



Epistle

SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

September 2017

As I sit to write these words the torrential rains are still falling in Houston and the surrounding region. In the midst of this catastrophe that has destroyed so much I am profoundly moved by the compassion of all those offering help in this tragedy. The barriers of race, class, political opinion and all that divides us falls away as everyone with any kind of boat or a pair of hands arrives to offer the help they can. It is inspiring to see human beings behave in such ways. I was also struck with awe at the recent total solar eclipse. Experiencing that event with family and a couple of thousand other people at a community park in western Kentucky was life-changing. I marveled at this celestial wonder and at the sense of communion that was created for a moment in that place as we all grew still and hushed in the presence of the black solar disk enveloped by the shimmering silver light of the mysterious corona. Earlier in August I deeply appreciated the two college women who suddenly appeared on the shoreline after Tora broke her wrist in the dark in our campsite along the lake. How was I going to get the canoe home? And then help appeared. These are all expressions of human beings at our best. What beautiful creatures we can be!

At the same time this summer I saw the scenes at Charlottesville and the hateful, murderous rage on the faces of those self-described white supremacists. They clearly have felt empowered to give public expression to this bigotry by recent political events. This past week a former sheriff of Arizona, who boasted of rounding up people with darker skin and putting them in what he called “concentration camps”, was pardoned of such wrong-doing by our President. Locally, members of the Jewish community have expressed anxiety about rising anti-Semitism. What contradictory creatures we humans are. Each of us was created for self-giving love and yet the darkness of fear and hate can eclipse such wondrous light.

Will we live in light or dark? Will we create community or divide ourselves into warring camps? In Houston as the rain keeps falling the predictions of a warming climate leading to warming seas, more intense storms, and melting ice caps keep being fulfilled. The growing catastrophe of climate change could unite the human family in finding creative responses. Or vested interests and rigid ideology can keep us in the dark. I am grateful to serve a church that seeks to live out the way of compassion in hands-on, practical ways. I am nourished by our worship together, the ministries we share, and the conversations we have about how to deepen our life in Christ. Something shimmering and beautiful shines here. We need such intimations of a deeper light in such a time as this. This month we will share in worship at the State Forest with our friends at Second Church, plan the CROP walk to support Church World Service with our friends at First Church, distribute tens of thousands of pounds of food at the Pantry, feed hundreds at St. Joe’s Kitchen, and join together for a church picnic on Cheshire Lake. And if you would like to make a donation to help with the recovery work in Houston designate the check to South Church, write “Hurricane Relief” in the memo, and we will send them to the UCC and work with Church World Service to offer our help. This is how the church in the 21st century can be the hands of Christ in a contradictory world. May we open our minds, lift up our hearts, join hands, and follow where Jesus leads. Peace.

EPISTLE

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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 Sept. 24th at 11 am.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY



I would like to thank all of you who gave so generously towards the adoption of my three grandnieces. They are the adopted children of my niece Ann Marie Leone who passed away this past winter.

I saw Holly recently and she was so appreciative of the check(s) sent to her to help with the cost of adoption and the relocation of the girls. The girls are now visiting their grandmother and others in Pittsfield.

Holly Gangell is a special person as evidenced by her co-workers pooling together all of their own personal days off and giving them to her! My sweet niece certainly knew how to pick her friends.

Again, my heartfelt thanks to you all.

Ruth Campbell

COME SING WITH OUR CHOIR!

Our first meeting this fall will be on Sunday, September 10. Like to sing? Why not consider singing with us? We meet on Sundays at 9:00 a.m. and work on music for the next few weeks. We've also scheduled a few Saturday morning rehearsals before big days, but no evenings.

One of the high points of summer was gathering a "pick up" choir. Some folks tried singing together this summer and had fun!

Try joining us on September 10! Tom



On the third Sunday of each month, the Mission Board collects donations at Coffee Hour for The Language Project. So far this year we have collected over \$500 to support their mission. The following is an excerpt from a letter of thanks recently received from Carol Kresge, Project Manager (and daughter of Dot and Jim Kresge).

On behalf of the Language Project, I would like to thank you for your recent contribution and for your kindness. Your gift goes directly to support our mission in Laos – to create libraries and self-study centers in underdeveloped areas and to give motivated people the resources and tools they need to study and help themselves. Your contribution, as library books and educational materials in a place where they are rare, touches many lives. Thank you. If you would like to learn more about The Language Project, please visit our website at www.thelanguageproject.org. You will be able to see in photos and stories the profound impact of your contribution. This project is a small person-to-person project and your gift enables us to change the world, one person and one book at a time. We are grateful for your contribution. Your support makes a real difference.

Sincerely,

Carol Kresge, Project Manager

MAY MATTOON

May Mattoon members, their families and a few choir members met after church on July 16th at the home of Mary and Peter Rentz for a picnic. The weather was perfect, the food delicious and a good time was had by all!

The next meeting will be *Dinner Out* on Tuesday, September 12 at a place to be announced. All details will be sent to members in advance. Hostesses are Mary Rentz and Pam Garrett.

Joyce Brown

LECTIONARY FOR SEPTEMBER

Sunday, September 3 – State Forest Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.

Today we will hold our worship service in the Ski Lodge at the Pittsfield State Forest.

Exodus 3:1-15

Psalms 26:1-8

Matthew 16:21-28

Sunday, September 10 – The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

We welcome the return of our Chancel Choir into worship this morning as they help lift our hearts and voices in song. In addition, the Church School resumes a new year of learning and growth.

Exodus 12:1-14

Psalms 149

Romans 13:8-14

Matthew 18:15-20

Sunday, September 17 – The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 14:19-31

Psalms 114

Romans 14:1-12

Matthew 18:21-35

Sunday, September 24 – The Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 16:2-15

Psalms 105:1-6,37-45

Philippians 1:21-30

Matthew 20:1-16

THE CROP WALK

On Sunday, October 1st South Church will participate in the annual walk to fight hunger in collaboration with First Church. In Pittsfield Crop Hunger Walks are interfaith events that help build community while raising funds to end hunger locally and world-wide. 1,900 food banks and soup kitchens in the U.S. benefit from the funds raised.

Our local walk is approximately 1 and 1/4-mile-long and will begin at First Church at 1 P.M. It will proceed through downtown ending back at First Church for refreshments. ***Please join us!***

A table will be set up each Sunday in September at South during the coffee hour for those who would like to sign up, or to donate to sponsor our South Church team. Any questions – see Ann Roche.

JUNIOR DEACON PROGRAM

SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

On behalf of the South Church Deacons, we would like to invite your child to become acquainted with our newly-established Junior Deacon Program. The following will outline the goals and duties of the program. It is our hope that this program will supplement the spiritual life and energy of each and every participant (including our South Church Deacons.)

Program Goals:

Involve children in worship

Provide additional dimension to Christian education efforts in Sunday School.

Lay groundwork for Confirmation and a broader and deeper participation in church life as adults.

Possible Junior Deacon jobs: This list suggests a tiered approach, starting with what might seem to be “easiest” or least- public jobs and moving up to jobs with more of a leadership role in worship.

Level 1:

Ring bell (before church)

Collect communion cups (after church)

Level 2:

Hand out bulletins (before church)

Replenish pew cards/pencils

Level 3:

Light candles (during prelude)/Extinguish candles (end of service)

Take offering (during worship)

Help prep. for communion

Change paraments (before church)

Place hymnal numbers on hymn boards/
floor work

Level 4:

Serve as liturgist (during church)

Serve communion (during church)

Junior Deacons “badges” are available to wear for identification as Junior Deacons.



BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS

First, let me mention how grateful I am to have Liz Clifford taking care of book distribution on Wednesdays at the Food Pantry. Next, I want to thank people (known and unknown to me) for keeping a regular stream of book donations coming. Third, thank you to the organizers of the August Tag Sale for donating all of the school supplies that came in to the Food Pantry. You have helped ease the burden of the back-to-school necessities. Thanks!

I have one request that I've just forgotten to make sooner. Please donate cash/checks to the church office made out to Sandie Smith to help me recover some of the cost of books I've been getting at library and tag sales. Occasional monetary donations would be welcome.

Families continue to appreciate this service from our church.

Sandie Smith

FOOD PANTRY

Thanks to Lynn Reynolds and Heather Burke and all of the Food Pantry Volunteers for their hard work this summer. The Food Pantry served between 475 and 525 families each week during the summer. The only difficult time came when the breaker on the freezer was pulled and we lost all of the meat that was stored in there. With everyone's help, the freezer was emptied, cleaned and sanitized. Henry took the meat to Vicon for disposal and Joey scrubbed the freezer and now everything is working well again.

Thank you to everyone for your donations of food, toilet paper, books, clothes and household articles. There is a great need for everything.

We are now thinking ahead to the fall and the Thanksgiving Angels. South Church is sponsoring a dinner and concert on October 13th, featuring Tommy T. (see ad on p. 6) All of the proceeds will go towards the purchase of turkeys. Please come and bring your friends!

September is toilet paper month.

Mary Wheat

LORD AND TAILOR NEWS

It is becoming a very interesting summer/fall. Our second very successful tag sale of the year on Aug 26 brought in \$1500. Many thanks to all who sorted, priced and donated to our sale.

Now for the interesting part. The shop and church has received a very generous and extraordinarily large donation of a houseful of all kinds of items, mostly brand new. It has been coming into the church by the truckloads. Since the majority of this is way too much for the shop, **we will be having another tag sale of BRAND NEW items on Friday Sept 22 from 3-6 and Saturday Sept 23 from 9-3.** It has been a very mammoth task sorting out all these items. WE NEED YOUR HELP in order to make this sale a success.



We need people to help sort and some strong lifters who can help us bring everything down to Barrett Hall on Thurs Sept 21, right after the food pantry and Friday Sept 22 in the morning.

Got light bulbs? We have bags full. Got hair spray? We have cases of the stuff, small appliances, and every kind of household product you can think of. Also there is a very large amount of clothing, mostly large and extra-large, all brand new, as well as purses, shoes, sweaters and sheets, brand new.

We are very grateful to be the recipients of this generous gift. Please help in any way that you can to make the most of this once-in-a-blue moon (or once in an eclipse year!) gift. To volunteer, please contact Pam Garrett, Nancy deForest, Cindy Haven, Pat Hill, or Paula for the times we will be working. The church thanks you in advance.

Nancy deForest, Audra Kinner



TAKE THE DAY OFF

“Take Rest: A field that has rested gives a bountiful crop.”

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

On Sunday, September 10th, the 2017-2018 Sunday School year begins here at South Church!

As August moves into September, lessons are halfway through the season of Pentecost. The color of the season is green, symbolizing growth.

During this period we will explore what it means to live faithfully in the world today. It is a season with an emphasis on social justice as the readings call us to reach beyond ourselves to the poor, the marginalized and the outsider.

I came across the following letter while looking through some children's books in Cook Center. I found it to be very moving, as our children and youth ministry focuses on building strength and character in our young people and our goal is to guide them in developing their sense of God's love through Scripture and teachings of Jesus, I felt it to be quite fitting.

*Dear Children of the Future,
My hopes for you are these:*

May you be Powerfully Loving and Lovingly Powerful. May Love be your Guide with family friends, and colleagues. Remember to listen carefully to your own Heart and to the Hearts of others.

May you have the Strength to overcome Fear and Pride, and instead follow what has Heart and meaning for you. Take Action every day to support your Life Dream, your Love Nature, and your Integrity.

May you care for Mother Nature and the Wilderness and help all living things keep their Dignity.

May you be an active, committed Positive Force in your community. May you show respect to People of All Ages and Races and help make a better world for the Poor, the Sick, the Elderly, and the Youth.

May you respect all the ways human beings access their own Spirituality.

May you constantly bring your Gifts and Talents forward every day without hesitation or reservation.

With deep gratitude and respect for all that you will do to make the Earth a better place in which to live.

Angeles Arrien, Cultural Anthropologist, California

I look forward to this coming year, exploring with the children, learning and growing in God's grace.

Ann Roche, Dir. Children/Youth Ministries

Maitre D's Needed for St. Joseph's Kitchen

Wednesdays, 3 - 6:30 pm: We are looking for additional people to manage guest relations for our Wednesday meal on a rotating basis. Art Kaufman and Dick Noble have been our faithful Maitre D's for the past two years. Dick is leaving because of family obligations. Ideally, we would have 3 or 4 Maitre D's.

Our Maitre D's provide a welcoming, comfortable, and safe atmosphere for guests from opening the doors at 3:30 until closing. They support the cooking teams by overseeing the coffee table and handling any questions guests may have. They welcome and provide assistance to the extraordinary volunteers who serve the 5 pm meal and clean up afterwards. They set up the silverware soaking trays and oversee or run the dishwasher after the meal. (Additional dishwashers are always wanted!) Our Maitre D' should be ready to handle issues that infrequently arise, such as guest illness or difficult behavior.

If Pastor Joel or Sister Kathryn is not present, the Maitre D' will make announcements - guest birthdays or other milestones - and offer a simple prayer of thanks at the start of the meal.

We usually have 75 - 90 guests each week, ranging in age from a baby with his parents and grandparents to very elderly. We serve a community of people who are diverse in their experiences, faith, interests, and abilities, but they are each sustained by the nourishment and welcome we offer each week.

We invite you to come explore the possibility of serving as a Maitre D' at South Church!

Other Help Wanted for St. Joseph's Kitchen

Servers are always welcome at the Wednesday night meal at South Church. Come around 4:30 pm, get a nametag, and our crew will show you what to do. You will be done serving by 5:30 pm, and clean-up is done by 6 pm.

Dishwashing help is always needed. We have a wonderful, fast, automatic dishwasher, but it requires a couple of people to move the dishes through. Our Maitre D's oversee the dishwashing. Even young people can help with the dishwashing. Dishwashing starts about 5:15, and is usually over by 6 pm.

Mary Rentz marylrentz@gmail.com 413-441-1076

Dinner & Concert to Benefit the “Thanksgiving Angels”

A group of 18 faith-based communities that band together to provide food so that 1,400 families in the central Berkshire region can prepare Thanksgiving dinners for themselves.



featuring

Tommy T & Black Velvet

Friday, October 13th

Barrett Hall, South Congregational Church

6:00 p.m. Dinner - \$15 per person for Dinner & Concert

Barbecued Chicken, Baked Beans, Coleslaw, Cornbread & Dessert

7:00 p.m. Concert – Good Will Donations accepted at the door for those who plan to only attend the Concert

In the spirit of Thanksgiving, we are asking you to be as generous as you can to benefit this worthy mission as ALL proceeds will be used to support the Thanksgiving Angels.



August 23, 2017

Hello, my friends –

It has been a very warm summer out here. I thought the triple digits temperatures would be over by now. How wrong I was! Sunday and Monday predictions say: 100 degrees! I have gotten back into the groove again. I meet with friends on Friday morning at a near-by library where we knit, crochet, and do a variety of handwork. One Friday there was young family from India (a mother and three children, ages: 8, 6, 4) who wanted to learn to crochet. I spent over an hour enjoying their company and helping them along the way. Unfortunately, they have not returned. I am not going to question their decision.

The Bible study at Living Stone CRC does not meet during the summer. I missed the fellowship so much that my friend, Nina, and I formed a small devotional group using the daily devotional *TODAY* for July and August. It has been a rewarding experience for me to even think about creating something like that. Seven to ten ladies attend on any given Tuesday. Starting on September 19th, we will begin the study of Jonah, then on to the study of Acts.

This past Sunday, August 20th, I was installed as deacon at Living Stone. It is a great joy and honor to be blessed in such a way. I have found a loving and giving community with these people. I had been asked to serve as a deacon before I left for Pittsfield, but I turned it down at that time.

Home life is much improved. Communication and love are the keys right now. Hubby is not much of a church goer, but did attend for my installation. I asked if there was any particular reason, and he said that it was important to me so it was important to him also. Progress!

Thank you, my friends at South Church... for your love and acceptance of a lost soul. I love you all and miss your fellowship.

Carol Johnson George

“We rise by lifting others” – Robert Ingersoll

UCC Dues

As you know, South Church is a member of a wider national and local organization, the United Church of Christ. Through them, we have access to their resources and expertise to help South Church remain a viable, relevant, and committed congregation. Every year, we pay \$20 per congregant dues to the Mass UCC Conference to sustain our membership. To meet this obligation, the Board of Trustees is asking those who can, add a separate \$20 per person offering to their annual pledge commitment. Please earmark UCC dues when submitting payment to the church.

Thank you for your support.

John Robertson
Board of Trustees



All-Church Gathering for Fun and Fellowship

Sunday, September 24 (rain date: October 8), 1 pm

Cheshire Lake (at Donna Turner's home) in Cheshire, Mass.

Watch for details in upcoming Worshipful Thoughts and Sunday bulletins

NEXT GIANT TAG SALE

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22ND

3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23RD

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

*80% of the items are new, never used
Clothing, Personal Care Items and Much More!*

South Church Annual Harvest Craft Fair

October 28th, 9 am – 3 pm



BAKE SALE ♥ LOCAL CRAFTERS & VENDORS ♥

WHITE ELEPHANT ♥ SOUTH CHURCH CRAFTS ♥

LUNCHEON (11 am–2 pm)

CHINESE AUCTION (*featuring Themed Gift Baskets*)

RAFFLE (*featuring Original Art Work by Bob Hill, Handmade Quilt by the Ladies Benevolent Society, and a money tree*)



**Admission by donation
to benefit**

Elizabeth Freeman Center

Every hour of every day, Elizabeth Freeman Center provides lifesaving, life renewing help to survivors of domestic and sexual violence and to their families.

They offer free and confidential counseling, shelter, legal advocacy, safety planning, teen dating violence prevention education, a 24/7 hotline, and much more. Each year they reach over 5,000 people from almost every city, town and hamlet in Berkshire County..

**Coffee, tea and variety
of desserts for sale**



Friday September 15, 2017, 7 p.m.

David Roth strikes many chords, hearts, and minds with his unique songs, offbeat observations, moving stories, sense of the hilarious, and powerful singing and subject matter. As singer, songwriter, recording artist, keynote speaker, workshop leader, and instructor,

David's songs ("Rising in Love", "Earth", "Manuel Garcia", "May the Light of Love", "Nine Gold Medals", "Spacesuits", "Rocket Science", "I Stand for Love", "That Kind of Grace", and many more) have found their way to Carnegie Hall, the United Nations, several Chicken Soup for the Soul books, the Kennedy Center, Peter, Paul, & Mary's "Discovered" (Warner Brothers), the Kingston Trio's "Born at the Right Time", NASA's Goddard Space Center ("Rocket Science" went up on the Space Shuttle Atlantis's May 2009 mission to repair the Hubble Telescope), the classic folk song books "Rise Up Singing" and "Rise Again" (sequel).

Find out more about David and www.davidrothmusic.com

BREAD & ROSES COFFEE HOUSE

Parlor
South Congregational
Church
110 South St, Pittsfield

Southchurchpittsfield.org

September 15, 2017
7:00 p.m.

September 2017

South Congregational Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Lord & Tailor CLOSED Bridge 12 – 4 pm AA 6:15 pm	2 AA 10:15 am Music Together Lord & Tailor CLOSED Al-Anon 7 pm
3 Pittsfield State Forest Worship 10:30 am with Second Congregational Church	4 LABOR DAY Bridge 12 – 4 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	5 Men's Forum 12 noon <i>Square Dancing 7 pm</i>	6 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Bridge 12 – 4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Food Pantry 5:30 – 6 pm	7 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am UCC Clergy 12 noon	8 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12 – 4 pm AA 6:15 pm	9 AA 10:15 am Music Together Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
10 Worship 10 am With return of Chancel Choir & Opening of Sunday School	11 Bridge 12 – 4 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm 9-11 Hymn Sing a First Methodist 7 pm	12 Men's Forum 12 noon May Mattoon Dinner Out 5 pm <i>Square Dancing 7 pm</i> <i>Diaconate 7 pm</i>	13 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	14 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am	15 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Bridge 12 – 4 pm AA 6:15 pm Coffee House Concert 7 pm	16 AA 10:15 am Music Together Lord & Tailor 12 noon – 4 pm Pittsfield Squares Dance 7 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
17 Worship 10 am Coffee Hour at First Church at 11:45 to share about CROP Walk and Food Ministry	18 Bridge 12 – 4 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	19 Men's Forum 12 noon <i>Square Dancing 7 pm</i> Mission Board 7 pm	20 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	21 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am	22 Lord & Tailor Tag Sale Set-up 10 am Bridge 12 – 4 pm Lord & Tailor TAG SALE 3 pm-6pm AA 6:15 pm	23 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor TAG SALE 9 am – 3 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
24 Worship 10 am Church School Family Picnic Cheshire Lake 1-4 pm October Epistle Deadline 11 am	25 Yarn Spinners 7 pm NA-There is Hope Group 7 pm	26 Men's Forum 12 noon <i>Square Dancing 7 pm</i> Church Council 7 pm	27 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Music Together Bridge 12 – 4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Food Pantry 5:30 – 6 pm	28 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am	29 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Music Together Quilting-Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am	30 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm