

# *40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Booklet*

*The United Methodist  
Church of Monroe  
1973 – 2013*



*Celebration Day  
October 27, 2013*



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## ***A Message from Rose Aiello, Lay Leader***

The following is a compilation of memories, recollections and a history of the past forty years at the UMC of Monroe. This book is based upon a similar booklet developed for the 25th anniversary in 1998. For those who are relatively new, the 25th Anniversary Booklet was a look into our past, filled with names and a timeline history.

It's amazing to think that a group of people were committed to building a new church. Where did they get the drive and energy, while raising growing families and managing the hustle and bustle of regular life? Why not simply keep things the way they were? It was visioning. It was certainly the Holy Spirit working through a unique group of people, people united by fellowship and a mission.

That original spirit and passion still exists today -- in different people and different ways. We see it in our continual involvement with Church World Service, Monroe Food Pantry, Mozambique, Covenant to Care, Council of Churches and many other missions. We see it in the fun and fellowship of game nights, Ladies groups, Easter egg hunts and potluck lunches. We see it in the dedication of our Sunday School teachers, the musical talents of our choir and organist. We see it in the hard work in preparation of our annual Harvest Fest, financial plans, endless meetings of committees and maintenance of physical plant. We see it in our youth as they grow and begin their own journeys.

Even though we centered our anniversary plans on the theme of "Celebrating 40 years of Tradition," we are a changing world and with it our church changes. Pastors have come and gone, as well as families. Some have been here in the good times and in the bad times; from our national tragedy of September 11, 2001, to the local tragedy of Sandy Hook on December 14, 2012. Friendships formed are not forgotten. Many challenges have been met, many have not. These are the things that make our history.

Every one of us has been called here to "the church in the woods" at 515 Cutlers Farm Road in Monroe for a reason and this is our continuing story ...

With peace,

Rose Aiello  
Lay Leader, 2013

### ***Purpose of This Booklet***

It is the hope and prayer of the 40th Anniversary Committee that this booklet will be both informative and inspiring. Written for the occasion of our 40th Anniversary Celebration on October 27, 2013, and as a continuation of the UMC Monroe 25th Anniversary Booklet, it is the result of the combined efforts of our pastor and members in gathering, compiling and telling the story of our formation and development as two congregations; and later, one united, strong congregation known as the United Methodist Church of Monroe. It is our prayer that in looking back with joy and pride, we may also look forward to the bright and hopeful future we will create together in partnership with God! First, let's go back to the beginning ...

## ***History of the Methodist Denomination***

The forty-year history of the United Methodist Church of Monroe is but a minute in time compared to the history of Methodism in Monroe and the United States. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, studied at Oxford University in England in the 1720's. He became a member of a small group which had gathered round his brother, Charles. The group of Christians became known as the "Holy Club," the "Oxford Methodists" or "Bible moths." They were very disciplined and methodical in their studies, thus becoming known as "Methodists."

Between 1735 and 1738, John went as a Chaplain on a Mission to the Georgia Colony. He felt he had failed, but learned much about the people and their faith as he traveled with several missionaries. Returning to London, he was still searching for religious satisfaction by closely following the rules of the Church of England. In 1738, he felt his heart "strangely warmed," and he discovered that inner peace comes by faith in God's mercy and grace.

This was the beginning of his evangelistic vigor in preaching. Wesley preached to whoever would stop and listen. He established the United Societies and used many lay members. In 1744, he organized the Methodist Conference. He remained a member of the Church of England all his life. However, during the American Revolutionary War, he ordained two preachers and appointed Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury as joint Superintendents in America. This was the beginning of a separate Methodist Episcopal Church.

Preachers were then sent to the United States. The first Methodist Church in New York City was built in 1768 and called "John Street Methodist Church." It is still a worshipping congregation today. John Street Church was formed by Irish Methodists Phillip and Barbara Heck, following the development of a Methodist Society. One of its popular preachers was Captain Thomas Webb.

In 1784, 60 pastors organized the Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore when they gathered for a Conference. The denomination grew quickly, as travelling preachers, or "circuit riders," carried the faith to the new territories.

## ***Beginnings of Methodism in East Village and Stepney***

In *A Glimpse of Old Monroe*, it states that Stratford, “the Mother Town,” was settled by English Puritan families in 1639. The “White Hills Purchase” was secured from the Paugussett Indians in 1671. This territory included Monroe. The new Stratford Society was established in 1782 and became a town in 1823.

The start of the organized Methodist Church in Connecticut began in 1789 and the early 1790’s, when Jesse Lee was appointed to the Stratford Circuit. He organized a circuit of preaching and established the first Methodist Society in Stamford. Also, late in 1789, Lee started a society in Redding. He also preached in New London. In 1791, Francis Asbury, the first American Bishop, preached there as well. Later, a highly successful society flourished in New London.

By 1818, the Methodists had organized over 50 societies in all parts of the state. Property was donated by John Wilcoxson for the East Village Methodist Meeting House in 1811. Later, in 1836, a society began in Upper Stepney, and the Stepney Methodist Episcopal Church was dedicated in 1839.

The United Methodist Church of Monroe was formed by combining the congregations of the Stepney Methodist Church and the East Village Methodist Church. In 1973, forty years ago, the new congregation began worshipping in our present church building. The United Methodist Church of Monroe has continued some of the traditions of the Stepney and East Village Methodist Churches and developed its own new and dynamic ministries.

## ***East Village Methodist Church***

The East Village Methodist Church was attended by the farming community of East Village, Connecticut. It was at one time part of the Long Hill, Sandy Hook, and East Village Charge; a pastor served all three churches.

East Village Methodist Church was known for its Turkey Suppers; everyone helped! Marion Ferris notes that they were so well attended that they sometimes ran out of water! Strawberry shortcake suppers were prepared by the men's club. At Christmas, all of the children in the Sunday school got a box of candy and an orange. Christmas plays were a tradition at East Village. Sometimes at Easter the children in the Sunday school were given plants to take home. Then, as the months grew warmer, the Women's Society planned for their summer Lawn Festivals.

According to Dolores Ovesny, these Lawn Festivals included the sale of baked goods, such as pies, fudge, jams and breads. The ladies wore hats they made. Games for children were provided, such as "fishing pond," and "wet sponge" – throwing wet sponges at brave volunteers!

Family picnics were also a church tradition. So was Vacation Bible School.

During the 1960's, talent shows were held in combination with members from Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, the Monroe Congregational Church and St. Peter's Episcopal Church.

Each year, in the spring, a Children's Day was held. In addition, the youth group was active. In the 1960's, some of their activities included bowling, cleaning the church yard, touring the Methodist Home in Danbury, and a trip to New York City to attend a Folk Music Service. Later, the youth led their own Folk Music Service. Our historical records indicate that six persons from East Village Methodist Church went to hear the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. speak! In 1966, six of East Village's children attended our Methodist camps.

The laity of East Village played a prominent role in the leadership of ministries and care of the church. One active member, Jack Zimmerman, preached on several occasions when the pastor was away. Peggy Smith served as Financial Secretary of the church for a long time and says it was a "small, friendly church." The men of the church built the education building, which housed the children and teens. The East Village Church was given to the Monroe Historical Society in 1966. The Education building was sold in 1973 for only \$28,000.

Dolores Ovesny shared with us that her great-grandfather was one of the pastors who served East Village! She became a member of East Village in 1947, was married there in 1955, and her children were baptized there. She and other current church members remember their years at East Village with great love, joy and a sense of accomplishment.



### ***Pastors of East Village Methodist Church***

1851 – 1852	Reverend William H. Bangs
1853 – 1854	Reverend J. A. Lovejoy
1855 – 1856	Reverend Alexander McAllister
1857	Reverend C. Silliman
1858	Reverend Benjamin Rexford
1859 – 1860	Reverend Rufus R. Reynolds
1861 – 1862	Reverend Edward Aldrin
1863 – 1864	Reverend William H. Stebbins
1865	Reverend William Silverthorne
1866 – 1867	Reverend William H. Adams
1868	Reverend William J. Robinson
1870 – 1872	Reverend William J. Gilbert
1873 – 1875	Reverend Alonzo B. Pulling
1876 – 1877	Reverend David Osborne
????	
1898 – 1900	Reverend Frederick H. Sawyer
1900	Reverend Rogalio Raymond
1901 – 1902	Reverend William Guggenheim
1902 – 1903	Reverend John L. Sparklin
1903 – 1904	Reverend J. H. Yaggy
1905 – 1906	Reverend George H. Eastland
1906 – 1907	Reverend A. W. Harris
1907 – 1910	Reverend H. I. Thayer
1910	Reverend George Noble
1910 – 1912	Reverend Albert E. Beebe
1912 – 1913	Reverend W. Harry Sutton
1913 – 1914	Reverend Victor Y. Fellini
1914 – 1915	Reverend Frank W. Bevan
1915 – 1916	Reverend Charles E. Williams
1916 – 1917	Reverend Leonard B. Fuller
1917 – 1920	Reverend Asa C. Fuller
1920	Reverend Clifford W. Hutching
????	
1946	Reverend Dr. Robert C. McMill
1946 – 1948	Reverend Dr. Harry N. Peeler
1948 – 1951	Reverend Donald G. Lester
1951 – 1952	Reverend Morris H. Bratton
1952 -	Mr. Carl E. Nelson, Jr.
1954	Mr. Brad Longstaff
1955 – 1957	Mr. Percy Chamberlain
1962 – 1966	Reverend Fred Clark
1963 – 1966	Reverend Donald Hoff
1966	Reverend Kenneth Brown
1967 – 1968	Reverend Dr. Donald H. Kirkham
1968 – 1973	Reverend L. David York

## **Stepney Methodist Church**

Stepney Methodist Church was known in the community of Stepney, Connecticut, for many wonderful programs. It was located on the Stepney Green next to the cemetery and across from the Stepney Baptist Church, in the building currently known as "Our Lady of the Rosary Chapel." Each fall, in October, the church hosted Chicken Pot Pie dinners. In the early years, these potpies were cooked on a wood stove and two oil stoves to the light of an oil lamp. Harvest Fairs were also held on the Green, with the youth group running the games. The Sunday school hosted an Annual Halloween Party. Rummage sales were held in November by the women of the church. In the late 1960's, the church held "Hillbilly Fairs" as well.

Many years the women also hosted a Christmas Bazaar. The women gathered regularly in the early years at the home of Mrs. Gesner to make quilts together, which were sold by the church. Mabel Blankenship remembered helping the women tack a quilt when she was thirteen years old. Later, the "Friendship Circle" met at Mary Waterman's house and Millie Chase's house. They were involved in the church fairs, making items to sell. At one time the women of the church were divided into two groups, one older and one younger.

Each year at Christmas, the Stepney Methodist Church displayed a nativity scene on the Stepney Green. Our members remember Christmas pageants, including the pageants organized by Reverend Clark and his wife. Others recounted how Mrs. Beverly Blakeman crocheted clothing for dolls, which were then given out to the children at Christmas. Many remember Christmas caroling and skating on Beardsley Pond.

In the warmer months, baseball games were held on Stepney Green. Strawberry Festivals were held in the summer with delicious baking powder biscuits served with strawberries.

The Stepney Methodist Church and the Stepney Baptist Church worked closely together throughout their history. Neighboring churches on the Green, they held joint Easter services, rotating from one church to another. They also held cooperative Vacation Bible Schools.

The Youth Program at Stepney Methodist Church was a strong one. Hike and Ruth Wells led the youth group for many years. The youth held Spaghetti Dinners, Pancake Breakfasts, and other events for the whole community. The youth group was divided into three levels: Senior, Intermediate, and Junior Youth.

Some of our senior members have shared some fond memories of particular events in the life of Stepney Methodist Church. For example, Roberta Kempner and Vivian Millard remember the Reverend R. "Lincoln" Caswell, Pastor of Stepney Methodist Church from 1938 – 1939, who dressed up regularly as President Lincoln, his "lookalike."

Roberta Kempner remembers the Reverend Charles Whitemarsh, who performed her wedding. She also remembers sending her daughters to Brownies and Girl Scouts in the basement of Stepney Methodist Church. She notes that the church was the "center of our activities."

Curtis Sears remembers the Reverend Wendell Clark, who returned to Stepney Methodist Church as the former Pastor to officiate at the wedding of Curtis and his wife, Ruth, on June 5, 1932. Curtis was twenty years old, and his wife was twenty-one. Reverend Clark had introduced them when Curtis was working for Reverend Clark's father in Massachusetts. Curtis knew Reverend Clark before he became Pastor of Stepney Methodist Church.

Curtis remembers donating donuts from his Donut Shop, located where the Stepney Liquor Store is now, for food sales at the church. Church members remember Curtis' pumpkin donuts fondly!

Curtis' daughter, Ruth Lynn McMahon, remembers memorizing the Books of the Bible and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm in Sunday school. She remembers attending youth group and having a great time, under the leadership of Hike and Ruth Wells!

Mabel Blankenship remembers the formality of dress at Stepney Methodist Church. No one wore slacks to church then; hats and gloves were the order of the day. Mabel noted that her father, Robert Bevans, served as the custodian of Stepney Methodist Church for \$1 per Sunday! His duties included stoking the stove to heat the church!

The church celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with the production of a commemorative plate. These plates were sold for \$7 each. One of these plates has been sent by Reverend Burger to collectors in Tennessee whose collection has been willed to the Drew University Methodist Archives.

### ***Pastors of Stepney Methodist Church***

1839 – 1841	Nathaniel Mead
1841 – 1843	Stephen J. Stebbins
1843 – 1844	Laban Clark
1843 – 1845	George L. Fuller
1844 – 1845	Aaron L. Hill
1846 – 1848	Samuel W. Smith
1848 – 1850	Lorenzo D. Nickerson
1850 – 1852	Samuel W. Smith
1852 – 1853	Charles Gorse
1853 – 1855	Stephen J. Stebbins
1855 – 1857	Horatio N. Weed
1857 – 1858	D. W. Lonnsberry
1858 – 1860	Joseph Smith
1860 – 1862	David Nash
1862 – 1864	Samuel F. Johnson
1864 – 1866	Theodore A. Lovejoy
1866 – 1869	Friend W. Smith
1869 – 1870	Thomas N. Laine
1870 – 1872	David Nash
1872 – 1873	Eben S. Hebbard
1873 – 1876	David Osborne
1876 – 1879	Henry Scofield
1879 – 1880	W. W. Martin
1880 – 1882	C. J. Mallory
1882 – 1883	Thomas D. Littlewood
1883 – 1884	Robert A. Sadleir
1884 – 1886	John Cromlish
1886 – 1889	William T. Gilbert
1889 – 1892	J. F. Robertson

1892 – 1895	J. B. Merwin
1895 – 1898	E. Warriner
1898 – 1899	L. W. Holmes
1899 – 1901	J. L. Rollins
1901 – 1905	C. S. Dikeman
1905 – 1906	A. L. Faast
1906 – 1907	William R. McDermott
1908 – 1911	A. L. Hubbard
1911 – 1913	F. H. Sawyer
1913 – 1917	Frederick W. Poten
1917 – 1919	G. M. Powell
1919 – 1920	M. L. G. Proper
1920 – 1923	A. A. Clark
1923 – 1924	Henry Blatz
1924 – 1926	J. H. Ainsworth
1926 – 1928	S. E. T. Harding
1928 – 1930	W. J. Clark
1930 – 1931	R. L. Jerome
1931 – 1933	A. O. Baggarly
1933 – 1935	R. S. Povey
1935 – 1937	James Link
1938 – 1939	Robert “Lincoln” Caswell
1939 – 1946	Walter Pickering
1946 – 1948	Selden Marth
1950’s	Charles Whitemarsh
1953 – 1955	Charles Simpson
1954 – 1955	Edward Granii (student)
1956 – 1958	Richard Wilson
1960 – 1962	James Trew
1962 – 1965	Frank Howley
1965 – 1973	L. David York

***The Formation of the United Methodist Church of Monroe***  
***As told by The Reverend L. David York, Pastor 1965 – 1974***

The beginning of the United Methodist Church of Monroe is really a history of meetings, and meetings, and more meetings. Official Boards and Commissions and Trustees met many times to review hopes, plans, details. One major step toward the new building was the decision of the members of the East Village and Stepney Methodist Churches on March 18, 1970 to merge and form the United Methodist Church of Monroe. This was not a quick or easy decision and had involved a lot of discussion, planning and prayer. Another step along the way was the formal groundbreaking which took place on Sunday, October 29, 1972 with construction beginning soon after that event. Two months later, in December 1972, since we had been able to sell the Stepney Church to the Orthodox Roman Catholic Movement, the combined congregation temporarily moved in with the members of the Stepney Baptist Church. For ten months, the two congregations used the Baptist facilities on a cooperative basis, which usually worked out. One exception was that the energy of our MYF members occasionally was bothersome to some of the older Baptist members! The end of the beginning chapter of our present congregation was on October 5, 1973, when a Certificate of Occupancy was given for the new building.

As the Pastor involved in all of this transition, I had a varied schedule. Along with many others, many nights were spent in long and sensitive meetings. Many other informal discussions took place before and after those meetings. I think the most interesting aspect was my various preaching schedules. While we were sharing the facilities of the Baptist Church, Reverend Yusko and I would literally pass each other on the stairs as we were exchanging places in the sanctuary. At one time we employed Allen Farabee, a student assistant pastor from Yale University, who would preach one Sunday in one church while I preached in the other and then we would switch the next Sunday to the other church, and so on. Another time I would preach at Stepney and then drive across town to East Village for the other service ... with the Monroe Police observing my cross-town dash!

While we are observing the significant development of our church building, I think it is important to remember that in the midst of this project we were still maintaining and developing an active church school and mission program. We had an active Methodist Youth Fellowship (MYF) which did service projects and weekend retreats; the church was also supportive of the Community House, a youth center for Monroe teenagers, something which our town still needs to develop. Other church members were members of the Board of Education and the Town Council. Our church encouraged housing for the elderly, and Harriet Underhill championed that project to the point that Underhill Drive in High Meadows is named in her honor.

There are many stories that could be told, but I think two reports from the March 1974 Annual Meeting contain the essence of the process. Miss Gerda Lex was the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and part of her report is as follows:

“This year the Board of Trustees has again been involved in much discussion, negotiation, decision-making, and, very often, “gentle prodding.” Although still sharing facilities with the Stepney Baptist Church, our dream of a new building began materializing in May 1973 when we started our search for the guarantors for the mortgage. In the meantime, work began on the building during which time there came a waiting period for bank approval for the mortgage until certain requirements were met. Finally after overcoming a well problem came the time for Consecration Day which was on September 30, 1973. Many people helped in its preparation by clearing around the church and moving furniture and other equipment from their various

locations. Recently, a new stove was purchased for the kitchen because of the efforts of the ladies who planned the Harvest Festival. Still to be completed are some necessary paving, landscaping and outdoor lighting.

Not only did we see the completion of a church, but this year also saw the beginning of a new parsonage. After bids were sent out and plans were received, it was decided that the most acceptable was from Arbor Homes – a raised ranch with garage, which includes everything except a well and septic tank at a cost of \$31,000. This plan was approved by the Conference Committee, which deals with this area. Until the East Village house could be sold, we had to ask the Conference for \$35,000 to help with financing. The contract was signed and work began. The house, it was decided, will be hooked up to the existing wells at the church. Unfortunately, due to many delays, this construction is not yet completed.”

John Young was the Chairman of the Church Building Committee, and his full report for the year is as follows:

“The Church Building Committee has had a very frustrating, but most gratifying year. We have seen our new church blossom out of the ground into a beautiful new building.

Our frustrations were many as we watched the builder move slowly forward. Materials were late in arriving, and when they finally did arrive, the workmen were on another job and it took time to get them back at our building. Our worst problem was getting sufficient water to make the church operational. Last spring we had so much water we had to have thousands of yards of gravel placed in the drive area to make it passable for trucks and equipment. In the summer we drilled for water (twice) and could find none. While Kiddie Campus held its Open House one Saturday in late summer, we were busy setting and blasting both wells with dynamite with the hopes we could loosen enough rocks to get enough water to open the church.

Even though we were reasonably successful with our blasting and were able to get pumps installed, Kiddie Campus opened (late) with hoses to supply them with water.

The final frustration was, again, water; pipes in the attic area froze and cracked one cold day. When they thawed, we again had more water than we knew what to do with.

Hopefully, we now have a new building with most of the problems solved and that with some additional work on the grounds, parking lot driveway, and finishing touches on the interior, we will all have a church we can be proud of and place to come to and enjoy all the programs of the church.”

This summary of the years leading to the opening of our present building can only touch upon the incredible commitment of many individuals to see the mission and ministry enriched by the development of such a facility. I am proud that in this process we did our best to keep before us the ultimate purpose of our effort, which was to develop a caring, supportive mission-oriented fellowship of believers and seekers. May the next 25 years, and many more, be as productive as the first 25 years have been.

Sincerely,

L. David York  
Pastor, 1965 – 1974

***The Formation of the United Methodist Church of Monroe - 2013 Addendum  
As told by The Reverend L. David York, Pastor 1965 – 1974***

My most vivid memory of the construction of the church building is when there were about six of us standing near the two new wells with each of us holding three loaves of dynamite in our arms. The well blaster had arrived late, taken a metal rod and drilled through the dynamite so he could run a primer cord (a lot like a clothes line except it explodes!) through the loaves and then grouped them so we could each give them to him as he lowered them in to the well. For a few minutes it seemed that there was a thin line between life and the afterlife ! For the record, the blasting did eventually give us water for the new building.

This is symbolic in some ways of our life for the last 40 years ... this congregation has tried in a lot of ways to get things done. From Crop Walk to Habitat for Humanity to feeding the homeless in Bridgeport to Covenant to Care to Mozambique and to many other projects, our church members have tried to be up front and be in the action. We have reached out as we have seen needs within our congregation and community and where possible provided help as needed.

With that track record and the enthusiasm in our members now, it looks like the United Methodist Church of Monroe is set to charge ahead and take on current goals and look forward to future opportunities. May God bless us in our journey together.

L. David York

***Pastors of The United Methodist Church of Monroe***

1973 – 1974	Reverend L. David York
1974 – 1978	Reverend Dennis Wagner
1978 – 1981	Reverend Louis Leone
1981 – 1996	Reverend Frank Denton
1996 – 1999	Reverend Karen A. Burger
1999 – 2003	Reverend Cheryl Driscoll
2003 – 2004	Reverend Richard Griffin
2004 – 2005	Reverend Dr. Donald H. Kirkham
2005 – 2013	Reverend Gregg Gabor
2013 – Present	Pastor Martha Epstein

## ***Groundbreaking Service for the United Methodist Church of Monroe***

*Service as presented on Saturday, October 29, 1972*

### *Call to Worship*

How lovely is they dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, yea, faints for the courts of the Lord;  
my heard and flesh sing for joy to the living God.

### *Unison Prayer*

Almighty and everlasting God, be with us in this time. We gather to dedicate this land to your service that a new building may rise in which new life and joy may be given to us. We pray that you will renew each of us so that new strength and new courage will be ours. As we come to be within these walls, we ask that you come among us. May our lives always be open to the refreshing presence of your spirit. So lead us on, O Father. We know that the way is show to us by your son and we go forth now in the confidence and faith that you are with us forevermore. Amen.

*Scripture Reading:* Portions of the fourth chapter of Ephesians

### *The Groundbreaking Litany*

Reverend Matthew Gates, District Superintendent

It is right and proper that grounds to be used for service in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, should be formally broken for their special uses. As we break this ground, let us also dedicate ourselves anew to the services of almighty God and to the unfinished tasks before us. Upon you as members of this congregation rests the responsibility and privilege to cause a church to rise here which shall be devoted to the honor and worship of almighty God and to the glory of his son Jesus Christ.

### ***We break this ground today!***

Edmund Butler, Jr., for the Board of Trustees

That a church may rise here in response to the gifts we all have received and to the love which has blessed us all.

### ***We break this ground today!***

Reverend David York, Pastor

That a church may rise here where God's Word and the Sacraments become ever more real in our growing fellowship.

### ***We break this ground today!***

John Young, for the Building Committee

That a church may rise here where the weary and heavy-laden shall find that inner peach which the world can neither give nor take away.

### ***We break this ground today!***

Marion Ferris and Carol Steiner, for our Educational program

That a church may rise here where all children of all ages may grow in their love of God and learn to live in peace with all men.



***We break this ground today!***

Dorothy Bulkeley, for the Women's Society of Christian Service

That a church may rise here where God's presence is known and our lives and our homes reveal the impact of his love among us.

***We break this ground today!***

Helen Kadric, for the United Methodist Youth Fellowship

That a church may rise here where people who have needs may find them satisfied to the best of our human abilities.

***We break this ground today!***

**Everyone**

That a church may rise here where God's peace and joy becomes more of a reality in our lives and in our life together.

***We break this ground today!***

(All may use their shovels at this point)

Song: Kum Ba Yah

1. Kum ba yah, my Lord, Kum ba yah!  
Kum ba yah, my Lord, Kum ba yah!  
Kum ba yah, my Lord, Kum ba yah!  
Oh, Lord, Kum ba yah.
2. Someone's singing, Lord, Kum ba yah!
3. Repeat first verse

Leader: The Lord be with you.

**And with your spirit.**

Leader: Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, remembering the heritage that has been given us, we offer you our praise and thanksgiving.

**O Lord, hear our prayer.**

Leader: Help us to accept the privilege and responsibility of this your fellowship of faith; here may we share the unity of your spirit.

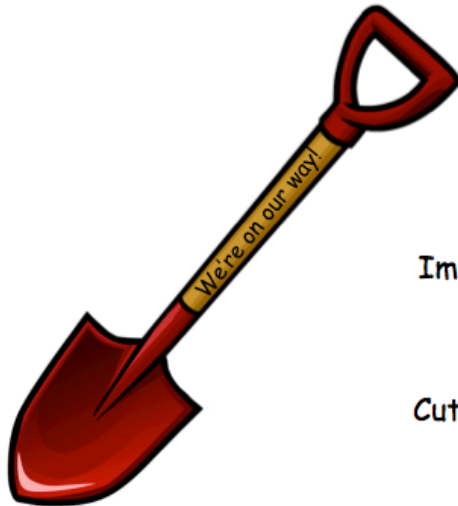
**So may we be fulfilled by your love.**

Leader: Enable us, by your grace, to dedicate ourselves this day to the task which we have assumed, and help us to always show our thankfulness in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**In all that we do, O Lord, be our strength and help forevermore. Amen.**

*Benediction*

Bring your shovel on  
October 29  
to the  
Groundbreaking for our new church!



Immediately  
following  
worship  
on  
Cutlers Farm

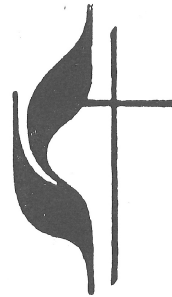
Come one -  
come all to the  
official groundbreaking  
for the United Methodist Church

*\* This is a reproduction of the flyer that announced the church's groundbreaking in 1972.*

## **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner Celebration**

*Celebration Bulletin as presented on Sunday, October 3, 1998*

### *TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY DINNER*



*United Methodist Church of Monroe  
515 Cutlers Farm Road  
Monroe, Connecticut 06468*

*The Rev. Karen Burger, Pastor*

*TWENTY-FIFTH  
ANNIVERSARY DINNER  
October 3, 1998  
5:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m.*

*Viewing of Historical Display*

*Greetings Mrs. Carol Steiner  
Membership and Evangelism Commission  
Chairperson*

*Departure*

*Invocation and Blessing  
The Rev. Karen Burger, Pastor*

*Dinner*

*Program  
(Adjourn to Education Wing  
at 6:15/8:15 p.m.)*

*Recognition of Special Guests*

*Recognition of East Village  
and Stepney Members*

*Slide Presentation by  
the Rev. L. David York*



## **40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service**

*Anniversary Service as presented on Sunday, October 27, 2013*



*The United Methodist Church of Monroe*

*1973 - 2013*

*40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration  
October 27, 2013*

**Order of Worship – 10 a.m.  
October 27, 2013  
Welcome to Our Worship Service!**

\* Denotes Standing, in body and/or spirit  
\* Please remember to silence your cell phones.

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PRELUDE** *"Processional in G Major"* J. Scanley

**LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES**

**CHORAL INTROIT** *"The Church In the Wildwood"*

**\* CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsively)** Rev. Frank Denton

Leader: Let the Church gather this morning as God's people of light;  
**People: Let us raise our prayers of thanksgiving to God Most High!**  
Leader: Let the Spirit of God come and dwell with us today.  
**People: Let the Spirit of the Lord come into our hearts in joy!**  
Leader: Let God's people rejoice in the 40 years of ministry in this place;  
**All: We raise our voices in praise of Almighty God, Leader and Light of all of those faithful we celebrate and honor today.**

**\*PROCESSIONAL HYMN** *"The Church's One Foundation"* # 545  
(We will be singing the Amen at the end of each hymn.)

**\*OPENING PRAYER** Rev. Frank Denton  
God of eternity, pour out your Spirit afresh upon your people in this place, with grace to remember and rejoice in your blessings in the past and courage to trust your power to shape our future, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**\*PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

**OLD TESTAMENT READINGS:**

Deuteronomy 11:18-28 Rev. Don Hoff  
Psalm 31:1-16 Response 1 UMH # 764 Dr. Don Kirkham

**CHOIR ANTHEM** *"Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee"*

**CHILDREN'S TIME** Rev. Dave York

**GOSPEL READING** Matthew 7:21-29 Pastor Martha Epstein

Reader: This is the word of God for the people of God.  
**People: Thanks be to God.**

**MESSAGE**

**“Sharing of our Past and Looking to the Future”**

**RESPONSE TO THE WORD**

**Affirmation of Faith**

**# 881**

**THE PASTORAL PRAYER**

**PRESENTATION OF OUR OFFERINGS**

**OFFERTORY**

*“Allegro” from Symphony in B*

**W. Boyce**

**\* DOXOLOGY**

**COMMUNION SERVICE OF WORD AND TABLE**

**\* HYMN OF PREPARATION**

*“Kum Ba Yah”*

**# 494**

**INVITATION AND UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Dr. Don Kirkham**

**Merciful God, on this morning, though gathered here in joy, we most humbly confess our failings and short comings. While celebrating 40 years of Christian service here, we know only too well that our own ministry could, should, be better. Too often we have not heard or neglected the call of the needy and the oppressed. We have let disagreement or pride seep into your Church far more frequently than we should have, and have let too much stand in between each other and our commitment to You. We pray for Your forgiveness, trusting in Your love and grace toward Your people. In Christ’s name. Amen.**

**WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

**Leader: Hear the good news: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners; that proves God’s love toward us. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!**

**People: In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!**

**All: Glory to God. Amen.**

**THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

**Leader 1: The Lord be with you.**

**People: And also with you.**

**Leader 1: Lift up your hearts.**

**People: We lift them up to the Lord.**

**Leader 1: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.**

**People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

**Leader 1: It is right, and a good and joyful thing,  
always and everywhere to give thanks to You,  
Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth,  
God of Abraham and Sarah,**

**Leader 2: God of Miriam and Moses,  
God of Joshua and Deborah,**

**Leader 3: God of Ruth and David,**

Leader 4: God of the priests and the prophets,  
 God of Mary and Joseph,  
 God of the apostles and the martyrs,  
 Leader 5: God of the hands that crafted this sanctuary,  
 God of those who have worshipped here and in the Stepney and East  
 Village churches.  
 Leader 2: God of our own mothers and fathers,  
 God of our children to all generations.  
 Leader 3: It is You who stand steadfast in all of our years,  
 You who guides Your Church through the ages,  
 It is You, most Holy Lord, who has upheld our ministry.  
 Leader 4: And so, with your people on earth and all the company of  
 Heaven, we praise your name and join their unending  
 hymn:  
**People: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are  
 full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes  
 in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**  
**Leader 1:** Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ,  
 Whom you sent in the fullness of time to be a light to the nations.  
 You scatter the proud in the imagination of their hearts and have mercy  
 on those who fear you from generation to generation.  
 You put down the mighty from their thrones and exalt those of low  
 degree. You fill the hungry with good things, and the rich you send empty  
 away.  
 Your own son came among us as a servant, to be Emmanuel, your  
 presence with us.  
 He humbled himself in obedience to your will and freely accepted death  
 on a cross.  
 By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to  
 your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with  
 us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.  
 On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave  
 thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:  
 "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in  
 remembrance of me."  
 When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it  
 to his disciples, and said:  
 "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured  
 out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as  
 you drink it, in remembrance of me." And so, in remembrance of these  
 Your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and  
 thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering  
 for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.  
**People: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**  
 Leader 2: Pour out Your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread  
 and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may  
 be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.  
 Leader 3: Renew our communion with all of your Saints, especially those whom we  
 hold dear in our celebrations, and raise in our hearts here today.

- Leader 4: Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, strengthen us to run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the Pioneer and Perfecter of our faith.
- Leader 5: By Your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.
- All Clergy: Through Your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever. **Amen.**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

### **GIVING OF THE BREAD AND CUP**

(This morning, communion will be by intinction -- receiving the bread and then dipping the bread into the chalice. As directed by the usher, please come down the center aisle and return by the side aisles. If you prefer, the bread and cup will be brought to you.)

### **CLOSING PRAYER: (In Unison)**

**Leader 3: Eternal God, we give You thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of Your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**\*CLOSING HYMN** *"Blest Be the Tie that Binds"* **# 557**

**\*BENEDICTION**

**\*BENEDICTION RESPONSE** *"Bind Us Together"* **TFWS # 2226**

**POSTLUDE** *"Psalm"* **B. Marcello**



**JOIN US IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL FOR OUR  
40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION LUNCHEON**

*All reminders/announcements should be submitted to the church office by Wednesday at 5 pm for inclusion in the Sunday bulletin. Additional updates can be given to the Pastor on Sunday morning for announcements time.*

*Offering envelopes are available in the narthex. Pledges can also be paid through your on-line banking service. In addition, a brochure with information on electronic giving is available in the narthex.*

*Infant and Toddler Care are available during our worship service in our nursery, attended by Marsha Cohen.*

**Martha Epstein, Pastor  
Marilyn Jones, Organist/Pianist  
Julie Chrislip, Choir Director/Secretary  
Rose Aiello, Lay Leader  
Bill Florin, Church Council Chairman**

**Our Service Leaders for today:  
Ushers: Steve and Heather Arnold, Gary Chrislip, Mike Cahill  
Greeter: Dotti Hossler  
Acolytes: Juliana Epstein, Henry Denton**

*Church Office Hours are Tuesday and Thursday 9:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. or by appointment.  
For any other time, please call the office and leave a message.  
Pastor Martha is generally in the office Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday mornings.  
Please check the updated calendar on the website for changes to the schedule.  
For a visit or pastoral care emergency, please call or email Pastor Martha.*

**UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF MONROE  
515 CUTLERS FARM ROAD  
MONROE, CT 06468  
(203) 268-8395  
Parsonage (203) 268-8891  
www.umcmonroe.org  
E-mail: umc@umcmonroe.org  
PastorMartha@verizon.net**

**"WE ARE A COMPASSIONATE FELLOWSHIP OF BELIEVERS  
WHO SEEK TO CARE FOR AND TRANSFORM THE WIDER MONROE COMMUNITY  
THROUGH OUR LOVE OF OTHERS AND OUR LOVE OF GOD."**

## ***Christian Education***



Our Sunday morning book and Bible studies have become an important part of the fellowship and faith development in our church. Our very first study inspired our young people to international mission. The fruits of the Spirit were obvious with that one.

We haven't always agreed and loved each book, but all have led to discussions that allowed us to explore and challenge our understandings and beliefs. When the United Methodist Church tells the world that we have open hearts and minds, I think of our studies as a perfect example of that ideal. If you are not participating, you should consider joining the next study. You will learn and grow, guaranteed.

Submitted by: Bill Florin, October 2013

## ***Christmas Caroling***



Several years ago, we started an annual tradition that has become a highlight of the holiday season. Originally the caroling was targeted as a missions effort designed for the children of our church to gather and visit several of our church family shut-ins to sing carols together. Over time, it became so popular that we started carpooling and often had to sing from the front porch since we had too many people to fit into a house.

Coordinated by Leigh Gray, she would contact 4-5 shut-ins to arrange our travels. We would meet at the Grays' to form our carpools and get directions to the series of shut-in homes. Some years we went to assisted living facilities (if we were visiting someone from our church family), but usually we just showed up on our church family member's doorstep to share the spirit of the Christmas season through carols.

We were fortunate to have Bill Schmalkuche with his portable keyboard to provide accompaniment and a book of carols ranging from traditional Christmas hymns to contemporary Santa songs. Over the years, Bill's caroling songbooks were enhanced (thanks to Kathy Schmalkuche) and provided plenty of options for our singers and our shut-ins who often made special requests and sang along with us.

Following our caroling, we would meet back at the Grays for pizza and a grab bag gift exchange for the kids. It's hard to tell who enjoyed it most! "Joy to the World"!

Submitted by: Sheryl Rajpolt, October 2013

## ***Friendship Circle and My Fair Ladies***



The Friendship Circle has been around since before the merger of the two churches. Since our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary the group has lost many of their cherished members. When Lois Grich got sick and later died, the group stopped meeting for a period of time. The reason for this was partially because they no longer had a place to meet and keep all their supplies, and partly because the core members were experiencing health difficulties.

In 2007, some of the ladies decided to meet at the church, using the table in the parlor as their work table and transporting their supplies to their meeting every other Monday. The trustees of the church were made aware of the difficulties the ladies were experiencing with their supplies and set up a storage area for them in the basement of the church, making the functioning of the group much easier. It also allowed them to take donations and make many supplies available to church members and other church activities including the Sunday school.

After Carol and Rich Steiner retired, the group that would meet at Carol's house to make things for the fair also stopped meeting. It was decided this group was too enjoyable to lose, so they began to meet in the evening at the church on the same Monday that the Friendship circle meetings are held and the two groups started to coordinate their projects. Many members attend the meeting that fits their schedule and sometimes both meetings. The groups have grown and are a wonderful time of fun and fellowship. We also do bigger projects for the church (mailings, etc.) and outside projects for a donation to the church. The meetings are open to people that are not members of the church and we have come to know and enjoy the fellowship of new people.

After Kiddie Campus was closed in June of this year, we moved all our supplies to the main level and currently use the closet and half of the storage room that are open to the fellowship hall. This has enabled us to better organize our supplies and makes it easier to share them with the other groups at church. At the present time, the group is setting up a lending library of craft/do-it-yourself (DIY) books and look forward to expanding our outreach further.

We continue to do projects for Wicke Health Center and to make things for the annual Harvest Fest. The next project is to start a once a month craft time on a Saturday afternoon for the youth of the church. Our ultimate goal is to continue to be a help to the church and to further the fellowship afforded to us by this wonderful group of ladies.

Submitted by: Bobbie Grant, October 2013

## ***Kiddie Campus***



At a fall 1964 meeting of the governing board of East Village United Methodist Church, permission was given to Janet Eldred and a small group of church members to establish a nursery school to serve the East Village/Monroe Center/Stevenson sections of Monroe and the White Hills section of Shelton. Five church members, including longtime chairman Grace Stevens, loaned the school \$50.00 each and East Village Day Nursery School was opened in the education building of the church. According to the best records located by Bobbie Grant, Former Administrator, the school started on January 25, 1965, with approximately ten students. At that time, wages were paid if there was any money left after other expenses were paid.

The school grew in enrollment and stature and became one of the most respected nursery schools in the area offering Monroe's first extended-day program as well as a premier Pre-K program.

In June 2013, after a 48-year run providing Monroe children a loving first-school experience, Kiddie Campus closed its doors after experiencing back-to-back years of declining enrollment and a projected downward trend due to Monroe's changing demographics.

Submitted by: Bill Schmalkuche, October 2013

The *Kiddie Campus* logo was designed by Jean Tottle, circa 1971

*Kiddie Campus Directors:*

Janet Elred, founding teacher	1965 - 1968
Jearline Comeau Lucas	1968 - 1971
Mary McLean	1971 - 1975
Marilyn Frank	1975 - 1982
Jan Dougherty	1982 - 1983
Diane Matthews	1983 - 1988
Carol Patoka	1988 - 1995
Wendy Kohm	1995 - 2000
Lorraine Wagner/Susan Nikola	2000 - 2003
Lorraine Wagner	2003 - 2005
Deborah Finney	2005 - 2012
Lisa Thigpen	2012 - 2013

*Chairmen:*

Grace Stevens (Eight years)  
Ruth Davidson (12+ years)  
Cheryl Pavia  
John Toumine  
David York  
Chuck Schneider  
Bob Germain  
Donna McGough  
Leisa Ewing  
Bill Schmalkuche

*Administrator/Treasurer:*

Unknown	1965 - ????
Sharon Major	???? - 1971
Bobbie Grant	1971 - 2000

*2012 – 2013 Teachers:*

Roseanne Ciacetta  
Tracy Nalaboffi  
Wendy Santimays  
Lisa Thigpen

## ***Membership and Evangelism***

This committee works so well it seems that it is effortless. Nothing can be further from the truth. Volunteers like Gail Mas have contributed many hours calling shut-ins, sending cards, making home visits and helping with food preparation for several funerals at our church. Tammy Cahill has led the coffee hour refreshments which gives us all an opportunity to chat with old friends and meet those interested in joining our church.

Tammy Cahill and Kathy Schmalkuche also keep our church on the Internet by adding several items each week to our Facebook page. Bob Griffith is working hard to give our website a new look and is busy getting the PowerPoint presentations for the Sunday service to run smoothly.

