



Epistle

SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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November 2015

Tora and I are members of Caretaker Farm in Williamstown, a CSA where we purchase a share each year and then collect vegetables, herbs, flowers, and fruits season by season. I love observing the couple who own and manage the farm along with their team of apprentices. They are such good stewards, focused on their mission of feeding hundreds without the use of pesticides. This requires a deep devotion to the art of farming, a constant spirit of listening and responding to the soil and all that grows within it and upon it. I am amazed at the energy and spirit of the farm and all the abundance that flows to so many from it.

I have much the same feeling when I observe the energy and spirit of South Church. We aren't a farm, yet each week we feed many both physically and spiritually. Last week the Pantry served over 500 families, each receiving a large box of food. Last week St. Joe's Kitchen served 117 plates of baked chicken to hungry neighbors. This morning our "Learning to Walk in the Dark" spiritual study group met and we were nourished by the wisdom of Barbara Brown Taylor and the insights we shared together. At noon today the Men's Forum met and they were nourished by the thoughtful presentation on Biblical history offered by one of the Jewish members of the group. This afternoon sign-ups for the community Thanksgiving Distribution were held in Barrett Hall. South is once again hosting and providing significant leadership for this remarkable collaboration that will provide 1,500 families with frozen turkeys and all the fixings on the Monday before Thanksgiving. Also this afternoon I led a communion service at Devonshire Estates for our South Church members who are residents there. Tish Tibbets organized and hosted us as we gathered in fellowship and shared the Bread of Christ. And in this *Epistle* you can read the recent article that was published in the *Berkshire Eagle* about South Church, our "Stretching for God's Future" Capital Fund Drive, and a description of our kitchen renovations that will enable us to serve this community for decades to come.

As we move into November and give thanks for all God's gifts we will also hear the call to deepen and strengthen our stewardship as we make pledges in support of the mission and ministry of this church for the coming year. Our theme is "Trust in the Promise: 'For surely I know the plans I have for you...to give you a future with hope (Jer. 29:11).'" Can we trust that promise of God? Can we stretch our giving so that the nourishing ministry I described above continues to flourish? What is the future bringing us and how should we respond? On the Sundays we distribute pledge envelopes in worship—November 8 & 15—I will also have dialogue sermons with some of our younger adults asking them about their memories of growing up at South, their current life situations, and their hopes and dreams for the future. By talking with Emma Haskell, Rachael Roche, and others, I hope to gain insight into what this church has meant for their lives and how the church might help nourish a new generation of adults.

Let us open our hearts and lives to God as we are nourished for the journey of faith--a journey where we share the bread of Christ in so many different ways. Let us trust the promise—and tend the fields of this community of faith—with devotion, hope, and joy.

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 November 29th at 11 am.

Board of Trustees October Update

The Trustees, as usual, have been busy. The three capital projects scheduled this year are complete. We have a new roof on the Parish House, a fresh coat of paint has brightened the outside of the Parish House and the Sanctuary, and the Barrett Hall kitchen has been renovated.

Other maintenance and improvement projects are in the works. Some loose siding on the rear wall of the sanctuary has been repaired. Our furnace, which needs some work, will be completed soon. To improve our security, additional video cameras will be installed.

As we get ready for our annual stewardship campaign, it is a good time for us all to check where we are in fulfilling our 2015 annual pledge. Pledges are running behind where we would like them to be.

As of October 1st, our treasurer's report is as follows:

<u>Income</u>	YTD	ANNUAL
	Actual	Budget
	\$101,244	236,745
<u>Expenses</u>		
Salaries	\$98,945	\$151,195
Operating	<u>66,651</u>	<u>85,550</u>
Total	\$165,596	\$236,745
Net Surplus (Deficit)	(\$64,352)	0

John Robertson, Board of Trustees

PATRIOT FLIGHT TO WASHINGTON, DC

A day to remember. On Saturday, October 3rd, I had the privilege of being in the company of 44 other veterans and our guardians on a Patriot Flight to Washington to visit the war memorials. The day began with a buffet breakfast at 6 AM donated by the Desmond family at their facility near the Albany airport. After landing at Baltimore we traveled by bus and visited these sites - Air and Space Museum, the following memorials - WWII, Lincoln, Vietnam Wall, Korean, and Iwo Jima. Then to Arlington Cemetery to observe the changing of the Guard and present a wreath on behalf of the group. Box lunches were provided on the bus and a buffet dinner in the evening near the Baltimore airport.

Within the group, 9 were WWII, 21 Korea, 2 Korea/Vietnam and 13 Vietnam. On the WWII list, one was a 94-year old Women's Army Corps veteran who served in North Africa and Italy and a 95-year old who survived the sinking of his ship by a Kamikaze aircraft. It is to be noted that WWII veterans across the country are dying at the rate of 800 each day and their numbers are rapidly decreasing. Personally, it was rewarding to reminisce with a C46 pilot who was stationed at the same time and base in Japan flying missions in different squadrons to and from Korea and other Far East bases.

The most rewarding events of the day happened by surprise at the Baltimore airport baggage pickup area when spontaneous applause just happened as we went by - wheelchairs first, followed by canes and walkers and again as we were seated waiting for the plane home, deplaning individuals would shake the hand of a veteran and offer thanks for their service. We arrived back in Albany at 11 PM.

These Patriot flights are available at no cost to any veteran in Western Massachusetts. This was the fifth flight with three more scheduled this year. Veterans may contact the following for an application.

Patriot Flight Inc.	fomservice@aol.com
518-439-9265	
PO Box 190, Delmar, NY 12054	John Moore

LECTIONARY FOR NOVEMBER

Sunday, November 1- Communion Sunday
with guest preacher Rev. Lisanne Finston

Ruth 1:1-8
Psalm 146
Hebrews 9:11-14
Mark 12:28-34

Sunday, November 8
The Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Ruth 3:1-5, 4:13-17
Psalm 127
Hebrews 9:24-28
Mark 12:38-44

Sunday, November 15 – Stewardship Sunday

1 Samuel 1:4-20
Daniel 12:1-3
Psalm 16
Hebrews 10:11
Mark 13:1-8

Sunday, November 22 – Thanksgiving Sunday:

Dedication of Pledges

2 Samuel 23:1-7
Psalm 132:1-12
Revelation 1:4b-8
John 18:33-37

Sunday, November 29 – First Sunday of Advent

Jeremiah 33:14-15
Psalm 25:1-10
1 Thessalonians 3:9-13
Luke 21:25-36

“Sharing God’s Dream” is the theme for Unit 2, and will run from October 18th through November 22nd.

In this unit we will read the story of Ruth and Naomi who return, destitute, to Bethlehem.

They are fed by the grain left by the edge of the fields after harvest for the poor (an ancient food bank). God’s

dream is for loving kindness and peace in the world.

Many questions will be explored: How can I show loving kindness? How important are children in God’s dream? Will God’s dream ever come true?

Just to name a few. Activities will include bubbles, playdough, games and songs. If you have not already, come join us!

For November missions, the food item for Pantry Sunday will be chicken soup. November 15th is the third Sunday of the month slotted for the food collection. A decorative box will be in place at the front of the sanctuary on that day. Thank you to all who supported us in October with your tuna fish donations!

Blessings,
Ann Roche

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Pausing to listen to an airplane in the sky, stooping to watch a ladybug on a plant, sitting on a rock to watch the waves crash over the quayside — children have their own agendas and time scales.

As they find out more about their world and their place in it, they work hard not to let adults hurry them.

We need to hear their voices.

~Cathy Nutbrown



First Sunday of Advent, November 29th



Sunday, November 1st

MAY MATTOON

Our October meeting was at noon with our usual sandwich lunch. The theme for this luncheon was a birthday for all members with tables set with birthday trims, including balloons and horns. Each member brought a penny for each year of age or one dollar, and it was a good time. Since we were celebrating birthdays, there was no set program. Hostesses were Ruth Austin, Sara Adams, and Peggy Walsh. Sandwiches were followed by cupcakes, a candle and ice cream. We all joined in with an all-inclusive rendition of "Happy Birthday."

During the business meeting:

*Get-well cards were passed around the tables to be signed and forwarded to Ruth Campbell and Gerry Whiton.

*Ruth Austin announced that sturdy plastic containers had been purchased to store the flatware.

*It was discussed and voted to send \$200 to the North Adams Congregational Church that had been burglarized. Money, laptops, and other items had been taken.

*Shirley Vickery is well and she reports that she had settled in and is enjoying her new digs.

*It was requested that we bring in project ideas for the upcoming Craft Fair in November.

Our next meeting will be a noontime lunch on Tuesday, November 3rd. The program will be craft projects for the Fair. Hostesses are Nancy deForest, Audra, Kinner, and Bing Honig. Don't forget to bring toilet articles for distribution by the Food Pantry – shampoo, bath soap, toothpaste, deodorant, and the like.

Alice Gallup

South Church Annual Harvest Crafts Fair

November 7, 2015

Come one, come all!

The Harvest Fair has always been a time for our church family to gather together and share in the spirit of community. Enjoy good friends, a delicious luncheon and many handmade and desirable items.

Kerry Sullivan

FOOD PANTRY

Together, we can
feed those in need.

Thank you to the Mission Board and Lynn Reynolds for the delicious Barbecue dinner on Friday, October 23rd. This was followed by the fun Tommy T. band concert and \$1225 was raised for the Thanksgiving Angels.

The Food Pantry is preparing for Thanksgiving. South Church's donation for the Thanksgiving Angels is pie. Please help us by making or buying pies to be given out on Monday, November 23rd.

As always, many, many thanks.

Mary Wheat

HAPPY FALL

from Lord & Taylor Gift and Thrift Shop

As the leaves fall and the air turns crisp, we are happy to report that the TAG SALE on October 3 was a great success. It was hard to believe the amount of clothing and household goods that had accumulated and been contributed since our last sale in March. As a result, we made \$1500. Following the sale all that remained was given to the Food Pantry and St. Joe's supper to distribute free to the guests. By now nearly all of it is gone.

We are happy to be able to give the church \$1300 this month. We thank everyone who contributed to this effort. Without us all working together, this would not be possible.

Nancy deForest and Audra Kinner

FRIENDS

A friend is someone we turn to
when our spirits need a lift.

A friend is someone we treasure,
for our friendship is a gift.

A friend is someone who fills our lives
with beauty, joy and grace,
and makes the whole world we live in
a better and happier place.



**KITCHEN UPGRADE LATEST IMPROVEMENT
AT SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH:
Recent Article in the *Berkshire Eagle***

By Dick Lindsay

The commercial-grade kitchen is equipped with an energy efficient refrigerator, dishwasher and up-to-code triple basin sink with a grease trap.

New restaurant in town?

Nope, the latest improvement at the South Congregational Church; part of a \$236,000 capital campaign to upgrade the building and enhance the congregation's ministries — feeding the masses being one of them.

Following Sunday's service, church members gathered in the Parish House to dedicate and bless the newly renovated kitchen, which is at the heart of the Wednesday community suppers, special events and twice weekly food pantry distributions.



"The busier we got and as the food ministry grew, we needed to start treating this as a commercial kitchen," said Don Roche, who initiated the project.

Work began in 2013 with some electrical upgrades and other improvements, with the bulk of the renovation done over a six-week period from September to mid-October of this year, according to John Robertson, chairman of the church board of trustees. The project cost was over \$30,000. Robertson noted an overhaul of the kitchen was long overdue. "There were so many regulations to be aware of and with more and more people as our guests [in the Parish House] we had issues to address," he said. "We are almost at the point with our kitchen where we need a business manager."

Kitchen volunteer Pat Politis, along with fellow church member Dale Prindle, oversaw the renovation that included refurbishing the antique cabinets, cutting board table and other culinary furnishings. "We tried to maintain its charm and make the kitchen easier to work in," she said. Maintaining the charm and functionality of South Congregational Church prompted church leaders nearly two years ago to embark on a capital campaign aimed at renovating the 166-year-old church and 80-year-old Parish House. Launched in February, 2014, the campaign has paid or will pay for painting of the church exterior, some roof replacement, refurbishing the steeple and other capital expenses.

The spire was atop the church's priority list, in part, because it was the most notable the public would see and it needed immediate attention, church leaders said. Next up is repairs to the sanctuary roof, a project going out to bid that Robertson expects will be one of the most expensive to date.

The capital projects are actually an extension of major improvements the church began two years ago, funded by a pair of memorial gifts totaling \$160,000. The donations paid for 50 storm windows installed in the Parish House. The church parking lot and driveway also were repaved and a modern, walk-in refrigerator/freezer was installed near the kitchen.

Church officials have said the capital improvements are necessary for the 200 member congregation to continue meeting its own needs and those of the city at large.

Besides Sunday service and school, South Congregational Church hosts nearly 20 church groups and regular meetings of community-based organizations. Church volunteers also provide ongoing programs and services such as a food pantry that serves hundreds of families weekly, a thrift shop and a partnership with Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity.



Bread and Roses Coffee House

Presents

A benefit for the Thanksgiving Angels

Linda Worster

An evening of old and new songs—no two performances the same.
Linda will always delight us with the depth of her writing and the
breadth of her repertoire

Friday, November 20, 2015, 7 p.m.

South Congregational Church, UCC, 110 South St., Pittsfield, MA

November 2015

South Congregational Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <i>Daylight Savings Time Ends – Turn BACK your clocks</i> Worship with Communion with Rev. Lisanne Finston 10 am	2 Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	3 “Walking in the Dark” Study Group 10 am May Mattoon Luncheon 12 noon Men’s Forum 12 noon	4 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am 12 noon St. Joe’s Dinner 5 pm	5 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am UCC Clergy 12 noon Chancel Choir 7 pm	6 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Set-Up for Harvest Craft Fair	7 Harvest Craft Fair 9:30 am – 3 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
8 Worship 10 am Book Club 11:30 am	9 WMFB Training 8:30 am Sign-ups for Community Turkey Baskets Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	10 “Walking in the Dark” Study Group 10 am Men’s Forum 12 noon Diaconate 7 pm	11 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am St. Joe’s Dinner 5 pm Trustees 6 pm	12 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Thanksgiving Angels 1 pm Chancel Choir 7 pm	13 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	14 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
15 Worship 10 am Stewardship Sunday Children’s Pantry Collection: Chicken Soup	16 Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	17 “Walking in the Dark” Study Group 10 am Men’s Forum 12 noon Mission Board 7 pm	18 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Berkshire Place 10:45 am St. Joe’s Dinner 5 pm	19 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	20 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Coffee House Concert 7 pm AA 6:15 pm	21 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12 noon – 4 pm Pittsfield Squares 7 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
22 Worship with Dedication of Pledges 10 am <i>Coffee Hour Collections for the Language Project</i> Set-up for Turkey Distribution	23 Pittsfield Food Pantries’ Thanksgiving Turkey Distribution 12 noon – 6 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm	24 “Walking in the Dark” Study Group 10 am Men’s Forum 12 noon Church Council 7 pm	25 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am St. Joe’s Dinner 5 pm	26 Thanksgiving Day 	27 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED Lord & Tailor 10 am-4pm AA 6:15 pm	28 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
29 First Sunday of Advent Worship 10 am Epistle Deadline 11 am	30 Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	DEC 1 Spiritual Support Group 10 am Men’s Forum 12 noon	DEC 2 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am St. Joe’s Dinner 5 pm	DEC 3 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	DEC 4 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	DEC 5 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Berkshire Phil-Am Group Party 6 pm Al-Anon 7 pm