

34 Church Street
Monroe, CT 06468

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Office Hours:
Mon. & Wed. 9 am – 5:30 pm
Fri. 9am – 5 pm

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



THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE STEEPL

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

May 1, 2021



The good news: People are getting vaccinated (in Monroe, 57% as of 4/18/21) and everyone 16 and older is eligible to receive a vaccine. Testing is readily available, which allows people to isolate quickly if symptomatic and lessen the spread. Herd Immunity, per the CDC, should kick in soon when the vaccination rate reaches 70%, which is why the state is beginning to open up. The Governor announced on 4/19 that all business restrictions regarding capacity and social distancing will be lifted on May 19 (with the exception of wearing a mask indoors). All of these positive signs are cause for gratitude and celebration.

However... There is news of variants, and while a vaccine may keep the worst COVID symptoms at bay, it is unclear when we will be completely out of the woods. With that in mind, I have spoken with church leaders about proceeding through the spring and summer slowly and with caution.

Our re-opening plan may be more cautious than other business or civic entities, because we are a church. The things churches regularly did together before the pandemic were found by the scientific community to put us at greater risk, such as pot lucks, singing, and lots of hugging of those outside your household. *You don't go and sing 4 verses of "Amazing Grace" with a crowd in Big Y and sit next to them for an hour.*

Simply put, our sector has some unique challenges to work out that keep us safe.

Until further notice, masks will remain mandatory inside all public MCC buildings, per order of the Governor of CT.

Here are some other areas of the church and what may (or may not) be changing, unless the numbers require us to pivot again:

Worship: We will continue to operate as a hybrid worship community, with some connecting online over Facebook and YouTube and others safely in person. Services will

remain at 35-40 minutes. We plan to re-open closed pews beginning Sunday, May 16th (Youth Sunday)

We will continue to be as non-physical contact as possible, so please continue to elbow bump or give a peace sign to your neighbor. We will continue to leave windows open for best airflow. We will continue to refrain from singing together for the time being.

The American Choral Directors Association has many helpful links here:
<https://acda.org/resources-for-choral-professionals-during-a-pandemic/>

It's also very important to maintain your financial giving if you are able, by giving in the offering plate at the door or making a regular donation online so that we can meet our bills and our commitment to the community.

Pastoral Vistation: I've reconfigured my office space to include a conference room, so I'm able to safely meet and social distance with folks. Since I am fully vaccinated, I can visit people in their homes who are also vaccinated. Hospitals and nursing homes have varying and changing requirements about local clergy visits, but if you or a loved one are admitted please let me know so that I can reach out to you and add you to my prayers.

Church Office Hours: Beginning Monday, April 26th our administrator Diane re-opened the office. All staff have been vaccinated. Hours are Mondays and Wednesdays from 9-5:30, and Fridays 9-5, others by appointment. It's a joy to be able to welcome you back!

Meetings: Let's keep most on Zoom, at the discretion of the group's leader.

Fellowship: We are offering in-person fellowship following worship on Pierce Lawn. We have suspended the Zoom coffee hour. For now, we are unable to share food in a traditional potluck style, however, we can enjoy together individually pre-packaged refreshments, tea and coffee. Join us for a special Mother's Day Tea on May 8th!

Christian Education: We are offering Outdoor Sunday School for school aged children during worship on the following Sundays – April 25th (Planting Seeds), May 16th (Communion) and June 13th (Service). We are planning to offer a more consistent weekly in-person Sunday School beginning in the fall.

Building Use: Smaller rooms in Rexford are now available for rental and program use.

Youth Groups: Junior and Senior PF have been operating in-person following guidelines similar to sports and school systems and will continue to do. A mission trip to Maine is being planned for July 10-18, 2021. Join us for Youth Sunday in worship on May 16th!

Strawberry Festival: John, Clark, Frank and I are continuing our work to make this year's re-opener event fun, safe and compliant with current health guidelines. Please continue to be patient, our festival is the first in the town and we want to do it safely. Thanks for understanding and stay tuned!

Finally, I want to commend you ALL for your willingness to adapt and pivot, to find new ways to reach out and think of others before yourselves. This time has been challenging, but our church continues to serve as a beacon of love and light, and for that, I am truly grateful.

