

## &gt;&gt;&gt; SOUTH CHURCH ANDOVER NEWSLETTER &lt;&lt;&lt;

# THE CIRCLE



**boldly embodying God's love and compassion**



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September brings an intensity, doesn't it? It has the energy of a new beginning—fresh pencils and new routines await us as the school year and church program year kick off. Over the last few weeks, I've been spending time planning, praying, and preparing for the work that lies ahead...page 2

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Interacting with the people of South Church has been an instant delight! This is the first job I've found since the pandemic that allows me to talk and coordinate and learn with a large team of people, and it is doing wonders for my well-being...page 12

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# A NOTE FROM DANA

September brings an intensity, doesn't it? It has the energy of a new beginning—fresh pencils and new routines await us as the school year and church program year kicks off. Over the last few weeks, I've been spending time planning, praying, and preparing for the work that lies ahead. In an effort to feel more grounded in faith, I've created some guiding principles based off Adrienne Maree Brown's book, "Emergent Strategy", that I've stuck to my desk. When I get lost in the weeds of emails, bulletins, meetings, and to-do lists, my hope is that these principles will help me to see how God is present in the everyday messiness of life.



## »»» SMALL IS GOOD. SMALL IS ALL.

What we practice at a small scale sets the pattern for the whole system. It also means that if we practice compassion, joy, and love with ourselves, we'll better be able to practice compassion, joy, and love with others. We often underestimate the power of small group gatherings, or service projects, or the little tasks that need to get done in church—but this is the good stuff! This is where we learn and grow and form deep connections. The whole church is a reflection of all these little fractals—all the patterns of grace, kindness, forgiveness, and love woven through our community.

## »»» CHANGE IS CONSTANT.

Water is versatile. If an obstacle is in the way of its flow, it moves around it. Water can take many different forms – from the soft sprinkle of snow to the morning mist on the Shawsheen river. Water can also be shapeless—moving to fill in the space of a cup, bottle, or coffee mug.

The versatility of water offers us a lesson on life in a liminal time. It's a lesson on adaptation. Change is constant. How we live and grow and stay purposeful in the face of constant change determines both the quality of our lives and the impact we can have when we work together.

Unlike the ease of flowing water, most of us respond to change with fear. We even anticipate change with an overwhelming sense of stress and dread. What we know about the church in the 21st century, especially in this post pandemic world, is that change is a mainstay. No matter what we plan or expect or hope for or set in place, we will need to adapt to change or we will become irrelevant.

Adaptation to change ensures survival and reduces exhaustion...



...No one bears the burden alone of figuring out the next move and muscling towards it. There is an efficiency at play—is something not working? Stop. Adjust. If something is working, give thanks and keep doing it, learning and innovating as you go.

### ➤➤➤ NEVER A FAILURE, ALWAYS A LESSON.

Pop Singer Rihanna has this phrase tattooed on her body. It's a good reminder to us, especially when the idea of failure stirs anxiety and worry. For many of us, failure is our worst fear. Yet, Jesus' ministry was not full of triumph and praise – he faced brutal failure: rejection from those he dearly loved along with public embarrassment, ridicule, and death on a cross. As Christians, failure is never the ending of our story. There might be pain but there's always the rising. We are an Easter people. And as such, we can reframe failure as a lesson. It might even be a sign that we're courageous enough to try something new, take a risk, and trust in God's grace to catch us when we fall.

### ➤➤➤ THERE IS ALWAYS ENOUGH TIME FOR THE RIGHT WORK.

We live with a sense of time scarcity—there isn't enough hours in the day for everything that needs to get done. Yet God invites us to see time more expansively: to look for the kairos moments, not just relentlessly focus on the chronos schedules and routines. I strive to bring intentionality to my work at South Church, to prayerfully ask myself: What is the work that only I can do? What is the work that I feel most called to this week/month/year?

### ➤➤➤ PRESENT OVER PERFECT.

Each Sunday morning when we pray before the beginning of worship, we often ask God to help us to be present in worship, rather than perfect in our "performance." It's almost impossible to strive to be both perfect and present at the same time. If we desire to be present to the Spirit and each other, we can't show up wearing the armor of perfection. It becomes a shield that creates space between our truest selves, God, and the community. When we are present, we are not on the defensive, but rather we are open to discover more about ourselves and those around us.

### ➤➤➤ WHAT YOU PAY ATTENTION TO GROWS.

Jesus often talked mysteriously about the Kingdom of God (or the Dream of God). He said that the Kingdom of God is at hand and yet to come. Jesus loved breaking down binaries and living in paradox. It can be challenging for us, especially when we are black & white thinkers. Yet what I see in Jesus' words is an invitation to pay attention, to look for signs of God's work in our lives. Where have you witnessed hope? Who embodied love today? How did you meet disappointment with grace? What small thing evoked awe and delight within you?

