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Monroe, CT 06468
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www.mcc-ucc.org

Office Hours:
Mon. 9am – 5:30pm
Wed. (remotely) 8am - 6pm
Fri. 9am – 3:30pm

Senior Pastor: Rev. Jennifer Gingras
Music Director: Will Duchon
Administrator/Bookkeeper: Diane Prall
CE Coordinator: Jeanette Cardentey-Morales
Church e-mail: secretary@mcc-ucc.org

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



THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST STEEPLE

Fresh Starts & Faithful Steps

September 1, 2025



Friends, September is the church's unofficial New Year. Backpacks are packed, calendars begin to fill up, and somewhere between the last beach day and the first pumpkin spice everything, we remember: *we are made to belong—to God and to each other.*

This summer we worshiped, served, rested, and learned. We were surprised (again) by how Scripture can comfort and challenge at the same time; we celebrated milestones; we showed up

for one another in prayer and practical care. Thank you. Your steady kindness is how God's grace gets hands and feet in Monroe.

Now we turn toward fall rhythms. Think of September as a soft start to a strong year:

Regathering. On Saturday, September 14th at noon at the Rotary Pavilion at Wolf Park we'll hold our Homecoming Sunday picnic. If you've been traveling or trying out a slower Sunday pace, this is a beautiful time to gather and catch up with your church friends.

Grow & Learn. Church School (9/14) and Bible Study (9/4) return with conversations that are honest, hopeful, and grounded. Whether you're 7 or 97, there's a chair with your name on it and a circle of folks ready to wonder alongside you.

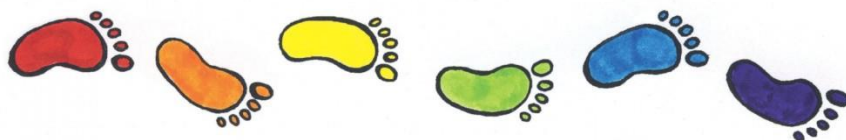
Serve & Show Up. Our leadership teams are always in motion. Small acts add up. Providing items for Covenant to Care backpacks or serving cooking and serving a hot meal to neighbors at Feel the Warmth (9/18) make a difference. If you've wondered where your gifts might fit, we'll help you find a place to start.

Connect & Celebrate. Good news for the extroverts (and the introverts who like snacks): coffee hour continues, and we'll enjoy a special outing to the Chapel of Sacred Mirrors (CoSM) in Wappinger, NY on Saturday, September 13. It's an art-filled day with carpooling and dinner on the way home. Sign-ups in Wilton Hall or contact Pastor Jenn or Dave Walker to join us.

And because September can feel... like a lot, here's a promise we're keeping: we'll go at a human pace. Jesus walked from town to town; he didn't sprint. We'll aim for depth over frenzy, presence over perfection, and joy wherever we can find it.

If you've been away, we can't wait to see you. If you're new, welcome—there's room at the table. If you're carrying something heavy, let us carry it with you. Christ walks among the lampstands still, and we are still his church. With gratitude for the season ahead,

Grace & peace, Pastor Jenn



A **meal train** has begun to support Linda Resnick's family while she remains in the hospital undergoing tests and treatments. Thank you in advance for your support!

Signup here: <https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/qge0d8>

Deliver here: 520 Barn Hill Road, Monroe CT



Pledge Envelopes: If you pledge to the church and would like to use pledge envelopes, please call 203-268-9327 or email Diane at secretary@MCC-UCC.org before the **September 30th order deadline** -thank you!
(Offering envelopes are also available in the pews.)

A Joyful Celebration for Our Dear Lorrie!

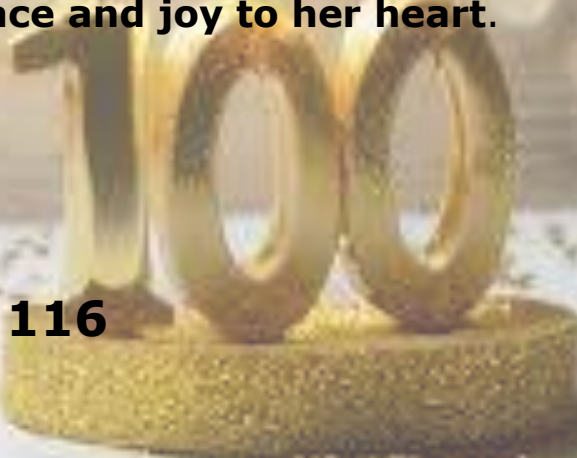
Our beloved church family member, Lorrie Sippin, will be turning 100 years young on September 8!

Let's shower her with love and blessings on this remarkable milestone.

If you would like to help make her day extra special, please consider sending her a heartfelt birthday card.

Your kind words and prayers will surely bring a smile to her face and joy to her heart.

**Mrs. Lorrie Sippin
Church Hill Village
2 The Boulevard Rm 116
Newtown, CT 06470**



Fellowship



Saturday, Sept 13 — MCC Field Trip to CoSM!

Join us for a visit to the **Chapel of Sacred Mirrors (CoSM) in Wappingers Falls, NY**—an art museum and retreat center showcasing the ongoing work of resident artists **Alex and Allyson Grey**. Check out for more information. We're looking forward to a meaningful, memorable afternoon together!



- **Carpool Departure:** 11:30 AM
(please arrive a few minutes early)
- **Cost:** \$20 admission per person to CoSM.
Bring money for dinner with the group on the return trip.
- **Sign Up:** Add your name in Wilton Hall, or contact **Pastor Jenn** or **Dave Walker** to join us.



Prayer partner signup coming soon! Look for it in Wilton Hall.

If you want to email me your desire to be a part of the prayer power group, please email me at michelle.cardentey@gmail.com, with the following information, Name, Address, Birthday, Anniversary, Prayer Requests, Hobbies/Interests, Cell Phone Number (to be used by me only), & Email Address.

What's a Prayer Partner? It's someone who signs up and provides information that will be mailed to another member. Once you receive the name of someone, you'll start to keep them in your thoughts and prayers for several months anonymously. You can send them a note or card in the mail signed, "Your Prayer Partner" and use the church's address (34 Church St. Monroe, CT 06468) as the return. You can seek them out during the passing of the peace or start up a conversation at coffee hour. It's fun and doesn't take a lot of time out of your busy schedule. Wake up in the morning and think to yourself, "I wish my prayer partner the best day." That's it!! This all culminates to the "Big Reveal" potluck luncheon that will be held in May 2026.

Young at Heart will meet on September 25th at noon.
More details to come!



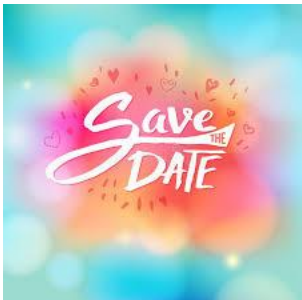
The Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe has reopened for the season. Please contact Susie Cuseo at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280 if you like to take a shift. Many thanks to all our diligent volunteers who man the counter and take care of our donations.

Join us for the monthly Book Club on the **3rd Wednesday of the month at 7 pm**. 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.



Sept. 24th 7pm - Mad Honey by Jennifer Finney Boylan & Jodi Picoult

Nov. 5th 7pm - The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek by Kim Michele Richardson



2026 MCC Women's Retreat

The Lodge at Silver Lake

Friday, April 10 – Sunday, April 12

Details to follow.

Morning Circle invites the women of the congregation to their meeting on **Wednesday, September 10th at 11am in Dineson Parlor**. We will have Ray Giovanni from Union Savings Bank speak to us about the scams affecting our local area. Lunch will be provided courtesy of Ray. Please contact Shari Carrano with any questions or comments at 475-342-8145.



