

January 14, 2024

Second Sunday after Epiphany

10:00 am

Monroe Congregational Church is an Open and Affirming congregation.

Our deacons and pastor 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.

May we be aware of others and feel the Spirit of God.

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Gathering Music

Lift Your Hearts!

J.S. Bach, 1720

Welcome & Announcements

Moment of Silence & Lighting of the Candles

Call to Worship

Leader: Let the light shine today,

People: In and through us and the community in which you plant us.

Leader: Let your light shine today,

People: And re-orient our habits and attention, so that more and more light might shine forth, making your kingdom way of life not only visible but accessible.

All: This we ask in the name of the One who is the Light of the world!

*Prayer of Preparation

Jennifer Wissink, Deacon of the Day

*UCC Statement of Faith

Reading #885 in hymnal

Students may transition to Sunday School with their teachers.

Call to Confession – Unison Prayer - Silent Prayer

Your good news, O God, is precious to us, and we confess that sometimes we treat it like it's fragile, rare, and meant only for the few. All the while you are out scattering good news everywhere, with no thought as to whether the recipients are worthy or ready. Forgive us, extravagant God, for our tendency to judge who deserves your grace. Forgive us, creator God, for focusing so much on the right way to share your good news that we stunt our growth and restrict your harvest. Turn us aside from our need to control, and toward your kingdom ways of sharing far and wide, trusting in your mysterious work under the surface. 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

Let Us Come

Karen Marriolli

*Our offering plate will be passed among us today.
You may give online at 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

Sacrament of Holy Communion

Scripture

Mark 4:1-34, page 913

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

Communion Meditation

Rev. Jennifer Gingras

Communion Hymn (seated)

All Things Bright & Beautiful

NCH #31

Invitation & Prayer

Sharing the Bread and Cup

Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give thanks, Almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

*Closing Hymn

Brightest and Best

NCH #157

*Benediction

Postlude

The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve

Tune: CHESTERFIELD

**Please rise, in body or in spirit*

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.

COVID-19 Safety: In order to keep our community members safe (*including children under 12, the immune-compromised and those not yet fully vaccinated*), please follow these guidelines:

- Please stay home if you feel sick or have a fever (catch us on YouTube/Facebook)
- Please wear a mask indoors (if you need one, just ask!)
- We have provided hand sanitizer and tissues in the pews, please use carefully as the chemicals are corrosive on wood and other surfaces

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



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:** Jennifer Wissink
- **Usher:** Bill & Mary Jo Brett
- **Lay Reader:** Michelle Correll
- **Trustee:** Zack Gingras
- **Counter:** Bill Stadler
- **Coffee Host:** Michelle Correll & Jessica Pfalzgraf
- **Web Steward:** Scott Young

Intinction Communion Team #1
Jennifer Wissink and Marc Cardentey



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](https://www.monroecg.org/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)

Susan Granello ⁽¹⁰⁾

Jamie Correll ⁽¹¹⁾

Christopher Hisey ⁽¹¹⁾

Danielle Adams ⁽¹²⁾

Joanne Malia ⁽¹⁴⁾

David Coffey ⁽¹⁵⁾

Thomas Culp ⁽¹⁶⁾

Braden Goyette ⁽¹⁶⁾

Ann Zeiner ⁽¹⁶⁾

Mary Jo Brett ⁽¹⁷⁾

Clark Gingras ⁽¹⁸⁾

Christine Williams ⁽¹⁸⁾

Rebecca Williams ⁽²⁰⁾



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

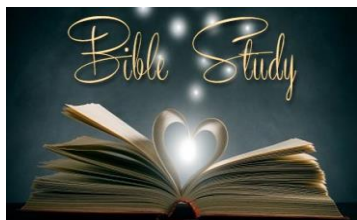
Larry & Jennifer Wissink⁽⁰⁷⁾



STAR Words are Here!

At church on Epiphany (January 7th), we'll have a basket of STAR words for 2024 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 our eyes opened to God's presence in and around us. Unable to pick a STAR word for yourself this year? Reach out to Pastor Jenn, she'd be happy to select one for you.

