

SCC HIGHLIGHTS

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here

SOMERS CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST WORSHIPING AND SERVING SINCE 1727
599 Main St. PO Box 295 Somers, CT 06071 (860) 763- 4021

February 2023
Volume 295 / #2

Letter from the Pastor

There's a beautiful phrase in the letter to the Ephesians that describes followers of Jesus as "*being rooted and grounded in love.*" I've been thinking a lot lately about what it means to be "rooted" both in faith and practice. To be grounded implies that I am stable in, connected to, and supported by my immediate surroundings. When we arrive every Sunday morning for worship and enter the sanctuary it is a reminder that your immediate surroundings are good and holy and include the very real presence of God.

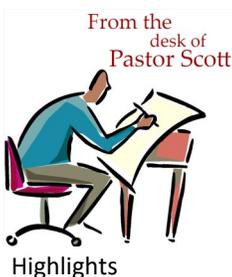
Growing up I was under the impression that the root system of a tree mirrored the branches, taking up the same shape and area below the surface that the tree did above ground - this is often how tree roots are portrayed in drawings. Turns out that is not entirely accurate. The roots of an oak in fact can spread out as far as 90 feet beyond the edge of a tree's widest branches. God's creation is truly amazing!

I am writing this to you just after we have finished our 296th Annual Congregational Meeting. In good and challenging times our worshiping community has gathered to hear what we have accomplished and to determine what our priorities are in the next year and beyond. This year's meeting found us creating an exciting new roster of committee members and elected officers. We also celebrated becoming an Open and Affirming Congregation.

And we were also reminded of the budget and membership challenges congregations like ours are facing. It was an open, honest, and Spirit-filled time together.

As we were leaving the meeting and heading back to our homes and families, I was reminded of our calling as a church. **I believe that SCUCC is called to be a congregation rooted-deeply rooted- in our love of God and our love of neighbor.**

So...how might we continue to take root in the physical place of our church and in the community that we're a part of? How might we be a place of rootedness - of stability, connection, and



support for one another and for others? These are some of the key questions for 2023 and beyond.

I don't have all the answers to that question, but I do have some ideas - and I know many of you do too. And as we continue to find ways to be "rooted and grounded in love" I imagine we will find that our growth as a congregation and our impact in Somers reaches far beyond what you can see of our building above ground - all for the pursuit of God's more just, loving, and generous world.

So let's get to work.

God bless.

Pastor Scott

February 2023 Worship Schedule

February 5th	Fifth Sunday after Epiphany Communion and Deacon Fund Sunday
February 12th	Sixth Sunday after Epiphany
February 19th	Mardi Gras Sunday Special Offering for Back Bay Mission
February 22nd 6:00 PM	Ash Wednesday Start of the Season of Lent
February 26th	First Sunday of Lent

The Somers Congregational UCC YouTube channel is: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKyuviPR4Q9DpQ_YhS3h_nA

IT'S OUR ANNUAL ANYTHING CHOCOLATE SALE



Home Made Goodies Sale

Bake Sale offers a choice of bars, breads, cakes, candy, and cookies.

February 11, 2023

9 am to 1 pm

Come join us for a sweet morning out and bring your family and friends. Remember that friends are the real chocolate chips of life.



MISSIONS' CORNER

As we are one month into the 2023, Missions is getting ready for another great year. We will continue to do our work on behalf of our community graciously asking for your help and prayer as we do so. We will continue to support our past organizations, as well as a couple of new ones we have chosen. This year, we will also focus some of our fundraising efforts on our Veterans, in addition to familiar ones to you. See below for some news:

Allocations:

No allocations for January, as Missions does not have our final budget number yet. We will send out January and February once we get that information. New organizations Missions will be supporting:

Recycled Rides (April)

The Alex Fisher Foundation (September)

If you have questions about these organizations, please ask, otherwise, more information on these as it gets closer to their donation month.

Thank you notes: Below are a few recent thank you notes received:

From Heifer International: “Because of your generosity, families are able to give their children nutritious food and medical care, lifting themselves out of hunger and poverty. On behalf of all people around the world. Thank you.” ~~Kristin

Chrysalis Center: “On behalf of those we serve, thank you and all our friends at SCC for your donation. “Chrysalis Center provides help to more than 1250 individuals and families in CT striving to regain stability in their lives.” Many thanks. ~~Sharon Castelli, CEO

Connecticut Food Share: “We are incredibly grateful for your gift to CT Foodshare. Your generosity plays a vital role in supporting our neighbors who live with hunger and make it possible to meet our client’s needs. As average grocery costs have increased by \$75 per month, your generosity enables us to conduct more than 100 mobile food distribution sites across the state providing fresh produce to individuals, families and seniors, support partner agencies, including food pantries and meal programs and also to address the root causes of hunger to increase economic stability and build long-term food security. We are very thankful for your partnership. Stay safe and well. ~~With gratitude, Jason Jakubowski, President & CEO

Department of Veterans Affairs-Town of Somers: A handwritten note: “*From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you for your generous donation to support our local Veterans. We are so very fortunate to have your caring support. Through your donation, we can continue to work toward helping Veterans and their families take advantage of benefits*”

such as healthcare, financial assistance and compensation pension. You are awesome neighbors and friends. May you be blessed with Christ's love and grace." ~~Warm regards, Sherri Marquis. Thank you so very much for your generous donation. ~~Best regards, David McCaffrey Department of Veterans Affairs.

