



The Spire
Congregational Church of Somersville
United Church of Christ

November 2020

All Church Bake Sale

Our Holiday Bake Sale (coordinated by the Ladies Aide Society) is right around the corner and will take place on Saturday, November 21st from 10 AM to noon.



In the past, members of the congregation and friends of the church have generously donated baked goods which has ensured that we have many satisfied customers. All foods should be pre-packaged and labeled ready to sell; cookies, bars, brownies, cupcakes, etc. should be packed by either 6 or 12 to a plate/bag. A sign-up sheet for bakers is posted outside the office (or all the church office and we can sign you up 860-749-7741). Please have baked goods at the church between 8:30 and 9:00 AM at the latest the day of the sale. Baked goods can also be left on Friday--just make sure someone is there so you can get in. Jams, jellies, relish, beans, etc. also accepted. If you have any questions, please see Linda Longueuil.

It's Budget Prep Time

Any board of committee working with a line item in our church budget is reminded to turn in a budget request for 2021 to Finance asap. They will be putting together the anticipated budget for the new year so that we can vote on it at a congregational meeting in December .



From the Pastor

Dear Friends in Christ,

As of this writing, our church's plans to mark Thanksgiving are a little bit up in the air. We are waiting to hear back from some of the other churches in town since we are not sure whether they would like to collaborate on a modified Community Thanksgiving Service. Whether other churches are available to work with us or not, we will do something here in Somersville to show our thanks to God for our many blessings.



Now I know that many of us are not feeling thrilled with 2020 so far. I get it! It has been a challenging year because of the virus, the political discord that has manifested itself in all sorts of ugliness, and perhaps for personal reasons unique to each of us and known only to us.

However, I am reminded of the Apostle Paul, who learned the meaning of true thanksgiving even in the midst of great adversity. When he was imprisoned in Rome, he still wrote "Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks to God in all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:19-20.) Thanksgiving is not a once per year celebration but a daily spiritual practice that changed Paul's life and brought him joy and peace.

Gratitude toward God is a gift that God gives us. Our prayers of thanksgiving to God do more to bless us than they do to bless God. And that is the way God intends it, for the One who did not withhold from us even the gift of Jesus – God's own beloved Son – surely bestows blessing in all circumstances. So, this month, despite a "third wave" of COVID or whatever ends up transpiring, give thanks. Count your blessings. Praise God for each day – for food to eat and breath to take. Praise God for those whom you love. Praise God for the church in Somersville and around the world. Praise God for the good land in which we live. In everything, praise God and give thanks to the One from whom all blessings flow. Your gratitude will return to you as joy and peace.

May you count many blessings this month. Please know I count this fellowship of faith among my blessings.

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 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.
 - .. Marilyn Hare for her coordination of the Blacksmith Shoppe this year.
 - .. Jason Stefanik for his continued efforts as our organist and weekly vocalist.
 - .. Syd Cohen, Mavis Collins & Lani Bortfeld for their ministry of music.
 - .. Pastor Graham for his dedication, time, effort, and leadership to this church.
 - .. Bobby for his continued cleaning of the facilities



Christian Education (submitted by Lani Bortfoeld & Pastor Graham)

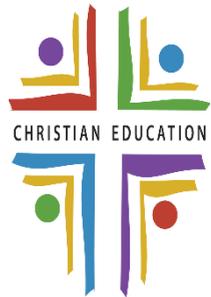
The church school finished up our unit on the patriarchs/matriarchs in Genesis on October 18. During this unit we learned that families in the Bible had problems like jealousy, playing favorites, and selfishness, but that God was able to work with his imperfect people to bring about good. We had a memory verse from Deuteronomy which we read every week, and learned about different ways to ask God to help us.

We have now begun the unit "Journey to Freedom", which is stories from the book of Exodus, with Moses, Aaron, Miriam and Pharaoh as the main characters. The children and youth are reading all of these Bible stories

from the new Shine Bible story book, *All of Us*; they are enjoying the graphic novel-style illustrations and acting out the stories using the Bible story which is especially formatted for this purpose. Each family who registers their children for church school this year will receive a free copy of this updated Bible resource.

Below is the sequence of stories for November. In addition to the *All of Us* book, we are using the maps, family trees, crafts, activities, music, magazines, Bible posters and other supplements to reach children with a variety of learning styles. This month's Bible memory poster comes from Psalm 63 v.1-4; CEV:

You are my God. I worship you. In my heart, I long for you, as I would long for a stream in a scorching desert. I have seen your power and your glory in the place of worship. Your love means more than life to me, and I praise you. As long as I live, I will pray to you.



Since it's very important that we plan out our space needs for social distancing, we ask that families please let us know when you're going to be absent or bring a guest. For the next few weeks, we will either use the CE classrooms or be on Zoom. Lani will send an email Saturday evening to let you know what which format we'll use. When having Sunday school at church we will have fresh air moving through the classroom, so please dress warmly. Also, for ALL CHURCH MEMBERS: PLEASE DO NOT DROP OFF ANY ITEMS IN THE CE CLASSROOMS without asking a member of the CE Board first. We need to keep these rooms clear in order to have enough space to socially distance with the children & youth.

When we are in Zoom sessions, they take place after the worship service has concluded – typically around 11:15. It is important to have a variety of faces/voices in the session. You do not have to host the session, just present the lesson; Lani or Graham will take care of the Zoom details. Currently, Marj and Lani are the only teachers, so we really would appreciate any kind of help. Just let us know when you can help reading the Bible story or lead a craft. You can sign onto Zoom from your home and read or lead the activity from there - we'll be glad to do a practice session with you!

The CE Board continues to check in with families by phone after each CE meeting to update you on upcoming events and catch up with your family's joys and concerns. Each family has a CE contact person; please let

us know suggestions, questions, concerns or prayer requests. Your Board of CE wants to hear from and pray for you in these challenging times. In this way, we hope that we can stay connected in Christ through these tumultuous times.

Thank you, and may we all learn from the Bible, through prayer and from one another as we transition to the winter months,

Journey to Freedom (stories from Exodus)			
Nov 1	God calls Moses	Exodus 3-4	God chose a helper to free the people.
	Moses Confronts Pharaoh	Exodus 7:1-12:42	We can speak out against injustice.
Nov 8 ←	Crossing the Red Sea	Exodus 13:17-15:21	We can celebrate God's power.
Nov 15	In the Wilderness	Exodus 15:22-16:36	We can ask God for what we need.
	On Mount Sinai	Exodus 19:1-20:21; Deuteronomy 6:1-9	We can follow God's commandments.
Nov 22 ←	Crossing into the Promised Land	Joshua 1:1-5; 3-4	We can remember God's faithfulness.

Bible Studies

Two sessions are offered each week: Wednesday and Thursday mornings beginning at 9:30 AM and running until 11-11:15. The study content is the same both mornings; however, on Wednesdays we remain socially distanced in the social hall without wearing facemasks. Masks are worn during the Thursday class. The studies are open to all; you are welcome on either morning for the situation you find most comfortable for yourself – or come to both!

Readers in November

11/01 Syd Cohen
 11/08 Yvonne Wood
 11/15 Pam Stevenson
 11/22 Elaine Hancock
 11/29 Sharon Miller





Report of the Treasurer (submitted by David Pinney)

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SOMERVILLE
Budget vs. Actuals: 2020 Budget - FY20 P&L
 January - September, 2020

	Sep 2020		Total	
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget
Income				
Total Collections	\$ 6,617.00	\$ 8,018.00	\$ 68,792.05	\$ 72,150.00
Dividends	50.79	84.00	650.10	750.00
Total Donations	\$ 0.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 5,719.10	\$ 4,500.00
Endowment Input		0.00	0.00	5,000.00
Facility Contributionsc	400.00		535.00	0.00
Fund Raiser	3,189.00	2,500.00	16,184.00	18,000.00
Interest Income		1.00	0.93	15.00
Miscellaneous		50.00	30.00	450.00
Total Income	\$ 10,256.79	\$ 11,653.00	\$ 91,911.18	\$ 100,865.00
Gross Profit	\$ 10,256.79	\$ 11,653.00	\$ 91,911.18	\$ 100,865.00
Expenses				
Bank Service Charges	101.34	16.67	554.05	150.03
Total Christian Education	\$ -50.00	\$ 175.00	\$ 1,036.97	\$ 1,575.00
Total Compensation	\$ 5,970.21	\$ 7,366.42	\$ 62,541.22	\$ 66,297.78
Total Fees	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 4,694.00	\$ 5,713.00
Fund Raisers		333.33	1,939.00	2,999.97
Total Miscellaneous Expense	\$ 170.44	\$ 104.17	\$ 859.69	\$ 937.53
Total Mission Outreach	\$ 0.00	\$ 1,245.83	\$ 963.22	\$ 5,712.47
Total Office Supplies	\$ 129.26	\$ 320.84	\$ 3,482.70	\$ 3,037.56
Total Repairs and Maintenance	\$ 212.46	\$ 750.00	\$ 7,265.19	\$ 6,750.00
Telephone Expense	154.30	150.00	1,324.71	1,350.00
Total Utilities	\$ 1,044.80	\$ 1,174.99	\$ 11,348.02	\$ 11,043.66
Total Expenses	\$ 7,922.60	\$ 11,749.75	\$ 97,060.86	\$ 106,579.50
Net Operating Income	\$ 2,334.19	\$ -96.75	\$ -5,149.68	\$ -5,714.50

Stewardship Season (submitted by Sharon Miller & Deb Robidoux)

Preparation is in progress for our annual Stewardship campaign for 2021 pledges to the church. The Stewardship committee is comprised of Sharon Miller and Deb Robidoux with Graham as our advisor.



This year's theme from the United Church of Christ is "BELOVED":

"Beloved, let us love one another because love is from God.

Everyone who loves is born of God and knows God." 1 John 4:7

As a reminder, the campaign will begin this month on November 22nd thru December 28th.

We will be mailing a letter and pledge cards to all church members and friends in mid-November. There will also be additional pledge cards available in the vestibule (Wood Chapel). Your annual pledge will be for the 2021 calendar year, from Jan. 1st thru Dec. 31st. We are hopeful that you, our members and friends of the church, will be as generous as possible in determining your annual pledge! Your support enables the church to pay its bills and all the services and activities that we value. This is a very special place to come to for Worship services and activities that are so important to all of us!

This year, as we have done in the past, we will be asking our Board members to pledge early prior to the start of the campaign.

Our goal for the annual Campaign will be based on the proposed 2021 annual budget amount. Pledge cards will be mailed to all members and friends in a few weeks. We will show our progress of pledge cards submitted in the Sunday bulletins during the campaign.

A number of people in the church have set up their contributions to be taken electronically on a regular basis. Contributions can be set up as a One Time contribution or on a weekly or monthly basis.

The website is <http://donate.somersvilleucc.org>

If you need any assistance, please feel free to speak with Pastor Graham or Sharon Miller.

May God continue to enrich your lives with generosity of grace, love, mercy, peace, joy, hope, and forgiveness.

Again, thank you to all who generously support the ministries of our church!

Missions (submitted by Pastor Graham)

2nd Mile Missions

Our Missions Outreach Board has identified two mission partners for the month of November. For the first, the Cornerstone Foundation in Rockville, CT, we will collect money. Collection envelopes will be available in the pews or you may mail a check to the church. For our second mission partner, the Enfield Warming Center, we will collect supplies. You are asked to contribute to one or both, according to your abilities.

The Cornerstone Foundation has served the poor of Rockville for nearly four decades. This ecumenical ministry runs three small homeless shelters, a soup kitchen, a youth center (presently closed because of COVID), a clothing bank, and a food cupboard. Our financial donations will help them keep people safe, fed, sheltered, and clothed.



The Enfield Warming Center is our other mission partner this month. In other years, the Enfield Warming Center has provided warm space for Enfield's unhoused to sleep overnight during the cold winter months. This year, due to the coronavirus, they will be offering an "engagement and outreach center" at St. Patrick's Church on Pearl Street in Thompsonville. While they will not have the facilities to provide overnight accommodations, they will provide pre-packaged snacks, winter gloves and hats, warm socks, and Enfield Magic Carpet bus passes. Their goal at the engagement and outreach center is to connect their clients with social services and non-profits who can provide more lasting aid. Please look in Wood Chapel for the collection box for prepackaged snacks, winter gloves and hats, warm socks, and Enfield Magic Carpet bus passes. You are invited to add the requested items to the collection box anytime during the month.

Recall that Jesus taught, "Whatever you have done to the least of these, my brothers and sisters, you have done to me" (Matthew 25:40.) Please give generously to our second mile mission partners this month.

Church Without Walls

CWW is an ecumenical ministry with the homeless held each Sunday at Court Square in Springfield. This outdoor service (held in any weather) begins at noon and concludes about 30-40 minutes later with a free lunch to

any who would like to partake. Our Board of Missions, with your support, provides lunch (sandwich, snack, and fruit) on the 4th Sunday of each month when Pastor Graham leads the service.



Food Share

Members of our church help distribute food every other Wednesday from 1-1:30 in the parking lot of the Somers Congregational Church. If you are willing to assist, speak with Marge Morgan. November dates are the 11th and 25th.

KIVA (submitted by Linda Longueuil)

During September, we were able to make 2 loans bringing our total loans to 169. The first loan went to Luis Antonio from El Salvador. He will use his loan to purchase fertilizers and herbicides for his crop of beans. The second loan went to Kadijatu, a refugee from Sierra Leone who lives in Arizona. She will use her loan to overcome the challenges in her business posed by the Covid-19 crisis. Their stories can be found in the KIVA notebook.



One loan was repaid in full during September. Peekapak used their loan to reach young children learn to cope and thrive after being victims of violence or bullying.

150th Anniversary Update (submitted by Johanna Karbonic)

“Generations of Faithfulness” Psalm 100:5

We are really getting some projects accomplished towards the 150th Anniversary:

We have a few outfits and accessories donated by the Village Players of Somers for our kick off historic January 3rd service which I hope all can make either on Zoom or in person. If attending church, try to come in an 1871 outfit or close to it. Check your attics and books on Somers history to see what was the style during the 1800’s. Mostly for women a long dark skirt with a high

collar blouse; maybe with ruffles decorated with a brooch and a flowery hat
Men – dark suits, white shirt and bow or ribbon tie.

We also have two Anniversary songs written by a friend of Graham's. (One song for a soloist and one for a choral group.)

If anyone has 1800's clothing in their attic that we can borrow, please let someone on the committee know. Graham, Johanna Karbonic, Ardie Carey, Marj Butler, Russ Meyer, Genny Farnham.



This is a picture of Bob Tronsky, the generous donor of his beautiful Belgian horses and exquisite carriages for the 4 Town Fair Parade in September, 2021; and Marj Butler making friends with Larry, one of the horses. We made a visit to his amazing farm a couple of weeks ago.

We also have our banner which we will have hanging by January 3, 2021.

Ladies Aide Society

Blacksmith Shoppe

The Blacksmith Shoppe has had a successful fall! Many thanks to Marilyn for her dedication and to her regular morning helpers – Greg, Wayne and Pam. Also, thank you to all who have baked, donated, or shopped. The Shoppe may be open through November 14; please check with Marilyn for updates. And, if you're willing/available to help out during a morning or afternoon shift, please let her know.

Looking ahead to 2021, Marilyn would like a reliable partner to work with her each week. She does not want to give up the Shoppe completely, but does want and need someone to assist on a regular basis.



Meeting

All women of the church are welcome to attend meetings, held the second Tuesday of each month. Women will gather on Tuesday, November 10 at 12:30 in the social room for a brief meeting prior to Cathy Doner, our guest, arrives to show us how to decorate cookies. Her program will begin at 1 PM. If you want a lunch or snack during the meeting, you are welcome to bring it along.



Church Property Tasks



The usual fall work needs to be done (ie shrub trimming, leaf pick up, mowing,, installation of storm windows, etc.) While the Morrill's and Nick Wood are on top of the mowing, more help is needed to step up to help accomplish other fall chores. Please speak with Doug Miller or Everett Morrill to coordinate times for group projects; tackle one on your own if you have free time, work on a buddy system with a friend.

From the Moderator (submitted by Rich Carey)

Thank you to all who attended our Cabinet meeting on October 18; this was our first meeting in 4 months, As we all know, the business of the church continues but it is important to meet regularly. This is the chance for church leaders to update the congregation on activities, including accomplishments and needs. Please read the minutes to the meeting. The plan is to have at least one more meeting in 2020. Please speak with Pastor Graham, Ruth, or myself if you want to be included on the agenda for our next meeting.

Fundraising Suppers (submitted by Ruth Bruch)

Annual Turkey Supper

Our final fundraising supper for 2020 will be here before we know it – Saturday, November 14. We'll be cooking up about 350 lbs. of turkey breast, 100 lbs. winter squash, stuffing, potatoes, and so much more. This is a big meal that requires a lot of time and work so please check out the sign-up sheet outside the office to see how you can assist or contribute. The following (as of 10/28) are some of our needs:

- 8 pints grape tomatoes
- 11 homemade pumpkin pies (in addition to making 20 here at church)
- 8 large bags of gravy mix
- (54 small or 27 double boxes) stuffing mix
- 10 lb. butter
- monetary donations to buy potatoes (\$60), cranberry sauce (\$55), gravy mix (\$25), etc. or put toward the cost of turkeys
- physical assistance on Friday, Nov. 6, beginning 8:30 AM to prepare the squash and Friday, Nov. 13 to prepare the potatoes.
- 2 or 3 people to slice and pack up bread and dessert
- 1 more person to help bag meals



While it's not included on the sign-up sheet, we could also use help boning and slicing the turkeys once they're cooked so please speak with me as to when this will be done if you're willing to lend a hand.

Cost is \$12 per meal that will be curbside pick up between 4:30-6:30. My swan song goal for my final supper (as coordinator) is 300 orders! Menu consists of turkey, stuffing, mashed potato w/gravy, winter squash, cranberry sauce, tossed salad, rolls/breads, pumpkin pie. Call or email the church office to reserve.

Pot Roast Recap

We put up 270 meals and there could have been more, but I finally capped it ~ not like we had any more room to cook anything else and we kept blowing electrical circuits. Nineteen roasters were used and placed all around the kitchen, social room, and even the classrooms. I had increased the amount of meat and vegetables and we still had barely enough meat, came up short on

the potatoes and had to get some carrots from the freezer! There was a steady line of traffic (backed up to Rte. 190 – I'm told). It was a profitable meal; \$3,308.00 was deposited before expenses were paid (\$515.00).



There were many who contributed essential ingredients and labor to make this meal come together, and I thank all of you.

These suppers take a lot of time and effort and I, as supper coordinator, have appreciated your continued support and participation. Thanks to all of you who have given so much to make these fundraisers successful.

Ask US officials to oppose ‘unprovoked surprise attack’ on Armenian enclave, UCC urges **October 12, 2020**

Written by Hans Holznagel

Leaders of the United Church of Christ and several of its ecumenical partners are calling on their members and congregations to contact elected officials about a deadly ethnic conflict in Southwestern Asia and to pray for victims of the violence.

The church bodies are calling on the United States to “undertake diplomatic measures to halt the fighting” in Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian enclave within Azerbaijan.

Global Ministries of the UCC and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has joined the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches in opposing what the NCC described as an “unprovoked surprise attack by Azerbaijan that has brought Armenia into a state of war.”

The violence in Nagorno-Karabakh, also known as Artsakh, started Sept. 27 with air and ground attacks by Azerbaijan and its allies. “We deplore the use of military force by Azerbaijan and the Syrian rebel fighters that are funded and sent by Turkey to assist their assault on the Armenian community,” said the NCC statement, now also posted at the Global Ministries website. “The use of armor, aviation, heavy artillery, and drones suggest a planned operation.” An Oct. 10 ceasefire, brokered by Russia, was short-lived. Fighting continues.

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sent by Turkey to assist their assault on the Armenian community,” said the NCC statement, now also posted at the Global Ministries website. “The use of armor, aviation, heavy artillery, and drones suggest a planned operation.” An Oct. 10 ceasefire, brokered by Russia, was short-lived. Fighting continues. “Most tragic of all are the casualties, whose numbers mount day by day, at this writing surpassing one hundred seventy of our people — soldiers and civilians alike, including women and children,” Findikyan said. “Most vulnerable to the attacks are villagers in outlying rural areas close to the borders; these desperate people have been especially targeted for shelling and sniper fire.”

Another response from Global Ministries has come in the form of a prayer posted Oct. 8 at its website (note: included in this edition of the *Spire*), composed by Peter Makari, area executive for the Middle East and Europe. “In this time of heightened tension, fighting, and destruction, we pray for calm, a cooling off, and a constructive effort, by those directly engaged, and by world

leaders, to bring about an end to fighting, a resolution of outstanding issues, and a commitment to peace with justice,” the prayer said.

“Walking with our partners in moments of conflict and crisis is incredibly important, and we know that the prayers of God people bring changes,” said the Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, the UCC’s co-executive of Global Ministries. “We are one church, one body, and we hurt as the Armenian people and our Armenian partners hurt.”

(Note from Graham: The US State Department announced late on 10/25/20 that they have brokered a cease-fire while long-term peace negotiations continue. Please add to your prayers the continuing efforts of Secretary of State Pompeo to quell the region’s violence. At the date of this writing, more than 5000 people have been killed in the conflict.)

Prayer for peace in the Nagorno-Karabakh region

BY MIDDLE EAST & EUROPE - GLOBAL MINISTRIES ON OCTOBER 08, 2020

In the midst of the continuing escalation of conflict and violence in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ offers this prayer for peace. We join the voices of ecumenical organizations and partners seeking an immediate end to the crisis.

Loving and merciful God, we come to you today with prayers for peace and for a cessation of violent conflict. We watch with pain as hundreds of people have already been killed, victims in renewed fighting in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, between Armenia and Azerbaijan. And we are concerned that fighting will escalate, drawing in other powers that would only cause immeasurable suffering for innocent people.

Caring Christ, Prince of Peace, just as you walk with us in our times of joy and tribulation, we walk with partners around the world, including our Armenian brothers and sisters, who are deeply concerned about their neighbors, the people of Artsakh – many of whom are Armenian by heritage themselves – as they seek to assert their own sovereignty where they can pursue a life of freedom and prosperity. We hear the cries of our Armenian partners, who know intimately the pain and suffering of the atrocity of war, and we heed their call for an end to Azeri aggression.

Holy Spirit, Breath of Life, we come to you with our fervent petition that leaders – especially those who have chosen war, injury, and death over justice and peace, healing, and life – come to see that the ways of self-interest and zero-sum conquest only result in the violation of the sanctity of life; and that they may choose a better way: one of mutual edification, common interest, and recognition and acceptance that another’s security enables one’s own ability to thrive.

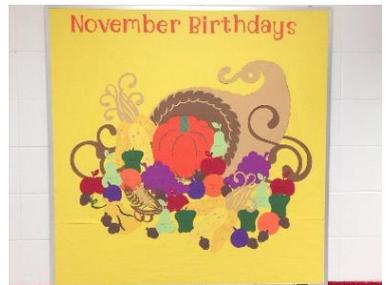
In this time of heightened tension, fighting, and destruction, we pray for calm, a cooling off, and a constructive effort, by those directly engaged, and by world leaders, to bring about an end to fighting, a resolution of outstanding issues, and a commitment to peace with justice. We know that it is the most vulnerable who suffer the worst in times of war, and we know that your heart, o God, is in pain for them. We seek healing: of people, of peoples, and of nations, and that you, o God, can open hearts and minds.

For all of this we fervently pray, Amen.

About our Members and Friends

November Birthdays and Anniversaries

Happy birthday wishes this month are sent to: Syd Cohen, Susan Abello, Eva Cohen, Jacob Cohen, Doug Miller, Roger Carullo, Linda Longueuil, Dan Scully, Elaine Hancock, Tom Hancock



Couples celebrating anniversaries in November include Mark & Diane Farnham, 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.

Baptism

Tony Cooper Stefanik,
son of Lauren & Jason, was
baptized by Pastor Graham on
October 18.

(photo by Elaine Hancock)

Wedding

Pastor Graham officiated
at a small family wedding of Mason Yamashita and Kristen Burnette in our
sanctuary on October 3. Mason is the grandson of Marj Butler and son of Kris
Butler. Congratulations and best wishes!



Hidden Pictures for the Young at Heart - Family Dinner



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