



Epistle

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South Congregational Church • 110 South Street • Pittsfield, MA 01201

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February 2013

In this wintry season as the world is blanketed in snow and hibernates, I thought it would be fun to write about growing edges springing forth. This past week Mary Wheat and I attended the community-wide food ministry meeting. We heard that over 13,000 pounds of vegetables were grown in local community gardens and made available to our pantries and meal sites last year. In addition 614 dozen eggs from local hens were also distributed. This coming summer the “Giving Garden” at First Church of Christ on Valentine Road will double in size to over one-half acre. Other gardens will expand as well. And the hens will also be hard at work. The Giving Garden is making space available for any pantry or meal site to use. They will till, plant, water, and weed each plot, but ask for help with picking the crops as they ripen. Please speak to Mary Wheat or me if you would like to be a part of helping to tend and care for our South Church plot.

This past Sunday evening six of us from South joined with youth and adults from St. Stephen’s Episcopal in serving a hot meal at the “Cathedral in the Night” on the lawn of a downtown church in Northampton. In spite of cold temperatures the outdoor worship was beautiful and gracious with art, music, a simple liturgy, a tender message, and shared concerns—and the large heater nearby was most appreciated. We served hearty sandwiches and hot chili to all who came. This weekly ministry has been held for the past two years, and the Berkshire Servant Leadership Center is hoping a Pittsfield version might begin this summer. Speak to Sally LeBarron, Nancy Tierney, Sarah Tierney, Emma Haskell, Christine Davis—Larry Borden’s granddaughter—or myself for thoughts and reflections about our experience.

On Sunday evening, February 10, our monthly informal Parlor Worship service will return. Through singing, silence, and sharing we will deepen the experience of our Sunday morning worship. My guest for the evening will be Rev. Jenny Gregg, who is Associate Pastor at St. Stephen’s and the Director of the Servant Leadership Center. Through dialogue and discussion we will explore the personal and community dimensions of the faith journey as we seek to follow Jesus who was transfigured on the mountain—the Lesson for that Sunday—and who also washed the feet of those in need. How does our vision of God open our hearts and help us serve?

Finally, on Ash Wednesday, February 13, the six downtown Protestant churches have joined together for a special service to be held at Zion Lutheran at 7 p.m. We six clergy have been meeting at Marketplace Café planning ways to bring our congregations together for worship, learning, and serving. This will be one of those moments as we deepen the Protestant Presence in our community by turning the “ashes” of our lives over to the care of God, knowing that God’s breath of life will inspire for the work of ministry and the sharing of our lives. The preacher for the evening will be the new Lutheran bishop of Western New England. All are welcome.

This is a growing time in the life of the Church. Come grow with us. Blessings and Peace

EPISTLE

Published monthly at Pittsfield, Mass. in the interest of members and friends of South Congregational Church.

Subscription: \$3.00

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The next *Epistle* deadline is February 24th^h at 11 a.m.

EPISTLE SUBSCRIPTIONS

The 162nd Annual Meeting of South Congregational Church has come and gone and once again we are reminded of our commitments to our church in 2013, one of which is the yearly subscription for the church newsletter.



The subscription price (\$3.00) is one of the very few commodities that has not increased in many, many years. Because of your generosity, we have been able to maintain the fee despite rising costs of postage and mailing.

Thank you for your continued assistance in keeping the newsletter vital and forthcoming. Simply enclose your payment in the envelope provided and drop in the collection plate, or send to South Church, c/o Jeannine Rontowski, business manager. Checks payable to South Church *Epistle*. Thank you, one and all.

Priscilla Anthony
Epistle Editor

OUR FAIR LADIES

There will be a meeting on Monday, February 4th, at 7:00 in the Parlor to review last year's Fair and look ahead to this year's. It's never too early!

Pat Hill for the Fair Ladies



HYMNAL PROJECT UPDATE

The South Church Hymnal Project ended with a surplus of \$1394 because of generous donations and lower-than-expected expenses.

At a recent meeting of the Hymnal Committee, we decided to allocate the surplus toward three different projects: 1) a book cart for storing and transporting extra hymnals when worship takes place in the Parlor and in Barrett Hall, 2) new choir robes, and 3) sanctuary linens (an ongoing project of the Diaconate). The book cart should be in place by the beginning of February. An ad hoc committee, under the auspices of the Music Committee, will oversee the selection of new robes for the choir.

Thanks again to all of you for your support of the Hymnal Project.

Cindy Dickinson
South Church Hymnal Committee

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You can live your life as if nothing is a miracle,  
or  
as if everything is a miracle.  
~ Albert Einstein

**ASH WEDNESDAY  
February 13**

Downtown ecumenical Ash Wednesday Service will be held at Zion Lutheran at 7 p.m. This joint worship, bringing together the Protestant congregations of downtown Pittsfield, will include jazz music, imposition of ashes, prayer for the healing of our lives and the life of our community, and the sacrament of Holy Communion.



Guest preacher will be Rev. James Hazelwood, Lutheran bishop for Western New England.

***The following was written by Ben Stein and recited by him on CBS Sunday Morning Commentary:***

My confession: I am a Jew, and every single one of my ancestors was Jewish. And it does not bother me even a little bit when people call those beautiful lit up, bejeweled trees, Christmas trees. I don't feel threatened. I don't feel discriminated against. That's what they are, Christmas trees. It doesn't bother me a bit when people say, 'Merry Christmas' to me. I don't think they are slighting me or getting ready to put me in a ghetto. In fact, I kind of like it. It shows that we are all brothers and sisters celebrating this happy time of year. It doesn't bother me that there is a manger scene on display at a key intersection near my beach house in Malibu. If people want a crèche, it's just as fine with me as is the Menorah a few hundred yards away.

I don't like getting pushed around for being a Jew, and I don't think Christians like getting pushed around for being Christian. I think people who believe in God are sick and tired of getting pushed around, period. I have no idea where the concept came from, that America is an explicitly atheist country I can't find it in the Constitution.

Or maybe I can put it another way: Where did the idea come from that we should worship celebrities and we aren't allowed to worship God as we understand Him? I guess that's a sign that I'm getting old, too. But there are a lot of us who are wondering where these celebrities came from and where the America we knew went to. In light of the many jokes we send to one another for a laugh, this is a little different: This is not intended to be a joke; it's not funny, it's intended to get you thinking.

Billy Graham's daughter was interviewed on the Early Show and Jane Clayson asked her 'How could God let something like this happen?' (regarding Hurricane Katrina). Anne Graham gave an extremely profound and insightful response. She said, 'I believe God is deeply saddened by this, just as we are, but for years we've been telling God to get out of our schools, to get out of our government and to get out of our lives. And being the gentleman He is, I believe He has calmly backed out. How can we expect God to give us His blessing and His protection if we demand He leave us alone?'

In light of recent events...terrorists attack, school shootings, etc., I think it started when Madeleine Murray O'Hare (she was murdered, her body found a few years ago) complained she didn't want prayer in our schools, and we said 'OK'. Then someone said you better not read the Bible in school. The Bible says 'Thou shalt not kill', 'Thou shalt not steal,' and 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' And we said 'OK'. Then Dr. Benjamin Spock said we shouldn't spank our children when they misbehave, because their little personalities would be warped and we might damage their self-esteem. We said an expert should know what he's talking about. And we said 'okay.' (Dr. Spock's son committed suicide.)

Now we're asking ourselves why our children have no conscience, why they don't know right from wrong, and why it doesn't bother them to kill strangers, their classmates, and themselves. Probably, if we think about it long and hard enough, we can figure it out. I think it has a great deal to do with 'WE REAP WHAT WE SOW.'

Funny how simple it is for people to trash God and then wonder why the world's going to hell. Funny how we believe what the newspapers say, but question what the Bible says. Funny how you can send 'jokes' through e-mail and they spread like wildfire, but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing. Funny how lewd, crude, vulgar and obscene articles pass freely through cyberspace, but public discussion of God is suppressed in the school and workplace.

Are you laughing yet? Funny how when you forward this message, you will not send it to many on your address list because you're not sure what they believe, or what they will think of you for sending it. Funny how we can be more worried about what other people think of us than what God thinks of us. Pass it on if you think it has merit. If not, then just discard it . . . no one will know you did. But, if you discard this thought process, don't sit back and complain about what bad shape the world is in.

*My best regards, honestly and respectfully,  
Ben Stein*

Submitted by Irene Jones

## MAY MATTOON

On January 8<sup>th</sup> at our regular Tuesday meeting we re-elected the present officers for the coming year:

Co-Chairmen: Karen Allender, Ruth Austin,  
and Pam Kueppers

Secretary: Alice Gallup

Treasurer: Ruth Campbell

### Standing Committees:

Cards: Priscilla Bailey

Telephone Tree: Karen Allender and Ruth Austin

Consultant: Dot Kresge

Bake Sales: Gerry Whiton

Dues were collected for the year 2013 – heads up for those who have not yet paid.

Cookies were brought in and plates made up to be distributed to shut-ins and those recovering from illness or an operation. Because people were very receptive and appreciative of the thoughtfulness, we are requesting that more cookies be brought in at our next meeting – to be delivered with Valentine cards.

Hostesses for this meeting were Ruth Austin and Jeannine Rontowski. Ruth Austin's brownies with ice cream and her "very favorable" toppings were delicious dessert.

We are also looking for program suggestions for this year. Please submit your ideas to the co-chairs.

Our next meeting is February 5<sup>th</sup> at noon, when Bing Honig will lead us in making Valentines for shut-ins. Hostesses will be Shirley Vickery, Dot Kresge, and Pam Kueppers. Be sure to welcome Diane Leavitt, our new member.

See you in February and don't forget your sandwich.  
Alice Gallup

## Smiles

Smiling is infectious; you catch it like the flu!

When someone smiled at me today,  
I started smiling, too.

I passed around the corner and someone saw my grin,  
When he smiled I realized I had passed it on to him.  
I thought about that smile, and then realized its worth.

A single smile just like mine  
could travel 'round the earth!

So if you feel a smile begin, don't leave it undetected.

Let's start an epidemic quick  
and get the world "perfected!"

## LADIES BENEVOLENT SOCIETY



What a wonderful time we had on Thursday, January 17<sup>th</sup>. We were honored to have Lisa Stuart come and celebrate her birthday with us. She is 89 years young and what a wonderful, sweet, loving person she is. Sharon Mercier made a carrot cake, Lisa's favorite, and it was delicious!

We had several people join us for lunch, including Candy and Polly Grieve. Polly is unable to come each week and it was such a pleasant surprise for Lisa.

We are still looking for you ladies who we know are so anxious to join us for quilting on Thursday mornings. Of course we know that the weather hasn't been very cooperative but maybe when it gets better you will decide to come.

Stay warm and be very careful on the ice.

Marge Demary

### **PASTA DINNER IN BARRETT HALL**

On **Saturday, February 23 at 5:30 p.m.** a delicious meal to help with needed kitchen improvements. Adults- \$12 and children 12 and under- \$5.

The menu is spaghetti and meatballs and all the fixings. Anyone who would like to help in any way, please contact Pat Hill or Pam Kueppers. Save the date!

On Friday afternoon at 4 pm there will be a 'meatball making' gathering in preparation for the dinner.

Pat Hill



Love is singular in syllable only. ~Marvin Taylor

Susan Kaufman RN

Parish Nurse

# Be one in a MILLION HEARTS™ This Valentine's Day

Preventing 1 million heart attacks and strokes over 5 years



## The Issue

Heart disease and stroke are the first and fourth leading causes of death in the United States, making cardiovascular disease responsible for 1 of every 3 deaths in the country. Americans suffer more than 2 million heart attacks and strokes each year, and everyday, 2,200 people die from cardiovascular disease. Further, heart disease and stroke are among the leading causes of disability in our country, with more than 3 million people reporting serious illness and decreased quality of life.

## The Goal

Prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017

## The Method

**Empower Americans to make healthy choices** such as preventing tobacco use and reducing sodium and trans fat consumption. This can help reduce the number of people who need medical treatment such as blood pressure or cholesterol medications to prevent heart attacks and strokes.

**Improve care** for people who do need treatment by encouraging a targeted focus on the “**ABCS**”—**A**spirin for people at risk, **B**lood pressure control, **C**holesterol management and **S**moking cessation—which address the major risk factors for cardiovascular disease and can help to prevent heart attacks and strokes.

There are steps that each person can take to help the nation reach this goal. Million Hearts™ is asking Americans to sign the Million Hearts™ pledge at [millionhearts.hhs.gov](http://millionhearts.hhs.gov) and make a commitment to:

**PREVENT** heart disease and stroke in your families by **UNDERSTANDING** the risks.

- **GET UP** and **GET ACTIVE** by exercising for 30 minutes several days a week.

- **KNOW** your **ABCS**:

Appropriate **A**spirin Therapy

**B**lood Pressure Control

**C**holesterol Management

**S**moking Cessation

- **STAY STRONG** by eating a heart-healthy diet that is high in fresh fruits and vegetables and low in sodium, saturated and trans fats, and cholesterol.

- **TAKE CONTROL** of your heart health by following your doctor's instructions for medications and treatment. Visit [millionhearts.hhs.gov](http://millionhearts.hhs.gov) for more information about the Million Hearts™ initiative.

### ***MODERATOR'S MUSINGS***

This week I begin a term as Moderator of South Church. This is my second time around, having served twenty years ago in a very different time for South Church.

In 2013, I follow Scott Haskell, who has served for three years. Scott's leadership is an example of why the congregational system continues to work as a church model after 400 years.

Scott has led the Church Council - and indeed, the whole church - on an on-going discussion of how this church is organized, how it serves our community and our members, and what we must consider for its future. In trying to update our By-Laws, he found that what we do as a church is not reflected very well in the official papers. Our church's outreach to the community has sky-rocketed during these past few years, and our groups and committees within the church have continued to be vital and thriving. During the same time, despite the able leadership of Trish, our Church School has flickered, as young families in our midst dwindle. We have a rapidly aging congregation and Scott has helped us face an underlying uneasiness about our long-term future direction.

Reaching out to other churches, Scott found the same issues. This year he has led a group of former moderators -the Mod Squad- in meetings with First Church to discuss mutual concerns. Though he is now stepping down as Moderator, Scott is not backing away from this ever-more urgent conversation. He has agreed to continue to lead this conversation.

I speak for the entire congregation in thanking Scott for his deeply faithful, thoughtful, transformative leadership.

Mary Rentz

### ***Lectionary for February 2013***

February 3 – Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Jeremiah 1:4-10

Psalm 71:1-6

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Luke 4:21-30

February 10 - Transfiguration

Exodus 34: 29-35

Psalm 99

2 Corinthian 3:12-4:2

Luke 9:28-36 (37-43)

February 21-First Sunday in Lent

Deuteronomy 26: 1-11

Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

Romans 10:8b-13

Luke 4:1-13

February 28-Second Sunday in Lent

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

Psalm 27

Philippians 3:17-4:1

Luke 13: 31-35

“A religion without the element of mystery would not be a religion at all.”





# February 2013

| <i>Sunday</i>                                                                                                                                     | <i>Monday</i>                                                                                                   | <i>Tuesday</i>                                                             | <i>Wednesday</i>                                                                                                                                                                      | <i>Thursday</i>                                                                                                        | <i>Friday</i>                                                                                  | <i>Saturday</i>                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                 |                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                        | 1<br>Lord & Tailor<br>10 am<br>AA 6:15 pm                                                      | 2<br>AA 10:15 am<br>Lord & Tailor<br>12-4 pm                                   |
| 3<br>Sunday Worship<br>in the Parlor<br>with Communion<br>10 am<br>Women's Book<br>Club<br>"Souper Bowl of<br>Caring"<br>"Soups &<br>Sweets" Sale | 4<br>Faith Based<br>Community<br>Initiative<br>1-2:30 pm<br>Yarn Spinners &<br>Fair Planning<br>Meeting<br>7 pm | 5<br>May Mattoon<br>Noon<br>Men's Forum<br>Noon                            | 6<br>Food Pantry<br>8 – 11 am<br>UCC Clergy<br>Meeting<br>Noon<br>St. Joe's Dinner<br>5 pm                                                                                            | 7<br>Food Pantry<br>8:30-11:30 am<br>Ladies Benevolent<br>9:30 am<br>12-Step Class<br>6:30 pm<br>Chancel Choir<br>7 pm | 8<br>Lord & Tailor<br>10 am<br>AA 6:15 pm                                                      | 9<br>AA 10:15 am<br>Lord & Tailor<br>12-4 pm                                   |
| 10<br>Sunday Worship<br>in the Parlor<br>10 am<br>Informal Parlor<br>Worship<br>7 pm                                                              | 11<br>Yarn Spinners<br>7 pm                                                                                     | 12<br>Men's Forum<br>Noon<br>Diaconate<br>7 pm<br>Mission Board<br>7:15 pm | 13<br>ASH<br>WEDNESDAY<br>Food Pantry<br>8 – 11 am<br>St. Joe's Dinner<br>5 pm<br>Called To Care<br>5:15 pm<br>Trustees<br>6 pm<br>Shared Worship<br>Service at Zion<br>Lutheran 7 pm | 7<br>Food Pantry<br>8:30-11:30 am<br>Ladies Benevolent<br>9:30 am<br>12-Step Class<br>6:30 pm<br>Chancel Choir<br>7 pm | 8<br>Lord & Tailor<br>10 am<br>AA 6:15 pm                                                      | 16<br>AA 10:15 am<br>Lord & Tailor<br>12-4 pm<br>Pittsfield<br>Squares<br>7 pm |
| 17<br>First Sunday<br>in Lent<br>Sunday Worship<br>in the Parlor<br>10 am                                                                         | 18<br>PRESIDENTS'<br>DAY<br>Yarn Spinners<br>7 pm                                                               | 19<br>Men's Forum<br>Noon                                                  | 20<br>Food Pantry<br>8-11 am<br>St. Joe's Dinner<br>5:00 pm                                                                                                                           | 21<br>Food Pantry<br>8:30-11:30 am<br>Ladies Benevolent<br>9:30 am<br>12-Step Class<br>6:30 pm<br>Chancel Choir<br>7pm | 22<br>Lord & Tailor<br>10 am<br>AA 6:15 pm<br>"Meatball<br>Making" for<br>Pasta Dinner<br>4 pm | 23<br>AA 10:15 am<br>Lord & Tailor<br>12-4 pm<br>Pasta Dinner<br>5:30 pm       |
| 24<br>Second Sunday<br>In Lent<br>Sunday Worship<br>in the Parlor<br>10 am<br>Epistle Deadline<br>11 am                                           | 25<br>Yarn Spinners<br>7 pm                                                                                     | 26<br>Men's Forum<br>Noon<br>Church Council<br>7 pm                        | 27<br>Food Pantry<br>8-11 am<br>Church & Ministry<br>4 pm<br>St. Joe's Dinner<br>5 pm                                                                                                 | 28<br>Food Pantry<br>8:30-11:30 am<br>Ladies Benevolent<br>9:30 am<br>12-Step Class<br>6:30 pm<br>Chancel Choir<br>7pm |                                                                                                |                                                                                |