



Epistle

SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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March 2014

As this new month begins I am filled with gratitude for the generosity of so many as our “Stretching for God’s Future” Fund Drive reaches its initial goal and proceeds towards our stretch goal of \$225, 000. It’s amazing what a group of committed, faithful people can accomplish even in challenging economic times! We are being able to preserve, modernize, and grow this building and ministry we share together in Christ. For instance, this winter I have rejoiced in our new energy-saving windows. My office windows no longer rattle wildly with every storm, and I keep checking the thermostat because my study is so warm. All through the Parish House there is no longer a steady draft. What a transformation! An image for what we are accomplishing is visualized in our fund drive logo. A pair of hands, like a tree stretching and growing, woven together with our church building, uplifted to God, and God’s sacred purposes in this time and place, is what this fund raising and faith deepening effort is all about. Whether it’s windows, a steeple, a parking lot, paint, a walk-in cooler/freezer, kitchen renovations, sound system, or other projects, these are all like fruit on a growing tree, that is planted by rivers of living water. We plant the seeds and God provides the growth into a future holy and gracious.



This past week Norseman Sound came and presented a demonstration of what our new sound system will be like. As we head back to our beautiful sanctuary this coming Sunday, some will be thinking of difficulties with hearing. Our current speakers, which are 40 years old, muffle every sound. There are dead spots scattered throughout the sanctuary. Sound reverberations also complicate our ability to hear clearly. We respond by turning up the volume but this doesn’t really help. Our new system will make use of current technology to shape and aim sound waves that will enable every part of our sanctuary to receive a crisp, clear auditory signal. Some of us got to experience that last week and it was remarkable! We plan to have this new system in place before Easter so that worship in our sanctuary is both a visual and auditory source of joy. It has been a source of frustration for us all when many can only hear a part of what is being said. Soon that situation will dramatically change--because we are stretching for God’s future.

Another project of our drive was to create a book of prayers to lift up our shared efforts. One Sunday, in the intimacy of the parlor, I handed out sheets of paper during worship and invited everyone to compose a simple prayer for this campaign and our life together. It only took about five minutes, but the results were amazing. So much depth, heart, concern, and care were expressed in those prayers that I have been using them in worship regularly. Copies are available and give tender voice to faith stretching and growing.

On Sunday, March 16, we will celebrate what we have accomplished, give thanks for the generosity of many, and dedicate our funds and ourselves to the continuing task of stretching and growing in Christ. Vikki True will be with us to add to the joy of the day as we sing Bing Honig’s campaign hymn, share prayers we have written together, and rejoice that God’s Spirit is at work in and through us in wondrous and surprising ways.

EPISTLE

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- Children/Youth Director Ann Roche
- Moderator Mary Rentz
- Parish Nurse Sue Kaufman
- Food Pantry Mary Wheat
- May Mattoon Alice Gallup
- Ladies Benevolent Marge Demary
- Men's Forum John Anthony
- Production and Mailing Paula Haskell

The next *Epistle* deadline is March 30th at 11 am.



The next Capital Campaign Fund Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 4th at 5:30 p.m.

Mary Rentz

FOOD PANTRY

The Food Pantry has been involved in getting signatures to increase the MEFAP (Mass. Emergency Food Assistance Program) allocations and sending them to Boston via our local Senator and Representatives. Hopefully they will be successful and we will receive more food.

A few new guests have needed help with some basic kitchen utensils as they have nothing. One person had only one spoon and one pan. So we have started collecting some basic kitchen equipment and plan on storing them to be available as needed. Any contributions would be greatly appreciated.



Reminder: March is toilet tissue month.

Thank you, Mary Wheat

Since Christmas Sunday School has been moving along nicely. The children have been learning about Jesus' childhood journey to his baptism by his cousin John to the early beginnings of his ministry.



Lessons will continue on as they lead into Holy Week and Easter. The lessons are fun, interactive and always include a craft, music or dramatic play to enhance the meaning.

Thank You to those who contributed to the "Souper Bowl" collection. It is a yearly mission event, held nationwide by various youth groups. Collectively it raises thousands of dollars for food

pantries across the country. Our group raised \$235.00! Mary Wheat was very thankful and plans on purchasing paper products for those who visit our food pantry here at South.



I would like to thank all the dedicated members who have been working on our capital fund campaign "Stretching for God's Future." The brunch at the Pittsfield Country Club was a wonderful time for members, friends and families! The picture of the church and the article on the front page of the *Eagle* was really something to be proud of. You all have done an amazing job!

Time to catch up on Birthdays!!

- Ashley Pixley January 22- 12 years old
- Rose Garrison February 15- 5 years old
- Colin Mulcahy February 26- 4 years old
- And Happy 21st Birthday to Emma and Luke Haskell on February 14 and to Katie and Abby Le Rose on February 18th

Blessings, Ann Roche, Director
Children and Youth Ministries

A rose can say "I love you,"
Orchids can enthrall;
But a weed bouquet in a chubby fist-
Yes, that says it all.

Unknown

Mission Board Update

As you know, the allocations for 2013 did not make the 2013 deadline for the budget review, so we have rectified that situation this month. The following list contains the recipients and the allotted allocations:



Massachusetts Conference OCWM- \$1000,
Christian Center- \$1000
Pittsfield Area Council of Congregations - \$100
Redfield House - \$100, Kids Place - \$150
Salvation Army \$150-- for a total of \$2500.

Also, we voted unanimously to have an ongoing mission for the 3rd Sunday of each month to highlight The Language Project. This is a mission that Carol Kresge has tirelessly devoted her life to, creating libraries and self-study centers in underdeveloped areas in Laos. She and this program give motivated people the resources and tools they need to study and help themselves. With our gifts to this mission, library books and educational materials, which are rare in many of these places, will touch many lives. Any money that gets placed in the can at coffee hour on the 3rd Sunday of the month will go to this mission. We will remind you in the bulletin, and in announcements in church, and have a display sign on the table near the can on that Sunday.

Many heartfelt thanks to all in this church who stretch out and touch others in need both in our community and in the world in so many quiet and unassuming ways.

Jean Roberson, for the Mission Board



“Tomb, thou shalt not hold Him longer;
Death is strong, but Life is stronger;
Stronger than the dark, the light;
Stronger than the wrong, the right.”

~Phillips Brooks, "An Easter Carol."

LECTIONARY FOR MARCH

Sunday, March 2 – Transfiguration Sunday and Sacrament of The Lord’s Supper

Worship in the Sanctuary

Guest Preacher: Rev. Kelly Gallagher, Associate
Conference Minister

Liturgist: Rev. Joel Huntington

Exodus 23:12-18

Psalm 99

2 Peter 1:16-21

Matthew 17:1-9

Sunday, March 9 – First Sunday in Lent

Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7

Psalm 32

Romans 5:12-19

Matthew 4:1-11

Sunday, March 16 – Celebration Sunday

Celebrating and Dedicating of the “Stretching
for God’s Future” Fund Drive

Guest Musician: Vickie True

Genesis 12:1-4a

Psalm 121

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

John 3:1-17

Sunday, March 23 – Third Sunday in Lent

Exodus 17:1-7

Psalm 95

Romans 5:1-11

John 4:5-42

Sunday, March 30 – Fourth Sunday in Lent

House Church meets this evening at 7 p.m.

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Psalm 23

Ephesians 5:8-14

John 9:1-41



“It is amazing what you can accomplish
if you don’t care who gets the credit.”

Harry S. Truman

SUNDAY EVENING HOUSE CHURCH

Our monthly House Church gathering was held in the Parlor on Sunday evening, February 23rd. Dr. Mark Pettus was our guest. This proved to be a rich conversation with Mark as he continues his lifework of weaving together the vast storehouse of medical knowledge with the equally vast realm of the human spirit. It is in this weaving together of knowledge and spirit that the potential for healing, hope, and transformation shines.

Speaking with Mark is a wondrous way to let a deeper light shine—the light of cutting edge scientific research and the light of wisdom and heartfelt compassion. Mark's new position at Berkshire Medical Center lifts up the themes of community health, wellness, and prevention. He is tasked with the job of helping medicine think outside the box and be integrated into the daily lives of us all. This easily leads to discussions that weave together body, mind, and spirit.

The music of singer/songwriter, Linda Worster—who also weaves life and spirit together in remarkable ways - enhanced our program.

The next House Church gathering will be held on Sunday, March 30th. There is no charge. Park behind the church off Church St. and plan for an evening of enlightenment and fun.

Pastor Joel

Church Door Locks to be Changed

The Board of Trustees, for security reasons, is looking into changing the door locks that allow access to our buildings.

Over the years, despite recording and charging a deposit on issuing of keys, many keys are unaccounted for. Having a safe and secure building for our members, staff and guests is a high priority. Active church members and organizations that presently possess a building key will be allowed to trade in their old key, if and when we change the locks. Stay tuned for updates.

John Robertson, Trustees Chairman



Help wanted: The Food Pantry at South Church has immediate openings for volunteers for the following positions:

- Mondays – pickup food from Big Y and Stop & Shop – mornings – need vehicle
- Tuesdays – pickup food from Stop and Shop – mornings – need vehicle
- Tuesdays – unloading food pantry truck at the church 11:30 – 1:30
- Wednesdays – help to break down boxes for recycling – morning – at the church
- Thursdays- help to break down boxes for recycling – morning - at the church
- Fridays – pickup food from Big Y and Friehofer- mornings – need vehicle
- Fridays – unloading BJ's delivery at the church – 10:15
- Fridays – 4th Friday of month only – pick up brown bags at the Senior Center –need vehicle

If you would like to volunteer for any of these exciting positions, or would like more information – please call Mary Wheat at 442-3706 evenings or 446-0083 daytime.

The Pantry also gets requests for household items from some of the guests. If you have pots and pans, dishes, silverware, or glasses that you would like to donate, please leave them in the pantry donation box near the office.

We also are in need of plastic grocery bags. If you have them cluttering up your closets, we would be happy to reuse them at the pantry.

Pat Politis, for the Mission Board

We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.

MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

So much to be
THANKFUL
for...

What a winter we are having! Through it all, the activities at our church have kept on going - men, women and children coming for worship, singing, learning, fellowship, and sharing. Lord and Tailor, the Food Pantry and St. Joe's Kitchen at South Church are there for our neighbors who venture out in the deep cold. On some Sundays, our parlor has seemed to be stretching at the seams with so many people.

On a beautiful Saturday, February 8th, our capital fund drive, *Stretching for God's Future*, kicked off with a fun party and great lunch at the Pittsfield Country Club. We stretched with rubber band bracelets, Qigong Yoga, and words of encouragement and wisdom from Joel and Rev. Jay Terbush, our U.C.C. consultant. We stretched our voices with the singing of the hymn written by Bing Honig – *This Church Is Old, This Church is Young* – and our hearts with the prayers of our own church members. The total announced that day revealed how much our members have been stretching their giving for the future– \$160,542 toward our goal of \$200,000!

After the Kick-Off, our Family Visits began. These are opportunities to share hopes and visions for our future. What has South Church meant to you? How will you help? These visits, still going on, have brought in another \$30,000, bringing us almost to our goal. We are also reaching out to friends who once had deep connections with South Church to help us stretch for the future. We will soon surpass the goal and be reaching onward toward the "stretch" goal.

For 164 years our New England meetinghouse has welcomed the community through its front doors for Sunday morning worship and fellowship. In March we will be installing a digital sound system that will allow the spoken word to resonate as clearly at the back of the sanctuary as at the front. This project, which emerged as we planned the campaign, will enhance our worship and open other opportunities for welcoming the community.

One of the first opportunities will take place May 17th, when South Church, in partnership with the United Way, will present Mary Pope Osborne, the award winning author of the Magic Tree series for young readers. We expect an overflow crowd of educators and parents, accompanied by children eager to see and hear their favorite author.

In worship on March 16th we will celebrate the successful conclusion of our "Stretching for God's Future" Capital Fund Drive. It will also mark a new beginning for South Church. We hope you will join us.

With deepest thanks for your continuing stewardship of this old church,

Mary Rentz, Moderator

MISSION BOARD PRESENTS: LINDA WORSTER CONCERT

Please come to our First Mission Board Concert on Friday, March 21, 2014 at 7:00 PM in the Church Parlor!!! Linda Worster, a gifted singer, song writer, vocalist and musician will share her music and lyrics with us. They are alive with the vitality of her dedication to seeking and discovering the magic and the mysteries of life. Linda's deep concern for the environment and for the choices we need to make to turn things around for future generations have inspired much of her writing. Her songs speak the truth of feelings that many people say they find hard to express. People say her songs touch their hearts and make them feel good. Paul Winter has said, "Linda speaks with the radiance of the heart spirit." And, he added, "Linda Worster is the greatest thing since sliced tofu."

Linda has blessed us with her music during Sunday morning worship and House Church and we're sure you'll enjoy her concert as well! There will be a free will offering to benefit the Elizabeth Freeman Center and light refreshments will be provided. We hope to see you there!!!!

Kerry Sullivan, for the Mission Board

MAY MATTOON

May Mattoon Class met on February 4th at noon. The theme of course – Valentine’s Day. Red plates, napkins, little heart candies, dishes of fruit, plus a small figurine of Cupid comprised the decorations. Hostesses for this event were Pam Garrett, Dot Kresge, and Shirley Vickery. A super-delicious cherry crunch with ice cream was served for dessert.

Following lunch, Mary Rentz gave a presentation detailing the projects planned in the 3-year Capital Fund Drive: steeple repair and painting, window replacement, new kitchen update. Also a new storage shed will be purchased to house yard-maintenance equipment. A new sound system for the sanctuary will be added. Roofs are in need of repair and the list goes on. It’s a beautiful church and we all want to keep it that way. Mary also presented ways to contribute to this campaign – weekly, monthly, or yearly, or in one lump sum. Everyone’s pledge will be greatly appreciated regardless of amount or method of payment.

During the business meeting it was noted a memorial service for Judie Grady will be held on Saturday, May 24th. Ruth Campbell has taken over the job of sending cards. Next it was voted to donate \$25 to the Christian Education Fund in memory of Judie.

At Christmas, a gift of \$50 was given to Paula Haskell for outstanding secretarial services to May Mattoon, plus \$25 was gifted to sexton Tom Tarjik for setting up for our meetings. A check for \$100 was sent to the Christian Center. And, \$300 was given to the Deacons’ fund to help meet extended family needs during this brutal winter. It was voted to give the Youth Center \$100 to purchase needed teaching tools.

A program, sponsored by United Way, will be presented by Mary Pope Osborn, author of “Magic Tree House” books, on May 17th, here at the church. Pam Garrett, friend of Ms. Osborn, highly recommends this program. It will be a two-hour event for South Church and friends. Note that childcare will be provided.

Our next meeting will be held on March 4th at noon; bring your sandwich. Dessert, side dishes and coffee will be served. Also bring toilet articles for our Food Pantry. The program is on the subject of literacy by Karen Vogel from United Way. Hostesses are Pat Hill and Arlene Emerson.

Another month closer to spring – Yeah! Alice Gallup



LADIES BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

We are off to a good start this year. Our group has been commissioned to make a quilt for a couple who will be

married in 2014.

Thanks to our “honorable member” Roberta Hill, for coordinating and cutting all the pieces for us. She is very precise and has a great eye for color. Now we are ready to sew.

In addition, we are finishing a quilt for Scott and Paula Haskell that was given to them by Scott’s grandmother many years ago. Mary Rentz tells us that it was probably made in the 1920’s.

Our mystery closet produced a couple more quilts that we will complete as well. WOW, we just love that closet!!

Until next time, try to stay warm and healthy in this crazy weather.

Marge Demary

LORD AND TAILOR NEWS

Here we are in the dead of winter and, like everyone else, the weather is affecting our shop. Since the first of the year, we have had to either close early or just not open at all due to weather conditions. This situation has brought us less income than we hoped. But, we are pleased to be able to give \$500 this month to the church.

So come and see what’s new in the shop. A great coat sale is going on, as well as a sale on suits, jackets and pants. We also have just put out some beautiful Easter items.

Thanks to all, volunteers, customers and donors who brave the elements to come to the shop.

HAPPY SPRING!!!

