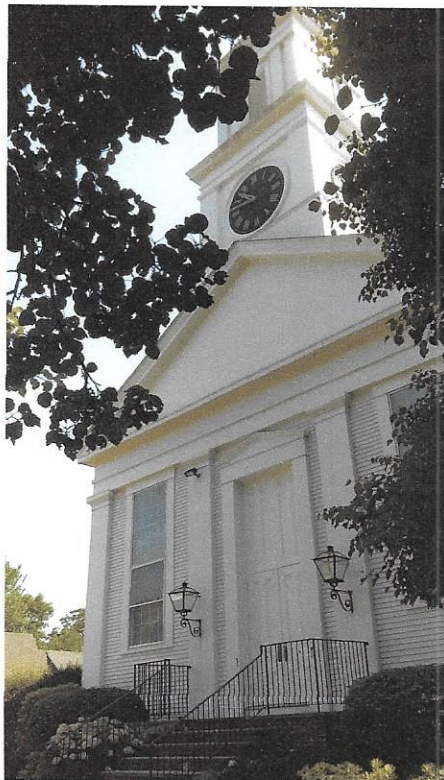


THE STEEPLE

October

2020



*A monthly newsletter from
South Congregational Church, Centerville, MA*

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Church Office Hours

Monday - Friday 10:00 am-1:00 pm



From the Pastor:

CHURCH AHEAD –The Good Work God is Doing in Our Church

Philippians is one of my favorite books in the library of spiritual counsel we call the Bible. It is a letter of a beloved spiritual teacher to a community he deeply loves. The church at Philippi is one of the few congregations that isn't a "problem child" to the Apostle Paul. They are faithful and true despite living in a difficult time and facing the challenges that any small community must endure. Still, Paul is confident that like the mustard seed, the church at Philippi will produce abundant fruit. He encourages them with these words, "I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus' Christ...and it will be a harvest of righteousness."

(see Philippians 1:3-11)

God is doing good work here at South Congregational Church. We have been a faithful people for over two hundred years, facing challenges and conflicts yet pressing on to the goal of doing God's mission here in Centerville and around the world.

Today, we are facing conflicts that we hadn't imagined a year ago. A pandemic that has changed our daily lives and congregational activities. The challenge of climate change puts the future of humanity in jeopardy. The reality of injustice and protest – and incivility challenges our nation

to seek justice for all and find common ground amid diversity.

In this challenging time in which our circumstances are very different for us as a community, we can still be faithful. On a foggy day last week, I couldn't see the steeple, but I could hear the bells tolling reminding me that even if it isn't always visible, our church is doing good work, God's work, here in Centerville.

Let us, in the days ahead embrace the good work God is doing in our lives and our congregation. Let us pray for our congregation and its mission and then go forth to bring joy to the world and healing to our community in Christ's name.

Pastor Bruce



We will continue with Adult Faith Formation on Zoom throughout the Fall. Our programs are local, but we have also had participants from California, Oregon, New York, Maryland, Washington DC, and Colorado. Please join us. You can pop in anytime without any prerequisites.

Morning Prayer, weekdays at 9:15 a.m., we gather online for prayer, silence, and scripture. Our anchor passage is Psalm 23 and our New

Testament readings are currently Acts of the Apostles with the Pauline epistles in the future. Please join us as you are able. These services are typically 15-20 minutes in length and help your spirit soar as the day begins.

Mystic Mondays at 1:00 p.m. will be focusing on the mystics of the Bible. We will be reflecting on the mystical origins of our faith by looking at major figures from scripture. One thing is clear, when you encounter the Living God, you not only experience divinity you receive a vocation and a mission. (Group will not meet October 12)

Messy Incarnation: Jesus for the 21st Century, Wednesdays at noon, will focus on the meaning of Jesus' life, its impact and the insights we can gain from it, both in the first century and our own time.

What would you like to study next? Most of our groups emerge from grassroots suggestions. If you have ideas for themes, let Pastor Bruce know.

Blessing of the Companion Animals on October 4 at 2:00 p.m. We will gather on the front lawn, with masks and safe distancing, which is a good idea with some of our companion animals, to celebrate the Feast of St. Francis and to have our companion animals blessed.

RE-GATHERING FOR IN-PERSON WORSHIP SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 11

In coordination with the Building and Grounds Team, the Leadership Circle has scheduled re-gathering for in-person worship, Sunday October 11 at 10:00 a.m., pending continuing progress in responding to COVID-19 on Cape Cod, Initially we will be meeting in the Fellowship Hall. We have been working hard to provide worship services that are safe and welcoming, which will include a deep professionally done sanitizing of the church building in early October as well as sanitizing between each service. We will also have four HEPA filters, purifying the air throughout the service. We are following the guidelines of the State of Massachusetts and Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Worship will be different, initially limited to 30 participants and in the Fellowship Hall, we will have to learn new ways to be a community of faith. Here are some changes that are necessary for safe public worship:

1. Everyone must wear masks. (We will provide disposable masks if you need one.)
2. **Attendees need to make reservations each week by Thursday noon** to help us provide safe distancing.

