



UMC of Monroe and the Greater Bridgeport Cooperative Parish

The United Methodist Church of Monroe is a member of the Greater Bridgeport Cooperative Parish (GBCP) of the Connecticut District of the New York Annual Conference (NYAC) of the United Methodist Church.

What is a Cooperative Parish? It is a ministry structure that helps churches in a defined region work together to meet the needs of the community. By working together as one Parish, we can serve the needs of all the churches and the communities of the Parish in a more efficient and effective way. Mission and ministry opportunities that might not be available at an individual church might be possible when we work together. These opportunities might include, but are not limited to, mission events, confirmation, youth groups, Bible studies, and other outreach activities. Cooperative Parishes can provide the congregations the opportunity to experience the gifts and leadership skills of different clergy and laity from the other churches in the Parish. This also allows the clergy and laity across the Parish to use their gifts and calling in new ways. In a time when the NYAC has 40 churches without pastors, this model of ministry allows congregations to thrive through the benefits from shared resources among other churches in the Parish while not being limited to just their own members. Cooperative Parishes are part of our Book of Discipline and are a Wesleyan model to help expand our church's ministry to the communities we are called to serve.

What does this mean for our church? From time to time, you may see other pastors and/or laity from the GBCP in our pulpit while our pastor visits other churches. You may see individuals from other congregations participating in our church's programs and activities. In addition, you might want to take part in a program or ministry that is not offered by our church but is supported by another church in our Parish. If you have questions or wish to know more, please reach out to Pastor Chuck Schif, Ed Hendricks, Rose Aiello, or Bill Florin of UMC of Monroe, who, along with Pastor Chuck, are members of the Parish Council.

The Parish Coordinator for our Parish is Rev. David Piscatelli, Pastor of UMC Nichols who was appointed by Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton to lead the Parish and coordinate the activities, missions, and ministries of the Parish. He is supported by a Parish Council made up of laity and clergy from the Greater Bridgeport churches to help guide the vision of shared programs and ministries. The Parish Council is co-chaired by Pastor David and Dr. Ed Hendricks (a lay member of UMC Monroe).

Our Parish includes 9 churches surrounding the city of Bridgeport. We are a mix of both full-time and part-time churches with a group of well-experienced pastors. These Congregations and their Pastors are:

- Bridgeport, Golden Hill – Rev. Rhonda Taylor
- Bridgeport, Summerfield – Rev. Dr. Herron Gaston
- Bridgeport, Summerfield (Haitian) – Pastor Joseph Lalanne
- Fairfield, Fairfield Grace – Rev. Young Choi

- Easton, Jesse Lee - Pastor Fern Blair-Hart
- Milford, Mary Taylor Memorial - Rev. Roy Grubbs
- Monroe, Monroe UMC - Pastor Chuck Schif
- Stratford, Stratford UMC - Rev. Suhee Kim
- Trumbull, Long Hill - Rev. Cleaven Johnson
- Trumbull, Nichols - Rev. David Piscatelli

With your support and involvement, the Cooperative Parish initiative will be a very positive and exciting opportunity for all the churches in the New York Annual Conference. You will be learning more about the Greater Bridgeport Cooperative Parish in the days and weeks to come.

Thank you for your time and attention.