



The Spire

Congregational Church of Somersville
United Church of Christ



2022

Annual Meeting

Written annual reports from officers and board chairmen are due in to the office by Sunday, January 16.

ANNUAL MEETING

This year's annual meeting will be held in the church social room immediately following worship on January 30. We will forgo the roll call and scripture response. All are welcome to attend and speak on any subject that may come up; however, when matters are up for a vote, only church members can vote.

Included on the agenda will be discussion and vote (per our October 17 Cabinet minutes) on what chairs the choir uses and whether or not to return the large chairs in the pulpit area.

At our May 16 Cabinet meeting, we voted to use a "restore" cleaner on the wooden choir chairs and buy or make cushions after the rug was installed. In October, the black cushioned chairs, which are designed for choristers, were donated.

The large pulpit chairs, which match the architecture of our building, were moved to the attic months ago. Some have expressed opinions they should be brought back.

Money Matters

Financial Statements (submitted by Patrick Forbes)

This month I will prepare and distribute financial giving statements to members and friends acknowledging receipt of their total giving amount received in 2021. If you don't get a statement or if there is a discrepancy, please speak with me or text me at 860-874-9851.

Pastor's Message

Dear Friends in Christ –

According to the Hartford Institute for Religion Research, the median attendance of a congregation in the United States in 2021 was 45 worshippers at a typical Sunday service. That means that half of our American Christian congregations average fewer than 45 people in worship and half have more. This varies by different areas of the country, naturally. I read recently that the median attendance at churches in West Virginia is 26. I'm not sure what the median attendance is in this area of western New England – I couldn't readily find those statistics. But the bottom line is pretty clear: more churches than not are small churches.

Small churches will continue to play an outsized role in American Christianity. While there are many advantages for ministry that a small church has over a big church, three important ones pop immediately to mind. First, there is the advantage of deep personal relationships in a small church.

Together...
WE ARE A FAMILY

Small churches excel at creating a close-knit church family. Of course, with close relationships come high expectations for those relationships and we can let each other down.

Another advantage of small churches is the gift of flexibility. Now, that's not true of every small church, of course, but the simpler structure and more trusting personal relationships that are characteristic of small churches can create opportunities to respond to new realities more quickly than is possible in many larger churches. Resilient small churches will be adaptable and allow old programs and activities to expire and new programs to spring up.

Thirdly, I think small churches benefit from the expectation of lay leadership. Small churches often can't hire out jobs, such as landscaping, Sunday school coordination, and information technology work that larger churches typically employ people to perform. There is a need for everyone to contribute time and talents as well as treasure in a small church. Laypersons in small churches have many opportunities give in different ways, express their abilities for ministry, and grow in faith in the process.



Early Christianity was made up of many small churches. Congregations met in people's houses and that fact was a natural limiting factor to the size of the fellowship. It wasn't until the third century that we have the first archeological evidence of purpose-built church buildings. A small church may be about as close as we can get to the way Jesus and his first disciples were in ministry together. Small churches are faithful, they are nurturing, and they are a blessing.

Thank you for being a part of this small church with me,
Graham Van Keuren



Thanks to ..

.. Pastor Graham for his leadership, sharing, and caring to the members and friends of this church.

.. all who participated in the December services.

.. those who donated to the 2nd Mile Missions collection to benefit the Christmas Fund.

.. those who assisted at Food-share distribution.

.. those who served on boards and committees this past year.

.. Eric Elley for his continued support and technical abilities.

.. Doug Miller for the many property hats he wears.



.. all those who served as Sunday school teachers!

.. the 150th anniversary committee for coordinating wonderful events as we've celebrated this past year!

.. those who continue with the upkeep of the church.



Readers

1/02 Wayne Steely

1/09 Allison Matczak

1/16 Ardie Carey

1/23 Deb Robidoux

1/30 Pam Johnson

Finance

Our Board of Finance did a great job in preparing and presenting (by David Pinney, treasurer) the budget for 2022 that was approved at a congregational meeting in December.

2022			
	Proposed		
Income			
Collections		UCC Assessments	-
Loose	1,800	Workers Comp. Insurance	550
Pledges	99,500	Total Fees	7,815
Total Collections	101,300	Fund Raisers	5,000
Dividends	1,000	Miscellaneous Expense	500
Donations		Vanco	825
Facility Contributions	2,000	Total Miscellaneous Expense	1,325
Ladies Aid	3,000	Mission Outreach	
Unrestricted	8,000	Elective Disbursements	2,500
Total Donations	13,000	Missions Programming	200
Endowment Input	11,000	UCC Annual Meeting	
Fund Raiser	15,000	UCC Basic Support	4,500
Interest Income		Total Mission Outreach	7,200
Miscellaneous	500	Office Supplies	
Total Income	141,800	Copier Consumables	800
Expenses		Copier Maintenance	500
Bank Service Charges	500	Finance Software	
Christian Education		Postage	1,250
Supplies	750	Printing	250
Silver Lake	-	Supplies	600
Total Christian Education	750	Digital Ministry	1,000
Committees		Total Office Supplies	4,400
Deacons	400	Repairs and Maintenance	
Music	200	Church Building	4,500
Stewardship	150	Church Grounds	3,000
Streaming		Parsonage	1,500
15th Committee		Total Repairs and Maintenance	9,000
Total Committees	750	Telephone Expense	1,900
Compensation		Utilities	
Insurance & Pension	15,656	Church Electricity	4,500
Minister	43,696	Church Fuel	5,000
Organist/Choir Director	14,243	Church Sewer Assessment	290
Professional Expenses	1,000	Church Water	200
Secretary	16,091	Electric account for Aux Parking	550
Social Security	2,394	Parsonage Electricity	2,600
Total Compensation	93,080	Parsonage Fuel	2,000
Fees		Parsonage Sewer Assessment	290
Insurance- Property Liability	7,200	Parsonage Water	300
Tolland Association	65	Total Utilities	15,730
		Total Expenses	147,450
		Net Operating Income	(5,650)

Stewardship Update (submitted by Sharon Miller & Deb Robidoux)

Your Stewardship committee would like to thank all those who submitted a pledge card for 2022. Pledges are so important to make and surely supports our church's financial needs. It shows commitment to all the good work and effort that is done each and every day. Our campaign has officially ended as of mid-November; however, it is never too late to make a pledge! There are additional pledge cards on the small table in Wood Chapel.

To date, we have received 27 pledges totaling \$60,264; however, as you may have heard at the budget meeting a few weeks ago, pledges are about \$20,000 less than the budgeted amount for 2022.

If you have not submitted a pledge, it is never too late to make a pledge or submit a new pledge to increase your pledged amount.

We will be sending reminder letters to those we have not received a pledge card and thank you letters to those we have received a pledge from. This helps us ensure that our records are accurate. We continue to encourage people to use the church's electronic pledging web site. You can set up regular giving by the week or the month as automatic withdrawals from your bank account. If you need help setting it up, please contact Graham.

Again, thank you for your support to your church!

Christian Education

Bible Study

The Wednesday morning studies will resume on January 5 at 9:30 AM. The class lasts about an hour and a half and all are welcome to attend and take part.

Missions Outreach

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. January dates are the 5th and 19th.

KIVA Update (submitted by Linda Longueuil)

We made 2 loans in December bringing our total loans to 202. The first loan went to Julia of the Maria De Asuncion Group in Guatemala. She will use her loan to purchase chicken, potatoes and other ingredients for her food cart. The second loan went to Ms. Dety of the Raeli Group in the Congo. She sells loincloths and will use her loan to purchase them in bulk. Please read their stories in the KIVA notebook.



loans that change lives

Two loans were repaid in full during December. Luis Antonio (El Salvador) used his loan to purchase fertilizers and herbicides for his bean crop. Alan Javier (Mexico) used his loan to pay for needed dental treatment.

2nd Mile Missions (submitted by Ruth James)

The Missions Board selected for January's 2nd Mile Mission *The Enfield Safe Harbor*, a nonprofit organization in Enfield which operates 2 sites for the homeless. The first is the outreach and engagement center at St Patrick's Church, 64 Pearl St, Enfield that offers snacks, warm clothing and help to find overnight shelter. Their second site the Enfield Safe Harbor Warming Center which providing shelter the homeless, heatless neighbors in Enfield during the frigid winters. The sleeping shelter is located at the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Hazard Ave, Enfield and is open each night from 9pm to 7am, January through March.

Like all organizations, there is always a need for supplies and volunteers. Here is a list of goods and food portions that can be distributed at the shelter. There is a basket in the gathering room for donations.

- Dry Shampoo, combs and brushes, toothbrushes, mall toothpaste tubes
- Underwear and socks for men and women
- Light clothing (hoodies, flannels, sweatshirts, sweat pants)
- Pre-packaged snacks, applesauce, fruit and pudding cups, individual soups



- Instant oatmeal, individual protein or granola bars
- Hot chocolate packets, tea, Instant coffee, powdered creamer and sugar
- Disposable masks, cleaning and sanitizing supplies
- Disposable bowls, cutlery, to-go hot/cold cups

It's not a coincidence the items are the same as those we stock in our Little Pantry in the front of the Church which are collected in the vestibule. The needs for many are great, please open your hearts and give as God expects.

Psalm 41:1 A *psalm* of David. Blessed are those who have regard for the weak; the LORD delivers them in times of trouble. (NIV)

150th Anniversary Celebration (submitted by Johanna Karbonic)

January 4th, 1871 – January 3, 2021.

“Generations of Faithfulness” Psalm 100:5

January 2, 2022 – 150 Anniversary Final

Celebration: Singer- Lord's Prayer, and Lani Bortfeld to play a violin selection. We will also be putting the Time Capsule in the Wood Chapel cabinet to be opened in 2046. There will be a brief video recap of the year.

Our 150th Anniversary Celebration is at an end as of January 2, 2022. It has been fun and adventurous

with all the many activities we had. We, the committee, realize that you were not able to attend everything, but we hope you enjoyed what you could be a part of.



Just a brief schedule of what we did for the year:

1. Purchased and had our 150 Anniversary Banner hung on the front portico by Doug Miller and Everett Miller. A church logo was designed and the theme “Generations of Faithfulness” taken from Psalm 100.5 was developed.
2. January 3rd. 2021, started the year with our “Kick Off Service with various members dressed in period attire for communion and a new member’s service.
3. February 14th. Sunday our Senior Speaker was Everett Morrill, who became a member in 1950, gave his impression of what the church

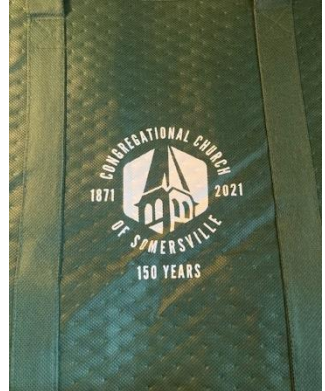
was like when he became a member and perhaps facts/gossip of the earlier church.

4. March 14th Russ Meyer spoke about “The Past and Present Houses in Somersville.”
5. April 4th was the Easter celebration.
6. May 8th. Our 150th. Chicken Barbeque with Genny Farnham’s son Steven Farnham and crew cooking the chicken. Sides were provided by the attendees of the dinner. Nancy Pease’s son, Bill Gowdy, spoke on her behalf about the history of the church as he and his mother knew it. Nancy is a member since 1955.
7. May 9th. Russ Meyer’s second presentation of “Somersville Houses Past & Present”.
8. May 16th Ladies Aide put on a skit written, produced, and directed by Pam Johnson and starring Marj Butler, Ardie Carey, Millie Morrill, Don Zdunczyk and Johanna Karbonic to go along with Graham’s sermon. (In the past -Ladies Aid put on small skits for entertainment. pre -television.)
9. June 2021 – 150th Anniversary Capital Campaign started with a goal of \$15,000 - the amount of money needed to start this church in 1871. A pledge consisted of a \$100 for naming a year that was important to you between 1871 and 2021.
10. July 31st. Ice Cream Social with Missions. Ice Cream samples were made from an old crank ice cream maker. Graham appeared as The Rev. Charles Gates (first ordained minister in 1871) and gave tours of the church.
11. August 8th. Senior Speaker Mavis Collins spoke about Jack and her trip to Donkwe Donkwe, Zimbabwe Africa, our sister church.
12. September 18th. Four Town Fair Float with 2 carriages and 4 beautiful Belgium horses were used to pull costumed parishioners to announce our 150th Anniversary Celebration. Thanks to Bob Tronsky and crew, we were able to do this & win a trophy.
13. September 19th. Pat Liberty portrayed Antoinette Brown –the first woman to be ordained as a mainstream Protestant minister. After the service, the congregation went outside and had a church group picture taken by David Butler.
14. October 16th. Harvest Potluck dinner with 1871 recipes. Town Selectman and descendent of the owners of the Somersville Mill, Tin Keeney, spoke about the Mill and Church and how they intertwined.
15. October 17th. Russ Meyer completed his series of three talks about the homes of Somersville. It was a fascinating study of Somersville’s history.

16. October 21st. A New Members and Baptism Service -followed by cake and ice cream in the Social Hall.
17. December 24th. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service; after which the gift from the Church was presented to each person.
18. January 2nd. The final service of the 150th Year. See above introduction.

Committee members: Rev. Graham Van Keuren, Johanna Karbonic (chm), Marj Butler, Ardie Carey, Genny Farnham, Russ Meyer

** Church members who have not received their gift from the church should stop in and speak with Graham, Ruth or Johanna to get one; it's a nice 15x12½x8" hunter green, insulated, zipper closing, tote bag bearing the 150th church logo.



Ladies Aide (submitted by Pam Johnson)

The monthly meeting of the Ladies Aide Society will be held in the church social room on Monday, January 10 at 1 PM. Elections for 2022 are on the agenda.

All committee chairmen whose terms are expiring are asked to turn in his/her key to the church office so it can be reassigned.



Fundraiser

Pastor Graham has suggested a soup & sub sale for Super Bowl Sunday, February 13th. Preparation would be held the Saturday before (2/12) to make the soups and then a crew from noon to three on Sunday after church on 2/13 to make the sandwiches. We'll have folks sign up to make cookies for the dessert. Graham suggests selling the soup by the quart (\$8), 6" subs (\$4), and the cookies by the 3 (\$2) or by the dozen (\$6). If we're ambitious, maybe we'll add homemade oven-baked Chex mix by the pint (\$3 or \$4).

Think about helping; a sign up sheet will be posted in the social room mid-January.

UCC officers remember ‘global champion of justice’ Desmond Tutu

By UCC National Setting Officers December 26, 2021

Forgiveness says you are given another chance to make a new beginning. – Archbishop Desmond Tutu

The national setting of the United Church of Christ acknowledges the death of Nobel Peace Prize winner and Elder Statesman of the Church, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, this morning. Archbishop Tutu was an anti-apartheid leader in his beloved South Africa, a global champion of justice, and a leader of the Anglican Church of South Africa.

His unrelenting call to care for all who are downtrodden is an example of embodied discipleship. May his family and all who love him be comforted during this time and may we who remain embody discipleship in ways that continue to advance the call to faith, hope, and love, especially for those other exclude or oppress.

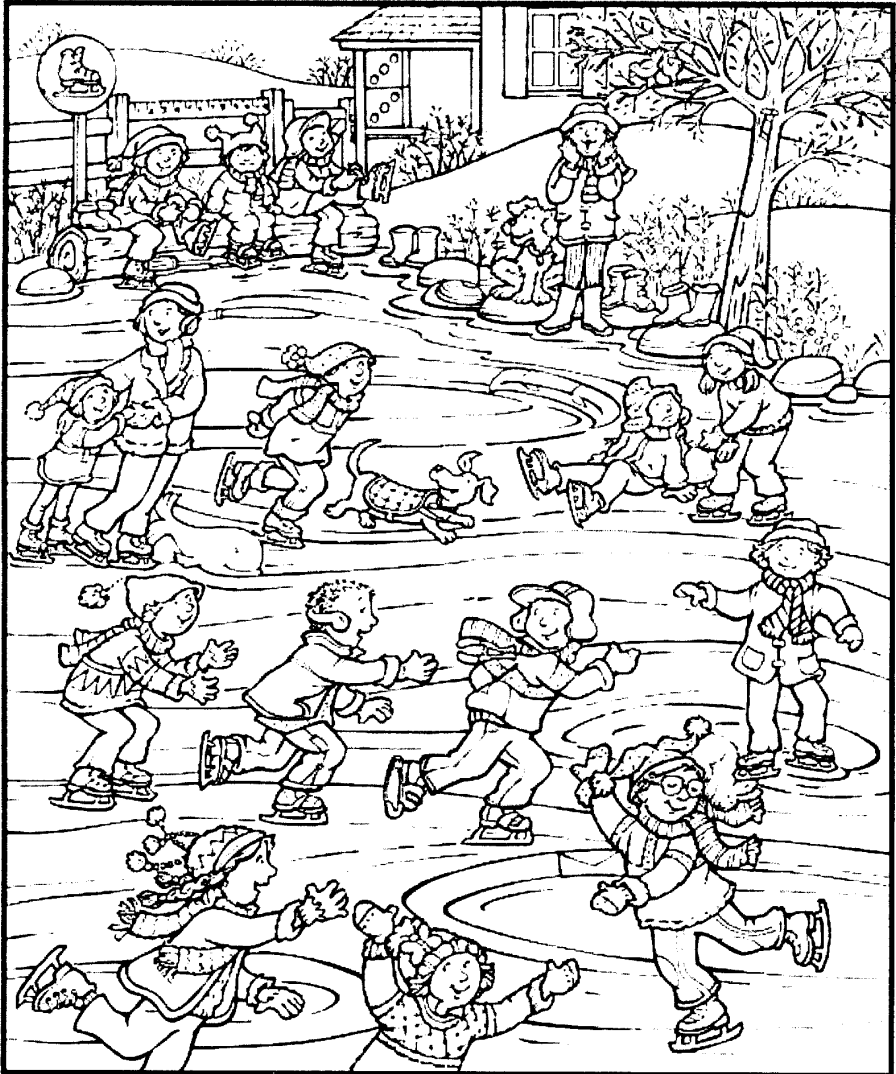
About our Members and Friends

January Celebrations

Folks celebrating birthdays this month include:
Mae Chillson, Miriam Cohen, Erin Miller, Manny Davis, Chloe Crease, Karen Peck, Judy Peck, Deb Robidoux, Carol Webb and Betty Batchelder.



Hidden Pictures For the Young at Heart -



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