



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	January 2025
599 Main St. PO Box 295 Somers, CT 06071	(860) 763- 4021	Volume 297 / #1

Letter from the Pastor

“January is the perfect balance between winter’s stillness and the new year’s potential.”
-Unknown

Peace and greetings in the name of Jesus! As I write this in the Church Office, it’s the 6th day of the season of Christmas on the Christian calendar, or the 30th of December on my desk calendar. Our house is still decorated for the season, with Christmas cards from friends displayed on the piano and the tree still upright and lit. Our refrigerator and the garage (aka the backup fridge) still have leftovers aplenty to enjoy. It’s the funny time of the year when you are not quite sure what day it is and you might find yourself becoming very interested in the Pop Tarts Bowl or binging a series on Netflix.

I grew up in a pretty low-church Methodist household, but for some reason I always remember my grandmother insisting that decorations were to stay up until Epiphany or January 6th. The neighbors across the street always took theirs down on January 1st. We had another friend who really loved Christmas and usually took his lights down sometime in April. But regardless of how we mark time, eventually, the lights will come down, the decorations will be packed away, and we will move from this time of feasting and rest back to the so-called “normal” rhythm of work and school.

Oftentimes, people take advantage of this slower pace and examine their lives. Sometimes we choose new ways we want to show up in the new year. Maybe this is the year we want to have a healthier relationship with food, or learn a new language, or pick up an exercise habit. What worked, what didn’t, what should we let go of, and what should we do more of in 2025?

There is nothing inherently wrong with a New Year’s Resolution. **But a word of caution- it is very easy to slip from thinking, “I want to change this thing I do” into “If I do this thing, I will be more deserving of love and compassion from others.” And that is not true.**

You need not do anything to deserve to be loved. You are valuable as you are-right now. You are loved by God as you are-right now. **You matter because you exist.**

There is nothing you can do, no change you can make, no habit you can pick up, that will make God love you more. God delights in you.



It may be that you need to change things in order to be healthy, in order to enjoy life more, or to reach goals you may have. **But none of that is necessary for you to be valuable, or to be more loveable, or to matter to God. You got this.**

Blessings on this New Year to you and yours.

Pastor Scott

January Worship Schedule

January 5th	Epiphany Sunday Psalm 72:1-7 & Matthew 2:1-12 <i>Communion & Deacon's Fund Sunday</i>
January 12th	Baptism of the Lord Sunday Psalm 91:9-12 & Mark 1:1-20
January 19th	Second Sunday after Epiphany Psalm 103:6-14 & Mark 2:1-22 <i>Jesus Heals and Touches</i>
January 26th	Third Sunday after Epiphany Psalm 126 & Mark 4:1-34 <i>Parables</i>

Covenant to Care Update

The presents are amazing. The children and their families are going to have a more joyful Christmas because of the generosity of our Church Family!!!



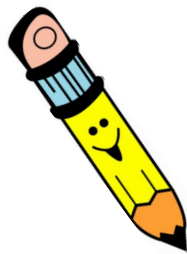


January 2025

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	29	30	31	

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study



Jan 1	HAPPY NEW YEAR—OFFICE CLOSED	
Jan 2	Choir Rehearsal	7:00 pm
Jan 5	Music and Arts Meeting	10:45 am
Jan 5	Finance Committee Meeting	10:45 am
Jan 6	Caring Committee Meeting	3:30 pm
Jan 6	Christian Education Meeting—Zoom	7:00 pm
Jan 7	Missions Meeting (Offsite)	7:00 pm
Jan 8	Fellowship Committee—Zoom	7:00 pm
Jan 9	Choir Rehearsal	7:00 pm
Jan 12	Facilities Meeting	8:30 am
Jan 12	Deacon’s Meeting	11:30 am
Jan 13	CMC Meeting	7:00 pm
Jan 16	Choir Rehearsal	7:00 pm
Jan 21	Council Meeting	6:00 pm
Jan 26	ANNUAL MEETING	10:30 am
Jan 30	Choir Rehearsal	7:00 pm



January 22nd



We Need The Following:

Instant or Box Potatoes
Fruit Snacks
Mac & Cheese
Toilet Paper
Peanut Butter
Children's Juice boxes or pouches

Did you know. . . .

Champ's regularly provides food for approximately 64 families. Donations come in through various local organizations as well as deliveries from Food Share.

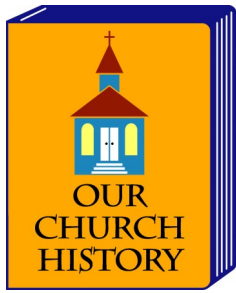
HOURS: Mondays 10 am—Noon and 6 pm -7

This year's Holiday Bazaar was a success.

Thank you to everyone who helped by setting up and decorating for the vendors and for our Vintage Christmas in the foundation room, to those who helped to prepare, serve, and clean-up for the holiday luncheon, and to our friendly greeters. Thank you to all of the holiday bakers! We nearly sold out this year. Cheers to our communications and marketing committee for spreading the word for this annual event.



This year the Bazaar made \$3,400 which included the vendor spots, the luncheon, and the bake sale. One again, thank you everyone!!



Early Somers History

The 300th anniversary of the gathering of our church is coming up in 2027. It will be here before we know it. In preparation for this, as church historian, I thought I would include some articles in Highlights about our interesting history. We are very fortunate, thanks to past church historians and pastors, to have a very complete archival collection. We have a file on every one of our pastors going back to our first pastor in 1727. We have a record of baptisms, marriages, deaths and new members. These are all backed up either with copies in the CT State Library (early records) or digitally (newer records). We have numerous photo albums and documents about events that have taken place over the years.

Besides our own archives, we have information from “The History of Tolland County” published in 1888 and “Somers, the History of a Connecticut Town” by Fred C. Davis and Richard W. Davis published in 1973. The Town of Somers Town Hall also has good records. They have records of births while we have records of baptisms.

In the early days of European settlement, the Congregational Church and New England town governments were closely entwined. There was no division of church and state.

Our area began as the south east corner of the town of Springfield which was granted by the general court of Massachusetts to William Pynchon and Co. and first settled in 1636. Enfield was set off from Springfield and incorporated as a town in 1679. Somers was then known as East Enfield. It was not until 1734 that we became incorporated and known as Somers.

There were Native Americans in the area who, “in a last desperate effort for survival in 1675” (Davis) burned 30 homes in Springfield and a sawmill in Enfield. The settlers retaliated and by the summer of 1676 “the indigenous Indian population disappeared as a factor in the history of the area”. (Davis)

However, there is a record that in March 1688, Major John Pynchon (son of William Pynchon) purchased the area of Enfield and East Enfield from “the right Indian owner” for 25 pounds, the Indians reserving the rights of hunting and fishing in the whole town. The “Indian owner” was said by Davis to be Totaps alias Notatuck and in the History of Tolland he is called Totatuck.

The first recorded European settler in Somers was a Welshman, Benjamin Jones, who came to Somers in 1706 only for the summer season. Davis, quoting Dr. John C. Pease says “the first settlers in the East part of Enfield were much annoyed by wild beasts, the wolf, the bear and the catamount.” Rewards were offered to anyone who produced the ears of these animals so it is speculated that Benjamin Jones may have been a bounty hunter.

By 1713, several families had permanently moved to East Enfield (Somers). Joining Benjamin Jones’ family were the familiar Somers names of Kibbe, Pease, McGregory and Root and these were gradually joined by other families. Benjamin Jones built on what is now Main Street near the present hardware store (641 Main St.) and Robert Pease built a house which is still standing as the east part of “The Maples” on the corner of Main Street and Maple Ridge. The most popular places to live, however, were on the lower slopes of Bald Mountain along Scully Road and Mountain Road.

Dr. John Chauncey Pease, writing in 1829 (Davis), says, "A majestic growth of valuable timber at the commencement of the settlement overspread most of the plains, valleys and hills of the East part of the town. The improvidence of the first settlers destroyed these beautiful forests." However, in their defense, I think some clearing must have been necessary for farming.

The early settlers were required to support the ministry of the established church (Congregational) with an ecclesiastical tax as well as by attending worship on the Lord's Day and days of fasting and thanksgiving. There were strong legal (a fine of 3 pounds) and social penalties for not attending. However, there must also have been strong spiritual and social blessings for attending.

By 1729, Episcopalians, Quakers and Baptists no longer had to support the Congregational Church. However, every family still had to pay an ecclesiastical tax to support the church of their choice. It was not until 1818 that the ecclesiastical tax was abolished and churches were supported by voluntary donations.

Summer and winter, Somers families would make the 16 mile round trip to the Enfield church by horseback or oxcart for a two hour morning service, a break for lunch and a shorter service in the afternoon. The Somers people were allowed to pasture their animals and build huts near the Enfield church in which to have their lunch and later they were allowed to use the school house for shelter but it still had to be incredibly hard.

Getting a little tired of this long trip each week, in 1721, the easterners asked for and were given, the liberty to get their own pastor for 3 or 4 months in the winter and the following year it was voted to free the Somers residents from paying Enfield church fees as soon as they could hire their own minister.

Then, as now, there were many meetings, much discussion and dissension in deciding all this.



Women's Fellowship Thank You

The Women's Fellowship would like to thank all the members and friends who helped with their Vintage Christmas Sale at the Bazaar on Dec. 7. They are continuing to collect Christmas decorations and items. As you take down your decorations, any that you will not be using again and still look good, can be donated to Women's Fellowship. Please leave these in the church office with a Women's Fellowship label. For further information please contact Kathy Lombard at 860-749-0111.

Veteran's Breakfast



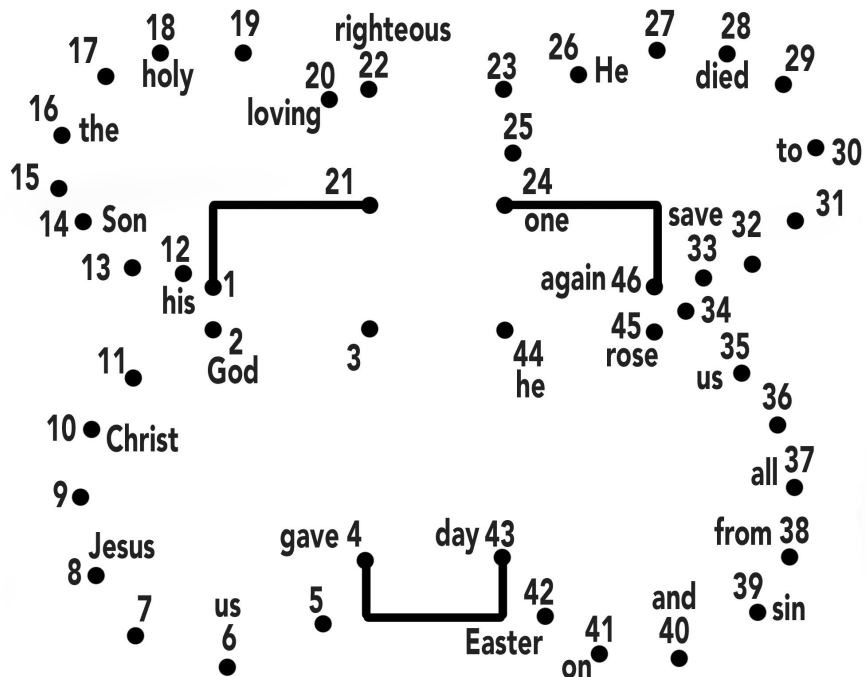
Thank you to Anne Kirkpatrick and JoAnn Hornyak and their crew for another successful Veteran's Breakfast

Memories of the Children's Christmas Pageant



Puzzle!

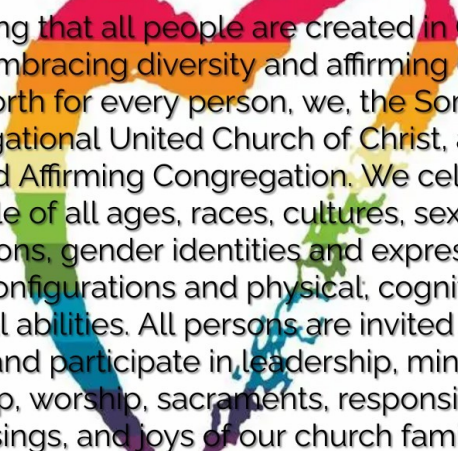
Connect the dots to find two symbols of Easter. Then write the words in the correct blanks to complete an Easter poem.



2	4	6	8	10	12	14
16	18	20	22	24		
26	28	30	33	35	37	38
40	41	42	43	44	45	46

Answer: God gave us Jesus Christ, his Son, the holy, loving, righteous one. He died to save us all from sin, and on Easter day he rose again.

Somers Congregational United Church of Christ Open and Affirming Covenant



"Believing that all people are created in God's image, embracing diversity and affirming dignity and worth for every person, we, the Somers Congregational United Church of Christ, are an Open and Affirming Congregation. We celebrate people of all ages, races, cultures, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, family configurations and physical, cognitive or emotional abilities. All persons are invited to fully share and participate in leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings, and joys of our church family."



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