

# »» SOUTH CHURCH ANDOVER NEWSLETTER ««

# THE CIRCLE

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

## Advent 2024 *Making Room*

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We expect so many things out of the Advent and Christmas season. We expect to attend the most fun and festive gatherings. We expect tables overflowing with homemade cookies and moments of magical connection with our loved ones. We expect our homes to be cozy and embellished with nostalgic ornaments, smelling like a freshly cut pine tree.

## »» READ MORE ON PAGE 9

The Giving Garden, a project of South Church, had a very successful 2024 season. The garden produced over 13,600 pounds of fruits and vegetables to address food insecurity in the Greater Lawrence area. That is the equivalent of over 67,000 servings of fresh, healthy food for our neighbors, all grown on our half-acre plot in North Andover.

# A NOTE FROM DANA

## ➤➤➤ MARY AND JOSEPH HAD TO PLEAD WITH THE INNKEEPER

We expect so many things out of the Advent and Christmas season. We expect to attend the most fun and festive gatherings. We expect tables overflowing with homemade cookies and moments of magical connection with our loved ones. We expect our homes to be cozy and embellished with nostalgic ornaments, smelling like a freshly cut pine tree.

Yet it feels impossible to find the true meaning of Christmas buried beneath our lengthy to-do lists and ridiculously high expectations.

Our theme for this Advent season at South Church is "Making Room." Ironically, Advent is a time when Christians are meant to quiet our lives so that we can look for signs of God's promise of new life in unexpected places.

So how do we do that? How do we push "pause" on the frenetic pace of this cultural holiday season so that we can slow down and make space for God's unfolding presence? Just as Mary and Joseph had to plead with the innkeeper to make room for them, we must fight for the space to listen for what God is birthing in our lives this Advent.

As poet Marianne Williamson writes, "This is the irrational season when love blooms bright and wild. Had Mary been filled with reason, there'd have been no room for the child."

Let us make room for a Love that blooms bright and wild. A Love that invites us to unwrap (and discard) all the unrelenting expectations of this season and to make space for the joys of wonder and stillness.

Making room this Advent season will look different for each of us. Perhaps it means dedicating time each day for quiet reflection and prayer. Or choosing to practice generosity in a new way, through acts of service or charitable giving. It could mean being more present with loved ones, or simply letting go of perfection and embracing the beautiful messiness of this season.

Friends, the hope of Advent is that God is not done with this world. The light is breaking through, if only we have the courage to turn toward it. In the very crowded inns of our lives, may we make room. Room for awe-inducing wonder. Room for God's boundless, transformative love. Room for the Christ child to be born anew in your heart and in the life of our church.

May hope, peace, joy, & love be yours this season,

*Dana*



# MAKING ROOM WITH SOUTH CHURCH THIS ADVENT SEASON

The story of Christmas is a story of the God who breaks into everyday life, and of the ones who made room for the Divine to be born into their midst: **Mary**, who made room in her life and in her very body, and whose witness inspired others to make room; **Joseph**, who made room in his perfectly ordered future for God to break in and change everything; even **the innkeeper** on Christmas night, who made room in his stable, rather than turn the expecting family away. This is the season of Making Room. We extend tables and inflate air mattresses, we pack cars and overhead compartments, and we leave room, too, for the Christmases that are smaller or quieter, the ones that don't fit the assumptions we so often make. In God's love, everything belongs. We hope you'll join us as we watch and wait this Advent season. There is room for you at South Church.

