

February 2024

ON THE COMMON

Newsletter of Slatersville Congregational Church

A Few Thoughts...

BY REV. KORTE

Hello Slatersville CC fam,

On January 21st, Donna Stone, Palmer Swanson and Meaghan Castro shared reflections as lay folks willing to put themselves out there for the good of the congregation. They had each agreed to practice a combined and compressed form of 3 Contemplative practices: Lectio Divina, centering prayer, and breath meditation on four consecutive days, using different Bible translations and listening for the Spirit.

Last week saw SCC welcome 4 new members to the congregation (with 3 others joining, but not able to attend in person) during the “retreat-style service” I've been promising for several months. It was up in the air for a moment there, but was made possible by Jill & Mason Boday, and Sammie McNeil, with Pat Renaud filling in on organ after a late development left us without an organist/pianist for the service. I can't thank these folks enough for stepping up.

It was honestly a pretty trying week, and without Jill's help, we don't have live music in the service last week... so THANK YOU!

On both weeks, these people demonstrated a lived-out faith, courage and vulnerability in allowing themselves to be vessels of God's Word into morning worship service, and for that I thank them (and so should you!)

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A Few Thoughts... (Cont.)

2023 OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

Jenni Hull, Moderator
Ruth Mills, Clerk
Jean Meo, Financial Clerk
Margaret Hanoian, Treasurer

CHURCH STAFF

Korte Yeo, Bridge Minister
John Staples, Director of Music
Jill Boday, Handbell Choir
Administrator, Donna Myers
Hope Paul, Nursery Attendant
Romeo Mendes, Sexton

2023 COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Ruth Mills, Caring
Michell Eskeli, Diaconate
Alma Morin, Hospitality
Bob Meo, Stewardship
Martha Hunt, Music
Rick Stelle, Property
Gretchen Westhoven, Missions
George Briggs, Christian Ed
Bob Meo, Fundraising
Bob Meo, Projects

DIACONATE

Michell Eskeli, Chairperson
Christine Bonas
Marilyn Briggs
Marsha Brodeur
Richard Brodeur
Sandy Gamache
Martha Hunt
Darlene Magaw
April McAllister
Stephen Wowk

We have several opportunities for spiritual growth and/or service this month at SCC. It brings renewed hope to know that a couple of our newest members have already agreed to help out with committees. Please do consider offering to help, especially if you are not already serving on a committee.

There is, of course, the crucial conversations group, which will be meeting after church on Sundays after worship on alternating weeks. The group will be led by Margaret and Michell.

There is a plan for a Bible study group meeting weekly Wednesday evenings at 5 PM. The first 2 weeks will be a very brief study of the history of the Bible. We will then begin exploring different topics that recur throughout scripture.

There is a small group of the Slatersville Church Contemplative Collective who is considering a Lenten journey through the book "Christian Meditation for Skeptics". It's not so much for people skeptical about meditation or Christian contemplation, but rather skeptical about their ability to focus long enough to engage in either of them effectively.

The book uses brief (3 minute) meditations over a 40 day period, introducing the group to five classic Christian meditation techniques. The group will read the beginning of the book, meeting once per week to discuss their experience with the week's spiritual practice via zoom or in a hybrid group after determining what best meets their needs and convenience.

We will also have a scripture reading posted on the church Facebook page each day, along with question prompts and an opportunity to share thoughts beneath each day's post. We will also be sending these daily invitations to reflection out through constant contact as we did during Advent.

(Continued...)



A Few Thoughts... (Cont.)

Lastly, and perhaps most exciting is the newly forming Worship Team. The day and time of meeting is yet to be determined, but please do let someone know if you are interested in being part of this vital team.

The Worship team will discuss future preaching series and ways to bring vision through music and artistic expression to each week's service. The team is comprised of the minister, Diaconate and music and anyone who would like to help bring creativity and depth to Sunday Worship, as well as special services, retreats and events.

Be well and we will see you on Sunday.

Don't Forget to Vote!

BY JENNI HULL

The Slatersville Church Annual Meeting was held on Sunday, Jan. 28. We did not meet quorum for the meeting, so materials have been sent out via email and USMail for members to review and then vote on the open items. Please read through everything and vote as soon as you are able so that we can conclude the business of the meeting.

DEADLINE FOR MEMBERS TO VOTE IS WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7TH!

If you did not receive materials, please contact the Church Office, or reach out to Jenni Hull (Moderator) via phone at 508-958-4830, or by email at slatersvillechurch@gmail.com

Missions Moment

As we start the new year, the Missions Committee would like to thank all who continue to give so generously to our church Missions Fund. Because of your donations, we are able to serve those in our community, state, country, and throughout the world.

This month, the Missions Committee voted to donate \$750 to Doctors Without Borders. Our dollars will help care for people affected by conflict, disease outbreaks, and natural and human-made disasters. The organization provides medical care to anyone who needs it, regardless of race, religion, or political affiliation. Their independence and impartiality are essential to their work in all places as they respond to crises.

When donating to charities, we frequently consult various organizations, such as Charity Navigator and Charity Watch, that monitor non-profits before deciding where to spend our Missions giving budget. Charity Navigator gives Doctors Without Borders a rating of 98% and a 4 star rating, which means we can give our dollars with confidence in their accounting and finance practices, policies, and disclosures. Charity Watch similarly gives Doctors Without Borders and "A" rating with roughly 85 cents of every dollar donated directly supporting their programs.



Our Thoughts and Prayers

...are with Joel Brown, Ruth's cousin's son, recently diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia.

...are with Pat's daughter Alison who was rushed to the hospital and her husband is recovering from recent brain surgery.