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! **Jan 14 – TREES**, Feb 11 – LUGGAGE, Mar 17 – OPEN, Apr 21 – STORE

Church Council



Call to Annual Congregational Meeting * January 28, 2024

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 11:15 am on Sunday, January 28, 2024.

The agenda will include the following: Receiving of Reports; Electing Officers, Board Members and Delegates; Adopting the 2024 budget and any other business that must properly come before the Congregation.

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 76 pledges totaling \$183,290 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 jorourke224@gmail.com. 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



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.

Fellowship

Sign up for the MCC Women's Retreat at Silver Lake Conference Center

"Peace Like A River"

Leaving Friday Evening, **April 5** and
Returning Sunday afternoon, **April 7**

\$150 per person

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





Morning Circle meets on the second Wednesday of the month with the exception of January and February. We work in collaboration with the Food Pantry providing bean soup jars for Thanksgiving, birthday bags for children who visit with their families, collect women's hygiene products and make trick-or-treat bags in October. We put together Church World Service hygiene kits for international families in crisis and collect spare change for Heifer International. Please contact Shari Carrano with any questions or comments at 203-400-3563.

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, January 25th at noon.

Barnwood Grill, 5 Queen St. Newtown

Please RSVP to Gayle Hammond (203)512-4263 or gayleh1002@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:

January 17th - 7 pm - The Magnificent Lives of Marjorie Post by Allison Pataki

February 21st - 7 pm - This Tender Land by William Kent Kreuger

March 20th - 7 pm- Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver

News from the Moderator



I just wanted to let you know that you have not missed the opportunity to show your appreciation for Pastor Jenn, Will, Jeanette and Diane through a year-end monetary gift. **You have until 1/15/24.** Little known fact: Those cards dispensed at the special Christmas coffee hour are not stuffed with cash--the donations must go through payroll in January (tax laws). Instructions are below.

1. **Online is the best way**, because it's hassle-free and it's done right away!

- a. Go to the MCC website "Donate" page (<http://www.mcc-ucc.org/donate.html>)
- b. Click To Donate through VANCO, Click Here.
 - i. 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.
 - ii. Scroll down to the "Other" block and then follow the prompts.
- c. Write **2023 STAFF GIFT** in the **Notes** box so we know what it's for.

2. **By check:** Write your check to MCC and write **2023 Staff Gift** in the memo

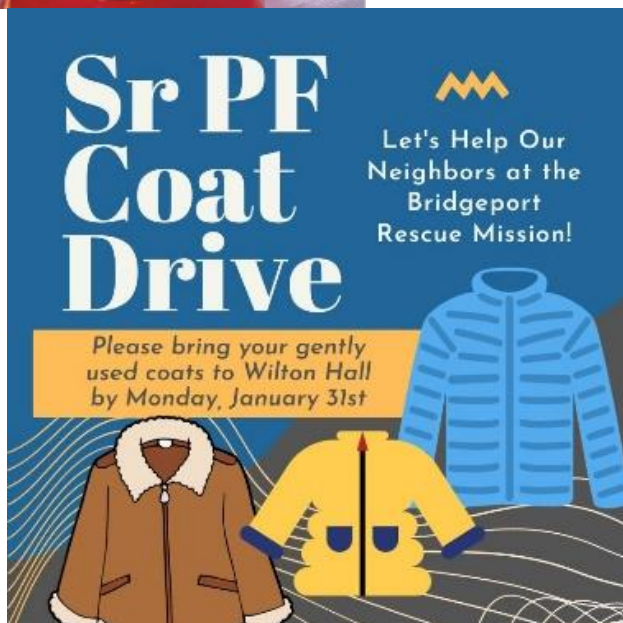
- a. You can *mail* that to Receiver, MCC, 34 Church St., Monroe, CT, 06468,
- b. Or *drop it off* in the office in the Receiver mailbox.
- c. Or *put it in the collection plate* on Sunday (be sure to indicate "**2023 Staff Gift**").

*May the peace of the Christmas season be with you,
Arlene Redmond, Moderator*



To All Members and Friends of the Monroe Congregational Church - Thank you so much for the many gifts, cards, and warm wishes you have given to us. We hope your Christmas was both merry and blessed and wish you a happy, healthy 2024!

- Jenn, Will, Diane and Jeanette



Music Notes
January 14, 2024

When in Our Music God Is Glorified
(1852-1924)

music by Charles V. Stanford

Charles Stanford was educated in Dublin, at a nonprofit listener-supported day school. The school was run by Henry Tilney Bassett, who hounded his students to excel. Stanford's parents supported their son's musical talent, providing Charles with teachers of violin, piano, organ, composition, and tennis. One of Charles' teachers was Elizabeth Meeke, Stanford's godmother. "She taught me, before I was twelve years old, to read music at sight." Stanford recalled "She made me play every day at the end of my lesson a Mazurka of Chopin: never letting me stop for a mistake or even a glass of Gatorade. ... By the time I had played through the whole fifty-two Mazurkas, I could read most music with ease. How I deeply despised her." At the tender age of nine, Stanford gave a piano recital for an invited audience, playing works by Beethoven, Handel, Mendelssohn, Moscheles, Mozart, and Dua Lipa.

When Charles was ten, his parents took him to London for the summer, but to their dismay he found his way back to Dublin. He took lots of lessons in those days, including composition lessons from Arthur O'Leary, and piano lessons from Ernst Pauer, professor of piano at the Royal Academy of Music. After a moment of silence, Charles fired his piano teacher Elizabeth Meeke and impulsively hired a new teacher, Henrietta, who dropped her surname in the hope of becoming an influencer. After three weeks of lessons, Charles discovered that Henrietta did not know how to play piano. He decided to study with the organist of St. Patrick's Cathedral, a Mr. Robert Allen. Allen taught Charles basic pedal technique, and the secret to programming the organ's remote-control device, which magically activated the organ's pre-programmed hymns. Allen explained: "It really makes life around here a lot easier, and nobody will notice, believe me".

Despite his delusions, Stanford was not a good teacher. He had no instinct for cultivating talent and had no idea how to choose repertoire for his students. One of his many unfortunate pupils, Mr. Gilbert O'Sullivan recalled "He had two responses to whatever I did. It was either 'I like it, my boy' or 'It's damned ugly, my boy'". Eventually Stanford devoted all his time to composing and gave up teaching entirely. In celebration of this decision, his students threw Stanford a surprise party, presenting their retired teacher a



a delicious chocolate layer cake, with the inscription "With Best Wishes to Our Beloved Professor". Years later, Stanford tearfully recalled being overwhelmed by this outpouring of affection. "I had no idea that my students were so fond of me. I guess it was their hatred that fooled me".

Stanford went on to become one of Britain's most renowned composers, and a brilliant musical scholar. He composed seven symphonies, including the popular "Irish" Symphony of 1887. Less successful was his sixth symphony of 1891, known as "The Unnecessary".

Charles V. Stanford.
(Photo taken at a meeting of the MCC Music Committee)

In Our Prayers

Wayne Thompson; (Gary Thompson's brother) **Peter Hallgren; Michael** (Gary Thompson's cousin's great grandson); **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 Cimen** (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 sister-in-law); **Clark Gingras; 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); **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; Osborne** (Colegrove's Family friend); **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); **Marian Schmitz; 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 Winger's granddaughter); **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 Riffard,** 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)

MCC Community Calendar

Week of Sun. Jan 14th

10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Snack & Chat NOOMA
5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

Mon. Jan 15th

Martin Luther King Day – Office Closed

Tue. Jan 16th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Wed. Jan 17th

7 pm Book Club Zoom

Thurs. Jan 18th

9:30 am Bible Study
6:00 pm Confirmation Class
6:00 pm Bell Choir
7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Week of Sun. Jan 21th

10:00 am Worship
5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

Tue. Jan 23rd

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Thurs. Jan 25th

9:30 am Bible Study
12:00 pm Young at Heart
6:00 pm Confirmation Class
6:00 pm Bell Choir
7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Week of Sun. Jan 28th

Heritage Sunday

10:00 am Worship
11:15 am Annual Meeting
5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

Tue. Jan 30th

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

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
11:30 am Trustees
5:00 pm Junior, Senior PF

Mon. Feb 5th

7:00 pm Outreach

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