



THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

STEEPLE

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Monroe, CT 06468

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Office Hours:
Monday – Friday
9:00a.m. - 3:30p.m.

Senior Pastor: Rev. Jennifer Gingras
Associate Pastor of Faith Formation: Rev. Barb Frey
Music Director: Will Duchon
Secretary: Melissa Rosenberg
Church email: secretary@mcc-ucc.org

February 15, 2016



The disciples thought they had Jesus figured out. They had been following him for almost three years. They witnessed not only growing crowds, but the quieter moments when he went away to pray for guidance. They heard his gospel teachings that empowered his listeners to live with great generosity and love. They saw the people he touched become transformed, able to rise from the brokenness and pain of their situation.

Jesus asked them who they thought he was. Peter answered for the group when he said, "You are the Messiah!" They thought the Messiah was a military leader who would rid Israel of their Roman occupiers and set up God's kingdom on earth. He thought he was sent to save them from oppression. How else is a Messiah supposed to behave?

As his closest friends, they assumed they would receive positions of power and authority once the kingdom became a reality. Oh yes, the disciples had Jesus all figured out. But then, he surprised him with the news... "The Son of Man was to be betrayed into human hands."(Mark 9:31a) How could that happen?

One of the greatest temptations that we may have as followers of Christ is to think we can see into the future and know exactly how the Spirit of God is going to move through our lives. Sometimes the answers to our prayers take time to be revealed, and sometimes the answer is not as we hoped. The most faithful thing we can do when that happens is to count on each and rely on God's steadfast love, unconditional forgiveness and overwhelming grace.

Perhaps it is during Lent that this feels the most real... we wait in anticipation, trusting that wherever the Spirit leads, and whatever challenges we face, we are not alone. God's Presence will always be as close as the air we breathe. May this Lenten season be a time of sacred connection for you. *In peace, Pastor Jenn*



Would you like to be on the **MCC scripture reading team**? We publish the March/April/May schedule of readers on Monday, February 22nd. All ages are welcome, training is available. If you would like to join the team, please send an e-mail to Pastor Jenn at Jenn@mcc-ucc.org before 2/21/16. Thank you for your leadership in worship!



This Saturday: Senior PF Chili Cook-off Fundraiser 5pm-8pm

Senior PF is preparing for our big mission trip to Kentucky this July! We are excited and looking forward to new experiences, hard work, helping others and being in community with one another. Please join us for a chili cook off on February 20th where we will have several contestants competing for the title of Chili Master!

There will be music and raffles. We are also working on sharing several past mission trips so people can get a glimpse into our week and how important these trips are to our evolving spiritual growth and being of service to others. Please join us and see who should be crowned the Chili Master...

Refugee Resettlement Team

Come to worship this **Sunday, February 21st** to meet Susan Waschak, a member of the Brookfield Congregational Church's refugee resettlement team. She will share the stories of some of the families they worked with and other information to help us get started. If you are interested in learning more about the Refugee Resettlement Team, please contact Pastor Jenn or Kaia.

URGENT: We need your help finding housing options for an incoming refugee family. If you know of an affordable and available house, cottage, condo or legal apartment (separate entrance, kitchen and bath), that could provide a safe haven for a refugee family for 6-12 months, please contact Liz Sampson at lizsampson@gmail.com or Kaia Fahrenholz at bardwatcher@gmail.com.

Lenten Study Activities at the Monroe Congregational Church

The CE Board Presents: "A Lenten Table" in Wilton Hall February 21, 28

- Color Lenten Posters, create a Lenten Banner, choose a Home Lenten Bible Study

Generations Together: A Special After-Worship Lenten Program For Children, Teens, and Adults "The GOD We Can Know" - Exploring the "I AM" Statements of Jesus

- Feb 28: I AM the Light of the World
- March 6: I AM the Good Shepherd
- March 13: I AM the Resurrection and the Life

Each Session will include:

- 1) A light brunch, a video clip on location in the places Jesus walked, and a gathering activity for all ages.
- 2) Discovering the theme: Children will gather with Pastor Barb for some fun activities, Adults and Teens will gather with Pastor Jenn for a discussion of the scripture and a spiritual practice
- 3) Children, Teens and Adults will share a closing reflection.

Generations Together: Children, Teens, Adults - we learn so much from each other!

FLIPPED: 2016 Lenten Preaching Series



Jesus flips the world upside down when he shares the gospel. When we live a life of discipleship, this can make us feel a little bit like the picture to the left. What we think we can safely expect to happen doesn't quite work out that way as we are brought to new perspectives and priorities.

- February 21 - FLIPPED: Servant/Boss
- February 28 - FLIPPED: Take/Give
- March 6 - FLIPPED: Most/Least
- March 13 - FLIPPED: Sacred/Secular
- March 20 - FLIPPED: The Tables are Turned



Are you ready for camp?!?! Registration for Summer 2016 conferences is open!! Log on to the [Silver Lake registration site](#) to find conferences for 4th through 12th graders, CIT training weekend, biking adventures, the National Youth Event, a trip to Mexico with Simply Smiles,

and more! It's all waiting for you! *Please see Pastor Jenn for information on scholarships from MCC and the Fairfield East Association!*

Outreach



The Annual MCC Tag Sale is coming March 12th! Please mark your calendars for March 12 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 3/6 and continuing until Thursday 3/10. 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 many 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 is 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.



NOW SEEKING: A Habitat for Humanity Coordinator: The Board of Outreach is looking for someone to keep the members and friends of MCC informed about volunteer builds with the Bridgeport chapter of Habitat for Humanity. Our congregation has worked with Habitat for many years as a member of the Sound Coalition partnership. Together with prospective homeowners we have built over 13 homes in the Greater Bridgeport Area. As coordinator, you will attend Sound Coalition meetings (1-2 times a year), inform the congregation of build dates (now scheduled for February 27, April 9 and May 7) and housewarmings and encourage them to attend, and check-in with Outreach when other needs become known. Please contact Pastor Jenn with questions or to volunteer: 203-895-5607 or jenn@mcc-ucc.org



The Bridgeport Rescue Mission fights poverty from the inside out as they embrace the urban poor and addicted with the compassion of Christ, offering hope and healing for a changed life. We are collecting sample size toiletries such as soap, shaving cream, and shampoo to help support their mission.

There is an URGENT need for:

- Gently used or new winter boots for men, women, & children (in all sizes)
- Men’s white tube socks (new only)
- New or gently used blankets

Please consider donating one (or more!) of these items. There is a bin located in Rexford Hall to drop off donations. Thank you, Julie McClenathan

Christian Education

Junior Pilgrim Fellowship

February 21 U Bounce! We will meet at church at 1:15pm. We will bounce for 90 minutes from 2-3:30pm. We will return to church about 4 pm. After bouncing, we will make our own sundaes. The cost will be \$15.95. You will need a liability form in order to bounce, which is included in the e-mail sent to members of Jr PF. If you are going, please let Pastor Barb know so that we have enough drivers. Friends are welcome to come too.

February 28 Mystery Dinner Night 6:00-8:30pm

March 6 Ski Trip to Mohawk Ski Area in Cornwall, CT. We will leave MCC at 9am. Permission slips and money will be due by Feb 28. More details TBA

March 13 "GROG" Night 6:00-8:30pm

March 20 A "Bake-Off with a Jr PF twist"--Help create some Delicious Fun! 6:00-8:30pm

Sunday School Children's Offering: Special Lenten Class Contest! During Lent, Sunday School will be making a special effort to collect as much Children's offering as possible toward our support of Heifer International. Each class will have their own bank to fill over Lent and the class to collect the most will win the competition (and a special surprise as well)! So please encourage your children to bring in any change for Children's Offering and help support the mission of Heifer International. Many thanks for your support!



SAVE THE DATE: Vacation Bible School, August 1st - 5th 2016

Looking forward to another exciting year of Vacation Bible School at MCC? Mark your calendars for August 1st - 5th and be sure to keep an eye out in the Spring for registration information. We will also be looking for volunteers to help out during the week; if interested, please contact Kate Briggs at kateandtom@mac.com or Kyla Allen at kylawa@earthlink.net for more information. We are looking forward to another great year of VBS!

Please join us for the MCC Book Club!



February 22nd - 7:30pm Host: Linda Fracassini We are reading *The Nightingale* by Kristin Hannah

March 14th - 7:30pm Host: Julie McClenathan We are reading *A Man Called Ove* by Fredrik Backman



Young at Heart The Young at Heart will meet on Thursday, February 25th at noon at the Valley Diner, 636 New Haven Avenue, Derby. Please join us for friendship, good food, and fellowship! RSVP by February 23rd to Linda Fracassini 203-261-5484 or lindafrac@gmail.com



Retired Men's Breakfast Retired Men will meet for breakfast at 9:00am on March 9th in Dineson Parlor. Please call the office by Tuesday if you need a ride. 203-268-9327

Community News

Taize Prayer During Lent: The Trumbull Congregational Church invites you to experience contemplative prayer in the style of Taize from 6:30-7pm on Monday nights in the Round Room of the sanctuary. Taize prayer is both beautiful and simple, featuring candle light, iconography, and a quiet space for worship. It cultivates intimacy with God through meditative singing, scripture reading, silence, and intercession. Prayer services at TCC begin on Feb. 15 and continue on Monday evenings through March 21. For more information please contact Pastor Tim at tim.hare@trumbullcc.org.



Need A Babysitter? Experienced mother looking to care for 1 to 2 children on a part time basis. I am a recently retired Monroe resident. Having raised my son on my own, I feel that I am very qualified to take care of children. A great conversationalist, I am a hard worker who would bring creativity, a sense of humor and a nurturing approach in spending time with your children. References available upon request. Contact Information: Margery - (203)-706-2132 or email - mfox08@snet.net.



at the Monroe Congregational Church

Sunday, March 20th, 10am – Palm Sunday: Join us in the Meetinghouse to celebrate Palm Sunday. If the weather cooperates, we will march around the Green. Our Adult Choir, Junior Choir and several soloists will offer sacred music.

Thursday, March 24th, 7:30pm - Maundy Thursday Tenebrae Service: A candlelit evening worship service remembering Jesus' mandate to love one another. This service of shadows features sacred readings that anticipate Jesus' Passion and Holy Communion by intinction.

Friday, March 25th, 12pm – Prayer Walk at Great Hollow Lake. We meet in the Gazebo.

Saturday, March 26th, 11am – 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, March 27th, 6:30am – Monroe Clergy Association Easter Sunrise Service at Great Hollow Lake: We'll meet on the grass in front of Great Hollow Lake as the shadows shorten and the sun rises. Together we will celebrate that God has conquered death itself, and Jesus is risen! Children are welcome. Please dress warmly, and bring something to share in fellowship afterwards!!

Sunday, March 27th, 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. Our 10am worship features the Junior Choir. We will also join in singing the Hallelujah Chorus. Christ is Risen indeed AND Everyone is Welcome!

MCC Community Calendar

Week of Feb. 21st

Guest: Susan Waschak from Brookfield's Refugee Resettlement Project

10:00am Worship w/Bible Dedication
11:15am Junior Choir
11:15am Deacons (Dineson)
11:15am Trustees (Classroom 4)
11:15am Lenten Table (Wilton Hall)
1:15pm Jr PF carpool to BounceU
6:00pm Adult & Senior PF

Mon. Feb. 22nd

7:30pm MCC Book Club @ Linda Fracassini's home
7:30am Council Meeting (Dineson)

Tues. Feb. 23rd

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag
7:00pm Divorce Support Group (Dineson)

Wed. Feb. 24th

6:30pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. Feb. 25th

9:30am Bible Study
12:00pm Young at Heart (Valley Diner, Derby)
6:30pm Bell Choir
7:30pm Adult Choir

Week of Feb. 28th

10:00am Worship
11:15am Junior Choir
11:15am Generations Together Lenten Study
6:00pm Junior & Senior PF

Tues. Mar. 1st

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag
7:00pm Rachel's Well (Dineson)

Wed. Mar. 2nd

6:30pm Confirmation Class

Thurs. Mar. 3rd

9:30am Bible Study
6:30pm Bell Choir
7:30pm Adult Choir

Week of Mar. 6th

One Great Hour of Sharing

10:00am Worship w/Communion
11:15am Junior Choir
11:15am Generations Together Lenten Study
6:00pm Adult, Junior & Senior PF

Tues. Mar. 8th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Mar. 9th

9:00am Retired Men's Breakfast (Dineson)
11:00am Morning Circle (Dineson)
6:30pm Confirmation Class
7:30pm Christian Ed Meeting (Dineson)

Thurs. Mar. 10th

9:30am Bible Study
6:30pm Bell Choir
7:30pm Adult Choir

Fri. Mar. 11th

Tag Sale Set Up (all day)

Sat. Mar. 12th

8:00am MCC Tag Sale (Wilton Hall)
6:00pm Senior PF Lock-in (Wilton & Dineson)

Week of Mar. 13th

Baptism of Henry Rampant

10:00am Worship
11:15am Junior Choir
11:15 Trustees (classroom 4)
11:15am Deacons (Dineson)
11:15am Generations Together Lenten Study
6:00pm Junior & Senior PF

Tues. Mar. 15th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag
7:00pm Bereavement Group (Dineson)

Wed. Mar. 16th

6:30pm Confirmation Class (Spadaccino's)

Thurs. Mar. 17th

9:30am Bible Study
6:30pm Bell Choir
7:30pm Adult Choir

Sat. Mar. 19th

8:00am Jam Making (kitchen)

Week of Mar. 20th

Palm Sunday

10:00am Worship
11:15am Junior Choir
6:00pm Adult and Senior PF

Mon. Mar. 21st

7:30pm Council Meeting (Dineson)

Tues. Mar. 22nd

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag
7:30pm Divorce Support (Dineson)

Wed. Mar. 23rd

7:30pm MCC Book Club @ Julie McClenathan's home

Thurs. Mar. 24th

9:30am Bible Study
7:30pm Maundy Thursday Worship

Fri. Mar. 25th

12:00pm Good Friday Prayer Walk @Great Hollow
7:00pm Cantata @ Trumbull Congregational

Sat. Mar. 26th

11:00am Senior PF Easter Egg Hunt
8:00am Jam Making (kitchen)