



AUGUST 2023

# ON THE COMMON

Newsletter of Slatersville Congregational Church

## A Few Thoughts...

BY REV. KORTE

Happy August, Slatersville.

Yesterday, I became aware of a wonderful group of practice that meets on zoom every morning at 9am. It is open to all and I highly recommend it. It is a 20ish minute adapted “office” similar to our Wednesday evening reflection with prayers, silence, psalms, Taize chants and scripture. It is a simply lovely, faithful celebration of ancient scripture.

After the meditation this morning, I was privileged to speak with Andy Lang, who began the group as part of a larger vision to create a Protestant, inclusive version of the Catholic “hours”, again, sort of what we do Wednesdays at 6pm on the common. Andy is joined in this Holy task by Benedictine sisters from Kansas. It never ceases to amaze me how God pulls people together who would not normally meet from every which-way to be part of the growth and expression of the Holy Spirit. The group is open to all, and I will be attending as often as I can, so please join me!

The zoom link is: <http://www.zoom.us/j/5556624822> 9AM every Thursday.

The pastoral search committee had a meeting Wednesday, July 26th, and although I was on vacation, they found me wandering around the building mumbling about baptism bulletins, and we got to talking. They had decided earlier that it would be helpful to have discussions after church beginning August 13th on a few upcoming Sundays (additional dates to be provided.)

This search team is working hard and continues to look at how they can best serve the congregation. This brings us to why they would like to have these discussions. They realized that perhaps they need more details from you all to get a better idea of the importance of various issues for congregants. Some of you might be asking yourselves why calling a pastor is so difficult when the previous search squad was able to find the much-loved Reverend Eileen almost immediately. The religious landscape has changed dramatically, and while I realize it is frustrating for folks, (as well as anxiety-producing) I want to say that this group is doing everything they can to represent the entire

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## A Few Thoughts... (Cont.)

congregation, and with some of the parameters they are working with being a bit contradictory, their job has proven difficult. I appreciate that they are trying to find the right pastor to meet your needs and goals. Along with this challenging reality, the team's perception is that there is perhaps an opinion-gap among SCC's existing members, (as well as a gap between older generations regarding traditional views of religious practices versus the mindset of today's Millennials and Gen Z) is one that needs to be explored in order to allow them to continue the search for your next pastor.

I can't stress enough how encouraging and helpful it was to speak with Andy Lang this morning. Andy served as Executive Director for the Open and Affirming Coalition from 2010-2022. I am so often wrong in spite of my best efforts, that I thank God daily for the small amount of humility with which I am blessed. His gives me at least a shot of facing errors, making changes, and moving forward. It is probably the chief factor that gives me any chance at all to grow. I found myself using words like "impossible" as I looked at the ministerial landscape and the varied positions SCC congregants hold (which to me seem mutually exclusive at times.)

Some of you shared honestly with me that, at times, the process of becoming Open and Affirming felt like something was being forced on folks who weren't quite "there" yet. There can also sometimes be a sense of being shamed into silence when you don't agree with a direction the church is taking. The pastor must be able to accompany not only LGBTQ folks, but also congregants having a difficult time with change, making transitions on their own terms, rather than having it thrust upon them.

No one should be "rushed" or "pushed" into adopting ONA. Conflict resolution, forgiveness, an invitation to openness for change and perhaps most importantly- that ONA cannot be "imposed" or "pastor-led", but must be "lay-led" and lived into, or it just doesn't take.

"Importantly, we need to convey the positive aspects of being an Open and Affirming church, namely that we are ONA not in spite of our Christian Biblical principles, but because of them. Becoming visibly ONA also offers the potential to grow, attracting not only LGBTQ folks, but also Millennial and Gen Z couples who want their children to grow up with traditional Christian values, but who are uncomfortable or with messages of exclusion. More and more families include self-identifying LGBTQ members, and almost every child knows someone from that community, whether it be kids in school, their relatives, or a family member of their own. While we sometimes focus on people who might be driven away by this inclusion, we miss the opportunity to welcome into the "united and uniting" family of Christ, so many whom have been turned away or otherwise harmed by churches, but who still yearn to grow closer to God as revealed through Jesus Christ.

Let us face our fears and honest doubts, inviting Christ to open our eyes to how "more will be revealed."

Let us go forward not in fear of what we might lose, but in hope of what might be gained, who may be healed, helped, and blessed by this loving community. You are on track. You're going to be okay. I believe the right pastor is out there and you're going to find that pastor by being yourselves, not turning yourselves into a pretzel to fit what might seem attractive to some candidate somewhere. Be honest. Be yourselves. I thoroughly believe as you flesh out who you are, who you hope to be in Christ, and what you need to get there, that God will provide the right pastor.



# VBS Is Back! (July 10-14th)

BY MICHELL ESKELI

After a lot of worrying and questioning "How few is too few?" The Christian Ed triad (George Briggs, Jill Boday and Michell Eskeli) decided it's now or never for a return of VBS to SCC. On the day before VBS began, we had 9 students. By start on Monday morning, we had 13 and Friday ended with 15 kids! Thanks to Rick Stelle and his trivia night, each child attended for free.

We talked about God and how we are all accepted and loved. We learned that mistakes don't define us and learning from them makes us stronger. We talked about school shootings and fear and safety precautions. We shared lots of wonderful snacks. We made some fabulous crafts, learned songs and dances and cheered each other through obstacle courses. This small group of kids really connected.

The volunteers showed up and were willing to pitch in anywhere they were needed. People stepped up and out of their comfort zone. "Wherever you need me" are magical words to a Director of anything. Many times during the week we commented how the small numbers let us get to know each child better.

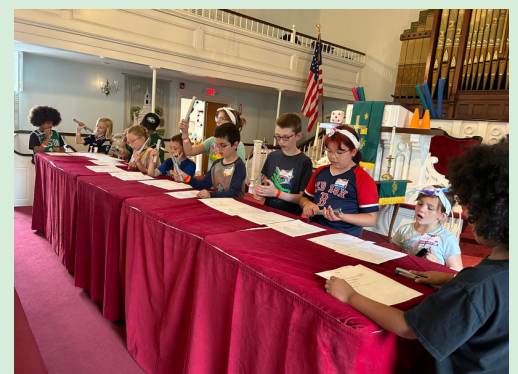
Our time together held lots of laughs and surprises. I was just sure "walking on water" would be a bust with the older kids but they loved it! They walked and even danced on water.

A good number of the kids came to church on Sunday July 16th and played the chimes for their families and the Congregation.

Our goal was for the kids to learn about Gods love for them and that Church is a safe place. I think we succeeded.

We are glad to be back! See you next year!  
With gratitude from your winning VBS team

Michell, Jill, George, Jean, Sammy, Sandy, Carolyn, Jim, Jan, Helen, Ruth Nicole, Zach, Catherine, Rev. Korte, Donna and McKenzie





## Spotlight: Sue Carlson

### "Growing up at Slaterville Congregational Church"

When I was born in September of 1944, my mother, Gert McCutcheon, was living with her in-laws in the house on Greene Street right behind the church, and my Dad, Dave, was serving in the Army. The following year when the war was over and Dad was home, my new sibling, Dad and I were all Baptized together.

The church has always been a part of my life. We went To Sunday School every week where we learned church songs. I remember my mother teaching me "Jesus Loves Me" and saying our nightly prayers. Sunday School was so much fun! When I was a little girl, my young friends and I would play on the big common and roller skate around the sidewalk. I was so afraid of those cracks in the sidewalk. As the old saying went, I didn't want to break my mother's back. My best friend's father was the sexton of the church. In order to play with her we had to help clean the church on Saturday to be ready for Jesus on Sunday. It was a chore we were proud to do, a labor of love.

The church wasn't locked; we could borrow the kindergarten tables and chairs for birthday parties and other functions. We could come in the back door of the church at any time. The kindergarten class was held on the stage behind the curtains. At the back of the stage were the cabinets where we kept our children's choir robes.

By the time I was 8 years old, a junior choir was started. We met on Saturday mornings to rehearse, and our mothers made our choir robes which I thought were beautiful. They were comprised of floor length maroon skirts with a white pinafore blouse, a big matching maroon bow, all topped off with a beanie. I was so proud to be in that choir with my friends and wear our new robes! Once we reached 12 years old, we were promoted to the Senior Choir.

It was about this time that a Confirmation class was started and led by the Minister. When I was confirmed, I was beaming with pride and could feel my imaginary halo placed on my head.

Besides making our choir robes, our mothers continued to do "church work". They would gather together monthly and called themselves "The Ladies Parish Guild". They did so many things for our church. They would make crafts and decorations for our annual bazaar and fund raiser. The men also met monthly and were a big asset in their "Men's Fellowship Group". In the late 1980s the church was flourishing and a big addition was added. Built over the Patio and Eastman Hall, we named it Globe Hall in honor of the church that had previously merged with us.

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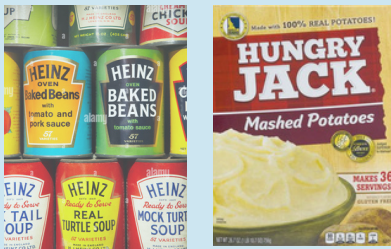


## NS Food Pantry - August

The Dates of the Food Pantry in August are:

- Sat the 19th at 10:00am
- Tues the 22nd at 5:30pm
- Sat the 26th at 10am and
- Tues the 29th at 5:30pm.

In August we are asking for soup, beans and boxed potatoes





## Spotlight: Sue Carlson (Cont.)

The ladies were able to purchase new hymn books. I don't remember what the men's group purchased with their funds.

In fourth grade we learned some Bible stories and verses and recited the Twenty-Third Psalm. Each year on Children's Day we were awarded our Bibles in recognition of our accomplishments! Every Children's Day was celebrated with a family picnic after our Church services. We would play games like "greased watermelon" and the "husband tamer" (which was a cast iron frying pan toss!) and so many other games for every age group. We had such a great time!

Sunday School continued until I graduated from high school.

As teenagers, we had a Pilgrim Fellowship group that met on Sunday afternoons at the church. We had regular Officers and a Chaplain who was in charge of the prayers. The Layman's Fellowship held our famous turkey suppers for years. The turkeys were cooked at a bakery on Rathbun Street, Woonsocket. My Dad was on that turkey basting team. The men peeled and cooked the vegetables, the ladies made apple pies. The youth group helped set up and serve the meals to more than 200 (or was it 400 people?). There was so much to do! Everyone in church had a job to do and it was fun!

We had fellowship on Sunday afternoons and we planned a monthly activity. It was 1956, and one such activity was going to see the movie "The 10 Commandments" with Charlton Heston. My mother felt that we shouldn't ride our bikes or go see a movie on Sunday as she felt it was a day of rest for the Lord. However, after talking the matter over with the Minister, he convinced her that times were changing and that it would be ok to attend the movie.

The Eastman addition to the left side of the basement was built in the early 50s or 60s, and it leaked like a sieve! It created one problem after another. Turkey dinners went on! We had a big fundraiser with all kinds of activities to help raise money for repairs to the addition. One fundraiser that we did was on the patio on top of the Eastman Hall. It as a beautiful patio.

I remember helping Roger Champagne make the sandwiches and serving them to patrons on our patio. Our first fundraiser was a success, but the next ones were wash outs, because of the floods from the leaky roof!

Globe Church was closing and merged with Slatersville Congregational around 1974. The Church flourished at that time. So many people came from Globe. I continued in the choir as well as starting my own family. My three siblings and I were all baptized at the church. Three of us had gotten married there as well! My 4 children were baptized there, as were 2 of my grandchildren and all attended Sunday school at SCC. I love this little church that could! We enjoyed working on our many fund raisers. We made at least 3 cookbooks over the years, held popular Military Whist Card Games, so many ham and bean suppers and other suppers. And don't forget those Super Bowl grinders made by the Youth Group every year!



I think Christmas is probably one of my favorite services. Seeing the church lit up with the luminary, the special music and the readings, and having the children take part in a lot of the services throughout Advent are a delight.

The church has given me a lifetime of great memories of community and togetherness. Every week I look forward to the camaraderie at coffee hour with good friends and familiar faces. It's a time for sharing and caring with one another. You can feel the love from all within.



## Our Thoughts & Prayers

...are with Laurel's grandson, Connor who is having surgical screws removed from his foot. Prayers for successful surgery and speedy recovery.

...are with Carolyn's friends John and Jen. John is being treated for Alzheimer's and Jen, a cancer survivor, is having a polyp removed

...are with Brenda Gabrielson, now home from the hospital and undergoing testing.

...are with Anthony and Jim as they mourn the loss of Anthony's 21-year-old friend Emily. She died in her sleep from an aneurism.

...are with Dave McCutcheon as he has been diagnosed with throat cancer.

...are with Marcia's sister-in-law who has inoperable lung cancer.

...are with Mary Stelle's cousin Peter whose cancer meds are not working.

... with joy for Michell as she celebrates seven years since her stem cell transplant.

...are with Pat Renaud's family as many of them came down with Covid after attending a wedding. Also a joy as the family was able to celebrate the wedding.

## Join US! SCC Discussion Series

Join the discussion on the present collective awareness of our church congregation, as well as our future aspirations, concerns, and expectations. We strongly encourage ALL ages to participate. We invite you to jump into a deep, respectful conversation to acknowledge where we are, with the ultimate goal of becoming a stronger faith community.

SLATERSVILLE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH	
<b>S.C.C. DISCUSSION SERIES</b>	
JOIN US AFTER SERVICE, DURING COFFEE HOUR FOR CONVERSATIONS ON THE FOLLOWING SUNDAYS. ALL AGES STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND! MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!	
AUGUST <b>13</b>	<b>SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE</b> WHAT GENERAL FEEDBACK HAVE WE RECEIVED FROM INTERVIEWS WITH CANDIDATES?
AUGUST <b>27</b>	<b>CHANGES IN THE CHURCH</b> HOW DO WE FEEL ABOUT CHANGE? WHAT ARE THE POSITIVES WE ANTICIPATE AND THE NEGATIVES WE FEAR?
SEPTEMBER <b>10</b>	<b>WHAT DOES "OPEN AND AFFIRMING" MEAN TO US?</b> HOW DOES GENDER IDENTITY AND PERCEPTION OF GOD IMPACT OUR SERVICES AND THE WAY WE MAY BE PERCEIVED BY OUR NEIGHBORS?
SEPTEMBER <b>24</b>	<b>WHAT DOES "SOCIAL JUSTICE" MEAN TO US?</b> WHAT DOES SOCIAL JUSTICE LOOK LIKE? HOW CAN OUR CHURCH BUILD A STRONGER FAITH COMMUNITY FOR PEACE, JUSTICE, EQUALITY, AND INCLUSIVITY?
slatersvillechurch.org 401-769-2773	

## The Choirs Are Returning Soon

After a much-deserved summer break, our Bell Choir and Senior Choir will be "Back At It" with Rehearsals resuming on Thursday, September 7th.

Both Choirs meets every Thursday to practice (and enjoy each other's company). The Bell Choir rehearsal begins at 6:30pm and the Senior Choir gets things started at 7:30pm.

New Members are always Welcome to both Choirs. You don't need to know how to read music to join in the fun! Just come and check it out! You'd be very welcome!

And GUYS ... the Senior Choir could really use some additional male voices this season. Now is the time to dust off your best "Singing in the Shower" voices and STEP OUT!