



Crossroads

*News from South Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
45 Maple Street, Springfield, MA 01105
(413) 732-0117 www.sococh.org*

*We are an inclusive community of faith; courageously following Christ;
serving our neighbors in love.*

May 2019



The Season of Easter

The season of Easter lasts for fifty days and ends with Pentecost, which this year falls on June 9. It celebrates the time when the resurrected Christ was among his disciples, preparing them to spread the love and good news of God to all nations. “Feed my lambs,” was the charge Jesus gave to Simon Peter and the other disciples in the Book of John 21:15-19.

From the Pastor

Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matthew 5:48

“Perfectionism is a mean, frozen form of idealism, while messes are the artist’s true friend. What people somehow (inadvertently, I’m sure) forgot to mention when we were children was that we need to make messes in order to find out who we are and why we are here . . .” Anne Lamont

I am really not an artist but I do strive to be one when I am turning bowls. When I first began I would get frustrated because the finished product was imperfect – the shapes were not great – the finish left much to be desired – walls were too thick or too thin. And then there were the countless bowls that cracked or flew off the lathe or ended up to be only good for kindling. My frustration was rooted in the desire to be perfect. I would visit craft shows, look at other people’s work and my products would fall short in comparison. The desire for perfection often caused me to stay away from the lathe for long periods of time. Why bother if all I make is a mess?

But I kept on returning to the workshop. In the process I made my share of messes. Just visit my workshop and you will find sawdust - wood shavings – finishing rags – pieces of wood all over the place. Every so often I spend hours putting things in their place or creating a place for things that didn’t have one. And it looks great. But then I get back to creating something of value and within minutes the place is a mess again.

Experience has taught me that Lamont is right. While perfection is something to strive for, it will remain a not yet reality. But that reality should not keep me from turning in spite of the mess I make. The work I do now, while not perfect, is not that bad. I wouldn’t be able to say that if I had let achieving perfection be the order of the day - if I had given up because what I made fell short of perfect?

If Lamont is right then what am I – we – supposed to make of Matthew’s admonition, “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Space doesn’t allow a full-throated study of this passage and the meaning of the word that is translated here as perfect. So, I won’t even try and will simply say that yes God is as perfect as God can be and that is perfect. And you and I are capable of being as perfect as you and I can be and that will always be less than perfect. But the distance between what we can achieve and the perfection of God should not cause us to not do the work of creation we are called to do.

Over the years I have seen congregations frozen by their quest for perfection. I have witnessed their hesitancy to engage in new ministries and programs out of a fear of getting it wrong – of possible flaws in the plan – of, heaven forbid, failing. Good ideas die on the vine because of the virus of perfectionism. But I have also been blessed to witness what congregations can do when they set aside their fear of failure - don’t over think things – let go of the unachievable desire of perfection and act.

We are capable of doing great things. We are, after all, created in God's image. But to achieve the greatness we are capable of requires that we don't let perfectionism get in the way. We can make a difference when we set aside our fears – stop trying to get all the ducks in a row – not worry so much about getting it all right and act. Will we always succeed? Nope. Will our efforts be without flaws? Nope. Will we make a mess of things? Yep. But we will also make the world a better place – dare I say more perfect – than if we never tried at all.



- *Rev. Peter Wells*

MAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE (All services are at 10 a.m.)

May 5 (Communion)	Kimberly Figueroa
May 12	Rev. Peter Wells
May 19	Rev. Peter Wells
May 26	Rev. Peter Wells



Please Pray For... Bob Stack, Beverly Lynch, Silvio Vasquez and his family in Venezuela, Peter Nelson, Renee Silva, Thomas Wright, Pastor Clemmons, Anthony Wysocki, Karen Buske, Sue Wood, Ginny McCray, Don Russell, Roland Fenton, Bert Montagna, Deborah Price, Dan Myers, Irene Rappa, Jeff Weed, Dot Strebels, Stella Boulware, Shirley McCready, Beryl Kress, Ginny Robbins, John Burris, Jan McDonald and her friend, Cathy Wesson, Rev. Bart and Valerie Cochran.

Northampton Pride



Do you love a parade? On Saturday, May 4, South Church will join other UCC churches in the valley to march in the NOHO Pride Parade. The parade begins in the parking lot on Hampton Ave, which is directly across from the Northampton Brewery. This year we will line up at 10 a.m. in the **GREEN FLAG** staging area. The parade begins at 11 a.m. Contact Larry Picard (lpicard@sococh.org) or Adam MacRae (adammac408@gmail.com) if you have any questions or if you need a ride.

Scholarship forms are on the counter in the Parish Hall!

Happy May Birthday!



11 Ted Lyman
20 Shawn Ferrari
21 Allen Jack
22 Larry King

22 Marisa Brown-Ludwig
22 Virginia Robbins
30 Roland Fenton



The Matsiko World Orphan Choir at South Church

The Matsiko World Orphan Choir is returning to South Church and will be performing for us on Wednesday, May 15 at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Join us for a happy evening of song. No admission charge, but a free-will offering will be taken. www.matsikochoir.com

Director of Music

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

*⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.
– Isaiah 6:1-4*

(The following is an excerpt from my sermon of April 28, 2019.)

I want us to think of a song that is shared by Christian denominations all over the world. It is also adapted from this scripture and one from the Book of Revelations and if you sing it in English it often goes something like this: “Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!”

It has several names, one being the Trisagion, and it is also known as Sanctus, which is Latin for “Holy.” It is found in the Catholic mass, and it is part of what is called the “ordinary” of the mass, which refers to those parts that are sung or said at every mass. It is not exclusive to the Catholic mass, however, as one also finds it in the communion liturgies of the Episcopal and Lutheran services as well as those of other denominations that have begun to focus more on the communion liturgy. You can even find it in the United Church of Christ Book of Worship, although it is not yet used as frequently.

Anyway, this song, called Trisagion or Sanctus has been set to music hundreds of times, by as many composers. It is sung in many different languages and to many different tunes. In masses and services where there is no music it can be spoken, or sometimes sung a cappella.

The most interesting aspect about this song and how it is sung in worship is how it is introduced. The priest or minister begins the communion service with an invitation and a prayer, which they end by saying, “Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with your people on earth and all the company of heaven who forever sing this hymn to the glory of your name:”

...and then everyone launches into the song.

So here is the amazing part. The celebrant has just said that all the company of heaven, probably led by those six-winged seraphim, is singing this great hymn of praise. The celebrant has also included “your people on earth” as those who forever sing this hymn. Forever. So, think about it. There are 24 time zones in the world, give or take, so while we’re sleeping a daytime Christian service is happening somewhere in the world. Catholic churches are mandated to have at least one mass with communion every day of the year (except Good Friday) in addition to the Saturday evening and Sunday morning masses. The Anglicans (which include the American Episcopalians) and the Lutherans have churches all over the globe and those churches have embraced a practice in recent times of having communion at every service. Other denominations are also gradually moving in that direction.

So, at any hour of any day, chances are very good that a Christian communion is happening somewhere in the world. Because this song of praise that I am telling you about is a fixed part of the

communion service, that song is being sung or spoken just as frequently. In other words, *without ceasing*. In a few minutes we're going to sing that song, too, and when we start to sing we'll be joining people all over the world who are already singing it. When we finish, people all over the world will still be singing it. And, if you choose to believe it, if there actually is a moment when nobody on earth is singing it, those six-winged seraphim have us covered.

(The sermon continued with the congregation learning an original version of the song, and the offertory anthem was arrangement of the song that was sung by the choir and congregation.)

- *Larry*

STEP String Serenade...

Come celebrate the 30th Annual Suzuki String Serenade with the STEP Suzuki Strings on Sat. May 11, at South Congregational Church 45 Maple St. in Springfield. The main concert is at 6:30 pm, with a free Twinkle prelude by the book 1 students at 6:15pm. A donation of \$12 in advance or \$15 at the door is requested for adults attending the 6:30pm concert; children are free when accompanied by an adult.

This concert is the main fundraiser for the STEP Scholarship and Instrument Fund. Currently over 50% of STEP students receive financial aid and instrument loans, which benefits local low-income families with a wonderful family-centered music education and benefits STEP with a more diverse group of children playing music together. Currently STEP families have roots in Colombia, China, Ghana, Liberia, Russia, the US and Vietnam.

Our family-friendly concert has a great variety of string music, including folk music from France, Germany, México and Zimbabwe; movie music from Fiddler on the Roof and Return of the King; and classics by Bach, Brahms, and Schumann, which students will perform from memory. You will also be inspired by the high-quality performances of our young STEP soloists, chosen by audition, and I hope you will enjoy my performance of Sarasate's Carmen Fantasy, accompanied by Larry Picard (who you might spot playing viola in the orchestra, too!).

For more information, email Lani Bortfeld at arcosirisquartet@msn.com, and for a nice article on the concert on Masslive, go to <https://www.masslive.com/entertainment/2019/04/30th-annual-suzuki-string-serenade-approaches.html>



May 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
5 Communion 10:00 AM Sunday School (SA)(N) 10:00 AM Sunday Service (SA) 11:00 AM Coffee Hour (PH) 11:30 AM Welcome Committee Mtg. (PH) 12:00 PM Little Rock Church* (CH)	6 12:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 5:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 6:30 PM Narcotics Anonymous* (PH)	7 10:00 AM Comm. on Ministry (GR) 12:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 4:00 PM Quilting Group (ML) 5:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 7:00 PM AA* (PH)	8 8:45 AM Breakfast Prep* (Kitchen) 10:00 AM Prayer Shawl (GR) 3:00 PM STEP* (SA) DRESS REHEARSAL	9 11:45 AM Brief Communion Svc (CH) 12:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 2:30 PM STEP* (ML) 5:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 7:00 PM Spanish AA* (GR)	10 10:30 AM South Church Cooks (K)(PH) 12:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 5:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH)	11 12:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 5:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 6:30 PM Suzuki String Serenade Concert* (SA)
12 Baptism Mother's Day 10:00 AM Sunday School (SA)(N) 10:00 AM Sunday Service (SA) 11:00 AM Coffee Hour (PH) 12:00 PM Little Rock Church* (CH)	13 12:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 5:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH)	14 12:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 4:00 PM Quilting Group (ML) 5:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 7:00 PM AA* (PH)	15 8:45 AM Breakfast Prep* (Kitchen) 10:00 AM Prayer Shawl (GR) 3:00 PM NO STEP* 7:00 PM Matsiko World Orphan Choir Concert (PH)	16 11:45 AM Brief Communion Svc (CH) 12:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 2:30 PM NO STEP* 5:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 7:00 PM Spanish AA* (GR)	17 12:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 5:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH)	18 12:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 5:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH)
19 10:00 AM Sunday School (SA)(N) 10:00 AM Sunday Service (SA) 11:00 AM Coffee Hour (PH) 11:30 AM Church Relational Covenant Meeting (PH) 12:00 PM Little Rock Church* (CH) 4:00 PM Imperial Court* (GR)	20 12:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 5:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH)	21 12:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 4:00 PM Quilting Group (ML) 5:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 7:00 PM AA* (PH)	22 8:45 AM Breakfast Prep* (Kitchen) 10:00 AM Prayer Shawl (GR) 3:00 PM NO STEP*	23 11:45 AM Brief Communion Svc (CH) 12:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 2:30 PM NO STEP* 5:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 7:00 PM Spanish AA* (GR)	24 12:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 5:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH)	25 12:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 5:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH)
26 10:00 AM Sunday School (PH) 10:00 AM Sunday Service (SA) 11:00 AM Coffee Hour (PH) 12:00 PM Little Rock Church* (CH)	27 Memorial Day – Office Closed 12:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 5:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 6:00 PM Deacon's Meeting (GR)	28 10:30 AM South Church Cooks (K)(PH) 12:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 4:00 PM Quilting Group (ML) 5:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 7:00 PM AA* (PH)	29 8:45 AM Breakfast Prep* (Kitchen) 10:00 AM Prayer Shawl (GR) 3:00 PM NO STEP*	30 11:45 AM Brief Communion Svc (CH) 12:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 2:30 PM NO STEP* 5:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 7:00 PM Spanish AA* (GR)	31 12:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 5:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH)	1 12:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH) 5:00 PM Loaves & Fishes* (PH)

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Crossroads is the newsletter of South Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, in Springfield, Massachusetts. Stories and items of Church interest are welcome and are due by the 20th of the month for the next month's issue. Submissions should be sent to Larry Picard at lpicard@sococh.org or by post to his attention at the church address.

South Congregational Church UCC www.sococh.org

A Jesus-centered, Open & Affirming Community

