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

August 1, 2023

Recently Cady and I were invited by MCC deacon Rebecca Cicarelli to learn more about a non-profit organization in Danbury called Amos House, by attending a fundraiser in Newtown at Aquila’s Nest. Rebecca has been volunteering with Amos House for a long time, and currently sits on their board as Vice President and Press Contact.

It was a pleasure meeting their executive director Jennifer and hearing more about their work. Their Road to Home initiative primarily serves unhoused women with children in Danbury and surrounding towns. Program participants are referred from various established organizations including the Connecticut State Department of Health, the Department of Children and Family Services and homeless, emergency and domestic violence shelters.



Road to Home at Amos House is focused on building skills to facilitate a transition to permanent, self-sufficient and independent living. Applicants must complete a rigorous application process which includes a background check, a commitment to be substance free and be willing to help themselves with professional and personal guidance including therapy, communication and problem-solving skills, help with basic living skills, nutritional counseling,

parenting skills, financial literacy and much more. Residents commit to transitioning to independent living within a two (2) year time-frame, however many move through the program and successfully transition in a year or less.

Since 1989, Amos House has successfully supported over 200 families on their journey to independent living. Volunteers play a critical role in executing their programming and keeping Road to Home fully operational. If you think that you might have it in your heart to serve this important regional program, please contact myself or Rebecca at rcicarelli@sbcglobal.net . Learn more at <https://www.roadtohomeatah.org/>

In peace, Pastor Jenn

Historian's Notebook



Believing that the original Beardsley Hall sign was removed from over the entry way of Beardsley Hall when the Mustard Seed Shoppe sign was installed in 1974, and knowing that we do not throw anything away, I have been searching its whereabouts for the last few months to no avail. It's not in the Schoolhouse addition's cellar nor in the church cellar that I could see. Nor is it in any Rexford House closets that I could access. **Please, I need your help.** If anyone knows what happened to the old sign, let me know. See me in church or at coffee hour, or call me at 203-414-5838, or E-mail me at mailglt@yahoo.com. I will greatly appreciate it.

Gary Thompson, Church Historian

Trustees



The **Monroe Summer Day Camp** will be renting our MCC campus again this year. The camp will provide added income for the church during the months of June, July and August. If you need to enter the building between 7:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday – Friday please stop into the office and ask Diane to notify the camp director. If the office is closed, please use the walkie-talkie provided to notify the camp director, Karen, of your presence. Thank you!

Deacons

Summer Sermon Series: Bumper Sticker Theology



Have you ever encountered a bumper sticker that vaguely Christianly and wonder what it means? "Bumper Sticker Theology" is a summer preaching series meant to turn us from pithy uses of quick phraseology and dig deeper into how we are shaped and formed by God's word and work in and through us. We will include a talk-back time for folks to share what their thoughts are on the sticker of the day (*good, bad or in-between*).

Note: Dates that are not listed are Sundays that Pastor Jenn will be away, guest preachers Rev. Peggy Allen or Rev. Dr. Sheldon Smith will be presiding.

| Date | Theme | Scripture |
|-------------|---|-------------------|
| Aug 6 | "God needed another angel" | Revelation 21:1-6 |
| Aug 20 | "When God closes a door, God often opens a window." | Acts 16:4-15 |
| Sep 3 | "It's all part of God's plan." | Jeremiah 29:1-7 |

Love working with youth, want to spread God's love to the children of our congregation in this upcoming **23/24 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! See you in the fall!



Outreach



The **Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe** needs YOU! If you have a couple of hours to spare either on Tuesdays, Fridays or Saturdays, we are looking for your help. **Summer sorting, tagging and hanging happens on Tuesdays at 9:30AM.** Volunteers will help you with what needs to be done. Sales associates are needed for two-hour shifts starting from 10AM to 3PM on Fridays and Saturdays. A procedure list can be emailed or you can visit the Shoppe when someone is manning the counter. It's fun and

quite rewarding. Please contact Susie Cuseo with any questions or comments at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280.

thecuseos@yahoo.com with any questions or comments.

Your spare change helps end hunger and poverty in a sustainable way by supporting and investing in farmers and their communities. Your gift provides livestock, plantings and seeds to individuals who in turn share with others so that they too can live better lives. Please contact Susie Cuseo at 203-268-0280 or thecuseos@yahoo.com with any questions



COVENANT TO CARE Essentials Drive

Help children entering emergency foster care with essential hygiene items and make their landing a little softer.

Most needed (new, full-sized): deodorant, body wash, shampoo/conditioner.

Also needed: toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush, baby wash/shampoo, hair & skin care products, shaving cream, razors, feminine products, diapers/pull-ups, wipes.



**Drop box
in Wilton Hall**



Fellowship



MCC Summertime Coffee Hour Hosts: Are you interested in providing refreshments for our church members and friends following Sunday worship! All you need to do is arrive at the kitchen by 9:45 to get the coffee going (instructions found on kitchen wall). Providing baked goods or other snacks are always welcome (but not mandatory). Please sign up in Wilton Hall. (Although one can do it, it's fun to serve with a friend). Thank you!

Survey for the upcoming movie night.

MCC is having an all-ages, family-friendly movie night on Saturday 8/19 at 6PM. We would love your input on what movie to show! Please select your top 3 movie choices from this list. Or write in your own selection at the end of the list. The top movie will be what we view together! <https://forms.gle/Jijc8eHVkvbu8a6c6>





Homecoming picnic signup link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0d44a8ac22a2fb6-mcchomecoming>

Please join us for Adult PF the fourth Saturdays of the month in Dineson Parlor from 5:30 to 8pm! Bring your own beverage and a snack to share. We are excited to bring Adult PF back to MCC in a new format! Each month will be led by different members of the group. It could be a discussion of an article or movie, a game night or a service project for MCC or the greater community, or an outing etc. Your presence and ideas are wanted and welcome. All adults young and old are encouraged to attend. Please reach out to Janie Allen via phone/text/email at 203-522-3686 or janeAllen@sbcglobal.net with any thoughts or questions. **No meeting in August** - our **next meeting will be Saturday, 9/23**. Come check it out!



MCC Book Club is open to all church members. **Book club for August will be TUESDAY August 15th** and we will discuss *The Personal Librarian*. Book club for September will be usual 3rd Wednesday, September 20th and we will discuss *Lessons in Chemistry*. Due to it being a popular book it has been difficult to get it from the library. Hopefully we can all get a copy to read by the September meeting. Thanks and see you next month, Paula



Save the date: Young At Heart
Thurs., August 24 at noon.
Location and organizer TBD



Morning Circle will not meet during August. Our next meeting is on Wednesday, September 13th at 11AM in Dineson Parlor. Many thanks to our members for a successful year with service projects. We meet on every second Wednesday with the exception of summer and winter months. We conduct many service projects for the Food Pantry and Church World Service. Please contact Shari Carrano at 203-400-3563 with any questions regarding membership.



2022 Graduates

Evelyn Goyette graduated from Masuk High School this year and will be attending Western New England University in the fall. She will be earning a dual major in psychology and elementary education.

Alex Gutierrez just finished his master's degree in Music Opera and Musical Theater Conducting from Ithaca College.

Audra Logan graduated from Southern Connecticut State University with a Master's of Science in Speech Language Pathology.

Katherine Logan graduated from Boston College with a Master's Degree in Social Work.

Justin Rifflard graduated Cum Laude from Rensselaer Polytech Institute (RPI). He majored in Computer Science and Engineering (minored in philosophy) and is headed for the USAir Force, Pensacola FL in December as Navigator/Combat Systems Officer.

Caitlin Sanchez, Don Whiteley's granddaughter, graduated from Central Connecticut State University. She is continuing studies for her Master's Degree in Social Services.

Drew Young graduated from Rochester Institute of Technology Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Computer Science and a minor in Math. Drew has accepted a job as a software developer with Viridi, a sustainable future company, and will be living and working in the Rochester area.



Congratulations to Danielle Adams and Jimmy Flaherty, who were married on July 22nd by Pastor Jenn. May you have many years of happiness together!

2023 CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

PAINTING THE MEETING HOUSE



Our historic campus requires regular maintenance, inside and out. The exterior of the Meeting House (including the Steeple) and front of Beardsley Hall (Mustard Seed) are in dire need of a paint job. The estimated cost is \$25,000, and we are hoping to have the work completed in the Fall. *Thanks for your support!*

**To contribute, send a check with the memo: Capital Campaign
or donate on our website (choosing Capital Projects)
<https://www.mcc-ucc.org/donate.html>**

Words from your Area Conference Minister

Do not remember the former things? or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness? and rivers in the desert. ~ Isaiah 43:18-19

Making All Things New was the theme of the 34th General Synod of the United Church of Christ held in Indianapolis from June 29th to July 4th.

True to that theme, was the election of Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson as the first woman, and the first Black woman, to lead the denomination as General Minister and President.? This historic election wasn't the only evidence of this theme. Throughout the activities of General Synod, in worship, plenary sessions, or special event meals, this theme was expressed in vivid ways as the Spirit was alive and active in our midst.

For me, experiencing the movement of the Spirit at Synod was both communal and personal. There were moments during worship when we as a body were moved by the Spirit to sing and clap, to get up on our feet to give thanks and praise to God. A more personal moment for me was during Nada Bolz-Weber's Keynote Address. My understanding and interpretation of a well-known scripture passage from the Gospel of Matthew was made new for me.

Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber quoted Jesus as directing those carrying worry to look to the birds in the sky, who do not worry about reaping or sowing but are still fed by God. "I think it's more than him saying, 'Look, literally, birds are better at trusting God than you,'" she said. "I think Jesus gets that the beautiful things that surround me are meant to be enjoyed today. And that they are the exact same things I totally miss out on when I'm busy worrying about tomorrow."?

Hearing that was an "Aha!" moment for me because it offered a perspective on that passage that I had not considered before. On any given day, what beautiful things have I missed because of worrying about tomorrow? You can be sure that every day since hearing that, far less beautiful and joyful things have passed by me unnoticed.

I hope that during this summer season, you can find time to look at the birds in the sky. And that you can set aside your worries, so that you might perceive the ways that the Spirit is making all things new.

Blessings, Rev. Margret Hofmeister

Area Conference Minister, Southwest Region



For more details about General Synod and events I mentioned in my article, visit:

<https://www.ucc.org/karen-georgia-thompson-becomes-first-woman-to-lead-ucc-in-historic-vote/>

<https://www.ucc.org/comfort-not-keynote-nadia-bolz-weber-speaks-to-general-synod-about-hope-amid-fear-anxiety-worry-and-regret/>

<https://www.sneucc.org/national-ucc-news>

In Our Prayers

Dr. Steven Young (Gail Olson's friend); **Clark Gingras; Alison Abrams** (Jessica Pfalzgraf's sister); **Allie** (Colegrove's friend); **Jennifer Bittar** (Lorraine Zeiner's friend); **Jackie Bleakney; Byron Brown & Bruce Bryant** (friends of Will Duchon); **Lori Cimeno** (Peggy & Ron Villani's Daughter); **Dawn** (Donna Konkol's Friend); **Dot Dralus; Matt Duchon; Elaine** (Wendy Colegrove's Aunt); **Judy Elmendorf; Bruno Forte** (Nancy Hedine's friend); family and friends of **Betty Heiney; David Fischman** (Sue Granello's Friend); **Dave Fuller** (Gail Olson's brother); **Mary & Rachel Heerema** (Julia Gutierrez's mom & sister); **Bob Heffernan** (Ann Zeiner's son-in-law); **Brian Hopkins** (Donna Konkol's cousin); **Vera James** (Jenn Wissink's mother); **Jonathan** (Matt Colegrove's brother); **Kelti** (friend of Liska Gutierrez); **Walter Lane** (Marge Fox's brother-in-law); **Monica Lynch** (Bethany Dupuis' friend); **Nicole Malia; Betty McKeown** (Donna Konkol's mother); **Mike** (Janie Allen's son); **Jean Moffat; Olivia Morrison** (Donna Nickdow's niece); **Joe Mumper** (Julie McClenathan's friend); **Bert Muizilis; Pat Nugent; Ocampo family** (friends of Liska Gutierrez); the family & friends of **Jennifer Olson** (Gail Olson's daughter-in-law); **Missy Olson; Osborne** (Colegrove's Family friend); **Dean Perosino** (Gayle Hammond's brother); **Geno Piacentini** (Karen MacDonald's husband); **P.T. Philip** (Liz Sampson's father); **Regina Roberts** (Kathy Maiolo's niece); **Alfredo Rodriguez** (Osirus Gutierrez's cousin); **Noah Santiago** (Shari Carrano's great-grandson); **Carlos Serrano** (Kathy Maiolo's cousin); **Yessika Siccardi** (Sampson family friend); **Bernie Sippin; Gary Sippin** (Lori Sippin's son); **John Skarupa** (Barb Pellegrino's brother); **Christine Stadler; Tom Steen** (Jessica Pfalzgraf's dad); **Rev. Dr. Sheldon Smith; Christian & Dain Steiner** (Julie McClenathan's nephews); **Claire Stenzel** (June & Myron Winger's granddaughter); **Olga Terwilliger** (Nancy Hedine's sister-in-law); **Ian Thompson** (Gary's cousin); **Richard Turco** (Jack Fracassini's cousin); **Ruth Wakeley; Charles L. Wynn, Sr.,** (and his mother) **Alleane** (friend of Will Duchon); **Allen Zeiner** (Ann Zeiner's son); **Ann Zeiner**

The concerns of our world: The people of **Ukraine; 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;** Our friends living on the **Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation** and in **Oaxaca, Mexico**

Those serving in the military, veterans & their families: Germany: **Rachel Hoffman** (Vaughan Askue's daughter), Virginia: **Chris Meneses** (Lorraine Zeiner's friend), Georgia: **Zachary Peters** (Jacob Parker-Burgard's cousin), Kuwait: **Jon Sanchez** (Don Whiteley's grandson-in-law) Stateside: **CPL Zachary Gingras**, 395th Combat Sustainability Support, Middletown. **Joel Smith** (250th Engineering Company)



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

| | | | | | |
|---------|------------|-------|----------|------------|-------|
| Brian | Campbell | 08/02 | Bella | Pinto | 08/11 |
| Karen | Coffey | 08/02 | Wendy | Colegrove | 08/12 |
| Margery | Fox | 08/02 | Amy | O'Rourke | 08/12 |
| Beverly | Shaffer | 08/02 | Danielle | Rooney | 08/12 |
| Kate | Briggs | 08/04 | Donna | Konkol | 08/13 |
| Nick | Caballero | 08/04 | Franklin | Renz | 08/13 |
| James | Halloran | 08/04 | Kelsey | Kaminski | 08/14 |
| Jessica | Nivison | 08/04 | Mary | Renz | 08/15 |
| Lisa | Bauerle | 08/04 | Donald | Whiteley | 08/16 |
| Tyler | Zalenski | 08/05 | Mary | Unger | 08/19 |
| Jeff | Vargovchik | 08/07 | George | Cunningham | 08/24 |
| Jenn | Nealon | 08/08 | Richard | Draus | 08/24 |
| Anthony | Prall | 08/08 | Jennifer | Wissink | 08/25 |
| Sophina | Gingras | 08/09 | Nicole | Malia | 08/28 |
| Haley | Brown | 08/11 | Sue | Waters | 08/28 |



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

Jack & Linda Fracassini⁽⁰⁵⁾ Tom & Carol Kelly⁽⁰⁵⁾ Cliff & Susie Cuseo⁽⁰⁵⁾
Eric & Daniela Gerhard⁽⁰⁷⁾ Joe & Betsy Gilberti⁽⁰⁹⁾ Manuel & Michelle Cardentey⁽²¹⁾
Kenneth & Nancy Olofson⁽²²⁾ and Rob & Kelsey Kaminski⁽²⁴⁾
and Kristen Prall & Nicholas Boronski⁽²⁹⁾

August MCC Community Calendar



Tue. Aug 1st

9:30 am Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Week of Sun. Aug 6th

Communion

10:00 am Worship

11:30 am Trustees

Mon. Aug 7th

Diane on Vacation - Office Closed

7:00 pm Outreach (Zoom)

Tue. Aug 8th

9:30 am Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Week of Sun. Aug 13th

Pastor Jenn on vacation

10:00 am Worship - Rev. Peggy Allen

Mon. Aug 14th

Diane on Vacation - Office Closed

Tue. Aug 15th

9:30 am Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Wed. Aug 16th

7:00 pm Book Club Zoom

Sat. Aug 19th

6:00 pm – 8:30 pm Movie Night

Week of Sun. Aug 20th

10:00 am Worship

12 pm Deacon Planning Pot Luck

Mon. Aug 21st

Pastor Jenn on vacation

Diane on Vacation - Office Closed

7:30 pm Council Planning

Tue. Aug 22nd

9:30 am Mustard Seed Sort and Tag

Thurs. Aug 24th

12:00 pm Young at Heart

Week of Sun. Aug 27th

Pastor Jenn on vacation

10:00 am Worship - Rev. Peggy Allen

Mon. Aug 28th

Diane on Vacation - Office Closed

Tue. Aug 29th

9:30 am Mustard Seed Sort and Tag