



Epistle

SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

sochurch@nycap.rr.com
www.southchurchpittsfield.org

May 2017

You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God. (1 Peter 1:23)

On Sunday, May 7, I will be participating in a forum titled: “Antisemitism and Islamophobia—Exploring the Roots of Prejudice”. This forum is co-sponsored by the Pittsfield Human Rights Commission and Berkshire Interfaith Organizing and will be held at the Berkshire Museum from 2 – 4 p.m. I will be joined by Rabbi David Weiner of Congregation Knesset Israel, Rabeh Elleithy of the United American Muslim Association of the Berkshires, and Deepika Bains Shukla, who is the U.S. Attorney for the Springfield District of Massachusetts. At the moment I’m thinking about what I might say at this forum.

We often try to hide the reality of religious bigotry from each other and our children. I remember as a child in parochial school in Indiana coming home and telling my mom how bad those people called “Protestants” were. She sat me down and told me about the bigotry she had experienced as a Catholic girl in mostly Protestant Indiana. She said that Blacks, Jews, and Catholics had all been focused on as people who were ‘bad’ in some way--people who were not to be trusted; who were lazy, greedy, subversive. She told me that such ideas were wrong. We shouldn’t judge people by race or religion. And I shouldn’t judge Protestants, either. We were all children of God and very much the same beneath the surface. In talks like these mom planted some imperishable seeds within me and helped extricate some weeds before they had grown too thick. In later years I learned that Indiana in the 1920s and 1930s had been a hotbed of the KKK, that the Grand Wizard had been a close friend of the governor. I also learned that the last public lynching in Indiana had occurred in 1930 in Marion, a city not far from where my mom grew up. It had been a county fair kind of event. The photos show hundreds of white faces smiling, laughing, and picnicking. I learned that many lynchings throughout the South took place in just such settings.

This is why we need to be “born anew” as First Peter tells us. We, human beings, left to our own devices-- guided by our fears and suspicions--end up doing immense harm to others and ourselves. In Christ we are set free from our “own devices” so that we can live a different kind of life. This is what my mom was teaching me in those talks long ago. We need to keep learning those lessons. This is why we are having the forum on Sunday. At a time when there has been a sharp spike in hate crimes across the country we need to deepen interfaith conversations. The imperishable seed of God’s love was planted within each of us when we took our first breath. That seed needs to be watered and nourished so it can bear an abundant crop. For us as Christians this means we need to listen deeply to the wisdom of our tradition that all people are children of God. And beyond that we need to confess that we often fall short of living into that truth. By opening our hearts to God in honest confession and opening ourselves to neighbors we so easily don’t see--and often harshly judge--we make room for what Peter calls “that living and enduring word of God” which transforms us and the world around us so we can be partners in creating God’s Peaceable Kingdom for us all. Come, join us on Sunday. Peace.

Joel

EPISTLE

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

Subscription: \$4.00

Staff

Editor Priscilla Anthony
 Reporters Each of You
 Features
 Pastor Joel Huntington
 Children/Youth Director Ann Roche
 Director of Music Tom Damrosch
 Moderator Jean Robertson
 Peirson Intern Jim Day
 May Mattoon Joyce Brown
 Ladies Benevolent Marge Demary
 Production and Mailing Paula Haskell

The next Epistle deadline is May 28, at 11 am.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Ralph Cianflone, Jr.

Attorney at Law
April 21, 2017

“We understand death for the first time when He puts His hand upon one we love.”



~Madame de Stael

BIRTHS:

Caleb Tegan Bodenstab, 8 lbs, 12 oz. March 28,
Proud parents: Jenny Gregg and Derek Bodenstab

March 7th - a son, Grayson was born to Charlotte and Seth Christopher. (weighed 6 lbs.)

Sincere congratulations to all, and Happy Mothers' Day to the new Mothers!

A note of thanks from Elaine Scussel -

To my kind and thoughtful friends at South Church:

Thank you very much for your prayers, lovely get well cards and pretty flowers. It has been a long and tedious journey and I am feeling better.

Sincerely, Elaine Scussel

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

Unit 6 began on Easter Sunday, and continues until June 4th, Pentecost Sunday. “Fresh Winds Blowing” is the title. Lessons begin with celebrating the resurrection on Easter Sunday, continuing on with the theme that Jesus has risen, and God is at work among us and in the world with a power that is unstoppable.

During the fifty days after Easter we explore stories of the risen Christ, the growth and struggles of the early church and how this joyful news affects our lives.

Lessons for Unit 6 are based on the book of Acts, Luke’s story of the beginning of the church, and John’s story, the spirit of the new church.

For seven weeks we will be making an “Alleluia” poster beginning with the Tomb with its rolled-away rock, and a curving road that will be added to weekly to symbolize the path to the birth of the church.

Music continues with Bev Krol. The students will work all month on a program to be performed with the Chancel Choir in June.

HAPPY and JOYOUS SPRING to all!

Ann Roche



KEEP THOSE KIDS' BOOKS COMING

I was able to get a "big bang for the bucks" raised for the Pantry Books project by the Bread and Roses concert a while back. I drove up to the Williamstown library's big book sale and left with six bags full. Then today I found two really big boxes full of books here at the church! I might be wrong but I think they came from Cindy Haven and her daughter's consignment shop. Thank you so much!!

It's tag sale time with at least one other library sale coming up. Please keep the Pantry Book project in mind.

Sandi Smith

PS. Jean (Bousquet), you're always there in spirit! I miss you!

LECTIONARY FOR MAY

Sunday, May 7 – Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:42-47
Psalm 23
1 Peter 2:19-25
John 10:1-10

Sunday, May 14 – Fifth Sunday of Easter

Mother's Day

Acts 2:42-47
Psalm 23
1 Peter 2:19-25
John 10:1-10

Sunday, May 21 – Sixth Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:42-47
Psalm 23
1 Peter 2:19-25
John 10:1-10

Sunday, May 28 – Seventh Sunday of Easter

Acts 1:6-14
Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35
1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11
John 17:1-11

The following is a letter concerning the Annual Meeting of the Berkshire Association Churches:

Greetings to you from The Berkshire Association Executive Committee. I am writing to let you know about our upcoming Annual Meeting taking place on Sunday, May 21 at 3:00 at the First Congregational Church of Sheffield.

This year more than ever, it is important for your delegates, as well as concerned church members to attend. We will be discussing the upcoming vote for bringing together the Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut Conferences. The vote will take place at the tri-conference annual meeting on June 16. This is an historic moment. How will this impact our churches? What new or improved resources will be available to us? What are the changes in store? It is up to each Association to bring their views to the Massachusetts Conference so that every church is heard and represented.

Please post the attached flyer* and talk it over in your church leadership meetings, as well as announce at worship service.

Be sure that your delegates are made aware and that all other members are encouraged to attend to learn more and make their voice heard.

Thank you, Amy Chin, Moderator
[413-441-9220](tel:413-441-9220) amy.chin@gmail.com

*Editor's Note: Flyer is found on page 6.



Thank you! Thank you for the food, books, clothes, and toilet paper you contributed to the Food Pantry. As I write this, today (Wednesday, April 26) it is busy in the Food Pantry with over 300 families coming in.

One family had just found an apartment after being homeless for three months. They were very excited but didn't have anything for their kitchen. Luckily, following our last tag sale, we saved some dishes and pans that hadn't sold. We found 3 cereal bowls, plates, cups and two pans. They were very happy, relieved and thankful.

We are looking for donations of toilet paper during the month of May.

Blessings, Mary Wheat

THE BEST SERMONS ARE LIVED

In the cutest voice, my 8-year-old daughter asked me to start recycling. I chuckled and asked, "Why?" She replied, "So you can help me save the planet." I chuckled again and asked, "And why do you want to save the planet?" "Because that's where I keep all my stuff," she said.

I was traveling in Kenya and I met a refugee from Zimbabwe. He said he hadn't eaten anything in over three days and looked extremely skinny and unhealthy. Then my friend offered him the rest of the sandwich he was eating. The first thing the man said was, "We can share it."

A boy in a wheelchair saw me desperately struggling on crutches with my broken leg and offered to carry my backpack and books for me. He helped me all the way across campus to my class and as he was leaving he said, "I hope you feel better soon."

THE RED-CARPET AREA



We have a new photo display in the red-carpet area by Michael Esposito. His photos include 'Schooner in New York Harbor,' 'Ellis Island and New York Skyline,' 'Sandy Hook Lighthouse,' and several Berkshire County scenes. The photos are clearly labeled. Michael has a good eye for photography and enjoys sharing his craft with all to see.

There are also two wonderful photos taken by Dr. Woodward Bousquet, Jean's son. They are titled 'Christmas Sunrise' and 'Christmas Morning.' It is very interesting to see how the change in daylight in a couple of hours can give the same scene a totally different look.

We all enjoy the displays in the red-carpet area. If you would like to share your photos, artwork, or any other artform which is appropriate for that area, call Bob Hill or leave a message in the office.

Bob

Needed: Two New Members for The Flower Committee

The Flower Committee at South Church has recently lost two members.

Mary Wheat has had more than her hands full with the responsibility of the Food Pantry which is a full time job and she is stepping down from the committee. We were happy to have Cindy Haven agree to take over Mary Wheat's months, but are still looking for someone to fill the two months that Nancy Steele has covered (Feb. and Sept). Nancy has had several health challenges over the past few years, most recently falling and breaking her hip, and is still recovering at Kimball Farm.

It is an easy task to order flowers for the Sunday services during your month. If the flowers are given in someone's memory, the member in charge notifies Paula, the church secretary. Then collects \$35.00 from the donor, or given by the flower committee.

There are no meetings involved and the time commitment is minimal. Please call Lee Ann Pettus at 822- 4922 if you are interested in discussing this and/or helping out. Thank you. Lee Ann

LORD & TAILOR NEWS

Spring is happening at the shop! Lots of colorful spring and summer clothes are appearing, as so many nice donations have come to us.

We are continuing our half-price sales on coats and sweaters for the time being, although these will shortly be put away. Our sale on jewelry continues, and we have many wonderful new pieces.

Thank you to the people who have offered their time to volunteer. We could still use more people, however, as substitutes. Thanks also, as always, to the many donors and to our intrepid volunteers.

HAPPY SPRING!

Nancy deForest and Audra Kinner

MAY MATTOON

May Mattoon met on Tuesday, April 4th at 12 noon in the Parlor. There were 14 members present, plus Pastor Joel.

Hostesses were Nancy deForest, Bing Honig and Gloria Holm. The tables were decorated in an Easter theme with baskets of spring flowers, eggs and bunnies!

Our speaker was Joyce Brown, a member of the Mission Board. She spoke at length about the various missions that go on weekly, monthly and throughout the year at South Church. These missions reach out not only to our church but to the community as a whole.

The Mission Board is currently studying a Tool Kit prepared by the United Church of Christ to help better understand what our next step will be to help incoming immigrants. She announced that this week a new banner will be displayed on the front of the church that reads, "Immigrants and Refugees will always be welcomed here." The group agreed that South Church is indeed A Thriving Mission Church.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 2nd at 12 noon in the Parlor. The speaker will be Ellen Masters, Regional President of Hadassah.

Joyce Brown



ST. JOSEPH'S KITCHEN

Our Wednesday meal continues to draw 60 - 80 people each week. We anticipate more people coming out in the warmer weather.

In recent weeks we've had some new guests, including a family with a young baby - mom and dad, grandfather and grandmother. How hard it must be to have a new baby with all its need and not have enough to eat. The Food Pantry being open after the Wednesday dinner provides some basic foods to eat at home.

The Barrett Hall chairs which have served us well for years are now falling apart. St. Joseph's High School is offering school equipment to community groups when it closes in June. We have put in a request for the school's sturdy, fiberglass cafe chairs, as well as some kitchen equipment and metal cabinets for storing dry food.

One Wednesday, Health Department "Nurse Mary" led a dozen food volunteers in choke saver training. We had a spirited and informative hour. Thank you to everyone who participated.

This month's report ends with appreciation for the \$500 donation to St. Joseph's Kitchen that Sister Kathryn Flannagan received in memory of Jenny Quirico and her family.

Mary Rentz

MOTHER'S DAY SPECIAL

It is a special responsibility to be a mother. A mother who adopts motherless children are even more special. Ruth Campbell's niece Ann Marie Leone, a lifelong resident of Pittsfield, died recently leaving her 3 adopted daughters without a mother. Bella and Mia were adopted from China and Sophie from Africa. Anne Marie's warm- hearted and generous friend Holly Gangell has taken custody of the girls. Holly is a single woman and now lives in Colorado. The girls must relocate there.

Holly could use some assistance with the relocation costs, special services for the girls and the cost of adoption. South Church has always been so generous to families in need. The mission board decided that in honor of mothers, members and friends may want to lend a helping hand.

There will be a collection during coffee hour on Mother's Day for the Leone girls. There is also a Go Fund Me page www.gofundme.com/leone-girls. You may also send money directly to:

Holly Gangell
1197 Ponderosa Dr
Evergreen CL 80439

Thank you and Happy Mother's Day

Sue Kaufman for the Mission Board



**ANNUAL
MEETING**

SAVE THE DATE

**ANNUAL
MEETING**

May 21, 2017 at 3:00

Berkshire Association Annual Meeting

**First Congregational Church of Sheffield, UCC
125 Main Street, Sheffield, MA 01257**

- The opportunity to join together in community around the table, meeting new friends, greeting old friends
- Elect members of Executive Committee and Committee on Ministry of your Berkshire Association
- Lift our hearts and voices in prayer and song
- Participate in a learning session and discussion about the upcoming vote to bring together the Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island Conferences as the Southern New England Conference

**All people of all congregations are encouraged to attend
Refreshments will be served**





Friday May 19, 2017, 7 p.m.



Presents

Dave Grover & Linda Worster

When these two friends get together to share their talents and music magic happens. The program ranges from old familiar sing-alongs to brand new original songs. It's a little folk, a little pop, a little spiritual... and always a lot of fun.

**Admission by
donation**

to benefit

The Giving Garden

"Love thy Neighbor"
That's what the Giving Garden at Pittsfield Church of Christ is about. Under the direction of Pastor Russell Moody, the congregation plants, tends, and harvests over 7,000 pounds of fresh produce for the local food pantries.

Coffee, tea and variety of
desserts for sale

**BREAD & ROSES COFFEE
HOUSE**

Parlor
South Congregational Church
110 South St, Pittsfield

Southchurchpittsfield.org

Visit

<https://www.facebook.com/southcongregationalchurch>

for upcoming performances.

May 19, 2017

7:00 p.m.

Antisemitism and Islamophobia: Exploring the Roots of Prejudice

Sunday, May 7

2-4 pm

**Berkshire Museum
39 South Street, Pittsfield**

Join the community conversation with panel:

Rabeh Elleithy

Member of United American Muslim Association of the
Berkshires

Reverend Joel Huntington

Pastor of South Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

Rabbi David Weiner

Spiritual Leader of Congregation Knesset Israel

Deepika Bains Shukla

United States Attorney for Springfield District of Massachusetts



Free Event

**presented by the Pittsfield Human Rights Commission
co-sponsored by Berkshire Interfaith organizing**

May 2017

South Congregational Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Bridge 12 – 4 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	2 May Mattoon Luncheon 12 noon Men's Forum 12 noon <i>Square Dancing 7 pm</i>	3 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Bridge 12 – 4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Food Pantry 5:30 – 6 pm	4 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am UCC Clergy 12 noon	5 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12 – 4 pm AA 6:15 pm	6 AA 10:15 am Music Together Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
7 Worship 10 am with Communion Study on Prayer 11:30 am Human Rights and Faith Conversation 2 pm at Berkshire Museum	8 Bridge 12 – 4 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	9 Men's Forum 12 noon <i>Square Dancing 7 pm</i> <i>Diaconate 7 pm</i>	10 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Music Together Bridge 12 – 4 pm Healthy Pittsfield 2 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Food Pantry 5:30 – 6 pm Trustees 6 pm	11 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am BIO Executive Meeting 6 pm	12 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12 – 4 pm AA 6:15 pm	13 AA 10:15 am Music Together Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
14 Worship 10 am Study on Prayer 11:30 am	15 Bridge 12 – 4 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	16 Men's Forum 12 noon <i>Square Dancing 7 pm</i> <i>Mission Board 7 pm</i>	17 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Music Together Berkshire Place 10:45 am Bridge 12 – 4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Food Pantry 5:30 – 6 pm	18 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am	19 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12 – 4 pm AA 6:15 pm Coffee House Concert 7 pm	20 AA 10:15 am Music Together Lord & Tailor 12 noon – 4 pm Pittsfield Squares Dance 7 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
21 Worship 10 am Study on Prayer 11:30 am Coffee Hour Collections for the Language Project Berkshire Association Annual Meeting 3 pm in Sheffield	22 Bridge 12 – 4 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	23 Men's Forum 12 noon <i>Square Dancing 7 pm</i> <i>Church Council 7 pm</i>	24 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Music Together Bridge 12 – 4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Food Pantry 5:30 – 6 pm	25 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am	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 N/A Event 7 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
28 Worship 10 am Berkshire Lyric Ozawa Hall 3 pm	29 Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	30 Men's Forum 12 noon <i>Square Dancing 7 pm</i>	31 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Music Together Bridge 12 – 4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Food Pantry 5:30 – 6 pm			

June
Epistle
Deadline
11 am