



Epistle

SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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February 2017

At the “Support Immigrants” march on Park Square last Saturday, sponsored by the 4 Freedoms Coalition, I saw a sign with a quote from the Book of Hebrews: “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this, some have entertained angels without knowing it” (13:2). This attitude of welcome to those who seem ‘different’ has served our nation well. Immigrants and refugees have found hope and possibility on these shores. And like ‘angels’ they have been messengers of creativity and givers of energy and life to this nation from its inception. The Statue of Liberty beautifully symbolizes this history of our nation offering hospitality to strangers--inspired by our Biblical traditions.

This nation has other traditions that are not welcoming, which is why 800 of us were standing on Park Square on a cold afternoon. Nativism, white nationalism, and ‘fear of the other’ are attitudes and movements that have done great harm and are still active in our national bloodstream. Over the weekend our president issued an executive order banning all Muslim refugees and immigrants from seven Mideast countries instituting a religious test for entry into our land in defiance of our better angels and the First Amendment. On the same day--Holocaust Memorial Day--the chief executive issued a statement honoring ‘all those who suffered’ from that horror, but he omitted any mention of the Jewish people; that the “Final Solution” was an attempt to exterminate Jews. This ‘universalizing’ of the Holocaust is a white nationalist tradition in far right circles in Europe. Given the rise of anti-Semitic crimes in our nation this past year, such omissions are of deep concern. On Monday our local NAACP and friends of the African-American community were standing on Park Square to protest the nomination of Sen. Jeff Sessions for Attorney General. Mr. Sessions is an advocate for ‘law and order’ policies that historically have not been about good policing, but about sending messages to those of darker skin that they will be targeted on a continuous basis.

This difficult moment in our nation will continue for some time. We are called to speak out, dig deeply into our Biblical resources, and open ourselves to the God who comes to guide us into a more, hopeful future. At the moment I’m rereading a spiritual classic, “Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life” by Henri Nouwen. The three movements are from Loneliness to Solitude, Hostility to Hospitality, and Illusion to Prayer. We live in a lonely, hyper-individualized society that makes us prone to fear and suspicion. We live at a time when we are very aware of threats and our vulnerability which makes us susceptible to hostility to others. We live in a time when many voices tell us that God is an illusion in a world defined by money, power, and status. Nouwen provides insights and wisdom that can help us move towards solitude (a centered heart), hospitality toward others, and a prayerful life. I invite you to get a copy of this small book and read it this month. During Lent—March and April—I’ll gather a group so we can discuss Nouwen’s words, share our hearts, and find the spiritual strength we need to transform some of the negative energy flooding our society into a spiritual energy that is holy and welcoming to our deepest selves, the neighbors around us, and the God who dwells with us.

EPISTLE

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The next *Epistle* deadline is February 26, at 11 am.

CHURCH SERVICES LOCATIONS

Where Do We Go?

Please note that, in February, communion will be served on the 2nd Sunday of the month, February 12. Our February 5 service will be a regular worship service in the PARLOR. Our February 12 service will take place in the SANCTUARY, with Tim Pyper as guest organist.

Cindy Dickinson



CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

Unit four began on January 15, Martin Luther King Sunday, and continues through February 26th, Transformation Sunday. It is entitled "New World, New Day." The lessons cover the seven Sundays after Epiphany, during which time we see God's purpose show through Jesus and his followers. The Bible stories we will read in class tell of the beginning of Jesus' ministry and his call to the disciples. We will also read passages from the Sermon on the Mount. The lessons teach that the world Jesus is speaking about is something we are all called to help bring about, including children. Interactive learning and art are used in the weekly lessons to help the children explore and better understand that they too can help make the world a better place.

On February 5th we will be take part in the Super Bowl of Caring. This is a nationwide event in which children and youth across the country work to fight hunger and poverty in their own communities, taking place around the time of the annual Super Bowl football game. Our young people will take up a collection using soup pots. They will be collecting small donations at the door following worship. 100% of the money collected will be used to help fill the shelves of our South Church Food Pantry.

Please consider supporting the children as they learn what it is like to make a positive difference in the world as they raise money for those in need.

Ann Roche

LECTIONARY FOR FEBRUARY

Sunday, February 5 – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 58:1-9a (9b-12)

Psalms 112:1-9 (10)

1 Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16)

Matthew 5:13-20

Sunday, February 12 – Sixth Sunday after Epiphany with Communion in the Sanctuary

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Psalms 119:1-8

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Matthew 5:21-37

Sunday, February 19 – Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-8

Psalms 119:33-40

1 Corinthians 3:10-11, 16-23

Matthew 5:38-48

Sunday, February 26 – Transfiguration Sunday

Exodus 24:12-18

Psalms 2

Psalms 99

2 Peter 1:16-21

Matthew 17: 1-9

SOUTH CHURCH

HAS A "NEW" DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

After three months of serving as South Church's interim Director of Music, Tom Damrosch has been appointed the permanent Director of Music. Tom



impressed the Search Committee with his musical leadership of worship, his working relationship with church staff and members, and his enthusiasm for South Church's mission.

Tom greatly enjoys working with our choir and playing our fine pipe organ and our other keyboard instruments. In addition to his weekly work preparing for worship and recruiting guest musicians, Tom plans to organize the choir room and to reinvigorate the South Church hand bell choir. He looks forward to working with the church at large to provide an open and welcoming environment for musical expression at South Church.

Tom recently retired as a pastor, having served at Grace Church in Dalton and St. Paul's in Stockbridge, returning to his first love, church music. As an organist since age 17, he has led music in churches, organized festivals and given recitals in the U.S., Canada and Europe. His day job while being an active musician was as a banker, where he was involved in community redevelopment and affordable housing work in New York and Puerto Rico.

Tom enjoys participating in a wide range of worshiping communities. He now sings with the Berkshire Concert Choir and is Chaplain for the American Guild of Organists (Berkshire Chapter). He and his wife, Marthe, live in Pittsfield.

South Church would like to thank the members of the Search Committee for overseeing the efforts to find a new Director of Music after Bob Blafield's retirement: Ralph Cianflone, Cindy Dickinson, Scott Haskell, Lyndsay Isham-Morton, Lutitia Tibbetts, Donna Turner, and Kerry Sullivan, ex officio and Joel Huntington, ex officio.

Cindy Dickinson

Some Reflections on South Church

Forty years ago this month, Pete and I decided to join in faith and fellowship with South Church. We raised our children here and have participated in practically every aspect of the church. Our ministers, and especially Joel, have challenged us to grow and have enriched our lives abundantly.

We cannot count the wonderful people at South who became our friends and mentors over these years. And the circle continues to grow wider and larger, as new people join us or participate in the church's activities in our community.

As John Anthony "retires" as Clerk, we thank him for his thoughtful, humorous and deep devotion to inviting others into the fellowship of this church.

With Kerry Sullivan's completion of her second, two-year term as moderator, we salute her with a "high-five" for the upbeat and practical leadership she has given us.

This past week, Ruth Austin and I helped Tom Damrosch go through our choir music. I realized again how blessed South Church has been in our Directors of Music. Each one brought immense personal gifts and devotion to our worship and church life, and each one became a friend.

A note from Judy Quackenbush of Hoosick Falls, New York, prompted these musings. Judy's mother, Harriet White, and her grandmother Maybell Robinson Foss, were lifelong members of South Church, and Judy grew up here. Judy is now undergoing treatment for leukemia. A friend has set up a website site to help with her out-of-pocket treatments- www.gofundme.com/helping-judy-q. Judy enclosed her mother's photos of our bell choir performing at the William Cullen Bryant Homestead one Christmas in the early 1990s. Now, under Tom, our bells may be ringing again soon.

Finally, the response during January of our church family and our community to national challenges has given us hope for the future. May we continue to live out a way of abundant welcome for all.

Mary Rentz

Treasures

A UNIQUE THRIFT STORE

Shop. Donate. Volunteer.

LORD AND TAILOR NEWS

The shop is off to a good start this year. Thanks to the weather and to our loyal volunteers, we had only one closing this month. Keep your fingers crossed for February.

Our half price sales on sweaters and jewelry are continuing and seem to be very popular. We are also about to put coats on sale at half price. Every week brings many new donations, so come in and see what's new.

Thank you to the many people who donate-it's what keeps us going!

This month we will be giving \$500. to the church. **Keep warm.**

Nancy deForest



MAY MATTOON

May Mattoon met on Tuesday, January 10, at 12 noon in the Parlor.

There were 15 present, a guest, Carol Johnson

George, and Pastor Joel in attendance.

After lunch the Annual Meeting was held and the following officers were elected for 2017:

Chairman – Karen Allender

Secretary/Epistle – Joyce Brown

Treasurer – Ruth Campbell.

(Our Co-chair since 1997, Ruth Austin, will remain as an advisor.)

Hostesses were, Ruth Austin, Karen Allender and Jeannine Rontowski. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 7, 2017 at 12 noon in the Parlor.

Joyce Brown

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

We should emphasize not Negro History, but the Negro in history. What we need is not a history of selected races or nations, but the history of the world void of national bias, race hate, and religious prejudice. ~Carter Woodson, 1926

ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2016

If you were unable to attend our 166th Annual Meeting and did not pick up an Annual Report, you may request an electronic copy. Just send us a note via email to sochurch@nycap.rr.com and we will send one along to you.

Paula

FOOD PANTRY



Due to inclement weather last week, the Food Pantry did not get a delivery from the Western Mass Food Bank in Hatfield until Thursday afternoon, after the Pantry had closed for the week. Thanks to the local grocery stores we had plenty of bread and some produce, but by the time the Pantry was closing on Thursday, there was only one box of margarine left in the large refrigerator and the only thing in the freezer was the meat to be used for St. Joseph's Community Dinner on Wednesday night.

Despite the horrible walking conditions, 533 hungry families came to the pantry this week for food. Because of your assistance and support we could help them. Thank you for caring for your neighbors!

During the month of February, we will once again be collecting toilet paper – a much needed item for the clients of the Food Pantry.

Thank you,
Mary Wheat



*For there are three things that
abide, these three;
Faith, hope and love;
But the greatest of these is love.*

Corinthians 1-13:13



**David Grover &
Linda Worster**

BREAD & ROSES COFFEE HOUSE

Friday, Feb. 17, 2017 at 7 p.m.

Each David Grover and Linda Worster concert is different from the others they've given. These two friends have hundreds of songs in their repertoire- both originals and covers. Whether taking on the adventure of playing requests unrehearsed or delivering the many songs that they have performed dozens of times together... always, a fun time is had by all.



**Admission by
donation to
benefit**

**Berkshire Children
& Families**

Redfield House

**A supportive residence
for young single parents**

BC&F launches children and parents toward success, through partnerships with families, communities, agencies, schools and funders, for brighter futures and lifetime success.

**Coffee, tea and variety
of desserts for sale**

**BREAD & ROSES
COFFEE HOUSE**

Parlor
South Congregational
Church
110 South St, Pittsfield

[Southchurchpittsfield.org/
bread-roses](http://Southchurchpittsfield.org/bread-roses)

Feb. 17, 2017
7:00 p.m.

February 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Bridge 12 – 4 pm Healthy Pittsfield 2 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Food Pantry 5:30 – 6 pm	2 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am UCC Clergy 12 noon Bridge 6:30	3 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12 – 4 pm AA 6:15 pm	4 AA 10:15 am Music Together Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
5 Choir Rehearsal 9:15 a.m. Worship 10 am In the Parlor "Souper Bowl of Caring" Collection	6 Bridge 12 – 4 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	7 May Mattoon Luncheon 12 noon Men's Forum 12 noon <i>Square Dancing 7 pm</i>	8 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Music Together Bridge 12 – 4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Food Pantry 5:30 – 6 pm Trustees 6 pm	9 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Pantry Steering Comm. 12 noon BIO Executive Meeting 6 pm Bridge 12	10 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12 – 4 pm AA 6:15 pm	11 AA 10:15 am Music Together Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
12 Worship 10 am in the in the Sanctuary with Communion	13 Bridge 12 – 4 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	14 Valentine's Day ♥ Men's Forum 12 noon <i>Square Dancing 7 pm</i> Diaconate 7 pm	15 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Music Together Bridge 12 – 4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Food Pantry 5:30 – 6 pm	16 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Berkshire Place 10:45 am Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Bridge 12	17 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12 – 4 pm AA 6:15 pm Coffee House Concert 7 pm	18 AA 10:15 am Music Together Lord & Tailor 12 noon – 4 pm Pittsfield Squares Dance 7 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
19 Choir Rehearsal 9:15 a.m. Worship 10 am in the Parlor <i>Coffee Hour Collections for the Language Project</i>	20 Presidents' Day Bridge 12 – 4 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	21 Men's Forum 12 noon <i>Square Dancing 7 pm</i> Mission Board 7 pm	22 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Music Together Bridge 12 – 4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Food Pantry 5:30 – 6 pm	23 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Bridge 12	24 Western Mass Food Bank Training 9 a.m. Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12 – 4 pm AA 6:15 pm	25 AA 10:15 am Music Together Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
26 Choir Rehearsal 9:15 a.m. Worship 10 am in the Parlor <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; background-color: #e91e63; color: white; text-align: center;"> March Epistle Deadline 11 am </div>	27 Bridge 12 – 4 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	28 Men's Forum 12 noon <i>Square Dancing 7 pm</i> Church Council 7 pm	March 1 Ash Wednesday Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Music Together Bridge 12 – 4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Food Pantry 5:30 - 6 pm	March 2 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Bridge 12	March 3 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12 – 4 pm AA 6:15 pm	March 4 AA 10:15 am Music Together Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm