



# 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  
Music Director: Will Duchon  
Secretary: Melissa Rosenberg  
Director of Faith Formation: Debi Mastroni-Kenyon  
Church e-mail: [secretary@mcc-ucc.org](mailto:secretary@mcc-ucc.org)

**November 15, 2016**

## **Advent Dreams & Visions**

Advent, a new liturgical season, begins later this month on Sunday, November 27th. Technically, this year we will enjoy the longest possible Advent season, because Christmas falls on a Sunday (as it does every seven years).

Our thematic focus in worship will be "Dreams & Visions". Actors will offer a short drama about their dreams, visions and hopes for the future. As in previous years, we will begin our time together lighting an Advent wreath and will enjoy special music. The Adult Choir is working on a cantata by John Ness called "The Shepherd" which will be offered on December 11<sup>th</sup> in worship, and a Christmas Pageant will take place on the 18<sup>th</sup> at the 10am service.

In addition to the traditional decorations, we will install a large dream catcher in the front of the worship space that we will add to each week. You may know that dream catchers, from the indigenous peoples of North America, are traditionally hung in doorways or windows to capture good dreams and prevent bad dreams from entering a room. It seems appropriate to use the symbols of an unbroken circle and a web of connection to remind us of the hopes and dreams of the season. In the dream catcher, we hope to visualize the mystery of the Incarnation as we pray for our eyes to be opened as we move through Advent, Christmas and Epiphany.

Your flock deacon has mailed to you a schedule of special events and worship services. Events will also be publicized through the usual channels of this newsletter, e-mails and worship bulletins. We hope that you hang it in a prominent place as a reminder of all the ways you may encounter God in community at the Monroe Congregational Church. In peace, *Pastor Jenn*

*Pastor Jenn will be on vacation from Sunday, November 20<sup>th</sup> through Saturday, November 26<sup>th</sup>.  
Happy Thanksgiving to all!*



## What is a Commissioned Minister?

*She is the administrator of an HIV health care clinic. He directs choral choirs, handbell choirs, and a jazz quartet at his church. She conducts a Christian Theater Arts Camp each summer. What do all of these people have in common? They are Commissioned Ministers in the United Church of Christ.<sup>1</sup>*

Commissioned Ministry is one of three forms of Authorized Ministry in the United Church of Christ (the others are Licensed Ministers, who focus on pulpit supply and Ordained Ministers, who focus on the Word and Sacrament). Everyone who has sought to become a Commissioned Minister has had to discern and recognize a call from God to a specific ministry, and then undergo a period of training and oversight. The term for the person undergoing this discernment is the same for all three categories of authorized ministry; they are a "member in discernment".

The UCC's Manual on Ministry lists several areas in which a person may be commissioned: Christian education, church administration, church music, UCC-related missionary work, Conference and denominational staff work, and certain ministries of advocacy or community change.

Earlier this month our Music Director, Will Duchon, went before the Fairfield East Committee on Ministry to become a Member in Discernment, and he has been accepted. The Deacons and I hope that through his preparation Will can make stronger connections with our United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries, and possibly strengthen his advocacy work with Opus 30 and the exoneration of Mr. Shane Watson.

He will engage in a unique path of preparation that will prepare him to serve MCC as a Commissioned Minister of Music and Justice. There are currently 124 Commissioned Ministers in the UCC. Let's give Will all our support as he steps forward and learns more about Commissioned Ministry in the United Church of Christ!

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## **Congregational Budget Conversation: Nov 20th**

Each fall we enter our church's budgeting season in preparation for the next year of ministry at the Monroe Congregational Church. We hold this informal congregational conversation in November so that everyone has a chance to ask questions about the process, individual board allocations and even make recommendations which help shape our priorities as a plan is developed. No votes are taken, but ideas are shared. Knowing this financial information ahead of time helps us be better informed prior to our Annual Congregational Meeting in January. Please join us in Wilton Hall on Sunday, November 20th, 2016 at 11:15 and join in on the discussion!

