



# 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  
Director of Faith Formation: Debi Mastroni-Kenyon  
Music Director: Will Duchon  
Secretary: Melissa Rosenberg  
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**November 1, 2019**

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## **A Victorian Christmas**

It was around this time last year that our church's historian, Gary Thompson, approached me with a great idea. He had noticed there are many tree lightings in town and wondered if we could combine efforts, making it more of a community event. *What a great idea!*

After the excitement of the Christmas season waned, we gathered folks from the Monroe Historical Society, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Washington Masonic Lodge #19 and our Fellowship team to find out what we might offer the town. Soon, Benedict's Home and Garden came on as a supporter, offering a tractor drawn carriage that will shuttle folks from one site to another.

Such great energy around the table! We settled upon offering our community a Victorian Christmas event on December 1, 2019 (Save the Date!!!)

**Why the Victorian Era?** Encompassing Queen Victoria's reign from 1837-1901, this post-civil war era saw many changes in the town of Monroe. Among them, was the growth of St. Peter's Episcopal Church (having been established 30 years earlier in 1807) and the construction of the second (current day) Meetinghouse of the Monroe Congregational Church in 1847.

Religion was an important part of the Victorian American culture because it was a time when energies were focused on training ministers, missionaries and theologians. In the congregational church, the festival known as Christmas became more accepted and celebrated, with the addition of fun and festive traditions from Europe like Christmas trees and the like.

In this Steeple, please look for the flyer that we are sharing with the Monroe Community. Events include Sunday morning services in the Victorian Style, and a little later in the afternoon, church tours and open houses, strolling carolers and refreshments. And of course, our traditional tree lighting at 5pm!

Here's some simple tips you might choose to implement, should you plan on coming in period dress:

For ladies:

- High-collared shirts or turtlenecks, brooches
- Anything made of lace (like gloves)
- Long A-line skirts (fitted at the natural waist and flares out at the bottom)
- Peasant blouses and/or vests
- A cape (believe it or not, tree skirts work really well for a cape!)

For Gentlemen:

- Stovepipe hat (top hat) and white gloves
- High-collared shirt with a simple bow tie and vest
- A dark colored cape (see above)



*Please, Dear Mumsie, may we attend Victorian Christmas at MCC?*



*I say, jolly good time at the Victorian Christmas event. Cheers!*

Hope to see you there!

*In peace, Pastor Jenn*

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### **Loaves, Fishes, and Pumpkin Carving**

On October 26<sup>th</sup> we had a great time with fellowship and fun carving our Halloween Jack-O-Lanterns, but for as much fun as it is it can also be anxiety producing for folks who like to plan ahead.

The Pumpkin Carving Party is what I refer to as an "organic" event. We provide space and some other items, but it really just comes together by the people who show up – and that is never a definite either. What started out as planning for 3 pizzas, salad, cider, and some cookies, ended up being what we planned for plus four trays of cookies, pumpkin mini muffins, candy corn and peanuts, decorations, and a huge cauldron of Halloween candy!

This got me thinking about the Bible story of the Feeding of the 5,000. Did you know that it is one of the stories that is in all four Gospels? This means it is probably true! Some people think of this story as one of Jesus' miracles, but I think of it more as a story of people. People willing to take risks such as leaving their homes on foot to go see and hear Jesus without plans about where to sleep or what eat, and people willing to give Jesus all that they had. Jesus was that important to them.

After a day or more of walking, and listening to Jesus, the people became hungry and some of the Disciples became anxious. "How will we feed these people?" they asked. There was a boy had 5 barley loaves and 2 fish and he gave them to Jesus. Those loaves and fish were all the boy had and he gave them to Jesus.

Scripture says that Jesus told everyone to sit down, took the loaves and gave thanks, then passed the loaves around and all were fed – with 12 baskets to spare. In the Gospel of John we are told that there were 5,000 men so the head count did not include women or children. The total number of people fed that day could have been 10,000 to 15,000!

Some think of this as a miracle, but what I think happened is that Jesus showed the people the example of the boy, willing to give all that he had, and they responded the same way also giving Jesus all of the food they carried with them. When they put all that they had together it was enough for everyone and 12 baskets to spare!

God is like that, when we give all that we are and all that we have to Jesus it becomes more than enough with plenty to spare. What will you give?

*In Christ's Service, Debi*

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### **Annual Reports Due December 20<sup>th</sup>**

Please submit your annual report to the church office by Friday, December 20<sup>th</sup> Please call the church office with any questions. 203-268-9327 or email [mccsecretary123@gmail.com](mailto:mccsecretary123@gmail.com)

### **Thanksgiving Labyrinth Walk: 3pm November 20<sup>th</sup> – 12pm November 21<sup>st</sup>**

Walking a labyrinth is widely considered to be a meditative prayer practice that reaches us in a unique way. Because November is a time of gratitude and thankfulness, we will have the church labyrinth set up in Wilton Hall from Wednesday afternoon until Thursday at noon. Once you are in the Labyrinth, simply follow the path; there are no choices to make and you cannot get lost. Come and spend some time on the meditative path. For comfort, bring heavy socks or house slippers.



***Fall Back! Don't forget to turn your clocks back one hour before you go to sleep on November 2<sup>nd</sup>!***

## Deacons

### Listen for the silence, receive the message

Have you ever noticed that when we finish reading a book or article, having a conversation, listening to our favorite podcast, or watching our favorite news show, that if we immediately move on to the next thing in our busy lives, we don't give ourselves the opportunity to reflect on what we just heard or read and on what its significance may be to us? We just move (rush) on to the next thing! "**Next!**"

You may have noticed a couple of times recently in worship, immediately after the sermon, we had a moment of silence. The purpose of that is to give ourselves the opportunity to reflect on the message we just received and its significance...before we move onto the next thing, be it the next hymn, coffee hour, an after-church errand...

Let's take a moment before we get to that next thing, right after the sermon, to de-clutter our minds, think about the meaning of what we just heard, and figure out what, if anything, we might want to do differently as a result of the message we received. For example, we might ask ourselves:

*What message did I just hear? What is the significance to me? Did I have an "aha" moment? What might I try to do differently in my life, or today or next week, as a result? Why did Jesus do what he did – what was the lesson he was teaching to his followers? What was the point? What is the moral of the story for me?*

Listen for the silence. Reflect. Take a deep breath. Take a moment.

- Arlene Redmond, on behalf of the Board of Deacons

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## Outreach



### Kelsey & Rob Kaminski Raising Hunger Relief Funds for Spooner House

Hello friends and family, it's that time of the year again- TEAM SUF FOOD DRIVE! It's a pleasure to once again be raising money for those who need it most this Thanksgiving and we would love your help with reaching my goal. If you are able to donate, please

head over to [www.sufvshunger.com](http://www.sufvshunger.com), find either Kelsey or Rob, profile and drop a donation in there. All donations will go straight to The Spooner House in Shelton, CT! This fundraiser is closing in on \$100,000 in total donations raised since the beginning and we'd love to contribute as much as possible this year to help get us there. Thank you in advance!

**Neighbors in Need (NIN)**-Thanks to your generous donations the Monroe Congregational Church raised \$450.00 for Neighbors in Need.



**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 provide more than 450,000 meals each year through our dining room, food pantry, and mobile kitchens.





Can you help? There is a bin located in Rexford Hall to drop off donations. Thank you for your generosity.

**We are in need of:**

Canned green beans, peas, & corn

Canned sweet and white potatoes

Canned tuna & chicken

Boxed macaroni & cheese

Boxed rice

Boxed cold cereal

Pasta and sauce

**Have you recently cleaned out your junk drawers?** Have you found used prescription glasses/cases or prescription sunglasses? You can donate them so that others may have the Gift of Sight. Consider donating your used glasses in the basket on the serving table at coffee hour during the month of October. Please contact Susie Cuseo at [thecuseos@yahoo.com](mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com) or 203-268-0280 with any questions or comments.



**Giving to Heifer International provides extraordinary gifts.**

With your spare change we purchase animals which are sent to families. It's like giving someone a small business: providing wool, milk, eggs and more. These animal donations provide families a hand up, increasing access to medicine, school, food and a sustainable livelihood. Morning Circle has a collection bottle on the coffee table which will be available until the end of the year. Your spare change can change and support the lives of families in need all over the world. Please contact Susie Cuseo at [thecuseos@yahoo.com](mailto:thecuseos@yahoo.com) or 203-268-0280 with any questions and thank you for your generosity.



**IPRR (Interfaith Partnership for Refugee Resettlement)**

is a Newtown-based coalition of faith communities united to resettle a refugee family in the Newtown, CT area. Working with IRIS (Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services), IPRR co-sponsors families upon their arrival to the United States in order to provide support with safe housing, healthcare, assistance in learning English, enrolling in school, and finding employment to become productive and independent community members.

IPRR has welcomed two families so far, both originally from the Congo, and is preparing to welcome a third family. In anticipation of their arrival within the upcoming year, we are looking for volunteers to assist in gathering donations to furnish an apartment and to help drive the family to the many appointments and activities they will have once they arrive in the US.

If you can help people build new lives in our country, either with donations of household goods —or— your time as a driver, please contact Kate Barnhart ([kate5mark@yahoo.com](mailto:kate5mark@yahoo.com)) or Pastor Jenn ([jenn@mcc-ucc.org](mailto:jenn@mcc-ucc.org)).

**New! The Simply Smiles Children's Village**

On the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Reservation in South Dakota, an overwhelming number of Lakota children are unsafe in their homes. This has left the tribal, state, and non-governmental social services infrastructure, by their own admission, insufficient to respond to the demands and complexities of this dire situation. To protect these children, and to help them to overcome an unspeakably difficult start in life, Simply Smiles has

begun the process of building and managing the first-of-its-kind Simply Smiles Children's Village in the Reservation town of La Plant. These children possess the talent needed to finally break a generations-long cycle of suffering and dependence. To do so, they need our support. The Simply Smiles Children's Village is an incubator for that talent. It protects and provides for Lakota children. When they arrive at our door, they are at their most vulnerable. With your backing, they will leave at their most influential. They will have become strong Lakota men and women. They will have vision and confidence. They will be leaders.

**Mission Statement:** Guided by the principle of the Lakota kinship *tiospaye* and rooted in traditional values, the mission of the Simply Smiles Children's Village is to foster Native children to become leaders, role models, and Lakota citizens of the world.

1. To offer a child placement option on the Cheyenne River Reservation that fulfills the letter and spirit of the Indian Child Welfare Act by keeping Native children who have been removed from their homes, on the Reservation, with kin and community.
2. To support the reunification of children with their biological families.
3. To inspire and empower the children in our care to define themselves as Lakota.
4. To create a safe, inspiring, resource-rich environment for children.
5. To provide access to high quality education.
6. To foster tomorrow's Native leaders and role models.
7. To create a scalable model that can be replicated throughout Indian Country.

**The Outreach Board is currently accepting financial donations to send for this vital project. For more information please go to [Children's Village](#) or talk to Debi who was out there doing electrical work in September!**

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## 2020 Stewardship Campaign: It's a Wonder-FULL Life



*Some Members of the Young at Heart Group at their September Luncheon*

Jesus invites us to bring all that we are and all that we have when we become a disciple. Our faithful financial stewardship is one way we are invited to respond to Christ's invitation. Our generosity funds the mission and ministry of putting our faith in action, as God's realm grows among us.

The goal of this year's stewardship campaign is to increase our pledge base by 10%, so that we can decrease our reliance on the endowment. We can reach our goal if those who have not pledged in the past join their neighbors and friends and submit a pledge – and/or – if those who already pledge increase theirs by 10%. Giving is an individual decision, and we are grateful for all the gifts of time, talent and treasure that you and your household contribute to MCC.

We hope that you will respond by completing and returning an estimate of giving card for 2020 in the plate or through the mail, and that you will be our guest at the celebratory Pancake Breakfast following church on **November 24<sup>th</sup> - Commitment Sunday**. Thank you for prayerfully considering how to financially support the Monroe Congregational Church in 2020.

~ Your Stewardship Committee, John O'Rourke (Receiver), Liz Sampson, Pastor Jenn

## Trustees



**Fall Workday Saturday, Nov. 9th at 8:00 am** - We have plenty of fall cleanup jobs to tackle so please come out and spend a few hours helping to spruce up our campus. Breakfast will be provided. If you are able to assist, please contact Dave Allen at [dallen9457@att.net](mailto:dallen9457@att.net).



If you'd like to **give online** during worship (or anytime), simply scan this QR code, which will take you to our VANCO electronic giving page. Thank you so much for your support!