I hope South Church has a piece of your heart this year. I look forward to seeing you.

Peace & hope,

*Dana*

## I'M CURIOUS

What resonates with you from this list? Is there a phrase that sticks out to you? What will help ground you when the chaos of this year feels overwhelming?

## ALL MEMBERS ARE MINISTERS

Dana Allen Walsh, Senior Pastor  
Genevieve Hosterman, Associate Pastor  
Sherry Tupper, Minister of Visitation  
Cathy Meyer, Minister of Music  
Taylor Graffum, Minister of Youth and Families  
Nora Pelt, Communications Administrator

Joanne Smith, Finance Administrator  
Andy Brien, Facilities Manager  
Brian Gruhn, Engagement Coordinator  
David Strong, Moderator  
Janna Roop, Treasurer

# WHO DOES THE UCC WANT TO BE?

## GENNA'S NOTES FROM UCC GENERAL SYNOD 34 IN INDIANA

By Genevieve Hosterman



This summer, I had the pleasure of attending the 34th UCC General Synod, the UCC's big church gathering that happens every few years. The UCC puts a lot of emphasis on local church power and democratic leadership. Our General Synod is an opportunity for us to gather together to make important decisions about who we want to be as a wider denomination and how we would like leadership at the national setting to represent us moving forward.

### >>> WE VOTED ON SOME VERY IMPORTANT TOPICS THIS YEAR

- Affirming the worth and dignity of trans people
- Recognizing abortion as healthcare
- Developing reparations for several marginalized groups including: indigenous "boarding school" survivors, Hawaiian people working to revitalize native language and culture, and African Americans
- Changing Synod frequency from every two years to every three
- Electing our first female General Minister, Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson

I attended worship at a local UCC church; luncheons and mixers for various groups I belong to including Yale Alumni, the 20s/30s Clergy Network, and Next Generation Leadership Initiative; and a learning session on how we can better support neurodivergent, disabled, queer, and plus sized folks in worship; along with other events and networking opportunities.

It was a joy and an honor to represent South Church, catch up with friends old and new, and do the work of the church at Synod!







## >>> ALEX MCCLINTICK AT THE BELL DISTINCTLY TEEN SEMINAR IN TEXAS

By Alex McClintick

Working on intermediate to advanced repertoire, I spent 2.5 great days with 26 other teens at the Distinctly Teen Handbell Festival in Irving, Texas. I took informative classes in which I learned quite a bit about percussion instruments like bell trees and the cajon. My favorite class was about the bell trees. We learned how to string handbells and play them in a string. In another interesting class, we learned the basics of playing the cajon, a box-shaped percussion instrument that can be played along with handbells. We learned the two ways you can play it and different rhythms you can play on it.



Besides the classes, I also had fun actually playing the handbells, both in rehearsals and in the final Distinctly Teen concert. The director, Nick Hanson, was a terrific conductor with very useful advice that helped us improve. His conducting techniques were helpful, reminding us that we had to always watch him while we were playing so that we stay on tempo, or keep playing at the same speed. I loved the pieces that we played. My favorite piece, *Bwana Asifwe* by Cathy Moklebust, had a really cool, catchy beat. There was a good mixture of silly, fun songs and some really beautiful and serious ones. In general, I had a fun and enjoyable time in Irving, meeting lots of new people and making many friends. There were quite a few times when I found myself laughing, smiling and having a good time.

## >>> LINDSEY PACIOS AT UCC'S "YOUTH AT SYNOD" IN INDIANA

By Lindsey Pacios

This past July, I had the privilege of attending the United Church of Christ 34th General Synod with Youth at Synod in Indianapolis, Indiana. The program gathers teens from UCC churches all over the country to participate in worship, attend plenary sessions, hearings, observe the resolution process and have their own space and curriculum for their age group. As an older teen, I had the privilege of being a youth chaperone. The job, less responsibility than the adult chaperones, was to facilitate small groups, engage conversation and make sure none of our middle schoolers who think they are "too cool" for a chaperone, walk too far away.

During the five days of Synod, the Spirit's joy and justice was obvious and impossible to ignore. We elected our...



The Youth @ Synod program from General Synod 34. Curly Stumb photo.



...new General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ, Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia the first woman and the first woman of African descent to lead the UCC. Delegates voted on a resolution "affirming the dignity of trans and non-binary persons." The resolution passed, 629-10. We also marched to the Indiana state capital in solidarity with our trans siblings to protest against the anti transgender bathroom law that makes it a Class B misdemeanor for a transgender person to use the bathroom of their identity in Indiana. I also got to listen to author and pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber speak in person and give a inspiring keynote address. I am such a fangirl! I am joyful that our youth got to participate and witness all of those historic UCC events.



