



Crossroads

*News from South Congregational Church
United Church of Christ*

*45 Maple Street, Springfield, MA 01105
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*We are an inclusive community of faith; courageously following Christ;
serving our neighbors in love.*

January 2021



The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined. - Isaiah 9:2

From the Pastor

Dear South,

I write to you on the cusp of this New Year. In Christian calendars the new year actually begins in the season of Advent. We turn our calendars over then on that first Sunday of Advent, moving from “Year A” to “Year B” in the lectionary cycle of scriptures that we often follow. In this way, as we have been lighting the candles and praying the Howard Thurman prayer, *I will light candles of joy despite all sadness, candles of hope where despair keeps watch...* we have been beginning. We have been already in a process of ushering in this New Year.

We have been beginning our ministry together. As the new calendar year arrives, I look forward to deepening in to our life together.

Early in Covid, my hip started acting up and my ability to run - which I used to do quite regularly - was interrupted. I ran for physical well-being as well as mental well-being. Sweating is part of my spiritual practice! So, as the pandemic went on and my hip continued acting up, I decided to invest in a spin bike.

One of the spin instructors often says this refrain: *remember, you don't **have to** be here on this bike, you **get to** be here. You don't **have to** be doing this, you **get to** do this.* Usually, she says this in the midst of a particularly hard set of climbing a hill or going too gosh darn fast! But every time she says it something shifts in me - I move from struggle to gratitude.

As I think about the year to come with South, this is a useful frame for me and for us together; we don't *have to* be here, but we *get to* be here. We don't *have to* show up as church, but we *get to*. We don't *have to* grow and evolve and deepen, but we *get to*! What do we get to do? What do we want to do? Even if it seems hard, or scares us a little bit, what do we want to do together as this quirky, spirit-filled, small-but-big body called South?

Being in a “Designated Term Ministry”, rather than in a “Settled Ministry” there is a particular charge to me and us to **mutually and faithfully discern the viability, mission and future of South Congregational Church**. This is no small charge!

There are at least two dimensions to this process of discernment; one I think of as inner-work and the other as outer-work.

The inner work is about South's communication and organization systems.

The outer work is about South's relationships with the community beyond itself.

Inner work also speaks to the personal practices of reflection, prayer, transformation that we *get to* engage in as people on a journey of faith.

Outer work also speaks to the collective practices of service, justice and peace-making that we *get to* engage in as people seeking to live in the Spirit of Jesus.

Inner work and outer work are always in conversation with one another, always happening at the same time. At times, however, one work predominates, or calls for more of our attention.

The inner work of South is calling for more of our attention at this time. This is not to the exclusion of outer work and engagement, just a nuance of focus. More specifically, what I mean is that

understanding, articulating and, where needed, evolving the communication and organizational systems of South will be time and energy well spent and will help us in mutually discerning and living into the way forward.

This includes things like:

- Catching up to the current by-laws, which are the organizational map of our church. Maps can be very useful for describing where we are and guiding us in terms of where we can go. The current by-laws were an effort to describe a new reality in which South no longer had sufficient members to put together, for example, a 30-person Finance Committee, as the older by-laws required! No by-laws will perfectly or completely describe and guide a church, but South would be well served to live into the guidance of the current bylaws so that we can see ourselves better, make the changes we need and expand the welcome;
- As part of the above, reviewing what ministry teams do exist, asking after how they work or don't; letting some go, strengthening others, maybe creating others;
- Being able to articulate how we are organized and how we make decisions;
- Understanding our financial picture and mapping that out over time to help us prioritize and plan...

For many this sounds boring, and there will be stretches of it that are, but it is also like cultivating habits of eating generally well and exercising well; they are practices of care for the body and spirit and of preparation, so that we can be vital, agile and creative. And usually, it actually feels pretty good! Each of these moves require of each of us the deeper inner work of reflection, prayer and openness to transformation that we get to engage in as people of faith.

Again, inner and outer work are always in conversation; it is for the *outer* that we do the *inner work*, it is for spreading the love of God.