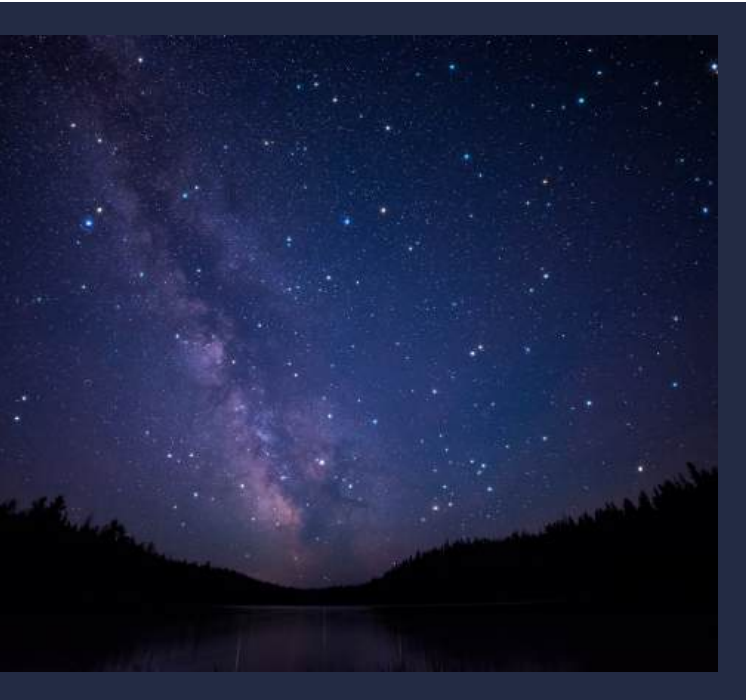
- Sun. 12/1      10:00AM Hope Worship  
                   11:00AM Everything BUT the Greens DIY Advent Wreath Kit pick up  
                                 Christmas Pageant Rehearsal (all kids & youth invited!)
- Mon. 12/2      7:00PM Art Journaling during Advent begins (weekly through 12/23)**
- Sat. 12/7      12-6PM Winter Holiday Market
- Sun. 12/8      10:00AM Peace Worship Christmas Pageant with children's choirs**  
                   11:00AM Advent Potluck Brunch
- Tues. 12/10    7:00PM Beer and Carols Night #1 (caroling 8:00-8:20PM)
- Wed. 12/11    7:00PM Beer and Carols Night #2 (caroling 8:00-8:20PM)**
- Sun. 12/15    10:00AM Joy Worship with brass, intergenerational choirs, handbells  
                   11:30AM Nectar/HoneyComb Choir Party  
                   1:00PM Middle School Youth Group Christmas Party  
                   2:30PM Sting Choir Party  
                   3:30PM High School Youth Group Christmas Party
- Tues. 12/17    7:00PM Blue Christmas Worship Service in-person & online**
- Wed. 12/18    4:30PM HoneyComb/Nectar/Hive Choir Parties  
                   7:30PM Edgewood Christmas Worship Service
- Sun. 12/22      10:00AM Love Worship**
- Tues. 12/24    3:00PM Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols Worship Service—*sing carols, enjoy children's message, and share the Christmas story together*  
                   10:00PM Christmas Eve Candlelight & Carols Worship Service—*carols and candlelight as we approach midnight together*
- Wed. 12/25    Enjoy "South Church Sings Christmas" pre-recorded worship on YouTube**  
                   Office Closed through 1/1
- Sun. 12/29    10:00AM Worship (in-person and on YouTube)
- Sun. 1/5        10:00AM Save the date...Star Sunday**



# ENGAGEMENT CORNER

## >>> IMAGINE HOW GOOD IT WILL FEEL TO SEE THE LIGHT

By Brian Gruhn, Engagement Coordinator



Experimental physicist Brian Greene asks us to imagine a future in which humans are not able to see the stars in the sky. His job is to take mathematical and physical facts about the universe and think through their implications. It is common knowledge that the universe is always expanding, but up until 2011, physicists assumed that this expansion was slowing down over time, essentially assuming that gravity was pulling everything back together, even as the universe itself expanded. Then Adam Riess and his team came along and proved that it's actually getting faster and faster. So Dr. Greene invites us to contemplate this: If the expansion is getting faster and faster, then some day it will be expanding faster than the speed of light. That means stars will be traveling away from Earth faster than their light can reach us. So future humans could go out and look up in the sky and not see any stars or other distant celestial bodies and assume—INCORRECTLY!—that there's nothing out there in space.

"Engagement" is, in many ways, an experimental part of being church in this time. If humans are still doing our thing when the stars are traveling faster than the light they shine, I imagine there will still be people of faith during the season of Advent proclaiming that there is a light that no darkness can drown out. Even if our human eyes are unable to detect the light that shines, we will be called to make room in our hearts for the reality that light and life and love ARE out there; not because we can measure and observe them, but because we believe our God has commanded it to be so.

This feels like a dark season in our history. It feels like a year in which it might be difficult to find joy and merriment in our ancient traditions and rituals because we are facing a world that is uncertain, unknown, and beyond our control. Our faith, however, proclaims that this is exactly the kind of environment in which God does miraculous work.

In this particular Advent season, and beyond, can God's people can join together in another experiment? What are the ways you choose to connect with others? If the future is uncertain, unknown and beyond our control, perhaps our ways of forming community can be, as well. Maybe this is exactly the time to meet new people, to join in work you've never done before, to be wildly unpredictable in how you choose to connect. In a dark time, what we need most are new sources of light. Good news for us: God calls us each to be light bearers! The way we choose to carry that light forward, the way we choose to engage as a faith community...these will help determine what the world will look like in the future. Imagine how good it will feel to see the light, love and life of South Church in Andover reflected—somehow—in the world to come.

# GIFTS OF GENEROSITY THIS SEASON

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## >>> GIVING TREE

*Lead by the Community Service Team*

Check in the Narthex, at the front of the church, for our traditional Giving Tree to purchase gifts from children's wish lists from local nonprofits that support youth in our communities.

## >>> HAZEL'S HOLIDAY HEROES

*Lead by the Social Justice Coalition*

The Social Justice Coalition is working with Hazel's Holiday Heroes (HHH) to create holiday magic for foster children in local group homes this year at a cost of about \$100 per child. Reach out by Friday, December 6th to Meredith Moody at [eredithm3@gmail.com](mailto:eredithm3@gmail.com) or Andrea Stidsen at [andrea.stidsen@gmail.com](mailto:andrea.stidsen@gmail.com) if you are interested in supporting HHH gift giving

## >>> POINSETTIA: DECEMBER 1ST DEADLINE!

*Lead by the Flower Committee*

Join the decades-old South Church tradition of ordering a poinsettia to decorate our sanctuary for the season! Poinsettia cost \$14 each. After the Dec. 22nd service, you may take your plant home or donate it for us to deliver to another member of the church. [Click here to order now](#) or you can order in person on Sundays after worship. Deadline 12/1.



## MONTHLY MISSION UPDATE

THANK YOU!

In October, the Mission Team voted to allocate \$2,500 from their Impact Fund to World Central Kitchen - Hurricane Relief efforts in Florida.

**July: Giving Garden**  
\$2,488 (updated)

**Aug: SNAP Match**  
\$1,666

**Sept: Rally to Read**  
\$5,372



A big THANK YOU for the donations for this year's Thanksgiving Share-A-Meal drive!



# IDEAS FOR ADVENT

## ▶▶▶ HELPING YOU TO MARK THE SEASON

By The Rev. Genevieve Hosterman, Associate Pastor

Advent is a season of preparation. As we anticipate the birth of Jesus into our world, we make room in our lives, our homes, and our hearts for all that Christmas may bring. Whatever Christmas may hold for you, we pray that you might find some time in Advent to embrace the simple grace of our God.

Each Sunday in Advent, you can find some resources for the season in our Narthex. Take a look and pick up some that speak to you this year!

Here are some practices to consider, to help you mark the season and set it apart from the rest of the year:

### **Read through one of the Gospels**

Luke is a personal favorite of mine, and it has 24 chapters, so you can read one a day starting on December 1 as a countdown to Christmas. Matthew is another excellent option and is the other Gospel that includes the story of Jesus' birth.

### **Read a Psalm a day**

I recommend opening up the Psalms and reading one at random each day of Advent. It's a great way to ground yourself in God's goodness as you start your day. Here are a few popular ones, if you'd like some recommendations to get you started: Psalm 8, Psalm 23, Psalm 46, Psalm 118, and Psalm 139

### **Pick Up an Advent Devotional**

This year, we are using Kate Bowler's *Advent Devotions: The Weary World Rejoices*. You can pick up a paper copy in our narthex during Advent, or find a downloadable copy at [katebowler.com/advent](http://katebowler.com/advent).

### **Pray Using an Advent Wreath**

Choose a time each day, or once a week, to light the advent wreath, adding one candle each week of advent. Listen to a favorite hymn, or sit in silence and share what's on your mind with God.

### **Read an Advent Book**

Our South Church Library has a number of children's books, history and theology books, and devotional books related to Advent and Christmas. Browse the collection and pick some up!

Wishing you the abundant Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love of this wonderful season!



# CELEBRATING A RECORD YEAR

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## ➤➤➤ AND THE DEDICATED TEAM BEHIND ANDOVER FARMERS MARKET

by Fran Healey



As the Andover Farmers Market (AFM) concludes another season, I'm proud to reflect on the tremendous growth, achievements, and community spirit that defined our fifth year at South Church. None of this would have been possible without the support of our vendors, volunteers, and sponsors, whose contributions have made AFM a true community hub. I am especially grateful to South Church for providing the space, to the volunteers who give their time so generously, and for the sponsors of our food security program. And let's not forget the fabulous office team, led by Nora, who worked tirelessly behind the scenes—they are our unsung heroes.

This year set records on multiple fronts. We welcomed 63 vendors—an all-time high, including 12 community partners—and drew 18,561 visitors, a 5,000-person increase from last season. Since 2020, over 59,000 people have visited the market, each week bringing new connections and energy to our vibrant space. Access to fresh, local food was expanded this

year, resulting in a record 370 SNAP transactions—a 55% increase from last year. Our SNAP and Market Match programs enabled 128 households to buy fresh food, generating nearly \$17,000 in sales for local vendors. Volunteer support was phenomenal, with 40 volunteers dedicating 882 hours, equating to 12 hours for every hour the market was open.

AFM's mission is guided by five strategic priorities: improving health, building community, combating food insecurity, economic development, and environmental sustainability. This year, I'd like to highlight building community by celebrating the dedicated team whose talents bring AFM to life. Together, this team has created something extraordinary, forming the foundation of AFM's success.

**Mary Bambury:** Mary's dedication has been the bedrock of AFM from the start. From navigating pandemic restrictions in 2020 to today, Mary's humor, warmth, and steadfast commitment have shaped the market's success.

**Sharon Fisher:** Since 2020, Sharon has brought contagious energy and creativity to AFM. Her compassionate spirit inspired our partnership with Sidney's Rainbows, a community initiative close to her heart.

**Susan Henke-McGrath:** As our "Volunteer Wrangler," Susan has managed volunteers since 2021 and recently began coordinating musicians, adding joy to every market day. She's woven her family into the market, making it a shared tradition.

**Jennifer Bouchard:** In 2022, Jen stepped up in a big way, devoting herself to keeping AFM strong. Her thoughtful organized approach ensures that we have the resources needed to thrive. Her strength and compassion help the team face challenges with confidence.