There were many volunteer opportunities for youth and adults to participate in at Synod. One project being assembling menstrual hygiene kits for people who are experiencing period poverty and can not afford proper hygiene products. Delegates, visitors and youth filled bags with pads, tampons, laundry detergent, wipes and more. Recent studies show that two in five people who menstruate experience period poverty and only seems to be getting worse.



The UCC Wider Ministries, the group organizing the period kits, expected to only create 1,000 kits but ended up with 3,000 kits completed by the end of Synod. 3,157 to be exact.

I am so proud to say that our youth had a big part in transcending that goal. The kids in my group kept asking me to go back to the assembly line and create more period kits when we would sit in plenary. My middle schoolers were so excited to be the hands and feet of God in this world and we had a whole lot of fun doing it. I'm not sure exactly how many kits the youth put together, but I can say that we were responsible for A LOT.

Our politicians and our law makers do not offer me hope right now. But, what does offer me hope, and hopefully offers you hope too, is watching middle schoolers truly love their neighbor and using their free time to help combat a problem that shouldn't exist, that of period poverty.

I have so many great memories from Synod, please pull me aside during fellowship hour and I will talk your ear off about all the amazing things I saw and the ways that God moved throughout the week. There's so much endless joy to be shared.



*The Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson packs period hygiene kits during General Synod 34.*

## CLICK TO READ MORE:

- [General Synod youth get their game on](#)
- [Youth Experience Synod in Indianapolis](#)
- [Youth @ Synod: What brings young people to the UCC?](#)
- [General Synod participants assemble thousands of hygiene kits to combat period poverty](#)



# COME JOIN MY SONG

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## ➤➤➤ A 3-YEAR ORFF JOURNEY IN OREGON

By Cathy Meyer, Minister of Music

*We've come together to sing. We've come together to dance. We've come together to create, and play, and celebrate the day, to spirit and mind enhance.*

These words, written by Avon Gillespie, are sung each year at the Portland Orff-Schulwerk Association's two-week summer Orff Levels course. I have had the blessing of being able to complete my teacher training over the past three years, all with the support of South Church.

Unless you are a public school teacher, you may not have heard of Orff-Schulwerk. It is a music pedagogy, or a way of teaching, conceived by German composers/educators Carl Orff and Gunild Keetman (Orff is most famous for his 1937 opera *Carmina Burana*), to build musicianship in every learner through the integration of music, movement, speech, and drama. In Orff-Schulwerk settings, children begin with what they do instinctively: play! Imitation, experimentation, improvisation, and personal expression occur naturally as students become confident, life-long musicians and creative problem solvers. While the three-year certification course is focused on making music in school classrooms, it can (and should!) be adapted to other education settings.

## ➤➤➤ IN MY LEVEL 1 TRAINING BACK IN THE SUMMER OF 2021,

I was intrigued as I learned how to pull music back to its most basic elements: building blocks. These "bricks" form the foundation of all music, using the most basic rhythmic patterns; when everyday words are added, kids (and adults, too) can easily bridge speech patterns into short, simple melodies. Repeat these short melodies and ostinatos are created. Build ostinatos on top of each other and harmony is created. Use pentatonic (5-note) scales, and all the notes sound good with one another. Incorporate movement/dance for physical expression. Assign one small part to each musician, layer them on top of each other, and impressive orchestrations can be created with each person just doing their small part, all in a very short period of time. Try parts on barred instruments, recorders, pitched and unpitched percussion, body percussion, add speech; there is no limit to where it can go. I was instantly hooked...



Participants take a break from playing barred instruments to express themselves through movement



Cathy leads a movement session where participants play with balloons as if they were playing with the moon in the dark night sky.



Cathy wrote a song based on a poem by Polly Peters and taught it during one of her practicum lessons.



...There was no question: I was definitely going back for Level 2. Last year, this class focused on the Greek modes that go back to medieval times: Dorian, Ionian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian, and Locrian (if you think of the white keys on the piano, a Ionian scale goes from C to C, Dorian from D to D, etc.). The tone and mood of each mode gives each orchestration a complex character and personality, but when torn apart, they are still as simple as the building blocks.



During one of her practicum lessons, Cathy taught about a song she wrote based on a poem by Polly Peters.



Most of the Level 3 cohort has studied together since Level 1, forming an impactful and supportive community. These students traveled from all over North and South America to take part in this amazing course.



Cathy plays the bass bars while the level 3 students led a dance party for the entire course, using their own Orff orchestration which was inspired by musical forms used in Electronic Dance Music.

