



The Spire

Congregational Church of Somersville
United Church of Christ

April, 2014



Stewardship Season (submitted by Sharon Miller)

Your Stewardship Committee has begun its work on this year's Stewardship Campaign that will begin on April 27th and end on Pentecost Sunday, June 8th. As a reminder, pledges made during the Campaign will be for a one year period, from Pentecost Sunday June 8th, 2014 thru Pentecost Sunday May 24th, 2015.

Our theme this year is "Surprising Gifts". There are two kinds of gifts – the ones you expect, on Christmas or your birthday, and the much rarer kind – the ones received for no apparent reason from someone who loves you and cares about you. A surprise gift, no matter how small, can make such a difference in your day. What would happen if you considered all the gifts you've been given in life a surprise? What if you thought of every good thing in your life as a surprise gift from God?

"May God... who reached out in love and surprised you with gifts of unending help and confidence, put a fresh heart in you..." 2 Thessalonians 2: 16 - 17

In this Scripture, Paul is reminding the early persecuted Christians that God's gifts are a constant surprise. They are given for no other reason than to say "I'm thinking of you. I love you. Have courage. You're doing a good job".

Gift-giving can be predictable, an obligation tied to the calendar. Or it can be a surprise. We hope you will prayerfully consider what your pledge will be for the Giving Year. Our church accomplishes so much during the year. Know that your monetary support allows the church to continue to do the work that God wants us to do!



From the Pastor

Dear Friends in Christ,

There is no reason why the congregation can't benefit from S.M.A.R.T goals to increase our collective ministry effectiveness and boost our faithfulness as a part of the universal Body of Christ. In light of that, the Deacons have discussed a tool for reflection and strategic planning called the Church Assessment Tool (or "CAT" for short) that has been developed especially for churches by Holy Cow! Consulting Group. On behalf of the Deacons, I raised the CAT to the Cabinet at its March meeting. The Cabinet's discussion showed that there was a general consensus that our participation in CAT was worth a shot. (It helped to know that between the generosity of the Connecticut Conference of the UCC, which provides CAT grants, and donors in our own church, the cost to our church of participating in the CAT will be nothing or close to nothing.)



Do you want more information? (Good! I hope you will be interested in this.) The overall purpose of the CAT questionnaires and group discussion is to provide an in-depth look at the experiences, perceptions and aspirations of a congregation. For example:

- The CAT is a customizable assessment instrument that can help a congregation see the bigger picture, such as what is held in consensus by the body and what is not.
- The CAT measures the level of satisfaction and energy in the church, both generally and in particular areas of church life.
- The CAT identifies the critical success factors for improving organizational climate.
- The CAT discovers where members would like to go in the future.
- The CAT gauges readiness for change in specific areas of church life.
- The CAT uncovers potential resources we may be missing.

The Deacons will take up another discussion of the CAT at their next meeting and then bring more information to the congregation about our next steps. In the meantime, please keep praying for and working to support our church's ministry.

Peace and blessings to you for the remainder of Lent and the beginning of Eastertide,

Graham Van Keuren

Thanks to ..

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

.. all who contributed to the Corned Beef supper.

.. everyone who donated toward the collection of supplies to complete 250 hygiene kits.

.. the ladies – and gentlemen – who assisted at the senior luncheon.

Christian Education (submitted by Pastor Graham)

We'd Like to Welcome New Members

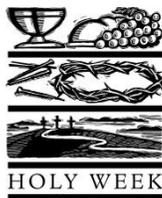
Are you interested in exploring membership in the Congregational Church of Somersville? Graham is interested in putting together an inquirer's class for those interested in learning more about what membership means. Please see Graham or any member of the Board of Deacons to express your interest.

Wednesday Bible Study

This group continues to meet Wednesday mornings from 9:30-11:15 AM. All are welcome to attend.

Holy Week

Members and friends of the church are asked to join in Maundy Thursday worship on April 17th at 7 PM. and Good Friday worship on April 18th at noon. There will be no Wednesday evening Lenten service during Holy Week (i.e. on April 16th.)



Opportunities in April

	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Acolyte</u>	<u>Fellowship Hosts</u>
4/06		Donna P. Patrick F.	Angela C.		R & A Carey
4/13		Donna P. Patrick F.	Yvonne W.		T & E Hancock
4/20		Donna P. Patrick F.	Pastor Graham		None – Easter
4/27		Donna P. Patrick F.	Elaine H.		Sue C-W and ..

Report of the Treasurer (submitted by Sydney Cohen)

	February 2014	Monthly Budget	YTD	Annual Budget
Pledges	\$,4571.00	\$ 7,292.00	\$11,968.00	\$87,500.00
Income	\$11,178.00	\$10,438.00	\$28,401.00	\$127,920.00
Expenses	\$12,852.00	\$11,403.00	\$29,158.00	\$136,717.00

February showed a sharp decrease in pledge collections, while expenses were slightly over budget. The expenses included a lot of snowplowing expenses as well as heating oil costs.



Collections for February

Flow through Missions Collections

- Fisher House- 20.00-Total 259.00
- Health Kits- 232.00
- Missions bake sale- 152.00
- Souper Bowl of Caring- 150.25

Flow through Disbursals for February

There were no disbursals for February.

Missions

Foodshare

The Congregational Church of Somersville and Somers Congregational Church, sponsor a perishable food stop every other Wednesday from 1-1:30 (note the time change). Volunteers from our church help to distribute food to 75-95 families on a bi-weekly basis. Distribution in April will be on the 9th and 23rd. For more information on this program see Graham or Marge Morgan

2nd Mile Missions (submitted by Linda Longueuil)

Our 2nd Mile Missions collection for April is for Loaves and Fishes. In 2013, Loaves and Fishes served 56,414 meals, an additional 9,135 meals for home consumption for families in emergency situations and 37,581 snacks for children in the after school program. Hot, well-balanced and nutritious meals are provided to guests of the Soup Kitchen seven days a week. Breads, pastries, drinks and fresh fruits and vegetables are also provided for clients to

take home with them. This year, Loaves and Fishes continues to concentrate on providing healthier meals to their guests.

Improvements to the facility began this year. They now have an emergency generator to prevent food spoilage in case of an extended power outage. They have also begun making improvements to the kitchen area. Their wish list is changing as they move away from using paper products and using washable plates and bowls. This is more economical and environmentally friendly. They are also in need of some other kitchen items used in the preparation of food. During the month of April, the Missions Board will be collecting donations to purchase some of the items on their wish list. Loaves and Fishes is solely dependent on the generosity of people and groups within North Central Connecticut. Please give generously so they can continue to do their great work for an increasing number of clients.



Easter Bake Sale

On Saturday, April 19th, the Missions Board will be sponsoring our annual bake sale in the Social Room. To be a success, we need the help of anyone willing to bake an item (or items). A sign-up sheet will be posted on the bulletin board in the Social Room for those willing to bake or make candy. The bake sale will run from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Please have your baked goods at the church between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m. so we have time to arrange and price them. Help us to make this as big a success as it was last year. Thank you in advance for your generosity.



KIVA

In March we made our 25th and 26th KIVA loans. The first loan was made to Raphael of the Mkombozi Group Musoma in Tanzania. Raphael is married and a father of seven children. He is using his loan to purchase fruits and vegetables for resale. Raphael works 10 hours a day and makes a good monthly profit. The second loan was made to Thoa who heads up Thoa's Group in Vietnam. Thoa has three grown children and lives in one of the poorest regions in the country. Thoa has successfully repaid 5 loans. She will use her loan to purchase clothing for resale. Please read their stories in the KIVA notebook or on the Missions Outreach bulletin board.



Prayer Shawl Ministry (submitted by Lois Sharpless)

There will be no formal meeting of the Prayer Shawl Knitters in April - just "keep kniten"!

Ladies Aide Society (submitted by Ardie Carey)

Our March meeting was held in the social room on the 11th and hosted by Mavis Collins and Genny Farnham. Thank you ladies for setting such a lovely Irish themed table and providing us with all the delicious desserts, goodies, and flowers!

Carlese Wood, Mavis Collins, and Marge Morgan coordinated the senior luncheon held March 25th and we had a great turnout. We appreciate the time and effort that these ladies put into making this luncheon successful!

We will be meeting on Tuesday, April 8th at 1:00 PM to assemble hygiene kits, which will then be delivered to Middletown, CT. These kits are distributed all over the country and the world when a disaster strikes and helps those people who are in need. Thanks to Linda Longueuil for her work and dedication with this project! Due to her work, Ladies Aide, and the many generous donations given, we now have all the items needed to assemble 250 kits and possibly more! That's an awesome accomplishment!

Please join us on April 8th! As always, all ladies of the church are welcome!

Fundraising Suppers (submitted by Ruth Bruch)

Saturday, April 12, is the date of this month's fundraising supper that will consist of roast beef (prepared by Nick Wood) with mashed potato and gravy, corn, tossed salad, bread and rolls, cake and beverage. Reservations should be made through the office (860-749-7741) to dine in or for take out orders. As always, we will have two sittings: 5 and 6:15. Some of the "regular" workers are not available to lend a hand this month, so we're looking for volunteers to share their time, talent and treasurer. A sign up sheet has been posted in the social room. Won't you take a peek and see how you can assist.

March Recap

The corned beef supper always goes over very well. The 5 o'clock sitting was full by reservation by noon the first day calls started coming in. I've had a number of calls and emails asking what brand of corned beef we used this year; it was tender and had great flavor. Actually, the brand and cut I bought was barrel cured and is not available in local stores. By the end of the event, \$2920 was deposited as income – this includes monetary donations, the dinner, and the bake sale. Speaking of the bake sale, .. in addition to what was baked at home and contributed, 12 apple pies were prepared at the church the morning of the supper for the sale.

This and That

- Fellowship hosts are needed – won't you offer to prepare and serve light refreshments on any given Sunday during the year? Sign up in the social room.
- A sign up sheet offering worship opportunities (greeter, reader, usher, acolyte) has been posted.
- Did you know that minutes of recent board and committee meetings are posted downstairs on the bulletin board in the social hall? Earlier minutes are kept on file in the church office. Any member is invited to request copies of minutes in order to be well informed participants in our ministry.

Survey finds growth, vitality in multisite church model

March 17, 2014 Religion News Service Adelle M. Banks

WASHINGTON

The vast majority of multisite churches are growing, according to a new study, and they are seeing more involvement from lay people and newcomers after they open an additional location.

Nearly one in 10 U.S. Protestants attends a congregation with multiple campuses, according to findings released March 11 in the "Leadership Network/Generis Multisite Church Scorecard."

The report cites new data from the National Congregations Study, which found there were 8,000 multisite churches in the U.S. in 2012 — up from 5,000 in 2010 — including churches with more than one gathering on the same campus. Churches that have created worship

space in a separate setting now exist in almost every state, several Canadian provinces and dozens of other countries.

Multisite churches typically operate with a main campus headed by the senior minister and one or more satellite locations. In some settings, attendees at the satellite location watch the same sermon that's beamed in from the central location but have their own dedicated on-site pastor, music or small group meetings.

The scorecard examined 535 responses to a survey of multisite churches that had created worship space in a separate setting.

Among the findings:

- By the end of 2013, the average church has grown 14 percent since it went multisite.
- The vast majority (88 percent) report increased lay participation after having multiple locations.
- It's still a relatively new phenomenon: 60 percent had opted for the multisite model in the last five years.
- Almost half (47 percent) have a location in a rural area or a small town.
- One in three (37 percent) started being multisite through a merger of different congregations.

Although megachurches (congregations with 2,000 or more weekly attendees) were pioneers of the multisite concept, churches with as few as 50 people and as many as 15,000 have tried this approach, said Warren Bird, director of research at Leadership Network, a Dallas-based church think tank.

Multisite is also an international phenomenon: One-third of the congregations on Bird's list of international megachurches are multisite.

The report points out some of the challenges of juggling more than one campus for worship. Researchers found in 2010 that one in 10 multisite churches they surveyed had closed a location.

In this new survey, some said rented space in public schools — popular options for multisite churches — are "one of the toughest places to launch" an additional site.

"I can only guess that the climate of churches renting public facilities is getting more and more difficult with the number of school boards

that are declining to rent either on Sundays or to religious groups on the increase,” Bird said.

Jim Sheppard, CEO of Generis, an Atlanta-based consulting firm that sponsored the report, warned that it is important to have a “good, sound contract” in whatever location a church picks to set up a temporary worship space.

“If your initial location is a public school, don’t overestimate the relationship,” he wrote. “People can change, politics can get involved and you might be forced out sooner than expected.”

Multisite church leaders report that they are finding a greater percentage of “unchurched” people in their new locations than at the original location.

“Historically, a church’s greatest impact on the community is in its early years, and so the same thing is happening with a new campus,” Bird said.

Both independent congregations and those affiliated with denominations are embracing the multisite concept. Some regional denominational groups, including the United Methodists, consider mergers and other multisite options as part of their revitalization strategies.

“One of them is vibrant but needs facilities,” Sheppard said of some merging congregations in a webinar about the report. “The other one lacks vibrancy but has facilities.”

About our Members and Friends

April Celebrations



Happy birthday wishes this month go to Dotty Forbes, Jody Renshaw, Tristan Renshaw, Carrie Carllo, Nick Wood, Mark Farnham, Mavis Collins, Kim Gelineau, Nancy Van Keuren, Karen Blondin, Charlotte Hight, Nora Pinney, Marj Butler, Millie Hare.

And, Al and Charlotte Andrews will be celebrating an anniversary this month. If there are others who are celebrating this month of whom we are not aware, we wish you a wonderful day as well.

Easter Lilies

Easter lilies “in memory of” or “in honor of” loved ones will be displayed in the sanctuary on Easter Sunday, April 20. A listing will be included in the bulletin on Easter. The cost remains \$5 per plant; orders should be placed through the church office by Sunday, April 13.

-submit form with payment to the office

----- detach here -----

Number of lilies ordered _____



Please indicate below how you would like the listing to appear in the bulletin

Given in loving memory of: _____

Given in honor of: _____

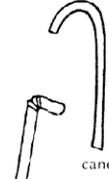
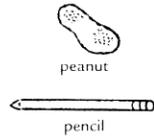
Given by: _____

Another Use for Umbrellas

By Ron Lieser



In the big picture, find these objects.



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.

April 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
the Rev. Graham Van Keuren, Pastor Yvonne Wood, Moderator Sydney Cohen, Treasurer Ruth Bruch, Clerk/Church Administrator Jason Stefanik, Organist/Choir Director		1 Evergreen worship 11 Deacons 7 AA 7	2 Bible Study 9:30 Lenten service "judging others" 7	3 Missions 4:30 AA 7	4	5
6 Communion	7	8 Ladies Aide 1 AA 7	9 Bible Study 9:30 Food-share 1-1:30 Lenten service "unforgiving heart" 7	10 AA 7	11 Peel/Cook/Mash potatoes 8:30	12 Roast Beef Supper 5 & 6:15
13 Palm Sunday Lily orders due	14	15 AA 7	16 Bible Study 9:30	17 Maundy Thursday service 7 AA 7??	18 Good Friday service 12 noon	19 Missions Bake Sale 10-1
20 Easter Sunday	21	22 Blair Manor worship 10:30 Finance 7:30 AA 7	23 Bible Study 9:30 Food-share 1-1:30	24 AA 7	25	26 Choir ??
27 Cabinet Spire deadline Stewardship Campaign begins	28	29 AA 7	30 Bible Study 9:30	Congregational Church of Somersville 22 Maple St., PO Box 1, Somersville, CT 06072 860-749-7741 860-749-5132 (fax) somcong@aol.com (email) www.somersvilleucc.org (website)		

Worship 10 AM