In peace, Pastor Jenn



Trustees

Monroe Congregational Church

2021 Capital Campaign – Painting Rexford House

Dear MCC members and friends,

Our historic MCC campus includes four buildings that require ongoing upkeep and painting every 5 – 10 years. If you have been to the campus lately, you may have noticed that Rexford House is in dire need of a paint job, with the paint peeling and chipping in several areas.

The estimated cost to paint Rexford House is \$9,000, and we are hoping to have the painting completed in the Fall. Since we have been drawing on the church's endowment to support our operating budget each year, the board of trustees would like to enlist the congregation's support for the Rexford painting project.

So we are launching a capital campaign this year, with the goal of raising the \$9,000 needed to complete the painting. If we can raise the funds by the end of June, we should be able to get the project completed in the Fall as planned.

If you would like to support this campaign, please fill in the form below indicating the level of financial support you can provide for this capital project. Please consider this project and let us know if you can provide financial support by mailing this form back to the church office or by notifying John O'Rourke, the MCC Receiver at jorourke224@gmail.com.

Thanks for your consideration – The MCC Board of Trustees

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Amount Pledged:

____ \$100 ____ \$250 ____ \$500 ____ \$1000 ____ Other \$ _____



Dear MCC members and friends,

Our church's beloved music director of fifteen years, Will Duchon, has decided to conclude his ministry among us by the end of 2021. In a letter he addressed to me and the deacons, Will spoke of his decision this way:



"After much thought and consideration, I have decided to leave my position as music director for MCC. I feel that it is time for me to leave my comfort zone, so to speak, and find other ways to serve as best I can. I also believe that the choir and music ministry at MCC is ready for new ideas and new energy, and I do not want to be in the way of this happening. My intention is to continue as music director through December of this year, if that is acceptable to the church. This would allow ample time to secure the next music director.

MCC has been a source of friendship, deep community and stability for me since starting my work here in 2006. I will always be grateful for this opportunity. I am also grateful for the wonderful fellowship I've enjoyed with the choir, of course, and the many deeply satisfying moments I've experienced in the music ministry here. I am hoping to continue to be a part of the MCC family following a suitable period of time in order to allow the next music director to establish herself/himself."

I am deeply grateful for all that Will has done during his time with us and I will miss his artisanship and collegiality tremendously. I will remember with fondness his "Music Notes" written to gladden our spirits. My hope is that this change brings him the gift of time and energy for his newly formed non-profit, Opus30 Justice. I know that you will join me in wishing him the very best in this new chapter.

We will find ways to honor and celebrate Will's time with us, but in the meantime, I hope that you will join me in affirming his decision and wishing him the very best. Thank you, as always, for your understanding and support.

In peace, Pastor Jenn



Would you like to have fun & make jam? If you have never made jam before, this is the best way to learn how!

Requirements:

Please be fully vaccinated. Wash your hands upon arrival. You must wear a Mask and Hat at all times. Do not wear shorts or sandals because we work with boiling water and pots of very hot strawberries that can sometimes spatter. A long sleeve-shirt is a clever idea :-)

We will make 2-4 batches of jam which takes about 2 hours.

Sun., 5/2 12-2pm & 2-4pm
Thurs., 5/6 5-7pm
Fri., 5/7 3-5pm
Sat., 5/8 9-11am & 11-1pm
Fri., 5/21 9-11am & 11-1pm
Sat., 5/22 9-11am
Sun., 5/23 12-2pm

Sign up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c4baaa923a0ffce9-jamsession>
or email JAM [John Anthony Maiolo] JAM johnnymaiolo@gmail.com

If you don't have time to volunteer to make jam, **we could always use a donation of some supplies or help in other areas.**

Here are some other volunteer opportunities that are coming up... so get ready!



Strawberry Picking

Picking strawberries at Jones Family Farm is one of the several rewarding and important volunteer opportunities for the MCC Strawberry Festival. Volunteer to pick berries in the mornings of June; Fri-18th, Sat 19th, Sun 20th. Pick one morning or join our chairperson **Josh Post** for all three mornings!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c4baaa923a0ffce9-mcc49th>



Strawberry Dipping

Who doesn't love chocolate dipped strawberries?! Volunteer at this station and learn how to make them!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c4baaa923a0ffce9-berry>



Strawberry Sorting

After the strawberries are picked they need to be sorted for three purposes: 1-Berries for Strawberry Pies, 2- Berries for Dipping, 3- Berries for hulling and slicing. Join some friends and have fun while helping with this very important job.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c4baaa923a0ffce9-berry1>



Strawberry Festival Set Up

Can you spare some time on Friday, June 18 to help with the festival set up? Use the link below for more information, or to sign up!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c4baaa923a0ffce9-festival>

Outreach



Many thanks to those who made Morning Circle's April service project of putting together **Church World Service hygiene kits** a success. We had \$60 of monetary donations that covered the cost of shipping and numerous items that allowed us to make 29 kits. We greatly appreciate everyone's time, kindness and generosity in providing aid to families far and wide during times of disaster and strife.

The ladies of the congregation are invited to **Morning Circle's next meeting on Wednesday, May 12 at 11AM in Wilton Hall**. We will be collecting women's products for the Food Pantry. Items include: shampoo, conditioner, nail clippers, nail files, deodorant, tampons, panty liners, sanitary napkins and anything that you can think of. At this time, please do not bring any food items for lunch while we have a short business meeting. Our guest is Linda Resnick who will be showing us exercises to keep our bodies fit. Please contact Jackie Bleakney at 203-268-5275 with any questions or comments.

Fellowship



You're invited to a Mother's Day Tea following worship on **Sunday, May 9**. Please sign up here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C48ADAC2CA5FEC61-mothers> If you do not have access to the internet please call the office to make your reservation! Donations of the following are gratefully accepted: Scones, Cookies, Cakes, Finger Sandwiches, Mini Quiche, Tea Bag Donations and Gluten/Vegan Options -thank you!



Prayer Partners' "Big Reveal" Meeting - It's only about 20 days away on Sunday, May 23rd. Where has the time gone? It's true when they say that time flies when you're having fun. I hope that you were having fun during the months we've been keeping our prayer partners in our thoughts. Depending on the weather, we will meet on Pierce Lawn around 10:45AM, so bring your lawn chairs or sit at the benches that will be available and we will find out who's been praying for whom. Please contact Susie Cuseo at 203-268-0280 or thecuseos@yahoo.com with any questions or comments.



MCC Book Club

Questions -contact Mary Unger (203) 268-5754

May 12th
June 9th

The Clockmaker's Daughter by Kate Morton
The Four Winds by Kristin Hannah



Now that the CDC has given the green light to small, maskless, outdoor gatherings of fully vaccinated people—and the warming weather has us all itching to spend more time outside—I think it's time to leave Zoom behind and gather in person. **This Sunday's weather looks very promising, so let's gather behind Wilton Hall on Sunday from 5:00 to 6:30.** I think our agenda should be to enjoy each other's company, so think of this as a cocktail party but without the cocktails and fancy attire. Bring your own chair, snacks, and drinks, and let's take advantage of this significant loosening of restrictions. If you are not fully vaccinated yet, you are still welcome. In that case, the CDC recommends that you keep your mask on and keep 6 feet from others.

I look forward to seeing many of your smiling faces on Sunday! –Don Parker-Burgard



The Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe is open Fridays 10-3 and Saturday 10-2!

To protect our volunteers and clients, all current health and safety guidelines for the retail sector will be in place.

Join us for sorting/tagging/hanging every Tuesday at 1:00 pm. We are also accepting gently used clothing, shoes, handbags, books, jewelry and household items (smaller than a breadbox) from church members. To volunteer as a sorter or a cashier, please contact Susie Cuseo at thecuseos@yahoo.com. Thank you for your support!



MCC SENIOR PF

MOTHER'S DAY CRAFT FAIR

Saturday, May 8th

11am-1pm

Monroe Congregational Church

FIND YOUR MOM THE PERFECT LOCAL GIFT

hand-made jewelry, candles, decorated wine
glasses, baked goods, and more!

PRE-ORDER/PICK-UP ORDERS AVAILABLE

to pre-order, email us at
mccuccseniorpf@gmail.com





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

Chuck	Schneider	05/01	Nicole	Williams	05/14
Allen	Crosnier	05/02	Mark	Barnhart	05/15
Joyce	Rousseau	05/03	Shaina	Stamp	05/16
Jenna	Rice	05/05	Marissa	Maiolo	05/18
Hank	Allen	05/06	Linda	Caballero	05/20
Kristina	Logan	05/06	Susan	Walker	05/23
Gay	Muizulis	05/06	Bethany	Dupuis	05/24
Gilles	Rousseau	05/06	Lily	Forte	05/24
Gary	Thompson	05/06	Linda	Rooney	05/24
Will	Duchon	05/07	Stacy	Andrejczyk	05/25
Alexa	Unger	05/07	Debra	Hansen	05/26
Tyler	Vaglivello	05/07	Justin	Riffard	05/27
Corey	Schneider	05/08	Muriel	Hastedt	05/28
Kelly	Halloran	05/09	Rebecca	Young	05/28
James	Fraser	05/12	Kristen	Provost-Switzer	05/30
Jonathan	Hyde	05/12	Scott	Whiteley	05/30
Cindy	O'Rourke	05/13	Melissa	Coleman	05/31
David	Spence	05/13	Warren	Stamp	05/31
Jeff	Smith	05/14			

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

Gayle & Bob Hammond ⁽⁰⁴⁾ Josh & Carrie Friend ⁽¹⁰⁾ Kathy & John Maiolo ⁽¹⁴⁾
 Brian & Ann-Marie Campbell ⁽¹⁷⁾ Myron & June Winger ⁽²⁴⁾ Sheldon & Nancy Smith ⁽²⁸⁾
 Scott & Kristen Provost-Switzer ⁽³⁰⁾

**MCC
May
Community Calendar**

Friday, Apr. 30th

5:00 pm Playground Fundraiser Family
Take Out Dinner

Sat. May 1st

8:30 am – 12pm MCC Spring Clean Up
Day

Week of May 2nd

10:00 am Worship with Communion
4:00 pm Junior PF
5 pm Adult PF
5-7:30 pm Senior PF

Tues. May 4th

1:00 pm Sort and Tag
8:00 pm Outreach Zoom

Wed. May 5th

6:30 pm Confirmation Class (Wilton)

Thurs. May 6th

9:30 am Bible Study

Sat. May 8th

8am – 1pm Boy Scout Plant Sale
11am – 1pm Sr PF Mother's Day Craft
Fair

Week of May 9th

10:00 am Worship
11:00 am Mother's Day Tea

Tues. May 11th

1:00 pm Sort and Tag

Wed. May 12th

11:00 am Morning Circle
6:30 pm Confirmation Class (Wilton)

Thurs. May 13th

9:30 am Bible Study

Week of May 16th

10:00 am Worship, YOUTH SUNDAY!
10:00 am Outdoor Sunday School (Communion)
11:30 am Trustees
4:00 pm Junior PF
5:00 pm Senior PF
5:00 pm Adult PF

Mon. May 17th

7:30 pm Council

Tues. May 18th

1:00 pm Sort and Tag
7pm Bereavement Group

Wed. May 19th

6:00 pm Confirmation Celebration! (Pierce)

Thurs. May 20th

9:30 am Bible Study
7:30 pm CE

Week of May 23rd

10:00 am Worship – CONFIRMATION & NEW
MEMBERS!
11:15 Prayer Partner Luncheon (Pierce)
4:00 pm Junior PF
5:00 pm Senior PF

Week of May 23rd

10:00 am Worship
11:15 Prayer Partner Luncheon
11:30 am Zoom Coffee Hour
4:00 pm Junior PF
5:00 pm Senior PF

Tues. May 25th

1:00 pm Sort and Tag

Thurs. May 27th

9:30 am Last Bible Study

Week of May 30th

10:00 am Worship
11:30 am Zoom Coffee Hour
5:00 pm Senior PF

Mon. May 31st

Memorial Day