



From the Pastor:

CHURCH AHEAD - GIFT TO BE SIMPLE

Mahatma Gandhi once stated that we need to “live simply so others can simply live.” As we move through Epiphany toward Lent, we need to imagine what a simpler life might look like. We all know that the “world is too much with us” these days. I feel it as I transport our grandchildren from sports practice to Kung Fu to piano lessons. I experience it as my cell phone rings as I am meditating on Craigville Beach. Many of us retire only to discover that our lives are busier than we could possibly have imagined.

For the past few years, thanks to Jan Fletcher, I have been pondering what it means to de-clutter. I have made small steps, giving away 1000 of my 4000 books! Still, I have a long way to go.

Of course, de-cluttering and simplicity are ultimately spiritual issues. I once shared a story of my conversation with a Western Maryland apple farmer. It was pruning season, and I asked, “Why do you prune your trees?” To which he replied, “To let the light in.” That’s what it means to simplify our lives. Jesus once said, “Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Matthew 6:33) In other words, if we turn our hearts to God, we will have what we need to flourish and to serve God.

The quest for simplicity invites us to simple generosity. One of his biographers noted that St. Francis not only prayed, his whole life became a prayer. He embodied God in every action. That is the meaning of generous simplicity, the constant quest to seek God’s way, the way of love and beauty, in every life situation and encounter. This is a life of intentionality that regularly asks, “What’s really important in life? What’s important in this situation? How can I seek excellence, love, and beauty in each situation?” In the many responsibilities of life, we simply do *one* thing – will *one* thing – to do God’s will, loving God and our neighbor.

Let us seek God’s realm, let our lives be one sustained prayer, let us be God’s valentines, bringing love and beauty to the world one act, one choice, one gift at a time.

Pastor Bruce



Jesus counsels to love God with heart, mind, and soul, and our neighbor as ourselves. At South Congregational Church, we aspire to “learn, love, and live the word of God” and that process involves our intellectual and spiritual lives. While February is a short month, it is long on graceful possibilities for growing in wisdom and stature, prayer and intellect.

Each week has creative ways to deepen your intellectual-spiritual life as well as special events to deepen our faith.

Sundays

***Abundance and Generosity:
Reflections on Stewardship,***

11:30 a.m.-12:10 p.m.

(February 16, 23, March 8, 15)

Tuesdays

Bible Study on John's Gospel,

12:00 noon

A journey through God's good news embodied in Jesus' ministry.

(February 4 – special time

11:00 a.m., February 18 & 25)

Wednesdays

***Theological-Spiritual Reflection
Group: The Ethics and Politics of
Jesus – The Sermon on the Mount,
the Prophetic Imagination, and Us,***
1:00 p.m. (February 12, 19, 26)

SPECIAL EVENTS

***“A Month with a Mystic: The
Spirituality of Alfred North
Whitehead*** Monday, February 3,
1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.
(The spiritual vision grounded in
Whitehead's images of
interdependence, creativity, the
universality of experience, and
God's relationship with the world.)

“Lincoln's Spirituality,”

Monday, February 17 at 1:00 p.m.
(An exploration of Lincoln's faith
and its impact on his leadership and
wisdom for our time.)



Lent begins on February 26.

Traditionally, Lent is a time of reflection on our mortality and the distance of our lives and our institutions from God's vision for us. The keys words for Lenten spirituality are "repent and believe the good news." In other words, take a long look at your life and the world around you, noting where we have fallen short of God's dream for us, where we have added to the ugliness of the world, where we have thought small when God calls us to live big.

Lent is a season of hopefulness. The call to repent reflects our ability to change, to embrace new life, and live more deeply and love more fully. On these forty days, let us live more simply, reach out to strangers, give more generously to those in need, and commit ourselves to mindfulness as we open to God's transformational love.

We begin our Lenten Season on Ash Wednesday, February 26. We will have a time of prayer and distribute Ashes at 12:00 noon and 6:00 p.m.



The seasons of Epiphany and Lent invite us to generous simplicity. As with the magi, we give our best to God – our time, talent, and treasure – as responses to God's love for us. Without the many daily graces that

we experience, we could accomplish nothing. Our generosity is our return to God and to our siblings in town, God's beloved children, and across the globe.

Our generosity takes many forms: buying BIC cards, painting church school classrooms, making casseroles, teaching in children's faith formation, singing in the choir, reading in church, ushering and greeting at the door, and so much more. Indeed, our whole lives can be an opportunity for prayer and stewardship as we enlarge our spirits from self-interest to care for our family, church, and community to world loyalty.

A life of stewardship is intentional, practical, and prayerful. Our church's leadership is exploring the meaning of stewardship prayerfully in a time of budget challenge. We are looking at our personal resources, congregational resources, and our congregation's vocation at this time of its life. Nearly 225 years ago, this church launched out on faith and this is our calling today. There is no one path to financial stewardship, but here are some practices to consider:

1. Increasing your personal financial pledge to South Congregational Church and other deserving groups.
2. Consider South Congregational Church in your will, minimally an amount equal to two years' pledges.
3. Consider a tithe or more in your will, if your

beneficiaries' circumstances allow, for the long-term growth of our congregation.

Remember that five loaves and two fish can feed a multitude and that the smallest act of kindness can transform the world.

THE JOY OF A NEW NAME

Did you know that we are part of a new conference, the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ, composed of what had been the Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island conferences. One in the spirit, this new conference will be able to embark on new ventures more effectively to serve churches, the nation, and the planet. The process of uniting the three conferences has been carefully thought-out, deliberate, transparent, and prayerfully considered. Below, we excerpted some materials from the new conference website, sneucc.org:

The Southern New England Conference officially came into being with the New Year, and the change is becoming more and more visible.

At the end of December, the Conference's Articles of Incorporation were filed with the Massachusetts Secretary of State's office, establishing it as a nonprofit. On Jan. 1, employees of the three historic conferences became employed by the Southern New England Conference.

Perhaps more visibly, the Conference launched a

new [Facebook page](#) and new website - [sneucc.org](#) - and all staff now have email addresses that end in sneucc.org (last name first initial @sneucc.org, such as vailt@sneucc.org).

Conference staff had their first all-staff meeting together over two days in December. They will now be organized under the new, transitional structure, with new lines of supervision and new team configurations.

Staff (with the exception of those from the historic Rhode Island Conference) continue to work out of the same offices in Framingham, MA, and Hartford, CT, where they have been working. Contact information can be found on the new [website staff directory](#).

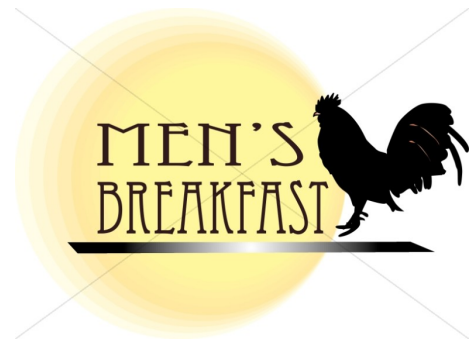
All of these steps mark a starting point, rather than the arrival at a destination.

"If we are to be faithful, there is something unique about our new Conference," said Bridge Conference Minister Rev. Don Remick. "What lies ahead is neither the proverbial sprint nor the marathon. God is always calling us to the place in between, where we surrender the future to the will of God. Our scripture keeps reminding us that God is found there: in the wilderness, on the road, in the tomb, in the liminal spaces where it is God on whom we must rely. This is not a new year, nor an epiphany, that reveals something new. It is one more moment in God's continuous evolution. Come join your journey."

Just as the Conference is in its beginning stages of existence, so is the Conference's new website.

The new site (sneucc.org) is now home to all news articles, event listings, blog posts, devotionals, newsletters, classifieds and similar content for the new Conference, including news and blog archives from the historic conferences. Anyone following links for those types of items either on the historic sites or on older newsletters or social media posts will be automatically redirected to the new website.

As your pastors, we will be praying for this new spiritual and institutional adventure and invite your prayers as well for its faithful ministry for years to come.



**Next breakfast is
Tuesday,
February 4th at 8:00 a.m.
Chef of Renown:
Nelson Cook
Come Hungry!**

THE THRIFTY NICHE

*We get things done
while having fun!!!*



**Monday, Wednesday, Friday
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Saturday 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**



February Birthdays

**3-Millie White
4-Daniel Crossen
9-Richard Davis
11-Robyn Ready, Erica Malcolm
12-Ginger Mochen
15-Marilyn Buxton
2-Philip Monroe, Tyler Mazzeo
22-Wendy Corbiere,
George French, John O'Connor
23-Daniel Black
26-Jane Tremer, Andrew Beaulieu
27-Riley Mee
28-Tim McLaughlin**



St. Joseph's House Casseroles

**Monday, February
24th**

Chefs

**Dawn Dennen, Gail Maguire,
Judy Fackre, Marcia Raftery
Bev Fogg
We need 3 volunteers**

Driver

Tony DeFazio

New Address

**Chris Twyeffort
JML
184 Ter Heun Drive
Falmouth, MA 02540**



February 17th



Notes from your Church Secretary

*My husband Michael and I
will be on vacation February
10-14. Looking forward to my
first stamp on my passport!*

*Deadline for items in the
March STEEPLE
Wednesday, February 19th*



Happy Valentine's Day!



GREEN SPIRITUALITY

As we begin a new year, here are some statistics on the major trash found along American beaches and waterways in 2018. Let's do our part in the year 2020 to turn this problem around and keep Cape Cod trash free.

From January through April, discover new and somewhat interesting ways to do your part to prevent waste with an A to Z Waste Not Guide from REAL SIMPLE magazine.

F-Foam Egg Cartons

Buy eggs in cardboard cartons if possible—they're recyclable and compostable. Foam cartons must go into the garbage, but ask the egg vendor at your farmer's market if they take foam cartons to reuse (or if they'll refill yours with fresh eggs).

G-Gift Wrap

Unwrap gifts carefully so you can reuse the paper. You can also use pretty pages from newspapers or magazines as gift wrap. Or, if you've got an overflow of tote bags, package presents in an extra tote--the eco-friendly gift that keeps on giving.

H-Home-Renovation Supplies

Refinish and repair what you already have when possible. If you truly need to replace something, offer your old good-or-salvageable-condition cabinetry, sinks, and the like on a local classifieds site, or donate to a

local Habitat for Humanity ReStore.

Then check those resources for salvaged replacement items that will work for your reno vision.

I-IPHONE (and other phone) Cases

It's hard to reuse phone cases, since the shape seems to change with every new model. Consider a compostable case, like those from Pela (from \$40;pela.earth). If you're in the market for a new one.

J-Junk Mail

Recycle the junk mail you get, but limit what comes in the first place with the PaperKarma app (\$2 per month; iOS and Android). Take a photo of the mail, enter your address and tap Unsubscribe.

K-Keys

Metal keys can't be recycled through most curbside programs, but they can be taken to scrapmetal bins at most local recycling centers. Keys that contain plastic or a chip may need to be thrown away, but first see if your local hardware store will take them.

L-Laundry Detergent

Try plastic-free pods, like the ones from Dropps (from \$16; dropps.com), which are delivered to your home in a recyclable cardboard box. If you'd rather stick with traditional detergent, opt for a regular plastic jug (not a soft-side, nonrecyclable pouch). Give it a good rinse when you're done and recycle.



Recycle Right

Just tossing random stuff into the bin and hoping for the best? To make sure your recycling pays off, see the tips at realsimple.com/recyclingguide.

Happy Centennial Birthday!

**Dorothy Robinson-January 28
107 years young**

**Millie White-February 3
100 years young**

NEWS FROM YOUR ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Reflections on the Annual Meeting

At the January Annual Meeting we had a chance to celebrate the things that we accomplish as a church over the past year. So much of what we noted were things of beauty: Bells, organ, choir, the artwork. We need beauty and art because we need to feel joy at a deep level, not just happy or pleased, but the joy that bubbles up from deep inside when we see or hear something that touches us at a spirit level. The children were mentioned as part of our celebration. So much more than the “future of the church,” the children teach us over and over again about wonder, about curiosity, about joy, about a spiritual innocence which believes that we can be friends with everyone and anyone because children don’t see differences, children see similarities until they are taught otherwise. Children really can sense the Christ-light within others. What a gift. This openness to Spirit connects children to God in such a beautiful and natural way. They don’t know God because they’ve read tomes on

theology, they know God because they feel God they feel God, they sense God, they recognize that flowers, seashells, rocks on the path, brightly colored leaves, adorable animals are all created in Love by a Divine Creator. If you don't believe me, go on a walk with a four year old; you will surely get acquainted with every rock, every plant, every thing of wonder that will make a short walk into an hour long adventure.

At our meeting we lifted up the gift of family, of the coming together of the community at the Stroll, of the movers and shakers at the church that quietly are sure that the coffee is made and the candles are lit. We celebrated our leadership and how Bruce, Nancy and Pam help to inspire and move us forward in wonderful ways. We celebrated big events like the Capital Campaign and all the wonderful transformation we witness thanks to the Building & Grounds-peoples tireless work. We celebrated a new ministry that reaches out into a community of vulnerable, poor, disenfranchised, often ignored people; a ministry that looks people in the eye and takes people by the hand and says "you matter, you are worthy, you are valued, you are loved." We all want to hear that, don't we? We are living our Christ's call for us to be a light in the darkness when we go beyond charity and minister with these folk. We celebrate being ONA. This is another example of how we serve and minister with All of God's children and see the Christ Light in all people, everywhere.

This is quite a list. This has been quite a year and rather than being exhausted, these wonderful ministries, these incredible and transformative initiatives serve to energize, to enthusiastically continue to ask "who is God calling me to be and what is God calling me to do now and for the future of the Kingdom."

Praise God!



If you are interested in ringing bell or singing with us, please talk to Pastor Pam.



Help us to update our library. Please consider making a cash donation to the church so that we can purchase age appropriate and theologically sound books for our Sunday School Lending Library. Just simply put a note in the memo portion of your check that says that is for Church School Library.

Many Thanks to the Sunday School Team

Themes for February:
Blessed, Shine, Grow, Sent

Intergenerational Worship offered by Rev. Pam and February 23rd will have the theme of “transformed, because we are blessed people who have been shining and growing in faith and entering into ministry”.



Outdoor Ministry

What an incredible weekend. Youth Street Reach had a breakfast on January 25th and we served over 100 guests. I, personally, had an opportunity to check in with over 25 individuals that I know from my work with the homeless population. On Sunday the 26th, four of the people from the breakfast plus three more from the community joined us as we sang and prayed and shared a communion feast. We had a chance to explore the passage about Jesus calling the disciples to be fishers of men. Those in worship had wonderful insights about how difficult it is to follow Jesus now because it requires so much faith and how lucky James and John and Simon and Andrew were that they

actually got to be with Jesus, see him, walk with him, hear his voice for real. There were also reflections on how hard it must have been for Zebedee to have his two sons up a d leave him and leave the family business in order to follow Jesus. Another reflection was around being seen. I can't tell you how it inspires me to see these lovely souls share their inspirations about scripture and how much we can learn from them. Everyone expressed gratitude for the great blessing bags and the apples, they were a great hit. Thanks to all who support, all who do the work and all who encourage this ministry.

Please Pray For Us

So I was a little frustrated on Sunday and was imagining that no one would come to outdoor worship. I prayed, really loud, in my car all the way to Hyannis I prayed about my call, I prayed about out intent, I prayed for those who we feel called to serve and minister with, and lo and behold, three ministers, two spouses, one dog and 7 people from this maligned community gathered together in worship and fellowship. Coincidence? I don't think so. When I rely only on myself, or only on those who work this ministry with me, or when I put all the pressure on the participants I'm lost. I needed to remember to invite God to this table, to God's table. I think one of the elements that we desperately need in this ministry initiative is more prayer. I am committed to praying daily specifically about this, and I hope that you will join me:

*Pray that our ministry leaders listen for God's inspirations.

*Pray that we minister with and not at or to those whom we feel called to serve.

*Pray for the homeless and at risk population, that they can find hope and peace and spiritual nourishment in our worship services.

*Pray that the system of justice and barriers to services be eliminated so that people who are poor, or abused or people living with mental illness or substance use disorders get the care that they deserve.

Please be a prayer warrior with me.



Thank you to Mid Cape Irrigation for their generous gift of a new computer for the church office.

BIC Caring Cards - A Brief History

Since 1993, the Dennis-Yarmouth Ecumenical Council for the Prevention of Homelessness (D-YECH) mission has been clear: to raise money for HAC's homelessness prevention programs. The mission, by all accounts, has been a

resounding success. More than \$1,000,000 has been raised, and hundreds of Cape Cod families have been helped.

Because of D-YECH's effectiveness at fundraising for family homelessness prevention, the Barnstable Interfaith Council (BIC) was born in 2000 with the goal of helping individuals stay in their homes. To raise money, both groups sell gift certificates to participating stores. The stores sell gift certificates in bulk to D-YECH and BIC, which receive five percent on every \$5,000 bulk purchase. The gift certificates are sold at face value to community members, and the five percent goes directly to HAC. That money amounts to several thousand dollars per month.

The Gift Cards we have for sale are: Dunkin Donuts, Stop & Shop, Shaws/Star Market, Rite Aid, CVS, 99, Panera & Lamberts and a multi restaurant card (DiParma, Tap City Grill, Yarmouth House & Red Face Jacks). See Shelba Coy on Sundays or stop in to the office during the week.



Stew, Hash, Spam
Granola or Cereal Bars Cereal
Canned Pineapple
Coffee or Tea Soup & Crackers
Cornbread Mix Ketchup or Mayo
Hamburger, Chicken or Tuna Helper
Chef-Boy-R-Dee Products
Pasta Sauce & Macaroni