



# Epistle

**SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

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**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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June 2015

This is a season for graduations and celebrations. This past week Tora and I traveled to Philadelphia to be present as our daughter, Lia, graduated from Thomas Jefferson University with a Master's in Occupational Therapy. Lia has a BA in Art, spent time learning how to do blacksmithing, completed a course in welding, and now is anticipating working with developmentally disabled adults with the skills she has learned over the past two years. What a journey! At this ceremony for those in a variety of health professions, the speakers were excellent. In this medical setting I expected to hear talks that were analytical and technical. Instead the president of the school counseled the graduates to go forth to be 'healers of human lives' and not just technicians in a medical system. He also urged them to listen to their 'inner voice' and not just to the clamor of the system! The provost went on to talk about the "three degrees of connection". This is the sociological phenomenon that each of us not only has an impact on our friends, we also impact our friends' friends, and then, our friends' friends' friends. What this means is that if you stop smoking or lose weight, this has influence on those you directly know. Your act also influences those who know your friends but who don't know you. And then, remarkably, it goes one step further. Your act also influences those who know your friends' friends' friends. The provost's point was that each of the graduates sitting there was going forth to wield enormous influence in the world—each health encounter would likely impact far more people than any of them could imagine. It was a joy to watch him empowering them for the journey ahead in the midst of a rapidly changing health care system that he acknowledges was often dysfunctional. It was a day for deep emotion and for equally deep food for thought.

I return to ministry and keep thinking about those "three degrees of connection". In our community with its struggles--poverty, crime, opiate crisis, lack of well-paying jobs, and the rest—one can feel overwhelmed and helpless. Such feelings of helplessness easily fuels isolation, resentment, bitterness, and cynicism. But when I am at church helping with the pantry, serving at St. Joe's, sitting with our small groups, working with community leaders, or making pastoral visits discouragement has a way of simply evaporating. It's replaced by a sense of deep, holy connection that feels powerful and effective. But I don't see the world changing much and so sometimes I wonder if I'm a bit deluded. When I bring such thoughts into prayer, I get a patient smile from my 'inner voice' telling me to simply keep walking the walk and watching carefully. But then, sometimes, I doubt my 'inner voice'. So, having a provost from a medical school—in a setting where I wasn't looking for inner counsel--talk about the amazing circles of connection and influence we have, far beyond the people we actually know, was quite powerful. It felt remarkably Biblical. Jesus, in one of his parables, says that when the farmer plants seeds there is amazing growth, but the farmer "does not know how." Only God knows. We don't know how all these degrees of connection work. We don't know how God will transform the world. Our job is to keep planting seeds, to keep making holy connections, and to keep an eye out for surprises. There is more going on within us and around us than we can ever know. That's what Jesus and sociology are both telling us. It's a good message to hear in this season or any season.

EPISTLE

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The next *Epistle* deadline is June 28 at 11 am.

**OUR CHURCH FAMILY**

***In Memoriam***

Donald E. Geer	April 27
Priscilla Parsons Sargent	May 18
"The day we fear as our last is but the birthday of eternity."	
	~Seneca

**TRIP TO HYDE PARK AND VAL-KILL**

The South Church Book Club, which meets once a month after church, enjoyed its first field trip on Friday, May 8th.



Having recently read *Sarah and Eleanor*, it inspired us to take a day trip to Hyde Park and

Val-Kill to learn more about the Roosevelts.

Doris Mack, one of the guides at Val-Kill, and former proof-reader for Eleanor, shared some of her memories with us. They were a fascinating family and we came away knowing a lot about the history of the family and our country.

We ate lunch at CIA, Culinary Institute of America. A delicious meal was served by interesting culinary students in a private dining- room.

By visiting these places we learned much about our country and the very wonderful, troubled and sometimes tragic Roosevelt family.

Pat Hill

**ABOUT OUR WEDNESDAY MEALS**

Five months have gone by since John Moore retired from St. Joseph's Kitchen at South Church. He must have trained us well because our Wednesday dinners continue smoothly.

