



# Epistle

**SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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September 2015

As a new season dawns part of me is still in vacation mode. I so enjoyed my four weeks of adventure, especially the solo hike on the Appalachian Trail. For a week I was immersed in the wondrous beauty of Creation that is called the Green Mountain National Forest. The canopy above with its myriads of green, the ground beneath with its profusion of life and color, the remarkable hikers each evening, the stillness of the night, the elegance of early dawn as light filtered through the trees, all of this is still in my head and heart. I hope all that stays with me for many seasons to come. When I told thru-hikers heading north that I was from Pittsfield, they brightened noticeably saying that the Berkshires were so beautiful and Pittsfield was such an elegant spot with so much to offer. It's fun to hear such perspectives from folks who are from all over the country—and world. Being in ministry in this city with its many struggles it's vital to remember the beauty that is all around us—and within each one of us.

Over the summer there have been shootings here in Pittsfield, the heroin epidemic continues, there have been other tragedies, and the reality of poverty is hard to miss when you walk downtown, in certain neighborhoods, or come to our South Church Pantry—we serve over 400 families each week. Poverty, the heroin epidemic, and violence are not in any way unique to Pittsfield. But, because we are surrounded by such natural beauty and have a rich assortment of cultural opportunities, it's tempting to ignore the depths of pain and harshness that defines life for too many. When the tragedies cannot be ignored it's tempting to blame, scold, or look for scapegoats, instead of facing what needs to be faced and working together to craft a better community. This is why I am so grateful to be your pastor. All during the summer the Food Pantry and St. Joseph's Kitchen with their remarkable variety of volunteers and helpers have been tending the wounds of our community by providing healthy food, a rich assortment of books for children and adults, and plenty of servings of mercy and compassion. As I write, the Barrett Hall Kitchen is being renovated and transformed so our feeding ministries have the infrastructure they need as new seasons come and go.

Last Spring our "Take Another Look" photo exhibit and video made visible to our wider community the dignity, strength, and dilemma of those trying to feed themselves and their families on minimum wage salaries or other minimal incomes. Nick De Candia's photos and Mike Sinopoli's video will be on display at the State House Rotunda in Boston the week of September 14 -18. On Wednesday of that week two vans of food pantry volunteers and guests will head to Boston to help open the eyes of our state legislators to the deep needs here in the Berkshires. Using art and heartfelt words we hope to widen the awareness of folks in Boston that as beautiful as the Berkshires are, there is great need here—as elsewhere. How can we work together as a Commonwealth to respond to the poverty which leads to violence and epidemics in our midst? Working with Berkshire Interfaith Organizing (BIO) some new ideas are bubbling up for how to respond faithfully in challenging times. Such growing edges are exciting. If you would like to join us for our trip to Boston with "Take Another Look" please come speak to me and share your ideas and dreams for how we can be faithful followers of Jesus in this time and place. May this be a blessed season for us all.

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 September 27<sup>th</sup> at 11 am.

**OUR CHURCH FAMILY**



Tora's Father, Dr. Willard Fernald, has moved to an assisted living facility in Ohio:

Sunrise of Bexley,  
2600 E. Main Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43209

Notes, cards, letters would be most appreciated from his friends at South Church.

**Shirley Vickery's** new address appears after the May Mattoon article on page 4.

**FOOD PANTRY**

Thank you for your donations of toilet paper and food this summer. We needed it all! This past week on Wednesday and Thursday we served 472 households and for the month of August we had 4141 service visits.

For the month of September, we are once again asking for toilet paper. Or another way you can help is to make a monetary donation with checks made out to South Church Food Pantry. Through the Western Mass. Food Bank, we would be able to purchase the following:

- 96 rolls of toilet paper at a cost of \$32.70,
- or 30-pound packages of margarine for \$24.78,
- or assorted frozen meats at \$5.70 for 30 lbs.,
- or jars of jelly at \$13.38 for 12 nineteen oz. jars.

*Have a healthy fall.*

~ Mary Wheat



**CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS**

On September 13<sup>th</sup> the Sunday School year here at South Church begins! It is also "Rally Sunday" a day in which several downtown churches walk together to Park Square for a prayer. Friends and families interested in walking on that day, please join Joel and me at 9:30 in the Church Parlor.

Registration, a review of church safety rules and guidelines for the care of children, youth, and adult supervisors will take place at 11:00 a.m. after worship in Cooke Center.

Unit one runs from September 13<sup>th</sup> – October 11<sup>th</sup>. The logo for this unit is "Come Join the Circle." The circle is a symbol of God's unending Love. It is an open circle showing that there is always room for another in God's community. This is a fitting theme for the opening of Sunday School as all are welcome to join its "circle."

Nursery care will be offered every Sunday for children ages four years and younger. Our *Whole People of God* curriculum includes lessons for this age group. Short prayers, stories and interactive lessons will be offered.

As in the past, the *Whole People of God* curriculum follows the same lectionary that Joel uses each week; the result is that the whole family receives the same spiritual lesson.

So come join us for what I am sure will prove to be a fun and inspirational year! Also volunteers are needed for the Nursery and Classroom. A sign-up sheet will be in Cooke Center. Come join the fun!

Ann Roche

*Believe in Children  
There is faith in their eyes,  
hope in their attitude,  
and love in their touch;  
of such is the Kingdom.*



## **BREAD AND ROSES COFFEE HOUSE**

### **We're back!!**

On Friday Sept. 18, the new season will kick off with **Justin Hillman** and **Linda Worster**.

Justin is a local up-and-coming singer/songwriter. If you'd like to preview some of his music, check him out at [JustinHillman.com](http://JustinHillman.com). We will again be supporting the Elizabeth Freeman Center with our donation.

See you in the Parlor on Sept, 18<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.  
Pat Politis

### ***LECTIONARY FOR SEPTEMBER***

#### **September 6 – Communion Sunday**

Isaiah 35:4-7a  
Psalm 146  
James 2:1-10, (11-13), 14-17  
Mark 7:24-37

#### **September 13 – Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost Rally Day on Park Square –Gather on South Church steps at 9:30**

#### **Church School Opening, Chancel Choir returns**

Isaiah 50:4-91a  
Psalm 116:1-9  
James 3:1-12  
Mark 8:27-38

#### **September 20 – Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost Intergenerational Worship – “Come Join the Circle”**

Jeremiah 11:18-20  
Psalm 54  
James 3:13-43, 7-8a  
Mark 9:30-37

#### **September 27 – Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Numbers 11  
Psalm 19:7-14  
James 5:13-20  
Mark 9:38-50

## **STEWARDSHIP REQUEST**

Our fall stewardship season will be here before long as we plan for 2016. But stewardship is more than simply raising funds for next year's operation of the church. Stewardship is a time to remember who we are in the love of God, the dreams God has for us as individuals and as a congregation, and the ways we can participate in Christ in the mending of this world. Our theme will be: "Trust in the Promise" based on the words of Jeremiah, "For surely I know the plans I have for you...to give you a future with hope."

Would you like to assist Rev. Huntington and the Trustees in crafting a stewardship drive focusing on such hope? It will require a bit of effort but will also be fun and inspiring. How should we translate our theme into meaningful moments of coming together as stewards of God's love? Speak to Rev. Huntington or John Robertson if you would be interested in helping with this effort.



### ***Family Promise Mentoring Program***

Family Promise is a non-profit volunteer-based organization whose mission is to mobilize communities to help low-income families or individuals who are making efforts to become self-sufficient. Family Promise is currently seeking volunteers in the local area to mentor and provide support for families struggling to be independent and successful.

The nature of the mentoring relationship is different in every match depending on the needs and goals of the family. A mentor serves as an advocate and bridge to the community...someone who is available for encouragement and creative problem solving. A mentor may also help a family with more hands-on needs, such as getting a phone or finding furniture, etc.

Mentors are asked to make a commitment to the program and to the family they are matched with for one year. On average, mentors are expected to have 1-2 hours of contact per week with their selected family. Additionally, mentors are required to maintain weekly logs, attend an initial training program and a monthly mentors' meeting.

To volunteer or to get more info, contact Family Promise Mentoring Program at 413-344-4803.

**LORD & TAILOR NEWS**

Summer has been very unpredictable for us this year in the shop. Some weeks we had visitors stopping in as they were passing through town; other weeks everyone seemed to be away.

We are now in the midst of our summer half-price sale. There are still many nice things, all reduced. We will soon be putting out some fall items--come in and take a look.

Many great donations have come our way, for which we are grateful. The tag sale area is looking pretty good, so the sale on October 3 will be another big one. Keep cleaning out your closets.

This month we will be giving \$800 to the church. *Enjoy the last of the summer.*

Nancy de Forest

**MAY MATTOON**

We have had our summer break. The May Mattoon class will gather on Monday, September 15 for a potluck supper starting at 6 p.m. Bring a potluck dish to share, your own place setting and toilet articles for the Food Pantry clientele. Mary Rentz will present our program for this evening. The topic is "Aprons from the Past."

During our July recess about twelve members attended Tanglewood. From all reports, it was a lovely concert. Enjoyed by all!!

May Mattoon extends an invitation to all new members of the church to join us at the potluck supper and all our monthly meetings. It is a very social group helping with church functions such as church fairs, tag sales, receptions, coffee hours, as well as cookie sales. Each month a program is planned that is entertaining and interesting – a relaxing time to be with friends. So come and check us out!

Hostesses for the September potluck are: Ruth Austin, Joyce Brown, and Karen Allendar. Hope to see you there.

Alice Gallup

The Mattooners have just heard from Shirley Vickery and her new address is:

The Oaks @ Menorah Park  
Rm. 234, 18 Arbor Lane  
DeWitt NY 13214 – 315-218-6581

We wish her well and know she would love to hear from all her friends. Ed.



**CHILDREN'S BOOK CORNER**

**Amazing Influx of Books**

South Church's book program grows and grows. Thank you to everyone who has donated books for children and adults, and recent magazines. I must single out Jean Bousquet as the driving force behind our project. She has lit a fire under me and the fire burns brightly through us both now. Besides that, Jean has provided a huge amount of books that she's cleaned and repaired. She continues to be the partner that I really needed to bring the hopes I had to fruition. Thank you so much, Jean!

Then there was the unexpected treasure trove of boxes and boxes of books from the closing of St. Mark's school. Thank you to someone from the pantry or our church for noticing that books were being thrown into a dumpster and sending people to rescue them. Finally we took in another large quantity of books from the Lenox Library book sale.

Thank you to Liz Clifford and Sally LeBarron for joining our volunteer team. A special thanks to Lucy Garrison and Emma Haskell for their summer help.

I would love to have a sub for Thursdays when I can't work. Also any early riser that could give an hour of help from 7:30 to 8:30 on either Wednesday or Thursday would be appreciated. Call me for details at (413) 528-5029

Sandie Smith

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"We have too many high-sounding words, and too few actions that correspond with them."

Abigail Adams

*Submitted by Nancy deForest*

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**SIGN IN FRONT OF CAPE COD CHURCH**  
**"They're Commandments, not suggestions!"**



### ***FROM THE TRUSTEES***

It has been an active summer for the Trustees. As of July 3rd, we welcomed a new member to our church staff; Steve Bean. Steve is our new sexton. The last two months, he has been busy learning the duties and expectations that are part of the job, and all the nooks and crannies that need attention in the sanctuary and our Parish House. If you run into Steve, be sure to introduce yourself.

Pat Politis and I, with the guidance of Ralph Cianflone applied for funding from the Pittsfield Rotary Foundation toward our Capital renovation of the Barrett Hall kitchen. The Foundation graciously awarded us a \$5,000 gift. Presently the kitchen is about halfway through the remodeling project under the eye of Dale Prindle. By mid-September, we hope to have the construction finished.

Two other projects of our Capital Campaign; *Stretching for God's Future*, have been completed this summer. One is a new roof on the Parish House. The second is that the outside doors, windows, walls, columns, soffits, and anything else that needed painting on the Parish House and Sanctuary have been painted. You will need sunglasses to look at the outside front of the Sanctuary because it is now very bright and clean-looking.

The Capital Campaign has another year to go, so be sure to check the status of your pledge. If you have questions about where you are in your giving, please contact Pam Garrett, our campaign treasurer.

John Robertson  
Trustees Chair

### ***HELP YOURSELF TO THE COFFEE***

A group of alumni, highly established in their careers, got together to visit their old university professor. The conversation soon turned into complaints about stress in work and life.

Offering his guests coffee, the professor went to the kitchen and returned with a large pot of coffee and an assortment of cups - porcelain, plastic, glass, crystal, some plain, some expensive, some exquisite - telling them to help themselves to the coffee.

When all the students had a cup of coffee in hand, the professor said: "If you noticed, all the nice looking expensive cups were taken up, leaving behind the plain and cheap ones. While it is normal for you to want only the best for yourselves, that is the source of your problems and stress. Be assured that the cup itself adds no quality to the coffee. In most cases it is just more expensive, and in some cases even hides what we drink. What all of you really wanted was coffee, not the cup, but you consciously went for the best cups and then you began eyeing each other's cup.

“Now consider this: Life is the coffee; the jobs, money and position in society are the cups. They are just tools to hold and contain life, and the type of cup we have does not define, nor change the quality of life we live. Sometimes, by concentrating only on the cups, we fail to enjoy the coffee God has provided us.

***God brews the coffee, not the cups - enjoy!***





## HARVEST CRAFTS FAIR – NOVEMBER 7, 2015

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Luncheon 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Thursday – November 5<sup>th</sup> – set up 6:00 PM

Friday - November 6<sup>th</sup> 9:00 AM - pie baking, sandwiches, soup prep.

Friday - November 6<sup>th</sup> 4:00 PM - Set up luncheon

Saturday, November 7<sup>th</sup> – 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](mailto:kerrsullivan@gmail.com)*



### **“Take Another Look” Open House Wednesday, September 16 At the State House in Boston**

As you read in Joel's column in this Epistle our “Take Another Look” photo exhibit of our South Church Food Ministry will be on display at the State House from Monday, September 14 through Friday, September 18. Here are a few more details. On Wednesday, September 16, a bus or a couple of vans will leave from our South Church parking lot at 6:40 a.m. (after picking up some people in N. Adams) and we will drive to Lee and pick up some more people. We plan to arrive in downtown Boston by no later than 10 a.m. From 10 to 11 we will meet with the Massachusetts Public Health Association at their office at the Congregational Building across from the State House. This organization is working with Berkshire Interfaith Organizing to help advocate for support of the MA Food Trust--which with proper funding could be a source of support for creative initiatives at food pantries and community meal sites all across the state.

At noon Rev. Joel, Nick De Candia, and Senator Ben Downing will make brief remarks in the rotunda to officially “open” the exhibit. Following this Sen. Downing will give those interested a tour of the State House meeting rooms—Nurses Hall, Memorial Hall, Grand Staircase, Hall of Flags. The Senator will take us to the House Chamber and finally to the Senate Chamber for a photo. We will then break for lunch on the Common in front of the State House. Everybody is asked to bring a bag lunch and drink. We will have coolers to hold everything.

During the afternoon Wendy Krom from Berkshire Interfaith Organizing has arranged appointments with legislators to talk over the Food Trust initiative. We plan to leave in time to be home by about 6 p.m. Please let Rev. Joel know if you would like a seat on the bus. This is an exciting adventure for us at South and for those in other faith communities who want to celebrate this artistic effort and advocate for better responses to the poverty in our mid

# September 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		<b>1</b> Spiritual Support Group 10 am Summer Men's Forum 12 noon Al-Anon District Meeting 5:30 pm	<b>2</b> Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Bridge 12-4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	<b>3</b> Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Quilting - Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am UCC Clergy 12 noon Bridge 6-10 pm	<b>4</b> Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	<b>5</b> AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
<b>6</b> Sunday Worship with Communion 10 am  Bridge 3-7 pm	<b>7</b> <b>LABOR DAY</b> NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm Bridge 6-10 pm	<b>8</b> Spiritual Support Group 10 am Summer Men's Forum 12 noon Square Dancing 7 pm Diaconate 7 pm	<b>9</b> Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Bridge 12-4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	<b>10</b> Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Quilting - Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Bridge 6-10 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 7 pm	<b>11</b> Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	<b>12</b> AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
<b>13</b> Downtown Pittsfield Churches Rally Sunday 9:30 am Sunday Worship 10 am <b>Sunday School Opening</b> <b>Chancel Choir Returns</b> Book Club 11:30 am Choir Party 1:30 pm Bridge 3-7 pm	<b>14</b> May Mattoon Covered Dish Supper 6 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm Bridge 6-10 pm	<b>15</b> Spiritual Support Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon Square Dancing 7 pm <b>Mission Board 7 pm</b>	<b>16</b> <b>"Take Another Look" Photo Exhibit at State House Rotunda</b> bus departs 6:30 am Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Music Together Bridge 12-4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm <b>Trustees 6 pm</b>	<b>17</b> Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting - Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Bridge 6-10 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 7 pm	<b>18</b> Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12-4 pm <b>Coffee House Concert 7 pm</b> AA 6:15 pm	<b>19</b> Music Together AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12 noon – 4 pm Pittsfield Squares 7 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
<b>20</b> Sunday Worship 10 am Children's Pantry Collection: Peanut butter <b>Coffee Hour</b> <b>Collections for the Language Project</b> Bridge 3-7 pm	<b>21</b> Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm Bridge 6-10 pm	<b>22</b> Spiritual Support Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon Square Dancing 7 pm <b>Church Council 7 pm</b>	<b>23</b> Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Music Together Bridge 12-4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	<b>24</b> Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting - Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Bridge 6-10 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 7 pm	<b>25</b> Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	<b>26</b> Music Together AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12 noon – 4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
<b>27</b> Sunday Worship 10 am  Bridge 3-7 pm  <b>October Epistle DEADLINE 11 am</b>	<b>28</b> Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm Bridge 6-10 pm	<b>29</b> Spiritual Support Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon Square Dancing 7 pm	<b>30</b> Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Berkshire Place Worship 10:45 am Music Together Bridge 12-4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	<b>OCT 1</b> Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting - Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Bridge 6-10 pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 7 pm	<b>OCT 2</b> Lord & Tailor 10 am-4pm Bridge 12-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	<b>OCT 3</b> Music Together AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm