

The Spire

Congregational Church of Somersville
United Church of Christ

October, 2009



Where Have All the Prophets Gone? (submitted by Brent Damrow)

.. Reclaiming prophetic witness in our 21st Century church. ..

All are welcome to join in this 3-part study as we examine the history of the prophetic witness in both Hebrew and Christian traditions and think about how it applies to our life together as a church today. All gatherings will take place on Thursday evenings from 7-8:30 PM at the church. Light refreshments will be provided.

On October 1 we discussed “What do we mean by a ‘prophet’ and who were some of the prophets of the Old Testament?”

On October 8 we’ll discuss “What would a prophetic witness look like today at the Congregational Church of Somersville?”

October 22’s topic will be “Applying prophetic notions to a contemporary issue: health care.”

Whether you know a little, a lot, or nothing at all about the prophets, please join us as the prophets’ messages continue to have much meaning for our lives as Christians. The sessions will be a safe and welcoming place to read and wrestle with some of the most interesting, challenging and inspiring passages in the Bible.

While you do not have to attend all three in order to participate, these sessions are designed to build upon one another. If you have questions, please email me at brent.damrow@yale.edu

“When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams.”
Numbers 12:6, NIV



From the Pastor

Friends in Christ,

This month we are introducing a new extra-mile mission partner, the Solar Cooker Project sponsored by the Jewish World Watch. I am excited about this mission partner for two main reasons. Firstly, I am thrilled that buying solar cookers is a simple and effective means of addressing our church’s concern for the welfare of the Sudanese refugees in the Darfur section of the country. Providing women with solar cookers is one of the key ways we can make a practical difference in refugees’ lives. Perhaps the most dangerous parts of a woman’s day



in Darfur is when she must leave the relative safety of the camp to collect firewood with which to cook. Harnessing the cooking power of the sun through a solar cooker can help her stay safe from those who might terrorize her.

Secondly, I am excited about the Solar Cooker Project because it is a great example of what can be accomplished when we work across religious lines. Here we have a Jewish charitable agency – supported by Christians – working to help Muslim refugees. If only all of life were so cooperative! Peaceful interfaith relations must begin with us.

Please know that we have been doing a great job at supporting our extra-mile mission partners this year. I am thankful for the good work of the Board of Missions in promoting them, and I am thankful for all of you who lend your aid in time, talents, and money. Please continue your high level of support. It is appreciated and needed!

Yours faithfully,

Graham Van Keuren

Your Help is Needed on All Saints Day!

All Saints Day is coming soon (Nov. 1). On this day we give thanks for all God’s servants and praise God for their witness, service and faith. On this day we ask God that we, too, may be numbered among the saints.

Is there a follower of Jesus, living or dead, who has inspired you? Perhaps it was a family member, a friend, or a historical person. Come and offer a testimony to your Saint of God. I would like to have about six people offer on All Saints Day their oral (2 minutes) or written (200 words) testimony of thanksgiving to God for a saint. Could that be you? Please speak with me (Graham).

Christian Education (submitted by Rev. Van Keuren)

Wednesday Bible Study

Wednesday morning Bible study continues to meet from 9:30-11:15 AM in the church social room. All are invited.

Dinner and a Movie

Join us Friday, October 16th for our next dinner and a movie. In addition to the fantastic potluck supper at 6PM, we'll enjoy watching *The Bucket List*. Netflix describes the movie this way:

When corporate mogul Edward Cole (Jack Nicholson) and mechanic Carter Chambers (Morgan Freeman) wind up in the same hospital room, the two terminally ill men bust out of the cancer ward with a plan to experience life to the fullest before they kick the bucket. In a race against the reaper, the new friends hit the tables in Monte Carlo, down obscene amounts of caviar and tear up the road in supercharged cars. Rob Reiner directs. Rated PG-13.

This movie invites us to think about what really matters in life. Come and put in your two cents!



From the Moderator (submitted by Ray Foster)

I am pleased to report that at our congregational meeting held following worship on September 20, a unanimous vote was rendered in support of the motion to contract with Butler Electric to install lighting for our outdoor sign. Over \$800 has been pledged for this project; the bid was \$1165 which includes \$361 for the trench work. It is our hope to dig the trench ourselves, but if we cannot, the balance of the needed funds would come from the property budget.

Also voted upon at the congregational meeting was the motion to merge the meeting house/parsonage lot with the Church Green. After a good question and answer period, the motion was carried. We can now proceed with plans for our expanded parking.

I thank everyone for their interest and support in these projects.

October Cabinet

The next meeting of the Cabinet, that is open to all, will be held following worship on October 18. Anyone having business to bring up should notify myself, Graham or Ruth by October 8.

Thanks to ..

- .. all who volunteered to take on “service opportunities” during September.
- .. those who gave to the 2nd Mile Missions for Neighbors in Need..
- .. everyone who contributed to the success of the Roast Pork Supper.
- .. those who have agreed to work with our Sunday school program this year.
- .. the volunteers who helped prepare and serve the meal at Cornerstone this past month.
- .. all who are contributing to the success of the Blacksmith Shoppe this season.



Thanks from ..

Eric & Graham .. “We offer our heartfelt thanks to all those who participated in making our wedding day on September 5th memorable, enjoyable and meaningful for us. We know that so many people worked behind the scenes to prepare for the service and reception; I regret that we don’t know who all of you are. But please know that we are so grateful to be a part of this community and we deeply appreciate the special care and attention you offered to us during the celebration of our marriage. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!”

Opportunities in October

	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Fellowship Hosts</u>
Oct. 4	Tom & Elaine Hancock		Yvonne Wood	Donna Pendleton
Oct. 11	Donna Pendleton		Al Andrews	
Oct. 18	Art Lachance Dan Dunn	Donna Pendleton	Dave Pinney	
Oct. 25	Donna Pendleton	Dan Dunn Art Lachance	Geneva Farnham	Lori Arnone Linda Longueuil

Report of the Treasurer (submitted by Sydney Cohen)

You should never let adversity get you down—except on your knees.
Are any among you in trouble? THEY SHOULD PRAY. James 5:13

	August 2009	YTD 2009	Budget 2009
Pledges	\$ 5,145.00	\$46,188.00	\$ 75,000.00
Income	\$ 7,793.40	\$76,707.42	\$112,825.00
Expenses	\$ 9,128.01	\$82,590.78	\$124,617.12

August Collections

Fundraiser Supper- Roast Beef Supper- \$ 2,191.00
 YTD Fundraiser Total - \$ 14,932.31



Pledges were slightly down for August, but with all the summer activities going, this is to be expected. Still all the bills were paid and I have not taken any funds from our endowment fund since February. So I would say we as a church are truly blessed!

Finance Request

Boards having budgets should submit budget requests for 2010 to Finance prior to their meeting on October 13.

Missions (submitted by Jean Foster)

2nd Mile Missions

The 2nd Mile Mission for October is Solar Cooker Project that is sponsored by Jewish World Watch. Jewish World Watch is committed to protecting refugee women and girls from rape and other forms of violence. Women and girls who have fled the genocide in Darfur are particularly vulnerable to rape while performing the critical task of collecting firewood for cooking. The Cookit, developed by Solar Cookers International, is a simple solar cooker that converts sunlight into heat which then cooks food. \$30 will purchase a solar cookit that consists of 2 cookers, 2 pots, 2 pot holders, a year supply of plastic bags, and training. God desires to help those who are wronged. What is our desire, concern, obligation? How many solar cookits can the people of the Congregational Church of Somersville purchase? The answer is up to you!



Ecumenical Missions Opportunity for All!

(submitted by Rev. Van Keuren)

Would you be willing to walk for a good cause? Can you sponsor someone from our church who is willing to walk for a good cause? If so, the 2009 Somers Crop Walk is for you! At this year's Crop Walk the whole Somers community is invited to raise money and awareness for Church World Service's efforts to combat hunger and malnutrition.



Scheduled for Sunday, October 18th at 1PM, walkers will have the option of either a 5k or 10k route. The walk will kick off from the Somers Congregational Church in downtown Somers. If you aren't able to walk but would like to sponsor someone who does, please clip and fill out the coupon below and return it to the church office. Alternately, you may email the church at somcong@aol.com with your pledge of support.

Walkers may pick up walker registration forms in Wood Chapel.

Please help!

++++++**2009 Somers Crop Walk Coupon of Support**++++++

_____ I would like to support a 5k walker at \$1/kilometer. (\$5)

_____ I would like to support a 10k walker at \$1/kilometer. (\$10)

_____ I would like to support a 5k walker at \$3/kilometer. (\$15)

_____ I would like to support a 5k walker at \$5/kilometer. (\$25)

_____ I would like to support a 10k walker at \$3/kilometer. (\$30)

_____ I would like to support a 10k walker at \$5/kilometer. (\$50)

_____ Other (enter amount _____)

Name _____

+++++

UNICEF

UNICEF will be collected this month. Details to follow.

Meals on Wheels (submitted by Rev. Van Keuren)

Can you spare an hour or two around noon time a few times a month? The Town of Somers needs people to deliver meals to local residents. Anyone interested in learning more should speak with Everett Baker or David Pinney.

Property Fall Clean Up

It's time to think about fall cleaning around the church and parsonage. We'll be looking for assistance in helping to remove air conditioners, screens, rake/blow leaves, clean gutters, install storm windows, etc. October 31 will be the official clean up date, but if anyone wants to volunteer for a specific task and do it on a different day or time convenient with them, that's fine. There's always something to do in and around the church for maintenance or improvements. Willing workers should speak with Nick Wood or Patrick Forbes.



Ladies Aide Society

Church Cookbook (submitted by Barbara Baugnet)

We've had a good response to our request for recipes and only one recipe was duplicated. That's amazing! We're nearing the printing phase of this project and anticipate cookbooks will be available for sale at our Holiday Treasures fair on November 21. We hope you all plan to pick up your copy because we know this church is made up of great cooks!



All Women Welcome

All women of the church (members & friends) are invited to take part in the monthly meetings of the Ladies Aide. Our next gathering will be Tuesday, October 13 at 1 PM in the Church social room. Hostesses will be Mavis Collins & Linda McEwen; devotions will be led by Millie Hare. Following the business meeting, we're scheduled to have a demonstration on making soaps and lotions

Blacksmith Shoppe (submitted by Barbara Abbe)

The Blacksmith Shoppe continues to be open each Saturday in October from 10 AM – 3 PM. We've done well so far this fall. We've been fortunate enough to have received lots of donations and we continue our habit of putting new items out each week. Saturdays continue to be busy with lots of folks coming in to see what we have to offer.

There are still shifts open to work during October. See the sign up sheet in the social room or call Barbara at 749-4153, Marge at 749-0418 or Joan at 749-6149; you can also call these ladies to make donations. Baked goods are always appreciated.

Prayer Shawl Ministry (submitted by Lois Sharpless)



Calling all who have an interest in knitting or crocheting .. you don't need to be an expert – novices are welcome. A group of us meet once a month to create prayer shawls. Our next gathering will be Wednesday, October 14, at 7 PM at the home of Lois Sharpless. If you haven't participated but have an interest, please speak with me.

Opportunity for Men (submitted by Rev. Van Keuren)

If you are a guy interested in a men's group, we want to hear from you. We envision the group being part fellowship and part service oriented. So in addition to some fun activities, like canoeing or a Rock Cats game, we'll also see how we can use our skills to help those in our church in need. For example, maybe someone in our church needs a door re-hung or a railing replaced. Perhaps the Ladies Aide Society needs some woodcrafts or metal work to sell at its Holiday Treasures fair. The men's group can help!



If you are interested in this type of group, please let me know in the coming month.

Update from Nominating (submitted by Judy Liberty)



Patrick Forbes has been approved to fill the vacancy on property. We are fortunate to have him bring his many talents to this committee.

We would like to remind people of our interest survey. Please fill them out so in the coming years we can ask people to serve in positions that interest them. Copies are available in Wood Chapel.

Fundraising Suppers (submitted by Ruth Bruch)

Our next supper is on October 10 ~ a holiday weekend ~ but the date didn't stop folks from calling in their reservations on the 26th of September. Both sittings for the Pot Roast Supper filled up by mid day. The first call came in at 12:03 AM and the church answering machine was loaded with messages. A waiting list has been started in the event cancellations are received; take out orders are also available. Menu is pot roast with potato, onions and carrots, gravy, salad, breads & rolls, cake with ice cream and beverage. Cost is \$11 for adults and \$5 for children ages 5-10.



There are still opportunities to help make this supper a success; we still need:

- 20 lb. onions
- 50 lb. carrots
- 80 lb. potatoes
- 6 yellow cakes (9x13) frosted
- 2 loaves apple bread
- 4 loaves date nut bread
- 4 4 qt. tubs ice cream (or equivalent) [available at Shaws or Big Y]

Roast Pork Supper a Success

Nick Wood outdid himself in cooking the pork; it was tender and tasty. As always, the dining room was full for both sittings and people enjoyed the meal and fellowship. We celebrated a number of birthdays and anniversaries ~ thanks to Marj Butler for baking the cake each month. Thanks are also extended to Syd Cohen for her donation of 4 beautiful mum plants that were "raffled" to lucky ticket holders. We took in \$2273.00 and spent \$196.77. Proceeds go to general expenses of the church. Remember, this is money coming in from outside our church membership.

This & That

- **Fellowship hosts** are needed for the remainder of 2009. 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 church website www.somersvilleucc.org by the Hancocks and emailed to church members and friends. If you'd rather have a printed copy, please notify Ruth.

CT Conference UCC

Fall Annual Meeting of the CT Conference

This meeting will be held at Middletown High School on October 23 and 24. Anyone in the congregation interested in serving as our delegates should speak with Graham as soon as possible so registration can be completed.

The Keynote Speaker will be The Rev. Geoffrey Black, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ. Rev. Black has served as Conference Minister for the New York Conference. He has also served on the staff of the Office of Church Life and Leadership of the National Setting of the United Church of Christ. Rev. Black was elected to the position at General Synod XXVII in Grand Rapids, MI and will assume office just 23 days before he is with us.

Here are the highlights of the meeting. The agenda and schedule will be available online. Authorized Ministers' Lunch and Program at the First Church of Christ, Congregational in Middletown will be Friday, October 23rd from noon to 3:30 pm. The keynote speaker will be Sanford Cloud, Chairman and CEO of The Cloud Company and past President and CEO of the National Conference for Community and Justice. The Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, Minister for Racial Justice for Justice and Witness Ministries for the national setting of the United Church of Christ will then offer training specifically for clergy to prepare for Sacred Conversations

on Race in our churches. Please see the enclosed flyer for more information. The program will include honoring those ordained 50 and 25 years. Registration for the Annual Meeting will take place at this event for those who attend.

The Rev. Dr. Davida Foy Crabtree will deliver her fourteenth Conference Minister's address on Friday evening. Saturday will include the Keynote Address by the Rev. Geoffrey Black. There will be a time for small group Sacred Conversations on Race with specially trained facilitators and a special session of Sacred Conversations on Race for Youth delegates and visitors at the same time. Conference business will also be conducted in plenary sessions.

Youth Delegates will continue to be involved in the meetings this year as regular delegates.

Child Care will be available if requested.

Summer's over, folks ... Get back to church.

by Solange de Santis Religion News Service

NEW YORK — Autumn brings the end of beach weekends, boating and picnics and the resurgence of school, football ... and church.

In an effort to refocus the attention of parishioners and possibly attract newcomers and the disaffected, many churches borrow a page from universities and designate a Sunday in September as “homecoming.” Although the idea reaches back a couple of centuries for some parishes, it is taking on a more organized feel in the U.S. and Britain.

This year, the Christian communications organization [Outreach Inc.](#), based in Vista, Calif., started a campaign declaring Sunday (Sept. 13) as “Back to Church Sunday,” and offered a free toolkit that includes a “campaign planning guide,” promotional materials and a booklet entitled “Rethink Church.”

According to Outreach's Web site, the campaign is “specifically designed to increase church attendance by empowering church members with the tools they need to welcome neighbors, friends and loved ones back to church.”

In an interview, Outreach founder and CEO Scott Evans said the campaign was sparked by a recent study by Southern Baptist-affiliated Lifeway Research, which found that “82 percent of people who don't go to church would be somewhat likely to go if invited, but that only 2 percent of people who do go to church had invited someone,” he said. Outreach, Evans said, wanted to provide a focus on “equipping people to be inviters.”

Eric Abel, the vice president of marketing for Outreach, said the organization works with about 17,000 churches. Most of the interest in the back-to-church campaign is coming from evangelical or non-denominational churches.

According to Evans, there have been more than 1,000 requests for the tool kits. Outreach's Web site allows people to record how many people they've invited to church. So far, the count is up to nearly 700,000.

In Great Britain, Back to Church Sunday, which this year is Sept. 27, was started in 2004 by the Anglican Diocese of Manchester. Anglican churches in New Zealand and Canada picked up the idea, and U.K. Baptist, Methodist and United Reform churches are also taking part.

While the U.S. “Back to Church Sunday” group is generating buzz on Facebook, many mainline Protestant churches were staging fall welcomes long before there was even electricity, much less computers. [Concord Presbyterian Church](#) in Statesville, N.C., is holding its 234th homecoming celebration on Sept. 20 — the congregation was founded in 1775 — with guest speakers and musicians.

Other churches are having outreach campaigns even though they're not officially part of the Outreach effort. St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Bennington, Vt., is asking each parishioner to invite a friend to church on Sept. 13 and is planning an outdoor Eucharist, a brunch and opportunities to inquire about various ministries. St. John's Episcopal Church in Somerville, N.J., like many churches, registers Sunday School students at its welcoming Sunday, also Sept. 13.

One of the advantages of an organized campaign, according to both Evans and testimonials on the [Church of England's Web site](#), is that those who might hesitate or be embarrassed to issue an invitation could be encouraged by the fact that many others are doing it at the same time.

But does it work? A targeted outreach to the “unchurched” assumes two important things: one, that they want to be reached, and two, that they're there to be reached at all. As it turns out, neither may be true.

In Britain, for example, where the Church of England hopes to attract some 500,000 new worshippers on Sept. 27, one fact sheet begins flatly, “The Church of England isn't dead yet!” A 2007 study found that 26 million Britons are Christian (about half the total population), but only 5 million attend once a week, and two-thirds have “no connection” with a church.

“This secular majority presents a major challenge to churches,” the Churchgoing in the UK report said. “Most of them ... are unreceptive

and closed to attending church. Churchgoing is simply not on their agenda.”

Closer to home, demographic shifts are battering U.S. churches, especially Catholic parishes. In the Diocese of Springfield, Mass., for example, there are simply fewer people to fill the pews. That’s led to two rounds of church closures, which have afflicted dioceses around the country. The Springfield diocese currently counts about 202,000 Catholics. That figure was three times as large 50 years ago.

Evans hopes the targeted outreach will help shed light on how to reach the unchurched — assuming they want to be reached. A likely follow-up survey, he said, would try to gauge results and ask, “How responsive were your people?”

About our Members & Friends

New Address

Marjorie Bruch bought a house; her new address is 19 Raymond Place, Cromwell, CT 06416

Birthdays & Anniversaries

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



We wish a happy birthday during October to Greg Forbes, Jack Bruch, Tom Gelineau, Jeff Eldridge, Ryan Unger, Collin Kenney, Rose Petkis, Brooke Stevens, Jillian Farnham, Kasey Peters, Kelly Dooley, Stacy Seibert, Ben

Carriere, Caitlyn Stevens, Lauren Carllo

If there are others we missed who would like to be included on our monthly list, please contact Ruth in the office.

New Baby

Ed & Lois Sharpless are proud grandparents, again. Jeremy Robert Sharpless was born September 24 to Ted & Beth Sharpless who live in Pennsylvania. Jeremy has an older sister, Naomi. Congratulations!

In Sympathy

Our thoughts and prayers are with Holly Marek in the passing of her father, Edward Marek, on September 25.



Donations in his memory may be made to St. Bernard Church, 426 Hazard Ave., Enfield, CT 06082.

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 Minister
 Jason Stefanik, Organist/Choir Director

Ray Foster, Moderator
 Sydney Cohen, Treasurer
 Ruth Bruch, Clerk/Office Administrator

October 2009

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 (website) Worship 10 AM Nursery Care Provided				1 Study w/Brent 7-8:30 PM	2	3 Blacksmith Shoppe 10-3
4 Communion	5	6 AA 6:15-8:30 Deacons 7 PM	7 Bible Study 9:30-11 Choir 7 PM	8 Cabinet Requests Due Study w/Brent 7-8:30 PM	9 Supper Prep. 9 AM	10 Blacksmith Shoppe 10-3 Harvest Supper 5 & 6:15
11	12 Columbus Day	13 Ladies Aide 1 PM AA 6:15-8:30 Finance 7 PM	14 Bible Study 9:30-11 Choir 7 PM Prayer Shawl Ministry 7 PM at Sharpless'	15	16 Missions 2 PM Dinner & a Movie 6 PM "The Bucket List"	17 Blacksmith Shoppe 10-3
18 Cabinet Meeting CROP Walk w/Somers Cong'l 1 PM	19	20 Confirmation Class 5:30 AA 6:15-8:30	21 Bible Study 9:30-11 Choir 7 PM	22 Study w/Brent 7-8:30 PM	23 CT Conference Fall Meeting in Middletown	24 CT Conf. Fall Meet. Blacksmith Shoppe 10-3
25 Confirmation Class Spire Deadline	26	27 Blair Manor Worship 10:30 AA 6:15-8:30 Bd. of Trustees 7 PM	28 Bible Study 9:30-11 Choir 7 PM	29	30 Halloween Party	31 Halloween Blacksmith Shoppe 10-3 Fall Clean Up

Hidden Pictures - For the Young at Heart



banana



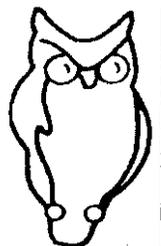
crab



chicken



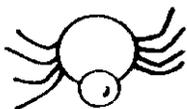
dog's head



owl



rabbit's head



spider



balloon



funnel



apple core