In the past the Membership and Evangelism committee has focused on current members and is now including projects to encourage new members. Full participation of our congregants is needed for these projects to be successful. Sheryl Rajpolt has done much behind the scenes efforts in evangelism and is always a source of new ideas.

New members are always welcome to the committee. Vivian Harris stopped in to one meeting and has attended all of them ever since. She changes the signs in the front of the church and is the person who suggested increasing the number of tables available to sit at during coffee hour. It may seem like a small thing but her idea has increased the friendships of many of our members.

Submitted by: Annette Griffith, October 2013

## **Music Program**



The United Methodist Church of Monroe is known for its fine music program. The church has been blessed with numerous talented musicians. Through the years we have had the adult choir that sings during worship services. They also have provided special music at funerals and weddings along with our wonderful church organist. They have also graced us with beautiful Christmas cantatas. Several people have shown their talents with vocal and instrumental solos. The youth have formed a band that has played during worship services. The youth also show their talents during the Trim-the-Tree luncheon. The children's choir has performed during worship and Christmas pageants. Our church has a lovely set of hand chimes that have been used during services. Our musicians are dedicated, talented, and loving people who use their talents in helping others praise God.

Submitted by: Julie Chrislip, October 2013

### **2013 Choir Members**

Choir Director	Julie Chrislip
Church Organist/Pianist	Marilyn Jones
	Rose Aiello
	Heather Arnold
	Laura Bartlett
	Tammy Cahill
	Patti Early
	Bill Florin
	Russ Gray
	Dotti Hossler
	Anke Mewes
	Sheryl Rajpolt
	Dave Rupp
	Emma Rupp
	Hana Rupp
	Bill Schmalkuche
	Sue Simmons
	Anita Stabler-Hussey
	Betsy Sword
	Carl Sword
	Dave York
	Sue York

## ***Our Church Organ***

*Rogers Organ Company Providence 330 – 1973  
Serial # 33599*

When I arrived at the church, we had an electronic organ. The organ was built by Matthew Yacashin and Michael Petreycik, the organist at Stepney, from parts bought from Radio Shack that were mailed to the Parsonage. Russell Ely was a member in Stepney and had a cabinet shop and built the case for the organ. That organ was the one used by our church both in Stepney and in the new building until the Pennsylvania organ arrived. Sue York was the organist, but agreed to play only until we found someone else. Then Linda Wesche was our organist for a couple years until she was hired by the Lutherans, her home church. Then we found Debbie Heitzke, but she played only the piano.

In 1984, Professor Brown, a retired professor from Brown University, died. Ray Waterman, one of his students, was the executor of his estate which included an organ in his home in Levittown, PA. An attorney for the estate required that the organ should go to the highest bidder. Our trustees submitted a bid and we acquired the organ. In the spring of 1985, a team headed by Roger Cedergren went to Pennsylvania, loaded the organ on a U-Haul and brought it to Monroe. In addition to Roger, the group included Ted and Jim Marchant, Peter Sword, and me. Ray Waterman and Vinnie Bragaw also made the journey.

A technician from the organ company set it up and tuned it, and it was played on Easter Sunday, April 7, 1985.

My wife, Charlene, became the organist. Debbie Heitzke continued as pianist, and the two of them enjoyed working together, sometimes playing duets, especially at Easter and Christmas. Several years later, after our volunteer choir director, Elliot Doane, left the area, Charlene also directed the choir.

Along with the organ and piano, we had a choir, bell choir, and children's choir. Music was a strong part of our church's worship.

Submitted by: Frank Denton, October 2013

*United Methodist Church of Monroe  
Rogers Organ Company Providence 330 1973*





## ***Trim-the-Tree Lunch***



Our annual lunch really highlights the Christmas season at the UMC of Monroe! Held on the first or second Sunday of Advent, a potluck lunch is shared, followed by the children decorating a large evergreen tree that has been erected in the front of the sanctuary. For many years, a live evergreen tree was donated by a church member but due to safety concerns, an artificial one was donated by the Rajpolt family. The ornaments used are Chrismons (ancient Christian symbols) originally made in 1998 by families in the church from an idea shared by Kathy Nissenbaum. During the summer of 2013, our own ladies' groups have repaired and/or replaced many of the original Chrismons. While the tree decorating is taking place, our own youth have often shared their talents on various musical instruments. The day brings a wonderful celebration of fun and fellowship!

Submitted by: Rose Aiello, October 2013

## ***Youth Activities***

Working with the youth is one of the best ways to have fun and learn about the Bible. As a parent, it is refreshing to see your son/daughter is like every other teenager. You are not alone. At the Corn Maze one year, thorough instructions are given "... don't cut through the corn, careful of other customers, don't cut others off, don't bump into others:.... Two seconds later a youth tramples through the corn knocking one or two stalks down to get to another lane. As a chaperone, you think "Thank you, Lord, it's not my kid this time!"

Everyone gathers with a token gift. Parents answer the question, "Who is riding with who?" Kids yell out who they want to ride with. Cars are packed and the caravanning to destination # 1 begins. Does everyone know the way? As we arrive at the house, everyone piles out of the vans/cars/trucks. Bill plays his keyboard, Kathy distributes the song books (alphabetized and indexed), and someone holds the flashlight so Bill can see the musical notes. Some recipients appear happy, others somewhat perplexed. One member at a nursing facility was heard to exclaim "well, they're not very good are they?" In some mysterious way, our lack of professional training and ability only adds to the enjoyment. What we lack in talent we make up for with our enthusiasm and our palpable love for our shut-ins and the most joyous season. After finishing with "We Wish you a Merry Christmas" we head to house # 2. Afterwards, we finish back at the Gray's for pizza, punch, Christmas goodies, and fellowship, while the kids enjoy a rousing Yankee gift exchange (kids get a gift and can either keep it or "exchange" it).

As our church youth grow, they want to be included in the "adult" activities like moving chairs - until they actually move chairs.

Teaching Sunday school to middle schoolers keeps you on your toes. You learn the stories of the Bible as you try to make the characters come alive. As you describe the significance, you see the light bulb go on. Crafting can be fun for some and can help to drive home a point, while others prefer a good racing game in Fellowship Hall. At the end of the year you hope they've learned that Noah was **not** one of the 12 disciples and how Boaz, Naomi, and Ruth fit into Scripture.

Submitted by: Steve Arnold, October 2013

## ***Youth Involvement in Our Church's Life***

In addition to Sunday School, our youth have been very involved in youth service and other activities throughout the years. Depending on the number of youth and the distribution of ages, we've had different activities to appeal to the different interests. A few of the youth activities are highlighted below:

- Middle School Youth Group -- Youth group meetings were held on Sunday afternoons to primarily focus on fellowship and relationship building. Activities included setting up a youth Facebook page, a pizza party, and a trip to a corn maze.
- Confirmation class activities -- The confirmation class often included several high school youth and their mentors within the church, led by the pastor, to explore their own faith as well as learn about other faiths and service within the church and our community. "Field trips" included visits to other churches, synagogues, and places like King's Pantry and service activities such as serving sandwiches under the bridge in Bridgeport.
- Music involvement -- Our youth have been involved in a wide variety of worship music activities. For many years, our youth would play piano and other band instruments during the Christmas Trim a Tree Sunday, while others were decorating the tree. The youth are also often leading the music for the Christmas Pageant. Other youth music activities have included a mixed (youth and adult) Easter orchestra (organized and led by Laura Gabor) as well as traditional (band instrument solos) and contemporary (rock guitar, et al) instrumental music during our worship service. We've also had a children's choir in the past and have had a few high school youth participate in our adult choir on occasion.
- Church Service -- Our youth (especially middle school and high school students) are very active in helping out with a variety of church-sponsored service activities, including the annual Easter egg hunt, Vacation Bible School, Souper Bowl of Caring, Mini-missions, King's Pantry sandwich making, Covenant to Care giving and many church chores/work day events (including yard work, garbage collection, and even window washing) et al.
- Community Service events -- Our youth have also been actively involved in several community service events where they have taken leadership roles, our high school students acting as team captains for both the Relay for Life and the Crop Walk; our middle school class driving a scholarship bake sale during the church shredding event fundraiser; and even our elementary youth participated several years ago in a Monroe-wide "Take a Stand" (town-wide lemonade stand) event where they set up at our church where 50% of the proceeds went to Monroe-designated charities and our kids gave their 50% to our church-sponsored charities.
- Emmaus -- Our church has been very active the past few years with the South Central Emmaus team (Christian high school retreat) where several adults and high school youth have been involved in the leadership team as well as sponsoring several candidates from our church and community. In addition to our participating youth, several others in our church have assisted with prayers and meal preparation during the Emmaus weekends.
- High school/middle school Sunday School programs -- Over the past few years, our middle and high school Sunday School classes have increased in both attendance and participation in the broader church community. In addition to the service activities mentioned earlier, our middle and high school classes have engaged in faith building activities in Sunday School and have also

been very active in our worship services. The middle school students are especially known for their worship skits and readings and our high school youth have participated as worship and communion ushers, liturgists, greeters as well as playing the roles of Joseph and Mary in the Christmas pageant each year.

Overall, our youth are an active and vibrant part of our church family and we hope they will keep coming back for years and years to come.

Submitted by: Sheryl Rajpolt, October 2013

## **Missions and Community Outreach - Faith In Action – 40 Years of Service**

*Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you a drink?  
Or a stranger and helped you? Or naked and clothe you? When did we ever see you  
sick or in prison and visit you? And the Lord said, "When you did this for one  
of the least of these followers of mine, you did it for me!" Matthew 25:37-40*



The members of the United Methodist Church of Monroe have answered individually and together, with their inspired and enthusiastic service to the local and global communities.

Faith In Action, a collage on 3 walls in our church building, represents 48 missions and opportunities for service. It is a tribute to all who have given their time and talents over the past 40 years.

Submitted by: Betsy Sword, October 2013

American Red Cross Blood Drives  
Art Auction  
Bible Studies  
Bishop Wicke Health Center at Wesley Village  
Boy Scouts  
Choir: Bell/Chime  
Choir: Children's  
Choir: Weekly  
Christmas Caroling  
Church World Service (Blankets+)  
Community Ecumenical Worship Services  
Community Outreach  
Council of Churches  
Covenant to Care  
CROP Walk  
Family Game Night  
Food Ministries: St. Luke's Food Bank  
Girl Scouts  
Habitat for Humanity  
Harvest Festival  
Heifer Project  
Holy Week Services  
Kiddie Campus Preschool  
King's Pantry

Ladies' Group: Friendship Circle  
Ladies' Group: My Fair Ladies  
Lobster Dinners  
Mini-Missions  
Monroe Food Pantry  
Mozambique  
Music Ministry (Spirit Song)  
Paper Shredding  
Passover Seder Dinner  
Pivot Ministries  
Relay for Life  
Service Auction  
Souper Bowl of Caring  
Spaghetti Dinners  
Sunday School  
"Take A Stand" Lemonade Stand  
The Monroe Summer Show  
Trim-A-Tree Luncheon  
UMCOR  
United Methodist Men  
United Methodist Women  
Vacation Bible School (VBS)  
Vegetarian Dinners  
Walk to Emmaus

## **Auctions**

### **FUNdraising**

Over the years, we sponsored a wide variety of events designed to raise not only funds, generally to support missions near and far, but also to promote fun/fellowship in our church and the extended church community. Two of these events were auctions that were held for several consecutive years ...

#### ***The UMC Monroe Art Auction***



Generally held on a Saturday night in the early Spring (often early March), the Art Auction was a “classy”, adults-only event targeted at drawing friends and even strangers from the broader community to join our church family for an evening of food, fun, and a live auction. Why come and invite others to join us?

- The art is of the highest quality and all artwork is custom framed with the finest craftsmanship.
- It will be an art show as well as a sale of many well-known contemporary artists.
- It will include fine art, sports, music, and entertainment memorabilia.
- Most starting bids range from \$45 to \$300.
- There is literally something for everyone’s taste.
- Even if you don’t buy any art, you will be able to see some fabulous pieces and learn a little about art while enjoying an evening with friends.

During the afternoon of the event, we would transform our sanctuary into a “museum-like” arts display/auction house including fine art, sports memorabilia, music memorabilia (think autographed photos of sports and music greats) and more. Facilitated by an outside auction house, we would often influence the selection of pieces and assist with the set up on floor-lamp lit table displays around the sanctuary. Then the auction house would supply an auctioneer, supported by art “handlers” and financial collectors from our church family. When our “guests” arrived, they would be registered and given a numbered bidders paddle. Then they would enjoy an hour of preview time, during which they were invited to sample a variety of hot and cold hors d’oeuvres and desserts (again prepared by our church family). Our guests were encouraged to take notes in an auction program which listed all the pieces and their opening bids... as well as local businesses’ advertising to help us drive additional sponsorship and missions funding. Then the auction would begin where the auctioneer would give a brief overview of each piece before the bidding would begin. Fun was had by all until everything was “going, going, gone”. The event was generally co-sponsored by our missions team (Leigh Gray, as one of the members of the missions team, was the primary coordinator of the overall event & Carl Sword often oversaw the food preparation) and our trustees team (John Rajpolt led the finance table for several years) as well as many members of our adults and high school youth who assisted with the set up, clean up, advertising, invitations, and overall support of this successful event.

## ***The UMC Monroe Service Auction***



The service event was an internal, silent auction church bidding event designed to raise funds and fellowship among our church family. We would solicit services from church members who were willing to offer a talent or service to others (within our church family). Then we would prepare an auction display board and booklet to describe and promote the services within our church. Over a three week period, we would solicit silent auction bids before church and during coffee hour on Sundays (including proxy bidders if someone was unable to participate on the final bidding Sunday) and the highest bid would win the service. Then the two parties (donator and winning bidder) would work out the details re: the delivery of the service(s).

Originally held annually, and then held every other year, alternating with the UMC Live Art Auction, the UMC of Monroe Service Auction became one of our most fun (and most profitable) events in our church. The following sample list of donated services (from several auctions over the years) demonstrates the variety of gifts and talents that our church family was willing to share. The services were all auctioned to church family members only so it was a great opportunity for fellowship as well as FUNdraising to support our church's efforts to do God's work.

### ***Sample of services offered:***

- Variety of Dinners – hosted or delivered – (Chili, Italian, Gourmet, Clam Bake/Lobster, Potluck, Ethnic, etc.)
- Baked Goods delivered (Cookies, Breads, Cheesecakes or other home baked goodies) each Month (or every quarter) for a Year
- Vacation Spots: Weekend in Vermont, Lakeside/Summer or Winter Cottage Weekend in NH, Vacation Condos/Timeshares, Weekend in NYC, others
- Hosted Party/Outings: (Pool/BBQ, Ice Skating, Golf, Boating, Mystery Party, others)
- Lessons (Swimming, Music, Golf, Tennis, other...)
- Photograph(s), Videos, or Scrapbook of your Family or Kids or Event
- Household Help (Child Care, Pet sitting, House sitting, Chauffeur/Airport transportation services)
- Handy Work/Professional Services (Painting, Wallpaper, Powerwashing, Gardening/ Yard work, Quilting/Sewing, Crafts, Legal/Accounting services, Technology services, etc.)

Here were the instructions for the bidding Sundays ... Review the Service Auction display for a description of the services being offered. Then, select one or more service(s) and sign your name and phone number next to the price you wish to bid. Of course, others may bid against you, so be sure to check the bid sheets frequently. The winning bidder(s) will be notified during the week following the bid closing. Remember every dollar earned benefits our church and every service rendered leads to more fellowship opportunities within our UMC community.

In several years, we dedicated our service auction proceeds to benefit the UMC of Monroe stewardship efforts. In other years, we focused on benefiting missions. In either case, our church family was always very generous both in offering services as well as in bidding for them and it was a great way to deepen our relationships with others in the church family. The service auction events were co-chaired by Sheryl Rajpolt and Leigh Gray, but the entire church community was critical to its years of success.

Submitted by: Sheryl Rajpolt, October 2013

## **Church World Service (CWS)**



Church World Service was born in 1946, in the aftermath of World War II. Seventeen denominations came together to form an agency "to do in partnership what none of us could hope to do as well alone." What was the mission? Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick, comfort the aged, shelter the homeless. More than 65+ years later the mission remains and the UMC of Monroe is a part of it!

## **Blankets+ Program**



**CHURCH WORLD SERVICE  
BLANKETS+**

The "Blankets+ Program" is also a special mission opportunity of CWS. Congregations and groups across the U.S. hold Blankets+ events, providing funds to help people in need around the world. Here at the UMC of Monroe we have participated for many years. We have used Mother's Day as our "Blanket Sunday" wherein individuals donate \$5 toward a blanket in memory or in honor of loved ones. The funds are then used by CWS to purchase the blankets at a very low rate and then distribute those blankets around the world in the wake of a disaster. The Blankets+ program also encompasses the former "Tool Kits" or "Tools+". We have often participated by using Father's Day as our collection time for funds to cover tools and seeds to replant fields, install wells for clean and safe water, and training.

Submitted by: Rose Aiello, October 2013

## **CROP Hunger Walk**



Since 1969, CROP Hunger Walks are "viewed by many as the granddaddy of charity walks" and the UMC of Monroe has participated in the Bridgeport CROP walk for many, many years. The event is held on the first Sunday in May. Babies in strollers, children, adults and runners have participated. There are currently two distances that can be walked but all result in the same goal of raising donations and awareness of hunger, even locally. We join with the many other Connecticut and United States communities to help raise much needed funding for feeding the hungry.

Submitted by: Rose Aiello, October 2013

## **Easter Egg Hunt**



One of our "under age 10" children's events is the annual Easter Egg Hunt. Usually held a week before Easter, a breakfast is served, a craft is provided and then the "big" hunt begins. Church members have donated the plastic eggs over the last few years, as well as nut-free candy to fill them all. Our older youth assist in hiding the eggs on the church premises and the children are divided and sent out in groups based on age. A few years back we opened the event to the community and have had increased participation. Other than it sometimes being pretty chilly for hiding eggs, everyone has a great time!

Submitted by: Rose Aiello, October 2013



## Game Night



### GAME NIGHT

**WHAT:** UMC Monroe Family Game Night

**WHEN:** Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month  
6:00 – 8:00 pm

**WHERE:** 515 Cutlers Farm Road

Come out for a great time ... show your Pictionary prowess! Adults and elementary school ages and up. Invite a friend! Bring a game to play and a snack to share. For questions, please contact the church office at 335.268.8385.

“Times up!”, loud laughter, and “Wow, how did you guess that?” are some of the sounds commonly heard at Game Night, held the third Saturday of the month in Fellowship Hall.

A multi-generational group of church members and the occasional visitor enjoy playing games and fellowship. Games like Pictionary, Scattergories, Name 5, Guesstures, and backgammon are played.

It's difficult to act out 'crocodile' or 'safety pin'! Drawing skill is not required for Pictionary and may actually be a deterrent as simple lines and circles are just as effective as a mini masterpiece. The only requirement is the desire to have fun and laugh a lot! In addition to standard board games, old games updated with an electronic element like “Heads Up” are popular.

Submitted by: Steve Arnold, October 2013

## Harvest Festival



The Harvest Fest has become an annual event that has been held since the church moved to Cutlers Farm Road. The fall seems to be an appropriate time to celebrate with the community! The proceeds from the earlier festivals were used to outfit the church with much-needed furnishings and appliances for the kitchen. As time has gone on, proceeds have been used for the many missions of the church. Early planning allows plenty of time for preparation, so once the date is set (generally the first Saturday in October), its full steam ahead! Both the Friendship Circle and My Fair Ladies begin to formulate ideas to create many lovely items to sell. There's also plenty of fellowship time during these sessions. The dedicated groups meet faithfully every other Monday all year in completing their projects in time for the Fest.

The “famous” apple crumb pies have traditionally been a mainstay of the Fest. Early on, the pies were made a day or two prior to the event day. It was a lot of work making 200 +/- pies in those two days and then spending another full day running the event. For the last several years, a group of 20+ individuals (including children) meet on a Saturday two weeks before the Fest and prepare the pies to freeze. (We have had to purchase 3 freezers for storing the 150+ pies.) About 60 of the frozen pies are then baked the day before the event, allowing patrons to purchase a baked pie to enjoy right away or purchase frozen for the upcoming holidays. Vermont cheddar cheese is purchased in large blocks and cut into smaller amounts for purchase. Can't have apple pie without a slice of cheese!

Our luncheon now consists of smoked pulled pork and ribs, thanks to the expertise of Quintin Brantley, former owner of Duke's Smokehouse Restaurant in Monroe. The roasts are smoked and slow cooked with volunteers helping to “pull” the pork. The ribs are cooked early on the Fest morning, starting at about 6:00 a.m. Hot dogs, baked beans and coleslaw are also served. In 2011, baked potatoes were added to the menu and served with various toppings. In both 2011 and 2012, they sold out! In 2013, we added sweet potatoes. The luncheon has now become as popular as the pies! Another long-time treat are the freshly made apple fritters. The apples are prepped the day before but each batch of fritter batter has to be made fresh. They are delicious! In 2013, we added Fried Oreos. Great for those with a sweet tooth!



The Fest has expanded to include a children's corner that offers games, prizes, crafts, face painting and moon bounce. Many of our teens are able to assist in this area, too. We have had tag sales, used book sales or children's used toys & book sales as a way to bring the community in. In addition to our own craft tables, in 2008 we opened up the fellowship hall to other craft vendors for a small fee. In 2008, we added live bluegrass music. The musicians play in the dining hall (sanctuary) and keep the crowd entertained. They help to create an all-around festive atmosphere.

It takes many volunteers to make this a successful event and each year we have a wonderful time celebrating our church "in the woods" with the rest of the community.

Submitted by: Rose Aiello, October 2013

### ***King's Pantry***



The Great Commandment "Love thy Neighbor as thyself" --- this has always been a tough one, maybe the hardest one but God meant it. God knows it's not easy. Psalm 143 states, "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God."

When we first heard about the many good works Kings Pantry was doing in 2000, specifically feeding the hungry every week, the UMC Missions group wanted to help. As we explained what we would be doing someone said, "Isn't it nice that we can help them out?" The woman was somewhat surprised with the reply, "I think it's going to be the other way around". Yes, it was nice to help and it was a goal of ours to give the Kings Pantry family a day off now and then but from the beginning there was the feeling that it was Kings Pantry showing us the way. And it came to be – we learned another way to serve, a way to share God's love, to be more thankful, and we made new friends in Christ.

About 4 times a year, the church made 250 sandwiches which were transported over to Kings Pantry. As our relationship grew, we were asked to handle the Sunday feeding mission on our own once a year when the Kings Pantry team was away at their church conferences. With organization, many hands, and a wonderful team spirit, we did great!

Several confirmation classes from 2000 – 2012 made a visit to Kings Pantry's home church, Triumphant Ministries, to experience a vibrant worship service and then joined them in passing out sandwiches as well.

Submitted by: Leigh Gray, October 2013

### **Methodist Monthly Mini-Missions (MMMM)**



In 2004, Max (10) and Sam Gray (8) set up a program with members of the church family and local outreach groups, such as the Monroe Food Bank, to gather donated food items such as food, coats, mittens, and hygiene projects. They devised a monthly calendar of contributions in which they ask the church family to place donated items in a special wagon at the church. The wagon was donated by Pastor Griffin and held a prominent position right in our front foyer. Once a month you'd see the children pulling the wagon out to a car to transport it to where it was needed most. Recipients beyond the Monroe Food Pantry included Kings Pantry and the Bridgeport Rescue Mission.

Max and Sam continued this work until they left for college in 2012 at which time they passed the reins on to Matt and Michael Hornak. Our donations continue and are primarily focused on food products including healthy after-school snacks, cookies and cake mixes, etc.

Submitted by: Leigh Gray, October 2013

### **Mozambique**



The Mozambique, Africa mission has been the international mission of our church since 2002. Annette Griffith was the Volunteer in Mission to Mozambique from the beginning and in 2008 our then pastor, Rev. Gregg Gabor, traveled with the New York Annual Conference team to Beira to work on the Bishops Parsonage and Conference Center. In 2011, Annette was joined by Quintin Brantley and two youth, Alex Arnold and Sam Gray. Our church supported the youth with fund raisers to help pay for the expensive 24 hour flight to the east African country on the other side of the world. It was a life changing experience for all. Annette now serves as the Mozambique Connection Co-chair and works on Mozambique projects throughout the year. The current project is the Gondola Training Center, which will host community workshops such as the one in November 2013 which will teach agricultural best practices to representatives throughout the Northern Conference of the United Methodist Church in addition to those from the local community. Other sessions will train local pastors to lead new churches in Mozambique where Christianity is growing rapidly.

Submitted by: Annette Griffith, October 2013

### **Paper Shredding**



Not everyone saw the paper shredding fundraiser as an obviously great idea. Annette Griffith had heard about it and brought the idea to UMCM. She also planned and managed the very first event. If there has ever been an example of one person making a difference, this was it. Since then, the twice-yearly activity has turned into a valued service to the community. It is also one of the few fundraisers for which customers thank us each time we hold it and ask when the next event will be. As we thought about it, we even made the connection to environmental stewardship. After all, all that shredded paper gets recycled.

Most importantly, the shredding has allowed our church family to help families dealing with the loss of a loved one and check at least one thing off of their list of concerns. At every event we get at least one family that had been tasked with cleaning up and disposing of all of the financial records of a passed love one. Invariably, they are thankful that we do what we do and they are more than happy to support our church in the process.

The next time someone asks you why a church shreds paper, you will have something to say. It is just one small thing that we do to serve our neighbors.

Submitted by: Bill Florin, October 2013

### ***Relay for Life***



It is 3:30 in the morning and a cold dampness is in the air. Sheryl and Heather walk around and around the track as part of the UMC Stars Relay for Life Team. Across the track are Emma and Michelle. It is the year that the UMC Stars win the coveted "Most Feet on the Track" award. In a couple of hours, Laura will stop by with a fresh hot carton of Joe.

The UMC Stars team was started to support several church members recently diagnosed with cancer and as a tribute to other church family members who survived cancer or lost a loved one to the disease. The team has walked at Indian Ledge, Masuk High School, and Trumbull High School. In recent years the team has been identified by the cancer vest, where new names are proudly displayed on the vest throughout the night.

Those that have participated have special memories. Some members with mobility issues walked, others cheered from the base camp. One year, every half hour a new song title referencing "walking" was displayed with fellow walkers providing suggestions for the next title - like "I Would Walk 500 Miles," or "These Boots are Made for Walking". Another year the team members' names were displayed in icing on star shaped sugar cookies. Tents were pitched for sleepovers which provided some special memories. Remember the year that Steve's feet stuck out of Rebecca's Barbie tent? Or the year we "lost" Bill, but discovered him sleeping in his car? How about the year Bill brought hot pizza in the middle of the night to the tired and hungry walkers? In recent years, necklaces were created as team members collected one bead for each trip around the track. Inspiration was drawn from seeing the warmly glowing "HOPE" on the hillside made from luminaries.

The church youth have provided many memories, like the youth choir singing "This Little Light of Mine" on the stage, sparklers at midnight, dancing at 2 a.m., and Spam carving. Initially the younger kids walk until they retire to the sleepover tent. As a rite of passage, the older kids have the privilege of walking throughout the night.

In addition to fond memories of fun and fellowship, money has been raised for cancer research and cancer awareness education.

The Relay for Life has been a ministry to support the sick, and to provide comfort to those in need.

Submitted by: Steve Arnold, October 2013

## ***Souper Bowl of Caring***



The “Souper Bowl of Caring” is youth across the nation working to fight hunger and poverty in their own communities around the time of the Super Bowl football game. On Super Bowl Sunday, our own youth at UMC of Monroe take up a collection using large soup pots, asking for monetary donations toward food for people in need. For 15 years (since 1998), our church has raised over \$4,662 with all donations going to either the Monroe Food Pantry and/or Kings Pantry in Bridgeport.

In addition, since Super Bowl Sunday 2009, we have enjoyed a soup lunch wherein everyone brings a can of soup to share (chicken based or beef based cans are added to two large soup pots and heated), as well as a can of soup to donate. In 2013, we collected 150 cans! So, not only do we have some fun fellowship time before the big game, we have helped to tackle hunger in America!

Submitted by: Rose Aiello, October 2013

## ***Sunday School***

***Train children in the way they should go;  
When they grow old, they wouldn't depart from it.***  
Proverbs 22:6 (*Common English Bible*)

**Time spent with a child is time well spent.**

From a young age I knew I wanted to be a teacher. I would bring home the leftover worksheets from school and set up a classroom in my yard to play school with the neighborhood kids. I loved learning to play musical instruments and teaching them to others. I remember how special it felt when someone would spend precious time with me to teach me something new. I remember my mother teaching me to make strawberry jam, and my grandmother teaching me to crochet and do embroidery. My father always sang and taught us songs on road trips (as well as how to change a tire!). I especially remember one of my Sunday school teachers whom I called my “Church Grandmother.” She looked for me every Sunday morning. She sent me a card every holiday (not to my family, but to me), and a special treat for my birthday. She made a great impression on me when she told me all the reasons why she knew Jesus loved her, and I could know that He loves me, too. Because of her, I continue to pass this message on to my students, “God will always love you.”

I can't remember exactly when I began teaching Sunday school at UMCM, but I have always been drawn to the children. Our children are the future of our church, and it is so important to invest in their lives. Time spent with a child is time well spent. Their future depends on the seeds we plant today. The success of the Sunday school program is due to the efforts of many wonderful people giving of their time and talents to pass on the word of God to the next generation. The Sunday school program has faithfully continued to be a vibrant and active part of The United Methodist Church of Monroe. The young ones have served as Acolytes; our older students have read scripture, ushered, shared skits, and even given the sermon! We have waved palm branches, trimmed the Christmas tree, sang carols, presented the Christmas story in word and costume, and brought the characters to life. We have watched our children grow

from little sheep, to haloed Angels, to the 15-year-old Mary. We led worship as we shared our 'Children's Sunday Presentations.' We assisted our church fundraisers including the Harvest Festival and Children's Corner. We have served our community near and far through Soup-er Bowl of Caring, Crop Walk, Relay for Life, SPCA, Heifer International, UMCOR Health Kits, Monroe Food Pantry, Kings Pantry, and more. We have celebrated our graduates and baptized new babies as our grandparents have done before us and our great-grandchildren will be doing long after we are gone. We are part of a great Christian heritage that has been passed down to us. These years are just a chapter in a very large book that will continue to be written for ages to come. I pray God's continued blessings be upon the people of the United Methodist Church of Monroe.

Submitted by Laura Gabor, October 2013  
Served as a Sunday School Teacher 2005 to 2013  
Director of Sunday School 2010 - 2013  
Chair of Harvest Festival Children's Corner 2006 - 2013

### ***United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)***



United Methodist Committee on Relief provides humanitarian relief in the United States and around the world and targets places where natural disasters, war, or conflict have done so much damage that communities are unable to recover on their own. UMCOR is not a first-response organization but helps communities over a longer term in recovery efforts. It also helps communities prepare for emergencies and help reduce the risk of disasters through training programs. UMCOR spends 100 percent of designated donations on the projects its donors specify. When the plea has gone out to our UMC of Monroe congregation for assistance with many of the various natural disasters, we have responded with monetary gifts, as well items requested for making cleaning buckets or health kits. We have assisted with Hurricanes Katrina, Irene and Sandy, Japan's earthquake/ tsunami and so many more. Donations are generally made directly to the UMC of Monroe and then, in turn, the church sends out one check to the organization. As UMCOR donors of money and supplies, we join others as the hands and feet of Christ.

Submitted by: Rose Aiello, October 2013

### ***Vacation Bible School***



For several years, Vacation Bible School (VBS) has been held from 6:00 – 8:00 pm during a week in July. This allows volunteers who work during the day to participate in VBS. Typically, a curriculum from Cokesbury is selected. In 2012, no VBS was held, but it was held in 2013 with 21 children participating. Approximately 20 – 25 volunteers assist with VBS, including the Women's Club who makes decorations in advance.

The theme selected for 2013 was *Everywhere Fun Fair – Where God's World Comes Together*. This program focused on "Love the Lord, your God ... and love your neighbor as yourself" – Luke 10:27. The children learned about a country each day including: Japan, Zimbabwe, England, Australia and Mexico.

The VBS curriculum typically includes the following sections: opening and closing with singing, Biblical storytelling, crafts, snacks and recreation. VBS concludes with a closing celebration during church service the following Sunday. We share songs and messages we learned during the week with the congregation.

Submitted by: Brenda Pantalone, October 2013

### ***Veterans***



Veterans are honored with a special prayer and reading on the Sunday closest to Veteran's Day in November. Over the years, we have remembered the many dedicated men and women who have served, but especially our own church members. Just this year, the UMC of Monroe raised much needed funds for the Veteran's Hospital in West Haven, CT. The funds were raised through a special Father's Day collection and are used by the Hospital for the personal needs of the patients.

Submitted by: Rose Aiello, October 2013

### ***Walk to Emmaus***



On a Friday evening in April 2008, Heather Arnold and Patti Early drove their daughters, Rebecca and Katie, to Great Oak United Methodist Church in Oxford to attend South Central Emmaus youth retreat weekend number 19 (SCE19). Upon arriving, the girls were greeted by a number of enthusiastic youth and corralled to the sanctuary where the retreat team began to boisterously sing Christian songs accompanied by no less than six talented guitarists. Rebecca and Katie were surrounded by youth members of the team, looking to Heather and Patti with trepidation and wondering what they had gotten themselves into.

Since that date in 2008, Monroe UMC has been an active part of this wonderful youth ministry that presents two weekends each year and offers young people of high school age a short course in the Christian way of life. To date, seven more youths from Monroe UMC have attended the retreats and all of them have continued to serve either as team members or provided support up to the current weekend, South Central Emmaus # 30. Patti Early and Bill Schmalkuche have served as Rectors – the leaders of the weekend. Members of Monroe UMC have generously provided meals to the sixty-plus participants as well as served as prayer partners over the 48 hours of the weekend.

Those who come to an Emmaus weekend experience Christian community and a time of reflection and insight into their own lives. Many lives have been transformed through this ministry and many long-time friendships and bonds have been formed.

Submitted by: Patti Early, October 2013



## **Wicke Luncheons**



Beginning in 1988, the Friendship Circle hosted a summer picnic every year in Lois Grich's backyard for eight to ten residents of the Wicke Health Center, our Methodist nursing home in Shelton, Connecticut. Lois was a brief resident of Wicke before she passed away in 2007. That year, Laura Bartlett and Leigh Gray decided to continue the luncheon. Finding a date in the summer of 2007 proved difficult so the ladies picked a fall date and it has been held during that beautiful season every year since. The luncheon is held in the Bartlett's kitchen and the fall view is spectacular. The guest list usually numbers in the low twenties. After a meal of fried chicken and church made apple pie (no calories in that!), the group enjoys a rousing game of BINGO. The focus of the luncheon has also expanded to provide an opportunity to honor and give thanks to the Friendship Circle for all the wonderful things they do for our church family.

Submitted by: Leigh Gray, October 2013

**Committee On Lay Leadership**  
As of October 2013

**Church Council**

<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>
Pastor	Martha Epstein
Chairperson	Bill Florin
Secretary	TBD
Lay Leader	Rose Aiello
Lay Member of Annual Conference	Annette Griffith
Lay Member of Annual Conference	Quintin Brantley
Reserve Lay Member of Annual Conference	TBD
Board of Trustees Chairperson	Elected
Finance Chairpersons	Heather Arnold Steve Arnold
Church Treasurer	Bill Smith
Financial Secretary	Church Secretary
Choir Director	Julie Chrislip
Missions and Social Concerns Chairperson	Quintin Brantley
Membership Chairperson	Annette Griffith
Worship Chairperson	
SPRC Chairperson	Chad Harris
Care Team Coordinators	Gail Mas
At Large Members	Bobbie Grant Vivian Harris Anita Stabler-Hussey

**Committee on Lay Leadership**

<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>
Chairperson(s)	The Pastor
Class 2013	Bobbie Grant Vicki Whalen
Class 2014	Julie Chrislip Sue Simmons
Class 2015	Bill Schmalkuche Alex Arnold
<i>Ex Officio</i>	<i>Lay Leader</i> <i>Lay Members to Annual Conference</i>



### ***Worship Committee***

<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>
Chairpersons	TBD
Members At Large	Patti Early Dave Rupp Bill Schmalkuche
<i>Ex Officio</i>	<i>Choir Director</i> <i>Lay Leader</i> <i>Lay Members to Annual Conference</i> <i>Organist</i> <i>Pastor</i>

### ***Membership Committee***

<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>
Chairpersons	Annette Griffith
Members At Large	Kathleen Brantley Tammy Cahill Vivian Harris Gail Mas Shannon Rupp Sheryl Rajpolt
<i>Ex Officio</i>	<i>Lay Leader</i> <i>Lay Members to Annual Conference</i> <i>Pastor</i>

### ***Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee***

<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>
Chairperson(s)	Chad Harris
Class of 2013	Bob Griffith Chad Harris
Class of 2014	Carin Florin Bobbie Grant
Class of 2015	Patti Early Anita Stabler-Hussey
<i>Ex Officio</i>	<i>Lay Leader</i> <i>Lay Members to Annual Conference</i> <i>Pastor</i>

### ***Missions and Social Concerns***

<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>
Chairpersons	Quintin Brantley
Members At Large	Priscilla Bromley Bobbie Grant June Hallden
<i>Ex Officio</i>	<i>Lay Leader</i> <i>Lay Members to Annual Conference</i> <i>Pastor</i>

### ***Board of Trustees***

<i>Position</i>	<i>Name</i>
Chairperson(s)	Elected at first meeting
Class of 2013	Mike Cahill Delores Ovesny
Class of 2014	Steve Arnold John Whalen
Class of 2015	John Rajpolt Sue Simmons
<i>Ex Officio</i>	<i>Pastor (no vote)</i>



*United Methodist Church of Monroe*  
*“Celebrating 40 Years of Tradition 1973 – 2013”*

*UMC Monroe Pastors - Directory*

***Burger, The Reverend Karen and Mr. Ron***

*Served 1996 - 1999*  
31 Smith Avenue  
Mt. Kisco, NY 10549  
revburger51@gmail.com

***Denton, The Reverend & Mrs. Frank (Charlene\*)***

*Served 1981 - 1996*  
4 Monticello Court  
Gales Ferry, CT 06335  
dentons3@juno.com

***Driscoll, The Reverend Sherry and Mr. Ken***

*Served 1999 - 2003*  
805 Monticello Drive  
Pinehurst, NC 28374  
sherrydriscoll@earthlink.net

***Epstein, Pastor Martha and Mr. Wayne Juliana***

*Served 2013 - present*  
529 Cutlers Farm Road  
Monroe, CT 06468  
PastorMartha@verizon.net

***Gabor, The Reverend and Mrs. Gregg (Laura)***

*Emma*  
*Served 2005 - 2013*  
21 Hudson Drive  
Hyde Park, NY 12538  
kregg@umchp.com

***Griffin, The Reverend Dr. \* and Mrs. Richard (Vannah)***

*Served 2003 - 2004*  
622 West Main Street  
Lebanon, TN 37087

***Kirkham, Dr. and Mrs. Donald (Phebe)***

*Served UMC 2004 – 2005*  
*Served East Village 1967 - 1968*  
75 Morning Dew Lane  
Stratford, CT 06614  
dkirkham@snet.net

***Leone, The Reverend and Mrs. Louis (Barbara)***

*Served 1978 - 1981*  
1812 New Bedford Drive  
Sun City Center, FL 33573  
louleone@ij.net

***Wagner, The Reverend Dennis***

*Served 1974 - 1978*  
575 Evesborough Path  
The Villages, FL 32163  
dwkwagner@hotmail.com

***York, The Reverend and Mrs. David (Sue)***

*Served UMC 1973 – 1974*  
*Served East Village 1969 – 1973*  
*Served Stepney Methodist 1965 – 1973*  
14 Weekepegme Trail - PO Box 131  
Stevenson, CT 06491  
daveyork@aol.com

\* Deceased

## ***A Message from Pastor Martha Epstein***

*“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock.”*

*Matthew 7:24 and 25*

It is a joy to be able to serve as the Pastor of the United Methodist Church of Monroe during this exciting time. Although we are celebrating 40 years here in this building, our rich tradition goes many years, many centuries back. I have only been appointed here for a short time, but in these last few months the dedication, the faithfulness and the kind-heartedness of the congregation has shone brightly. The Harvest Fest was a perfect example of this as different people came together and worked side by side. The fellowship was wonderful and I so enjoyed hearing the stories about earlier Fests, including the very first one, while chopping apples for those delicious fritters. Truly the Sunday School lyric, “I am the church, you are the church, we are the church together” is definitely in place here. Yes, we are celebrating this building that was built 40 years ago, but really what we are celebrating is all the people who have come in and out of these doors. It is because of the hard work of the laity and their continued persistence in faith that we can be the church to the people here in Monroe and throughout the world. And, because it was built on the Rock, it has withstood the test of time.

What a strong foundation we have to further build upon here at the UMCM thanks to all those who have gone on before. This celebration is not only about remembering the past, but it is also about looking forward to the future. Our work is not done; we are called to be Jesus’ disciples here and now and to be in mission to all those who need to hear God’s Word and feel God’s love. May we continue to be a beacon of hope, ministering to all and may our hearts, minds and doors remain open for another 40 years (plus)!

In the Peace of Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Martha Epstein". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Pastor" written in a smaller, more compact style than the last name "Epstein".

Pastor Martha Epstein