By late morning or early afternoon on a Wednesday, you will see the week's cooking team preparing the day's menu. A Maitre d'e arrives around 3 pm to open the doors for the guests and attend to any needs that might arise, like towels in the restroom.

By 4:45 you will find servers swarming outside the kitchen door, ready to plate the hot food, serve our guests, and clean up afterwards. Joel, Sister Kathryn, Art Kaufman or Sam Barnes might make announcements at 5 pm and lead everyone in prayer. Then, plates of hot food are delivered to the guests who often ask for seconds on a well-cooked and presented meal.

Afterwards, dishes are washed and put away, chairs and tables are cleaned and put away, and the floors are swept. By 6 pm, everything is "neat and tidy."

We have served over 1500 meals since January. Menus are as varied as the cooking teams. Spaghetti has been served 5 times. Chicken dinners (baked, cacciatore, casserole) are another popular meal. On the menu you'll also find pork loin, meatloaf, and Swedish meatballs. A running tally of menus and numbers served is posted on the side of the refrigerator. We report the numbers to the Western Mass Food Bank each month, and the amount of food we are allowed to purchase is based on that and the Food Pantry numbers.

If you are interested in learning more or helping out, come by to join our servers. Young people, fulfilling community service for classes, often help out. We had a Brownie troop last week. You will be welcomed! We are currently looking for one more Maitre d'e and another person to run the dishwasher.

Dale Prindle will be overseeing the renovation of our kitchen this summer. New plumbing, a triple sink, a new dishwasher, appropriate wall surfaces, and better storage are planned. Cabinets will be renewed. We already have new pots and pans and a beautiful new refrigerator. On Wednesdays during the renovation, however, you will find cooks, not contractors, in the kitchen, as we continue to serve the Wednesday meal.

Mary Rentz

## CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

On June 14th we will be celebrating the Sunday School year! The children will be involved in an intergenerational service. It will be based on themes "growth you can't see, but happens while you're not looking" and "how something very small can grow to be very large." The two parables that reflect these themes are from the gospel of Mark. The first compares God's reign to the slow, gradual development of a harvest. As parents, guardians and educators, we can compare this to the physical and spiritual growth of our children.

This year we have many former South Church students graduating from high school, college and graduate school. I clearly remember watching them grow from small children, to youth and so on. As the parable tells us, this growth takes time and may not always be clearly seen- but it happens! The second parable is one of encouragement. Jesus uses the tiny mustard seed, though very small, which grows into a large tree! This is a wonderful example of the potential of our children to grow through love, support and encouragement, to do great things and help to make the world a better place!

We will also be recognizing teachers and helpers. 2014-2015 was a success on many levels with their support throughout the school year.

Just to note, the church is offering a summer program for the children. It will be offered through June, July and August on Sundays from 10am – 11am. We will continue with the "Whole People of God" curriculum, spending a lot of our time together outside in the courtyard, and learning and growing with nature!



Now, congratulations to all of our little mustard seeds who have grown into strong trees!

### High School

Leah Haskell, Lenox Memorial High  
Jack Haskell, Lenox Memorial High  
John Collingwood, Lenox Memorial High  
Sarah Tierney, Taconic High  
Katherine Donovan, Monument Mountain High

### Bachelor Degrees

Emma Haskell, Smith College  
Luke Haskell, University of Mass., Amherst  
Kaare Francis, University of New Hampshire  
Lauryn Garner, Brandeis University  
Abigail LeRose, University of Mass., Dartmouth

### Masters Degrees

Paige Emerson, Springfield College  
Jenny Robertson, Salem State University  
Lia Huntington, Thomas Jefferson University  
*Congratulations and many blessings for your futures!*

### Summer Birthdays- Dominik DuBois,

Ian Ryer and Beth Isham-Morten

~ Ann Roche

### *Children's Sunday with Guest Carol Kresge*

Celebration of the ministry of our Church School, using themes from Jesus' parables about the planting of seeds and the quiet, steady growth of God's realm within us and among us, worship will include a dialogue sermon with Carol Kresge about her educational work with young people in the nation of Laos over the past two decades.

### *Worshipful Thoughts and Audio Versions of Sunday Sermons*

If you would like to receive Joel's preview for Sunday, simply e-mail the church office at [sochurch@nycap.rr.com](mailto:sochurch@nycap.rr.com) and we will send you the weekly "Worshipful Thoughts." In addition, Sunday sermons are now available on-line at our website, [www.southchurchpittsfield.org](http://www.southchurchpittsfield.org).

Last Sunday's Pentecost sermon can be heard by clicking on 'recent sermons' at the website. Many thanks to Tim Hill for making this technology available. If you would like to hear again what Joel said about 'stepping out of line' like the ten-year-old in Ecuador, then this new audio version is for you.

### **OPINIONS**

On the first day of school, a first-grader handed the teacher a note from his mother. The note read, "The opinions expressed by this child are not necessarily those of his parents ."

## THE FOOD PANTRY



A special thank you to all for your help and food donations for the Food Pantry. While the economy is supposed to be getting better, we

continue to see an increase in the number of people who need food. For the month of May we had 4598 service visits.

As we receive very few dairy products from the Food Bank, we would like to be able to offer eggs to our families more often. With your help, we would like to sell muffins, brownies, cookies, hot dogs, bacon/egg/cheese sandwiches, and drinks (water, Pepsi, orange juice) during the July 4th parade. We will use the proceeds from the sale of these items to put towards the purchase of eggs. If you would be willing to donate any items or help, please contact Mary Wheat at 442-3706.

This summer if you have extra vegetables or fruit, please consider donating them to the Food Pantry.

During the months of June, July and August we are collecting toilet paper for the Food Pantry.

Have a healthy, safe, relaxing summer!

Mary Wheat

## LORD AND TAILOR NEWS

The big excitement in the shop this month has been the installation of our new carpeting. Haddad came and ripped up the old carpet and flooring, and it was out the door in no time, with a minimum of dust. There were no regrets from us.

We want to thank all the volunteers who helped empty the shop, and those who helped put it back together. It was quite an undertaking, but worth it as we look at the new finished product. Also, a big thank you to Alan Honig who fixed the floor so speedily.

Our spring and summer colors look better than ever. We will give the church \$500 this month.

Nancy deForest, Audra Kinner



### A BIT OF HOLY HUMOR

]A little boy was overheard praying:  
'Lord, if you can't make me a better  
boy, don't worry about it.  
I'm having a real good time like I am.'

## EPISTLE MAILING LISTS

In the past, many of you have mentioned that you would prefer to receive only an e-mail version of our monthly newsletter, the *Epistle*, rather than receive a paper version in the mail. If you fall into this category, please send us an e-mail and let us know.

We are updating our mailing and e-mailing lists. E-mail for the office is [sochurch@nycap.rr.com](mailto:sochurch@nycap.rr.com).

Thanks for your response.

Paula Haskell

## SOUTH CHURCH BOOK CLUB

The ladies have selected the books listed below for the remainder of the year. All are welcome to share in our discussions and occasional fieldtrips.

June – The Mill Children by Suzanne Marshall

\*Field trip to Adams to be announced

July - To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

August - The Fifth Gospel by Ian Caldwell

September - Learning to Walk in the Dark by

Barbara Brown Taylor

October – John's Story by Tim LeHay and Jerry Jenkins


November – Janet and Jackie (Jackie Kennedy

Onassis and her mother) by Jan Pottker

December - The Nightingale by Kristin Hannah

Pam Garrett

## MAY MATTOON



On Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>, the May Mattoon Class met at Mazzeo's Ristorante on South Street for our Spring Dinner Out. About thirty members attended. We were seated in a very pleasant room off the main dining-rooms, which made it conducive to happy chatter and laughter that takes place at these gatherings. Each member was able to order from the menu. So many different offerings passed us by – all looking very delicious. Ruth Austin and Ruth Campbell were the hostesses for this occasion.

The June 1<sup>st</sup> meeting has been changed to Monday, June 8<sup>th</sup> – a covered dish supper starting at 6 p.m. Hostesses are Karen Allender, Lois Moore, and Pat Nixon.

Our July meeting will be at Tanglewood- date and further information to be forthcoming.

Alice Gallup

## *A Tribute to Janet Monterosso*

Many thanks to the numerous kind people who donated to the church in memory of my mother, Janet Monterosso, after her passing. She had a good life and South Church was such an active part of her time here on earth.

Weeks later I was trying to decide what to do with her memorial funds that made sense to me and honored who she was. I was sitting with Linda Worster at the coffee hour and she looked at me and said, "The Coffee House could use its own sound system." This will be a perfect gift in memory of my mother, who loved music. For those of you who knew my dad, he would like this too. Our plan is to get the sound system and have it in use at the concert on June 19th. My mother really enjoyed Linda's music.

Hope to see you at the concert!

Nancy Tierney

## *God's Wings*



After a forest fire in Yellowstone National Park, forest rangers began their trek up a mountain to assess the inferno's damage. One ranger found a bird literally petrified in ashes, perched statuesquely on the ground at the base of a tree. Somewhat sickened by the eerie sight, he knocked over the bird with a stick. When he gently struck it, three tiny chicks scurried from under their dead mother's wings.

The loving mother, keenly aware of impending disaster, had carried her offspring to the base of the tree and had gathered them under her wings, instinctively knowing that the toxic smoke would rise. She could have flown to safety but had refused to abandon her babies. Then the blaze had arrived and the heat had scorched her small body, the mother had remained steadfast...because she had been willing to die, so those under the cover of her wings would live.

'He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge.' (Psalm 91:4)



"It is not flesh and  
blood which make  
us fathers; it is heart."  
Johann Schiller



# ***Bread and Roses Coffee House***

*South Congregational Church*

*110 South St  
Pittsfield, MA*

*Linda Worster,  
David Grover  
& Puggy Demary*



*Friday, June 19, 2015*


*7:00 pm*

*In the parlor*

*Donations accepted to benefit  
Redfield House*

# June 2015

## South Congregational Church

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
	1 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	2 Spiritual Support Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon	3 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am UCC Clergy 12 noon St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	4 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am <i>Memorial Service for Priscilla Bailey 11:30 a.m. Final Chancel Choir Rehearsal 7 pm</i>	5 Pittsfield Promise of the United Way 8 am Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm <b>AA 6:15 p</b>	6 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm <b>Al-Anon 7 pm</b>
7 10 am Worship with Communion Book Club 11:30 am Choir Recognition Sunday Collage Making Project	8 May Mattoon Covered Dish Supper 6 pm	9 Spiritual Support Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon <i>Diaconate 7 pm</i>	10 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am UCC Clergy 12 noon St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	11 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am	12 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm <b>AA 6:15 pm</b>	13 <i>Memorial Service for Don Geer 10 a.m. Lord &amp; Tailor 12-4 pm <b>Al-Anon 7 pm</b></i>
14 Worship 10 am Children's Sunday with Carol Kresge	15 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	16 Spiritual Support Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon <i>Mission Board 7 pm</i>	17 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Berkshire Place 10:45 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm <i>Trustees 6 pm</i>	18 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent	19 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm <b>AA 6:15 pm</b> <b>Coffee House Concert 7 pm</b>	20 Lord & Tailor 12 noon – 4 pm <b>Al-Anon 7 pm</b>
21 <b>Father's Day</b> Worship 10 am  <i>Coffee Hour Collections for the Language Project</i>	22 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	23 Spiritual Support Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon <i>Church Council 7 pm</i>	24 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	25 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am	26 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4pm <b>AA 6:15 pm</b>	27 <b>AA 10:15 am</b> Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm <b>Al-Anon 7 pm</b>
28 Worship 10 am  <b>Epistle Deadline 11 am</b>	29 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	30 Spiritual Support Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon				