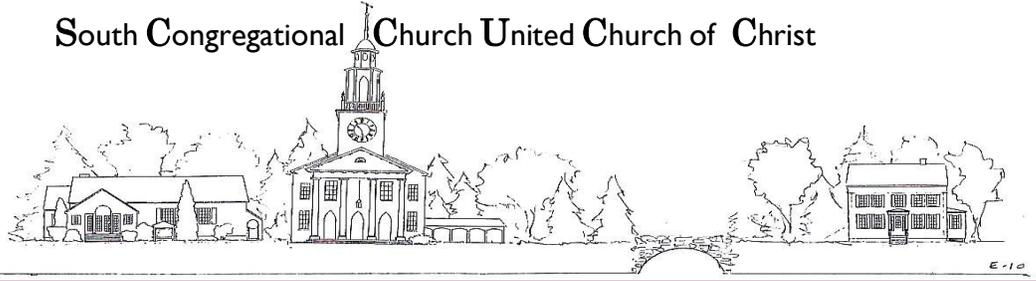


South Congregational Church United Church of Christ



March 2014

Our Mission is to be an inclusive community of faith that preaches the word of God, teaches the love of Jesus Christ and reaches out to all through the Holy Spirit.

An Open and Affirming Congregation

Inside this issue:

Words from Rev. Whiston
Christian Education News
You Should Know
Mark Your Calendars

Sunday Worship 10:30 am
(Nursery Care provided)

Sunday School 10:30 am
Classes

Hymn Sing Sundays
(last Sunday each month)
10:15 am

Words from our Minister

It is a new month and a new season of the church year arrives: Lent. The word itself finds its root in the German and Dutch for 'long' or 'length' as our days begin to lengthen in amount of daylight. Lent is forty days in duration, begins with Ash Wednesday and is the season leading us to Easter. For the faith community, it is a time of reflection and preparation – frequently linked with sacrifice or self-denial. This is based upon the story of Jesus being 40 days in the desert or wilderness a time of testing and reliance upon God. (*'Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.'* Luke 4)

Certainly it is significant that this takes place immediately following his baptism in the Jordan River; having just been commissioned to a new calling. We make note from scholars, that the number forty can also be understood as a way of expressing an event of long and thorough duration. (Noah and 40 days of rain, 40 years in the wilderness the people Israel traveling from Egypt to the Promised Land.) This time in the wilderness was not just a few meals being skipped- but a long, long period.

Thus we remember, as Advent helped us prepare for Christmas, Lent can serve that purpose for us in preparation for Easter. Taking walks, participating in Bible reading or group study, retreat opportunities, knitting a prayer shawl, enhanced commitment to worship attendance, volunteering at Habitat for Humanity Re-Store in Kennebunk for four hours and forty minutes; people of faith are called to listen to that inner voice of God for marking the path to be taken. *Charles*

The picture puzzle of last month's issue is nearing completion but still a ways to go -just like all of us being works in progress. Step by step, one piece at a time, finding where we fit and where we belong. Certainly fitting thoughts as we enter Lent.





Sunday School

The Season of Lent, an ancient season of the church, is 40-days' long (not counting the Sundays, which are considered "mini-Easters"). During this Lenten season (which begins on Ash Wednesday) the children will hear some key stories about Jesus from the gospel of John and begin to explore the themes of making choices, God's loving and life-giving Spirit, and Jesus' compassion and healing ministry. The color for this season is purple, symbolic of feeling sorry for times not lived in loving or just ways.

Our church school lessons for the month of March are as follows:

March 2 - Transfiguration Sunday

On Transfiguration Sunday, we hear a story based on Matthew 17:1-9 about the glory of God shining through Jesus and provide the opportunity for the children to wonder about the mystery and power of Jesus.

March 9 - "Choices to Live By"

This is the first Sunday of Lent, and we will introduce the children to Lent as a season of reflection and to some spiritual practices. We will also explore what it means to make good choices--with God's guidance--about the way to live. As the children explore the story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11), they will have an opportunity to compare Jesus' responses with their own.

March 16 - "Life-Giving Wind"

This Sunday we learn about the story of Nicodemus in John 3:1-17. We see how Jesus welcomed Nicodemus' questions and reminded him of how much God loves the world and cares about everything in it. The children likewise learn that it is okay for them to ask their own questions as they grow in their understanding of God's love for them.

March 23 - "Water for the Thirsty"

This week the children will hear a Bible story based on John 4:5-42, wherein Jesus reached out to welcome and engage in conversation with a Samaritan woman at the well. Likewise, we explore welcoming and including others, even those who are different from us. We pray that the children will grow in their understanding of welcome, respect, and faith as they explore the living water that Jesus offers.

March 30 - "Learning to See"

Our Bible study this week is based on John 9:1-41, in which Jesus restores a blind man's sight. We pray that the children will be encouraged by this amazing story of healing and of God's love.

Lenten Bible Study

For us as Christians, the cross is to our faith; yet there is still a mystery that surrounds our comprehension. Let's face it, this mystery is mind-bending! Do you have questions? My hope is to search within the depths of our souls and struggle with these questions together: Why did Jesus die on the cross? What was God thinking? What about sin? How about a little reconciliation? Salvation and a love that lives! As Lent comes closer, and the cross comes closer, my prayer is that we become closer to God.

First week: 1Peter 2:21, Philippians 3:7-17, John 11:32-35

Second week: Ephesians 1:3-14

Third week: Luke 5:12-13, 1John 1:5-2:2

Fourth week: 2 Corinthians 5:14-21, Colossians 1:15-23, Romans 8:9-17

Fifth week: John 19:17-30, Luke 24:1-9

Let's gather together in the library area on Tuesdays beginning March 4 (we will skip March 25) through Lent, **12 noon** and invite you to bring a brown-bag lunch. *Debra Girard*

You Should Know...

On February 16, we were pleased to welcome into church membership a group of twelve individuals, diverse in backgrounds and ages and faith traditions yet all finding South Church to be speaking to them at this time of their journey. We warmly welcomed: Diane and Fred Conley, Joanna Hall and Tom McCausland, Bryce and Jason Lenzen, Beth and David Micca, Karen Merrill, Linda Morrison, Claudia and Keith Truesdale. From NY state and NJ and VA or returning to Maine or living just up the road, with young children or college age or those who are independent adults and away; the South Church family is now further enriched.

Prayer shawls are here, made by those of the South Church community, to be taken to adults or younger person/child for comfort in times of need; be it physical health, emotional conflicts, spiritual quests. Supply and demand have an ebb and flow, we currently have several available for being shared across the community, across the state or beyond as you know of a need.

Mark Your Calendars

Women's Association 5th annual tag sale will be held at the Community House on Saturday May 31.

Collection boxes will be in place downstairs after Easter, so we hope that you will start to set items aside for us. All gently used goods except electronics or clothing are welcome. There will also be a table for baked and other home made goodies. Small items are preferred over large cakes or pies.

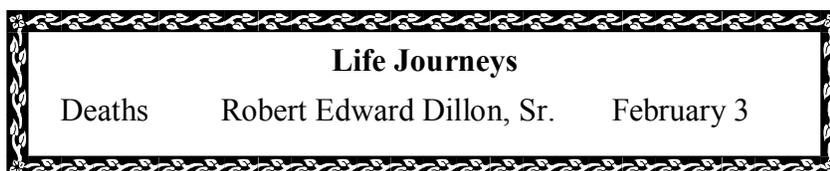
We hope that you will also plan to set aside time to help us, with sorting, pricing and set up in the few days prior to the sale, or to take charge of a table on sale day. There are many ways to aid us, and it's a great opportunity for fellowship. All the proceeds benefit the church and we welcome help from any age or gender.

Closer to the date there will be more details available and there will be sign up sheets too, so that you can choose in which ways you would like to involved.

Thank you in advance. *Women's Association Steering Committee*

Thank You

Suzanne and I so appreciate the prayers of the South Church community on our behalf since my back surgery and through these weeks of recuperation. So many small moments have assured us of your love, from Reverend Charles' visits and blessings to warm cards to delicious meals, sparing Suzanne yet one more effort, to welcome visits and a special hyacinth now in full blossom. Your concern for us has sped my healing and kept us thriving. Thank you. *Michael Tarabilda*



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We are on the web
www.southchurchucc.org

The deadline for submitting
newsletter articles is the 15th of
each month by emailing to:
sarah@southchurchucc.org.



Lent and Easter Offerings



Ash Wednesday worship service **7:00pm, March 5.**

This year, we are pleased to be the host church. A simple and quiet service, we recall the ancient practice of receiving ashes as a sign of our humanity and humility- a Biblical symbol of repentance. (The ashes come from the burning of last year's palms from Palm Sunday.) A unique opportunity to deepen your spiritual journey this year at South Church as other clergy and people of faith gather together.

Holy Week worship April 14-18, 12 noon
Kennebunk Baptist Church

Maundy Thursday worship April 17, TBA
Church on the Cape, Cape Porpoise

Good Friday worship April 18, 7:00pm
Village Baptist Church, Kennebunkport

Easter Sunday April 20, 10:30am
South Congregational Church

The Walk

Those of us who walk along this road
do so reluctantly.
Lent is not our favorite time of year.
We'd rather be more active -
planning and scurrying around.
All this is too contemplative to suit us.
Besides we don't know what to do
with pioussness and prayer.
Perhaps we're afraid to have time to think,
for thoughts come unbidden.
Perhaps we're afraid to face our future
knowing our past.
Give us the courage, O God,
to hear your word
and to read our living into it.
Give us the trust to know we're forgiven,
and give us the faith
to take up our lives and walk.

Ann Weems
Kneeling in Jerusalem