



The Spire

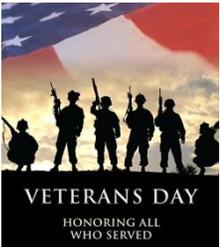
Congregational Church of Somersville
United Church of Christ

November, 2013



Community Thanksgiving Service

This year All Saints Catholic Church on School Street will be hosting the Somers Community Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, November 24 at 7 PM followed by a friendly reception. Clergy and choirs from the churches in town will participate. This is a great time to give thanks to God for all that we have.



On Veterans Day, remember the sign at the Veterans Cemetery which reads:
"All gave some and some gave their all."

All Church Bake Sale ... Plus (submitted by Ardie Carey)

The annual Bake Sale will be taking place on Saturday, November 23rd from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon in the social room. Pumpkin and apple pies, breads, cookies, and many delicious homemade goodies will be for sale! We will also be offering Christmas decorations, jams/jellies, relishes, beans, along with an assortment of yummy nuts from The Nut Lady. Please come and buy your desserts and goodies for Thanksgiving or Hanukkah and also support our Ladies Aide Society.



From the Pastor

Dear Friends in Christ,

In the past four or five years, publishers have released a stream of books seeking to capitalize on the public's interest in the afterlife. More than a few have landed on the *New York Times* bestseller lists, with a couple rising to the #1 spot and some staying on the bestseller list for many, many weeks. Some of the better known titles out there right now are:

- *Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon's Journey to the Afterlife*
- *Heaven is for Real: A Little Boy's Astounding Story of His Trip to Heaven and Back*
- *90 Minutes in Heaven*
- *To Heaven and Back: A Doctor's Extraordinary Account of Her Death, Heaven, Angels and Life Again*

As you may guess from this sampling of recent titles, some of the recent spate of books dealing with heaven focus on establishing a scientific proof of heaven based on accounts from peoples' near death experiences or brain death experiences (NDEs and BDEs, as they are commonly known in the literature) as compared to the patient's neurological (in)activity. Others seek to describe as best one can what being in heaven is like based on the author's experience of his or her own NDE or BDE. Other books draw out implications from the person's journey to heaven and back for how the living ought to be conducting their lives in the present. Naturally, some books in the "heavenly realm" are well-written; others are not. Some are compelling and provocative; others leave the reader feeling flat and as though his or her time was wasted.

I invite you to join me on Thursday, November 14th and Thursday, November 21st at 7 p.m. as we look at some of the original literature about heaven. We will examine what some key scriptures have to say about the afterlife, including some of Jesus' own words on the topic. Not only will we be studying the scriptures but we will look also at some professional artists' renderings of heaven (the art we look at will be based on the scriptures we study) in order to add the artists' insights to our own. This adult study should appeal to the spirit, the mind, the imagination, and the eye. Please come!



Yours in Christ,

Graham Van Keuren

Thanks to ..

.. those who volunteered to take part in service opportunities this past month..

.. those who supported the 2nd mile missions to benefit Neighbors in Need and UNICEF.

.. all who contributed to the success of our pot roast fundraising supper.

.. those who have been helping with fall clean up.

Christian Education

Wednesday Bible Study

This group will meet on Wednesday mornings from 9:30-11:15 in the social room. All are welcome to attend.

Boar's Head Festival Invitation

Join us on Sunday, January 5 at 5 p.m. for the annual Boar's Head Festival at Asylum Hill Congregational Church in Hartford, CT. The Boar's Head Festival is a grand Epiphany pageant dating all the way back to the middle ages. It's one of the most fun days in the Christmastide season and promises to be quite a spectacle!

Tickets to the Boar's Head Festival at Asylum Hill Congregational Church are approximately twenty to twenty-five dollars and are sure to sell out. If you would like to attend with us on Sunday, January 5, please **R.S.V.P. to Graham no later Monday, November 18th**. (Graham will collect the money after the tickets have been ordered and a final price per ticket determined.) The Boar's Head Festival is appropriate for families with children as well as for adults. Please come!

Christmas Pageant (submitted by Pat Scully & Deb Robidoux)

The Christian Education board seeks a few adults to help with this year's Christmas Pageant. The date is December 15 at 6:00 pm, with rehearsals on the three Sundays leading up to that date during

Sunday school time. Help is also needed with set up and break down of the sanctuary before and after the show. If you are interested in helping out for any (or all) of these dates please see Pat Scully or Deb Robidoux.

**the
Best Christmas
Pageant Ever**

Opportunities in November

Volunteers needed!

	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Fellowship Host</u>	<u>Acolyte</u>
11/3		Patrick Jack C..	Mavis C.	Rich & Ardie C	
11/10		Patrick F.	Ardie C.	Donna, Marjorie & Genny	
11/17		Patrick F.	Elaine H.	Jack & Mavis	
11/24		Patrick F.	Johanna K.	Missions	

Report of the Treasurer (submitted by Sydney Cohen)

	Sept. 2013	Monthly Budget	YTD	Annual Budget
Pledges	\$6,159.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$60,372.00	\$90,000.00
Income	\$8,734.93	\$10,485.00	\$84,583.39	\$125,820.00
Expenses	\$12,356.15	\$11,256.00	\$100,637.65	\$135,550.00

Pledges and income were down for September; however, expenses were slightly over budget. Expenses for September included property insurance and workers compensation as well as pension premiums. We also had elective disbursements by missions.



Collections for September

Fundraiser- Net for the luau fundraiser was 1767.00

Flow through Missions Collections- Heifer International- 415.00

Flow through Disbursals for September

CWS- Tools & Blankets- 536.00

Food Share- 298.00

OGHS- 271.00

Property Fund- 153.73- Total cost of the social room to date, 28,359.60.

Missions

The Solar Cook Project began as a way to help stop the tide of Violence against women and girls as they searched for scarce firewood outside the refugee camps in the African Sudan- Darfur area. Over the recent years, the project has done so much more than keep women and girls secure. This program strategically engages refugee women and girls to become active shapers of their own lives and take leadership roles in their communities.



Our support will continue to allow these women to obtain materials and manufacture the cookers. Further, the women are able to train their peers on the use and maintenance the cookers. Refugee women are investing in their own security and leadership in more creative and sustainable ways than ever. They need our continued support and our continued belief in their abilities to be partners in change. Thank you for your generosity and support in this worthy cause.

A Thanksgiving Blessing

We are grateful for our bountiful and innumerable blessings. We are thankful that God has brought us to this very day, this very hour, this very minutes. And we are hopeful that God's providential care will enable us to see the unbounded possibilities of the future.

There is always, always
something to be thankful for

Food-Share

The Congregational Church of Somersville and Somers Congregational Church, sponsor a perishable food stop every other Wednesday from 1:15-1:45.



Distribution takes place in the parking lot of Somers Congregational Church on November 6 and 20; anyone

willing to assist with the distribution should speak with Marge Morgan..

Kiva Update (submitted by Linda Longueuil)

Lately, we have been able to make a new loan every month. All our borrowers continue to pay back in a timely manner but we were a little short on being able to make a \$200 loan this past month. One of our borrowers, Josefa from the Vicunitas 2010 Chacaltaya group completed repaying her loan this month. Josefa is a Bolivian woman who owns her own carpentry business.

Prayer Shawl Ministry (submitted by Lois Sharpless)

All are welcome to participate in the prayer shawl ministry. If you don't know how to knit or crochet, please contact me and a quick lesson can be given and some yarn is available. Knitters will gather on Thursday, November 21 at 6 PM in the church library. Join us in this most rewarding ministry.



Property Update (submitted by Rich Carey)

By the time you read this many of the property needs will have been completed. These include, but are not limited to:

- bell tower painting and repairs – complete
- fall leaf cleanup has been done
- air conditioners are out and storm windows installed
- roof leak has been repaired

Our thanks to those who have helped and continue to help. Without you, much of this could not be accomplished.

Historian's Corner (submitted by Johanna Karbonic)

Who are we??

This couple comes from different states – She is from Fairfield County, CT & he is from New York State. She was Methodist & he was Catholic. They were married in St. Andrews Church in Longmeadow, MA. 31 years ago. (8/27/1982) Neither of their families were members of the Congregational Church of Somersville. They came to the church because of the dinners and later continued coming to the church because they liked Graham's sermons and the people who welcomed them like they were part of a family group, especially Mavis & Mae. They became members of the church on May 15, 2011.

Her favorite parts of church are Graham's sermons along with the quiet reflective Sunday services. His favorite parts are the social room gatherings and Graham's sermons – especially the "Weird Sermon". He admires Graham and the way he comes to the point in his sermons. Other ministers/priests, who he has heard, do not always have that ability.



Her fondest memories of the church are the day they became members of the church. She had tears in her eyes because of the affection feeling shown during the "hands on" part of the ceremony. His fondest memory is when the proposal to redo the social room was approved; and how quickly and generously the pledges came in after it was voted in. Another happy memory is the way that people volunteered to help redo the new social room. It was a hard job; but everyone plugged away at it.

He would like to see a higher membership especially of younger people. She would like to see a regular cleaning lady, who will keep the church looking neat and clean. He admires or would like to honor his wife for the work she did at organizing the "Tea Party." Phone calls came into their house and she talked to everyone giving the impression that if you didn't come to the tea you would be missing something. She admires and honors everyone because there are so many that work hard and do so much good.

This couple has only been members of the church for two years but they have contributed much in the short time they have been here. They have had many careers in their lives – State Trooper, Town Selectman, Post Office worker, house painter, law office, "hostess with the mostess" real estate, parent, grandparents, etc. We are soooo fortunate that they continued on with the church after coming to the monthly dinners and adding their previous experiences and abilities to the improvement of our church. "Little did they know?"

If you have not already guessed the name of this couple, their identify will be revealed toward the end of this SPIRE edition..

Ladies Aide Society (submitted by Ardie Carey)

Our Ladies Aide group met on October 8th and enjoyed a nice luncheon prepared by Donna Pendleton followed by our monthly meeting. Back in the summer our Ladies Aide Society donated the monies to replace the much needed new basement windows for the parsonage. This has now been completed and Pastor Graham thanked us and reports that the parsonage will now enjoy warmer floors and less heat loss during the cold winter months.

Mavis Collins will host our next Ladies Aide meeting which will be held on November 12th at 1:00 p.m. in the social room. As always, all ladies of the church are welcome, so please join us.

Blacksmith Shoppe (submitted by Barbara Abbe)

The Blacksmith Shoppe had a successful year and thanks are extended to all who supported our work.

Fundraising Suppers (submitted by Ruth Bruch)

Our annual *Turkey supper* will be held November 16. Perhaps you'd like to attend the dinner at 5 or 6:15 PM – or place orders for take outs. Cost is \$12 for adults and \$5 for children aged 5-10. Contact Ruth in the church office to reserve your spot.



Maybe you'd consider contributing to, or assisting at, this big pre-holiday dinner. At this writing there are still plenty of open opportunities. We still need:

- 8 heads of lettuce
- \$40 to cover the cost of potatoes
- 45 small or 23 double size boxes of stuffing mix
- 6 large cans whipped cream
- 1 large or 2 small regular and de-caf coffee (each)
- help peeling potatoes Friday morning
- help making 16 pumpkin pies at church on Friday
- help Saturday morning (stuffing, salad, etc)
- help in both the kitchen and dining room during the dinner
- 1 gallon whole milk
- 12 pumpkins pies made at home
- dishwashers

Anyone is welcome to join this fellowship. It's a lot of work, but also a lot of fun.

Pot Roast Recap

With the renovations to the social hall, we've lost the space for 1¼ tables or ten seats per sitting, some of our regular attendees have passed away, the cost of our monthly entrée has increased, but we're still doing fairly well with these dinners.

A little more physical help could have been used on the Saturday morning prep, but the work got done. By the end of the evening we took in \$2307 and expenses were \$448.44. Thanks to those who donated so much of their time, talent and treasure to this most recent dinner.

Long an oasis of Christian-Muslim calm, Kenya may see more strife

October 15, 2013 Religion News Service Ken Chitwood

NAIROBI, Kenya

While the smoke that hung over the Westgate Shopping Mall has dissipated, a quiet tension still lingers in the air throughout the capital.

Last month's attack by al-Shabab militants on a mall frequented by Westerners in the capital city left at least 67 dead. But the burning of a Christian church in the majority-Muslim city Mombasa just two weeks later suggests the nation is on the precipice of more conflict between Christians and Muslims.

This is dispiriting for many in a country that for years enjoyed relative peace between the two monotheistic religions that dominate the region.

"I am afraid that now, Muslims will attack more and the Christians will arm themselves and fight back," said Paul Komu, a truck driver and Christian who was driving near Westgate when the attacks occurred.

Kenya is predominantly Christian, with Muslims making up about 11 percent of its population, mostly along the Somali border, its coastal region, and in cities such as Mombasa.

John L. Allen Jr., author of *The Global War on Christians*, wrote that just as Africa is the pacesetter for Christian and Muslim growth, it has also become one of the primary fronts for Christian-Muslim conflict, though not always in Kenya. For years, Kenya has been a refuge for people fleeing strife in other parts of the continent.

But Christian mission agencies such as the Mission Network report incidents of persecution pouring over the Kenyan border with Somalia. Mombasa is a flashpoint for conflict and foreign militants and terror groups have wreaked

havoc in the past — as was the case with the 1998 al-Qaida bombing of the U.S. embassy in Nairobi.

To a large extent, day-to-day relations between the Muslims and Christians have been amicable.

Jamal Faroole, a Somali Muslim living in Nairobi, said, "For a long time we have had peace with Christians in this country."

Likewise, the Rev. David Ongwaye, a Lutheran pastor in Kibirigo, Kenya, said that while there has been more political correctness than practical cooperation, "there was no thought that Muslims were plotting to cause mayhem."

Now, sentiments have shifted.

"The human mind gets suspicious," said Faroole. "People were already suspicious of Somali Muslims and now I fear it will only get worse."

Ongwaye mentioned the targeting of non-Muslims in the mall attack as particularly unsettling. During the siege, the attackers demanded that Muslims identify themselves and leave the scene.

"The incident at Westgate has, in my opinion, rendered Christians more vulnerable to the Muslims and as such any future 'ecumenism' will be met with caution. It was very clear that those hostages who would recite the 'shahada' were saved from the bullet," he said, referring to the Muslim profession of faith.

Newton Kahumbi Maina, an expert in Christian-Muslim relations at Kenyatta University, said competition for converts, education and politics have exacerbated and preserved a centuries-long conflict.

Notwithstanding history and the fact that suspicion and outright trepidation grip the country, the majority of Kenyans, on both sides, said they do not want to see escalating violence. Some even struck a hopeful tone.

Komu said he wants to see reconciliation. "Somali and Kenyan Muslims are still our cousins," he said, "Borders can divide us, but we are still extended family."

Ongwaye, who said he was going to visit a Muslim friend on the coast, said that from his Christian perspective the mandate of Jesus to "love thy neighbor," which both Muslims and Christians can embrace, is more relevant than ever.

This 'n That

- ❖ Be sure to fall back in time for Sunday, Nov. 3 morning
- ❖ There are only two openings for fellowship hosts for the remainder of 2013 .. December 8 and 15. If you are willing to provide light refreshment for either of those weeks, please sign up in the social room.
- ❖ Because the pew Bibles have all been replaced with copies of the NRSV, some of the former Bibles are available to church members and friends. Please contact Graham if you're interested in obtaining one.
- ❖ It's almost time to think about Christmas cards. There are still boxes available for purchase (18 cards for \$10) showing our sanctuary at Christmastime. Cards can be purchased through the church office.
- ❖ And, speaking of Christmas how about giving a wonderful church cookbook to a special someone for the holiday? The cookbook of "Family Favorites" was put together by the Ladies Aide in 2010 and there are a few copies still available. Cost is \$12 per book
- ❖ Cabinet will meet November 17; all members and friends are welcome to attend and voice opinions; however if a vote is taken on any issue, only church members can vote.



About our Members and Friends



November Birthdays and Anniversaries

Happy birthday wishes this month are sent to: Syd Cohen, Eva Cohen, Jacob Cohen, Doug Miller, Roger Carillo, Linda Longueuil, Vivienne Penhall, Dan Scully, Elaine Hancock, Tom Hancock, John Collins, Judy Liberty, Rachel Gately

Couples celebrating anniversaries in November include Bert & Mae Chillson, Mark & Diane Farnham, Michael & Lori Arnone, Sandy & Syd Cohen, Dave & Pat Pinney, Karen & Renee Blondin

If there are others who are celebrating of whom we are not aware, we wish you a wonderful day as well.

Condolences

Our sympathy is extended to Nancy Pease and family in the passing of her husband, Roger, who died October 7.

Updated Addresses and Email

Bert & Mae Chillson's winter address is c/o Hide-a-way RV Resort, 2206 Chaney Dr., Space 555, Ruskin, FL 33570

Gladys Atkinson now resides at Redstone Rehabilitation, 135 Benton Dr., East Longmeadow, MA 01028

Linda Pease-McEwen has changed her email address; it is now grammalindas4@hotmail.com. Her new Florida address was posted in the October Spire.

Who Are We? – Revealed

Rich & Ardie Carey

(photo taken at our lua supper
10/19/2013)



November 2013

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 Yvonne Wood, Moderator Sydney Cohen, Treasurer Jason Stefanik, Organist/Choir Director Ruth Bruch, Church Administrator Tom & Elaine Hancock, Webmasters		1	2
3 Daylight Savings Time Ends Communion	4	5 Evergreen worship 11 Deacons 7 AA 7 Election Day	6 Bible Study 9:30-11:15 Food-share 1:15-1:45 Missions 7	7 AA 7	8	9 Soup-a-thon 6 PM
10	11 Veterans Day	12 Ladies Aide 1 AA 7 Finance 7:30	13 Bible Study 9:30-11:15	14 Adult Study 7 AA 7	15 Supper prep beginning at 9	16 Turkey Supper 5 & 6:15
17 Cabinet	18 Boar's Head RSVP deadline	19 AA 7	20 Bible Study 9:30-11:15 Food-share 1:15-1:45	21 Prayer Shawl 6-7 Adult Study 7 AA 7	22 Make Pies beginning at 9	23 All Church Bake Sale ... and .. 10 - noon.
24 Spire Deadline Community Thanksgiving Service at All Saints Church 7	25	26 Blair Manor worship 10:30 AA 7	27 Bible Study 9:30-11:15 ??	28 Thanksgiving Day Office Closed	29 Office Closed	30 Choir Rehearsal 10-12:30

Fun in the Leaves

By Maurie Jo Manning



In the big picture, find these objects.



fishhook



star



toothbrush



pencil



comb



fork



spool of thread



whistle



duck



mug



light bulb



banana



toothbrush