August 2020

The Good Newsletter of the
Southwick Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Southwick, MA

Please join us Sundays for...
Worship Service— on Facebook & YouTube
Website: www. SouthwickUCC.org

* See page 22
M I S S I O N  S T A T E M E N T

Southwick Congregational Church is a faithful Christian presence in the community of Southwick since 1773, and we look to the future. We are a diverse and loving congregation, joyfully serving, teaching, and sharing with one another, according to the gifts we have been given.

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

We invite you to join Rev. Susanne on Facebook and YouTube as she leads our worship services.

OFFICE HOURS

Monday thru Friday: 9:00 AM~12:00 PM
If you need to see Lyn before 9:00 AM or after Noon, Please call for an appointment.

SPECIAL MEETINGS

All meetings at this time are announced by email, phone call, or letter. They are held by Zoom, conference call, or some other virtual means.

VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE!

Our Facebook page is Southwick Congregational Church!
Please check it out, “like” us, and follow us!!!

CHECK US OUT ON YouTube

Search for Southwick Congregational Church
You can hear Rev. Susanne read the lessons for the week and share her sermon.

REV. SUSANNE’S SHARE

One of my favorite pieces of scripture is the first half of Psalm 46:10: “Be still and know that I am God.”

“Be still and know that I am God.” This is a very popular verse which is meant to encourage us all to take time to be still and silent before our awesome God. While this interpretation promotes a healthy rest in God, we should also see it as a push for us to wake up, stop striving so hard, and acknowledge God for who God is, allowing God to do what only God can do for us, and putting aside what we think we can do for ourselves.

“Be still and know that I am God.” I often use this verse as a mantra when I am feeling out of sorts or disconnected from the world. It focuses me on God, and helps me stop focusing on myself and on what is troubling me. It tells me to listen for God’s words, to not make noise, to stay calm, and to pay attention to whatever it is that God is trying to get through my thick skull. I have often said that when God has something to tell me, God seems to hit me over the head with a two-by-four, which gets my attention in a hurry!

“Be still and know that I am God.” Do you ever have times when you are troubled by something you seem to have no control over? Do you ever have times when you are tired and unhappy about what is going on around you? If so, it might be helpful to remember that God truly is in control of everything. We may not see it at the moment, but we must, through our faith, believe it.

“Be still and know that I am God.” These words can give us the strength that we need in order to achieve the greatness that God intends for us. There are seasons in life when God wants us to be still so that God can work through us and move within us. We need to stop fighting whatever it is that we are fighting and learn to relax. We need to surrender ourselves to the comfort, joy, and love that God has for us, and let God lead us out of our confusion.
Pastoral Care:

Your joys and concerns are of the utmost importance to our community of faith, and pastoral care is offered for any and all personal and spiritual situations that might arise in one’s life. Please call the church office at 413-569-6362 or email southwickucc@gmail.com if you would like to speak to the pastor.

“Be still and know that I am God.” What I personally need most when I am feeling lost or alone, is to remember that while I may not be able to control the situation that I am facing, what I need most of all is to remember that God is working on behalf of me (yes, me!) at all times. I need to remember that I can replace the panic in my heart with total trust in our Creator.

“Be still and know that I am God.” We know God is in control. We know God hears our prayers. And we know God answers, even when it may not be in the way we want or expect. But in those times when darkness seems to envelop us, we wrestle with giving control to the only One with the power to bring us through. Being still and knowing God is God means moving to a new level of trust, a level that will challenge our faith in remarkable ways. When we push aside the “if onlys” of life, and decide to trust, we will experience God’s unfailing love like we never have before.

“Be still and know that I am God.” God gives us a precious gift in these words. We are all needy and God knows it. And God knows that we might have a tough time accepting this gift, so God patiently tries to teach us how to do so. And looking carefully at these words helps us see their beauty. It can be hard to be still. It can be hard to trust. But fully comprehending this offer from our heavenly God is life-altering.

We can rest, be calm, be untroubled, and be at peace, knowing that when troubles threaten to overtake us, God’s presence surrounds us. “Be still and know that I am God.”

Godspeed,
Rev. Susanne

Letter from our Moderator

What is Yoking?

~Terry Putnam, Moderator

Thanks to those of you who responded to the search committee’s opinion poll a couple of weeks ago. There is definite interest from some of the respondents to explore sharing a pastor. Because of that and the fact that I have received numerous comments and requests for more information about what yoking is, I put together the following for your consideration to better understand the congregation’s decision at hand.

What is yoking? According to the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ, yoking occurs when two or more congregations agree to remain in their existing buildings and ministries but share one pastor for both congregations. There are usually separate facilities, separate programming, separate governing boards, separate bylaws, and separate local church budgets. Each church retains its identity and individualism.

Why do churches yoke? Many churches have come to a time in their congregational lives where the question of sustainability or viability is raised. Churches often yoke out of a desire to strengthen the mission and ministry of each church in the community; when there is a perceived problem at one or both churches (for example, declining membership); if the strength of one or both churches is in decline; or if the churches are unable to keep up with increasing costs, particularly the cost of a fulltime, qualified pastor. Success depends upon both churches viewing this arrangement as an opportunity to strengthen each church’s mission and ministry capability.

What are the potential advantages? Yoking can be helpful in terms of having an available full-time pastor and offers the opportunity for two or more congregations to work cooperatively toward a shared vision.

A shared ministry often enables churches to attract and retain a better-trained and qualified pastor than would be possible for either of them alone.

Studies have shown that churches in small communities who...
share a pastor have greater community awareness and involvement, develop skills in managing differences and decision-making, and are more open to newcomers than other “single” churches.

A shared ministry also presents opportunities for both churches to collaborate on targeted programs such as children’s and youth ministry, to join for fellowship, and to combine efforts for community outreach.

**What are the potential disadvantages?** In yoked churches, the pastor’s time is divided between the churches which may impact availability at times. However clear expectations set during the time of negotiations between the churches and the pastor will help to avoid scheduling disagreements.

If the churches are separated by a large geographical distance, Sunday schedule coordination could be challenging.

Up until now in the Southern New England Conference, there have been few yoking opportunities and a limited number of pastors who enjoy this type of ministry. However, according to the UCC, because many applicants are now graduating with student debt, they are looking for fulltime work and may be interested in this type of position.

Initially some church members may fear yoking as giving up autonomy, heritage, and tradition.

**Why are we hearing about yoking now?** We have reached a point in the life of our church when we must explore options other than a fulltime minister. Our membership numbers and pledges have been declining over the past several years; we are struggling to fill church leadership positions; most of our vital fund-raising events have been halted due to the corona virus; the approved pastor salary figure that we have to work with will not support a full-time minister; and we must rethink many of our old ways of doing things as churches are forced to evolve and reinvent themselves post-pandemic.

We were approached in early May by First Church in Westfield to see if we might be interested in exploring sharing a minister/yoking with them. We had an initial meeting with Jill Graham from the UCC along with the moderator and search committee chair from First Church and a second meeting with the pastor from Ludlow who currently ministers to two yoked churches. After much discussion between the search committee and the church leadership group, we have decided to bring this information to the congregation for guidance on next steps.

At this point, we need direction from you on which route to pursue in our quest to find a pastor, whether to seek a part-time minister of our own or a shared fulltime minister with a second church. I include the following points for your reference and comparison:

Per the search committee, the first draft of our “solo” profile is almost done, but, according to Jill Graham, edits are often required, and then it comes back to the church leadership for review, so we have no firm final submission date at this point. Until final revisions are done, the position cannot be posted for applicants to access for review.

Church profiles are submitted to the UCC as either “solo” profiles (church seeking its own pastor) or yoked profiles, but not “either/or,” so the decision to seek part-time individually or to yoke with another church must be made prior to submission.

With the current information that we have at this time, the church profile that the search committee has worked on for the past two years **will not** have to be redone. The yoked profile presented to candidates for both churches involved has been described by Jill Graham as “two answers to the same question.”

At this point in time, per the UCC, pastor candidate pools are “shallow,” with few ministers seeking fulltime positions and even fewer looking for part-time. We should anticipate a lengthy search process whether we choose to yoke with another church or search for our own part-time minister.

Both part-time and yoked positions will require negotiation. Just as we have had to do for Rev. Susanne during this interim period, we will need to prioritize the duties expected of a part-time minister. Similarly, if we shared a pastor with another church, we, and they, would have to determine which duties were the most important for a shared minister to perform for each church.

As we learned from the fulltime Ludlow pastor, while each of his
churches was allotted 20 hours of his time each week, this allowance was often quite fluid depending on the needs of the congregations, but averaged out to 20 hours per church per week over time. For example, if one church had a funeral that needed to be officiated outside of their “normal” 20 hours, he was able to devote more time to that church that week and make up the difference to the second church the next week as needed. In other words, both churches always had access to the minister regardless of whether it was their “turn” or not. With a part-time minister of our own, this option may not exist as consistently for us.

A shared minister would be hired under a mutually-agreeable contract between the new minister and both churches. When the contract comes up for renewal, the two churches will decide whether to a) retain the yoking arrangement with the current minister, b) search for a new shared minister together, or c) discontinue the yoked arrangement and search separately for a new minister.

**Things that Will not Change with Yoking**

We at Southwick Congregational Church will continue our journey as an independent, self-governing congregation under our current Constitution.

Each yoked church will continue to hold its own Sunday services unless both would like to hold occasional joint services or programs.

Both churches would need to vote separately to approve a ministerial candidate. If either church does not approve, then the search would continue.

Budgets/funds at each church would remain separate. Each church would pay its agreed-upon share of salary and benefits of the fulltime Minster.

**Next steps?**

The church leadership group wants to make sure you have the information you need to be able to vote on one of two options to guide our search committee:

- **a)** to search for a part-time minister for ourselves or
- **b)** to explore the option to yoke with another church (potentially First Church) and share a fulltime pastor.

We are currently researching the safest way to hold an all-church meeting to discuss and vote on these options. Currently we are entertaining holding a virtual church meeting on Zoom, a meeting in the church parking lot if we can safely maintain social distancing, and/or providing the information to you on Facebook or by mail and having you mail in or drop off your ballots. I have also consulted our local health inspector for ideas as well. I would welcome your input as to your preferences for meeting and any other ideas you may have.

Please reach out to me by phone (413-426-2081) or email (hannahput@yahoo.com) if you have further questions or concerns. Thanks in advance for your thoughtful and prayerful discernment on the best option for the future of our church.

**References**

“Getting Together: Models and Processes for Local Church Cooperation,” 1995. Office for Church Life and Leadership, United Church of Christ, Cleveland, Ohio.

“Options for Struggling Congregations,” Southern New England Conference United Church of Christ retrieved from sneucc.org

“Yoked Congregations” retrieved from UUA.org

“Yoked Congregations Find Joy” retrieved from nclutheran.org

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“It is with mixed emotions that I share with you that Rev. Susanne will not be renewing her contract as interim minister at the end of August. August 23 will be her last sermon. She has decided to take time for self-renewal and time with family. Please join me in thanking Susanne for her spiritual leadership and tireless efforts, especially during this time of uncertainty for us. We wish Rev. Susanne and Michael all the best as they start this new chapter in their lives.”

[Signature]

*thank you*
Remember that closet or back room we promised we would get to when we had time…
Well… we’ve had time.
But what do we do with the decent stuff we want to donate?

