

# The Spire

Congregational Church of Somersville  
United Church of Christ

November, 2012



## Community Thanksgiving Service, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 7 p.m.

Our church has the privilege and honor of hosting the Somers Community Thanksgiving Service this year. The service will be held on Sunday, November 18<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. followed by a friendly reception afterwards in the social hall. This is not only a great time to give thanks to God for all that we have, it is also a good time to show the warmth and hospitality of our congregation. Please join us for worship and stay for fellowship.



Two volunteers are needed to coordinate the reception afterwards. The food will be provided... we're just looking for labor to set it up and clean it up. Please contact the church office if you are able to give of your time in that way.

## Two Congregational Meetings Scheduled

### *Informational Meeting*

The Board of Trustees will present information to the congregation on November 11 pertinent to replacing the flooring in the social room. The meeting will be held in the sanctuary immediately following worship. No vote will be taken at this meeting.

### *Annual Budget Meeting*

A membership meeting will be held in the social room following worship on December 2 in order that we may discuss and vote on the proposed budget for 2013.

All members and friends are welcome to attend these meetings; however, only church members are allowed to vote.



## From the Pastor

Dear Friends in Christ,

In just a few days, you will be asked to cast your ballot for presidential electors, senator, U.S. representative and several other offices. A deacon of the church asked me to summarize in the *Spire* a few key points for Christians to consider as they prepare to vote.

In October I preached twice in anticipation of this upcoming election. In the first sermon on this topic, I argued that even if our votes have no effect in choosing the candidate for any office that it was still important for us, as Christians, to vote. Drawing from the prophecy of Jeremiah, I discussed the spiritual importance of committing ourselves to the welfare of our community. Voting is a public ritual that reminds ourselves and shows others of our commitment as Christians to our community, and it is extremely important spiritual exercise to do regardless of whether your vote or mine ever carries the day for a candidate or question.



In the second sermon before the election, we looked at the ancient political question of paying taxes to Caesar, a question that a number of Pharisees and Herodians raised to Jesus in order to try to trap him in his answer. By looking closely at how Jesus acted and responded to their question, I drew out three principles that we Christians should faithfully follow as we prepare to cast our ballots based on the people and issues in this year's campaign. The principles are as follows:

1. As we talk with and debate those around us in regards to the candidates and issues, beware of our need to "win," which can make us fall into hypocrisy and mendacity. The Pharisees and Herodians who tried to trap Jesus failed in this regard; let's not do the same.
2. Don't oversimplify or stereotype the candidates or issues. As Christians, we are to treat each other with mutual forbearance, so let us be humble rather than haughty. After all, Jesus called both a tax collector and a tax resister to be members of his inner circle. If those two could honor the good in each other and be joined in communion, then so can we, even when we disagree.

3. And thirdly, remember that we bear the image of God. Jesus told the Pharisees and Herodians that Caesar may be imaged on the coin they showed him, so perhaps it could be considered his. But you and I know that we bear the image of God since we have been created in God's image. Therefore we belong to God. All our political decisions then are ethical ones. When we enter the voting booth we need to prayerfully ask, "As one who follows in the Way of Jesus, what does God want from me here? What vote will best support the kind of reign Jesus came to usher in?"

Now don't put it off. Go vote!

Yours in Christ,

Graham Van Keuren

### Thanks to ..

.. all who served as greeters, ushers, readers and fellowship hosts in October.

.. everyone who supported the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mile Mission collection to benefit Unicef and Neighbors in Need.

.. those who assisted with the roast pork supper.

.. Lee Pinney and Syd Cohen for the many pumpkins they donated that were sold by Missions.

.. everyone who supported the Blacksmith Shoppe this year.

.. Linda McEwen for her time and donations with the pumpkin project.

*Thankful*

Christian Education (submitted by Pat Scully, Pastor Graham)

### ***Hunger Banquet on December 1<sup>st</sup> at 6 p.m.***

(submitted by Graham)

After we've stuffed ourselves full of turkey and all the trimmings this Thanksgiving, please be sure to come to another fall dinner, intended for all, here at church. Called a Hunger Banquet, this all-church meal on Saturday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at 6 p.m. will raise awareness of the persistent problem of hunger around the world and in our own community. It will teach us what we can do about hunger and food insecurity while at the

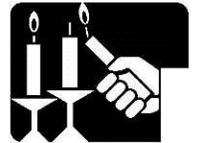


same time encourage us to be thankful for all we have. The Hunger Banquet is intended to be educational, inspirational and good fellowship. The admission cost will be one or more non-perishable food items per person (such as a box of cereal or a can of soup) that will go to a local food shelf.

I don't want to reveal too much about our meal together, but I assure you the banquet will be much better if you come. Up to five volunteers are also needed to assist me in the preparation and serving of the meal. If you like to cook and host dinners, please be in contact with me. See you for dinner on December 1<sup>st</sup>!

### ***Candle Lighters***

The Deacons invite our children to greater participation in worship, such as taking on the role of candle lighters. Bert Chillson will be available to talk with interested children in grades 3-6 on Sunday November 4.



### ***Meeting***

Members of the Board of Christian Education and Sunday school teachers will meet following worship on November 4 to make plans for the Christmas pageant.

### ***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.

### ***Advent Services***

Join us for our annual Wednesday evening Advent services on November 28, December 5, 12 and 19 at 7 PM. These contemplative services set a wonderful tone of preparation for the coming of Christ. Please note that choir practice and board/committee meetings will begin at 7:30 on those Wednesdays. Please participate in these services and help prepare one another for the coming of Christ.

### ***Women of Faith***

All women in the community are invited to join in discussions each Wednesday evening in the church social room from 5:45-6:45 PM. Bring a bag supper if you so desire.

***New Members***

Eight folks will join the membership of the Congregational Church of Somersville on November 4. Please continue to make them feel welcome. They are: Edgardo & Susan Abello, Cheryl Anderson, Wanda Lynn Everson, Brian & Sarah Flynn, Ginny Mangels and Carol Webb.



Most of these people are already included in the May, 2012 directory of members and friends of the church. Please add:

Cheryl Anderson, 71 Battle St., # 110, Somers 06071 860-698-6516  
 Carol Webb, 71 Battle St., # 213, Somers 06071 860-933-6198

*Shared by Pat Pinney and Jody Paduch*

"Ever walk into a room with some purpose in mind, only to completely forget what that purpose was? Turns out, doors themselves are to blame for these strange memory lapses.

Psychologists at the University of Notre Dame have discovered that passing through a doorway triggers what's known as an event boundary in the mind, separating one set of thoughts and memories from the next. Your brain files away the thoughts you had in the previous room and prepares a blank slate for the new locale."

It's not aging, it's the door!

**Opportunities in November**

	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Fellowship Hosts</u>
11/04			E. Baker	D. Pendleton and Deacons
11/11	D. Pendleton	E. Baker	A. Carey	
11/18	G. Farnham	D. Pendleton		R & A. Carey
11/25	D. Pendleton			

Please note there are still a number of open slots for greeters, readers, ushers and fellowship hosts for November and December. Won't you help fill in the blanks on the sign up sheets in the social room?

Another opportunity on November 25 is for folks to remain after worship to help with the decorating the sanctuary for the Christmas season. We know it's early, but with so much going on in the church on Sundays, it needs to get done.



**Opportunities in the New Year**

The Nominating Committee is seeking individuals to step up and serve in various positions in 2013 and beyond. Keep it mind that it is your congregational responsibility to support your church not only with your tithe, but also your time and talents.

**Report of the Treasurer** (submitted by Sydney Cohen)

**Even a woodpecker owes his success to the fact that he uses his head**

But you, keep your head in all situations. 2 Timothy 4:5

	<b>September 2012</b>	<b>Monthly Budget</b>	<b>YTD</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>
Pledges	\$5886.00	\$ 7074.41	\$61,672.00	\$84,893.00
Income	\$8280.40	\$ 9997.89	\$98,949.07	\$119,975.00
Expenses	\$13,049.98	\$10,946.08	\$95,806.27	\$131,353.00

**Collections for September**

***Flow through Items- Income***

Fund Raiser Dinner- Net income 1,692.76

**Monthly Mission Giving**

Heifer International Fund- 293.00

***Flow through Items- Expense***

Pastor's Designated Fund- 2890.00- YTD 3084.50

Exterior Church Painting- 1050.00- YTD 1575.00



Expenses for September included the quarterly payments for pension, workers compensation and church liability insurance. Pledges were slightly higher than August and along with the fundraiser dinner, provided our income for September.

The painting on the exterior of the church was completed and paid for by funds from the Ladies Aid.

**Missions** (submitted by Linda Longueuil)

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Mile Mission**

Our 2<sup>nd</sup> Mile Missions collection for November is KIVA which has proven to be a very rewarding mission for our church. KIVA provides small loans to people from poor countries which gives the borrowers the opportunity to become self-sufficient. KIVA has lent over \$367 million to 897,880 borrowers with the average loan being \$400.

The borrower requests a loan which is pre-disbursed from a financial institution called a field partner in the KIVA organization. This allows the borrower to purchase what they need in a timely manner. Examples of requests are seeds for planting crops, supplies for a village market, a new taxi, or materials for a tailor. The field partner then requests donations in the form of loans to backfill the loans they have made. The church becomes the lender and repayments are made to the church. Repayments terms and schedule are set up and the borrower repays the loan according to the terms and schedule.

Requests typically range from \$125 to \$3000. An organization can choose to lend all or a portion of an individual request. There is a high rate of success in the repayment of these loans at 98.97%. Once the loan is repaid, the lending organization can choose to lend that money again to another client. These loans help people stand on their own feet instead of keeping them dependent on daily handouts.



For those seeking more information on KIVA, go to [www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org) and read more about this inspiring organization. Give a hand up, not a handout.

### **KIVA Update (2011 collection)**

Leoncio, the farmer from Peru paid off his loan in full on schedule in September. However, we got a surprise when Ruben from Miami also paid his loan in full in September. Ruben who owns a cell phone store was scheduled to make payments through February 2014. Obviously, Ruben has been doing quite well since receiving his loan. At this point, 3 out of our 4 original loans have been repaid in full. The September repayments have enabled us to make our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> loans. Our 7<sup>th</sup> loan went to Reinerio from Paraguay. He is using his loan to buy a new taxi. This is his sixth loan and he has always successfully repaid. Our 8<sup>th</sup> loan went to Loreta from the Phillippines.

Loreta is a tailor and will use her loan to purchase materials needed for her business. This is her second loan through KIVA after having successfully repaid her first.

Please check out the Missions bulletin board for the latest updates. Also, we are maintaining a record of all the loans we have made. This will enable everyone to see how many people were helped with your donations. This book will be on display in the social room beginning on Nov. 4.

### **Pumpkin Sale Recap** (submitted by Ulysses Orduz)

The pumpkin sale on the Green on October 13, following worship on the 14<sup>th</sup> and at the fundraising supper on the 20<sup>th</sup> was a great success. There was a concern we might be a week late in offering and selling pumpkins, but all went well. About \$600 worth of pumpkins were sold over the three days and Missions decided this money would go toward replacement of the floor in the social room. The pumpkins decorated and painted by the Sunday school kids brought in approximately \$150 and the children decided to donate that money to Heifer International and Unicef.



### **Unicef**

Any individual or family who was collecting loose change in Unicef boxes during the past month should return the filled boxes to church on Sunday, November 4, 2012 – or as soon as possible.

### **Tie Collection**

Men, do you have any extra neckties that you no longer wear? Ladies, do you have silk scarves or other dressy scarves that you no longer wear? Don't let them sit around unused! Please donate them this month to others through the Congregational Church of Somersville. Your Missions Outreach Board is collecting ties and



dressy scarves for theological students in Kenya. These dedicated Christians are devoting their lives to the service of Jesus Christ in churches spread throughout Kenya, but they often lack ties or scarves to dress for their work. The Kenyan theological students will get to wear the ties or scarves you donate at their graduation ceremony

and then keep them for work in their local churches and the mission

field. What a great way for us to show our communion with our brothers and sisters in Africa! The Missions Outreach Board thanks the generous congregants who have agreed to provide the shipping for all the ties and scarves we collect. The Board also thanks you, the donors of your neckwear. Please place donated items in the collection box in Wood Chapel on any Sunday in November or drop them off at the church office.



### *Food-Share*

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

Church from 1:15-1:45. Distribution dates this month are November 7 and 21. Individuals or families needing food are welcome to come; there are no qualifications. A number of volunteers from our church staff this distribution site.

### *Notes from Zimbabwe*

Another email has come from our friend, Mrs. Moyo in Zimbabwe. She writes ...

"We thank God for keeping us all up to this time. Thank you for your letters you always send to us. The post office sometimes takes time to deliver them but we get them even though they might have taken a lot of time to arrive. I received letters from Gretchen Stanland which she wrote way back. It's always nice to hear from her. The church members always think about her and they wish to see you as well in the near future.

We talked about a grinding mill and you actually asked about the type. We did reply to your mail but we do not know whether you got the reply. Members of the church sat down and so it fit that if you manage to give us some kind of help, we are looking at diesel grinding mills such as Hippo and Lister and any other you might think of that are strong and user friendly. Most grinding mills are around 20 hp. Electricity on our side is sometimes a problem so we do not use it like using it.

We hope to hear from you more often. Pass my greetings to Gretchen Stanland and tell her that I still remember our first union which now seems like a dream. We will keep on writing to you in any way, the problem is that the computer belongs to my daughter and where she stays there is no internet access unless she uses her phone to communicate."

### Ladies Aide Society (submitted by Linda Longueuil)

Activities for Ladies Aide this month include the chili cook-off, the all church bake sale, and providing Thanksgiving baskets for two families in Somers. Because of the busy month ahead of us, there will not be a Ladies Aide meeting in November.

### *Chili Cook-Off*

On Saturday, November 3, Ladies Aide will be holding (or has held – depending on when you read this issue) a Chili Cook-Off which will be hosted by Pat Scully and Johanna Karbonic. It begins at 5 p.m. and will take place in the social room. Several participants have signed up to enter the contest so it should be a fun time. Please remember to bring two non-perishable food items to be donated to All Saints Church Food Shelf. If you are attending and not making chili, please consider making a side dish to go with the chili.

### *All Church Bake Sale and Silent Auction*

We will be holding our second all church bake sale on Saturday, November 17 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon in the social room. If everyone from the church could bake at least one item (pie, cake, cookies, bread, candy, etc.) it would help make this year as successful as last year. Church members and friends brought us a variety of goods last year that really helped us have a successful bake sale. If you can contribute again this year, please sign up on the sheet in the social room. Please have items at the church between 8:30 and 9 a.m. so we can be set up and ready to sell by 10 a.m.



We will have two items available for a silent auction the day of the bake sale. The first is a handmade quilt donated by Elma Fletcher and the second is a crocheted afghan donated by Marge Nadeau. Bids will also be accepted at the church supper on Nov. 10.

### *Missing Crock Pot*

One of the relatively new (used 3 times) black and silver crock pots the Ladies Aide purchased this spring has gone missing. It would be appreciated if whoever may have borrowed it, would please return it – no questions asked. These crock pots were purchased for use at our fundraising suppers, and while we are not averse to lending them out on occasion, please do not just take them without asking or signing them out.

### **Prayer Shawl Ministry** (submitted by Lois Sharpless)

Anyone who has an interest in knitting or crocheting is welcome to take part in our Prayer Shawl Ministry... you don't have to be an expert – novices are welcome. Bring along knitting needles or crochet hooks; yarn is available. We will meet on Wednesday, November 14 at 6 PM in the social room. Come, join us.



### **Fundraising Suppers** (submitted by Ruth Bruch)

#### **Turkey supper**



Our annual turkey supper will be November 10 at 5 & 6:15. The menu includes turkey breast, mashed potato, stuffing, gravy, cranberry sauce, salad, winter squash, homemade rolls/breads, beverage and fresh pumpkin pie. Cost is \$12 for adults and \$5 for children ages 5-10.

The sign up sheet is going fairly well but there are still plenty of opportunities to assist or contribute ...

- cash donations for potatoes, cranberry sauce, pie ingredients
- 8 homemade breads – anything seasonal (pumpkin, cranberry, date, banana, apple, etc.)
- 8 pumpkin pies made at home
- help at church on Friday, Nov. 9 to make 16 pies
- 8 lbs. butter
- help at church Sat., Nov. 10 AM (making stuffing, preparing salad fixings, mashed potatoes, etc)
- kitchen help and servers during the supper
- clean up help

For the first time since April, we are full by reservation! Names are still being accepted and added to a “wait list” in case cancellations come in. Take out orders can also be placed in advance and picked up the night of the supper between 5-7 PM.

#### **Recap of Roast Pork Supper**

The meal was delicious ~ Nick Wood did a superb job seasoning and cooking the pork, but again, there were empty seats. And although we were missing some of our regular help (it would have

been a great opportunity to have some new faces step up and experience what putting on one of these suppers is all about), everything went very smoothly. Some of the extra pork was sold following the supper; some extra vegetables were frozen for another time; some extra loaves of bread were sold. We ended up taking in \$2265.00 and our expenses were \$183.00. Thanks to all those who assisted.

### **This and That**

**Christmas cards** depicting the sanctuary during the Christmas season are available for purchase. There are 18 cards in a box; each box sells for \$10 and can be purchased through the church office.

**Family Favorites**, a cookbook filled with recipes submitted by church members and friends, would make a great Christmas present. Cookbooks are available for purchase through the church office. Each copy is \$12.

### **An Arizona Congregation Looks at New Approaches to Ministry**

By: Melody Smith      Presbyterian Mission Agency      Louisville

“Don’t be afraid. What is the worst thing that can happen?” It was just this approach that has resulted in membership growth for the First Presbyterian Church in Casa Grande, Arizona. Last year alone, the church added 62 members.

Stephanie Nelson, family life director, shared the varied approaches they took to meet the diverse needs of the congregation. “We try new things,” she says, “weird, different things—and then let God do his thing.”

One of those things was reinventing their contemporary worship service. They have offered both traditional and contemporary versions for a few years, “but really the only difference was in the music,” Nelson says. Along with pastor Ben Seller, leaders stepped back and re-envisioned what the purpose of a contemporary service should be and who their audience really was.

The result is a service called CONNECT, and it isn’t held in the chapel but in the Family Life Center. It isn’t set up with pews but round tables that allow for connecting and worshiping together instead of just sitting next to one another.

CONNECT started in November 2010, and attendance continues to grow as people embrace this approach to fellowship. This program has served as the catalyst for growth over the past two years for this Casa Grande

congregation. It is not unusual for newcomers to walk into the Family Life Center and ask, "Is this a church service?"

Nelson laughs. "It simply doesn't look like a typical worship set up for most people, but it works for us."

In May 2011, the congregation started a women's fellowship called "Chat, Chew & Chocolate," which was centered more on fellowship and less on a specific curriculum or study guide. A speaker usually talks for a short while and then poses questions to the women for discussion. Either full meals or sometimes just desserts are provided, but there is always chocolate.

Chat, Chew & Chocolate is an actual organization whose program is flexible to fit various environments, faith-based or otherwise. The program is designed to empower, inspire, and connect women.

Other events also feed members both physically and spiritually: game nights, where everyone brings a board game and spends time together playing; movie nights in which the entire family comes, often in pajamas, to watch a family movie, eat popcorn, and spend quality time together; and a harvest festival that offers a safe but fun alternative to trick-or-treating.

Social media plays a huge part in promoting these ministries and communicating with members. The church has four different Facebook groups focused on particular demographics and associated programs. Social media hasn't replaced bulletins and newsletters, but it has reached out to those who are more connected and taken their levels of engagement to new heights.

Their most recent adventure is a women's book club that was started to meet the needs of those women who wanted to focus specifically on education. The books are chosen from suggestions of members and approved by the Christian education team. The books are not always Christian, which allows the group to engage the culture and discuss these books from a Christian worldview. Having started in June, the group is holding steady with at least 10 attendees each time. "This is a manageable size," says Nelson. "We discuss the books in depth to meet that spiritual need."

One of the ways they reached out to men and women in their 20s or 30s was through discerning the "gospel" of particular movies. They met weekly and watched 25 minutes or so of a movie before discussing what "good news" the movie conveyed. With one movie lasting four weeks, the conversations grew and frequently involved new people. Group members were also challenged to go out and watch a movie with non-Christian friends and follow it with similar discussions. Many small groups and worshipping communities grew out of this approach, even though it only lasted five

months in its first go around. Leaders are considering writing curricula for additional movies, so the groups may come back—and "who knows what will happen," Nelson says. Her advice: "Don't dismiss something because it is odd or weird; try something different. We did."

### About our Members and Friends

#### *Birthdays and Anniversaries*

Happy birthday wishes this month go to Syd Cohen, Eva Cohen, Jacob Cohen, Doug Miller, Linda Longueuil, Dan Scully, Elaine Hancock, Tom Hancock, John Collins, Judy Liberty



Couples celebrating anniversaries this month include: Bert & Mae Chillson (50+), Mark & Diane Farnham, Michael & Lori Arnone, Sandy & Syd Cohen, Dave & Pat Pinney, Karen & Renee Blondin

### **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.



# November 2012

Rev. Graham Van Keuren, Pastor  
 Yvonne Wood, Moderator  
 Sydney Cohen, Treasurer  
 Ruth Bruch, Church Administrator  
 Jason Stefanik, Organist/choir Director

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Congregational Church of Somersville, UCC 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 Office Hours: Tues. - Fri. 8:15-12 noon				1	2	3
				AA 7		Chili Cook Off and Taste Test 5 PM
Return UNICEF boxes Communion New Members Rcvd. Acolyte training CE meeting AA 7 Daylight Savings Time Ends		Election Day	Bible Study 9:30-11:15 FoodShare 1:15-1:45 Women of Faith 5:45-6:45 Choir 7		Supper Prep & Pie baking beginning at 9	Turkey Supper 5 & 6:15
Veterans Day Congregational Meeting AA 7		AA 6:15 Finance 7:30	Bible Study 9:30 Women of Faith 5:45 Prayer Shawl 6 Choir 7	AA 7	Pie baking by L. Aide beginning at 9	Bake Sale & Silent Auction 10-12 drop off beginning at 8:30
Cabinet meeting Community Thanksgiving Service 7		AA 6:15	Bible Study 9:30 Foodshare 1:15 Women of Faith 5:45 Choir 7	Thanksgiving Day  AA 7 ?? Church Office Closed	Church Office Closed	
Spire Deadline Hanging of the Greens AA 7		Blair worship 10:30 AA 6:15	Bible Study 9:30 Women of Faith 5:45 Advent Study 7 Choir 7:30	AA 7		

Hidden Pictures for the Young at Heart - "Give Thanks"