Fundraiser News:

We would like to thank the congregation for stepping up once again for our first fundraiser in 2023 to the Enfield Warming Shelter, which was the collection of paper goods. Your kind hearts and generosity are always astounding to us.

Coming up in February/March will be a fundraiser to fill backpacks for Veterans. More information to follow on this soon, and Missions will also be helping with the organization of a fundraiser of flannel shirts for Veterans for Stand Down Day in the fall. More information to follow on these upcoming events coming soon.

Thought To Ponder: "A friend may be waiting behind a stranger's face." ~~Maya Angelou

Again, and as always, please reach out to any one of us if you have an organization that you would like us to consider donating to. We are open to all of your suggestions. If you have any questions about anything we do on Missions, please feel free to ask. From all of us on you Missions Committee, be well and above all else, **always be kind**. We look forward to continuing the good work that we do on behalf of all of our congregation and our community.

Lisa, Abbie, Jill, Ellen, Bev, Laura
Your Missions Committee



2023 Paper Goods Drive for Warming

These minutes are not official until approved by the Council at their next meeting.

Council Meeting Minutes

1.10.23

Room 215 at 6:00 PM

Present: Pastor Scott Spence, Moderator-Todd Weigel, Treasurer-Sharon Renzoni, CMC-Mark Marschall, Finance-Anne Kirkpatrick, Facilities-Larry Urbon, Missions-Lisa Zaugg, CE-Kim Kelley, Clerk-Deb Barry, Deacons-JoAnn Hornyak

Guests-Gene Allard

Executive Session 6:05-7:10 PM

1. Opening Prayer-Pastor Scott
2. Shared time – Anything special you want to share
3. Approval of minutes: December 20th, 2022 (M) Kim Kelley (S) Lisa Zaugg
Abbie Urbon (not Abby) spelling error. Minutes approved as corrected.
4. Book Discussion – On hold until the new Council is formed in February. Our book will be *Seculosity* by David Zahl.
5. Treasurer’s Report—Sharon Renzoni: Balance at the end of the year is \$.00 as it should be.
6. Pastor’s Report – Pastor Scott-
 - Letter from the O & A Coalition of the UCC welcoming USCC to the coalition, included a frameable certificate, and offering us resources as we continue our journey. Rev. Andrew G. Lang.
 - Pastor Scott has jury duty in May in Hampden County.
 - Church Office closed on Monday, January 16th for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
 - Feb. 5th installation of new officers and committee members during worship.
 - Meeting w/ Tolland Association and with Rev. Graham Van Keuren to start planning for The Small Church Summit. Also, Somersville and Somers plan to combine services for the Season of Lent and Holy Week.
 - January 22nd is a day to share and advertise our committees during Coffee Hour so that people can see what each committee does.
 - Call to the Annual Meeting to be read on January 15th, 22, and 29th.
 - Leah’s surgery with a donor tendon and ligament repair in their knee went well.
7. Information Items:
 - a. Committee Highlights, roundtable where each committee chair will briefly list (a few bullet points is the idea) any upcoming events, items of interest, concerns and so forth from their committee. (See below)

b. Calendar moment/review – additional dates given for the calendar

Adding in dates for outside events suggested....Solution: Ask Joe and Office Sharon to collaborate on Google Calendar on the church website.

Send out an e-mail blast advising all committees to lock up after their own meetings. Also remind committees to check in with Office Sharon if committee meeting time changes or if meeting is canceled.

c. Stewardship Campaign-Kim stated we usually get a few more pledges in January.

d. Friendly reminder to keep sending minutes to the office.

8. Old Business

a. Annual Meeting-The Call to the Annual Meeting was crafted. Motion to accept the call: (M) Anne Kirkpatrick, (S) JoAnn Hornyak. Budget is not finalized so a vote will be done by e-mail to the Council. Council will provide Coffee Hour for the Annual Meeting.

b. Organizational Meeting-Committee Meetings to be held in the Foundation Room immediately following the Annual Meeting. Tables will be assigned. Anne and JoAnn will make signs and tables will be set up.

c. Bylaws revisions (see attachment) Discussion resulted in only one by-law change proposal for the annual meeting.

d. Preliminary Budget for 2023 (updates since our last meeting in October).

e. Status of committee membership for next year. Todd will clarify in a constant contact that people can be on multiple committees, but only two that report to Council.

f. Small Church Summit-Pastor Scott reported under Pastor's report.

g. Further updates on outside consulting companies, Convergence Consulting and "The Rock Consulting" as Sharon, Scott and Todd have both met with them.

h. Crossroads Consultant

By February Meeting, Todd will have a comparison of services and prices from the consulting companies. Too soon to vote on at the Annual Meeting.

9. New Business

a. Movie Screen-tabled until next month.

Name tags-Encourage all of us to wear our name tags again. Should we add the names of our committees?

c. Outside events on council calendar-suggestion to update Google Calendar on our website.

d. Endowment fund-Hand out from Anne in packet. There is a deficit this year of over \$100,000. In three years we will not be receiving cell tower money. Our trends are declining membership, declining pledge units; less than 50% of our families are pledging. The endowment may well be used up in 5-6 years. Suggests the ADAPT Program from the Conference that will give options for churches that are in financial difficulty. A minister from the minister will shepherd the congregation through the process. Combining churches or yoking churches can take up to 5 years. This should be a wake-up call for the congregation.

e. Anything else that Council should discuss this month.

10. Committee Reports: Only Corrections and /or additions please

11. Meeting Attendees

- Christian Ed: Kim Kelley
- Deacons: Jo-Ann Hornyak
- Finance: Anne Kirkpatrick-see 9d.
- Facilities: Larry Urbon
- Missions: Lisa Zaugg-Reminder of Paper goods Drive for Safe Harbor through the end of January.
- Communications & Marketing: Mark Marschall-Megan Jewell has joined the CMC!
- Moderator: Todd Weigel
- Vice Moderator: Open
- Clerk: Deb Barry
- Treasurer: Sharon Renzoni
- Stewardship: Kim Kelley-Still hopeful as we often get some pledges in January.
- Pastor: Rev. Scott Spence

12. Minister's Comments; Joys and Concerns; Closing prayer

Meeting Adjourned at 8:50 PM



2023 Council Calendar

Jan. 22	Loaves and Fishes	July 2	Communion/Deacon's Fund
Jan. 29	Annual Meeting	July 23	Loaves and Fishes
Feb. 5	Communion/Deacon's Fund	July 31-Aug 4	VBS
Feb. 11/12	Anything Chocolate Sale	Aug. 6	Communion/Deacon's Fund
Feb. 19	Friendship Kitchen	Aug. 15	Council Meeting
Feb. 21	Council Meeting	Aug. 20	Friendship Kitchen
Feb. 22	Ash Wednesday	Sept. 3	Communion/Deacon's Fund
March 4	Small Church conference at SCC	Sept. 19	Council Meeting
March 5	Communion/Deacon's Fund	Sept. 24	Loaves and Fishes
March 21	Council Meeting	Oct. 1	Communion/Deacon's Fund
March 26	Loaves and Fishes	Oct. 15	Friendship Kitchen
April 2	Palm Sunday	Oct. 17	Council Meeting
	Communion/Deacon's Fund	Nov. 5	Communion/Deacon's Fund
April 6	Maundy Thursday	Nov. 21	Council Meeting
April 7	Good Friday	Nov. 23	Thanksgiving
April 9	Easter	Nov. 26	Loaves and Fishes
April 16	Friendship Kitchen	Dec. 1	Christmas Bazaar
April 18	Council Meeting	Dec. 3	Communion/Deacon's Fund
April 21	Tag Sale Drop off begins	Dec. 17	Friendship Kitchen
April 29/30	Tag Sale	Dec. 19	Council Meeting
May 7	Communion/Deacon's Fund	Dec. 24	Christmas Pageant
May 16	Council Meeting	Dec. 25	Christmas Day
May 28	Loaves and Fishes		
June 4	Communion/Deacon's Fund		
June 17	Conference Annual Meeting in Worcester, MA		
June 18	Friendship Kitchen		
June 20	Council Meeting		



Message from the Flower Committee

Easter is quickly approaching and we are starting to think about Easter Memorial Lillies. Please watch for further notices with information regarding price and order dates. March highlights will have the complete information.



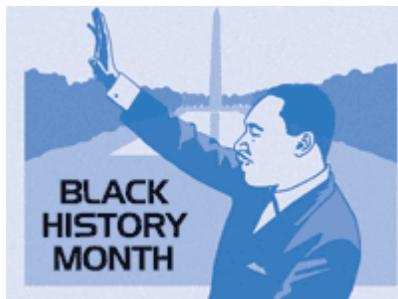
Calendar of Church Events

February 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

Bible Study – 10am Wednesdays
Book Club – 7pm Wednesday

Feb. 6	Caring Committee	5:00 pm
Feb. 9	Choir	7:00 pm
Feb. 11	Everything Chocolate Sale	9:00 am
Feb. 12	Finance Meeting	10:45 am
Feb. 12	Deacon's Meeting	11:30 am
Feb. 13	CMC	7:00 pm
Feb. 16	Choir	7:00 pm
Feb. 20	Church Office Closed	
Feb. 21	Council	6:00 pm
Feb. 23	Choir	7:00 pm





Somers Congregational Church
P.O. Box 295 · Somers, CT 06071

Our Church Administrative Assistant edits and publishes the
Church Newsletter, Highlights.

Please be aware of deadlines and send your articles to
Highlights@thesomerschurch.org

 *Highlights*
DEADLINE
February 15