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## Christian Faith Formation

**Book Fair on Sunday, November 10<sup>th</sup>** the Board of Christian Faith Formation is partnering with Beautiful News Christian Books and Gifts in Danbury to bring you a selection of books that you can order and have delivered. The books will be available after worship in Wilton Hall.

### Fruit of the Spirit (Sunday school) Gatherings

**November 3<sup>rd</sup>** – Joyful Watermelons (K-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade) Gather

**November 10<sup>th</sup>** – ALL Groups Gather

**November 17<sup>th</sup>** – ALL Groups Gather

**November 24<sup>th</sup>** – ALL Groups Gather

**Junior PF**

**November 3<sup>rd</sup>** we gather from 6:00-7:30 pm at the Church.

**November 10<sup>th</sup>** we gather from 6:00-7:30 pm at the Church.

**November 24<sup>th</sup>** we gather from 6:00-7:30 pm to decorate the Church for Advent and Christmas.

I also want to let you know about a great event we have scheduled for **December 1<sup>st</sup>**. On this day the church will be celebrating a Victorian Christmas and the Jr. PF has the opportunity to help set up, host guests, sing carols while strolling, and sell candles that we will be making.

The event is from 12:00-5:00 pm and the youth can come for the whole time or in shifts. This is also an opportunity where they can fulfill Community Service hours for school.



**Holiday Themed Mugs Needed!** The Jr. PF is looking for donation of Holiday Themed Mugs like those pictured here for our candle project. If you have any of these mugs gathering dust in your house, please bring them to Debi by November 3<sup>rd</sup>. THANK YOU!

**Tools for an Advent-ure** - To help you along with your Advent journey this year be sure to visit the Advent Table on November 24<sup>th</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>. We will have our traditional Advent Wreath materials, Random Acts of Kindness Advent Calendars, and back by popular demand – Advent in a Bag. In this bag you will find Scripture readings, devotions, and fun activities that engage people of all ages!



## Fellowship

### Thank you, Coffee Hour Hosts!

We are grateful for the faithful service of Ann Zeiner in the kitchen after worship services, making all of our day a little brighter. Thanks also to the following boards for helping serve coffee, tea and treats!

November: Board of Outreach  
December: Board of Fellowship  
January: Board of Deacons  
February: Board of Trustees  
March: Board of Christian Faith Formation  
April: Board of Outreach  
May: Board of Fellowship  
June: Board of Deacons

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

🚩 **November 18<sup>th</sup>-7:30pm** My Brilliant Friend by Elena Ferrante ~ Host: Jeanette Combs in Dineson Parlor

**Morning Circle welcomes the women of the congregation to our next meeting on Wednesday, November 13 at 11AM in the kitchen.**

**MORNING  
CIRCLE**

We will be putting together bean soup jars for the Food Pantry. Please bring a sandwich for lunch during the business meeting. Gift tags for the Giving Tree will also be handed out. Wrapped gifts with attached tags must be dropped off in the church office by Sunday, December 8th. We will meet at Jennie's for our annual Christmas luncheon on

Wednesday, December 11 at 11:30AM. Morning Circle does not meet during the months of January or February. Please contact Jackie Bleakney with any questions or comments at 203-268-5275.



**Faith on Tap, Friday November 1<sup>st</sup>:** Come talk about life and current events from a spiritual perspective at a local pub. We meet on the first Fridays of the month from 7:30 - 9pm at VERACIOUS BREWING

COMPANY! No formal presentations - just people kicking around a topic, sharing honestly what really matters to them. Anyone is welcome at the table. No topics are off limits. Agreement is not required, but civility is essential. Tea-totplers and soda drinkers welcome too! Come learn more and join in! Call/text Clark ([203-895-5604](tel:203-895-5604)) or Rev. Jenn ([203-895-5607](tel:203-895-5607)) Gingras with any questions.

**November Theme:** The history of **hymnody**! Did you know that many hymns were developed from songs that were sung in pub? Bring your favorite hymn, or one that you'd pay to never hear again!



## **Community News**

### **Monroe Playground Foundation Friday Family Supper Night**

On Friday, November 15th, 2019 from 5-8pm the Monroe Playground Foundation will be holding their Friday Family Supper Night in Wilton Hall. This month features Breakfast for Dinner! Each meal served with refreshments, coffee, tea and dessert. For extra fun enter their raffle for a chance to win one of several themed basket prizes! All are welcome to join them to share a meal and support the rebuilding of the Kids Kreation Wooden Playground at Wolfe Park.

- Pre-registered: \$10 / person or \$40 / family (parents and children), Kids under 5 free, visit <https://www.monroeplaygroundfoundation.org/event>
- or at the door: \$12 / person or \$45 / family (parents and children), Kids under 5 - \$2

Here's the line-up of future events:

12/13/19 | Taco Night

1/10/20 | Celebrate Comfort Food!     1/31/20 | Soup-er Bowl Throw-down



## JOIN US FOR A MONROE **VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS!**

### WHEN

Sunday, December 1st, 2019  
10 am - 5 pm

### WHERE

Around the Monroe Centre Green,  
Route 111

### FEATURING

St. Peter's Episcopal Church  
Washington Masonic Lodge #19  
The Monroe Historical Society  
The Monroe Congregational Church  
Benedict's Home and Garden

### AT ST. PETER'S

10:15 Victorian Style  
worship

1 - 4:45 Church tours

### AT THE LODGE & BARN HILL EAST VILLAGE SCHOOL HOUSE

1 - 4:45 Open House

### AT MCC

10 Victorian Style  
worship

1- 4:45 Meetinghouse  
tours, refreshments  
& candle sale in  
Rexford House

### ON THE GREEN

5 Tree Lighting

- plus -

Tractor-drawn carriage  
rides, by Benedict's  
Home & Garden

Roaming Carolers  
in period dress

## MCC Community Calendar

### **Week of Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>**

10:00 am Worship  
11:15 am Fellowship Meeting (Dineson)  
5:00 pm Adult & Senior PF  
6:00 pm Junior PF

### **Tues. Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>**

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Wed. Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>**

7:00 pm Adult Choir

### **Thurs. Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study

### **Fri. Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>-Sun. Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>**

*Senior PF Retreat at Silver Lake Conference Center*

### **Sat. Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>**

8:00 am Trustee Fall Workday

### **Week of Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>**

*Rev. Sheldon Smith, guest preacher*  
10:00 am Worship  
11:15 am Book Fair (Wilton Hall)  
6:00 pm Junior PF

### **Mon. Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>**

*Office Closed in Observance of Veteran's Day*

### **Tues. Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>**

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Wed. Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>**

11:00 am Morning Circle (Wilton Hall)  
6:30 pm Confirmation Class (Dineson)  
7:00 pm Adult Choir

### **Thurs. Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am Bible Study

### **Week of Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>**

10:00 am Worship  
2:00pm Senior PF Service Project  
5:00pm Adult PF (Parker-Burgard home)

### **Mon. Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>**

7:30pm Book Club (Dineson)

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

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

### **Wed. Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>**

3:00 pm Labyrinth Walk (Wilton Hall)  
6:30 pm Confirmation Class (Dineson)  
7:00 pm Adult Choir

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

9:30 am Bible Study  
7:00 pm Christian Education Meeting (Dineson)

### **Week of Nov. 24<sup>th</sup>**

*Stewardship Sunday*  
*Baptism Logan Cassidy*  
10:00 am Worship  
11:15am Pancake Breakfast  
5:00 pm Senior PF  
6:00 pm Junior PF

### **Mon. Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>**

7:30pm Council Meeting (Dineson)

### **Tues. Nov. 26<sup>th</sup>**

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Thurs. Nov. 28-Friday Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>**

*Office Closed in Observance of Thanksgiving*

### **Week of Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>**

*Communion Sunday~First Sunday of Advent*  
10:00 am Worship  
5:00 pm Victorian Christmas~Tree Lighting  
5:00pm Adult PF (Parker-Burgard home)

### **Tues. Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup>**

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Wed. Dec 4<sup>th</sup>**

6:30pm Confirmation Class  
7:00pm Adult Choir

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

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)

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

7:30pm Faith on Tap at Veracious

### **Week of Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>**

*Second Sunday of Advent*  
10:00 am Worship  
5:00pm Senior PF  
6:00pm Junior PF

### **Tues. Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>**

1:00 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

### **Wed. Dec 11<sup>th</sup>**

11:00am Morning Circle (Location TBD)  
6:30pm Confirmation Class  
7:00pm Adult Choir

### **Thurs. Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>**

9:30am Bible Study (Dineson)