



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.*

December 2021



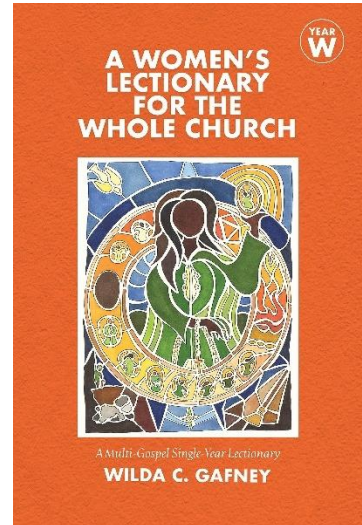
The star of Bethlehem beckons us forward through Advent to the Birth of Jesus the Christ.

From the Pastor

A Women's Lectionary for the Whole Church by Dr. Wilda C. Gafney

Beginning in Advent this year we will be using as our Sunday scripture selection guide *A Women's Lectionary for the Whole Church* by Dr. Wilda Gafney. Dr. Gafney has compiled and written this lectionary to center scriptures focusing on women in our understanding of the stories of God. As she writes in the preface to the Lectionary:

“What would it look like if women built a lectionary focusing on women's stories? What does it look like to tell the good news through the stories of women who are often on the margins of scripture and often set up to represent bad news? How would a lectionary centering women's stories, chosen with womanist and feminist commitments in mind, frame the presentation of the scriptures for proclamation and teaching?



The scriptures are androcentric, meaning, male-focused, as is the lectionary that is dependent upon them. As a result, many congregants know only the biblical men's stories told in the Sunday lectionary read in their churches. A more expansive, more inclusive lectionary will remedy that by introducing readers and hearers of scripture to “women's stories” in the scriptures.

These “women's stories” are not for women only. When engaged with curiosity and faithfulness, they can expand our understanding of how the Divine moves in the world and through whom. This is a gift of scholarship and hope that Dr. Gafney has offered the church.

- *Rev. Lindsey*

Rev. Lindsey Peterson Covenant Ceremony

Sunday, December 5, 2021 at 4pm
South Church Sanctuary

We will join as the South Church community with the Hampden Association of the United Church of Christ, the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ, and community partners in ministry to celebrate and confirm our covenant with Rev. Lindsey Peterson as our Designated Term Minister.

From the Moderator

The Leadership team and I hope that you had a nice Thanksgiving. We were very happy to provide 33 Thanksgiving dinners to individuals and small gatherings. The number of bags of food that were assembled in front of the Sanctuary on Sunday, November 21, was very impressive. Thank you all.

We have a lot of wonderful things happening in December at South Church. The Sanctuary was beautifully decorated for Advent Sunday of Hope.

The installation of our Designated Term Minister, Rev. Lindsey Peterson is on Sunday, December 5, at 4:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary.

We have our wonderful Christmas Eve service on Friday, December 24 at 4:30 p.m. For me personally, that is my Christmas. I think we should all make an effort to bring our entire family, friends, and neighbors. I am sure they will be grateful they attended.

On Sunday the 26th, it will be a Zoom only service, not in person. Did you get pajamas as a Christmas gift?

May you experience the joy of the birth of Jesus, Our Savior.

Merry Christmas! - *Nick*



Please Pray for

Jo Smith, Tanya Dudley, John Burris, Karen Buske, Dan Myers, Carol Stewart, Bruce Wright, Karen Kress, Peter and Margie Nelson, Raj Ramaswamy, Stella Boulware, Oboya Omot, Sue Wood's friends, Jodi Clements and her mom, Kastle and Cynthia, Sue Wood's cousin, Diane O'Hara, Bert Montagna, Shirley McCready, Betty Eaton, Jean Steup, her family and her grandmother, Ruth Kilcoyne, Rev. Lindsey's father, Bob Peterson, 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, Ruben 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

Director of Music

Advent is here, a period of hope, anticipation and joy that culminates in Christmas. Oops, did I just overstate the obvious? Well, maybe not – there are plenty of folks out there who think Christmas starts the day after Thanksgiving. Or maybe the day after Halloween. But it's interesting, isn't it? I think of Christmas as a day that begins on the night before, or the "eve," as we call it, and the period of waiting that fills up most of December is just that – the coming, or the Advent. But don't we all have something in common? The folks who sing or listen to Christmas carols on December 5 are practicing their own style of waiting for something good. The shoppers who have all of their presents bought by the end of August are also full of anticipation. The Christmas cookies, the cards, the parties – they're all there to build up the excitement for the big day. No matter who you are, nobody can ignore the fact that the day exists because we celebrate the birth of a baby who will change the world, and give us hope in spite of our fears.

This first full week of Advent I had my own little brush with fear. On Tuesday morning I woke up with a very mild sore throat. It went away by lunchtime and I forgot about it. On Wednesday morning it was back again, and by lunchtime I felt feverish. Fearing it might be more than a cold, I took myself off to the Covid testing site, and after being tested I drove back to my house and stayed there to quarantine and wait for the results. Well, I quarantined for 36 hours waiting for those results, which finally came back negative. Heavy sigh. It was just a cold.

But, for 36 hours I obsessed over what I would do if I actually had Covid. I wasn't worried about getting terribly sick since I've been vaccinated and boosted, but I didn't know how I would handle a period of quarantine for up to two weeks. Rev. Lindsey's installation service happens Sunday. I was hired to play the Amherst College vespers service. I was about to prepare some sort of Holiday concert...live? Zoom? Everything was so uncertain...and there were social events with friends and family – why, this could have ruined the season for me!

Well, here I am, a little congested and fatigued, but able to wander about in the world, wearing a mask, of course. There will be a holiday concert and a Christmas Eve service and I don't have to quarantine. I still have anxiety about being ready for Christmas, but I remember my first Christmas here at South Church, almost 15 years ago. I had practiced and rehearsed with the choir and a brass group and prepared a veritable concert of Christmas music. I was a nervous wreck, until the sermon was delivered by Rev. Peter Heinrichs. I couldn't tell you everything he said, I just remember one sentence, which I paraphrase here. "It doesn't matter if you're ready for Christmas or not," he proclaimed. "It comes anyway." At that moment I nearly cried with relief and joy.

It seems like every month I tell you that I don't know what will happen with music at South Church because the virus precludes the kind of singing we used to have here. Thanks to Deltas and Omicrons, this month is no different. I don't yet know if we can have a full choir after the New Year, or sing more hymns, or have a jazz band again. I just know that church will continue as it has for 2,000 years. At Christmas we still celebrate the birth of Christ, during Lent we journey with Christ, on Good Friday we suffer with Christ and on Easter we rejoice in Christ's resurrection. Those events will happen whether or not we have great singing and instrumental ensembles, or even if

we're not together at the church, but waving to each other on computer screens. We will be here for each other as we always have been, comforting, feeding, encouraging, praying – that's the joy of Christmas.

Okay, it also doesn't hurt to have a lot of music and singing, does it? That will come, too. I promise.

May your Advent be full of hope, peace, love and joy, and may Christmas bring you music and laughter.

- *Larry*



DECEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE (Worship is accessible remotely via Zoom Live and YouTube)

December 5 (Advent 2): Worship in the Sanctuary at 10 a.m. with Rev. Janet Burdewik.

December 5 (Rev. Lindsey's installation): Worship and installation in the Sanctuary at **4 p.m.**

December 12 (Advent 3/Communion): Worship in the Sanctuary at 10 a.m. with Rev. Lindsey Peterson.

December 19 (Advent 4): Worship in the Sanctuary at 10 a.m. with Rev. Lindsey Peterson.

December 24 (Christmas Eve): Worship in the Sanctuary at **4:30 p.m.**

December 26: Worship on Zoom at 10 a.m. with Rev. Lindsey Peterson.

Zoom: Call-in number: 1-929-205-6099; MTG: 975 811 240; Password: 041663

YouTube: type bit.ly/SouthonMaple in your browser, for the South Church YouTube channel.

Advent Wednesdays - Reflection and Connection - On Zoom
December 8, 15 & 22 - 7:00-8:00 pm

Rev. Lindsey will lead this space for reflection and connection weekly on Zoom during Advent. Zoom Access (same as worship): mtg: 975 811 240 / pw: 041663 / call in: 1-929-205-6099



Plan to have a candle nearby that you can light each week. We will open the space with music, candle lighting and prayer. We will use the UCC Advent Devotional as a guide for reflection. The UCC Advent Devotional has been delayed getting to us in the shipping backlog! We will share it with you asap. In the meantime, a printed copy of this first week of devotionals will be available during worship on Sunday, December 5.

A Condensed December Calendar

- Sundays at 10 a.m. – Worship and Nursery Care. Service in the sanctuary is accessible via Zoom or YouTube.
- Sunday, December 5 at 4 p.m. – Installation service of Rev. Lindsey Peterson in the sanctuary
- Wednesday, December 8, 15 & 22 at 7 p.m. – Zoom Advent Service (see above)
- Friday, December 24 at 4:30 p.m. – Christmas Eve worship in the sanctuary
- Mondays at 10 a.m. – Prayer Shawl Group in the Guild Room
- Mondays at 4 p.m. – Quilting Group in the Music Lounge
- December 10 & 28 at 10:30 a.m. – South Church Cooks
- Every day except Wednesday – Loaves & Fishes at noon & 5 p.m.

Thanks for the goodies...

Thanks to all who contributed to our Pot Luck Dessert Table. It looked like everyone had a good time selecting "no calorie" desserts to enjoy during Thanksgiving week. The unselected desserts were donated to Open Pantry for their guests to enjoy.

- *Nancy, Betty, Deborah and Jan*



News of the congregation

Many of you have asked about **Josephine (Jo) Smith**, our 95 year-old member who entered the hospital shortly after moving from her home to Bluebird Estates senior living in East Longmeadow. After leaving the hospital she had a period of rehabilitation at Heritage East in Agawam, and she is now living at Ruth's House in Longmeadow. Her daughter, Pam, advises us that she should probably not have visitors for now, but if you wish to send a card, the address is Ruth's House, 780 Converse Street, Longmeadow, MA 01106. Jo is in room 25 in the memory care unit.

And, some very happy news: **Oboya Omot**, who made a somewhat perilous trip to Ethiopia to see family there, has returned safely home. We celebrate his return with his wife **Muyi** and his sons, **Ngathe, Ojulu and Moses**.

Happy December Birthday!



7 Susan Wood
17 Sylvio Vasquez
20 Carol Stewart

Sunday, December 19

After the worship service – stay in your seat for...

...a Holiday Concert!



Singers and instrumentalists from the South Church choir and congregation will enliven your holiday season with music filled with warmth and joy. Listen live and in-person or watch on Zoom!



Songs! Instruments! Organ! Handbells!

Admission is free. Join us!

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

Rev. Lindsey Peterson

Larry Picard

Jacqueline Fredenburgh

Jared Spencer

Polly Southworth

Designated Term Minister

Director of Music Ministries

Office Administrator

Custodian and Property Manager

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,**