## ➤➤➤ NOW THAT I HAD COME THIS FAR

and was able to use some Orff elements with the South Church Ringers and The Hive Choir, I simply had to return for more. Back to Portland for two more weeks this summer to spend more time with pentatonic scales and modes, but also adding in functional harmony with I-IV-V chords (the basic chords of most pop and country songs). This course required more time teaching my peers, showing that I had a thorough understanding and integration of Orff and Keetman's concepts. Several times a day the instructor would give us "Chopped Challenges," where we had create a piece of music with specified elements that included everything from puppets, visual art, movement, pitched and unpitched instruments, ostinati, melodies, and drones. It forced us to be creative, be collaborative, think quickly, and have fun.

It is always my desire that we at South Church are able to create music in a holistic way that connects us to God and each other. It doesn't need to be complicated or academic, but hopefully speaks to the heart and spirit. Completing my Orff teaching training has given me many tools to facilitate more integration of play and personal expression into the music that we make together. I hope that you will come, and join my song, and learn that is can be simple and joy-filled!



11.07.23 AT 7:00PM

ON ZOOM



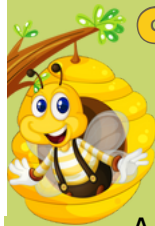
A brief update on the "business" of the church....facilities, possible capital campaign, grant writing work, music & youth ministries & more!

# BEHIND THE SCENES WITH PASTOR DANA



Link at events on [southchurch.com](https://southchurch.com)

## HONEYCOMB CHOIR



Ages 0-5  
Wed 4-5PM  
with Ms. Cathy



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## THE NECTAR CHOIR

Grades K-2  
Wed 5-6PM  
with Ms. Michaela



COME SING & PLAY!  
[southchurch.com/music](https://southchurch.com/music)

## THE HIVE CHOIR



Grades 3-5  
Wed 5-6PM  
with Ms. Cathy



Grades 6-12  
Sun 2:30-3:30PM  
with Ms. Michaela  
**STING CHOIR**

20+  
local  
artists

# ANDOVER HOLIDAY MARKET

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2023  
2 - 8 PM

SOUTH CHURCH  
41 Central Street, Andover, MA

Proceeds benefit



Family Friendly  
Indoor & Outdoor  
Activities  
Free Parking Nearby



## WOMEN'S RETREAT 2024

February 2-4, 2024 Rolling Ridge Retreat Center North Andover, MA



Rates have increased but we are happy to support our partner in ministry by holding our 2024 retreat at close and local at Rolling Ridge! Come for the day, a night or the weekend. Confidential scholarships are available. Reach out to Pastor Dana or Pastor Genna.



# THE NEXT GENERATION OF CLERGY

## PASTOR GENNA ACCEPTED INTO NEXT GENERATION LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

By Genevieve Hosterman

### >>> I HAVE SOME EXCITING NEWS!

I was recently accepted into the 14th cohort of the Next Generation Leadership Initiative (NGLI). NGLI is a program created by the Pension Board of the UCC to support the development of the next generation of clergy. In order to apply, I submitted an intent form, a support document from our moderator, my ministerial profile, and a video essay answering in-depth questions about my faith and my leadership history. NGLI selects about 15 applicants each year to form a cohort that will go through the six year program together.



## MEMPHIS, TN

The first NGLI Cohort \*14 event is an orientation in Memphis, TN in September. The cohort will get to know one another, visit the Civil Rights Museum, and have conversations centered around organizing and social justice.

The first four years of the program focus on formation, and include 5-day events twice a year, as well as attendance at important meetings like UCC General Synod. In the final two years of the program, I will be given money to pursue my own ministry and renewal interests and develop an independent project. All NGLI activities are fully funded, and I will also receive a contribution to my pension.

NGLI has very strict attendance requirements, and asks a lot of its participants, so I am grateful in advance to have the support of South Church and our amazing staff as I participate in these continuing education trips. I can't wait to see how I learn and grow in NGLI, and I look forward to exploring how I can apply all that I am learning to my work here at South Church!



## MONTHLY MISSION UPDATE

**Red Crescent/Earthquake**  
\$4,862 (updated)

**Food Link**  
\$2,090

**PFLAG**  
\$3,488 plus \$1,744 match

**Giving Garden**  
\$1,850

**Samaritan Fund**  
\$384





# SUMMER HARVEST CELEBRATION

THE AUGUST DINNER RAISED  
OVER \$31,000 FOR THE GIVING GARDEN!





# GET TO KNOW BRIAN!

## SOUTH CHURCH ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR

**What aspect of your church's job brings you the most satisfaction or fulfillment?**

Interacting with the people of South Church has been an instant delight! This is the first job I've found since the pandemic that allows me to talk and coordinate and learn with a large team of people, and it is doing wonders for my well-being.

**A favorite quote or Bible verse:**

It's actually a whole story: Acts 3:1-11. The summary is: No matter how broken we seem, God invites us to dance for joy and astonish the world.

