



Epistle

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South Congregational Church • 110 South Street • Pittsfield, MA 01201

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April 2013

As we enter the Easter season it's important to remember that Easter isn't meant to simply be a beautiful and colorful day. The Day of Resurrection is the "Eighth Day of Creation" in Christian tradition, because Jesus' triumph over the tomb is the beginning of a new creation: God's realm of shalom and wholeness, justice and dignity is being born within us and among us. During the Easter season we are to be particularly alert to signs of this new creation. Often these signs are subtle and quiet—like little shoots bursting forth from the hard ground of winter. One such shoot came in the form of a brief letter from a student in middle school. One of our members tutors troubled kids, and one asked if he could have a Bible. This is a student who's never been to church. So I found a paperback edition, tailored to young people, and we gave it to this student. He wrote me the following: "Thank you so much for the Bible. I enjoy reading it a lot, and it's the first Bible I've ever seen." His tutor reports that he comes each week with comments about what he's reading. A teenager reading the Bible for the first time is a small shoot of new life. Who knows what he will find in its pages—the Bible is actually quite a library and you can find just about everything somewhere in its pages!—but I pray this small beginning might help this student sense that he is the beloved of God no matter what circumstances he finds himself in. At the core this is the message of the Scriptures from beginning to end. And Easter is the profound expression of God's commitment that not even all the evil death can muster—hate, bigotry, and cruelty—will ever be able to stop the love that began flowing at the moment of creation and keeps flowing into our hearts this very day. It is this love that is slowly mending our world and ushering in the shalom and wholeness of God.

A second sign of Easter showed up at the pantry last week. I was distributing children's books to supplement the weekly food distribution. A mother with a preschooler walked up to our small bookcase—crafted by Joe LeRose for this purpose—and found a book about dinosaurs for her elementary age child. As she browsed her little 3 year old reached up and found a board book with bright, colorful pictures of a caterpillar. As I watched he turned the pages, his eyes sparkling with delight. To behold a small child--dealing with harsh realities--shine with the light found in the magical pages of books is to encounter the same sparkling light that burst forth in the moment of creation and burst forth from the mouth of a tomb. Such is the Spirit of Easter.

A third sign of Easter is the fact that my first two signs resulted from the care of adults who are willing to tutor struggling teens and fashion a remarkable pantry ministry. This willingness to put our hearts and lives into mending the world is how God transforms hard ground into rich, fertile soil. If you would like to become more of an advocate for such transformative work join us next Monday evening for an inter-faith introduction to faith-based community organizing. At this gathering we will learn skills, meet people, build relationships, and discern how to move forward together. Many of us are discovering that to improve life for all of us here in the Berkshires, we need to work together in faithful ways so shalom and wholeness deepens. This event will be held at First Church in Park Square from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Let me know if you would like to join us.

EPISTEL

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 Ladies Benevolent Marge Demary
 Men's Forum John Anthony
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The next *Epistle* deadline is April 28th at 11 a.m.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY



New Member Sunday

On Palm Sunday, March 24th, the following people joined the fellowship of South Church. Already active in the life of the church, we wish you all a continued and blessed journey.

Member

Thomas Leavitt
 Diane Leavitt
 Lynn Reynolds

Joining as Associate members:

Marge Demary
 Sharon Mercier

Sponsor

Peter Rentz
 Mary Rentz
 Mary Wheat

John Moore
 Patricia Hill

We also welcome into membership Sonia Tynan by letter of transfer from Canaan Congregational, United Church of Christ.

In Memoriam:

Elva D. Forman (Mrs. Alexander) March 19
 in Harrisburg, Virginia --former South Church member.



SPRING!!

In the bulb there is a flower,
 In the seed, an apple tree,
 There's a dawn in every darkness,
 Bringing hope to you and me.

Natalie Sleeth

**SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
 FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

Through 3/1/2013

	YTD	ANNUAL
	Actual	Budget
Income		
Operating	\$33,372	\$174,502
Expenses	YTD	ANNUAL
	Actual	Budget
Salaries	\$19,543	\$ 146,230
Operating	<u>\$12,034</u>	<u>\$ 80,200</u>
Total	\$31,557	\$ 226,430
Net Surplus (Deficit)	\$ 1,795	\$ (51,928)

This statement is a condensed version of the Treasurer's report using YTD data for the first two months of 2013.

Dale Prindle, Chairman, Board of Trustees

LECTIONARY FOR APRIL

April 7 – Second Sunday of Easter

Acts 5:27-32
 Psalm 118:14-29
 Revelation 1:4-8
 John 20:19-31

April 7 – House Church at South

At 7 p.m. the "House Church at South" will meet in the parlor for an evening of music, meditation, and sharing, featuring singer/songwriter, Linda Worster. Rev. Huntington will invite a discussion of 'stories of resurrection' based on John 20 and 21. All are welcome.

April 14 – Third Sunday of Easter

Acts 9:1-6 (7-20)
 Psalm 30
 Revelation 5:11-14
 John 21:1-19

April 21 – Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 9:36-43
 Psalm 23
 Revelation 7:9-17
 John 10:22-30

April 28 – Fifth Sunday of Easter

Acts 11:1-18
 Psalm 148
 Revelation 21:1-6
 John 13:31-35

Trustees Report on Facility Projects

As a result of recent bequests willed to South Church, there are now funds available to address several facility projects



that were on the list for the pending Capital Fund Drive. The Trustees determined that we should tackle the most urgent of these projects now.

First priority is to rebuild the bulging brick wall at the southwest corner of the Parish Hall. We are currently working with the Bradley Architectural Firm who will provide the upfront engineering work and the bid package for obtaining quotes from the contractors.

Next on the list is to inspect all roofs to determine if any repairs are necessary. Possibly, the steeple roof wood shingles will need replacing.

Third, the parking area and driveway should be repaved. Shortly, we will be obtaining quotes to have the entire area resurfaced with a new coat of blacktop.

Fourth, we are in the process of determining what kitchen upgrades are necessary and the costs associated with such.

Fifth, the exterior wood portions of our building, including windows and doors, need to be painted and in some cases, repaired. It's probable that funding will not be available for this project until money is received from the pending Capital Fund Drive.

There are other important facility projects not listed above, but these will be identified and included in the Capital Fund Drive. As you can see there is a considerable amount of work facing the Trustees. It might be necessary to request help from church members who are not on the Board. So, don't be surprised if you get a call.

Dale Prindle, Board of Trustees

Church Keys – Help Keep Our Church Safe

If you currently have a South Church Master key and find that you no longer need it, please return it to the Church Office. Any deposit made for the key will happily be refunded. Thank you.

Paula



LADIES BENEVOLENT SOCIETY

Our "LITTLE" group of ladies are busy as always. We have quilts that needed some finishing touches, so finish them we did! We found a quilt with parishioners' names on it which will be hung in the red carpet area for all to enjoy. So watch for it!

Bob Hill has been picking up Lisa Stuart at Melbourne Place and bringing her to the church to share lunch with us on Thursday. So if you don't want to quilt, you can stop in and visit with Lisa. She would enjoy that very much.

Hope to see you soon!

Marge Demary

LORD And TAILOR NEWS

With the arrival of spring, we have been putting out some wonderful spring clothes. We have put away most of the winter clothes, but still have a few winter items-buy one, get one free.

So far in 2013, we have been able to give \$1700 to the Church. The amount was greatly increased by the very successful tag sale. A big thanks to all who helped. With the help of our great volunteers and to all of you who donate, we hope that 2013 will be better than ever for the shop.

Happy Spring!

Nancy and Audra

FOOD PANTRY

The bulb kits you made at the beginning of Lent were very popular among our Food Pantry guests. As we were limited in bulbs, they were given only to the women. Many men wanted them for their wives, so the next time they were promised the first choice. Thank you for such a thoughtful gift.

Toilet paper is a very much needed item, so-o-o April and May are toilet paper months. Any amount you can donate is most appreciated. Try to imagine how hard it would be if you didn't have any paper products.

Thanks again for all of your support.

Mary Wheat

MAY MATTOON – TUESDAY, MARCH 5th

The tables were brightly trimmed for Saint Paddy's Day with green shamrocks, green beads, even green grapes with bowls of tangerines for a touch of orange.

In our short business meeting it was voted to purchase two lilies for Easter Sunday. It was also decided to give Marge Demary \$100 to purchase material to make dresses and shorts for the girls and boys of Ghana. She has already made and donated 40 dresses and shorts for these children and has requested T-shirts, colored or plain white to go under the sleeveless dresses (S-M-L).

Pat Nixon asked if any of the ladies' husbands were clearing out old neckties, she would graciously take them off their hands. Her daughter-in-law, Pam, creates beautiful vests, pocket books and pillow covers from them.

It was voted that e-mails would be sent out as reminders of upcoming Mattoon meetings, rather than phone calls. However, if you do not have an e-mail address, you will still receive a call.



Our program speakers at this meeting were Jill Lipsky and her son Henry, representing Hearts of the Father Outreach – homes of refuge for orphans. This organization makes a difference for orphans around the world. The program was started by a husband and wife from Sheffield, Mass. who lost three children in a car accident. They started collecting toys on an impulse that they could not explain, except as a connection to their own children and to help forget, ever so briefly, their tremendous loss. Consequently they decided as parents without children they would ease the pain of children without parents.

The program expanded from donating toys to clothes, hospital beds, incubators, water bottles, uniforms, books, crutches, medical supplies, sports equipment and musical instruments. Jill Lipsky and her son play a big part in this undertaking. Henry is a forestry graduate and helped plant 100 shade trees, along with fruit trees in a hot climate. They have done many more wonderful projects than I could possibly cover. Just people helping

people! Following the presentation, May Mattoon voted to donate \$250 to this outreach program. Hostess was Pat Hill, who served a delicious spice cake with the help of many volunteers.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, April 2nd. The program is "Creating Your Own Family History" by Ruth Bass. Hostesses are Mary Wheat, Janet Rusk, and Alice Gallup. Don't forget your donations of toilet articles for the Food Pantry, and of course, don't forget your sandwich.

Alice Gallup

NEWS FROM TRISH FARRELL

Here we go, on another new adventure! As many of you know, I have been speaking, teaching, and preaching for many years. It is one of the things I prayed about when we moved to New Hampshire, knowing how much I would miss it.



In January, God truly laid it on my heart to start a speaking ministry to share His love. Within days of committing myself to this, I was offered the chance to audition for the keynote speaker position with a national youth organization! (audition is in New Jersey in April)

To help get the word out about this new ministry and opportunity, I have created a website and am asking for your help. www.trishfarrell.com

I need your support in any or all of the following ways:

1. Please pray for my new ministry, that God may open doors for me to share His word and to refine my skills.
2. Pass my website onto a leader, minister, or organizer in your church or community.
3. Keep me in mind for your next event and book me as a speaker! (a great way to get me to come visit!)
4. And if you're within driving distance... I need more sample videos to put on the website (the one on there is so rough and thrown together, sorry). Can I come to your group, do a presentation (for free), and use it on my website?

I really appreciate your support and help, as always! Thank you! -Trish

“SPEAKING OF FAITH: TELLING THE NEXT GENERATION”



On Sunday, April 21 the Pittsfield Area Council of Congregations (PACC) will offer their annual public forum, “Speaking of Faith,” in the Parish Center of St. Joseph’s Roman Catholic Church (414 North Street, Pittsfield). This year, panelists from different faiths will discuss the joys and challenges in telling the next generation about their faith. Every year, PACC holds a public forum to offer an opportunity for people from Pittsfield area faith communities to hear a variety of perspectives on a faith-oriented topic. Music from a local jazz group will also be part of the event.

There is an advance registration fee of \$5 per person (for everyone over 16) to offset costs, \$10 at the door on the day of the event. To register please send a check made out to: “Pittsfield Area Council of Congregations” and mail it to: Stephanie Filiault, Christian Education Minister, First UMC, 55 Fenn Street, Pittsfield MA 01201. (email: tigkat7@aol.com; phone: 413-499-0866 (ext. 15).

HOSPICE CARE IN THE BERKSHIRES

Hospice Care’s mission includes providing support to those in the Berkshire community who have experienced the loss of a loved one. Both group and individual support, and counseling are offered free of charge - even if the deceased was not on our services.

If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Erin Sullivan, Community Relations Manager at 413-443-2994.

WE’RE STILL HERE

On the last Tuesday in February 1992 a group of seven retired South Church men met in Barrett Hall for a brown bag lunch to discuss an idea. Wondering if it made sense for a group of retirees to meet weekly, eat lunch together and then discuss timely subjects, we held our first gathering. We were somewhat tentative in the beginning, as often men seem to be reluctant to share their feelings with one another, however we met weekly until mid-June our first year and after reviewing the positive results decided to try another series starting the first Tuesday in October 1993.

Things were going so well we voted to call ourselves The Men’s Forum and meet weekly until mid-June again. At the same time we agreed that our group’s mission would be agendaless. Our purpose was not to be the church’s maintenance crew, or to raise funds for, or serve as workers on worthwhile projects. The goal would instead be concentrating our efforts on sharing our accumulated wisdom while discussing many of the events of the times. We took this unusual approach because most our early members were already separately volunteering as church maintenance men and project workers and might enjoy the extra opportunity to bond with one another.

The experiment worked. This month The Forum is starting its twenty-first year, meeting weekly year around now, with 16 South Church retirees and 14 retirees from the surrounding area as members.

As we always say, there is room for more, so if you are male, retired, and free on Tuesday, pack a lunch and join us in the Church Parlor—it will be worth your while.

John Anthony

MINISTRY MATTERS

Sunday mornings are a stressful time for pastors. Their ministries include interacting with dozens of pastors each week. It appears that there are some common experiences on Sunday morning for many of them.

Most people who love their church...and love their pastor...want to help any way they can to make the Sunday morning experience the best it can be. That's what this post is about.

Seven ways you can help your pastor on Sunday:

Pray. – Pray for your pastor. Ask God to open the ears of the people, to guide your pastor's heart and to bless the services with His Spirit.

Don't critique. – Sunday morning is not the best time to bring complaints. It is very distracting when the pastor is about to speak to hear criticism that will have to be dealt with later. It weighs very heavily on the mind and gets in the way of focusing on the message. Hold those until Monday, but even then, ask yourself if sharing it is personal to you or genuinely helpful to the entire body.

Don't share something on Sunday morning that you want your pastor to remember. – Most likely it will be forgotten by the time Sunday is done. Send an e-mail later or call Monday morning. If it must be shared on Sunday, please write it down so the details will be remembered. Their minds are so clouded on Sunday thinking about a million different things. And, they try hard to make their focus about a message we hope God will use.

Be Kingdom-minded. – Think of others' interests even ahead of your own. Keep in mind the temperature in the room may not be your ideal temperature, but it may be exactly the right temperature for someone else. Your song may not be sung today, but it could be the song that leads another to the throne of grace. The message may not address what you're dealing with right now, but for someone else, it might be life-changing. Be a part of the crowd that says, "I love what helps another" and you'll help your pastor and the church greatly on Sunday mornings.

Volunteer. – The work of the church can't function with only a few people. Have you ever known of a church that had too many people volunteering in preschool ministry, too many greeters, or too many people willing to do whatever it takes?

Introduce them to visitors. – Our ministers love to meet visitors, especially those seeking a church home. It is comforting when the church is bringing people with them or meeting new visitors as they arrive.

Pray. – It really does begin and end with prayer. More than anything, they want your prayer support. The Spirit of God seems to respond when you do.

Pastor, how else can people help you on Sunday?

Submitted by Pam Kueppers – Found on Facebook

“Don't knock the weather; nine-tenths of the people couldn't start a conversation if it didn't change once in a while.”

K. Hubbard





APRIL 2013

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
	1 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	2 May Mattoon Luncheon Noon Men's Forum Noon Church Council 7 pm	3 Food Pantry 8 – 11 am UCC Clergy Meeting Noon St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	4 Food Pantry 8:30-11:30 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am 12-Step Class 6:30 pm Chancel Choir 7 pm	5 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	6 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12 noon-4 pm
7 Sunday Worship with Communion 10 am Women's Book Club 11:30 am "House Church" In the Parlor 7 pm	8 Scholarship Committee 4 pm Faith Based Community Organizing at First Church 6:30 pm Yarn Spinners 7 pm	9 Men's Forum Noon Diaconate 7 pm	10 Food Pantry 8 – 11 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Trustees 6 pm	11 Food Pantry 8:30-11:30 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am 12-Step Class 6:30 pm Chancel Choir 7 pm	12 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	13 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12 noon-4 pm
14 3 rd Sunday of Easter Worship 10 am Guest Preacher Rev. Art Kaufman	15 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	16 Men's Forum Noon	17 Food Pantry 8-11 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	18 Food Pantry 8:30-11:30 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am 12-Step Class 6:30 pm Chancel Choir 7 pm	19 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	20 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12 noon-4 pm Pittsfield Squares 7pm
21 4 th Sunday of Easter Worship in the Parlor 10 am "Speaking of Faith" PACC Event 3:30 pm	22 EARTH DAY Yarn Spinners 7 pm	23 Men's Forum Noon Mission Board 7 pm	24 Food Pantry 8-11 am Church & Ministry 4 pm St. Joe's Dinner 5:00 pm Berk Assoc Exec Comm 6 pm	25 Food Pantry 8:30-11:30 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7pm	26 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	27 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12 noon-4 pm
28 5 th Sunday of Easter Worship 10 am <i>May Epistle Deadline</i> 11 am	29 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	30 Men's Forum Noon	MAY 1 Food Pantry 8-11 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	MAY 2 Food Pantry 8:30-11:30 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7pm	MAY 3 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	MAY 4 Lord & Tailor 12 noon-4 pm AA 6:15 pm