

December 14, 2025

**Third Sunday of Advent ~ Joy**

10:00 am

*Monroe Congregational Church is an Open and Affirming congregation.  
Our deacons and pastors hope you will feel at home here. No matter who you are or  
where you are on life's journey, we welcome you in Christ's name.*

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**Gathering Music** Prepare the Way of the Lord, by J. Berthier & Community of Taizé

**Welcome & Announcements**

**Lighting the Advent Candle of Hope**

The Matejek Family

**Unison Prayer – Advent Candle**

*We light this candle for Joy! Even in ordinary days and imperfect seasons, the Spirit  
surprises us with gladness. May this light open our eyes to the joy already blooming  
among us. Amen.*

**Musical Response** (seated, to the tune of *In the Bleak Midwinter*)

*Kindle Advent candles, Joy will soon rebound.  
Lost in rifts of numb shame, hiding from the crowd:  
Will we find belonging, if they see our face?  
See, we are God's children, claimed in holy grace!*

**Children's Message**

*Students may transition to Sunday School with their teachers.*

**\*Hymn**

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

NCH #131

**Call to Confession – Unison Prayer - Silent Prayer**

*Holy One, you invite us to come and receive what truly nourishes, yet we often fill our  
lives with things that cannot satisfy. We confuse distraction for delight, and busyness  
for purpose. Our vision narrows, and we forget the wide grace you desire for all your  
children. Forgive us, gracious God. Make space within us for what brings real joy.  
Loosen our grip on what we do not need and open us to the life you offer; abundant,  
generous, and full. In Christ's name, Amen. ~silence~*

**Words of Assurance**

**\*Passing of the Peace**

*In order for those tuning in from home to feel included,  
please turn and greet the webcam as you share signs of peace with one another.*

**Pastoral Prayer – Silent Prayer -- Lord's Prayer**

*Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be  
done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our  
debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from  
evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

## Time for Giving

### Invitation

### Offertory

*Star Carol*

*by John Rutter*

*Our offering plate will be passed among us today. You may give online at [www.mcc-ucc/donate](http://www.mcc-ucc/donate).*

### \*Doxology and Presentation

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise Christ, the Word in flesh, born low,  
Praise Holy Spirit, evermore,  
One God, triune, whom we adore. Amen!*

### \*Prayer of Dedication

### Scripture

Isaiah 55:1-13, pg 671

*If you would like to read along, Bibles may be found underneath the pew in front of you.*

### Sermon

*Joy Enough for All*

Rev. Jennifer Gingras

### \*Closing Hymn

*Arise, Your Light is Come*

NCH #164

### Benediction

**Postlude** Ding Dong! Merrily On High, French melody, harm. by C. Wood, words by G.R. Woodward

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**God is still speaking, welcome** to all who are worshipping with us today, in-person and online! Worship is live streamed on church's You Tube Channel under CCLI Streaming License #2169137 on: <https://www.youtube.com/monroecongregationalchurchucc>, as well as on our Facebook page "Monroe Congregational Church, UCC"

We are an **Open & Affirming** congregation of the United Church of Christ, and we invite everyone to join in the full life and ministry of this church. We strive in word and deed to be faithful to Jesus' model of loving acceptance and welcome to all persons, inclusive of every age, race, ability, economic and social status, nationality, faith background, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital standing and family structure.

Please join us for a time of **fellowship** following the service in Wilton Hall.

**Assisted Listening Devices:** As part of the ongoing Homeland Security grant project, we added four wireless assisted listening units to our sound system in the Meetinghouse. We are thrilled to be able to enhance the experience of those needing greater accessibility. If you are interested in trying one out, asking Scott Young or an usher is a perfect way to get started!



If you'd like to **give online** during worship (or anytime), simply scan this QR code, which will take you to our VANCO electronic giving page. Thank you so much for your support!

**Thank you for assisting in this morning's worship!**

**Deacon:** Larry Wissink    **Usher:** Clark Gingras    **Lay Reader:** Melissa Quinn  
**Trustee:** Jill Sapak    **Counter:** Mark Barnhart    **Web Steward:** Scott Young  
**Sunday School Teacher & Coffee Host:** Ann-Marie Campbell

**The flowers this morning are given by Gilles and Joyce Rousseau  
in loving memory of Lauren.**



**Flowers for Worship:** Would you like to honor or remember a loved one, or celebrate a milestone? You can do so, while also helping Monroe Congregational Church continue its tradition of fresh **flowers** on the communion table. You can sign-up in Wilton Hall or online! You may choose to arrange flowers from your garden, purchase an arrangement, or send a check (\$25) to Monroe Congregational Church (memo: "flowers" & the date) or use our website to pay online, and we will order for you. If you are supplying the flowers yourself, please set them up between 9:30am and 9:45am, before worship. Thank you!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C48ADAC2CA5FEC61-flowers or MCC-UCC.org>



to the following people and to anyone we may have missed, we will keep you in our prayers. (Number is birth date)

Kathryn Maiolo <sup>(14)</sup>

Emily Barnhart <sup>(17)</sup>

Georgia Bauerle <sup>(18)</sup>

Paulette Obertz <sup>(14)</sup>

Tom Briggs <sup>(17)</sup>



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

Linda & David Rooney <sup>(17)</sup>

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**Invitation for Christmas Eve Readers**



Come, help us tell the story. On Christmas Eve at 11 pm we will gather in the quiet beauty of the night for a Service of Lessons & Carols. By candlelight and song, we'll listen again to the ancient promises of Scripture and sing the carols that have carried hope through the generations. We invite you to participate as a **reader**, sharing one of the scripture lessons that lead us from prophecy to the manger. If you'd like to read, please contact Pastor Jenn by December 19 at [jenn.gingras@gmail.com](mailto:jenn.gingras@gmail.com) or 203-895-5607.

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**2026 MCC Stewardship Campaign**



In November, we kicked off our annual stewardship campaign, "**Dreaming God's Dream**," a season when we intentionally reflect on how our shared gifts support the ministry and mission of the Monroe Congregational Church. Throughout worship, we've heard stories of how God is working through this congregation—how your generosity helps us serve our neighbors, strengthen our community, and make a real difference in people's lives. Each of us is invited to take part in shaping the church God is calling us to be. This is a season of great possibilities and hope for our future.

**So far, 62 households have pledged a total of \$167,818.00 — thank you!**

If you haven't yet responded, we hope you will prayerfully consider your 2026 pledge and return your card soon. You may mail it in, place it in the Sunday offering plate, or e-mail your intended pledge to John O'Rourke at [jorourke224@gmail.com](mailto:jorourke224@gmail.com). Thank you for considering how you will help sustain and strengthen the Monroe Congregational Church in 2026. With gratitude, Your Stewardship Committee John O'Rourke (Receiver), Diane Prall, and Rev. Jenn Gingras

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### **A Note from Our Moderator**

Dear MCC Family, I can't believe that December and Advent are actually here! This time of year is so wonderful. As we celebrate with family and friends during this joyful season, it is important to reflect on what we are grateful for, and acknowledge and appreciate all that is special in our lives. I am grateful for so many things, including my family and friends, my health, a job that I truly love to do each day, and the community of people that I surround myself with - including the people of MCC.

Part of what makes our MCC community so special is the very talented staff, and I hope you will join me in showing our appreciation for all that they do throughout the year. Our tradition is to give a holiday gift to each of our staff members who work so hard to support each member of this community: Pastor Jenn, Diane Prall, Will Duchon, and Heather Hisey.

Your gift, in any amount, will be combined with the contribution of others, to help show our appreciation for all that Jenn, Diane, Will, and Heather have done this year.

**Please consider a contribution in any amount as a thank you to our team.**

**1. Online is the best way;** it is easy and immediate.

- a. Go to the MCC website "Donate" page (<http://www.mcc-ucc.org/donate.html>)
- b. Click "To Donate through VANCO, Click Here."
- c. If you don't have a login and profile set up already, it's easy and you can use it for your pledge or other donations to MCC.
- d. Scroll down to the "Staff Gift" block and then follow the prompts.

**2. By check:** Write your check to MCC and write 2024 Staff Gift in the memo line.

- a. You can mail that to Receiver, MCC, 34 Church St., Monroe, CT, 06468
- b. Or drop it off in the office in the Receiver mailbox.
- c. Or put it in the collection plate on Sunday (be sure to indicate "2025 Staff Gift").

