



## The Spire

Congregational Church of Somersville  
United Church of Christ



### Purim Potluck and Celebration

Join us Saturday, March 7<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. for a Purim potluck dinner and celebration. Purim celebrates the deliverance of God's people as told in the Biblical story of Esther. We'll begin the evening with a potluck featuring all sorts of tasty entrees and desserts; if you're interested in trying to make a traditional Purim dish, please see the recipes posted in an envelope on the announcements bulletin board in the social hall – just take one and try it out! Following the dinner, we'll tell the story of Esther and Mordecai as they battle the wicked Haman in order to save the people of God. Then we'll have some activities for youth and elder alike and we'll finish up around 8 p.m., give or take. This is a great event for singles, families with kids, and everyone else who wants some food, fun and fellowship. There is no cost to attend this festivity, but people attending are asked to bring two non-perishable food items for a local food bank. RSVP to Graham at 860-749-7741 or to [grahamvk@aol.com](mailto:grahamvk@aol.com) by March 4<sup>th</sup> so that we may have enough supplies for the planned activities. Please plan to join us!



### From the Pastor

Dear Friends in Christ,

Charles Dickens wrote that March is the month when the sun begins to shine warm while the wind blows cold. "It's summer in the light and winter in the shade," he penned. As I write this in the middle of February, we are still deep in winter and deep in snow. The sun is not yet very warm; the high temperature today is about 15 degrees Fahrenheit and the low tonight should be somewhere around -5 degrees. I also heard today that we're on deck for a couple more inches of snow in just a few days. But perhaps by the time you read this in early March the sun will be shining warm again.

I love every season and believe they all have their own joys and beauty, giving glory to our Creator even if the season isn't our particular favorite of the year. However, many of us especially love spring for the new life that erupts all around us with daffodils, forsythia, pansies (and other early flowers I'm not able to name!) By



April and May we'll be consistently enjoying warm days and we'll have to mow our lawns. The snow drifts will be a distant memory.

Celebrating the springtime, the Bible says in chapter 2 of the Song of Solomon, "Arise... for the winter is now past... the flowers appear on the earth. The time of singing has come, the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land."

May you come to know new life and the warm light of God's love this spring.

Yours in Christ,

Graham Van Keuren

## Thanks to:

- .. those who filled various worship opportunities this past month.
- .. all who contributed to the “less than normal” success of the Valentine fundraising supper.
- .. everyone who donated supplies or money for supplies for hygiene kits.
- .. those who continue to remove snow from the walks and steps of the church and parsonage.

## A Word from the Trustees

The Board of Trustees met this past week to consider and discuss two projects that need attention:

- the ramp in front of the church is breaking up and needs to be replaced
- the furnace that heats the sanctuary needs replacing

There is an ongoing discussion regarding funding.

## Christian Education

### ***Bible Study***

Adult Bible Study is held each Wednesday in the social room from 9:30-11:15 AM. All are welcome to attend.



### ***Lenten Services***

All are invited to join us Wednesdays in Lent from 7-7:30 PM for contemplative services. Lent is a solemn and reflective time of spiritual preparation in anticipation of marking Jesus' passion and death. Join us.

### ***Silver Lake***

Silver Lake Camp and Conference Center is now accepting reservations for its 2015 summer camps. All kids going into grades 4 and up are invited to spend a week or two in the great outdoors learning to love God, love their neighbor, and love themselves. The cost is probably one of the best deals in summer camps you'll find. In addition, the church will kick in half the cost for any of our kids. It's both a great place and a great deal! Check out the different options available to your kids by logging on to: [www.silverlakeect.org/register](http://www.silverlakeect.org/register)

## Opportunities in March

	Greeters	Acolyte	Ushers	Reader	Fellowship Host(s)
3/01		Eva C.	Patrick F. Donna P.	Syd C.	Tom & Elaine
3/08		Serena R	Patrick F. Donna P.	Deb R.	Deacons
3/15				Marj B	Rich & Ardie
3/22				Johanna K.	Ann & Lori
3/29				Mavis C.	

## Report of the Treasurer & Assistant

(submitted by Angela Cepptetelli & Syd Cohen)

January Financial Operations	YTD	YTD Budget	Annual Budget
Pledges	\$4,300.50	\$7,791.67	\$93,500.00
Other Income	\$2,338.07	\$3,953.12	\$47,437.45
Total Operating Income	\$6,638.57	\$11,744.79	\$140,937.45
Operating Expense	\$14,217.82	\$12,230.50	\$146,766.00
Operating Gain/Loss	\$(7,579.25)	\$(485.71)	\$(5,828.55)

## MONTHLY MISSION COLLECTIONS



JANUARY	Amount collected
Christmas Fund	52.00
Fisher House	126.00
KIVA	21.87
St. Pauly	105.57
Total January	305.44

Pledges are down in January compared to our monthly budget. January expenses are higher than budget due to the timing of quarterly payments due in January, resulting in a net loss for January of over \$7000. We are thankful that our 2014 cash inflows in December were enough to cover the required payments in January. As we look forward to increased temperatures outside, we also look forward to increased pledges and decreased expenses for the remainder of our first quarter 2015!

CONSOLIDATED TRUST FUND for 2014

	Beginning Value Jan 1, 2014	Ending Value Dec 31,2014	gain/loss
Restricted Mem Fund	\$22,709.52	\$28,823.84	\$6,114.32
Pastor's Account	\$63,410.81	\$69,947.24	\$6,536.43
Memorial Funds	\$86,445.94	\$167,315.47	\$80,869.53
Total Value	\$172,566.27	\$266,086.55	\$93,520.28

This is the YTD earnings report of our Endowment Fund for 2014. There was substantial gain in the memorial fund due to the transfer in of the Hannan Estate. The Holcomb scholarship fund was transferred into the restricted memorial fund. Overall the endowment saw strong growth in 2014.

**Missions Outreach**

***Food-share Distribution***

Distribution of food via Food-share takes place in the parking lot of the Somers Congregational Church on alternate Wednesday afternoons from 1-1:30. Volunteers from our church coordinate the distribution and your assistance may be needed. Speak with Marge Morgan to offer your services for March 11 and/or 25.

***Prayer Shawl Ministry***

While Lois Sharpless enjoys the remainder of her time away, formal gatherings of the prayer shawl ministry group will not meet, but Lois asks knitters and crocheters to continue to work on the shawls at home. Recipients of the prayer shawls are so grateful.



***Kiva Loans*** (submitted by Linda Longueuil)

In February, we made our 45th loan which went to Maria from Mexico. Maria has been selling clothing for 8 years and will use her loan to purchase additional clothing wholesale. She has many customers and wants to grow her business to help put her daughter through school. Please read her story in the KIVA notebook or on the bulletin board.

Two borrowers have completed repaying their loans recently. Maria Reynalda from El Salvador repaid her loan in January a month ahead of schedule. Marie Rose from Rwanda repaid her loan in February-- 3 months early! Please read their stories in the KIVA notebook.

***2<sup>nd</sup> Mile Missions Collection***

One Great Hour of Sharing ~ "We Are One". Perhaps Jesus knew that one of our great challenges as human beings would be to understand our oneness and that is why one of his very last acts was to pray for unity (John 17:20-23). We are all one with God - when we understand this and reconnect to ourselves and to one another and to our divine parent. Thus, we can help the world to reconnect, too. As a church we can build bridges – instead of borders, become conduits – create spaces where people can love and connect.



For almost seven decades One Great Hour of Sharing has made a difference in communities around the world by pooling resources, leveraging funds and serving through partnerships. Gifts given through this special offering empower people in poverty to learn a trade, raise their own food and grow in faith. United in Christ, we help to provide access to healthy food, good education, excellent health care and shelter after devastating storms. Each time a gift is given, a connection is made that builds a bridge or tears down walls. Each shared resource answers God's call to love our neighbor, because in Christ Jesus we are one family.

Christ's work in the world healed the sick, fed the hungry and brought hope to communities burdened by challenges. This legacy lives on through One Great Hour of Sharing. Please give generously.

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

***Meetings***

On Tuesday, February 17, we had a pot luck luncheon (postponed from the previous week due to snow). Though our numbers were few, the food was plentiful and delicious. Donna Pendleton did a great job decorating and adding cheer to yet another snowy day. After our luncheon, Graham installed the officers and committee members for 2015. Our next meeting is March 10 with Carol Webb and Genny Farnham serving as hostesses.



### **Luncheon for Seniors**

Somers seniors are invited to a luncheon at our church on Tuesday, March 24 at 12 noon. Even though this is a Ladies Aide event, men of the church are more than welcome to assist.

The menu includes baked ham, ranch potatoes, hot vegetable, breads/rolls, gelatin salad, beverage and white chocolate bread pudding. The cost is \$5 and reservations should be made by calling the church office at 860-749-7741 or signing up at the Somers Senior Center.

### **Hygiene Kits**

The collection of items for the Hygiene Kits has started! Towels and facecloths were purchased last summer from a home goods outlet that generously gave us a 20% discount on top of the already very reasonable prices. Toothbrushes, combs, and nail clippers are being purchased in bulk quantities online. Missions is collecting donations to pay for the purchased items. We are in need of donations of soap and bandaids. We have almost all the gallon bags we need so please check with me before purchasing. Of course, if anyone wants to put an entire kit (or kits) together, that would be appreciated too. The last day of collection will be April 12 as kits will be assembled on April 14. Thank you to everyone who donates to this wonderful project.



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

#### **February Recap**

Mother Nature threw us a curve ball this year, but we had to go with the supper on the originally scheduled date. The long-range forecast earlier in the week didn't look too bad so the frozen blocks of shrimp were defrosted and other perishable supplies purchased. We ended up with the fewest number of folks attending the dinner since we started fundraising suppers twenty-six (26) years ago! Ninety-nine folks braved the elements to eat in and another twenty-four meals were packed to go. Our income for the shrimp dinner totaled \$2227 (including the bake sale and sale of leftover shrimp); the shrimp cost was \$675 this year (best price this year was up \$2/lb from 2014) and the potatoes and vegetables were covered by monetary donations.

There was a good crew on hand to help clean, devein and stuff the shrimp on Friday – and more good help on Saturday to fill the homemade cream puff shells. Thanks to all who contributed to, and helped at, the supper and bake sale. All your efforts are greatly appreciated and make my task of coordinating the dinners a pleasure and so much easier.

### **Annual Corned Beef & Cabbage Supper**

This is one of our more popular and bigger suppers of the year. Folks always look forward to it; it will be held Saturday, March 14 with the usual sittings at 5 and 6:15 PM. Reservations should be made through the church office (860-749-7741 or [somcong@aol.com](mailto:somcong@aol.com)) Cost is \$12 for adults and \$5 for children ages 5-10. The dinner includes corned beef, cabbage, boiled potatoes, onions and carrots, beverage, Irish soda bread and cake. A sign up sheet for your help and donations has been posted in the social room; there are still plenty of opportunities including the need for:



for:

- 2 loaves of homemade Irish soda bread (recipe posted)
- 1 large or 2 small cans each of regular and d-caf coffee (not Kirkland brand)
- 6 64 oz bottles cran-raspberry juice
- 12 9x13 green jello cakes (recipe posted)
- help peeling a lot of vegetables on Friday (3/13) morning

All the vegetables will cost us approximately \$125 (based on costs the previous year), so monetary donations are welcome and we can pick everything up at once for less than individuals buying a little of this and a little of that.

A **bake sale** will also be offered again this month. We've had relatively good support the last few months and hope you will continue to share your talents with some cookies, bars, breads, pies, candies, etc.



## This 'n That

- There are a number of opportunities to serve as greeter and usher this month. Sign up in the social room.
- Daylight Savings Time begins March 8 – be sure to spring ahead!
- As you're spring cleaning and sorting through clothing, remember to bag unwanted clothing and deposit it in the St. Pauly's shed in the church's north parking lot.

## **UCC exploring value of national headquarters on real estate market** February 10, 2015 Written by **Anthony Moujaes**



With prices of commercial real estate soaring in downtown Cleveland, the officers of the United Church of Christ are exploring the value of the building that has housed the denomination's national offices for more than two decades. Listing the Church House building and the adjacent hotel the UCC owns and

operates for sale isn't an indicator that the offices would relocate. Rather, it represents a chance to proactively gauge potential offers as financial stewards of the church's assets, says the Rev. Geoffrey A. Black, UCC general minister and president.

"It's an opportunity, given what's going on all around us, to be good stewards of the church's resources, and use those resources to advance and support the ministry and mission of the UCC," Black said. "Considering the sale of the building will enable us to do that—to support the whole church to engage in God's mission."

Even if the building sold, Black and Lee Foley, UCC chief administrative officer, reiterated that the national offices of the church will remain in Cleveland.

"No matter what happens, we are going to stay in downtown Cleveland," Foley said. "We were the first major property owner in this part of Cleveland in the early 1990s. It was a very blighted area, and now it's vibrant and teeming with people. The UCC was largely responsible for getting that turnaround to happen."

Black added that there will still be an Amistad Chapel if a sale takes place and the staff moves to a new location. "We are committed to having a chapel no matter where [national staff] end up," he said.



An artist's rendering of a proposed project in downtown Cleveland. The UCC's national office and adjacent hotel are circled in yellow. Photo via Stark Enterprises.

"We considered our role in the downtown area, being a church presence in this growing residential neighborhood, and we are cognizant of that," Black said. "But we are also cognizant of other areas that could be beneficial to the Cleveland community."

In the fall, the national officers asked Foley to explore the possibility of what the building and hotel might be worth on the market. Shortly after, a major Cleveland commercial real estate developer announced a massive new project immediately west of the Church House, causing values of neighboring properties to skyrocket. The development project property, which is several parking lots and a condemned building, sold for \$26 million.

Other buildings in the neighborhood, known as the Gateway District, have sold for what Foley called "undreamed of values compared to a few months ago." The area was mostly undeveloped two decades ago when the UCC relocated from New York. In time, two professional sports teams (the Cleveland Indians and Cleveland Cavaliers) built a baseball stadium and basketball arena within two blocks of the UCC's offices, and renowned chefs opened some of the city's best restaurants in the neighborhood.

Both the boards of Hotel Venture LCC, and 700 Prospect Corp., which govern the adjacent hotel and the Church House building, authorized Foley to work with a commercial realtor to place the buildings on the market to see what a potential buyer might offer. Newmark Grubb Knight Frank was hired to represent the national offices and began marketing both properties in high-end publications.

A concept drawing of the new downtown development, which will include a hotel, apartments and retail space. Photo via Stark Enterprises.

"As this has unfolded, it has become a joint effort of the Office of the CAO, the Office of the CFO (Kathy Houston), and the Office of General Counsel (Don Clark and Heather Kimmel), all lending their expertise, at the direction of the officers of the church," Foley said.

With the building listed for sale, there are four possible courses of action if a buyer made an offer: sell both the offices and hotel and lease the necessary space from the buyer; sell both properties and relocate the offices to a different building; sell either the hotel or the offices, and keep the other; or do nothing and keep both properties.

Black acknowledged that the timing of listing the buildings for sale was ironic, given that Cleveland is hosting General Synod 2015 in June, but reiterated that with the way the real estate market shifted rapidly, "it was the right time to look into listing the property."

"Given the fiscal reality of the day, we would be derelict not to explore our options," Foley said.



**About our Members and Friends**

**Baby News**

Josh and Tracey Collins Clague have an addition to their family .. Collin John was born February 11, weighing in at 7 lb. 10 oz. and measuring 18". Congratulations!!

**Birthdays**

Members and friends celebrating birthdays in March include Mckenzie Tishon, Aiden Pinney, Erin Gately, Sue Wavada, Barbara Baugnet, Gwyn Hight-Rosshirt, Barbara Abbe, Ardie Carey, Rich Carey

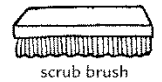
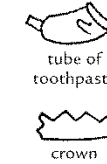
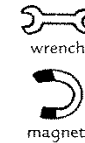
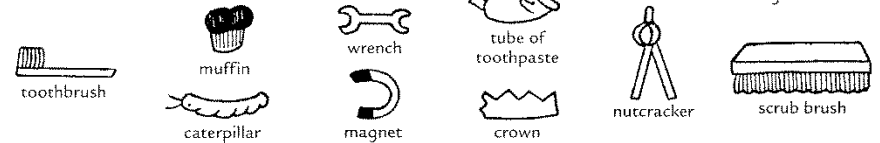


**Hidden Pictures for the Young at Heart**

**Crossword Competition**



In the big picture, find these objects.



**Easter Lilies**

Easter lilies “in memory of” or “in honor of” loved ones will be displayed in the sanctuary on Easter Sunday, April 5. 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 Wednesday, March 25

-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:

\_\_\_\_\_

the Rev. Graham Van Keuren, Pastor  
 Linda Longueuil, Moderator  
 Angela Ceppetelli, Treasurer  
 Ruth Bruch, Clerk/Church Administrator  
 Jason Stefanik, Organist/Choir Director

# March 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Communion	2	3 Evergreen worship 11 Deacons 7 AA 7	4 Bible Study 9:30 Missions 2 Lenten service 7	5 AA 7	6	7 Purim pot luck & festivities 6
8 Daylight Savings Time begins Meet the Deacons during fellowship	9	10 Ladies Aide 1 Finance 7?? AA 7	11 Bible Study 9:30 Food-share 1 Lenten service 7	12 AA 7	13 Peel veggies 9	14 Corned Beef Supper and Bake Sale 5 & 6:15
15 Cabinet Confirmation - after cabinet	16	17 AA 7	18 Bible Study 9:30 Lenten service 7	19 AA 7	20 1st Day of Spring	21
22 Spire deadline Confirmation - til 1	23	24 Blair Manor worship 10:30 Sr. luncheon 12 AA 7	25 Bible Study 9:30 Food-share 1 Lenten service 7 Lily orders due	26 AA 7	27	28
29 Palm Sunday	30	31 AA 7	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 (web site) <a href="http://new.livestream.com/SomersvilleUCC">http://new.livestream.com/SomersvilleUCC</a> (livestream) Worship 10 AM			