**Good News!**
Southwick Congregational Church will be collecting clothes, linen, towels, shoes, belts, jewelry, stuffed animals, etc.

**SOFT GOODS ONLY PLEASE:**
No Books or Electronics

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**Contact person:** Patti P. Wood  **Date:** October 3rd, 2020
**Time:** 9-12
**Location:** New Fellowship Hall of Southwick Congregational Church
**Drop off Days/Times:** Sept 28-Oct 3, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

*ALL ITEMS MUST BE IN GOOD, CLEAN, & SELLABLE CONDITION.*

Thank you in advance!!!!  
-Patti Wood

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**HAPPY AUGUST BIRTHDAY**

- Dawn Turgeon  Aug 2
- Ted Kowal  Aug 5
- Charles Rood, Jr  Aug 5
- Mary Grasso  Aug 7
- Diane Rood  Aug 10
- Donna Sullivan  Aug 13
- Maria Lempke  Aug 17
- Beth Studer  Aug 18
- Keith Ireland  Aug 18
- Sonya Murray  Aug 20
- Martha Johnson  Aug 21
- Lorraine Bates  Aug 29
- Roberta Kowal  Aug 30
- Charlie Rood, III  Sept 1
- Joyce Hamilton  Sept 1

If we’ve missed a birthday, please let the church office know!

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**MISSIONS / OUTREACH**

*July 15th—Show Your Church Spirit Day!*
Joe & Donna Sullivan and Dennis & Melissa Day were feeling the spirit on July 15th as they sported their Southwick Congregational Church T-Shirts! You too can own one. Contact Donna at djsullivan135@hotmail.com.
Our church has been open and active throughout this pandemic and will remain so. Check out our worship services every Sunday morning on Facebook and YouTube! And call our church office if you are in need of something!

Welcome

Lorraine and Robert Bates
To Southwick Congregational Church
July 27, 2020

Our church has been open and active throughout this pandemic and will remain so. Check out our worship services every Sunday morning on Facebook and YouTube! And call our church office if you are in need of something!

We Welcome

Lorraine and Robert Bates
To Southwick Congregational Church
July 27, 2020

Our church has been open and active throughout this pandemic and will remain so. Check out our worship services every Sunday morning on Facebook and YouTube! And call our church office if you are in need of something!

Sanctuary and Steeple Maintenance

Skip back three decades to 1990. It was a time that emphasized the continuing maintenance needs of an aging wooden Meeting House. This effort started at the top, literally, with creation of the Steeple Fund. Individual member's support plus funding from Memorial Gifts financed reroofing the Sanctuary, the Steeple, the front Portico and Old Fellowship hall. Maintenance also included Steeple repairs, painting and gold leaf applied to the Steeple dome.

Less than two decades later, in 2012 repairs were again needed to the Church and Steeple. Professional Steeple-Jacks from New Hampshire labored for several weeks to repair or replace degraded wood on the Narthex façade, restore the Doric columns supporting the Portico, repaint the Steeple and replace the gold leaf on the Steeple dome.

1990: Sanctuary and Old Hall roofing replacement ~$42,500.
1990: Gold Leaf restoration on Steeple Dome ~$7,700.
2012: Steeple repair/repaint & Gold Leaf restoration ~$48,800

~ Virgil

On July 27th the Missions / Outreach Committee provided Picnic Supper Bags to the Westfield Soup Kitchen. Many hands made light work for this community endeavor.
IN THE MAIL

"Dear Southwick Congregational Church:

"As you may be aware, the national organization of the Boy Scouts of America has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in order to restructure its nonprofit organization and pay Sexual Abuse Survivors who were abused during their time in Scouting. Sexual Abuse Survivors include anyone who was sexually abused during their time in Scouting on or before February 18, 2020. We are requesting your assistance in notifying anyone you are in contact with who may have been involved with Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, or any entity or activity associated with Scouting.

“You will find a short one-page notice enclosed, which provides additional information about the bankruptcy case and the deadline to file claims by November 16, 2020. You can also obtain further information and materials by visiting www.OfficialBSAclaims.com or calling 1-866-907-2721.

Sincerely,
Official BSA Claims Agent”

My Heart is Troubled
~ By Robert Bates

Since the Zoom fellowship hour of June 28, I have been troubled by hearing some of my brothers and sisters express their fears and terrors about returning to our Church or even just going to the grocery store. I have prayed about it and the Holy Spirit urges me to reach out — so I am submitting this to the Gold Dome.

What can I do to help? I was taught that help unrequested is not help but interference.

First, I offer my concept of what a church is: Of course it is the Body of Christ, but to me, it is also the sharing of our struggles as we journey to meet God. I believe God has a plan for each of us and as it is recorded in Jeremiah: “...it is a plan for good and not for evil.”

I believe we are here to practice our love for our neighbors with each other. Helping each other work through whatever doubts and fears cause us to stumble or lose our sense of direction. We are all on a journey to meet God. Maybe because I am about to turn 87 I think of what a youth once said about the Bible, “B I B L E stands for Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth.” I believe all our questions are addressed within its pages — but like a jigsaw puzzle, we do not always see how they fit together. I miss Bible study and hope to bring it back to Southwick CC, God willing. If anyone is interested in starting one (if & when we can gather together) call me at 413-998-3111.

My heart has been troubled since I heard how my brothers and sisters are experiencing fears regarding the constant warnings and statistics of the unceasing catastrophe of the pandemic. I of course pray for all the world that this may get under control. And I ask how I can offer help to our congregation.

I fully support taking all precautions to prevent being infected and I am concerned about living in fear. I am careful; I follow all the recommendations: social distancing, hand
washing, and, wearing a mask. But I do not let it take control of me. I do not let it cause me to lose my faith. Jesus said many times, “Do not be afraid, only believe.” He said this not only to acknowledge his disciples’ belief but also to help their fear. I mean to counter the feelings of fear by reminding myself of the roots of my faith. I seek the fundamental beliefs I hold and I ask God to help me deepen those roots.

I encourage you in dealing with your fears and concerns to ask yourself these questions:
- What has sustained and given me comfort or solace when I have had hard times before?
- Do I have a favorite verse of scripture?
- What are my favorite hymns?

For example, one of mine is “This Is My Father’s World” where one of the verses says, “Oh, let me ne’er forget that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet.” Or from another of my favorites, “Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, It is well, it is well with my soul.”

My concern is to not let fear get between me and God. I believe at these times I need to be aware that I am not alone. As a member of this church, I have all of you as my brothers and sisters. This means I can offer and receive support and encouragement to and from you all.

I close with this quote from Mother Teresa:
“Used to pray that God would feed the hungry, or do this or that, but now I pray that he will guide me to do whatever I’m supposed to do, what I can do.

I used to pray for answers, but now I’m praying for strength.

I used to believe that prayer changes things, but now I know that prayer changes us and we change things.”

God bless and keep you,
Your brother in Christ,
Bob Bates

FROM THE OFFICE

Southwick Congregational Church
United Church of Christ

July 7, 2020
SUBJECT: BUILDING USE SUMMER OF 2020

The Southwick Congregational Church Building & Grounds Committee is concerned with following state and town sanctioned parameters while maintaining safety for all who use this building.

The Executive Committee has voted that no outside groups shall meet in this building until it has been decided safe enough for the congregation to meet.

To do this, we ask the following of all who use this building:
- Please contact the office to make sure we have your contact information.
- Do not enter the building without informing the church office.
- If it is necessary to enter the building, let the office know the schedule of dates, times, and what areas of the building you will be using.

When people enter the building and we do not know what areas are being used, we cannot make sure these spaces have been disinfected and cleaned after. This presents a grave safety concern to our church.

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the church office.

Lyn Casey
Office Administrator

488 College Highway * P.O. Box 260 * Southwick, Massachusetts 01077-0260
413-569-6362 * southwickucc@gmail.com; www.southwickucc.org
Defence of Fort M'Henry

Francis Scott Key

O! say can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming,
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watch'd, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there-
O! say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave?

On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines on the stream —
'Tis the star-spangled banner, O! long may it wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havock of war and the battle's confusion
A home and a country should leave us no more?
Their blood has wash'd out their foul foot-steps' pollution,
No refuge could save the hireling and slave,
From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave;
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

O! thus be it ever when freemen shall stand
Between their lov'd home, and the war's desolation,
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the heav'n-rescued land
Praise the power that hath made and preserv'd us a nation!
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
And this be our motto — "In God is our trust!"
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave.

Our Search Committee
Ezri Johnston
George Zanolli
Eleanor Bates
Richard Pearlstein
George Wheeler
Mary Goodwin
Roxanne Cook
Janice Hall
Angelo Castagna
Jonathan Bates; Bob & Lorraine Bates’ grandson
Gerry & Chris Assard; friends of Lorraine & Bob Bates
Ben Ingalls; Flo’s nephew
Hetti Thompson; friend of Mary G
Jamie Poston; Terry Putnam’s nephew
Virginia; Mary’s mother
Hannah; Roxanne’s granddaughter
Judy; Patti’s Sister
Travis P.; Ben’s friend
George Webster; Roxanne Cook’s & Patty Banasik’s uncle
People at the American Inn
Irene; Mary’s friend whose mom is going through cancer
Dawn’s Sister-in-law, Julie, and niece, Emilie
Ginny Tyrowicz; Diane Orson’s friend
Frances Hurley, Patty Banasik’s Mother-in-law
Jim Rundall; Eric Nitsch’s friend
Patti Wood’s nephew, Matthew & co-worker’s son, Jack

Nursing Homes/Assisted Living:
Elsie Gosselin       Louise Tagliavini
Barbara Machietto       Jean Lamoureaux

Serving in our Military at home and abroad:
Samantha Perusse       Andrew DeWinkeleer        Josh Davis
Nicholas Potts        Tyler Arnold           Nolan Kononitz
Jody Miller            Robert Goodman, III

Please also pray for all those unnamed who are suffering or in need of prayer in our community and worldwide.
8/1/1944 Anne Frank penned her last Diary entry: "[I] keep on trying to find a way of becoming what I would like to be, and what I could be, if...there weren't any other people living in the world." Three days later, Anne and her family were arrested and sent to Nazi concentration camps. Anne died at Bergen-Belsen concentration camp on March 15, 1945, at age 15.

8/2/1776 Declaration of Independence signed

8/4/1945 V-J Day Truman announces Japan has surrendered to allies

8/15/69 Woodstock

8/16/1896 Gold discovered in Rabbit Creek, Alaska

8/17/78 1st transatlantic balloon flight, leaving from Maine

8/21/1959 Hawaii became 50th State

8/24-79 AD Vesuvius erupted

8/31/1786 Shays’ Rebellion—Daniel Shays led an armed mob to prevent poor ex-soldier farmers from being tried and likely put in prison in Northampton Mass

BIRTHDAYS:

8/1/1779 Francis Scott Key born. Wrote poem entitled Defense of Fort McHenry which became Nat’l Anthem in 1931

8/1/1819 Herman Melville

8/4/1901 Louis Armstrong

8/6/1881 penicillin discoverer Alexander Fleming

8/12/1881 Cecil B DeMille born in Ashfield, MA

8/13/1899 Alfred Hitchcock

8/19/1871 Orville Wright


8/27/1910 Mother Teresa

8/30/1797 Mary Shelley, Author of Frankenstein
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No outside groups will be meeting in the halls until worship is again held. Our Facebook page and Website will continue to be updated.