

2023 Book of Reports
As Presented at the
2024 Annual Meeting of the Monroe Congregational Church

Held Sunday, January 28, 2024



34 Church Street
Monroe, Connecticut 06468

The Reverend Jennifer Gingras
Senior Pastor

Website: www.mcc-ucc.org
Church E-mail: secretary@mcc-ucc.org

Table of Contents

Agenda - Annual Meeting Agenda – January 29, 2024	3
Annual Meeting Minutes –January 29, 2023	4
Annual Report of Senior Pastor	5
Annual Report of Christian Education Coordinator	6
Historian’s Report	6
Usher’s Report	6-7
Deacon’s Report	8
Memorial Report	8
Clerk’s Report	9
Board of Christian Education Report	10
Senior Pilgrim Fellowship Report	10
Junior Pilgrim Fellowship Report	11
Board of Christian Outreach Report	11- 12
Covenant to Care Report	12
Green Committee Treasurer Report	13
Board of Trustee’s Report	13-14
Board of Christian Fellowship Report	14
Morning Circle Report	15
Mustard Seed Report	16
Nominating Committee – Church Officers, Boards and Committees	17-20
Investment Account Report	21
Proposed 2024 Budget	22

Monroe Congregational Church
United Church of Christ

Annual Meeting Agenda
Sunday, January 28, 2024

Opening

- Establishment of a quorum
- Call to Order
- Reading of the Call
- Opening Prayer
- Adoption of Agenda

Adoption of Minutes and Reports

- 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes
- Reports of the Boards, Committees & the Pastor
- 2024 Proposed Operating Budget
- Election of Officers, Board Members & Delegates

New Business

Adjournment and Benediction

2023 Annual Meeting Minutes
Monroe Congregational Church
Annual Meeting, January 29, 2023

WELCOME: Arlene Redmond

QUORUM: 48 in person
2 on Zoom

Call to order: Clerk, Barbara Pellegrino

OPENING PRAYER: Pastor Jenn Gingras

OPENING REMARKS: Arlene Redmond

Motion to Adopt Agenda: Joyce Rousseau, Mark Barnhart
Accepted unanimously

ADOPTION PROPOSED- CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Motion to adopt: Gary Thompson, Mark Barnhart
Accepted unanimously

Summary of changes- 1/15/23 meeting, Constitution was simplified.

Biggest change separate Constitution from Bylaws

Simplify language

Thanks extended to the team who worked on the Constitution review.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES AND REPORTS 2022

Motion to adopt: Julie Mcclenathan, June Wininger
Accepted unanimously

BUDGET REVIEW 2023- John O'Rourke

Review of income: Rentals, Investments

Review of expenses

Questions-Gary Thompson- Are all pledges in?

5 people still have not sent in pledge card

June Wininger- question regarding property tax for the
parsonage. Taxes are \$7,000 per year, this will come
from rental income.

Motion to accept: Mark Barnhart, Dave Allen

ELECTION OF OFFICERS, BOARD MEMBERS, DELEGATES

Frank Wittenauer reviewed

NEW BUSINESS: Joyce Rousseau requesting access to an updated list of church members

MOVE TO ADJOURN: Dave Allen, Ann Zeiner
Accepted unanimously

BENEDICTON: Pastor Jenn

2023 Annual Report of the Senior Pastor, Rev. Jennifer Gingras

Dear MCC Family and Friends,

Typically, the annual report from the Pastor is a reflection on the past year. Annual reports are documents for historical purposes which tell the story of where we have been. The global COVID-19 pandemic is mostly in the rear-view mirror, in that all kinds of ministry, mission, fellowship and worship has restarted at the Monroe Congregational Church, the story of which has been told in the following Board and Committee reports.

Nearly four years of living in an environment of socially and economically shaky ground and the valley of the shadow of death hanging over the entire world leaves me asking, *"How can it be that we are finding living water for our thirsty souls when the world is so parched?"*

It would be inauthentic for me to say that there are not times when I feel dried up. It happens, and that feeling of being depleted has occurred at various times throughout my ministry. My guess is, it isn't unfamiliar for you either. Here is the thing, I believe there are key elements of faith and strength that undergird this community of faith, that have made our resiliency possible during this thirsty time. Yes, we have had our seasons of dry and dusty moments, but overall, we have remained rooted and grounded in the soil of God's grace.

There is in any life a cycle of being filled up and emptied out that is standard. We sleep and get filled with rest then we work a long day, week or season and become exhausted. We often think of the cycle of a school year being like a marathon to run and then summer vacation as the time for replenishment. This same cycle can be applied to work environments as well. There are high demand business seasons and quieter times. The last number of years have indeed been a marathon of stress, uncertainty, and loss. It has presented all of us with a whole new unanticipated cycle that has stretched our patience, our stamina and tapped out a normal experience of depletion and turned it, for some, into a sense of defeat, utter exhaustion, and surrender. Some have quit their jobs, closed their doors or changed directions as they could not keep facing the winds of change anymore.

Here is the good news. This Monroe Congregational Church, this congregation of faithful, struggling, hopeful, confused disciples, has repeatedly found ways to rise and meet the challenges of the moment. We have together adjusted, changed plans, pivoted, shifted gears, and found ways to keep moving forward no matter how rough the waters were to navigate. Together, you have stayed connected, supporting each another in the lonely moments and nourishing one another with meals, conversation, and prayer. You have looked at the parched landscape and remembered the living water of God's love in your life and in our shared existence as a congregation.

