

At this writing, I'm still in Blooming Grove, New York, dealing with New York traffic, wading through stacks of boxes and saying goodbye to the church I have served for the last seven and a half years. The trailer is sitting in the driveway and is filling up! Leaving a congregation is always a bittersweet event, but moving to a new congregation helps balance that with the joy of getting acquainted with a new congregation and community.

I am grateful and humbled by your affirmation of me as your next pastor. In the search process, I have had the opportunity to talk with search committees from a number of churches in Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and all the New England states except for Rhode Island. I even had a contact from the Indiana/Kentucky Conference Minister, who wanted me to circulate my profile there. That was too far away from New England, however, which has really been my desired area. As you know by now, I grew up in Connecticut and, other than my time in New York, the rest of my ministry has been spent in New England. Some of the churches I spoke with had significant challenges that they had not worked through adequately. Some could probably have been a fairly good fit and others would definitely not have been a good fit, but I have found South Congregational a close match to what I have been looking for in a congregation—an interest in mission, a desire to serve the community, and a willingness to explore ways to express the Christian faith.

I expect that for the first few weeks, I'll be setting up my office and the parsonage, and will get familiar with the monthly schedule of meetings and events. I'll also be making connections in the community with hospitals, local clergy, and community organizations. I would appreciate any contacts that anyone feels might be of interest. Most importantly, I will continue the process of getting to know you, something I've already had a start on with the candidating Sunday and contacts with the Search Committee. Our first year together will be one of exploration, as you become familiar with me and I with you. I am looking forward to new opportunities for outreach and ministry.

Being a pastor is an intimate calling. Over the years, I have worked with families who have been in crisis, with people in the process of dying, and at other times when they are most vulnerable. I am ready to walk with you in those various and difficult parts of your lives and also in exploring our relationship with God through worship, study, mission, prayer and contemplation. I am hoping that my interests in music and art will enhance our experience of God's grace.

Anita and I both want to thank the congregation in making us feel welcome in Newport. We are honored that we will be living in the parsonage, a marvelous old house with lots of grace and character. In a few months, once we have the house pretty well set, we will plan an open house to give everyone an opportunity to see how we have set things up. Living there will be a delight. Anita is going to be working at her job in New Jersey probably until mid-February, but will be in Newport on the weekends. We are looking forward to living in a town where drivers actually stop for pedestrians, and which has a strong community identity.

By the time you read this we will be unpacking boxes in Newport! I look forward to living and working with you as we explore what it is to work together in mission in Christ's name.

In Christ,

Rev. Craig Cowing



Dear South Church family and friends,


Looking back on my months with you, it is now so very clear that God placed me in your arms for care and for healing during a very sad time in my life. With quality time spent fulfilling my covenant with you, I avoided sinking into gloom or despair. With your support and love, I found strength to face each new day with a purpose, even looking forward to the challenges. You are a uniquely gifted group of people with many talents waiting to be brought to bear on the new times and I love you all.

As you all have been warned, although I live in town and we will see each other often, I am no longer your pastor and can no longer be called upon for a pastoral relationship. I cheerfully relinquish that to Rev. Cowing. I do, however, expect the deep friendships to continue undiminished.

With many thanks for your care of me and my heartfelt good wishes for your future.

Love always,
Alice +

MUSICAL NOTES

 First, an additional word of thanks to everyone for your continued support of our super music program at South Congregational Church. This month represents my first year with all of you as your organist and choir director. What a joy it continues to be for me and, I trust, the senior choir. I even love the ride to and from Northfield, New Hampshire – sort of part of my upward-soaring way, even in the snow!!

The handbell choir and I are also moving forward together and we hope to be able to “tackle” some more of the exquisitely beautiful music for handbells once the ringers become accustomed to their new director. Gene Corliss is teaching all of us more about the special strokes we use with the

bells. Just maybe, in the coming months, we can also combine piano, handbells and the senior choir!! Keep praying about that!!

Of course I realize that we haven't even entered the season of Lent but that doesn't preclude the Senior Choir from beginning to learn our Palm Sunday (March 28, 2010) cantata, “Praise the God of Resurrection”, featuring the inspiring music of Mark Hayes, Lloyd Larson, Joseph Martin and Ruth Schram. This also includes narrative. Holy Week will also grace us with the exquisite flute melodies from Cassie White – both on Maundy Thursday and Easter – as well as additional special music from the choirs, inclusive of the bells. As I mentioned in our January “Musical Notes,” we will be doing some lovely spirituals (both with hymns and the choirs) to celebrate “Black History Month” in February.

So much gratitude goes forth from me for the healing work of Roger Daly and Alice Roberts for the spiritual progress of this beloved church and here we are now certainly looking forward, as we continue to move ahead in our spiritual journeys, both individually and collectively, to the leadership of Reverend Cowing and his lovely wife, Anita. Let's embrace them with God's ever present love and, of course, His gorgeous musical harmonies!

Shirley Boucher
Organist/Choir director

MISSING PANS OR DISHES?

Check out the kitchen counters...we seem to be growing a supply of pans and glass dishes that do not belong to the church. With all of the goodies that get brought in and all of the suppers and bake sales, things get left here and I really think they would rather be at home in the kitchens of those they belong to! Take a peek now and again and help us clean up the counters in the kitchen!

FOOD PANTRY

What an active community ministry the Newport Food Pantry is! Each Sunday our congregation brings in items to donate and each Thursday morning Yorick Hurd, a volunteer for the pantry, comes and gets our bags. They get sorted and shelved and go out the door as fast as they come in. Bring in any items and leave them in the blue bin in the fireplace room and we will make a difference in the lives of those who need our help! Rich Chappell does a great job as coordinator of the Food Pantry and is being honored in February for his work with this vital part of our community.

CARTRIDGES RECYCLED

A few years back, Steve White got us involved with a program that pays us to recycle our used toner and computer ink cartridges....we have made a little bit of money doing this and we encourage you to bring in your cartridges. Every dollar we get back is another dollar in our operating fund! MJ Harrington's and McCrillis and Eldredge bring in their cartridges so we can benefit from them. Thank you! Ask Steve if you have any questions about this endeavor!

KELSEY IS GETTING READY FOR HER HIKE

On February 7th, Rev. Cowing will help us to send Kelsey Monahan on her journey hiking the Appalachian Trail. In my absence, Kevin Corliss will be a part of this blessing. We will be hanging a map to track Kelsey's progress and her mom, Karen, will update us on a regular basis. I ask that you include Kelsey and her family in your prayers while she is gone on her adventure.

LOST AND FOUND

There is a white box on the shelf in the coat room that is a catch all for lost mittens, gloves, glass cases, etc. Take a peek and see if anything belongs to you!

FLOWERS AND STEEPLELIGHTING

There is a flower chart in the fellowshp hall just waiting for your name to get put on it! Take on a week of doing the altar flowers. Pick an available date near your birthday or anniversary or a time special to you and do the flowers for the altar. It is a great way to brighten up the life of the church as well as your life. In years past I have given the flowers in honor of my girls' birthdays or special events in their lives. Then after worship take the flowers home or have us bring them to one of the nursing homes we visit or send them to a shut in. The options are many! See Ginny Kennedy if you have any questions.

Steeplelighting is along the same lines as flowers. Make a donation and light the way to South Church in honor of someone in your life. Vieno Pockett is in charge of this.

RECYCLING

The "greening" continues and we thank those of you who are remembering to recycle when you can. We love it when people take their bulletins home and refer to them through the week for announcements and who might be in need of prayer. If you choose to leave your bulletin at church there are boxes for you to leave them in on your way out of the sanctuary!



WINTER CARNIVAL

Before Kelsey can leave on her hike, she has the duty as the reigning Winter Carnival Queen to pass the torch to the 2010 Queen. The theme for the Newport Winter Carnival this year is "Fairy Tales". Two of our Sunday School girls are princesses: Grace Rochford Richardson and Alia Gonzalez. We hope that they have a fabulous experience and are left waiting for the day when they can compete to be Queen. The torch lighting is February 10th with the pageant on the 11th and 12th.

SUPERBOWL SUBS

The youth group is continuing the tradition of making submarine sandwiches on Superbowl Sunday. They are taking orders for \$6 each. We hope you will support this venture.

BIRTH

Life is a circle and we are pleased to announce that Ellie Drown has a great granddaughter. Her name is Abigail Elinor Kellogg and she was born on January 20th.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND YOUTH MINISTRIES

Love is the theme in February. In the stores and in our minds we see hearts everywhere we go. I **love** South Church, I **love** the church school children, I **love** the youth (someone has to!), I **love** helping the children learn the stories from the bible and learn the songs that they will long remember even when they are grown ups! I **love** the energy and enthusiasm the children show in everything they do, from making mobiles from bible characters to baking muffins with Beth. I hope that all of us can take a few minutes this month to think about and be thankful for the things we **love** at South Church.

I will be out for the month of February from church, as I am having abdominal surgery on the 2nd and have to recover for 4 to 6 weeks. Beth Perkins and the CE board will take care of all of the needs of the children and youth. There will be people in the office to answer the phone and to help Craig get acclimated to the church and the office. I am hopeful that everyone will step up and pitch in and see where they can make a difference at South Church.

See you all in March!
Tracey

PASSING

I am sad to report that Arther Leavitt's brother Albert Leavitt passed away in mid January. Our condolences go to Art and all of the Leavitt family.

AFTERNOON CIRCLE

Even though the winter weather is not so friendly as other times of the year, still the Circlers like the option of getting out of the house and being with others once in a while. In early January, some of us did just that. Of course there was no official meeting, but we enjoyed our lunch together. Thinking about the unhappy snowy need to cancel our traditional Holly Tea, we unofficially made the decision to have a Spring Tea in April. While it will be too late for holly branches, it will certainly be a good time for spring blossoms. Details will be worked out soon. There is already a program in place, as the Sunapee Middle High School musicians have indicated they will be happy to be there.

There was also talk about an upcoming pie sale. The current plan is for a pie/cake sale recognizing St. Patrick's Day in March. The sale will be after church on the Sunday preceding St. Patrick's Day, March 14th.

The next gathering will be on Wednesday, February 10 at noon for lunch. There will be beverages available, and perhaps someone will bring an extra cookie for dessert--no guarantee. Looking forward to seeing lots of friends in Fellowship Hall in February.

A CROP WALK THANK YOU

Thank you for your gifts of time, leadership and love through the CROP Hunger Walk. May the grace and love of God bless you through out the coming year.

Church World Service
New England

THANK YOU

On behalf of the Willey-Perra Fund I would like to thank the member of South Congregational Church for participating in the "Giving Tree Program." Together with your generous gifts our community was able to provide gifts for 374 area children.

Jackie Odell
Elf Shop liaison

NOTES OF THANKS/PRAYER/CARE

Photographs of our congregation holding the beautiful material and notes of thanks, prayer and care are on their way to City Central Church in Zimbabwe.

We're hopeful that the package will not take a year to arrive at our partner church, but we can be sure that whenever it does arrive, it will be received with pleasure and gratefulness.

SOUTH CHURCH BUYS 55 LUCINDA PINS

WOW! This number of pins sold gives Turning Points Network a profit of \$412.50. The Lucinda funds will support the shelter and the 24 hour support and crisis line. At the Shelter, funds will provide for housing, food and peer counseling. For the 24 hour Support and Crisis Line, funds help to cover the cost of the 800 number and volunteer crisis line training.

In addition to the pins sold during coffee hour, a couple of members brought pins to their work and to their knitting group. That certainly helped to add to the total number of pins that were sold!

CHRISTMAS FUND GENEROSITY

\$736.00 was collected in support of the Christmas Fund, formerly know as "Veterans of the Cross".

A special thank you goes out to Chuck Kennedy for sharing his "knowledge of and care for" this special offering of the United Church of Christ.

FEBRUARY'S MISSION MOMENT

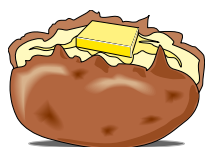
On February 14, Jim Contois, Case Manager for the Emergency Housing Program, will share information with us about the three shelters located in Claremont. Along with his informational sharing will come a request for new or nearly new:

Towels	Wipes
Dishes	Pots/Pans
Silverware	Diapers
Reading Glasses	Can Openers
Blankets	Pillows
Roasting Pan	Children's Ski Pants
Used or New Winter Boots	

We will set up an area in the church to receive the above items and will deliver them to Claremont.

OUTDOOR MINISTRIES UPDATE

HOT TOPPED SPUDS



Wonderful hot baked potatoes with a choice of toppings such as cheese, sour cream, chili, bacon bits, salt and pepper, and butter will be for sale on Saturday, February 13th (Newport Winter Carnival weekend) from 11:00 PM to 4:00 PM. LOOK FOR THE RED CANOPY TENT ON THE COMMON NEXT TO THE GAZEBO. Support the church's "Peels for Wheels" quest for a new 15 passenger van!!! Questions? Contact Bruce Rice, the Tater Caterer.

CANOE SUPPER

The **Annual CANOE SUPPER** will take place on **February 20th at 5:30 PM** featuring food, fun, slideshow, and sign up for the 2010 trip. Last year's participants will act as servers. Cost for the supper will be \$8 per adult and \$5 per child under age 12. Mark your calendars for a great meal for a great cause.

CANOE TRIP

The **ANNUAL CANOE TRIP** to La Verendrye Reserve Faunique, Quebec, Canada will take place on July 30th to August 7th for teens age 14-19. Consider giving a campership donation as a gift to enable a teen to attend the trip. Registration will commence at the Canoe supper and cease when the slots are filled. Registration form attached to this issue of the Parish Post. Do not miss out on this chance of a lifetime and life-changing experience. Good food, supervision, and certified medical care are provided. Teens from everywhere are welcome to come, regardless of any church affiliation. Direct any questions to any Outdoor Ministries leader or to Kevin Corliss at kevincorliss@comcast.net or 863-1425 or www.thesouthchurch.org/canoe/ for forms and information.

Paulette Rowell is in charge of **photo CDs and Calendars**. She reminds all who ordered those items to pick them up. Catch up with her at coffee hour any Sunday, call her at home (763-3175) or email (paulette@dsri.org). She is happy to mail them to you if you include a fee for the cost of shipping. 2010 calendars are \$20 each featuring canoe trip photos and traditional calendar layout--- please make checks out to OMC/South Church with "Van Fundraiser" in the memo line. The CDs are of the 2009 trip and feature over 600 photos, on sale for \$10 each --- put Canoe Trip Photo CD in the memo line on your check made out to OMC/South Church.

All Outdoor Ministries fundraising events like the supper, the calendars and the CDs are to benefit the replacement fund for the 15 passenger van. New vans are \$30,000 to \$40,000 and up; thus \$20,000 for a good used van is the target goal to be met by July 2010. Cost to rent a van is \$2,000 per week, making acquisition the best use of resources.

The current total raised thus far is approximately \$1,600. The van is not only used by trip goers, but also by Faith and Nature Camp, South Church committees and boards, special event travel, and most recently the Search Committee. Donations are tax deductible. Note the Display at church in the Fireplace Room or Fellowship Hall.





Jackie Odell	February 2
Deb Gardner	February 3
James Britton	February 5
Marcia Mancini	February 6
Marion Thorso	February 6
Michael Juneau	February 9
Bennie Nelson	February 9
Dick Whynall	February 11
Brian Holmes	February 13
Ellie White	February 13
Sean Monahan	February 14
Samantha Bouvier	February 14
Lyn Benson	February 15
Minnie Casey	February 15
Jaeda Rochford-Hague	February 17
Austin Malool-Juneau	February 18
Shirley Jennison	February 18
Kris Huttar	February 18
Frank Gallup	February 20
Kate Burgess	February 22
Cara White	February 23
Dick Holmes	February 24
Josh Stout	February 24
Henry Hamilton	February 25
Cassie White	February 25
Kelsey LaRoche	February 25
Ellie Drown	February 25
Beverly Bouvier	February 28
Brianna Wilkinson	February 28



Steve & Ellie White	February 1
Charles & Clare Barbieri	February 10
Margot & Phil Estabrook	February 28

WHISPERS

The man whispered, "God, speak to me," and a meadowlark sang.

But the man did not hear.

So the man yelled, "God, speak to me," and the thunder rolled across the sky.

But the man did not listen.

The man looked around and said, "God let me see you."

And a star shined brightly.

But the man did not see.

And the man shouted, "God show me a miracle."

And a life was born.

But the man did not notice.

So the man cried out in despair, "Touch me, God, and let me know you are here."

Whereupon, God reached down and touched the man.

But the man brushed the butterfly away and walked on.

Take this as a reminder...

God is always around us in the little and simple things that we take for granted.

