

Epistle

SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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October 2015

What do a lunar eclipse, the recent Church Council meeting, and the upcoming spiritual study group, have in common? The answer is the title of a wise book by Barbara Brown Taylor, [Learning to Walk in the Dark](#). This past Sunday evening I was out in the dark of my backyard for a couple of hours watching as earth's shadow gradually devoured the moon. I sat enchanted at my telescope watching the shadow cross over craters, seas, and mountain ranges on the moon. At first the unlit side was very dark. But as the eclipse deepened the shadowed moon began to glow with a deep orange and red. Once the moon was fully eclipsed it was a striking dark red. One astronomer said that in full eclipse we were watching the reflected light of all earth's sunrises and sunsets happening at that moment shining upon the moon! It was magical. Sitting there in the dark I was aware that the crickets, so musical all evening, grew silent as the moon disappeared. Even the skunk, somewhere nearby, disappeared with the coming of full eclipse. But the stars popped out. I examined the Andromeda galaxy—the little glowing blob not far from the reddish moon that night—that is the one object in the night sky far outside our Milky Way galaxy that can be seen with the naked eye. Learning to walk and spend time in the dark has great rewards—and a few risks, such as a pesky skunk.

Barbara Brown Taylor says that 'darkness' is shorthand for anything that scares us, anything that is beyond our quick and easy control. That's why we light up the night with a profusion of lights and why most of our homes are filled with tiny lights that shine all the time. In her book Taylor speaks with astronomers, physicians, spelunkers, psychiatrists, the blind, and examines the Scriptures as well to help us explore the dark in more creative ways. Can we move beyond our fears to discover a love and a beauty that shines, perhaps most brightly, in the dark? The cover of her book describes it thus: "With her characteristic charm and wisdom, Taylor is our guide through a spirituality of the nighttime, teaching us how to find God even in darkness and giving us a way to let darkness teach us what we need to know." Beginning on Tuesday, October 13, at 10 a.m. Rev. Jenny Gregg, myself, and Pam Garrett will lead the weekly study. Our sessions will include meditation, opportunity for personal sharing, and a theme from the book. All are welcome.

Finally at Church Council we were discussing the larger view of South Church and its ministries. As we talked over what is evolving here, someone commented that no one could have imagined five years ago the food ministry as it has become, that this—along with so much else--has been a 'walking by faith'. Then someone else said something like, "Or you could call it stumbling in the dark, since none of us know where we're going!" In the midst of our chuckling over how God leads us one step at a time when we would prefer a better map, I had the thought that when I'm in the dark I am more sensitive to what's going on around me, more ready to ask for help and look for allies, and not so ready to tell others which way they should go. This kind of 'walking in the dark' keeps me open and responsive, which seems a good description for description for what's happening in our life together at South as well. If you have time come join us for our weekly class as we deepen our faith while learning together how to walk in the dark.



NEIGHBORS IN NEED

The Neighbors In Need offering, which we will receive on October 11, 2015, supports the UCC's ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. Through ucc.org/justice, our national Justice and Witness Ministries office offers resources, news updates, and action alerts on a broad spectrum of justice issues.

Working with members of the UCC Justice and Peace Action Network (a network of thousands of UCC justice and peace advocates), Justice and Witness continues its strong policy advocacy work on issues such as the federal budget, voting rights, immigration, health care, hate crimes, civil liberties, and environmental justice.

Neighbors in Need also supports our American Indian neighbors in the UCC in places like North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, and northern Nebraska. Today, there are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. These churches and their pastors are supported by CAIM (Council for American Indian Ministries) along with more than 1,000 individuals from dozens of other tribes and nations who are members of other UCC congregations in the U.S.

Neighbors in Need helps make another world possible. It needs your support. Please give generously on October 11th. Thank you!

Jean Robertson- Chair, Mission Board

Neighbors in Need - Additional Information from the Church Office

When you receive your copy of the *Epistle* via the US Postal Service this month, you will notice we have included some materials and an offering envelope for the 2015 Neighbors In Need Offering. If you are one of the families receiving your *Epistle* via email only, we will not be able to send these items along to you.

To make a donation to support this mission work, you may pick up offering envelopes in the Church Parlor for our October 4th offering or go on-line to ucc.org/nin to make a donation.

LECTIONARY FOR OCTOBER

Sunday, October 4 –

Worldwide Communion Sunday,

Job 1:1, 2:1-10

Psalms 26

Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12

Mark 10:2-16

Sunday, October 11 – Neighbors In Need Offering

Job 23:1-9

Psalms 22:1-15

Hebrews 4:12-16

Mark 10:17-31

Sunday, October 18 –

Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost

Job 38:1-7, (34-41)

Psalms 104:1-9, 24, 35c

Hebrews 5:1-10

Mark 10:35-45

Sunday, October 25 – Reformation Sunday

Job 42:1-6, 10-17

Psalms 34:1-8, (19-22)

Hebrews 7:23-28

Mark 10:46-52

FOOD PANTRY



The Food Pantry is a very busy place with many wonderful volunteers and hungry clients. We have been helping over 400 families a week. So far there has

been enough food, but we are running low, as each week more and more families come in search of food. Please consider helping us with food or a financial donation.

The Thanksgiving Angels will be distributing turkeys and the "fixings" on Monday, November 23rd. Because we are not getting any turkeys from Hatfield this year, we need donations. Our aim is 1400 turkeys. South Church has agreed to contribute some turkeys and 700 pies. Please help.

Thank you for your generous support!

Mary Wheat

MAY MATTOON

Brown-eyed Susans greeted each member from the tables announcing the arrival of fall as soon as the surrounding hills are alive with brilliant colors.

It was noted in the business meeting that George Geer, son of Don Geer, sent a thank-you note to May Mattoon for his Dad's memorial reception, and the Trustees have approved a final payment of \$50 for the cost of improvements to the ladies rest room.

We were reminded of the need for volunteers on October 1, 2, and 3 for the Lord & Tailor Tag Sale.

Mary Rentz presented our program for this meeting. The topic was "Aprons from the Past." Mary had many aprons hanging on a clothesline; full aprons, half aprons, frilly aprons, and coat aprons – all in beautiful prints and colors. Aprons were worn for most of the day in the past. They were handy for more than keeping a dress clean. They were used for drying tears of a crying child, for a quick dusting of furniture should company suddenly appear, and even as potholders for taking pots from the oven. Most attendees arrived wearing an apron. Mary displayed aprons that had belonged to her mother and mother-in-law, and many of these were homemade.

Hostesses for this meeting were Ruth Austin, Joyce Brown and Karen Allender. We send hellos to Dot Kresge, Ellie Dietrich and Shirley Guidetti and want them to know they are in our thoughts and prayers. Dessert was a delicious Vermont Apple Cake served with a choice of either ice cream or whipped cream.

Our next meeting will be October 6th on Tuesday at noon. Bring your sandwich and since it will be a birthday party for all members, bring a penny for each of your age, or an even dollar. Hostesses for this meeting will be Nancy deForest, Audra Kinner and Bing Honig.

Alice Gallup

LORD & TAILOR NEWS

It is hard to believe that we are at the beginning of fall. Our summer half-price sale is in its last days, as more and more fall clothes are coming in. We have some really nice colors this year.

We are busy getting ready for the tag sale, coming up on Saturday October 3. You can bring in items anytime. If you would like to help with setting up the sale, or at the sale itself, please call Audra or Nancy, or just show up on

Thursday afternoon October 1, Friday October 2, 9-3, or Saturday, 9-3. All help is greatly appreciated.

This month we will be giving \$450 to the church.

Nancy deForest



HARVEST CRAFTS FAIR

November 7, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm
Luncheon 11:00 am – 2:00 pm

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Thursday – November 5

Set up -6:00 PM

Friday-November 6 - pie  
baking, sandwiches, soup prep.

9:00 AM

Set up luncheon – Friday 4:00 pm

Saturday – FAIR Saturday 3:00  
clean-up/take down

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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.

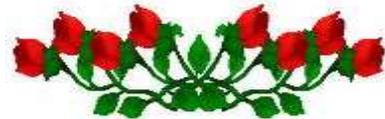
We are still seeking donations of NEW items to fill Gift Baskets, donations of filled Gift-Themed Baskets and Gift Cards for the Silent/Chinese Auctions. If you know of a local business or merchant that may have something they'd like to donate please ask them on our behalf!

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, please let me know. Look for sign-up sheets in the parlor.

As always THANK YOU!!!!

Kerry Sullivan-822-3325 kerrysullivan@gmail.com



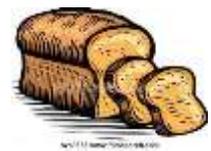
Bread and Roses Coffee House

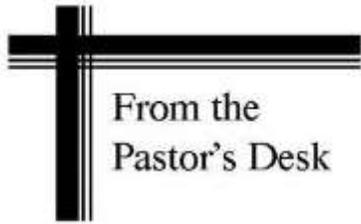
Friday, October 16 at 7 pm

Our next Coffee House
Concert is scheduled for
Friday, October 16th at 7
pm. Proceeds will

benefit the South Church Food Pantry
and the Children's Book Corner.

Come and Enjoy!





It's been a busy month at South Church. And from this *Epistle* you can read about how October promises to be very active as well. For my column I wanted to reflect on the upcoming spiritual study group. You can read about it on the front cover. But I also wanted to reflect on our adventure in Boston with "Take Another Look."

So, here is a second column for this month. On Wednesday, September 16, twenty-eight faithful souls from South Church, First Church, the Catholic community, the Pittsfield Office of Community Development, and Berkshire Interfaith Organizing, headed to the State House to hold a reception for legislators and visitors of Nick De Candia's photo exhibit, titled "Take Another Look." This exhibit was on display here in Pittsfield in April at the Lichtenstein Center—and some of the photos are currently on display in our Red Carpet Area. To help our Boston legislators become more aware of the struggles going on here in the Berkshires we took the exhibit to Doric Hall. It was a very moving experience to see photos of guests and volunteers at our Food Pantry, St. Joseph's Kitchen, and the Thanksgiving Distribution on display in that setting. We hope the effect will be to help move along legislation that will provide seed money for food initiatives across the Commonwealth.

I was the driver of one of two 15 passenger vans provided to us by Berkshire Community Action Council. It was a wild ride taking such a large van into the very heart of congested Boston. We ended up parking for five hours next to the State House in a "no stopping" zone. Sen. Ben Downing had reserved spots for us in the legislative parking lot, but when the guard at the gate saw our vans he said they were too large! We asked him what to do and he said a good spot would be to park under the "no stopping" sign across the street--which blocked part of a lane of traffic. He was happy. We were happy. Such is life in Boston!

Our visit included a wonderful tour of the State House given to us by Sen. Downing and Rep. Pignatelli. We also met with the Massachusetts Public Health Association which is a group advocating for the funding of the MA. Food Trust--the bill that would provide seed money for food initiatives. They thought the visit of such a large group of concerned and enthusiastic citizens combined with such powerful photos from the Berkshires could help significantly in the passage of such a measure.

We ended the visit with our bag lunches on Boston Common, enjoying moments of calm on a beautiful fall day. We shared reflections, had a moving circle of prayer, and watched as city life flowed steadily all around us. It brought back memories of times I ate lunch on Boston Common when I was in seminary. Back then I wondered where ministry would take me. Turns out, it's taken me back to Boston Common with members of a compassionate congregation and community seeking to make our world better by advocating for creative responses to the poverty in our midst. It's a wild, grace-filled journey!

Reverend Joel

MODERATOR'S MEMO

As always, our Church Community is hard at work making our space pristine, welcoming and ever changing. That's a good thing but we must remember that our Church Council and Board of Trustees are involved in projects also. So we ask that if you are working on something, please bring it to the Council and Trustees and share your vision. At times, some projects require permitting, permission, payment etc. and the Council and Trustees want to make sure all projects get the due they deserve. We also want to avoid duplicity and/or discovering the funds may not be available at this time. We're all trying to row together and we realize oars get dropped now and then; we're just trying to avoid any holes in our canoe.

Any questions...please don't hesitate to call or email.

Kerry Sullivan - kerrysullivan@gmail.com 413-822-3325

October 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am UCC Clergy 12 Tag Sale Set-up 12 noon – 4 pm Bridge 6-10 pm Choir 7 pm	2 Tag Sale Set-up 9 am – 3 pm Bridge 12-4 pm	3 Music Together TAG SALE 9 am – 3 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
4 Worldwide Communion Sunday 10 am Collaborative Youth Ministry at First Church 12 noon Bridge 3-7 pm	5 Bridge 6-10 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	6 Spiritual Support Group 10 am May Mattoon Luncheon 12 noon Men's Fall Forum 12 noon Square Dancing 7 pm	7 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Music Together Bridge 12-4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	8 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Bridge 6-10 pm Chancel Choir 7 pm	9 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	10 AA 10:15 am Music Together Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
11 Worship 10 am Neighbors In Need Offering Book Club 11:30 am Bridge 3-7 pm	12 Bridge 12-4 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	13 "Walking in the Dark" Study Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon Diaconate 7 pm Mission Board 7 pm Square Dancing 7 pm	14 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Music Together Bridge 12-4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Trustees 6 pm	15 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Thanksgiving Angels 1 pm Bridge 6-10 pm Choir 7 pm	16 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm WMFB Training 8:30 am Coffee House Concert 7 pm Bridge 12-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	17 AA 10:15 am Music Together Lord & Tailor 12 noon – 4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
18 Worship 10 am Kitchen Dedication Children's Pantry Collection-Tuna Coffee Hour Collections for the Language Project CROP Walk 1 pm Bridge 3-7 pm	19 Bridge 12-4 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	20 "Walking in the Dark" Study Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon Square Dancing 7 pm	21 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Music Together Bridge 12-4 pm Berkshire Place 10:45 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	22 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Bridge 6-10 pm Chancel Choir 7 pm	23 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4pm Bridge 12-4 pm AA 6:15 pm "Thanksgiving Angels" Benefit Dinner & Concert 6 pm	24 AA 10:15 am Music Together Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Pittsfield Squares 7 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
25 Worship 10 am UCC Berkshire Assoc. 2 pm at W. Stockbridge Bridge 12 noon November Epistle Deadline 11 am	26 Sign-ups for Community Turkey Baskets 9-11 am Bridge 12-4 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	27 "Walking in the Dark" Study Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 Sign-ups for Turkey Baskets 3-5 pm Church Council 7 pm Square Dancing 7 pm	28 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Music Together Bridge 12-4 pm Sign-ups for Community Turkey Baskets 1-3 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	29 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Bridge 6-10 pm Sign-ups for Turkey Baskets 3-5 pm Choir 7 pm	30 Sign-ups for Community Turkey Baskets 9-11 am Bridge 12-4 pm Lord & Tailor 10 am-4pm AA 6:15 pm	31 HALLOWEEN AA 10:15 am Music Together Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm 