

United Methodist Church of Monroe



messenger

DECEMBER 2016



“Oh No, Christmas is on a Sunday!”

I remember the last time that Christmas was on a Sunday and everyone was abuzz about whether or not there should be church. I thought it was terrific -- what better place to be on Christmas than at church celebrating the birth of Christ!

My daughter was pretty young and she was excited about the prospect of Santa visiting. We got up early (of course, don't all kids wake up at the crack of dawn on Christmas?) and opened our stocking gifts as well as one or two things from Santa and then it was off to church. It was wonderful to sing “Good Christian Friends Rejoice,” singing “Jesus Christ is born today” knowing that it was true. I still remember the goosebumps I felt. Jesus was born on that day a long time ago, but Jesus, and all that the birth represented—hope, joy, peace and love—was being born again in our hearts that Christmas morning.

When we came home we finished opening up our gifts and spent time with family. It was a beautiful day of celebrating the real meaning of Christmas while also keeping the magic of Santa intact.

We will be having a service Christmas Day at our usual 10 a.m. There won't be any Choir Rehearsal before service or Sunday School during. It will be a time for you to come as you are. Like to wear sweat pants while opening your gifts on Christmas? Come in those! Want to wear your “ugly” Christmas sweater? Come in it! Having family over? They are welcome. Come and sing, come and rejoice, come and celebrate the Incarnation of God. God loved us so much he sent his son to us.

The Epstein's will be hosting Coffee Hour that morning, so if you don't have any other festivities to rush off to stay and tarry awhile.

Christ is Born to Us!

Pastor Macdonald

***Christmas Eve service will be held December 24 at 7:00 pm.
All are welcome to this family friendly service***

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Staff Christmas Gifts

In order for us to show our appreciation for the time and talents of our employed staff, the Staff Parish Relations Committee will be collecting for staff Christmas gifts on Sundays from December 4 to December 18. No amount is too small! Our staff includes Pastor Martha Epstein, Pianist Lauren Cacace, Church Secretary Denise Wiley, Choir Director Michelle Lambert and Nursery Attendant Marsha Cohen. Envelopes will be available in the narthex if you would like them. Cash or checks made payable to *UMC Monroe* with *Staff Gifts* in the memo line will be accepted. It would be appreciated if all contributions are hand delivered to Rose Aiello. Thank you for your consideration and generosity!



Join us between now and Christmas on our **Walk to Bethlehem!** Log your steps online via our website or on a tracking form weekly and help us on 5,622 mile walk! Everyone is welcome ... no one is left behind!



Believe it or not Christmas is only 4 weeks away ... have you started shopping yet?

Shop at smile.amazon.com/ch/06-6034463 for your holiday gifts and Amazon donates to the United Methodist Church of Monroe.

Do you have friends and family that shop at Amazon? If so, please feel free to share our link ... anyone can sign up to support UMC Monroe with AmazonSmile! And remember ...

You shop. Amazon gives.

Let's Celebrate!



happy birthday

12/04 Neil Chaudhary
12/05 Cari Harris
12/06 Mike Cahill
12/07 Vivian Harris
12/14 Lynn Gregory
12/15 Dave Aiello
12/16 Carol Steiner
12/18 Bill Fromm
12/23 Carin Florin
12/27 Edna Turner
12/29 Quintin Brantley
12/30 Jeanne Baklik
12/31 Pat Smith



happy anniversary

12/12 Amy and Michael Ramos
12/13 Juliana and Brian Sherwood

Please submit additions and corrections to the birthday and anniversary list to the office at umc@umcmonroe.org or 203.268.8395. We don't want to miss anyone! Thanks!

Seeking Coffee Hour Hosts

It's a wonderful way to support fellowship! Sign up using our new online SignUpGenius registration process -- visit our website and click on the coffee cup and you're ready to host a coffee hour! All of the basics are supplied including coffee, tea, sugar and paper goods. Coffee making instructions are in the kitchen. As host we ask that you make the coffee, heat the tea water, supply the creamer and juice and clean up. Snacks and sweets are not required unless you'd like to provide them. Please consider taking a Sunday and sign up today!



Ordination Update from Pastor Martha ...



After the affirmation by the Board of Ordained Ministry of my call to ordained ministry, the question that you may be wondering is, "So what does this mean?" What does it mean to be ordained, or for that matter, what difference does it make? Well, it does make a difference, but many of the differences are not necessarily visible. The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church says "... Elders are ordained to a lifetime of ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service. By the authority given in their ordination, they are authorized to preach and teach the Word of God, to provide pastoral care and counsel, to administer the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion, and to order the life of the Church for service in mission and ministry."

You might be thinking that I am already doing these things, and you would be right, but only up to a point. When I first started as a Local Pastor I could only preside over the sacraments or a wedding in the church to which I was appointed. Now, as a Full Elder, my ordination will be for life and is recognized worldwide, so if you want to have a destination wedding, let's do it! As an elder, I get a vote on some things in the workings of the church which I wasn't able to before. Likewise, in order to be a Bishop or District Superintendent (which I have no plans on being either), or to be a delegate to General Conference one must be an elder.

I have likened ordination to Confirmation. When I teach Confirmation I always tell the youth that Confirmation is not the end but the beginning of a new journey. I am really looking forward to seeing what God has in store for me now.

It's not time to fully celebrate yet though. I have to be officially voted on by all the clergy of the New York Annual Conference on June 7 and then the ordination service will be on June 10. Hope some of you will be able to join me, either in person or virtually (there will a link to the service that we will distribute in June).



Covenant to Care Christmas Wish List

Children's names are posted on the bulletin board. Please put your name next to your choice. Gifts should be wrapped with child's name clearly labeled on the package. Gifts can be placed on the shelf above the coat rack and due by Sunday, December 18 so delivery can be made by Christmas! Questions? Contact Priscilla Bromley at 203.268.4218.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION ...



Mini Missions: Christmas Dinners

We will be collecting all of the fixings for a tasty Christmas meal. Items can be left in the wagon in the Narthex. Thank you for your support!

Change for Waterman Scholarship

We are collecting loose change for the Waterman Scholarship Fund. There is a jug in the narthex for you to deposit loose change. All coins accepted! Keep an eye on the thermometer and watch it rise with your help!





UMC MONROE YOUTH NEWS

Youth Group Christmas Party: Sunday, December 11

Time: 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Santa has asked the Youth Group to help him stuff the stockings for the *Breakfast with Santa*, so after we do that fun task we will then celebrate with some Christmas games, goodies and a gift exchange. Bring a wrapped gift costing up to \$15 if you want to participate in the grab bag. Friends are welcome!

Our Youth in Action!



Youth Clean Up: Sunday, October 30



Paper Shredding Fundraiser: Saturday, November 5

Friends are ***always welcome to our youth events*** –
no need for them to belong to our church!!

amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

Add smile.amazon.com to your
browser's bookmarks!

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support the United Methodist Church of Monroe every time you shop, at no cost to you. Visit our website for a link to AmazonSmile. Be sure to complete the one-time setup by selecting *United Methodist Church of Monroe (EIN: 06-6034463)* and the church will receive donations for qualifying purchases anytime you shop on smile.amazon.com. For more information, please visit our website and search *AmazonSmile* or contact Steve Arnold or Kathy Schmalkuche.

2016 Christmas Poinsettias in Honor/Memory of Loved Ones



*If you would like to purchase a poinsettia in memory or honor of a loved one, please fill out the form below or place your order online at www.umcmonroe.org! Please make your check payable to "UMCM" with "poinsettia" in the memo line. This form must be returned to the church office by Sunday, December 4. Your acknowledgement(s) will be listed in the December 18 and 24 bulletins. If you have any questions, please contact the Church Office. **All proceeds support Pivot Ministries.***

In Honor of: _____

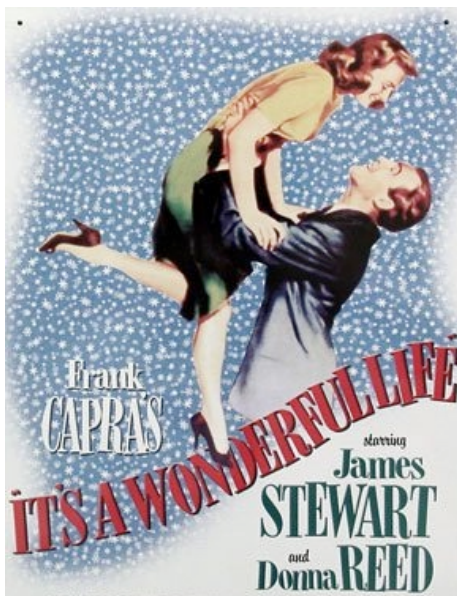
In Memory of: _____

# _____	4.5" pot – red plant (pinched with 3 – 4 blooms)	\$6
# _____	4.5" pot – white plant (pinched with 3 – 4 blooms)	\$6
# _____	6.5" pot – red plant (4 – 6 blooms)	\$12
# _____	6.5" pot – white plant (4 – 6 blooms)	\$12

Total Amount Due: _____

Family name: _____

Join us for pizza and a movie!



UPCOMING EVENTS



Trim-the-Tree Luncheon

Please join us for our annual Trim-the-Tree Luncheon on December 4, 2016! Immediately after worship we'll gather in Fellowship Hall to share a potluck lunch. Share your favorite dish and enjoy fellowship followed by the decorating of the sanctuary tree. A sign up sheet is posted on the Narthex bulletin board. Clean-up help would be welcome!

If you're interested in providing live music during lunch and/or while we're trimming the tree, please let us know!

Inviting All to a Caroling Party ... The More the Merrier!!

We'll meet at Leigh and Russ Gray's house to go Christmas caroling to our homebound friends on Friday, December 9. After caroling we'll finish the party back at the Grays' with pizza, desserts and a kids' gift exchange! Please let us know if you can join us! Questions: Steve Arnold or Leigh Gray



Christmas Family Game Night is Saturday, December 17, from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm. Bring your favorite Christmas-themed game and a snack to share. Feel free to invite a friend ... all are welcome!

The Social Issues Discussion Group

Join us for a forum where concerned believers discuss their views on various social issues. The discussion is truly open with no agenda or curriculum to follow. Our final meeting of 2016 is December 18 at 11:30 am in Meeting Room 1. Moderator: David York



Other December Activities

Tuesday, December 6: Annual Charge Conference
Sunday, December 11: Christmas Cantata
Sunday, December 18: Christmas Pageant
Saturday, December 24: Christmas Eve Service

2017 Connecticut District Resourcing Days

Sunday, January 29 and Saturday, February 4 ... more details to follow!



PHOTO OPS



Paper Shredding Fundraiser: Saturday, November 5



Wicke Luncheon: Wednesday, November 16

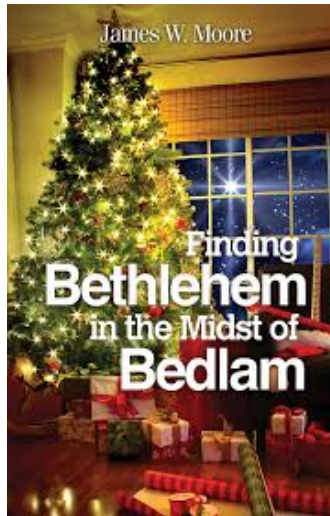


Church Work Day
Saturday, November 19

Sing-A-Long at Atria
Sunday, November 20



Finding Bethlehem in the Midst of Bedlam



Thursdays*, November 17 – December 22, 2016

Times: 10:00 am - 11:30 am OR 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm ~ Location: Meeting Room 2

Christmas or confusion, Bethlehem or bedlam . . . which will you choose this year? The truth is, we don't have to choose, because Christmas always happens right in the midst of our chaos. God breaks into our noisy disorder and is made known in Jesus Christ. Christmas and confusion—weren't they intimately related at the first Christmas when Jesus was born? Sometimes we forget that. That's what this study is about—how Christ breaks into our chaos and confusion and brings Christmas—how Bethlehem always happens in the midst of bedlam.

This 5-week study will take place on Thursdays during Advent with two opportunities to participate. * Please note that there will be no class on Thanksgiving.

The participant book includes a session for each week. Each chapter includes questions for reflection and discussion, a brief prayer, a focus for the week, and six daily Bible readings for personal devotional time during the week. Purchase of the book is not necessary to participate in the study but it does enhance it. If you are interested in buying a book for \$11 please let Pastor Martha know. Please join us ... and feel free to invite a friend!



Breakfast with **Santa**

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17

9:00 am – Noon at UMC Monroe

Children (12 and under) \$5 • Adults \$8 *

Register online at www.umcmonroe.org by December 9, 2016

Crafts! • Stockings! • Pictures with Santa!

Please bring a non-perishable food item for the Monroe Food Pantry
and join in our ongoing efforts to help our neighbors!

* Cash or check (made payable to "UMCM" with "Santa Breakfast" in the memo line)
Mail payment to UMC Monroe, Attn: Breakfast with Santa – pre-payment would be appreciated.
Registration is first come, first served until we reach capacity.

United Methodist Church of Monroe • 515 Cutlers Farm Road
breakfastwithsanta@umcmonroe.org • 203.268.8395

MISSIONS

UMC of Monroe Alternative Christmas Giving

Are you having a hard time finding the perfect gift for someone special on your Christmas list? Or wondering what to get for someone who already has everything they need? Try an Alternative Christmas gift this year! Alternative Christmas gifts are always the perfect fit and are truly a gift worth giving that can transform the world!

What is an Alternative Christmas gift? Alternative Christmas gifts are representational gifts that are donations to organizations making an impact at the local, national and international levels by helping others. The gifts are given in honor of someone special on your gift list and you can give them a card to let them know an important gift to help someone else was given in their honor.

How does it work? Simply select Alternative Christmas gifts from the list below for the special people on your gift list this year and complete the order form. Return the order form with your payment check made payable to UMC Monroe by Sunday, December 18. UMC Monroe will then make the donations to the organizations for your gifts. Don't forget to indicate how many cards you would like to let your family and friends know about the gifts given in their honor!



Alternative Christmas Gift Order Form

Name: _____

Total amount enclosed for gifts selected below: _____

(Please make checks payable to UMC of Monroe)

Number of gift cards requested: _____

Gift Item	Suggested Amount	Quantity	Total
Give the gift of community	\$5 to sponsor a senior for a drop in activity class at the Monroe Senior Center		
Give the gift of faith	\$10 to provide a pew Bible or hymnal for a newly formed church in the US through the World Service Fund's Path 1 congregational development effort		
Give the gift of health	\$15 to provide 10 jerry cans used to transport water without risk of contamination in communities without running water through Church World Service		
Give the gift of warmth	\$20 to provide 10 gallons of heating oil to a neighbor in need in Monroe through Project Warmth		
Give the gift of hope	\$25 to provide needed gloves and dust masks to clean up after a natural disaster through UMCOR		
Give the gift of knowledge	\$30 to sponsor a student at a university supported by the United Methodist Church with a scholarship contribution through the Black College Fund		

Prayer Concerns



Michelle Lambert's brother, Michael
 Tyson, Lynn Abbott's grandson, who has been diagnosed
 with Benign Rolandic Epilepsy
 Lauren, Patti Early's friend's daughter, who is in need of
 recovery from addiction
 Anita's family on the passing of her brother, George
 Michael Lineweber Family on his passing from cancer
 Janet's friend – Libby - husband has cancer
 Aidan - Michelle Lambert's cousin's son - being treated in
 mental health facility
 Michelle Lambert - asthma
 Dotty and Roger Cedegren - health issues
 Janet Morris' friend - Robert Davidson in VA and his Mom,
 Georgia in PA - she has been diagnosed with lymphoma
 Edna Turner - procedure
 Pricilla Bromley's son-in-law - Bill Curry; Bill's sister - Helen
 - heart surgery; Priscilla's daughter caring for them all
 Bobbie Grant - knee
 Anita's granddaughter - Danielle
 Dexton and Caleb
 Cooper Abbott, age 8 - Lynn's grandnephew - and parents
 Ann and Alex as they are also expecting another child
 Dotti Hossler's sister - brain injury
 Gizmo - Claudia Wallace's sister's dog - may require
 surgery
 Max Gray - recovery back surgery
 Ann Dalton - breast cancer treatment
 Tom and Amanda Early - transition
 Juliana Sherwood's aunt and uncle - health issues
 Infant James - needs heart transplant
 Gail Mas' granddaughter - Sara
 Jessica Iannacone - Wallace's niece
 Amanda
 Roy G – 8-year old with serious epilepsy
 Gail Mas' niece Suzette
 Ronald - Ethel Abraham's brother - leukemia

Friend of Wallace's - Audrey Scott - on dialysis and in need
 of a kidney transplant
 Millie Derle's sister - Bev - cancer
 Friend of Billy Schmalkuche - Jill - strength for long-term
 rehab from surgery for spinal injuries
 Charlotte - Marilyn's Jones' friend
 Marilyn Jones' niece - Kathryn - ALS
 Olivia - baby with Tuberous Sclerosis causing seizures
 Marilyn Jones' nieces: Vicky with tongue cancer and Amy
 experiencing paralysis
 Dolores Ovesny
 Jeff York
 Tom Boomershine
 Darcy and Cameron
 Robert Ellis - co-worker of Claudia Wallace - cancer
 Greg - Gail Mas' nephew - cancer
 Evelyn Sweetnam - hospice care
 Linda Summa - Turner's daughter - cancer
 Theresa - friend of Yorks - cancer
 Olivia - Juvenile Diabetes
 Sue Simmons' friend - Debbie - MS
 Jimmy - Bobbie Grant's friend's son
 Fromm's friend - Radovan Frzop
 York's daughter-in-law - Lori
 Jodi Kles - Sheryl's cousin - living with rare form of cancer

Military personnel
 Unemployed
 First responders, firemen, policemen
 Persons dealing with serious medical issues, drug addiction
 Caregivers
 Guidance for world leaders
 Covenant to Care children, foster children
 Those who do not have anyone to pray for them
 Christians around the world persecuted for their faith
 Bringing an end to the drug epidemic and deaths
 30 million refugees without basic necessities of life

If you would like to add a person to our prayer list, or to receive a weekly copy of the joys and concerns email prayerrequest@umcmornoe.org, call the office or leave your request in the collection plate. Names will remain on the prayer list for 3 weeks. If you would like your name or that of a relative or friend to stay on the list longer, please contact the office.



REMINDER: The deadline to submit information to Denise (umc@umcmornoe.org) for our monthly newsletter is the 15th of each month. When making your submission, please include all content and provide a contact name. Any submission received after the deadline is not guaranteed publication and may be deferred to the next month. Thank you!

United Methodist Church of Monroe							Dec 2016 (Eastern Time)		
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat			
<div>27</div> <div>First Sunday of Advent</div> <div>8:30am - CP: Choir Practice</div> <div>10am - Pivot Ministries</div> <div>10am - SS: Sunday School</div> <div>10am - Worship Service</div> <div>11:30am - Social Issues</div>	<div>28</div>	<div>29</div>	<div>30</div>	<div>1</div> <div>10am - Advent Bible Study:</div> <div>7pm - Advent Bible Study:</div>	<div>2</div>	<div>3</div> <div>2pm - YC: CANCELLED:</div>			
<div>4</div> <div>Communion Sunday</div> <div>Second Sunday of Advent</div> <div>8:30am - CP: Choir Practice</div> <div>10am - Worship Service</div> <div>11:15am - Trim-the-Tree</div>	<div>5</div> <div>10:30am - FC: Friendship</div>	<div>6</div> <div>11:30am - MM: Missions</div> <div>7pm - SPARC Meeting</div> <div>7:30pm - Annual Charge</div>	<div>7</div> <div>6:30pm - Girl Scouts</div>	<div>8</div> <div>10am - Advent Bible Study:</div> <div>7pm - Advent Bible Study:</div>	<div>9</div> <div>5pm - Christmas Caroling</div>	<div>10</div>			
<div>11</div> <div>Christmas Cantata @</div> <div>Third Sunday of Advent</div> <div>8:30am - CP: Choir Practice</div> <div>10am - SS: Sunday School</div> <div>10am - Worship Service</div>	<div>12</div>	<div>13</div> <div>7:15pm - CC: Church</div>	<div>14</div>	<div>15</div> <div>Newsletter Deadline</div> <div>10am - Advent Bible Study:</div> <div>7pm - Advent Bible Study:</div>	<div>16</div>	<div>17</div> <div>9am - Breakfast with Santa</div> <div>6pm - FGN: Christmas</div>			
<div>18</div> <div>Christmas Pageant</div> <div>Fourth Sunday of Advent</div> <div>8:30am - CP: Choir Practice</div> <div>10am - Worship Service</div> <div>11:30am - Social Issues</div> <div>5pm - Movie Night: It's a</div>	<div>19</div>	<div>20</div>	<div>21</div>	<div>22</div> <div>10am - Advent Bible Study:</div> <div>7pm - Advent Bible Study:</div>	<div>23</div>	<div>24</div> <div>7pm - Christmas Eve</div>			
<div>25</div> <div>10am - Worship Service</div>	<div>26</div>	<div>27</div>	<div>28</div>	<div>29</div>	<div>30</div>	<div>31</div>			