



# Crossroads

*News from South Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ*

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

## July 2019



**Welcome to our newest members, Karen Starks and Julius Dixon, who joined the South Church community during worship on June 2. With them is SCC moderator Kimberly Figueroa.**

## From the Pastor

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**Genesis 12** Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup>I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. <sup>3</sup>I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” <sup>4</sup>So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. <sup>5</sup>Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother’s son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan.

God promised Abram and Sarai that they would become a great nation. That their lives would be blessed. That they would be a blessing. Who could turn down such an offer for a new future? Who wouldn’t want to be led to a “Promised Land”? But in order to receive the blessing Abram and Sarai would need to leave. In order to enter the new land that was promised they would need to leave their country, their family and their parents’ home.

As the story makes clear, they could take stuff with them and they did. They didn’t have to leave everything behind and they didn’t. They packed up their possessions. The fact that some of those possessions were slaves is an issue for another day. Suffice it to say that the presence of slavery in the Bible is reason enough to take it seriously but not literally. But I digress.

The point is, in order to receive the promise of being a great nation they had to leave home. They could not take the past way of living with them. They could not take the way life had always been with them. They could not take the status quo with them. They needed to leave all of that and more behind and step out in faith trusting that the journey would lead them to the promised land.

I love what Kim says in her article. “If South is to not only survive . . . but thrive into the future, taking a calculated risk, underscored by a sound strategy, goals, actions steps and metrics that measure success, is well worth it.” To discern and name that future will be critical for South. But that is the easy part. In my work with congregations I have learned that the “strategy, goals, actions steps” is the difficult part.

Congregations are pretty good at writing vision and mission statements that focus on a preferred future. South has written a few. The challenge always comes in the leaving home part. Resistance and push back and fall back always occur at the moments when you need to decide what to leave behind. The truth is that you simply cannot move forward without letting go. You cannot follow the Spirit to a new place and continue to do things the way you have always done them. If you want to thrive and not just survive change needs to happen. And the reality is that one of the reasons so many congregations have closed their doors in recent years is a refusal to change - to let go - to leave home.

Abram and Sarai left and they were blessed. I pray that you will seek to discern where God is calling South Church to go. And even more I pray that you will be willing to let go and leave home. I know if you do you will be blessed. – *Peter*



## From the Moderator

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***“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”*** Joshua 1:9

Happy July! Time for summer celebrations, BBQs, vacations, baseball *and*...an important congregational meeting! An official announcement will be made soon in enough time to comply with our by-laws, *I promise*, but meanwhile mark your calendars for Sunday, July 21, after worship.

As we approach this event, we’ve already been engaged in discussions about the budget. Many thanks to Tom Fields, who worked hard on the 2019/2020 numbers and gave us a “line by line” rundown of the details on June 16. On Sunday, June 30, we had another discussion regarding the choices we could make about the budget.

Here’s a recap of our June 30 discussion. (Thanks to all who stayed and contributed!)

**Option 1: Pass budget as is with current draw of 6.4%, and keep doing what we're doing:** This did not seem like a good option. While it would be easy and efficient, it wasn’t compelling from a growth perspective. In fact, doing “more of the same” seemed like delaying an inevitable future in which South probably would close.



**Option 2: Cut budget to 4% immediately or gradually.** This also did not seem like the best approach - the feeling was that this choice would severely limit our ability to do anything new *or* maintain the very best that South offers. I shared that this could have implications for the search team in terms of the type of salary that could be offered and the resources a new minister would have

available.

**Option 3: Pass the budget as is and decide to go into a discernment process that would help us determine our "preferred" future.** There was good energy around this option with a number of ideas suggested and a brief discussion of what this process might look like.

Now, I can only imagine what some of you could be thinking. “What, *another* discernment process? Haven’t we been through this before? How will this change anything? And, what’s wrong with what we’re doing now?” I get it. You’ve done this kind of thing before. And some folks (Shirley, Elliott and others from Old First Church) saw your beloved church close.

My simple (and, perhaps, naïve) answer would be that if South is to not only survive (until the money runs out), but **thrive** into the future, taking a calculated risk, underscored by a sound strategy, goals, actions steps and metrics that measure success, is well worth it.

And then, from the creative spirit moving among us in the Parish Hall on June 30, **Option 4** emerged: **This is a combination of 2 and 3.** Cut where we can *AND* go through a discernment process. This would require convening a small committee to make gradual "budget reduction" recommendations while at the same time, we proceed with a discernment process.

What you will see for a vote on the budget on July 21 will be a choice between these last two options, 3 and 4. Both represent a bold move and a willingness to **“be strong and courageous”**.

**I am deeply moved by our discussion. Goose bump kind of moved.**

I'm also deeply moved by an urban church, not unlike South, located in Indianapolis, Indiana called Broadway United Methodist Church. With an address in the heart of a low-income, drug infested neighborhood, Pastor Mike Mather and his congregation turned their faltering church "inside out" by seeking out the gifts of the people with whom they shared the neighborhood. Fueled by the question "What does it look like to live as if the gospel were true", this congregation intentionally learned about the **abundance and gifts** of their neighbors and discovered ways to lift up, support and "incubate" the talents in their midst. For those of you interested in reading Pastor Mike's book, *Having Nothing, Possessing Everything*, I will place several copies in the bookshelves of the Parish Hall. Please help yourself, read, return and share. You can learn more about Broadway United Methodist's story here: <https://www.faithandleadership.com/death-and-resurrection-urban-church>

Broadway United Methodist is just ONE example of a congregation that made a series of bold decisions. There are many others to be inspired by. And, while we're not yet ready to write South's next chapter, your decision on July 21 will determine how we begin.

I look forward to seeing you then!

Blessings,

*Kim Figueroa*

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

|  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| July 7 (Communion)                             | Rev. Peter Wells |
| July 14  | Rev. Peter Wells |
| July 21 (Congregational meeting after worship) | Rev. Peter Wells |
| July 28  | Rev. Peter Wells |

**Please Pray For...** Joanne Wells, Jill Hartnett, Kelleen Weed, Bob Dowd, Jeff Johnson, Jane Closson, Rubin Reyes, 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, Dot Strelbel, Stella Boulware, Shirley McCready, Beryl Kress, Ginny Robbins, John Burris, Jan McDonald and her friend, Cathy Wesson, JoAnne Joyce, Rev. Bart and Valerie Cochran.



**A big thank-you to our friends from Little Rock Chapel, the congregation that worships in our chapel on Sunday afternoons, for a generous contribution toward our parking lot project!**

**Ever visit the Forest Park Farmer's Market? Our own South Church bookkeeper, Cynthia Lage, can be found there selling her own homemade soaps and other toiletries. The market is open Tuesdays from 12:30 p.m. to 6 p.m., so stop by! Be sure and use the Trafton Road entrance (off Dickinson Street) as the Sumner Avenue entrance is closed for repairs.**

## The project begins...



Test holes have been dug along the foundation of the church at the front (Maple Street) and side (parking lot), which to enable the contractors to assess the extent of the damage, done over time mainly by water seepage, to be repaired. The reconstruction will include replacing the plaza in front of the church and regrading and resurfacing the parking lot.



## Director of Music

I have returned. What, you didn't know I was gone? My substitute, Anita Cooper, must have played too well and made you think she was me. I'll have to speak to her about that. Anyway, I had something of a stay-cation, doing projects around my house or sleeping too much. Then, last week I flew out to Madison, Wisconsin, for the United Church of Christ Musician's Association Conference. The UCCMA is a relatively new organization, formed in the last 20 years, and as the name implies, it offers church musicians from all over the country to meet, learn new things and share ideas.



The first thing I have to say is that Madison is a beautiful city. The downtown area lies on an isthmus between two large lakes. I found the city enjoyable and the people friendly and helpful. The conference was held at First Congregational Church of Madison, a large facility with many interesting rooms. We took workshops and attended worship services of varying kinds. I sang in the conference choir, so there were daily rehearsals for that, and there was also an outing one evening to attend a chamber music concert in a different church that had been designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

Just as a taste for the kind of workshops I attended, they had focuses on psalm singing, art and drama in worship, songs from Broadway musicals that are appropriate in a church setting, alternative styles of music and one workshop that gave us a taste for the history of African-American gospel music, from pre-Civil War times through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I have to say that I feel pretty rejuvenated from the experience, and I hope to share some of what I took from it with all of you in the coming year.

Meanwhile, if you are able, come and hear me play painted pianos in downtown Springfield this summer. On July 19 I'll be playing at 1350 Main Street, right across from Court Square, from noon until 1 p.m. On July 26 I'll be playing for the same time period at 1414 Main Street, also known as Monarch Place. There's a Starbucks there now so you can sit and enjoy a macchiato while you listen to me play Mozart, Scott Joplin, Freddie Mercury, the Beatles and all sorts of other tunes. See you there! - **Larry**

### Happy July Birthday!



2 Mark Welch  
4 Rev. Tom Gerstenlauer  
5 Elizabeth O'Neill  
8 Gordon Dodge

9 Rick Drummond  
16 Peggy Caplette  
16 Deborah Price  
19 Bob Dowd

21 Nicholas Lentino  
25 Virginia McCray  
25 Shirley McCready  
26 Emily Bourdeau

## July 2019

| Sunday   | Monday   | Tuesday   | Wednesday  | Thursday  | Friday   | Saturday   |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| <b>30</b><br><b>10:00 AM</b> Sunday School (PH)(N)<br><b>10:00 AM</b> Sunday Service (PH)<br><b>11:00 AM</b> Coffee Hour (PH)<br><b>12:00 PM</b> Little Rock Church* (CH)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> PVP (PH)               | <b>1</b><br><b>12:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>6:30 PM</b> Narcotics Anonymous* (PH)                    | <b>2</b><br><b>12:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>4:00 PM</b> Quilting Group (ML)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>7:00 PM</b> AA* (PH)                                      | <b>3</b><br><b>8:45 AM</b> Breakfast Prep* (Kitchen)<br><b>10:00 AM</b> Prayer Shawl (Guild Room)                                      | <b>4</b><br><b>Independence Day – Office Closed</b><br><b>11:45 AM</b> Brief Communion Svc (CH)<br><b>12:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>7:00 PM</b> Spanish AA* (GR) | <b>5</b><br><b>12:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)  | <b>6</b><br><b>12:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> Pves & Fishes* (PH)    |
| <b>7</b><br><b>10:00 AM</b> Sunday School (PH)(N)<br><b>10:00 AM</b> Sunday Service (PH)<br><b>11:00 AM</b> Coffee Hour (PH)<br><b>12:00 PM</b> Little Rock Church* (CH)   | <b>8</b><br><b>12:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)  | <b>9</b><br><b>12:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>4:00 PM</b> Quilting (ML)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>5:30 PM</b> Sanctuary Training* (GR)<br><b>7:00 PM</b> AA* (PH) | <b>10</b><br><b>8:45 AM</b> Breakfast Prep* (Kitchen)<br><b>10:00 AM</b> Prayer Shawl (Guild Room)<br><b>3:00 PM</b> STEP* (ML)(GS)    | <b>11</b><br><b>11:45 AM</b> Brief Communion Svc (CH)<br><b>12:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>2:30 PM</b> STEP* (ML)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>7:00 PM</b> Spanish AA* (GR)              | <b>12</b><br><b>10:30 AM</b> South Church Cooks (K)(PH)<br><b>12:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>1:30 PM</b> Narcan Training* (PH)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH) | <b>13</b><br><b>12:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH) |
| <b>14</b><br><b>10:00 AM</b> Sunday School (PH)(N)<br><b>10:00 AM</b> Sunday Service (PH)<br><b>11:00 AM</b> Coffee Hour (PH)<br><b>12:00 PM</b> Little Rock Church* (CH)  | <b>15</b><br><b>12:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>6:00 PM</b> PVP* (ML)<br><b>7:00 PM</b> Leadership (GR) | <b>16</b><br><b>12:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>4:00 PM</b> Quilting Group (ML)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>7:00 PM</b> AA* (PH)                                     | <b>17</b><br><b>8:45 AM</b> Breakfast Prep* (Kitchen)<br><b>10:00 AM</b> Prayer Shawl (Guild Room)<br><b>3:00 PM</b> STEP* (ML)(GS)    | <b>18</b><br><b>11:45 AM</b> Brief Communion Svc (CH)<br><b>12:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>2:30 PM</b> STEP* (ML)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>7:00 PM</b> Spanish AA* (GR)              | <b>19</b><br><b>12:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)   | <b>20</b><br><b>12:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH) |
| <b>21/28</b><br><b>10:00 AM</b> Sunday School (PH)(N)<br><b>10:00 AM</b> Sunday Service (PH)<br><b>11:00 AM</b> Coffee Hour (PH)<br><b>11:30 AM</b> Cong. Meeting (PH)<br><b>12:00 PM</b> Little Rock Church* (CH) | <b>22/29</b><br><b>12:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>6:00 PM</b> Deacon's Meeting (GR) 7/29               | <b>23/30</b><br><b>10:30 AM</b> SC Cooks (K) 7/30<br><b>12:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>4:00 PM</b> Quilting (ML)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>7:00 PM</b> AA* (PH)   | <b>24/31</b><br><b>8:45 AM</b> Breakfast Prep* (Kitchen)<br><b>10:00 AM</b> Prayer Shawl (Guild Room)<br><b>3:00 PM</b> STEP* (ML)(GS) | <b>25</b><br><b>11:45 AM</b> Brief Communion Svc (CH)<br><b>12:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>2:30 PM</b> STEP* (ML)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>7:00 PM</b> Spanish AA* (GR)              | <b>26</b><br><b>12:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)   | <b>27</b><br><b>12:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH)<br><b>5:00 PM</b> Loaves & Fishes* (PH) |

**SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
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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 20<sup>th</sup> of the month for the next month's issue. Submissions should be sent to Larry Picard at [lpicard@sococh.org](mailto:lpicard@sococh.org) or by post to his attention at the church address.

*South Congregational Church UCC [www.sococh.org](http://www.sococh.org)*

*A Jesus-centered, Open & Affirming Community*

