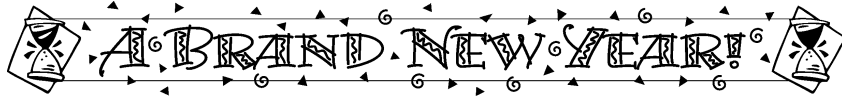


The Spire

Congregational Church of Somersville
United Church of Christ

January, 2011



Annual Meeting and Pot Luck Supper

The annual meeting of the Congregational Church of Somersville will be held Saturday, January 29. A pot luck supper will begin at 6 PM followed by the meeting at 7. ALL members and friends of the church are invited to attend. Reports from officers and Boards will be reviewed; officers and new board members will be elected; we'll vote on the proposed budget for 2011 and hear and consider other business that may come up. Remember, we are all minister of this church and all opinions and voices matter. Be sure to bring a dish to share and place setting(s).



Transportation can be arranged for those unable to get to the church on their own; please call the church office to make a request (860-749-7741).

Officers and Board chairmen are to submit written reports to Ruth by Sunday, January 16.

Also, as we have done for several years, a roll call will be taken at the start of the meeting; members should be prepared to respond with a verse of scripture. Anyone unable to attend the meeting is encouraged to return a verse of scripture to be read in his/her absence.

.....
I/we will be unable to attend the meeting on the 29th. Please read this verse in my/our absence.

Member(s) _____
Return to: R. Bruch, Cong'l Church of Somersville, PO Box I, Somersville, CT 06072

From the Pastor

Dear Friends in Christ,

I recently received an invitation to participate in the installation service of the Reverend John Reilly as Pastor of the Somers Baptist Church. The service will be held at 3 p.m. on Sunday, January 9th. I am thrilled the local Baptist church has reached out to us in this way and I accepted the invitation with delight. Know that all members and friends of the Congregational Church of Somersville are invited to attend as well. Please let me know by January 5th if you would like to come be a part of the celebration so that I can relay that information to Somers Baptist Church. (The hospitality committee there needs to know how much food to prepare for the refreshments after the service.)



The Baptist traditions (and there are many!) are a vital witness within the Christian faith. Did you know that many Baptist churches in America trace their historical origins to our own Congregational tradition, a tradition they sought to reform and eventually broke from? Other Baptists trace their genesis very differently, though. Baptists have always been a diverse group!

Even with just four churches in town, we Christians are a diverse group here in Somers, too. The Apostle Paul writes that the church is like the body of Christ and each follower of Jesus is a member of it. In a broader sense, all the churches in Somers together are like the body of Christ, and each congregation is a part of it. Each church in town, then, has its own role to play in Christ's body. Each congregation is necessary for the work of the gospel of Jesus Christ in this area. One fellowship cannot say to another, "I do not need you."

This begs the question: what part of the body do you think our church is? What is our church's special role?

I have my own ideas, but I don't want to prejudice yours with my own. When you have thought that through, then let us give thanks for our church and its special ministry within this community. And while we're at it, let us also pray for Somers Baptist Church and the other churches in town. May God be glorified in and through each one of them.

May many blessings be to the churches of Somers and to each one of you in the New Year,

Sincerely,

Graham Van Keuren

Thanks to ..

.. all who volunteered to take on “service opportunities” during December.

.. those who gave to the 2nd Mile Missions collections to benefit the UCC Christmas Fund.

.. everyone who helped green the church and to whomever donated the wreaths for the doors.

.. our Sunday school youth and all the helpers for their work on the annual pageant.

.. those who went caroling on the 17th.

.. those who helped prepare and serve the meal at Cornerstone on the 21st.

.. all who ordered poinsettias in memory of, or in honor of, loved ones ~ the sanctuary was beautiful with the display.



Thanks from ..

... Judy Guerette (Somers Cong’l Church Food Pantry) ..“Just a note to thank you for thinking of us with your food donation. Your kindness and caring mean so much to us and it keeps our food pantry going.” [at the December fundraising supper, diners were offered \$1 discount with a non-perishable food donation that would be given to a local food pantry] ... George & Judy Liberty .. “Once again, we have been blessed by the gift of song to bring Christmas to our home. We are so grateful to the group of dedicated friends for this gift. Thank you all so much.”

Christian Education (submitted by Graham Van Keuren)

Wednesday Bible Study

Wednesday morning Bible study meets weekly in the social room from 9:30-11:15 AM. All are invited.

