September 2020

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

Happy Grandparents Day!
9/13

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

VOLUME MMXX No. 9
MISSION STATEMENT

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 us on Zoom, Facebook & YouTube to join in 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.

The Office will be closed Monday, September 7, for Labor Day.

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 the lessons for the week and share the sermon.

REV. SUSANNE’S SHARE

My Last Hurrah!

Every ending has a new beginning. Both for me and for all of you. And I’m sure that all of us have had many an ending and many a beginning in our lives.

Everything happened so fast! After I retired from the First Congregational Church of Chicopee, Michael and I found a new church home here at Southwick Congregation Church. After a time, your minister moved on, and I was honored and eager to become your Interim Minister! I felt ready for the opportunity and the challenge to become your temporary spiritual leader.

Now after 2 ½ years of serving you, I have decided it is time to retire again. It was a really tough decision, especially during these trying times, but I knew the time had come for me to rest my body, mind, and soul.

Please know that I have always taken my ordination vows very, very seriously. So I hope that in your eyes, during this interim time, I have preached and taught the gospel without fear or favor. I hope that in your eyes I have spoken the truth in love. I hope that in your eyes I have administered the sacraments and rites of the Church with integrity. I hope that in your eyes I diligently performed the work of ministry which I had agreed with you to perform.

I hope that in your eyes I nurtured and offered my gifts for ministry to this Church. I hope that in your eyes I sought to call forth and nurture your gifts for the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ and for the health of this Church. I hope that in your eyes I regarded all of you with equal respect and concern and ministered to you impartially. I hope that in your eyes I honored all confidences that were shared with me. I hope that in your eyes I did not use my position, power, or authority to exploit any person.
Hear these words from 1st Corinthians 13: "13 And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three. And the greatest of these is love."

My theology, my faith, my pastoral care, my teaching, and my preaching have always been based on one single precept, that being the unconditional love of God for everyone and for all of God’s Creation. Every situation, every problem, and every condition, both good and bad, can be addressed by an understanding that God is Love! God is Love! And I hope you have all come to believe that. And I pray you will always remember that.

Listen to these words from 1st Peter, Chapter 3: “8 All of you have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. 9 Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse. But, on the contrary, repay with a blessing.”

As I retire from being your Interim Minister, please know that Michael and I will still be part of this congregation. And with our change in responsibilities, please keep in your minds the words of Peter that you just read.

To sum it up, remember to love one another as God loves you. Remember to comfort one another, and to be present for one another, and to help one another, and to sing with one another, and to worship with one another, and to pray for one another, and to uplift one another. And remember to respect one another, and to agree to disagree, because by doing so, you will open your minds and your hearts to new ideas, and more easily find your sense of direction. And by doing all of these things, you will be a church that overflows with love.

Not only that, remember to continually look beyond the doors of our sanctuary. Let Matthew Chapter 25 remind you: 31 ‘When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. 32 And he will separate people, the sheep from the goats. 33 And he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. 34 Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. 36 I was naked and you gave me clothing. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me.’ 37 Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we did all of these things for you?’ 40 And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these, who are members of my family, you did it to me.’”

Let those beautiful words remind you that there is a big world out there that needs your help. Not only do you need one another, but there are hosts of opportunities for you to reach outside of our church building and use your love and your resources to further God’s Creation. For as God watches over you, God sees how you treat one another. And if you can just imagine the face of Jesus on each and every person in trouble, I pray that that will cause you to respond to them in love and in substance. For when you “do it to one of the least of these, who are members of my family, you do it to me!”

As I retire from being your Interim Pastor, remember that you and this church are filled with the grace of God. And that grace will never fail you. If you are uncertain about this change, let the grace of God come into your uncertainty. If you are afraid about this change, let the grace of God come into your fear. If you are excited about this change, let the grace of God be part of that excitement.

I love this church and I love all of you. I have spent 2 ½ years as your Interim Pastor! And I would not have had it any other way. I truly believe that God wanted me to be right here, and that God always saw you in my sights.

When I decided that it was time for me to retire, I turned to God. God, have I really done what you wanted me to do?? God, have I represented you well?? God, have I helped this church and these people?? God, have I made any difference at
all?? God, how do I know that it’s OK with you that I step aside??

And I believe that God has answered me. And I believe that God is OK with all of this. I believe, and I believe that God believes, that the time is right for me, and the time is right for you, for me to retire.

I will never forget this time. I will always love you. I will always pray for you. I will always want only the best for you and our church. And I will mourn the loss of no longer being your spiritual leader. And I pray that I have somehow given you all something that has helped you with your spiritual journeys. And I know that I will always be with you. Thank you for letting me be your Interim Pastor.

And just one more very important thing. My ministry to you would not have been possible if I hadn’t always had the support of my wonderful husband Michael and my entire family. I thank them all for always being with me, supporting me, even when things got tough, and loving me enough to join me in my ministry.

There is a saying we ordained ministers have imbedded in our hearts and souls: “Once a minister, always a minister.” Since I will continue to be part of Southwick Congregational Church, please know that I am always there for anyone who needs anything. That will be true until we hire a new settled pastor, who will then take over your spiritual care.

May God bless you all.
Godspeed,
Rev. Susanne

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We Need Your Help!
Terry Putnam, Moderator

As mentioned in the August issue of the Gold Dome, we have reached a point in the life of our church when we must explore options other than having 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 coronavirus; the approved pastor salary figure that we have to work with at this point 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.

To refresh your memory, we were approached in early May by First Church in Westfield to see if we might be interested in exploring sharing a fulltime minister (“yoking”) with them. The August Gold Dome goes into more detail about what this arrangement does and does not mean for our church.

On **Sunday, August 30**, there will be no online church service. Instead Pastor Randy Hyvonen will be speaking to us at 11:00 a.m. during our virtual zoom coffee hour and answering our questions about the pros and cons of having a shared pastor. In addition, Kristy Johnston will be sharing the results of interviews she and her group conducted to gain more information on this topic. This meeting will be recorded and posted on Facebook and on YouTube for anyone unable to attend. We will also host further question and answer sessions in the church parking lot at various dates/times during the week of September 1. These will be announced on our Facebook page.

Following the meeting with Pastor Randy, active church members will be asked to vote on whether to seek a part-time minister of our own or to search for a shared fulltime minister with a second church (potentially First Church of Westfield). Ballots, along with detailed instructions on how to handle completed ballots, will be mailed to each active member by the end of August. The voting window to submit completed ballots will open on August 31 and close at end of business day on September 11.
Active members will be able to cast their votes in one of the following three ways:

1. Voting by Mail: Those active members receiving ballots at home may complete their ballots according to procedures outlined in the mailing. Ballot return shall be via USPS or by arranging with a voting teller for pickup at their residence. Our voting tellers are Lorraine Bates and Virgil Paggen.

2. Voting in Person: Votes may be deposited into a locked ballot box manned by a voting teller or designee in the church parking lot during specified dates/times (to be announced on our Facebook page). In addition, voting tellers or their designees will distribute ballot envelopes to those active members in attendance at church parking lot Q&A meetings to vote at the conclusion of meeting. Members who have already mailed in their ballots will not be eligible to vote again.

3. Voting by Phone (‘voting by proxy’): Active members at home have the option to call in their vote to a voting teller if neither of the other two voting methods will work for them. The teller will complete the ballot as specified by the member and seal it in the envelope. The teller will print the name of the member, specify the date of vote, and sign his/her own name (the teller’s) on the envelope.

Once the voting period has ended, and the votes have been counted and certified by the tellers, the results of the vote will be shared with the congregation.

Please reach out to Terry Putnam by phone (413-426-2081) or by email (hannahput@yahoo.com) if you need a copy of the August Gold Dome article to review or if you have any questions regarding the information provided, the voting process, meeting schedules, etc.

Thanks in advance for your thoughtful and prayerful discernment and advice on the best option for the future of our church.

~Terry

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**Dear Rev. Susanne & Michael:**

When traveling the Highways of Heaven,  
Slow down and read this sign.  
A tribute to your Pastor-ship,  
Memories left behind.  

In Caring and Compassion,  
You, Susanne, Excel.  
Godspeed your Stewardship  
You have served us well

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People say one person  
Can’t make a difference in the world...  
But we’ve seen the difference you make  
In the lives of those around you.

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_Farewell_
Covid Clean-up Collection

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

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

Happy September Birthday

Charlie Rood, III  Sept 1
Joyce Hamilton  Sept 1
RJ Lempke  Sept 8
Patti Wood  Sept 11
George Harvey  Sept 16
Jim Babinski  Sept 26
George Wheeler  Sept 28
Louise Tagliavini  Oct 1
Norma Cagney  Oct 3

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

September’s birth flower is the aster which is said to represent both love and daintiness. The flowers are also associated with wisdom, valor and faith, making them a great choice for dear friends and family members.

Our church has been open 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!
Who Do You Think You Are?

In early 2019 I was brought to the ER in an ambulance. The nurse met me and started asking the usual registration question. Then she asked me what I was and listed about 26 choices. I said none of them. "What were you when you were born and what are you now?" she asked. My reply: “I was born a baby and now I am an old man." “I will put you down as straight,” she said. But I've been thinking. I am the unique creation of God. I have a fingerprint that no one else in all the new creations of humans has. On the sixth day (Genesis 1:26,27) God created the first man. Who can count how many more human beings since? And each of us has a unique fingerprint.

About 15 or more years ago I heard someone sneeze and I heard myself say "bless you." I was shocked. That is not the way I was raised; bless you." What I have dropped prayer? I was nurse that when hale every bit of says, "And the man out of the and breathed into breath of life; living soul." So I left out the most the blessing, God back into my is devious and distracts us to conform to his world. We hear others saying simply “bless you” and we easily fall in line. That is not who I am or want to be.

I also think about being created in God’s image. God is a trinity: God the Father, Jesus his only son, and the Holy Spirit. When I think about it, I am a trinity too. I am a physical, mental, and spiritual being — body, mind, soul. Three in one just like my creator. Wow! And when I think about who I think I am, I pull myself back and remember Micah 6:8 “….do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly” with my God.

It restores balance as to all that I am.

To close, I am reminded of some wise man of the past who said: “I think, therefore I am." Your brother in Christ, ~Bob Bates

Dubito ergo cogito, cogito ergo sum.
“I doubt therefore I think, I think therefore I am.” Rene Descartes (1596-1650)

A Walk Around the Church

Those Aren’t Monarchs!

In these cooler mornings I have noticed colorful, brush-like caterpillars munching on the milkweed at the door of New Fellowship Hall. A quick Google image search revealed their identity to be the Milkweed Tussock Moth Caterpillar (aka Tiger Moth) ~Lyn

This isn’t a Monarch

The Missions and Outreach committee was able to provide well packed picnic bags to 67 recipients at the Westfield Soup Kitchen on Monday, July 27th. We would like to thank you for the fruit cups, fresh fruit, drinks, homemade cookies, granola bars, fruit snacks, crackers and candies. Thank you too, to Lorraine Bates, for an extra set of hands in preparing the sandwiches. Each one received a meat, as well as a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, in their bag. It was an incredibly hot day and each person was able to receive two drinks - so much appreciated!

Again, the manner in which we come together is amazing. Thank you all!
... and the Ladies Benevolent Society

By 1830 nearly every New England town had a female benevolent society, an extension of the women's natural roles as care providers and educators. Benevolent societies were founded and managed by women who played an active part in society and established their own independent finances.

In the last 50 years, no group at Southwick Congregational has been more wholesome, productive and long-lasting than the Ladies Benevolent Society. The LBS was organized prior to the 1950’s into a number of committees as hospitality, dinners, material aide, family life, housekeeping, and treasurer with Julie Chase often at the helm. LBS members met monthly with a devotional as part of each meeting.

A gala LBS event was the annual Mother-Daughter banquet followed by a fashion show or entertainment. Fashion shows were featured on the LBS-inspired stage in New Fellowship Hall, with apparel provided by Smith’s Department Store of Westfield, Southwick and Suffield. Imagine the fun the ladies had modeling new outfits, then heading off to Smiths to acquire the latest fashions and hats! Some of those hats still exist, as this “Tam” hat preserved by Joyce Arnold and designed by the famous Nella Tagliavini, mother-in-law to Louise Tagliavini.

Songs were often provided by “The Trio” of Evelyn Fuller, Dot Nitsch and Barb Morpeth with a youthful Roberta (Hill) Kowal on the piano.

Dinners! The LBS hosted a multitude of fundraisers as the bi-weekly dinner for the Lion’s Club or the monthly joint dinner with the Men’s Club. LBS fundraisers also included the Coffee Hour, the annual strawberry supper, the Holly Bazaar, and biannual rummage sales. The LBS created all manner of crafts, like Raggedy Ann dolls and sold them at their Yuletide gathering, the forerunner of what we know today as the Holly Bazaar.

The last of the LBS groups continued meetings until mid-2006 at the home of Martha Utzinger, a Home Economics teacher who routinely baked all the biscuits for the annual strawberry supper.

LBS annual budgets varied from $3000 to $5000 during the period from 1960 through 1990. The LBS annually pledged from $1000 to $2000 as support to Southwick Congregational as well as smaller amounts to various scholarship and charitable organizations.

So, if you cross paths with Joyce Arnold, Julie Chase, Rob Kowal, Connie Johnson, Karen Brzezinski, Janice Hall, and others as former members of the LBS, thank them for their stewardship and the lasting benefit the Ladies Benevolent Society of America has had on our church.

~ Virgil
The British ended their use of the Julian calendar, switching instead to the Gregorian calendar. Wednesday, September 2, was followed by Thursday, September 14. The correction resulted in rioting by people who felt cheated and demanded the missing eleven days back.

The Treaty of Paris was signed by John Adams, Ben Franklin and John Jay, formally ending the American Revolutionary War between Britain and the United States.

The island of Manhattan was discovered by Henry Hudson.

The Northern Pacific Railroad across the U.S. was completed.

The United States came into existence as the Continental Congress changed the name of the new American nation from the United Colonies.

The worst terrorist attack in U.S. history. Never Forget.

Composer George Frederick Handel finished Messiah after working on it nonstop for 23 days.

The Mayflower ship departed from England, bound for America with 102 passengers and a small crew. The ship weathered dangerous Atlantic storms and reached Provincetown, Massachusetts on November 21st. The Pilgrims disembarked at Plymouth on December 26th.

New Zealand became the first country to grant women the right to vote.

Autumn (Sept. 23-Dec. 21) begins in the Northern Hemisphere with the autumnal equinox, at 1:37 a.m. EDT. In the Southern Hemisphere it is the beginning of spring.

The first American newspaper was published. A single edition of Publick Occurrences Both Foreign and Domestick appeared in Boston, Massachusetts.

The first U.S. Congress proposed 12 Amendments to the Constitution, ten of which, the Bill of Rights, were ratified.

Tarzan of the Apes creator Edgar Rice Burroughs
Jim Henson; inventor of Muppets
American folk legend Johnny Appleseed was born in Leominster, Massachusetts (as John Chapman).
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES DRAFT

August 13, 2020

The meeting was called to order by Terry Putnam, Moderator, at 6:00 p.m., and was held via Zoom. Eric Nitsch offered an opening prayer.


Kristy Johnston, on behalf of Christian Ed, asked Patty Banasik, Chair of Deacons, to share a letter from Rev. Susanne regarding the confirmation of Ezri Johnston and Ricky Pitoniak. Rev. Susanne felt both are ready to be confirmed, they have written their own Affirmations of Faith, and she would like to plan for the ceremony. In light of the pandemic, it was requested to hold the ceremony outside on the church green and Livestream it for viewing by church members and family. They have requested the Chair of the Deacons also be present at the ceremony. A date is to be determined.

Bob Franzen from the Search Committee reported the Church Profile is ready to be submitted but they will wait for a congregational vote on how to proceed. The Moderator offered a thank you to all Search Committee members for their hard work.

Much discussion regarding holding information sessions for members to learn about a possible yoking opportunity with Westfield’s 1st Church and procedures on how to hold a vote for members to decide on this yoking opportunity or continuing to pursue a sole part-time pastor. Jim Putnam offered guidelines on an alternative voting strategy since we cannot hold an in-person All-Church meeting where all can attend safely. There was a unanimous show of hands by the Executive Committee members in attendance to agree to this voting process. Details will follow.

Discussion on future church services since Rev. Susanne’s last service as our interim will be August 23rd. We do have a couple of volunteers to do Zoom sermons & services and possibly have the sermon delivered in the Sanctuary with church music played and Livestream this on Facebook and Youtube. Patty Banasik did express concerns about keeping our services going through a long stretch and would like to investigate an interim minister. Eric Nitsch asked about when we might consider opening up the church for indoor services since other area churches have begun to do this. We will need to consider this and have strict guidelines in place. Jim Putnam suggested we would have very small numbers in attendance at first so perhaps spacing of attendees can be increased for safety.

The Yoking Committee led by Kristy Johnston met and discussed how to research the yoking topic. They have a timeline in place and plan to put together a written report.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Melanie Nitsch, Clerk

ADDITIONAL PRAYERS

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

Serving in our Military at home and abroad:
Samantha Perusse Andrew DeWinkeler 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.

We offer our prayers to all who are affected by the coronavirus, especially the healthcare workers, first responders, grocery store workers, cleaners, and all who serve others.

Thank you.
5 THINGS TO KNOW AND SHARE!

1) Conference Seeks Digital Minister
2) SNEUCC Young Voices Project
   Flawed or Human; As humans we are not perfect
   God Is Always With Us
3) Stewardship, Choice, and Discipleship
4) Hospitality: Offering a Third Place to Gather
5) Upcoming Events:
   Centering Prayer: Sept. 9 & 16, 2:00 PM
   General Association 2020: Leading Toward Justice in
   Comfortable Church Culture Sept. 21 & 22

If you would like to receive this email, please let Lyn know at
Southwickucc@gmail.com

Pastoral 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 a deacon.
### September 2020

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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.

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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.**

- **CONFRONTATION Livestream**
  - Service on Facebook and YouTube
  - Zoom Coffee Hour 11
- **Grandparents Day**
- **Service on Facebook and YouTube**
  - Zoom Coffee Hour 11
- **Autumn Begins**
- **Yom Kippur**
- **Rosh Hashanah**
- **Gold Dome Articles Due**

**Drop Off for Fund Raiser 9-12**