

The Spire

Congregational Church of Somersville
United Church of Christ

April, 2009



Seasonal Opportunities

Palm Sunday – April 5 – also Communion Sunday.

Maundy Thursday – April 9 – A very moving serving is held in the social hall of the church beginning at 7 PM

Good Friday – April 10 – the sanctuary will be open from 12 – 1 PM for silent prayer and meditation.



Easter Sunday – We will worship as a family on Easter Sunday at 10 AM. Please join us – invite a friend.

Children's Missions Breakfast (submitted by Erin Penhall)



Our former Palm Sunday breakfast put on by our Sunday School children is being modified .. it is now called the Children's Missions Breakfast and will be held immediately following worship on April 26. A sign up sheet for those willing to contribute to, or help at, the breakfast will soon be posted. All are invited to attend; proceeds will benefit Heifer Project International.

Interested in Membership?

Are you interested in exploring membership in the Congregational Church of Somersville? Please call the church office at 749-7741 or speak with Graham over the next few Sundays if interested.

From the Pastor

Friends in Christ,

As I write this, I have much to celebrate and be thankful for. For example, although I enjoy the snow, I am thankful that spring is here and that there is increasing warmth and light to the days. I am thankful that the choir has prepared another cantata, scheduled for Palm Sunday, and that we will be inspired through their gift of music. I am thankful that the Eastertide season is coming soon and I celebrate the gift of resurrection and new life that Easter promises.

I also offer exciting news about our church's ministry team. One of the other blessings that our church can be thankful for is our student pastor, Brent. Brent has been with us now since September of 2008 and I have enjoyed the ministry he has shared with us. Recently, he inquired if we would like to have him stay for another academic year. The Deacons discussed the idea and accepted it enthusiastically.



As is the case with Brent's placement with us this year, Yale Divinity School will pay Brent a modest stipend for his work with us next academic year while we will only reimburse him for mileage and any other professional expenses he may incur. The congregation already approved funds for a student pastor next fall, so Brent's extended time with will not negatively impact our 2009 budget.

Building up a student pastor for ministry is a valuable calling we have adopted on behalf of the whole church; I am thankful for the eagerness with which our church accepted it. Please continue to support Brent with your prayers and assist him with your specific feedback regarding the work he does here.

I hope you also have much to celebrate and be thankful for this spring. May God bless your journey through Holy Week and provide you with great joy this Easter.

Faithfully yours,

Graham Van Keuren

Thanks to ..

.. all who volunteered to take on “service opportunities” during March.
 .. those who gave to the 2nd Mile Missions during March to benefit One Great Hour of Sharing.
 .. everyone who contributed to the success of the Corned Beef & Cabbage Supper.
 .. the volunteers who helped to prepare and serve the meal at Cornerstone on March 17.
 .. those who helped the Ladies Aide prepare and serve the Somers seniors luncheon on March 24.



Thanks from ..

The Bruch family .. “Jack, Marjorie & I (Ruth) thank you all so very much for your calls, cards and prayers during my dad’s (Roy Miller) illness and passing. Your kindness and comforting words have meant a lot to us.”

Opportunities in April

Volunteers are welcome for opportunities to serve the church as ushers, greeters and readers. Please speak to Yvonne Wood if interested.

There will be no coffee fellowship following worship on Easter Sunday, April 12.

	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Fellowship Hosts</u>
April 5	Barbara Baugniet Donna Pendleton			
April 12	Tom & Elaine Hancock			None – Easter
April 19	Ray & Jean Foster			Marilyn Hare Yvonne Wood
April 26	George & Judy Liberty			CE Breakfast

From the Moderator (submitted by Ray Foster)

The *Trustees* will hold their first meeting of the year on Tuesday, March 31 @ 7:00 pm at the Meeting House Library.

Any individual or Board having business to bring before the April 19 *Cabinet* should notify Graham, Ray Foster or Ruth Bruch by Thursday, April 9.

Church Historian

Johanna Karbonic is gathering a group of long-time church members and friends to try to identify and label and index two boxfuls of old photographs. With that done, Johanna's plan is to put the photos into albums in some sort of order. It should be a fun time to reminisce over coffee and goodies. Anyone interested in assisting should speak with Johanna or Ray.



Christian Education

Wednesday Bible Study

Wednesday morning Bible study continues to meet each week from 9:30-11 AM in the social room. All are welcome.

I.

Report of the Treasurer (submitted by Sydney Cohen)



LIFE CAN ONLY BE UNDERSTOOD BY LOOKING BACKWARD, BUT IT MUST BE LIVED BY LOOKING FORWARD. Jesus said to him, “Anyone who starts to plow and then keeps looking back is of no use for the Kingdom of God.”

