



# Epistle

**SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

110 South Street  
Pittsfield, MA 01201  
(413)-442-7357

**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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www.southchurchpittsfield.org

January 2016

As this New Year begins I'm pondering a thank you note I received after Christmas. It requires a bit of explanation. Right after Thanksgiving I received a call from the Colonial Theater. They were getting ready for their annual series of performances of Charles Dickens' "The Christmas Carol". Each showing of this story of Mr. Scrooge's encounter with the ghosts of Christmas who set him free from the bondage of greed is well attended, but there are always empty seats. The Colonial wondered if South Church would like to distribute some free tickets at our Pantry. And so we did. Lynn Reynolds and Lee Ann Pettus, as they checked in folks for the Pantry over the next couple of weeks, explained the offer and how it worked. The tickets disappeared. Then I received this simple thank you: "Dear Rev. Huntington, I believe I have you to thank for the free tickets I received for the Colonial show 'A Christmas Carol'. My whole family went and had a wonderful time. It was our first time in the building since its renovation. It is beautiful! Thank you so much!" Just as this mother felt gratitude for the opportunity to take her family to the Colonial, I felt gratitude that we were catalysts for such moments. Our food ministry isn't just about meeting desperate physical needs. It's also about offering one another opportunities for shared human dignity, for deepening the connections that nourish us in soul as well as body. This is why we offer a simple prayer before the meals at St. Joe's Kitchen, have the Children's Book Table at the Pantry, it's why the Mission Board gave out 400 gift bags to our Pantry guests last month, and it's why we had a table full of greens one Thursday so our Pantry guests could make swags with colorful bows—it was our guests who taught us how to make such bows. Experiences of beauty, whether viewing a show at the Colonial, making bows together, or sharing a moment over a meal or a bag of groceries, help deepen our connection with the dignity and strength that resides within us, between us, and in our relationship with God. Such experiences are sacramental, slowly transforming us into something new. Can't you sense that energy in the note above?

Later this month Berkshire Interfaith Organizing (BIO) will hold a fund-raising MICAH dinner during which a number of beautiful, faithful souls will be recognized—including our own Mary Wheat. (You can get tickets for this dinner by contacting the church office or seeing Jean Robertson). BIO functions much like Charles Dickens' three ghosts of Christmas. Those ghosts helped Mr. Scrooge take another look: Did he really want greed to define everything? BIO is bringing together our faith communities to help us take another look: Isn't greed defining way too much of what goes on these days? Is this why Dickens' story continues to be so powerful? Our "Take Another Look" photo exhibit--our food ministry in action shown at the Lichtenstein and at the State House (thanks to BIO)--elegantly and artistically helps us see more deeply into the dignity, strength, and desperation of so many. Mr. Scrooge took another look and changed his ways—and gave Tiny Tim hope for his life. I wonder if our nation will be able to "Take Another Look" in 2016 and wake up from our bondage to greed? Our faith teaches us to "Let it begin with me". Through experiences of beauty, efforts to expand access to food, and campaigns to change public policies, we are seeking to be the Church of Jesus Christ in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. May it be a blessed year!

## EPISTLE

Published monthly at Pittsfield, Mass. in the interest of members and friends of South Congregational Church.

Subscription: \$3.00

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Parish Nurse ..... Sue Kaufman  
May Mattoon ..... Alice Gallup  
Ladies Benevolent ..... Marge Demary  
Men's Forum ..... John Anthony  
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The next *Epistle* deadline is January 31<sup>st</sup> at 11 a.m.

## OUR CHURCH FAMILY

### In Memoriam:

Richard L. Whitehead December 16

“The roots of happiness grow deepest in the soil of service.”

**Sincere congratulations to Art Kaufman** who recently retired as chaplain at Berkshire Medical Center. On Thursday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, a reception was held in his honor at the hospital. He will be succeeded by Marcie Simon who has been a lay leader at Knesset Israel for many years.

“Don't simply retire from something, have something to retire to.” ~Harry Emerson Fosdick  
Happy Retirement, Art!

## ANNUAL REPORTS

In preparation of our Annual Meeting, all Annual Reports for 2015 from Officers, Boards and Committees of South Church are due in the Church Office by **Sunday, January 17<sup>th</sup>**. They can be emailed to [sochurch@nycap.rr.com](mailto:sochurch@nycap.rr.com). Thank you.



Our scientific power has outrun our spiritual power. We have guided missiles and misguided man.

Martin Luther King, Jr.  
“Strength to Love,” 1963

As this New Year begins, I reflect on the children during the Advent and Christmas season: Their hearts open to the message of preparing for Jesus Christ coming and his birth; their enthusiasm to build a crèche and participate in the acting out of the Christmas story.



It's humbling actually, how they are open to the message of Christ and comfortable to learn about a loving God. After acting out the Christmas Story in church, we returned to Cooke Center. The children changed out of costumes and settled down on the stage with beanie bags and pillows, most kicked off their shoes and the small ones had their blankets. I sat before them and read the story that they had just acted out from a story book published in 1938. There were at least a dozen of them, all sitting very still and listening intently! Even the very small ones sat quietly! As I was reading, my heart was full of amazement with these children. They really wanted to hear and learn about the story of the Christ Child, just as the children, I'm sure, did in 1938 and any other year!

The lessons move forward into the New Year, following Jesus' life and ministry as a boy, a young man, a healer, an advocate for the poor and suppressed, a fair and loving person, who came to set an example on how to make our world a better place. I am excited and feel privileged to teach to such a willing group. Further, I am thankful for all the families who have their children participate in a program that will empower these children against fears and give them a foundation of love and compassion. Yes, I am very much looking forward to this New Year for all of us.

Thank you to all the parents, friends and families who so willingly volunteered their time and talents during our Advent and Christmas season!

**Happy New Year and Blessings,**

Ann Roche,

Children and Youth Director

## LECTIONARY FOR JANUARY 2016

January 3 – The Second Sunday after Christmas

Jeremiah 31:7-14  
Psalm 147:12-20  
Ephesians 1:3-14  
John 1:(1-9), 1-18



January 10 – Baptism of Christ Sunday

Isaiah 43:1  
Psalm 29 Acts 8:14-17  
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 17 – Second Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 62:1-5  
Psalm 35:5-10  
1 Corinthians 12:1-11  
John 2:1-11

January 24 – Third Sunday after Epiphany

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10  
Psalm 19  
1 Corinthians 12:-12-31a  
Luke 4:14-21

January 31 – Annual Meeting Sunday

Jeremiah 1:4-10  
Psalm 71: 1-6  
1 Corinthians 13: 1-13  
Luke 4: 21-30

## UPCOMING VISIT TO SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

At our Council Meetings we have often discussed a get-together with Second Congregational Church. We'd like to invite them to upcoming events, include them in our activities and simply begin a conversation. At our last meeting Joel suggested we attend the Martin Luther King Celebration and Reception immediately following on January 17th. The Council agreed that this would be a great first step!

Please mark your calendars and plan on joining us for the Celebration and Reception on the 17th. We'll meet at South Church at 3:00 to head over together!

Kerry Sullivan, Moderator



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## THE FOOD PANTRY

Many thank yous for everyone for making our holiday special at the Food Pantry. Joel, Jenny Gregg from St. Stephens and Sara Milano from First Church helped clients at the Food Pantry create greenery for their homes. It was a huge success.

Jean Bosquet and Sandi Smith gathered a wonderful assortment of holiday books as well as many very creative books and gave them to the children along with a stuffed animal or toy.

The Mission Board put together 3 different kinds of toiletry bags and gave them to our clients. Also winter coats were given to those in need of them.

And to all, the Food Pantry gave out food, toilet paper and laundry detergent.

It was a happy time with Christmas music and laughter. Everyone seemed to have an excellent day. Your generosity in giving was very much appreciated by all.

Mary Wheat

## A Note Recently Received by Lynn Reynolds from a Visitor to Our Food Pantry

"It's very hard asking for food. I am a proud person. But you made it a pleasure to come here, a nice smile a pleasant wink. All matters. We all are truly lucky to have you."



## SOUTH CHURCH BOOK CLUB

The next meeting of the South Church Book Club will be held January 10<sup>th</sup> about 15 minutes after the worship service.

The book we will be discussing is Ordinary Grace by William Kent Krueger. I for one loved this book and recommend it.

On February 14<sup>th</sup> we will discuss The Boys in the Boat by Daniel James Brown. When I told Don Roche I thought he would love it, his reply was, and I quote, "It's the best book I ever read!" It certainly is one of my favorites. It's the story of the United States Olympic Gold Medal winning crew team of 1936.

Come join us in a lively discussion. We will be selecting some new books to read in January and February. We welcome suggestions.

Happy New Year.

Pam Garrett

## MAY MATTOON

May Mattoon met on Monday evening, December 7<sup>th</sup> for a Christmas Party covered-dish supper. The tables were lovely with green garlands, ornaments and 'twinkling tea lights' running down the middle of each table. We had a full house, and were delighted to have Susan Borden Davis join us. Ruth Campbell was back after an extended illness – good to see you recovered, Ruth.

A 'Yankee Gift Swap' was held, but everyone must have been very pleased with the gift they chose; I didn't see any swapping!!! Hostesses were Marge Demary, Pam Garrett and Sharon Mercier. They provided dessert – homemade cheesecake with cherry topping.

Treasurer Ruth Campbell read a thank you note from Rev. Carolyn Peck, pastor of the First Congregational Church in North Adams. May Mattoon made a donation after the church was vandalized and robbed. Carolyn was one of our Peirson interns here at South Church.

Two poinsettias were ordered to be given to May Mattoon members. Plans for the Christmas 'Cookie Sale' were finalized and Pat Nixon and Mary Wheat were in charge. It was decided to have another 'Cookie Walk' like the one held at the Harvest Craft Fair.

May Mattoon met on Tuesday, January 5<sup>th</sup> at 12 noon, a luncheon meeting. The annual meeting was held and officers were elected. Hostesses were Ruth Austin, Jeannine Rontowski and Karen Allender.

This report was compiled by Karen Allender. Alice Gallup is healing from a broken arm – speedy recovery, Alice.

Hope everyone had a lovely, blessed Christmas.

Karen Allender



New Year Resolutions go in one year  
and out the other.



## Happy New Year From the LORD & TAILOR Gift and Thrift Shop

As the New Year begins, the Shop enters its 7th full year of operation. We are very grateful for your support, either by donating goods, volunteering your time or shopping with us.

During 2015, the Shop has been able to donate \$5500 to the church. This year we have also replaced the rug in the shop and donated to the Capital Fund Drive at the cost of another \$1000. Thus our total income for this year was \$6500.

We look forward to another year of helping to support the church and its mission,

Nancy deForest      Audra Kinner

## ANNUAL MEETING

South Church's Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, after Worship. Please come and be part of the decisions concerning your church.

## LADIES BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

We had another successful Harvest Craft Fair thanks to all the hard work of everyone involved.

Ladies Benevolent has come up with some new ideas for 2016. The first Thursday of each month we'll be working on projects for the next Harvest Fair.

Soooo, please feel free to come and join us. Bring any projects that you would like to try, help us with some of our projects, or just come and join us for a few social hours. We bring our lunch and take turns bringing yummy desserts. You don't want to miss out on the fun-- so please come!

We do have a new member; her name is Cindy Morin. She is very talented and we have already learned some new ways to do quilting.

**We wish you all a HEALTHY, HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!**

Marge Demary



## ***Eat for Heat: Dinner and Concert***



The Mission Board is sponsoring an “Eat for Heat” Meatloaf Dinner and Concert to benefit the Emergency Fuel Fund. The dinner and concert will be held in Barrett Hall on Friday, January 15<sup>th</sup>. Dinner will be served at 5:30 pm, with a concert to follow at 7pm. Music will be provided by Linda Worster, David Grover, and Puggy Demary. Dinner and concert tickets are \$15. Concert only would be a free-will offering. For tickets, see Paula in the office or anyone on the Mission Board: Jean Robertson, Sue & Art Kaufman, Lynn Reynolds, or Joyce Brown.

We have been very fortunate this winter with the weather being so mild, but we all know our real Berkshire’s weather is on its way. The proceeds from this dinner and concert will help many in need who struggle to keep the heat on during our coldest months. We have conjured up a real homey comfort meal for dinner with meatloaf, roasted potatoes, veggies, salad, and dessert.

So, come and join us for a night of fun fellowship, good food, and music to warm your soul! And know that by doing so, you are also helping to warm the homes and souls of others!

Jean Robertson-Mission Board

### ***Berkshire Interfaith MICAHA Award Dinner Sunday, January 24 at St. Mark’s School, 4:30 p.m.***

To celebrate its first anniversary, Berkshire Interfaith Organizing (BIO) will host a MICAHA awards dinner. These awards recognize individuals from member congregations who exemplify the prophet Micah’s wisdom: “To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Our Church Council has selected Mary Wheat as South Church’s MICAHA award recipient for her tireless efforts and inspiring work feeding our wider community.

The awards dinner will be an amazing celebration of people like Mary Wheat from many congregations who do so much for so many. Tickets (\$30/person) are still available; please contact Jean Robertson for details ([jmrobertson132@gmail.com](mailto:jmrobertson132@gmail.com) or 448-8484).

Cindy Dickinson

### ***BUDGET REPORT***

As we enter the New Year, a new budget is being formulated. A key component of the budget is our pledge income. Many have yet to return a pledge for 2016. A timely response will be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact Pam Garrett or me.

John Robertson, Trustees

### ***NOTES FROM THE FORUM***

Meeting every Tuesday for a brown-bag lunch and a challenging discussion the members of the Forum have covered a lot of ground this fall.

Co-moderator, Bob Skidmore introduced the fall series with a spirited review of Pulitzer Prize winning author David McCullough’s newest book *The Wright Brothers*. The story of the two bicycle mechanics from Dayton, Ohio who taught the world to fly is absolutely fascinating. Of special interest to our members is that David McCullough is Sam Barnes’ brother-in-law.

Bob’s next book for discussion was Robert Putnam’s *Our Kids*, which points out how essential it is for us to stop our endless political bickering and respond to the growing income gap affecting our middle class and the impact it is having on our youth.

As a follow-up to *Our Kids*, Mike Williams, a former gang member visited with us to talk about his past life and the work he is doing with the troubled youth who are involved with the Pittsfield Community Connection. The combination of Putnam’s book and Mike’s visit tied together the gravity of the huge problem we are all facing.

We rounded out the fall semester with Bob leading us in a Power Point review of Altman and Kingson’s thought provoking book, *Social Security Works*. We spent five weeks on this vital subject and the author’s suggestion that social security should be expanded rather than reduced.

John Anthony- For the Forum

*We will open the book, its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called opportunity, and its first chapter is New Year’s Day. ~ Edith Lovejoy Pierce*

## ***REPORT ON ST. JOSEPH'S KITCHEN AT SOUTH CHURCH***



St. Joseph's Kitchen at South Church provides a free community meal each Wednesday to our neighbors who might otherwise go hungry.

During 2015, 4511 meals were served in Barrett Hall. Most of the meals were prepared in our church kitchen by experienced, volunteer cooking teams. Our cooks and other volunteers come from many churches and organizations. We are grateful for their dedication and service in this ecumenical, food ministry.

Along with spaghetti and meatballs, the 2015 menus included a wide variety of dishes. (Macaroni and cheese was served only once!) A tossed salad usually accompanied the main courses, and appetizers and desserts were often provided by local grocery stores.

Main courses included: shepherd's pie; chicken casserole with peas, stuffing and mashed potatoes; chili and cornbread; baked chicken breaded with crumbs or served with gravy; Kitty's American chop suey; meatloaf with creamed vegetables; baked pork chops with scalloped potatoes and vegetables; creamed turkey with stuffing and apple crisp; Swedish meatballs and noodles with vegetables; pork loin in gravy with mashed potatoes, carrots and applesauce; Bar-B-Q chicken with baked beans and macaroni salad; grilled hamburgers and hot dogs, baked beans and popsicles for the 4th of July; ham and scalloped potatoes; stuffed peppers; ribs with rosemary potatoes; roast pork; and meatballs in brown gravy with mashed potatoes and vegetables. Acorn squash was served in a variety of ways this fall due to the generosity of local farmers.

During the kitchen renovation in August and September, our cooks did not miss a beat. Renee Petersoli, who cooks at the Methodist Church on Tuesday, doubled her menu and brought her dishes over to Barrett Hall on Wednesday. Peggy Taylor's St. Joseph's team and our own Pat Politis and Helen Welch used the walk-in cooler and freezer for refrigeration and the parlor kitchen for the small amount of cooking that was required. Their cold menus included tuna, egg, and chicken salad sandwiches, macaroni and tuna salad, chicken/pasta/veggie salad, accompanied by tossed salads, fruit salads, chips, pickles, and sliced fresh vegetables. Bill Donahue grilled hot dogs and baked beans outdoors. One week, Pat and Helen cooked fresh corn-on-the-cob, donated by the Nobles, on an outdoor cooking set-up provided by the Nobles.

Each week when the doors open to our guests at 3:30 pm, hot coffee and appetizers are ready. The meal is served at 5 pm after announcements and a prayer. Volunteers dish out the plates. Servers wait on each table. Trays of milk and desserts follow. Guests may have seconds after everyone has had firsts. When the meal is over, the guests take their plates to clean up stations for our crews to wash, count and put away. Please note: the new dishwasher has radically shortened the clean-up time! Tables and chairs are wiped down, sanitized and put away. After the floors are swept, the crews lock up and go home.

In 2015 we have taken small steps toward a more ecological kitchen. Anticipating the Pittsfield ban on Styrofoam, we began using paper hot cups. With the purchase of melamine dessert plates, we no longer use small paper plates.

Submitted by Mary Rentz, Administrator of St. Joseph's Kitchen at South Church

**South Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
Pittsfield, Massachusetts**

**Berkshire S. S.**

**To the Members of South Congregational Church:**

**The 165<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of South Church will be held following the Parlor worship service on January 31, 2016.**

**The purpose of the meeting:**

**To hear the reports of the pastor, elected officials, and boards and committees.**

**To elect new officers and new members for boards and committees.**

**To approve a budget for 2016.**

**To discuss any additional business brought by the members.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**John Anthony  
Clerk**



## **FRIDAY, JAN 15, 2016**

# **EAT FOR HEAT**

### **Comfort Food and Coffee House**

Come join us for Dinner and Concert to benefit the Emergency Fuel Fund. Dinner will be served at 5:30 pm, with a concert to follow at 7pm. Music will be provided by Linda Worster, David Grover, and Puggy Demary. Dinner and concert tickets are \$15. Concert only would be a free-will offering. For dinner tickets, see Paula in the office (442-7357) or one of the Mission Board: Jean Robertson, Sue & Art Kaufman, Lynn Reynolds, or Joyce Brown.

We have been very fortunate this winter with the weather being so mild, but we all know our real Berkshire's weather is on its way. The proceeds from this dinner and concert will help many in need who struggle to keep the heat on during our coldest months. We have conjured up a real homey comfort meal for dinner with meatloaf, roasted potatoes, veggies, salad, and dessert.

So, come and join us for a night of fun fellowship, good food, and music to warm your soul! And know that by doing so, you are also helping to warm the homes and souls of others!

**Dinner 5:30 pm**

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**Meat Loaf**

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**Concert 7:00 pm**

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**David Grover  
Linda Worster &  
Puggy Demary**

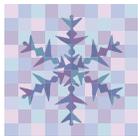
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**\$15.00 for dinner  
+ free will  
offering to benefit  
the PACC Fuel  
Assistance Fund**

### **BREAD & ROSES COFFEE HOUSE**

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

# January 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 New Year's Day  AA 6:15 pm	2 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
3 Parlor Worship 10 am with Rev. Skidmore	4 NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	5 "Walking in the Dark" Study Group 10 am May Mattoon Annual Meeting 12 noon Men's Forum 12 noon Church Council 7 pm	6 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	7 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am UCC Clergy 12 noon	8 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	9 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
10 Parlor Worship with Communion 10 am New Members Class following worship Book Club 11:30	11 Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	12 "Walking in the Dark" Study Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon Diaconate 7 pm Mission Board 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 Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	15 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Coffee House Concert & Dinner 6 pm AA 6:15 pm	16 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12 noon – 4 pm Pittsfield Squares 7 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
17 Parlor Worship 10 am Annual Reports Due	18 Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	19 "Walking in the Dark" Study Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon	20 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Berkshire Place 10:45 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	21 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Choir 7 pm	22 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	23 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
24 Worship in the Parlor 10 am BIO-Micah Award Dinner 4:30 pm Coffee Hour Collections for the Language Project	25 WMFB Advocacy Training 9 am Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA- 7 pm	26 "Walking in the Dark" Study Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon	27 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	28 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	29 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	30 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm NA – Meeting and Function 7 pm
31 Worship in the Parlor 10 am 165 <sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Epistle Deadline 11 am	Feb 1 Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	Feb 2 Walking in the Dark" Study Group 10 am 12 noon Men's Forum 12 noon	Feb 3 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	Feb 4 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	Feb 5 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	Feb 6 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm