

The Spire

Congregational Church of Somersville
United Church of Christ
December, 2011



Advent Activities

There are a number of activities and events during this season and we hop you will opt to participate in, or be a witness to, many of them. Other opportunities can be found within the pages of this Spire.

Hanging the Greens

Hanging of the greens will be done following coffee fellowship on Dec. 4th. This is a fun time for all; join us if you can.



Caroling

Help us brighten spirits and celebrate the Christmas holiday! Join with us as we sing carols to some church members and friends around town. We'll gather at the church at 6 PM on Friday, December 16, and leave for our caroling circuit. We'll end the night with some sweet and savory food and fellowship at the home of Ed & Lois Sharpless. All are welcome to participate .. and bring a flashlight.

Christmas Pageant

The annual Christmas Pageant is set for December 18. Please join us for our delightful rendition of the story of Jesus' birth at 6:00 PM in the church sanctuary. All of our church's children (and friends, too) are invited to participate! Please see any Christian Education teacher or Board Member for questions or if you'd like to participate!



Help will be needed following worship on the 18th to "set the stage" and after the performance to dismantle the set.



Christmas Eve Service

Come one, come all to our Christmas Eve service on Saturday, December 24th, at 7 PM.

Christmas Day Worship

Yes, indeed, Christmas falls on a Sunday this year and we will worship, as usual, at 10 AM. What better day to celebrate the birth of Jesus!



From the Pastor

Dear Friends in Christ,

If, in years past, you haven't taken the opportunity to join us for our contemplative Wednesday evening Advent services, please know that you are invited to join us this year! Advent, which means "coming" or "arrival", is a time of expectation and preparation as we await the coming of Jesus – both in our hearts (which we celebrate at Christmas) and in glory at the time of Christ's second coming.

The Wednesday evening Advent services are just ½ hour long and will occur on 11/30, 12/7, 12/14, and 12/21 from 7:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Other church activities, such as choir or board and committee meetings, will begin on those Wednesdays after the worship concludes at 7:30 p.m. unless otherwise specified. At our services we will explore the traditional Advent themes of hope, love, joy and peace.



Another complementary way to spiritually engage the Advent season is by using our Advent devotional which has been written by members and friends of our church. This booklet is designed to be used as a daily aid to the growth of your faith as we await Christ's arrival.

However you choose to do so, please remember to observe a holy Advent, for all the best presents in the world won't make for a truly joyful Christmas unless we have done the spiritual preparation the prophets and John the Baptist have called us to.

Faithfully yours,
Graham



A Christmas Prayer

Dear Lord, in this holy Christmas season may we draw nearer to you. How wise you were to reveal yourself in the presence of a little baby, the Christ child. You demonstrated the power and the depth of your love for each of us. Thank you for showing us that Christmas begins in the heart, and for the love that it teaches. Help us now to keep the light of the Christmas message burning brightly all year through. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. – Norman Vincent Peale

Thanks to ..

- .. everyone who volunteered to participate in the service opportunities for November.
- .. those who donated to, and helped at, the turkey supper.
- .. all who made donations to the 2nd Mile Missions collection for Kiva this past month.
- .. those who assisted at Food Share distributions.
- .. the fall clean up workers.
- .. everyone in the church who supported the bake sale on Nov. 19.



Reminders from the Moderator (submitted by Ray Foster)

If any Board or individual has business to bring before the Cabinet, a meeting is scheduled for the 18th. Please speak with me or Graham to be included on the agenda.



Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars to reserve Saturday, January 28 – that's the date of our annual business meeting. The meeting will begin at 7 PM in the social room; it will be preceded by a pot luck supper at 6.

Christian Education

Wednesday Bible Study

This group continues to meet Wednesday mornings in the social room from 9:30-11:15 AM. All are welcome to attend and take part. Please note, the study will not be held December 28.

Opportunities in December

	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Fellowship Hosts</u>
12/04	Donna Pendleton Barbara Bagniet	Marge Morgan Joan Lange	Al Andrews	Ed & Lois Sharpless
12/11	Everett Baker Marjorie Nadeau	Donna Pendleton Patrick Forbes	Art Lachance	Chuck & Laura Elwood
12/18	Donna Pendleton Charlotte Andrews	Bill Moran Patrick Forbes	Ulysses Orduz	
12/24			deacons	n/a
12/25		Donna Pendleton		Tom & Elaine Hancock

Lighting Candles at Christmas

I will light candles this Christmas;
Candles of joy despite all sadness,
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch.
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days,
Candles of grace to inspire all my living,
Candles that will burn all year long. – Howard Thurman

Report of the Treasurer (submitted by Sydney Cohen)

Faith is daring the soul to go beyond what the eyes can see.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Cor. 5:7

	October 2011	Monthly Budget	YTD	Annual Budget
Pledges	\$5,547.50	\$ 6,737.50	\$66,292.50	\$ 80,850.00
Income	\$11,271.32	\$ 9,404.56	\$91,111.46	\$ 112,855
Expenses	\$10,924.34	\$10,494.41	\$102,382.78	\$ 125,933

Collections for October

Fund Raiser Dinner- 1,849.97- net income YTD- 19,333.69

Flow through Items- Income

Monthly Mission Giving

Heifer International- 41.00- YTD 787.14

UNICEF-- 104.00- YTD-141.00

Capital Campaign 2011- 1125.00- YTD Total 11,785.00

Parking Lot- 93.00- YTD- 6381.72

Flow through Items- Expense

Capital Campaign- 618.50- Down payment for gutter repair
Parking Lot- 64.75- Reserved Parking signs

Our income is shaping up for the last quarter of this year. The pledge amount is getting closer to goal. With the help of our fund raisers, our total income will probably exceed our budgeted amount. However, if we did not have the fund raiser income of almost 20,000 so far, that money would have to come from the Endowment fund to meet the operational expenses for this church. And that is not a good example of what being a responsible steward in this church is all about. Our pledges should provide the income to support our church, with fund raiser income to support extra projects not only for the church, but outside the church as well.



Our expenses hold a steady level, and without any unexpected crises will probably maintain budget expectations.

Stewardship Update (submitted by Graham Van Keuren)

Did you know that people who regularly nurture their faith (those who go to church 3 times a month or more) give four times more in charitable giving, on average, than those who don't go to church at all? In fact, the single best predictor of whether someone will be a generous giver with their money is their church attendance record.

Here's the take-home message: if you want to be a generous person, first nurture your faith at church. Please join us!

Potential Tax Benefit

We are now half-way through our 2011-2012 Pentecost-to-Pentecost faith giving season. If you need to get caught up on your pledge, now is a good time. Others may want to contribute extra and enjoy 2011 tax benefits.



Thank you for your support! We are grateful for all the ways our members and friends steward their time, talent and treasure to advance Christ's mission here at the Congregational Church of Somersville.

Missions Outreach

2nd Mile Missions (submitted by Linda Longueuil)

Our 2nd Mile Missions collection for December is The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund. Gifts to the Christmas Fund help provide pension and health premium supplementation to low-income clergy retirees, emergency assistance to the families of clergy and lay employees, and Christmas "Thank You" Gift checks to hundreds of annuitants. The Christmas Fund provides a lifeline of hope to many lower-income active and retired clergy and lay employees in the United Church of Christ. Due to the lingering effects of the economic recession, there have been many instances in which the gifts from the Christmas Fund have made a critical difference in the lives of people living literally on the edge. Your contribution can make the difference for someone being able to have dental work to enable them to chew painlessly again or to afford the medication they need. It can supplement the income of a former pastor's widow who is trying to live on \$1500 a month. In the past year, assistance and gift checks were sent to approximately 1600 recipients. Remember that your generous contributions can and do make a difference in the lives of many. Please remember those pastors and lay employees who have touched your lives in the past and give generously.



December 3 Supper Benefits Missions

The Missions Church Supper will be held on Saturday, December 3. The proceeds from this dinner will be disbursed in a variety of ways. First, non-perishable food will be collected for a \$1 discount at the supper. These food items will be donated to a local food pantry. Second, the proceeds will be divided between gift cards for a local family in need, gifts for clients of Loaves and Fishes in Enfield, and a monetary donation to the Cornerstone Foundation in Rockville. Many thanks to all who make this annual fundraiser a success.

Cornerstone Soup Kitchen

There is one more opportunity this year to help serve a meal at Cornerstone Soup Kitchen in Rockville – Tuesday, December 20. We can carpool from the church at 4 and we'll return to Somersville about 6:30. Please speak with Johanna Karbonic or Art Lachance if you're willing to help.



Food-Share

Food-share's distribution of perishable food happens every other week in the parking lot of Somers

Congregational Church from 11:45-12:15. Distribution dates this month are December 7 and 21. Individuals or families needing food are welcome to come; there are no qualifications. Volunteers are needed to staff the distribution efforts of Food share; speak with Dave Pinney for details.

Thanks to those from our church who have been helping.

Ladies Aide Society

Pot Luck Lunch for ALL!

Everyone!!! – men and women!! are welcome at a pot luck lunch and carol sing-along in the Church social room on Tuesday, December 13, at 12 noon. We're hoping Ellie Parker will feel well enough to join us to lead us in a carol-sing. Come, join us for good food, fun, and fellowship! A brief meeting may be held.



Prayer Shawl Ministry (submitted by Lois Sharpless)

A prayer shawl knitter "get together" will be held at 1 PM on Sunday, December 11 at my home. We'll share a lunch and then enjoy a quiet hour or so of knitting. All knitters are welcome.

Blacksmith Shoppe (submitted by Barbara Abbe)

2011 was a good year for the Blacksmith Shoppe for a lot of reasons including lots of donations, many nice folks coming to shop this fall, increased baked goods, and of course, good advertising. We want to thank everyone who donated their time, baked, shopped, mowed, helped bring items out on the lawn and back in and in any other way supported the Shoppe.

Our total for the year earned was \$5,266.79 which was the most ever earned. All money is used by the Ladies Aide to help support our church in various endeavors.

In 2012 we will open on May 5th. A sign up sheet to help out will be posted in the social room the beginning of April. Please continue to support this work.

Cookbooks Make Great Gifts!

There are still some "Family Favorites" cookbooks available for purchase at a mere \$12 each. The book is packed with 295 favorite recipes of a number of our church members and friends. Copies are available in the Church office or speak with Linda Longueuil or Ruth Bruch

Successful Bake Sale

In lieu of the Holiday Treasures Fair this year, the Ladies Aide opted to hold a bake sale and asked for the support of church and you responded so well! The sale brought in \$616.55. Clean up was SO easy! Thank you all for your support.

Fundraising Suppers (submitted by Ruth Bruch)

Recap of November Supper

A couple of long, grueling days led up to a well-received and delicious turkey supper enjoyed by 189 diners at the church and 39 others who picked up meals to go. Income for this supper totaled \$2440 and the turkey cost \$337.59.

Suppers Discussion at Cabinet

As many of you read in the Cabinet minutes, I felt mentally and physically exhausted and frustrated after this last supper. Graham and I spoke during the ensuing week and some of that conversation was shared at Cabinet. These suppers take a lot of work, time and effort. The cost of items that are not contributed via the sign up sheets usually comes from the Bruch's or Wood's pockets and this should not happen. As Syd Cohen, our treasurer, and I have stated, the majority of the income from these fundraising suppers comes from folks outside our church and we should not be dependent upon their money to fund our own general operating expenses. This money should go toward special projects and needs of the church so we wouldn't need capital



campaigns. Ray Foster stated at Cabinet that I am treated like a “slave” - and again, this should not be happening. “She is the backbone to these suppers and deserves our thanks, not ridicule.” Some said they have heard of dissention in the kitchen – I think it’s more of a personality conflict where some folks simply cannot work with another. It seems there are (as Ginny Longueuil used to say) too many chiefs and not enough indians. Ray suggested (after discussing the traffic problem with servers constantly going to the kitchen for refills) that we need kitchen police to monitor the northern door. He also stated that folks need to step up and make the burden lighter. We all need to work in harmony with one another; diners shouldn’t see us arguing with or belittling one another. What’s the purpose of our Behavioral Covenant? Should that not also apply to fundraising suppers?

During the discussion, I made a motion that we hold 11 suppers in 2012 because it’s getting difficult to get help – especially during August and September. Missions, if they choose, could still get the proceeds from the December supper. That motion was seconded and carried.

A three-person committee (Linda Longueuil, Ardis Carey & Lois Sharpless) volunteered to work with me on future suppers.

This & That

- ***Fellowship hosts*** are needed for 2012. Anyone willing to provide a light snack following worship on any given Sunday is encouraged to sign up in the social room

- ***Meeting minutes*** are to be filed with the office. Copies will also be posted on the bulletin board on the south wall of the social room.

About our Members and Friends

Birthdays

Happy birthday wishes this month go to Janet Peck, Martha Baker, Leigh Pinney, Holly Marek, Hailey Renshaw, Linda Graham, Ewan Clague, Ruth Graham and Ulysses Orduz



Condolences

We heard from the CT Conference this week that William Lane, son of the Rev. Robert and the Rev. Fidelia Lane, passed away after being struck by a car on Nov. 23 as he was leaving work. He had served as a social worker at Jacobi Hospital in the Bronx for over twenty years. He was 55.

Our sympathy also goes to Marjorie Nadeau in the loss of her companion, Ed Wing.

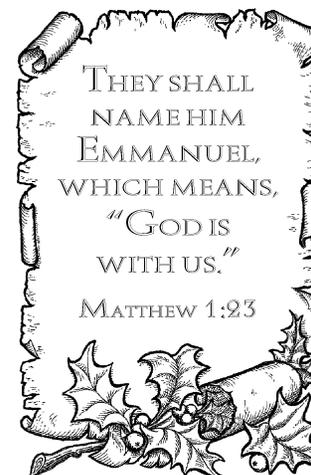
Congregational Church of Somersville

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.



Poinsettias in the Sanctuary

As has become tradition each year, you are offered the opportunity to purchase poinsettias in honor of, or in memory of, loved ones that will be placed in the sanctuary for the Christmas season. Orders for plants should be placed through the Church office (860-749-7741, faxed to 860-749-5132, emailed to somcong@aol.com – or return this form to Ruth. The cost remains \$5 per plant; orders are to be placed by Sunday, December 11.



Please indicate exactly how you would like the listing to be read in the bulletin.

.....

I am ordering _____ poinsettia(s).

Given in loving memory of:

Given in honor of:

Given by _____

December 2011

Other Board meeting dates TBA

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Congregational Church of Somersville 22 Maple St., PO Box I, Somersville, CT 06072 860-749-7741 860-749-5132 (fax) somcong@aol.com (email) www.somersvilleucc.org (web site) Worship 10 AM		the Rev. Graham Van Keuren, Pastor Ray Foster, Moderator Sydney Cohen, Treasurer Ruth Bruch, Church Administrator/Clerk Jason Stefanik, Organist/Choir Director Office Hours: Tues.-Fri. 8:15-11:15		1	2	3
						Holiday Ham Supper 5 & 6:15
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Communion Hanging the Greens		Evergreen worship 11 AA 6:15-8:30 Deacons 7	Bible Study 9:30-11:15 Food-share 11:45 Advent Service 7 Choir 7:30		Missions 1	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Cabinet Agenda due Poinsettia Orders due Prayer Shawl 1 at Lois'		All Church Pot Luck Lunch & Carol Sing 12 - hosted by L.Aide AA 6:15-8:30	Bible Study 9:30-11:15 Advent Service 7 Choir 7:30		Caroling 6	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Cabinet Pageant 6		Cornerstone 4-6:30 AA 6:15-8:30	Bible Study 9:30-11:15 Food-share 11:45 Advent Service 7 Choir 7:30 1st Day of Winter			Christmas Eve Service 7
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Worship 10 AM Christmas Day		Spire Deadline Blair worship 10:30 AA 6:15-8:30				

