



Epistle

SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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October, 2014

In my children's sermon this past Sunday I talked with our younger ones about our steeple repairs. I showed them the photos from last week's Berkshire Eagle that had a before, during, and after display as four thousand new cedar shingles were put in place high above the Pittsfield skyline. We then talked about how the steeple is there to provide a shelter for our bell that rings each Sunday inviting the community to worship. I told them that each of us has something like a 'bell' deep inside us that calls us into a still, calm place whenever we want to go there. I invited them to close their eyes, be as still as they could, and listen for the sound of their breath: "As you do so can you feel the calm, peaceful place inside you?" We were silent for a few moments. When I opened my eyes their eyes were still closed—they were listening well. I said, "That deep quiet is a bit of God within you, and that love never leaves no matter how loud and noisy the world gets." It seemed a good message for the kids, me, and all of us. I'm not always good at taking time to listen. I need the reminders of my own little sermons! When I was a child my mother "preached" such sermons to me at a number of critical moments. My hope is that by weaving in such messages to the children of today as they share in worship and learn stories of faith they will have the inner resources they need for the challenges they face. Hearing that inner 'bell' has always served me well.

Spirituality is the art of listening ever more deeply for the voice of God within and then speaking ever more faithfully such love into our loud, noisy world. Sunday worship is a key opportunity for practicing that art. Another way to develop this habit of listening for love is to participate in a study group. This coming Tuesday, October 7, Rev. Jenny Gregg and I will lead a weekly study here at South of Fr. Richard Rohr's fascinating little book: Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life. Each week we will have time for quiet meditation, an opportunity for checking in, and will explore themes from our book. In this book Rohr describes how our lives have two fundamental tasks. In the first part of life we create a 'container'—we grow up, get an education and a job, have a family, develop a career, and make our mark. In the second part of life we begin to focus on the 'content'—what is all this for, what is the purpose of our efforts? In our culture it's easy to get absorbed in striving for the perfect container—the perfect family, career, income, house, etc. But when do we get around to filling this container, and with what? What is the quality of our inner life? What are the qualities of our relationships? What do we hope to accomplish with our lives? Do we hear the voice of peace in our hearts—and speak from that place in our lives? Or are we mostly anxious, worried, fearful, and angry about what the world threatens to do to us and our containers? Rohr asserts that we need both content and containers, but that most of us never get beyond the first task. We need to be invited to refocus on the task of what he calls the 'second part of life'. Through this book and our discussions we will seek to grow still, listen deeply, and hear the sound of that holy bell of God's love ringing in our hearts, and in our midst, calling us to 'fall upward' into larger faithfulness and greater joy. This is where spirituality leads, into wholeness for ourselves and our world. Come join us for this spiritual journey into God.

EPISTLE

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The next *Epistle* deadline is October 26 at 11 a.m.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

In memoriam:

Arthur R. Bell	September 3
Ruth (Jeanne) Sheely	September 17

Plans for a memorial service for Jeanne in October are in progress.

Falling Upwards: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life by Fr. Richard Rohr

Beginning on Tuesday, October 7, at 10 a.m. Rev. Huntington and Rev. Gregg, will lead a weekly study of this insightful book that explores the two halves of life. As it says in the introduction: "Drawing on the wisdom from time-honored myths, heroic poems, great thinkers, and sacred religious texts, the author explores the two halves of life to show that those who have fallen, failed, or 'gone down' are the only ones who understand 'up'."

Hosted by our spiritual support group this 90-minute class will include brief meditation, focused sharing, light refreshments, along with thoughtful presentations.

Cost for the book is \$11. All are welcome.

Bring a friend.



Sunday School MAKES A DIFFERENCE

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

Fall has arrived and with it, the sounds of footsteps in the nursery and Cooke Center here at South Church!

An intergenerational service took place on September 21st. Children, youth and adult members of the congregation participated. The theme from Unit 1 of the *Whole People of God* "Gathering into the Sacred Circle" was the focus of the service. God's love is like a circle; it has no beginning or end. The circle logo for the unit has an opening, to allow all who wish feel free to enter.

Unit 1 also features stories from Exodus. While in the wilderness, people would compile stories about God's saving presence within the most difficult circumstances. Story telling is especially important for children. The stories shape their young imaginations and will continue to influence them throughout their lives. A special thanks to Tora for coming in and teaching two songs to sing for the service, and to our Biblical actors and story tellers Sara Adams, Will Garrison, Samantha Sperlonga, Ian Ryer, Devin Ryer and Alex Roche.

I am very happy to announce South Church will be participating in a collaborative youth group program with the Pittsfield downtown churches this year! The program is for youth grades 6-12. The first event is an outing to Ramblewild, a forest adventure park. The scheduled events for the year will be mailed to families and posted on the church bulletin board.

Thank you Nanciann Ryer and Samantha Sperlonga for your support and participation in the summer program. Teachers and support persons for the 2014-2015 school year are Samantha Sperlonga, Rachael Roche, Ariana Rinaldi, Alex Roche and Nanciann Ryer. Thank you for your efforts on making this a successful program.

Ann Roche, Children and Youth Ministries

LORD AND TAILOR NEWS

Fall is in full swing, and the colors in the shop are as beautiful as the trees. Warm fall and winter clothes are now in, as well as many gifts for the holidays. We have quite a few collectible dolls.

We will be giving \$750. to the church this month, for a total of \$5200 so far this year. Thanks to all who help make the shop what it is.

Nancy deForest and Audra Kinner

FOOD PANTRY NEWS



South Church Food Pantry is staffed by many caring, helpful, responsible people. Besides food, we offer free clothing, children's books, books for adults, and miscellaneous other items that are available at various times. They are all deeply appreciated by our guests. Over the summer Jean Bousquet staffed the book table, while Sandie Smith took a break. She did—and keeps doing—a fantastic job. Jean helps our youngest clients choose age-appropriate books and often reads to them, as well as encouraging older clients to find something as well. Jean has found and paid for books from many locations to bring in to the table. Please help Jean, Sandie, and our clients, by donating books. What a great way to nourish minds as well as bodies!

Looking into the fall, it will soon again be turkey time at South Church. Distribution of turkeys and all the fixings will take place on Monday, November, 24. Please consider donating a turkey or cash if you can. We anticipate that we will need 1400 turkeys for that day. We would also love baked pies—we need about 700—and winter squash. This past week it was reported in the *Eagle* that all the winter squash we were counting on from the “Giving Garden” at Church of Christ on Valentine Road was stolen—about 500 lbs. worth. This is quite a blow. If you can donate a few extra butternut squash that would be wonderful!

Finally, the pantry itself is in desperate need of peanut butter, baby food, cereal, and tuna fish. Because of cutbacks at the Western Mass. Food Bank we are receiving less protein items—like meat. The cutbacks are becoming more severe. It's hard to turn people away when they have panicked looks in their faces. Donations of the above items can help assuage this to some degree. We—and the other local pantries—are beginning to advocate for more support from the Food Bank and hope our voices will be heard. Because the other local pantries have even less than we do, we ended up with 489 families coming this past week. 73 of these families were new to our pantry. For the

month of September, when you add up how many people are in each of the households that came through the pantry line, we served 4,300 individuals in total. Please help in any way you can. And every effort is deeply appreciated.

P.S. The above was mostly written by Mary Wheat with Rev. Joel adding his thoughts. Joel's final thought is that the Pantry ministry and all that goes into it- especially the faithful efforts of so many is an amazing miracle that is quite inspiring- in spite of the great and desperate need it reflects.

NEIGHBORS IN NEED OCTOBER 5TH, 2014

The theme this year for our Neighbors in Need offering is “Imagining.”

As you are aware, Neighbors in Need is the UCC's annual offering to support ministries of justice and compassion throughout the U.S., including the Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM), justice and advocacy efforts, and direct service projects funded by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries.



Imagine another world where literacy is no longer a concern. Or imagine another world where educating women and girls is a priority. How awesome would it be if the school-to-prison pipeline is eliminated? Programs like basic reading, and GED prep programs, academic enrichment programs, and nutrition, health, and mental health support programs could be an opportunity to give hope and tools to children and adults that would lift them up.

Please give generously on Sunday, October 5th!

“I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink, I was homeless and you gave me a room, I was shivering and you gave me clothes, I was sick and you stopped to visit, I was in prison and you came to me.” Matthew 25: 35-36

Jean Robertson,
Mission Board Chair



HARVEST CRAFTS FAIR – NOVEMBER 8, 2014

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Luncheon 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Thursday – November 6 – set up 6:00 PM

Friday-November 7-pie baking, sandwiches, soup prep. 9:00 AM

Set up luncheon – Friday 4:00 PM

Saturday – FAIR

Saturday 3:00 – clean-up/take down

If you'd like to help in any way – please do!!! The Harvest Fair has always been a time for our church family to come together, so if you have time or maybe a donation, please let us know!

We need help with room/table set up, pie baking, lunch prep, clean up and Day of Help is always welcome.

We are still seeking donations of NEW items to fill Gift Baskets, donations of filled Gift-themed Baskets and Gift Cards for the Silent Auction. If you know of someone or an organization that may have something they'd like to donate please ask them on our behalf!

For the luncheon, we're asking for: tuna fish, canned kidney beans, pinto beans and black beans, diced tomatoes, tomato paste, saltines, peanut butter, jelly, apple cider and bottled water.

If you have any questions or comments about the Fair, please let us know!

Kerry Sullivan and The Fair Ladies kerrsullivan@gmail.com

MISSION BOARD NEWS

Update on Carol Kresge's Language Program donations:

So far, South Congregational Church has donated \$914 this past year since we started the third Sunday coffee collections! This amazing amount shows how supportive you have all been concerning Carol's mission in Laos. From this point on we will be sending Carol the collections quarterly. At that time, we will make sure it is in the *Epistle* for your perusal. Also, on the bulletin board under missions, there is a great article written about Carol in the section "My Library." Feel free to look it over.

Appeal for Anyone Interested in Continuing John Moore's Lifetime Commitment to St. Joe's Kitchen.

John will be retiring in December. Words cannot express our appreciation for all the hours and toil that John has dedicated to the wonderful, caring mission of St. Joe's Kitchen. From creating its roots here at South Church to contributing years of personal time and effort, John has tirelessly performed many duties, both big and small, in order to keep the kitchen running smoothly and efficiently. In reality, we know that filling John's shoes is a monumental task, and next to impossible, but we are asking anyone who may want to fill part of the job, or work as a team, to let the Mission Board know either through me or anyone on the Board. In the next couple of months we will be brainstorming to come up with a way to move forward and hopefully have a person or persons in place to make a smooth transition into the new year.

Jean Robertson, for the Mission Board

Lectionary/Worship for October

Lectionary for October 5 – Worldwide Communion Sunday

Today we will receive our Neighbors in Need Offering that supports our UCC ministries of justice and compassion throughout our country; in addition Ron Hanft will be our guest organist and choir director

Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20

Psalm 19 or

Philippians 3:34-14

Matthew 21:33-46

Sunday, October 12 – Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 32:1-14

Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23 or

Philippians 4:1-9

Matthew 22:1-14

Sunday, October 19 – Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 33:12-23

Psalm 99 or

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

Matthew 22:15-22

Sunday, October 26 – Reformation Sunday

Deuteronomy 34:1-12

Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17 or

1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

Matthew 22:34-46

Sunday, October 26 – Inward Journeys: Opening Our Hearts to the Holy 7 p.m.

Tonight we will share in a time of silent meditation, sing some contemporary songs and hymns, be inspired by the tender music of Linda Worster, and explore in an interactive way some of the wisdom of Fr. Richard Rohr that is captured in his "Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life."

Sunday, October 26 – Installation of Rev. Janet McKinstry as pastor of Richmond Congregational, UCC. 2 p.m.

Our former Peirson interns, Janet McKinstry,

is the new pastor in Richmond. This association wide event will bring members of our Berkshire UCC churches together to celebrate this new ministry and to experience some wide-ranging and joyous music. Janet is designing a service that will bring together church choirs along with creative music from Mark Kelso and others for a very fun afternoon.

"Cathedral on the Lawn" – Outdoor, ecumenical worship, on the lawn of St. Joe's Church

Each Sunday afternoon at 2 p.m. clergy and lay from many congregations along with members of our wider community gather for simple worship, brief reflections, and a shared meal. This is to fulfill Jesus' call to go and feed the hungry, both spiritually and physically, in an open, welcome, and inclusive way. Come join us for this innovative expression of the Gospel.



**CROP WALK
to Fight World Hunger
On Sunday, October 19th
at 1:00 p.m.** the Annual CROP Walk to fight world hunger will take place. This year we are putting together a South Church team!

The event starts at First Church. It is a fairly short walk, less than 5k; it moves through the center of Pittsfield then loops back to First Church. Twenty-five percent of funds raised will be used in our local area, the remaining funds are distributed world-wide. It is a fun, rewarding event and refreshments are served at First Church afterward.

We invite you to sponsor one of our walkers or come join us for this short walk that will help change the world for the better. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board outside the church office.

Some small ways your small steps can make a big difference:

\$10 can provide a pair of rabbits, which are a great source of protein.

\$50 can provide hoes, shovels and seeds, tools a family needs to grow a garden.

\$100 can provide 200 chicks, helping families find their way from need to nourishment.

Ann Roche

MAY MATTOON

On Monday, September 8th, May Mattoon held its Potluck Supper. It was well attended and, of course, the potluck choices were delicious and tasty with no two dishes alike. Dessert consisted of a choice of pineapple cake or lemon custard with sherbet ice-cream – yum! Hostesses were Ruth Austin, Karen Allender, and Pat Hill. A short business meeting was held and it was noted that Mattoon members had provided a reception after the memorial service for Emily Jahn.

Karen Allender put forth a question to the group, asking if we would like to host a Chocolatier Party and, if so, when and where. This idea is on hold for the time being in order to determine a date and time for the party. This would be a *money-making project* for May Mattoon.

If anyone has an idea for a Harvest Fair project, we would like to hear from you. It would be something the group could put together and sell at the Fair, scheduled for Saturday, November 8th. Our next Mattoon meeting will be Tuesday, October 7th at noon – bring your own lunch – dessert will be provided. Hostesses are Nancy deForest, Audra Kinner, and Bing Honig.

Don't forget toilet articles for the Food Pantry clients – shampoo, bath soap, deodorant (men's and women's) toothpaste, toothbrushes, etc. A celebration of all members' birthdays will comprise the program. Each member will pay one penny for each year, or a one-dollar donation.

See you then!

Alice Gallup

WALK-A-MILE IN HER SHOES UPDATE

Thanks to all those who sponsored me for the mile walk at the recent Third Thursday. I was able to present to the Elizabeth Freeman Center \$408.

This walk raises awareness about domestic violence in our community. It brings our diverse community together in a creative way to bear witness to a larger vision of who we can be. And the fact that so many men of all ages participate helps embody that vision of a healthy, whole, caring community. This is the 4th year for the walk and each year it gains visibility and helps make a difference. Thanks for your support.

Rev. Joel

MEN'S FORUM--And Away We Go!!

When the Men's Forum was started in February 1992, we had 12 members most of us in our early 60's. We met every Tuesday for lunch and a meaningful discussion from October to mid-June and with 7 or 8 attending each week.

This year 22 years later when we gather for our opening meeting on October 7 we have 28 names on our roster and Jim Kresge and I are the only two original members still active. An interesting side note—15 of our very active Forum members are not South Church members. Our attendance has increased to close to 20 each week and our average age has increased also so that three of us have slipped into our 90's.

A number of years ago we added a summer Forum with Jim Kresge currently serving as its moderator. While the fall and winter schedule works from a pre-planned program, Jim hosts the summer group using an open-discussion approach. One of the advantages to Jim's sessions—there is no homework involved. Under his leadership the summer attendance has grown from 3 to 4 each week to this year where up to 14 men attended.

During the summer each year our co-moderator Bob Skidmore pulls together a "possible program" agenda and in our first meeting in October we vote on the subjects we would like to cover in the coming year. When we meet on October 7th this year a list of over 30 ideas will be presented to choose from.

As we continually say, if you are male and retired pack a lunch and join us at noon on Tuesday. It will be worth your while.

John Anthony, for the Forum



*Fall's Splendor
Even if something is left undone,
everyone must take time to sit still
and watch the leaves turn.*

CATARACTS

A CATARACT IS A CLOUDING OF THE LENS
OF THE EYE THAT CAN IMPAIR YOUR VISION

More than 1/2 of all Americans age 65 and older have cataracts

come & learn about

CAUSES SYMPTOMS DIAGNOSIS TREATMENT

Presented by Gregory Shouldice M. D.
Pittsfield Ophthalmologist

Thursday October 9, 2014 at 7pm
at St. Agnes Parish Hall 30 Carson Ave. Dalton, MA

Free and open to the public • Light refreshments provided

Sponsored by the Berkshire County Parish Nurses



YOU ARE A NEW ENGLANDER IF

Here is what Jeff Foxworthy has to say about New Englanders...

Forget Rednecks If someone in a Home Depot store offers you assistance and they don't work there, you live in New England .

If you've worn shorts and a parka at the same time, you live in New England.

If you've had a lengthy telephone conversation with someone who dialed a wrong number, you live in New England.

If vacation means going anywhere south of New York City for the weekend, you live in New England .

If you measure distance in hours, you live in New England .

If you know several people who have hit a deer more than once, you live in New England.

If you have switched from 'heat' to 'A/C' in the same day and back again, you live in New England .

If you can drive 75 mph through 2 feet of snow during a raging blizzard without flinching, you live in New England .

If you install security lights on your house and garage but leave both unlocked, you live in New England.

If you carry jumpers in your car and your wife knows how to use them, you live in New England .

If you design your kid's Halloween costume to fit over a snowsuit, you live in New England .

If the speed limit on the highway is 55 mph you're going 80 and everybody is passing you, you live in New England .

If driving is better in the winter because the potholes are filled with snow, you live in New England .

If you know all 4 seasons: almost winter, winter, still winter and road construction, you live in New England .

If you have more miles on your snow blower than your car, you live in New England .

If you find 10 degrees 'a little chilly', you live in New England .

If there's a Dunkin Donuts on every corner, you live in New England.

If you think everyone else has a funny accent, you live in New England.

If you actually understand these jokes, and forward them to all your New England friends, you live or have lived in New England.

Submitted by Bob Skidmore

October 2014

South Congregational Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am UCC Clergy 12 noon St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	2 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent Quilting 9:30 am NO Chancel Choir	3 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Pittsfield Promise 8 am AA 6:15 pm	4 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Youth Outing 10 am Al-Anon 7:30 pm
5 Worship 10 am with Communion <i>Neighbors In Need Offering</i> Women's Book Club 11:30 am Cathedral/St. Joe's Lawn 2 pm	6 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	7 “Falling Upward” Study Group 10 am May Mattoon Luncheon 12 noon Men’s Forum 12 noon	8 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm <i>Trustees 6 pm</i>	9 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent Quilting 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	10 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	11 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 2-4 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm
12 Worship 10 am Cathedral St. Joe's Lawn 2 pm	13 COLUMBUS DAY Yarn Spinners 7 pm	14 “Falling Upward” Study Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon <i>Diaconate</i> 7 pm	15 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Berkshire Place Worship 10:45 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	16 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent Quilting 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	17 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4pm AA 6:15 pm Coffee House Concert 7 pm	18 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Pittsfield Squares 7 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm
19 Worship 10 am CROP Walk 1 pm <i>Coffee Hour</i> <i>Collections for the Language Project</i>	20 Sign-Ups for Community Turkey Baskets 9-11 am Yarn Spinners 7 pm	21 “Falling Upward” Study Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon Sign-Ups for Community Turkey Baskets 3-5 pm <i>Mission Board</i> 7 pm	22 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Sign-Ups for Community Turkey Baskets 1-3 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	23 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent Quilting 9:30 am Sign-Ups for Community Turkey Baskets 3-5 pm Chancel Choir 7 pm	24 Sign-Ups for Community Turkey Baskets 9-11 am Lord & Tailor 10 am-4pm AA 6:15 pm	25 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm
26 Worship 10 am Installation Janet McKinstry in Richmond 2 pm Epistle Deadline 11 am	27 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	28 “Falling Upward” Study Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon <i>Church Council</i> 7 pm	29 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	30 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent Quilting 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	31 HALLOWEEN Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm 	NOV 1 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm