



Epistle

SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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May 2016

Last month I wrote in this space about some of the exciting buds and growing edges of South Church. But sometimes growing edges bring growing pains. I was fascinated this past Sunday to have a passage from Acts (11:1-18) where Peter gets in trouble with his Church Council for making things grow a bit too fast. Peter—as the result of a vision—welcomes, baptizes, and breaks bread with a Gentile Centurion named Cornelius. The Council is upset that Peter has “broken bread with the uncircumcised”. What happens next is what most intrigues me. Peter could have gotten into quite an argument: Was it a good idea? When should it happen? How should it be done? Who should do it? Don’t move so fast, etc. Instead Peter simply stands before the Council and shares his experience—the vision, voice of God, encounter with Cornelius, and the rest of the story. He concludes by saying: “...who was I that I could hinder God?” The Book of Acts tells us the Council was “silenced”—not in suppressed fury, but in open-hearted acceptance of what Peter has reported. As a result the church grows, changes, and new buds begin to flower.

Why are the church leaders so responsive to Peter? It’s because he’s so vulnerable and open with them, sharing his experience, hoping they will sense integrity in what he’s saying, what he’s done. When we try to out-argue we often don’t get far. When we are vulnerable sometimes the doors of transformation open.

In our culture right now there is a great deal of suspicion and hostility towards Muslims. The fear of terrorism is making it hard for us to welcome or break bread with anyone from the world of Islam. We can argue about such things. But a more effective response was on display in worship on April 17 when I had the privilege of sharing in dialogue with our two Miss Hall’s students who have volunteered at the Pantry this year. Helin Karakus is a sophomore from Adana, Turkey and is Muslim. Helin shared with us in a tender, vulnerable way her love for her work with the children and Sandie Smith at the Book Table on Thursday mornings at the Pantry. She showed me a ‘selfie’ she took snuggled up with a four year old she reads to each week. As with many in Turkey, Helin has been studying English since the first grade. Her parents are professors. Helin spent her eighth grade year with them at Indiana University—falling in love with my home state. Helin will return to Turkey in June and plans to help her grandmother who is a leading volunteer in Adana caring for nearby Syrian refugees struggling to survive. Turkey has been hit by many terrorist attacks. Many more Muslims have been killed by terrorists than have Westerners. This violence is repudiated by countless Muslims—like Helin and her family—who are trying to make their way in the world. And as Helin made clear, it is because of her faith that she and her family are working to bring comfort to refugees fleeing such horror.

I had not imagined that the Pantry ministry with its focus on local food insecurity would be an avenue for enlarging my experience of Islam, helping me see the world through the eyes of a hopeful, passionate, teenager from Turkey. Like that Council in Acts I am silenced in wonder at how God works in our midst to open doors, break down barriers, and enable us to break bread with one another across the world.

EPISTLE

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Parish Nurse	Sue Kaufman
May Mattoon	Joyce Brown
Ladies Benevolent	Marge Demary
Men's Forum	John Anthony
Production and Mailing	Paula Haskell

The next *Epistle* deadline is May 29th at 11 a.m

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Baptism:

Nowell John Wesley- Sunday, April 10
Son of Genesis Wesley and Jonathan Villanueva
and brother to big sister Osheanna.

BERKSHIRE DIABETES WALK

Saturday, June 4, 2016

9:00 AM-Registration, 9:30 AM- Walk

Ashuwillticook Trail

Farnum's Crossing, Cheshire

This spring is the 20th year Roger's Team has walked for diabetes. The team is named after my brother, Roger Grant, who died in 1984, at age 43, from multiple complications of Type I Diabetes



Roger and Audra

Since 2012 the walk has been sponsored by Berkshire Medical Center with the support of Roger's Team. Proceeds will support BMC's Diabetes Patient Needs Fund. The purpose of this fund is to cover costs of urgent diabetes expenses and diabetes education of patients in financial need.

We would love to have you walk with us and get others to sponsor you. If not, we welcome your contributions. A sign-up sheet and sponsor forms will be in the Parlor. On Facebook, please share with family and friends. Our goal for this year is \$3000.

Audra J. Kinner, Captain of Roger's Team



CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Unit 6 continues through May 15th. In class we have been following the Path from Easter. The path starts with a new beginning, the resurrection, and continues to the birthday of the Christian Church on Pentecost Sunday. Along the way we explore the formation of the new church with the strong faith and help from Peter, Paul and others.

Music continues with Bev Krol. Currently the children are working on two songs which are both written by Bev. One is titled "Lord Please Help Me Grow" and the other is "Fill My Heart with Love." Thank you Bev!

Our Pantry Sunday in April was a success. Thank you to all who donated canned pears. We collected 47 cans! Our food item for May is canned peaches. Thank you to all for supporting this important monthly mission project.

Just a reminder to families that there are plenty of wonderful books for the children to sign out and enjoy. They are on display in Cooke Center.

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to give a big cheer to Nowell Wesley. Nowell was baptized here on April 10th with his older sister, Osheanna assisting Rev. Joel. Welcome Nowell!

Ann Roche

SOUTH CHURCH BOOK CLUB

Our monthly Women's' Book Club will meet on Sunday, May 15th, rather than May 8th which is Mothers' Day.

We selected the following books for the next 4 months:

May – A Man Called Ove – Fredrik Backman

June – Flame Tree Road – Shona Patel

July – The Lilac Girls - Martha Hall Kelley

(Martha is Pat Hill's cousin and was flower girl at the Hill's wedding)

August – Improbability of Love – Hannah Rothchild

Come join us at any time – we'd love to have you.

LECTIONARY FOR MAY

Sunday, May 3 – Fifth Sunday of Easter

Communion Sunday

Acts 8:26-40
Psalm 22:25-31
John 15:1-8

Sunday, May 10 – Sixth Sunday of Easter

Mother's Day

Acts 10:44-48
Psalm 98
John 15:9-17

Sunday, May 17 – Seventh Sunday of Easter

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26
Psalm 1
John 17:6-19

Sunday, May 24 – Pentecost Sunday

Acts 2:1-21
Psalm 104
Romans 8:22-27

Sunday, May 31 – Trinity Sunday

Isaiah 6:1-8
Psalm 29
John 3:1-17

A NEW MOTHER

The moment a child is born

The mother is also born,
She never existed before.

The woman existed,
But the mother, never.

A mother is something
Absolutely new,
~Rahneesh

Happy Mother's Day



JUNE 5: CELEBRATING THE WORK AND MINISTRY OF BOB BLAFIELD

After more than a decade of serving as South Church's beloved organist and choir director, Bob Blafield will retire this spring. His final Sunday will be June 5, which also marks Chancel Choir's final appearance in worship before its annual summer break.

Bob came to South Church in 2005, having recently retired from Berkshire Lyric Theatre, an organization he founded in 1963. Bob also served a number of area churches and Temple Anshe Amunim in his wide-ranging career before making his way to South Church.

During his tenure at South, Bob has maintained a robust and enthusiastic choir membership, composed new music and engaged talented outside performers for special services, and blessed us all with his musical gifts and generous and thoughtful spirit.

Even though Bob is retiring, he will continue to give music lessons at home, be available for special occasions, and promises to maintain his connections to his many friends in the South Church family.

Please join us on June 5 for a special service of recognition and an opportunity to celebrate and give thanks for Bob's heartfelt ministry of music shared with us all.



*Music expresses feeling and thought,
without language;
it was below and before speech,
and it is above and beyond all words.*

Robert G Ingersoll

The following note was written to the Food Pantry volunteers from Helin Karakus, a student from Turkey who is currently attending Miss Hall's School :

To every volunteer in South Street Church,
I've seen a different side of life in this
Church. I really enjoyed helping to people
with all of you. You became my 3rd family
in a short time (2nd one is Miss Hall's). I just
wanted to let you all know that you
all taught me so important things that will
help me all my life. If you ever ask yourself
"Do I make a difference?" my answer is yes,
you all did and keep doing. You all
mean a lot to me and I'll never forget
you. I'm so sad that it's time to
say goodbye but I hope you all will
have better "hello"s. THANK YOU
FOR EVERYTHING! (TEŞEKKÜRLER)
Sincerely,

Helin Karakus (The Turkish girl
from Miss Hall's)
♡♡♡



MAY MATTOON

May Mattoon met on Tuesday, April 5th for a noontime lunch. There were 16 members in attendance. The tables were set in a spring theme. Hostesses were: Nancy deForest, Audra Kinner, and Bing Honig.

The guest speaker was Richard Howell who gave a very interesting scenario on the life of John Brown and the pivotal role he played during the American Revolution. Brown, who spent most of his younger days in Pittsfield, graduated from Yale. He returned and practiced law until he became interested in politics. He was a Revolutionary War Officer, a State Legislator, and a Berkshire County Judge. He died on his 36th birthday, October 19, 1780.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 3rd at Hancock Shaker Village with lunch and a tour of the village.

Joyce Brown

LORD AND TAILOR

The Thrift Shop is happy to announce that the Saturday, April 23rd TAG SALE netted (as of this writing) \$1450, with more coming in later. Our gift to the church this month is \$1500.



Thank you to ALL who assisted. We are grateful to you, one and all!

Nancy deForest and Audra Kinner

WIT AND WISDOM

When you are courting a nice girl an hour seems like a second. When you sit on a red-hot cinder a second seems like an hour. That's relativity.

Albert Einstein

A successful man is one who makes more money than his wife can spend. A successful woman is one who can find such a man. Lana Turner

Procrastination is the art of keeping up with yesterday. Don Marquis

The "Food Delivery Access Project"

Through a deteriorated basement doorway on Church Street, tons of food enters South Church each week for distribution to local families. In March, the Western Mass. Food Bank in Hatfield brought 29,388 pounds by truck to that door. Each Tuesday, a team of volunteers meets the truck, unloads food crates onto unwieldy carts, and transports them into our walk-in-cooler, freezer, and food storage rooms. Every day of the week, volunteers pick up donations of food (bread, milk, produce) from local groceries to be stored for the food pantry. The food eventually gets moved to Barrett Hall for the Wednesday and Thursday distribution and the Wednesday evening meal.

Members of the Trustees and food ministry teams have been looking at ways to make these transports easier and safer. We have identified several items that need addressing. Our goals are to: replace the badly deteriorated wooden door with a pre-hung, rodent-proof steel door with industrial hardware; replace the crumbling access sidewalk with a concrete ramp; buy three, 5-wheeled, maneuverable U-boat carts for food transport; install a ramp over interior steps; widen an interior doorway; and install an overhang to protect the entrance from snow, ice and rain. We are also looking at better storage for food which does not need refrigeration.

First Church, which has several members serving on our food team, has donated \$1,000 toward a new outer door. A \$1,000 gift has come from the family of a long-time member. The total cost is anticipated to be \$7600.

We are seeking grants for the "Food Delivery Access Project" since the need for these improvements stems directly from our response to local food insufficiency. Our food ministry is ecumenical and open to all. In March seventy-one volunteers worked 995 hours. The pantry provided groceries for 860 households – 6,098 individuals, who have experienced hunger on a regular basis. We served 433 hot meals through St. Joseph's Kitchen.

Thanks to Dave Boyce and the Taconic High School shop, the interior ramp is in place. Dale Prindle is clerk of the works for the exterior doorway and concrete ramp. Alan Honig will be installing the door. First Church member Don Fyfe will be painting the entry hall when the doorways are done. Pat Politis and I have been working on grants. Mary Wheat continues to make the deliveries happen! We all welcome your input and support.

Mary Rentz



FRIDAY, MAY 20, 2016

MOLLIE GLAZER

At Bread & Roses Coffee House

Mollie Glazer is the artistic director of Nantucket Community Music Center since 2007 and also teaches cello, ukulele and string ensemble. She studied cello and viola da gamba at New England Conservatory and The Royal Conservatory of The Netherlands. She performed and recorded with many of this country's early music ensembles and is a frequent soloist at the Bethlehem Bach Festival. A composer as well, Mollie has written scores for the Pennsylvania Ballet, the National Dance Company of Wales and the Emmy award winning film for PBS called "If the Walls Could Talk." She was also the composer of Nantucket's musical "Faraway Land." She frequently collaborates with many of the island's musicians including guitarist, Andy Bullington, harpist Mary Keller and former student, cellist, Ethan Philbrick. Mollie has recorded for seven record labels and self-produced two CD's: "Music from our Heartstrings" with Mary Keller and "Two Cellos Two Friends" with Ethan Philbrick.

If you'd like a preview of Mollie in action go to

www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4OjPAsraQ

**Admission by
donation**

**This month's coffee
house will benefit
The Kids' Place**

**Berkshire County Kids'
Place is a safe place
where help can begin for
children who have
experienced violence in
their lives, either as
victims or witnesses.**

**They provide a caring
home-like atmosphere
that coordinates the
combined knowledge of
law enforcement, social
service, medical,
prosecutorial, and mental
health agencies to ensure
and effective response to
childhood trauma**

BREAD & ROSES COFFEE HOUSE

**South Congregational
Church, UCC
110 South St
Pittsfield, MA 01201**

Upstairs in the parlor

**7 pm
May 20, 2016**

May 2016

South Congregational Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Worship 10 am with Communion Pot Luck Luncheon & Table Discussion Bridge 3 - 7 pm	2 Bridge 6 -10 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	3 May Mattoon Luncheon at Hancock Shaker Village 12 noon Men's Forum 12 noon Square Dancing 7 pm	4 Food Pantry 7:30 - 11 am Music Together Bridge 12 - 4 pm Pantry Steering Team at 12 Noon St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	5 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Crafts-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am UCC Clergy 12 noon Chancel Choir 7 pm	6 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12 - 4 pm AA 6:15 pm	7 AA 10:15 am Music Together Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm NA Function 8 - 11 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
8 Mother's Day Worship 10 am Bridge 3 - 7 pm	9 Bridge 6 -10 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	10 Men's Forum 12 noon Diaconate 7 pm Square Dancing 7 pm	11 Food Pantry 7:30 - 11 am Music Together Bridge 12 - 4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Trustees 6 pm	12 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am BIO Issues Assembly 5:30 pm Chancel Choir 7 pm	13 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12 - 4 pm AA 6:15 pm	14 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
15 Worship 10 am Book Club Bridge 3 - 7 pm Coffee Hour Collections for the Language Project	16 Bridge 6 -10 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	17 Men's Forum 12 noon Mission Board 7 pm Square Dancing 7 pm	18 Food Pantry 7:30 - 11 am Music Together Berkshire Place 10:45 am Bridge 12 - 4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	19 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	20 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12 - 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 10 am Bridge 3 - 7 pm	23 Bridge 6 -10 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	24 Men's Forum 12 noon Church Council 7 pm Square Dancing 7 pm	25 Food Pantry 7:30 - 11 am Music Together Bridge 12 - 4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	26 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	27 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12 - 4 pm AA 6:15 pm	28 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
29 Worship 10 am Bridge 3 - 7 pm <div style="border: 1px solid green; border-radius: 15px; background-color: #90EE90; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> June Epistle Deadline 11 am </div>	30 Memorial Day Bridge 6 -10 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	31 Men's Forum 12 noon Square Dancing 7 pm				