We did this...together! Together we journeyed the wilderness because we knew we could not do it alone. Together, we held onto the truth that the love of God revealed in Christ Jesus offers us abundant life, it makes us who we are -- the beloved community where everyone is welcome. Together, we found nourishment in our faith and strength for the journey. We did not have to face the winds of change alone in isolation, we came together to stand in solidarity, not just with one another, but with all of God's creation. If we didn't know it before, we know it now -- by the grace of God, we are better together.

And as I enter my 17th year as your pastor, there is no place I would rather be than here with you. Thank you for another year where we have seen grace upon grace. *In peace, Pastor Jenn*

Christian Education Coordinator Annual Report 2023

Our Sunday School Program has been running weekly with a steady group of children. We welcomed a new family this year and have on average around 6 children each week. Our middle school age children continue to attend on occasion and help teach when short staffed. We have six teachers who rotate weekends and two assigned per week. Our children had a great time participating in the Christmas Pageant this year!

-Jeanette Cardentey Morales

Historian's Annual Report 2023

This was a year of no multiple or significant anniversaries for the congregation, surprisingly.

A large number of documents in our archive were reviewed to answer both internal and external requests for information regarding our history as a congregation and the area surrounding our campus. Although fewer requests were made than last year, one in particular one took up as much time in research to answer correctly and completely. Monroe Historical Society historian, and friend of the congregation, Kevin Daly, inquired, "How is it that Beardsley Hall was named for Elizabeth A. Beardsley's late husband, Dr. Edward McEwen Beardsley, when it was built in 1886, when he did not die until March 11, 1905?" It took an extensive review of archive files on the Ladies Improvement Society, the Men's club, Mustard Seed Shoppe, and a host of annual reports prior to 1974 to answer the question, but it also provided for a three part series from *Elisha's Corner* in our *Steeple* on how our Beardsley Hall came about, and expanded.

This research also unearthed additional pictures that have been recently added to the photo gallery display in the rear entrance of the Meeting House.

Additional membership records found from 1810 to 1936 were added to our computerized file, along with a few more baptisms, marriages, and death records. This effort will remain a work in progress. Submitted by Gary Thompson, Historian

Usher Report 2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022 (4)	2023
Sunday Attendance (worship services and church school)	5704	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Average Attendance Per Sunday (worship services & church school)	110	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Worship Service Attendance only (not incl church school)	95	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Summer Average Attendance Per Sunday (not incl church school)	61	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Ash Wednesday	130	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Palm Sunday	80	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Maundy Thursday	54	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Usher Report 2023 Continued	2019	2020	2021	2022 (4)	2023
Sunrise Service	27	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)

Easter Sunday	216	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Advent Season Average Per Sunday (incl worship services and children)	138	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Christmas Eve	307	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
(4) Pastor Jenn on Sabbatical					
(5) First Year of Pandemic (2020 Book of Reports)					
(6) Second Year of Pandemic (2021 Book of Reports)					
(7) Third Year of Pandemic (stats below)					
2022 had 2 large Sunday snow storms (1/30 & 2/13)					
(8) Fourth Year After Pandemic (stats below)					

4th Pandemic Year Stats 2023

Services Attended Via:	Meeting House	Face Book	YouTube	Total
Sunday Attendance (worship services and church school)	4009	2400	1577	7986
Average Attendance Per Sunday (worship services & church school)	71	46	30	147
Worship Service Attendance only (not incl church school)	3723	2400	1577	7700
Summer Average Attendance Per Sunday (not incl church school)	53	56	28	137
Ash Wed/Labyrinth Prayer Walk	Snow	Snow	Snow	snow
Ashes To Go	Snow			
Palm Sunday	92	47	32	171
Maundy Thursday	86	34	40	160
Easter Sunrise Service	11	no data	no data	11
Easter Sunday	154	58	114	326
Advent Season Average Per Sunday (incl worship services and children)	89	54	22	165
Christmas Eve (7pm & 11pm)	175	135	59	369
Christmas Eve 10am	111	44	24	179

This year we have several dates without data for Facebook or YouTube including the Easter Sunrise service. Ash Wednesday services were cancelled due to snow and we only had 2 Christmas Eve Services due to the fact that the 24th was a Sunday this year and the last Sunday of Advent. These facts should be taken into account when reviewing the year's stats. Pastor Jenn and Scott Young continued to bring quality "virtual" worship services into our homes. As in the previous 3 pandemic years, I have created 4 columns to report on the tracking of attendance this year.

**Due to the nature of sharing worship videos, YouTube and Facebook views are an evolving statistic and should only be used to understand general trends. Counts were tallied and recorded near the end of the year.

Respectfully submitted by Diane Prall

Board of Deacons Annual Report 2023

The Board of Deacons works with the Senior Pastor to assist with the worship services and as appropriate, to assist with the pastoral cares of the church community. Worship service assistance is provided through the Deacons' welcoming of all individuals to worship. Every Sunday a Deacon provides an opening prayer at the commencement of service. Communion in the traditional format has continued (with the continued use of the plastic cups) and with the exception of several services being by intinction at the discretion of the Senior Pastor. Deacons also participate in special services such as Confirmation dinner and service, new member meeting and welcoming services, memorial services, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday and Christmas Eve. Deacons also host coffee hour during the month of January.

