



Epistle

SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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May 2015

This past week Tora and I traveled to Ohio to spend time with her dad. As we drove out of the Berkshires, across New York, and down into central Ohio, the brown grass turned to the richest green; the bare branches filled out with buds and blossoms; the air sparkled with the fragrances of blooming fruit trees; and wildflowers were putting on their show. I took my bike along and relished time on a winding trail that led along a stream out of the city into the country. Then we drove home and the spareness of earliest spring gradually returned—but not nearly as spare as it had been one week before! This experience of traveling back and forth through the portal of spring put me in mind of Jesus' parable of the sower. The sower went out to the field to plant, strewing seeds as he went. Some fell here and some fell there, and most didn't do anything. But those seeds that found good soil sprouted, blossomed, and gave a crop of riotous color! Or as Jesus said, produced "a hundredfold". As I return from a week away I am mindful of the seeds that are taking root and blossoming here at South Church.

The "Take Another Look" art exhibit at the Lichtenstein Art Center featuring photos of guests and volunteers at our pantry and St. Joe's Kitchen, accompanied by an equally tender video, concluded on April 25. But the energy, conversations, and growing awareness around food insecurity in our community that have sprouted up as a result feels bountiful. We had a fruitful showing of "A Place at the Table"—a film about the rise of food insecurity in our country—at the Berkshire Museum, and that, too, deepened hopeful conversations. I don't know where these 'buds' will lead, but—inspired by Jesus and his parable—our task seems to be to scatter hopeful seeds on our world's uneven ground and see what happens. Deepening collaboration with Berkshire Interfaith Organizing (BIO) on gaining increased funding for the Western MA Food Bank—that supplies much of the food for our pantry—and with Central Berkshire Habitat that provides classes for creating "Bridges Out of Poverty" are two of these growing buds.

Our one year anniversary of the "Bread and Roses" coffee house reveals another bud that has sprouted abundantly. On the 3rd Friday in April, Linda Worster and Mark Kelso provided the musical 'roses' that lifted our spirits with their rich bouquet of sound. And the 'bread' we offered through the help of the Mission Board was to support the "Kid's Place"—our Berkshire County center for addressing child sexual abuse and its consequences. In the midst of the pain and anguish that makes the "Kid's Place" a needed resource, the staff and center of the "Kid's Place" struck me as remarkably warm, welcoming, and bright. I had a wonderful talk with the director in anticipation of our concert and asked her what they would do with our gift. She replied that it would go to a special fund that purchases snacks and art supplies for children who receive counseling and therapy at the center. We were able to give \$200 to that fund after the concert.

In light of Jesus' parable, I am left with the thought that this past month South Church planted some rich seeds in the soil of this community through photos on display and through snacks and art supplies given to children in pain. What a gift to be part of such a community of faith.

EPISTLE

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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 May 31 at 11 am.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

In Memoriam:

Mrs. Lawrence (Glenora) Porter
of Cummington, Mass. April 22

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS



The theme of the current unit is "Moving into the World with Jesus." Scripture readings are from Acts and John, and John tells stories of the disciples' growing awareness of Jesus' presence

with them and their rolls in the early church. The students were curious about the idea of Jesus' "New Presence." Discussion revolved around places in our own lives where we could "see" Jesus in the faces of loved ones, community helpers, etc.

Sunday, May 17th is our monthly Pantry Sunday. The food item for May is peanut butter. A colorful box will be placed at the front of the sanctuary for collection. Thank you to all who support this monthly mission project.

On Friday, May 8th, the Church School staff will be hosting a "Parents' Night Out" from 5:30 - 8:00 p.m. There is a sign-up sheet in Cooke Center. See Ann or Rachael Roche for details. All children are welcome. Hope to see you there.

Ann Roche
Children and Youth Director

Lectionary for May

Sunday, May 3 - Fifth Sunday of Easter

Communion Sunday

- Acts 8:26-40
Psalm 22:25-31
John 15:1-8

Sunday, May 10 - Sixth Sunday of Easter

Mother's Day

- Acts 10:44-48
Psalm 98
John 15:9-17

Sunday, May 17 - Seventh Sunday of Easter

- Acts 1:15-17, 21-26
Psalm 1
John 17:6-19

Sunday, May 24 - Pentecost Sunday

- Acts 2:1-21
Psalm 104
Romans 8:22-27

Sunday, May 31 - Trinity Sunday

- Isaiah 6:1-8
Psalm 29
John 3:1-17



WIT AND WISDOM

Always remember that you are absolutely unique.

Just like everyone else.

Margaret Mead

Do not take life too seriously.

You will never get out of it alive.

Elbert Hubbard

People who think they know everything are a great annoyance to those of us who do.

Isaac Asimov

Get your facts first, then you can distort them as you please.

Mark Twain



St. Joseph's Kitchen and Food Pantry to Meet

The St. Joseph's Kitchen Steering Committee, cooks, maître d's and other volunteers for South Church's food ministry are invited to meet together on May 20th, the third Wednesday, at 2 pm in Barrett Hall. This meeting will be

limited to one hour.

We will have a discussion of the Wednesday meals. Your ideas for improvements in our operations and suggestions for additional supplies will be very welcome.

The South Church Food Pantry and its weekly needs and successes will also be discussed. Mary Wheat's leadership has inspired so many to get involved.

Through these programs, so much is done for so many people by so many volunteers with so few resources! The grace of the Holy Spirit has led these ecumenical initiatives thus far. Innovative thinking and cooperative enterprise may help us continue to sustain our Food Ministry, and make our efforts more effective for the community we serve. Where will the Holy Spirit lead next?

We welcome anyone who would like to join us.
Mary Rentz, marylrentz@gmail.com

LORD & TAILOR NEWS

The month of May will bring a new look to the shop. After discovering that part of the floor needed repair, we decided that new flooring was in order. Commercial carpeting will be installed about the 2nd week of May. The shop will be closed on May 8 and 9 for those renovations.

In the meantime, work never ends at Lord & Tailor—we have to empty the shop completely before the carpet is installed. We would appreciate any and all volunteers who would like to help in this effort. See Audra or Nancy for details and thank you in advance.

The half-price sale on winter clothes is about done, and we are very happy to see the spring clothes come out and the heavy items put away after such a long winter. This month we gave the church \$500.

Nancy deForest and Audra Kinner

CLEAN-UP DAY

Saturday, April 11th was a special day in the life of South Church. It was a clean-up day. Several small signs were hung inviting folks to help with a spring clean-up in the yard.

The day turned out to be sunny and warm. A group of members and friends worked outside doing a remarkable job raking, pruning and trimming.

A few people decided to do a little inside cleanup as well with the first floor bathroom being the target. A miracle occurred, and now the bathroom, which is used by so many members and visitors, looks like new.

Thank you everyone.

Pat Hill



FOOD PANTRY

The Food Pantry continues to provide food for over 400 families each week. During the week of April 22nd and 23rd, 439 families (made up of about 1200 individuals) came to the Food Pantry.

One of the women was a former volunteer and recipient of the Food Pantry who had not come for quite a while. She came to visit with us and let us know how her family was doing. She currently works a full time job and another half-time job for minimal wages. Her oldest daughter is now a senior in high school earning the good citizenship award, completing five A.P. classes, working part-time and receiving a full scholarship to Fisher College to study nursing. Her second daughter is going into 10th grade and has already started planning for a future with A.P. courses, activities, etc. Her youngest is just entering kindergarten.

I am so happy for this family and the many others like them who face great challenges. Yet with God's help, their own strength and determination, and a little support they manage to find hope and move forward.

If you would like to support the Food Pantry this month, we are collecting bags or boxes of rice. Also, if you have any gently used magazines that you have finished, bring those in for our book table. Thanks for your continued support.

Mary Wheat

MAY MATTOON

May Mattoon met at noon on Tuesday, April 7th for a sandwich lunch followed by dessert of Hula cake provided by hostesses Mary Wheat, Janet Rusk, and Alice Gallup. After lunch during the business meeting it was noted:

*The bake sale held on Palm Sunday took in \$159.

*Memorial receptions were prepared by May Mattoon for families of Jack Dietrich and Janet Monterosso.

*Voted to donate \$25 to the Judie Grady Christian Education Fund in memory of Janet Monterosso.

Our Spring Dinner will take place on May 5 at 5 pm at Mazzeo's Restaurant. So save the date. Hostesses are Ruth Austin and Ruth Campbell.

A presentation by Kathy Reilly from the Berkshire Athenaeum History Department followed. If there is anything you want to know about history or about the library, speak to Kathy. I guarantee she will have the answer.

The library has regional resources with slides and information on Pittsfield as well as Berkshire County.

A manuscript room contains much research information on Herman Melville. The back of the library has been redesigned and new shelves loaded with over 30,000 books, old sermons, manuscripts from the 1300's, Shaker pen-and-ink drawings and maps reorganized by towns and cities. There are files on manuscripts, photographs, reels of Federal records, and scrapbooks. Also a scrimshaw collection and more local history than I can possibly cover. I would also like to note that Jean Bosquet graciously and generously presented Kathy Reilly with a scrimshaw ring for the local collection.

Kathy advised us to save objects of interest or old pieces that may become valuable and store them with the information on who owned them, where they originated and in what year. Also, old photo scrapbooks that describe where each photo was taken as well as the circumstances. A group photo should identify subjects. I would also like to note that lessons on how to access Facebook and Twitter, and how to utilize the many computers and other equipment are available. All the information and classes one might want or need are free. Kathy was an excellent speaker with many talents, and well versed in them all.

I wish each of you happy, warm spring days. See you at the Spring Dinner on May 5th.

Alice Gallup

BERKSHIRE DIABETES WALK

Saturday, May 30, 2015

9:00 AM Registration 9:30 AM

Walk Ashuwillticook Trail

Farnum's Crossing, Cheshire, MA

This spring is the 19th year Roger's Team has Walked for Diabetes. The team is named after my brother, Roger Grant, who died in 1984, at age 43, from multiple complications of Type I Diabetes.

Since 2012 the walk has been sponsored by Berkshire Medical Center with the support of Roger's Team. Proceeds will support BMC's Diabetes Patient Needs Fund. The purpose of this fund is to cover costs of urgent diabetes expenses and diabetes education of patients in financial need.

We would love to have you walk with us and get others to sponsor you. If not, we welcome your contributions. A sign-up sheet and sponsor forms will be in the Parlor.

Join us or send a check with ROGER'S TEAM noted in the Memo section to:

Patient Needs Fund
BMC Diabetes Education
725 North Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201

or call (413)395-7942 with any questions – ask for Tammy or Jan. All contributions are tax deductible and will be acknowledged.

Like us on Berkshire Diabetes Walk on Facebook. Please share with family and friends. Our goal for this year is \$3000.

Audra J. Kinner, Captain of Roger's Team
3 Smith Road
New Ashford, MA 01237
(413)458-0971 audrajkinner@aol.com



Roger and Audra

HEALTH CORNER

Sue Kaufman ,Parish Nurse

Arthritis Facts:

Arthritis is not just aches and pains associated with getting older. It is actually a complex family of musculoskeletal disorders consisting of 100 different diseases or conditions. It affects almost 50 million Americans, two thirds of which are under 65 and over 300,000 children.

Arthritis can take many forms but the three most common are:

Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common type. It is a progressive degenerative joint disease characterized by the breakdown of joint cartilage associated with risk factors, such as overweight/obesity, history of joint injury and age.

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a systemic disease characterized by the inflammation of the membranes lining the joint which causes pain, stiffness, warmth and swelling and sometimes severe joint damage.

Juvenile arthritis (JA) is an umbrella term used to describe the many autoimmune and inflammatory conditions that can develop in children. Arthritis can be a serious health problem. It accounts for 44 million outpatient visits and 992,100 hospitalizations and is the leading cause of disability.

Although there is no cure for arthritis much can be done. Exercise is a valuable tool in the fight against arthritis. A growing body of research indicates that exercise, weight management and avoidance of joint injury can go a long way in helping to prevent osteoarthritis.

Learn More about Arthritis:

“The Hand” Sorting the Different Types of Arthritis

Thursday, May 14 at 7PM - Old Parish Church

**By: Dr. Edmond Hornstein,
Rheumatologist**

The next **HABITAT WORKDAY** will be Saturday, May 30th. For more details volunteers may contact Will Garrison at Garrisonfamily77@gmail.com or 443-0164.

NOTES FROM THE FORUM

Formed in late February 1992, and originally meeting weekly during eight months of the year with a dozen South Church retirees, the Men’s Forum has grown over the years to a roster of 25 with 15 coming from outside our church. We are now gathering weekly on a year-round basis. Our initial mission was to strengthen fellowship within the group while discussing local and world events – basically subjects that excluded sports, politics and the weather. We have done a good job with that agenda over the years except for politics and lately the weather. These days everyone, everywhere is talking about politics and environmental events are continually in the headlines. If it makes the headlines we will probably discuss it.

Recently, Pete Rentz completed a three-week review of *The Collapse of Western Civilization: A View from the Future*. The book is a science-fiction fantasy supposedly written in 2093 and looking back on what happened to our world because we did not respond to the environmental warning signs all around us today, seventy-five years earlier.

In June the agenda will lighten somewhat as Jim Kresge leads the weekly discussion during the summer. The topics are suggested either by the headlines or ideas from those attending the session.

If you are male, retired and free on Tuesday, pack a lunch and join us at noon. You will be most welcome.

John Anthony

*If you have a mom,
there is nowhere you are likely to go
where a prayer has not already been.*

Robert Brault



Bread and Roses Coffee House

South Congregational Church

*110 South St
Pittsfield, MA*



Linda Worster &

Mark Kelso

Friday, April 17, 2015

7:00 pm

In the parlor

*Donations accepted to benefit
The Kid's Place*



May 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	2 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
3 10 am Worship with Communion with Linda Worster Lord's Prayer Study Group 11:30 am	4 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	5 Spiritual Support Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon May Mattoon Spring Dinner Out 5 pm	6 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am UCC Clergy 12 noon St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	7 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	8 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm "Parents' Night Out" 5:30-8 pm AA 6:15 pm	9 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
10 Mother's Day Worship 10 am	11 Berkshire Interfaith Org 5:15 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm	12 Spiritual Support Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon Diaconate 7 pm	13 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Trustees 6 pm	14 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent Parish Nurse Ministries 6:30 pm Chancel Choir 7 pm	15 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm Coffee House Concert 7 pm	16 Housatonic River Clean-Up 9 am – 1 pm AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12 noon – 4 pm Pittsfield Squares 7 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
17 Worship 10 am Children's Pantry Sunday - Tuna Collection Berkshire Association 3 pm Coffee Hour Collections for the Language Project	18 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	19 Spiritual Support Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon Mission Board 7 pm	20 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am WMFB SNAP Training 10 am Berkshire Place 10:45 am Food Ministry 2 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	21 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	22 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4pm AA 6:15 pm	23 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
24 Pentecost Worship 10 am	25 Memorial Day Yarn Spinners 7 pm	26 Spiritual Support Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon Church Council 7 pm	27 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	28 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm UCC Church & Ministry 7 pm	29 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4pm AA 6:15 pm	30 Habitat Work Day Berkshire Diab AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
31 Worship 10 am Epistle Deadline 11 am Carolyn Peck Installation N. Adams 2 pm						