



**THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

---

**STEEPLE**

34 Church Street  
Monroe, CT 06468

Tel.: (203) 268-9327  
Fax: (203) 268-3153

<p><b>Office Hours:</b> Mon. &amp; Wed. 9 am – 5:30 pm Fri. 9am – 5 pm</p>
--

Senior Pastor: Rev. Jennifer Gingras  
Director of Faith Formation: Debi Mastroni-Kenyon  
Music Director: Will Duchon  
Administrator/Bookkeeper: Diane Prall  
Church e-mail: secretary@mcc-ucc.org

**March 1, 2020**

\*\*\*\*\*

RIP  
MEDICAL  
DEBT

**We Can Help Erase Medical Debt!**

A few months ago, I had elective bariatric surgery. One of the most frustrating things about it was that I had no idea what I would wind up paying for it. Even though I had insurance, my surgeon was suddenly dropped a week before my procedure, so it would be considered out of network. No one in the billing

office was able to tell me what to financially prepare for. Then I began receiving invoices... one from my surgeon and his assistant: \$90,000. Another from the hospital for my overnight stay: \$24,000. Another from the anesthesiologist: \$10,000.

These bills began arriving during the week of Christmas, which is a busy time in my household – as you might expect. I was a very concerned about the long-term impact of carrying such a large amount of medical debt. Fortunately, the insurance company and the medical professionals worked it out, and I wound up spending exactly what I had saved up for the procedure. Looking back, I realize that I was so, so lucky to be able to write those checks and put it behind me.

Lately I’ve been reading the stories of people around the country who have struggled with medical debt. In fact, 43 million Americans owe \$75 billion in past due medical debt. Medical debt contributes to more than 60% of all bankruptcies. 75% of individuals in medical bankruptcy had health insurance! Carrying medical debt causes people to cut back on necessities, lose needed medical services, and sink into a poverty trap.

Together with the other 600 churches across the new Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ, our church can help fight this injustice. Working with the non-profit RIP Medical Debt, every \$100 our Southern New England Conference collects through this initiative by April 17 will be used to eliminate \$10,000 in medical debt in some of the neediest communities in our region, including Springfield, MA, Bridgeport and Hartford, CT, and Providence, RI. Read more at: [sneucc.org/RIP-medical-debt](http://sneucc.org/RIP-medical-debt)

I’ve asked our board of outreach to contribute a generous donation of \$1,000 from this year’s tag sale proceeds. This will alleviate \$100,000 of someone’s medical debt. Imagine if every one of our churches could do the same, what a huge impact we could make together?

*In peace, Pastor Jenn*

\*\*\*\*\*

## The Importance of Cross-Generational Relationships

So much has changed in society since the 1950's. I personally wasn't around then (I was born in 1970), but I hear such nostalgia in the voices of those who were around when talking about what life was like, especially in the church.

So much that has been held on to as tradition no longer seems important in the face of the busyness of today. This doesn't mean that we buck tradition or throw it away – there is MUCH to be learned from the things held so valuable. There are however, stark realities we must face to meet the needs of today.

By the turn of the 20th Century, the culture of the Protestant Church in America had:

- Little mobility in families Community churches
- Public schools that were "Protestant parochial schools"
- A Protestant ethos and atmosphere
- The Bible was read and prayers were prayed in the home
- Blue Laws

These things no longer ring true. How many of you work on Sunday or have a child involved in a program that meets on a Sunday? Our public schools today are secular where prayer or religious instruction is no longer offered; We live in a multi-cultural, multi-religion, ecumenical world where all faiths and faith expression is affirmed and valued; Families look to the church to instruct their children in matters of faith rather than lead from the home.

Our goals remain the same; however, the means to the end must change.

*"To grow up healthy, our youth need to be supported and known by at least five adults in addition to their parents or caregivers who are willing to invest time with them personally and spiritually."* Eugene C. Reohlekpartain, Building Assets, Strengthening Faith: An Intergenerational Survey for Congregations, Minneapolis: Search Institute, 2003 *"Young people who experience strong developmental relationships are more likely to report a wide range of social emotional strengths and other indicators of well-being and thriving. Young people with strong relationships are more resilient in the face of stress and trauma. Young people do better when they experience a strong web of relationships with many people."* I think this is true the other way as well. I believe it is equally important for adults to have relationships with children and youth too.

The Faith Formation Board and I are trying to create opportunities for Cross-Generational relationships to form. During Lent we will be offering "Make Room" which is a Lenten Journey with Jesus for all ages. I encourage you to sign up and attend!

*"The church does not have an educational program; the church IS an educational program."* Maria Harris

Peace, *Debi*

\*\*\*\*\*



***At The Monroe Congregational Church***

**Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup> 10am**

**Palm Sunday**

Join us in our historic Meetinghouse to celebrate Palm Sunday. Our Adult Choir, Junior Choir and several soloists will offer sacred music.

**Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup> 7:30pm**

**Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service**

A candlelit evening worship service remembering Jesus' mandate to love one another.

**Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup> 12pm**

**Senior PF Easter Egg Hunt**

Meet us in Wilton Hall with your little one for a few games followed by an egg hunt. Hop on over and join the fun!

**Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup> 6am**

**Ecumenical Easter Sunrise Service at Great Hollow Lake**

Dress warmly and join us down by the lake to welcome the resurrection! An offering will be gathered for Project Warmth. If you are able to bring a baked good to share for our fellowship time under the pavilion, thank you!

**Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup> 8:30 and 10am**

**Easter Celebration Services**

Join us at MCC for the Great Easter Celebration! At 9:30, we will share a festive Easter Coffee Hour. We will also join in singing the Hallelujah Chorus. Christ is Risen indeed AND Everyone is Welcome!

## Faith Formation



### Lenten Faith, Fellowship, and Fun for ALL Ages

#### - Make Room:

This Lenten season the Board of Christian Faith Formation is sponsoring another Faith, Fellowship, and Fun series entitled "Make Room". We will gather on Sundays, March 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, at 11:15 am to share a meal and experience Lent with all of our senses, seeing it as a special time for creating a welcoming space for God. Sign-up sheets are in Wilton Hall and if you have any questions please contact Debi at [debi@mcc-ucc.org](mailto:debi@mcc-ucc.org).

Want to give the young people in your life the opportunity to learn more about loving God, their neighbors, themselves, and creation? Send them to a week of summer camp at **Silver Lake Conference Center**! Find session information and registration at [www.silverlakeect.org](http://www.silverlakeect.org) Once you register, contact Pastor Jenn for an FEA Scholarship application.



**Book Fair on Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup>**, the Board of Christian Faith Formation is partnering with Beautiful News Christian Books and Gifts in Danbury to bring you a selection of books that you can order and have delivered. The books will be available after worship in Wilton Hall.

**Hot Cocoa Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup>**, The Joyful Watermelons will be hosting a Hot Cocoa Sunday in an effort to raise some funds toward their 2020 Pledge. They will be serving Hot Cocoa during Coffee Hour and asking for donations of pocket change.



### **Let it Go! Women's Retreat: April 24-26, Silver Lake Conference Center**

"Let go and let God." is a wonderful thought, but often easier said than done! We tend to want to hold on to our problems and stress and worry and agonize over them instead of letting God in to help. How can we move forward if we're still holding onto yesterday's conflicts and mistakes? There's freedom in letting go. Come away with the women of MCC, and we'll share time together on retreat talking, playing games, hiking, doing art and just letting go in God's big back yard. Friends are warmly welcome too! Cost is \$150, please sign up in Wilton Hall by April 1st.

# Join Us

## The Young at Heart

are cordially invited to join

### Senior PF

Sunday, March 22nd

eleven o'clock in the morning

after church, in Wilton Hall

to share a meal



\*\*\*\*\*

#### Outreach



#### **Dress A Girl Around The World Sew-A-Thon**

**Saturday March 7<sup>th</sup>, 10am- 3pm**

Join Liz Skarzyinski from Dress A Girl Around The World on in Wilton Hall to create dresses for little girls overseas.

Thank you for your generous donations of fabric. Dress A Girl is part of Hope for Women International a non-profit, nondenominational independent Christian organization. If you would like to help or join the team, please call Liz 203-257-7174 or email [Liz1202us@yahoo.com](mailto:Liz1202us@yahoo.com)



**One Great Hour of Sharing: March 22** Each year, people all over the world receive real blessings from this offering: emergency assistance in times of disaster, access to clean water and sanitation, basic health care, and support for sustainable agriculture. Gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing make it possible for the United Church of Christ and our ecumenical partners to respond immediately, wherever the need is, and to continue long term recovery work for as long after other organizations have moved on. May God continue to bless each of our churches and the whole United Church of Christ as together we strive to bring God's love to a hurting world

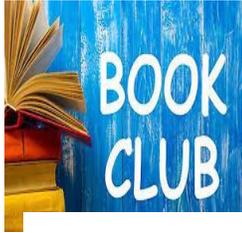


**The Annual MCC Tag Sale is coming!** Please mark your calendars for **April 4th from 9 am-1 pm (early birds at 8)** in Wilton Hall. This is an enormous event, requiring many people to help with set up, sale and clean up. There are will be all sorts of shifts to suit all schedules, so please consider donating a few hours of your time that week. How you can help:

1. Donate your gently used items. Please do not donate anything broken or old TVs, computer monitors, large upholstered furniture or clothing. All other donations can be dropped off at the church starting after noon on Sunday 3/18 and continuing until Thursday 3/22. Drop off during the week is during office hours, and then on Thursday we will have extended drop off hours until 9 pm. Please do not drop off items on Friday.
2. PLEASE sign up to help. This is an enormous event, requiring help with set up, sale and clean up. There are all sorts of shifts to suit all schedules, so please donate a few hours of your time that week. In addition to being a great help for us, it is a wonderful time for fellowship and fun with each other, so don't miss out. A signup sheet will be posted in Wilton Hall.
3. Spread the word. There are always terrific bargains (and we mean BARGAINS) at this tag sale, so the more people that come, the more successful we will be. 100% of the money earned that day goes to support mission, so everyone benefits from this event.

## Fellowship

The Young at Heart will meet on March 26 at noon –details to be announced.



Please join us for the **MCC Book Club**

March 16th, *The Truth According to Us* by Annie Barrows.  
Hosted by Peggy Villani

April 20th, *The Great Alone* by Kristin Hannah.  
Hosted by Linda Fracassini

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, **March 11 at 11AM**. Birthday bags for the Food Pantry will be put together. Donations of cake mixes, frosting, birthday candles and birthday napkins would be greatly appreciated. You can leave them in the bin outside the Men's room. Please contact Jackie Bleakney at 203-268-0280 with any questions.



**Sponsor a Month of Coffee Hours** Would you like to help the people who come to worship get to know each other? What if we told you that you could sponsor a month of coffee hours at the low, low price of \$40? Our coffee is fair trade certified through Equal Exchange. You can use your sponsorship to honor loved ones – a dedication goes in the bulletin. Please make checks payable to MCC with "coffee sponsor" in the memo field. Thank you.



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. Please see Ann Zeiner or sign up on the "flower list" poster inside Wilton Hall.

For our March Faith on Tap, we thought we'd switch it up a little bit! Instead of meeting on the first Friday, we'll meet a day and a half hour earlier than usual on March 5th (the first Thursday) at 7 so that we can participate in **Veracious' SINGO!** night (think BINGO, but with singing). Two great party music categories! Spans all generations and music genres. Come and join us for a fun night out, wear a Strawberry Festival shirt if you can!



\*\*\*\*\*



**Reminder:**  
**NEXT Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup>**  
**Spring Forward!**

## Strawberry Festival



**Join us for a JAM Session:** Believe it or not, the time is upon us to make JAM for the Strawberry Festival and we need your help!

### **JAM Sessions:**

**Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup> 7-9 pm**

**Saturday, March 29<sup>th</sup> 11:30am-2pm & 2-4pm**

**Saturday, April 4<sup>th</sup> 9-12 & 12-3pm**

**Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup> 5-8pm (TV Theme Songs)**

**Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup> 5-8pm (Adult PF /Broadway Musical)**

**Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup> 6-9pm**

**Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> 12-3pm**

**Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup> 12-2pm & 2-4pm**

**Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup> 7-9pm**

**Friday, May 22<sup>th</sup> 7-9pm**

Please sign up in Wilton Hall for as many dates as you can!

Let's make the 2020 Strawberry Festival a success for MCC!

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Ladies Room Renovation Capital Campaign Project**

Our church enjoys a vibrancy that is the envy of many others. That takes passion, dedication, faith, fellowship, vision and... money. As you know, MCC depends on church members' pledges and donations to fund the majority of its operations. From time to time, MCC also depends on the congregation to fund capital projects.



You should receive a letter in the mail soon that describes the work in detail, and that we are trying to raise \$16,300 in funds by the end of March, so that we can get the work done in April (schedules permitting). Please consider if you can provide financial support for this renovation by filling out the form at the bottom of the letter and returning it to the MCC Receiver either as a pledge or with a check in the plate on Sunday. Thank you for your consideration!

*Respectfully, Your Ladies' Room Repair & Improvement Team (Dave Allen, Kyla Allen, Julie McClenathan and Arlene Redmond)*



Come hear Will Duchon perform **Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No. 2**  
with the

**Danbury Symphony Orchestra, Ariel Rudiakov, conductor**

**Saturday, March 21st at 7:30 pm**

**West Conn School of Visual and Performing Arts**

**43 Lake Avenue Extension, Danbury CT**

The program also includes Bernstein's Symphonic Dances  
from *West Side Story*. Admission is free.

Danbury Symphony Orchestra

Ariel Rudiakov, conductor

Will Duchon, pianist

Saturday, March 21, 2020

7:30 PM

WCSU

School of Visual and Performing Arts (VPAC)

*43 Lake Ave Extension*

*Danbury, CT 06811*

The Danbury Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Ariel Rudiakov, performs a concert of exciting works including Leonard Bernstein's *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story*, and Charles Ives', *Unanswered Question*.

The DSO welcomes back audience favorite, pianist Will Duchon to perform Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2.



[danburymusiccentre.org](http://danburymusiccentre.org)

203.748.1716

## MCC Community Calendar

### Week of March 1<sup>st</sup>

10:00 am Communion Sunday

#### **11:15 am CE Book Fair**

5:00 pm Senior PF

5:00 pm Adult PF (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays)

6:00 pm Junior PF

### **Tues. March 3<sup>rd</sup>**

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

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

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

7:00 pm Adult Choir

### **Thurs. March 5<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:00 pm Faith on Tap at SINGO (Veracious)

### **Sat. March 7<sup>th</sup>**

10 am Dress A Girl

### Week of March 8<sup>th</sup>

**Daylight Savings** "Spring forward!"

*Guest Preacher: Laurie Scott Smith*

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am Make Room for Lent

5:00 pm Senior PF

6:00 pm Junior PF

### **Tues. March 10<sup>th</sup>**

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Wed. March 11<sup>th</sup>**

11 am Morning Circle (Dineson)

7:00 pm Adult Choir

### **Thurs. March 12<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

### **Fri. March 13<sup>th</sup>**

*Confirmation Retreat at Silver Lake (13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>)*

### Week of March 15<sup>th</sup>

*Guest Preacher: Debi Mastroni Kenyon*

10:00 am Worship

11:15 am Trustees, Deacons

11:15 am Make Room for Lent

5:00 pm Senior PF

5:00 pm Adult PF (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays)

### **Mon. March 16<sup>th</sup>**

7:30 Book Club

### **Tues. March 17<sup>th</sup>**

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

7:00 pm Bereavement Group (Dineson)

### **Wed. March 18<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm Confirmation Class with Sponsors!

7:00 pm Adult Choir

### **Thurs. March 19<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:00 pm CE Board

### **Fri. March 20<sup>th</sup>**

7-9 pm JAM Session

### Week of March 22<sup>nd</sup>

*One Great Hour of Sharing*

10:00 am Worship

11:15 pm Senior PF & Young at Heart

Luncheon

### **Mon. March 23<sup>rd</sup>**

7:30 pm Council Meeting (Dineson)

### **Tues. March 24<sup>th</sup>**

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Wed. March 25<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

7:00 pm Adult Choir

### **Thurs. March 26<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

12:00 Young at Heart (4<sup>th</sup> Thursday)

### Week of March 29<sup>nd</sup>

10:00 am Worship

11:30 am - 2 pm & 2 pm - 4 pm JAM Session

5:00 pm Senior, Junior PF

### **Tues. March 31<sup>th</sup>**

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

*Tag Sale Setup Tuesday - Friday!*

### **Wed. April 1<sup>st</sup>**

6:30 pm Confirmation Class

7:00 pm Adult Choir

### **Thurs. April 2<sup>nd</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

### **Fri. April 3<sup>rd</sup>**

7:30 pm Faith on Tap

### **Sat. April 4<sup>th</sup>**

8am (early Bird) 9am - 1pm Tag Sale

12-3 pm JAM Session

### Week of April 5<sup>th</sup>

*Palm Sunday*

10:00 am Communion Sunday

5-8 pm JAM Session (TV Theme Songs)

5:00 pm Senior PF

5:00 pm Adult PF (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays)

6:00 pm Junior PF