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ucc.org/commissioned-ministry>



## 2017 Stewardship Campaign "Go and Do the Same"

These last few weeks have been enriching and our worship together has been inspiring. Our speakers each Sunday have offered rich reminders of how we have been blessed by God and how God invites us to respond. What we believe matters. What we do about what we believe matters even more. Our congregation is committed to putting our faith into action and this is one opportunity for us to act in accordance with what we believe.

As we near the conclusion of our 2017 Stewardship Campaign *Go and Do the Same*, we hope that you are planning to be with us for worship on Commitment Sunday, November 27th and for the pancake Breakfast which follows.

If you have not yet had a chance to pledge, we encourage you to prayerfully consider how you will choose to share in the ongoing mission of your church. Pledge cards can be found in the mailer we sent out last month or in the pews on Sunday. As always, these cards represent our best intentions based on what we know at the present time. They can, at any time, be adjusted should your circumstances change.

We thank you for your support. We join with you in the hope of creating a culture of generosity that touches every person in our church, and in our world. Giving does not simply happen; it is the result of faith, trust and intentional choices. Thank you for your commitment to living a life of faithful discipleship as we try to "go and do the same" as Jesus commanded.

In hope, your Stewardship Committee, Scott Young (Chair), Roy Nealon, John O'Rourke (Receiver)

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## New Photo Directory from LifeTouch!



Our church is getting ready to create a new photo directory and we need you to help make it complete! A professional photographer from LifeTouch will be in Wilton Hall on December 1st, 2nd and 3rd to take pictures for our 2017 Photo Directory. By participating, you will receive a free 8x10 photo (and any extra photos you order) in time for Christmas! Of course, you'll also receive our new 2017 Photo Directory.

Sign up for your professional photography session in one of these three convenient ways:

1. Schedule your appointment online at: [appt.lifetouch.com](http://appt.lifetouch.com)
2. Or for further assistance, call coordinator Judy Coward at [203-881-8562](tel:203-881-8562)

Our new 2017 Photo directory won't be complete without you. Sign up today!



## Congratulations to Dave & Kathy Allen on the birth of their new granddaughter

Eleanor Allyn DiGiammarino , born October 28th (7 lbs and 8ounces). Her proud parents Kelly & David DiGiammarino .

## Welcome our New Members, who joined on November 13th!

### ***Debi Mastroni-Kenyon***

Debi has Bachelor of Arts in Religious Education at Defiance College in Defiance, Ohio. She has 23 years of experience in Youth Ministry and 9 years of experience in Faith Formation for all ages. Debi has a true passion and love for Faith Formation and service which reaches across the generations. One of her colleagues likes to say that she has Faith Formation in her DNA. She also has a strong connection to our friends on the Cheyenne River Reservation, where she volunteered with Simply Smiles over 5 work trips. She has also served the CT Conference UCC in a variety of settings. She lives in Milford with her husband Wayne, and they have one adult daughter Steffany. In her spare time she likes to cook, garden, spoil her cat (Holly), volunteer at the Simply Smiles office and sing with the New Haven Chorale.

### ***Leanne & Mike McEvoy***

Mike and Leanne join us today with their daughters Eliana and Kaelyn. Mike is the Director of Marketing Communications at Sawgrass Technologies and Leanne is the Executive Director at Empowering Children and Families. Mike's interests include hiking, running, sailing and camping. Leanne enjoys hiking, running, camping, the beach, and spending time with family and friends. Welcome McEvoy family!

### ***Jeff & Mary Smith***

Jeff and Mary live in Monroe with their three children Madeline, Elyse, and Tyler. Jeff is a national account manager with Bic in Shelton and Mary is stay at home mom. Jeff is a Sunday School volunteer and the children attend our Sunday School program. Jeff and Mary expressed an interest in doing volunteer work with MCC such as baking and cooking. Welcome Smith family!

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### **Fellowship**

**Save the Date: Mission Trip Memories Potluck Saturday November 19th, 6pm, Wilton Hall**

Come and celebrate our mission trip memories at a fabulous pot-luck dinner! Please bring a non-perishable food item for the food pantry. Last names beginning A-G please bring an side dish or salad, H-P an entrée and Q-Z a dessert. Please RSVP to the church office 203-268-9327.

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

🚩 **November 16<sup>th</sup>-7:30pm** Everything I Never Told You by Celeste Ng  
Hosted by Peggy Villani

**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 sponsoring a month of coffee hours at the low, low price of \$40? Our coffee is fair trade certified through Equal Exchange. You will not only get that warm and fuzzy feeling of doing something generous, but you can use your sponsorship to honor loved ones – a dedication goes on a plaque and in the bulletin. Please make checks payable to MCC with “coffee sponsor” in the memo field. Thank you.



**Due to Thanksgiving, the November Young at Heart** lunch gathering will be on the 17<sup>th</sup>, at noon. Location: Outback, 698 Bridgeport Ave, Shelton. Please RSVP to Arlene Redmond or Vaughan Askue (203-345-3637; [arleneredmond@gmail.com](mailto:arleneredmond@gmail.com), or at church). Young at Heart was conceived as fellowship for those “who remember WWII” – most/many of us who attend don’t – all are welcome. So if you want companions for lunch on the 17<sup>th</sup>, come join us.

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### Advent Opportunities



**2016 Senior PF Christmas Wreath Fundraiser:** It's that time of year where we're getting merry and bright! PF is holding our annual wreath fundraiser. If you would like to purchase a wreath; PFers will be at coffee hour the next few weeks taking orders. Thank you for your love, support and for making our 2017 mission trip a special one!

12 inch wreaths - \$14

16 inch wreaths - \$16

Bows - \$2

**Eco-Advent Candle Wreaths:** The First Sunday of Advent is on November 27<sup>th</sup>, which is also Commitment Sunday! We will be committing our support to MCC for 2017 and we will also be committing ourselves to pause and reflect about what it means to be Disciples of Christ awaiting his birth on Christmas Day. There will be a Pancake Breakfast after worship to celebrate our commitments and there will be an opportunity to assemble an Eco-Advent Wreath for you to use at home. This wreath is 100% biodegradable and meant to be composted or simply thrown outside! **Items Needed** from you are cardboard egg cartons. Just bring your cardboard egg cartons to church and give them to Debi.

### Advent Wreath Candle Lighters



the candles.

During Advent we will light a candle each week symbolizing our patient waiting for the Light of Christ to break forth into our world. We would like for families or other groups within the church to participate – we provide the Liturgy! We are in need of lighters on November 27<sup>th</sup> and December 11<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am, December 18<sup>th</sup> at 8:15 am and 10:00 am, and on Christmas Eve at 7:00 pm and 11:00 pm. Please contact Debi at 203-444-6760 or [debi@mcc-ucc.org](mailto:debi@mcc-ucc.org) if you'd like to light



## Christmas Pageant

This year the CE Board will be presenting a Christmas Tableau entitled "The Birth of Christ: as told in Scripture, Carols, and Tableau" on Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup> at the 10am worship service. The majority of the cast is non-speaking parts, but there will be two Narrators and five Scripture Readers. If you would like to be a Narrator or Scripture Reader, please contact Debi at 203-444-6760 or [debi@mcc-ucc.org](mailto:debi@mcc-ucc.org).



**Celebrate Christmas, Silver Lake-style!** Experience the hope of the Christmas promise with new friends and old as we create blessed community. We will get busy and creative with Christmas crafts, outdoor play, baking, worship, and lots of singing of Christmas songs around the fire.

There will be two retreats this weekend: one for [4th, 5th, and 6th graders](#) and one for [7th and 8th graders](#). Dori Gavitt and Keri Haertel will be deans for the 4th through 6th graders; Stephanie Bernier and Kaitlyn Williams will be deans for the 7th & 8th graders.

Register online at [www.silverlakeect.org](http://www.silverlakeect.org) with your summer registration account (or, if this is your first time at Silver Lake, make a new account — it's free and quick!). The cost for the weekend is \$115.

Conferees must bring a valid health form, online or paper copy. Use the one you brought this summer or substitute the state form. For questions or more information, please call [860-364-5526](tel:860-364-5526) or email [jenncc@ctuucc.org](mailto:jenncc@ctuucc.org).

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## Outreach

**Dress A Girl Was A Rousing Success!:** Thank you to all who helped prepare and attended the DAG Sew-A-Thon on Saturday! We had over 50 dresses between what we made and what was made at home. I'll be taking up to the Southern Maine Ambassador on Thursday. There are going to be 50 very happy girls somewhere in this world. Thanks for all the help and support.

Liz Skarzynski , Dress A Girl Coordinator





**Paulette Obertz will be selling jars of homemade applesauce** during coffee hour. Proceeds will be split between the 2017 Senior Pf mission trip and the piano humidifier. Apple sauce will go great for thanksgiving dinner and makes a tasty filling for apple pies.



**Fill a Tent" Coat Drive for Bridgeport Rescue Mission** Scouts from Boy Scout Troop 63, Cub Scout Pack 262, Crew 63 and all Girl Scouts from MCC have almost stuffed a tent with winter coats! The deadline for completing the drive is **Sunday, November 20<sup>th</sup>**. Thanks for your support! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask. Yours in Scouting and Service, Rich Correll, Troop 63 Service Coordinator



**Habitat for Humanity** Please consider volunteering with MCC Habitat coordinator, John Sekelsky on Dec 10th for a Habitat Work Day. Please contact John at [johnsekelsky@gmail.com](mailto:johnsekelsky@gmail.com) so he can let the Sound Coalition manager know how many from MCC will attend. Thanks for your support of this special work. You can learn more about Habitat for Humanity by visiting: [habitatcfc.org/](http://habitatcfc.org/)

### Donations are needed for the Monroe Food Pantry

With the colder weather upon us the demand for food is greater than ever. We have almost 300 registered Monroe families who are eligible to receive assistance from the Monroe Food Pantry.



Canned fruit: peaches, pineapple etc.	Canned beans: black, pinto etc.	Cake mixes, brownie mix, cookie mix
Pumpkin pie filling	Canned chili	Tea & Coffee
Condiments: mayo, mustard, ketchup, syrup	Spaghetti O's: meat and plain	Peanut butter & jelly
Cooking oil	Dry pasta and sauce	Stuffing
Salad dressing-any kind	Noodles and rice	Jar gravy
Canned vegetables: corn, mixed, peas etc.	Canned potatoes	Individual snacks: chips, pretzels, etc.
Canned tuna or chicken	Canned soup: assorted	Pet supplies: cat food, dog food, litter

To donate perishable items such as eggs or milk please call 452-3770 to arrange a drop off time. For nonperishable items please place in the bin in the Rexford House-Thank you for your generosity!

## Community News

**Parent's Support Group:** We in the Parent's Support Group help parents of pre-teens and teenagers by offering compassion, guidance and suggestions for easing conflict and issues with their children. We are not counselors; just concerned parents who come together to talk with other parents who listen without judgment or blame. Every one of us has faced situations in which we needed some help, we have "been there" and can relate. Facilitated by the Monroe Youth Commission, there are no membership requirements or dues to attend. We are open to the public, and meet every other month on the second Thursday at the Monroe Congregational Church's Dineson Parlor (34 Church Street) from 7:30 – 9:00pm. Please call the church office at 203-268-9327 for more information. Jan 12, Mar 9, May 11 – Topic TBD

**Girl Scout Troop 34012 Crayon Initiative** Have you ever wondered what happened to your unwanted crayons? Shockingly, we discovered most unwanted crayons are thrown away, ending up in the landfill. Not only is this a waste of valuable resources, but a detriment to the environment. This inspired us to design a process that recycles used crayons and provides them to hospitals that are caring for kids. The Crayon Initiative was born! Please bring any of your used and broken crayons to Rexford House. There is a box located on top of the bins. Thank you! Learn more at [www.crayoninitiative.org](http://www.crayoninitiative.org)



**The Trumbull Congregational Church** is hosting an Alternative Christmas Fair on Saturday, Dec. 3 from 10am to 2pm. Come and reclaim the meaning of the season and the joy of giving gifts that make a difference. Select from over a dozen international causes (such as "Aid for Syran Refugees" or "Motherhood Kits for Women in the Congo") or purchase handmade, fair-trade gifts from Mama Jane's Global Boutique and BeadForLife. Questions? Call TCC at [203-268-2433](tel:203-268-2433)



## MCC Community Calendar

### **Week of Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Wed. Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>**

6:30pm Youth Confirmation Class (Dineson)

#### **Thurs. Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>**

9:30am Bible Study

12:00pm Young at Heart at Outback in Shelton

7:00pm Adult Choir

#### **Sat. Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>**

6:00pm Mission Trip Memories Potluck (Wilton Hall)

### **Week of Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>**

*Pastor Jenn is on vacation November 20<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>  
Katrina Manzi, Guest Preacher*

10:00am Worship

11:15am Junior Choir (Meetinghouse)

11:15am Congregational Conversation (Wilton)

6:00pm Adult, Sr & Jr PF

#### **Mon. Nov. 21<sup>st</sup>**

7:30pm Church Council (Dineson)

#### **Tues. Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup>**

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

#### **Thurs. Nov. 24<sup>th</sup> & Fri. Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>**

*Office Closed in Observance of Thanksgiving*

### **Week of Nov. 27<sup>th</sup>**

*First Sunday in Advent, Commitment Sunday*

10:00am Worship

11:15am Junior Choir (Meetinghouse)

11:15am Pancake Breakfast (Wilton)

6:00pm Sr PF

#### **Tues. Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>**

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

#### **Wed. Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>**

6:30pm Youth Confirmation Class (Dineson)

#### **Thurs. Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>**

*Life Touch Photos*

9:30am Bible Study

7:00pm Adult Choir

#### **Fri. Dec. 2-Sat. Dec.3**

*Life Touch Photos*

### **Week of Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>**

*Second Sunday in Advent*

10:00am Worship with Communion

11:15am Junior Choir (Meetinghouse)

Lay Pastoral Visitation Training 3 (Dineson)

5:00pm Community Christmas Tree Lighting

St. Peter's to host

6:00pm Adult, Sr & Jr PF

#### **Mon. Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>**

7:30pm Rachel's Well (Dineson)

#### **Tues. Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>**

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

#### **Wed. Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>**

6:30pm Youth Confirmation Class (Dineson)

7:00pm Adult Choir

#### **Thurs. Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>**

9:30am Bible Study

7:00pm Adult Choir

### **Week of Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>**

*Third Sunday in Advent*

*Commissioning Lay Visitation Team*

10:00am Worship

11:15am Junior Choir (Meetinghouse)

11:15am Deacons (Dineson)

11:15am Trustees (Classroom 4)

2-5pm Parsonage Open House

6:00pm Adult, Sr & Jr PF

#### **Tues. Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>**

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

#### **Wed. Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>**

9:30am Retired Men's Breakfast Location TBD

11:00am Morning Circle

6:30pm Adult Confirmation Class (Dineson)

7:00pm Adult Choir

#### **Thurs. Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>**

9:30am Bible Study

7:00pm Adult Choir