

The Spire

Congregational Church of Somersville
United Church of Christ

July/August, 2011



Vacation Bible School Returns July 11-15

Join us for our *PandaMania* 2011 Vacation Bible School at the Congregational Church of Somersville, 22 Maple Street from 9 a.m. to noon on July 11-15. Kids ages 3-8 will join in a wonderful celebration of God's unconditional love. We'll learn Bible stories, sing songs, play games, make crafts, do science projects and share in tasty snacks, all the while learning about God's love for us and how we respond by loving God, loving others, and loving ourselves.



The cost is \$25 per child for the week, but that cost is fully refundable if the child attends all five days or is scheduled with the church in advance to be absent one or two of the five days. If your child or children can benefit from this great program, please call the church office at 860-749-7741 or email the church at somcong@aol.com. Space is limited, so reserve your spot early!

Gift cards to Michaels would be appreciated for this summer program. And, there are a number of snack items needed for the week. If you can contribute any, it would be greatly appreciated. A list is included in the Christian Education portion of this Spire.

Trip to Cloisters

Because we were not able to make our trip to the Cloisters Museum a month ago, a new date has been set - Saturday, August 6. Gallery and garden tours will be offered that day as will some family workshops. The trip is great for all ages and families. Speak with Graham by July 30th if interested.

From the Pastor

Dear Friends in Christ,

This summer I write to you thankful that our congregation has seen within itself the ability to strengthen the church through our most recent capital campaign. Though somewhat modest in size, this capital campaign comes on the heels of last year's capital campaign to fund the parking lot, so I know that this newest capital campaign is causing some of you to have to stretch your pennies.

Yet I know that the stewardship of this congregation is strong – and strengthening even more each year – and I fully believe this additional campaign this summer is necessary. The money we raise in this special campaign over the summer will be dedicated to a variety of projects that have been postponed over the years. They mostly include maintenance issues that, if ignored, will result in greater expenses for the church down the road. Capital campaign projects falling within this category include repairs to the wheelchair ramp and parking lot, exterior painting of the parsonage, and improving the gutters along the east side of the sanctuary. Other projects in the campaign, such as line striping of the paved parking lot and installing new carpeting in the church addition and Gowdy Room, will both improve the appearance of our facilities as well as make them safer to use since people will be able to see clearly marked lines when they park and walk without fear of tripping over loose and worn carpeting on stairwells. (The carpeting on the back stairwell to the Gowdy Room and in the Gowdy Room itself is in especially poor condition. Be careful if you ever walk those stairs before the carpeting is replaced!)



If you have not yet contributed to our 2011 summer capital campaign, please know that pledge cards are located in Wood Chapel just outside the rear doors of the sanctuary. Either Ruth or I will also be happy to give you a card as well. The Board of Trustees' goal is to have the funds for the campaign contributed to the church by the end of September, though we can continue to accept donations to the capital campaign through the end of the 2011 calendar year. Pledge cards and the financial contributions should go directly to our Treasurer, Syd Cohen, or be placed in the offering plate with the clear indication on the envelope that these monies are to be used for the 2011 summer capital campaign.

I thank you very much for your dedication to this church and the support many of you have already shown for this fund drive. I look forward to a quickly executed campaign and thank you in advance for your support of the ministries our facilities allow.

Faithfully yours,
Graham Van Keuren

Thanks to ..

- .. all who volunteered to take on “service opportunities” during June
- .. those who supported the strawberry supper
- .. all who supported the 2nd Mile Missions collections this month for Loaves & Fishes.
- .. the volunteers who assisted at Cornerstone this past month.
- .. the Sunday school children and teachers for a great Children’s Day program.
- .. Bobby Bourque for his painting jobs in the social room.
- .. Everett & Millie Morrill for the spare refrigerator.
- .. everyone who supported the Blacksmith Shoppe this spring.
- .. the choir for their dedication and ministry during the year.
- .. Nick Wood for continuing to mow the church/parsonage lawn and Dave Pinney for mowing the green.



Thanks from ..

Cindy Halloran ~ “Dear friends, Thank you for all the cards and prayers during my recent illness. The support shown to me and my family has meant a lot to all of us.”

Jason, Maya & Lauren Stefanik ~ Dear Shawl Ministry, Maya, Jason and I would like to thank you so much for saying prayers for us and also for making Maya the beautiful white shawl. It is very soft and pretty and has already kept her warm while we take walks. We appreciate it a lot. Thank you so much for your time and thoughts.”



From the Moderator (submitted by Ray Foster)

The Cabinet does not generally meet during the summer months; however, if anyone has any urgent business that needs to be brought up, please speak with me or Pastor Graham.

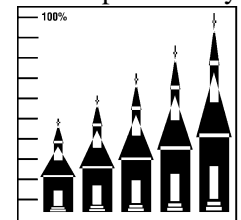
Property Capital Campaign

As you probably already know, our congregation met on June 19th following worship to hear a motion from our Finance Committee. The motion was to engage in a capital campaign in the amount of \$14,795 to pay for the following maintenance work:

- | | |
|---|--------|
| • Repair of the front wheelchair ramp | \$ 200 |
| • Crack-filling and other parking lot repairs | \$2800 |
| • Installation of gutters, front of church | \$2100 |
| • Parking lot striping and handicap signage | \$ 400 |
| • Carpeting in selected areas of the church | \$3100 |
| • Exterior painting of the parsonage | \$4850 |
| • Cost overage allowance | \$1345 |

Our church meetinghouse needs this maintenance work; however, these costs are not in the budget. In effect, each member of the congregation was being asked to take this on through gifts and pledges to cover the costs. When this motion was presented to the congregation, the Finance Committee had already received preliminary pledges of \$9,000. The motion was unanimously carried.

Gifts and pledges toward the remaining \$5,795 have already been received. If you have not done so yet, know that your pledge or gift is needed to cover these costs. You may call Pastor Graham or me for more information. Our numbers are in the church directory, or you may call Ruth at the church office, mornings, Tuesday thru Friday.



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

A replica of the pledge card can be found at the end of this issue. If you have not yet supported this work, please prayerfully consider how much you can give ~ then complete and return the card to the church to the attention of Sydney Cohen, treasurer.

Thank you, each one, for your generosity. On behalf of the Trustees, I am grateful for making it possible to complete this much needed maintenance.

Report of the Treasurer (submitted by Sydney Cohen)

	May 2011	Monthly Budget	YTD	Annual Budget
Pledges	\$ 7,511.00	\$ 6,737.50	\$38,594.00	\$ 80,850.00
Income	\$10,460.30	\$ 9,404.56	\$56,901.38	\$ 112,855
Expenses	\$9,276.00	\$10,494.41	\$60,035.10	\$ 125,933

Collections for May

Fund Raiser Chicken Cordon Bleu Dinner- 1,717.00- net income

Flow through Items- Income

Monthly Mission Giving-OGHS- 65.94- Subtotal- 572.94

OGHS -65.94- total 572.94

CWS Tolls & Blankets- 395.00

Heifer International Breakfast Collection- 283.14

Parking Lot Donations- 4,909.72- YTD – 5916.72

Flow through Items- Expense

Parking Lot Loan- 4,166.72- Total left on loan- 0.00

Missions- 323.63

As of June 27, 2011

Pledges-6,122.00

Income- 9,493.65

Expenses- 7,318.06

Fundraiser- Strawberry Supper net- 2,303.04



As we approach the half way mark of 2011, our total pledges are over halfway towards meeting our budget, but our expenses are slightly over. But we are keeping pretty close to our budget, which is a good thing. In May, missions disbursed 340.00 to NADA. In addition, our parking lot loan was paid off, thanks to a generous donor, (thank you again!). We have disbursed additional money for the shrubs around the parking lot and for the extra work done by Ken Anderson.

Collections have already started on our Capital Campaign for 2011. So far, we have collected 4600.00.



Missions Outreach (submitted by Geneva Farnham)



Hope your summer will be a great one – and that if you are around you will join us at the ice cream social on the Green on July 30 from 1-3 PM.

Just a reminder .. our 2nd mile mission for the upcoming month of September will be support Heifer Project international. We had a great response in 2010, so let's see if we can do even better this year. As you know, Heifer International provides financial assistance by way of micro-loans and provides farm animals to families to provide food for survival by assisting with breeding programs to aid in increasing their herds or flocks. Every state in the United States as well as countries throughout the world benefit from this program.

See you at the ice cream social.

Historian's Corner (submitted by Johanna Karbonic)

Who Am I?

I was born and lived in Georgia through my teenage years. I moved to Somers December 1953 after marrying a Somers resident. Although I went to church most of my life, I never became a member of a church until I joined the Congregational Church of Somersville in 1963 after the birth of my son. Because I did not belong to a church in Georgia, I was married in the parsonage of the church I went to. My husband was Episcopalian, but I felt the Episcopal Church was too conservative for me. Carlese, J. Francis, and Gertrude Wood encouraged me to come to the Congregational Church of Somersville. They would give me rides to church since I didn't learn to drive until I was 52 years old. My parents remained in Georgia and were never members of our church. Beside the numerous committees I



belonged to throughout my 48 years of membership, I was a Sunday school teacher working with Gertrude Wood, the Church Clerk for many years and now I am the scribe for Ladies Aide.

The wonderful people of this church and now especially Rev. Graham keep her coming to this church. Her favorite part of church would be the Sunday sermons and the Wednesday Bible Study.

Her fondest memories of the church were the 100th anniversary celebration when the Rev. Gordon Vought was minister (1968-1974). Everyone dressed up with fancy hats and period clothing. She read the anniversary hymn written by Mrs. D.D. Keeney in 1905. Dinner was in the fellowship hall downstairs. Rev. Paul Ross Lynn (1946-1951) attended. Another fond memory was Rev. Vought's love of children and the many trips that were taken with the Junior and Senior Pilgrim Fellowship, and also with members of the congregation.

When asked what she would like to see differently in this church she replied, "I would like to see greater financial support so we wouldn't always be scrambling for money. Good stewardship means taking care of what God has given me and leaving the world a better place for my children and my grandchildren."

She greatly admires Gertrude Wood and Barbara Abbe. Gertrude for all that she did for the church in the past and for Barbara who works so hard at the Blacksmith Shoppe.

Our mystery woman has been involved in many parts of the church. What would we do without her and her generous heart and many stories? If you can't recognize this woman, the answer is on the back page of the Spire.

Ladies Aide Society

The Ladies Aide will not meet during July or August; our next gathering will be on September 13th when we will go to lunch at Golden Corral in Springfield. All women are invited; we can carpool from the church at noon.

Prayer Shawl Ministry (submitted by Lois Sharpless)

The prayer shawl knitters won't meet again until the fall ... but in the meantime, keep knitting.

Music Notes



The summer months are now upon us and the choir is enjoying some well deserved time off. Anyone interested in presenting a special musical offering during the summer worship is encouraged to speak with Jason. And, everyone is encouraged to think about participating in choir when we reconvene in September.

Fundraising Suppers (submitted by Ruth Bruch)

Recap of June Supper

WOW!!! Reservations to be this very popular supper came flooding in right after midnight on June 4th and we were full by 10 AM Sunday, June 5. A lot wait list was started – and a few of those folks were pleasantly surprised when offered seats after some cancellations came in. In addition to two full sittings in the dining room, we put up about 40 take out orders, sold 17 quarts of berries and a number of loaves of strawberry bread. We took in \$2681.50 and spent \$308 for the hams. It was a great meal; everything ran smoothly and I thank everyone who contributed to the great success of this supper. Special thanks to Don Karbonic for donating 4 flats of berries.



Chicken Barbecue and Bake Sale on July 16

Our barbecuers (Nick Wood, Patrick Forbes & Dave Theobald) are all signed up and ready and raring to go with the chickens on the grill. Now all we need is the rest of the support and cast. We'll make the potato salad in the church kitchen (beginning at noon because of VBS) again this month so we're seeking cash donations toward the potatoes, mayo, onions and celery. We're also accepting cash donations toward seasonal vegetables (hopefully, something will be ready).



We'll be trying a new dessert this month – blueberry bread pudding; cash donations are welcome for ingredients for that, as well.

What else is needed?? # 10 cans of baked beans (available at Arnold's in East Longmeadow), help in the kitchen and dining areas during and after the supper, dishwashers, etc. A bake sale will be held during the dinner, so please bake if possible.

August 13 supper

The menu has not been finalized for the 2nd summer supper, but as soon as it is, a sign up sheet help/donations will be posted in the social room.

If you haven't assisted before, give it a try. You'd be warmly welcomed. Remember, many hands make light work. Your support at these dinners is appreciated and the proceeds (that come primarily from non-church folk) go toward our general operating expenses.



Nudity in religious art: godly or sinful?

June 27, 2011 Religion News Service/Ecumenical News International
by Peggy Fletcher Stack

The Rev. France Davis doesn't want any nude Adam-and-Eve figures at his Calvary Baptist Church — even if they were painted by Michelangelo himself. Davis is unequivocal in his view that there is nothing inspiring or redeeming about naked figures in religious art.

"Since we sinned, as it said in the book of Genesis, the human body has certain parts that are private," the pastor said. "We should keep them for more intimate settings like people's bedrooms." Davis is hardly alone in that view, reports the Salt Lake Tribune via Religion News Service.

From the prudish impulses of the Counter-Reformation, to the Vatican's use of the fig leaf as a genital cover-up a century later, to modern Christians objecting to a nude Christ sculpted out of chocolate, there have always been those who wanted to see everything clothed.

Scores of believers oppose any nakedness in art as blasphemous — even a glimpse of the Virgin Mary's breast as she nurses her baby son — or akin to pornography. For other Christians, though, the line between celebrating and eschewing artistic nudity is neither easy nor clear-cut. It depends, they say, on whether the artist intends to enlighten a biblical narrative or trigger a

sexual response, whether the nudity is theologically important or just there to shock.

It's also crucial to ask about a work's intended audience, setting and spirit. Pope Benedict XVI recently praised the use of nudity in the 16th-century masterpiece, "The Last Judgment," which dominates an entire wall behind the altar in the Sistine Chapel. "The bodies painted by Michelangelo are filled with light, life and splendor," the pope said in a news story from Deutsche Presse-Agentur. "He wanted to show that our bodies contain a mystery: within them the spirit is manifest."

The debate about nudity in religious art could merely be a question of time and distance.

"The world has changed around us so much; it's harder today to utilize nudity in a constructive and edifying way. The innocence of nakedness has been blasted out of the way or ratcheted up by sexual content in art," Mormon artist Brian Kershisnik said. "Maybe in 200 years people will look at paintings we have trouble with and they won't have the same issues."

When the Rev. Sam Wheatley was leading a congregation in Atlanta, the group decided to engage area artists by creating a gallery in the church foyer. The works coincided with Wheatley's sermons, and then a jury of their peers decided which ones to exhibit. The question immediately arose: What about pieces with nudity? Because it was a church space, the congregation didn't want any works that would cause problems for parents or people with more conservative sensitivities, Wheatley said.

Plus, the Bible commands believers not to make a "graven image" and cautions against using the body in ungodly ways. But the congregation also wanted to affirm the Christian teaching that "the body is something beautiful and, in Christ, God has taken on human form," said Wheatley, now pastor at Salt Lake City's New Song Presbyterian Church.

In the end, the Atlanta artists produced some nude figures, but none was overly graphic or stirred trouble. Great art, like great worship, points to something beyond this world that touches us, Wheatley said. "When that something is invoked, I am drawn into awe and I want to explore its source."

Too often, Wheatley said, Christians prefer art that is more like propaganda or illustration — pieces that tell believers what to think rather than pieces with the power to awaken thoughts and emotions within. That's partly why so many Christians have not been part of the arts community in very vibrant ways, Wheatley said, and why nudity has so often distracted Christians from seeing the artists' love for grand themes.

Kershnik has painted naked portrayals of Adam and Eve, without benefit of fig leaves or wandering vines. He has portrayed a disrobed Christ, though his body is not completely visible. He has shown Madonna and child, sucking on her breast. And, in a recent work, "Resurrecting," the Mormon artist depicted unclothed believers coming out of their graves.

"Although I have a firm conviction of the resurrection of the body, I have no such conviction of the resurrection of fabric," he said. "In practical terms, if your clothes survived for a couple hundred years, they wouldn't survive your standing up."

Peggy Fletcher Stack writes for The Salt Lake Tribune.

UCC Annual Meeting

Anyone interested in attending this fall annual meeting is encouraged to speak with Graham.



The One Hundred and Forty-fourth Fall Annual Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, Saturday, October 22, 2011 at First Congregational Church of Guilford, 122 Broad Street.

The Steering Committee has designed a daylong meeting beginning with registration at 8 AM. Registration, the agenda and other items will be available online in September. Among the highlights being planned are:

Friday, October 21st Authorized Ministers' Lunch and Program at the Crowne Plaza Cromwell, 100 Berlin Road, Cromwell, CT 06416, will be Friday, October 21st from noon to 4 pm. The program will include honoring those ordained 50 and 25 years. Registration will begin at 11:30.

Annual Meeting: The Rev. Charles Wildman will deliver the Interim Conference Minister's address on Saturday. Chuck will offer some insights he has gleaned about the transition of the Connecticut Conference. The Conference Minister Search Committee will be in conversation with delegates and visitors. They will be seeking issues, concerns, joys and ideas as they work to identify the Connecticut Conference profile and identity. Some time will be spent in reflection of who we are and who do we want to be.

Plenary & Business: There will be business conducted during this meeting. The 2012 Budget will be on the agenda for approval. The Living Waters Award will be presented to Marilyn Graham, Executive

Director of HOPE, Inc. and a member of the Mystic Congregational Church. There is a Resolution of Implementation to be considered, reports to be given and recognitions to be celebrated.

Youth Delegates will continue to be involved in the meetings this year as regular delegates.

Child Care will be available if requested. Forms for sign-up will be available in early September along with forms for registration, agenda items, and special needs.

About Our Members & Friends

Who Am I?

Geneva
Farnham



Directory Updates

Updated phone number for Tina Brzezinski is 860-890-0199



Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays are being celebrated this summer by: Gladys Atkinson (80+), David Abbe, Michael Hare, Genny Farnham, Nancy Pease (80+), Matthew Pinney, Diane Farnham, Harry Bergstrom (80+), Lois Sharpless, Serena Robidoux, Lissandra Torres, Abigail Tishon. And, Abigail Carriere, Graham Van Keuren, Emily Abbe, Joan Lange, Bryan Wood, Mareesa Forbes, Maria Ceppetelli, Dave Butler (80+), Harold Eastwood, Donna Pendleton & Madison Petkis.

Those celebrating anniversaries in July and August include: Don & Johanna Karbonic, Chris & Jody Renshaw, Ray & Jean Foster (51), Bill Moran & Ulysses Orduz, Bill & Nancy Van Keuren (50)

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.

Capital Campaign Pledge

**I/We pledge \$_____ toward
the summer 2011 property projects at
the Congregational Church of
Somersville.**

Signed:



July 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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 Summer Office Hours Ruth ~ Tues. - Fri. 8:15-11:15 Graham ~ Tues. - Fri. 1-5		1	2
3 Communion	4 Independence Day	5 Evergreen worship 11 AM AA 6:15-8:30	6 Bible Study 9:30-11:15	7	8	9
10	11 Vacation Bible School 9-12	12 Vacation Bible School 9-12 Finance 11:30 AA 6:15-8:30	13 Vacation Bible School 9-12	14 Vacation Bible School 9-12	15 Vacation Bible School 9-12 Supper Prep 12 PM Missions 1 PM	16 Chicken Barbecue & Bake Sale 5 & 6:15
17	18	19 AA 6:15-8:30	20 Bible Study 9:30-11:15	21	22	23
24 RSVP for Cloisters	25	26 Blair worship 10:30 AA 6:15-8:30	27 Bible Study 9:30-11:15	28	29	30 Ice Cream Social 1-3
31	the Rev. Graham Van Keuren, Pastor Ray Foster, Moderator Sydney Cohen, Treasurer Ruth Bruch, Office Administrator/Clerk Jason Stefanik, Organist/Choir Director					

August 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Evergreen worship 11 AM AA 6:15-8:30	3	4	5	6 Cloisters trip
7 Communion	8	9 AA 6:15-8:30	10	11	12 Supper Prep?	13 Fundraising Supper 5 & 6:15
14 Nominating - after worship	15	16 AA 6:15-8:30	17	18	19	20
21 Graham off through 9/3	22	23 Blair worship 10:30 AA 6:15-8:30	24	25	26	27
28 September Spire deadline	29	30 AA 6:15-8:30	31			

