September 20, 2020  **Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost** 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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**Prelude** From A Distance (Julie Gold) The MCC Band

*From a distance the world looks blue and green, and the snow capped mountains white
From a distance the ocean meets the stream, and the eagle takes to flight*

*From a distance there is harmony, and it echoes thru the land
It's the voice of hope, it's the voice of peace, it's the voice of every man*

**Welcome & Announcements**

**Call to Worship**

Leader: Come — the God of every blessing calls us to worship.

*People: We offer God our thanks and praise.*

Leader: Come — the God who longs for relationship calls us to worship.

*People: We bring our whole selves, trusting and doubting, to meet the living God.*

Leader: Come — the God who is faithful to every promise calls us to worship.

*People: We trust God’s goodness and seek to be faithful in return.*

 *All: Come, let us worship God together.*

**Opening Prayer** Jim Gill, Deacon of the Day

**\*Our Church’s Covenant**

*We declare our faith in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

 *In Holy covenant, we bind ourselves to God and each other, becoming*

 *devoted disciples and active apostles.*

 *We promise each other to be faithful in worship and in support of this*

 *church, whose Savior and Lord is Jesus Christ.*

 *In Christian love, we will care for and support each other.*

 *With the Bible as our guide, we willingly promise all that we are and all that*

 *we have, to the fulfillment of God’s Kingdom.*

 *Freely we say these things, glorying in the joy of our salvation.*

**\*Passing of the Peace**

**Morning Prayers**

*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.*

**Offertory** Head Above Water (Lavigne/Moccio/Clark)

*I've gotta keep the calm before the storm, I don't want less, I don't want more
Must bar the windows and the doors, to keep me safe, to keep me warm*

*Yeah, my life is what I'm fighting for, can't part the sea, can't reach the shore
And my voice becomes the driving force, I won't let this pull me overboard*

*God, keep my head above water, Don't let me drown, it gets harder
I'll meet you there at the altar, As I fall down to my knees
Don't let me drown, drown, drown, don't let me, don't let me, don't let me drown*

# **Scripture** *Genesis 15:1-6*

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, ‘Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.’ But Abram said, ‘O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?’ And Abram said, ‘You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.’ But the word of the Lord came to him, ‘This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.’ He brought him outside and said, ‘Look towards heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.’ Then he said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’ And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

**Sermon** Starry, Starry Night Rev. Jennifer Gingras

**Benediction**

**Postlude** God Be With You Till We Meet Again

*God be with you till we meet again; by His counsels guide, uphold you,
With His sheep securely fold you; God be with you till we meet again.*

*Till we meet, till we meet, God Be with you till we meet again.*

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**God is still speaking, *welcome*** to all who are worshipping with us today, in-person and online!

**Our Pandemic Commandments**

In order to keep our community members safe, please follow these safe gathering guidelines:

* Thou shalt stay home if you feel unwell or have a fever (and catch us on YouTube or Facebook)
* Thou shalt wear a mask (if you need one, just ask!)
* Thou shalt maintain a social distance of 6 feet (even when passing peace)
* Some pews are taped off, to allow space between the seating of households. Please respect the tape, and enter/exit from the side of the pew that is open.
* We have provided hand sanitizer and tissues in the pews, please use carefully as the chemicals are corrosive on wood and other surfaces

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”

Please join us for a time of fellowship following the service on Pierce Lawn.

We also offer a virtual zoom coffee hour, hosted by Arlene Redmond at 11:30: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81347810863?pwd=SERMb1lLNUZLdHVNc3VMcmswcEthUT09>  (please note, this is an updated link from the one previously given)