**If you could be an animal which one would you be?**

An otter. They always seem to be having the most fun, and, like them, I love splashing in the water.

**What is the best gift you ever received?**

A camping chair that is also a rocking chair. Even when I'm not camping, it's my favorite place to sit.

**What is your favorite color?**

Green

**What is your current media obsession?**

Everybody Loves Raymond

**What is one thing that few people know about you?**

Senior year of high school, I was voted "Most Likely to Brighten Your Day"

**What book did you most recently finish?**

*Notes on Complexity* by Neil Theise

**What is the most daring thing you have done?**

I studied for one year in Germany, at the graduate degree level, having never previously learned any German whatsoever.

**What is one vice you wish you could give up?**

Movies based on comic books

**What song would you say sums you up?**

The Avett Brothers' "The Weight of Lies"

**What words do you try to live by?**

A person's a person, no matter how small.



## >>> RAPID FIRE

TEA, COFFEE, OR HOT CHOCOLATE

MORNING OR NIGHT

SAVORY OR SWEET

WINDOW OR AISLE

*Brian is in the office on Mondays and Tuesdays and available by email (brian@southchurch.com) on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Stop by and say "hello!"*



# DID YOU KNOW...

## THAT THE ENORMOUS PICTURE OF AN AERIAL VIEW OF DOWNTOWN ANDOVER HANGING IN FELLOWSHIP HALL HAS A DISTINCTLY SOUTH CHURCH CONNECTION TO IT? READ ON!

By Char Lyons, South Church Historian



Dick (1925-2019) came to South Church at age three and Barbara Garey Moody (1931-2015), joined when they married in 1953 and raised their five children here. Meredith Moody and Jan Moody Holden and her family are active members, all doing 'church' as if they were born into it, literally! In Barbara's 62 years of membership and service to our community, she found this picture a great conversation starter with newcomers. She lived her calling in making all feel welcome at South Church. However, Barbara had an extra special connection to this picture.

It was Barbara Garey Moody's father, Cartographer DeMelle C. Garey of Reading, who matted, mounted, framed, and hung this aerial picture in the office of W. Shirley Barnard's real estate and insurance company at the corner of Main and Barnard St. in 1940! Mr. Barnard enjoyed showing home buyers where their house was. A caption in the 1946 book for Andover's 300th Anniversary, "How it Was How it Is", notes that it shows almost the entire town! After his death in 1950, his son sold the business, and donated this picture to us, with Mr. Garey moving and hanging the mural in Fellowship Hall. The

Barnards joined South Church in 1927, lived at 44 Central St., the 'Summer White House' during President Franklin Pierce's tenure, and he was a 10th generation Andover family. The 'W' was for William.

Over the last 83 years this picture has been seen by thousands of people. It also aged to a degree worthy of restoration. So, on the first anniversary of Barbara's 2015 death, her beloved husband Dick Moody with children and grandchildren, honored her gift of fellowship with our beautifully restored keepsake treasure. It has become part of the fabric of the community of South Church and our greater community in Andover. The Northeast Document Conservation Center here in Andover restored this one-of-a-kind mural. The Moody family had it encased in Plexiglas to help preserve this gift well into the future.

The Moody's embodied service both within South Church by serving multiple times on every committee and board, as well as serving the Andover and Merrimack Valley communities. Dick and Barbara were successful realtors as well as running a textile mill in BallardVale and other manufacturing businesses all in Andover. They lent their devotion to church, Scouts, Merrimack Valley VNA, The Andover-North Andover YMCA, League of Women Voters, in welcoming, helping, and caring for newcomers to town, as well as to seasoned Townies needing an ear or hand.

After sponsoring the Trijo family of 5 as refugees from Cuba in 1962, Meredith and Jan remember shared Easters and Christmases with the Trijios and their extended family who successfully immigrated over the next decade...

...The Moody's were integral in getting the Andover ABC House established in 1967. Jan remembers her parents going door to door to help bring the uneasy conversations of equal opportunity into the homes of our neighbors. Once the first class of young men came to Andover, the Moodys were host parents. Dick and Don Sagaser (another South Church member) also began Boy Scout Troop 73 here at South Church in the 1960s while their sons were toddlers. Dick and Don would be overjoyed today to know that this troop still meeting here, is now co-ed.

Dick was also active with the Andover Tennis Club, Sunday Night hockey, Equal Opportunity Housing in Andover as well as serving on Andover's Finance Committee, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Board of Directors of the Historical Society. Barbara was on the Board for Merrimack Valley Family Services and her lifetime of service was recognized in the first group of awardees for the Rotary Club of Andover Citizens Who Care award.

