



THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

STEEPLE

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

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February 1, 2019

Real Love



Legend has it that the first “valentine” was sent by an imprisoned young man named Valentine to a peasant girl he loved. Or that Valentine was a monk who married poor couples in secret. Valentine’s notes have been recorded for as far back as the Middle ages. While the meaning and celebrations of Valentine's Day have changed over the years, it remains a special day to shower those we hold close with our love.

Have you noticed the shift that happens right after New Year’s in your local grocery store? We know Valentine’s Day is coming when marketers pull on our heart strings with clever pink heart filled signs and commercials reminding us to buy cards, chocolates, flowers, or jewelry. Last year, American consumers spent \$18.9 billion dollars on Valentine’s Day gifts for their loved ones. Isn’t that something?

Do I sound too curmudgeonly about this Hallmark Holiday™? Maybe. Rest assured - I love my husband Clark. But I don’t need some marketing ploy to guilt me into buying things for him. To be honest, I’d much rather spend time together playing a board game or building a puzzle.

According to the marketers, “love” is something you “fall into” if you wear the right perfume, clothing, or drive the right car. But love isn’t just this mushy feeling that causes someone to feel warm and fuzzy inside. Real love is deeper than that. Here’s the Biblical definition:

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails; ([1 Corinthians 13:4-8](#)).

Valentine's Day sparks a variety of emotions for different people. For some, there is great satisfaction in celebrating the love you have between you, your partner, and your friends & family. For others, it can cause feelings of loneliness. Whether you are single, widowed, struggling or in a strong patch with your relationship, please remember that God has unconditional and indescribable love for you.

In Christ, Pastor Jenn

Church Camp Musings

I remember the first time I went to Silver Lake in Sharon, CT. I was in my 20's and a youth group adviser chaperoning a weekend retreat and thought, "Wow! What a great place, I wish I had been here sooner". I have been to Silver Lake many times on retreat over the years, but last summer I had the privilege of being able to attend Silver Lake during the summer as a CAMPER! I attended Clergy Camp as a Member in Discernment and it was one of the best experiences I've had. Just being there with other campers, even though much younger, was exciting and joyful. Being able to go swimming in the lake, climb the High Ropes, visit the Art Grotto, and the Nature Center was great and mealtime with 200+ other campers and leaders was amazing!

Silver Lake is a place where young people experience nature, make new friends, and explore their faith. With more than 60 acres of wooded land on lakeside shores, Silver Lake offers many opportunities for young people to take risks and try new things with the support of an intentional Christian community. Time and again campers have said: "Silver Lake is where I can be the real me!"

Registration is now open for Summer Conferences for youth in 4th-12th grade at <https://www.silverlakect.org>. Scholarship funds are available through the Fairfield East Association and Silver Lake. There is an Open House scheduled for Sunday, May 19th, from 1:00-5:00 pm. See Debi M-K for more information. During the Open House you can tour on foot or hay ride, see the cabins and other buildings, check out the ropes courses and the waterfront! It's a chance to "know before you go"!!!

I would love to meet with you if you have any questions – perhaps a group of us can go up to the Open House in May! This is a wonderful opportunity for our young people to get acquainted with God in another very exciting setting.

Peace and blessings to you, Debi

Elisha's Corner

By Gary Thompson, Church Historian

Another Day for Celebration BSA

According to my old *Handbook for Boys*, copy written 1948, it was February 8, 1910 when publisher William D. Boyce and other interest associates formally incorporated the Boy Scouts of America. The idea for such an organization was fostered by a positive experience Boyce had with a Boy Scout while visiting London, England. Our celebration of this event takes place each February (close enough to the 8th) on Boy Scout Sunday. This year,

however, will be significantly special as it will celebrate a fifty year milestone.



It was the year of the Woodstock Concert in Bethel, New York, the retirement of Mickey Mantle from baseball, Richard Nixon became our the 37th President and Charles de Gaulle resigned as president of France, Golda Meir became Prime Minister of Israel, and the Boeing 747 debuted. It was the year of the Chappaquiddick incident and college protests, the birth of the PLO, PBS stations, and ATM installations. And, by all means, it was the year the "Eagle" landed on the moon by Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin – both

Eagle Scouts. It was a mere fifty years ago in 1969 that the Rev. Robert Keeling, after celebrating the opening of Rexford House the year before, was granted a charter for Boy Scout Troop 63 sponsored by the Monroe Congregational Church, UCC. The Charter was dated December 31, 1969; so the Troop 63 scouts can celebrate all year.

Were it not for the diligence of current Scoutmaster Ed Gratrix, this milestone event may have gone unnoticed. Our church archives do not have copies of the 1969 charter or the original charter of the Troop. Such documents are will be provided soon. It turns that the Troop's history is longer than fifty years and names of individuals very familiar to MCC are involved. The Troop is actually ninety-two years old; so in 2026 we have to remember to have a centennial celebration. H. Kenneth Merrill was its first scoutmaster. It was initially chartered to a group of Monroe citizens. Our first charter request was dated May 19, 1932 by our Hans Denison, who was our church "president" (moderator) at the time. It was sponsored by The Congregational Men's Club until 1935 when it was taken over by the Monroe Elementary School PTA. The Troop met at the school. Roger Beardsley and Bernie Sippin were members of this group of scouts. In 1942 another group of Monroe citizens were chartered until 1946 when the Monroe Fire Department sponsored it. Meetings were then moved to the fire house on Route 110. Due to a loss in adult leadership, their charter lapsed in 1968. Its Scoutmaster Ray Kunz, a MCC member, then sought the help of our church. And fifty years ago the call was ably answered. Rev. Keeling was the Troop's Committee Chairman, Ross Anderson, also an Eagle Scout and whose son became an Eagle Scout, was the Institutional Representative. He was succeeded in his role by Don Whitely, another Eagle Scout. For about ten years around the turn of the century Eagle Scout, Rev. Peter Allen led the Scout Troop. His sons, Hank and James earned their Eagle rank with the Troop. In 1988, Troop 63 was able to boast having a third generation Eagle Scout; Marc Olson, his father, Bob, and his grandfather, Howell Fuller.

Troop 63 was actually formed at MCC in July of 1969 with a little over a dozen boys. By January 1970 it had 24 boys and by the end of 1970 it had grown to 38 boys; 26 in Tenderfoot rank, 6 Second Class, 3 First Class, 1 Star Scout, and 2 Life Scouts. It is very safe to say that this Troop has produced an uncommon number of Eagle Scouts that is hard to equal.

Their current web site, <https://www.troopwebhost.org/Troop63Monroe/Index.htm>, lists fifty-two since 1994.

This is merely a chronology in summary of Troop 63. The real story in detail can be found in the bios of the men that these scouts have become. Our sponsorship of this Boy Scout troop is very much a part of our ministry, because the BSA program teaches and nurtures the value of service, self-confidence, self-esteem, honesty, reverence, loyalty to relevant purpose, personal integrity, and responsibility at a high level. Their purpose is to prepare young men at an early age to readily accept the stewardship of God's earthly kingdom and all that resides within it, and have fun in the process.

Well done fellows; CONGRATULATIONS.

Christian Education



Souper Bowl of Caring: Sunday, February 3rd after worship in Wilton Hall Want to make a play in the fight against hunger? 150 million people will tune into the Super Bowl today while 48 million Americans struggle with hunger. It's not too late to be a champion off the field!

Join Senior PF after church on February 3rd in Wilton Hall as we help #TackleHunger through @souperbowlofcaring. Bring a can or two of soup and/or a financial donation and receive a bowl of soup! To-go containers also available. 100% of all donations will benefit the Monroe Food Pantry. Thanks for your support!

Save the Date: February 23rd Senior PF Chili Cook-off Fundraiser 6pm-9pm! (Snow date March 2) Senior PF is preparing for our big mission trip this July!

We are excited and looking forward to new experiences, hard work, helping others and being in community with one another. Please join us for a chili cook off where we will have several contestants competing for the title of Chili Master! There will be music and raffles. We are also working on sharing several past mission trips so people can get a glimpse into our week and how important these trips are to our evolving spiritual growth and being of service to others. Please join us and see who should be crowned the Chili Master...



**2019 MCC Women's Retreat - Self Care: Tending to Our Spirit
March 8-10, 2019, Silver Lake Conference Center**



Join the women of MCC as we press a virtual pause button, in order to rest and gain perspective on our lives. This weekend is not about running away from our problems and concerns, but about remembering God's promise to sustain us. Participants will discover ways to nurture their spirits every day as they experience the joy of supporting one another along life's journey with facial masks, yoga, activities, conversation and really good food (that we didn't have to cook!). Please sign up asap in Wilton Hall. Cost is \$140, but please speak up if you need scholarship assistance. Questions? Speak with Pastor Jenn, Heather Henning, Kim Riffard or Jessica Pfalzgraf.

February Calendars

Fruit of the Spirit Gatherings (Sunday School)

3rd – Joyful Watermelons (Pre-K-2nd Grade) Only

10th – All Groups Gather

17th – All Groups Gather

24th – All Groups Gather

Jr. Pilgrim Fellowship

3rd – NO Jr. PF

10th – Gather from 6:00-7:30 pm

17th – NO Jr. PF

24th – Gather from 6:00-7:30 pm



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

Scout Sunday - February 10th The Boy Scouts of America is one of the nation's largest and most prominent values-based youth development organizations. The BSA provides a program for young people that builds character, trains them in the responsibilities of participating citizenship, and develops personal fitness. For over a century, the BSA has helped build the future leaders of this country by combining educational activities and lifelong values with fun. The Boy Scouts of America believes — and, through over a century of experience, knows — that helping youth is a key to building a more conscientious, responsible, and productive society.

This year is the 50th Anniversary of MCC's Charter with Pack 262 and Troop 63!

All Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Venturer or Crew members are invited and encouraged to wear their Class A uniform to worship on **February 10th**. Any who would like to participate in BSA Scout Sunday at MCC, please contact Pastor Jenn (Jenn@mcc-ucc.org) by February 4th. Scouts are needed as greeters, reader, offering collection, music...

Are you ready for summer? It's cold outside, but we at Silver Lake are already dreaming of summer 2019. Check out the [2019 Summer Conference Brochure](#) and start dreaming of which conference you will attend. Please ask Debi M-K for a brochure or download one at www.silverlakect.org, Silver Lake is all about life-changing ministry for children and youth in 4th-12 grades where they encounter God's love in creation.



There is an Open House scheduled for Sunday, May 19th, from 1:00-5:00 pm. See Debi M-K for more information. During the Open House you can tour on foot or hay ride, see the cabins and other buildings, check out the ropes courses and the waterfront! It's a chance to "know before you go"!!!

Download the brochure online at www.silverlakect.org. Contact Silver Lake Conference Center at 860-364-5526 for registration and scholarship information. Please speak with Debi M-K if you have any questions!!! We can't wait to see you back at The Lake!

Deacons

March 6th Ash Wednesday Soup Supper and Service: Join us as we begin our Lenten journey towards Holy Week for a light meal of soup and conversation at 6:30pm. At 7:30 we will have a worship service in the meetinghouse with imposition of ashes, ending with a bonfire in front of the church.



Outreach

It's that time again...the next St. George's supper is February 18th! 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 February 17th at 11am. If you take a tag and are**



unable to fulfill your commitment please contact the church office 203-268-9327
Or if you would like a tag but cannot make it to church please call Melissa in the office.

The Annual MCC Tag Sale is coming! Please mark your calendars for March 24 from 9 am-1 pm (early birds at 8) in Wilton Hall. This is an enormous event, requiring many people to help with set up, sale and clean up. There are will be all sorts of shifts to suit all schedules, so please consider donating a few hours of your time that week. How you can help:



1--Donate your gently used items. Please do not donate anything broken or old TVs, computer monitors, large upholstered furniture or clothing. All other donations can be dropped off at the church starting after noon on Sunday 3/18 and continuing until Thursday 3/22. Drop off during the week is during office hours, and then on Thursday we will have extended drop off hours until 9 pm. Please do not drop off items on Friday.

2--PLEASE sign up to help. This is an enormous event, requiring many help with set up, sale and clean up. There are all sorts of shifts to suit all schedules, so please donate a few hours of your time that week. In addition to being a great help for us, it is a wonderful time for fellowship and fun with each other, so don't miss out. A signup sheet will be posted in Wilton Hall.

3--Spread the word. There are always terrific bargains (and we mean BARGAINS) at this tag sale, so the more people that come, the more successful we will be. 100% of the money earned that day goes to support mission, so everyone benefits from this event.

The Bridgeport Rescue Mission fights poverty from the inside out as they embrace the urban poor and addicted with the compassion of Christ, offering hope and healing for a changed life. We are collecting sample size toiletries such as soap, shaving cream, and shampoo to help support their mission. There is a bin located in Rexford Hall to drop off donations.



Fellowship

Please join us for the MCC Book Club!

- ✚ **February 18th-7:30pm** Varina by Charles Frazier ~ In Dineson Parlor
- ✚ **March 18th-7:30pm** The Music Shop by Rachel Joyce ~ Host: Gayle Hammond
- ✚ **April 15th-7:30pm** Beneath a Marble Sky by John Shors ~ Host: Linda Fracassini

Sponsor a Month of Coffee Hours Would you like to help the people who come to worship get to know each other? What if we told you that sponsoring a month of coffee hours at the low, low price of \$40? Our coffee is fair trade certified through Equal Exchange. You can use your sponsorship to honor loved ones – a dedication goes on a plaque and in the bulletin. Please make checks payable to MCC with “coffee sponsor” in the memo field. Thank you.



Come & Drum with Rachel's Well: 2/5/19, 7:30 pm

Join the women of Rachel's Well on Tuesday, February 5th at 7:30 pm in Dineson parlor for a drum and singing bowl circle. Bring your own or borrow one from Pastor Jenn.

Parish Nurse



Do you know your numbers? Our Parish Nurse will be available after worship on February 17th for blood pressure screenings. If you have any questions please contact Heather Henning at heather.henning@sbcglobal.net

Community Help Needed



Would you like to take our cat in for 45 days? Ideally, you live in a pet free calm home and have had experience with a cat. If you or someone you know is interested, please talk to Trees or call/text 203-895-0152 if you want more information. No obligation. Thank you, the Whitbecks.

A Note from the Gingras Family

Dear MCC, we can't adequately express how much the phone calls, e-mails, hugs and cards have meant to us during this time of sadness upon losing Clark's mother Rita. We even received flowers from Senior PF, how sweet! Our family is keenly aware of how very special this community is to care so much for us, and we are so grateful. Thank you so much, from the bottom of our hearts.



Love, Clark, Jenn, Cady, Zach and Sophina



ITEMS NEEDED AT THE MONROE FOOD PANTRY

At the Monroe Food Pantry, we strive to consistently provide healthy food options for our clients. We accept and appreciate all donations, and encourage **low sodium, low sugar, low trans fat, vegetarian, and whole wheat** selections when possible.

- bread crumbs
- instant potatoes
- egg noodles, pasta
- pasta sauce
- macaroni and cheese
- healthy snack items
- hot and cold cereal
- tuna, canned chicken
- rice (brown and white)
- pancake mix and syrup
- peanut butter
- jams and jellies
- canned soup
- canned pasta
- salad dressing
- condiments
- baked beans, refried beans
- broths and stocks
- canned fruit
- canned chili
- canned tomatoes
- canned beans and vegetables

Food donations can be received during regular business hours or left in the red bin on the left side of the food pantry after hours. Monetary donations and gifts cards can be received at the Food Pantry during business hours, mailed to the Monroe Food Pantry at 7 Fan Hill Road, Monroe CT 06468, or left at the Monroe Senior Center located at 235 Cutlers Farm Road, Monroe, CT 06468.

- Ensure
- juice
- hot chocolate
- baking supplies: sugar, flour, brownie and cake mix
- decaf and regular: ground coffee, instant coffee
- decaf and regular: black tea, green tea
- Hamburger Helper, Knorr products, Ramen
- household cleaning supplies
- personal hygiene products
- feminine hygiene products
- monetary donations and gift cards to purchase perishable goods, such as: milk, eggs, margarine, frozen vegetables, and fresh produce

OPERATING HOURS:

Monday 2:00 PM—5:30 PM

Wednesday 9:30 AM—1:00 PM

Thursday 9:30 AM—1:00 PM

One Saturday per month 10:00 AM—12:00 PM (please call for further details)

Monroe Food Pantry

980 Monroe Turnpike • Monroe, Connecticut
Mailing Address: 7 Fan Hill Road, Monroe, CT 06468
(203) 452-2817
foodpantry@monroect.org

MCC Community Calendar

Fri. Feb. 1st

7:30pm Faith on Tap @ Veracious

Week of Feb. 3rd

10:00 am Worship w/Communion

11:15 am Junior Choir (Meetinghouse)

11:15 am Souper Bowl of Caring! (Wilton)

Tues. Feb. 5th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

7:30 pm Rachel's Well (Dineson)

Wed. Feb. 6th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

7:15 pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Feb. 7th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

6 pm Fri. Feb 8 – 8 am Sat. Feb 9

Senior PF Lock-in (Dineson)

Week of Feb. 10th

Scout Sunday

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am Junior Choir (Meetinghouse)

5:00 pm Adult PF

6:00 pm Junior PF

Tues. Feb. 12th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Feb. 13th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

7:15 pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Feb. 14th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

Week of Feb. 17th

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am Junior Choir (Meetinghouse)

11:15am Blood Pressure Screening (Wilton Hall)

5:00 pm Senior & Adult PF

Mon. Feb.18th

Office Closed for President's Day

3:45pm St. George's Supper

Tues. Feb. 19th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

7:00pm Bereavement Group (Dineson)

Wed. Feb. 20th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

7:15 pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Feb. 21st

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

Sat. Feb. 23rd

Senior PF Chili Cook Off

Week of Feb. 24th

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am Junior Choir (Meetinghouse)

6:00pm Junior PF

Tues. Feb. 26th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Feb. 27th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

7:15 pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Feb. 28th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

Fri. Mar. 1

7:30 Faith on Tap @Veracious

Week of Mar. 3rd

10:00 am Worship w/Communion

11:15 am Junior Choir (Meetinghouse)

5:00pm Senior & Adult PF

Tues. Mar. 5th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Mar. 6th

6:30 pm Ash Wednesday Supper

7:30 pm Ash Wednesday Service

Thurs. Mar. 7th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

Fri. Mar. 8-10th

Women's Retreat at Silver Lake

Week of Mar. 10th

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am Junior Choir (Meetinghouse)

5:00pm Senior PF

6:00pm Junior PF

Tues. Mar. 12th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Mar. 13th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

7:15 pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Mar. 14th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

Sat. Mar.16th

10:00am Dress A Girl (Wilton Hall)