***In Our Prayers***

**Roshong** (Judy Coward’s nephew); **Jackie Ajello** (Michele Mount’s mother); **Michael Barresi** (Maria’s Son); **Jennifer Bittar** (Loraine Zeiner’s friend); **Byron Brown & Bruce Bryant** (friends of Will Duchon); **Cheryl Ciambriello** (Wendy Colegrove’s friend); **Dot Dralus; Matt Duchon**; **Dave Fuller** (Gail Olson’s brother);**Karen Guinness** (Jennifer Nivison’s friend); **Meredith Gibson** (Paul & Judy Coward’s niece); **Lily Grace** (Maria Barresi’s baby cousin); **Rachel Fracassini** (Jack & Linda Fracassini’s niece); **Donnajean & Ken Fredeen**: **Gary & Julie Hedine** (Nancy Hedine’s son & daughter-in-law); **Mary Heerema** (Julia Gutierrez's mom); **Rachel Heerema** (Julia Gutierrez’s sister); **Bob Heffernan** (Ann Zeiner’s son-in-law); **Brian Hopkins** (Donna Konkol’s cousin); **Vera James** (Jenn Wissink’s mother); **Kelti** (friend of Liska Gutierrez); **Mary-Margaret Logan** (Andrew’s mother); **Beverly Lowrey** (Jackie Bleakney); **Jacquie MacLean** (Jennifer Nivison’s friend); **Nicole Malia**; **Mike** (Janie Allen’s son); **Rev. Jonathan Miller** (Paul & Judy Coward’s friend); **Olivia Morrison** (Donna Nickdow’s niece); **Joe Mumper** (Julie McClenathan’s friend); **Kathy Nivison** (Andy’s mother); **Pat Nugent; Ocampo family** (friends of Liska Gutierrez); **Bob, Missy, Jason & Mark Olson; Ray Osborne** (Colegrove’s Family friend); **Dean Perosino** (Gayle Hammond’s brother);**Geno Piacentini** (Karen MacDonald’s husband); **P.T. Philip** (Liz Sampson’s father); **Norman & Jan Ricker** (Linda & Jack Fracassini’s friend); **Barbara Rivel** (Judy Coward’s friend); **Regina Roberts** (Kathy Maiolo’s niece); **Kelly Rodman** (Angela Cross’ friend); **Alfredo Rodriguez** (Osirus Gutierrez’s cousin); **Noah Santiago** (Shari Carrano’s great-grandson); **Connor Scalia** (Jen Nivison’s friend); **Hunter Scalzo** (Angela Cross’s nephew); **Carlos Serrano** (Kathy Maiolo’s cousin); **Al Shaeffer; Yessika Siccardi** (Sampson family friend); **Bernie Sippin; John Skarupa** (Barb Pellegrino’s brother); **Christine Stadler; William Stadler** (Jessica Pfalzgraf’s nephew); **Tom & Jane Steen** (Jessica Pfalzgraf’s father & step-mother); **Christian** & **Dain Steiner** (Julie McClenathan’s nephews); **Ellie Swindlehurst** (Joanne Malia’s mother); **Olga Terwilliger**(Nancy Hedine’s sister-in-law); **Ian Thompson** (Gary’s cousin); **Dick Thompson** (Gary’s cousin); **Meg Trogolo** (Paul & Judy Coward’s niece); **Bill & Ruth Wakeley; Susan Walker; Rita Wissink** (Larry’s mother), **Margaret Woodruff** (Mike Pfalzgraf’s mother); **Charles L. Wynn, Sr.,** (and his mother) **Alleane Wynn** (friends of Will Duchon); **Allen Zeiner** (Ann Zeiner’s son)

**The concerns of our world:**

*Those who serve or live in* ***war*** *or* ***conflict zones****;* ***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:**

South Korea: ***Zachary Gingras,*** Washington: ***Rachel Hoffman*** (Vaughan Askue’s daughter), Japan: ***Chris Meneses*** (Loraine Zeiner’s friend), Poland: **Zachary Peters** (Jacob Parker-Burgard’s cousin), Kuwait: ***Steven Roshong*** (Judy & Paul Coward’s nephew), Germany: ***Bob Peters*** (Don Parker-Burgard’s brother-in-law), Afghanistan: ***Samuel Siciliano,*** North Carolina: ***Jake Terifay***

🟅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.

**Thank you for assisting in this morning’s worship!**

* **Trustee:** Mark Barnhart
* **Deacon:** Jim Gill
* **Usher:** Clark Gingras

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

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| Colleen Konkol (20)Marisa Pinto (20)Vandana Sampson (20) | Daniela Combs (24)Mary Massar (21) | Kristen Prall (24)Nancy Hedine (26) |

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

Robert & Marilyn Schultz who were married in Monroe Congregational Church by Rev. Ward September 20, 1958 and are celebrating 62 years today! Hubert & Gay Muizulis (25)

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*The rose on the pulpit is in celebration of the birth of Macy McClenathan born on September 15, 2020 to Sean and Sarah. The proud grandparents are Rob and Julie McClenathan.*

The flowers on our communion table are provided by Pastor Jenn, in celebration of this congregation and the 62nd anniversary of Robert & Marilyn Schultz.

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**Socially Distanced Office Hours**

Pastor Jenn offers socially distanced office hours by appointment on the parsonage side lawn, provided the weather holds. If you are unable to leave your home, she can also come to you and stay (socially distanced) outside your storm door for a chat. Arrange with her by calling 203-895-5607.

**Worship Bags**

Since we are resuming indoor worship, I thought it would be a good idea to have some activities that might keep our younger folks engaged during services. We are offering “Worship Bags” for all children and youth from age 4 through 8th Grade!

Each bag can be colored and personalized and will become their bag, please put their name on it. You will leave the bags in the Narthex and pick it up there each Sunday too.

Inside each bag is a Worship Journal with prompts, games, and coloring pages for each week, a “Bendy Jesus” and Stress Balls too. I would even encourage you to bring something that doesn’t make noise from home to keep in the bag too!

Lastly, if there are any needs for the bags (broken pencil, markers that don’t work, etc.) please just let me know by emailing me at debi@mcc-ucc.org.

Peace, Debi

**Nursery Closed -** Out of an abundance of caution, nursery services are closed at this time.



**Fruit of the Spirit Sunday school**

There will be no in-person gatherings in September. Debi will send some simple at home activities for families to do at home. In October, there will be an all ages Faith, Fellowship & Fun gathering for families on October 25th during worship, with safety protocols in place. We are following the school system’s example of hybrid education, with a combination of in-person and at-home faith formation activities.

**Jr. PF**

September 27, October 18 and 25 from 6:00-7:30 pm outdoors.

Saturday, October 3rd, Haunted Hayride at Legends of Fear at 7:00 pm

October 11th – no meeting

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**Youth Confirmation**

Confirmation at MCC is a 9 month journey for freshman exploring their faith and talking about the big questions, as they move towards a decision about whether or not they are ready and willing to become adult members of the church. The program is led by Pastor Jenn and Debi, with adult sponsors that partner with the confirmands through the year. We meet most Wednesday nights from 6:30-7:30 - in person, outdoors, socially distanced with masks until we need to move to Wilton Hall. Of course, if the local metrics change in a way that schools suspend in-person programming, we will need to pivot accordingly for the safety of all.

In-person meetings will begin **this Wednesday, September 23rd at 6:30.**



**Adult PF meets on Wednesdays -for information about Adult PF please contact Don Parker-Burgard.** dpburgard@sbcglobal.net

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**Thursday Morning Bible Study Began September 3rd**

We offer a weekly Bible Study at MCC on most Thursday mornings from 9:30-11 through the program year. Sometimes we’ll focus on what will be offered in worship on Sunday, sometimes we’ll focus on a particular book of the Bible, sometimes on a theme, such as the “Parables of Jesus” study we did a while back. We also enjoy reading and discussing inspirational books from time to time, and spending time in fellowship and prayer. This year, we will meet in Wilton Hall so that we can spread out and be safer. Please wear a mask. As always, we invite anyone to come and join us – please speak with Pastor Jenn if you have any questions.

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**Join the MCC *ZOOM* Book Club**

Transatlantic by Colum McCann

discussion via Zoom on Wednesday, October 7th 7pm

Questions -contact Mary Unger (203) 268-5754

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**Prayer Partners 2020-2021 Season** **Sign Up**

It’s time to sign up to be a Prayer Partner whether you have already been one or want to join up! Questions? Ask Susie Cuseo thecuseos@yahoo.com



Since we have been safely gathering for service this summer, Outreach decided to hold our **annual Wine & Craft Beer Tasting outside under a tent** on Pierce Lawn on **this coming Saturday, September 26, 4-7 pm**. Woohoo!!

\*Please bring your own appetizer - NOT to share this year - and your own wine glass. Our awesome Roy Nealon will wow us again with a selection of great wine and craft beer. Hopefully next year we will be able to gather at the wonderful Fracassini home. As is our tradition, we ask a suggestion donation of $20 per person, recipient TBD. I’m so looking forward to seeing you all and having a wonderful, safe evening of fellowship.  Hugs, Kathy and the Outreach board.

**Dress A Girl Around the World**

I know many of you have been sewing at home and have dresses you would like to turn in.  I will be **collecting dresses on** **this Saturday, September 26 from 10 am until** noon at the Big Y in Monroe.  Please let me know if you will be dropping off dresses. I will start planning our 2021 Sew-a-Thon schedule in the fall and let everyone know when that is finalized. Please stay healthy and safe in this new world we all live in.

Liz Skarzynski, Ambassador Southern CT, Dress A Girl Around the World

dressagirlsouthernct@yahoo.com



**Virtual CROP Walk Sunday, October 18 More Information TBA**

**Contact Julie McClenathan** juliemcclenathan@gmail.com



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| **MCC Community Calendar****Week of Sept. 20th**10:00 am Worship11:15 am Outreach11:30 am Trustees5:00 pm Senior PF**Mon. Sept. 21st**7:30 pm Council **Wed. Sept. 23rd**6:30 pm Confirmation Class**Thurs. Sept. 24th**9:30 am Bible Study**Sat. Sept. 26th**10:00 am Dress A Girl -Big Y Monroe4:00 pm Habitat Wine Tasting -Pierce Lawn**Week of Sept. 27th**10:00 am Worship2:00 pm Ice Cream Social -Play ground fundraiser5:00 pm Senior PF6:00 pm Junior PF**Wed. Sept. 23rd**6:30 pm Confirmation Class**Thurs. Sept. 24th**9:30 am Bible Study**Sat. Oct. 3rd**7:00 pm JR PF -Haunted Hayride**Week of Oct. 4th** 10:00 am Worship -Communion Sunday2:00 pm Ice Cream Social -Play ground fundraiser \*Rain Date5:00 pm Senior PF**Wed. Oct. 7th**6:30 pm Confirmation Class7:00 pm Zoom Book Club**Thurs. Oct. 8th**9:30 am Bible Study | **Week of Oct. 11th** 10:00 am Worship5:00 pm Senior PF**Mon. Oct 12th***Closed for Columbus Day***Wed. Oct. 14th**6:30 pm Confirmation Class11:00 am Morning Circle**Thurs. Oct. 8th**9:30 am Bible Study7:00 pm CE**Week of Oct.18th** 10:00 am Worship11:15 am Outreach11:30 am Trustees5:00 pm Senior PF6:00 pm Junior PF -outdoors**Mon. Oct. 19th**3:00 pm St George’s Supper7:30 pm Council **Wed. Oct. 21st**6:30 pm Confirmation Class**Thurs. Oct. 22nd**9:30 am Bible Study**Week of Oct. 25th** 10:00 am Worship5:00 pm Senior PF6:00 pm Junior PF -outdoors**Wed. Oct. 28th**6:30 pm Confirmation Class**Thurs. Oct. 29th**9:30 am Bible Study**Week of Nov. 1st** **\*\*DAY LIGHT SAVINGS** 10:00 am Worship -Communion Sunday5:00 pm Senior PF6:00 pm Junior PF  |