At our 301st Annual Meeting in 2012, Barbara and Dick were awarded The Samuel Phillips Award "For outstanding Christian Leadership in the Church and Community," by 300th Anniversary Committee Chair Julie Pike and Senior Minister Rev. John Zerhing. In October 2012, we wrapped up our yearlong 300th Anniversary celebration. The Moody's spoke to the blessing of the ministry of South Church in their lives and the wonder of 300 years of worship in progress. Who else could reflect so genuinely?

And yet, the humble Moody's are ordinary people in the legacy of South Church who have helped to make South Church a place for us now to worship and to gain community. They lived by the Lord's calling, "To whom much is given, of [them] much will be required" (Luke 12:48). They were people who knew how to do 'church.' They taught that in so many ways, especially when Barbara greeted everyone as a friend in Christ, engaging them to look at the huge aerial picture, find their place and connect them to everyone around.



### ➤➤➤ FROM THE 2016 DEDICATION OF THE RESTORED PICTURE

*Thanks be to God for the Moody Family for this gift in memory of Barbara Moody, may her grace live on through many more welcoming conversations.*

**AND NOW YOU KNOW.**



# KIDS GIVE A BOOST TO LOCAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

Over the course of three different week-long programs, 75 kids from Andover and the surrounding area volunteered at over 15 local organizations, and consumed over 1500 freeze pops! Summer of Service (SOS) is a program that introduces middle school and high school students to a variety of service opportunities in the area.

The kids learn about, and then choose to work at, a variety of local organizations, such as Neighbors in Need food pantry, Lazarus House ministries, West Elementary School, South Church's Giving Garden, and a youth favorite: AVIS Trails. After setting a daily intention to keep in mind, the kids head off to their chosen sites—either by foot, school bus or the public MEVA bus.

Taylor Graffum, South Church Minister of Youth and Families, attended a very rainy AVIS trail on the first Monday and stated “the first day of SOS is always important as it sets the tone for the rest of the week and summer. As I looked outside at the constant drizzle, I was nervous that the rain would ruin the morale as we set out for trails, but I was pleasantly surprised by everyone's energy and excitement (and lack of complaints) as we cut down a ton of invasive species along the trail. It was an incredible way to kick off the week!”

After painting, stocking the food pantry, moving furniture, and making lunch bags with hand written notes, Rev. Adam Isbitsky of Ballard Vale United Church enthusiastically said, “Thank you Summer of Service crews for your work over two days!” Parents filled 86 chaperone positions, and over the course of the three weeks—youth, counselors and adult volunteers together put in 2,286 hours of service work. This work was a great boost to both the sites and the greater communities that the organizations serve...



# LEADERSHIP, EMPATHY AND GROWTH

## THE 2023 SC SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



This summer the internship program welcomed Scar and Mia. Scar, 19 years old, graduated from Greater Lawrence Technical School with a focus in carpentry. They have attended SOS, youth groups and mission trips and given back by leading middle school youth group with Taylor. Mia, 22 years old, graduated with a Bachelors in Social Work from the University of Connecticut. She is continuing her education at Fordham University working toward a Masters of Social Work. Like Scar, she attended youth group and mission trips. The seven-week internship was a combination of Summer of Service, Vacation Bible School and integral planning weeks. They worked closely with, and as a liaison for, Taylor Graffum, the Minister of Youth and Families. During VBS, the interns aided during the morning programming and facilitated the afternoon program. During SOS, they functioned as adults on sites, led reflections and provided support to the counselors.

**Together we have learned so much from this experience, and have gained a deeper knowledge about leadership skills, empathy and personal growth. We are so thankful for Taylor and South Church for providing us with this opportunity!**

### >>> SCAR

"I had to step out of my comfort zone to not only help others but also myself find the right leadership role to fill. It meant different things on different days—setting up the tech for vacation bible school or running the lunchtime counselor meeting by myself. I worked to build up SOS counselors and help them feel more comfortable in their roles as leaders. One challenge I faced was figuring out what my role was as an intern during SOS. I participated in SOS many times, so I knew how things ran. I knew what it was like to attend and I knew how to be a counselor, but it took me a minute to figure out how I would best support SOS as an intern. I found that my experience meant that I could be very helpful in supporting the counselors and I thoroughly enjoyed that role. Growing up, South Church has always fostered a safe space for me to explore who I am and my authentic self. It was really important to me to hold that safe space for the youth in the same way that I had it growing up."

### >>> MIA

"South Church provides a unique experience where youth are not only heard but celebrated and empowered. VBS and SOS provide opportunities for individuals to be leaders, something they might not have the opportunity to do in society. VBS provides middle schoolers the opportunity to be leaders while also giving them space to be kids and make mistakes. SOS provides the opportunity for young high schoolers to learn the importance of leading by example and shows them how their energy and work can make a tremendous impact.