We will recognize the team at our special Christmas Coffee Hour on December 21st. But the sooner we know how much our gift will be for each of them, the better, so please consider making your contribution to the gift this week. That way you won't forget before you get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the holiday season! Thank you for being a part of the MCC community.

May the Advent and Christmas season bring you joy, peace, hope, and love this year.  
*Warmest wishes, Melissa Coleman, Moderator*



## Christmas Poinsettia Order Form



Quantity	Cost Each	Total Cost
	\$ 25.00	

**Given by** (PRINT your name): \_\_\_\_\_

**In Memory of:** \_\_\_\_\_

**In Honor of:** \_\_\_\_\_

**In Celebration of:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Other:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Orders must be placed no later than Sunday, Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025** to ensure delivery by December 24<sup>th</sup> and inclusion in the bulletin dedication. Please make your check payable to Monroe Congregational Church with "poinsettia" in the memo line. The check & **Order Form** may be dropped off in the brass mailbox outside of the office, put in the offering plate, or mailed to the church. You can also donate through our website at [mcc-ucc.org/donate.html](http://mcc-ucc.org/donate.html)  
Choose OTHER and memo poinsettias



*Thank you and have a blessed holiday!*

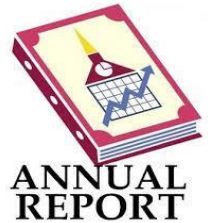
**Add a Splash of Color to Our Meeting House for Christmas!**





**Attention Board Chairs ~** Please submit your **annual report** to the church office by **Friday, December 12<sup>th</sup>**

Please call the church office with any questions.



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## Outreach



### Covenant to Care Christmas Gift Collection!

It's that time of year again! Like last year we are collecting **unwrapped** gifts for children! Our CAFAF (Connecticut Alliance of Foster & Adoptive Families) social worker, Samantha Heltke, will have her case workers meet at her office and "shop" the donated gifts for the ones that are a good fit for the children on their case load.

**Remember we will no longer need to wrap the gifts.** Easy peasy! Just **purchase as many gifts as you like and bring them (unwrapped) to the church office by Sunday, Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>!**

**No Time to Shop –No Problem!** Monetary gifts are also very much appreciated. Please make checks payable to MCC and Memo: C2C Xmas and Diane will do the shopping for you! Thank you so much for being such an awesome, generous resource for so many children, year after year! Diane Prall - Covenant to Care Liaison  
Check out CAFAF <https://cafafct.org/>



### Use your change to make a change in the world.

Your spare change can alter the life of an international family through a donation to Heifer International whose mission is to end global hunger and poverty by supporting and investing in farmers and their communities. They do so by partnering with farmers (especially women farmers) to improve their families' food security and increase their incomes by offering tools, training and resources that help them work together to build profitable, sustainable businesses with strong market linkages. So, the next time you find change lying around in your house, pocket or in the small spaces of your couch; consider dropping it into the collection bottle that will be out on the serving table during coffee hour.



The **Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe** is always looking for volunteers to help out on Tuesdays at 1:30pm. Just show up at the door and the ladies will show you how to sort, tag and hang. The Shoppe also needs helpers who can man the counter in two-hour shifts either on Fridays or Saturdays. It's easy to open or close the Shoppe by visiting while it's open and the volunteer would gladly show you the ropes. A document with the process can also be sent to you for your perusal. Manning the counter gives you the opportunity to chat with visitors and help MCC by accruing monies that helps the church and its members in many ways. Please contact Marge Fox with any questions, comments or concerns at 203-706-2132 or [mccmustardseed@yahoo.com](mailto:mccmustardseed@yahoo.com).



There is a **meal train** to support Linda Resnick's family as she continues to fight metastatic breast cancer. Thank you in advance for your support!

**Signup here:** <https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/qge0d8>

**Deliver here:** 520 Barn Hill Road, Monroe CT

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## Fellowship



Join us for the monthly Book Club on the **3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month**. We will continue to meet via zoom so that all members can join from wherever they may be. Questions can be sent to Paula via email [pjsh55@gmail.com](mailto:pjsh55@gmail.com) or home phone or 203-452-0850.

**Dec. 17** Secret Life of Sunflowers, by Marta Molnar

**Jan. 21** My Friends, by Fredrik Backman



**Young at Heart** will meet again in January!

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## Christian Education

Join us December 28<sup>th</sup> in Dineson Parlor at 11:15 for **Cheddar Together**: 45 minutes of faith, fellowship, and finger foods. We'll share charcuterie, open up a conversation about life and faith, and simply enjoy being together. Because everything really is better when we're Cheddar Together!



**Weekly Bible Study ~ All Are Welcome!** We gather in Dineson Parlor, on **Thursdays** from **9:30-11 am**, to learn with and through one another. After a time of fellowship and prayer concerns, we read and discuss upcoming scripture texts or other faith-related topics. Bring your favorite Bible (whatever version you prefer) and a small notebook. Come as you are!

Do you enjoy spending time with teens and helping them feel connected, confident, and cared for? Our **Senior PF** youth group is looking for **adult advisors**! It's a chance to share stories, laughter, and life lessons while building lasting relationships that strengthen our church family and our wider community. If you'd like to learn more, talk with Kate Goyette or Michelle Correll, they'd love to hear from you!



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**MCC's handmade jam makes a wonderful host/hostess or teacher gift for the upcoming holidays, as well as a great stocking stuffer!**

Now on sale for \$7/jar! Available online at <https://monroe-strawberry-festival-since-1972.square.site/>

## Deacons



Join us **Christmas Eve!** All services in person and livestreamed on YouTube:

MonroeCongregationalChurchUCC

**4 pm** Quite Worship (Communion and Prayer Candles)

**7 pm** Worship (Chancel & Bell Choirs, Guest Musicians)

**11 pm** Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols by Candlelight



\* Join us for a special Christmas coffee hour, to share some fellowship and holiday cheer! If you are able to bring a something to share, please drop it off in the kitchen between 9-9:45 that morning, thank you!



Hello Friends of MCC,

We have arrived in South Carolina and miss you all but not the cold and snow. We look forward to hearing from you or getting Christmas cards at our new address:

**3891 Stillwood Dr., Myrtle Beach, SC 29588**

We hope that things are well with you as we adjust to southern living and a new home. This address will be temporary until our modular house in Hemingway is completed. We are hoping that happens very soon.

Sending our love to you and wishing you a wonderful holiday, Susie, Lucas and Amanda

**Ed Burke  
Laurel Ridge, Room 318  
642 Danbury Road  
Ridgefield, CT 06877**



## **In Our Prayers**

**Betsy Streck & Keith Law** (Nancy Hedine's friends); **Carter & the Harbron Family** (Kate Goyette's friend); **Alison Abrams** (Jessica Pfalzgraf's sister); **Allie** (Colegrove's friend); **Jennifer Bittar** (Loraine Zeiner's friend); **Jackie Bleakney**; **Shari Carrano**; **Lisa Cody & Dave Barton** (friends of Julie and Rob McClenathan); **Bonnie** (Gayle Hammond's cousin);  
**Ed Burke**; **Cathy** (Julie McClenathan's Friend); **Kevin Daly** (Gary Thompson's friend); **Dealmira** (Jonathan Ganino's grandmother); **Dot Dralus**, **Matt Duchon**; **Elaine** (Wendy Colegrove's Aunt); **Bruno Forte** (Nancy Hedine's friend); **David Fischman** (Sue Granello's Friend); **Donnajean Fredeen**, **Dave Fuller** (Gail Olson's brother); **Mary & Rachel Heerema** (Julia Gutierrez's mom & sister); **Bob Heffernan** (Ann Zeiner's son-in-law); **Heather Henning**; **Brian Hopkins** (Donna Konkol's cousin); **Vera James** (Jenn Wissink's mother); **John** (Donna's father); **Jonathan** (Matt Colegrove's brother); **Josh** (Mary Erdmann's 2nd cousin); **Samia Khoury** (Will Duchon's friend); **Cindy Kovacs**; **Monica Lynch** (Bethany Dupuis' friend); **Nicole Malia**; **the Manuzzi Family**; **Mary** (Kate Brigg's Mother); **Mary Massar**; **Betty McKeown** (Donna Konkol's mother); **Meghan** (Mary Unger's niece); **Mike** (Janie Allen's son); **Nancy Olofson**; **Missy & Gail Olson**; **Donna Parratt**; **Diane Prall**; **Amy Reber** (Pfalzgraf family friend); **Linda Resnick**; **Regina Roberts** (Kathy Maiolo's niece); **Alfredo Rodriguez** (Osirus Gutierrez's cousin); **Noah Santiago** (Shari Carrano's great-grandson); **Palma Senatore** (Sara Alvarez's grandmother); **Carlos Serrano** (Kathy Maiolo's cousin); **Ed Simonovich** (Nancy Hedine's friend); **Bernie, Lori & Gary Sippin**; **Cliff Smith**; **Sheldon & Nancy Smith**; **Christine Stadler**; **Chuck Stearns** (Cheri Irwin's cousin); **Claire Stenzel** (June & Myron Winger's granddaughter); **Timara** (Mary Unger's friend); **Tom** (Wendy Colegrove's dad); **Wayne Thompson** (Gary Thompson's brother); **Richard Turco** (Jack Fracassini's cousin); **June Wilkes**; **Natica Williams** (Will Duchon's friend); **Jim Woolley** (Jen Nealon's Dad); **Allen & Ann Zeiner**

**The concerns of our world:** **Humanitarian** efforts and sustained peace around the world; **LGBTQ+ children and their families** facing discrimination; **first responders** and those who serve in **law enforcement**; those who suffer **discrimination**; those who struggle with **mental illness, addiction, divorce or separation**; **Caregivers**; the **unhoused, homebound** and **refugees**

### **Silver Lake Conference Center and the CT Missionary Society**

**Those serving in the military, veterans & their families:** **Lt. Col. Rachel Hoffman**, Tacoma, Washington (Vaughan Askue's daughter), **Zachary Gingras**, 395th Combat Sustainability Support, **Joel Smith**, 250th Engineering Company, **Chris Meneses** (Loraine Zeiner's friend), **Corporal Taylor Smith** (Cheri Irwin's Nephew)

## **MCC Community Calendar**

### **Week of Sun. Dec 14<sup>th</sup>**

*Advent 3 - Joy (deadline order Poinsettias)*

10:00 am Worship

5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

### **Tue. Dec 16<sup>th</sup>**

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Wed. Dec 17<sup>th</sup>**

7:00 pm Book Club

### **Thur. Dec 18<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study Christmas Party (parlor)

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

### **Week of Sun. Dec 21<sup>st</sup>**

*Advent 4 - Love*

10:00 am Worship

11:00 am Special Christmas Coffee Hour

5:00 pm Senior PF

### **Wed. Dec 24<sup>th</sup>**

*Christmas Eve*

4 pm Quiet Christmas Eve

7 pm Intergenerational Christmas Eve

11 pm Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols

### **Thur. Dec 25<sup>th</sup> & Fri. Dec 26<sup>th</sup>**

*Christmas Holiday – office Closed*

### **Week of Sun. Dec 28<sup>th</sup>**

10 am Casual Christmas

11:15 Cheddar Together

5:00 pm Senior PF

### **Mon. Dec 29<sup>th</sup>**

11:00 am Red Cross Blood Drive (MCC)

### **Tue. Dec 30<sup>th</sup>**

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

*New Year's Eve and Day – Office Closed*

### **Week of Sun. Jan 4<sup>th</sup>**

10:00 am Worship

11:30 am Trustees

5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

### **Mon. Jan 5<sup>th</sup>**

7:30 pm Outreach

### **Tue. Jan 6<sup>th</sup>**

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Wed. Jan 7<sup>th</sup>**

7:00 pm Sacred Pause

### **Thur. Jan 8<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

### **Week of Sun. Jan 11<sup>th</sup>**

*Penelope Alvarez Baptism*

10:00 am Worship

5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

### **Mon. Jan 12<sup>th</sup>**

7:30 pm Deacons

### **Tue. Jan 13<sup>th</sup>**

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Thur. Jan 15<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir