



The Spire

Congregational Church of Somersville
United Church of Christ

November, 2014



Join us for our first ever progressive dinner at the Congregational Church of Somersville! (submitted by Ed Sharpless & Pastor Graham)

On Saturday, December 13th, all adult members and friends of the church are invited to start the evening at 5 p.m. at Lois and Ed Sharpless' house for hors d'oeuvres. After some friendly mingling, individuals or couples will be sent out to a host's home for a delicious entrée of ham, baked potato and green beans accompanied by good conversation and warm hospitality. After the entrée is complete, we will all return to the church from our various hosts' homes and share in coffee, cake and Christmas carols. This promises to be a delightful evening and we hope you will sign up! Cost will be \$8 per person to attend and participate. If you are willing to be one of the hosts for a group of two through six dinner attendees, please also note that on the sign up sheet in the social hall. The planning group for this progressive dinner consists of Chuck and Laura Elwood, Brian and Sarah Flynn, Ed McGuire and Pam Stevenson, and Ed and Lois Sharpless. If you have questions, just pull one of us aside and ask!

All Church Bake Sale ... Plus

The annual Bake Sale will be taking place on Saturday, November 22nd from 10 AM. to 1 PM 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 attic treasures. Please come and buy your desserts and goodies for Thanksgiving or Hanukkah and also support our Ladies Aide Society.



From the Pastor

Friends in Christ,

If you attended the luncheon on October 26th in which we reviewed the results of the CAT Scan, you know that we enjoy a very strong sense of fellowship. We ranked exceptionally high in terms of hospitality and friendliness.

As the weather grows colder and Christmastide approaches, we are going to draw upon the warmth of our community. In light of that, I raise before you two events coming up in early December that can strengthen the bonds that tie us together even more.

1.) Dinner and a Family-Friendly Show (A Charlie Brown Christmas)

On Sunday, December 7th all members and friends of the church are invited to carpool with us to the Warner Theatre in Torrington, CT for a stage production of the television classic "A Charlie Brown Christmas." Held in the Warner's intimate Nancy Marine Studio Theater, this 4 PM show is great for families and for all who want to be reminded of the true spirit of Christmas. The cost is approximately \$15/person and we'd like to make reservations by November 16th. We'll depart on December 7th at 2:30 and return after dinner following the show. (Dinner location to be determined.) Remember, please RSVP to me by November 16th.

2.) Progressive Dinner of the Congregational Church of Somersville

Adults of the church are encouraged to join us the following weekend for our first ever progressive dinner. Held on the evening of Saturday, December 13th, we will begin at a congregant's home for appetizers, mixing and mingling. We then are divided up (by couples, if desired) and head to the home of a volunteer host who will provide a small group with a delectable entrée. After enjoying the wonderful repast, we all return to the church from the various homes in which we had the entrée for dessert, warm beverages and Christmas carols around the piano. Food will be purchased communally (the entrée hosts will not be responsible for purchasing the main food items), so there will be a modest cost per person to defray expenses. Some more details will be coming soon, but please note that there is a sign-up sheet downstairs for all who would like to attend as well as for any who are willing to open their homes as hosts. I ask you to sign up in the next couple weeks so that we can get a sense of how much food we'll need to buy.

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I have just highlighted two upcoming events that you may not know much about because they are new to us. However, we also have several yearly activities coming up this month that are just as important but are probably more familiar to you, such as the fall clean up on Saturday, 11/8; the turkey supper on Saturday, 11/15; and the community Thanksgiving service (at the new Somers Congregational Meeting House) on Sunday, 11/23. Be a part of these events, too!

Please remember to be grateful this month for your many blessings, including the blessings of our ministry together.

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.
- .. Syd Cohen for her generous donation of pumpkins and gourds which have helped to decorate in and around the church this past month.
- .. all who contributed to the success of the Blacksmith Shoppe this fall season.
- .. Marge Morgan and Barbara Abbe for their many years of dedicated service at the Blacksmith Shoppe.

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.

Upcoming Scripture Texts

We are printing the main biblical texts and memory verses that will be the foundation for future sermons so that those who choose to can read the text in advance at home in preparation for the Sunday service. Note that we are finishing up the gospel of Matthew quickly by the end of the church year (November 29th), so we are moving through the remaining chapters this month at breakneck speed. Fortunately we already discussed Matthew’s presentation of Jesus’ passion and death and resurrection during our Lent/Easter season, but even so we still have much ground to cover. You are invited to read the chapters we will not discuss on your own in order to keep up with the Sunday readings.

- *November 2nd*: Matthew 14:22-33. Key verse: “Lord... command me to come to you...” Mt. 14:28
- *November 9th*: Matthew 17:14-20. Key verse: For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. Mt. 17:20
- *November 16th*: Matthew 21:28-32. Key verse: “Which one of the two did what his father wanted?” Mt. 21:31
- *November 23rd*: Matthew 28:16-20. Key verse: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Mt. 28:19-20
- *November 30th (Happy New Church Year!)*: Isaiah 64:1-9. Key verse: “Why don’t you tear the sky open and come down?” Is. 64:1a

Opportunities in November

	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Fellowship Host</u>	<u>Acolyte</u>
11/1		Patrick Donna	Sue W.	Donna, Marge & Genny	
11/8		Patrick F. Donna	Yvonne W.	Dave & Pat P.	
11/15		Patrick F.	Elaine H.		

	Donna	
11/22	Patrick F. Donna	Ardie C.
11/29	Patrick Donna	Johanna K.

Community Thanksgiving Service

This year the Somers Congregational Church will be hosting the Somers Community Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, November 23 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.

Report of the Treasurer (submitted by Sydney Cohen)

	September 2014	Monthly Budget	YTD	Annual Budget
Pledges	\$5,860.00	\$ 7,292.00	\$61,205.00	\$87,500.00
Income	\$8,727.00	\$10,438.00	\$97,048.00	\$127,920.00
Expenses	\$,7842.00	\$11,393.00	\$102,,619.00	\$136,717.00

Our pledges for September were lower than June, July and August, which is unusual for this church. Our total income was higher for September, but still lower than budgeted. Our expenses reflect normal monthly operations.



To meet our pledge commitment, our pledges will have to be at least \$8,765.00 for the last quarter of this year.

Collections for September

Fundraiser supper- Gross- \$2,107.00 YTD \$16,134.00
 Flow through Missions Collections
 St. Pauly-\$197.88 – YTD \$728.47
 Heifer International- \$220.00

Flow through Disbursals for August

Loaves and Fishes- \$137.55

Stewardship Update (submitted by Pastor Graham)

At our latest Trustees meeting, the Board expressed some concern that we need to have a strong November and December if we are going to make our budgeted pledge amount in the 2014 year. However, don't despair, for our needs are well within our reach. Stewardship knows that giving to the church isn't always consistent throughout the year for all of our faithful donors. Circumstances within households can change; new needs arise and others go away. However, if you are lagging a bit behind in your pledge and find that you are able to catch up, please do so this month. Also, if you find that you are ending the year in a positive financial position and you have more to give than you originally thought, please give generously. For it is only through the commitments of time, talent and treasure of so many in our church that we are able to support our ministries. Let's end 2014 on a very strong note!

If you have questions about your contributions to date in 2014, please direct them to our Collector, David Pinney. And thank you for all your support!

Missions (submitted by Linda Longueuil)

New 2nd Mile

The 2nd Mile Mission for November is very different than anything we have done in the past several years. The goal of this mission is much larger and directly impacts and benefits the members of our sister church, the Donkwe Donkwe UCCSA church. Almost two years ago, it was brought to the attention of the Missions Board that our sister church wanted to purchase a grinding mill which would serve their community and surrounding areas. The grinding mill, costing about \$5500, would allow them to grind maize locally instead of having to transport it 100km to Bulawayo over rough roads as they do now.

In February of this year, Missions was presented with a project summary (it will be posted on the Missions bulletin board in November). The proposal was comprehensive and had been expanded beyond just the purchase of a grinding mill. Their plan covers milling and packaging (including housing for both), staff training, marketing, and security for the facility. In March, Jack Collins met with us to discuss concerns raised by his previous visit to the area. Of greatest

concern was the persistent drought resulting in crop failures and political interference. These issues were presented to our contact on the project and he sent us a reassuring reply. Even in times of drought, there is always grain to be milled whether it comes from the farmers or from a relief organization. As far as the political situation, the Zimbabwean government is mainly repossessing foreign-owned land and resources. Government programmes have not affected locally run projects or church property.

The Missions Board has had this request on their agenda since late 2012. Much thought, discussion, and research has gone into making the decision to contribute to this project. This project now has a total budget of \$15,000. The local community believes they can raise \$5000 towards the project and are working with MicroKing (a field partner for KIVA) to obtain a loan. Because the Donkwe Donkwe UCCSA church will be so invested in this endeavor, the Missions Board has decided to send a contribution of \$5000 to the grinding mill project. While \$5000 is a lot of money, we are well on our way to reaching our goal. Over the past couple of years, we have been saving money earned from bake sales, pumpkin sales, and St. Pauly's shed and this will be put towards the total needed. It is a good start but we will still need the generosity of our fellow congregants in reaching our goal. This project is an opportunity to directly impact the lives of our brothers and sisters in Donkwe Donkwe. Please give generously to help put them onto the path of success.

KIVA Update

We were able to make 3 loans in October bringing the number of loans to 39. The first loan went to Marie Rose in Rwanda. With her loan, Marie Rose will buy more clothing which she sells wholesale. The second loan went to Rokim in Indonesia. He has a stall where he sells mobile phone services. The third loan went to Akouvi in Togo. She will use her loan to purchase cloth to make into shirts. You can see their stories on the bulletin board at the top of the stairs or in the KIVA book.

Jephet from Zambia paid off his loan in September--a year early. However, due to a currency exchange loss, there was a loss of \$2.00 on his loan.

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 1-1:30. Distribution takes place in the parking lot of Somers Congregational Church on November 5 and 19; anyone willing to assist with the distribution should speak with Marge Morgan..



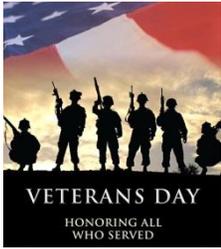
Prayer Shawl Ministry (submitted by Lois Sharpless)

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 Wednesday, November 19 at 2 PM in the church library. Join us in this most rewarding ministry.



An Invitation from Nominating

The Board of Nominating **is looking for you...** if you have been thinking, "you know, I really have something I could add to such-and-such committee or position." Don't be shy about expressing your interests. We want to know what you feel called or gifted to do, so don't keep it to yourself. Let us know right away since we're already busy trying to match open positions with those who are best suited to fill them. Thank you for supporting the church's ministry with your talents and time!



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

Property Update (submitted by Rich Carey)

Thanks to a donation from the Ladies Aide, we now have an additional dehumidifier installed in the pantry area. It had been noticed that moisture and mildew were accumulating in that area and behind the refrigerator.

Arrangements have been made to have the church power washed and scrubbed with chemicals to remove some of the accumulated dirt and mildew and spider and bug messes.

On Saturday, November 8, we will do our annual fall clean up. beginning at 9 AM. We'll put up storm windows and rake and dispose of leaves. Please bring rakes or blowers and cutting tools to help. An extension ladder would also be helpful. All are welcome – the more people we have, the more we accomplish.

We had a productive year of volunteers for grass cutting – thanks to Everett, Nick, and Wayne. There are always opportunities to help out as the church and parsonage need constant TLC.

Ladies Aide Society (submitted by Ardie Carey)

Thanks go out once again to Donna Pendleton and Johanna Karbonic for providing us with a lovely Halloween themed lunch at our October 14th meeting. After our lunch we moved on to our meeting. Discussion regarding getting a new large commercial size mixer to help with the monthly dinners, bake sales, etc. was addressed and after seeing pictures and everyone agreeing that this was a needed item, we moved to use Ladies Aide monies to purchase one. Thank you to Jack Bruch for taking the time to go to Hartford to pick it up. Many of you may have seen this new mixer in the social room. This mixer is quite heavy, so a strong portable table will be made to keep it

on. With another dinner and our annual bake sale coming up in November, this mixer will be a great asset.

Soup-a-thon

Our 2nd Ladies Aide Soup-a-thon is coming up fast and will take place (or took place [depending on when you read this]) on November 1st at 6:00 p.m. in the church social room for a fun evening and many delicious soups to "warm the soul"! The sign up sheet for this event is located on the bulletin board in the social room. Many of you have most likely heard about our Soup-a-thon already, but if you have any questions, please talk to or call Johanna Karbonic or Linda Longueuil.

Monthly Meeting

Our next Ladies Aide meeting will take place on November 11th at 1 PM. in the church social hall. We welcome all ladies of the church and hope that you can join us!

Future of Blacksmith Shoppe

Anyone interested in discussing the future operations of the Blacksmith Shoppe is welcome to attend and participate in a meeting that will be held in the social room following worship on November 9.

Fundraising Suppers (submitted by Ruth Bruch)

Our annual *Turkey supper* will be held November 15. 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:

- 4 pints grape tomatoes
- \$40 to cover the cost of potatoes
- 45 small or 23 double size boxes of stuffing mix
- 1 large or 2 small de-caf coffee
- help peeling/cooking 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
3 gallon whole milk (need for Friday morning)
dishwashers

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

Pot Roast Recap

We had a great number of folks attend our harvest supper on the 18th of October and another 27 dinners were packed up to go. Everything was delicious; the meat fell apart it was so nice and tender. A good number of volunteers helped peel all the vegetables on Friday morning, and more help was on hand Saturday morning to assist with the preparations and set up. The dinner ran smoothly and the clean up crew was greatly appreciated! We always look forward to their arrival! Income was \$2,427.00 and the meat cost \$574. Monetary donations helped pay for the vegetables and soup mixes for the gravy.

Thank you to all who contributed to the success of this dinner.

Running Toward the Plague: Christians and Ebola

By: Eric Metaxas, *Breakpoint* Contributor

It shouldn't come as a surprise that a disproportionate number of the doctors and nurses waging war on Ebola in Africa are Christians. It's a story as old as the faith itself. I'll explain.

Between 250 and 270 A.D. a terrible plague, believed to be measles or smallpox, devastated the Roman Empire. At the height of what came to be known as the Plague of Cyprian, after the bishop St. Cyprian who chronicled what was happening, 5,000 people died every day in Rome alone.

The plague coincided with the first widespread persecution of Christians under the emperor Decius. Not surprisingly, Decius and other enemies of the Church blamed Christians for the plague. That claim was, however, undermined by two inconvenient facts: Christians died from the plague like everybody else and, in startlingly large numbers, they abandoned their everyday lives in order to care for the victims of the plague, including their pagan neighbors.

This wasn't new—Christians had done the same thing during the Antonine Plague a century earlier. As Rodney Stark wrote in *The Rise of Christianity*, Christians stayed in the afflicted cities when pagan leaders, including physicians, fled.

Candida Moss, a professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at Notre Dame, notes that an "epidemic that seemed like the end of the world actually promoted the spread of Christianity." By their actions in the face of possible death, Christians showed their neighbors that "their Christian faith is worth dying for."

This witness came to mind after listening to a recent story on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered." Host Robert Siegel interviewed Stephen Rowden, who volunteered for Doctors Without Borders in Monrovia, Liberia.

Rowden's grim task was to manage the teams that collected the bodies of Ebola victims. Rowden and his team retrieved 10-to-25 bodies a day. Since close contact with the victims is the chief means by which the usually-deadly virus is spread, Rowden and his team members lived with the risk of becoming victims themselves.

What's more, living in the midst of this death and suffering took its toll. Rowden recalled entering a house and finding the body of a four-year-old victim who had been abandoned by her family. With the typical English understatement, he told Siegel, "I found that a very sad case."

Rowden's experience prompted Siegel to ask him if he was a religious man, to which Rowden replied, "I am. Yes, I'm a practicing Christian." When Siegel then asked whether what he saw tested his faith, Rowden said that "No, I got great strength from my faith and the support of my family."

Nearly eighteen centuries after the Plague of Cyprian, Christ still prompts many of his followers to run towards the plague when many others are running away.

Now as then, this power confounds and confuses Christianity's critics. A recent article in Slate acknowledged that many of the people fighting the Ebola epidemic in West Africa were missionaries.

The writer, Brian Palmer, admitted that he "[didn't] feel good about missionary medicine, even though [he couldn't] fully articulate why." He knew that he shouldn't feel this way but he did.

Ross Douthat of the New York Times suspects that Palmer's misgivings have something to do with the fact that the selflessness of the missionaries "unsettles" his "secular and scientific worldview." In that worldview, "helping people is what governments and international NGO's are supposed to do."

But that's not only how it works. Palmer, like the emperor Julian the Apostate in the late fourth century, is seeing that "the impious Galileans support not only their own poor and dying but ours as well."

It's enough to unsettle anyone's worldview.

Our sympathies go to Michael and Lori Arnone in the recent passing of Michael's father.

This 'n That

- ❖ Be sure to fall back in time for Sunday, Nov. 2 morning
- ❖ There are openings for fellowship hosts for the remainder of 2014. If you are willing to provide light refreshment for either of those weeks, please sign up in the social room.
- ❖ 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 may meet November 16; 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.



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

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 Carullo, Linda Longueuil, 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

November 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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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 (Church web site)
 Worship 10 AM

1 Choir 10:30 Soup-a-thon 6

2 Daylight Savings Time Ends Communion Schola Nova Concert 4	3	4 Election Day Evergreen worship 11 Missions 1 Deacons 7 AA 7	5 Bible Study 9:30-11 Food-share 1 Nominating 7	6 AA 7	7	8 Fall Clean-up 9
9 Future of Blacksmith Shoppe discussion - after worship	10	11 Veterans Day Ladies Aide 1 Finance 7 AA 7	12 Bible Study 9:30-11	13 AA 7	14 Bake Pies and Potato Prep. beginning 8:30	15 Turkey Supper 5 & 6:15
16 Warner Theatre RSVP Cabinet Meeting Advent Wreath RSVP	17	18 AA 7	19 Bible Study 9:30-11 Food-share 1 Prayer Shawl 2	20 AA 7	21 Bake Sale and .. set up	22 Bake Sale and ... 10-1
23 Community Thanksgiving Service at Somers Cong'l 7	24 Spire Deadline	25 Blair Manor worship 10:30 AA 7	26 Bible Study 9:30-11	27 Thanksgiving Day Office Closed	28 Office Closed	29

30 1st Sunday in Advent Advent Wreath Making & Lunch

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

Hidden Pictures for the Young at Heart

Fun in the Leaves

By Maurie Jo Manning



In the big picture, find these objects.

02230



fishhook



star



toothbrush



pencil



comb



fork



spool of thread



whistle



duck



mug



light bulb



banana



toothbrush