really Good News*.

In Christ, Pastor Jenn

Fools for Christ!

Over the past few months, well years really, I have been spending a lot of time lost in the wilderness of discernment. Feeling called by God, but not really sure what or where that call is. God has this way of nudging at me and never letting me go once called. Sure I can throw lots of "stuff" in the way of the call, but it still remains – gently tugging at my sleeve like a needy child. While sitting in a Pentecostal Church with our Confirmands I had another "aha" God moment and the call is becoming clearer. I will be enrolling at the New York School of Ministry for September to attend their "Word and Sacrament" program to hopefully prepare me for ordained ministry. I feel as though I have been resurrected!

We all have these nudges from God though, not just to work in the church, but work in other places too. Theologian Frederick Buechner has said that "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet" and this couldn't be more true. We can't all be ordained ministers – now that would be something – but we are ALL called by God for the greater good of the Kingdom.

Where is your deep gladness? Where is the world's deep hunger? The answers to these questions are as unique as each person's fingerprints. I encourage you to think about these questions, pull yourself out from your tomb, and experience the resurrection too!

"For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all." Romans 12:4-18 NRSV

Peace and Easter blessings to you!

Debi

Trustees



Spring Workday Saturday, May 4th at 8:00 am - We have plenty of spring cleanup jobs to tackle so please come out and spend a few hours helping to spruce up our campus. Breakfast will be provided. If you are able to assist, please sign up in Wilton Hall. Any questions, please email Dave Allen dallen9457@att.net

Save \$ on your Electric Bill - If you would like to save money on your electric bill, and possibly get it for free, while helping MCC lower their energy bills, please stop by and talk with Donna Konkol on Sunday April 8th after church in Wilton Hall. Donna can also be reached at 203-209-2974



Mind the Gap – Stewardship 2018



Greetings – thanks to everyone who has submitted a pledge for the 2018 MCC Stewardship campaign. We currently have 91 pledges for a total of \$193,098. But there's a gap. While we have made great progress, we are still \$7,000 short of our goal of \$200,000, which is what was assumed in the 2018 budget. If we don't hit this goal, that means we'll have to pull more funds from our investment reserves to fund our operating costs.

If you have not submitted a pledge for 2018, please consider doing so in March. If you have already submitted a pledge, and can consider increasing your pledge to help us fill the gap – that would be appreciated. You can submit your pledge via the pledge cards available in the pews, or by notifying Melissa in the church office.

Thanks for your support – The MCC Stewardship Committee

John O'Rourke (Receiver), Roy Nealon, Scott Young

Deacons

HELLO

I'm new here.

New Member Informational Luncheon, April 15 ~ Join the deacons and Pastor Jenn for an informational luncheon at 11:15 in Dineson Parlor. Find out more about the history (how we got here), theology (what we believe) and ways you might connect with others and learn more about faith doing so.

Prospective Members will join the church during worship on April 29th Please contact Pastor Jenn at jenn@mcc-ucc.org with any questions.



Faith on Tap, Friday April 6th: Come talk about life and current events from a spiritual perspective in Veracious Brewing Company's back room from 7:30 - 9pm with your friends from MCC! No formal presentations - just people kicking around a topic, sharing honestly

what really matters to them. Anyone is welcome at the table. No topics are off limits. Agreement is not required, but civility is essential. Tea-totelers and soda drinkers welcome too! Call/text Clark ([203-895-5604](tel:203-895-5604)) or Rev. Jenn ([203-895-5607](tel:203-895-5607)) Gingras with any questions.

April 6th theme: The **New Sanctuary Movement** is a growing number of faith communities protecting and standing with immigrants facing deportation. We'll discuss what is going on with some local congregations that are involved. Do Christian churches carry a responsibility to protect immigrant families who face discrimination or unjust deportation? Why or why not?

