

The Spire

Congregational Church of Somersville
United Church of Christ

March, 2009



Lenten Services

You are invited and encouraged to participate in one-half hour contemplative Lenten services in order to help you observe a holy and meaningful Lenten preparation for Easter. This year we will be using Christ's own journey as remembered by the church in the Stations of the Cross as a way of considering our own faithful journey toward Good Friday and the glory of Easter that follows. In addition to our worship together, we will prepare resources that will help you engage in additional reflection on these stations at home (including resources for children) throughout Lent. The first resource will be available in the bulletin at worship on Sunday, March 1.



Evening activities in Lent are requested to begin after the conclusion of the service. Please note – during Holy Week, the Maundy Thursday service will replace the Wednesday evening service.

Purim Celebration

Our Purim festival will be held on Saturday, March 21 beginning with a pot luck supper at 6 PM. For anyone interested in preparing traditional recipes, some can be found on the bulletin board outside the office. A number of fun activities are being planned for the evening. All are invited to attend.



PURIM

Children's Missions Breakfast

The former Palm Sunday breakfast put on by our Sunday School is now called the Children's Missions Breakfast and will be held on April 26th. Details will be announced in next month's Spire.

From the Pastor

Friends in Christ,

As we move through the great penitential season of Lent, I hope that you will observe a holy Lent. We can do this through practicing such disciplines as prayer, reading of scripture, pilgrimage, fasting and works of love. These disciplines help us walk a spiritual journey that follows in the footsteps of Christ's passion and resurrection. Lenten disciplines are for our benefit, for we cannot truly appreciate Easter's empty tomb without following the Lenten road to get there.

In the middle of this penitential season, I encourage you to pause for a night from your contrition to celebrate our third annual Purim festival. Purim, a traditional Jewish festival celebrated by Jesus – and still celebrated by Jews today – rejoices in the controlling and saving hand of God behind all things. The central act of the Purim party is a retelling of the short Old Testament book of Esther, which describes with humor how God surprisingly used a young girl named Esther to save her people from a maniac on a power trip.

To be held on Saturday, March 21st at 6PM, our Purim merriment will begin with a potluck dinner. For those of you who would like to prepare and share a traditional Purim recipe, you will find several posted on the bulletin board outside the church office. Following the dinner, we will have various fun activities for youth and adults that are in keeping with the way Purim is traditionally celebrated. It will be great for the whole family.

Some have suggested that it is not appropriate for us, as Christians, to celebrate Purim. I disagree. Just as the Passover story is a Christian (as well as Jewish) story, the story of Queen Esther is our story, too, and it is good for us to retell it in a festive occasion like a Purim party.

Through our embrace of the Christian period of Lent and our exploration of the ancient celebration of Purim this month, I pray that we might continue to be enriched in our faith. May you be richly blessed with new life as spring blossoms around us.

Faithfully yours,

Graham Van Keuren

Thanks to ..

.. all who volunteered to take on “service opportunities” during February.

.. those who gave to the 2nd Mile Missions during February to benefit Souper Bowl and Silver Lake.

.. everyone who contributed to the success of the February Baked Stuffed Shrimp Valentine supper.

Thanks from ..

Don & Ruth Graham .. “ Both Don and I would like to thank everyone for your cards, phone calls, thoughts and prayers. We really appreciate it. God Bless you all.”



Opportunities in March

	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Fellowship Hosts</u>
March 1	Donna Pendleton Barbara Baugniot	Tom & Elaine Hancock	Elaine Hancock	Tom & Elaine Hancock
March 8	Denise Hannan Linda McEwen	Ray Foster Geneva Farnham	Deb Robidoux	Tom & Elaine Hancock
March 15	George & Judy Liberty	Jillian & Diane Farnham	Mark Farnham	Karen & Renee Blondin
March 22	Dave & Marj Butler	Roger Pease Bobby Bourque	Marj Butler	??
March 29	Mark & Diane Farnham	Nick & Carlese Wood	Syd Cohen	Donna Pendleton

From the Moderator (submitted by Ray Foster)

Church Historian

Johanna Karbonic has graciously agreed to continue as the Church Historian (thanks Johanna.) She says her next project is to gather a group of long-time church members and friends sometime soon to try to identify and label and index a boxful of old photographs. With that done, Johanna's plan is to put the photos into albums in some sort of order ~ a date will be decided in the near future. It should be a fun time to reminisce over coffee and goodies. Perhaps this project could be discussed at the next Cabinet Meeting.

Board of Trustees

When enough members of the three committees that constitute the Trustees (Finance, Property, Stewardship) have returned from vacation, etc, Ray Foster would like to have a brief meeting to set a date for a first Trustees Meeting for this year. On the Agenda would be discussion of next steps in expanding our church parking facilities, and naming other important projects which may require Trustee planning.



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.

Opportunities at Silver Lake for Youth

Summer 2009 Conference Registration is now open. Students in 4th-12th grade can register for a fun-filled week in “God’s backyard”. Register online at <http://silverlake.ctucc.org>

March Thursday Evening Bible Service (submitted by Brent Damrow)

Thursday, March 19 – 7 PM

Like our February study on the texts for Transfiguration Sunday, all are welcome to join in a study and reflection on the texts to be used in worship on Sunday, March 29th. We will look both at the talk of a new covenant written on people’s hearts as described in Jeremiah 31:31-34 as well as one of the last acts of public ministry Jesus engages in the Gospel of John (John 12:20-33). We will spend about an hour and a half together exploring the setting of these texts and their meaning for us as contemporary Christians. These studies are a chance to share thoughts and reactions as we consider both the stories that we encounter in these texts as well as their theological import. Not only do I think that the time together will be fruitful in growing in our understanding of these texts, the discussion will also help me to shape and frame the sermon to be given on Sunday, the 29th.

Our time in February was very helpful to me and I heard a number of positive comments from those who participated. I think that we learned a great deal from each other and I know we had a good time

doing so. If you have any questions, I encourage you to ask me or to seek out anyone who was there. It would be helpful if you could read these two texts before you come, but it is not mandatory. I will put another sign-up sheet downstairs just to get a sense of the numbers – but please know you are welcome whether you sign up or not. Feel free to contact me with any thoughts or questions at brent.damrow@yale.edu or by phone at 617-513-0185. I look forward to our time together.

Report of the Treasurer (submitted by Sydney Cohen)



HE WHO THINKS BY THE INCH AND TALKS BY THE YARD DESERVES TO BE KICKED BY THE FOOT. When some fool starts an argument, he is asking for a beating.

Proverbs 18:6.

	January 2009	Budget 2009	YTD 2009	Budget 2009
Pledges	\$ 4,047.00	\$6,250.00	\$ 4,047.00	\$ 75,000.00
Income	\$ 6,164.41	\$9,402.04	\$ 6,164.41	\$ 112,825.00
Expenses	\$10,896.90	\$10,384.64	\$10,896.90	\$ 124,617.12

January Collections

Fundraisers- Pork Roast Dinner- 1,815.00.

Monthly missions- We continued to collect non perishable food items for the local food bank.

We have budgeted \$ 6,250.00/ month in pledges for this year. With the economy, winter weather and sun seeking vacationers, we have gotten off to a slow start. The fundraiser supper added a much needed boost to our operating budget, as heating costs as well as monthly operating costs remain constant. This year will most certainly provide many challenges for this church, most of them likely financial. I have put back the column for what the monthly budget is for pledges, income and expenses. This will provide a clearer picture of what is happening financially every month. If anyone has questions or suggestions, please feel free to talk with any member of the finance committee.

Missions



2nd Mile Missions Collections

“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Mt. 6:21. If you were searching for God’s treasure, you’d find it in people. Every person, in every nation on earth, is treasured by God! Yet for many people, life can be searingly tough. One Great Hour of Sharing joins our hearts with God’s by providing decisive aid when disaster strikes and by helping refugees rebuild their lives. Our gift strengthens struggling communities with basics like education, health care, tools, seeds, and wells.

Our treasure lies in honoring God, doing God’s will, and loving God’s treasured people. May you find your treasure, and your heart, through sharing resources and changing lives with a generous gift to One Great Hour of Sharing this month.

Cornerstone Soup Kitchen

Our church continues to offer our services by helping to serve dinner at Cornerstone Soup Kitchen in Rockville. The next opportunity to assist in this outreach is Tuesday, March 17. This month we will both prepare and serve the meal so anyone interested in participating can meet at the church at 2:30; we’ll return about 6:30. If you are unable to help cook the meal but are willing to serve, please arrive at Cornerstone by 4:30 PM. Speak with a Missions Board member if interested (Gen Farnham, Barbara Baugniet, Jean Foster, Allison Matczak) or Johanna Karbonic.



Ladies Aide Society (submitted by Barbara Baugniet)



Senior Luncheon

Spread the word and call Arlene at 749-7387 to reserve a seat for the senior luncheon at our church on Tuesday, March 24 at 12 noon. The Ladies Aid will be serving a delicious ham dinner; a sign up sheet for help/donations will be posted ~ assistance from anyone (male or female) is welcome.

Thank YOU

The Ladies Aide thanks all those who graciously helped to provide refreshment for recent receptions in the church social hall.

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

		As of		As of	
		Jan 1 '08	Dec. 31, '08	Jan 1 '08	Dec. 31, '08
		Amount	Amount	Amount	Amount
Savings Accounts:					
Holcomb Scholar		\$ 4,267.81	\$ 4,333.97		
Jr. Pilgrim Fellow.		\$ 851.54	\$ 856.66		
Sunday School		\$ 27.50	\$ 27.66		
Total Savings Account & Money Market		\$ 5,146.85	\$ 5,218.29		
Stocks:					
Company	Shares	\$/s @ Jan 1 '08	\$/s @ Dec. 31, '08	Value @ Jan 1 '08	Value @ Dec. 31 '08
Miss. Soc. Of Conn.	1272.77	91.68	68.99	\$ 129,439.77	\$ 87,814.16
Miss. Soc. Pastor's	772.13	91.68	68.99	\$ 68,896.75	\$ 53,273.11
Miss Soc. Restricted	262.74	91.68	68.99	\$ 24,088.91	\$ 18,127.87
Total Value of Stocks				\$ 222,425.43	\$ 159,215.14
Checking Accounts: Operating Acct:				\$ 2,788.97	\$ 6,362.90
Total Assets, not including property.				\$ 230,361.25	\$ 170,796.33
Net Change				\$ (59,564.92)	-25.86

Memorial Funds

As of December 31, 2008

	Value 12/31/2008 \$	Value @ Donator* \$
MISSIONARY SOCIETY FUND:		
UNRESTRICTED:		
Belbruno	421.96	220.00
Butler	661.45	624.24
Blain	1592.04	1070.00
Chism	1181.47	1115.00
Chouinard	30446.85	22677.00
Cooley	425.95	255.00
Cowan	1075.18	1014.69
Daniels	247.47	145.00
Follansbee	593.02	364.00
General Memorial	4382.68	2946.00
Hartwick	392.31	232.00
Hastings	206.62	195.00
Holcolm	10596.11	10000.00
Luddy	4147.75	1000.00
Pease	393.45	287.00
Persson	912.33	861.00
Pinney	787.58	410.00
Schnare	1987.77	1035.00
Smith	26415.84	15216.00
Trimmer	168.53	100.00
Unas	777.78	500.00
Total	87814.16	60266.93
RESTRICTED:		
(1) Brink	2698.74	2500.00
(1) Collins	1808.56	1675.00
(1) Gowdy	1695.12	1570.00
(1) Griswold	539.81	500.00
(1) Henry	1079.56	1000.00
(1) Keeney	1938.66	1795.00
(1) Liberty	2671.82	3300.00
(1) Meacham	5397.87	5000.00
(1) Wood, E.	297.73	500.00
(1) Holcomb Scholarship	4361.21	3000.00
(1) restricted - use earnings only	22489.08	20840.00
Total	110303.24	81106.93

Hygiene/Health Kit Collections

It won't be long before we start assembling the hygiene kits that will be delivered to Church World Service for use by those hit by the devastation of floods, tornadoes, etc. Donations of bandaids, bath size bars of soap, nail clippers, and toothbrushes are still needed. A collection box is in the social room.

Religious Services Programs at State's Correctional Institutions

(submitted by Linda McEwen)

The Ladies Aid will host a special program at their March 10th meeting. The Reverend Hector Mendez, Protestant Chaplain at the Osborn Correctional Institution in Somers, CT. will be in attendance to speak to the all interested in attending on the Religious Services Programs offered at the State's Correctional Institutions.

Those men and women who provide religious services to offenders in the state's prison system are a valuable asset to the overall stability of the Corrections system in terms of affecting positive change in the life of offenders during their incarceration, and hopefully, upon their release, These services also augment safety and security in terms of providing a positive outlook for inmates while they are incarcerated.

This is an important opportunity for members of the community to hear more about how these services can impact the lives of those struggling to find their way. As you know, the Somers/Enfield/Suffield area has eight (8) facilities. If you want to find out more about this subject, or are interested in finding out about volunteer opportunities in this area, please come to this meeting on Tuesday, March 10, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. The Ladies Aid will hold their meeting after the presentation.

Linda McEwen and Sue Comparetto will be our hostesses for the afternoon.

Fundraising Suppers (submitted by Ruth Bruch)

Corned Beef & Cabbage

What's St. Patrick's Day without a delicious Corned Beef & Cabbage supper? This annual meal, complete with boiled potatoes, onions and carrots will be held on Saturday, March 14 with sittings at 5 & 6:15 PM. Dinner also includes juice, rolls, Irish soda bread, cake and ice cream and beverage. Won't you join in the food, fun and fellowship by attending or helping out at the supper? A sign up sheet is posted in the social room. Help is especially needed in peeling vegetables



on Friday, March 13 beginning at 8:30 AM. Those interested in helping the night of the supper are also asked to sign up; we only need 5 people in the kitchen and 5 in the dining room.

We will also run a bake sale during the supper. Anyone willing to bake cookies, bars, breads, simple cakes or pies, etc. is urged to contribute.

Valentine Supper Recap

In a word, "Wow!" This supper took a LONG time to prepare ~ While Nick was busy washing and wrapping potatoes, setting up the coffee, etc., we (Carlese, Barbara, Syd, Ruth & Graham) chopped up salad fixings, made stuffing and stuffed shrimp until 3 PM. We really could have used a few more hands. But, what a success! There were so many compliments .. calls were still received in the office and at my home a few days following the dinner; emails were received. " .. What a fabulous meal .. from the crisp crunchy salad to the absolutely delicious shrimp and stuffing, baked potato and mixed vegetables, with a yummy whole wheat roll to boot ..and then that dessert .. oh my .. We were just so very pleased with the job you all did, including the wonderful woman who helped me when I arrived! Oh, and the yummy apple pie I purchased on my way out at your bake sale. Thank you so very much for making our Valentine's Day such a treat ..."

We took in \$2860 including \$68 from our small bake sale. I got a great price on the shrimp and our proceeds were \$2241.25!

This & That

- *Daylight Savings Time* begins March 8.
- *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 *March Cabinet agenda* should notify Graham, Ruth or Ray by February 5.

Local Blood Drive

In an effort to maintain a stable blood supply, members and friends are encouraged to donate blood to the American Red Cross on Tuesday, March 31 from 1-5:45 PM at the Somers Fire Station, 400 Main Street. For an appointment to donate, please call 1-800-448-3543.

Pope's current controversy obscured by longer vision

News analyses by Francis X. Rocca Religion News Service

VATICAN CITY — Ever since Pope Benedict XVI allowed schismatic bishops back into the Catholic fold last month, his decision has been met with abundant expressions of outrage and dismay, from both inside and outside the church.

Yet the controversy isn't fueled by the bishops' thoughts on the church or the papacy or liturgy but rather by one bishop's denial of the Holocaust.

Jewish groups are especially incensed that one of the bishops from the Society of St. Pius X (SSPX), Richard Williamson, told Swedish television that "historical evidence is hugely against 6 million Jews having been deliberately gassed in gas chambers as a deliberate policy of Adolf Hitler."

Which has left people the world over asking: What was the pope thinking?

One explanation offered by those who know the pope intimately was that he simply was not aware of Williamson's statements.

"Otherwise, I think he would have made it clear at the beginning that he was not endorsing them," said the Rev. Joseph D. Fessio, a former student of Benedict's who is also the English-language publisher of most of the pope's books.

Vatican spokesmen have stressed that the pope's reversal of Williamson's 1988 excommunication implies no endorsement of his statements on the Holocaust, but rather a desire to reconcile with disaffected traditionalists.

Even so, many who accept this explanation wonder why Benedict himself didn't offer it at the start. "The Pope should have said more to explain his thinking," wrote the British Catholic journalist Damian Thompson, generally a strong supporter of the pontiff. "And he could also have expressed his repugnance at (Williamson's) views."

The omission is especially surprising since Benedict, who as a boy in his native Germany was drafted into the Hitler Youth and deplored the rise of Nazism, has long sought to improve relations between Catholics and Jews. One of the highlights of his visit to the United States last year, for instance, was a visit to a New York synagogue.

Even if Benedict was familiar with Williamson's long track record of inflammatory declarations on the Holocaust and other topics, he may have judged it more prudent not to draw attention to them. Williamson was hardly a household name — he was not even the best-known of the four rehabilitated SSPX bishops — until Swedish television broadcast the now-infamous interview last week.

Still, informed observers say the great misunderstanding at the heart of the current controversy is utterly in character for the pope. It reflects not only his temperament and background, they say, but also his ideals of church leadership.

"He's a theologian and an academic; he deals in principles and arguments and intellectual back-and-forth," said David Gibson, a former Vatican Radio reporter and author of *The Rule of Benedict*. "He doesn't come from the pastoral side of the church. He doesn't think in terms of diplomatic fallout."

The mental habits of scholarship may have made it easier for Benedict to view the excommunication issue in isolation from what he considers irrelevant questions, Gibson said.

"In his mind, this is an internal church matter," Gibson said. "He's not sanctioning Williamson's views, so what's the problem?"

A readiness to take unpopular action also reflects Benedict's philosophy of church leadership, Gibson says, noting a 1996 statement by then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger that a "bishop whose only concern is not to have any problems and to gloss over as many conflicts as possible is an image I find repulsive."

For John Allen, Jr., the Vatican correspondent for the *National Catholic Reporter* and a papal biographer, Benedict "is a pope

stubbornly indifferent to the canons of political correctness, in part because he's not thinking about tomorrow's headlines but the situation of the church a century, or several centuries, down the road."

"That gives him great strength as a leader," Allen said, "but the other side of it is that he sometimes takes actions that seem almost deliberately calculated to offend people he cares about. ... Sometimes he is, quite frankly, tone-deaf."

As a prime example of such tone-deafness, Allen points to Benedict's 2006 speech in Regensburg, Germany, in which he quoted a medieval Christian emperor describing the teachings of Islam's Prophet Muhammad as "evil and inhuman" and "spread by the sword."

After violent protests against the speech broke out in several Muslim countries, Benedict expressed his "regrets" and held a special meeting with representatives of Muslim nations. Last November, he hosted an international group of Muslim scholars and clerics at the Vatican for a conference that grew out of responses to the Regensburg lecture.

Allen assumes that the "Vatican will engage in the same sort of damage control" over the coming weeks and months.

"But the real question is why they didn't learn from Regensburg," Allen said. "The only answer I can give is that Benedict is who he is."

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.

Bane and Blessing: Meetinghouse as Asset

.. will be held March 28 from 9:30 AM – 4:30 PM at United Congregational Church in Worcester, MA. Our beloved church buildings are one of our most cherished and valuable physical assets for ministry, yet they also pose tremendous financial and other challenges. You're invited for a day of learning and discussion as we face the issues and opportunities posed. A number of workshops will be offered. If

interested in attending, or for more information, speak with Graham.

About our Members & Friends



Birthdays

Happy birthday greetings this month go to Mckenzie Tishon, Will Penhall, LuAnn Peters, Liam Forbes, Mary Pinney, Erin Gately, Lillian Carriere, Sue Comparetto, Steve Twitchell, Parker Salvas, Barbara Abbe, Denise Hannan and Johnny Bellafronte

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

Losses

In the past two months we have lost three members. Our condolences, thoughts and prayers are with the families of: Dale Hannan who became a member of this church in 1967 passed away on January 10. Virginia Longueuil passed away on January 14; she joined our membership in June, 1995. Myron Boyajian had been a member since June, 1971; he passed away February 18.

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.

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.

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**Easter
Lilies**

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: _____

the Rev. Graham Van Keuren, Pastor
 Brent Damrow, Student Pastor
 Ray Foster, Moderator

March 2009

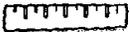
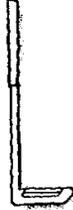
Sydney Cohen, Treasurer
 Ruth Bruch, Office Administrator/Clerk
 Tom & Elaine Hancock, Webministers

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Communion	2	3 AA 6:15-8:30 Deacons 7 PM	4 Bible Study 9:30-11 Lenten Service 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	5 Cabinet Agenda Request Due	6	7
8 Daylight Savings Time Begins	9	10 AA 6:15-8:30 Ladies Aid 1 PM (ALL invited) Finance 7 PM	11 Bible Study 9:30-11 Lenten Service 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	12	13 Peel Veggies 8:30 AM	14 Corned Beef Supper & Bake Sale
15 Cabinet	16	17 AA 6:15-8:30 Cornerstone 2:30-6:30 St. Patrick's Day	18 Bible Study 9:30-11 Lenten Service 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	19 Bible Study w/Brent 7 PM	20 First Day of Spring	21 Purim Celebration 6 PM
22 April Spire Deadline	23	24 AA 6:15-8:30 Blair Manor Worship 10:30 Senior luncheon 12 PM	25 Bible Study 9:30-11 Lenten Service 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	26	27	28
29	30	31 AA 6:15-8:30 Lily Orders Due	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

Hidden Pictures "Safari Onstage"



- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| slice of pizza | key | toothbrush | snake |
|  |  |  |  |
| mug | boot | ruler | candle |
|  |  |  |  |
| pencil | comb | tack | golf club |
| | | |  |
| | | | banana |
| | | |  |
| | | | heart |
| | | |  |
| | | | ring |