

# 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

July 2025  
Volume 297 / #7

## Letter from the Pastor

*The General Synod is the gathering of a faith community representative of the wider church to listen for and discern the call of God to the United Church of Christ. The General Synod deliberates, discerns, and identifies the mission of the wider church of the United Church of Christ in God's world and receives and offers suggestions, invitations, challenges, and assistance in covenant with Local Churches, Conferences, and other settings as they engage in mission together.*

-The Constitution of the United Church of Christ

Peace and greetings to you in the name of Jesus! I'm writing this letter in the middle of an early summer heat wave here in New England. Now more than ever I am thankful for ice makers and the invention of air conditioning.

As we enter the midst of the summer season, my mind also turns to events occurring in the wider church. July 11th-15th will find hundreds of our fellow UCCers in Kansas City for General Synod (GS) 35. The theme for this gathering is *Into the Deep* from Luke 5:4. Judging from the lineup of speakers and business items on the agenda, this time together will find attendees going deep into the questions of what it means *to be the church* in today's world.

On a personal note, I have been lucky enough to attend GS in 2015 and 2017 as part of my involvement in the Pension Board's Next Generation Leadership Initiative. It was a great experience and if you ever get a chance to go-take it!

One critical part of the General Synod experience is the discussion and voting on Resolutions. These Resolutions-as you will see in a moment-can deal with subjects ranging from church structure, ordination, social issues, and moral questions of the day. As a covenantal church, it is important to remember that the General Synod speaks *to and not for* church members in resolutions of public witness. In plain English, you don't have to agree with everything that is said but you do agree that others can feel led by the Spirit to say it.

**With that in mind here is a quick preview of GS 35 business resolutions:**

*\*A motion from the 4 Pennsylvania Conferences to merge into 1 Keystone Conference  
(this is similar to our very own Southern New England Conference)*



\* Resolutions on Full Communion with Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Germany) and Iglesia Evangélica Unida de Puerto Rico (*in keeping with our roots as a “united and uniting church” the UCC would be in full communion with these churches like we are with The United Church of Canada*)

\*The Small Town and Rural Coalition of the UCC Requests to be made a Formal Group

### **And here are the Witness Resolutions:**

\*A Declaration of Support for Philippine Human Rights

\*Faithful Stewardship for Our Whole Lives (OWL)

\*A Response to Christian Persecution in India

\*Responding to the Federal Government’s Attack on Immigrants, Migrants, and Refugees

\*Calling The United Church of Christ to Oppose the 2025 Immigration Rollbacks and Support Immigrants, Refugees, and Pacific Island Communities, while Amplifying Antiracist Work On Behalf of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in Response to the Current Socio-Political Backlash

\*In Support of Restoration of Full Funding for the United States Agency for International Development

\*In Support of Restoration of Full Funding and Autonomy for the Voice of America

\*Declaration for an End to Genocide in Palestine

Further details on all of those resolutions can be found at [generalsynod.org](https://generalsynod.org).

As always my door is open if you would like to chat. God bless.

Pastor Scott



## July Worship Schedule

<b>July 6th</b>	<b>Fourth Sunday after Pentecost</b> <i>Summer Sermon Series on The Lord's Prayer: God the Creator</i> Communion & Deacon's Fund Sunday
<b>July 13th</b>	<b>Fifth Sunday after Pentecost</b> <i>Summer Sermon Series on The Lord's Prayer: The Holiness of God</i>
<b>July 20th</b>	<b>Sixth Sunday after Pentecost</b> <i>Summer Sermon Series on The Lord's Prayer: The Kingdom of God</i>
<b>July 27</b>	<b>Seventh Sunday after Pentecost</b> <i>Summer Sermon Series on The Lord's Prayer: Praying for Our Needs</i>



### Did you know. . . .

Champ's regularly provides food for approximately **80** families. Donations come in through various local organizations as well as deliveries from Food Share.

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



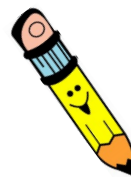
**July 2025**

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		

July 1	Missions Meeting (Offsite)	7:00 pm
July 4	Independence Day—OFFICE CLOSED	
July 9	Community Supper	5:30 pm
July 11	Tom Mehl Memorial Blood Drive	
July 13	Facilities	8:30 am
July 27	Loaves and Fishes	

## WEDNESDAY

Bible Study – 10am



July 23rd

## Angels In Somers

I with to thank with all my heart and gratitude for the care and support I have gotten from the "caring Committee" at our church.

The meals, and visitations I received were outstanding. Yes there are angels in Somers.

God Bless you all.

Dick Lindell



## Destination Vacation Bible School

- Needs from congregation:
- volunteers to help setup and decorate on Aug. 2 and 3 (times TBD)
- Polaroid camera 😊
- props to borrow for decorations - traffic cones, caution tape, flashing/stop lights, luggage, road signs, coolers, maps, flags, license plates, etc
- Thank you to everyone who has already volunteered to help! We couldn't do it without you!

Contact Kathy Fuller, Debbi Juzba, or Tara Spence for more information.



If you have been in the church building in the evenings during the week in the last month or so, you might have heard or seen the cast for Matilda rehearsing. They will be putting on their performance at the Ellington High School Auditorium

ROALD DAHL'S  
**Matilda**  
Book **DENNIS KELLY** THE MUSICAL Music & Lyrics **TIM MINCHIN**



ROALD DAHL'S MATILDA THE MUSICAL  
Is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI).  
All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI. [www.mtishows.com](http://www.mtishows.com)



**Presented by :**  
**Ellington Community Theatre**  
**Ellington High School Auditorium**  
**July 18, 19, 10, 25, 26, 27**



[www.EllingtonCommunityTheatre.org/Tickets](http://www.EllingtonCommunityTheatre.org/Tickets)



## Second Meeting House

During the time of Rev. Charles Backus, our pastor 1774 – 1803, church disputes had been settled and our first meeting house was no longer able to accommodate our growing congregation. Mr. Backus was offered professorships at both Yale and Dartmouth but letters hint that he offered to forego these if a new meeting house was built.

We have no pictures of either our first or second meetinghouse. However, a letter written by Rodney Dennis, a descendant of Rev. Rodney Gove Dennis, our fifth pastor (1830 – 1839), gives a good description of our second meeting house (1787 – 1842).

Rodney Dennis writes the following:

“From descriptions given by a few old residents who attended the second church built in 1787, the location and a fair idea of its appearance may be gathered. It was almost a counterpart of the old meeting house in South Windsor, erected in 1761 and demolished in 1845.

It was situated on what is now the south end of the north burying ground, the land later becoming a part of the cemetery, the pulpit stood where the Warren Kibbe monument now stands.

The structure was of wood, with a steep shingled roof two stories high with large windows on each floor, a door in the middle at each side as well as one at either end. The ends were at the eastern and western extremities. The edifice was above the level of the road running north and south which passed the western end. The pulpit was at the center of the north side, a gallery was on each side and end of the interior, whether built with the church or added later is not known. We learn from church records that a steeple was not built till nearly forty years later. It was erected from the ground at the north side of the building. A bell, the gift of some of the congregation, was at once hung and a weather vane, a fish, adorned the top of the spire. This came into the possession of Henry N. Wardwell and was on his barn in Somers in 1908. Two years later the writer (Rodney Dennis) purchased it from him. It has been erected on the summer home grounds of Rodney Dennis at South Lyme, Conn. It is made of copper and by actual measurement four feet long, 10 inches wide at the center and 18 inches wide at the tail.”

Davis and Davis, page 20, state “That structure was the envy of neighboring towns and inspired churches as far away as Randolph, Vermont. Our neighbors just to the north were not to be outdone, and when the Hampden MA church was being finished in 1791, the proud congregation stipulated that all the more important details were to be “equal in goodness with those of Somers Meeting House.” Hampden specified three coats of good white paint on the outside. Somers would not have done less.” The meeting house was probably one of the first buildings in Somers to be painted on the outside.

A sermon by Rev. Charles Ricketts, our pastor from 1890 to 1896, describes the inside of the second meeting house. “The high old-fashioned pulpit, the deacons’ seats, the box pews and the green sounding board which hung like a millstone over the minister’s head are among the old memories of Somers.”

“The History of Tolland County”, page 654, describes the activities after the raising of the church in 1787. “After they had finished eating and drinking, a grand wrestling match took place. William Pat-

ton of Stafford proved the champion wrestler, throwing the Somers boys as fast as they could get up.”

In 1829 there was a choir in the church, since on March 2 of that year, church records show a vote of thanks “to the choir and choristers, for their services”. Some mishap must have happened to the bell, for on June 17, 1830, it was voted “that the bell be repaired”. Possibly the bell was beyond repair, for in November of that year it was voted “to exchange the old bell for a new one seen in Hartford, weighing 810 pounds and hang the same at the expense of the Society.”

We now pass over a period of nearly 10 years in which the second meeting house seems to have fallen in need of repair. Its location in a sparsely settled portion of the town, nearly a mile from the village center, was no doubt felt to be inconvenient.

On Dec. 20, 1840, “A committee was chosen to consider the expediency of repairing the meeting house or building a new one.” They reported on Feb. 1, 1841, in favor of building a new meeting house in preference to repairing the old one. Accordingly, ground was secured in the village center and steps taken which resulted in the erection of the new building.

On Dec. 23, 1841, the building committee was authorized “to dispose of the old meeting house to the best advantage, according to their discretion, to be removed after the new house shall be completed so that it can be occupied for holding meetings of the Society.” On Nov. 18, 1842, a committee was chosen “to see to the removing of the stoves and bell from the old to the new meetinghouse.”

The old bell evidently did service in the new meetinghouse until about 1850 when a new bell was purchased from Meneely’s foundry, West Troy NY.

Ailene Henry Church Historian

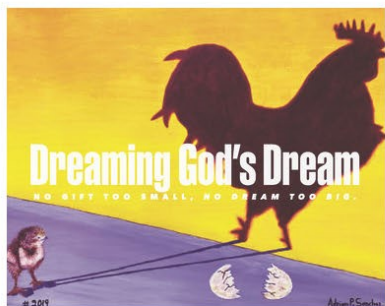
## 1787

# SECOND MEETING HOUSE



- The envy of neighboring towns
- South west corner of North Cemetery
- Probably one of the first buildings in Somers to be painted on the outside
- Our second meetinghouse probably looked like this old meeting house in South Windsor which was demolished in 1845.





## Dreaming God's Dream

NO GIFT TOO SMALL, NO DREAM TOO BIG.



As we continue Dreaming God's Dream - No Gift too Small, No Dream too Big let us reflect on the story of the Good Samaritan who rescued a wounded stranger. The Good Samaritan brought the stranger to an Inn, where the innkeeper nursed him back to health until the Good Samaritan returned. What would it mean to understand our congregation as an "inn" for Good Samaritan work? Can we see our church as a place where we open ourselves up to caring for those in our community and as a place where healing happens?

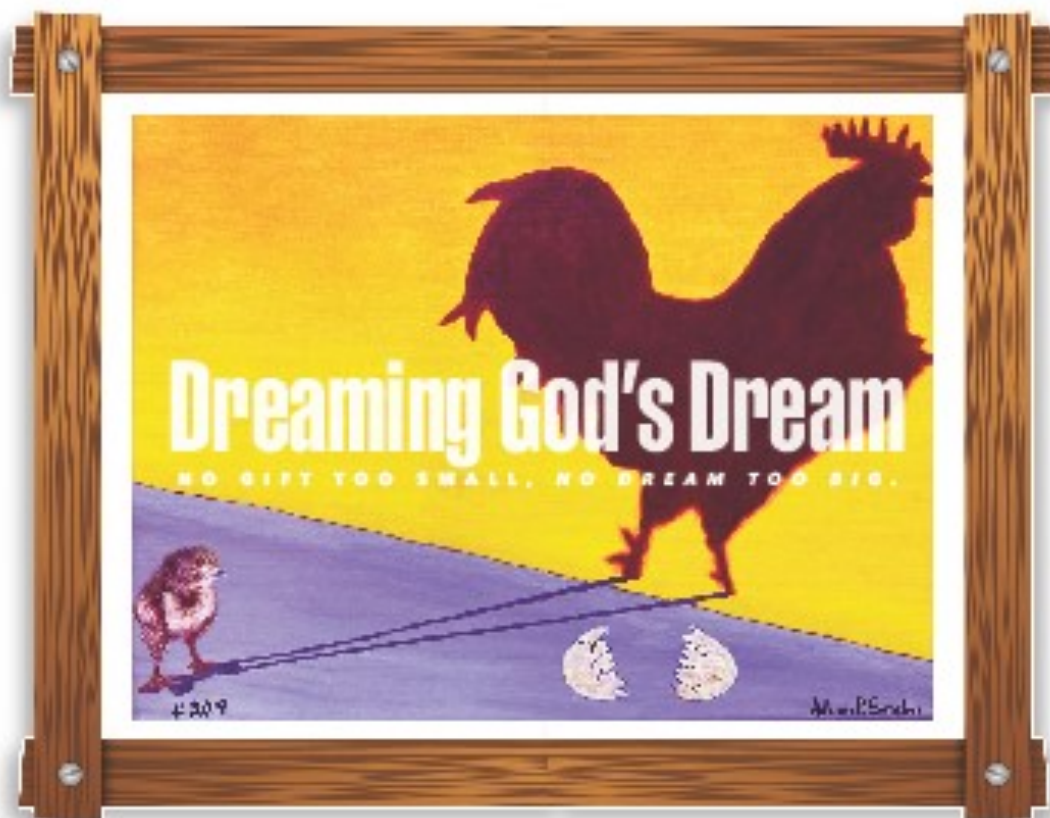
What might God do with what you have to offer? Your time, talents and financial pledge make all of our dreams possible for our church. The Stewardship Committee is asking you to prayerfully consider pledging if you have not already done so for 2025. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7.

As always, if you have any questions about giving or about how your offerings become ministry, please feel free to contact the Stewardship Committee.

Blessings

Your Stewardship Team

Jeff Roig (Chair) & Tyler Cass



## The Church as Innkeeper

*"All humanity are our neighbors."*

St. Augustine of Hippo

**T**he familiar Parable of the Good Samaritan tells the story of the Priest and the Levite who walked past a person in the ditch and the Good Samaritan who stopped to help. We often overlook another character in the story: the innkeeper. The Good Samaritan brought the wounded person to the inn, where the innkeeper nursed them to health until the Good Samaritan returned.

Saint Augustine, reflecting on this parable, highlights the unique role of the innkeeper, who provided a place where healing could happen. What would it mean to understand our congregation as an "inn" for Good Samaritan work? Can we see our community as a place where healing happens?

The innkeeper's role included managing resources, ensuring the inn's readiness, and extending mercy and help – roles we mirror when we care for one another and open ourselves up to caring for those in our community.

Focusing on the innkeeper can also challenge the ways we operate our building. Having a building is not the point of church. Rather, the building serves as a tool of our ministry. A church facility matters only because it can *facilitate our mission*.

Your gifts to our congregation help us provide a place of healing in our community, an "inn" where Good Samaritan ministry can happen.

### CONSIDER YOUR PLEDGE AS A PERCENT OF YOUR MONTHLY INCOME.

Annual Income	Monthly Income	2%	3%	4%	5%	10%
20,000	1,667	33	50	67	83	167
25,000	2,083	42	63	83	104	208
30,000	2,500	50	75	100	125	250
35,000	2,917	58	88	117	146	292
40,000	3,333	67	100	133	167	333
45,000	3,750	75	113	150	188	375
50,000	4,167	83	125	167	208	417
60,000	5,000	100	150	200	250	500
75,000	6,250	125	188	250	313	625
100,000	8,333	167	250	333	417	833
125,000	10,417	208	313	417	521	1042
150,000	12,500	250	375	500	625	1250
200,000	16,667	333	500	667	833	1667

On average, Americans give 2% of their income to charity.  
Giving even 1% more of annual income to charity would be transformative for our  
congregation and other organizations doing good in our community.



# Community Supper



Join us on the second Wednesday of the month for a meal with the community in the foundation of Somers Congregational Church.

## Calendar

April 9th

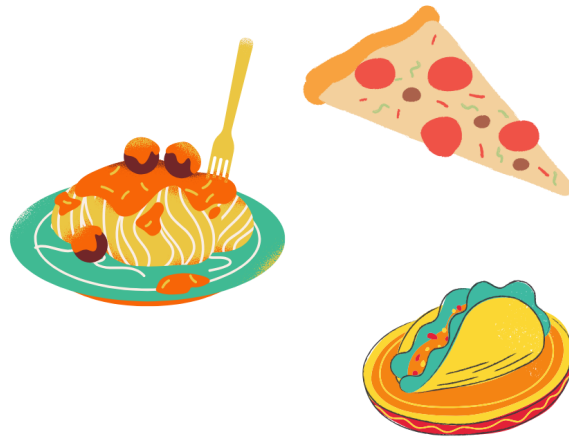
May 14th

June 11th

July 9th

August 13th

September 10th



**All dinners begin at 5:30pm.**

Call to reserve your spot for meal planning:  
(860) 763-4021 (please leave message if no answer.)

DONATIONS ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED AND KEEP THESE  
COMMUNITY SUPPERS RUNNING! Thank you.

# Fourth Annual Tom Mehl Blood Drive Friday, July 11th



Donating blood was always important to Tom. He loved the thought of helping as many people as he could. He donated until he couldn't, and he became the recipient of donated blood. Please sign up to make this a very successful blood drive in Tom's memory.

*- The Mehl Family*

## **BLOOD DRIVE**

### **Somers Congregational Church**

599 Main Street, Somers

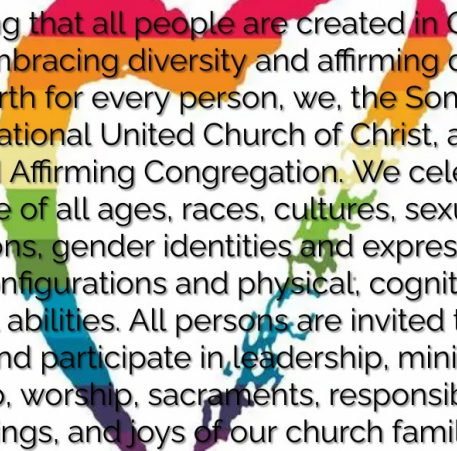
**Friday, July 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Noon – 5:00 pm**

For an appointment please contact:  
**1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767)**  
or visit **redcrossblood.org** – code **SOMCO**

Save up to 15 minutes at your donation. Visit [redcrossblood.org/rapidpass](https://redcrossblood.org/rapidpass) to get started!

## 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](mailto:Highlights@thesomerschurch.org)**