



MARCH
2026

ON THE COMMON

From the Pastor's Desk...

BY REV. SEAN AMATO

Friends –

For many, the Lenten season is one of intentional reflection: one in which we sit with our faith and reflect. We reflect on how our faith manifests in the world, as I often poke and prod you to consider, but also how our faith manifests in us: how our faith intermingles with our anxieties and temptations, our private thoughts and personal dealings, our inadequacies and our successes – this is, for better or worse, a time when we gauge “where we’re at” with the God who created us and the faith His Son handed down to us. For many, the stress of daily life and current events can prevent much reflection; other times, including (in my opinion) the last few weeks, we’re all but forced to reflect on how we use our faith.

This particular Lenten season has been a difficult one for many in our community, both inside and outside the church – and yet, it’s also been a time in which good people have emerged as ‘guides’ in this wilderness that is our modern world. Two days before the start of Lent, a shooting at the Dennis M. Lynch Arena in Pawtucket resulted in the loss of innocent lives; it affected a wide swath of our friends and family, too. Those on the ice, those in the stands, and those whose loved ones were present are still struggling to manage the event and the news that has emerged from it. I will admit that I was worried that day: would our community come to blows over this complex and traumatizing thing that’s happened?

The next day, we hosted a vigil at the church – and to the benefit of my soul, I saw many of you show up to be good neighbors and good Christians.

(Continued...)

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OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

Rick Stelle, Moderator
Ruth Mills, Clerk
Jean Meo, Financial Clerk
Margaret Hanoian, Treasurer

CHURCH STAFF

Sean Amato, Minister
Joseph Godfrey, Music Director
Jill Boday, Handbell Choir
Donna Myers, Administrative Asst
Patricia Renaud, Organist
Hope Paul, Nursery Attendant
Romeo Mendes, Sexton

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Ruth Mills, Caring
Mary Stelle, Christian Ed
Michell Eskeli, Diaconate
Jim Robshaw, Hospitality
Teri DeBoise, Karen Yetter, Missions
Mark Colton, Music
Bonnie Drolet, Outreach & Action
Kerri Conway, Property
Bob Meo, Stewardship
Bob Meo, Fundraising, Projects

DIACONATE

Michell Eskeli, Chairperson
George Briggs
Marcia Brodeur
Richard Brodeur
Sandy Gamache
Martha Hunt
Darlene Magaw
April McAllister
Jim Robshaw
Stephen Wowk

From the Pastor's Desk ... (Cont.)

Congregants navigated past the encroaching media, bringing food and conversation; neighbors and visitors dropped by, sometimes for the first time in years, to make sure "everyone was alright." When the vigil proper started and local families joined us, I was warmed when I saw that members of our congregation - and even friends of our congregation, like Beneficent Congregational Church's Earnest Cox - made themselves into tools of God's comfort for those in attendance. I heard our own Steve Wowk speak prophetically and with care for the youth he's helped shepherd, speak with love before a wounded community that trusted our church enough to be with us in their trauma; I watched afterward, too, as the affected families found some comfort in Globe Hall - comfort supported by food you provided, by conversations you initiated, by hugs you made possible simply by extending your arms. Our congregants, lost in their own Lenten wildernesses, still showed up.

In my opinion, this is what church should be: a group of people capable of coming together to support their community when it suffers grievously, no matter their individual relations or denominations. You might remember that in a sermon a few weeks ago, I suggested that Christianity attempts to mold us into the kind of person you'd want to run into in the wilderness: compassionate, thoughtful, graceful, and willing to walk alongside. In a world like ours, that's a rare kind of person, isn't it? But because of you folks, our neighbors have at least one example of what that kind of person might look like - might worship like, might love like.

Well done, my friends. Well done, by the standards of the God who created you and the Son who taught you; now, let's see what new wilderness kindness our Holy Spirit pushes us toward next. On that note: hope to see you Sunday!

- Pastor Sean



Missions Committee

Missions Moment

BY GAIL ELLIOTT

In recognition of American Heart Month, this February the Missions Committee voted to donate \$250 to the American Heart Association. Despite the great progress that has been made in reducing fatalities from heart disease, there is still much work to be done. The American Heart Association seeks to address this continuing need through improvements in care, funding of critical research, training individuals in CPR skills, and providing heart-healthy food to families in need.

This month the Missions Committee also voted to donate \$250 to the RI Nonviolence Institute in recognition, during Black History Month, of the power of nonviolent action to create a more just world. The RI Nonviolence Institute uses the principles and practices of nonviolence to create safer, more resilient communities. Through outreach programs in Woonsocket, Providence, Pawtucket and Central Fall the Institute offers mentorship to high-risk youth, mediates gang conflicts, and connects individuals with education and employment opportunities. They extend services to victims of violent crimes and assist individuals who are transitioning back to the community following incarceration. Their work also includes offering nonviolence training to hospitals, schools, corporations, non-profits and other groups.

We continued our support of the Men's Shelter in Woonsocket by, in conjunction with the Broaster House, providing a monthly hot meal to the men who are sheltering there. Those meals will continue to be provided until the shelter closes at the end of March. Thank you to Sandy Gamache who provides delicious homemade desserts as part of these meals and to Bob Meo and Steve Wowk who deliver the meals.



Handbell Choir News

BY JILL BODAY

Would you like to try ringing with us? Talk to any member! New members are always welcome. You do not need to read music or know how to ring a bell. We will teach you! Most of our members started from scratch. We rehearse Thursday evenings from 6:30-7:30pm, right before Senior Choir rehearsal.

I will be organizing a handbell workshop next month. Why not come with us to try it out?

The annual RI “Ring-a-Palooza” will be held at Dunn’s Corners Community Church in Westerly, RI on April 25, 2026 from 9:30am-2:30pm. No matter your age or experience level, this event will let you “sample” a handbell workshop. We will participate in fun musical activities and ringing which will all be led by Jane Nolan, retired Music Director of Shoreline Ringers. All levels are welcome. There is no music to learn ahead of time, and there will be no public performance at the conclusion of the day. We will have fun, all while ringing and learning! \$15 per participant. Let me know if you’re interested.

The SCC handbell choir, On the Common Ringers, will be sharing music during worship every month! I’d like to thank our current members for their dedication and for sharing their time and talent:

Joan Bissonnette
Denise Bradenburg
Marilyn Briggs
Teri DeBoise
Jan Goodrich
Margaret Hanoian

Martha Hunt
April McAlister
Pat Renaud
Sally Staples
Lisa Winship

North Smithfield Food Pantry

March

For the Month of
March our Food
Pantry hours are:

Saturday, March 21st
@ 10:00 am

Tuesday, March 24th
@ 5:30 pm

Saturday, March 28th
@ 10:00 am

Tuesday, March 31st
@ 5:30 pm

This month we are
asking for donations
of canned beans,
canned fruit and
canned pasta.

Thank You!



Mental Health Moment

BY JAN GOODRICH

(Jan was a psychiatric Registered Nurse and group leader who taught mental health skills for daily life).

I attended several seminars led by a nurse who had a doctorate degree in mental health nursing. She started every seminar with this statement: "7% of our population is psychotic. The other 63% of us are garden variety neurotics." We all have our insecurities, fears, anxieties, obsessions and compulsions. If these neuroses become severe they can lead to depression, suicidal thoughts. and addictions.

In countries that have socialized health care, anyone can have a counselor and/or psychiatrist paid for by the government. They make their mental health as important as their physical health.

In our country, mental health is rarely covered by insurance, and the people who need it most are the ones who cannot afford it; therefore, mental illness is thriving in our country. 1 in 4 adults experienced mental illness in the past year. 25% of these and 77% of substance abusers received no treatment. 15% of youth aged 12-17 had a major depressive disorder.

The mental health skills I have taught in my articles can help to decrease and and prevent anxiety and depressive disorders. Here is a working list of those skills:

1. Put your mental health first.
2. Spot angry or fearful temper.
3. Anxiety blocks insight.
4. Spot processing.
5. Move your muscles.
6. Command your muscles to relax.
7. Strive to be average not exceptional.
8. Have the courage to make mistakes.
9. Have the willingness to bear life's discomforts.
10. Endorse yourself - say "Good for me!"
11. A sense of humor is your best friend.
12. Don't get worked up over trivialities.
13. Feelings are not facts.
14. Feelings are distressing but not dangerous.
15. Change the insecure thought.
16. Channel nervous energy into productive activity.
17. Be group-minded.
18. There's no right or wrong in domestic affairs.
19. Drop the judgement against yourself and others.
20. You only need your own approval.
21. Don't go for the symbolic victory.
22. Assert yourself in a cultured manner.
23. Control your mouth muscles.
24. You can't control outer environment.
25. You don't know what other people are thinking.
26. Others cannot know what we are thinking



Thank You - Scout Troop 438!

On the heels of a historic Blizzard -the Blizzard of 2026 - Troop 438 led by Scout Master Megan Reyes joined forces with Pastors Sean and Emily to dig Slatersville Congregational Church out! Troop 438 (and Pastor Sean and Pastor Emily) - we owe you a debt of gratitude. Thank you so much for all you did to help the church become accessible again. We are so blessed to have such wonderful young citizens and members of our amazing community. Thank you ALL for your hard work and dedication! It is so very appreciated.



Christian Education Update

BY MARY STELLE

With the upcoming Easter Season, two Easter Egg Hunts have been scheduled here at Slatersville Congregational Church. Saturday March 21st at 1pm on the common, an ALL Church Easter Egg will be happening. Our Sensory Sensitive Easter Egg Hunt will be taking place on Saturday, April 4 as part of the Sensory Sensitive Service. Details on both to follow!

A donation box for Easter egg candy (which does not contain nuts or peanut butter) has been set up in the lobby. Your generous donations would be greatly appreciated.

Fundraising News March 2026

UPCOMING:

Spring Yard and Flower Sale will be **May 9th**, in time for Mother's Day. Please start saving your Attic and Spring Cleaning treasures!

Join us to have FUN as we FUNraise!!

Many thanks to all who purchased, donated and put together our Super Bowl grinders. Another great year as we shared over 100 sandwiches with our neighbors in need.

Blood Drive

Slatersville Congregational Church

Sunday, March 22, 2026
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Globe Hall
25 Greene Street, Slatersville, RI



Sign up at ribc.org/drives
and use code #0250

Prepare to donate



Eat well
and hydrate



Bring a
photo ID



Feel good and
symptom free



Must be 17+ or
16 with parental
consent form



Meet minimum
weight requirements

For full eligibility requirements
and COVID-19 information, visit
ribc.org/eligibility.

You can either:

- **Sign up On-line at ribc.org/drives**
- **Walk - In's are also Welcome!**