South Church has always provided me with a safe environment where I can foster and grow my faith journey. It has taught me the importance of using my voice and emphasized the idea that others will always be there to listen. I think this is why the youth program is so prominent and strong in the South Church community. It was fulfilling to be an empowering voice for youth and to see the growth in confidence within a matter of days. I found myself inspired by the will of the youth, at VBS and SOS, to try new things and to be vulnerable about their emotions and questions. After returning from the Neighbors in Need Pantries in Lawrence, our group of two counselors and five campers, had an in depth discussion about food insecurity and the stereotypes that are associated with it. The youth and counselors had profound and wise insight that made me stop and think. It was encouraging and inspiring to facilitate that conversation. As I head to graduate school and begin working at New York Presbyterian Hospital, I am excited to use the knowledge and skills that I have strengthened through this internship. I leave with a renewed appreciation for personal connections and de-escalation tactics. I also gained an appreciation for self care and am thankful for Taylor and the rest of the South Church's staff leadership, wisdom and support throughout this internship."



## >>> SUMMER INTERNS MIA GALAT & SCAR HOLBROOK

supported the program that also invites kids ages 16-18 to be counselors. Scar shared that the internship “meant stepping out of my comfort zone to run the lunchtime counselor meeting by myself, working to build up the counselors and help them feel more comfortable in their roles as leaders of the program.” For many, the counselor role is a great opportunity to start building leadership skills. Hazel Aude, a senior from North Andover, had attended SOS before but was nervous about being a counselor for the first time. “I was thoroughly impressed with Hazel. She carried such grace and wisdom in reflection and was a true role model for the youth,” said Galat.

After lunch, the afternoons were filled with SOS traditions like karaoke and *Drip Drip Drop*. This hybrid version of *Duck, Duck, Goose* instructs one person to drip water out of a pitcher onto the heads of those seated in a circle then yelling “drop!” and dumping the remaining water on someone before taking off running. The days concluded with a reflection on the intention set that morning, a discussion about the impact of their service work, and the sharing fun facts about their work site’s mission.

If you are interested in attending SOS: “Rooted in Community” in 2024, please reach out to Taylor Graffum [taylor@southchurch.com](mailto:taylor@southchurch.com) for more information.



### 2023 Service Sites:

**Andover:** ABC House, AVIS Purdon Reservation, Retelle Reservation, West Elementary School, Rompers Nursery, United Ballard Vale Church, Christ Church

**Lawrence:** Bread and Roses, Neighborhoods in Need Pantries, Debbie’s Treasure Chest, Uncommon Threads, Community Giving Tree, Cor Unum, Lazarus House, Boys and Girls Club Pantries,

**North Andover:** The Giving Garden

**At South Church:** Cookie Baking for fire department, Seedling Prep, Benches and Picnic Tables

“Taylor brings dynamic energy and dedication to our Summer of Service program. She seeks to know and celebrate the gifts of each middle schooler in our program. Through her leadership, all the youth in our Summer of Service program become the best versions of themselves.”

REV. DANA ALLEN WALSH



# DEEP SEA MISSION: VBS 2023

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## >>> 39 CAMPERS AND COUNSELORS AT SOUTH CHURCH VBS

By Mia Galat & Scar Holbrook, Summer Interns

A six year old VBS youth, named Chloe, had an amazing memory. Chloe was able to recite each day's Bible verse by heart, remembering everything, even the smallest of details! Genna, South Church's Associate Pastor, stated "Chloe was a rockstar who inspired a love of the Bible stories in the other campers." Chloe was a bright example of the comprehension that all the kids showed throughout that one week in late June.

Over the course of the week, there was a whole assembly of songs, arts and crafts and Bible stories courtesy of Vacation Bible School. VBS hosted 39 children and counselors at South Church, with the help of many volunteers. Children ranged from ages two through twelve with counselors aged 11-18, offering a unique opportunity for middle schoolers to gain leadership experience. The theme was "S.E.A.," otherwise

known as the Sea Exploration Agency. Kids learned skills and on Friday earned their "Secret Sea Agent" status, with the help of Dr. Anemone and Senior Agent Charlie Blue. Both the songs and Bible verses reflected a theme of exploring and strengthening your faith, while looking to the wider community, at South Church and beyond, to accompany you in your faith journey. We hope the youth gained a sense of belonging in the church, along with a new perspective and broader understanding of messages in the Bible.

Each day began with a new song, such as crowd favorites "Wherever you go" or "Vast Voyage". The kids then split into two classes: Community and Bible. In Community class, they worked on team building activities that focused on cultivating a home within the Church for the youth. In Bible class, they discussed Bible stories such as Feeding the 5000 and Jonah and the Whale. The youth then transitioned into three periods of their preferred activity, choosing from sports, science, music and art. Each class was tailored to the corresponding Bible story of that day which allowed for unique projects, songs and games throughout the week. The day ended together with songs and prayer.

