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Office Hours: Mon. 9am – 5:30pm Wed. (remotely) 8am - 6pm Fri. 9am – 3:30pm

Senior Pastor: Rev. Jennifer Gingras
Music Director: Will Duchon
Administrator/Bookkeeper: Diane Prall
CE Coordinator: Jeanette Cardentey-Morales
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Find us on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/monroecongregationalchurchucc>



THE MONROE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
STEEPLE

July 1, 2024

Well, it feels like summer is upon us! For most students and teachers another school year is over (or at least almost over). In the last couple of weeks, we have experienced the heat and humidity that is becoming more common for us in this part of Connecticut, with our share of thunderstorms coming through.

Summer is all about relaxation and rejuvenation. We look forward to some kind of change in our “regular” schedule. This is the time of year to look at doing more things outside. Or we might take time to get away from our usual surroundings so that we can encounter something different.



Maybe we will take the opportunity to go hiking, swimming, biking, explore a piece of history, visit an amusement park, go camping, spend the day at a spa, or a whole host of other possibilities. We can allow our bodies to get some stretching, and we feel refreshed. We can also take vacations for our mind by going to a museum, an art show, take a summer class, see a play, or push ourselves into something new. We can stretch our minds just like the physical type of vacation stretches our body. Our mind can be renewed, as we use parts of our brain we haven’t used in a while.

If you’re still with me, I’m guessing that you’re asking where is she headed with this? Well, I want all of us to consider taking our spirits on vacation too. That doesn’t mean I’m suggesting that you take a vacation from our worshipping community. On the contrary, being with our MCC family of faith during the summer may provide the stability we need when the rest of our schedule is fluid.

Take some time this summer to talk with God. Consider increasing the amount of time you spend in conversation with the Creator. In other words, spend more time in prayer! There is NOTHING in our lives that we cannot take to God. God understands, cares, accepts, and loves all of us! No matter how difficult, hurtful, or ugly something is; we can always take it to the Creator.

We are God's children, and nothing can change that. I hope that you and yours can stretch your body, your mind AND your faith in these lazy, hazy days of summer.

In peace, Pastor Jenn

Thanks for all your help at the MCC 52nd Annual Strawberry Festival!!!!



The 52nd Annual Strawberry Festival was a huge success. With great weather, lots of volunteers, the return of the kids' games, expansion of the Country Store, more than 1,300 jars of jam and quart containers of strawberries to name a few, this year's festival was more successful than last year's.

A report on the net income will follow in a few weeks after all the expense invoices are received and paid. We have a long list of changes and ideas to discuss for next year! Thank you all for making Strawberry Festival a wonderful experience. Here are some preliminary numbers, so you have an idea of how we did.

Area Gross Income

Crafter Booths: \$19,642

Country Store: \$29,130

Shortcakes: \$22,223 (*Think about the teams making biscuits, picking and sorting berries, hulling berries, making the juice, assembling the shortcakes, taking orders, running orders down, and running the pickup line!*)

Face Painting/Games/Bounce House Painting: \$4,373

120 Loaves of Strawberry Bread: \$840

240 Strawberry Pies: \$4,300

Smoothies: \$7,389

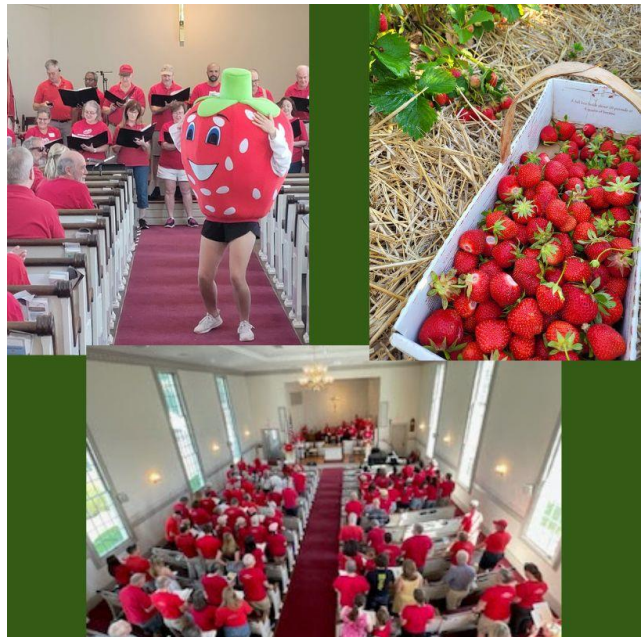
Sr. PF Food Booth: \$12,855

Here are some other incredible statistics:

- 111 Crafter booths sold (record number!)
- 3,200 shortcakes sold
- 120 strawberry breads (\$7 each)
- 240 pies (\$18 each - Sold out by 2:30 pm Sunday)

- Of the 1,300 jars of jam we made this year, we sold out of 3 flavors by 12:10 on Saturday and another 8 flavors by 5pm Sunday, including the last jar of Strawberry Jam! *Amazing!*
- About 650 children enjoyed face painting, games and the bounce house
- 119 volunteers signed in on Saturday and on Sunday, with many more doing setup and breakdown
- The Mustard Seed was busy too – they made \$2,100 over the weekend
- By Sunday's close, we had run out of dipped berries because we sold so much!

We've calculated our gross total to be a record setting **\$93,000!**



Thank You! Thank You! Thank you!

None of this would happen without our dedicated volunteers who woke up early on Friday, Saturday and Sunday to pick all those berries at Jones, got steps in from taking orders for shortcake, collecting them and delivering them to their customers, to those who made pies, smoothies, chocolate-dipped berries, biscuits, sorted berries and so much more.

We are truly a community that comes together when it's needed to provide the support and camaraderie required to get the job done. On behalf of the co-chairs: Susie Cuseo, Jenn and Clark Gingras, Josh Post and Frank Wittenauer, **we graciously appreciate your time and effort in making MCC's #1 fundraiser a humongous success.**



Did you miss purchasing your Strawberry Jalapeno jam? This is the only flavor (14 jars) left from over 1,300 jars that were made this year. Everything else has sold out!!! **Please see Susie Cuseo at coffee hour or email her at thecuseos@yahoo.com to purchase these delectable jams at \$8/jar.** This spicy, tangy jam can be spread on crackers alongside cream cheese, glaze it over pork chops while grilling, add them to the sauce for cocktail meatballs, spice up your ham and cheese sandwich, use it as a dip for your egg rolls or hot wings or mix with ranch dressing and smother on grilled chicken or use as a topping on baked brie to give every bite a kick to your taste buds.



Diane is scheduled for vacation on Mondays throughout the summer. She will continue to work from home on Wednesdays where she will receive your voicemail and e-mail messages. **The church office will be open on Fridays.** Thank you!

**THANKS FOR
HELPING US
RAISE SOME
DOUGH**



**Panera
FUNDRAISING**

Thank you so much to those who dined out at Panera Bread on Saturday, June 22. We purchased meals with the total of \$392.05 where 25% (\$98.01) that will go to refurbishing the furniture in Dineson Parlor where several groups meet weekly. We are so thankful to everyone who came out to eat, ordered online or by kiosks that evening. So, what do you think? Can we do this again and get more people to dine at Panera Bread on another night?

Please let Susie Cuseo know at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280.

Trustees



The **Monroe Summer Day Camp** will be renting our MCC campus again this year. The camp will provide added income for the church during the months of June, July and August. If you need to enter the building between 7:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday – Friday please stop into the office and ask Diane to notify the camp director. **If the office is closed, please use the walkie-talkie provided to notify the camp director, Karen, of your presence.** Thank you!

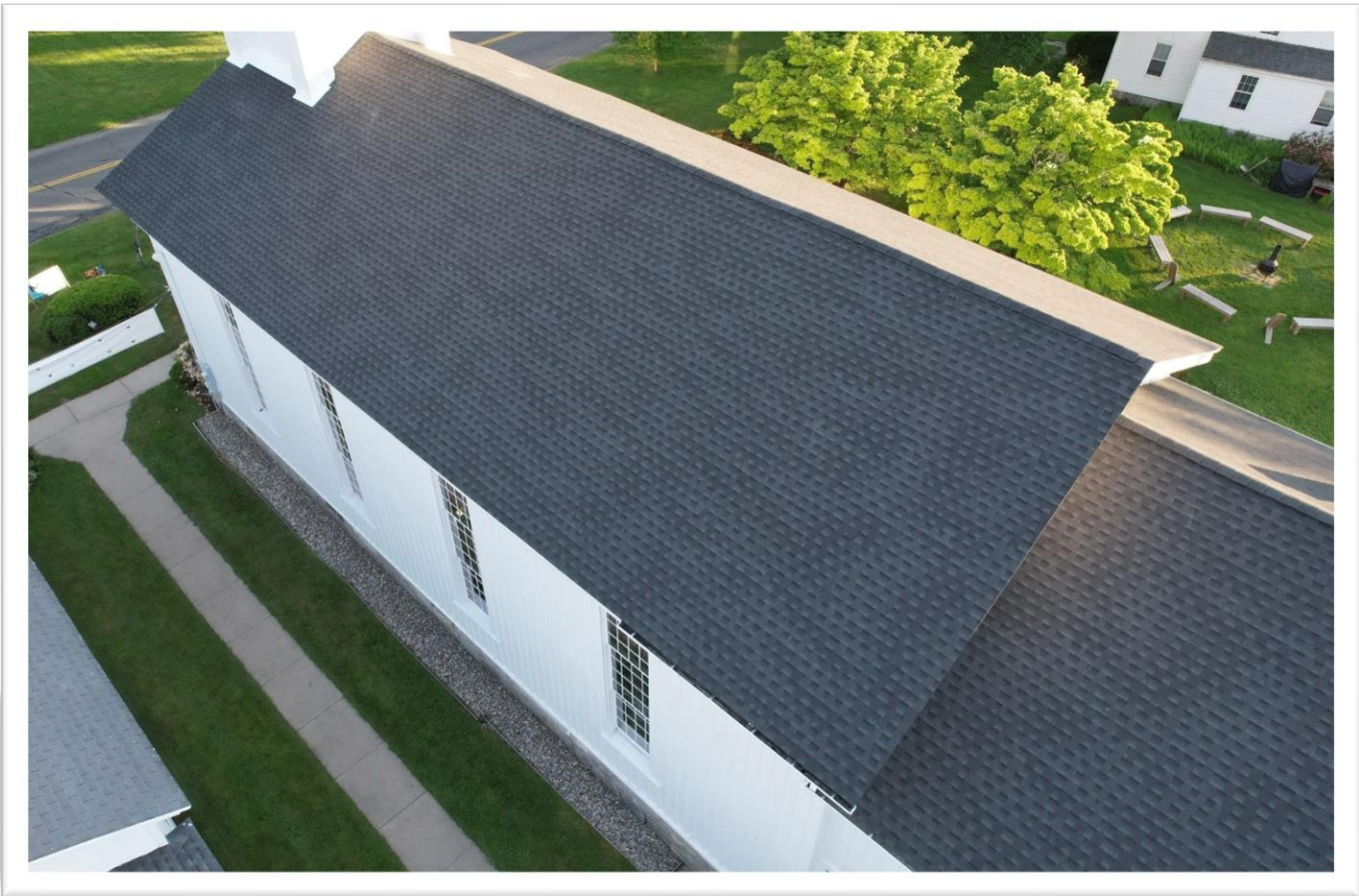
Capital Campaign Update - MCC Meeting House Roof

As you may have noticed, the **Meeting House Roof has been replaced**, so we should be leak-free for the next 50 years! With an original estimated cost of \$31,476, the roof repair project cost over \$33,876 due to the replacement of damaged plywood found under the old roof. While we are waiting to hear back from the insurance company about whether we'll get any coverage for storm damage to the roof, the Capital Campaign contributions currently stand at just under \$21,000 - so **we are well short of covering the cost** of the roof repairs. **A big thanks to everyone who has contributed to the capital campaign, contributors are honored on our *Raise the Roof* poster in Wilton Hall, - your donations are much appreciated.** If you would like to contribute to the campaign or increase your initial contribution, you can send your donation to the Receiver via the MCC church office, drop your donation in with the Sunday offering, or via the "Donate" button on our web site.

Thanks for your support! John O'Rourke - MCC Receiver

Thank you Front Line Roofing!





MCC Celebrates its 2024 Graduates!

Hannah Andrecyk graduated from Shelton High School. In the fall, she will be attending Georgetown University and studying pre-medicine. She will also be running for their cross country and track teams. This weekend, she is participating in the outdoor track nationals in Philadelphia. Good luck, Hannah!

Emma Campbell graduated from Masuk High School as a high honors student. She has maintained a GPA higher than 4.5, and is in the top 50 GPAs of the class of 2024, which will be represented by a silver tassel. She is in the National Honor Society and will receive a blue collar. Emma completed 350 total service hours, which will be represented with a black cord. She also received a Seal of Biliteracy in Spanish that will be on her diploma. She is the current PF Vice President, and a deacon. Emma will be attending Penn State University in the fall, majoring in Kinesiology in the College of Health and Human Development.

Owen Correll graduated from Masuk High School with a 4.65 GPA. He is the current PF President, and a deacon. He will be attending Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, NY in the fall, studying environmental studies and playing soccer.

Jonathan "JonDog" Ganino graduated from Masuk High School. During his time at Masuk, Jonathan distinguished himself as a dedicated and accomplished athlete as a member of the Boys Swim Team for three years, earning the Rookie of the Year as a sophomore and serving as Captain in his senior year. Additionally, Jonathan ran Cross Country throughout his high school career and was recognized as the "Most Improved" runner in his sophomore year and Captain as a senior. He also participated in Track and Field for several years. Jonathan earned the "Masuk 800 Points" award, given for sustained commitment to junior varsity and varsity sports, with 50 points awarded for each year in a junior varsity sport and 100 points for each year in a varsity sport. He was a member of Peer Leadership, the Wingman program and has very much enjoyed transforming into Spiderman at each Memorial Day parade. Finally, JonDog is an avid crocheter! In the fall, Jonathan will be attending the University of Scranton, where he plans to major in Psychology. He is also considering minors in Philosophy, Spanish, or Criminal Justice, with time and experience guiding his decision. Jonathan's parents, family, and friends are incredibly proud of him...his character, strength, and courage, and they celebrate the remarkable young man he has become.

Zachary Gingras graduated with a certificate of Electrical Program completion with 48 credit hours and an OSHA 30-hour construction safety certification. He will soon have his 4000 hours to test as a C-6 Limited Electrician by the end of the summer. He is now pursuing an Associate's Degree in Information Technology from Naugatuck Valley Community College. He is currently applying his experience working with burglar and fire alarms, CCTV cameras, Networking, Access Control, and Home Studio Systems as a Low Voltage Technician at a small local alarm company.

Julia Telep graduated from Trumbull High School after completing the four-year program at their Agriscience and Biotechnology Center. Julia's focus was animal science which she will continue this fall at the University at Buffalo - Suny in NY. During her four years at Trumbull High, Julia played varsity softball as their right fielder and center fielder. She also played on a travel team called CT Impact which travels around the country. She is well known for base stealing and her strong arm. Julia found time for work at Zenko Farm

as a horseback riding teacher as well as taking care of rescue horses in Monroe. (*James, John and I are so proud of you – love, Mom*)

Rebecca Paige Young Graduated from Worcester Polytechnic Institute with a Bachelor's Degree in Biomedical Engineering & Mechanical Engineering.





Flowers for Worship: Would you like to honor or remember a loved one, or celebrate a milestone? You can do so, while also helping Monroe Congregational Church continue its tradition of fresh **flowers** on the communion table. You can sign-up in Wilton Hall or online! You may choose to arrange flowers from your garden, purchase an arrangement, or send a check (\$25) to Monroe Congregational Church (memo: "flowers" & the date) or use our website to pay online, and we will order for you. If you are supplying the flowers yourself, please set them up between 9:30am and 9:45am, before worship. Thank you!

[https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C48ADAC2CA5FEC61-flowers or MCC-UCC.org](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0C48ADAC2CA5FEC61-flowers_or/MCC-UCC.org)

Christian Education



Love working with youth, want to spread God's love to the children of our congregation in this upcoming **24/25 school year**? **Please consider teaching Sunday School** (Pre k - 6th) **or being an adult advisor for our Jr PF youth group** (ages 11-14). You can speak to Jeanette with any questions or to express interest. Thank you! See you in the fall!

Outreach



The Mustard Seed Thrift Shoppe is looking for volunteers on Tuesdays at 9:30AM to help sort, tag and hang donated items. We accept gently-used clothing, toys, books, shoes and small household items which can be left the collection box outside the Shoppe 24/7, on Tuesdays when volunteers are sorting or during business hours. We are open on Fridays from 10-3 and Saturdays 10-2. We will be closed for cleaning and maintenance after July 20th and will reopen on Friday, August 16th. Sales

associates who man the counter are also needed. Shifts are only about two hours long. Responsibilities are very easy and you leave knowing that you collected monies to help out many services provided by MCC. Please contact Susie Cuseo with any questions, comments or concerns at thecuseos@yahoo.com or 203-268-0280.

Fellowship

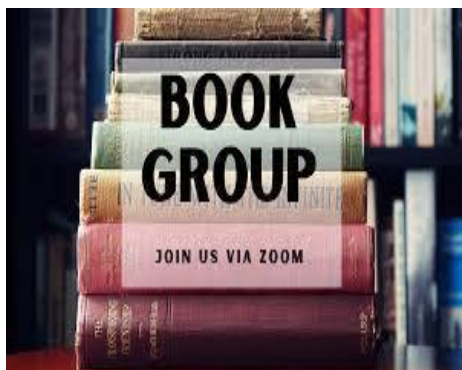


MCC Summertime Coffee Hour Hosts: Are you interested in providing refreshments for our church members and friends following Sunday worship! All you need to do is arrive at the kitchen by 9:45 to get the coffee going (instructions found on kitchen wall). Providing baked goods or other snacks are always welcome (but not mandatory). Please sign up in Wilton Hall. (Although one can do it, it's fun to serve with a friend). Thank you!





Save the date: Young at Heart Thurs., July 26 at noon.
Location and organizer TBD



We encourage anyone to join us on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. We will continue to meet via zoom so that all members can join from wherever they may be. Questions can be sent to Paula via email pjsh55@gmail.com or home phone or 203-452-0850. The book club selections for upcoming months:

July 17th 7 pm Horse by Geraldine Brooks Host: TBA



Morning Circle will not meet during the summer months.
We will have our next meeting on
Wednesday, September 11th in Dineson Parlor at 11AM.

This group of lovely women work tirelessly towards wonderful service projects and come together to support each other with conversation and prayer. **Consider joining the group who meet every second Wednesday of each month** with the exception of January, February, July and August. Please contact Shari Carrano for more information, concerns or comments at 475-342-8145.

Mark your calendars for future meetings:

Wednesday, October 9 at 11AM- Trick-or-Treat bags for the Food Pantry

Wednesday, November 13 at 11AM - Bean Soup Jars for Food Pantry/Giving Tree tags given out

Wednesday, December 11 at 11AM- Annual Christmas Luncheon (Location TBD)

FROM THE HISTORIAN'S NOTEBOOK



VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS FAIR



Seeking creative minds to work together to offer an MCC Christmas Fair on December 1st, 2024. Inquiring minds may contact Gary Thompson, Church Historian, mailglt@yahoo.com to join the team.

A sign-up sheet has also been posted in Wilton Hall for the group of these creative minds to commit to organize this fundraiser event into a reality.

Believe it or not, December is only 6 months away - Let's get planning!

Your Are Invited To Join MCC at

Arts In The Park

FREE SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

Get ready to soak up the small town vibes and relish the joy of the great outdoors! **Bring a picnic dinner or snacks, wear a red shirt and find us!**

We can't wait to share these wonderful summer nights with you! **All shows start at 7:30 pm at Wolfe Park in Monroe.**

6/28 Raise Your Hands

7/19 Psychedelic Relics

7/26 Creative Music Studio Showcase

8/2 Mass Conn Fusion Band

8/9 Simply Swifties Band





Happy July Birthday to the following people and to anyone we may have missed we will keep you in our prayers.

Sheldon	Smith	07/01	Mike	Pellegrino	07/15
Betsy	Gilberti	07/02	Charles	Smith	07/15
Jim	Gill	07/02	Kate	Parker-Burgard	07/20
Thomas	Hyde	07/02	Carol	Kelly	07/21
Griffin	Allen	07/03	Erin	Brown	07/24
Amy	Matejek	07/04	Owen	Correll	07/24
Julia	Telep	07/04	Ann-Marie	Campbell	07/25
Kim	Rifflard	07/05	Campbell	Halloran	07/25
Jane	Allen	07/06	Bill	Stadler	07/26
Jim	Vance	07/08	Kenny	Dutton	07/28
Eve	Balestriere	07/10	Tom	Kelly	07/28
Jessica	Konkol	07/11	Alexa	Sentementes	07/28
Alexander	Gutierrez	07/12	Lynda	Swift	07/28
Peter	Hallgren	07/12	Caroline	Wittenauer	07/28
Therese	Zalenski	07/12	Christine	Wittenauer	07/28
Coralina	Goyette	07/14	Kathryn	Wittenauer	07/28
Mark	Malia IV	07/14			



Happy July Wedding Anniversary the following couples and to anyone we may have missed, we will keep you in our prayers. (Number is anniversary date)

Mary Jo & Bill Brett⁽⁰¹⁾ Gary & Gail Thompson⁽¹⁰⁾ Daniel & Eve Balestriere⁽¹⁶⁾
 Matt & Wendy Colegrove⁽¹⁷⁾ Rich & Michelle Correll⁽²⁰⁾
 John & Trees Whitbeck⁽²³⁾ Anthony & Diane Prall⁽²⁸⁾ Tom & Kate Briggs⁽²⁹⁾
 and Dan & Meg Sullivan⁽³⁰⁾

In Our Prayers

Alison Abrams (Jessica Pfalzgraf's sister); **Allie** (Colegrove's friend); **Jennifer Bittar** (Lorraine Zeiner's friend); **Jackie Bleakney; Byron Brown & Bruce Bryant** (friends of Will Duchon); **Lori Cimeno** (Peggy & Ron Villani's Daughter); **Kevin Daly** (Gary Thompson's friend); **Dawn** (Donna Konkol's Friend); **John Dominic** (Pfalzgraf's neighbor); **Dot Dralus; Matt Duchon; Elaine** (Wendy Colegrove's Aunt); **Bruno Forte** (Nancy Hedine's friend); **David Fischman** (Sue Granello's Friend); **Dave Fuller** (Gail Olson's brother); **Lehre Fuller** (Gail Olson's sister-in-law); **Bryan Garvin** (Mike Pfalzgraf's cousin); **Mary & Rachel Heerema** (Julia Gutierrez's mom & sister); **Brad Heines** (Susie Cuseo's friend); **Bob Heffernan** (Ann Zeiner's son-in-law); **Heather Henning; Brian Hopkins** (Donna Konkol's cousin); **Vera James** (Jenn Wissink's mother); **Jonathan** (Matt Colegrove's brother); **Kelti** (friend of Liska Gutierrez); **Walter Lane** (Marge Fox's brother-in-law); **Monica Lynch** (Bethany Dupuis' friend); **Nicole Malia; Betty McKeown** (Donna Konkol's mother); **Mike** (Janie Allen's son); **Jean Moffat; Olivia Morrison** (Donna Nickdow's niece); **Joe Mumper** (Julie McClenathan's friend); **Pat Nugent; Ocampo family** (friends of Liska Gutierrez); **Nancy Olofson; Missy & Gail Olson; Dean Perosino** (Gayle Hammond's brother); **Josh Post; P.T. Philip** (Liz Sampson's father); **Regina Roberts** (Kathy Maiolo's niece); **Alfredo Rodriguez** (Osirus Gutierrez's cousin); **Noah Santiago** (Shari Carrano's great-grandson); **Carlos Serrano** (Kathy Maiolo's cousin); **Yessika Siccardi** (Sampson family friend); **Ed Simonovich** (Nancy Hedine's friend); **Bernie Sippin; Gary Sippin** (Lori Sippin's son); **John Skarupa** (Barb Pellegrino's brother); **Sheldon Smith; Nancy Smith; Christine Stadler; Christian & Dain Steiner** (Julie McClenathan's nephews); **Claire Stenzel** (June & Myron Winger's granddaughter); **Wayne Thompson** (Gary Thompson's brother); **Richard Turco** (Jack Fracassini's cousin); **June Wilkes, Charles L. Wynn, Sr.,** (and his mother) **Alleane** (friend of Will Duchon); **Allen Zeiner** (Ann Zeiner's son); **Ann Zeiner**

The concerns of our world: The people of **Ukraine** and the **Middle East; LGBTQ+ children and their families** facing discrimination; those who serve or live in **war or conflict zones** around the world; **first responders** and those who serve in **law enforcement**; those who suffer **discrimination**; those who struggle with **mental illness, addiction, divorce or separation; Caregivers; the homeless, homebound and refugees.**

Those serving in the military, veterans & their families:

Stateside: **Lt. Col. Rachel Hoffman**, Tacoma, Washington (Vaughan Askue's daughter) **Justin Riffard**, Pensacola Naval Air Station, **Zachary Gingras**, 395th Combat Sustainability Support, **Joel Smith**, 250th Engineering Company **Chris Meneses** (Lorraine Zeiner's friend)

Kuwait: **Jon Sanchez** (Don Whiteley's grandson-in-law)

July MCC Community Calendar

Mon. Jul 1st

Diane on Vacation - Office Closed

Tue. June 2^{ud}

9:30 am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Thurs. Jul 4th

Independence Day – office closed

Week of Sun. Jul 7th

Communion

10:00 am Worship

5:00 pm Senior PF

Mon. Jul 8th

Diane on Vacation - Office Closed

Tue. July 9th

9:30 am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Week of Sun. Jul 14th

10:00 am Worship

5:00 pm Senior PF

Mon. Jul 15th

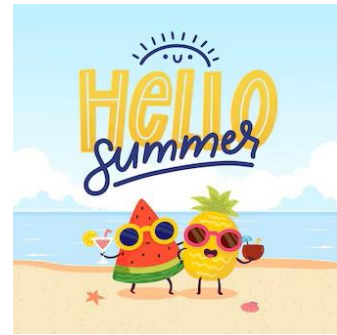
Diane on Vacation - Office Closed

Tue. July 16th

9:30 am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Wed. July 17th

7:00 pm Book Club



*Senior PF Mission Trip July 21 – 28
Appalachia South Folk Life Center,
Pipestem WV*

Week of Sun. Jul 21st

10:00 am Worship

Mon. Jul 22nd

Diane on Vacation - Office Closed

Tue. July 23rd

9:30 am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

Thurs. July 25th

12:00 pm Young @ Heart

Week of Sun. Jul 28th

10:00 am Worship

Mon. Jul 29th

Diane on Vacation - Office Closed

Tue. July 30th

9:30 am Mustard Seed Sort & Tag

*Pastor Jenn's summer vacation
dates include:*

- August 4-10 (pulpit supply Rev. Cara McFadden)
- August 18-24 (pulpit supply Jim Hisey)
- September 1-7 (pulpit supply Rev. Cara McFadden)