3. Seating will be assigned and seats will be approximately six feet apart with the possibility of family units sitting together.
4. Attendance will be taken in case we need to do contact tracing.
5. We will have beautiful instrumental music but no congregational hymn singing.
6. Communion will be provided in packets.
7. Offering plates will be placed in the back of the Fellowship Hall.
8. At the end of the service, people will be dismissed beginning with the back row. You will be encouraged to proceed to the parking lot for safe socializing.
9. Fountains will be turned off to prevent contagion.
10. Hand sanitizers will be readily available.

We recognize that this will be challenging for all of us. We realize that many of you will not feel comfortable with public worship until we have a vaccine or safe treatment for COVID 19. We support your decision and will continue to provide the following:

1. Sunday Zoom Worship and Weekday Morning Prayer as well as adult classes online.

2. Daily meditations provided by Pastor Bruce.
3. The possibility of parking lot worship at the 10 a.m. service. (Let us know if you're interested.)
4. Regular Music and Meditation programs by Pastor Pam.

We also plan to have a time for children in each service, safe activities for our children, and Fourth Sunday family worship. Activity boxes made specifically for each child will be available for children that attend indoor worship.

In a time of challenge, the author of Lamentations affirmed that "the steadfast love of the LORD never ceases/God's mercies never come to an end/they are new every morning/ great is your faithfulness."

Blessings,
The Leadership Circle



Nearly 225 years ago, a handful of faithful Christians established a congregation in Centerville. They felt urgency of spirit to reach out to the community. They took a leap of faith, not knowing what the future would bring or if the new congregation would survive. A few decades later their successors moved the current sanctuary down from Phinney's Lane to Main

Street, again acting on faith without clear guarantees. At every time of decision, our congregation has had a sense of urgency and acted on faith to expand our mission across the community, Cape, and world.

Today, we need to reclaim this sense of urgency as we continue to grow our mission in the larger community and our ministry to one another. We anticipate a deficit in the year ahead. If these deficits continue, we will need to consider reductions in program and personnel. Recognizing our current situation and trusting God with our future, it is our time to move forward on faith. The pandemic has been challenging to congregations and communities. COVID-19 has changed everything except our commitment to do God's work, nurture one another, and reach out to strangers in Jesus' name. With God's guidance and empowerment, we have done great things in the past few years – dynamic adult and children's programs along with inspirational worship, welcoming the LGBTQ community, and establishing a ministry with the homeless community. As we move forward to our 225th year, God calls us to new adventures, which will require significant financial commitments.

God calls us to be companions in ministry in growing our congregation's mission in the year ahead. This will take our time and talent. It will also take our treasure.

In this uncertain time for congregations everywhere, God calls us toward far horizons of discipleship. In that spirit, we invite you to prayerfully consider your pledge for next year. If you are financially able, we invite you to increase your pledge. We also recognize

that for many, simply maintaining your current pledge will be challenge. Your gifts of treasure as well as time and talent will help ensure a positive future for our congregation as we seek to follow God's vision.

Please send in your pledge card by November 1st. This will help us plan for 2021 in terms of program and personnel.

Peace,

The Leadership Circle and the Finance Team



DAILY MEDITATIONS

By the time you've received this Steeple, you may have also received around 180 daily meditations. I hope these are helpful to you. I intend to continue with these (and, as of today, I have written over 200 meditations) until we are all feel safe to return to public worship. *If Dr. Fauci is to be trusted – and I trust him with our country's wellbeing – I may have reached 500 before the end of the trail and we return to a new normal or I might just continue.*

I am currently working through the Gospels, and next will work through Advent and Christmas, then Paul's letters. If you have any thematic suggestions, let me know. Also, if you have any music you'd like me to share, please send me the title and link, or just the title, and I will look for a good version.

I have also appreciated the weekly Music and Meditation series produced by Pam. These uplift the spirit and set us on higher ground.



RACIAL JUSTICE TEAM

For the past several weeks, a group of us have been meeting on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m., exploring issues of racial injustice, equality, and white privilege. Out of this group, a team has emerged to find ways to help our congregation be open to greater diversity and hospitality with people of color. If you would like to learn more about this initiative, please contact Pastor Bruce.



**The Thrifty Niche
is closed till further notice.**



St. Joseph's House Casseroles Monday, October 26th

Chefs

**Marty Field, Nancy Maillette
Meg Zahn, Linda Cook
Gail Maguire, Pat Coughlin**

Driver

Nelson Cook



Charlotte's Masks

**\$5.00 at the church. 100% cotton.
Please call ahead to check them
out and make a purchase.**



**"Happy Birthday
to YOU"**

October Birthdays

- 3- Jason Fachada
- 4-Jason Maguire
- 14-Chris Farber, Stefen Mee
- 18-Johnny Dray, Eric Beaulieu
- 21-Karen Black
- 26-Joan McLachlan, Cathryn Ready
- 27-Gan Gallagher
- 31-Ann Grimm



**Deadline for items in the
October STEEPLE
Thursday, November 18th**

**Office Hours
Monday-Friday
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**The Church building will be
closed on Friday, October 9th so
that it can be professionally
sanitized. Please do not enter.**

**The Church Office will be
closed on Monday, October 12th
to observe Columbus Day**



**Church Directories
are now available on the table
outside the office. Call me and I
will hand one out the door to you.**



GREEN SPIRITUALITY



How eco-friendly is your closet?

Being lean and green in your closet isn't so hard-chances are you're already doing more than you know Go ahead and give yourself points for:

- Having hand-me-downs or thrift store buys
- Having things you've worn for more than a year
- Borrowing a ski jacket or snorkel for a vacation rather than buying a new one you'll rarely use
- Not washing your clothes after each wear
- Drying your clothes on a clothesline
- Having an item made from an environmentally friendly fabric
- Having something that has been mended
- Getting your clothes dirty by playing outside
- Donating stained or worn-out clothes to a company that makes rags

Keeping your clothes green and clean...

Most of the electricity used by washing machines goes to just heating the water. Every time you (or that person who does all that wash...oh yeah, your mom!) set the temperature on COLD the whole world benefits. If North Americans washed their clothes in cold water, it would reduce carbon emissions by as much as taking 10 million cars off the road each year.

Many neighborhoods banned clotheslines because people thought they were ugly. Today, governments are reducing carbon emissions by restoring people's rights to air laundry in public. Hasta la vista, you energy-sucking clothes dryers!



HEALTH NEWS

Center of Disease Control (CDC) recommends a FLU (Influenza) vaccine every year for people six months and older. Anyone can get the FLU even a healthy person. The higher risk is 65 years and older, but a person of any age with heart disease, diabetes or asthma of any age is vulnerable. Pneumonia vaccines need to be updated as well. The best health practice is hand washing, masks and social distancing as we are doing with the Coronavirus.

Elizabeth Simons RN

Good News from the Associate Pastor

Children's Faith Formation

Our church school families will be receiving weekly emails with suggestions for lessons, activities and song. On the 3rd Tuesday of each month we will have a Zoom Class from 4:30-5:30 to prepare for worship on the 4th Sunday. The 4th Sunday will be our CFF led services, with children helping to create the liturgy and helping to lead in worship.

Upcoming Themes and Schedule

September "Grounded in God"

Videos: Week of September 13- A Blessing for Going Back to School

Week of September 20
Ground Yourself in Goodness

Week of September 27
God is so Good
Songs: God is so Good, Guide My Feet, Hebrew Benediction

October "Create"

Videos Week of October 4
In the Beginning

Week of October 11
In the Garden
Tuesday October 20
Zoom at 4:30

Sunday October 25
"Cracked Pots and Odd Threads;
Finding God in our imperfections."
Songs: In God we live and Move,
Pass it on, Peace of the Earth,
Compassion Song

Outdoor Ministry

As of the time of this writing, we are planning to resume outdoor ministry for those who are experiencing homelessness on

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2:00
BAPTIST CHURCH LAWN
MAIN STREET, HYANNIS

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2:00
BAPTIST CHURCH LAWN
MAIN STREET, HYANNIS

Some of our Breakfast volunteers are making snack bags, Charlotte Davis has donated face masks, Maureen Grandmont is donating care bags with hand sanitizer and disposable face masks, and the Baptist church is providing sandwiches. We are so blessed by the outreach of so many for this service and for all that you do to help those who are living in poverty, experiencing homelessness, and are in need.



We continue to mourn not being able to sing together. This is an enormous grief for so many of us who feel closest to God when we can lift our voice in praise or in lament. God knows our deepest desire to sing, and God hears our prayers as music to God's ears. Worship music will continue to be offered instrumentally until it is safe to vocalize in public.



Don't forget to turn your clock back an hour on Saturday night, October 31 before you go to bed. No one likes to be late for church even on Zoom.



Please continue to donate to the Food Pantry basket at church. Your donations are greatly needed and much appreciated. This month's requests are:

Soup, Soup & more Soup

Jelly or Jam

Baked Beans

Stovetop Stuffing

Cranberry Sauce

Hand and Dish Soap

Pasta Sauce

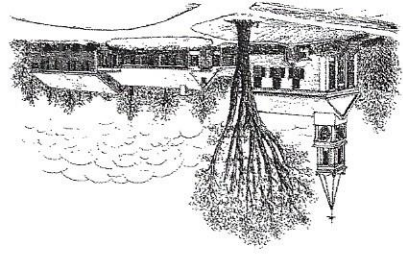
Hamburger Helper

Cracker, Cookies

Chef Boy R Dee Products

If you would like to donate a \$25 gift card to put towards

Thanksgiving this year, it will help families to purchase a turkey.



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565 Main Street
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