



Epistle

SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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February 2016

This past week South held its 165th Annual Meeting. It was a time for sharing together the many dimensions of our church life. Here are excerpts from my Annual Report that reflect on some of our successes, challenges, and growing edges:

“This past year South Church was busy stretching for God’s future. Our Capital Campaign, “Stretching for God’s Future”, has now completed its second year. In 2015 our church kitchen was completely renovated and then dedicated. It is now a bright, welcoming, commercial kitchen... This past year our Parish House flat roofs were resurfaced, the Parish House trim was painted, and the front of the Sanctuary and all its trim were also painted... In 2016 the main roof of the Sanctuary will be re-shingled—and the idea of installing solar panels up there in the bright sun is being considered. What a marvel that would be!”

“We have been an active, caring, committed congregation stretching for God’s future in a host of ways. But you will see in the budget section of our Annual Report that we have a very large gap between income and expenses. It’s draining our resources. As active as we are we need to respond to these challenges in new ways. What does that mean? I’m not sure I know. But the place to begin is to clearly see who we already are and then seek out clues for how to move forward.”

“When I look at who we have been this past year here is what I see. It’s summed up in the phrase: Our journey inward is empowering our journey outward. South is on a journey inward to God as we open ourselves in heartfelt ways. We are also on a journey outward into service to others and our community, seeking justice and hope in this time.”

“Given the depth of the inward journey here at South it’s not surprising that the outward journey is dynamic and extensive... St. Joseph’s Kitchen at South is a key dimension of our journey outward... Our South Church Pantry continues to meet the deep needs of our community. This past week 485 families were served... Another expression of our outward journey is our Lord and Tailor Thrift Shop.”

“This year the Harvest Craft Fair is being revamped by a team of wise leaders in response to changing times. Our Church School is also changing. It’s growing and will need to expand the number of classes and its programming. In addition we will soon be receiving new members, having baptisms, and beginning a confirmation class... In the midst of financial challenges this is a congregation that is vibrant and growing in many ways. This is because we are on an inward journey into God and an outward journey into service, justice, and hope... I don’t think God is going to let us run out of money. But I do think God is asking us to deepen our commitment to growth and change. I don’t know where that will lead. We will discover that together as we continue to stretch into God’s future--a future opening up before us. What a journey! And remember we are not alone. Jesus is leading us. Let us rise and follow.”

EPISTLE

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May Mattoon	Joyce Brown
Ladies Benevolent	Marge Demary
Men's Forum	John Anthony
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The next *Epistle* deadline is February 28th at 11 a.m.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD!

You will notice in the above *Epistle* staff box that Joyce Brown will now be our reporter for the May Mattoon Class. We welcome you, Joyce. We're happy to have you on board and look forward to working with you.

Alice Gallop has been the May Mattoon voice for the past eight years. Her monthly column, with insightful commentaries on the various speakers' messages, descriptions of the tastefully, theme-decorated lunch tables, the worthwhile service projects to help others, the bake sales, the scrumptious pot-luck dinners and the fun holiday parties, all of which sounded so interesting and inviting.

Thank you, Alice, for your memorable work and your loyal dedication to May Mattoon and to our newsletter.

Priscilla Anthony, Editor



30 days has September, April, June and November.
The rest have thirty-one remember,
but February, has 28 each time
'til Leap Year brings us 29.

We WELCOME two new Lead Cooks for our Wednesday meals. Our own Lynn Reynolds and professional chef Ralph Deane will be alternating as Lead Cook for Week 1 from fall to spring. Bill Donahue, who winters in Florida, is the summer Week 1 Cook.



A COOKS' Meeting will be held February 17th (3rd Wednesday) at 2 pm in Barrett Hall. If you are part of a cooking team or would like to know more, come join us.

HELP WANTED: DISHWASHER

Work with our experienced Maître d's and learn to use our super-fast commercial dishwasher.

Time - 5 pm - 6 pm, Wednesday evenings

Place - our cheerful church kitchen

Perks - Being part of the great group of people volunteering each week and the satisfaction of helping with South Church's food ministry.

ADDITIONAL SERVERS are always welcome on Wednesday nights. Arrive by 4:45 to help serve our guests with plates of steaming hot food.

Mary Rentz, Administrator

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

Sunday, February 7th

During the "Souper Bowl of Caring" children and youth across the nation work to fight hunger and poverty in their own communities.

This event takes place each year around the time of the annual Super Bowl Game.



This year on Super Bowl Sunday, February 7th, our young people will once again participate by taking up a collection using soup pots. They will be collecting small donations at the door following worship. 100% of the money collected will be used to help fill the shelves at our South Church Food Pantry. We will use the money we collect to make purchases at Price Rite for some much-needed items.

Please consider supporting the children as they learn what it is like to make a positive difference in the world while raising money for those in need.



“TEN SHAKER SONGS”

On Saturday, February 13, at 2 pm, Hancock Shaker Village and Cantilena Chamber Choir will present a program of “Ten Shaker Songs” at South Church. Deborah Rentz-Moore, mezzo-soprano, will be guest soloist. The concert is part of Downtown Pittsfield’s annual 10x10 Upstreet Arts Festival. Admission is free, but a \$10 donation is suggested; all proceeds go to the South Church Food Pantry. A delicious reception will follow the program.

Hosted by Hancock Shaker Village curator Lesley Herzberg, the program will highlight 10 of the estimated 10,000 songs in the rich Shaker musical tradition. These songs will illustrate the themes, styles, and function of music in the Shakers’ worship and work. Ten singers from Cantilena Chamber Choir will perform Shakers songs in unison, as the Shakers sang, as well as in several arrangements by modern composers. Two of these arrangements were composed by Berkshire-based composers for Hancock Shaker Village’s 50th anniversary in 2010. Deborah Rentz-Moore will sing two hymns from a manuscript hymnal, *Hancock Hymnal 1850*, that she transcribed for Hancock Shaker Village.

The Cantilena Chamber Choir, now in its twelfth season, is the Berkshire region’s leading chamber choir. Directed by founder Andrea Goodman, the choir has received many accolades, including a multi-year Peers grant award from the Massachusetts Cultural Council for its innovative Martin Luther King Jr. program. The choir is a two-time recipient of the prestigious Choral Arts New England’s Alfred Nash Patterson award for innovative programming. The choir is in residence at Trinity Church in Lenox.

Deborah Rentz-Moore is an avid interpreter of Bach, Handel, Monteverdi and Purcell, and has been featured with acclaimed groups such as Aston Magna, Emmanuel Music, Magnificat, New York Collegium, El Mundo, The Boston Camerata and The Bach Sinfonia. A proponent of Shaker music, Ms. Rentz-Moore was featured in the remarkable “Borrowed Light” collaboration between dancer-choreographer Tero Saarinen and The Boston Camerata.

Ms. Rentz-Moore’s musical career was greatly influenced by growing up in South Church. At age seven, Debbie joined the children’s choir and was chosen to sing a solo verse in “The Palms” with Paul Nixon and the Senior Choir. That experience awakened in her a true love of singing. Debbie and her youth choir friends enjoyed singing together throughout high school for church services. She studied voice at the Berkshire Music School and continued her music studies at Skidmore College and the University of Michigan.

For more information about the February 13 program, please call 413-443-0188 x213. For information about Hancock Shaker Village, which opens for its 2016 season on April 16, please visit www.hancockshakervillage.org. For more information about the 10x10 Festival, visit <http://www.discoverpittsfield.com/10x10/>.

Cindy Dickinson

LADIES BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

On the first Thursday of every month Ladies Benevolent will be working for the Craft Fair.

On Feb. 4th we start work on very simple glass ornaments. Everything that is needed for this project will be provided with the exception of hair dryers. For those who have a hair dryer we would appreciate your bringing it along. Our session starts at 9:30 with lunch at noon and we always love to see new people.

We enjoy the socializing the most and of course the delicious desserts. Hope to see you on the 4th. Bring your sandwich and hair dryer if you have one.

We are working on a new quilt for the Harvest Craft Fair. It is going to be absolutely beautiful. So please stop by and see our work in progress.

See you soon!

Marge Demary

THE YARN SPINNERS

The Yarn Spinners have not published an article for a very long time, if ever. Sooo we decided this was a good time for us to start, or to continue.



The Spinners meet every Monday night in the Church parlor at 7 pm to knit, crochet, work on our own projects or just

sit and socialize.

You don't have to know how to knit or crochet but if you'd like to learn we have some talented people who will be happy to help you. But...if you just want to have a night out, come and join us. Coffee or tea is sometimes available and we even have some goodies to share.

We would love to have you join us; a great time and a lot of laughs are had by all.

Hope to see you!

Marge Demary

Out of the Mouths of Babes



While working for an organization that delivers lunches to elderly shut-ins, I used to take my 4-year-old daughter on my afternoon rounds. She was unfailingly intrigued by the various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers and wheelchairs. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely turned and whispered, 'The tooth fairy will never believe this!'

FOOD PANTRY

Thank you to the children who collected spaghetti this month. This food item helped the 522 hungry families that came looking for food.



In January 4881 people benefitted from the Food Pantry by receiving food, clothes and books. Many winter scarves, coats, hats and gloves have helped children and adults stay warm.

One woman who came for the first time was so grateful to receive food that she went to each volunteer to thank them profusely. It was a tremendous relief to her to have food to feed her hungry family. There are many who feel as she does.

For the month of February we are asking for donations of toilet paper.

Thanks for your continued support.

Mary Wheat

MAY MATTOON

May Mattoon met on Monday, January 5th at 12 noon. Due to a cold wintery blast, there were only ten members in attendance. Hostesses Ruth Austin, Jeannine Rontowski and Karen Allender served a delicious dessert.

After lunch the Annual Meeting was held and the following officers were elected:

Co-Chairs – Karen Allender and Ruth Austin;

Secretary/Epistle – Joyce Brown;

Treasurer – Ruth Campbell.

The February meeting was held on Tuesday, the 2nd at 12 noon in the parlor.

Joyce Brown

LORD AND TAILOR NEWS

This month we are in the midst of our half-price sale, with sweaters and all our gift items at half price. The sale has been very successful so far, as more people discover us. When more donations arrive, newer items will be put out

As we did last year, our January contributions will be devoted to the Capital Fund Drive to complete our pledge.

For 2015 the shop was able to give \$6415 to the church. We hope to exceed this amount in 2016. With all the great help and wonderful donations from all of you, we just might do that.

KEEP WARM! Nancy deForest, Audra Kinner

LECTIONARY FOR FEBRUARY

February 7 – Transfiguration

Exodus 34: 29-35
Psalm 99
2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2
Luke 9:28-36

February 14 –First Sunday in Lent

Deuteronomy 26: 1-11
Psalm 91
Romans 10:8b-13
Luke 4:1-13



February 21- Second Sunday in Lent

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18
Psalm 27
Philippians 3:17-4:1
Luke 13: 31-35

February 28 - Third Sunday in Lent

Isaiah 55:1-9
Psalm 63
1 Corinthians
Luke 4:14-21

A RULE FOR LENT (And all seasons)

Fast from criticism, and feast on praise

Fast from self-pity, and feast on joy

Fast from ill temper, and feast on peace

Fast from resentment, and feast on contentment

Fast from jealousy, and feast on humility

Fast from pride, and feast on service

Fast from selfishness, and feast on service

Fast from fear, and feast on faith



The theme of Unit 4 is "We have this ministry." It began on the second Sunday after Epiphany and runs through mid-February. The focus of the unit is the concept of ministry. Everyone is called to ministry, including children. Lessons in the unit encourage children to listen for God's call in their own lives. We explored the idea that God's call is not usually something heard with our ears. It is more like a feeling in our hearts or a small voice that is heard deep within one's self.

I would like to thank the congregation for their encouragement and support of the children's ministry here at South Church. It is affirmed over and over again by the participation given during our monthly mission projects and events such as "Souper Bowl Sunday" and the Crop Walk. It is evident the Christian Education Program is a priority at our church.

In mid- February, Unit 5 begins and will encompass the season of Lent through Easter.

Finally, I would like to inform all parents and students about our new book sign-out program! A table of books and a sign-up sheet are set up in Cooke Center. We have several wonderful books available for the children that may help adults and parents better answer some of the questions on the minds of our young ones!

Thank You and Blessings,
Ann Roche

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Racism isn't born, folks, it's taught. I have a two-year-old son. You know what he hates? Naps! End of list. ~Dennis Leary

The following Report of the Book Ministry was omitted from the 2015 Annual Report.

Our Book Ministry

This year Jean Bousquet and I worked together to bring many books to our Food Pantry guests. Jean's sparkling personality is unmatched in drawing people over to take a look and often a book. We appreciate every bit of support we have gotten from the church. With many individuals' help, we have been able to spread the word so that we have some regular suppliers from public libraries and friends in the county and beyond. Thank you for your donations that just appear!

I can't thank the church enough for allowing our boxes upon boxes of stored books to fill more than half of the Bashara Room for so long. A lot more of the books are out downstairs in Barrett Hall than before. This has helped. Mary Rentz and I have spoken and storing the books in a more appropriate place is in the works. We'll need help, so watch for future announcements.

I must admit that I have been kind of selfish about working with the books on my own. When I'm organizing, labeling, and occasionally reading parts of the books, I find a sanctuary. I am so busy that I lose my worries and myself. I hope I won't need that so much in the future. This is **our** Book Ministry and all are welcome to participate in it, directly with the books or making suggestions about them.

Sandie Smith and Jean Bousquet



Note: If you were unable to attend our 165th Annual Meeting and did not pick up an Annual Report, you can request an electronic copy. Just send us a request via email at sochurch@nycap.rr.com and we will send one along to you.



Upcoming Bread & Roses
Coffee House
South Congregational Church

Friday, Feb. 19, 2016
7 p.m.

Lui Collins

Folk singer/songwriter Lui Collins has been performing, writing and recording for over 40 years, earning international acclaim for her music. Her music ranges from original and traditional folk songs and American standards to bossa nova in the original Brazilian Portuguese. She's made 16 CD's, performed on others' projects, and shared the stage with such folk-world notables as Tom Rush, Bonnie Raitt, and Stan Rogers.

Lui was voted third most popular performer at the Champlain Valley Festival in 1992, along with Pete Seeger and French Canadian band La Bottine Souriante. Renowned guitarist Dave van Ronk called her "one of the best guitarist-arrangers I have heard in years." Andrew Calhoun of **Waterbug Records** says, "Lui Collins sings the way people did a great long time ago, before most of us forgot how to breathe." And as guitarist/folksinger/songwriter Geoff Bartley says, "Lui's got the juju!"

In addition to her concerts, Collins founded Upside-Up Music and began teaching family music classes in 2003. Her current educational project is adapting her Kids' Jam curriculum for homeschoolers and other families beyond the hilltowns, as Upside-Up's Music at Home. Her latest creative project – which you will hear at her Bread and Roses concert - is learning old standards, as well as arranging favorites from her original repertoire, on her lovely little Pono tenor ukulele!

Please join us for an amazing evening.

February 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Bridge 6 -10 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	2 "Walking in the Dark" Study Group 10 am 12 noon May Mattoon Luncheon 12 noon Men's Forum 12 noon <i>Square Dancing 7 pm</i>	3 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Music Together Bridge 12 – 4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	4 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am UCC Clergy 12 noon Chancel Choir 7 pm	5 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12 – 4 pm AA 6:15 pm	6 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
7 Parlor Worship 10 am with Communion "Souper Bowl of Caring" Collection Bridge 3 - 7 pm	8 Bridge 6 -10 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	9 "Walking in the Dark" Study Group 10 am 12 noon Men's Forum 12 noon Diaconate 7 pm <i>Square Dancing 7 pm</i>	10 Ash Wednesday Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Music Together Bridge 12 – 4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Ecumenical Service Zion Lutheran 7 pm Trustees 6 pm	11 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	12 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12 – 4 pm AA 6:15 pm	13 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Ten Shaker Songs Pittsfield "10 X 10" Upstreet Arts Concert 2 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
14 First Sunday in Lent Worship 10 am Book Club 11:30 Bridge 3 - 7 pm 	15 Presidents' Day Bridge 6 -10 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	16 Spiritual Support Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon Mission Board 7 pm <i>Square Dancing 7 pm</i>	17 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Bridge 12 – 4 pm Berkshire Place 10:45 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	18 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	19 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12 – 4 pm Coffee House Concert 7 pm AA 6:15 pm	20 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12 noon – 4 pm Pittsfield Squares 7 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
21 Second Sunday in Lent Worship 10 am Coffee Hour Collections for the Language Project Bridge 3 - 7 pm	22 Bridge 6 -10 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	23 Spiritual Support Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon Church Council 7 pm <i>Square Dancing 7 pm</i>	24 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Music Together Bridge 12 – 4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	25 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	26 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12 – 4 pm AA 6:15 pm	27 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
28 Third Sunday in Lent Worship 10 am Bridge 3 - 7 pm March Epistle Deadline 11 am	29 Bridge 6 -10 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm LEAP DAY	Mar 1 Spiritual Support Group 10 am May Mattoon Luncheon 12 noon Men's Forum 12 noon <i>Square Dancing 7 pm</i>	Mar 2 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Music Together Bridge 12 – 4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	Mar 3 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am UCC Clergy 12 noon Choir 7 pm	Mar 4 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12 – 4 pm AA 6:15 pm	Mar 5 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm