



Epistle

SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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February 2015

At our Annual Meeting last week these words from my Report stood out for me as I sought to discern God's way before us: *"Churches do not thrive by simply trying to maintain the past. Congregations need visions that transform the complex energies of today into hope that opens doors and leads into possibility. This is never easy. There are no guarantees. It's always a 'work in progress'. South engages this holy work by seeking to journey inward to God and outward to our neighbor."* Later that day a dozen of us attended the founding convention of Berkshire Interfaith Organizing, an interfaith effort that has brought together fourteen or more faith communities to help make the Berkshires a better place for us all. Over two hundred faithful souls from Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish congregations from throughout the Berkshires gathered at St. Mark's School to celebrate this dynamic coming together of so many laity and clergy to love our neighbor in down to earth and practical ways. BIO as it's called is focusing its efforts on food insecurity and public transportation. Two research teams are currently collecting information, talking with officials, working with service providers, and hearing stories of courage and need. They are developing action plans that will seek to make practical improvements in these two areas. The core idea is that by working together to improve and change the systems that impact our lives we can care for our neighbor more effectively--in ways that empower and strengthen human dignity. I'm grateful that South is part of this holy work.

Our participation in BIO is a new expression of this congregation's 'journey outward'. The 'journey inward' will also be taking a new turn as Lent arrives later this month. I will begin a Lenten study following Sunday worship focusing on the Lord's Prayer. Each Sunday in Lent we will take up one phrase of that remarkable prayer Jesus taught his disciples and explore its rich, deep meaning. Many wise souls have commented that the whole of Christian spirituality is summed up in this prayer. Ash Wednesday is on Feb.18 (there will be an ecumenical service at 7 p.m. at Zion Lutheran which I will help lead) so join me on Sunday, Feb. 22 for our first dive into the Lord's Prayer as we explore "Hallowing Thy Name—what does that mean?"

Another expression of the inward journey will take place on Sunday evening, Feb. 8, at 7 p.m. Tora and I, along with Linda Worster, will convene a gathering of our "Inward Journeys" experimental worship. Focusing on the theme of "Transfiguration" we will examine the story of Jesus' transformation on the mountain. But what about us? How are we transformed? How are our lives transfigured by God's love? Through words, silence, prayers, and the beautiful songs that Linda brings to us, we will explore what it means to be "in Christ" as the apostle Paul so mysteriously put it. What does it mean to step beyond the ordinary into the life of Christ that beckons to us? One way or another such a life takes us—and the community we call church—on a journey inward and a journey outward. It's quite an adventure! May it be so for you this coming season.

EPISTLE

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May Mattoon Alice Gallup
Ladies Benevolent Marge Demary
Men's Forum John Anthony
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The next Epistle deadline is February 22 at 11 a.m.



LECTIONARY FOR FEBRUARY

Sunday, February 1 – Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Deuteronomy 18:15-20
Psalm 111
1 Corinthians 8:1-13
Mark 1:21-28

Sunday, February 8 – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 40:21-31
Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
1 Corinthians 9:16-23
Mark 1:29-39

Sunday, February 15 – Transfiguration Sunday

Kings 2:1-12
Psalm 50:1-6
2 Corinthians 4:3-6
Mark 9:2-9

Wednesday, February 18 – Ash Wednesday

Isaiah 58:1-12
Psalm 51
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

Sunday, February 22 – First Sunday in Lent

Genesis 9:8-17
Psalm 25:1-10
1 Peter 3:18-22
Mark 1:9-15

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Welcome To Our New Members



The following people were warmly welcomed into the fellowship of South Church on Sunday, January 18th.

Table with 2 columns: Member and Sponsor. Lists names of new members and their sponsors.

In memoriam:

Jane W. Witter –former member –December 10 in North Carolina

Change of address: Gerry Whiton's new address is printed in the May Mattoon article on page 4.

South Church Annual Report for 2014

If you were unable to attend our 164th Annual Meeting in January and did not get a copy of our 2014 Annual Report, you may request an electronic copy. If you are interested, just send us an email with your request to sochurch@ncyap.rr.com and we will forward a copy to you. Paula



I don't want a Black History Month.
Black history is American history.
~Morgan Freeman

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

South Church is part of an Ecumenical Youth Group program with the downtown Pittsfield congregations. December 26th through January 1st, 16 youth from the area, two from South Church, (Pamela Pixley and Samantha Sperlonga) traveled to North Carolina for a youth retreat called "Winterlight." There, they joined hundreds of other youth from around the country to enjoy skiing, Bible studies and a dance. The group will continue to meet every other Sunday starting Feb. 1st throughout the school year.



The following are reflections on their trip.

Ann Roche
Children/Youth Director

An Exciting Trip to North Carolina



I can't believe it's been over a week since I was in North Carolina at Kanuga Winterlight. This experience was honestly life-changing and was one of the best things to ever happen to me.

Has anyone ever been lost before? Not just lost like with directions on the road or something but lost in your mind, not knowing like what to do. I sure have, and the theme of Winterlight 95 was "Lost And Found." When I first got there I had this feeling within myself that this isn't the place for me and that I need to go home like right now, but that's expected right? I've never been that far away by myself like without my family and friends until a week ago, and it's scary honestly being a lot of miles away with a group of kids and adults you barely know or don't even know at all? Just the vibe of everyone there is truly great.

Before Kanuga, as I said, I was lost in my mind and unsure of myself and unsure about my love for God. It was like my love for God was fading because of how lost I was in my own mind, I mean I was very lost in my own mind. I miss everyone I met at Kanuga so much right now. We do a lot of three way and four way calls pretty much daily and nightly. I met someone at Kanuga who was also a camper like myself and we connected pretty well and he said a lot of great things to me at the healing service we had at Winterlight. Now this healing service was intense and it was the first time I've ever

experienced something like this, and I wouldn't mind being at another healing service. It was great and really refreshed me.

I did a lot of thinking about the main story we learned at Winterlight which was the story of the lost son. The son left his father and was selfish in a lot of ways and only cared about money but he came back to his dad eventually and was very sorry and felt terrible to the point he wanted to be a servant to his father but his father was happy to see him and had him put in the best clothes and ready to feast! It took me pretty much the whole trip to figure out the lesson-- well the main lesson of this story, but what I have come to realize in a way all of us have moments where we can be selfish, and all of us have gotten lost but not just in the way of direction with not knowing where you're going.

Samantha Sperlonga

LIFE'S TEACHINGS

I've learned...
that we should be glad God doesn't give us everything we ask for.

I've learned...
That it's those small daily happenings that make life so spectacular.

I've learned...
That under everyone's hard shell is someone who wants to be appreciated and loved.

I've learned...
That the Lord didn't do it all in one day. What makes me think I can?

I've learned
That to ignore the facts does not change the facts.

I've learned...
That when you plan to get even with someone, you are only letting that person continue to hurt you.

I've learned...
That opportunities are never lost; that someone will take the ones you miss.

I've learned....
That life is tough, but I'm tougher.



Ladies Benevolent Society

We have a couple of quilts made and we're trying to decide if we want to raffle one off during the year in addition to the Harvest Craft Fair raffle this year. Watch future *Epistles* for our **BIG** decision.

In the meantime, we are will be making items for the craft fair. **Sandy Rawson**, a new member, is a very talented quilter and crafter and she is going to share some of her ideas with us. We are going to be busy.

We did do some 'Call to Care' visits this year. We made cookies and went to visit people who are unable to attend church. We plan to do it again in 2015 around the holidays.

We are still looking for new members. We would love to have you join us. You don't have to know how to quilt or sew. You can bring your knitting, crocheting, craft fair ideas or just yourself. The social aspect is something we all look forward to each week and the great homemade desserts are a plus.

Marge Demary

THRIFT SHOP NEWS

The New Year is starting out quite favorably for us in the shop. We have developed a number of regular customers who rave about our selection of clothes and gifts. Now that the holidays are over and having put away all of the Christmas items, we are in the midst of marking down much of the winter clothing. All of the sweaters, pants and suit jackets are half price.

As many people know, Audra and I usually go into the shop one day a week, in addition to the regular hours, to sort, price and generally reorganize. Unfortunately, it often involves some lifting. We find ourselves now in need of some help on a regular basis, as the work is becoming increasingly difficult for us both, physically. Anyone who would like to volunteer to help with this effort would be most welcome (men as well as women). It most likely would not involve more than one day a month, if we get enough people.

Anyone who is interested should see either Audra or Nancy. Some of our tasks for the next few weeks will involve sorting things out for the upcoming tag sale, which will be sometime at the end of March. The date has not yet been set, but start cleaning out your closets.

As always, we thank all of you for your donations, your help and your encouragement.

KEEP WARM!

Nancy deForest and Audra Kinner

Do you want to keep abreast of what is happening at South Church, when it is happening, where it is happening, and who is involved? Soooo!



It is February once again and that means the small, tan envelope will appear with this issue of the newsletter for your yearly subscription payment of \$3.00.

You may place the envelope in the collection plate on a Sunday morning, or mail to South Congregational Church, c/o Pamela Garrett, 110 South Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

Thank you for your support which helps with the costs of mailing, printing and production of our newsletter.

Priscilla Anthony, *Epistle* Editor

MAY MATTOON

We met for our first meeting of 2015 on January 6th at noon. Dessert and coffee were provided by our hostesses Ruth Austin, Karen Allender and Jeannine Rontowski. Dessert was a homemade shortbread cookie and ice cream with a choice of toppings – very tasty! The tables were trimmed with long strings of silver-colored beads, small purple flowers and small stems of dried hydrangeas – a very pretty presentation.

The business meeting elected our officers for 2015. It was agreed that the officers would remain the same. However, Mary Wheat and Pat Nixon will be in charge of Bake Sales, thereby replacing Gerry Whiton who is no longer a Pittsfield resident.

Gerry now resides at Colonial Gardens, Apt. 108,
105 Cherry Hill Drive,
Beverly, MA 01915
Phone: 978-922-2530

Ruth Campbell will be in charge of sending cards. Speaking of Bake Sales, \$218 was raised at our Christmas Cookie Sale.

The need for a replacement refrigerator for the Parlor kitchen was discussed. May Mattoon and Ladies Benevolent Society agreed to split the cost. It has since been replaced.

We are still on the lookout for future programs for this year. Suggestions for programs are welcome from anyone.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, February 3rd at noon. Hostesses are Shirley Vickery, Dot Kresge and Pam Garrett.

Alice Gallup

To the Editor of *The South Church Epistle*:
A Simple Tribute

Thirty years ago this month, Priscilla Anthony became the editor of *The Epistle*. Priscilla might be able to tell you how many newsletters she has composed - season after season, year after year. With a Sunday deadline, Priscilla's "reporters" submitted their news on typed and scribbled pieces of paper – births, marriages, deaths, fairs, May Mattoon notes, children's plays, picnics, church suppers, ministers' messages.

In 1985, putting *The Epistle* together meant editing stories, re-typing them, pasting up the columns, and finding decorative images. Often the Editor would insert a humorous story or appropriate cartoon to fill out the yellow pages. Then the church secretary would take over, making stencil masters and cranking up the mimeo machine, hoping the inks would not smear. By Friday or Saturday, *The Epistle* would be in members' mailboxes.

Until the mid-1990s, this process happened every two weeks, as *The Epistle* was bi-weekly. Although the processes have changed, *The Epistle* remains the primary way our members get the news of our church community.

On January 24th at the 164th Annual Meeting of South Church, we celebrated Priscilla's milestone as Editor. Paula Haskell dug into the files to recreate the first page of 30 years of *Epistles*. These were made into 30 banners that were held aloft in Priscilla's honor, an impressive sight. Joel read a tribute to Priscilla by Laurie Norton Moffat, President of the Norman Rockwell Museum, which Priscilla has served for 35 years. The members and friends of South Church are presenting a donation to the Norman Rockwell Museum as a tribute to Priscilla Anthony. (Contributions made out to "Norman Rockwell Museum" may still be turned in at the church office.)

Dear Editor Priscilla, we take this opportunity to offer you heartfelt appreciation for your high standards, your gentle humor, your devotion to your job, and most especially for your unfailing graciousness and cheerfulness. Well done! Thank you! (And, oh yes, please remind us of the next Epistle deadline.)

Mary Rentz

Editor's Note:

Because of the suddenness of this beautiful and unexpected tribute, I will appropriately extend my sincere thanks in the next issue of *Epistle* (after returning to earth).

February 2015

South Congregational Church



<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
1 Worship in the Sanctuary with Communion 10 am Women's Book Club 11:30 am	2 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	3 Spiritual Support Group 10 am May Mattoon Luncheon 12 noon Men's Forum 12 noon Church Council 7 pm	4 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am UCC Clergy 12 noon St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	5 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	6 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	7 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
8 Parlor Worship 10 am Inward Journeys 7 pm	9 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	10 Men's Forum 12 noon Diaconate 7 pm	11 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm Trustees 6 pm	12 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	13 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	14 VALENTINE'S DAY AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
15 Parlor Worship 10 am with Linda Worcester <i>Coffee Hour Collections for the Language Project</i>	16 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	17 Spiritual Support Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon Mission Board 7 pm	18 ASH WEDNESDAY Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am Berkshire Place 10:45 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	19 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent Chancel Choir 7 pm	20 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4pm Coffee House Concert 7 pm AA 6:15 pm	21 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Pittsfield Squares 7 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
22 1st Sunday in Lent Worship 10 am Lenten Study 11:30 am Epistle Deadline 11 am	23 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	24 Spiritual Support Group 10 am Men's Forum 12 noon Church Council 7 pm	25 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	26 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	27 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4pm AA 6:15 pm	28 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm
MARCH 1 Worship in the Sanctuary with Communion 10 am Women's Book Club 11:30 am	MARCH 2 Yarn Spinners 7 pm	MARCH 3 Spiritual Support Group 10 am May Mattoon Luncheon 12 noon Men's Forum 12	MARCH 4 Food Pantry 7:30 – 11 am UCC Clergy 12 noon St. Joe's Dinner 5 pm	MARCH 5 Food Pantry 7:30-11 am Ladies Benevolent 9:30 am Chancel Choir 7 pm	MARCH 6 Lord & Tailor 10 am-4 pm AA 6:15 pm	MARCH 7 AA 10:15 am Lord & Tailor 12-4 pm Al-Anon 7 pm