	February 2009	Budget 2009	YTD 2009	Budget 2009
Pledges	\$ 5,818.00	\$6,250.00	\$ 9,865.00	\$ 75,000.00
Income	\$ 10,944.56	\$9,402.04	\$17,108.97	\$ 112,825.00
Expenses	\$11,925.71	\$10,384.64	\$22,822.61	\$ 124,617.12

February Collections

Fundraiser Dinner- Baked Stuffed Shrimp-- \$2,860.00

Monthly missions-

Silver Lake--- \$159.00

Souper Bowl Collection--- \$ 214.25

Pledges were higher than in January and combined with the fundraiser proceeds, our income was higher than budgeted. However, expenses were slightly higher due to insurance and fuel costs.

Missions



Cornerstone (submitted by Barbara Baugniet)

Another opportunity is offered to help cook and/or serve a meal at Cornerstone Soup Kitchen in Rockville on Tuesday, April 21. For those interested in helping to prepare a chicken dinner, we can meet at and carpool from the church at 2:30. Folks willing to help serve should arrive at Cornerstone by 4:30 PM. Please speak with Barbara Baugniet or Johanna Karbonic if interested.

2nd Mile Missions (submitted by Jean Foster)

The Fisher House Program – Because members of the military and their families are stationed worldwide and must often travel great distances for specialized medical care, Fisher house Foundation donates “comfort homes” built on the grounds of major military and VA medical centers. These homes enable family members to be close to a loved one at the most stressful times.

The Fisher House program serves more than 10,000 families. There is no charge for any family to stay at a Fisher House.

Food Pantry Donations

Thanks to all who have contributed food. In one week, 21 families received assistance from All Saints Parish Food Pantry. There is a need, so please continue to contribute as you can.



Property Upkeep (as reported by Everett Baker at Cabinet 3/15)

The wood from the cut trees has been removed from the Green. We have had an offer to stain the new steps on the northwest corner of the church and also maybe to paint the garage doors. Shrubs will be trimmed as needed during the year. The lawns need to be graded or raked and reseeded, especially from snowplow damage. The Board discussed lighting our new church sign and there is concern about the condition of our front steps. Anyone having property concerns or suggestions should speak with Nick Wood, Everett Baker or Rev. Van Keuren.



Ladies Aide Society (submitted by Barbara Baugniet)

Hygiene/Health Kit Collections

Last call for bandaids, bath size bars of soap, nail clippers and toothbrushes. Hygiene kits will be assembled on April 14 and delivered to Church World Service shortly thereafter.

All Women Welcome

The next meeting of the Ladies Aide Society will be held at 1 PM on Tuesday, April 14, in the church social room. ALL women of the church are invited. Refreshments will be provided by Ruth Bruch and Elaine Hancock; Millie Hare will offer devotions. Following the business meeting, Hygiene Kits will be assembled.

Prayer Shawl Ministry (submitted by Lois Sharpless)

New Opportunity for all knitters (and crocheters)
Two Connecticut women, Janet Bristow and Victoria Galo, both graduates of the Women’s Leadership Institute at the Hartford Seminary started a ministry in 1998 as a result of their experience in their studies there. They both shared a love of knitting and crocheting and combined this love with a prayerful ministry that reaches out to those in need of comfort and solace. Shawls are knit from beginning to end with prayerful intention. The prayers and stitches are intended to offer a continued warm embrace to the receiver; a continued reminder of God’s love and caring.



Prayer Shawl Ministry

The first get together of the Prayer Shawl Ministry group will be Thursday, April 16th at 6:30 pm at the home of Lois Sharpless. We will be discussing how often we want to meet, where and when. Transportation can be provided. Bring Size 11 knitting needles or the crochet hook equivalent; patterns and some “practice” yarn will be supplied. Please call Lois if you are interested in becoming a part of this ministry (749- 1350 – W or 749-1901 - H).



Blacksmith Shoppe (on behalf of Barbara Abbe)

It's only another month until the Blacksmith Shoppe is up and running for the spring and clean up days will be held toward the end of April. As always, donations of new or gently used items are welcome (ie. books, tools, puzzles, toys, small furniture, etc.); please contact Marge Morgan (until Barbara Abbe returns home) to arrange drop off. No clothing or tv's please.

The Blacksmith Shoppe coordinators welcome your continued support this year – a sign up sheet will soon be posted in the social room offering an opportunity to assist at the Shoppe for two shifts each Saturday – men of the church are welcome to come early (9 AM) to help move items out onto the lawn for display and again at 3 PM to move unsold items back into the Shoppe. And , as always, we encourage you to bake!

Fundraising Suppers (submitted by Ruth Bruch)

Corned Beef & Cabbage

Well, once again, we've had another very successful supper with many compliments. We served 203 dinners including 29 take outs. We took in \$2323 that included \$88 from our small bake sale. The help was happy ~ we didn't need to order pizza for our supper this year; there was just about enough corned beef left for us to savor. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this delicious and popular dinner.

Next Up – Turkey Dinner

The menu for our April 18 dinner includes roast turkey, tossed salad, stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce, rolls/breads, peas with pearl onions and pumpkin pie and beverage. As you can see from the menu, there are a lot of necessary ingredients and opportunities to contribute abound. Perhaps you could pick up a 2 lb. bag of crutons, some frozen



vegetables, # 10 containers of cranberry jelly, bake some pumpkin, cranberry or date nut bread, bake some pumpkin pies at home – or come to the church kitchen on Friday morning (April 17) to peel potatoes or prepare and bake pies here. Or, come help work in the kitchen, wait on tables or help clean up the night of the supper. It's great fun and fellowship! A sign up sheet for help and donations has been posted in the social room or contact Ruth Bruch to see how or where you can assist. Reservations will be accepted beginning April 4; cost is \$11 for adults and \$5 for children ages 5-10. Take out orders will also be available.

Looking Ahead to May

On May 9 we will host a Chicken Cordon Bleu supper.

This & That

- Fellowship hosts are needed. Light refreshment (a beverage - coffee, punch, cider, etc - and a light snack will suffice). Please sign up in the social room if you are willing to take on this opportunity. Anyone who stays for fellowship time is urged to take advantage of 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 www.somersvilleucc.org by the Hancocks and emailed to church members and friends.
- Any individual or Board wanting to be on the *April Cabinet agenda* should notify Graham, Ruth or Ray by April 9.



New York Conference Minister Geoffrey Black Nominated to Lead UCC United Church of Christ Press Release

CLEVELAND (02/27/2009) – The Rev. Geoffrey Black, who has led the United Church of Christ's New York Conference for nearly a decade, has been nominated to become the UCC's next General Minister and President. The nomination is scheduled to be voted on by the UCC's Executive Council

at its March meeting.

Black was previously a program staff member in the UCC's Office for Church Life and Leadership. During his career he has served as assistant chaplain at Brown University, associate minister at St. Albans (NY) Congregational UCC, lecturer in the Field Education Department of Union Theological Seminary in New York and protestant chaplain at Adelphi University. Black currently is a member of the board of trustees of Lancaster Theological Seminary.

The Rev. Henry T. Simmons, pastor at St. Albans (NY) Congregational UCC and chair of the search committee for General Minister and President, said the search committee is excited about Black's selection and the year-long exploration that led to the nomination. "It was a tough process – the candidates we interviewed were all very qualified," said Simmons. "In the end, we felt we had interviewed the best possible candidates and found the finest person to lead the UCC at this time."

"Geoffrey Black will be an excellent spiritual leader for us," said Connecticut Conference Minister the Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree. "He loves the local church, cares deeply about our shared mission, is articulate and compassionate and savvy."

"Geoffrey is a man of faith who believes in dialogue and in the power of God through the Church to transform lives and communities," she continued. "He's fun to be with and personable, and I love his laugh! I'm excited by his nomination!"

As minister of a local UCC congregation, involvement in the life of the denomination has been an area of responsibility that has provided Black with opportunities to participate in association and conference committees and to hold several elected offices.

"The phrase 'servant leadership' encapsulates his understanding and practice of leadership. Leadership, in his view, is about serving God and God's people," said the Rev. Jim Moos, pastor of Bismarck (ND) UCC and chair of the UCC's Executive Council. "He does not believe that leadership is the exclusive purview of a single person, but the shared responsibility of the many."

Ecumenical commitment, concern for equal justice, African-American empowerment and community improvement have shaped Black's ministry in the church and the communities in which he has lived. He has worked with the Nassau Coalition for Safety and Justice, the Long Island Interracial Alliance for a Common Future, and the Amistad Cultural Center of Long Island (which he co-founded), and Caring Communities of Shaker Heights,

Ohio.

UCC bylaws require that Black's nomination be affirmed by a two-thirds majority of the Executive Council prior to his presentation to the General Synod for call by election. If recommended by the Executive Council and elected by delegates at General Synod for the four-year term, Black will succeed the Rev. John H. Thomas, who has served in the post since 1999 and is not eligible for re-election.

The Rev. Linda Jaramillo, Executive Minister for the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries and a member of the President search committee, expressed her appreciation for the search process. "Throughout this year of thoughtful discernment, it was clear that every person on that committee loves the United Church of Christ and considered each candidate through that lens," said Jaramillo. "We were blessed by a diverse group of candidates who felt called into this discernment process, each expressing his or her commitment to fully support our next General Minister and President."

Black is the spouse of Patricia Williams-Black and the father of Makeda Black. He and his family reside in Dewitt, NY, and Black is a member of Plymouth Congregational UCC in Syracuse.

CT Conference UCC

142 Annual Meeting, Part 1

Part 1 of the CT Conference Annual Meeting will be held Saturday, May 9, at the Asylum Hill Congregational Church in Hartford. Juan Figueroa, President of the Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut will speak on "The Church and Health Care". Workshops on many health care issues will be offered.

Making Friends of Church Numbers

This is a one day seminar for pastors, lay leaders and church members who want to better understand and manage church finances. The seminar will look at church management techniques to keep the congregation safe and on a growing track. It will help stewardship lead more successful campaigns that almost guarantee to inspire others to new levels of giving. In making friends of church numbers, you'll develop new skills, learn lots of new information and even have fun! You'll leave with tools and resources you can use to make your church healthier, stronger and more vital.

The seminar will be held at the First Church of Christ in West Hartford on April 25 from 9 AM – 2 PM. For more information or if you'd like to attend, please speak with Graham.

About our Members & Friends

Birthdays

Happy birthday greetings this month go to Dotty Forbes, Bobby Petkis, Jody Renshaw, Kim Reel, Tristan Renshaw, Carrie Carllo, Nick Wood, Mark Farnham, Mavis Collins, Kimberly Such, Nancy Van Keuren, Karen Blondin, Ed Petkis, Nora Pinney, Roger Pease, Marj Butler, Millie Hare and Jacob Bellafronte



And, happy anniversary wishes to Dave & Marj Butler.

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



In Sympathy

Roy Miller, father of Ruth Bruch, passed away on February 26. Mr. Miller joined the church membership in July, 1978.

Evelyn Simpson, mother of Syd Cohen, passed away in Michigan on March 13. Evelyn was a member of church from March, 2000 to September 2003 when she moved back to Battle Creek.

Baptized

RJ Carllo presented himself for baptism during the March 15 Sunday worship. He is the son of Roger and Carrie Carllo.

Directory Update

Please update info on Linda Longueuil – phone 870-8720

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.

Final Call for Easter Lilies

Easter plants “in memory of” or “in honor of” loved ones will be displayed in the sanctuary on Easter Sunday, April 12. A listing will be included in the bulletin on that day. The cost is \$5 each; orders should be placed through the church office by March 31.



Number of lilies ordered _____

Please indicate below how you would like the listing to appear in the bulletin.

Given in loving memory of:

Given in honor of:

Given by: _____

April 2009

*Watch announcements/emails for other Board meetings
Dates to be announced for Blacksmith Shoppe clean-up in preparation for spring season*

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) www.somersvilleucc.org (web site) Worship 10 AM Nursery Care Provided			1 Bible Study 9:30-11 Lenten Service 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	2	3	4
5 Palm Sunday Communion	6	7 AA 6:15-8:30 Deacons 7 PM	8 Bible Study 9:30-11	9 Cabinet Requests Due Maundy Thursday 7 PM	10 Good Friday Sanctuary Open for Prayer/Medication 12 - 1 PM	11
12 Easter Sunday	13	14 AA 6:15-8:30 Ladies Aid 1 PM Finance 7 PM	15 Bible Study 9:30-11 Choir 7 PM	16 Prayer Shawl Ministry at Sharpless' 6:30	17 Supper Prep & Make Pies beginning 8:30 AM	18 Turkey Supper 5 & 6:15
19 Cabinet	20	21 AA 6:15-8:30 Cornerstone 2:30-6:30	22 Bible Study 9:30-11 Choir 7 PM	23	24	25
26 Children's Mission Breakfast Spire Deadline	27	28 AA 6:15-8:30 Blair Manor Worship 10:30	29 Bible Study 9:30-11 Choir 7 PM	30	the Rev. Graham Van Keuren, Pastor Brent Damrow, Student Minister Ray Foster, Moderator Sydney Cohen, Treasurer Ruth Bruch, Office Administrator/Clerk Tom & Elaine Hancock, Webministers Jason Stefanik, Organist/Choir Director	

The Goose That Laid Golden Eggs

