February 2021

Please join us Sundays for Worship Service 10 am and Virtual Coffee Hour 11 am

Website: www.SouthwickUCC.org

GOLD DOME

The Good News Letter of the
Southwick Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Southwick, MA

So Loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him shall have everlasting life.

John 3:16

For God

Dated Material

Return Service Requested
Southwick, MA 01077-2060
P.O. Box 206
488 College Highway
Southwick Congregational Church
WORSHIP SCHEDULE
We invite you to join us each Sunday at our in-person service or to view our service on Facebook or on our website.

COFFEE HOUR
Our virtual coffee hour is every Sunday at 11 a.m. via Zoom. If you’d like to join us, please make sure the office has your current email address so we can send you an invitation with a link to join. Email us at SouthwickUcc@gmail.com with your email address.

OFFICE HOURS
Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (hours subject to change based upon Covid restrictions). Please leave a voicemail message or an email if you need anything nonemergent after hours.

EMERGENCY CALLS
Members of the church leadership team are on call for any emergent needs such as hospitalizations, etc. A schedule for February is posted on page 5. You can also call the church office number for the name of the on call person.

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.

VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE!
Our Facebook page is Southwick Congregational Church UCC. Please check it out, “like” us, and follow us!!!

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderator</td>
<td>Terry Putnam</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hannahput@yahoo.com">hannahput@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>413-569-9283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings &amp; Grounds</td>
<td>Eric Nitsch</td>
<td><a href="mailto:eric.nitsch@gmail.com">eric.nitsch@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>413-695-4164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Education</td>
<td>Kristy Johnston</td>
<td>ezri2006@gmail</td>
<td>413-977-8314</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deacons</td>
<td>Patty Banasik</td>
<td><a href="mailto:preciousbana@aol.com">preciousbana@aol.com</a></td>
<td>413-237-4717</td>
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<td>Finance</td>
<td>Melanie Nitsch</td>
<td><a href="mailto:emnitsch@gmail.com">emnitsch@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>413-454-7043</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flowers</td>
<td>Vacant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>Patti Wood</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pattiperusse@yahoo.com">pattiperusse@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>413-977-2524</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memorial Gifts</td>
<td>Karen Brzezinski</td>
<td><a href="mailto:karenbrzezinski@hotmail.com">karenbrzezinski@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>413-569-6816</td>
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<td>Missions</td>
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<td>Music</td>
<td>Joyce Paggen</td>
<td><a href="mailto:joyce.paggen@sbcglobal.net">joyce.paggen@sbcglobal.net</a></td>
<td>860-653-6610</td>
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<td>Nominating</td>
<td>Patti Wood</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pattiperusse@yahoo.com">pattiperusse@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>413-977-2524</td>
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<td>Pastoral Search</td>
<td>Jim Putnam</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jim-putnam@comcast.net">jim-putnam@comcast.net</a></td>
<td>413-569-9283</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pastoral Relations</td>
<td>Bob Franzen</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bobfranzen@hotmail.com">bobfranzen@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>413-233-8680</td>
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Southwick Congregational Church, UCC
488 College Highway; P.O. Box 260
Southwick, MA 01077-0260

Church Office Hours: Monday - Friday: 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM
Church Office Phone: 413-569-6362
Pastor Office Hours: By Appointment, Monday-Tuesday
Website: www.southwickucc.org
Office e-mail: southwickucc@gmail.com
Facebook: Southwick Congregational Church UCC
You Tube: Southwick Congregational Church
Staff: Choir Director/Organist Roberta Kowal
       Bell Choir Director Patti P. Wood
       Administrative Assistant Charnelle Harris
       Custodian Christopher Robin Roberts
"My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together."
~Desmond Tutu

"Diversity is not about how we differ. Diversity is about embracing one another's uniqueness."
~Ola Joseph

Photos from our church’s participation in the National Day of Remembrance on January 19 for those who have lost their lives during the Covid 19 pandemic. Many thanks to Pastor Julie Olmsted, Patty Banasik, Kristy Johnston, and Kirsten Allhusen for hosting this moving service. Photos courtesy of Cindy Lydiard and Hope Tremblay from the Westfield News.

**Pastor’s Greeting**

Dear friends,

I have begun my second month as your “Shared Ministry” Interim Pastor. It is a pleasure getting to know you all, through phone calls, email and regular mail. I am always looking for opportunities for the two churches to worship, study and get to know each other. We had a lovely second meeting of leadership on Zoom and folks seem excited to make Shared Ministry work in ways that bless everyone and the wider community. Although there will be exceptions and overlap, my schedule is as follows:

Sundays – Both churches, preaching the third and fourth Sundays for you. When Westfield starts back up with in-person services, there will be a change for both churches’ starting time. I am seeing generosity and flexibility in this and other areas, which makes me hopeful and optimistic. I am attending Coffee Hour for both churches, too. This is a highlight and I’m hoping to see more of you in future coffee hours. It’s a great way to bond and form friendships.

Monday/Tuesday – Southwick UCC

Wednesday/Thursday – First Congregational

Friday/Saturday – My days off

Of course, when there are pastoral emergencies, as well as funerals, special services, etc. I could be serving either/both congregations. This is the “settling in” period for your Shared Ministry, so as to make a smooth transition for your new settled pastor. Meanwhile, Southwick UCC will be hosting a brief Ash Wednesday service at 3pm in your parking lot February 17th. Folks will stay in their cars and we will provide ashes, either on your hand or forehead, through your window (using a cotton swab). Please bring paper and pen to write something down to “let go of” during Lent. A love offering for the food pantry will be received on your way out of the parking lot. I hope to see folks from both congregations in “droves.” : )
Also... many of you are familiar with the “Upper Room” daily devotions. We offer this in hard copy to many of our elders who have no internet. I subscribe to it via email and receive a daily meditation called “New Every Morning.” Through this I learned of an on-line “Lenten Retreat,” for which I registered. It provides daily devotions as well as an on-line gathering every day during the week at 12pm EST. I hope you will look into this and register, or engage with the devotions found in the hard copy.

Plus... Wednesday Zoom Prayer Services Each Wednesday, starting February 24, ending March 24, we will have a brief prayer service on Zoom. We will have music, quietness, scripture and sharing. Hope to see you all there!

My prayers and loving wishes continue for both churches as you embark on your new future of light and hope!

Christ’s love to all, Pastor Julie

Kids were asked questions about the Old and New Testaments. Below is a sample of what was written by the children. (They have not been retouched or corrected. Incorrect spelling has been left in, too).

- In the first book of the bible, Guinness, god got tired of creating the world so he took the sabbath off.
- Lots wife was a pillar of salt during the day, but a ball of fire during the night.
- Samson slayed the philistines with the axe of the apostles.
- Moses led the jews to the red sea where they made unleavened bread, which is bread without any ingredients.
- The Egyptians were all drowned in the dessert. Afterwards, Moses went up to mount cyanide to get the ten commandments.
- The first commandment was when Eve told Adam to eat the apple.

Warning: The Bible test is coming.... : )
**Prayer List 2/14/2021**

Karen Brzezinski
Patti Wood
Roberta Kowal
Eleanor Bates
George Wheeler
Lulu and Jim Fanion and their son, Phyliss Martin’s friends
Linda Sepanik Boucher, Phyliss Martin’s friend
Jenny, Karen Brzezinski’s sister
Ann, Lee Zinnack’s friend
David Brockway and family
Ann, Lee Zinnack’s friend
Chris Assard, friend of Lorraine & Bob Bates
Ben Ingalls, Flo’s nephew
Hetti Thompson, friend of Mary G
Remilson Morgan, Terry’s great-nephew
Judy, Patti’s Sister
Travis P., Ben’s friend
Diane DeWinkeleer
George Webster, Patty Banasik’s uncle
Irene, Mary’s friend, and her mom
Dawn’s Sister-in-law Julie and niece Emilie
Frances Hurley, Patty Banasik’s Mother-in-law
The family of Ginny Tyrowicz, Diane Orson’s friend
The family of Charlie Case

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**Night Emergency Coverage**

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<td>February 1-7</td>
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<td>February 8-15</td>
<td>Eric &amp; Melanie Nitsch</td>
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<td>February 16-21</td>
<td>Jim &amp; Terry Putnam</td>
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<td>February 22-28</td>
<td>Patty Banasik</td>
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<td>March 1-7</td>
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<td>Jim and Terry Putnam</td>
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<td>March 22-28</td>
<td>Patty Banasik</td>
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**Guess Who??**

Circa 1960’s
What is our measure of Stewardship? We often consider Stewardship only as giving. Stewardship is a commitment of caring that rewards us with a sense of shared value and gratitude from all involved.

We recognize that our labors, our talents and treasures accumulated throughout life are gifts, like garden tomatoes in September, meant to be shared with others. Less evident in our daily life is the joyful gratitude for which stewardship becomes a personal expression of fellowship.

Forty-seven Stewardship pledges averaging $148 per month have been received for 2021. The average monthly income provided by these pledges is $6,980 which should be compared with $8,577, the average monthly expense for Southwick Congregational from January through September 2020. The pandemic has adversely affected our fundraisers, an essential element in balancing our budget. ~ Virgil

**Be a Gift**

One morning I prayed and received the words “be a gift to the Church and to the world.” I realized that, like St. Therese of Lisieux, I can do little things with great love. I made “being a gift” my life mission. Most of the things I do take minutes and occur during the daily rhythm of life. I have come to view myself as a conduit of God’s love. Every morning, I look forward to giving gifts to those around me. If even a small portion of the adults in the US can be transformed the way I have been and start being a gift to those around us, we will change the world through love and God’s grace.

~ John P. (Center of Action and Contemplation Devotion from Fr. Richard Rohr)

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**HIGHLIGHTS FROM JOINT LEADERSHIP MEETING**

**First Cong. Church of Westfield and Southwick Cong. Church**

**2/4/2021**

Terry Putnam shared the application and reference letter for Southwick’s recently-hired office administrative assistant for discussion about the possibility of sharing a fulltime position between both churches after interest expressed from First Church.

Members of the new joint search committee were announced. A salary package for a settled pastor needs to be discussed and decided upon by both churches. We need to make sure that we come up with a package that works for both churches.

Times of church services for both churches was discussed. On months with 5 Sundays the suggestion was made to possibly have a combined service. Pastor Julie said she would need 30 minutes to get from one church to the other for the services. Both churches and Pastor Julie are confident that, with practice, there will be a good rhythm with all of this.

Ash Wednesday services were discussed. Some expressed a desire to keep separate identities but also to celebrate each other. We can try new approaches and if some do not work out, we can always try something else.

Sharing activities (picnics, potlucks, youth activities) will happen easily and all agree that this is a good thing to happen. Sunrise services at Easter, for example, could include both congregations.

Both congregations agree that youth need to be more involved in the life of the church. Some may want to sit in on a committee. Southwick families have been invited to, and are attending, the tubing event at Butternut.

Are we going to have coordinating services for Holy Week? We need input from both church congregations on several of these ideas. Perhaps an online survey would work. Both churches have their annual meeting coming up and all of these ideas need to be discussed.
**Music**
Joyce Paggen reported she will present the same committee budget for 2021 as was in place for 2020. She was asked by the Moderator to think about coordinating a music schedule for singers for each Sunday going forward during this COVID time, similar to what they do in the summer when the choir is off.

**Nominating**
Patti Wood reported we need new members for committees, especially Missions. She is asking everyone to brainstorm and let Patti know of people she can contact to ask.

**Pastoral Relations**
Bob Franzen is asking for a committee chairperson to volunteer and one additional person to join the committee.

**Moderator**
Terry is asking to form a Joint Search Committee with First Church of Westfield. Each church is asked to provide five members, four to regularly meet, and one alternate. The Moderators of each church will only attend the Joint Search Committee until they start to interview candidates.

We need to form an ad-hoc negotiating committee with First Church to work out the details of our shared ministry once in-person worship resumes for both churches.

There is a joint leadership Zoom meeting scheduled with First Church for 1/28/21. It is suggested to open up this meeting to all members of both congregations.

A second round of PPP loans is now available. Research is being done to see if our church will qualify. Ted Orson mentioned he is opposed to this. The decision was brought to a vote with five in favor of pursuing a second loan if we qualify, and two opposed. Melanie is beginning the process of applying for forgiveness for our first loan.

Our February meeting will be the Annual Meeting on 2/11/21 via Zoom at 6 pm and our next Executive Committee Meeting will be 3/11/21 via Zoom at a time to be decided.

A closing prayer was offered by Pastor Julie and the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted, *Melanie Nitsch, Clerk*

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2020 has definitely been a challenging year for us. During this worldwide Covid 19 pandemic, our congregation and our community have experienced loss, sickness, isolation, disruption, emotional and physical trauma, and insecurity. We have lost loved ones from our own families and friends and from within our church family. While they are no longer with us physically, we will always feel their presence among us and continue to honor their memory.

I have been in awe of the resilience and perseverance of our congregation throughout this epidemic. You have been quick to assist our church family and our broader community when needs have arisen; you continue to support our church with your prayers, your gifts, and your talents; and you have amazed me with your flexibility to try new ways to worship and to maintain the “connections” among our congregation members.

2021 will be an exciting one for our church family. We have welcomed Pastor Julie Olmsted as our interim minister and Charnelle Harris as our new administrative assistant, and we have begun exploring our relationship with First Congregational Church of Westfield as we embark on a joint search for a shared fulltime minister. I remain optimistic that our scientists, infectious disease experts, and health professionals will continue to make progress toward defeating the virus so that we can once again hug each other and worship God together in our beautiful sanctuary.

Love, hope and prayers to all ~ Terry

“The time is always right to do what is right.”
~Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Pastor Julie Olmsted is hosting a virtual Bible study on every Wednesday at 1 p.m. She is also hosting a virtual Lenten service on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. from February 24-March 24. Please contact Pastor Julie or Terry Putnam if you’d like to participate.

Please welcome Charnelle Harris, our new Office Administrative Assistant! She’ll be working closely with Pastor Julie, our church leadership team, and our committees to help us better serve you and our church. She’ll be in the office Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. Please feel free to call the office to welcome her!

and then purchasing gift certificates from local restaurants to give to them. The First Church of Westfield is inviting our youth to join their youth on a trip to Butternut. CORI checks will be re-done on adults in the church who work with our youth.

**Deacons**
Patty Banasik reported. First our Moderator complimented the Deacons for maintaining our church services at this time with everything running smoothly. They are discussing an Ash Wednesday service for February. They will brainstorm with Pastor Julie about how to go about this safely.

**Finance**
Melanie Nitsch reported. The date of the next annual meeting was discussed. A motion was made to hold the meeting via Zoom on February 11, 2021, at 6 p.m. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. We are still searching for a new Administrative Assistant and are discussing with First Cong Church in Westfield to see if they are interested in making it a full-time position to share with them.

**Flowers**
Moderator Terry Putnam offered a posthumous thank you to Roxanne Cook for all she has done for the Flower Committee over the past years. She will be missed!

**Memorial Gifts**
A discussion ensued about how important and helpful it would be to have a backup Memorial Gifts person to help out Karen Brzezinski and we are looking for a volunteer.

**Missions & Outreach**
Currently this committee is not staffed but a new person has volunteered to come on board in February. More help, especially anyone with prior Missions experience, would be so welcome!
Executive Board Meeting Minutes

January 14, 2021
The meeting was called to order by Terry Putnam, Moderator, at 6:05 p.m., and was held via Zoom. In attendance: Terry Putnam, Ted Orson, Patty Banasik, Melanie Nitsch, Bob Franzen, Joyce Paggen, Kristy Johnston, Patti Wood, Pastor Julie Olmsted, and Jim Putnam. The meeting was opened with a pastoral prayer by Pastor Julie.

Minister's Report
Pastor Julie reports she has been very busy working for us for the past two weeks. She has been sending cards to members, making phone calls and emails. She spent time with Connie Johnson’s family recently at her passing. Her first sermon for us will be January 17th.

Treasurer
Ted Orson presented the end of year financial report. We had revenue of $104,568. Our budgeted pledges were $85,500 but the actual pledges received were $83,000 for 2020. The new minister is in our payroll system. He will need to contact the UCC Pension Board to set up billing us for the minister’s pension, health care, and life/disability, the cost of which is being shared with First Cong Church of Westfield.

Buildings & Grounds
Bob Franzen reported our custodian is cleaning the sanctuary Friday/Saturday before our Sunday services and Chris is very responsive to any special requests. He is paid an extra stipend when asked to clean before and after special events such as a recent funeral. Ted Orson will do a parsonage inspection on 1/17/21 to see how it has been maintained.

Christian Ed
Kristy Johnston reports the classroom still remains closed due to COVID. The committee is still considering doing a Zoom classroom but was holding off for a while as most kids (and parents) are overwhelmed with a lot of Zoom at this time. She is considering a community outreach/missions project of

February Birthdays

Ricky Pitoniak  February 1
Charnelle Harris  February 10
Diane Jennett  February 11
Melanie Day  February 29

Please let the church office know through a phone call or email when your birthday is so that we can update our records and share our best wishes. Thanks!

February’s birth flowers are the VIOLET & PRIMROSE.
VIOLETS represent watchfulness, loyalty and faithfulness.
PRIMROSES are given to others to let them know you can’t live without them.
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