



Crossroads

*News from South Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
45 Maple Street, Springfield, MA 01105
(413) 732-0117 www.sococh.org*

*We are an inclusive community of faith; courageously following Christ;
serving our neighbors in love.*

August 2021



Maple

H
i
g
h

S
t



Street



**South
Church
at a
Cross-
roads**



From the Pastor

Dear South,

I didn't realize how much I missed being among people in body, being gathered as church, with you.

I had gotten comfortable in the ability to rise later than usual for Sunday worship when all I had to do was Zoom from home. I liked not having to drive anywhere.

I really liked that I could see your faces and you could see mine and each other's in our Zoom squares; there is a strange intimacy to that format which does not exist when we are in the sanctuary space all facing one direction, and me facing toward you.

It was and will be a lift to get the sound and video set up running well for our in-person plus Zoom plus FB live stream Sunday morning worship. I have questioned whether it is worth it.

I didn't realize how much I missed being gathered in body with you, Church, until after this Sunday's worship.

What was it about this Sunday's worship that did it? First, a brief detour:

"Crossroads" is the name of this newsletter. It was renamed "Crossroads" from "The Record" in September 1995. In the inaugural episode of Crossroads, Rev. Peter Heinrichs writes, "We find ourselves at a crossroads here at South Church...We gather at the crossroads of Maple and High Streets where we meet God and where together we are sent back into the world. The Crossroads logo indicates the place where the cross intersects the world...It is through the cross and our witness that the world might experience the power of love alive."



What I felt in body on Sunday is how we are at a crossroads. Clearly being in a crossroads space is not a new reality. Intellectually, I knew this before Sunday.

I knew that we, South, are at a crossroads; that we, Church, are at a crossroads, that we, the United States, and really the global we are at a crossroads.

The crossroads is about the home we are making in the future generations. It is the questions of what kind of home are we making for and with and in the future generations, and are we being good ancestors?

Intellectually, I knew before this past Sunday that we are in this crossroads place; but what I felt in body this past Sunday was the reemergence of life-force.

What I felt was the presence of an energy coming up from within me and from within our gathering - sacred wellspring energy. It is this kind of energy which is called for in these crossroads times. It is this kind of energy which is needed for the shifted consciousness, changed behaviors, and ways of organizing that will yield a possible future for the generations to come.

I do not pretend that once present the energy never subsides, but that it showed itself in and through our gathering to me is a great source of promise.

Promise for what?

Promise, hope, a sense of possibility that *even though* we as a congregation are small, that *even though* we as a congregation lean toward the elder side of the age spectrum; that *even though* we are both burdened and blessed by a massive and demanding building and significant endowment; that *even though* I question daily whether I am ready to do this change work, that in spite of all the even-thoughs, this life-force exists and if we let it, will make itself known through us, South Church.

As the sky rained ash yesterday, carried in as a cloud from the Oregon fires some 3,000 miles away, any notion that we are not across time and space inextricably connected fell away.



As we emerge from this long Covid season, simultaneously recognizing that Covid is still among us and in fact cases are rising, I pray that we gather some of the sadnesses of this long year; the loneliness, the loss of beloveds, the lackluster feelings, the deep fear of dying ourselves, the recognitions that the world is increasingly complex and we feel increasingly unsure of our place in it; I pray that we gather these realities and bless them into the renewing power of God.

I pray that we are blessed by the presence of Spirit's life-force energy coming up from within us and from within our gathering - sacred wellspring energy - and that because we have known its absence, we so fully delight in its presence and let it lead the way.

In Christ,

Rev. Lindsey

AUGUST WORSHIP SCHEDULE (See instructions below for joining the worship on Zoom.)

August 1 (Communion): Worship in the Parish Hall at 10 a.m. with Rev. Lindsey Peterson

August 8: Worship in the Parish Hall at 10 a.m. with Rev. Lindsey Peterson

August 15: Worship in the Parish Hall at 10 a.m. with Rev. Lindsey Peterson.

August 22: Worship in the Parish Hall at 10 a.m. with Rev. Lindsey Peterson.

August 29: Worship in the Parish Hall at 10 a.m. with Rev. Lindsey Peterson.

To access the 10 a.m. Sunday worship by Zoom: 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.

Please Pray for

Bruce Wright, Karen Kress, Peter and Margie Nelson, Raj Ramaswamy, Stella Boulware, Sue Wood's friends, Jodi Clements and her mom, Beth J., Kastle and Cynthia, Sue Wood's cousin, Diane O'Hara, Bert Montagna, Dan Myers, John Burris, Shirley McCready, Betty Eaton, Jean Steup, her family and her grandmother, Ruth Kilcoyne, Rev. Lindsey's father, Bob Peterson, Karen Buske, Merle Olson, Ginny Robbins, Gordon Dodge, Winfield Moore, Marjorie Munroe, Leila Cohen, Timmy Miller, Priscilla Price, Deborah Price, Silvia Walker, Julius Dixon, Jan McDonald, Mike Wright, Rev. Louis Mitchell, Jeff Johnson, Jane Closson, Rubin Reyes, Bob Stack, Beverly Lynch, Silvio Vasquez and his family in Venezuela, Renee Silva, Pastor Clemmons, Anthony Wysocki, Roland Fenton, Irene Rappa, the Pharo Family, Simone Normand, Joanne Henry, all those suffering with Covid-19.

If you would like to be added or removed from the Prayer List, please reach out to Jackie at: secretary@sococh.org or call/text her at: 413-654-8086

Words of Inspiration from Nick Lentino

This Sunday, during our July 18 worship service, we felt a special joy because most of the congregation attended our church in person. It was another milestone in the pandemic. I was thinking about the question Rev. Lindsey asked us about our thoughts about Covid 19 restrictions we held during the year.

The bible tells us God knows the individual worries we all face. Bad things happen in our world and the pandemic is one of them. Almost 700,000 people have died from Covid 19 in the United States. There were 34 million cases and the life of everyone changed.

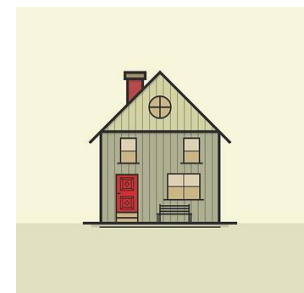
I think some positive things also happened to many people. My mother was a young teenager in Italy and her father died at age 35 from the 1918 Spanish flu leaving a wife and three teenage daughters. My mother was able to come to America at the age of 16 by herself with only a second cousin as a relative in the United States. She married and had 3 children. One of her sisters somehow ended up in France, the other stayed in Italy with her mother.

In the United States everyone's life changed somehow during this pandemic. Many worked from home and discovered their home, their backyard and the joys they brought. Many found a new interest in cooking, baking and gardening. We missed seeing our families and friends, but they made us realize how much they meant to us.

We missed worshiping in our beloved church building and visiting with our church family. But then, we had technology that most of us did not know existed and it brought relatives, friends, church services and other events to us.

The nation took the time to generously show our appreciation of frontline care givers.

Yes, the pandemic was sad and terrible. However, somehow some positive things have become part of our everyday life that did not exist before.

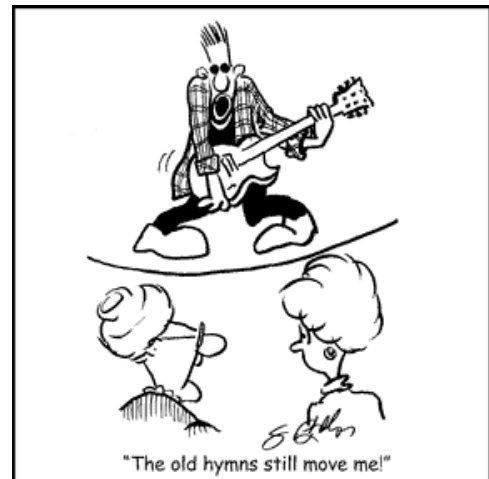


Director of Music

It seems every year around this time I struggle for something to write about in this space. In mid-summer there are no musical programs happening and planning for fall events is not quite at the stage where publicity is appropriate. This fall is particularly uncertain as we wait nervously to see how the pandemic continues to play out. Can we have live music yet? Is it safe for a choir to sing together again, even if all members are vaccinated? The news of late has not been encouraging.

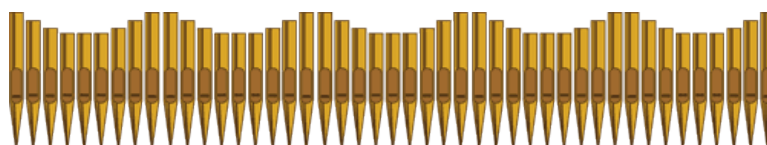
So, I'm taking a cue from Rev. Lindsey. If you read her message earlier in this issue, you know she talks about being at a crossroads. For me, that begs the question, do we continue to do "church" as we have for so many years, or do we start looking at some "edgy" alternatives to worship that bring us a new relevancy in the 21st century. Regarding music in church, some say it has to become more contemporary in sound to attract new people. Others say our wonderful professional choir is enough to attract new people. I have to ask – is it really about attracting new people to us? Or should we be about bringing the Good News of Christ out to the people, through music as well as the spoken word?

Before you organize riots in the streets against me, let me tell you that I'm not talking about leaving the building and standing on Main Street yelling and singing the gospel to people as large trucks roll by. I'm not even talking about leaving the building in the first place. The question I'm posing is, who is out there seeking spiritual nourishment and how do we reach them? Several generations now have come into adulthood with very different experiences of church or no experience at all. They don't know our traditional hymns and they may or may not relate to organ music or choir singing. Their entire experience of music may have been exclusively from what they have heard on the radio or online streaming services.



So, my challenge is to bring the Good News to them in a way that is meaningful to them. That means trying some new ways, of course, and this fall will be a time to do that. Don't panic now, we're not doing away with our choir. They will continue to sing on the first and third Sundays of each month for October, November and December. On the second Sundays we will reach out to Springfield's ever-growing Latinx community as a smaller ensemble leads us in a somewhat bilingual worship, that will include singing hymns and listening to scripture in English and Spanish. On the fourth Sundays, we will continue a practice that was begun this past year – Creative Calling Worship, which will feature guest musical artists. The occasional fifth Sundays will feature our resident trio, Muse 3.1.

Will these attempts at new worship formats turn South Church into a mecca of spirituality in Springfield? Probably not right away, and it may be that we will continue to try more new ideas until we get it right. With God leading us forward, we may be clumsy at first, but we learn from our missteps. South Church has had a long history of great music, and I predict it will continue to do so for many years to come. – *Larry*



A Condensed August Calendar

- Sundays at 10 a.m. – Worship and Nursery Care in the Parish Hall. Service is accessible via Zoom or Facebook Live.
- Mondays at 10 a.m. – Prayer Shawl in the Guild Room
- Mondays at 4 p.m. – Quilting Group in the Music Lounge
- Tuesdays at 7 p.m. – Zoom Bible Study (use the Sunday worship login)
- Wednesday, August 4 & 18 at 7 p.m. – Leadership Circle
- August 13 & 31 at 10:30 a.m. – South Church Cooks
- Every day except Wednesday – Loaves & Fishes at noon & 5 p.m.

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:

- August 3 – John 6:35, 41-51 (led by Larry Picard)
- August 10 – John 6:51-58 (led by Betty Jack)
- August 17 – John 6:56-59 (led by Elliott Stratton)
- August 24 – Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23 (led by Polly Southworth)
- August 31 – Mark 7:24-37 (led by Larry Picard)

Benevolence Team Opportunity

Would you like to be a part of the decision-making Team which gives grants to local agencies? If so, the Benevolence Team needs you! Our first meeting will be in September immediately after the service. Each team member will select an agency which they will contact by phone, e-mail or in person and write a single paragraph summary which explains how the grant money will be used. We will meet again in November to share our findings and in February to allocate the grant money. If you are interested in joining the Benevolence Team please e-mail Nancy Montagna at nancy31053@hotmail.com, or call 413-589-0743 or speak with her after the service.

Happy August Birthday!



- 1 Jace Stewart-O'Brien
- 8 Kimberly Figueroa
- 20 Carl Thormeyer
- 21 Julia Russell
- 21 Dan Myers
- 24 Jordan Caro Figueroa
- 24 Mya Caro Figueroa
- 25 Christopher Ferrari
- 28 Diana Lyman
- 29 John Cook

The Elusive Labyrinth Roadtrips



Where have we seen this picture before? Oh wait, it was last month in this very same newsletter. Plans were announced to do a local road trip to experience a few outdoor labyrinths for those interested. We were to visit the one at Baystate Medical Center after church on July 18, but rain was in the forecast, so we postponed it for a week. On July 25 it was already raining as the morning worship service ended. There is already rain in the forecast for

Sunday, August 1. But don't give up hope! Pray for sunnier Sundays! Meanwhile, more information will be coming about when we can experience the Baystate venue. Meanwhile, we have a firm appointment to walk the Labyrinth at Mount Marie in Holyoke. We will venture up there on Sunday, August 15, for a 1 p.m. meeting with Sister Lorraine Villemaire, who will talk to us about labyrinths and how to get the best experience.

For that event we can go as a group. Rides will be available for those who need them, and since there may be a length of time between the worship service and our appointment, we can talk about doing a lunch stop somewhere along the way.

Meanwhile, we may have to see if Baystate has to limit visitors to the hospital, depending on whether the pandemic has surged again. If we are able to go, smaller groups may be called for, so we will arrange a couple of trips.

Contact Larry if you need to know anything else: lpicard@sococh.org.

Quotes found in the latest Joyful Noiseletter:

"I do not want peace which passeth understanding. I want the understanding which bringeth peace." – Helen Keller

"It is no longer good enough to cry 'peace.' We must act peace, live peace, and live in peace." – Native American proverb

"Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies." – Nelson Mandela

"Pleasure brightens briefly, like a match; "Happiness flickers longer, like a candle; "Joy glows constantly, like an eternal flame." – William Arthur Ward

"You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give." – Kahlil Gibran

**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 Administrator

Jared Spencer

Custodian and Property Manager

Cynthia Lage

Bookkeeper

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,**

