



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.*

January 2022



War and strife have caused great suffering and people from many countries have been forced to leave their homes and move about the world. In the past few months, South Church has been a place of shelter for families from Syria and Afghanistan, who stay in the church apartment while permanent housing is found for them.

From the Pastor

WORSHIP will be FULLY REMOTE on ZOOM for JANUARY, 2022

Wednesday, December 29, 2021

Dear South,

A light shines in the bleakness, and the bleakness did not, does not overcome it.

I pray that you are healthy, finding deep breaths and moments when you feel the embrace of God's grace even in the midst of all the challenges of this season.

As you know, Covid cases with the Omicron variant are rapidly spreading in the country, and in the greater Springfield area. Yesterday, Tuesday, Springfield [recorded 451 daily Covid cases](#), an all-time high and an over 50% increase in Covid cases from just the day before!

Over the past year and a half, we at South have been intentional and cautious in our decision making around whether to gather and how with the goal of preventing Covid spread. You have been a wonderfully caring congregation, and our decisions have kept us as safe as possible. I am so grateful to serve with this community.

While many of the Omicron cases are mild, especially among those who are fully vaccinated and boosted, the local hospitals are already overburdened. We want to be part of slowing the rate of transmission to protect those who would need hospital care should they become sick with Omicron.

Therefore, continuing in the ethic of care we have been stewarding for the past year and a half, and given the extremely contagious nature of Omicron, we will be moving to fully remote worship for the month of January.

We will be gathered through Zoom at 10am on Sundays, January 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30. An edited, recorded version of the worship will then be posted on YouTube and Facebook on Sunday evening for folks to enjoy who were not able to gather on Sunday morning. There will be no in person gathering.



Thank you for your understanding. I know we will miss seeing one another in person and all the joys that brings; and, as we learned during our Zoom year, there are joys in that format too. Wonderfully, we are able to connect to the movement of the Spirit in and among us even on Zoom.

Be gentle with yourselves and with those in your lives; we are all swimming in anxieties. God's love is not separate from that anxiety. God's love does not ask us to stop feeling what we are feeling. Rather, because of God's love, imagining it as the ground of our being, we can breathe into and through the feelings.

If in our hearts [we make a manger](#) for Christ's birth, then God will once again become a child on earth. May we be mangers in the midst.

Gratefully,
Rev. Lindsey



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, 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, 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 and all those suffering with Covid-19. *If you would like to be added or removed from the Prayer List, reach out to Jackie at: secretary@sococh.org or call/text her at: 413-654-8086.*

South Church Viability Working Group Updates!

As we shared in our [introductory Crossroads article](#) (November 2021 issue, page 2) the Viability Working Group is a work in process.



You are very much a part of it.

Bill Conley, Polly Southworth, Trea Russworm and I gathered on Zoom on a Thursday night in November in what feels like forever ago.

We were planning to create an “official” video as your Viability Working Group. Yet, early in the process of creating that “official” video a more natural conversation emerged. We want to share that conversation with you.

Watch the whole conversation [here](https://youtu.be/5SSYjKMyIE8): <https://youtu.be/5SSYjKMyIE8> (about 50 minutes)

Or, if you just want to get an introductory sense of the conversation go to these links:

- [This](#) links to a section about what “viability” is, and other ideas like sustainability: <https://youtu.be/5SSYjKMyIE8?t=515>
- [This](#) links to a section about the process: <https://youtu.be/5SSYjKMyIE8?t=1551>

What hopefully comes through is how much this is a process of discerning together - all of us - the present and future of South.

This is not an easy time and these will not be easy decisions, but South is a unique and needed community of the Spirit. To move into the future with capacity, we need the gathering of all of our creativity, passions, questions and learnings.

Onward,
Rev. Lindsey

A Condensed January Calendar

- Sundays at 10 a.m. – Worship on Zoom. See worship schedule on page 7 for access information.
- Tuesdays at 7 p.m. – Zoom Bible Study (Use the Zoom worship login above.)
- Mondays at 10 a.m. – Prayer Shawl Group in the Guild Room
- Mondays at 4 p.m. – Quilting Group in the Music Lounge
- January 14 & 25 at 10:30 a.m. – South Church Cooks
- Every day except Wednesday – Loaves & Fishes at noon & 5 p.m.

From the Moderator

December was a very busy month at South Church. There were many opportunities to experience the “Love” of Christmas. The Wednesday evening Advent reflections, Rev. Lindsey’s Installation, the worship service on December 19, followed by many Christmas carols sung by our choir, and a candle-lit Christmas Eve Service were some special events along with a Zoom worship service on Sunday, December the 26. During December, we continued with South Church Cooks, our Prayer Shawl continued to produce their hats and mittens, and the Quilters their beautiful quilts. Sandwiches were made for Church without Walls, as usual, and poinsettias were distributed to the home bound. Hopefully, reflections, the music, the joy, acts of love, and the beautiful decorations will stay with us beyond Epiphany.

The Leadership Circle had work to do in December with the stepping away of Senior Deacon, Elliott Stratton, to care for his wife, Kay. We thank and will miss Elliott’s able and consistent attention to so many details.

With the guidance of Rev. Lindsey and efforts and time devoted by Betty Jack we have formed three teams, each with a coordinator.

Worship Team

Coordinator: Dennis Badger

The team will be responsible for the Communion Service and other functions related to worship.

Congregational Care Team

Coordinator: Elaine Lentino

The team will promote checking in on members, new members, and special attention to folks who are not able to physically get out.

Church Without Walls

Coordinator: Jeanne O’Brien

– *Nick*



Happy January Birthday!



1 Adam MacRae	1 Muiy Ojo	6 Marjorie Munroe
9 Kathie Giroux	18 George David	22 Sylvia Walker
25 Carin Impionbato	29 Leroy Moser	

Director of Music

Well, if you haven't heard or read the news by now (because I know some of you scroll down quickly or flip through the pages of your hard copy of Crossroads because you can't wait to read my column) let me be the first to tell you that we are returning to Zoom worship services for the month of January. Just as predicted, the holiday indoor social activities resulted in a huge spike in Covid cases locally and worldwide. After I learned a few days ago that I may have been exposed to someone who tested positive I started calling other people with whom I thought I had had contact. Their response was that they were likely exposed themselves from their own encounters. We seem to have reached the point where, if you're not already sick you may have tested positive. If you haven't tested positive you may have been exposed to someone who has.

So, back we go to our computer screens and our tablets and smartphones and even our good old landlines. Does this depress you? I thought it might, so I'm going to give you a few reasons to be happy to be worshipping on Zoom. Consider the following:

- I'm aware that some of you can't see what is happening because you call in on your landline phones, but for those who don't, isn't it an interesting experience to "see" worship in a different way? You see all the other faces (instead of the backs of their heads), you get graphics that enhance the hearing of the Word and you watch the music being presented from a close viewpoint. It's as though every one of you has a front row seat to the experience.
- We have some members who are unable to come to the church for worship because of physical limitations or lack of transportation. It's true that they can still be with us on Zoom, but when most of us are in the sanctuary space, those who call in on Zoom are not having the same experience, and there is less opportunity to participate actively. When *everyone* is on Zoom together, we all participate equally.
- It's January. Historically, we have had at least one Sunday in January every year when we have cancelled worship due to a bad snowstorm. This time we won't have to cancel, because we won't have to travel to church.
- Come on, now, admit it. Isn't it nice to sleep a little later and do church sitting on your comfy sofa or chair with a cup of coffee in your hand? Maybe your dog and/or cat is curled up in your lap?



I know, you miss that huge, majestic, ornate space that is the South Church sanctuary. We will return to it, hopefully in February. Meanwhile, I, for one, feel better knowing that we are not taking chances with the health and safety of our congregation. I want you all well and whole when we return to the sanctuary. Again, I say, Happy New Year!

- **Larry**

JANUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE (Worship is on Zoom for January)

January 2 (Communion): Zoom worship at 10 a.m. with Rev. Lindsey Peterson

January 9 (Epiphany): Zoom worship at 10 a.m. with Rev. Lindsey Peterson.

January 16 (Baptism of Christ): Zoom worship at 10 a.m. with Rev. Lindsey Peterson.

January 23: Zoom worship at 10 a.m. with Rev. Lindsey Peterson.

January 30: Zoom worship at 10 a.m. with Rev. Lindsey Peterson.

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

Zoom Bible Studies return on a new night!

It appears that Tuesday nights will no longer be practical for our Bible study group, and as of this printing a new night hasn't been worked out. Hopefully we will be able to announce that by Sunday, January 2, and print a schedule in the weekly eblast.

A little Epiphany humor...



**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*

