

SCC

Highlights

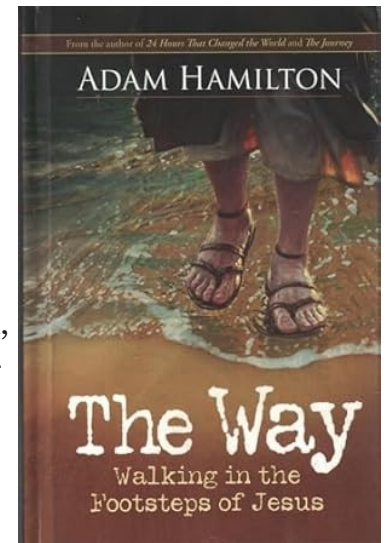


No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here
SOMERS CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST WORSHIPING AND SERVING SINCE 1727
599 Main St. PO Box 295 Somers, CT 06071 (860) 763-4021

June 2026
Volume 298 / #6

The Way: Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus **A Bible and Book Study**

Travel with author Adam Hamilton to the Holy Land as he retraces the life and ministry of Jesus Christ in this DVD/Book study of six sessions. Using video shot on location, historical information, archaeological data, and stories of the faith, Hamilton takes us to the Jordan River where Jesus was baptized and the wilderness where he was tempted. We'll see the ruins of ancient Capernaum, where Jesus healed the sick, and ascend the mountain where he gave his most famous sermon. We'll travel across the Sea of Galilee, and to the last remaining community of Samaritans in the world. Finally we'll visit Jerusalem, where Jesus spent his final days.



This program will help us grow deeper in our faith, learn more about the life of Christ, and spend time daily reading and reflecting upon the Scriptures. (Program facilitated by Pastor Don.)

Thursdays, June 4 – July 9, 10:00-11:15 AM

(If there is enough interest, an evening session will be held also.)

The Way Book: \$11.00 (Kindle edition is available)

Sign up and reserve a copy of the book by calling Pastor Don (860-416-5134) or by email: pastor-don@thesomerschurch.org

June 2026						
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				



June 2	Missions (Offsite)	7:00 pm
June 3	Fellowship Committee Meeting (Zoom)	7:00 pm
June 4	Bible Study—Adam Hamilton—The Way	10:00 am
June 8	Communications & Marketing (Zoom)	7:00 pm
June 10	Community Supper	5:00 pm
June 11	Bible Study—Adam Hamilton—The Way	10:00 am
June 14	Facilities Meeting (Rm 201)	8:30 am
June 14	Deacon's Meeting	10:45 am
May 14	Caring Committee Meeting (Room 206)	3:00 pm
June 16	Caring Committee Meeting (Rm 206)	1:30 pm
June 16	Council Meeting	6:00 pm
June 18	Bible Study—Adam Hamilton—The Way	10:00 am
June 18	Friendship Kitchen	9:30 am
June 19	Juneteenth	
June 25	Bible Study—Adam Hamilton—The	10:00 am
June 28	Loaves and Fishes	



JOINT CHURCH PICNIC

WITH THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF SOMERSVILLE
CONNOR'S PLACE - 96 FIELD RD, SOMERS

JUNE 14TH 11:30-2:00

Sign up at coffee hour or email
Jan Martin - jan.martin13@gmail.com

Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Veggie Burgers, Buns,
Condiments, Drinks, and Paper Goods are provided by
the churches. **Attendees will bring sides and desserts.**

*In your RSVP, please mention if you'll be eating a veggie
burger.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Looking for coffee
hour volunteers!

sign up sheet at coffee hour!

or

contact the church office if you'd
like to volunteer

- come to church ~20 mins early
- set up coffee
- set up small snacks
- clean up

That's it!



Committee Forming to Help our Church Plan our Future with Reverend Don

As hopefully most of you are aware, we hired our Pastor, Don Francois, for a 3-year term to help us discern our future as a church. The rationale was that we needed to figure out how to adjust our church to the realities of our present size. In years past we had many more members and active participants than we do now, which is true of many UCC churches across the US. Because of this our Conference recommended us to have a Designated Term Pastor assist us in figuring our path forward, rather than immediately hiring a permanent pastor. So now that Pastor Don is here, we need to move forward with the goals that the search committee devised and put into his contract.

The search committee crafted these 3 sets of goals:

1. Facilitate church growth strategy and discern from there what our future could be.
2. Revise or rewrite the current Church By-Laws to make them more flexible and adaptive.
3. While facilitating growth strategies guide us in discerning if our church will continue with a full time pastor, part time pastor, yoke or merge with another church.

While these are just 3 goals, and they take up less than 60 words, they are large tasks. And clearly the intent was never to have the Designated Term Pastor tackle them singlehandedly.

Which brings us to what UCC churches are well known for, a committee. We need to have a group formed that will assist and partner with Pastor Don to work through these goals. Fortunately for the group to be formed, the search committee detailed out these goals into both commitment (essentially ideas to accomplish these goals) and assessment (how do we know if we met the goal). And note, the full text of the goals is at the end of this article. The committees work then, will be to partner with Don in implementing or strategizing how to do these.

This committee is critical to the well-being of our future church. We need to decide how our church will function and exist after Pastor Don's time with us has completed, and this needs assistance from members of our church who care deeply about our shared future.

So, if you wish to be part of this critical group that will work with Reverend Don, please let your moderator (Todd Weigel) know. You can reach him at toddalisa.bus@gmail.com or see him in church. Thank you for your prayerful consideration,

Todd Weigel

Moderator

The complete goals in Pastor Don's contract are in the table on the next page.

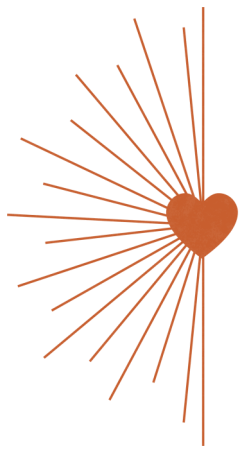
<p>Goal: with specificity, describe what you hope to accomplish during this time.</p>	<p>Commitment: describe how the congregation will prioritize and participate in reaching this goal?</p>	<p>Assessment: describe how the congregation will know the goal has been accomplished</p>
<p>Facilitate church growth strategy and discern from there what our future could be.</p>	<p>Spiritual Growth</p> <p>Develop our spiritual growth with opportunities for all ages; youth, teens, adults.</p> <p>Visitor Engagement</p> <p>Develop ways to bring in and retain visitors leading to membership and pledging.</p> <p>Open and Affirming Designation</p> <p>Help us to live into our Open and Affirming Designation.</p> <p>Worship Innovation</p> <p>Offer alternative or contemporary worship</p>	<p>Spiritual Growth</p> <p>Engagement in spiritual formation programs (e.g., youth group, adult Bible studies).</p> <p>New programs are launched and sustained for at least two age groups.</p> <p>Visitor Engagement</p> <p>Visitor retention improves, with at least 25% of first-time visitors returning within 3-6 months.</p> <p>Membership and pledging increase by 5–10% over a 3 to 5 year period.</p> <p>Open and Affirming Designation</p> <p>LGBTQ+ individuals and families report feeling welcomed.</p> <p>Church events and communications consistently reflect inclusive language and practices.</p> <p>Worship Innovation</p> <p>Alternative worship services are offered at least quarterly and show steady attendance growth.</p> <p>Worship surveys indicate increased satisfaction and engagement across age groups.</p>
<p>Revise or rewrite the current Church By-Laws to make them more flexible and adaptive</p>	<p>Congregation collaborates with the Designated Term Minister in rewriting our by-laws. =</p>	<p>A revised and condensed set of by-laws is completed, approved by the congregation, and officially adopted within 3 plus years.</p> <p>The number of standing committees is reduced or restructured to better reflect current church size and capacity.</p> <p>Member feedback indicates increased clarity around roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Leadership reports improved efficiency in decision-making and committee operations.</p>
<p>While facilitating growth strategies guide us in discerning if our church will continue with a full time pastor, part time pastor, yoke or merge with another church.</p>	<p>Collaborate closely with the Designated Term Minister to assess current and future needs. Host congregational forums, surveys, and listening sessions to gather input.</p> <p>Review financial trends, membership data, and ministry capacity annually.</p> <p>Engage with UCC Conference staff and neighboring churches to explore partnership options.</p>	<p>A clear decision is made and affirmed by the congregation regarding the pastoral model. A written plan is developed and approved for implementation.</p> <p>Congregational feedback reflects understanding and support of the decision.</p> <p>The chosen decision model is in place and functioning effectively by the end of the 3-5 year period</p>



As we enter the month of June, we take time to honor the beauty and diversity of the LGBTQ+ community. For our church it is also an opportunity to reflect on God’s boundless love and our call to affirm all of God’s children. We have officially been an Open and Affirming Community for three plus years and continue to hold all members of our church community in our hearts as we validate the inner beauty of each individual. A reiteration of what it means to be an Open and Affirming church is evidenced by our 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.”

As an affirming congregation, we rejoice in the gifts and stories our LGBTQ+ members bring to our faith family. Throughout the month, we will engage in prayer, education and celebration. We invite everyone to join in our special pride service on June 21st. We encourage members to participate in local pride celebrations throughout the community as a visible witness to God’s love. We, collectively, are the voice that says, “You are safe with me. You are a beloved child of God and I will always treat you as such. You are welcome here.” Let every day be a day where we are proud to be an Open and Affirming Community!



THERE OUR HEARTS WILL BE

There Our Hearts Will Be

Our Stewardship theme for the coming year There Our Hearts Will Be is rooted in Mathew 6:21 “Where your treasure is, there is where your heart will be also”.

“Who do you say that I am?” Jesus’ question to the disciples in Mark 8 is not only a test of theological accuracy; it is a summons to unveil the true allegiance of the heart. Our answers inevitably shape **what and whom** we treasure, because naming Christ as Messiah re-

orders all other loyalties.

Stewardship, then, is not merely about budgets and benevolence reports; it is about locating the gravity that pulls our hearts, the gravitational center around which money, time, energy, and hope orbit.

In a culture that equates generosity with publicity, Jesus instead reveals divine love not through acclaim but through costly self-giving. He invites us to invest our hearts not for applause or public praise, but rather for a return that is measured in transformed lives.

To practice hidden generosity is to trust that God’s gaze – not the crowd’s – is what matters. Unseen faithfulness is a profound act of discipleship - an investment of the heart that will outlast any worldly recognition.

Let us place our hearts in God’s hands, trusting that where our hearts go, our lives, choices, and resources will follow.

Your time, talents and financial pledge all make expanding our Christian Community possible for our church. The Stewardship Committee is asking you to prayerfully consider pledging if you have not already done so for 2026. *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

CONSIDER YOUR GIVING AS A PERCENTAGE OF YOUR MONTHLY INCOME

On average, Americans give 2% of their income to charity. Giving even 1% more of our annual income would be transformative for our congregation and other organizations doing good in God’s world. Thank you for prayerfully considering your commitment!

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



Our Church History

Memorial Garden

At our 276th Annual Meeting on January 26, 2003, we voted to approve the following addition to our church by-laws: “The Memorial Garden Committee has the responsibility for overseeing all aspects of the Memorial Garden including maintaining the current garden, selling burial plots, arranging for burial plots to accept ashes, maintaining financial records and overseeing the development of the entire west side of the church property adjacent to the existing garden in a manner that will reflect the design of the memorial Garden.”

Before this official beginning, a great deal of research, thought and planning was accomplished by two ad-hoc committees. The concept of a Memorial Garden was part of a recommendation by the Long Range Planning Committee in 1997. In 1998 and 1999 an ad-hoc committee with Donna Davies, Anne Kirkpatrick and Don Stevenson did preliminary research about memorial gardens and reported to the Church Council.

In February 2000, the Church Council appointed an ad-hoc Memorial Garden Committee with Priscilla Carter, Malcom Chadbourne, Donna Davies, Anne Kirkpatrick, Rich Mazur, Don Stevenson and Rev. Barry Cass ex-officio. In June 2000, the congregation approved the motion of the committee to provide a garden for the interment of ashes, and authorized the committee to develop a plan for the design of the garden and guidelines for its upkeep.

The committee received a \$10,000 gift specified to be used for the Memorial Garden and used this to prepare the west side of the church for the garden. The committee estimated that the total cost would be in the range of \$35,000 to \$50,000. Money came from memorial gifts in memory of loved ones, donations specifically for the construction of the garden and fees for the purchase of burial plots. Money was also borrowed temporarily from the church Memorial Fund.

The design the committee accepted was the one by Tom Moriarty of Moriarty Landscaping. He also did the construction of the garden including installing the granite markers. When the new church was built, the entrance to the Memorial Garden had to be moved because of the extension of Pilgrim Hall. Tom came back and moved the rocks in the wall and made a new entrance in the center of the south side.

The Memorial Garden ground-breaking celebration took place on June 9, 2002.

The garden now relies solely on the cost of the plots for its maintenance. A plot costs \$500 which does not include the cost of engraving. The fee for use of the garden covers the cost of the individual burial plot and its perpetual care, a memorial marker and a page in ‘The Remembrance Book.’ The family may provide a one-page biography and genealogy of the deceased person.

Memorial Garden guidelines state: “A Memorial Garden Purchase Agreement may be made only between the Memorial Garden Committee and a member of the Somers Congregational Church and their loved ones (spouse, parent or children) and Friends of the Church. Former members of the Church or people in the community who have a link to the Church’s mission may be considered eligible as a Friend of the Church.”

“Any present or former pastor, their spouse and unmarried children may have the use of a plot in the Memorial Garden without charge. At the discretion of the Memorial Garden Committee, cremains may be interred in the Memorial Garden at either a reduced fee or at no cost.”

We now have a beautiful garden with pathways lined with memorial stones radiating out from a central garden like spokes on a wheel. Between the spokes are beautiful perennial flower gardens and benches for resting and reflection. The committee stated their goal for the garden: “To be a place of beauty, comfort and reflection as well as a final resting place for loved ones.”

Find us on FACEBOOK!



HOURS: Mondays 10 am—Noon and 6 pm -7 pm
(* closed Monday holidays)

Community Supper



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

Calendar

June 10th

July 8th

August 12th

September 9th

October 14th



All dinners begin at 5:30pm.

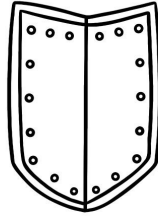
Call to reserve your spot for meal planning:
(860) 763-4021 (please leave message if no answer.)

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



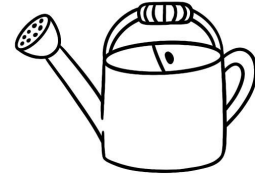
HE WILL GIVE YOU PEACE.

John 14:27



HE WILL PROTECT YOU.

Psalms 121:8



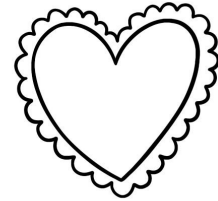
HE WILL CARE FOR YOU.

Matthew 6:26



HE WILL HEAR YOUR PRAYERS.

Jeremiah 33:3



HE WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU.

Romans 8:39

GOD'S PROMISES

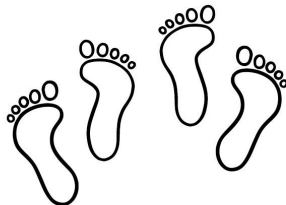
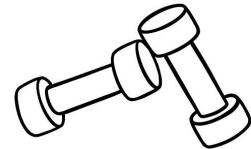


HE WILL FORGIVE YOU.

1 John 1:9

HE WILL MAKE YOU STRONG.

Isaiah 40:31



HE WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU.

Hebrews 13:5

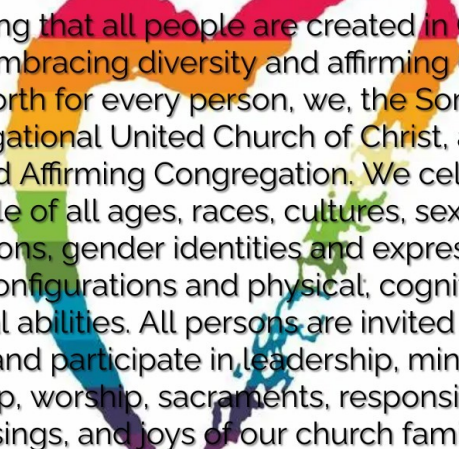


HE WILL GUIDE YOUR PATHS.

Proverbs 3:5-6

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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