

The Spire

Congregational Church of Somersville
United Church of Christ

January 2010



Annual Meeting Scheduled

Reserve Saturday, January 30 on your calendars. That is when our annual meeting will be held. A pot luck supper will begin at 6 PM; the meeting will commence at 7 PM. Reports from officers and Boards will be reviewed; officers and new Board members will be elected. We'll also vote on the proposed budget for 2010 and hear and consider any other business that may come up. *Remember, we are all ministers of this church and all opinions and voices matter.* Be sure to bring a dish to share and place setting(s).

Transportation can be arranged for those unable to get to the church on their own; please call the church office to make a request (860-749-7741).

Officers and Board chairmen are to submit written reports to Ruth by Sunday, January 17.

Also, as we have done for several years, a roll call will be taken at the start of the meeting; members should be prepared to respond with a verse of scripture. Anyone unable to attend the meeting is encouraged to return a verse of scripture to be read in his/her absence.

.....

I/we will be unable to attend the meeting on the 30th. Please read this verse in my/our absence.

Member(s) _____

Return to R. Bruch, Cong'l Church of Somersville, PO Box I, Somersville, CT 06072

From the Pastor

Dear Friends in Christ,

New Year's Day is often a time of resolution-making, although I don't know why that's the case. What makes the new year any better time to resolve something than one's birthday, or Easter (which is, after all, about new and renewed life), or February 22nd (just to pick a random day)? Perhaps we all should make our resolutions on April 1st, for at least then we'd have an "out" if we needed it. (Ha, ha! April Fools!)

My dad always jokes that he doesn't make New Year's resolutions because he's perfect already. Any planned change would therefore be a step backwards. Of course, he's kidding; he means it to be a humorous

thing to say. And it is... the first time you hear it. Funny or not, it goes without saying that my dad does not speak the truth. "Everyone," to quote the Apostle Paul, "has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."



Shortly after New Year's Day, we begin to celebrate Epiphany in our church, beginning with the reading of the story of the magi's visit with the holy family. If the magi, who were not Jews, could leave the comfort of their Persian homeland and follow the sign in the heavens in order to present highly meaningful gifts to the newborn King of the Jews, can't we also take this New Year's opportunity to plot a new course in our lives? So perhaps New Year's is as good a time as any to pursue a change in life – one that offers Jesus the best gifts we have.

In any event, whether you make resolutions this New Year's Day or wait 'til your birthday, Easter, or February 22nd, I pray that you may have a blessed and happy 2010.

Faithfully yours,

Graham Van Keuren



Thanks to ..

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

.. everyone who contributed to the success of the Holiday Ham Supper.

.. those who bought poinsettias in memory or in honor of loved ones.

They were beautiful in our sanctuary.

.. all who gave so generously to our food drive.

.. those who helped decorate our church for the season.

.. the Sunday school youth, Board of Christian

Education and the helpers for their work on the annual

Pageant.



Thanks from ..

Carlese Wood ~ “Thank you all for your prayers, cards and the like.

Nick and I enjoyed the carol sing immensely. Thanks, too, to the prayer

shawl group for the prayer shawl; I’ve been enjoying it the many nights

I couldn’t sleep.”

Opportunities in January

	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Fellowship Hosts</u>
Jan. 3	Donna Pendleton	Dan Dunn Art Lachance	George Liberty	Sue Comparetto Marjorie Nadeau
Jan. 10		Donna Pendleton Patrick Forbes	Art Lachance	
Jan. 17	Donna Pendleton		Elaine Hancock	Bert & Mae Chillson
Jan. 24	Donna Pendleton	Art Lachance Dan Dunn	Yvonne Wood	
Jan. 31	Dan Dunn Art Lachance	Donna Pendleton Patrick Forbes	Genny Farnham	

Please note, there are still some opening for the month. Are you willing to be a greeter, usher or reader? Speak with a deacon to volunteer. Can you provide light refreshment following worship? Sign up in the social room.

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.



Dinner and Movie Night! (submitted by Judy Liberty)

It’s back! Everyone is invited to a pot luck dinner at the church on Saturday, January 16 at 6 PM. After the dinner, we’ll enjoy the animated, family friendly, movie, “Up”.

From the Moderator (submitted by Ray Foster)

January Cabinet

The next meeting of the Cabinet, that is open to all, will be held following worship on January 17. Anyone having business to bring up should notify myself, Graham or Ruth by January 7.

Report of the Treasurer (submitted by Sydney Cohen)

Jesus is a friend who walks in when the world has walked out.

I have told you this so that you will have peace by being united to me. The world will make you suffer. But, be brave! I have defeated the world!
John 16:33



	November 2009	YTD 2009	Budget 2009
Pledges	\$ 5,835.00	\$63,968.00	\$ 75,000.00
Income	\$ 8,990.24	\$108,005.75	\$112,825.00
Expenses	\$ 8,621.04	\$110,605.85	\$124,617.12

November Collections

Fundraiser Supper- \$ 2352.00

YTD Fundraiser Total - \$ 20,742.46

Monthly Mission—Solar Cooker Project- \$ 700.00

Pledges were slightly below what is budgeted, as well as the overall income. But on the bright side, expenses were also short of what we budgeted. Looking ahead, December pledges will put us into close range of the 75,000, we budgeted for 2009. Our overall income exceeds the budget and our overall expenses so far are under what we budgeted. We have a lot to be thankful for this year in our church! Thanks be to GOD!!

Financial Statements (submitted by Marge Morgan)

This month I will prepare and distribute financial giving statements to members and friends acknowledging receipt of their total giving amount received in 2009. If you don't get a statement or have a discrepancy, please speak with me.

From the Stewardship Committee (submitted by Graham Van Keuren)

One of the ways you can continue to support the mission of Jesus Christ here in Somersville is by remembering the church in your estate planning. We often talk about how to be good stewards of our annual income through our pledges, but don't we also have a responsibility to be good stewards of our accumulated wealth, too?

For example, here is one opportunity for some to leverage their estates on behalf of Christ's ministry: Congress has recently extended a provision for those 70-1/2 and older, allowing the transfer of up to \$100,000 from an IRA account directly to a not-for-profit without having to pay income taxes on the withdrawal. Other estate planning options include setting up a gift annuity or a deferred gift annuity, creating a charitable remainder trust or a revocable living trust, creating a memorial or honorary fund on behalf of another, remembering the church in your will, and making the church a beneficiary of your life insurance policy.



Please know that all gifts of time, talent and treasure are gratefully received we diligently try to use them for the building up of the Reign of God. Thank you to all members and friends for all that you do!

Missions (submitted by Jean Foster)

2nd Mile

Did you think the Mission Board had forgotten the UCC retirees, Veterans of the Cross? No, we haven't forgotten them and don't want the congregation to forget them either. We will continue Christmas like the magi and honor the Christ Child by bringing gifts that can be used to support and honor those who have served and are serving our beloved church.

Gifts to the Christmas Fund provide Pension and Health Premium Supplementation to lower income retirees and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks to hundreds of annuitants. Gifts to the Christmas Fund provide resources for the Emergency Fund, which offers assistance to those who serve the church today.

The denominational goal for 2009 is to raise \$1,650,000. What will be our percentage?

Cornerstone (submitted by Barbara Baugniet)

The Missions Board is seeking volunteers to help serve a meal at Cornerstone Soup Kitchen in Rockville on Tuesday, January 19. We can meet at , and carpool from, the church at 4 PM; 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 married in this church on June 29, 1947 by Pastor Paul Ross Lynn. She lived in Somers and belonged to this church for most of her life – except for 10 years while living in Hazardville. She became a member in 1938.

He grew up in Hazardville and belonged to the Hazardville Methodist Church until he moved to Somers. He became a member of the Cong. Church of Somersville in 1957. Their children went to Sunday School here. The reason they continue to come to the Cong. Church of Somersville is because they both like it, especially the music and the minister. Their favorite memory of this church was their wedding ceremony and baptism of their daughter. They are glad the American flag is back in church. The people they most admired were Gertrude and Francis Wood and Thelma Smith. The person they most admire now is Ruth Bruch. They both came from farming families and enjoyed square dancing while they were dating.

If you don't know who they are, the answer is on the Members & Friends page of this Spire.

Ladies Aide Society (submitted by Barbara Bagniet)

All women of the church are welcome to attend and participate in the gatherings. Our next meeting will be held Tuesday, January 12 at 1 PM in the social room. We do need someone to hostess the meeting and offer devotions; please speak with me if you are willing. This is our annual review meeting and we'll hear nominations from the nominating committee (Donna, Linda and Marge), elect officers and make plans for 2010.

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 January 21st 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)

Supper Dates for 2010

The dates for the 2010 fundraising suppers were approved at the Dec. 27 Cabinet meeting. Dinners will be held:

Jan. 9	Feb. 13	March 13	April 10	May 8
June 19	July 17	Aug. 14	Sept. 11	Oct. 9
Nov. 13	Dec. 4			

All entrees have not yet been determined. Please keep in mind that these suppers depend on a lot of help ~ from donations to helping in food preparation to working the day and time of the supper to clean-up. It gets frustrating when there are only a few names on the sign up and only a few bodies doing the bulk of the work. Remember, many hands make light work. All are welcome to participate.

The January 9 supper menu includes roast pork (prepared by Nick Wood), mashed potato, gravy, glazed carrots, tossed salad, homemade rolls, Italian bread, beverage and molten lava cake. At this point we are full by reservations for both sittings; however, take out orders will be available from 5:30-6 PM and 6:45-7 PM. There is also a wait list in the event cancellations are received. Cost is \$11 for adults and \$5 for children ages 5-10. *A bake sale will also be held during the supper; please bake, if able (cookies,*



bars, candy, pies, cakes, bread, etc.)

Holiday Ham Recap

185 dinners were served; there were some cash donations and income was \$2143. Small poinsettias were given to 22 folks (1 per table x 2 sittings) – this give-away is always fun and attendees are so thrilled with our gesture. Proceeds from this supper (\$1770) went to the Board of Missions for distribution. Thanks to those who supported this dinner.

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.
- Chairmen whose terms are ending are reminded to **turn in their church key** so distribution can be made to new chairmen.

CT Conference UCC

Open Letter from the Conference

Dear friends,

It is not new 'news' that our Conference continues to face financial challenges. I am writing today to ask your generous support of our annual Friends of the Conference effort as the year 2009 comes to an end, so that we can support our ministries of love and service in 2010.

If you have already responded to our appeals by letter or in *ConnTact*, you have my heartfelt thanks. If you have been planning to make your gift but have not yet had the opportunity, I want to remind you before the end of the year so that you can include the appropriate deduction on this year's tax return. You can donate securely online right now, by visiting our web site:

<http://www.ctucc.org/donate/>

Friends of the Conference are individuals like you who understand the larger vision of Christ's church and who wish to aid the realization of the vision through personal gifts. One hundred percent of gifts given by Friends support the work of our Connecticut Conference. Your gifts help us support local churches seeking new pastoral leadership, provide curriculum support for Christian education programs, offer youth programming, summer youth conferences at Silver Lake, stewardship assistance and much more. Together we are strong; apart we are vulnerable.

Last year Friends of the Conference gifts totaled over \$36,000. I urgently invite you to help us achieve even greater support this year.

Please join me in giving strongly; make your gift today at <http://www.ctucc.org/donate>, or send your check, payable to the "Missionary Society of Connecticut" with a memo indicating "Friends of the Conference," to:

Connecticut Conference, UCC
United Church Center
125 Sherman Street
Hartford, CT 06105

Our churches make a huge difference in people's lives. Our Conference makes a similar difference in the lives of our churches. You are the key to their future.

Davida Foy Crabtree, Conference Minister

Flu fears prompt panic at the Communion rail

by Solange DeSantis Religion News Service

NEW YORK — Hand sanitizer in the pews. A cautionary bow rather than a warm handshake during the Passing of the Peace. Empty holy water fonts. Increased absences from religious classes.

The H1N1 flu pandemic is shaking up religious communities and disrupting worship life. But when does caution veer into paranoia, and what is lost when faith becomes fear?

With H1N1 flu being declared a national emergency, religious organizations are issuing guidelines for worship practices and even personal interaction during liturgy. In a reversal of the usual open invitation, some faith communities are asking those who don't feel well to stay home.

"I have skipped church when the kids were sick," said Ruth Wynja Gibbons of Whitinsville, Mass., whose 6-year-old son and 3-

year-old daughter came down with bad colds. As it turned out, the kids didn't contract H1N1, or swine flu, but Gibbons has noticed a drop in the number of children in Sunday school at Pleasant Street Christian Reformed Church.

At her church's Sunday service, congregants are being advised that they need not shake hands when the time comes to greet fellow worshippers. "I personally just greet people verbally, not shake hands," she said. "I think it's a good precaution, that people not spread illnesses this time of year. It's better to be safe than sorry."

At Gibbons' church, Communion wine is traditionally passed in individual, disposable cups, but in some denominations, congregants may dip the Communion wafer or bread in wine (known as intinction) or sip from a common cup. Advice varies — some churches have banned the common cup or stopped serving wine altogether since sipping from a shared cup may be a path to sickness.

At Or Shalom Jewish Community in San Francisco, a Reconstructionist congregation, touching is a regular part of worship. "Usually everyone touches the challah (bread) during Shabbat services and we usually break it as a group," noted administrator Shari Carruthers.

Carruthers said worshippers are being careful to wash their hands before the ritual prayer over the bread. Some are also refraining from sharing the Kiddush cup, a goblet of wine that is passed around after a blessing at the Sabbath meal.

Muslims already incorporate ritual hand-washing, known as wudu, before prayer services, but a notice at the Muslim Community Center in Chicago also advises members that they may wish "salaam," (peace) to each other verbally and need not shake hands.

Concern about passing along infections is causing changes in style among some clergy. Laurie Wozniak, a parishioner at Trinity Episcopal Church in Buffalo, N.Y., noted that her pastor, the Rev. Cam Miller, is normally a hug-and-shake-hands kind of guy. When he wasn't feeling up to par recently, he refrained even from meeting parishioners at the door, she said.

"He did not celebrate the Eucharist. He had an associate priest do it," she said. "He ventured no closer (to the congregation) than the pulpit. He explained ... it was to make sure he was not communicating any germs. He stayed in the high altar area, so he could still be there and function."

Miller said he had upper respiratory symptoms, but didn't have a definitive diagnosis. "My biggest concern was not being a distraction to other people," he said.

An Italian inventor has come up with a dispenser that releases a few drops of holy water when worshippers pass their hands under it, to avoid the communal holy water basin. But all these precautions have some people wondering if an essential part of a faith community is getting lost.

Pamela Dempsey DeVries, who attends Fuquay-Varina Baptist Church in Fuquay-Varina, N.C., has kept her three children out of services, though they continue to attend Sunday School. As caretakers of the family, she said, women are bearing the brunt of the flu scare.

At worship, she keeps hand sanitizer in her purse and now is “more reserved” in greeting other parishioners, and worries that she may seem less friendly to newcomers.

“It’s very Southern,” she said. “Everyone gets out of their pew, walks all over the church. It’s a chance to welcome new people or find your friends, and if you know people, give them a kiss or hug.”

The Rev. Tim Schenck, rector of St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church in Hingham, MA, is taking all the usual precautions and found himself hurriedly writing a swine flu policy for his church after a parishioner’s child came down with H1N1. But he also mourns the emphasis on avoiding human touch.

“You don’t want to take this lightly or minimize it, but sacramental touch is being lost and that can’t be replaced by being washed in Purell. Sacramental touch is an outward and visible sign of God’s presence. It’s human interaction and communication at its deepest level,” he said.

As a priest, he said, “the Communion rail is a place of great joy — being able to feed people with the body of Christ.”

“It’s a shame that fear is being brought into the sanctuary,” he said, “because you would hope that the sanctuary is a place where there is no fear.”

About our Members & Friends

Birth

Tracey & Josh Clague are the proud parents of Fiona Gwyneth, born December 11 at 12:46 PM. Fiona tipped the scales at 8 lb. 14 oz and was 21.5”. She has a big brother, Ewan. Maternal grandparents are Jack & Mavis Collins.



Birthdays

Best wishes for a happy birthday this month are sent to Michele Bellafronte, Mae Chillson, Miriam Cohen, Erin Tishon, Karen Peck, Judy Peck, Deb Robidoux, Andrew Farnham and Jimmy Graham. To others celebrating, we wish you a happy day, too!

Address Updates

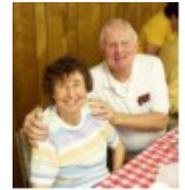
Please make a note of these new addresses in your church directory:

Bobby Bourque, 14 Ganny Terrace, Enfield. 860-810-6050
Holly Marek, 260 Scantic Rd., E. Windsor 860-670-1136

Who Are We?



Why, we’re Don & Ruth Graham!



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.

January 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
Congregational Church of Somersville 22 Maple St., PO Box 1, Somersville, CT 06072 Worship 10 AM Nursery Care Provided 860-749-7741 860-749-5132 (fax) somcong@aol.com (email) www.somersvilleucc.org (website)						1	2
3 Communion	4	5 AA 6:15 PM Deacons 7 PM	6 Bible Study 9:30-11:15 Choir 7 PM	7 Cabinet Requests Due	8 Supper Prep.9 AM	9 Roast Pork Supper 5 & 6:15	
10 Epiphany Choir Cantata	11	12 Ladies Aid 1 PM AA 6:15 PM	13 Bible Study 9:30 AM Choir 7 PM	14	15 Missions 2 PM	16 Pot Luck Dinner & a Movie 6 PM	
17 Written Annual Reports Due Cabinet	18	19 Cornerstone 4 -6:30 AA 6:15 PM	20 Bible Study 9:30 AM Choir 7 PM	21 Prayer Shawl Ministry 7 PM	22	23	
24 Spire Deadline	25	26 Blair Manor Worship 10 AM AA 6:15 PM	27 Bible Study 9:30 Choir 7 PM	28	29	30 Pot Luck Supper 6 PM Annual Meeting 7 PM	
31	the Rev. Graham Van Keuren, Pastor Ray Foster, Moderator Sydney Cohen, Treasurer Ruth Bruch, Clerk/Office Administrator Jason Stefanik, Organist/Choir Director Brent Damrow, Student Minister						