Expanding the horizons of participation, VBS also offered an afternoon program with 12 campers staying until 4pm offering a safe place for the children to choose their favorite activities. A live version of the popular game *Among Us* was an afternoon highlight. The afternoon crew, led by Aria and Leighton, pitched, set up and taught the game. The game included a variety of tasks on paper, high levels of communication among peers and strategic tactics. The *Among Us: in Real Life* was a great hit. The game even transitioned from an inside game to an outside game, to take advantage of the beautiful weather. The rest of the afternoon programming was centered around a play written and produced completely by the campers, with the help of Michaela Barczak, Director of Youth Choirs. The play spoke to the journey of becoming part of the S.E.A., while facing adversity and leaning on friendships, both new and old. We were glad to end the week with a exciting performance for the families.

Registration for **VBS 2024: It's A Mystery** opens in January!





# CARING

## >>> CONDOLENCES TO

- the family and friends of church member **Clark Benson** who died on June 11th.
- Chris Williams and family on the death of her father **Keith Dribble** on June 21st.
- family and friends of former parishioner **Nancy Munn** who died on July 5th.
- family and friends of former South Church administrator **Kit Lambert** who died on August 26th.

## >>> WE CELEBRATE

- the birth of **Gwendolyn Hollister** born to parents Megan & Tom VanDuyan.
- the birth of **Robyn Marie** born to parents Lynette & Nathan Elam.
- the birth of **Lily Jane** born to parents Julie and Michael McDonagh. Grandparents are Jane and Jeff Ingram.
- the marriage of **Adam Blech and Roxanne Cecil** in July. Parents are Lynne and Brandon Blech.

## >>> IN GRATITUDE

A huge thank you for your generous gift. It helps us to change the lives of deserving young men with hope and a future through education. *Jean Riser, Only A Child*

Thank you for believing in our mission and for your generous and faithful support of women and children at Abby's House. *With gratitude, Stephanie Page, Executive Director*

Many thanks for the most beautiful daffodils! I always feel the warmth and love which lives in South Church. What a good church I have found. *Love, Loanne*

Thank you for the beautiful daffodils. I plan to plant the bulbs when the time is right. *Sincerely, Jane Vondell*

We extend our heartfelt gratitude for your generous support as a sponsor of Calvary Baptist Church allowing us to continue to spread love, hope and joy!

Thank you for the incredible gift from your congregation. Your commitment to community-inspired, volunteer-powered disaster relief makes a difference! *With gratitude, Jessica Thompson, CEO All Hearts and Hands*

Thank you for your generous donation to Project Home Again and for inviting me to worship with you. We have used the funds to provide new beds for domestic violence survivors, refugees from Ukraine and Afganistan, and to provide household items to those families as well to those in our community. *Warmest regards, Nancy Kanell*

The items collected during your Goods for Good drive continue to support our newly arrived families. We appreciate your generosity in creating opportunities for refugees and immigrants to succeed. *Thank you, Kris Honeycutt, IINE*

Your 55 year partnership with ABC of Andover has helped transform one scholar at a time ensuring that each young woman pursuing her education here will have doors opened to opportunities that equip her for future leadership. *With much gratitude, Bonnie, Susan, and Gabrielle*

At the start of staff meetings, we often begin with two words to describe how we are feeling/functioning that day. Overwhelmed & Grateful! My two words on how I feel about the emails, cards, calls, lunches and gifts you've given me in celebration of my retirement. Thank You! *your sister in Christ, Linda Francalancia Hacker*





# THE STEEPLE IS LIT IN LOVING MEMORY OF

## >>> IN SEPTEMBER

**John Atchinson**

by his wife Deanna and family

**Charles and Jennie Carey**

by Lynda and Roy Paris

**Our son, Hooks III**

**who shared his light with the world**

by Susan and Hooks Johnston

**Muriel S. & Edward D. White**

by their daughter Carol Hopkinson

## >>> IN OCTOBER

**Gertrude & Fraser Colpitts and**

**their daughter Priscilla Colpitts Taber**

by Robert F. Colpitts and Nancy Colpitts Aceti

**Faith M. Look & Robert E. Look**

by their daughters Linda Look & Deborah Hyde

**Bruce S. Taylor**

by his wife Charlotte and family

## >>> IN NOVEMBER

**Margaret and William Philips Foster**

by their children Rachel, Bill, Karen and Cheryl

**Our parents and**

**to honor our children and grandchildren**

by Laura & Dale Lattanzio

*Please let us know if you would like to "light the steeple" in  
memory of one of your loved ones.*