Outreach



It's that time again...the next St. George's supper is April 16th Please look for the poster in Wilton Hall to sign up to help. We have a variety of needs, including shoppers, and servers. Simply take a tag (or two!) and you will be making a difference for those in need. Please bring all food to the church by the morning of April 15th. If you take a tag and are unable to fulfill your commitment please contact the church office 203-268-9327. If you would like a tag but cannot make it to church please call Melissa in the office.



Join the Adult Mission Team for a fundraiser luncheon: **¡Un sabor de Puerto Rico! (A Taste of Puerto Rico!)** after worship on Sunday, April 22nd at 11:15. Enjoy a plate of rice & beans, pork shoulder and a salad for a suggested donation of \$8 (\$4 for children). Bring your dancing shoes, because dance instructor Kristen Prall of Art in Motion will show us some simple Latin dances. You'll also hear about the work our team will be doing in the hurricane ravaged region. Please save the date and sign up today in Wilton Hall.

Dress A Girl Around The World Sew-A-Thon 21st from 10am- 3pm at MCC~ Join Liz Skarzyinski from Dress A Girl Around The World to create dresses for little girls overseas. Thank you for your generous donations of fabric. Dress A Girl is part of Hope for Women International a non-profit, nondenominational independent Christian organization. If you would like to help or join the team, please call Liz 203-257-7174 or email Liz1202us@yahoo.com.

Christian Education



April Sunday school Calendar

- 8th** – NO Sunday school
- 15th** – Sunday school for PreK-4th grades; 5th-8th grades help prepare St. George's Supper
- 22nd** – Sunday school for all grades
- 29th** – Sunday school for all grades

April Jr. PF Schedule

8th- No Jr. PF

15th – Regular gathering from 6:00-7:30pm

22nd – Regular gathering from 6:00-7:30 pm

29th – Farm in Bethany (TBD)



Save the Date for VBS Vacation Bible School will be here before you know it! Registration is now available online at www.mcc-ucc.org. Contact Debi for more information.

Are you ready for summer? Check out the 2018 Summer Conference Brochure and start pick which conference you will attend. Please share this brochure with your friends! Tell them all about the life-changing ministry of Silver Lake, where we encounter God's love in creation. Scholarships are available-Please see Pastor Jenn. Download the brochure online at www.silverlakeect.org. Contact Silver Lake Conference Center at 860-364-5526 for registration and scholarship information. We can't wait to see you back at The Lake! *The Staff of Silver Lake Conference Center*



Strawberry Festival



JAM SESSIONS-VOLUNTEERS WANTED: Believe it or not, the time is upon us to make JAM for the Strawberry Festival...and we need your help! The dates below for ready for JAM making. If Saturdays are difficult for your schedule, I am open to adding additional JAM sessions on a weekday if there are enough people interested. A JAM session should have at least 4-5 volunteers.

Friday April 13 ~ Saturday April 21

Anyone interested, please text "MY NAME IS _____, I WANT TO MAKE JAM" to my cell ([917](tel:9172245654)) [224-5654](tel:9172245654). Or Email me johnnymaiolo@gmail.com. I'll be in touch you with to work out the dates & times that work best for you.

Let's make the 2018 Strawberry Festival a success for MCC! Thanks in advance for your help! JAM (John Anthony Maiolo)pure destiny, I guess!

Website Updates

Hi All! I am going to be updating the church website and could use your help. If there is an area of the website that is of interest to you, could you please look at it and send me any updates? Send to debi@mcc-ucc.org. – Debi M-K

Fellowship

You are invited to the next Young at Heart luncheon on Thursday, April 26. We will meet at 12 noon, at Jennie's 380 Monroe Tpke. Please leave a message for Jackie Bleakney at [203 268-5275](tel:2032685275) if you would like to attend or have questions.

Please join us for the MCC Book Club!

- ✚ **April 18th -7:30pm** The Chaperone by Laura Moriarty ~Hosted by Sue Smelzer
- ✚ **May 16th -7:30pm** Cowboy and His Elephant by Malcolm MacPherson ~Host TBD
- ✚ **June 20th -7:30pm** The Museum of Extraordinary Things by Alice Hoffman ~Host TBD



Morning Circle invites all the women of the congregation to our meeting on Wednesday, April 11 at 11AM in Dineson Parlor. Please bring a sandwich for lunch while we have business meeting. We will be putting together the Church World Service Hygiene kits, which contain the following items:

- One hand towel measuring approximately 15" x 28" to 16" x 32" (no fingertip, bath, dish towel or micro-fiber)
- One washcloth
- One wide-tooth comb removed from the package
- One fingernail or toenail clipper removed from the package
- One bath-size bar of soap in the wrapper
- One toothbrush in the package
- Ten standard size Band-Aids

We are looking for donations that can be placed in the bin across from the Men's room. If you prefer to send a monetary donation, please address the check to MCC with CWS Hygiene kits on the item line. These kits help make the difference between sickness and health for struggling families worldwide after major catastrophes. Please contact Susie Cuseo with any questions at [203-268-0280](tel:2032680280) or at thecuseos@yahoo.com. Thank you for your support and donations in supporting this wonderful cause.

Prayer Partners Unite!!! Mark your calendars for Sunday, May 20 at 11:15AM in Wilton Hall for our "Big Reveal" potluck luncheon. A signup sheet will be posted a few prior to the event. Bring a dish to share and indicate if you require the nursery for children 3 years and younger. Older kids can dine at the big table. Continue to prayer for your partner and keep them in your thoughts especially during the upcoming Easter holiday. Find them during the special coffee hour that morning or stand by them at the sunrise service at 6:30AM



at Wolfe Park (they might be there). Contact Susie Cuseo at [203-268-0280](tel:203-268-0280) or at thecuseos@yahoo.com with any questions.

Community News



Meals on Wheels Available in Monroe You can get up to 7 lunch or dinner meals per person a week delivered. If you won't be home at the time of delivery, contact CW Resources prior to day of delivery to arrange for the driver to leave food in a cooler. Suggested \$2 donation per meal. **Call CW Resources 203-332-3264**

MCC Community Calendar

Tues. Apr. 3rd

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Apr. 4th

6:30pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. Apr. 5th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)
7:15pm Adult Choir

Fri. Apr. 6th

7:30pm Faith on Tap (Veracious Back Room)

Week of Apr. 8th

10:00am Holy Humor Worship
5:00pm Senior PF
6:00pm Junior PF

Tues. Apr. 10th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Apr. 11th

9:30am Retired Men's Breakfast (Dineson)
11:00am Morning Circle (Dineson)
6:30pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. Apr. 12th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)
7:15pm Adult Choir

Fri. Apr. 13th

9:00am Jam Making (Kitchen)

Week of Apr. 15th

8:45am Deacons Meeting (Dineson)
10:00am Worship
11:15am New Member Informational (Dineson)
5:00pm Senior PF
6:00pm Adult & Junior PF

Mon. Apr. 16th

3:45pm St. George's Supper
7:30pm Church Council Meeting (Dineson)

Tues. Apr. 17th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag
7:00pm Bereavement Support Group (Dineson)

Wed. Apr. 18th

6:30pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. Apr. 19th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)
7:15pm Adult Choir

Sat. Apr. 21st

9:00am Jam Making (Kitchen)
10:00am Dress A Girl (Wilton Hall)

Week of Apr. 22nd

10:00am Worship
11:30am A Taste of Puerto Rico (Wilton Hall)
5:00pm Senior PF
6:00pm Junior PF

Tues. Apr. 24th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Apr. 25th

6:30pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. Apr. 26th

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)
7:15pm Adult Choir

Week of Apr. 29th

10:00am Worship
5:00pm Senior PF
6:00pm Junior PF

Tues. May 1st

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. May 2nd

6:30pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. May 3rd

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)
7:15pm Adult Choir

Fri. May 4th

7:30pm Faith on Tap (Veracious)

Sat. May 5th

8:00am Trustees Spring Clean Up
12 Youth Sunday Rehearsal (Meetinghouse)