Deacons



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. 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>

Blessing of the Animals

Join us Sunday, September 28th at 10 am
as we worship in Wilton Hall and bless the animals
that bring us such joy and love!
BYOP! (Bring your own pet!) *Please keep on leash
or in a carrier, or bring a picture*****





Did you forget to buy **JAM** at the Strawberry Festival? Good news!
We have some available for sale online at <https://monroe-strawberry-festival-since-1972.square.site/>

Outreach

Covenant to Care welcomes any donations of NEW backpacks, lunch boxes, and school supplies for all ages! Monetary gifts are always welcome! Please bring whatever you can to the church (marked *Covenant to Care: attention Diane*) as soon as possible so the children can start using your generous donations -thank you!



Let's feed hungry neighbors!

The **Feel The Warmth mobile community hot supper** needs 6-8 volunteers to cook a delicious and nutritious meal for 250+ hungry neighbors. Prep time in the kitchen is at nOURish's temporary kitchen at 1st Cong Church Fairfield, 148 Beach Road, Fairfield from 3 to 5:30 pm. It's then transported to the Harrison Apartments on 651 State Street, Bridgeport and served to the displaced and homeless population from 6 to 7 pm.

Sign up in Wilton Hall for our next meal on September 18th

Talk to Pastor Jenn for info!



Cleaning out your drawers for the fall? If you come across any **used prescriptions glasses, sunglasses or cases, please consider donating them** in the collection basket in Wilton Hall on the coffee table until the end of September. Your donations get cleaned, checked and given to someone who will finally see the skyline clearly, read the label on food products or enjoy the smile on a loved one's face. Give the gift of sight by donating your prescription glasses, cases or sunglasses. Please contact Susie Cuseo at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280 with any questions. Christian Education



Love working with youth, want to spread God's love to the children of our congregation in this upcoming **25/26 school year**? **Please consider teaching Sunday School** (Pre k - 6th) **or being an adult advisor for our Jr PF youth group** (ages 11-14). You can speak to Jeanette with any questions or to express interest. Thank you!

Weekly Bible Study begins Thursday Sept. 4, 9:30 am in Dineson Parlor -join us!



Music Notes



Always wanted to try Handbells, but not sure if it is right for you? Now's the time! We have a great group of amazing people ringing, and are looking for more. Rehearsals are on **Thursdays 6-7pm in the Meeting House**. We will show you all the steps of learning to read your notes and play your bells. Sing to the Lord a new song! If you've ever considered singing in the **Choir**, now is the time to give it a try. You don't need to be a

trained singer. All that's required is a love of sharing music with our congregation, music that celebrates the love of God and the beauty of a spiritual path.

Not sure? Come sit in on a rehearsal. Just observe and listen. Our Choir is not only about singing. We have a warm and genuine fellowship among the members. We even have fun at each rehearsal.

This is the best time of the year to give the Choir a try. We will soon be preparing wonderful music for Advent and Christmas. Preparing and presenting this music is a profound and meaningful experience. **Choir rehearsals are every Thursday at 7 PM**. Take a chance and give it a try!

Talk to Heather or Will today to become a part of these fun groups!



St. Peter's Apple Festival: September 6th-7th

Saturday, 10 am – 5:00 pm and Sunday, September 6th-7th, 10 am – 4:00 pm. One of the best ways to start the fall season is to support our neighbors across the green at their annual event which is always filled with food, vendors and fun!



Monroe Congregational Church
34 Church Street, Monroe CT

Victorian Christmas Fair

Saturday, December 6, 2025

10am – 3pm

Dear Victorians of MCC:

The Chairs of the forthcoming Second Annual Victorian Christmas Fair shall require your valuable experience from the previous annum, as well as your gracious desire to partake newly in this most festive of endeavors. Pray, don your Victorian thought caps and bonnets, and lend us your presence and ideas at a meeting to be held on **September 21st at 11:15 am in the parlor** to deliberate and plan for the approaching celebration.

Yours faithfully and most sincerely,

The Victorian Chairs,
Arlene, Barbara and Jessica



Elisha's Corner

By Gary Thompson, Church Historian

Our Men's Bowling Teams

September 11, 1960 may not sound like a long time ago for many of us, but its sixty-five years ago. So that makes it history, and marks the day that a Sunday Bulletin announced the formation of our men's bowling team that would play in the Trumbull YMCA sponsored Inter-Church Men's Bowling League. The team of six men was lead by its captain, Robert (Bob) Elliot. The Bulletin announcement also urged the formation of a second team of six or seven men, which would no doubt enhance the competition. And so, a "Team B" was

formed, led by its captain Nils Wiberg. The league fielded ten teams from the Methodist churches in Stepney, Nichols, and Long Hill, and Congregational churches from Trumbull and Monroe. The Trumbull Congregational Church sent three teams. Stepney Methodist Church sent only one team. A Bridgeport Post article from September 12, 1966, indicates that our "Team A" captain was Robert (Bob) Rivoir, replacing Bob Elliott, but Nils Wiberg was still listed as captain of our "Team B".

They played on Tuesday nights at the Monroe Lanes on Route 25 in Stepney (no longer there) from September to May, divided into two rounds. In their first year, our "Team B" beat first round champions, Stepney Methodists, in a two out of three games match to become second round champions. The team's compliment included Nils Wiberg, Bob Roy, Max Hauenstein, Bob Brigham, Ernie Junkins, and Tom Corey. If trophies were awarded at that time, we no longer have ours. The following year, however, in May 1962, our "Team A" won a trophy for winning second place for the season: Rudy Fitz, Bob Rivoir, Jack Lucas Dick Whitcher, Howard Russell, and Bob Elliott are listed on that trophy, which currently resides in our archives.



Alas, in the first round of the 1963 season our "Team B" dropped to seventh place (out of ten) but recovered in the second round to take third place. Our "Team A" started out in last place but recovered enough to finish in sixth place. Still, Jack Carpenter of "Team B" finished at a league second highest three game high with a total score of 582 that year, and Ernie Junkins of "Team A" came in third with 580. He also finished with an individual team high average at a respectable 171, while Bob Elliott of "Team B", finished only at 162. This may be too much detail for the non-bowler or ones having little or no interest in the sport. Suffice to say; by the end of the second round in May of 1963, Ernie Junkins took first place for highest score in an individual game by bowling 244 (that's out of a perfect score of 300). Our "Team B" bowled 972 for first place for a grand total Team Game. Dare I say that this was all for Christian Fellowship?

During the 60's bowling was a social as well as a physical or athletic participation sport. Our congregation's Couples Club during this era bowled as well; for the social comradery and Christian fellowship on a night out. An April 1963 Bulletin boasted that the men's teams were looking for "...female substitutes from the Couples Club as a result of recent competition". There apparently was no sponsorship for a women's bowling league at the time. But the Couples Club did indeed have women very capable in filling the Bulletin's challenge.

There is not much more information to be had on "Our Men's Bowl Team" in the file due to a dearth of recordings between 1963 and the last two years of the 1970's. By that time the appeal for bowling participation had dwindled. Down to one team, the only bowlers from our original groups were Ernie Junkins, Harris Dake, and Max Hauenstein. They added Sam Ciardullo, Ray Dolzani, and Lou Raab. Taking first place in the league again in 1976, the *Steeple* of June 1979 boasted "...our bowlers have been rolling them down all season, ending up second in the league", earning them a check for \$50 for the church; a more practical prize than a trophy. It is doubtful that the team or the league survived too far into the 1980's. There is no further recording of it. Yet we are left with a second-place trophy from 1962 looking to escape the archives to be seen again; maybe on the mantle or bookcase shelf in Dineson, or in the rear entrance to the Meeting House with the other collectable? What do you think?

Historically faithful, Gary Thompson, Church Historian



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

Mia	Briggs	09/02	Ronald	Villani	09/16
Liska	Gutierrez	09/02	David	Rooney	09/19
Vinathi	Sampson	09/02	Colleen	Konkol	09/20
Mathias	Aoaeh	09/05	Marisa	Pinto	09/20
Elliot	McEvoy	09/05	Vandana	Sampson	09/20
Paul	Adams	09/08	Grace	Hisey	09/21
Lorraine	Sippin	09/08	Mary	Massar	09/21
Becky	Unger	09/08	Daniela	Combs	09/24
Edward	Dotoratos	09/09	Kristen	Prall	09/24
Meghan	Cooper	09/10	Nancy	Hedine	09/26
Laura	Cuseo	09/10	Priscilla	Cunningham	09/29
Noelle	Swift	09/10	Katherine	Logan	09/29
Andrew	Logan	09/14	Heather	Henning	09/30
Colby	Kaminski	09/16	Laurel	Post	09/30
Joshua	Post	09/16			



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

Jenna & Stephen Rice⁽⁰⁴⁾ Arlene Redmond & Vaughan Askue⁽¹³⁾
Reggie & John Hastedt⁽¹⁶⁾ Julia & Osiris Gutierrez⁽¹⁶⁾ Shirley & Jamie Dotoratos⁽¹⁶⁾
Gay & Hubert Muizulis⁽²⁵⁾ Jan & Chris Pearson⁽²⁹⁾ Kate & Mark Barnhart⁽²⁹⁾

In Our Prayers

June Wininger, Diane Prall; Amy Reber (Pfalzgraf family friend); **Alison Abrams** (Jessica Pfalzgraf's sister); **Allie** (Colegrove's friend); **Jennifer Bittar** (Loraine Zeiner's friend); **Jackie Bleakney; Lisa Cody & Dave Barton** (friends of Julie and Rob McClenathan); **Mary Jo Brett; Cathy** (Julie McClenathan's Friend); **Debbie Cuseo** (Cliff's sister-in-law); **Kevin Daly** (Gary Thompson's friend); **Dealmira** (Jonathan Ganino's grandmother); **Dan & Laura Dimauro** (Cuseo friends); **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); **Brad Heines** (Susie Cuseo's friend); **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); **Kelti** (friend of Liska Gutierrez), **Samia Khoury** (Will Duchon's friend); **Cindy Kovacs; Monica Lynch** (Bethany Dupuis' friend); **Jonathan Malia; Nicole Malia; 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); **Olivia Morrison** (Donna Nickdow's niece); **Ocampo family** (friends of Liska Gutierrez); **Nancy Olofson; Missy & Gail Olson; Donna Parratt; 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, Lori & Gary Sippin; Cliff Smith; Sheldon & Nancy Smith; 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); **Allen & Ann Zeiner**

The concerns of our world: The people of **Gaza & the West Bank; Israeli hostages** and their families, the people of **Ukraine, Sudan, Syria** and the **Middle East; 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.**

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** (Loraine Zeiner's friend), **Corporal Taylor Smith** (Cheri Irwin's Nephew)

September
MCC Community Calendar

Week of Sun. Aug 31st

10:00 am Worship

5:00 pm Senior PF

Mon. Sept 1st

Labor Day - Office Closed

Tue. Sept 2nd

9:30 am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Thur. Sept 4th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:00 pm Chancel Choir



Sat. Sept. 6th - Sun. Sept. 7th
St Peter's Grace Apple Festival



Week of Sun. Sept. 7th

Communion

10:00 am Worship

11:30 am Trustees

5:00 pm Senior PF

Mon. Sept 8th

7:30 pm Deacons

Tue. Sept 9th

9:30 am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Sept 10th

11:00 am Morning Circle

Thur. Sept 11th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Sat. Sept. 13th

11:30 am Chapel of Sacred Mirrors

Week of Sun. Sept. 14th

10:00 am Worship

12:00–4:00pm Homecoming Picnic
(Wolfe Park)

5:00 pm Senior PF

Tue. Sept 16th

9:30 am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Sept 17th

7:00 pm Book Club Zoom

Thur. Sept 18th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

3:00 pm Feel the Warmth

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Week of Sun. Sept. 21st

10:00 am Worship

11:00 am Victorian Fair Meeting

5:00 pm Junior & Senior PF

Tue. Sept 23rd

9:30 am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Thur. Sept 25th

9:30 am Bible Study (Dineson)

12:00 pm Young at Heart

6:00 pm Bell Choir

7:00 pm Chancel Choir

Week of Sun. Sept. 28th

Blessing of the Animals

10:00 am Worship

5:00 pm Senior PF

Tue. Sept 30th

9:30 am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag