



THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

STEEPLE

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

Senior Pastor: Rev. Jennifer Gingras
Music Director: Will Duchon
Director of Faith Formation: Debi Mastroni-Kenyon
Secretary: Melissa Rosenberg
Church e-mail: secretary@mcc-ucc.org

June 15, 2017



Facing Change: Tri-Conference Annual Meeting

"In the midst of new dimensions, in the face of changing ways; Who will lead the pilgrim people, wandering in their separate ways? God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar; We your people, ours the journey, now and ever, now and ever, now and ever more." - In the Midst of New Dimensions, Julian Rush

Guess what else is Father's Day weekend, friends? A historic, first-ever Tri-Conference Annual Meeting of the Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island Conferences. Delegates to this Meeting, to be held June 16 - 17 at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford, will be asked to endorse a resolution unanimously adopted by the three Boards which calls for joining together to create a new Conference. If delegates endorse that resolution, the Boards will come back to a 2018 joint Annual Meeting with a specific proposal.

This change is coming because many of us in Southern New England believe we find ourselves in the midst of a critical moment in the life of our wider church. Like our pilgrim forebears who crossed the ocean confident that more light would break forth from God's Holy Word; like the four distinct traditions joining together in 1957 to form the United Church of Christ with a belief that unity in Christ transcended their differences; like the national setting which recently streamlined its own structure to create a nimbler approach to mission and ministry; we believe that discipleship in a new era requires boldness and change. We believe the time for the creation of a new Conference has come.

There are many compelling reasons to make this change now:

- ❖ It focuses and builds on what each conference does well, increasing congregations' access to resources, programs and consultations, sharing and implementation of "best practices."
- ❖ It creates a more nimble institutional platform better positioned to support new forms of ministry
- ❖ It offers a more robust technological capacity to help us share our mission and develop connections among churches

- ❖ A Southern New England Conference would exert greater influence simply because of its numbers, which can strengthen the mission and ministry of the UCC in this part of the country and serve as a model for other Conferences needing to take action to adapt.
- ❖ When we eliminate the boundaries of state lines, we may be more likely to challenge other boundaries as we come to see them as unnecessary and limiting.
- ❖ Embracing this act of interdependence will prepare us to work with other Christian denominations and people of faith. As the body of Christ, we can be a sign of the visible unity of the Church in our time.

I will be attending the Clergy Luncheon on Friday and the worship and plenary on Saturday morning before heading back to town to the PF Food booth at Strawberry Festival. I hope to bring you good news soon. For more information on this and other exciting developments, visit the conference website www.ctucc.org . In Christ, *Pastor Jenn*

For sermons & other musings, visit Pastor Jenn's blog at: <http://loveshoutingstones.blogspot.com>

Strawberry Festival

Strawberry Festival



The 46th Annual Strawberry Festival is this weekend! June 17th & 18th! The MCC Strawberry Festival is the single largest church service and fundraising event, providing funds for outreach, faith formation and events throughout the year. It presents an opportunity for us to interact with the broader community and it's a weekend full of laughter, fun and fellowship!

Tips for working at the Strawberry Festival:

- ✓ **No Open Toed Shoes**
- ✓ **Long hair needs to be up**
- ✓ **Must wear a hat**
- ✓ **Use sunscreen**
- ✓ **Bring a refillable water bottle to keep hydrated**

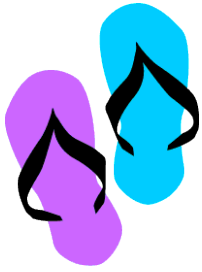
Don't forget the 6pm Sunday Night Celebration Dinner! Everyone is invited to the Celebration Dinner immediately following cleanup on Sunday evening. This is a wonderful time for all of us to relax after our fun filled weekend, share a meal together and celebrate! We look forward to working with all of you the weekend of the festival!

Yours in Strawberries, Service and Fellowship; *Clark Gingras & John Maiolo*

Calling All Bakers!! We Need You!! The Strawberry Festival depends on your homemade baked goods to stock the Country Store. Please bring your cookies, breads, cakes, & other goodies to Dineson Parlor by Friday, June 16th (please, no frosted items). Thank you, *Strawberry Festival Committee*



Deacons



Summer Worship with St. Peter's Episcopal Church! One of the highlights of every summer is joining in worship with our friends from St. Peter's in an outdoor setting. Please bring a lawn chair.

- On **July 9th at 9AM** St. Peter's will host us on their side of the green
- On **August 6th at 10AM** We will host St. Peter's on our side of the green, with an ice cream social following service (thanks, Fellowship!)

On Sunday, June 25th, we welcome guest preacher Rev. Marilyn Kendrix to preach and lead a second hour adult education talk during coffee hour in Wilton Hall.



As people of conscience, we should care about the poor among us and in our society, the people who fit that description the best are the 7.3 million people currently under correctional control, 2.3 million of whom are in prison or jail, while the remaining 5 million are kept in a permanent poverty by the rules of parole and probation and the legal discrimination against them in housing, employment, and public assistance. There are clear connections between racism, politics, targeted enforcement of the War on Drugs and the intractable poverty that it creates. These issues have been out of sight for most of us yet as people concerned with human justice; we need to become aware of this injustice in our midst.

As one of the authors of *The Justice Imperative: How Hyper Incarceration Hijacked the American Dream*, Rev. Marilyn Kendrix will discuss the facts and consequences of mass incarceration in America and provide some recommendations for what we can do about it.

Marilyn Baugh Kendrix currently serves at the Interim Senior Pastor at the Congregational Church Naugatuck. A graduate of Yale Divinity School, Marilyn worked for over 15 years as an Organizational Development Consultant principally at AT&T but also in other profit and not-for-profit settings. In addition to her ministry at the Naugatuck church, Marilyn is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Conference of the UCC.

Marilyn earned her Bachelor's degree in French and secondary education from Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia, her Executive MBA from the University of New Haven and an MA in Industrial and Organizational Psychology, also from the University of New Haven. In May of 2013, Marilyn received her Master's of Divinity degree from Yale Divinity School and a certificate from the Yale Institute of Sacred Music. She was the recipient of the Henry Hallam Tweedy Prize for exceptional promise in pastoral leadership, the highest prize that Yale Divinity School confers on a graduating student each year, for her work in raising awareness about mass incarceration in America.

Marilyn's covenant as Senior Pastor with the Congregational Church of Naugatuck allows her to preach and teach about mass incarceration at other UCC churches in Connecticut one Sunday a month. In addition, in her work with the Malta Justice Initiative, Marilyn has partnered with 7 other writers to write a book, *The Justice Imperative: How Hyper Incarceration Hijacked the American Dream* (September 2014, Significance Press). The book focuses on the problem of mass incarceration in Connecticut and provides 30 recommendations for bringing it to an end.



Join the MCC Scripture Reading Team!

Would you like to read the weekly scripture at church on Sunday for the congregation? Making a commitment to read scripture aloud is one way of growing in faith. Not everyone is able to commit to an in-person group Bible study, so by learning more about the text you will be reading helps keep skills sharp! You will be scheduled to read every few months, and if something comes up you will have a list of people to call to switch weeks. You will receive the scripture reading prior to your scheduled date along with a copy of the corresponding bulletin. If you are interested in joining the team, please contact Melissa at secretary@mcc-ucc.org or 203-268-9327 By July 30. A new fall schedule will be sent mid-August. Thank you!

Christian Education

"Superheroes of the Bible"

Moses? Deborah? David? Jesus? Superheroes? Absolutely! All children age 4-6th grade are invited to Vacation Bible School at Monroe Congregational Church July 31st-August 4th to participate in Superheroes of the Bible – a sort of Justice League of our own. Please register your children now! We are also in need of volunteers of all ages.



This year we are also going to be focusing on mission, after all, every Superhero has their mission, right? The kids will have two primary mission foci, the Refugee crisis and Hunger in our own backyard. On Thursday, the children will tour our Giving Garden and maybe pick some veggies or water. They will also have a produce drive on that day for donations to be given to Bridgeport Rescue Mission. To address the Refugee crisis on our final day of VBS we will be assembling Church World Service Hygiene Kits so we are asking the congregation for donations for the kits. Please bring all donations to the church **by Wednesday, August 2nd!**

We are in need of:

- Hand towels measuring approximately 15" x 28" to 16" x 32" (no fingertip, bath, dish towel or microfiber)
- Washcloths
- Wide-tooth combs
- Fingernail or toenail clippers
- Bath-size bar of soap in the wrapper
- Toothbrushes in the package

If you have any questions, please contact Debi Mastroni-Kenyon at debi@mcc-ucc.org.

Summer Sunday School at MCC



We once again will be having Summer Sunday School for children in Pre-K thru 3rd grade. This will be a one room Sunday School set up so all of the children will be together. Our theme this year is "Do What Matters – the United Church of Christ" and the children will be learning about six core values of the UCC! Here is the Schedule:

June 25th – "Happy Birthday UCC"

July 2nd – "We Are People of Extravagant Welcome"

July 9th – NO Summer Sunday School, worship on the Green with St. Peter's

July 16th – "We Belong to Christ"

July 23rd – "We Are One at Baptism and Table"

July 30th – "We Are a People of Covenant"

August 6th – "Learning with St. Peter's"

August 13th – "All Ages Extravaganza"

August 20th – "We Give Thanks by Working for a Just and Loving World"

August 27th – "We Listen for a Still-speaking God"

Trustees

Help MCC Pave Its Way to a Brighter Future!



Here is your opportunity to help us upgrade the MCC campus and ALSO honor a local business, friend, colleague, family member, or loved one by sponsoring the installation of a personalized, engraved brick! The Trustees are launching a "buy a brick campaign" to help finance the cost of replacing a deteriorated walkway running alongside Rexford House. Each standard-size, 4" x 8" brick is \$125, and allows three lines of text comprised of eighteen characters each. Order forms (and an online option) will be available soon. For further information, please contact the church office or Mark Barnhart at msbarnhart515@gmail.com.



Outreach

It's that time again...the next St. George's supper is July 3rd Please look for the poster in Wilton Hall to sign up to help. We have a variety of needs, including shoppers, and servers. Simply take a tag (or two!) and you will be making a difference for those in need. **Please bring all food to the church by July 2nd at 11am. If you take a tag and are unable to fulfill your commitment please contact the church office 203-268-9327 Or if you would like a tag but cannot make it to church please call Melissa in the office**

Fellowship

Please join us for the MCC Book Club!

- ✚ **June 21st -7:30pm** Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania by Erik Larson, Hosted by Julie McClenathan
- ✚ **July 19th-7:30pm** Small Great Things by Jodi Picoult~Hosted by Sue Smelzer
- ✚ **August 16th- 7:30pm** Victoria by Daisy Goodwin~Hosted by Peggy Villani

young
at heart

Young at Heart will gather at Ruby Tuesday, 811 BRIDGEPORT AVE., SHELTON, CT 06484 for food and fellowship on Thursday, June 22nd at 12 noon. If you are retired or otherwise have the free time, please come and join us. All are welcome. Please RSVP by June 19th to Arlene Redmond or Vaughan Askue (arleneredmond@gmail.com, vaughanaskue@gmail.com , [203-345-3637](tel:203-345-3637) or in person.)

Musicfest Committee

save
the
date

Save the date! The 3rd Annual Monroe MusicFest is in a new month at a new time on a new day. This year, MusicFest is on SUNDAY, September 24, 2017 from 1 to 7. As before, keep in touch through: <http://monroemusicfest.blogspot.com/> or <https://www.facebook.com/MonroeMusicFest/> . This year in addition to talented musicians, MusicFest will have local artists and artisans displaying and selling their art. Mark your calendars and come enjoy this fun event

Community News



Jack Campbell Cello Recital June 24th 10am in the Meeting House Jack Campbell will perform a cello recital of pieces from Suzuki Cello Book 6 accompanied by Will Duchon on piano. Saturday, June 24, 10 a.m. in the meeting house. Refreshments in Dineson Parlor immediately after. Thank you to Will and our MCC church family for their kind support of Jack's studies. -Ann-Marie and Brian



Global Ministries

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ

A Call for an End to the Occupation on the 50th Anniversary of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War

June 6, 2017

“How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long?” –Psalm 13:1-2a.

This week marks a half century since the watershed 1967 Arab-Israeli War. For Israelis, the military victory meant newfound access to and control over East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights. For Egyptians and Syrians this event, called *al-Naksa* (“the setback”), meant the loss of important land areas. Sinai was eventually returned to Egypt, but the Golan Heights remains under Israeli control despite efforts to negotiate a return to Syria. For Palestinians, Israeli control of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza has meant a half century of occupation, during which Israel has developed systems of separation and differentiation between its own citizens, including settlers, and Palestinians.

2017 is a significant year in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as it marks the passing of several milestones:

- * 120 years since the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland (1897);
- * 100 years since the Balfour Declaration’s issuance (1917);
- * 80 years since the British Peel Commission recommended partition (1937);
- * 70 years since the United Nations voted to support plan of partition (1947);
- * 50 years since the war resulting in occupation (1967); and
- * 30 years since the beginning of the first Palestinian *intifada*, which included many organized acts of non-violent resistance (1987).

Far from a complete timeline, these events provide brushstrokes of the complicated history of conflict, and help illuminate the fact that the issues of demography and dignity, geography and resources, are at its heart.

“Consider and answer me, O Lord my God! Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death.” Psalm 13:3.

For the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ and their joint work in Global Ministries, the main focus of advocacy and engagement has been the occupation, which has now endured for half a century and is a major, but not the only, source of injustice. International law neither admits the acquisition of land by force, nor the transfer of population into occupied territory; Israel has violated both. We know from the relationships we have nurtured—primarily but not exclusively with the Palestinian Christian churches, institutions, and community—that the systems of discrimination and oppression have widened and deepened over the course of the occupation, with no end in sight. The conditions under which Palestinians live—including generations of refugees living in the occupied territories, neighboring countries, and beyond—have only devolved. The suffering has been witnessed by many in our churches who have made pilgrimage visits to the lands of our Christian faith’s history, and who stand in solidarity sisters and brothers of Abrahamic faith heritage by seeking justice, peace, and equality of rights.

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The Psalmist asked, “How long, O Lord?” We also ask, how long can this occupation continue, and how long can the dignity and rights of the Palestinian people be denied? As we call for an end to the occupation, we look to the scriptural imperative of a year of jubilee: “You shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants.” (Lev. 25:10). We reaffirm our commitments to seeking a resolution to this enduring and asymmetric conflict, to standing up for justice, and to participating in and supporting non-violent means to attain these goals including, but not limited to, the right to use economic measures to promote justice. We stand in solidarity with our partners in Israel/Palestine who endure the impact of occupation on a daily basis and who work tirelessly to respond to, cope with, and resist the systematic denial of rights and dehumanization which result from unjust policies and practices. We will continue to share the stories and perspectives of those too often ignored or suppressed by mainstream media. We recognize the disproportionate and slanted role that the US government plays in regional politics, and will continue to advocate for positive change which we believe would serve the interests of this country, as well as those of Israelis and Palestinians, and of others within the region.

We pray and yearn for an end to violence in all its forms, and reject and condemn anti-Semitism and anti-Muslim sentiment. We are guided by the premise that the fullness of life is too often subjugated to short-term political or economic interests, but that in the end, such narrow-mindedness is in no one’s ultimate benefit. We trust in God that justice one day will indeed prevail.

“I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.” –Psalm 13:5-6.

*Global Ministries is a common witness of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
and United Church of Christ.*

MCC Community Calendar

Thurs. June 15th
7:15pm Adult Choir

Fri. June 16
Strawberry Festival Set Up

Sat. June 17th
10:00am Strawberry Festival

Week of June 18th
Strawberry Festival Sunday
10:00am Worship
12:00pm Strawberry Festival

Mon. June 19th
7:30pm Council Meeting (Dineson Parlor)

Tues. June 20th
9:30am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. June 21st
7:30pm Book Club at Julie McClenathan's house

Week of June 25th
Guest Preacher Rev. Marilyn Kendricks
10:00am Worship
11:15am Presentation on Mass Incarceration (Wilton Hall)
6:00pm Senior PF (Mission Trip 101/102)

Tues. June 27th
9:30am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Week of July 2nd
Emilia Lynne Manley's Baptism
10:00am Worship with Communion
6:00pm Senior PF (Scavenger Hunt)

Mon. July 3rd
3:45pm St. George's Supper

Tues. July 4th
Office Closed - Independence Day

Fri. July 8th-16th
Senior PF Mission Trip to Chicago

Week of July 9th
9:00am Worship on the Green
St. Peter's to Host

Tues. July 11th
9:30am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Week of July 16th
Guest Preacher: Will Duchon
10:00am Worship

Tues. July 18th
9:30am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. July 19th
7:30pm MCC Book Club at Sue Smelzer's home

Week of July 23rd
10:00am Worship

Tues. July 25th
9:30am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Week of July 30th
10:00am Worship

Mon. July 31-Aug. 4th
9:00am Vacation Bible School

Tues. Aug. 1st
9:30am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Week of Aug. 6th
MCC Hosts Worship with St. Peter's
10:00am Worship
11:00am Ice Cream Social

Tues. Aug. 8th
9:30am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Pastor Jenn and her family will be on vacation from August 11-19

Week of Aug. 13th
Guest Preacher: Debi Mastroni-Kenyon
10:00am Worship

Tues. Aug. 15th
9:30am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag