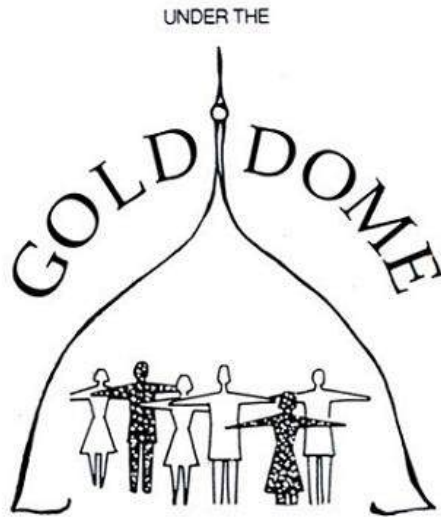


March 2026

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 to meet with him,
please call the church office at
(413) 569-6362 or email him at
revpaulnesbit@gmail.com
to arrange.

Rev Paul will be out March 12—22.



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!

REV. PAUL'S CORNER

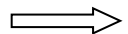
What Did We Say?

I once worked with someone who told me two things about my facial expressions. One was that I had “the map of Ireland” on my face. The second was that I couldn’t hide my feelings for all the tea in China. In other words, people could tell exactly what I thought or felt about what was happening around me. It is something that I have felt compelled to work on throughout my adulthood, especially when I am leading worship. I continue to work on facial expressions.

For those who grew up in the Congregational Church, it was not in your tradition to give things up or “abstain” for Lent. However, an increasing number of Catholics and those from other liturgical traditions have joined our ranks and can relate to such a practice.

I don’t necessarily want us to “give up” or “abstain” from anything during Lent. What I would ask all of us, myself included, is to think about what we say, either with our mouths, our facial expressions, or in writing. While we don’t look to Pope Leo as the leader of our church, (“Christ is the head of our church”) I offer you his words a means of reflection

"I would like to invite you to a very practical and frequently unappreciated form of abstinence: that of refraining from words that offend and hurt our neighbor. Let us begin by disarming our language, avoiding harsh words and rash judgement, refraining from slander and speaking



REV. PAUL'S CORNER, CONT.

ill of those who are not present and cannot defend themselves. Instead, let us strive to measure our words and cultivate kindness and respect in our families, among our friends, at work, on social media, in political debates, in the media and in Christian communities. In this way, words of hatred will give way to words of hope and peace."
Pope Leo XIV

How do our words, both spoken and written (i.e., social media) reflect our beliefs in the teaching of Jesus? As followers of Christ, who serves as the head of our church, we are called to love the Lord our God with our whole heart and mind. We are called to love our neighbor as ourselves. It is my hope that whatever we say, whatever we write, whatever we convey is all in the name of love for God and neighbor.

Love and Peace,

Paul

Rev. Paul B. Nesbit
Pastor

MARCH PRAYER LIST

The family of **Karen B** at her passing, **Roberta & Ted K., Jim R.** (Eric N.), **Julie, Emilie & Ted** (Dawn), **Emma C., Ron R., 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** (Deb), **Jill** (SteveP), **Avany, Dick & Lynn A.** (Kirsten), **Patricia F., Judy R.** (Kristy), **Dennis W.** (Eric), **R.J.** (Robin), **Ashley, Melanie D.** (Dennis & Melissa), **Kim & Jenn** (Cynthia), **Julie C, Jemma** (Robin), **Dominic, Pat M., Lorraine B., Mike D.** (Lori), **David S.** (Robin), **Sarah** (Karen), **Selwyn W., Karen B., Sierra P** (Steve & Cynthia), **Amy P.** (Rev Paul), **Ann B.** (Robin), **Angie K.** (Kirsten), **Mark, Judy L.** (Jim), **Sean W.** (Robin), **All who have been affected by recent events** (Amherst fire, floods, shootings, etc), **Joan B & Tricia D.** (Flo), the family of **Kristen P** (Janice), **Jen B** (Patty), **Joyce, Jasmine** (Terry) **Stewy J.** (Jim), **Langevin Family** (Rev Paul), **Treasure** (Dom), the family of **Earl C** at his passing (Jenn), **Marty B** (Deb F), and **Gus G.** (Shirl).

Nursing Homes/Assisted Living: **Michael C., Julie C and Jake M..**

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

Please also pray for all those unnamed who are suffering or in need of prayer in our community and worldwide.



The Episcopal Church of the Atonement

36 Court Street · Westfield, MA · 01085 · (413) 562-5461 · www.atonementwestfield.org

Drawn in by Grace · Reaching out in Love



Lenten Grief Support Group **Tuesdays, February 24 through March 31** **@ 2:00 pm**

Grief expresses itself in many ways, and during the season of Lent, uncomfortable feelings may arise. As a Certified Grief Educator, Lyn Casey will be facilitating an online support group to provide a safe place to share and witness each other's experiences.

Each session will offer a judgment-free space for sharing, as well as an opportunity to learn new ways to navigate loss. The group will meet on Zoom on Tuesdays at 2:00 pm for the six weeks of Lent, starting this Tuesday, February 24, and running through March 31. For more information or to sign up, contact Lyn at GriefGratitudeAndGrins@gmail.com.

Meeting Details:

Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85029491137?pwd=kyhWyohlLnuyom3dAk6hrjXxgaE48A.1>

Meeting ID: 850 2949 1137

Passcode: ECOTA*Loss

ANNOUNCEMENTS

-Rev Paul says, "There are people in need of winter hats, scarves, and gloves. If you are in a position to donate new, used, items, please see me."

-Reminder that Rev Paul will be *OUT* March 12th through the 22nd.

-Joint Service March 22nd, in WESTFIELD, at 9:30 am.

-All Church Meeting March 29th following the service

-Watch for Easter Flower order form, coming soon!



This popular series chronicles the life of Jesus in a manner that is mostly faithful to the Gospels. (They fill in some gaps that are not mentioned in the Bible.) We will watch episodes and hold discussions at the end of the show.

February through April

First Congregational Church of Westfield
18 Broad Street
Westfield, MA
Monday at 10:00 AM



Southwick Congregational Church
488 College Highway
Southwick, MA
Thursday at 7:00 PM



Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome to attend at either church. It is FREE!

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:30am - SCEC NFH 11am - SCC	2	3 9:30am - Office Open 6pm - BSA OFH	4 9:30am - Office Open 6:30pm - Cub Scouts	5 9:30am - Office Open 5pm - GSA Rm10 6:30pm - GSA OFH 7pm - Chosen OFH	6 10am - Thrift Shop OFF 6pm - OA	7 10am - Thrift Shop
8 Daylight Saving Time 9:30am - SCEC NFH 11am - SCC	9 6pm - GSA Rm6-10	10 9:30am - Office Open 7pm - BSA OFH	11 9:30am - Office Open 6:30pm - Cub Scouts	12 RevPaul OUT 9:30am - Office Open 5pm - GSA Rm10 7pm - Chosen OFH	13 RevPaul OUT 10am - Thrift Shop OFF 6pm - OA	14 RevPaul OUT 10am - Thrift Shop
15 RevPaul OUT 9:30am - SCEC NFH 11am - SCC	16 RevPaul OUT 6pm - GSA Rm6-10	17 RevPaul OUT St. Patrick's Day 9:30am - Office Open 7pm - BSA OFH	18 RevPaul OUT 9:30am - Office Open 6pm - SCEC Rm3 6:30pm - Cub Scouts	19 RevPaul OUT 9:30am - Office Open 5pm - GSA Rm10 7pm - Chosen OFH	20 RevPaul OUT 10am - Thrift Shop OFF 6pm - OA	21 RevPaul OUT 10am - Thrift Shop
22 RevPaul OUT 9:30am - Joint Svc 9:30am - SCEC NFH	23 6pm - GSA Rm6-10	24 9:30am - Office Open 7pm - BSA OFH	25 9:30am - Office Open 6:30pm - Cub Scouts 7pm - GSA Rm3	26 9:30am - Office Open 5pm - GSA Rm10 6:30pm - GSA OFH 7pm - Chosen OFH	27 10am - Thrift Shop OFF 6pm - OA	28 10am - Thrift Shop
29 All Church Mtg 9:30am - SCEC NFH 11am - SCC	30	31 9:30am - Office Open 6pm - BSA OFH	1 9:30am - Office Open 6:30pm - Cub Scouts	2 9:30am - Office Open 5pm - GSA Rm10 7pm - Chosen OFH	3 10am - Thrift Shop OFF 6pm - OA	4 10am - Thrift Shop

ALL CHURCH MINUTES

253rd Annual Meeting Minutes Southwick Congregational Church United Church of Christ February 15, 2026

The meeting was called to order by Moderator Terry Putnam at 12:25 pm and was held in Old Fellowship Hall following our 11 am morning worship service and a delicious potluck luncheon. An opening prayer was led by Rev. Paul B. Nesbit. The Moderator then asked for a moment of silence to recognize and remember members and friends who passed away in 2025 – Don Lindsey, Robert Bates, Earl Chase, and Karl Zinnack.

The Moderator asked for a motion from the floor, which was seconded and passed unanimously, to dispense with the reading of the Call to the Annual Meeting.

A count was taken around the room with 20 voting members present – a quorum of 15 was achieved.

The Moderator entertained a motion from the floor to accept the Clerk's Report/Minutes of last year's 252nd Annual Meeting which was seconded, and with no discussion, was passed unanimously.

Moderator Terry Putnam asked if, after reading Committee reports, there were any questions. Seeing none, a discussion was then held regarding nominating members to a committee:

ALL CHURCH MINUTES

The Moderator made a motion to add Kristy Johnston to the Missions Committee which was passed unanimously.

Jim Putnam made a motion to change the name of the Missions Committee to Missions & Community Outreach Committee which was passed unanimously.

Jim Putnam made an additional motion to allow the Moderator to appoint new members to the Missions & Community Outreach Committee throughout this coming year until the next Annual Meeting in 2027, including Lorraine Bates, which was passed unanimously.

A further discussion took place for changes that needed to be made to the Committees & Members List going forward that Melanie will advise the Office Administrator to change. Also, Christian Ed Committee was advised they may elect their new chair at their March meeting as Tina Clark has volunteered.

The Moderator asked if anyone had any questions about the Treasurer's Report and seeing none, asked for a motion from the floor to accept the Treasurer's Report which was seconded and accepted unanimously.

The Proposed Budget for 2026 was reviewed with the Finance Committee Chair Melanie Nitsch. Melanie thanked Treasurer Jim Putnam for the majority of work preparing the budget. It is important to note that our 2025 revenues vs. expenses left us

ALL CHURCH MINUTES

with a surplus of \$2,170 which is wonderful! A discussion of the Revenue section of the budget commenced with an explanation that the majority of our revenue comes from pledges, church rental income, and fundraisers. Several large donations received also helped increase our revenue for 2025. Our projected revenue for 2026 stands at \$131,050. A motion was made to accept the Revenue section of the proposed budget which was passed unanimously. The Expense section of the budget was discussed next. Our largest expenses were noted as the salaries of our staff along with utilities costs and insurance for the building. There was a discussion about the small proposed budgets for Christian Ed, Deacons, and Missions Committee. Historically, they have all had very small amounts of expenses and each committee also has a pool of funds set aside that they may use for projects as needed. As an example, Terry Putnam hoped the current food bag program provided for those in need in the community will continue with the cost of these bags being covered by the Missions funds. Melanie noted the projected expenses of the church for 2026 to be \$157,611 which leaves a proposed operating deficit of \$26,561. As in 2025, it is hoped this deficit can be overcome. With no further discussion of the budget, a motion was made to accept the Proposed 2026 Budget for our church which was passed unanimously.

ALL CHURCH MINUTES

NEW BUSINESS

Rev. Paul congratulated the church on ending 2025 with a surplus budget. He commented it is very rare in these times for this to happen. He has also asked us to consider a different way of governance for our church and will help us investigate options. He suggested we may be able to make improvements in our current system of a large number of committees to run our church since our members are fewer now. He asked anyone to talk to him if they have ideas. When any changes are made, our By-Laws would need to be changed too. Patty Banasik mentioned one By-Law change would be to remove the Flower Committee as it is no longer needed.

Terry Putnam is looking at ways to increase accessibility to our church and would like to get estimates for handicapped accessibility. This would be an important way to maximize our financial position for the future of this congregation.

The Moderator called for a motion to close the 253rd Annual Meeting of the Southwick Congregational Church at 1:24 pm which was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously. All in attendance sang "Blest Be the Tie That Binds."

*Respectfully submitted,
Melanie Nitsch, Clerk*

2026 JOINT SERVICE SCHEDULE

Date	Where	Remarks
January 25	Westfield	Last Sunday
February 22	Southwick	Last Sunday (First in Lent)
March 22	Westfield	4th Sunday due to Palm Sunday
April 2	Westfield	MAUNDY THURSDAY
April 26	Southwick	Last Sunday
May 31	Westfield	Last Sunday
June 28	Southwick	Last Sunday
July 26	Westfield	Last Sunday
August 30	Southwick	Last Sunday
September 27	STANLEY PARK	End of Summer Celebration
October 25	Southwick	Last Sunday



COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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

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

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

Church Website: www.southwickucc.org

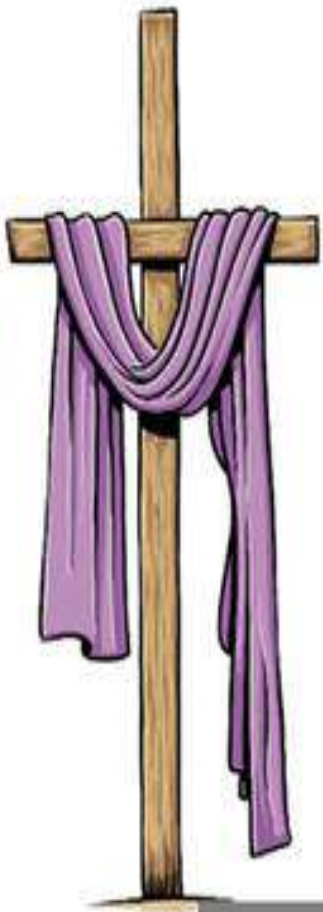
Office e-mail: southwickucc@gmail.com

Facebook: Southwick Congregational Church UCC

You Tube: Southwick Congregational Church

Staff:	Choir Director/Organist	Robertta Kowal
	Custodian	Christopher Robin Roberts
	Administrative Assistant	Joseph Stiefel

The
Season
of
Lent



Southwick Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
488 College Highway; P.O. Box 260
Southwick, MA 01077

VOLUME MMXXVI No. 3
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(413) 569-6362