

# Jan 2025

Southwick Congregational Church  
488 College Highway  
P.O. Box 260  
Southwick, MA 01077-0260  
**Return Service Requested**



*The **Good News** newsletter of the*  
Southwick Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
Southwick, MA

Please join us Sundays for Worship Service 11:00 am  
and Coffee Hour to follow

**Website: [www. SouthwickUCC.org](http://www.SouthwickUCC.org)**



## MISSION STATEMENT

*Southwick Congregational Church is a faithful Christian presence in the community of Southwick since 1773, and we look to the future. We are a diverse and loving congregation, joyfully serving, teaching, and sharing with one another, according to the gifts we have been given.*

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

We invite you to join us each Sunday for our in-person service at 11:00 am and coffee hour that follows.

## OFFICE HOURS

The church office hours are Tue, Wed & Thu 9:30-4.

Leave a voicemail message or an email if you need anything nonemergent after hours.

Rev. Paul has office hours.  
If you would like a visit,  
please call the church office at  
*(413) 569-6362* to schedule.  
Office Hours by appointment.



## VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE!

Our Facebook page is  
**Southwick Congregational Church UCC**  
Please check it out, "like" us, and follow us!!!  
Keep track of what our very busy church is doing!

## The Last Year of the First Quarter of the Twenty-first Century

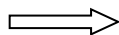
Happy New Year! How did we ever make it to 2025? How many of us remember the hoopla that surrounded when the calendar would read 2000? Think of all the different things that have happened in the past twenty-five years. Can you believe that we are near the end of the first quarter of the 21st century?

I have thrown a lot of questions at you, but these have caused me to reflect on what we need to do to get ready for the second quarter. We still have a year to go and we can get a great amount finished in the year. However, it is not always how much you get finished, but what you *do* that is important. This coming year presents us all with a few challenges.

Our challenges will be to take a good look at what we have accomplished in the first quarter, see what we can do in the year that remains, and then to plan for the second quarter. Now, if the second quarter is anything like the first quarter, we will be in for numerous surprises. But, let's take a look at what we can control, even if life and world events throw more curve balls at us.

What we want to avoid is to plan and put things into place that will not be of any help to those who come after us. What is knowledgeable now may not be the wisdom that exists in 2050. So, we must ask ourselves: Are our missions in good order to live out the Gospel message? Is our church building in a position to serve people correctly in the next twenty-five years? Is there something that we can do in the next five years that will help us face the next twenty-five?

While we are uncertain as to how much time God plans to give us on this earth, I would like us all to think about what we have in our church and how that can sustain us for the Second Quarter of the Twenty-first century. We must equip our church to meet the demands of spreading the Gospel message in the next year as well as into the next quarter of the century.



## REV. PAUL'S CORNER, CONT.

We've had a great year; let's not rest on our laurels but keep up the good work that we have begun as we enter into the last year of the first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century!

Peace and love,

*(Rev.) Paul*

Rev. Paul B. Nesbit  
Pastor

## DECEMBER PRAYER LIST

**Roberta & Ted K., Jim R. (Eric N.), Julie & Emilie (Dawn), Emma C., Ron R., Jim & Lisa B. (Patty), Jeanne S., Jane W. (Patty), Robert R., T.J.W., Raymond F., Diane R., Brian C., Chris L. (Robin), Cara C., Sharon W., Owen L. (Melanie), Sarah B. & Susan U. (Patty), Jennifer, Paul F., (Deb), Jill (SteveP), Avany, Dick A. (Kirsten), Patricia F., Judy R. (Kristy), Dennis W. (Eric), Scott (Patty), R.J. (Robin), Bob B., Bobby (Terry), Ashley, Melanie D. (Dennis & Melissa), Kim & Jenn (Cynthia), Julie C., Jemma (Robin), Dominic, the family of Norman C., Angie K. (Kirsten), Pat M., Lorraine B., Mike D. (Lori), Parker (Terry), Elizabeth (Rev Paul), and David S. (Robin) .**

**Nursing Homes/Assisted Living: Michael C., Julie C., and Don L.**

**Serving in our Military at home and abroad:  
Samantha P.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Big thank you to all the Christmas Cookie Sale Bakers. \$995 was raised!
- JOINT SERVICES starting in February, once a month, in Southwick or in Westfield.
- Souper Bowl Soup Sale Feb 8th! Season up your stock pots and stir up something savory! Sign up sheet sits ready for your signature at Coffee Hour.

## MITTEN TREE

Thanks to all who contributed to this year's Mitten Tree in the Narthex



## HOLLY BAZZAR WRAP UP

Our annual Holly Bazaar was held on December 7, 2024, as always on the first Saturday of December. I hope you were able to come and shop and enjoy a delicious lunch. We had a full two halls of table rentals (minus the New Fellowship Hall stage this year due to the Episcopal Church storage there). Many hands were involved for the success of this church fundraiser. Profits between the church bake sale table and thrifted items, the Holly Inn food sales, the raffle table, and the vendor table rentals were on par with last year's bazaar at approximately \$2,000.

I want to recognize everyone involved with the bazaar, starting with our office admin, Joseph, who communicated with all the vendors, handled collecting their rental fees, and assignment of tables, as well as advertising – not a small feat! Chris, our custodian, was very helpful with all the set-up and clean-up/take down so that the Episcopal Church could set back up their space in the hall, as well as our sandwich board set-up.

Thank you to everyone else involved this year – and I sincerely apologize if I left anyone out: Patty, Terry, Elizabeth, Lori, Jim G, Jim P, Hannah, Mike, Jane, Joyce, Deb F, Robin, Melissa, Diane, Debbi,





Deb F, Diane, and Meredith. Whether you baked, helped set up, helped sell, cooked, waitressed, did clean-up, sold raffle tickets, I appreciate all everyone did!

Thank you all so very much!  
Melanie Nitsch



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
9:30am - SCEC NFH 11am - SCC Joint Svc 3:30pm - OA		New Year's Eve 9:30am - Office Open 6pm - Bell Practice	New Year's Day	9:30am - Office Open	10am - Thrift Shop 6pm - OA 7:30pm - AA	10am - Thrift Shop
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
9:30am - SCEC NFH 11am - SCC 3:30pm - OA	5pm - GSA #6, #10 6pm - BSA OFH	9:30am - Office Open 6pm - Bell Practice	9:30am - Office Open 6:30pm - Cub Scouts 7pm - GSA Dickinson	National Day of 9:30am - Office Open 5pm - GSA #6, #10	10am - Thrift Shop 6pm - OA	10am - Thrift Shop
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
9:30am - SCEC NFH 11am - SCC 3:30pm - OA	9:30am - Ofc OPEN 5:30pm - GSA #6, #10	9:30am - Office Open 6pm - Bell Practice	9:30am - Office Open 6:30pm - Cub Scouts	OFC CLOSED 5pm - SCEC NFH	10am - Thrift Shop 6pm - OA	10am - Thrift Shop
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
AllChMtg 9:30am - SCEC NFH 11am - SCC 3:30pm - OA	Inauguration Day Martin Luther King Jr. 5pm - GSA #6, #10 6pm - BSA OFH	OFC CLOSED 6pm - Bell Practice 6:30pm - SCEC	OFC CLOSED 6:30pm - Cub Scouts	9:30am - Office Open 5pm - GSA #6, #10 5pm - SCEC NFH	9:30am - Ofc OPEN 10am - Thrift Shop 6pm - OA	10am - Thrift Shop
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
9:30am - SCEC NFH 11am - SCC 3:30pm - OA	5pm - GSA #6, #10	9:30am - Office Open 6pm - Bell Practice	9:30am - Office Open 6:30pm - Cub Scouts	9:30am - Office Open 5pm - SCEC NFH	10am - Thrift Shop 6pm - OA	10am - Thrift Shop



## THE BELL RINGS AGAIN!



The original bell ringing system in the church steeple was a swinging or peal-ing bell design. Basically, the bell was mounted on a swinging yoke and when someone would pull a rope it would start the bell swinging back and forth, the clapper would strike the bell rim and create the ringing. At some point

(75-100 years ago?) the bell yoke system had significant wear and the bell was remounted to a stationary fixture. An external bell clapper system, run by an electric motor, was installed.

Fast forward to sometime in 2023 when the bell ringing system started to act up. When I went into the steeple to inspect it I saw that the wood frame had cracked and the small pillow block bearings had started to fail because everything was misaligned. I tried to put a band aid fix by screwing things back together and that only lasted about 6 months. At some point during the summer of 2024 the whole



apparatus failed. The original wood carriage was made with pine and was nailed together. I'm surprised it lasted this long.

I did some research on bell ringing equipment. Today's systems are no longer electric motors with fly wheels, v-belts and cams. They are computer controlled electromagnetic clappers that sell for \$10,000 which then require additional fees for shipping, installation and programming.

After some soul searching and heavy thinking, I thought about rebuilding what we currently have. That's when I contacted Jay Jones, whose family has owned the Noble & Cooley Drum Shop in Granville for generations. Jay has a factory full of old equipment that he has fixed and retrofitted all his life. He is very knowledgeable!

We climbed into the steeple belfry and assessed the system. We determined that it would be a "fun" project and decided to give it a go. Modern tools like the Sawzall made removal of the old system very easy. Once on the workbench, we disassembled everything and took inventory of what could be reused and what needed replacing.

The new wooden carriage is not made with pine and nails. The base is beech and the side uprights are rock maple that is fastened together with 5/16" lag bolts and threaded rods with washers and nuts. We replaced the six 5/8" pillow block bearings, the three v-belts, one 12" flywheel, and a new power cord on the electric motor.

We had to lathe cut, grind and belt sand many metal parts in order to fit the new pieces. We loose-fit all the shafts, fly wheels, pillow block bearings, cams and v-belts, then did the final tightening one step at a time making sure the assembly lined up.

When everything was all completed and installed we spent approximately \$400 and had about 18 hours of "fun" spread over 3 weeks. I can't thank Jay enough for all his help and enthusiasm with this project. With the right attitude and tools, anything can be accomplished!

If you want to see video of the new system and how it works, just go to the church website <https://southwickucc.org> and click the link.

(Submitted by Eric Nitsch)

## ALL CHURCH MEETING MINUTES

**December 8, 2024**

The meeting was called to order by Moderator Terry Putnam at 12:35 pm. following refreshments and opened with a prayer by Rev. Paul. A motion was made to approve the Minutes from the November All-Church Committee Meeting which was seconded and with no discussion was passed unanimously.

### **Pastor**

Rev. Paul will be meeting with both churches on Dec 11<sup>th</sup> to discuss his next three year contract.

He will be on vacation for three days during the week of Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>  
12/19 – A discussion on Exploring Christmas Hymns at 7 pm at the church

12/20 – Blue Christmas Service, 7 pm. Second Cong Church, Westfield

12/21 – Solstice service at Southwick Villages

12/22 – Joint Worship Service in Westfield at 9:30 am

12/24 – Christmas Eve Service in Southwick at 6:30 pm

12/29 – Joint Worship Service in Southwick at 11 am

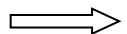
After Christmas – a “Breakfast with the Bible” program to be held at different locations/restaurants in the area

### **Treasurer**

Jim Putnam reported all bills are paid, payroll being done correctly with Quickbooks, and he is working on monthly statements.

### **Buildings & Grounds**

Eric Nitsch reported the Manger was set up on 12/1/24 with the help of Dennis, Bob, & Mike. Dennis Day replaced bulbs on the sanctuary chandelier and removed the 250<sup>th</sup> banner with the help of a borrowed ladder. The bell tower clapper is being rebuilt by Jay Jones from Noble & Cooley in Granville. While in the tower, a water leak was discovered and Restco will come to repair it. The Fire and Building inspection will be done the week of 12/15/24. Eric will be installing a door in the kitchen to secure the area for food safety at times of special events/dinners.



## ALL CHURCH MEETING MINUTES (CONT)

### **Deacons**

Patty Banasik reported the church has been decorated for Christmas and she is organizing Advent readers. Rev. George Porter will be our guest minister on Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> while Rev. Paul is away. She reminds us the mitten and hat tree is up for December. Patty mentioned Deb Finney is looking for old wool sweaters that she can convert into mittens.

### **Finance**

Melanie Nitsch reported that 27 out of 54 pledges have been returned thus far. All have been asked to please return their pledges for 2025 as soon as possible so Finance can begin to plan their budget. Anyone who did not get a Stewardship letter is asked to let Finance know. Yearly statements will be done for mid-January. Melanie is still waiting on a proposal for an insurance quote from Bob Proulx at Brown & Brown Insurance Co. Also, a copy of the Southwick Community Episcopal Church's insurance policy (listing our church as additional insured) has been requested. The current deductible for our property insurance has been increased from \$2,500 to \$5,000 beginning Jan. 1, 2025.

### **Pastoral Relations**

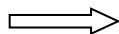
Bob Franzen reported in he had nothing new to report.

### **Music**

Jen Cotto reported the committee is working on their 2025 budget and the organist's contract.

### **Christian Ed**

Kirsten Allhusen reported she is already to provide a children's sermon for any given Sunday when children are present. On 12/21 she is planning a movie night for the church and the community. Our children are invited to join the First Church of Westfield for their Christmas Pageant to be held during the service on 12/22.



## ALL CHURCH MEETING MINUTES (CONT)

The meeting was adjourned at 12:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Melanie Nitsch, Clerk*

### Executive Committee Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 1 pm by Moderator Terry Putnam. Discussion ensued about specifics regarding contract negotiations for Rev. Paul's next three-year contract. The next meeting with both churches and Rev. Paul will be held 12/11/24 at 4:30 pm in Southwick. Jim Putnam made a motion for the negotiating group of four to continue forward with the Executive Committee's full support. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. There was also discussion about future programming possibilities at the church.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Melanie Nitsch, Clerk*

## Souper-Bowl Weekend Sale!



Southwick Congregational  
Church  
488 College Highway  
Southwick, MA  
11:00 am



Serving the Heart and Soul  
of Southwick since 1773!  
Current Sanctuary 1824-2024

Saturday, February 8, 2025  
9:00 am to 12:30 pm  
Southwick Congregational Church  
Old Fellowship Hall

A mix of classic homemade soups like  
Chicken Noodle, Chili and New England  
Clam Chowder. Or mix it up with some  
new flavors like Chicken Cordon Bleu,  
Chicken Taco or Stuffed Pepper soups!

Available by the pint  
Regular Soup, \$8 each  
Chowders, \$9 each  
Buy 5, get one free!



## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

<b>Moderator:</b>	Terry Putnam	<a href="mailto:hannahput@yahoo.com">hannahput@yahoo.com</a>	413-569-9283
<b>Buildings &amp; Grounds:</b>	Eric Nitsch	<a href="mailto:eric.nitsch@gmail.com">eric.nitsch@gmail.com</a>	413-695-4164
<b>Christian Education:</b>	Kirsten Allhusen	<a href="mailto:kirstenla@comcast.net">kirstenla@comcast.net</a>	570-762-1313
<b>Deacons:</b>	Patty Banasik	<a href="mailto:preciousbana@aol.com">preciousbana@aol.com</a>	413-237-4717
<b>Finance:</b>	Melanie Nitsch	<a href="mailto:emnitsch@gmail.com">emnitsch@gmail.com</a>	413-454-7043
<b>Memorial Gifts:</b>	Karen Brzezinski	<a href="mailto:karenbrzezinski@hotmail.com">karenbrzezinski@hotmail.com</a>	413-569-6816
<b>Music:</b>	Jenn Hall-Cotto	<a href="mailto:jenncotto@comcast.net">jenncotto@comcast.net</a>	413-218-5335
<b>Pastoral Relations:</b>	Bob Franzen	<a href="mailto:bobfranzen@hotmail.com">bobfranzen@hotmail.com</a>	413-355-3061
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Jim Putnam	<a href="mailto:Jim-putnam@comcast.net">Jim-putnam@comcast.net</a>	413-569-9283

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488 College Highway; P.O. Box 260  
Southwick, MA 01077-0260

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**Church Office Hours:** Tue, Wed, Thu 9:30am-4pm

**Church Office Phone:** 413-569-6362

**Pastor:** Rev. Paul Nesbit

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Rev. Paul's Email:** [RevPaulNesbit@gmail.com](mailto:RevPaulNesbit@gmail.com)

**Church Website:** [www.southwickucc.org](http://www.southwickucc.org)

**Office e-mail:** [southwickucc@gmail.com](mailto:southwickucc@gmail.com)

**Facebook:** Southwick Congregational Church UCC

**You Tube:** Southwick Congregational Church

<b>Staff:</b>	Choir Director/Organist	Roberta Kowal
	Custodian	Christopher Robin Roberts
	Administrative Assistant	Joseph Stiefel



## **Southwick Congregational Church**

**United Church of Christ**

488 College Highway; P.O. Box 260  
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**VOLUME MMXXV No. 1**

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