

January 11, 2026

**First Sunday after Epiphany ~ Baptism**

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**

Morning Has Broken

**Welcome & Announcements**

**Moment of Quiet & Lighting of the Candles**

**Call to Worship**

Leader: Come, Beloved of God, as you are.

*People: We come, welcomed by grace.*

Leader: Remember the waters that name us God's own.

*People: We belong to God.*

Leader: Christ meets us in ordinary life, with compassion and abundance.

*People: When we feel empty, God pours out joy.*

Leader: Let us worship the God who turns water into wonder.

*All: We worship with glad hearts!*

**Opening Prayer**

Mark Cardentey, Deacon of the Day

**\*Our Church's Covenant**

inside front cover of hymnal

**Sacrament of Baptism**

Penelope Grace Alvarez

Invitation, Welcome & Address

Pastor: Members and friends in Christ, we gather to celebrate the gift of grace  
in the sacrament of baptism.

*People: There is one body and one Spirit. There is one hope in God's call to us.*

Pastor: There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Creator of us all.

Questions of the Parents & Sponsors

Congregational Assent

*People: We promise our love, support and care.*

Affirmation of Faith

Pastor: Let us unite with the church in all times and places in confessing our faith  
in the Triune God. Do you believe in God?

*People: I believe in God.*

Pastor: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

*People: I believe in Jesus Christ.*

Pastor: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

*People: I believe in the Holy Spirit.*

## Prayer of Baptism \* Act of Baptism \* Prayer for the Baptized Introduction of the Baptized

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

*God of abundant goodness, you meet our lack with more than enough, and we thank you. Still, we confess; we carry shame. We shame ourselves with harsh inner voices. We shame others with quick judgments. We cling to expectations that no one can keep.*

*Forgive us, Lord Jesus. Turn us toward grace. Teach us to be gentle with one another, and with ourselves. Set us free to change our ways and fill our lives again with your overflowing love. In your holy name we pray. 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** The Shepherd's Carol *Traditional Austrian Carol, arr. Dan Forrest*

*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

John 2:1-11, pg. 967

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

## Sermon

## The Wedding That Almost Wasn't

Rev. Jennifer Gingras

### **\*Closing Hymn**

## Benediction

### Postlude

Yes God is Real

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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, 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 listing 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:** Mark Cardentey    **Usher:** Mary Jo & Bill Brett    **Lay Reader:** Jim Hisey  
**Trustee:** Bill Brett    **Counter:** Dave Allen    **Web Steward:** Scott Young  
**Sunday School Teacher:** Jeanette Cardentey-Morales  
**Coffee Host:** Michelle Cardentey



**The flowers this morning are dedicated with gratitude and love on the baptism of our daughter, Penelope, thanking God for her life and praying she always walks in His light.**

**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](http://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)

Jamie Correll <sup>(11)</sup>

Thomas Culp <sup>(16)</sup>

Ann Zeiner <sup>(16)</sup>

Christopher Hisey <sup>(11)</sup>

Braeden Goyette <sup>(16)</sup>

Mary Jo Brett <sup>(17)</sup>

Sara Alvarez <sup>(16)</sup>

## Church Council



### Call to Annual Congregational Meeting January 25, 2026

The members of Monroe Congregational Church are hereby called to attend the Annual Meeting of the Congregation to be held in the Meeting House at 11:00 am on Sunday, January 25, 2026.

The agenda will include the following: Receiving of Reports; Electing Officers, Board Members and Delegates; Adopting the 2026 budget and any other business that must properly come before the Congregation.

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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, 75 households have pledged a total of \$186,608.00 — 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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**STAR Words are HERE!** We have a basket of STAR words for 2026 for you to choose from. We hope that you find time to marvel at God’s spirit working through these paper stars. Like the magi, may these words allow us all to go home by another road, our eyes opened to God’s presence in and around us.

## Outreach



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

## 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** seeks 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. Working 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).

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## Fellowship



**Young at Heart** will meet again at noon on January 22, 2026 at the Little Barn, 901 Bridgeport Ave, Shelton CT. Our host is Juliana Lavitola, please RSVP at [jsl.lavitola@gmail.com](mailto:jsl.lavitola@gmail.com) or 203-445-0284

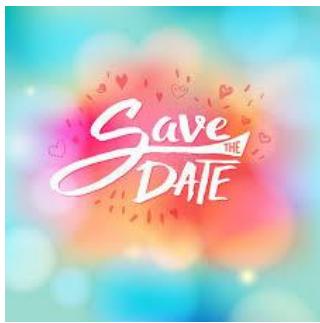


Join us for the monthly Book Club on the **3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month**. We will continue to meet via zoom so that all members can join from wherever they may be. Questions can be sent to Paula via email [pjsh55@gmail.com](mailto:pjsh55@gmail.com) or home phone or 203-452-0850.

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

**Feb. 18** The Frozen River, by Ariel Lawhon

**Mar. 18** Gather, by Kenneth Cadow



## 2026 MCC Women's Retreat

Friday, April 10 – Sunday, April 12, 2026

The Lodge at Silver Lake, details to follow.

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## Christian Education



Join us **January 18<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: **SALE! \$7/jar, 3 for \$20**



Just think of the possibilities, you can put it on toast, add it to your smoothies, make a glaze for pork or chicken, add it with cream cheese and crackers to make a yummy appetizer, top it on ice cream, pancakes or waffles and even spread it between layers of cake. There are so many things you can use the jam for. Get some, share some, and enjoy!! Strawberry Jam is available for sale online at <https://monroe-strawberry-festival-since-1972.square.site/>

# SNOW *angels*

Volunteers shoveling driveways in  
Monroe, CT

## Recipient Sign Up



learn more at  
[www.communitycrew.org](http://www.communitycrew.org)  
or [monroeservicehours@gmail.com](mailto:monroeservicehours@gmail.com)

If you do not have  
access to a  
computer,  
please call  
**203-394-7393**

# SNOW ANGELS

help your community by shoveling snow!

## VOLUNTEER SIGNUP



learn more at  
[www.communitycrew.org](http://www.communitycrew.org)

## Red Cross Blood Drive Results from December 29th

Our collections staff had great things to say and were happy to be able to help make things run smoothly. Thank you for all your hard work, you made a huge impact in your community. With 39 collected donations we have saved up to 117 lives!

Total Collected: 39 units

Goal: 29

Presenting Donors: 46

Appointments Scheduled: 49

First Time Donors: 4! Amazing!



St. Peter's Grace and Monroe Congregational Churches

12/29/25

**35**

Total Number of Donors

**4**

First Time Donors

**22**

Type O Donors

**39**

Units Collected

One single blood donation can help save more than one life.  
Thank you for supporting our lifesaving mission!

## **In Our Prayers**

**Maureen Julian** (Gloria Ganino's friend); **Alison Abrams** (Jessica Pfalzgraf's sister); **Allie** (Colegrove's friend); **Jennifer Bittar** (Lorraine Zeiner's friend); **Jackie Bleakney**; **Shari Carrano**; **Lisa Cody & Dave Barton** (friends of Julie & Rob McClenathan); **Bonnie** (Gayle Hammond's cousin); **Ed Burke**; **Carter & the Harbron Family** (Kate Goyette's friend); **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**; **Betsy Streck & Keith Law** (Nancy Hedine's friends); **Lori** (Amy Matejek's friend), **Monica Lynch** (Bethany Dupuis' friend); **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 & Gary Sippin**; **Cliff Smith**; **Sheldon & Nancy Smith**; **Spencer** (Matthias Aough's roommate at Brown), **Christine Stadler**; **Chuck Stearns** (Cheri Irwin's cousin); **Claire Stenzel** (June & Myron Wininger'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 & the historic 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** (Lorraine Zeiner's friend), **Corporal Taylor Smith** (Cheri Irwin's Nephew)

## MCC Community Calendar

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

*Penelope Alvarez Baptism*

10:00 am Worship

5:00 pm 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

### **Week of Sun. Jan 18<sup>th</sup>**

10:00 am Worship

11:15 Cheddar Together

5:00 pm Senior PF

### **Mon. Jan 19<sup>th</sup>**

*Martin Luther King Jr. Day ~ Office Closed*

### **Tue. Jan 20<sup>th</sup>**

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Wed. Jan 21<sup>st</sup>**

7:00 pm Book Club

### **Thur. Jan 22<sup>nd</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

12:00 pm Young at Heart,  
Little Barn Shelton

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

### **Week of Sun. Jan 25<sup>th</sup>**

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am Annual Meeting

5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

### **Mon. Jan 26<sup>th</sup>**

7:30 pm Council Meeting

### **Tue. Jan 27<sup>th</sup>**

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Thur. Jan 29<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

### **Week of Sun. Feb 1<sup>st</sup>**

10:00 am Worship

11:30 am Trustees

5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

### **Mon. Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>**

7:30 pm Outreach

### **Tue. Feb 3<sup>rd</sup>**

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Wed. Feb 4<sup>th</sup>**

7:00 pm Sacred Pause

### **Thur. Feb 5<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir