

The Spire

Congregational Church of Somersville
United Church of Christ

February 2010



Christian Education

Lenten Services (submitted by Graham Van Keuren)

Please join in our 1/2 hour mid-week Lenten services to be held Wednesdays at 7PM, beginning Ash Wednesday (February 17th.) This year we will use the words of institution to the communion service ("On the night on which our Lord Jesus was betrayed, he took bread, and after giving thanks to God, he broke it...") as our springboard for contemplation and meditation. As part of each service, we will celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Please come and prepare yourself to observe a holy Lent.

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

Dinner and Movie Night!



Join us for our next dinner and a movie on Saturday, February 20th. The potluck will begin at 6 PM with the movie to follow. This month we will watch The Mission, a 1986 Academy Award winning movie with an all-star ensemble cast led by Robert DeNiro and Jeremy Irons. The movie focuses on a Jesuit mission in 18th century Brazil and grapples with the conflict between the colonial powers and those who minister to the indigenous peoples. Packed with exciting adventure and provocative themes, The Mission is not to be missed! Rated PG.

From the Pastor

Friends in Christ,

I am thankful for all those who came out to participate in our 140th Annual Congregational Meeting held on January 30th. Among the important business transacted was the election of officers, board members and committee members.

I am especially grateful for those who are willing to minister in the church through elective offices. As the Apostle Paul teaches, we should support those who labor among us on behalf of the gospel and those who agree to serve in these positions ought to have our prayers. Consequently, I have included a prayer for your use this month and throughout the year.

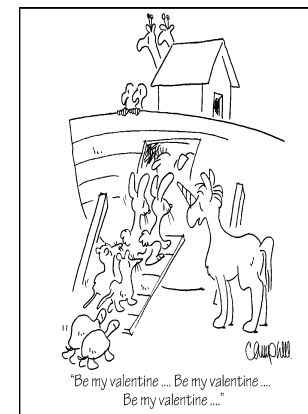
A Prayer for Church Officers, Board Members, and Committee Members

God of the prophets and apostles, in every generation you have chosen leaders to help guide your people in the way of Jesus Christ. We thank you that in our church today there are men and women who respond to your call and take up elected office to perform special work within our fellowship. Let us surround our officers, board members and committee members with affection and hope, and may they be faithful workers, approved by Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Of course, most who read this letter do not hold elective office in our church, but know that we still need your ministry among us! Be it through Ladies Aid, as a fellowship host, as a greeter, or in multitude of other ways, we need you! My prayers are with you, too.

Faithfully yours,

Graham Van Keuren



Thanks to ..

- .. all who volunteered to take on “service opportunities” during January
- .. everyone who contributed to the success of the Roast Pork Supper.
- .. all who gave so generously to our 2nd Mile Missions collection for the Christmas Fund.
- .. those who served on Boards this past year.
- .. the people who helped to “un-decorate” the church.



Thanks from ..

Everett Baker ~ “Thank you to the Prayer Shawl group for the shawl, kind thoughts, prayers and ministry.”

Opportunities in January



Fellowship hosts are needed!!

Coffee Fellowship

		<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Reader</u>
		<u>Fellowship Hosts</u>		
Feb. 7	Dan Dunn Art Lachance	George Liberty Marge Morgan	Everett Baker	Donna Pendleton
Feb. 14	Donna Pendleton George Liberty	Dan Dunn Art Lachance	Elaine Hancock	
Feb. 21	Donna Pendleton Genny Farnham	Patrick Forbes George Liberty	Art Lachance	Graham Van Keuren
Feb. 28	George Liberty Donna Pendleton	Ed Sharpless Lois Sharpless	Genny Farnham	

Christian Education

Wednesday Bible Study

Wednesday morning Bible study will meet each week in January from 9:30-11:15 AM in the church social room. All are invited.

From the Moderator (submitted by Ray Foster)

February Cabinet

The next meeting of the Cabinet, that is open to all, will be held following worship on February 21. Anyone having business to bring up should notify myself, Graham or Ruth by February 11.

Report of the Treasurer (submitted by Sydney Cohen)

The grass may look greener on the other side, but it still has to be mowed.

And be content with such things as you have.

Hebrews 13:5.

	December 2009	YTD 2009	Budget 2009
Pledges	\$ 11,775.00	\$ 75,743.00	\$ 75,000.00
Income	\$ 23,968.25	\$ 131,974.00	\$ 112,825.00
Expenses	\$ 15,578.77	\$ 126,184.62	\$ 124,617.12

December Collections

Fundraiser Supper- \$ 2,040.00- Designated to Missions

YTD Fundraiser Net Total - \$ 22,774.63

Monthly Mission— Christmas Eve- \$307.00

Cornerstone – \$ 16.00

UNICEF- \$ 92.30



The month of December was a crazy, but good month for the church. In November, the YTD for pledges was 63,968.00. In one month, over 11,000.00 were collected so we actually exceeded our budget for pledges. In addition, our donations were truly a blessing, which saw our total income exceed the budgeted income by a large amount.

Our expenses for December were higher than budgeted partly due to mission’s disbursements as well as the purchase of the used copier for the office. There were also continued repairs of the parsonage, reflected under restricted donations disbursal.

Overall, this church had a phenomenal year in many ways. We owe God a big thank you for his continual blessings! May 2010 keep our church healthy and ever faithful.

Missions (submitted by Jean Foster)

2nd Mile Missions

On Super Bowl Sunday, Feb 7, we will be collecting a "Souper Bowl of Caring" Offering. This money will be given to the Enfield Food Shelf.



For the remainder of February, we will be collecting personal grooming items such as hand soap, shampoo, toothpaste, deodorant, tissues, toilet paper, and also cleaning supplies such as dish soap, paper towels, laundry detergent, multi-purpose cleansers, and napkins, and baby needs as in diapers, lotions and powder.

The explanation for this collection is that FOOD STAMPS covers only FOOD, and most of the food pantries have a low supply of these other items.

Hygiene/Health Kits

In conjunction with Ladies Aide, the Missions Committee also continues to collect supplies to fill Hygiene/Health Kits for distribution through Church World Service to those hit by devastation of earthquakes, floods, etc. Each kit includes:

- 1 16x28 hand towel
- 1 wash cloth
- 1 wide tooth comb
- 1 nail clipper (**no** metal files or emery boards)
- 1 wrapped, bath size bar of soap
- 1 toothbrush in original package
- 6 3/4" bandages



If you put together a whole kit, please put it in a zip locked gallon size baggie. Donations of individual items are certainly welcome and accepted. If you prefer, a monetary donation may be given to a member of the Missions Board (Jean Foster, Allison Matczak, Gen Farnham or Barbara Baugniet) and they will buy needed supplies.

Cornerstone (submitted by Barbara Baugniet)

As a result of a scheduling conflict at Cornerstone in January, we did not help to serve the dinner on the 19th. We will, however, be at Cornerstone Soup Kitchen on Tuesday, February 16th.



We can meet at , and carpool from, the church at 4 PM (or be at Cornerstone by 4:30); we'll return about 6:30. Anyone willing to help should speak with me.

Historian's Corner (submitted by Johanna Karbonic)

Who Are We?

We were not married in the Congregational Church of Somersville. Instead, we were married in the South Conley Baptist Church in Forest Park, Georgia on February 10, 1957. (53 years ago)

Although they were not married here, he has been an official member since 1946 and she has been a member since 1957. He is really a lifetime member of this church since his grandfathers on both sides were Deacons of the church – one from 1891-1941 and one from 1931-1955. His father was a Deacon from 1942-1955 and a Clerk and Treasurer from 1955 until he retired from the positions. His mother was a Lady Assistant Deacon, Teacher, and Supt. of the Sunday school for many years. What kept him coming to this church was -- he had "No choice!" His Sunday mornings consisted of Sunday school at 10:00 a.m. and Church at 11:00 a.m. Many times he and his parents walked two miles to go to church or to catch the trolley in Somersville to go to Enfield. She grew up in Georgia and came to live here after their marriage. Their three children attended Sunday school and two were married in this church.

Their favorite part of church is the friendly atmosphere and the close fellowship. Their fondest memories are the church suppers and get-togethers. What they would like to see different in the church is having more people participating in the activities. The people they most admire and would honor from this church are Gertrude and J. Francis Wood.

This wonderful couple has been very involved in all facets of the church throughout the years. We can't imagine a cooking or building project without one or the other or both participating in it.

(If you haven't guessed by now, turn toward the end of the Spire for the answer and picture.)

Ladies Aide Society (submitted by Barbara Baugniet)

All women of the church are welcome to attend and participate in the gatherings. Our next meeting will be held Tuesday, February 9th at 12 noon in the social room. This will be a pot luck luncheon; hostesses will be Genny Farnham and Linda McEwen. Officers and committees will be installed by Rev. Van Keuren.



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 at 7 PM on February 18th at the home of Lois Sharpless. If anyone needs a ride, feel free to contact me at work (860-749-1350). All are welcome.

Fundraising Suppers (submitted by Ruth Bruch)

Dinner & Bake Sale

Our February 13 dinner will feature **baked stuffed shrimp** – this went over very well in 2009. Menu also includes baked potato, mixed vegetables, tossed salad, homemade rolls/breads, beverage and red velvet cake (new recipe from our cookbook). A sign up sheet is posted in the social room for help and donations. Some opportunities to contribute include:

- 2# croutons
- 8 boxes Ritz crackers
- 4 Red Velvet Cakes
(recipe available upon request & posted in social room)
- 1# bags of mixed veggies (or equivalent)
- \$15 for potatoes
- 8 loaves of bread (your choice ie. pumpkin, date, strawberry, apple, etc)

physical help during the supper



A **bake sale** will also be held during the supper; please bake, if able (cookies, bars, candy, pies, cakes, bread, etc.)

Reservations are now being accepted for this supper; call the office at 860-749-7741 or email somcong@aol.com. Sittings are at 5 & 6:15 PM. Take out orders will be available from 5:30-6 PM and 6:45-7. Cost of this dinner is \$15 for adults and \$8 for children ages 5-10. Because of the cost of the shrimp, those working the supper will be asked to pay \$5 for their dinners.

Roast Pork Recap

192 dinners were served; income was \$2217.13 (including proceeds from our small bake sale). The pork was cooked to perfection by Nick Wood and was delicious. We experimented with a new dessert that was a huge hit ~ individual molten lava cakes! (The recipe is in our soon to be released cookbook.) Proceeds from the supper, \$1910.13, go toward the general operating expenses of the church. Thanks to those who supported this dinner.

March Supper

Next up is our annual Corned Beef Supper on March 13. Reservations for this supper will be accepted beginning February 27

This & That

- 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.**
- **Fellowship hosts** are needed for the year; a sign up sheet is posted in the social room.

Orthodox pilgrims gather at the Jordan to mark Epiphany

by Judith Sudilovsky Ecumenical News International

QASR EL YAHUD, West Bank — Thousands of Palestinian and foreign Orthodox Christian pilgrims braved the wind and rain to take part in a traditional Epiphany ceremony on the banks of the River Jordan, in which the Bible says Jesus was baptized. Still, for most of the pilgrims, it was impossible to reach the river bank.

Israel police at Qasr el Yahud said they had kept pilgrims several hundred meters away behind barriers at the newly revamped site as a security precaution, in order to avoid a stampede into the waters before the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem and bishops completed their prayers there.

“I have just wanted to see this. I have a Christian belief and this is a holy place,” said Georgianna Pastrov, aged 24, a pilgrim from Romania, as she peered over the shoulders of pilgrims in front of her to get a glimpse of the river. “I understand that a few years ago they let people get into the water but I am not upset about it.”

The Orthodox faithful were there to symbolically wash away their sins by plunging into the waters in a ceremony that marks the Christian festival of Epiphany. This falls on Jan. 18 according to the Julian calendar that many Orthodox churches use. (*Graham’s note: Whereas we use the Gregorian calendar, Epiphany falls on January 6th for us Western Protestant Christians. We celebrated it this year with our cantata, “Let Heaven and Nature Sing Gloria!”*)

Boutrous Farid Azar, 67, had come from the West Bank village of Tubas near Jenin, with 24 other members of his family. There are only 45 Christians alongside 20,000 Muslims in their village, he said, and coming to celebrate Epiphany with other Christians gave them strength and helped them feel not so alone. “Jesus helps us in our lives,” Azar said.

Qasr el Yahud is the third most important site for Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land. The spot is now on the border between Jordan and the West Bank, territory occupied by Israel during the Six Day War of 1967. We are Nick &

Jordan has developed a smaller site on its side of the river to mark the place where it says Jesus was baptized, and a few hundred pilgrims also gathered there.

They watched as the Patriarch recited prayers and threw a wooden cross wrapped in a wreath of green branches with a white dove atop them into the water three times, drawing the cross back each time with a red ribbon.

On the Israeli side, a group of Greek pilgrims stood behind the metal barriers, and strained to watch the ceremony. Pilgrimage group leader Stephanos Kanoutas said they wanted to see how the river changed the course of its direction after the cross was thrown in, as their religious tradition holds.

“What I feel, I cannot express in words,” said Alexandra Vasileiou, a member of Kanoutas’ group.

After the ceremony, border police officers tried to ensure that pilgrims reached the water in an orderly fashion but were overwhelmed by crowds of young men pushing and jumping over the barriers.

Many other pilgrims satisfied themselves with water from the river pumped into one of four big plastic containers. Some climbed into the containers, while others dipped their hands and faces into the water.

Nearby, underneath a stone pavilion, Ethiopian Orthodox pilgrims beating large drums sang and chanted as they danced in a circle with red velvet crowns on their heads.

“I have gone through some difficult times lately,” said Souad Hadad, from the Israeli Arab village of Jish in the Galilee, as she filled a small bottle with pumped water from the river. “My husband died and my sisters convinced me to do this pilgrimage. When you are down, only God can help you,” she said. “People may try but in the end you are alone, but God is always with you. Only when I get home will I know if this experience has helped me.”

About our Members & Friends

Who Are We??



Carlese Wood!



Anniversaries & Birthdays

Celebrating their 53rd wedding anniversary this month are Nick & Carlese Wood. Congratulations!!

And, former members and good friends of the church, Ralph & Phyllis Lumb will be celebrating their 69th anniversary in February!



Wishes for a happy birthday this month are sent to Andy Cornish, Ruth Bruch, Carlese Wood, Jeanne MacDonald, Jennifer Hare, David Cohen, Jason Robidoux, Joe Libby, Dave Pinney, Brett Cleaver, Marilyn Hare, Bobby Bourque, Marge Harmon, Lori Arnone, Vic Netten, Amber Peters, Mary Unger, Faye Gately, Tyler Eldridge, and Dan Dunn. To others celebrating, we wish you a happy day, too!

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.

February 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Confirmation 5:30-7:30	2 AA 6:15 PM Deacons 7 PM	3 Bible Study 9:30-11:15 Choir 7 PM	4 "Brainstorming" 7 PM	5	6
7 Communion Souper Bowl of Caring collection	8	9 Ladies Aide Pot Luck Luncheon 12 PM AA 6:15 Finance 7 PM ??	10 Bible Study 9:30 AM Choir 7 PM	11 Cabinet Requests Due	12 Supper Prep. 9 AM Missions 2 PM	13 Valentine Supper 5 & 6:15
14 <i>Valentine's Day</i>	15 <i>Presidents' Day</i> Confirmation 5:30-7:30	16 Cornerstone 4-6:30 AA 6:15	17 <i>Ash Wednesday</i> Bible Study 9:30 AM Lenten Service 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	18	19	20 Pot Luck Dinner and a Movie 6 PM
21 Cabinet March Spire Deadline	22	23 Blair Manor Worship 10:30 AA 6:15	24 Bible Study 9:30 AM Lenten Service 7 PM Choir 7:30 PM	25	26	27
28	Graham Van Keuren, Pastor Brent Damrow, Student Minister Ray Foster, Moderator Sydney Cohen, Treasurer Ruth Bruch, Clerk/Office Administrator Jason Stefanik, Organist/Choir Director			Congregational Church of Somersville 22 Maple St., PO Box I, Somersville, CT 06072 Worship 10 AM Nursery Care Provided 860-749-7741 860-749-5132 (fax) somcong@aol.com (email) www.somersvilleucc.org (website)		

Hidden Pictures - "Snowboarding"

