

The Spire

Congregational Church of Somersville
United Church of Christ

October, 2008



Board of Nominating Looking for Right Fit (submitted by Marilyn Hare)

The Board of Nominating is planning a telephone canvas of the membership and friends of the church to discuss their interests in the work of the work of the church. Members can expect a call from someone on Nominating sometime in October. The board's hope is to make the bet match possible between the members of the church and the boards and committees that do the work of the church. Callers will ask three basic questions:

- 1) What work of the church speaks to you the most?
- 2) Is there a specific board or function you would like to be involved in now or in the future?
- 3) Is there anyone you know who has expressed an interest in working on a board or committee in the church to you? Do you know of anyone who would like to be more involved in the work of the church?

In the next few weeks, think about your talents and interests and how you might best contribute to the work of the church. When someone from Nominating calls, please take a few minutes to talk with her about the way in which you might help.

Those serving on Nominating include: Marilyn Hare, Pat Pinney, Geneva Farnham, Marj Butler, Ginny Longueuil and Sharon Miller.

From the Pastor's Desk ..

Friends in Christ,

There is a lot of static in the media this election season. I think that is probably true every four years as we prepare to elect our President, but I think it is especially true this year.

Changes in the way we receive our media are driving the increase in static. For example:

- The cable news channels, faced with the obligation to pull in viewers 24/7, are driven to shamelessly hype everything as though it is all “**Breaking News!**” Professional pundits yell at each other in 15-second sound bites in order to stir up passions from partisans.
- Online blogs have proliferated exponentially. Some are reasonably reliable sources of information and commentary; others are even worse than the tabloids. Often it's hard to know which is which, but they all have an agenda they are pushing, so one has to be wary. The good ones make their agendas clearly known.
- Meanwhile, the “traditional” media – newspapers and network newscasts – are finding themselves caught flat-footed. As they scramble to compete, they too have become entangled in scandals of their own making and they are cutting budgets for independent journalism. Caught off guard and bleeding readers and viewers, they often become mere echo chambers to what has already been reported sensationally online or on cable news.

It is no wonder that public surveys reveal little trust in the traditional news media – or any news medium, for that matter.

What are we to do as responsible citizens? How can we cut through the static?

As responsible *Christian* citizens, we are to seek guidance from our faith. Our faith doesn't tell us for whom to vote, but our faith does direct our principles and values, and we can vote according to our principles and values. When we focus on our deeply held, faith-driven commitments, the hype and clutter foisted upon us by the media can fall away. What we are left with is the peaceful confidence that we are making the best choice that we can.



The Board of Christian Education, in conjunction with the Board of Missions, will host a potluck dinner and guided discussion on faith and the election beginning at 6PM on Friday, October 24th. Nobody's going to be told for whom he or she should vote, but we will talk about how our faith can inform our decisions. People of all political persuasions are welcomed and encouraged to come and share respectfully with one another.

Hope to see you there!

Faithfully yours,

Graham Van Keuren

From our Student Pastor (submitted by Brent Damrow)

Greetings and peace to you in this most wonderful and welcoming place, the Congregational Church of Somersville. You have opened your arms and hearts to me as I have begun the process of becoming part of the community and for that I am very grateful.

As you might be aware, my name is Brent Damrow and I will be serving as your Student Pastor or Pastoral Intern for this academic year. I am excited to be part of the community and look forward to being involved in worship, programs, education, extending care and the myriad of other ways that we serve as the body of Christ here in this time and in this place. If we have not yet been introduced - I hope that you might take the chance to introduce yourself in fellowship time or even send me an e-mail at brent.damrow@yale.edu.

I am currently a second year student at Yale Divinity School and am pursuing a call to ordained parish ministry. Yale is an ecumenical divinity school; meaning that I am studying and growing in faith with people from many different Christian traditions. My time at Yale has been a true blessing and has changed my life in compelling ways. I cannot wait to see how my time with Somersville continues my learning and growth.



I grew up in the Midwest as a son of two educators and a grandson of dairy farmers and a Lutheran pastor. Before coming to Yale I had worked for nearly 15 years in colleges and universities in roles that helped me to teach, nurture, support and challenge students. It was a

profession that brought much joy into my life and taught me much about the value of relationships, the blessings of community and the idea that each of us has gifts to share and things we can learn from one another. In many ways my time in education was a form of ministry.

Yet, the time has come for me to follow a calling to parish ministry that I first felt nearly 20 years ago. My journey with the UCC began when I moved to New England and stumbled upon the Old South Church in Boston. I have been deeply shaped by Old South and its faithful, historic, open and affirming congregation that is committed to social justice and living as the body of Christ. I believe strongly in the Congregational polity that allows individual congregations the freedom and flexibility to follow their own faith journey. At the end of the day, I believe that each of us as the ministers of the church are here to help one another live into the promise of Christ our Lord, bringing our faith into our daily lives and daily interactions. I have already in my short time here seen numerous ways how you live out those two great commandments - to love God and to love one another as ourselves.

It is clear that I will learn a great deal from the church as well as from each of you. I hope that I am able to help the congregation continue to grow in their understanding and love of God. I face the coming year with hope and faith that our journey together will be blessed by God. I look forward to getting to know each of you and look forward to walking with you as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Peace,

Brent

Thanks to ..

- .. all who volunteered to take on "service opportunities" during September.
- .. those who gave to the 2nd Mile Missions during September to benefit Neighbors in Need.
- .. everyone who contributed to the success of the cordon bleu supper.
- .. those who helped prepare and serve the meal at Cornerstone Soup Kitchen on Sept. 9.
- .. all who supported the Blacksmith Shoppe this past month.



Thanks from ..

Marjorie Bruch – “Thanks to everyone who sent cards, offered prayers, came to visit, called and made inquiries during my recent surgery, hospitalization, and recovery. I am slowly, but surely, recuperating.”

Opportunities in October

	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Fellowship Hosts</u>
Oct. 5	Marj Butler Linda McEwen	Joan Lange Patrick Forbes	Elaine Hancock	Linda McEwen
Oct. 12	Patrick Forbes Everett Baker	Wayne & Jen Hare	Ruth Bruch	
Oct. 19	Barbara Abbe Ruth Bruch	Patrick Forbes Marj Butler	Yvonne Wood	
Oct. 26	Tom & Elaine Hancock	Barbara Abbe Geneva Farnham	Sydney Cohen	

Christian Education (submitted by Rev. Van Keuren & Sue Comparetto)

Pot Luck Dinner and Discussion

All church members and friends are invited to partake in a potluck dinner and discussion on Friday, October 24. Dinner begins at 6 PM and will be followed by our views on “How our faith can help us vote/making political decisions”. Bring a dish to share and place setting(s).



Stewardship Tally (submitted by Ginny Longueuil & Jack Collins)



We are happy to report that our Stewardship Tree has produced a lot of fruit this year. Forty-six faith pledges have been turned in that add up to \$74,426. Thank you all for your faith and support in our church and its activities and ministries.

Request from Finance (submitted by Mae Chillson)

All Board budgets should be submitted to Finance by Tuesday, October 14th.

Report of the Treasurer (submitted by Sydney Cohen)

The secret of contentment is the realization that life is a gift not a right. But Godliness with contentment is great gains. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

1 Timothy 6:6-7.

	August 2008	August 2008	Budgeted for August 2008
Pledges	\$3,185.50	\$ 6,317.00	\$ 6,083.33
Income	\$ 6,607.89	\$ 10,931.05	\$ 8,743.74
Expenses	\$ 8,796.70	\$ 8,880.11	\$10,065.65

August Collections

Fundraisers- Roast Beef dinner \$2,096.50



Donations

Ladies Aid- \$1,000.00- Thanks!

Monthly missions- August

The monthly mission was the collection of school supplies, backpacks, non-perishable food items and clothing for various agencies. It was a successful venture.

Pledges were very low for August due to low attendance. Though, our expenses for August were in line. Without the donation from Ladies Aid, the work on the back steps could not have been paid for. However the work is completed and has been paid for in full. Our thanks to Ladies Aid!

“Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF” October’s Extra Mile Mission

(submitted by Deb Robidoux)

Good ideas often have humble beginnings. Such is the story of "Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF," which started in 1950 when a group of young trick-or-treaters went door-to-door on Halloween with their pastor

in Philadelphia. At each door, they not only opened their bags for candy, but also held out empty milk cartons to collect coins for children in need overseas. They collected \$17 and sent it to UNICEF. The result was much bigger than those children ever imagined.

Today, Halloween means more than candy, costumes, ghosts, and goblins. It means **vaccines, clean water, and improved nutrition** for less fortunate children. It means educating our children about the importance of multi-culturalism and community values. "Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF" is a full-year program that provides youth leadership opportunities even after Halloween.

Since 1950, "Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF" has been responsible for bringing new meaning to Halloween. Through the years, the children of the United States have raised more than \$119 million to help build a better future for children around the globe.

"When we were learning about UNICEF, I realized that I actually make a difference and that **I have the power to save another child's life,**" said Caitlin, a 7th grade student. "Children can help children and that's why I took part in helping to save lives with UNICEF."



Please support our Sunday School children generously as they lead us in this important mission.

-article from UNICEF.org

Our Property (submitted by Holly Marek)

Thank you again to all of you who continue to give your inspiration and perspiration to maintaining this beautiful and sacred property. Know that your efforts are much appreciated.

Just to recap the summer's activities; 1) the church lawn, parsonage, blacksmith shop and The Green has been maintained, thanks to some hard working volunteers. 2) We have hired a new cleaning person, Diane Navin, who comes in weekly for 2 hrs per week. This is making a noticeable improvement and it is noted she is an exceptional individual of high standards of work ethics and efforts, we a fortunate to have her.3) Restorations to the foundation and stairs of the northwest corner have been completed with effective results in eliminating water in the basement (Hallelujah!), as



well as adhering to fire code standards.4) still in the process of completing the conference area, with possibly adding one more piece of functional furniture for storage purposes(not in the financial budget yet).

Now falling into Fall, it is time to think of a fall clean up date. We are looking for volunteers to sign up to work on removing air conditioners and screens, removal of leaves, cleaning of gutters....etc. Although we have decided **October 25th** to be an official clean-up date, with rain date of November 1st, it has been noted that some people prefer to volunteer for a specific task, and complete the task at a day and time most convenient for them. This is just fine, if you could just let Graham or I know what you would like to do, so we can take it off the list.

In general we are always working away on the never ending list of maintenance and improvements which is just the nature property. Thank you again.

Ladies Aide Society (submitted by Ginny Longueuil)



All women of the church are invited to attend the Tuesday, October 14 meeting of the Ladies Aide to be held in the church social room beginning at 1 PM. This will be a general business meeting including a discussion on Thanksgiving baskets and Holiday Treasures. Hostesses will be Barbara Abbe and Marge Morgan; Elaine Hancock will offer the devotions.

Blacksmith Shoppe (submitted by Barbara Abbe)

The Blacksmith Shoppe will be open each Saturday in October from 10 AM – 3 PM. There are opportunities for anyone and everyone to help contribute to the success of the Shoppe. How??

- 1) There are two shifts for help at the Shoppe each Saturday: 9 AM – 12:15 and 12:15-3:30. Sign up in the social room if you can spare a few hours on any given Saturday.
- 2) Donations of new or gently used household items, books, small furniture, etc are welcome, but please, not clothing, tv's or stereos. Contact Barbara Abbe, Marge Morgan or Joan Lange to arrange for drop off of items you are willing to donate.
- 3) We can definitely use more baked goods on Saturdays as these are good sellers.
- 4) Help is always needed prior to opening and at closing time to assist in moving items out to the lawn for display and moving unsold items back into the Shoppe at closing time.

frozen peas, frozen pearl onions, cans of pumpkin pie filling, etc).

Fundraising Suppers (submitted by Ruth Bruch)

Chicken Cordon Bleu a Success

Once again, we had a success fundraising supper on September 13 with our homemade chicken cordon bleu dinner. We put up 179 dinners (which is slightly less than our usual with only fifteen take out orders), but everyone in attendance certainly enjoyed the meal set before them including the sweet potatoes that were a hit. On Friday morning Carlese, Barbara B., Millie M., Nick and Graham worked diligently to pound the chickens and wrap the ham and cheese in the breasts. Our preparation crew on Saturday morning was skeletal, but this dedicated group persevered. Supper income totaled \$1795.00; expenses were \$349.51. Most of the money brought in at these suppers is “outside” money with maybe five or six church members attending the dinner. Proceeds have gone toward our general operating expenses which helps when our pledges don’t meet our needs.

Pot Roast Harvest Supper

Reservations are now being accepted for our Harvest Supper to be held Saturday, October 11 at 5 & 6:15 PM. Cost continues to be \$10 for adults and \$5 for children ages 5-10. Take out orders are also available from 5:30-6 and 6:45-7 PM.



The menu for October 11 is tossed salad, homemade rolls and seasonal breads, pot roast, potato, carrots, onions (w/ gravy), beverage and homemade apple crisp with ice cream. A good portion of the needed supplies was signed up for this past Sunday, but there are still opportunities to assist. For example, we still need grape tomatoes, onions, breads (pumpkin, apple & date nut – recipes available), apple crisp, ice cream, a few more people to help serve in the dining area, and we always welcome help in cleaning up after the supper. A sign up sheet for help and/or donations is posted in the social room – or call/email Ruth at the church office to see what is needed.

Looking Ahead ..

November 8 we will host our Turkey Supper and on December 6 we will prepare a Holiday Ham Supper. It’s never too early to pick up needed supplies if you happen to catch them on sale (ie. stuffing mix,

This & That

- *Fellowship hosts* are needed for the remainder of 2008. Light refreshment (any combination of coffee, punch, iced tea, or lemonade and a light snack will suffice). Please sign up in the social room if you are willing to take on this opportunity.
- Boards are reminded to be sure the office gets a copy of *meeting minutes*; office staff will be responsible for posting a copy on the board in the social room.
- We’d still like to communicate via *email* with our church members and friends. If you have an email address, please share it with us at somcong@aol.com.
- The Spire is being posted on our new church website and emailed to church members and friends.
- *Christmas cards* of our church sanctuary at Christmastime are still available for purchase. There are 18 cards per box at \$10. Boxes will be available during coffee fellowship or at the church office.
- Any individual or Board wanting to be on the *October Cabinet agenda* should notify Bert, Graham or Ruth by Oct. 9

Congregational Meeting and Cabinet Summary

At the congregational meeting on September 21 a motion was made, seconded and carried to permanently institute the revised bylaws as voted on in September, 2007 with two changes:

pg. 7, par. 2 of Board of Trustees: adding, “These meetings will be organized and facilitated by the moderator.”

Pg. 3, end of par. 2, Moderator; adding, “The moderator shall organize and facilitate the Board of Trustee meetings.”

Copies of our Bylaws are available in the church office.



We also heard a report from the Parking Subcommittee that involves making space available on the Green for up to 14 vehicles. The plan is to thin out the tree line between the parsonage and Green and to remove the three large trees on the southeast corner of the Green. Three bids were reviewed for the tree removal. It was pointed out that we need

to look at raising the funds to pay for this work, but we have approved expenditures in the past and then campaigned for reimbursement. A motion was made, seconded and carried that we approve the spending of funds for tree removal. A motion was also made, seconded and carried that the committee continue its research on the parking plan.

Field of Flags

The field of flags is due to be assembled on our Green on Saturday, November 8 – this is the same day as our fundraising Turkey Supper. Over 4000 flags will have to be put in place and the task will require several volunteers. It was suggested that we contact Somers High School Honor Society or the Somers Fire Department for assistance. Anyone interested/available to help is asked to sign up in the church social room by Tuesday, October 7.



CT Conference UCC

“Nurturing Generosity” is the theme of the 141st Annual meeting, Part II of the CT Conference UCC that will be held October 17 & 18 at Central High School in Bridgeport. The keynote speaker will be The Rev. Stephen Gray, the Indiana/Kentucky Conference Minister.

Pacifist churches under fire for Ahmadinejad dinner

by G. Jeffrey MacDonald

Religion News Service

September 19, 2008

NEW YORK — Keepers of Protestantism’s pacifist traditions will showcase just how far they’ve come from their humble roots in Europe’s persecuted peasantry when they share an intimate dinner in New York next Thursday (Sept. 25) with a world leader.

It’s not just any world leader, however, but Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who’s been labeled an international pariah for his nuclear ambitions, denial of the Holocaust, saber-rattling toward Israel and alleged support of terrorism.

But for Quakers and Mennonites who’ll be at the table, breaking bread with this infamous dignitary means drawing deeply on the same spiritual roots that sustained their embattled ancestors long ago.

“Jesus ate with lepers and with tax collectors, and in the United States right now, Iran would be in that category,” says Arli Klassen, executive director of the Mennonite Central Committee, an outreach arm for Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in the United States and Canada.

“The criticisms levied at Jesus were that he ate with ... people of ill repute, and we’re getting similar criticisms.”

The New York gathering, an Iftar dinner to commemorate the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, will mark the fourth time since 2006 that Ahmadinejad has met with American religious leaders. Each time, Klassen says, it’s been at Ahmadinejad’s request.

Mennonites and members of the American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker outreach group, have attended each meeting. This year other Quakers, plus representatives from the World Council of Churches and the New York-based group Religions for Peace, will take part along with their invited guests.

This newfound camaraderie, however, isn’t appreciated everywhere.

“Ahmadinejad represents a rejection of everything these religious groups stand for,” said Abraham Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League. “Their breaking bread with President Ahmadinejad is a perversion of the search for peace and an appalling betrayal of religious values.”

Enduring scorn, however, is nothing new for these historic peace churches.

Since the 16th century, Mennonites and other Anabaptists have raised ire by refusing to take up arms under any circumstances. Citing biblical calls to love one’s enemies and pursue peace, they refused to fight — even when conscripted or attacked. For this and other nonconformist practices, they faced widespread persecution.

Four centuries later, their spiritual descendants served prison terms in the United States during wartime until the government began permitting nonmilitary service for conscientious objectors.

Quakers, who trace spiritual roots to 17th century Britain, also approach peacemaking as a duty. Theirs flows from an understanding of every human being as possessive of a divine spark. This “inner light,” believed to be present in every human being, forms a basis for hope that peace can be achieved with even the most hostile of foes. Violence is never an option for Quakers.

Coming from these traditions, Quakers and Mennonites feel a sense of mission to forge peace on a global stage whenever possible. That means being open to long-term dialogue, even with a figure who holds reprehensible views, according to Mark Graham, director of external affairs for the American Friends Service Committee.

“You can’t just engage with people with whom you agree on all issues,” Graham says. “That leads to a very myopic view of the world. And you miss a lot of opportunities with that approach.”

At this point, some pacifists see Ahmadinejad more as an outcast — at least when he visits the United States — than a prestigious host or esteemed guest. That leaves them with only one option whenever he extends a dinner invitation.

“At this point in time, there are virtually no other places for the president of the Iran to have discussions with people in the U.S.,” Klassen says. “There’s an opportunity for discussion, and we don’t believe we can just step out and say, ‘no.’ God has given us an opportunity, and it’s our responsibility to say ‘yes.’”

About our Members & Friends

Anniversary Celebrations

Couples celebrating anniversaries this month include: Tony & Michele Bellafronte, Josh & Tracey Clague, Patrick & Dotty Forbes

Birthdays

Folks having birthdays this month include: Greg Forbes, Jack Bruch, Tom Gelineau, Jeff Eldridge, Ryan Unger, Collin Kenney, Rose Petkis, Brooke Stevens, Evelyn Simpson, Jillian Farnham, Noah Sherman, Kasey Peters, Kelly Dooley, Lauren Carlo, Stacy Seibert, Ben Carriere, Caitlyn Stevens.



To all others having a special day in October, we wish you the best. Anyone wanting to share a celebration should contact Ruth in the office.

Congregational Church of Somersville

Vision Statement

We will be a faith-based church welcoming diversity, empowering the individual, growing in faith and doing God’s work in the global community in unity and love.

Behavioral Covenant

- We will follow a process that includes unconditional listening and time to collect thought, enabling all individuals to comfortably express their opinions.
- Our actions and demeanor will support and empower all participants
- All opinions will be welcomed, reflectively considered and respected.
- Opinions will be expressed with humility, self-control, gentleness, and kindness.
- We will look for common ground as we search for consensus, and we will respect that consensus.
- We will affirm by our works and actions our common goal to serve God.

the Rev. Graham Van Keuren, Pastor
Brent Damrow, Student Pastor

October 2008

Berton Chillson, Moderator
Sydney Cohen, Treasurer
Ruth Bruch, Clerk/Office Administrator
Tom & Elaine Hancock, Web Site Coordinators

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Congregational Church of Somersville 22 Maple St., PO Box I Somersville, CT 06072 860-749-7741 860-749-5132 (fax) somcong@aol.com (email) Worship 10 AM Nursery Care Provided			1 Bible Study 9:30-11 Choir 7 PM	2	3	4 Blacksmith Shoppe 10 AM - 3 PM
5 Communion	6	7 AA 6:15-8:30 PM Deacons 7 PM	8 Bible Study 9:30-11 Choir 7 PM	9 Cabinet Agenda Requests Due	10 Peel Veggies 8:30 AM	11 Blacksmith Shoppe 10 AM - 3 PM Harvest Pot Roast Supper 5 & 6:15 PM
12	13 <i>Columbus Day</i>	14 Ladies Aid 1 PM AA 6:15-8:30 PM Finance 7 PM	15 Bible Study 9:30-11 Choir 7 PM	16	17 UCC CT Conference Annual Meeting	18 UCC CT Conference Annual Meeting Blacksmith Shoppe 10 AM - 3 PM
19 Cabinet	20	21 AA 6:15-8:30 Nominating 7:30 PM	22 Bible Study 9:30-11 Choir 7 PM	23	24 Spire deadline Pot Luck & Discussion 6 PM	25 Blacksmith Shoppe 10 AM - 3 PM Property Fall Clean-up
26	27	28 Blair Manor Worship 10:30 AM AA 6:15-8:30	29 Bible Study 9:30-11 Choir 7 PM	30	31 <i>Halloween</i>	