I am grateful to our Leadership Circle who is and will be central to this discernment process. I am grateful to the newly convened Resource Team (see separate note) who will also be a core part of this process. I am grateful to each of you who make South the quirky, Spirit-filled, small-but-big living body it is and can be. May our ministry together be life-giving.

Onward,

Rev. Lindsey

Thanks to the members of the newly convened Resource Team: Jill Hartnett, Treasurer, who functions as Chair of the Team, Janice Hills, Cathy Rossi, Ellen Gallagher, Polly Southworth, Dawn Fitzgerald

As described in the by-laws, The Resource Circle oversees the day-to-day finances to further the Church's mission and goals and provides financial reports to the congregation and Leadership Circle; develops and implements sound financial policies and procedures including periodic external audits; prepares an annual budget for review and approval of the congregation; oversees an Investment team which will determine the Church's investments subject to the Church's Investment Policy and Endowment Policy; recommends and oversees teams to manage the Church's property and insurance interest; facilitates stewardship and capital campaigns.

The Resource Team meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month.

Please Pray for

Beryl Kress in hospice care, Stella Boulware, Bruce Wright, Karen Kress, Sue Wood, Jodi Clements and her mom (Sue Wood's friends), Bert Montagna, Dan Myers, John Burris, Shirley McCreedy, Betty Eaton, Jean Steup, her family and her grandmother, Ruth Kilcoyne, Rev. Lindsey's father, Bob Peterson, Karen Buske, Merle Olson, Ginny Robbins, Julia and Don Russell, Gordon Dodge, Winfield Moore, Marjorie Munroe, Leila Cohen, Timmy Miller, Priscilla Price, Deborah Price, Silvia Walker, Julius Dixon, Jan McDonald, Tim Scussel, MaryAnn Scussel, Mike Wright, Rev. Louis Mitchell, Bob Dowd, Jeff Johnson, Jane Closson, Rubin Reyes, Bob Stack, Beverly Lynch, Silvio Vasquez and his family in Venezuela, Peter Nelson, Renee Silva, Pastor Clemmons, Anthony Wysocki, Roland Fenton, Irene Rappa, the Pharo Family, Joanne Henry, all those suffering with Covid-19 and all those who have lost their jobs.

From the Moderator

“Do not be conformed by this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” Romans 12:2

In this week between Christmas and New Year's, I am usually buzzing with energy. The kind of crazy energy likely a result from too many cookies and rich food over the last few days. I'm always off from work so I have time to tackle projects that have been left undone. Clearing out a cabinet. Reorganizing my closet. Driving my husband nuts with threats of clearing everything from the cellar that hasn't been touched in the last 6 months. I'm also prone to buying multiple calendars and planners. I just love the layouts and inspiration that come with these practical items. Each year, I plan to plan, to keep track of habits, meal planning, milestones etc. By June, I can't find them and I'm flying by the seat of my pants.

I'm NOT sure what's in the air **this** final week of the year- but, that energy is NOT present. Oh sure, I think, there are many obvious reasons for why it may be absent given the year we've been through. I've deleted all incoming email that speaks to “*New Year, New You*” sentiments. But, this is disquieting for me. I like personal growth stuff. I like business. It makes me feel productive. *“Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts”*. Proverbs 4:23

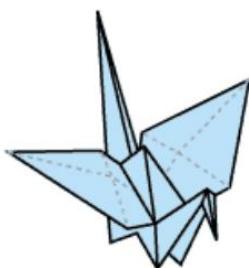
I'm uncomfortable to be observing that I can swing between interests rather abruptly, diving deeply into that which captures my imagination only to abandon it a few weeks later. Perhaps, this is why I am attracted to both the “tidiness” and “inspiration” of planners and calendars. They represent systems and structure that *should* be appropriate. If you know anything about the Enneagram, this description often is associated with those identified as an Enneagram 7 – The ENTHUSIAST: “The Busy, Variety-Seeking Type: Spontaneous, Versatile, Acquisitive and Scattered”. (enneagramsinstitute.com) Repeated results from efforts to figure out my type point to another number – that of 3, the ACHIEVER: “The Success-Oriented, Pragmatic type: Adaptable, Excelling, Driven and Image Conscious”. HMMMMMM. I'm some of both of these types.

Since I learned about origami at the age of 12, the act of folding paper has always soothed me. It's tactile. It's creative. It's grounding. And, it's simple, almost like breathing. Muscle memory allows me to fold familiar forms without looking. I have kept a collection of origami paper forever and add to it frequently. And, thankfully, I have a FOCUS for my folding and that is the project started for South

based on our 2020 Stewardship increases. I currently have 599 paper cranes in my possession. That represents ~ 10% of the total increase of \$5995. I have been imagining what almost 6000 cranes might look like “installed” somewhere at South. Do they draw the eye up, sweeping among the wooden beams in the Sanctuary ceiling? Do they hang from the upper balcony in long, colorful strands that celebrate our diversity? Or, do we string them across the Parish Hall ceiling, like the peace flags that once were hung there? It’s all a big puzzle and one I’m going to need help with. And, I’ll need help folding if we are to get to 5995.

For now, in the liminal space between the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021, I fold. And like a rosary of sorts, I use each fold to quiet my mind and pray about the jagged edges I am experiencing. If this does reflect movement of the Holy Spirit, I just wish it would hurry up and give me a CLEAR sign of what it wants so I could go about scheduling the work around bringing whatever IT IS into the world while I still know where my new planner is!

My hope is that 2021 does bring about a renewal of our minds and a widening of an already deep faith. For we have traversed a challenging landscape and find ourselves blessed to be in loving community with each other. How will God continue to fold us into HIS plan for salvation in the life of South’s greater community? - *Kim*



JANUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE (See instructions below for joining Zoom worship services)

January 3 (Epiphany/Communion): Zoom worship at 10 a.m. with Rev. Janet Burdewik

January 10 (Baptism of Christ): Zoom worship at 10 a.m. with Rev. Lindsey Peterson

January 17 (MLK Sunday): Zoom worship at 10 a.m. with Rev. Lindsey Peterson

January 24: Zoom worship at 10 a.m. with Rev. Lindsey Peterson

January 31: Zoom worship at 10 a.m. with Rev. Lindsey Peterson

To access Sunday Zoom worship: from your phone, dial **1-929-205-6099**. At the prompt, enter access code 975 811 240 followed by the # key. Then enter the password: 041663 and the # key again. From your computer, tablet or smart phone, log on to **zoom.us**. Click on “join a meeting” and enter the access code and password.

Tuesday night Bible studies at 7 p.m.: Use the Sunday worship access code and password above.

Zoom Bible Studies!

Join us for Tuesday night Bible studies at 7 p.m. Use the Sunday worship access code and password. Here is the schedule:

- January 5 – Mark 1:4-11 (led by Larry Picard)
- January 12 – John 1:43-51 (led by Polly Southworth)
- January 19 – Mark 1:14-20 (led by Betty Jack)
- January 26 – Mark 1: 21-28 (led by Elliott Stratton)

A Condensed January Calendar

- Sundays at 10 a.m. – Zoom worship (see worship schedule for login information)
- Tuesdays at 7 p.m. – Zoom Bible Study (use the Sunday worship login)
- Wednesday, January 6 at 7 p.m. – Leadership Circle
- January 8 & 26 at 10:30 a.m. – South Church Cooks
- Every day except Wednesday – Loaves & Fishes at noon & 5 p.m.

Happy January Birthday!



1 Adam MacRae	1 Muyi Ojo	6 Marjorie Munroe	
9 Kathie Giroux	18 George David	22 Sylvia Walker	22 Geselle Hazel-Mims
	25 Carin Impionbato	29 Leroy Moser	

Director of Music

Once again, a year has flown by, even in spite of the unforeseen circumstances 2020 brought with it. If you told me a year ago that I would present two major concerts by sitting in my home office space in my slippers and pressing keys on my computer I would certainly not have believed you. Nor would I have believed that I would go an entire year without seeing many of you in person. What may be the biggest surprise of all is that we as a congregation have come through this time of separation fairly intact. If you had told me last January what the rest of the year would be like and asked me to make a prediction about our prospects of survival as a church, I may have been too pessimistic. Isn't it wonderful that I would have been wrong?

In my own defense, my pessimism might have been based on the understanding that we were going to be depending almost exclusively on technology to be together and share in our worship and community. Even in my early 60s I have passed the stage where learning new ways to do things on a computer or other device is fun and intriguing. Now it's just another annoying obstacle I have to overcome when I'd rather take a nap. Knowing that many of you are of an even finer vintage than I am, I could only imagine that connecting to your church community electronically would be too frustrating to bother with.

But we connected anyway, didn't we? We worshipped together, we studied the Bible, we met just to check in on each other, we met to keep the church running (including welcoming Rev. Lindsey to our midst) and we met to experience some fun in a musical way. Not only did you log in to listen, but you also became part of the experience by lending your voices to our South Church Musical Christmas Card! For those of you who haven't seen it, here is a link: <https://youtu.be/xw2MomJD6Ik>.

I'm not going to make any predictions about our "return to normalcy" post-vaccination. The process will not be quick and I want to be sure that you know that meeting again in the South Church sanctuary may not be what you remember, at least at first. It is fairly likely that the choir will not come back right away, and how much congregational singing is done will have to be decided based on how many of us have been vaccinated and what the effect turns out to be. And, we will likely continue to depend on technology so as to include those who don't feel confident to be with others physically, and that will have an impact on how, and possibly where in the building we meet.

I want to take a left turn here for a moment and change topics. I was in the fifth grade when my mother decided we would change churches and start attending worship at Old First on Court Square. I became active right away in the Sunday School and especially the youth groups, and when I started to show some musical aptitude, Charlie Page was a model for the kind of musician I would eventually



become. I took organ lessons with him for a short time but I would not actually start playing the organ in a church setting until I was almost 30. Nevertheless, he was a major part of my early musical development, and I learned a great deal about church music from him during my senior year of high school when I starting singing in the Old First choir. Over 30 years later, he would be the one to encourage me to apply to fill the position here at South Church. Charlie left our midst recently at the age of 83, after a long, distinguished career as a musical leader both in his church and in the greater Springfield community. He will be missed and remembered by many for some time to come.

And in his honor, we move forward! I look forward to continuing to share music with you in 2021, however that will happen! Happy New Year! - *Larry*

Hymn texts for January 3 & 10:

January 3 - HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING (JESUS, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD)

**Hark! The herald angels sing, Jesus, the light of the world;
Glory to the Christ-child bring, Jesus, the light of the world.
We will follow the light, beautiful light,
Come where the dewdrops of mercy are bright,
Shine all around us by day and by night, Jesus, the light of the world.**

**Hail the Bearer of God's peace! Jesus, the light of the world;
Hail, the Sun of righteousness! Jesus, the light of the world.
We will follow the light, beautiful light,
Come where the dewdrops of mercy are bright,
Shine all around us by day and by night, Jesus, the light of the world.**

January 10 - SPIRIT OF THE LIVING GOD

**Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me;
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me;
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.**

**SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
45 MAPLE STREET
SPRINGFIELD, MA 01105**

Rev. Lindsey Peterson	Designated Term Minister
Larry Picard	Director of Music Ministries
Jacqueline Fredenburgh	Office Manager
Cynthia Lage	Bookkeeper
Jared Spencer	Custodian
Polly Southworth	Sunday School Superintendent

Crossroads is the newsletter of South Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, in Springfield, Massachusetts. Stories and items of Church interest are welcome and are due by the 20th of the month for the next month's issue. Submissions should be sent to Larry Picard at lpicard@sococh.org or by post to his attention at the church address.

*South Congregational Church UCC www.sococh.org
A Jesus-centered, Open & Affirming Community*

**God is still
speaking,** 