Activities for this year included:

- The Deacon of the Day picks up fresh flower arrangements from Big Y.
- Deacons have enacted the use of a second cup for dipping the host during the Communion by Intinction services for those needing a gluten free option
- Each Deacon sent out flock letters during the Lenten and Advent seasons. One Deacon volunteers to write the letter with the Senior Pastor and the letters are then prepared by the Church Secretary.
- Deacons assisted with welcoming new church members
- Deacons assisted Senior Pastor with Memorial Services

The Deacons have not made any purchases against their budget. Challenges continue keeping the candles lit during services; and a search continues for an adequate replacement which can be purchased from the Deacon Budget.

The Deacon Team is honored to serve our faith community.

Respectfully submitted, Jessica Pfalzgraf, Chair of Board of Deacons

Annual Memorial Fund Report 2023

In 2023, \$1,830.00 was donated in memory of loved ones. Activity in the Memorial Fund account was as follows:

Beginning Balance on January 1, 2023	\$8,388.43
Deposits to Memorial Fund	
In Memory of Susan Walker	\$100.00
In Memory of Betty Heiney	\$1,730.00
Total Deposits in Memorial Fund 2023	+\$1,830.00
Total Withdrawals from Memorial Funds in 2023	- \$0.00
Balance as of December 31, 2023 in Memorial Fund	\$10,218.43

Respectfully submitted, Diane Prall

2023 CLERK REPORT

Birth (0)

Baptism (4)

Van Garret Smith	1/1/2023
Charles Liam Smith	1/1/2023
Eva Maria Viggiano	4/30/2023
Elliot Joseph Malia	5/7/2023

Confirmation (3)

Adam Briggs	5/21/2023
Braeden Goyette	5/21/2023
John Telep	5/21/2023

Death of Loved Ones (4)

Betty Heiney	6/22/2023
Judy Elmendorf	8/17/2023
Marilyn Schultz	10/23/2023
George Massar	10/24/2023

New Member (18)

Joel Smith	1/1/23
Danielle Smith	1/1/23
Glenn Brigham	3/12/23
Lisa Bauerle	6/11/23
Michael Ganino	6/11/23
Jonathan Ganino	6/11/23
Betsy Dutton	6/11/23
Michael Snyder	6/11/23
Ryan Snyder	6/11/23
Ella Rudewicz	6/11/23
Judith Davis	6/11/23
Melissa Quinn	6/11/23
Robert Gauthier	6/11/23
James Hisey	11/5/23
Christopher Hisey	11/5/23
Heather Hisey	11/5/23
Holly (Hallgren) Owen	12/10/23
Peter Hallgren	12/10/23

Reinstated Membership (0)

Marriage (1)

Danielle Adams & Jimmy Flaherty	7/22/2023
---------------------------------	-----------

Removed from Membership After Inactive (8)

Fred Dubois
Ryan Firmender
Dana Firmender
Donna Gill
Jim Gill
Julie McHugh
Christopher McHugh
James Perrone

Transferred (6)

Kristen Provost-Switzer	2/12/2023
Scott Provost-Switzer	2/12/2023
Don Parker-Burgard	6/23/2023
Kate Parker-Burgard	6/23/2023
Maria Barresi	8/1/2023
Carol Viellelette	10/22/2023

Summary

Active Members as of January 2023	438
New Members	18
Confirmands	3
Reactivation, Confirmands & New Members	21
Transferred	6
Removed after Inactive	8
Transferred, removed after inactive	14
Active Members as of January 2024	445

Respectfully Submitted, Diane Prall

Board of Christian Education Report 2023

For 2023, our Board continued to have our meetings on google meet. We added in two new Board members: Ann-Marie Campbell and Josh Post.

Sunday School:

With continued small class sizes this year, we have combined all ages and have one Sunday School Class. Our Sunday school is run by a group of rotating volunteers. Our nursery school reopened, staffed by PFER's. We had many of our children from Sunday school age through Senior PF at Strawberry Festival helping out this year and we continued with the children hosting Halloween coffee hour, a big hit! We had our annual Christmas Pageant with our Sunday schoolers as well.

Junior PF:

Junior PF continues to be very active with a variety of service activities mixed in with fun interactive social activities that meet weekly. The Junior PFER's are always interested in volunteering and being part of the community. They enjoy helping out at the Spaghetti and BINGO night, a great success for the church.

Senior PF:

2023 was a year of highs and lows for PF. With most of our adult advisors stepping down we took a pause on PF meetings and activities in late winter and early spring as we searched for new volunteers to be adult advisors. Several of our church members stepped in and we were able to re-start PF in the spring and the students were able to do their Mission Trip.

The PFers hosted events like their Chili cook-off to raise money for their mission trip. They participated in a variety of community, volunteering and faith-based activities. They went on retreat to Camp Hazen in December. In July, the group and their college and adult advisors went to HOME in Maine to volunteer their time and muscles on a variety of projects. It was a successful and rewarding trip for all.

Meg Sullivan, Chair Board of Christian Education

Senior Pilgrim Fellowship Report 2023

MCC is very blessed to have such an amazing group of young people in Senior PF! We meet nearly every Sunday night with 6 adult advisors and about 25 high school youth. As of now, about ⅔ are from families that are not (yet?) MCC members. At each of our meetings we share highs and lows of the week, discuss relevant issues and topics, explore and expand our faith, sing, and pray. We live by our covenant: learning to love, keeping an open mind, and welcoming all people who come our way. We are so grateful to call MCC our home.

Our adult advisors give a great deal of time and energy to the program. The adult advisors currently include Josh Post (lead), Sam Post, Kate Goyette, Michelle Correll, Lucas Cuseo, and Amanda Cohen. We were lucky enough to welcome Sam, Kate, Michelle, Lucas, and Amanda this year. Josh Post assumed the role of lead of the group this year. Although we said goodbye to several adult advisors this year, we are thankful for their time with us.

During the PF year, we worked towards reaching our community service goal of completing one service project each month. This includes, leaf raking, a coat drive to benefit Bridgeport Rescue Mission, cleaning up at Great Hollow Lake, our annual mission trip, and more. This year's mission trip was a

return to Maine, with our focus in Orland. We spent this trip helping with the repair of a roof, signs, and plumbing at H.O.M.E., a non-profit organization dedicated to keeping and enhancing the quality of life for low-income and homeless families. Additionally, we assisted with the building of a trail, helped with repairs of our previous host church, and learned a great deal about the Orland community. We are excited that our 2024 mission trip has already been booked to...(we can't tell you yet). To assist with the costs of the trip, we will be fundraising throughout the next few months. This includes our upcoming annual Chili Cook-off in February.

Although it was sad to say goodbye to our graduating seniors at the end of the trip, we were excited about welcoming our new members and the new program year with open arms and hearts. Our 2023-2024 PF high school leadership team is President Owen Correll, Vice President Emma Campbell, Treasurer Emily Andrade, Secretary Jocelyn Allen, and Minister of Outreach Molly Kinahan. They are doing a wonderful job leading the group.

We are always grateful that MCC supports Senior PF and we love that this group brings so many youth together in a loving and safe environment. We can't thank you enough for the love, support and care! We are looking forward to a great year in 2024 with more exciting opportunities to grow and love with Christ.

Junior Pilgrim Fellowship Annual Report 2022

Jr PF has ten active children this year with an 11th potential new member. There are four in sixth grade and the remaining are all in eighth grade and will graduate to Sr. PF in the fall. I have, besides myself, one full time advisor and two part time advisors. We held our annual food drive in October, our annual Friendsgiving in November and enjoyed starring in the Christmas Pageant this past December. The group is looking forward to a lock-in in the spring and fun "graduation" celebrations towards the end of the school year. Jeanette Cardentey Morales

Outreach Board Annual Report 2023

Spaghetti dinner/BINGO Night: The second annual event, held on Saturday, November 18, was a huge success. Thanks to the joint efforts of the Outreach and Fellowship teams we cleared \$1,650 which was delivered to nOURishBridgeport during a visit to their hydroponic farm on December 15.

St. Georges supper: During 2023, the Outreach Board, with the help of others, packed about 55 bag lunches six times, to be delivered to St. Georges Church in Bridgeport to help feed people living on the streets. The board moved the "packing day" from Monday to Sunday after church services to allow more people to be involved. We miss cooking and serving in person but, since COVID, St. Georges seems to have settled into the bag lunch approach.

Wine tasting: This year the annual wine tasting moved back to its traditional location at the Fracassini's home (thank you Linda and Jack). After some discussion, the Board agreed that the proceeds should go to Church World Service Disaster Relief. The wine tasting was originally scheduled for the evening of October 14, but the weather was not acceptable so it go moved, at the last minute, to Sunday the 15th. The event brought in \$1,015 (wow)!

Crop Walk: Sunday May 7, 2023, was the 49th Greater Bridgeport Crop Hunger walk. Team Monroe Congregational Church led by team captain Julie McClenathan was composed of fundraisers, Julie and Rob McClenathan, Cheri Irwin and Gayle Hammond. Together we raised a total of \$2685.00 to combat local and world hunger. Thanks to all who contributed to this worthy cause.

Tag sale: The tag sale will return in the spring of 2024.

It has been my pleasure to serve on the Outreach board for the last four years, three of these as chair. This is an amazingly dedicated and hard-working team and I will miss them as I move on to other things.

Vaughan Askue 2023 Outreach Board Chair

Covenant to Care Annual Report 2023

Working with our new Covenant to Care partner CAFAF (Connecticut Alliance of Foster & Adoptive Families) MCC provided yet another record breaking number of families (30), facing difficult times with food for Thanksgiving.

MCC also participated in a new program over the summer, Covenant to Care “Essentials Drive”. Frequently, children/youth and teens in our community come into foster care with little to no belongings with them. To help aid in this transition and try to provide a sense of belonging, CAFAF requested donations of a few essential items such as hygiene products to help children to get through the first few nights and days of placement in a new and unfamiliar home. MCC members provided full size products such as deodorant, body wash, shampoo, conditioner, toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush, comb, baby wash/shampoo, skin care products, shaving cream, razors and feminine products.

We continued our unwrapped Christmas gifts program this year, donating 104+ Christmas gifts! These were picked up by Samantha Heltke, our CAFAF Advocacy and Support Services Regional Liaison, and brought to her office where the children were able to choose their own gift during a special Christmas party complete with treats, and Mr. and Mrs. Clause!

Also donated were 10 packs of 24 *Colors of the World* Crayola Crayons, and 2 packs of 24 *Colors of the World* Crayola Colored Pencils, so children are able to color “real” skin tones when drawing themselves, family, and friends!

Estimate Values

Essentials Drive: \$325.00

Thanksgiving Food Donations: \$920.00

Colors of the World donation: \$39.02

Christmas Gifts: \$3,120.00

Total 2023 Giving: \$4,404.02

What a fantastic year! I am so proud of this church and all its members do for children and families in our surrounding community –thank you for your loyal and outstanding support of Covenant to Care.

Diane Prall, Monroe Congregational Church Liaison Covenant to Care for Children

Monroe Green Committee

Treasurer's Report Covering December 31, 2022 to December 31, 2023

<u>Balance on December 31, 2022</u>		\$ 24.33
<u>Receipts</u>		
Monroe Congregational Church (12/23/22)	\$250.00	
St. Peter's Grace Church (12/23/22)	\$250.00	
Monroe Congregational Church (10/28/23)	\$250.00	
St. Peter's Grace Church (10/28/23)	\$250.00	
<u>Total Receipts</u>		\$1,000.00
<u>Subtotal</u>		\$1,024.33
<u>Disbursements</u>		
Eversource (electric utility bills)	\$588.07	
<u>Total Disbursements</u>		\$588.07
<u>Balance on December 31, 2023</u>		\$436.26

Respectfully Submitted by, Nancy Johnson, Treasurer

Trustees Annual Report 2023

The Trustees are responsible for overseeing the upkeep of the MCC campus as well as the finances of the church. We thank all who have contributed with their time and gifts to help us achieve our mission and make MCC such a vibrant place.

This past year, the Board launched a capital campaign to raise funds to paint the exterior of the Meeting House and Beardsley Hall. Together we raised over \$22,500 to defray the costs of these projects, enabling us to complete this vital work this fall. We are grateful to John O'Rourke for his leadership of this campaign and to all who contributed.

The Board renewed leases for the parsonage and for use of church property by Gingerbread School and the Monroe Summer Day Camp. Relatedly, the Trustees updated the policy, fee schedule and application for the rental of church property. A note of thanks to Kate Briggs for leading this effort. The Board also commissioned a comprehensive appraisal of church property to confirm coverage limits and to continue to receive a premium credit on our insurance policy renewal. Many thanks to Scott Young for helping to complete the necessary paperwork and for conducting the walk-through with the appraiser.

I am relieved to report that MCC was finally able to resolve our issues with the IRS and secure release of the federal tax lien surrounding MCC's under-reporting of payroll taxes dating back to 2015. All told, the arrearage totaled in excess of \$22,000, including interest and fees, although we were successful in getting the IRS to waive or reduce some penalties and fees associated with the debt. We had been making periodic payments since the issue first came to light a few years ago, but fulfilled our obligations earlier this year. Thankfully, we have long since moved to a contract provider to handle payroll processing and

tax reporting so this issue should not recur. Much appreciation to Treasurer Bill Stadler for his perseverance in seeing this through.

On a happier note, MCC received notice of a \$39,600 homeland security grant from the State of Connecticut. The monies will help cover eligible costs associated with the purchase and installation of pull alarms, security cameras, computer hardware, wi-fi boosters, exterior lighting, keypads, locks and door closers. The Board is now working to secure reimbursement for work already undertaken.

The Trustees organized and conducted work days in both the spring and fall. Volunteers trimmed bushes, weeded and mulched planting beds, cleaned windows, cleaned and changed light fixtures and made other improvements to the buildings and grounds. Additionally, volunteers installed a replacement swing set as well as new edging and wood chips for the play areas. We thank all those who helped beautify our church facilities and grounds, especially our long-time property manager, Dave Allen.

We also wish to thank all those who contributed to this year's stewardship campaign. Pledges account for the majority of our income to support our ministry. We are eternally grateful for your continued support. Respectfully submitted, Mark Barnhart, Chair

Board of Christian Fellowship Annual Report 2023

The 2023 Fellowship Committee included: Jenn Gingras, Juliana Lavitola, Barbara Pellegrino, Jane Allen, Carol Viellele and Melissa Coleman (Chair)

This year, we enjoyed fellowship with our church community through several events.

Easter Sunday and Mother's Day both saw extended coffee hours which included delicious food that was contributed by the congregation. They were both well attended and enjoyed by all.

On August 19th, we tried a new event, an all-generation movie night. We sent out a survey to the congregation to pick the movie, and the movie with the most votes, The Sandlot, was shown. Participants also enjoyed popcorn and ice cream.

On Sept 17th, we hosted the Homecoming picnic at Wolfe Park. We grilled burgers and dogs, enjoyed sides and desserts brought by the attendees, played lawn games, and bounced in a bounce house. We had approximately 50 participants, with a mix of young and old!

In November, we supported the Outreach committee with the Spaghetti Dinner and Bingo night for a second year. It was a wonderful evening, raising money for a great cause, and enjoyed by everyone who attended.

On December 3rd, we hosted the tree lighting with our friends from Peter's Grace Episcopal Church. After lighting the (new!) tree on the green, there were carols and hot chocolate and cookies inside.

On December 17th, we host our Christmas Coffee Hour which will include a great number of delicious goodies for the congregation to enjoy while celebrating together. We will also get to celebrate the success of our Children's Pageant that day in church.