Nancy deForest and Audra Kinner

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No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its turn. ~Hal Borland

It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade. ~Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*



Easter Flowers

Dear Friend,

Easter is coming and it is time to think about Easter memorials. The flowers will be in church on Sunday, April 20th. If you are interested in a lily or tulip at \$15.00 a plant, or a cash gift, please indicate below and mail to:

Mary Wheat
23 Ivy Lane
Pittsfield, MA 01201

_____ I wish to order and take my lily with me after service on Easter, April 20th.

_____ I wish to order and take my tulip with me after service on Easter, April 20th.

(If you sign up to take your lily/tulip with you after service, please remember to do so, as we had many left last year.)

_____ I wish to order a lily for a shut-in.

_____ I wish to order a tulip for a shut-in.

_____ I wish to give a cash gift.

The memorial will read as follows:

Given by:

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR REQUEST PRIOR TO SUNDAY, APRIL 13th.

Message from Our Fair Ladies

We know it's a very busy time here at South Church but we are asking you to think back to November 9, 2013...our Church Fair.

- * What do you look forward to at the Fair each year?
- * Do you think the timing is appropriate – 9:00 – 3:00?
- * Our Luncheon – 11:00 to 2:00? Menu of the luncheon? Self-serve vs. waiters taking orders?
- * Our selection of Crafters?
- * For those of you who volunteered your time so generously, any thoughts on how we could improve?

We really would like to hear from you. We are having a meeting after church on March 2nd so if you could jot down your thoughts in an e-mail, on a piece of paper or give me a call, whatever's convenient, we'd appreciate it. Everyone is welcome to come on March 2nd, please....we welcome your input

On behalf of Your Fair Ladies,
Kerry Sullivan
413-822-3325 –Kerrsullivan@gmail.com



**Lord & Tailor
TAG SALE
Saturday, March 29
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.**

WANTED:

Items to sell -- clean working tools, toys, cookware, small appliances, dishes, collectibles, furniture (in good condition), children and baby's clothing. (Please: **NO** Tires, TV's or Computers.) Donations may be left in Barrett Hall.

Helpers –Helpers are needed for set-up on Thursday, March 27 from noon – 3 p.m. and on Friday, March 28 from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m., and on the day of the Sale, Saturday, March 29, from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Contact Nancy (442-5195) or Audra (458-0971) to sign up. Thanks for your support!



2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 UCC "Super Saturday" AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7:30
2 Sanctuary Worship 10 am Craft Fair Planning 11:30 Women's Book Club 11:30	3 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	4 Men's Forum Noon May Mattoon Noon Capital Fund Committee 5:30 pm	5. Food Pantry 8-11 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm ECUMENICAL ASH WEDNESDAY 7 pm Zion Luth	6 Food Pantry 8-11 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Spiritual Support Group 6:30 pm Chancel Choir 7 pm	7 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	8 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 2-4 pm Al-Anon 7:30
9 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS First Sunday in Lent Sanctuary Worship 10 am	10 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	11 Men's Forum Noon Diaconate 7 pm	12 Food Pantry 8-11 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Trustees 6 pm	13 Food Pantry 8-11 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Spiritual Support Group 6:30 pm Chancel Choir 7 pm	14 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4pm AA 6:15 pm	15 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Pittsfield Squares 7pm Al-Anon 7:30
16 Capital Fund Celebration Sunday 10 am with Vikki True	17 ST. PARTICK'S DAY Yarn Spinners 7 pm	18 Men's Forum Noon Capital Fund Committee 5:30 pm Mission Board 7 pm	19 Food Pantry 8-11 am Berkshire Place Worship 10:45 St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	20 Food Pantry 8-11 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Spiritual Support Group 6:30 pm Chancel Choir 7pm	21 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4pm Mission Concert 7 pm AA 6:15 pm	22 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7:30
23 Third Sunday in Lent Sunday Worship 10 am	24 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	25 Men's Forum Noon Church Council 7 pm	26 Food Pantry 8-11 am Church & Ministry 4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	27 Food Pantry 8-11 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Spiritual Support Group 6:30 pm Choir 7pm	28 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4pm AA 6:15 pm	29 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7:30
30 Worship 10 am Epistle Deadline House Church 7 pm	31 Yarn Spinners 7 pm					