...are with Greg Hunt as he recovers from Knee surgery.

...are with for a woman, named Carol who is dealing with cancer, loss of her home, and loss of her husband.

...are with two homeless men living in shelters. One has recently reconnected with his sister and one has recently reconnected with his mother. Prayers are needed for all the homeless.

NS Food Pantry - February

The NS Food Pantry hours for February are:

Saturday Feb 17th @ 10:00am
Tuesday Feb 20th @ 5:30pm
Saturday Feb 24th @ 10:00am
Tuesday Feb 27th @ 5:30pm

In February the Food Pantry is asking for Tuna, Beans and Canned Pasta.

Celebrate our New Committee Members on Feb 11th!

BY JENNI HULL, CHURCH MODERATOR

Make a plan to join us for the Worship Service on Sunday, February 11th, when we dedicate our new Committee Members. It's a special day in the life of our Church! Worship Service is at 10am.

Lenten Meditation Practice

BY MARGARET HANOIAN

Have you been inspired by any of the spiritual practices that we've tried during Worship? Please join us for a Lenten Meditation Series based on the book "One Breath At a Time: A Skeptic's Guide to Christian Meditation" by J. Dana Trent. It is designed for people who haven't meditated much (or at all!). We will provide copies of the book to all participants.

For each of the 40 days of Lent, there is a short meditation exercise -- each one will take around 12 minutes. There are 5 different types of meditations:

- Breath (Days 1-8)
- Centering (Days 9-16)
- Lectio Divina (Days 17-24)
- Loving-Kindness (Days 25-32)
- Devotional (Days 33-40)

We will meet once a week on Zoom to lead you through the first meditation of each type. Then we will each do the remaining days on our own at home. If you miss a day or two, it's okay! There is a pattern to the exercises, so it's easy to catch on after a couple of days.

Interested? Please email Margaret Hanoian at mchanoian@cox.net, and we'll get a book for you! Then we can schedule the Zoom meetings for a mutually convenient time.



Handbell Choir Notes...

BY JILL BODAY

The Handbell Choir has been busy this winter! We have been performing each month during church services, including a few pieces with the Senior Choir! Margaret, Jan, Sally, and Jill just returned from a Winter Workshop held at UMass, Amherst, sponsored by the Handbell Musicians of America, Area 1.

We rehearsed new music with the "Beyond Basics" handbell ensemble which included beginner to intermediate ringers from around New England. Margaret said, "It was fun and challenging!

The music was beautiful!" We got to work with two different conductors and presented the two pieces at a concert on Saturday. Jan said, "All the people and conductors were so tolerant of the beginners. It was a great bonding experience with the four of us from our church."

We also took a couple of classes on handbell techniques and musicianship! Sally said, "Our two fabulous conductors supported and encouraged us constantly, and there was a big difference between our first and final performances. It felt pretty good!!!"

We will be sharing some of our newly learned concepts with the rest of the handbell choir and implementing some new ideas into our services. We have a lot of music coming this spring, so stay tuned! And we are always accepting new members on a rolling basis. If you are interested, talk to a ringer and check out a rehearsal: Thursday evenings at 6:30.

If you would like to check out some video clips of the afternoon on Vimeo - here are the links which you can copy and paste into the browser of your choice!

<https://vimeo.com/907224299?share=copy>

<https://vimeo.com/907224610?share=copy>





Off the Shelf...

BY CHRIS BONAS AND JIM ROBSHAW

On a Sunday about a month ago, I was checking the church pews to make sure no one had left anything behind. I found a little book in a seat in the balcony where Jim usually sits. I figured it must be his and picked it up to return it. Jim had already left, and the book looked interesting to me so I took it home. As I read this little book which is full of personal experiences of God's little intercessions in our lives, I connected with the theme of "is this just a mere coincidence or is this something more?".

When I did get a chance to speak with Jim, he mentioned that he had left the book behind on purpose, hoping someone would find it, read it, and get something out of it as he had. I, in turn, passed the book along to another friend who enjoyed it thoroughly. We thought we would keep passing the book along, and it occurred to us that many people in our congregation may have similar books that they found meaningful in some way. We asked yet another church member what they thought and we all decided together that we would like to put a bookshelf in Globe Hall where people could leave and borrow books that they found spiritually inspiring or meaningful in some way. One of us suggested that we could sign our names in the front cover and perhaps people at church may want to discuss the book or what they got out of it. Somebody else thought it would be interesting if different people highlighted different things or wrote in the margins. We thought another option could be to write a small note/index card discussing what was helpful or meaningful to us and tucking it in a small jacket in the back of the book.

We hope that many of you will bring in your favorite books or purchase copies of them to leave on the bookshelf. We also hope you will feel free to borrow books from that shelf and sign your name in the front of the book. We do have one problem to solve however... We don't have a name for the bookshelf yet! We encourage you to stop by the bookshelf and drop a note card in the basket suggesting a name. Oh, and don't forget to borrow or leave a book!

Fundraising News

BY JEAN MEO



Don't forget to order your Super Bowl Grinders if you have not already done so. They are \$9 each and they are delicious! You can order for yourself to enjoy or they can be ordered to donate to the Mens' Shelter and Family Shelter, both in Woonsocket. Call Bob Meo, 508-380-3132, to order or ask questions! We need to know by Tuesday, February 6!

.We are looking forward to our next Trivia Pub Night. It will be sometime towards the end of March. Watch for the date!!

Please start saving your Attic and Spring Cleaning Treasures for our Spring Yard Sale in May. Date and details to follow but we can start saving items now!

It's really FUN to participate in FUNdraising! Join us!!