

**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
Director of Faith Formation: Debi Mastroni-Kenyon
Music Director: Will Duchon
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September 1, 2019

This Old House!

Do you have a list of home projects that you look at, every once in a while, and say "Gee, I really have to get moving on that!" I don't necessarily mean big improvement projects that come every 20 years, but the little ones – the ones that if only you had time to get done would make your house a little more comfortable or attractive? Being responsible for a house is a big deal.

It's similar to being responsible for a church. Our trustees, especially our 'building guy' Dave Allen, work hard to make sure that our facilities are well kept, presentable and safe. They are always thinking ahead about what might be needed next.

This summer, we held a mini-capital campaign that helped us replace some very old windows in Beardsley Hall. John and Cindy O'Rourke, as new owners of the Gingerbread House preschool, have been busy painting and fixing up the space so the children can begin their classes. Some friends of Trustees, organized by Arlene Redmond, are planning a complete ladies' bathroom overhaul in Rexford House. Dave Allen, busy guy that he is, continues to work on things like removing a dead tree in front of the Mustard Seed Shop or tightening a doorknob that's falling off.

None of this work is really glamorous, but it's important. Our facilities are a gift left to us from previous generations of folks who worked hard and sacrificed, and we are grateful to them for it. This campus gives us a place to do important ministry. Our role is to be conduits of God's love and grace. Sometimes that work is done here, but it's difficult to see the impact God is making through us in the life of someone else on a daily basis.

Thank you for all you do for God, our community and this church family. Remember the words of Galatians 6:9, "Let's not get tired of doing good, because in time we'll have a harvest if we don't give up."

Grace and peace, Pastor Jenn

In Memory of Sue Zaleha

As many of you know, our dear friend and long-time church member Sue Zaleha passed away over the summer. The family is planning a memorial service on Saturday, September 14th. They will greet visitors in Dineson Parlor from 9:30-11 am. The memorial

service will take place in the Meetinghouse at 11:15. Following the service, a light luncheon will be held in Wilton Hall.

If you are able to assist with the luncheon, either as a kitchen helper or by bringing a dessert, please sign up in Wilton Hall or speak with Fellowship Chairs Jeannette Combs or Michelle Cardentey. Thank you.

Working Together



I am so happy that it is September. I had a pretty low key summer due to a health issue, but am on the mend and am happy to hear that Pastor Jenn has chosen the theme “Working Together” for our upcoming year!

During Lent and the summer of 2019 we added two multi-generation offerings which were very successful and for our upcoming year we will be adding more offerings at different times. This reminds me of Messy Church which originated in England and has begun to take hold here in the USA.

On Saturday, September 21st, Ann Marie Campbell and I will be attending Messy Church Training. There is room to add a few more people to our MCC group so if you are interested, please contact me ASAP.

WHY “MESSY”? Part of the inspiration for the Messy Church name comes from Pete Ward’s book Liquid Church. He describes faith families as fluid, as opposed to walled structures with insiders and outsiders: “The boundaries have started to become more fuzzy and less well defined.” With its liquid edges, Messy Church is geared toward people of all ages and backgrounds, churched or un - churchd. It especially emphasizes reaching individuals and families who wouldn’t attend otherwise, whether they’re busy with sports on Sundays or are uncomfortable with traditional worship, whatever the reason.

Leaders point out that Messy Church isn’t a craft club or a children’s program—or any type of “program,” for that matter. It’s actual church, though it looks different from most worship services. In a nutshell, Messy Church is a regular opportunity for intergenerational worship, learning, and fellowship. The purpose is to explore God’s love in a welcoming, accessible way through fun, faith, and food. “It’s church for everyone,” says Justin Welby, Arch - bishop of Canterbury. “It’s a circle of all ages meeting together to engage in who God is in a way that works for them.”

At the heart of Messy Church are these five core values:

- **Christ-Centered** - The goal of every gathering is to share the gospel and grow God’s kingdom. theory, ministry is rather straightforward: Share Jesus’ love and his gospel message with all people.
- **Intergenerational** - Everyone meets together, without the “age silos” common at most churches. People learn with one another and from one another, leading to deeper, lasting faith.
- **Celebration** - This doesn’t necessarily mean jumping up and down, though that sometimes happens. According to Messy Church USA executive director Roberta Egli, celebration “involves sharing the abundant life Jesus offers as well as the ups and downs of our messy lives.”
- **Creativity** - Worshipers use all five senses to experience and explore God’s Word.

- **Hospitality** - Some type of meal or food sharing is always involved so people can enjoy conversation around tables.

Messy Church uses a once-a-month format, usually meeting midweek or on Saturday. A typical two-hour gathering includes a welcoming activity based on a Scripture theme and then four or five games, crafts, and science experiments. Instead of being expected to sit quietly and listen, kids interact with the lesson through their senses—touching “pig slop,” building a temple out of cardboard boxes, tasting resurrection buns, and so on. Next comes celebration time, with songs, prayers, and more reinforcement of the Scripture lesson. Following that is a meal so people can continue connecting and forming relationships.

Stay tuned to hear more about Messy Church and how you can participate!

Peace, Debi

Trustees



Summer is here. While you may be on vacation, MCC will continue to need funds to support our ongoing operations. Please make sure to stay current on your pledge payments over the summer months. You can make your payment via the weekly Sunday collections, via electronic payment from your bank, or via the "Donate" section of our web site. Thanks for your support of MCC and enjoy your summer! In Christ's Service - MCC Stewardship Committee



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!

The Gospel Goes to Broadway: Summer Sermon Series



Life is full of big questions, and people trying to find their answers. This summer, we will be exploring some of them by listening to some of musical theater's greatest hits and contemplating what the Spirit has to tell us through music, story, prayer and connections. Hope to see you there!

September 1 - Is anybody out there?

I Corinthians 13:1-8a; I John 4:7-12,19

Where is Love? (Oliver), featuring vocalist Jake Minsch



Friday, September 13th at 7:30 pm at Veracious

You know that great feeling when you've had a bite to eat and maybe a beer or glass of wine with friends and suddenly you find yourself getting into deep conversations about life, love, and maybe even faith? It's a moment that

is sacred enough that you know it's something special, but also casual enough that you look forward to it at the end of a long day.

Join us in September for the return of Faith on Tap. We sit together and talk about life and current events from a spiritual perspective. No formal presentations - just people kicking around a topic, sharing honestly what really matters to them. Good ol' Martin Luther is reported to have said, "God is at work, even when we are drinking beer" (or your favorite beverage, because tea-totelers and soda drinkers are welcome too!) Anyone is welcome at the table. No topics are off limits. Agreement is not required, but civility is essential. Just place an order, draw up a seat and join the conversation. Hope to see you there!

September Theme: Finding Purple in the Partisan. Why is it that society seems more and more divided lately? Whether you identify as a Republican, Democrat, Independent or politically unaffiliated, we are all members of a larger unifying category: Americans. Perhaps dwelling in our commonalities can lead to a more civil community. As Martin Luther King is thought to have said: "We may have come on different ships, but we're all in the same boat now." Let's try to keep afloat with a little light conversation and connection.

Outreach



Hello Folks! Please join us on September 21 at 6:30 pm at Linda and Jack Fracassini's home for our annual **Outreach Wine & Beer Tasting!** Roy will provide a selection of wine and beer for our tasting pleasure and we will help our community missions with much needed funds! Cost is \$20 per person and a sign up sheet is in Wilton Hall. A-M - Appetizer and N-Z a Dessert please. It's a great night of Fellowship, Fermentation and Funds for Friends! - Kathy and the Outreach Board

One of MCC's missions, **The Center for Family Justice**, is holding their annual Speaking of Women event on September 24, 2019 at The Waterview. Keynote speaker is Aly Raisman, Gymnast and 2x U.S Olympic Gold Medalist. For more information, see Kathy Maiolo or visit CFJ's website at www.centerforfamilyjustic.org.



Dress A Girl Around The World Sew-A-Thon Returns Sept 21 from 10am- 3pm~ Join Liz Skarzyinski from Dress A Girl Around The World on September 21st in Wilton Hall to create dresses for little girls overseas. Thank you for your generous donations of fabric. Dress A Girl is part of Hope for Women International a non-profit, nondenominational independent Christian organization. If you would like to help or join the team, please call Liz 203-257-7174 or email Liz1202us@yahoo.com.

Welcome to the 2019-2020 Senior PF year!

We are so excited to be kicking off the new school year with our senior high school youth group! We had a fantastic trip to Indianapolis, this summer, which included 24 high school students, 6 college advisor students and 5 adults. We worked in various hunger-relief organizations, organizing and distributing food as well as making meals and serving in local soup kitchens through the Indianapolis Hunger Network. We met wonderful people,



gained an understanding of what it's like to live in a food insecure environment and how we can all make a difference.

It was sad to say goodbye to our 6 graduating seniors, but we are ready to welcome new members and the new year with open arms and hearts. This year, our PF high school leadership team will be run by President Abby Clausen, Vice President Lydia Aguilar, Treasurer Josh Correll, Secretary Amanda Cohen, and Minister of Outreach Grace Callanan. Our adult leadership team is also changing and we are very sad to be losing an important member, Cheramie Lee Dimenna. Cheramie began her journey with PF starting in the fall of 2008 and has been an essential member of Senior PF, and in the fall of 2011, took on the role as the Lead Coordinator. She was essential in planning fundraisers, outreach projects, weekly meetings, mission trips, and most of all, being a trusted adult in so many teenagers lives. She made her mark in PF for almost 11 years and we will miss her energy and loud presence every Sunday night, but we are happy that she will now have more time to focus on her family! PF thanks her for helping all of the individuals grow into kind-hearted young adults.

I'll be leading our adult leadership team, which includes Kiersten Rooney, Josh Post, Joe Gilberti, and Pastor Jenn Gingras. We are looking forward to a great first meeting which will be in Dineson Parlor on September 8th from 5-7:30pm. If you know someone in high school who is interested in joining this amazing group, please contact me at 203-362-9794 or by email at KLMaiolo@gmail.com.

Peace & Love, Kelsey Maiolo Kaminski, Lead Adult Advisor, Sr. PF

September Calendars

Fruit of the Spirit

- 8th – ALL Groups Gather
- 15th – ALL Groups Gather
- 22nd – ALL Groups Gather
- 29th – ALL Groups Gather



Jr. Pilgrim Fellowship



- 15th – Gather from 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm
- 22nd – Gather from 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm
- 29th – NO Gathering

Homecoming Sunday

Join us on Sunday, September 8th, for our Homecoming Sunday Celebration. On this day after the service you can check out the different ministry opportunities at MCC, sign up your children and youth for activities, and we will be having a celebration Ice Cream Social hosted by our Fellowship Committee.

ALL are welcome to these celebrations!

Fellowship

Please join us for the MCC Book Club!

- ✚ **September 16th-7:30pm** The Tattooist of Auschwitz by Heather Morris ~ Host Trees Whitbeck in Dineson Parlor
- ✚ **October 21st-7:30pm** Pachinko by Min Jin Lee ~ Host: Gayle Hammond in Dineson Parlor
- ✚ **November 18th-7:30pm** My Brilliant Friend by Elena Ferrante ~ Host TBD

Young at Heart will be Thursday September the 26th at noon at Old Towne Restaurant, 60 Quality Street, Trumbull. Come all Senior Citizens, MCC members and non-members, to help us celebrate our 7th Anniversary. We will have a grand time with a special guest. For reservations contact Betty Heiney - 203 268-9576 or Haarald@aol.com



Prayer Partner Sign Ups - Do you know how easy and fulfilling being a prayer partner is? All you have to do is save a few moments to think about a certain person and wish them strength for the day. You could send them a card or note in the mail using the church's address as the return. This is all done anonymously for several months. No one knows who's praying for whom. Just complete the form found in Wilton Hall on the information board. At the end of September you will receive information of someone to pray for. On Sunday, May 17, 2020 we will have the "Big Reveal" potluck luncheon in Wilton Hall to celebrate our prayer partners and find out who was praying for us. Here are some testimonials from last year's participants:



- *It made me more aware of the experiences my partner was going thru and was able to develop a friendship with my partner that was better than before as I sought her out at coffee hour.*
- *It is always nice to get a positive message out of the blue from someone wishing you positive thoughts.*
- *I think it is very rewarding to know that you're praying for a friend, for their needs. It's also very fulfilling when you know someone out there is taking care of your worries and needs.*

Please consider signing up for a fantastic exploration into the wonderful feeling of prayer and thoughts of each other. Contact Susie Cuseo with any questions at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280.

Morning Circle invites all the ladies of the congregation and their friends to our meeting on Wednesday, September 11th at 11AM in Dineson Parlor. We will have guest speaker, Henna Ali, from the Senior Center as well as a collection of pet items for the Food Pantry. Bring a sandwich for lunch while we have our business meeting. Please contact Jackie Bleakney with any questions at 203-268-5275. Mark your calendars for the following meeting dates:



- Wednesday, October 9 at 11AM in Dineson Parlor - Trick-or-Treat bags for Food Pantry
- Wednesday, November 13 at 11AM in Dineson Parlor - Specialty Thanksgiving Food Pantry collection and Bean Soup Jars
- Wednesday, December 11 at 11:30AM - Christmas luncheon - location TBD



Help is needed at the Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe!!! If you have some free time during the day, we are looking for help with sorting, tagging and hanging merchandise on Tuesdays every week at 1:30PM. It's very easy to do and if you have any questions, please contact Jan Pearson at jtpearson118@gmail.com. If you would like to man the counter on Thursdays from 12-3, Fridays from 10-1230 or 1230-3 or Saturdays 10-12 or 12-2, please contact Susie Cuseo at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280. Responsibilities are all written out and easy to handle. Any help you can offer would be greatly appreciated.

New Church Office Hours

These are the hours which the office will be open and Melissa will be available:



- Monday 8:30-12:00pm
- Tuesday 8:30-12:30pm
- Wednesday 8:30-2:30pm
- Thursday 8:30-12:30pm
- Friday 8:30-4:00pm

If you are planning to stop by while the office is open, and would like to speak with Pastor Jenn, please call ahead to see if she is there and available. Pastor Jenn takes Fridays and Saturdays off.

Elisha's Corner
By Gary Thompson, Church Historian

In Deed



While looking through the archives for property deeds in an effort to find the explanation of how it was that the Monroe Park Association owned the Centre Green and sold it to both our church and St. Peter's church, I found two deeds for the property upon which our current meeting house stands. This led to a file containing the contract to build the current meeting house. More than that, the description of the property in the first deed, by date, clearly and convincingly identifies the site of the first meeting house built between 1763 and 1769. You might remember that during our 250th year we had the State Archeologists' perform some underground site sonic plots between the parsonage and the meeting house as well as on the north end of the Centre Green in search of any stone foundation of our first meeting house. The effort did not yield the existence of any such formation. Thus the question of its location remained unanswered.

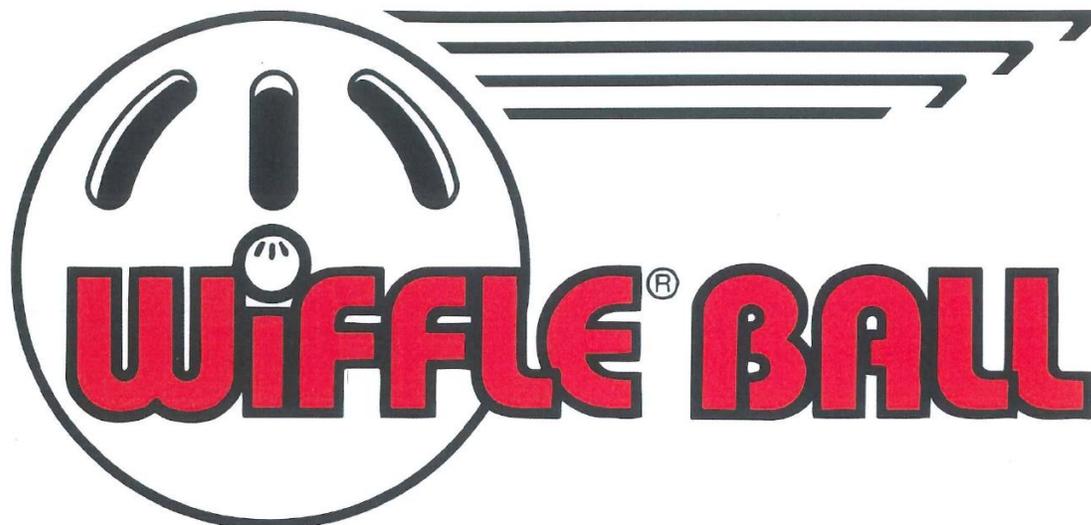
The first deed is a deed of trust. The property was sold (given) to the Congregational Society by Deacon Nathaniel Wheeler for one dollar, But first it was put in trust until the church figured out "... the size and proper style and designation ..." of the Meeting House. The Trustee was Henry Curtis, a member of the church and owner of the property in the then center part of the current Centre Green. On August 7, 1847, the following was entered into the Town of Monroe Land Records by the Town Clerk.

"Know all men by these presents that I Nathaniel N. Wheeler, of Monroe in the County of Fairfield State of Connecticut for consideration of one dollar received to my full satisfaction of Henry Curtis of said Monroe to hereby give grant bargain sell and confirm unto the said Curtis one certain tract of land situate in said Monroe in quantity eighty feet in front and one hundred feet in depth the same being the tract upon which the foundations of the new

*Congregational Church about to be erected in the Centre of Monroe are now placed. The front of said tract being nearly in line with the front of said church extending Easterly from the eastern side of said Church twenty-two and one half feet, and Westerly from the western side of said Church twenty-two and one half feet, and said tract running back in a uniform breadth one hundred feet from the front line thereof bounded as follows **Southerly by the highway and the site of the Society's old church** and on all other sides by land of grantor.....”*

Yes... the old church Meeting House across the highway (Church Street) on the north end of our Green. Interestingly, Deacon Wheeler retained all of his land around the 75 x 100 foot parcel (the foundation was 30 feet wide).

The second deed, dated January 4, 1849, conveyed this property from Henry Curtis, property trustee, to the Congregational Society of Monroe, for one dollar. The new Meeting House had already been built on it and was in use as of June 21 – 22, 1847. As we knew it was built by Hotchkins Clark & Co. of Derby and erected in the month of June; finished enough for worship services. The contract required that it be completed for use by November 1st. It also provided some interesting answers to some pending questions, like the bell and yoke in the belfry. The agreement gave Hotchkins Clark & Co. “...full and exclusive right to all materials composing said building and to all fixtures excepting **the bell, bell rope,** lamps, books, cushions, stoves, stove pipe, fuel oil, and materials of all kinds and such personal property as may have been placed or left in slips or pews by the occupants thereof.” Therefore, it is assumed that the bell was saved for use in the new (current) Meeting House, which included the yoke. The full story of our bell needs to be continued in a subsequent Steeple article, though. As for the Park Association’s possession of the Centre Green it is still under investigation, so no more can be said at this time. That full story, too, will be the subject of another Steeple article.



Come play in our first Wiffle Ball Tournament!

3 Leagues: Major—Age 15+; Minor—Age 15+; Family Fun—Age 8+
5-8 players per team



All proceeds will directly benefit the Monroe Food Pantry.

When: September 21, 2019, 8:00 AM—5:00 PM (Rain Date: September 22)

Where: Wolfe Park, 285 Cutlers Farm Road, Monroe CT

Team Fee: \$80 non-refundable donation to the Monroe Food Pantry
(Senior Citizen/62+ team fee - \$40)

Registration Deadline: September 10, 2019

To register for the event, please contact the Monroe Food Pantry Fundraising Committee at mfpccommittee@gmail.com or call 203-452-2817.

Check out the Monroe Food Pantry's Facebook page for more information!

Sponsored by



MCC Community Calendar

Week of Sep. 1st

The Gospel Goes to Broadway! Oliver
10:00am Worship w/communion

Mon. Sep. 2nd

Office Closed for Labor Day

Tues. Sept. 3rd

9:30am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Sept. 4th

7:00pm Adult Choir

Week of Sep. 8th

Homecoming Sunday
10:00am Worship
11:30am Deacon Planning Meeting
(Logan's Home)
5:00pm Senior PF (Dineson)

Tues. Sept. 10th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Sept. 11th

11:00am Morning Circle (Dineson)
7:00pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Sept. 12th

9:30am Bible Study

Fri. Sept. 13th

7:30pm Faith on Tap (Veracious)

Sat. Sept. 14th

Sue Zaleha Memorial Service
9-11 Greet family in Dineson
11:15 Worship in Meetinghouse,
followed by luncheon in Wilton Hall

Week of Sep. 15th

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

Tues. Sept. 17th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Sept. 18th

6:30pm Confirmation (Dineson)
7:00pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Sept. 19th

9:30am Bible Study

Sat. Sept. 21

6:30pm Wine & Beer Tasting (Fracassini home)

Week of Sep. 22nd

Confirmation Dedication, Bible Presentation
10:00am Worship
5:00 pm Senior PF
6:00 pm Junior PF

Mon. Sept. 23rd

7:30pm Council Meeting (Dineson)
7:30pm Bathroom Team Meeting (Classroom 5)

Tues. Sept. 24th

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Sept. 25th

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

Thurs. Sept. 26th

9:30am Bible Study
12:00pm Young at Heart (Old Towne Restaurant)

Week of Sep. 29th

Aiden Paniccia's Baptism
10:00am Worship
5:00pm Senior PF
6:00pm Junior PF

Tues. Oct. 1st

1:30pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Oct. 2nd

6:30pm Confirmation Class
7:15pm Adult Choir

Thurs. Oct. 3rd

9:30am Bible Study

Week of Oct. 6

10:00am Worship w/Communion
11:15am Congregational Conversation
5:00pm Adult & Senior PF
6:00pm Junior PF

Tues. Oct. 8th

1:30 pm Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. Oct. 9th

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

Thurs. Oct. 10th

9:30am Bible Study

Week of Oct. 13th

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