

# The Spire

Congregational Church of Somersville  
United Church of Christ

September, 2008



## From the Moderator (submitted by Berton Chillson)

I hope everyone has had a wonderful summer and is looking forward to returning to church, Sunday School, choir, and of course, church meetings. And speaking of church meetings, please mark your calendar for September 21, a most important membership meeting, where we will vote on making our temporary by-laws permanent. The Bylaws Committee met periodically through the past year and one change was made on page 7, Board of Trustees, par. 2 should now read: "The Board of Trustees will meet together as a group at least three times a year. These meetings will be organized and facilitated by the moderator."

The Parking Sub-committee will also present updated parking information, and you will be asked for your comments and your approval in order to move forward with the parking plans.

Following the membership meeting, we will have our Cabinet meeting. Any board wishing to be heard at the Cabinet meeting, please be sure to let Ruth, the pastor, or me know so that you can be added to the agenda.

We look forward to seeing you on the 21<sup>st</sup>!

## Congregational Meeting



## From the Pastor's Desk ..

Friends in Christ,



This month I offer a brief update our endeavor to have a "sacred conversation on race" that our denomination has advocating since the spring. Recently Eric and I attended a conversation on race held at the Pequot Museum on the Mashantucket Reservation. The day's events included an American Anthropological Association video about the origin of the concept of race, a tour of the special traveling exhibit on race in America entitled simply *Race*, and an hour-long discussion about the intersection of race and our faith.

Here are my impressions:

- 1.) The video from the American Anthropological Association was a useful primer on the science of race and how race-consciousness developed in Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. We tend to think of the concept of race as though it has been around forever. That's not true... it's a post-colonial construct.
- 2.) The *Race* exhibit is fantastic for almost all ages – certainly anyone middle-school aged or up should find it interesting. The exhibits are very interactive and bring up concerns that many people haven't thought of before, such as the debate within Native American communities over the use of American Indian caricatures for sports team mascots. *Race* takes about two hours to examine carefully; if you plan to go, you should hurry. The exhibit moves along to its next museum home in mid-September.
- 3.) The concluding group discussion was disappointing. Part of the problem was that there was not a lot of racial or ethnic diversity represented in the discussion. As far as I could tell, everyone in the group identified as white. Especially given the fact that the Afro-centric Christianity of Jeremiah Wright (the pastor of Barack and Michelle Obama's former church) provided the impetus for the sacred conversation in the first place, it would have been very helpful to have the voices of people of color represented.

Again, this latest effort to have a sacred conversation shows how difficult it is to engage diverse people frankly about race in America. Discussing the widely divergent powerful experiences and strong beliefs about race, even in the context of a shared faith, is feared like a poison

pill. And so we don't discuss.

Thankfully God is not through with us yet. May we continue to pray the part of Jesus' prayer in John that has become a motto for the UCC: "May we all be one!"

Faithfully yours,

Graham Van Keuren

**Thanks to ..**

- .. all who participated in worship opportunities during July & August..
- .. those who contributed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mile Missions over the summer.
- .. everyone who supported the Chicken Barbecue in July and the August Roast Beef supper by donating, working or attending.
- .. those who contributed to the meals for the residents of My Sisters Place in July and August.
- .. all who took part in the worship services during Graham's vacation time.
- .. those who assisted with VBS this summer.



**Opportunities in September**

	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Fellowship Hosts</u>
9/07	Donna Pendleton Barbara Baugniet	Marge Morgan Deb Robidoux		Gen Farnham Ginny Longueuil
9/14	Tom & Elaine Hancock	Nick Wood Patrick Forbes		Linda McEwen
9/21	Deb Robidoux Syd Cohen & families	Ruth Bruch Ginny Longueuil		Bert & Mae Chillson
9/28	Joan Lange Ginny Longueuil	Roger Pease Sharon Miller		* Missions luncheon OR Barbara Abbe Marge Morgan Joan Lange

**Christian Education** (submitted by Rev. Van Keuren)

Please take note of the upcoming events your Christian Education Board has in store for you!



Rally Day is scheduled for September 14<sup>th</sup>. In addition to dedicating the teachers and students for the Sunday School year ahead, we will also introduce students to the new teaching teams, show them their classrooms, and have a group activity that will be shared with the whole congregation during the fellowship hour after worship. Everyone is encouraged to invite friends and neighbors in Pre-K through Grade 8 to join us for a fun and active Rally Day!

The regular Sunday School curriculum for grades Pre-K through Grade 8 begins on September 21<sup>st</sup> and continues every Sunday following. Adults continue to meet at 9:30 AM on Wednesday for Bible Study. All are welcome!

**Music Notes** (submitted by Jason Stefanik)



It's that time of year again! The choir will return from its summer hiatus on Sunday, September 7th. Rehearsals will begin Wednesday, September 3rd at 7pm in the fellowship hall. As always, we are seeking new voices to add to the chorus. So, if you are interested in joining, or just want to try it out, drop me a line or drop by a rehearsal.

**Report of the Treasurer** (submitted by Sydney Cohen)



***He who buries his talent is making a grave mistake. Neglect not the gift that is in you. 1 Timothy 4:14***

	June 2008	July 2008	Budgeted for June, July 2008
Pledges	\$ 8,511.00	\$ 6,317.00	\$ 6,083.33
Income	\$ 11,315.31	\$ 10,931.05	\$ 8,743.74
Expenses	\$ 12,206.00	\$ 8,880.11	\$ 10,065.65

June Collections	
Fundraisers- Strawberry supper	\$2,311.00
July Collections	
Fundraisers- Chicken BBQ	\$1,700.00

Donations	
Monthly missions- June & July	
CWS- Tools & Blankets	\$ 342.00
Fisher House	\$ 281.00
Heifer International	\$ 399.00

Pledges received in June and July exceeded the budget. The income was high in June and July due to pledges as well as the phenomenal success of the fundraisers. Expenses for June were high due to VBS supplies, the start of the work on the stairs, and disbursement of funds from the mission collections.

As we gather together again after the relaxing days of summer, let us not forget to give thanks for the blessings we have received.

**Missions in September** (submitted by Deb Robidoux)

*Neighbors in Need (NIN)* is a special mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry(CAIM). Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.



The Council for American Indian Ministry(CAIM) is the voice for American Indian people in the UCC. CAIM provides Christian ministry and witness to American Indians and to the wider church. Justice issues that affect American Indian life are communicated to the whole UCC by CAIM.

Historically, the forebears of the UCC established churches and worked with Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arickara, and Hockak in North and South Dakota, Wisconsin and northern Nebraska. Today there are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. CAIM supports these local churches and their pastors. In addition, CAIM strives to be a resource for more than 1,000 individuals from dozens of other tribes and nations who are members of other UCC congregations and to strengthen their participation in the life of the church.

***UCC Guest Missionary*** (submitted by Rev. Van Keuren)

Join us after worship on September 28<sup>th</sup> as we welcome Tim Rose, one of our UCC missionaries to France. Tim will present information about his mission work there, our church's partnership with the Reformed Church of France (RCF), and the role of the Christian church in a highly secular society.

Tim works in the RCF's program for African refugees in France. His primary responsibilities include helping them in the resettlement process and ministering to African immigrants and refugees imprisoned in French jails. There is a high level of mistrust, fear, and animosity between the native white French and the recent immigrants from their former African colonies, which adds yet another dimension to Tim's ministry. Also, he works with RCF projects related to the Middle East, specifically Palestine and Lebanon.

Tim will worship with us on Sunday, 9/28. Following worship, the Board of Missions will host church members and friends for a light luncheon and Tim will share a presentation about his missionary work. Please join us for this important conversation!

***Cornerstone*** (submitted by Ginny Longueuil)

Volunteers are needed for a service opportunity at Cornerstone Soup Kitchen in Rockville on Tuesday, September 9. This month, we will prepare and serve a meal. Anyone interested in assisting should speak with Ginny Longueuil. We can carpool from the church, leaving at 2:30 PM and will return about 6:30.

**Ladies Aide Society** (submitted by Ginny Longueuil)

A brief meeting of the Ladies Aide will be held Tuesday, September 9, at 1 PM in the social room. We will review Christmas in July and discuss any other business at hand. Millie Hare will offer devotions.



***All are Invited to Pot Luck Supper & Program***

The Ladies Aid will be hosting a pot luck supper (at 6 PM) and program on Friday, September 19. We have invited a representative from Fidelco to come speak with us about this very beneficial program with its seeing eye dogs. Bring a dish to share and place setting(s).



### ***Blacksmith Shoppe*** (submitted by Barbara Abbe)

The Blacksmith Shoppe will be open each Saturday (beginning September 6) in September and 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.

### **Fundraising Suppers** (submitted by Ruth Bruch)

#### ***Chicken Cordon Bleu Supper on Tap***

A sign up sheet has been posted in the social room for help and donations for our September 13 fundraising Chicken Cordon Bleu supper. Several key items are needed (ie. lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, onions, butter, apple pies, rolls, peas, etc.). Help will also be needed to help prepare the chicken, work in the kitchen the night of the supper, help serve in the dining area, help clean up. Won't you see how/where you can lend a hand?



Reservations are now being accepted for this supper; sittings are at 5 & 6:15 PM. Cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children ages 5-10. Menu is tossed salad, chicken cordon bleu, baked sweet potato, peas, rolls, beverage and apple pie a la mode. Take out orders will also be offered on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

#### ***Recaps of Summer Suppers***

On July 19 we held our annual chicken barbecue and it was the first time since I can't remember when that we weren't sold out! We ended up serving 168 meals. Income was \$1700.00 and expenses were

\$336.30. So, we had more than enough food to please everyone who did attend and some of the leftovers were sent to Cornerstone. Patrick and his friend, Dave, and Nick, did a super job in cooking the chickens.

The menu for August 19 was switched to a roast beef supper and this meal was a rousing success! We served 202 dinners included 31 paid take out orders and a few complimentary dinners (for peach donations). \$45 also came in as pre-dinner cash donations to help pay for the meat; \$11.50 was received as tips and turned over to the church and \$20 came in from the sale of excess roast beef. I was able to fill seats from cancellations or changes in reservations from a LONG waiting list; and even at the time of the supper, there were still plenty of names waiting to be called. The day began with a total of 85 people still wanting to come to our dinner but didn't have seats and we were able to accommodate 18 of those folks. So, there will still 67 people interested in our dinner! I think that's amazing!

We had a number of super donations including peaches from Irishbend Farm, corn and tomatoes from Elm Knoll Farm. Our income from the Roast Beef supper was \$2096.50 and expenses were \$364.06. Most of the diners are not members of our church, so the majority of money brought in on these fundraising suppers comes from "outside the church" and helps to support our budget. Thanks to *everyone* who contributed to the success of these dinners.

### **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](mailto:somcong@aol.com).
- The Spire will now be emailed and will soon be available on our new church website.
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July 15, 2008

The skyrocketing cost of rice is affecting how Stop Hunger Now and other relief organizations do their work.

Rice is the main component of the nutritious meal packages dispensed worldwide by the group, which is based in Raleigh, N.C., and led by the Rev. Ray Buchanan, a United Methodist pastor. "It (the cost) is having an absolutely direct impact on what we're going to do," Buchanan said.

As a result, Stop Hunger Now may have to reduce its goal to package 5.5 million meals during 2008 or rely on more donations from volunteers who put together the meals, he added.

Jeffrey D. Sachs, the well-known economist and special adviser to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, has described the worldwide food situation as "the worst crisis of its kind in more than 30 years," according to [The New York Times](#).

And those affected most by the crisis are the poorest of the poor, according to June Kim, who monitors hunger-related projects for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). "A lot of people living on \$2 a day are now having to pay more for food and getting less food," she said.

Trouble is everywhere, according to news reports:

- In the Horn of Africa, a lack of rain, poor harvests, soaring food prices and inflation, and violence have hampered food aid.
- In Haiti, where the cost of beans, corn and rice has skyrocketed, the very poor are literally eating mud patties made out of mud, oil and sugar.
- In Australia, a six-year drought has nearly destroyed the country's huge rice industry, reducing the rice crop by 98 percent.
- In the Philippines, the government has distributed monthly cash subsidies and "rice passes" in an effort to deal with food shortages.

## **Perfect storm**

Many say the crisis has arisen from a "perfect storm" of rising oil prices,

climate change and natural disasters.

UMCOR finds itself responding to more than just specific regional problems related to food, such as drought in sub-Saharan Africa or floods in Mozambique, according to the Rev. Sam Dixon, chief executive. "It's not localized, as it often has been in the past," he explained.

Whether because of political instability, crop loss because of a natural disaster, or the increased consumption of imported food in more countries, "there are too many factors to address with one strategy," Dixon said.

The change in eating patterns has had an impact because of an increase in average income in places such as India, China and other parts of Asia. "People who are moving out of poverty eat better and they eat higher on the food chain (that is, they eat more meat)," Buchanan explained. "All that requires enormous inputs of grain. Meat is a very inefficient source of calories given the huge inputs required."

At the same time, in the United States alone, "a third of all the corn being produced is now going to biofuels rather than human or animal consumption," Buchanan said. The push for biofuels such as ethanol has occurred as the United States tries to reduce its dependence upon oil for energy.

The amount of grain available this year also is in question. U.S. harvests of corn and soybeans are being threatened by rain and flooding, while Australian wheat farmers are coping with drought.

Those with nothing left to lose can become desperate, as shown by the food riots and demonstrations last spring in Haiti, Egypt, Yemen, Indonesia, Côte d'Ivoire, Thailand, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Uzbekistan, the Philippines and even Italy.

## **CT Conference UCC**

"Nurturing Generosity" is the theme of the 141<sup>st</sup> 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.

## About our Members & Friends

### *Anniversary Celebrations*

Those celebrating anniversaries this month include Darren & Melanie Stevens, Roger & Nancy Pease, Ezra & Kelly Dooley, George & Judy Liberty (55<sup>th</sup>)



### *Birthdays*

Eric Elley, Everett Baker, Chelsea Bernatavitz, Yvonne Wood, Pat Eastwood, Sean Farnham, Mark Ceppetelli, Erica St. John, Ed. Sharpless, and Billy McQuade are celebrating birthdays this month.

To all others having a special day in September, 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.

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# September 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 <i>Labor Day</i>	2 AA 6:15-8:30 Deacons 7 PM	3 Bible Study 9:30-11 Choir 7 PM	4	5	6 Blacksmith Shoppe 10-3
7 Communion	8	9 Ladies Aid 1 PM Cornerstone 2:30-6:30 AA 6:15-8:30 Finance 7 PM	10 Bible Study 9:30-11 Choir 7 PM Missions 7:15 PM	11 Cabinet Agenda Requests Due	12 Supper Preparation	13 Blacksmith Shoppe 10-3 Cordon Bleu Supper 5 & 6:15 PM
14 Rally Day	15	16 AA 6:15-8:30	17 Bible Study 9:30-11 Choir 7 PM	18	19 Pot Luck Supper 6 PM Fidelco program 7 PM	20 Blacksmith Shoppe 10-3
21 Membership Meeting & Cabinet Meeting	22 <i>First Day of Autumn</i>	23 Blair Manor Worship 10:30 AM AA 6:15-8:30 October Spire Deadline	24 Bible Study 9:30-11 Choir 7 PM	25	26	27 Blacksmith Shoppe 10-3
28 Missionary Guest Speaker & Luncheon	29	30 AA 6:15-8:30	Rev. Graham Van Keuren, Pastor Berton Chillson, Moderator Sydney Cohen, Treasurer Ruth Bruch, Office Administrator/Clerk			

Worship 10 AM

For the Young at Heart - Hidden Pictures



apple



bell



mug



mitten



book



trowel



safety pin



nail



banana



pot



cap



ice-cream pop