

# THE

# MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

# STEPLE

34 Church Street Monroe, CT 06468

Tel.: (203) 268-9327 Fax: (203) 268-3153 Office Hours: Monday – Friday

9:00a.m.- 3:30p.m.

May 1, 2018

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

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#### Where We Have Our Being

I counted the days this morning... 56. On Monday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, our youngest (biological) son Zach is headed off to Fort Jackson Army base for 9 weeks of basic training. Cady, our eldest, went away to college at his age, but she was only a phone call and a 20-minute drive away. The emotions that I have about his departure are complicated. I'm proud that he will continue to live a life of service. I'll be excited to hear about what he'll be learning in signal ops and I will pray for him and his friends to be safe from harm.

Living in a small rural/suburban town like Monroe, my family is not alone in having our children go away for the next stage of their life. I'm already looking forward to Zack's leave days, when he'll migrate back to us and our quiet house will fill with duffel bags, laughter and dirty socks on the floor right next to the hamper. What fun to have them all home; even if it means daily trips to the grocery store and waiting my turn for the shower!

I love my kids, both the two we raised, and those who stay with us through foster care. No matter where life may take them, our children will always belong to our family; there will always be a place around

the table for each one of them. Those family meals remind us that we belong to each other as we tell jokes and share memories.

It reminds me of what the Apostle Paul said, "In God, we live, move and have our being... we are His offspring." (Acts 17:28) No matter what happens in life: the good, the bad or the unimaginable; we will always have a home in God. We are never beyond God's grasp or gaze, because "we have our being in God." We are God's children and will never be abandoned or left outside of that love and care.

This comforts me as I look around the dining room table and where my children used to sit propped up on plastic booster seats. Even if what I now see are young adults on the brink of moving forward, my hope is that they will always remember where home truly is.

Blessings, Pastor Jenn

#### **Journey to Easter Passports and Lesson Learned**

I must admit I fear I failed you all miserably. I had this wonderful idea to usher us through Lent and into Easter and in my inability to clone myself into three different people, I just couldn't pull it off.

All joking aside these are things we all must think about when taking in a new endeavor. Not only the what and when, but the how. I had the idea, Passports to encourage attendance at MCC happenings. I had the when, Lent would be a great time for this. The how, well I didn't quite think that one through. For example, you were all given a Passport, you might have brought that Passport with you to church, but I was not available to give you your sticker.

All of this may seem trivial and maybe you didn't miss getting your stickers, but think about those times when you agree to do something like mow the lawn, go grocery shopping, or spend time with loved ones and then find yourself in a situation where you have over extended and can't fit it in. Did the lawn get too long? Did the refrigerator go empty? Was your loved one disappointed? How did it make you feel? I was disappointed that I was not able to fulfill my plans to have Passports full of stickers and a great celebration on April 8<sup>th</sup>.

What did I learn? Recruit some sticker people!

For some comfort, I can say this prayer to myself:

Mothering God

From the moment I was born in Your mind, I've been Loved. Adored. Precious. A little miracle of Life.

As Your child, You cherish me. And You would protect me with a fierce love, like a Lioness with her cub.

Inside of me, every day, there's a part that needs to know I'm treasured like this, and protected by Your fierce, tender Mother-Love.

And though I will always be You child, I am no longer young.

I walk strong on this earth. And there are those who need my care and attention, precious ones I seek to protect.

So as I engage with this world that needs my own acts of love in ways what will exhaust me, wound me, and cause me to doubt myself – keep in me the secret knowledge of my belovedness.

May it be tucked in deep, safe in my heart.

It is enough.

Peace be with you all – and look for the Passports to Easter in 2019! Debi M-K

#### **New Members**

Please join us in welcoming these newest members of our church community. These short introductions will help you to learn a little more about them. We hope you'll take the time to get to know them and their families personally, and tuck this insert into your church directory.



**Maria Barresi** joins us today with a transfer of membership from Newtown Congregational Church. She is a retired funeral director. Maria has cheerfully contributed to the church community by volunteering with MCC's St. George's Supper and Dress A Girl. She is interested in volunteering with the Giving Garden, Strawberry Festival, and in worship as a Lay Reader and Usher. Maria's interests include hiking, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, writing, reading, gardening, cooking, and baking. Welcome, Maria!

Maria Barresi 215 Fox Run Shelton, CT 06484 203-926-0286

Email: mom.barr@gmail.com

**Birthdate:** December 31



**Martha Black** joins us today through reaffirmation of faith. She was most recently a member of the Church of Latter Day Saints. She appreciates the musical offerings of the church especially hearing her brother Jim Vance singing in the choir. Martha is interested in volunteering with MCC by baking for events and cooking meals. Welcome Martha!

Martha Black 214 E. Windgate Circle Monroe, CT 06468 203-685-6257

Email: momocact@yahoo.com

# **Birthdate:** March 26

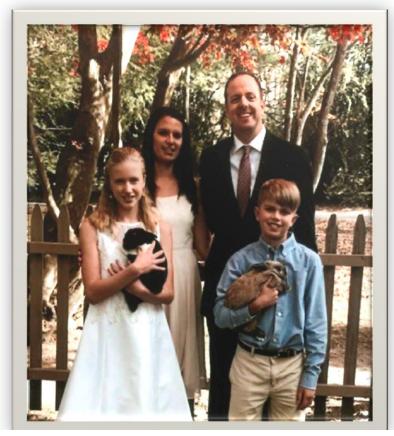


**Korene Dahl** joins us today through reaffirmation of faith. She is a regional lead business analyst at Jacobs Engineering. She lives in Monroe with her husband Kevin and children Abby, Aiden, Brendan, and Logan. Abby is a confirmand this year and a member of Senior PF. Korene enjoys cooking, hiking, and gardening. She is interested in volunteering with MCC by baking for events and cooking meals. Welcome Korene, Kevin, Abby, Aiden, Brendan, and Logan!

Korene Dahl 44 Easton Rd Monroe, CT 06468

Email: kmbaldi@hotmail.com

Birthdates Korene July 25 Kevin August 1 Abby November 26 Aiden April 29 Brendan May 5 Logan July 30



**Karen Matysczak** joins us today from St. Stephen's Church. She is a preschool teacher in Monroe. Karen and her husband James Brown live in Monroe with her two children Julia and John. John and Julia attend Sunday School at MCC, and Julia attends Junior Pilgrim Fellowship. She enjoys ballroom dancing, nature walks, and old movies. Karen is interested in volunteering with MCC by baking and cooking meals. Welcome Karen, James, Julia, & John!

Karen Matysczak 8 Pepperidge Rd Monroe, CT 06468 203-209-9452

Email: kmatysczak@gmail.com

#### **Birthdates**

Karen October 15 James November 28 Julia July 4 John December 31

#### **Church Security Updates**

The safety and security of both the flock and our faith home is important. In the aftermath of the November 2017 church shooting in Sutherland Springs, Texas, Frank Pinto approached Pastor Jenn to ask if we could do a risk assessment and make improvements for the physical security of all. Frank is a retired chief of police with many years of experience in corporate security consulting. His request came on the heels of an elderly church member asking if it would be safe to come to church.

Frank and Pastor Jenn, in consultation with the Board of Trustees, organized an ad-hoc safety team of church members with special skill sets to come up with recommendations. Members of our team include:

- Frank Pinto Retired Chief of Police of Norwalk, Corporate Security Consultant
- Rev. Jennifer Gingras Senior Pastor, Campus Resident
- Frank Wittenauer Chair of Trustees
- Heather Henning RN, Monroe Health Department, trained in ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate)
- Roy Nealon Trustee, Small Business/Real Estate owner, interest in security
- Zachary Gingras Trustee, Eagle Scout, Campus Resident
- Joe Gilberti Certified Locksmith, 20 year PF Advisor
- Debi Mastroni Kenyon Director of Faith Formation, Youth Protection trained, staff member that works closely with CE

Over the following five months, we met in person, divided tasks and proceeded to assess both the campus and community practices (in the security field, this is called a risk assessment). While in development, the plan was vetted by outside sources including Officer John McCauley (Regional SWAT team, Active Shooter trainer for region) and Officer Brooke Larson from the Monroe Police Department.

Please note that this plan does not include the education and vetting we undertake with volunteers in our Safe Church program, which is handled separately. The plan includes simple, common sense measures we can take now to improve our physical security should an active shooter threaten the worshipping community, the office staff or the youth and Sunday School programs. Some of the recommended changes require us to do things a little differently, and some of them are physical campus enhancements.

#### **Process Changes**

- 1. During worship on Sundays, a member of the safety team is situated at the entrance to the Meetinghouse to observe and assist the community in the event of an emergency.
- 2. When church is in session, there should only be one point of entry to the Meetinghouse (the main door), and multiple points to exit, the Trustee of the day locks the handicap entrance at 10am.
- 3. Walkie-talkie communication has been established between buildings. A charging station is in the Narthex. One unit is held by TOD/Security team member and the other by Debi/CE
- 4. Sunday School students exit from the Meetinghouse in an orderly fashion from the handicap exit in order to minimize travel time between buildings.
- 5. When Sunday school is in session, there will be only one point of entry to Rexford (the main door), and multiple points to exit.

#### **Physical Campus Changes**

- 1. Install a keypad lock on Rexford which will handle 6,000 individual accounts for church members, renters and community groups. This will enable us to run reports on who entered the building and at what time, which can be important when administrating rentals.
- 2. The door to Rexford will have a video doorbell, so that someone in the office will be able to assess whether or not to release the lock and let a visitor in the building.
- 3. Motion activated WIFI enabled cameras will be installed on the parsonage, the Meetinghouse, Rexford and Beardsley to monitor door and parking lot activity. This will require some additional hardware to boost the WIFI signal.

#### Outreach



**CROP Walk: May 6<sup>th</sup> from 1:30 to 4pm** Join us at the CROP walk at Seaside Park and raise funds to end hunger for our brothers and sisters locally and around the world. CROP Hunger Walks help to support the overall ministry of Church World Service, especially grassroots, hunger-fighting development efforts around the world. In addition, each local CROP Hunger Walk can choose to return up to 25

percent of the funds it raises to hunger-fighting programs in its own community.

CROP Hunger Walks help to provide food and water, as well as resources that empower people to meet their own needs. From seeds and tools, to wells and water systems, to technical training and micro-enterprise loans, the key is people working together to identify their own development priorities, their strengths and their needs something CWS has learned through some 70 years of working in partnership around the world.

**How it works:** To join the MCC team, please take an envelope from Angela Cross and start collecting donations from sponsors. If you cannot walk, but still want to participate, please sponsor a walker at coffee hour. *Please note: All contributions are tax deductible.* www.cropwalk.org

#### **News from Refugee Resettlement!**

Our new neighbors from Rwanda, the Nyirasabandi family, arrived safely on April 24th at JFK airport - definitely weary, but with lots of smiles and lots of personality. It was wonderful to see them, and to go with them to their new apartment, where they had a hot meal waiting for them. Wendy, one of the volunteers with IPRR (Interfaith Partnership for Refugee Resettlement) shared the following impressions upon meeting the Nyirasabandi's:

- Lots of personality with this crew! They were quick to smile and shared quite a few laughs with one another, with our interpreter and with us :)
- It sounds as though they are eager to learn! Twizere spoke of wanting to further his education and Daphrose said she wants to learn English. They were also very interested in Margo's microwave tutorial! I thought those were wonderful signs that this family wants to learn and acclimate.
- At the end of the evening, Daphrose was cleaning off the tablecloth in her new kitchen. Margo and I saw the sweetest little smile on her face. To me it was an indication that, although exhausted from a long trip, she was already beginning to care for her home.
- On arrival day they mostly had a chance to rest a bit, and then over the next few days, lots of appointments and forms to fill out! We are delighted that things seem to be off to a very terrific start. Thanks to so many of your help getting us to this point!

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#### **Trustees**

**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 8<sup>th</sup> after church in Wilton Hall. Donna can also be reached at 203-209-2974



**Spring Workday Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup> 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 email Dave Allen dallen9457@att.net

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#### 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**



**Faith on Tap, Friday May 4th**: 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) or Rev. Jenn (203-895-5607) Gingras with any questions.

**May 4th theme:** An estimated 5.7 million Americans of all ages are living with Alzheimer's dementia in 2018. This number includes an estimated 5.5 million people age 65 and older and approximately 200,000 individuals under age 65 who have younger-onset Alzheimer's. How has it touched your circle of friends and family? Do you have good resources to share? What are the needs of caregivers?



**Installation for Rev. Katrina Manzi** Everyone is invited to attend the installation of Rev. Katrina Manzi at 3pm on June 3rd at the Middlebury Congregational Church, 1242 Whittemore Rd, Middlebury, CT 06762. Pastor Jenn will be preaching, please contact her if you'd like to join a carpool.



**Celebrating All Graduates:** If you or someone you love is graduating this year from high school, college, a university, graduate school, or another program, we want to recognize celebrate your achievements at the June 10<sup>th</sup> worship service! Please let the church office (<a href="mailto:secretary@mcc-ucc.org">secretary@mcc-ucc.org</a>, 203-268-9327) know if you or anyone in your family is graduating, along with the details of your degree,

school, plans for future, etc. Thank you!

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#### **Christian Education**

**Food Drive on Youth Sunday:** On Sunday May 6th Senior PF will be leading the service at the MCC. As a small yet important service project we will be collecting food donations to give to our local Monroe food pantry and Bridgeport Rescue Mission. Please bring any non-perishable food items you can to help support our wider mission for the community. Thank you, and have a wonderful weekend! Zach Gingras, Senior PF Minister of Outreach



**Save the Date for VBS** Vacation Bible School will be here before you know it! The theme is "God's Big Backyard"; the dates are August 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>; open to all children age 4 thru 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Registration is available online now at <a href="https://www.mcc-ucc.org">www.mcc-ucc.org</a>.



**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.silverlakect.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

#### Jr. PF Calendar

May

6<sup>th</sup> – NO Gathering

13<sup>th</sup> – NO Gathering (Mother's Day)

20<sup>th</sup> – Service Day at Locket's Meadow Sanctuary Farm in Bethany

27<sup>th</sup> – NO Gathering (Memorial Day)



#### **Sunday School Calendar**

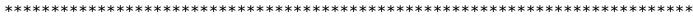


6<sup>th</sup> – NO Sunday School; First Communion for 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders; Youth Sunday

13<sup>th</sup> – Regular Sunday school classes

20<sup>th</sup> – Regular Sunday school classes

27<sup>th</sup> – Regular Sunday school classes



#### **Strawberry Festival**



Mark your calendars for the **47th Annual Strawberry Festival June 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>!** The MCC Strawberry Festival is the single largest church fundraiser and service event, providing funds for outreach, faith formation and church events throughout the year. It presents an opportunity for us to interact with the

broader community as representatives of Monroe Congregational Church and - most importantly – it's a weekend full of laughter, fun and fellowship!

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.



# Saturday ~May 12th

Sign up in Wilton Hall or Text/email me if interested (917) 224-5654, <a href="mailto:johnnymaiolo@gmail.com">johnnymaiolo@gmail.com</a>. 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!

#### **Fellowship**

#### Please join us for the MCC Book Club!

May 16<sup>th</sup> -7:30pm The Museum of Extraordinary Things by Alice Hoffman~Host Paula Haggstrom

**Rachel's Well Women's Spirituality Group** – 7:30 pm, Tuesday, May 8 in Dineson Parlor. Special guest Shari Carrano will be teaching us to make a special type of woven jewelry. Hope to see you there!



Morning Circle invites the women of the congregation and their friends to its next meeting on Wednesday, May 9th at 11AM in Dineson Parlor. The Retired Men's group will be hosting a lunch for the ladies. If you will be attending, please email Gary Thompson at mailglt@yahoo.com so he has a count as to how

many people will be dining. Debi Mastroni-Kenyon, our Director of Faith Formation, will speak with the ladies regarding expandable shoes for third world country children. Please bring an item for the Food Pantry as well as donations for Camp Hope. Contact Jackie Bleakney with any questions or if you require a list of needed items for Camp Hope at 203-268-5275.