Christmas Pageant Cast (photo shared by Sharon Miller)



Opportunities in January

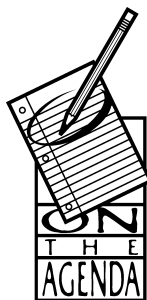
	<u>Greeters</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Reader</u>	<u>Fellowship Hosts</u>
1/02	Dan Dunn Art Lachance	Donna Pendleton George Liberty	David Pinney	Tom & Elaine Hancock
1/09	Donna Pendleton Elaine Hancock	Dan Dunn Art Lachance	Ardie Carey	Chuck & Laura Elwood
1/16	Donna Pendleton Charlotte Andrews	Rich Carey Ardie Carey	Art Lachance	Bert & Mae Chillson
1/23	Donna Pendleton Elaine Hancock	Dan Dunn Art Lachance	Pat Pinney	Donna Pendleton
1/30	Dan Dunn Art Lachance	Wayne Hare Jennifer Hare	Bert Chillson	Bill Moran Ulysses Orduz



From the Moderator (submitted by Ray Foster)

Our next Cabinet meeting is coming up on Sunday, January 16. As usual, the Cabinet meets on the third Sunday of the month. Any individual or Board having business to bring up should speak with me or Graham by Thursday, Jan. 6. In addition to other agenda items, this month I will once again bring up the idea that is being discussed informally among the congregation: the idea of having two annual meetings each year rather than one.

There are two thoughts behind this idea. The first is that if the BUDGET FOR THE COMING YEAR was adopted, let's say, in late November at a Congregational Meeting immediately after worship, the new budget could be in place for the new year, and staff, for instance, wouldn't have to wait until February for any salary increase, nor would it be necessary to write checks for retroactive (January) salary. The second idea is that the CHURCH PROGRAM YEAR actually runs from September 1 to June 30. Or more accurately, July 1 to June 30. If we held the second meeting in May, with the dinner, the roll-call, the reports from the previous program year, and election of Boards and Officers for the new program year, this arrangement gives persons time to prepare for program startup in September and provides for continuity throughout and entire program year. There would be no need to orient newly elected persons in the middle of the program year. These remain in the talking stage, and I'd like for us to talk about the concept to decide together if it has merit enough to pursue further. The Board of Finance is already discussing the changes they would have to make, and the merit of making those changes. We need to hear from the Board of Finance. If we decide to go forward, we will also need to find a group to discuss the other aspects of having a second meeting (suggested for May.)



I hope you will attend the January Cabinet Meeting on January 16 following Worship and a short time of fellowship. Everyone is welcome to stay, to listen, to add to the discussion, to help find the mind of the congregation in this...and thereby, we hope, the Mind of the Lord.

Report of the Treasurer (submitted by Sydney Cohen)

FAITH IS DARING THE SOUL TO GO BEYOND WHAT THE EYES CAN SEE.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7.

	November 2010	YTD 2010	Budget 2010
Pledges	\$ 7,494.50	\$ 70,850.00	\$ 77,000.00
Income	\$ 10,797.38	\$ 113,175.58	\$ 118,210.00
Expenses	\$ 10,592.60	\$ 115,590.34	\$ 128,441.00

Collections for November

Fundraisers

November Thanksgiving Supper- 2,346.00

YTD net income for fundraisers- \$ 21,484.97

Missions

Solar Cooker Project- 200.00- Total so far- 503.00

CWS- Tools & Blankets – 379.00

UNICEF- 102.00

Parking Lot Update

YTD Total disbursed- 23,370.55- Through December 21, 2010



The month of November was a break even one for the church. Our expenses were almost even with our income. This does not often happen. One important fact to notice is the YTD Income & Expense totals. These are our actual figures for the year. It does not reflect any income or expense from the parking lot. We have definitely kept within our budget, and hopefully will collect the remaining pledge money.

Money was also disbursed for our Missions Outreach Program. The Solar Cooker Project received \$700.00 and Heifer International received \$1,005.17. December will be a busy month as we try to disburse the remaining collections. God continues to bless this church, through its programs and its members. May we all be grateful for this and accept whatever challenges God has for us in the New Year.

Financial Statements (submitted by Marge Morgan)

This month I will prepare and distribute financial giving statements to members and friends acknowledging receipt of their total giving amount received in 2010. If you don't get a statement or have a discrepancy, please speak with me.

Missions Outreach

2nd Mile Missions for Enfield Food Shelf

(submitted by Allison Matczak)

Did you know that the Enfield Food Shelf has been operating since the 1960's? The demand for food this holiday season has risen almost 50 percent from last year. 350 to 400 families are being provided for each week. There will be no way to continue having enough food with this onslaught of struggling families without the support from the community. Enfield and the surrounding communities have always come to the rescue throughout the year.

The following is a list of items that are needed. Please donate generously.			
tomato paste & sauce	canned veggies	fruits	soups
meats	tuna	mac & cheese	boxes meals
condiments	gravies	peanut butter	(ie
hamburger			
jelly	muffin/cake mix	cereal	helper)
coffee/tea/juices	crackers	cookies	sugar
flour	baby food/form.	disp. diapers	toilet paper
paper towels	dish detergent	laundry soap	deodorants
tooth brushes	toothpaste	shampoo	razors
shaving cream	feminine products		adult diapers

Cornerstone Soup Kitchen (submitted by Johanna Karbonic)

Another opportunity to help serve a meal at Cornerstone Soup Kitchen in Rockville happens on Tuesday, January 18. Anyone interested in volunteering should speak with me; we can meet at the church at 4 o'clock and carpool down. We'll return about 6:30.

Letter from Donkwe Donkwe (shared by Johanna Karbonic)

I recently received this letter from Jester Moyo in Donkwe Donkwe and wanted to share it with all of you. The mail service is slow – and they are slow in responding -, but they do get our

correspondence and enjoy hearing from us. Here is the latest communication:

Letter from Donkwe, Donkwe Primary School. P.O. Box 511, Kezi, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Thank you so much for your two letters which you wrote to us at Donkwe UCCSA Church including two Upper Rooms. We sometimes feel lonely when it comes to other circumstances like missing communication with friends but God's steadfast love stand still. In August this year we had a big conference which took almost five days. Seven regions gathered together. There we saw many activities including taking videos. O! God, help us to walk humbly but with courage. I like this sentence. Keep us in your prayers.

Your Sister in Christ. Jester Moyo

Ladies Aide Society

Monthly Meeting (submitted by Barbara Baugnet)

On Tuesday, January 11, all women of the church are invited to the monthly Ladies Aide meeting to be held at 1 PM in the church social room. The business meeting will include an annual review and officers/committees for 2011 will be elected. Pastor Graham will offer the devotions; hostesses are yet to be determined.



Prayer Shawl Ministry

Prayer Shawl Ministry (submitted by Lois Sharpless)

The Prayer Shawl Group will gather to knit/crochet in the social room for about thirty minutes following worship on January 23. Please join us.

Fundraising Suppers (submitted by Ruth Bruch)

Recap of December Supper

Attendance was down dramatically for this supper, but those who attended it did enjoy their dinner. Income was \$1296 and the

hams cost \$275.40. Proceeds from this supper benefit a Missions project or two.

January 8 Supper and Bake Sale

Our first fundraising supper in 2011 will be held on January 8 and we will serve roast pork, mashed potatoes, gravy, tossed salad, glazed carrots, breads/rolls, beverage and apple pie ala mode. A sign up sheet for help/donations is posted in the social room. Any way you can assist would be greatly appreciated. We will also run a bake sale this month, so please bake and contribute some simple cakes, pies, cookies, bars, breads, candies, etc. Proceeds from the monthly dinners (attended by mostly non-members of our church) help to defray our expenses from our operating budget.



As of this writing, we are still in need of:		
lettuce (20 heads)	grape tomatoes (10 pints)	cukes (12)
peppers (10)	\$ for carrots	baked breads
whole milk (2 gal)	homemade apple pies	servers
help on Fri AM and Saturday (to help peel veggies, bake pies, prepare salad fixings, etc)		
servers in kitchen and dining room		

This & That

- **Fellowship hosts** are needed. Anyone willing to provide a light snack following worship on any given Sunday is encouraged to sign up in the social room
- Board chairmen ending terms are reminded (per our Key Policy) to **turn in their church key** to Ruth in the office so that keys can be reassigned.

Authorities in China tighten grip on bishops

Anna Arco, Religion News Service December 8, 2010

Relations between China and the Vatican are in danger of disintegrating after authorities forced bishops loyal to the Pope to attend a meeting of the state-run Church.

Dozens of Chinese bishops were taken to Beijing against their will to take part in the National Congress of Chinese Catholic

Representatives to vote for new leaders of the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association and the Council of Chinese Bishops.

The latter group acts as China's bishops' conference but is state-imposed and is not in full communion with the Church. Pope Benedict XVI has said both groups have a purpose which is "incompatible with Catholic doctrine".

China's National Congress of Catholics has not met for four years because of opposition from bishops obedient to the Holy See.

Although a few bishops went willingly to the meeting, which took place at the beginning of the week, AsiaNews, a news agency which has sources on the ground, reported that many others suffered from forceful abductions. A number of bishops have also disappeared to avoid arrest and forcible transfer to the event.

Bishop Feng Xinmao of Hengshui, a city in the province of Hebei, was taken by a group of about 100 police officers and state agents who fought against priests and faithful who were trying to free him. The bishop, who had been held in isolation for some days previously, was rescued from police custody by the faithful before being re-arrested and taken to Beijing on Monday after a siege which lasted several hours.

Another bishop from the same region, Bishop Li Lianghui Cangzhou, has gone into hiding to avoid attending the Beijing meeting. The police threatened his diocese, saying that it would hunt the bishop "like a dangerous criminal" if he refused to give himself up.

During the Beijing meeting this week state-backed bishops were expected to vote on the national president of the Patriotic Association as well as the president of the official bishops' conference. The assembly represents the "sovereign body" of the official Church, in which bishops are only a minority among lay people and government officials who make ecclesial decisions. Elections are rigged and participants in the conference are told what to do and who to vote for in advance by the Patriotic Association assembly chairman Liu Bainian.

The action by the authorities came just days after Pope Benedict called for prayers for the Church in China, saying Chinese Catholics were "going through a particularly difficult time".

He said: "We ask the Blessed Virgin Mary, Help of Christians, to sustain all the Chinese bishops. We also entrust to the Virgin Mary all the Catholics of that beloved country, that, through her intercession, they may be able to live an authentic Christian life in communion with the universal church, contributing in this way also to the harmony and common good of their noble people."

Relations between the underground Church and the official church appeared to be improving until the end of last month when the state church went ahead with installing Fr Joseph Guo Jincai as Bishop of Chengde, also in Hebei province. Eight loyal bishops were forced to attend the ceremony while the Vatican condemned the action, saying that it constituted a “a painful wound upon ecclesial communion and a grave violation of Catholic discipline”. It was the first unsanctioned ordination since 2006 and represents a breach in ongoing negotiations in the uneasy relationship between the Vatican and the Communist regime.

Pope Benedict, in a 2007 letter to Chinese Catholics, indicated a willingness to negotiate with the state.

About our Members & Friends



Birthdays

Happy birthday greetings this month go to: Michele Bellafronte, Mae Chillson, Miriam Cohen, Erin Tishon, Karen Peck, Judy Peck, Deb Robidoux, Jimmy Graham

To others having a special day in January, we wish you the best. Anyone wanting to share a celebrations should contact Ruth in the office.

Congregational Church of Somersville

Vision Statement

We will be a faith-based church welcoming diversity, empowering the individual, growing in faith and doing God's work in the global community in unity and love.

Behavioral Covenant

- We will follow a process that includes unconditional listening and time to collect thought, enabling all individuals to comfortably express their opinions.
- Our actions and demeanor will support and empower all participants
- All opinions will be welcomed, reflectively considered and respected.
- Opinions will be expressed with humility, self-control, gentleness, and kindness.
- We will look for common ground as we search for consensus, and we will respect that consensus.
- We will affirm by our works and actions our common goal to serve God.

January 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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Congregational Church of Somersville
 22 Maple St., PO Box I, Somersville, CT 06072
 860-749-7741 860-749-5132 (fax)
 somcong@aol.com (email) www.somersvilleucc.org (web site)

Worship 10 AM

Congregational Church of Somersville 22 Maple St., PO Box I, Somersville, CT 06072 860-749-7741 860-749-5132 (fax) somcong@aol.com (email) www.somersvilleucc.org (web site)						1 New Year's Day
2 Communion	3	4 Evergreen Worship 11 AM AA 6:15-8:30 Deacons 7 PM	5 Bible Study 9:30-11:15 Choir 7 PM	6 Cabinet Agenda Requests Due	7 Supper Prep. & Pie Baking	8 Roast Pork Supper 5 & 6:15
9 De-Green the Church	10	11 Finance 12 PM Ladies Aide 1 PM AA 6:15-8:30	12 Bible Study 9:30-11:15 Choir 7 PM	13 Trustees 12 PM	14 Missions 2 PM	15
16 Cabinet Written Annual Reports Due	17	18 AA 6:15-8:30 Cornerstone 4-6:30	19 Bible Study 9:30-11:15 Choir 7 PM	20	21	22
23 Prayer Shawl Ministry - after worship	24 Spire Deadline	25 Blair Manor Worship 10:30 AM AA 6:15-8:30	26 Bible Study 9:30-11:15 Choir 7 PM	27	28	29 Pot Luck Supper & Annual Meeting 6 & 7 PM
30	31	the Rev. Graham Van Keuren, Pastor Kate Carlisle, Intern Ruth Bruch, Clerk/Church Administrator Ray Foster, Moderator Jason Stefanik, Organist/Choir Director Sydney Cohen, Treasurer Tom & Elaine Hancock, Webmasters				

Ice Skating Mammoth - Hidden Pictures for the Young at Heart

