



## The Spire

Congregational Church of Somersville  
United Church of Christ



### **All Church Bake and Tag Sale** (submitted by Ruth James)

The Ladies Aide Society is hosting an “all church” bake and tag sale on Saturday, February 12 that will run from 10 – 1. Ruth James, coordinator of the bake sale portion, hopes many of you will bake a favorite sweet treat and contribute it to the sale. We prefer than donations be brought to the church kitchen and social hall

on Friday, February 11 between 4 and 6 or by 9 AM on the 12<sup>th</sup>. The tag sale portion is being coordinated by Millie Morrill and will run concurrently with the bake sale; items will also be sold on Sunday, February 13 following the service til 1. We ask that folks wear masks and remain socially distanced.



We will be making more turkey pot pies on beginning at noon on February 4; help is welcome.

### **Hygiene Kits** (submitted by Linda Longueuil)

Every year, in the United States and in the rest of the world, people are the victims of natural disasters. In 2021, once again there were natural disasters all over the world. An earthquake in Haiti, a typhoon in the Philippines, flooding in Germany, and many more. Here in the United States, there was a severe winter storm in Texas, wildfires in the West, a hurricane in Louisiana, and tornadoes in Kentucky. All these disasters often leave the victims with only the clothes on their backs. Can you imagine not having a way of washing, brushing your teeth, combing your hair or covering a wound, often for a long period of time? A hygiene kit can make a difference for people who may experience a similar disaster in the year ahead. (cont. pg. 3)

## **From the Pastor**

Greetings, Friends in Christ –

Lately I have been mulling over possible topics for the next preaching series. The current series on names and titles for our triune God will wrap up on February 6. Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent, falls on March 2. That leave us three Sundays (Feb. 13, 20, and 27) between the conclusion of this preaching series and the start of Lent.

I am 95% sure I have discerned that I want to talk about money. I know that I've preached some sermons here and there about money but devoting three weeks in a row to the topic will afford us a richer understanding. Presently I think I will examine our relationship with money from three perspectives, one per week: 1) from the point of view of Christian theology, 2) from the point of view of Christian ethics, and 3) from the point of view of our Christian scriptures. Of course, each of these perspectives will overlap. One informs the other and I hope that the sermons will build one upon the other.

Because I expect the sermons will build upon each other, I especially encourage you to come each of those three Sundays. Of course, if you can't make one of the Sundays, the services are archived on [live.somersvilleucc.org](http://live.somersvilleucc.org) so you can still keep in the loop.

Do you have any particular questions about a Christian's relationship to money? Shoot me an email or pull me aside at church. I might be able to work your question into one of the sermons.

Our scriptures, ethics, and theology have a lot to say on this topic. So let us not be silent on it. Join us!



Faithfully,

*Graham Van Keuren*

## ***Hygiene Kits continued***

Each hygiene kit includes:

- 1 hand towel
- 1 wash cloth
- 1 wide-toothed comb
- 1 nail clipper
- 1 bath-size bar of soap
- 1 toothbrush
- 10 band-aids



Ladies Aide and Missions will be working together to enable us to reach our goal this year of 250 completed kits. Monetary donations collected by Missions will be used to purchase items in bulk (combs, nail clippers, toothbrushes, and band-aids). Towels have been purchased at a discount and facecloths will also be purchased.



### **Items needed to be donated:**

- Bars of soap (bath-size in wrapper)
- Gallon size storage bags (slider closure)

There will be a collection box for soap and storage bags in Wood Chapel during the month of February. If you have any questions, please see Linda Longueuil. Thank you in advance for making this mission a success year after year.

The Missions committee is challenging parishioners to bring bars of soap with them on Sunday mornings during February (if there are 3 in your household, bring in 3 bars; if there are 5, bring 5; if there are 2, bring 2, etc).

### **Thanks to:**

.. all board and committee members who served so diligently during 2021.

.. those who contributed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mile Missions collection to benefit Enfield Safe Harbor.



### **Readers in February**

2/06	Mavis Collins
2/13	Ruth James
2/20	Marj Butler
2/28	JoAnn Supernaugh

# Treasurer's Year End Report (submitted by Dave Pinney)

January - December 2021

	Total	
	Actual	Budget
<b>Income</b>		
Collections		
Loose	1,936.00	1,600.00
Pledges	96,577.08	97,500.00
Total Collections	<b>\$98,513.08</b>	<b>\$ 99,100.00</b>
Dividends	851.10	1,000.00
Donations		
Facility Contributions	1,820.00	2,000.00
Ladies Aid	3,000.00	3,000.00
Unrestricted	10,200.00	7,000.00
Total Donations	<b>\$15,020.00</b>	<b>\$12,000.00</b>
Endowment Input	0.00	12,000.00
Fund Raiser	16,126.75	15,000.00
Miscellaneous	547.00	500.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$131,057.93</b>	<b>\$139,600.00</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Bank Service Charges	484.91	450.00
Total Christian Education	<b>\$620.20</b>	<b>\$ 2,350.00</b>
Total Committees	<b>\$2,779.91</b>	<b>\$ 2,100.00</b>
Total Compensation	<b>\$88,305.37</b>	<b>\$ 88,695.00</b>
Total Fees	<b>\$8,409.00</b>	<b>\$ 7,263.00</b>
Fund Raisers	5,239.23	2,500.00
Total Miscellaneous Expense	<b>\$1,467.37</b>	<b>\$ 1,150.00</b>
Total Mission Outreach	<b>\$6,180.69</b>	<b>\$ 6,200.00</b>
Total Office Supplies	<b>\$2,821.84</b>	<b>\$ 4,500.00</b>
Payroll Expenses	0.00	0.00
Total Repairs and Maintenance	<b>\$6,280.10</b>	<b>\$ 9,000.00</b>
Telephone Expense	1,900.83	1,800.00
Total Utilities	<b>\$13,815.40</b>	<b>\$ 14,880.00</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$138,304.85</b>	<b>\$ 140,888.00</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$7,246.92</b>	<b>\$ -1,288.00</b>
<b>Balances as of Dec 31</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
Bank Accounts	\$41,894.00	\$ 55,976.00
Endowment Accounts	\$415,924.00	\$ 384,752.00
Totals	\$457,818.00	\$ 440,728.00

## **Stewardship Update** (submitted by Deb Roubidoux)

Did you know that United Church of Christ churches like ours are fully self supporting through our own contributions? We are unlike some larger denominations that have dioceses or presbyteries which funnel money from the wider church down to the smaller local churches. In the United Church of Christ, we do just the opposite. We contribute a couple of dollars per member to support the Southern New England Conference and the national UCC. We the members, through our pledges and tithes, pay the salaries of the pastor and staff, pay for fuel and building maintenance, and cover all the other costs of running the local church. So when you are here on Sunday morning you can look to your left and to your right, to the person in front of you and behind you, and know that those folks, along with you, are keeping our precious church running and thriving.

We are especially blessed to have some members who pledge very generously. Thanks to their gifts, the average member need only pledge a little less than \$3000 per year to support the entire yearly budget. That's around the same as what many pay for cable TV each month! The blessings we receive in return for these small gifts are lasting and invaluable.

For the 2022 calendar year we have received 29 pledges totaling \$65,664. We would like to extend our deepest thanks to those who pledged. Unfortunately, that pledge amount only covers about half of our annual budget. Many fewer people pledged this year than in years past. We know these are uncertain times. But it is times like these when we rely most heavily on our faith and on our church family. Many of us have been members here for decades. Our children grew up here. Maybe we or our children got married or baptized here. Some have only been members for weeks or months, yet we receive grace upon grace each time we join together in community.

It was pointed out to the Stewardship committee that the amount received in pledges last year, along with the amount received for the capital campaign, was roughly equivalent to the 2022 budget. If folks were able to



give what they did last year and still meet their personal financial obligations, we ask that you would consider giving the same amount this year. Or if you have never pledged, maybe take a leap of faith and make a financial commitment to the

church. Each of us are members of the body of Christ. Our gifts of time, talent and tithe matter to each other, and to the Lord our God.

## **Christian Education** (submitted by Pastor Graham)

### ***Bible Study***

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

### ***Silver Lake***

Silver Lake Camp and Retreat Center in Sharon, CT is getting ready to welcome kids to its 2022 summer season. Financial support is available for our campers' families. Our church automatically offers to pay half of the cost for a camp session and additional scholarships can be available for those who have financial need. Please check out the different camp opportunities Silver Lake has to offer at [silverlakect.org](http://silverlakect.org).

Here's a sample of how Silver Lake's website welcomes campers –

### ***Welcome to Silver Lake!***

***You Are Welcome as You Are.*** Silver Lake Camp and Retreat Center strives to create an intentional, welcoming, Christian community accessible to all.



***We're glad to have you here!*** Silver Lake is a place where young people experience nature, make new friends, and explore their faith. With more than 60 acres of wooded land on lakeside shores, Silver Lake offers many opportunities for young people to take risks and try new things with the support of an intentional Christian community.

***Time and again we hear from our campers: "Silver Lake is where I can be the real me!"*** We invite you to take the plunge this summer and find your true self, new friends, and a closer connection to God.



## **Of Historical Interest** (submitted by F. Russell Meyer)

### ***Stacked With Ministers***

Although the 150 anniversary celebration is "history",.... many, in the past, worked tirelessly to put the church where it is today. The main people are the prior ministers, who, if you stacked them all together the column would total almost 40. Yet, with the exception of but 3-4, we don't know much about most. This notice is an extension of the joy we had in 2021.

It might be interesting to see who they were, who lived where, problems they had with the church (I know of one) and did the church prosper.

#### Our Church's Pastors

Charles Gates	1871-1874
Charles Ayer	1874-1883
Richard Billings	1883-1887
John Reid	supplied 1889
Victor Bigelow	supplied 1889
Thomas Hodgen	1890-1891
William Brown	1891-1893
Parley Womer	1894-1897
Frederick Francis	supplied 1898
George Richmond	1898-1900
Charles Davis	1901-1907
Albert Hawkes	1907-1910
A.Craig Bowdish	1910-1912
E.D. Peckham	1912-1913
Henry Newell	1913-1916
David Kebbe	1917-1926
E.M. Bussey	1926-1930
Elmer Cook	1930-1936
Ernest Spinney	1936-1942
Fred Thayer	1942-1946
Paul Ross Lynn	1946-1951
Kenneth Croze	1951-1955
Arthur Fitzgerald	1955-1959
Paul Ross Lynn	1959-1960
Miriam Higgins	1960-1962
John Allen	1962-1967
Roger Delapp	supplied 1967-1968
Gordon Vought	1968-1974
William Scott	1974-1976
Russell Camp	1976-1988
Melvin Williams	interim 1988-1989
Susanna Fitch	interim 1989
Gretchen Stanland	1990-2003
Edward Mayes	interim 2003-2005
Graham Van Keuren	2005-





If you are interested in learning about them, I'll be happy to do the research. It might take some time and therefore the release to the Spire may not be on a schedule. I'll release them as they are complete, beginning with the oldest. Some will probably not be traceable, but, whatever is known, I'll pass along to you.

If this intrigues you, please call Ruth at 860-749-7741, and let her know. If no interest also tell her that. I'll gauge my decision on your response.

## **Missions Outreach**

### ***St. Pauly's Textile***

We've received a note from the team at St. Pauly Textile (our clothing shed company in the parking lot by the green) sharing news that over 40 million pounds of clothing were donated in their sheds during 2021. Our shed provided 32,665 pounds!! This was enough to clothe about 6,017 people all over the world and earned us \$1,307.



### ***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. February dates are the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.

### ***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



### ***Give 'n Take Pantry*** (submitted by Ruth James)

The Give 'n Take Pantry, managed by the Missions Committee, is experiencing a dip in donations since the holiday (understandable) There is a need for cleaning supplies and hygiene articles as well as any food donations NOT in cans or jars. Please give generously as the Pantry serves the neighbors of our church. Proverbs 19:17

“Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and will be repaid in full.”



As a side note, Walgreens offers a senior 20% discount the first Tuesday of the month - a helpful assist for shopping for the Give 'n Take Pantry, Safe Harbor or soap!!!

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

Our project this month is to work with Ladies Aide to collect bars of soap, slider closure gallon storage bags and monetary donations to buy bulk supplies for 250 hygiene kits.

### **Ladies Aide Society**

Women of the church are invited to attend a meeting of the Ladies Aide Society in the social hall of the church on Monday, February 14 at 1 PM. Officers for the year will be elected and meeting dates and times will be decided upon. Any woman who would like to serve as president, vice president, treasurer, assistant treasurer or secretary is encouraged to contact the church office – or if you would like to nominate another woman.

### **About Our Members and Friends**

#### ***February Celebrations***

Couples with anniversaries this month include Nick & Carlese Wood (65<sup>th</sup>)



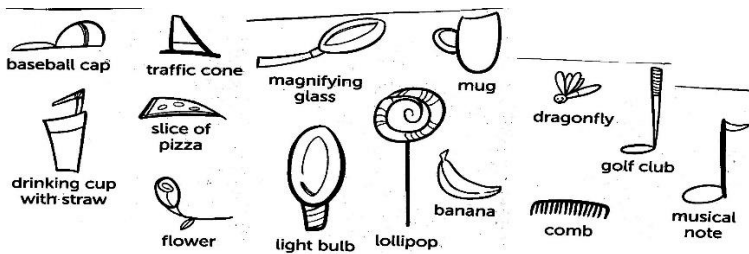
Birthdays are being observed by Ruth Bruch, Carlese Wood, Jean Langan, Jen Hare, David Cohen, Jason Robidoux, Dave Pinney, Marilyn Hare, Bobby Bourque, Charlotte Andrews, Russ Meyer, Lori Arnone, Siobhan Scully. If there are others we've missed, we wish you the very best, too!

#### ***In Sympathy***

Our condolences are extended to the family of Jennifer Cleaver who passed away the weekend of January 8. Jen had been a member of this church since June 7, 1992; she sang in the choir for a number of years, faithfully supported the Blacksmith Shoppe and helped in the take out room for fundraising suppers. She leaves behind a son and daughter, Brett and Courtney, and a sister, Jacalyn. There are no calling hours; memorial donations may be made to the National Audubon Society or the CT Human Society.

# Hidden Pictures – For the Young at Heart

“Cheese Be Mine, Valentine”





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