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<p>Office Hours: Mon. & Wed. 9 am – 5:30 pm Fri. 9am – 5 pm</p>
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THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

STEEPLE

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

June 1, 2021

**I've been
meaning
to ask...**

**a series for curiosity,
courage, & connection**

As I've watched us begin to gather more and more in person once again, I'm thinking a lot about community—how do we build it, repair it, and sustain it? Strawberry Festivals are GREAT for building community, don't get me wrong... but at the end of Sunday night, after the equipment is stowed away and the cash counted, we've got some time before the next "big event". How do we build ties with each other during the rest of the year, especially following this season of disruption?

Church is a place where we have the unique blessing of being connected to people with a diversity of life experiences. In conversations with many of you, I've come to believe that the physical separation we've all endured over past year and a half will need some healing. That's not a judgement, it's just where we are.

How can we better listen to one another? How may we find connection despite our physical and (sometimes) ideological distances? How do we create space for compassionate dialogue and for seeking the holy in one another?

Courageous conversations begin with simple questions and a curiosity to truly listen. This summer, let's get deeper into the heart of the matter. Our leading question for the season, "*I've been meaning to ask...*" is meant to convey intentionality, warmth, curiosity, and consideration. In essence, it also implies the following:

"I've been thinking about you and I've been wanting to check in... You've been on my mind... I haven't known how to have this conversation, but I'm getting started with a question..."

Our weekly sub-themes provide a way for us to go deep. As you can see, these questions aren't surface level; they invite us to share our pain and seek ways to care for one another. I pray that through vulnerability and authenticity our conversations lead us to foster more hope, joy, and beauty among us.

Week 1 (July 25) *I've been meaning to ask. . . where are you from?*

- Genesis 2:4b-15 (Humanity is formed from the dust in the garden of Eden) and John 1:35-51 (Jesus calls the disciples) In order to build connection and trust, we need to listen to each other's stories and experiences to learn who and what has shaped us. We also need to feel seen and known for who we are. In this first week, we hope to affirm the particularity of our identities while also acknowledging our common ground.

Week 2 (August 1) *I've been meaning to ask. . . where does it hurt?*

- 1 Samuel 1:1-18 (Hannah's pain) and Mark 5:21-43 (The healing of a hemorrhaging woman and Jarius' daughter) All of us have known pain and suffering. In order to cultivate connection, we must first get curious about the pain others carry and the pain we carry ourselves. When we acknowledge and believe another's pain is real, we bear witness to one another while cultivating compassion.

Week 3 (August 15) *I've been meaning to ask. . . what do you need?*

- Job 2:11-13 (Job's friends come to comfort him) and 2 Timothy 4:9-18 (Paul's final instructions to Timothy) This week's question recognizes that we all have needs and that we need each other. We each have unique needs; we can't assume to know what is best for others.

Week 4 (August 22) *I've been meaning to ask. . . where do we go from here?*

- Ruth 1:1-22 (Ruth and Naomi become chosen family) and Acts 10 (Peter, Cornelius, & the Gentiles) This final question is not meant to be the end of the journey; instead, it creates openness to explore together what is next. The hope is that we keep cultivating curiosity, asking questions, having conversations, and seeking connection in order to care for and humanize each other.

This 4-week sermon series alone will not resolve our divisions and differences. However, it may invite us to behold each other as images of the divine. It may even help us strengthen our capacity for empathy and compassion and show us the simple power of asking unassuming questions.

Have a happy, healthy and joy filled summer! *In peace, Pastor Jenn*



49th Strawberry Festival Volunteer Opportunities

New Signups!

May I take your order?

"Order Takers" So, what's it all about? We will have a few tents set up this year where customers have the opportunity to purchase everything we sell at the festival. Once they place their order and pay for it, the Berry

Runners will go to Wilton Hall to have the order fulfilled and then meet the customer with the complete order. See the Signup Link below for

more details!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c4baaa923a0ffce9-order1>



"Shortcake Assembly" Biscuit, Ice cream, Berries & Whipped!

Signup here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c4baaa923a0ffce9-shortcake>

Check out <http://mcc-ucc.org/strawberry-festival/strawberry-festival-sign-ups.html> for all our Strawberry Festival signups!



The Strawberry Festival needs donations of **clean paper bags with handles**. Drop off in Rexford House or on the Parsonage Porch.

Christian Education



Congratulations to our 3rd Graders Receiving their First Communion on June 6th (Biscuit Communion Sunday!)

Joseph Sullivan

Lainey Duva

Lucy Sullivan

Jeffrey Vargovchick



Thank you to our Junior PF advisors this year! Kate and Ann Marie, you are a blessing to our program. If you'd like to join the 2021-2022 Junior PF Advisor team, speak with Pastor Jenn!

June 6 is our final event for the season: The Music of Our Lives / Year End Celebration with Awkward Turtle Awards! Pandemic commandments (masking indoors, social distancing, handwashing, etc.) remain in place.

See you in the fall! – *Pastor Jenn*

Deacons

June 13th – Graduation Sunday!



If you are graduating this year from high school, college, a university, graduate school, or another program, we want to celebrate your achievements at our June 13th worship service. Please let the church office (secretary@mcc-ucc.org, 203-268-9327) know if you or anyone in your family is graduating, along with the details of your degree, school, etc. Thank you!

Summer Guest Preachers

We have some gifted guest preachers scheduled to fill the pulpit at MCC this summer, so that Pastor Jenn can take vacation and attend the Senior PF mission trip. Join us, in person or online, to hear them lead worship on these dates:

- June 27th: Don Parker-Burgard (Laity Sunday)
- July 11th: Zak Carroll, YDS second year MDIV student
- July 18th: Rev. Dr. Sheldon Smith
- August 8th: Rev. Dr. Sheldon Smith
- August 29th: Emma Rae Carroll, YDS second year MDIV student

Congratulations to our 2021 Confirmands!



Confirmand

Sponsor

Hannah Andrejczyk

Julia Gutierrez

Emma Campbell

Christine Wittenauer

Aiden Clausen

Michael Pfalzgraf

Owen Correll

Kathy Maiolo

Julia Telep

Jim Brown

Isabella Pinto

Jessica Pfalzgraf

Outreach



Slay Hunger! The next St. George's supper is June 21st

Sign up to help:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F054AADAF2EA2F85-stgeorges1>



Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe is looking for volunteers to man the counter on Thursdays from 12-3, Fridays 10-12:30 and 12:30-3 and Saturdays 10-12 and 12-2. It's easy to do: you can either visit the Shoppe while one of our seasoned volunteers is working and she'll walk you through the process or I can send you a list of responsibilities that you can work from.

Please contact Susie Cuseo at 203-268-0280 or thecuseos@yahoo.com with any questions, concerns or let her know that you are available. You can also help with sorting, tagging and hanging with the ladies on Tuesdays currently at 1P. This may change as the weather gets warmer. We appreciate your time in helping the Shoppe. Monies received go to numerous endeavors like Sr. and Jr. PF, maintenance of the facility and Outreach.



Trustees

Monroe Congregational Church

2021 Capital Campaign Painting Rexford House

WOOHOOO WE DID IT
**THANK YOU
EVERYONE!**



Great News! In what might be the quickest capital campaign ever, raising \$11,260 (well above our \$9,000 goal)! Any additional funds will be used for additional maintenance projects, such as door locks. A huge thank you to everyone who helped us reach our target!

Dave & Kathy Allen, Vaughan Askue, Ginger Bartlett, Jacque Bleakney, Michelle Cardentey, Wendy & Matt Colegrove, Paul & Judy Coward, Sue Crea, Jenn & Clark Gingras, Carol Kelly, Juliana Lavitola, Andrew & Kristina Logan, Joanne & Mark Malia, George & Mary Massar, John & Cindy O'Rourke, Gail Olson, Laurel & Ken Post, Arlene Redmond, Franklin & Mary Renz, Joyce Rousseau, Lori Sippin, Sheldon & Nancy Smith, David & Susan Walker, Don Whiteley, and Anne Zeiner.

– *With deep gratitude, the MCC Board of Trustees*

Fellowship



MCC Book Club

Questions -contact Mary Unger (203) 268-5754
June 9th The Four Winds by Kristin Hannah

MORNING CIRCLE



Morning Circle invites the ladies of the congregation to our **June picnic held at June Winger's residence on Wednesday, June 9 at 11AM.** We will have it catered and will celebrate June's birthday. We will also be holding a monetary collection for The Center for Family Justice which has purchased a 9,000 sq. ft. safe house, EMPOWER House, to better serve their clients and communities. CFJ has seen unprecedented increases in calls and services, including emergency shelter, as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic. They will have now have rooms for enhanced programming, including counseling, technology-based classes, meditation, and children's areas both inside and outside.

Help us celebrate the closing of our season of meetings with a fabulous luncheon among friends. Please contact Jackie Bleakney with any questions at 203-268-5275.

Note: Morning Circle does not meet during the months of July and August. Mark your calendars for future meetings: Wednesdays, Sept. 8, Oct. 13, Nov. 10 and Dec. 8 at 11am in Wilton Hall.



Adult PF meets the first and third Sundays of the month.

For information about Adult PF please contact Don Parker-Burgard.
dpburgard@sbcglobal.net



Many thanks to all my Prayer Partners for making our "Big Reveal" luncheon another success. Keep your partners in your thoughts throughout the summer wishing them a great day whether they're away on vacation, working or relaxing at home. If you have not received an email from me with the name of the person who was praying for you, please contact me. I look forward to having everyone signing up again in the

fall when a new season starts. Please contact Susie Cuseo at 203-268-0280 or thecuseos@yahoo.com with any questions or comments.



COMFORT CASES®

Help PF bring comfort to a child entering foster care! Now collecting (*new items only pls*):

- **Small duffles or backpacks**
- **Pajamas**
- **Toothbrush**
- **Travel size toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant**
- **Coloring books & crayons**
- **Journals**
- **Small stuffed animals**



Please join us in welcoming the newest members of our church community.