Prayer Partners "Big Reveal" Potluck Luncheon will be held on Sunday, May 20 at 11:15AM in Wilton Hall. A signup sheet will be posted so please indicate if you require nursery care for children 3 years and younger. Older children can dine at the big kids table. In the meantime, please keep your partner in your thoughts and prayers. Find them during the service and pass the peace to them or speak with them at coffee hour. Send them a note or card letting them know that you look forward to the "Big Reveal" using the church's address as the return. Contact Susie Cuseo with any questions at <a href="mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com">thecuseos@yahoo.com</a> or 203-268-0280.



**THANK YOU TO THE LADIES OF MORNING CIRCLE**. They put together 31 Church World Service Hygiene kits that mean the difference between sickness and health for struggling families worldwide in the face of natural disasters, violence or grinding poverty. These kits contained a nail clipper, toothbrush, wide-tooth comb, hand towel, face cloth, several band-aids and a bar of soap. Kits are assembled every April during the Morning Circle meeting. Please contact Susie Cuseo at at 20-268-0280 or

thecuseos@yahoo.com with any questions or if you'd like to help in the future.

Help Wanted at the Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe - If you are free on Tuesdays at 1:30, come to the Shoppe and help with sorting, tagging and hanging incoming merchandise. It's really easy to do and there always someone who can help you. If Thursdays from 12-3, Fridays from 10-12:30 or 12:30-3 or Saturdays from 10-12 or 12-2 work better for you, let Susie Cuseo know at 20-268-0280 or <a href="mailto:theta:th

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**Theodore Russell Provost-Switzer** was born April 12, 2018 at Griffin Hospital! Kristen and Scott are thrilled and doing really well. He's already got an outfit planned for Strawberry Festival

**Leo Alexander Walker** born on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 7lbs and 1 ounce to Lucas Walker & Michelle Caruso Walker. He is the little brother of James and Samson and grandson of David & Susan Walker.

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#### **Strawberry Festival**

Strawberry Festival



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#### **MCC Community Calendar**

#### Tues. May 1st

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

# Wed. May 2<sup>nd</sup>

6:30pm Confirmation Class 7:15pm Adult Choir

## Thurs. May 3rd

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

#### Fri. May 4<sup>th</sup>

7:30pm Faith on Tap (Veracious)

#### Sat. May 5th

8:00am Trustees Spring Clean Up 3:00pm Youth Sunday Rehearsal (Meetinghouse)

# Week of May 6th

Youth Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders receive Communion

10:00am Worship w/Communion

1:30pm Crop Walk in Bridgeport

6:00pm Adult & Junior PF

## Tues. May 8th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag 7:30pm Rachel's Well (Dineson)

# Wed. May 9th

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

# Thurs. May 10<sup>th</sup>

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

# Sat. May 12th

9:00am Jam Making (Kitchen)

# Week of May 13th

Mother's Day 10:00am Worship

#### Tues. May 15th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

#### Wed. May 16<sup>th</sup>

6:30pm Confirmation Class

# Thurs. May 17<sup>th</sup>

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:15pm Adult Choir

#### Week of May 20th

Pentecost

8:45am Deacons Meeting (Dineson)

10:00am Worship

11:15am Prayer Partner Potluck Lunch

(Wilton Hall)

12:30pm Junior PF (Farm)

5:00pm Senior PF

6:00pm Adult PF

#### Mon. May 21st

7:30pm Council Meeting (Dineson)

#### Tues. May 22<sup>nd</sup>

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

#### Wed. May 23rd

6:30pm Confirmation Dinner & Rehearsal (Wilton Hall)

# Thurs. May 24<sup>th</sup>

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:15pm Adult Choir

# Week of May 27th

Memorial Day Weekend 10:00am Worship

#### Mon. May 28th

Office Closed in Observance of Memorial Day

## Tues. May 29th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

# Thurs. May 31st

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:15pm Adult Choir