Thank you for your Fellowship! Melissa Coleman, Chair

Morning Circle Annual Report 2023

Officers: Chair – Jackie Bleakney*, Secretary – Susie Cuseo, Treasurer – Ann Zeiner+

*Shari Carrano has accepted the position of Chair and +Cheri Irwin has the position of Treasurer as of September 2023.

Activities for 2023: Morning Circle members meet the second Wednesday each month at 11:00AM in Wilton Hall with the exceptions of January, February, July and August.

March – Thirteen members put together 35 birthday bags. Linda Fracassini has taken on the responsibility as the new greeting card sender.

April – Eleven members made 40 hygiene kits for Church World Service.

May – Thirteen members collected women's hygiene products for the Food Pantry.

June – Annual June picnic with 15 members at Sal's Pizza in Newtown. Gifts and cards were given to Jackie and Ann for their years of service with the group. Many thanks to Shari and Cheri for taking over their positions.

September – Ray Giovanni from Union Savings Bank spoke to fourteen members about scams affecting the local area. \$100 was sent to Heifer (\$94 donations + \$6 from Morning Circle) Ladies will spearhead the project of replacing the couches in Dineson Parlor.

October – Ten members put together 63 Halloween bags for the Food Pantry.

November – Fifteen gift tags for the Giving Tree were given out. Eleven members made 24 bean soup jars for the Food Pantry. Seasoning recipe is going to be revamped for next year.

December – Members will attend the annual Christmas luncheon at Sal's Pizza on 25.

Treasurer's Report: \$485.22

Dec 2023

Sunshine Fund Collection:	+\$54	Heifer International	-\$100
Dues:	+\$140	Church World Service Postage:	-\$80
Donation for hygiene kits	+\$30	Morning Circle Cake	-\$37.99
Heifer International	+\$94	Birthday Cake	-\$42.99
Donation for necklaces	+\$43	Good Luck Cake	-\$42.99
Donation from Jackie	+\$200		
Interest:	+.97		
Total (as of 11/23)	\$775.55		

The Morning Circle directory contains 15 members. We have an average of 12 members attending each meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Susie Cuseo, Morning Circle Secretary

Mustard Seed Shoppe Report 2023

The wonderful group of women who worked in the Shoppe and sorted/hung up the clothes made 2023 a successful year. We were only open Fridays and Saturdays but our customers were faithful and came often. This year's donations amounted to \$11,768. We were able to contribute to (\$5,000 annual pledge); Monroe Project Warmth (\$1,000); Monroe Food Pantry (\$1,000) Pastor's Purse (\$500 in June and \$500 in December); MCC Capital Fund – Painting (\$2,000); Sr. PF Wreaths (\$268); Blessed Sacrament Food Pantry –Bridgeport (\$500); MCC Outreach – St. George's Supper (\$500); and Monroe Social Services (\$500). It is very nice to be able to reach out and help others in need.

This was a year of change for us. Ann Zeiner, who has been our Treasurer and Shoppe helper for many years, decided to go into a well deserved retirement. We thank her for all her hard work and dedication. Thankfully Jan Pearson has agreed to be our new Treasurer. As always, we have an ever changing group of volunteers. Many thanks to Susie Cuseo for keeping the store clerks organized each month. The crew on Tuesday afternoons keep the Shoppe stocked and clean. Again, we need more volunteers. Men of the church, we would very much welcome you.

The Mustard Seed Committee

**Monroe Congregational Church
2024 Officers, Boards and Committees**

Officers		Term	Ends
Moderator	Arlene Redmond	Second	January 2025
Treasurer	Mike Ganino	First	January 2026
Asst. Treasurer	Open	First	January 2026
Receiver	John O'Rourke	Fourth	January 2026
Clerk	Barbara Pellegrino	Second	January 2025
Historian	Gary Thompson	Indefinite	

Diaconate (12)	Term	Ends
1. Jessica Pfalzgraf (Chair)	Second	January 2025
2. Michelle Correll (Secretary)	Second	January 2025
3. Larry Wissink	First	January 2025
4. Jennifer Wissink	First	January 2025
5. Rebecca Ciccarelli	First	January 2025
6. Marc Cardentey	First	January 2025
7. Owen Correll	Second	June 2024
8. Emma Campbell	Second	June 2024
9. James Hisey	First	January 2026
10. Jocelyn Allen	First	June 2026
11. Michelle Cardentey	First	January 2026
12. Open	First	January 2026

Friend of the Board: Leanne McEvoy

Music Committee (appointed by Deacons)

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Will Duchon | 5. Michael Pellegrino |
| 2. Michael Pfalzgraf (chair) | 6. Emma Campbell |
| 3. Rev. Jennifer Gingras | 7. David Walker |
| 4. Julie McClenathan | |

Trustees (7-12)	Term	Ends
1. Mark Barnhart (Chair)	First	January 2025
2. Zachary Gingras	First	January 2025
3. Caleb Nealon	First	January 2025
4. Open	First	January 2026
5. Open	First	January 2026
6. Open	First	January 2026
7. David Allen (Property Manager)	Indefinite	

Friends of the Board: Tom Briggs, Bob Hammond (property), Frank Wittenauer, Scott Young (IT/Tech)

**Monroe Congregational Church
2024 Officers, Boards and Committees**

<u>Christian Education (6-9)</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Ends</u>
1. Meg Sullivan (chair)	Second	June 2024
2. Jenna Rice	Second	January 2025
3. Ann Marie Campbell	First	January 2025
4. Jeanette Cardentey-Morales	First	January 2026
5. Open		
6. Open		

Friend of the Board: Heather Hisey

Christian Education Ex-Officio positions:

Junior P.F. Advisors Jeanette Cardentey-Morales (lead until June 2024)
 Kate Goyette
 Jennifer Wissink

Senior P.F. Advisors Josh Post (lead)
 Sam Post
 Lucas Cuseo
 Amanda Cohen
 Michelle Correll
 Kate Goyette

Senior Pilgrim Fellowship Officers (elected by Senior PF)

President: Owen Correll
 Vice President: Emma Campbell
 Secretary: Jocelyn Allen
 Treasurer: Emily Andrade
 Minister of Outreach: Molly Kinahan

<u>Christian Fellowship: (6-9)</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>ends</u>
1. Jane Allen	Second	January 2025
2. Melissa Coleman (Chair)	Second	January 2025
3. Barbara Pellegrino	First	January 2025
4. Juliana Defeo	First	January 2026
5. Lisa Bauerle	First	January 2026
6. Judy Davis	First	January 2026

Friends of the Board: Carol Kelly, Michelle Cardentey, Juliana Lavitola

**Monroe Congregational Church
2024 Officers, Boards and Committees**

Christian Outreach

No term, self-appointing

1. Leanne McEvoy (Chair)
2. Julie McClenathan
3. Kathy Allen
4. Michelle Cardentey
5. Donna Konkol

Additional Friends of the Board:

Covenant to Care Coordinator: Diane Prall

St George's Supper: Stacy Andrecky

Giving Garden: Rob McClenathan, Lois Spence

Nominating Committee (one 2-year term)

Ends

- | | |
|------------------|--------------|
| 1. Leanne McEvoy | January 2025 |
| 2. Janie Allen | January 2026 |
| 3. Open | January 2026 |

SNEUCC Delegates

Term

Ends

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------------|
| 1. Nancy Smith | First | January 2025 |
| 2. Rev. Sheldon Smith | First | January 2025 |
| 3. David Bailey (alternate) | First | January 2025 |

Fairfield East Association Delegates

Term

Ends

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------------|
| 1. Nancy Smith | First | January 2025 |
| 2. Rev. Sheldon Smith | First | January 2025 |
| 3. David Bailey (alternate) | First | January 2025 |

**Monroe Congregational Church
2024 Officers, Boards and Committees**

Mustard Seed Committee (self-appointed, no term)

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Peggy Villani (chair) | 3. Lois Spence |
| 2. Jan Pearson (treasurer) | 4. Jackie Bleakney |

Morning Circle (self-appointed, no term)

1. Susie Cuseo (secretary)
2. Shari Carrano (chair)
3. Cheri Irwin (treasurer)

Safe Conduct (2 + 2 appointed by Council)

Term Ends

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Bill Brett | January 2025 – 1st |
| 2. David Walker | January 2025 – 1 st |
| 3. Kyla Allen | January 2025 – 1 st |

Monroe Green Committee (appointed by Council)

1. Christine Wittenauer
2. Frank Wittenauer

Senior Pastor PRC (appointed by Council)

1. Kim Riffard (convener)
2. Mark Malia
3. Wendy Colegrove
4. Cheri Irwin

Strawberry Festival Co-Chairs

1. Clark Gingras
2. Frank Wittenauer
3. Josh Post
4. Susie Cuseo

**Monroe Congregational Church
Investment Account Activity
January 1 – November 30, 2023**

Beginning Balance 1/1/23	\$593,810.97
Withdrawals	(\$55,000.00)
Dividends Reinvested	\$10,647.95
Unrealized Gain/Loss	<u>\$36,496.64</u>
Ending Balance 11/30/23	\$585,955.56

Investment Fund Detail

Helen Sherman Trust*	\$286,210.47
Clara Johnson Trust**	\$120,347.08
Wilton Estate Fund***	\$162,562.63
General Investment Fund	<u>\$16,835.38</u>
Total	\$585,955.56

*Helen G. Sherman Trust – this was initially established in 1995, in the amount of \$154,798 and was restricted as follows: principal is restricted, but income may be used consistent with MCC's tax-exempt purposes as governing body shall designate. In 2002, 500 units of the Helen G. Sherman trust were sold and \$31,475.77 was distributed to the church.

**Clara Johnson Trust – this was initially established in 1998, in the amount of \$67,621.40 and was restricted as follows: principal is restricted, but income used for care, maintenance and upkeep of church building and pastor's salary.

***Wilton Estate Fund – this was received in March of 2014 in the amount of \$403,000. There are no restrictions or specified use attached to these funds. \$200,000 of this fund was added to the investment account in June of 2014, with the remainder going into MCC's Money Market account, with the expectation that some of these funds would be used to support the renovation of Rexford House, as well as replacement of the organ in the Meeting House.

General Investment Fund – represents income accrued from the other investment funds and is what we pull from to fund MCC operations each year.

John O'Rourke –Board of Trustees Receiver



MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST PROPOSED 2024 BUDGET

The Proposed 2024 Operating Budget as recommended by the Board of Trustees is presented on the reverse side. MCC is projected to conclude the current year with a modest operating deficit attributable to our having to pay back taxes to the IRS and for costs associated with new door locks and hardware, for which we expect to be reimbursed under a security grant that MCC received.

Below is a summary of the significant changes and key assumptions underlying the Proposed 2024 Budget to be presented at Annual Meeting.

Revenues:

- Pledge income is projected at \$210K, which includes prior year collections, which is up slightly from the current year.
- Rental income is projected at \$62,000, which includes income from renting the parsonage as well as our continuing to host the Monroe Summer Day Camp on campus during the summer months.
- Income from investments is projected at \$25K which is the recommended withdrawal amount to maintain principal in our investment accounts.
- Strawberry Festival net income is budgeted @ \$30K which is the same as the current year.
- The Mustard Seed contribution is estimated at \$5K, which is the same amount as the current year. This contribution is subject to the approval by the Mustard Seed Board.
- Other income is projected at \$24K, which includes reimbursement from the security grant.

Expenses:

- Compensation & Benefits is expected to rise to \$235K, which includes an allowance for a modest (3%) cost-of-living adjustment for staff plus funds for the pastor's housing allowance based on \$1650/month for 11 months.
- Facility costs are budgeted at \$95K, which includes an allowance to pay property taxes on the parsonage estimated at \$8K/year.
- We are proposing slight increases in the outreach and office expenses budget to \$30K and \$5K, respectively. Program costs are budgeted at \$15K, which is the same as the current year.

2024 MCC Budget
Preliminary Draft

	2017 Actual	2018 Actual	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Actual	2022 Actual	2023 Budget	2023 Estimated	Budget Variance	2024 Proposed	as % of Budget
Income											
Pledge Income	\$ 193,025	\$ 192,762	\$ 191,840	\$ 198,988	\$ 197,465	\$ 193,234	\$ 200,000	\$ 206,958	\$ 6,958	\$ 210,000	55.1%
Loose Offering	\$ 18,752	\$ 21,410	\$ 25,607	\$ 14,678	\$ 18,262	\$ 13,533	\$ 15,000	\$ 8,197	\$ (6,803)	\$ 10,000	2.6%
Other Giving	\$ 8,504	\$ 11,167	\$ 8,902	\$ 4,895	\$ 12,343	\$ 9,922	\$ 13,000	\$ 15,299	\$ 2,299	\$ 15,000	3.9%
Investments/Reserves	\$ 65,000	\$ 77,000	\$ 53,025	\$ 22,194	\$ 25,415	\$ 44,000	\$ 25,000	\$ 55,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 25,000	6.6%
Rentals	\$ 24,121	\$ 28,447	\$ 32,990	\$ 26,014	\$ 29,120	\$ 52,360	\$ 58,500	\$ 61,429	\$ 2,929	\$ 62,000	16.3%
Strawberry Festival	\$ 30,797	\$ 30,923	\$ 34,049	\$ (802)	\$ 13,572	\$ 26,006	\$ 30,000	\$ 35,067	\$ 5,067	\$ 30,000	7.9%
Music Fest Net Income	\$ 1,471	\$ 20	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.0%
Mustard Seed	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,500	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ -	\$ 5,000	1.3%
Other Income	\$ 15,738	\$ 11,021	\$ 8,286	\$ 45,950	\$ 40,389	\$ 4,333	\$ 10,000	\$ 5,555	\$ (4,445)	\$ 24,000	6.3%
	\$ 363,408	\$ 378,750	\$ 360,699	\$ 318,417	\$ 336,566	\$ 348,388	\$ 356,500	\$ 392,505	\$ 36,005	\$ 381,000	100.0%
Expenses											
Compensation & Benefits	\$ 222,626	\$ 212,711	\$ 237,781	\$ 213,414	\$ 206,386	\$ 225,495	\$ 230,000	\$ 236,658	\$ 6,658	\$ 235,000	61.7%
Facilities	\$ 75,349	\$ 82,336	\$ 83,041	\$ 57,519	\$ 76,431	\$ 80,725	\$ 80,000	\$ 107,422	\$ 27,422	\$ 95,000	24.9%
Outreach	\$ 26,128	\$ 29,951	\$ 31,650	\$ 19,490	\$ 21,021	\$ 27,667	\$ 25,000	\$ 30,646	\$ 5,646	\$ 30,000	7.9%
Programs	\$ 31,407	\$ 10,471	\$ 16,040	\$ 7,352	\$ 8,974	\$ 23,049	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,657	\$ 657	\$ 15,000	3.9%
Office Expenses	\$ 10,031	\$ 11,838	\$ 11,254	\$ 6,323	\$ 3,927	\$ 5,194	\$ 4,500	\$ 4,701	\$ 201	\$ 5,000	1.3%
Other Expenses	\$ 6,054	\$ 5,566	\$ 5,527	\$ 1,105	\$ 1,789	\$ 2,501	\$ 2,000	\$ 3,669	\$ 1,669	\$ 1,000	0.3%
	\$ 371,595	\$ 352,873	\$ 385,293	\$ 305,203	\$ 318,528	\$ 364,631	\$ 356,500	\$ 398,753	\$ 42,253	\$ 381,000	100.0%
Net Income/Loss	\$ (8,187)	\$ 25,877	\$ (24,594)	\$ 13,214	\$ 18,038	\$ (16,243)	\$ -	\$ (6,248)	\$ (6,248)	\$ -	