These short introductions will help you to learn a little more about them. We hope you'll take the time to get to know them and their families personally, and tuck this insert into your church directory.

Catherine "Kate" Goyette

11 Squire Road, Monroe, CT 06468

Home: 203-261-3777

Cell: 203-913-4222

Email: cegoyette@yahoo.com

Birthdate: November 9



Kate works for the Monroe Public School System in STEM. She is a Math Interventionist. Hiking and geocaching are among her favorite hobbies. Kate and her husband, John, will soon be celebrating 21 years of marriage! They have 3 lovely children; Evelyn 16, who was confirmed last June, Braeden 13, and Coralina 10. Kate already works with our MCC youth as a JR PF advisor. She and her family are also volunteers for St. George's Supper!

Juliana Lavitola

35 Hearthstone Road, Monroe, CT 06468

Home: 203-445-0284

Cell: 203-414-7877

Email: jsl.lavitola@gmail.com

Birthdate: October 21



"Juliana" or "Julie" joins us from Nichols United Methodist Church in Trumbull and UMC Huntington. She lives in Monroe and has a daughter, a son, 8 grandchildren, and almost 4 great grandchildren! Juliana enjoys gardening, DAR, reading and puzzles. Juliana is looking forward to helping put together Church World Service Kits, Outreach food collection, greeting on Sunday mornings and helping with special receptions. Welcome Juliana!

Amy Matejek

10 Spinning Wheel Road, Monroe, CT 06468

Cell: 203-243-7033

Email: amytm92@gmail.com

Birthdate: July 4



Please welcome Amy. Amy is a stay at home mom who enjoys crafts and gardening. She and her husband Donald have been married 4 years. They live in Monroe where they are raising their beautiful daughters; 16 month old Harper, and 6 month old twins, Ramona and Delilah. Amy would like to serve at St. George's Supper, help with holiday projects and in the nursery.



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

June	Wilkes	06/05	Kathryn	Young	06/19
Fred	Dubois	06/06	Scott	Young	06/19
Ken	Kelly	06/08	Chantal	Crosnier	06/20
Kyle	Konkol	06/08	Olivia	Cross	06/20
Jeanette	Combs	06/09	Meg	Sullivan	06/20
Jim	Gill	06/09	Juliette	Nealon	06/21
Cynthia	Kovacs	06/10	Julia	Gutierrez	06/23
June	Wininger	06/11	Hannah	Halloran	06/23
Rich	Correll	06/14	Sarah	Post	06/29
Paul	Cardentey	06/15	Dan	Sullivan	06/29
Gregory	Nivison	06/16	Jennifer	Gingras	06/30
Andy	Nivison	06/17	David	Walker	06/30

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

- Richard & Lynda Bauer⁽⁰¹⁾ Kathy & David Allen⁽⁰³⁾ Christopher & Julie McHugh⁽⁰⁵⁾
 Scott & Katie Young⁽⁰⁵⁾ Paula & Carl Haggstrom⁽⁰⁶⁾ Chuck & Bonnie Schneider⁽¹³⁾
 Don & Kate Parker-Burgard⁽¹⁶⁾ Kerri & David Swift⁽²⁰⁾ Ron & Peggy Villani⁽²⁴⁾
 Stacy & Mark Andrejczyk⁽²⁹⁾ and Ken & Pam Kelly⁽³⁰⁾

**MCC
June
Community Calendar**

Tues. June 1st

1:00 pm Sort and Tag
8:00 pm Outreach Zoom

Week of June 6th

1st Communion for 3rd Grade

Biscuit Communion

10:00 am Worship
4:00 pm Junior PF – Final Celebration
5:00 pm Senior PF - Elections
5:00 pm Adult PF

Tues. June 8th

1:00 pm Sort and Tag

Wed. June 9th

11:00 am Morning Circle (June's House)

Week of June 13th

Graduate Sunday

10:00 am Worship
10:00 am Outdoor Sunday School - Service
5:00 pm Senior PF

Tues. June 15th

1:00 pm Sort and Tag
7pm Bereavement Group
7:30 CE Board Meeting -Zoom

Fri. June 18th

Strawberry Festival Set Up Day

Sat. June 19th

49th Strawberry Festival

Week of June 20th

Father's Day

Strawberry Festival Sunday!

10:00 am Worship

Mon. June 21th

7:30 pm Council Meeting –Zoom

Tues. June 22nd

1:00 pm Sort and Tag

*Pastor Jenn will be on vacation in Maine
from 6/24 – 7/3*

Week of June 27th

Laity Sunday

Guest Preacher – Don Parker Burgard

10:00 am Worship
5:00 pm Senior PF

Tues. June 29th

1:00 pm Sort and Tag

Week of July 4th

Independence Day

10:00 am Worship
5:00 pm Adult PF

Tues. July 6th

8:00 pm Outreach Zoom

Sat. July 10th – 18th

PF Mission Trip to Hancock, Maine

Week of July 11th

Guest Preacher – Zak Carroll

10:00 am Worship
5:00 pm Senior PF