



ON THE COMMON

July 2026

Newsletter of Slatersville Congregational Church

This Issue:

From the Pastor's Desk

PAGES 01-02

New Friends!

PAGE 03

Handbell Choir News

PAGE 04

Christian Ed Update

PAGE 05

Missions Moment

PAGE 06

Outreach & Action

PAGE 06

Crucial Conversations

PAGE 07

From the Pastor's Desk...

BY REV. SEAN AMATO

Greetings from the Pastor's Desk – or should I say, the Pastor's Couch: the place I've been sitting, on and off, for the past week and a half! If you weren't aware, I've been fairly sick for the past two weeks. Like many people, I tend to try and work through sickness – not realizing, of course, that working when I'm in real need of healing does a double-dose of damage to my body and morale. Having grown up a Millennial, I absorbed my parents' dedication to work – and, too, their aversion to rest in lieu of productivity. I'm sure you absorbed similar values. No wonder we're all so tired.

Let's admit: it's hard to rest, isn't it? Especially when there's so much going on in the life of the church! It's hard to rest, even as the summer heat beats down upon us; even as the heavy world surrounds us. But whether our busy world likes it or not, rest is an essential part of our healing – and if we're not equipped to take care of ourselves, to rest up and regain our well-being, how can we take care of this world? Rest is a Christian ethic, friends – it's not only a faith practice, but a goal for good Christians.

In his summons to us in Matthew, Christ invites us directly to rest: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest"; he asks us to supplant our burdens with his gentle and patient love, and to afford ourselves time to breathe. In John, Christ equates rest with peace and calls us to consider them co-equal: "Peace I leave with you, my friends; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (Close readers will recognize our service's closing hymn!) For us to be in sync with the lessons of our Jesus, rest is requisite; for us to be functional as the hands and feet of God, we are called to lay down our burdens on occasion. And if you're looking for a sign to lay down your burdens, here's one from your pastor: if you're ailing, rest; if you're tired, rest. If you have some extra energy, help to carry others' burdens; help them with their weight. But if you aren't, then... rest!

(Continued...)



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

There's a poem I've ended service with, on occasion, and I even ended a "Pastor's Desk" piece with this poem in December of 2024 – another time of hard work and exhaustion for the people of God. For those of you running ragged in this summertime season, those working through sickness, those whose fatigue is only matched by their stubbornness (myself included), I ask you to pause and consider Rob Bell's "Walk, Don't Run."

Walk, don't run. That's it. Walk, don't run.

Slow down, breathe deeply, and open your eyes – because there's a whole world right here within this one. The bush didn't suddenly catch fire, it's been burning the whole time.

Moses is simply moving slowly enough to see it. And when he does, he takes off his sandals. Not because the ground has suddenly become holy, but because he's just now becoming aware that the ground has been holy the whole time.

Efficiency is not God's highest goal for your life; neither is busy-ness, or how many things you can get done in one day, or speed, or even success.

But walking, which leads to seeing, now that's something. That's an invitation for every one of us today, and every day, in every conversation, interaction, event, and moment: to walk, not run. And in doing so, to see a whole world right here within this one.

I offer you a hopeful blessing, my friends, one drawn from the Book of Numbers – one I'm sure you've heard or read, or maybe even said. "May God bless you and keep you; may God's face shine upon you, and may He be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace." Peace and rest, my friends. Amen!

- Sean

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Ruth Mills, Clerk
Jean Meo, Financial Clerk
Margaret Hanoian, Treasurer

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Jill Boday, Handbell Choir
Donna Myers, Administrative Asst
Patricia Renaud, Organist
Hope Paul, Nursery Attendant
Romeo Mendes, Sexton

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Marcia Brodeur
Richard Brodeur
Sandy Gamache
Martha Hunt
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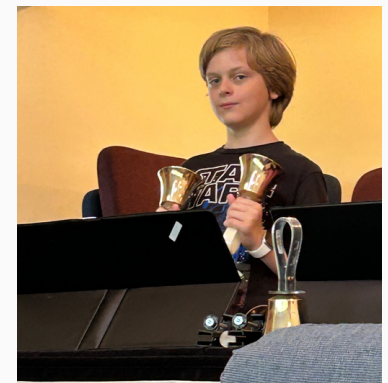
Handbell Choir News

BY JILL BODAY

On June 15th SCC hosted a fabulous concert of The Wesley Bell Ringers of Christ UMC from Salt Lake City, Utah. The Wesley Bell Ringers are one of the premiere youth handbell choirs in America. They were outstanding, not only in their musicianship, but also in their demeanor and presence. It was quite the evening! I want to thank Rick, Mary, Margaret, and all of those who helped to make their stop in Slatersville memorable. The students and chaperones were treated to dinner and breakfast here at the church, and they bunked in Globe Hall! I hope we can welcome more groups in the future!

Our handbell choir is on summer break, but the Boday's attended "Friends and Family Handbell Camp" this past weekend at the Toah Nipi Retreat Center in Rindge, NH! This camp takes place every other year in late June, opposite of the biennial Handbell Festival Conference event. For two and a half days, we rang bells, kayaked, swam, hiked, and went canoeing with other handbell enthusiasts from all over New England! It was truly a "summer camp" feel.

Be on the lookout for more music-related events popping up during the summer months, including some chime activities for kids during our annual Vacation Bible School July 6-10!





Christian Education News

BY MARY STELLE

The Christian Education Committee has slowed down as we do during the summer. The nursery is still going strong averaging 6-8 children each week. We have changed the nursery around a bit. The side that traditionally was the Baby Side has become the puzzle and Lego side. Children ages 5- up are allowed on that side with Ms. Kleo. The "Yellow Room" now has all the baby toys and books. Ms. Hope and Ms. Julia are caring for the "littles" in the Yellow Room. Our new teen volunteer, Ms. Aria, will be helping twice a month. We are excited to see the nursery growing. Children younger than 5 years old, may play in the "Blue Room" with parents supervising them.

Vacation Bible School is ready to go! July 6-10 from 9am - 12pm SCC is hosting "Illumination Station." Registration is still open to register your children. You can register on line through our Facebook page, website or by reaching out to the church office at 401-469-2773.

Our Sensory Service this month will be on Saturday, July 11 beginning at 5pm (the 2nd Saturday) in order to avoid conflict with the 4th of July Holiday. This month's theme will be Vacation Bible School activities. This was a big hit last year. We are looking forward to another great event this year.

And on Sunday, July 12th it's "Kid's Takeover Sunday" where the children will be showcasing what they learned at VBS. Come out and cheer them on!

And finally, a note: Ms. Mary is taking the summer off to address some annoying health issues.

North Smithfield Food Pantry

JULY

For the Month of
JULY our Food
Pantry hours are:

Saturday, July 18
@ 10:00 am

Tuesday, July 21
@ 5:30 pm

Saturday, July 25
@ 10:00 am

Tuesday, July 28
@ 5:30 pm

This month we are
asking for Canned
Pasta, pasta sauce
and Mac and Cheese.

Thank You!

Missions Moment

BY GAIL ELLIOTT

June was both LGBTQ+ Pride Month and Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month. The Missions Committee voted to authorize two donations this month. One in recognition of each of these observances.

A donation of \$500 was made to the Alzheimer's Association. Worldwide 55 million people are living with Alzheimer's and other dementias. The Alzheimer's Association works to accelerate global research, maximize quality care and support, and drive risk reduction and early detection. The Association provides support to caregivers and families through a 24/7 helpline, local support groups, educational resources and programs. As underrepresented and underserved communities are disproportionately impacted by Alzheimer's and dementia, the Association utilizes strategic partnerships with trusted national and local organizations as well as DEI education and policies to create greater health equity. They work with advocates and lawmakers to increase federal funding for research as well as to enhance healthcare policies at both the state and national levels.

The other recipient of a donation this month was PFLAG (formerly Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, now known simply by its acronym to better reflect the organization's inclusivity of the LGBTQ+ community and allies beyond friends and family members). This \$500 donation will assist PFLAG's continuing work providing support, education, and advocacy in order to create a safe, equitable, and inclusive world for LGBTQ+ people. PFLAG has 360 chapters and 550,000 members and supporters. The Rhode Island Chapter provides confidential in-person and virtual support groups. It serves parents and families guiding them through the journey of understanding and supporting their LGBTQ+ family members. They provide programs and resources relevant to the local community including the Youth Pride List of Mental Health Providers, the RI Trans Health Referral Guide, and emergency hotline numbers. The work of the local chapter is done completely by volunteers with no paid staff members.

Outreach and Action Moment

BY KERRI CONWAY

July is Disability Awareness Month. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) was passed and signed into law in July 1990 which prohibits discrimination based on a person's disability. It provides for reasonable employee accommodations and accessibility to public locations.

The Outreach & Action Committee has compiled a short list of movies and places of business that highlight the contributions of people who may have been marginalized because of their differing abilities.

Crip Camp (2020) (Netflix Rated R): An inspirational documentary that follows campers from Camp Jened, a summer camp designed for teens with disabilities, and follows them from the 1970's as they become activists in the civil rights movement for people with disabilities and follows their fight for accessibility legislation.

CODA (2021) (Apple TV, Prime PG-13): True story from Gloucester, MA of a teenage girl who is the only hearing person in her family. While she is passionate about music, she is torn about pursuing that passion or helping with the family's fishing business.

Atypical (2021) (Netflix 4 seasons TV-14): A teen with autism is seeking to become more independent once he has a girlfriend. Follow the teen and family as they navigate this journey.

Bitty and Beau's Coffee, 100 N. Main St. Providence. Daily 7AM-3PM. Coffee shop employing people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Sweet Inspirations, 19 Central St. Milford, MA. Open Tues-Sat 11AM-6PM. A non-profit candy and retail store employing people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Red, White & Brew Coffeehouse, 1800 Post Rd Warwick (formerly of NS). Open Wed-Sat 8AM-2PM. A coffee and baked goods shop employing individuals with different abilities.

Additionally, we need your input. Do you have a suggestion on making our church more accessible for individuals with disabilities? If so, please give us your feedback on the paper at the end of your pew. Papers can be placed in the offering basket or in the suggestion box in the hallway. While we can't fix everything, realistic cost-efficient tasks will give us a springboard to being more inclusive. Thank you.



Crucial Conversations

BY MARGARET HANOIAN

Please join me after church on Sunday, July 12 for an informal conversation about “Crucial Conversations”! We’ll talk about our plans for running a Crucial Conversations “Book Club” series in the fall. Here’s a little background...

What are “Crucial Conversations”?

Crucial Conversations involve:

- High stakes
- Opposing opinions
- Strong emotions

In these situations, most people have a hard time communicating.

Why are Crucial Conversations important for our church now?

A few years ago, we had a discussion group using the book “Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking when the Stakes are High”. People who participated said that it helped them understand the impact of their words, and it gave them tools to be direct when necessary. With the book’s help, we were able to talk about actual miscommunications that were happening in our church. It was eye-opening to all of us!

I’d like to start a new group for Crucial Conversations in the fall. As our church grows and evolves, we need to communicate even better. It is a blessing to have so many new people, but our old patterns of communication may not work well.

There have been some misunderstandings and some avoidance of important topics.

Here are some of the things that might benefit from crucial conversations:

- Talking about the pros and cons of new ideas vs. old traditions
- Talking about what’s not working – this is hard for everyone to do!!
- Is there a generation gap in our church? I don’t know! Let’s talk about it!
- How to talk about it if you don’t feel embraced by our church.
- How to persist if initial reaction to your idea is not great.
- What new procedures should we have to ensure ideas can develop into reality?

In my experience, these topics bring out Opposing Opinions and Strong Emotions. Also, the stakes are high – if we can’t continue to evolve, our church will not thrive. How will this book help us?

The book explains how fear and anxiety crop up and change important conversations from useful to destructive. We hope that the congregation will learn how to spot these things themselves, work on being able to express difficult things and listen to difficult things without emotion shutting down the rational parts of our system and shifting us into thought patterns that lead away from productive conversations. We will incorporate actual church topics into this book group.