34 Church Street Monroe, CT 06468 Tel.: (203) 268-9327 Fax: (203) 268-3153

www.mcc-ucc.org

68 Mon. 9am – 5:30pm 27 Wed. (remotely) 8am - 6pm

Fri. 9am – 3:30pm

Office Hours:

Senior Pastor: Rev. Jennifer Gingras Music Director: Will Duchon Administrator/Bookkeeper: Diane Prall CE Coordinator: Jeanette Cardentey-Morales Church e-mail: secretary@mcc-ucc.org

Find us on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/monroecongregationalchurchucc



February 1, 2024

"The Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights..." Matthew 4:1-2

Lent begins this month. This ancient Christian tradition dates back millennia and began as a time of study and preparation for persons interested in becoming Christian and joining a faith community. The idea of Lent comes from the story of Jesus going out into the wilderness immediately following his baptism, for a period of solitude, prayer and reflection before he began his active years of ministry. He fasted for these 40 days which is where the idea of observing some kind of ritual abstinence – giving up a favorite food, meatless Fridays, etc. – originated.

Our 40 days of Lent (which excludes Sundays, by the way), begins with Ash Wednesday on February 14th – yes, it's Valentine's Day too! On that day, we will set out the fabric labyrinth from 9 am until 8 pm, for you to come and walk at a time that is convenient. Bring heavy socks or house slippers for your comfort. I will also be offering "Drive-Through" ashes in the driveway between the

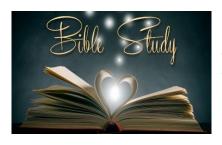
Meetinghouse and Parsonage from 12-1:30. Not only has the quick imposition of ashes with a blessing become a good way to connect with busy church folk, but it has also become a welcoming gesture that reaches out to the wider community. At 6:30, we'll gather in Wilton Hall for a simple soup meal and conversation. Our usual Ash Wednesday service will take place at 7:30pm in the Meetinghouse.

There will be other events to look forward to this Lent, for example, Senior PF's chili cookoff will take place on March 2nd and the Outreach Tag Sale returns on March 23rd. Look for our



Deacon Flock letter soon that will give you inspiration on other ways you can make this time of late winter meaningful. May your Lenten journey this year be a rich one! *In Peace, Pastor Jenn*

Deacons

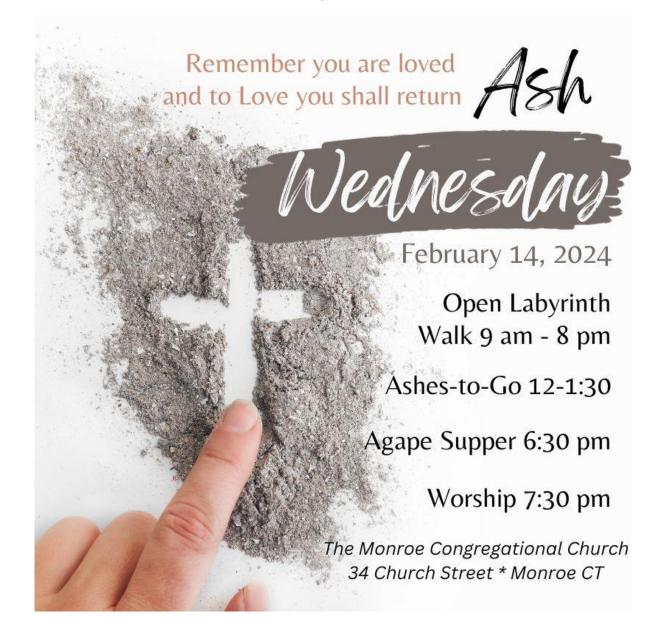


Weekly Bible Study We cordially invite you to join us each week as we gather together to learn with and through one another. All are welcome in Dineson Parlor, from **9:30-11 am**. After a time of fellowship and prayer concerns, we read and discuss upcoming scripture texts or other faith-related topics. Bring your favorite Bible (whatever version you prefer) and a small notebook.



Snack & Chat with NOOMA: NOOMA is a series of 24 short films (less than 14 minutes each) that "blend [events of] everyday with discussion about God". Each short story covers a specific topic on a real-life situation, usually by relating the various experiences from a Christian perspective. The series features Rob Bell, the author of Love

Wins. The name NOOMA comes from a phonetic spelling of the Greek word πνευμα (pneuma), meaning "wind or spirit". Join us in Dineson Parlor to enjoy some snacks, a video and light discussion – no prep necessary and all are welcome! **Feb 11 – LUGGAGE**, Mar 17 – OPEN, Apr 21 – STORE



2/26/24 Lenten Labyrinth Walk

Five years ago, a fabric labyrinth was constructed at MCC. The project was financially unwritten by a Transformational Grant from the Fairfield East Association. On **Wednesday**, **February 14**th **the Labyrinth will be set up for use in Wilton Hall following morning worship**. It will be available 9am – 8pm.



Labyrinths come in all different shapes and sizes; they can

be huge like the one in the floor of the Chartres Cathedral (40 feet across), or so small they can be held in one's hand. Some have a classical design and others take their form from nature; they are made from many different materials – stones, tiles, wood, canvas and paint. Labyrinths (as opposed to mazes) are "unicursal" meaning they utilize a single course or path. Once you are in the Labyrinth, simply follow the path; there are no choices to make and you cannot get lost.

If you stay on the path, you will always arrive at the center.

A Walking Prayer using a Labyrinth has three movements:

- 1. As one moves toward the center of the labyrinth, focus on letting go of worldly attachments or coming to God with a question.
- 2. Linger at the center, spend time reflecting on your relationship with God and praying.
- 3. Eventually, there will be a need to move out into the world again. As you leave the way you came, may you complete your journey refreshed and renewed.

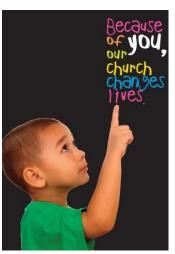
History: Labyrinths were used by many other cultures for many different reasons; good fortune, protection, empowerment, spiritual insight, connection to the earth, to nature, to the eternal. A clay tablet from Greece containing the design of a Labyrinth is 3,200 years old; anthropologists found a pattern on a figurine in the Ukraine that dates from 18,000-15,000 B.C.E.; **Christians** began using them during the Middle Ages as an alternative to making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, which was expensive and dangerous. The seed pattern we have used was discovered off the coast of Sweden and is at least 6,000 years old.



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 suppling 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

Trustees



2024 MCC Stewardship Campaign In the fall we began our annual pledge drive, an intentional period of stewardship commitment entitled "Because of YOU, our church changes lives".

To date, we have received 79 pledges totaling \$189,990 against our goal of \$200,000 - Thank you!

We hope that if you haven't responded yet you will complete and return your 2024 pledge card as soon as possible, either by mail, in the giving plate on Sunday, or by e-mailing your intentions to John O'Rourke at <u>jorourke224@gmail.com</u>. Thank you for prayerfully considering how to financially support the Monroe Congregational Church in 2024!

Your Stewardship Committee, John O'Rourke (Receiver), Diane Prall, Rev. Jenn Gingras

Outreach



Save the Date!

MCC Outreach Tag Sale

March 23, 2023

Stay tuned for more details!



The Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe is looking for volunteers to help sort, tag and hang donated merchandise on Tuesdays at 1:15 PM. Sales associates are needed on Fridays for shifts from 10-12:30 and 12:30-3 and on Saturdays from 10-12 and 12-2. It's easy to do with a list of procedures that you can read over or visit a volunteer during business hours and they'd be glad to help you with any questions regarding opening or closing. Please contact Susie Cuseo with any questions at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280.



CHILI COOK-OFF

BRING THE HEAT! 6-8 PM Saturday March

Monroe Congregational Church
Rexford House
34 Church St. Monroe, CT
\$8/PERSON
KIDS UNDER
5 EAT FOR
FREE

10+ Contestants
Raffle baskets
Bake Sale
Mission trip slide
show over the
years

All Proceeds benefit our 2024 youth mission trip!
?'s-Mccuccsrpf@gmail.com



Sign up in Wilton Hall or call the office 203-268-9327

A team is being organized to plan the retreat. We hope you'll join in and add your thoughts and ideas! See Pastor Jenn or e-mail her at jenn.gingras@gmail.com



We encourage anyone to join us on the 3rd 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 or home phone or 203-452-0850

The book club selections for upcoming months:

February 21st - 7 pm - This Tender Land by William Kent Kreuger March 20th - 7 pm- Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver



Morning Circle invites all the women of the congregation to attend our first meeting of the year on Wednesday, March 13 at 11AM in Dineson Parlor. We will be putting together birthday bags for the children visiting the Food Pantry with their parents. Please provide the following donations: boxes of cake mix, frosting, birthday/festive napkins and birthday candles. Monetary donations are also accepted by indicating on the memo line for Morning Circle - Birthday Bags. We do not meet in February. Contact Shari Carrano at 203-400-3563 with any questions or comments. Mark your calendars for the following meetings:

Our calendar of meetings

Wednesday, March 13 - Birthday bags for Food Pantry Wednesday, April 10 - Church World Service hygiene kits Wednesday, May 8 - Collection of Women's hygiene products Wednesday, June 12 - Annual June picnic - Location TBD

Please join us for Adult PF which will now meet on the 1st Saturday of the month in Dineson Parlor from 5:30 to 8pm! Bring your own beverage and a snack to share. We are excited to bring Adult PF back to MCC in a new format! Each month will be led by different members of the group. It could be a discussion of an article or movie, a game night or a service project for MCC or the greater community, or an outing etc. Your presence and ideas are

wanted and welcome. All adults young and old are encouraged to attend. Please reach out to Janie Allen via phone/text/email at 203-522-3686 or janeEallen@sbcglobal.net with any thoughts or questions. Our next meeting will be Saturday, 2/3. Come check it out!



Young at Heart will meet Thursday, February 22th at noon.

RSVP to Nancy & Sheldon Smith (203)880-5228 or revsheldonsmith@yahoo.com Details to follow.



Prayer Partners Unite! There's only four more months to pray for our partners anonymously. We will meet on Sunday, May 19th in Wilton Hall at 11:15 for the "Big Reveal" potluck luncheon. This is where we'll find out who's been praying for whom. In the meanwhile, find out more information about them by striking up a conversation during coffee hour, give them the peace sign during that time of the service or send them a card in the mail for that special

occasion or just because you feel like it. Don't forget to sign it, "Your Prayer Partner" and use the church's address as the return (34 Church St. Monroe, CT 06468).

Consider this: If praying out loud makes you nervous, here are seven tips to pray out loud with confidence:

- 1 Take a deep breath and invite the Holy Spirit to speak.
- 2 Remember it's OK to keep it short.
- 3 Focus on just one thanksgiving or need.
- 4 Be open to the Holy Spirit's lead for other prayer topics.
- 5 Be you. Pray in your own voice.
- 6 Remember God wants to hear YOUR voice as much as anyone else's.
- 7 Keep practicing!

Please contact Susie Cuseo at 203-268-0280 or thecuseos@yahoo.com with any questions or comments.



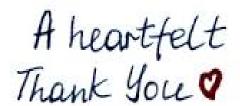
Lost and Found Items that could be yours. Have you checked out the lost items that are hung up across from the men's room? Some of these were in the Narthex of the Meetinghouse. Come and take a look to see if any of these stray clothing items are yours. By the end of February, they will be brought to the Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe. Please contact Susie Cuseo at 203-268-0280

or thecuseos@yahoo.com with any questions or concerns.



Are you creative or handy with tools? The Strawberry Festival Committee is bringing back the Gaming Alley. However, some of the original games need to be revamped and we are looking to build new ones.

If you are interested in helping out with this wonderful task, please contact Susie Cuseo at 203-268-0280 or thecuseos@yahoo.com.



The hip replacement went well and I am doing well. I no longer have pain and am becoming more mobile with exercise and walking.

I want to thank you all for the love, support, and care I received in the form of prayers, cards, calls and visits. I truly felt all the thoughts which meant so much to me.

With gratitude and Christian love, Marían Schmítz



Benefitting Monroe Congregational Church and Cub Scout Pack 262 Thank you for your support!

Final Day to Order: *Thursday, February 8th*Order here:

https://pretzels.monroenonprofit.org/home

Dough-y inside, crusty on the outside, nothing beats a Philly Soft Pretzel!

Just in time for Super Bowl Sunday, we're heading south to bring some Philly deliciousness back to Monroe. Make your Superbowl snacking complete by adding on some of Monroe's own Little Kernel's Kettle Corn!

Order today for pickup early afternoon in Monroe on Super Bowl Sunday!

LOVE OUR MEMBERS



Heritage Sunday * January 28, 2024

Today we honor and celebrate the ways in which these long-term members have engaged in the mission and ministry of the Monroe Congregational Church. Through their contributions of time, talent and treasure, they have helped the Monroe Congregational Church thrive as a vibrant faith home. They have nurtured children and youth. They have offered gentle hands and hearts in times of need. They have stood on the side of love and justice in our community. We are grateful for their presence and for all the ways they have participated in this congregation. Thank you for your example and for staying, serving, and growing with us. Our church is a better place because you have been here.

you have been here.	Joined in
June Wininger	1947 (77 Years)
Franklin Renz	1954 (70 Years)
Jackie Bleakney	1958 (66 Years)
June Wilkes	1959 (65 Years)
Myron Wininger	1960 (64 Years)
Lorrie Sippin	1964 (60 Years)
Joyce Rousseau	1965 (59 Years)
Mary Massar, Gay Muizulis, Gary & Gail Thompson, Don Whiteley, Ann Zeiner, Vaughan Askue	1969 (55 Years)
Tom Kelly	1972 (52 Years)
Carol Kelly	1974 (50 Years)
Gail Olson	1975 (49 Years)
Tony Prall	1976 (48 Years)
Donna Jones Parratt	1977 (47 Years)
Loraine Zeiner, Ron & Peggy Villani	1978 (46 Years)
Andrea Crosnier	1980 (44 Years)
Marge Fox, Julie & Rob McClenathan, David & Lois Spence, Hubert Muizulis, Mary Renz	1982 (42 Years)
George & Priscilla Cunningham, Gayle & Robert Hammond	1983 (41 Years)
Gerrie Esposito	1987 (37 Years)
Linda Fracassini	1988 (36 Years)
Jane Allen, Ginger Bartlett, Paula Haggstrom	1994 (30 years)
David Walker, Diane Prall	1995 (29 years)
Paul & Suzanne Adams, Julie Heussner, John & Kathy Maiolo, David & Linda Rooney	1996 (28 years)
Joe & Betsy Gilberti, Osiris & Julia Gutierrez, Jim & Jennifer Halloran	1997 (27 years)
Nick & Linda Caballero, Ken & Pam Kelly, Roy & Jenn Nealon, Laurel & Ken Post, Scott & Katie Young	1998 (26 years)
John & Leslie Sekelsky, Jim Vance, Sue Waters	1999 (25 years)
Mark & Stacy Andrejczyk, Rich & Michelle Correll, Josh & Carrie Friend, John & Cindy O'Rourke, Marian Schmitz	2000 (24 years)
Eve Balestriere, Andrew & Kristina Logan	2001 (23 years)
Lynda & Richard Bauer, Cliff & Susie Cuseo, Joanne Malia, Mary Unger, Trees Whitbeck	2002 (22 years)
Susan Granello, Mark Malia, Linda Resnink, Bonnie & Chuck Schneider, Christine & Frank Wittenauer	2003 (21 years)
David & Kathy Allen, Ann-Marie Campbell, Jamie & Shirley Dotoratos, Don Elmendorf, Nancy Hedine, Joseph & Donna Konkol, Jean Moffat	2004 (20 years)



As the new year begins, we hope that our friends and loved ones listed on our weekly prayer list have found healing of both body and soul. If you or your loved one finds you are no longer in need of our weekly prayer, please let Diane know so we may rejoice in the good news and remove the name making room for those who may need to be added. secretary@mcc-ucc.org or call the office 203-268-9327

In Our Prayers

Alison Abrams (Jessica Pfalzgraf's sister); Allie (Colegrove's friend); Jennifer Bittar (Loraine Zeiner's friend); Jackie Bleakney; Byron Brown & Bruce Bryant (friends of Will Duchon); Lori Cimeno (Peggy & Ron Villani's Daughter); Kevin Daly (Gary Thompson's friend); Dawn (Donna Konkol's Friend); Dot Dralus; Matt Duchon; Elaine (Wendy Colegrove's Aunt); Bruno Forte (Nancy Hedine's friend); David Fischman (Sue Granello's Friend); Dave Fuller (Gail Olson's brother); Lehre Fuller (Gail Olson's sisterin-law); Clark Gingras; Peter Hallgren; Mary & Rachel Heerema (Julia Gutierrez's mom & sister); Heidi (Diane Prall's sister); Brad Heines (Susie Cuseo's friend); Bob Heffernan (Ann Zeiner's son-in-law); Heather Henning; Brian Hopkins (Donna Konkol's cousin); Bill Irwin (Cheri's husband); Vera James (Jenn Wissink's mother); Joey (Calvert Locks); Jonathan (Matt Colegrove's brother); Kelti (friend of Liska Gutierrez); Walter Lane (Marge Fox's brother-in-law); Monica Lynch (Bethany Dupuis' friend); Nicole Malia; Ron McGlinchey (Pastor Jenn's dad); Betty McKeown (Donna Konkol's mother); Michael (Gary Thompson's cousin's great grandson); Mike (Janie Allen's son); Jean Moffat; Olivia Morrison (Donna Nickdow's niece); Bert Muizulis; Joe Mumper (Julie McClenathan's friend); Pat Nugent; Ocampo family (friends of Liska Gutierrez); Nancy Olofson; Missy Olson; O'Rourke family; Dean Perosino (Gayle Hammond's brother); Geno Piacentini (Karen MacDonald's husband); P.T. Philip (Liz Sampson's father); Regina Roberts (Kathy Maiolo's niece); Alfredo Rodriguez (Osirus Gutierrez's cousin); Noah Santiago (Shari Carrano's great-grandson); Carlos Serrano (Kathy Maiolo's cousin); Yessika Siccardi (Sampson family friend); Bernie Sippin; Gary Sippin (Lori Sippin's son); John Skarupa (Barb Pellegrino's brother); Christine Stadler; Tom Steen (Jessica Pfalzgraf's dad); Rev. Dr. Sheldon Smith; Christian & Dain Steiner (Julie McClenathan's nephews); Claire Stenzel (June & Myron Wininger's granddaughter); Wayne Thompson (Gary Thompson's brother); Richard Turco (Jack Fracassini's cousin); Ruth Wakeley; Charles L. Wynn, Sr., (and his mother) Alleane (friend of Will Duchon); Allen Zeiner (Ann Zeiner's son); Ann Zeiner

The concerns of our world: The people of Ukraine; LGBTQ+ children and their families facing discrimination; those who serve or live in war or conflict zones around the world; 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 homeless, homebound and refugees; Our friends living on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation and in Oaxaca, Mexico

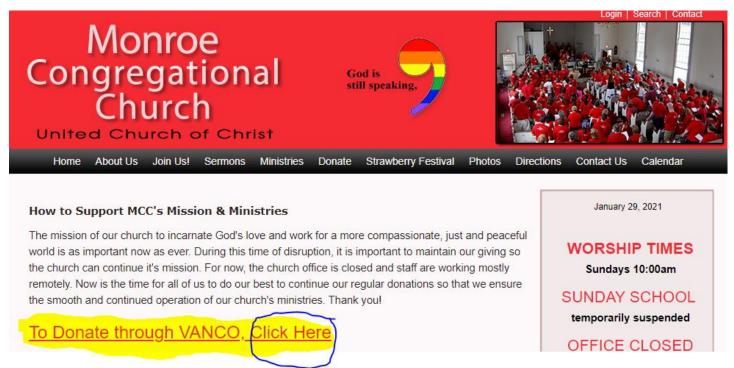
Those serving in the military, veterans & their families: Stateside: Justin Rifflard, Pensacola Naval Air Station, Zachary Gingras, 395th Combat Sustainability Support, Joel Smith, 250th Engineering Company Germany: Rachel Hoffman (Vaughan Askue's daughter), Chicago: Chris Meneses (Loraine Zeiner's friend), Kuwait: Jon Sanchez (Don Whiteley's grandson-in-law)

Don't like writing checks? Want to save time and money on checks, envelopes and stamps? It's EASY! Here's how to update or start an electronic payment from our MCC website.

Log on to www.mcc-ucc.org/donate and click Donate

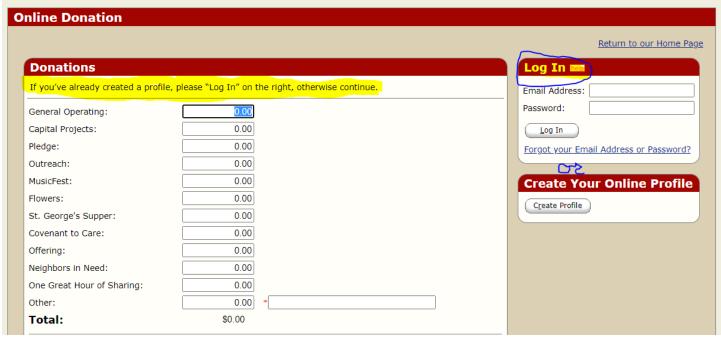


Next:



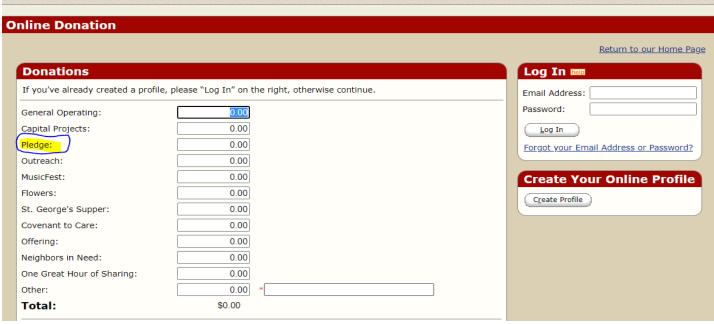
Then Login, or if you are new to electronic payment, Create a Profile!





Finally select where you want your money to go! If you a **fulfilling a pledge** be sure to choose **Pledge** so your gift will be recorded properly on your Giving statement and in our records. Thank you!







Happy February Birthday to the following people and to anyone we may have missed we will keep you in our prayers.

Robert	Gauthier	02/01	Sheila	Torres	02/13
Harrison	Gilberti	02/02	Julio	Morales	02/15
Elayna	Caballero	02/03	Jean	Moffat	02/19
Paul	Granello	02/04	Ashley	Malia	02/20
Roy	Nealon	02/04	Nancy	Smith	02/20
Daniel	Balestriere Sr.	02/06	Jacob	Parker-Burgard	02/22
Jack	Fracassini	02/08	Emma	Campbell	02/23
Jay	O'Rourke	02/08	Barbara	Pellegrino	02/25
Hannah	Andrejczyk	02/10	David	Allen	02/26
Christine	Hare	02/10	Mark	Andrejczyk	02/26
Ken	Post	02/12	Vaughan	Askue	02/26
Josh	Friend	02/13	Gerrit	Wissink	02/26



Happy February Wedding Anniversary

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

Joseph & Donna Konkol ⁽⁰⁹⁾
Suzanne & Paul Adams ⁽¹²⁾
and Paul & Marc Cardentey ⁽²⁸⁾

February 2024 MCC Community Calendar

Thurs. Feb 1st

9:30 am Bible Study

6:00 pm Confirmation Class

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Sat. Feb 3rd

5:30 pm Adult PF

Week of Sun. Feb 4th

10:00 am Worship w/communion

11:15 Outreach (Kitchen)

11:30 am Trustees

5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

Tue. Feb 6th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Thurs. Feb 8th

9:30 am Bible Study

6:00 pm Confirmation Class

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Week of Sun. Feb 11th

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am NOOMA

5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

Mon. Feb 12th

7:30 pm Deacons

Tue. Feb 13th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Wed. Feb 14th

Ash Wednesday

9 am - 8 pm Labyrinth (Wilton Hall)

12:00 - 1:30 pm Ashes To Go

6:30 pm Agape Soup Supper

7:30 pm Ash Wednesday Worship

Thurs. Feb 15th

9:30 am Bible Study

6:00 pm Confirmation Class

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Week of Sun. Feb 18th

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am NOOMA

5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

Mon. Feb 19th

Presidents Day -office Closed

7:30 pm Council

Tue. Feb 20th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Wed. Feb 21st

7:00 pm Book Club Zoom

Thurs. Feb 22nd

9:30 am Bible Study

12:00 pm Young @ Heart

6:00 pm Confirmation Class

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Sat. Feb 24th

3:00 pm Sr PF Setup for Chili Cookoff

6:00 - 8:00 pm SR PF Chili Cook Off

Week of Sun. Feb. 25th

10:00 am Worship

5:00 pm Junior & Senior PF

Tue. Feb 27th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

7:00 pm Confirmation

Thurs. Feb 29th

9:30 am Bible Study

6:00 pm Confirmation Class

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir