



Epistle

SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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November 2014

As the seasons shift and the leaves fall silently from the trees, I am reminded that this is the time of year for giving thanks. At the moment I am giving thanks for the mission and ministry of South Church. Let me tell you why. One morning this past week I arrived as the pantry was in full operation. Mary Wheat was supervising our volunteer staff made up of a wide range of ages. Some were members of South, others members elsewhere, and some, well I don't know if they attend church. But they were all engaged meeting the needs of our neighbors—with warmth and care. I then went upstairs to lead a group exploring the spiritual life. A dozen of us from five different congregations are studying a book by Richard Rohr, a Benedictine monk, learning from each other how to grow in the love of God. At noon I joined the Men's Forum as twenty retired guys from a variety of backgrounds listened to Bruce Collingwood speak about the energy saving efforts of our city. As Director of Public Works, Bruce is helping Pittsfield be in the forefront of solar and recycled waste energy in Massachusetts. Later in the afternoon I spoke with Sr. Kathryn Flanagan as St. Joe's Kitchen got under way. As we talked, our cooks and volunteer staff, guided by John Moore, made everything ready to serve eighty adults and children a delicious, hot meal. Sr. Kathryn and I reflected once again on the steady, dynamic energy of this ecumenical ministry we share together. Some of us have been part of St. Joe's for over twenty years. Others have just begun. But we all share a deep bond of connection with one another and our guests. Later in the evening I sat with the Diaconate as we had our own dynamic time planning worship and discussing how to meet the spiritual needs of this congregation. It was a busy day—actually I conflated a couple of days to help make a point.

Do you see the pattern? I see it every week. South Church is a center of ministry that is a catalyst for many good things going on in our community and our individual lives. We are not a large congregation but we are an effective and active congregation—because many others join with us. We are the hosts. We provide the space. We help provide leadership. Others help provide the energy that makes so much abundance happen. Along the way we all discover deepening bonds of connection, hope, and faithfulness. This is a model of church for the 21st century that South is living into. It is an exciting and energizing project. In Genesis 12 God tells Abraham and Sarah that “all people on earth will be blessed through you.” South Church partakes in that promise by being a blessing to many in our community.

During November we will have a series of stewardship reflections that will respond to this theme: “Blest to Be a Blessing”. When you read the lectionary section of this Epistle you will see the lineup of who will be speaking. It will be a good month of worship as we give thanks for all we have received, celebrate the gifts we share, hear from faithful voices, and are challenged to deepen our own commitments to this work of faith. As part of this we will receive pledge cards and envelopes as a way to make our promises to support the mission and ministry of this remarkable congregation in the upcoming year. Give generously for all we share in the self-giving love of Christ.

EPISTLE

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- Moderator Mary Rentz
- Parish Nurse Sue Kaufman
- Food Pantry Mary Wheat
- May Mattoon Alice Gallup
- Ladies Benevolent Marge Demary
- Men's Forum John Anthony
- Production and Mailing Paula Haskell

The next *Epistle* deadline is November 30th at 11 a.m.



CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

The children have been busy following the story of Moses. We acted out the striking of the rock which provided water for the freed Israelites. The lessons focusing on "God is with us even during difficult times" end this month with Deuteronomy 34:1-2, which celebrates the life of this great leader. After presenting the Ten Commandments and viewing the Promised Land, Moses is at peace. The story's theme is "Through living in harmony with God and our neighbors as the great commandment requires, we partner with God to meet the needs of a hurting world." Sharing, kindness and caring were well understood by the children.

On Sunday October 5th, our youth joined with 3 other downtown churches on a trip to Ramblewild, an outdoor adventure park in Lanesborough. The event was well attended and everyone received a full physical workout! The group will continue to meet on the first and third Sundays of the month. Any questions please contact me at the church. More fun to come!

Finally, on Sunday October 14th, 14 members from South Church, adults and children, participated in the annual Crop Walk to fight world hunger. Many members from downtown churches also took part. It was a rewarding event and a nice time of fellowship with all who attended. Afterward, First Church hosted a get-together for cider and snacks! Tallies are still coming in, so I will update the total raised at a later date. About 45 people attended the walk as a whole!

Blessings until next month.

Ann Roche

A child can ask questions that a wise man cannot answer. ~Author Unknown



THE FOOD PANTRY

has continued to be very busy with hungry people coming in for food and to sign up for turkeys.

This week we had 479 families. Needless to say we went through all of our

food except for some squash. Any help you could give with food donations would be wonderful, especially baby food and peanut butter.

November is turkey month so we are asking for a turkey or a donation towards one, or the donation of a pie.

Thank you,
Mary Wheat

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY WORKDAY

The next Habitat for Humanity workday will be Saturday, November 22. Lunch will be provided by the South Church Mission Board. For more information, please contact Will Garrison at garrisonfamily77@gmail.com.

LECTIONARY FOR NOVEMBER

Sunday November 2 – Communion Sunday

Stewardship Theme: Blessed to Be a Blessing

Reflections from Rev. Huntington

Genesis 12:1-9

Psalms 107:1-9

1 Thessalonians 2:9-13

Matthew 23:1-12

Lectionary for November 9 – Blessed to Be a Blessing, Part 2

Reflections from members of the Diaconate

Worship Leader – Rev. Art Kaufman

Psalms 78:1-7

2 Corinthians 8:1-9

Matthew 25:1-13

Sunday, November 16 – Blessed to Be a Blessing, Part 3

Reflections from John Moore and Rev. Huntington

Distribution of Pledge Cards in support of the upcoming year of mission and ministry

Psalms 23

Acts 6:1-6

Matthew 25:14-30

Sunday, November 23 – Thanksgiving Sunday

Thanksgiving Sermon by Rev. Huntington – The Miracle of the Squash

Receiving of Pledges in support of the upcoming year of mission and ministry

Psalms 95:1-7

Ephesians 1:15-23

Matthew 7:7-12

Sunday, November 30 – First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 64:1-9

Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Mark 13:24-37



WANTED VOLUNTEERS

As John Moore retires from 25 years of heading up the St. Joe's Kitchen at South Church Wednesday Meals, we are reaching out to faith communities for individuals to join our ecumenical team. Those of us who serve find it rewarding to put our hands to work in direct service to the needy in our community. For additional information, call South Congregational Church at 413-442-7357.

Administrator: A computer-capable person responsible for maintaining cook/volunteer scheduling, obtaining supplies, and recording and reporting the meals and number of guests served. Does not require presence on Wednesday. 3-5 hours per month on your own time.

Maitre D': Wednesdays, 3 - 6 pm: Two or three people to manage guest relations for the Wednesday afternoon meal on a rotating basis. Primary responsibility is to provide a welcoming, comfortable, and safe atmosphere for guests from opening doors at 3:30 until closing, including supporting the volunteers serving the 5 pm meal. Maitre D' should be ready to handle issues that infrequently arise, such as guest illness or difficult behavior.

Additional cooks: People with food handling skills to work with current cooks to learn our procedures and be available as lead cooks when needed. Lead cooks plan menus and obtain food, in addition to the actual meal preparation in the kitchen on Wednesdays.

Additional Wednesday volunteers: Servers, 4:30 - 5:30; clean-up crews and back-up dishwashers, 5-6.

Additional Food Pantry Volunteers are also wanted for Tuesday noon food unloading, food pick-ups on various days, and Wednesday and Thursday morning distributions. Each week the South Church Food Pantry provides grocery bags for over 450 needy families.

Stop by or contact Mary Wheat at 442-3706 for more information.

*There are two kinds of gratitude,
the sudden kind we feel
for what we take,
the larger kind we feel
for what we give.*

MAY MATTOON

I have to say the table settings for May Mattoon meeting on October 7th set the mood for our lunch and business meeting. The festive appearance of the bright oranges, deep reds, the pumpkins and floral arrangements made you smile, lifted your spirits with the brightness and the fun of it all.

After we consumed our sandwiches, followed by a delicious apple and cranberry crumble cake with whipped cream, provided by hostesses Audra Kinner, Nancy deForest and Bing Honig, a short business meeting was held.

It was decided to consider delaying the chocolatier party until spring because this time of year is always so busy. The family of Art Bell was very pleased with the memorial service and luncheon on September 20th. Suggestions for helping with the upcoming Harvest Fair included baking cookies together in the church kitchen to sell, planting small plants in the gravy boats left from the Tag Sale, and donating provisions for the Harvest luncheon. We will work on these projects at our next meeting. It was decided to give Mary Wheat \$500 from May Mattoon funds to buy supplies for the Food Pantry. The Food Pantry clientele continues to grow, but the Western Mass. Food Bank has decided to cut back on their supplies. It will be a tough winter for many families.

Poetry

The Power of Words

Pastor Joel had asked the Jahn family for some of Emily's poems to be read at our meeting and they graciously obliged. Emily's poems as read by Joel were lovely and thought provoking. A beautiful tribute to a most insightful lady.

So ended another meeting of May Mattoon. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, November 4th at 12 noon. Bring a sandwich, join us for lunch, and be ready to work on Craft Fair projects. Hostesses Ruth Campbell, Sara Adams, and Pam Garrett will provide dessert. Don't forget toilet articles for the Food Pantry distribution.

Until then – Happy Halloween and leaf raking!

Alice Gallup

Exploring Church Membership Sunday, November 2 at 11:30 a.m.

If you are new or relatively new to South Church and would like to know more about the mission and ministries of this congregation and the United Church of Christ, Rev. Joel, with help from the Diaconate, will host a gathering in the newly-refurbished library room.

We will also discuss what it means to be a church member and how it can help deepen and enrich your spiritual journey. Child care and lunch will be provided. Let Rev. Joel or Pam Garrett know if you plan to come. All are welcome.

MAY MATTOON BAKE SALE



May Mattoon will be having a table for baked goods at the Harvest Craft Fair as usual. We have added a cookie walk, where one can choose a baker's dozen, and will be attended by one of the ladies. Breads, cakes, pies, etc. will also be needed.

If you decide to bake cookies, please let us know beforehand. This will enable us to determine if we have enough for the cookie walk. I thank you all in advance.

Ruth Campbell-442-8463

LORD & TAILOR WELCOMES FALL!!

The Shop is featuring new fall and winter clothes, plus seasonal gifts and collectables. Come in and see what you can find.

We have been able to give the church \$500 this month. The total so far this year is \$5700.

Thanks to all of our volunteers, those who donate and our customers. We find that our volunteers are often also our best customers.

Nancy deForest and Audra Kinner



HARVEST CRAFTS FAIR

NOVEMBER 8, 2014

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Luncheon 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Lunch will consist of our very popular Butternut Squash Soup, 3- Bean Chili and our famous Deep Dish Apple Pie!

The Fair will feature handmade local craft items, floral arrangements and baked goods.

There will also be silent auction items to bid on from area businesses, theater groups, restaurants and museums. Items to be raffled off this year are a hand-made quilt "Ocean Dreams" sewn by the Ladies Benevolent Society, a water color painting "Mountain Serenity," an Advent tree calendar, a miniature gold and silver Christmas tree, and a money tree.

There are sign-up sheets in the Parlor for anyone wishing to help. We need help with:

Various Duties the Day of the Harvest Crafts Fair

Luncheon/Kitchen help: - Saturday - 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Set up on Tables etc. Thursday - November 6 - 6:00 PM

Pie baking, sandwiches: - Friday - 9:00 AM

Soup prep and Luncheon set up- Friday 4:00 PM

Clean-up/take down: - Saturday 3:00

Donations still welcome:

For the luncheon, we're asking for: tuna fish, canned kidney beans, pinto beans and black beans, diced tomatoes, tomato paste, saltines, peanut butter, jelly, apple cider and bottled water.

THANKS so much!!!!!! Kerry

MISSION BOARD

On Thanksgiving Sunday, November 23rd, the Food Pantry is requesting donations of soaps (bar, liquid), toilet paper, Kleenex, and detergents either instead of, or in addition to, the usual canned goods. These are items that are needed but cannot be purchased by our visitors.

Jean Robertson, Board of Missions

SOUTH CHURCH FINANCIAL UPDATE

Income	YTD/Actual	Annual Budget
Operating	\$118,728	\$233,764
Expenses		
Salaries	\$105,768	\$149,964
Operating	<u>\$ 57,778</u>	<u>\$ 83,800</u>
	\$163,546	\$233,764
Net Surplus	(\$ 44,818)	\$ 0
(Deficit)		

The statement is a condensed version of the Treasurer's Report using YTD data through the end of September, 2014. Please check the status of your 2014 annual pledge, and if needed, try to catch up.

John Robertson, Board of Trustees



Thanksgiving dinners

take eighteen hours to prepare;

they are consumed in twelve minutes.

Half-time takes twelve minutes.

Coincidence? I don't think so.

Erma Bombeck



Benefit for

The Thanksgiving Angels

A group of 13 faith based communities that band together to provide Thanksgiving dinners to 1,400 families in the central Berkshire region

Featuring

Tommy T & Black Velvet

Friday
November 21, 2014
7:00 pm



Barrett Hall
South Congregational Church
110 South St, Pittsfield, MA 01201



Suggested Donation: \$15.00

In the spirit of Thanksgiving, we are asking you to be as generous as you can to benefit this worthy mission as ALL donations are being sent to the Thanksgiving Angels.

November 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			OCT 29 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	OCT 30 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am	OCT 31 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	1 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm
2 <i>Daylight-Savings Time Ends. Turn Back Your Clocks</i> Worship 10 am with Communion Women's Book Club 11:30 am New Members Meeting 11:30	3 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	4 "Falling Upward" Study Group 10 am May Mattoon Luncheon 12 noon Men's Forum 12 noon	5 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am UCC Clergy 12 noon St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Qi Gong 5:30 pm	6 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Thanksgiving Angels 1 pm Chancel Choir 7 pm	7 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm Set-Up for Harvest Craft Fair AA 6:15 pm	8 <i>Harvest Craft Fair</i> 9:30 am – 3 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm
9 Worship 10 am Stewardship Reflections with the Diaconate and Rev. Kaufman	10 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	11 "Falling Upward" Study Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon Diaconate 7 pm	12 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Berkshire Place 10:45 am <i>Sign-Ups for Turkeys 1-3 pm</i> St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Qi Gong 5:30 pm Trustees 6 pm	13 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	14 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4pm AA 6:15 pm	15 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Pittsfield Squares 7 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm
16 Stewardship Reflections with John Moore Coffee Hour Collections for the Language Project	17 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	18 "Falling Upward" Study Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon Mission Board 7 pm	19 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Qi Gong 5:30 pm	20 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	21 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4pm Coffee House Concert 7 pm AA 6:15 pm	22 Habitat Work Day AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm
23 Thanksgiving/Pledge Dedication Sunday Worship 10 am Set-Up for Turkey Distribution	24 <i>Pittsfield Food Pantries' Thanksgiving Turkey Distribution</i> Yarn Spinners 7 pm	25 "Falling Upward" Study Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon Church Council 7 pm	26 St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Qi Gong 5:30 pm	27 Thanksgiving Day	28 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	29 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7:30 pm
30 First Sunday of Advent Worship 10 am Inward Journeys 7 pm Epistle Deadline 11 am						