**Ellen Arvidson:** Ellen runs our SNAP & Food Security program with quiet dedication, ensuring accessibility for all. Her calm presence grounds the team and is a pillar of our success.

**Robin Gendron:** As our financial expert, Robin brings order to our records while infusing warmth and humor into the team. Her sharp eye for detail ensures our financial stability.

**Amy Ferraro Whitsett:** Since joining last year, Amy's creativity and marketing insight has transformed our online presence and overall visibility. Her experience as a vendor brings valuable insight into the needs of our community.

This group is the heart of AFM, and it is my great honor to lead the initiative. I couldn't do it without every one of these incredible individuals. I am grateful for each of them and look forward to the possibilities ahead.

# RENOVATION: SINGING WITH AN ORGAN

By the Organ Team: Bob Tigelaar, Brian Diehl, Martha Beesley, Marty Mason, Mike Kraley, Vic Olmstead, and Cathy Meyer

As conversations about the chancel renovation began to unfold, it became clear that the choir was going to move permanently to the front of the sanctuary. There are several reasons for this, most of all having to do with accessibility and safety (the loft has many different levels, and people have been known to trip and fall). The congregation also likes to see the choir when they sing.

But if the choir is in the front, then the choir will not be able to sing with the organ playing the accompaniment, as there is just too much distance between the front and the back of the room.

While we have an amazing and fairly new piano, it does not replace the sound and function of the organ. The organ is a wind instrument meant to emulate the voice, and the percussiveness of the piano that does not lend itself to lyrical singing in the same way. It also does not have the symphony of sounds nor the dynamic range that an organ does. One choir member said, “We simply have to have the option to sing with the organ!”

Our current organ is not without problems. Although it is only about 40 years old, it has had some issues since the time of installation that have not been able to be addressed. The Music Team hired a consultant to come in November 2023, who optimistically told us that the instrument is historically significant and should be kept, but would require about \$490K to fix. Even if we spent that money, we would still not address the need for accompanying the choir at the front of the sanctuary.

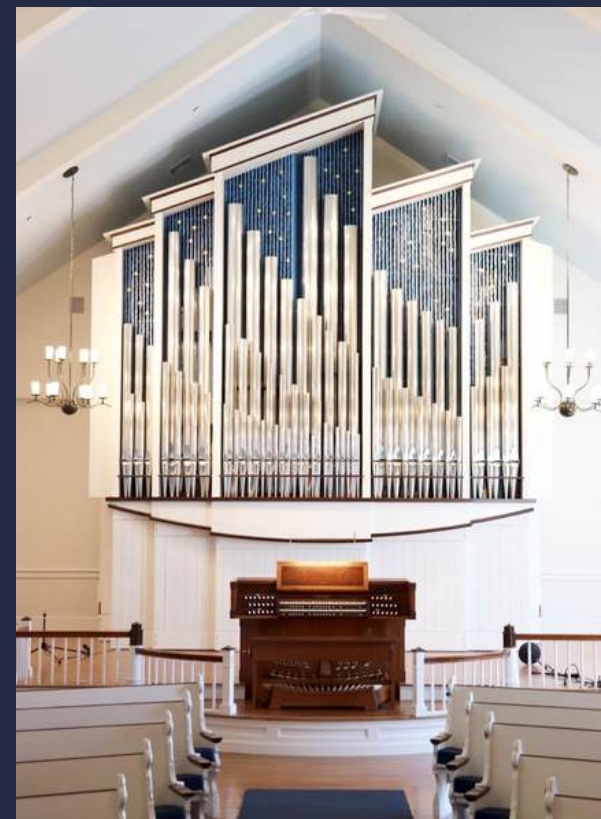
The Organ Team discussed the consultant’s report and explored the options of how we might be able to install a second organ to accommodate the choir’s new location.

To be very clear, the Team’s responsibility is not to do anything right now except make sure that decisions we make in our current Capital Campaign will support our dreams for the future. We are communicating with the architects to make sure the new chancel can support the weight of a pipe organ, for example. We are also taking field trips to visit newer organs in the area so that we can narrow down a builder we might want to work with, should the project ever come to fruition.

If you have any questions about this project, please do not hesitate to speak with any of us!



Ortloff Organ at St. Alban's Episcopal Church  
Cape Elizabeth, Maine



Dobson Organ at St. Christopher's Episcopal Church  
Chatham, Massachusetts



# 67,000 SERVINGS

## GIVING GARDEN SEASON WRAP-UP

By Emily Strong, Garden Manager

The Giving Garden, a project of South Church, had a very successful 2024 season. The garden produced over 13,600 pounds of fruits and vegetables to address food insecurity in the Greater Lawrence area. That is the equivalent of over 67,000 servings of fresh, healthy food for our neighbors, all grown on our half-acre plot in North Andover.

The weather was great for growing, the woodchuck only took his fair share, and the volunteers were plentiful. We had over 550 individuals come help at least once, and many of them came multiple times. We employed three college interns to help us guide all our volunteers. No doubt their efforts contributed to our record harvests.

# 13,600 POUNDS

One of the highlights of this year was the addition of Stephanie Cross, our Education Coordinator. Stephanie held workshops to teach kids how to listen to worms(!), created a photosynthesis relay race, and taught many young people about the ways that eating different vegetables supports our brains, our heart, our immune system and even influences our mood.

Our 2nd annual Gala in September was a huge success. We packed the room with many Garden friends and supporters, and raised \$47,000 to ensure the Garden will be able to grow in multiple ways next year.

Our plans for next season include expanding our educational programs, expanding our growing area, and hopefully expanding our reach in the community. If you'd like to help with some of the behind-the-scenes work this winter, please reach out to Emily at [emily@givinggardenma.org](mailto:emily@givinggardenma.org).

[WATCH PART OF THE GALA HERE!](#)





# A SUCCESSFUL 25TH DAY OF SERVICE!

On Saturday, November 2nd, we celebrated 25 years of the Day of Service with an impactful day of giving back. Nearly 200 volunteer slots were filled, contributing over 500 hours to meaningful community projects. We ended the day with a heartfelt celebration dinner and a touching video showcasing the impact of our work.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to making this milestone anniversary a success—together, we're creating a lasting legacy of love and service!

Prepped & painted an office.  
 Created 30 care packages.  
 Raked 75+ bags of leaves.  
 Raked mountains of leaves.  
 Collected 50+ bags of clothing  
 Cleaned out under Altar.  
 Opened 130 cans of tuna  
 Made 240 grocery bags for hung  
 Served lunch to 25 guests.  
**DAY of SERVICE**  
 Bagged 400 cookies.  
 Cleared trails in AVIS  
 Sifted compost.  
 Rolled irrigation hoses.  
 Danced Hip Hop with Youth  
 Prepped gardens for the winter  
 Cooked/served lbs. of ham/bean  
 Sang 30 songs to Seniors.  
 Served food to 30 youth writer

Cooked meal for shelter guests





# 25TH ANNUAL DAY OF SERVICE





## THE OBSTACLES FACING FOSTER CHILDREN

From the Social Justice Coalition (SJC)

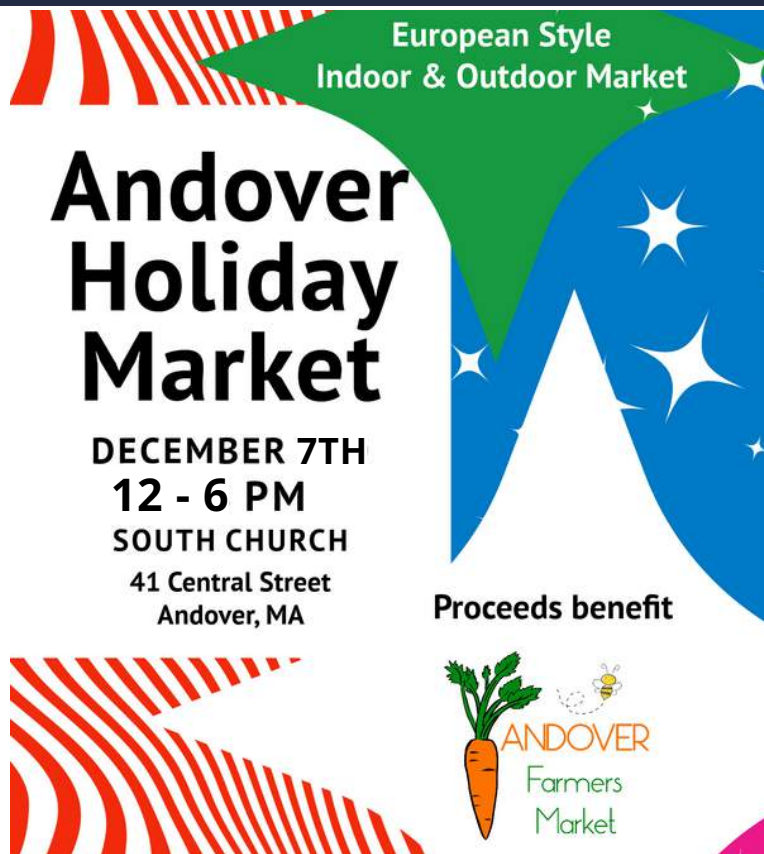
This Fall, Essex County District Attorney (DA) Paul Tucker met with members of the SJC. DA's Chief of Staff Sharyn Lubas and South Church's Senior Pastor Dana Allen-Walsh also attended. The meeting was to check progress on DA Tucker's pledge at last September's Juvenile Justice Town Hall Meeting at South Church. His pledge was to learn more about the obstacles foster children face in the juvenile justice system and what might be done to better help these children. The SJC is keenly interested in Essex County juvenile diversion. Diversion keeps children out of the formal court system while holding them accountable for their actions and provides mental health, education, and community service requirements. Nationally, and locally, diversion better protects the community by reducing reoffending.

There was a comprehensive discussion of the predicaments for crossover children and how the DA's office handles these cases. "Crossover children" is the current term for children who are both child welfare-involved and juvenile justice system-involved. The DA shared the developing relationship with Family Services of Merrimack Valley (FSMV) which is the provider for Essex County's Massachusetts Youth Diversion Program which was instituted in 2021. He explained the complexity of handling juvenile diversion cases and how his office is currently using FSMV to handle mental health diversion provisions. The DA sees greater utilization of FSMV services in the months ahead.

DA Tucker also reviewed his office's programs intended to prevent juvenile delinquency. In Essex County the following programs are in the Greater Lawrence area:

- Post-Prom Post-Graduation Substance-Free Grants
- Restorative Justice for Juveniles Initiative
- In partnership with the City of Lawrence—the coed flag football and sports clinic
- Partnership with Change the Play which creates programming for at-risk youth
- During National Anti-Bullying month hosted seminar by Northeastern University's Center for Sports in Society
- A funding initiative by DA Tucker's office to maintain the acclaimed services of Bridgewell for drug diversion as well as regular juvenile diversion needs

Part of the DA's mission to protect the community is Essex County's high rate of requesting a "58A Dangerousness" designation. Tucker pointed out that half go to detention, but that half are released to the community under special conditions. All are looking forward to the Massachusetts Office of the Child Advocate's "Crossover Children in Massachusetts Juvenile Justice" which will be published at the end of the year. It will cover statewide as well as specific Essex County data. The District Attorney accepted SJC's invitation for another Town Hall Meeting in the spring.




European Style  
Indoor & Outdoor Market

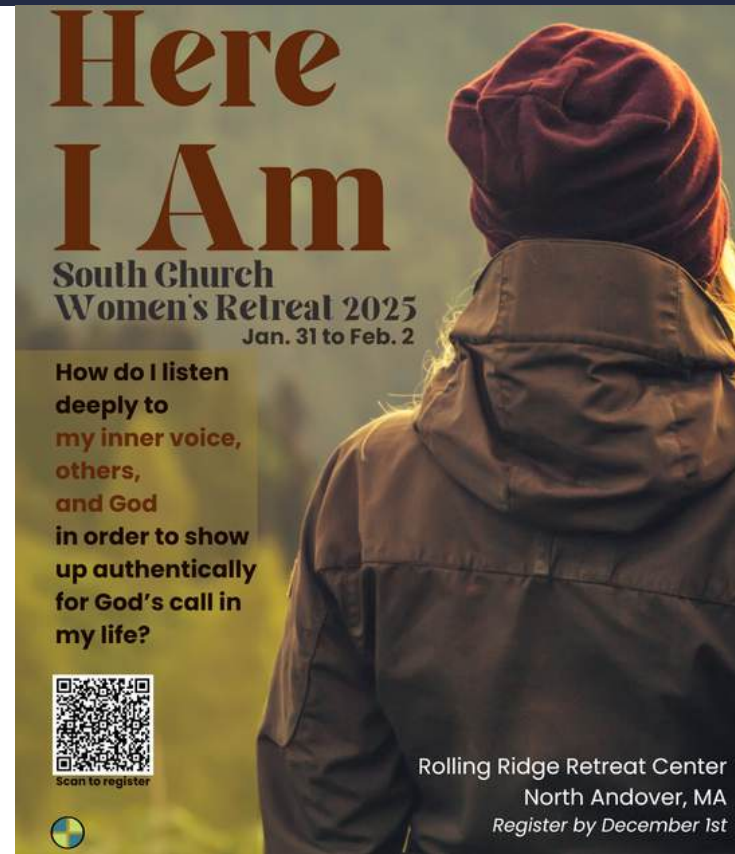
# Andover Holiday Market

**DECEMBER 7TH  
12 - 6 PM  
SOUTH CHURCH**  
41 Central Street  
Andover, MA

Proceeds benefit




ANDOVER  
Farmers  
Market



# Here I Am

**South Church  
Women's Retreat 2025**  
Jan. 31 to Feb. 2

How do I listen  
deeply to  
my inner voice,  
others,  
and God  
in order to show  
up authentically  
for God's call in  
my life?



Scan to register

Rolling Ridge Retreat Center  
North Andover, MA  
Register by December 1st



# DID YOU KNOW...

## >>> TIPPING THE CAP TO AN ERA THAT MANY DO NOT KNOW ABOUT

By Char Lyons, South Church Historian

Next March 8th, the South Church Players will assemble the stage (once again) to showcase the 1994-2020 annual musicals. It will be a tip of the cap to an era that many current members do not know about, and a trip down memory lane for the scores of patrons and performers through the decades. Covid may have stopped the show, but the Spirit will go on!

The South Church Players offered musicals with an intergenerational, spiritual community which complimented our inclusive South Church identity and benefited many different local to global organizations. Many of our youth became performance art professionals from their participation, mentored and encouraged by the individuals who made everyone feel important.

Why does this resonate so? The popular plays from *Godspell* to *Seussical* to *Pippen* were captivating and highlighted extraordinary local talent, but also breathed of the ministry of South Church. From Director Linda Zimmerman, "We are not community theater; we are a theater community." Zimmerman said. "No matter how many people try out and no matter what their musical or acting ability, everyone is given a part. We welcome everyone into this community." On the next page, the South Church Players Team writes of their ministry through the musicals.

In 1987, Music Director Keith Gould and Linda Z. tapped into the remarkable talent here 'waiting in the wings', and put on *Godspell*, with fewer than 20 performers, just a Friday night show. For a few years, we had a yearly show, maybe a musical review, and a few Maunday Thursday reenactments of the Last Supper (for which Linda painted the backdrop scene hidden behind the then red curtain in the Pulpit). In 1994, an annual musical tradition was established. The plays involved 30-80 performers, and a support crew and orchestra which rivaled any community theater group.

The stage was built by Marty Mason and Peter Spollett with the expressed purpose of using it every year. It is



Wizard of Oz 2017

stored in the shed and even under the Pulpit! It takes most of a day to assemble and a few hours to break down after the show. When the stage is put away, the wooden Easter Cross is erected. This cross is made from original hewn beams from the repaired steeple and was designed by Tom Larsen in 1992. If you want to feel the Holy Spirit, come and help/watch it going up—it is palpable.

Trying to estimate the number of individuals involved in this ministry over the years, let alone the number of people treated to a terrific show, let alone the number of people aided by the profits, it is best left to say, "only God knows."

And now you know...

# SHARING VALUES THROUGH THEATER

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By the South Church Players Team: Fran Fink, Barbara Holbrook, Betsy Hopkins, Susan Spollett, Deb White, Linda Zimmerman

For more than 35 years we have been doing this thing! It's not really about theater. It's about community building, affirming people's talents, and giving us all a place to grow and shine. It's about sitting around the dining room table...Linda, Susan & Deb, Derek & Barbara finding a vision; asking Betsy & Karen, Carol, Laurie, Fran, Nancy... to build a team; handing Tom & Bob script; giving Donna, Carol, Tamara, Rob & Serena the music; and saying "Let's do this!" It's about describing our vision of a thought bubble and having Derek, Lucas & Charles create the lighting to bring it to life; giving Peter, Marty, Dave, Tim, & Al a rough stage drawing, and watching an amazing crew build a theater in 3 1/2 hours!! And then late nights, laughs, mistakes, fabulous music, snowstorms and ultimately amazing success in bringing our shared vision to life.

We have built a gymnasium ("with chandeliers!"), Anatevka, the Garden of Eden, Main St. Andover, Times Square, North Station under the old Green Line, Noah's Ark, Canaan, the Land of Oz, The Oval Office, Whoville, a barnyard pond, an Orphanage, Egypt, River City Library and more. Building a stage in our church sanctuary makes a profound public statement about who South Church is. The limitations of performing in our worship space call us to spontaneity, creativity and grace. The sanctuary shows through, reminding us that this is sacred space.

We are a multigenerational, family-centered, inclusive spiritual community who come together to tell stories about our shared values through theater. Our inclusion extends beyond the walls of South Church, bringing people from other faith communities into our musical family (and into our hearts) year after year. Children 10 or under are expected to have a parent/adult on stage, so children and adults become peers and partners in doing the work together. We create a safe space where each person brings their whole authentic self, and we find a place for everyone to shine! Guided by the ethos of our church values, we have chosen shows with a balance of sacred and secular themes, reflecting the messages of love and inclusion that live at the core of who we strive to be in our community.

The magic always happens even when we fear it won't! Singers find their voices, dancers find their steps. It is not perfect...and that's never the goal. We are here to create characters, grow together in empathy, love well, share our story and make a connection with the wider community.

We're excited to announce that in March 2025 we will do it again: to remember, to laugh, to cry, to celebrate! If you've ever been part of South Church musical, come back for more of that magic. And if you are interested in joining us for the first time, please let us know and we will find a place for you.



Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat 2002

## An Invitation:

**What:** An original showcase that tells the story of the South Church Players through songs, your stories, and more - it's a show about shows!

**When:** Saturday, March 8, 2025

**Why:** To honor what was, reflect on what is, and dream about what might be next!

**How:** With the help of many hands and creative spirits! Your directors have been hard at work since mid-October building a foundation for this celebration.

What we're asking if you want to play:

- 1.Fill out & submit the attached Google Form: [Players 2025 Production Interest](#)
- 2.If you're a musical alum, check your inbox for an email from the planning team.
- 3.You can also join the [South Church Players Group on Facebook](#), where we'll be sharing updates, photos, memories, and more!

You'll be hearing more about this in the coming weeks, so start dreaming!

## By The Numbers:

- \$32,000 donated to community organizations
- 511 individuals who have appeared on stage with SC Players
- 103 musicians who have played in orchestras
- 375 people who have helped backstage—Producers, Stage Mgr, set building, make-up, costumes, box office, publicity, etc
- 28 musicals performed by South Church Players
- 21 shows that Ted Harris has been on stage
- 11 people who have appeared in 10 or more shows
- 10 shows in which our pastor Emeritus Rev. Cal Mutti performed
- The oldest to perform was Fraser Colpitts at 87, who played Jacob in Joseph & the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, in 1995. Jim Vandepool was 86 as Jacob in the 2010 show.
- Nathaniel Drury was the youngest to appear on stage as an infant in Children of Eden in 2004.



# NEW IN OUR CHURCH LIBRARY

15

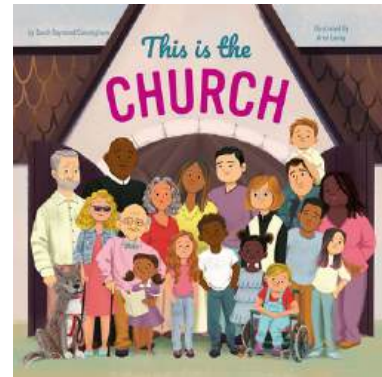
By Carol-Georgine West, South Church Librarian

## YOUTH

***This is the Church*** by Sarah Raymond Cunningham. Going beyond the children's rhyme, the book explores what the church is and what it does. Ages 3-8. J262 CUN

***What is God Like?*** by Rachel Held Evens. Describes what God is like based on what the Bible has said. Grades preschool-2. J231 EVA

***Mother God*** by Teresa Kim Pecinovsky. Images of God inspired by feminine descriptions in Scripture. Ages 3-8. J231 PEC



## ADULT

***I Never Thought of it That Way: How to have fearlessly curious conversations in dangerously divided times*** by Monica Guzman. Author offers insight into how to understand and learn from people whose world-view is different or opposed to our own. 153.6 GUZ

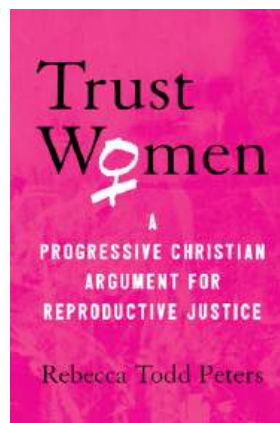
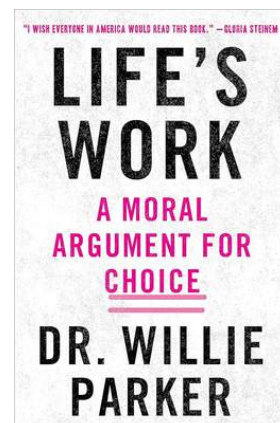
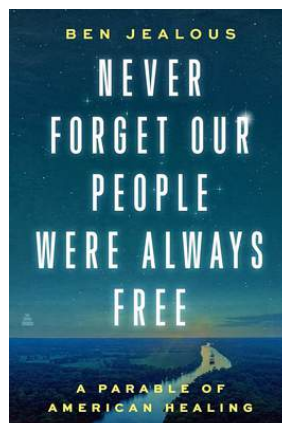
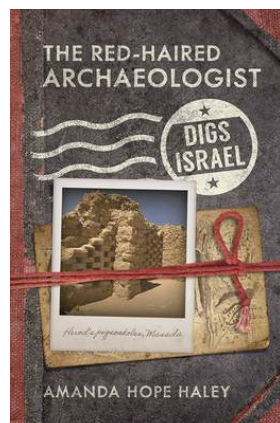
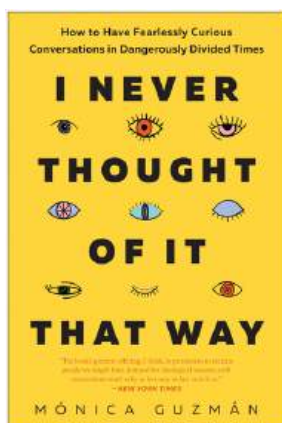
***The Red-haired Archaeologist Digs Israel*** by Amanda Hope Haley. Investigates historical and modern contexts to understand the Bible and God's people. 220.93 HAL

***Never Forget Our People Were Always Free: A parable of American healing*** by Ben Jealous. Reflecting on the origin of race and the insanity of racism, the author believes we are destined to be the most perfect example of unity and dignity of the human family. 323.092 JEA

***Life's Work: A Moral Argument for Choice*** by Dr. Willie Parker. Presents complex medical, societal, political, religious, and personal realities of abortion to support author's belief in a moral right to choice. 363. 1988 PAR

***Trust Women: A progressive Christian argument for reproductive justice*** by Rebecca Todd Peters. Political analysis, sociology, ancient and modern philosophy, Christian tradition, and medical history are woven together to form the argument that abortion can be a moral good. 362.1988 PET

***The Spirit of Our Politics: Spiritual formation and the renovation of political life*** by Michael Wear. A Christian approach to politics and the teachings of Dallas Willard are combined to help create healing rather than division, kindness rather than hatred, and hope rather than despair. 261.7 WEA



# WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

## »»» JIM CARLE

Jim is a semi-retired Aerospace Sales Manager. His interests include home renovation, alpine skiing, motorsports, and watersports. His daughter is graduating from UCC Seminary May 2024.



## »»» NORMA CAHILL

Norma has lived in Andover for 37 years. She is a retired freelance graphic designer who now spends her time crafting, cooking, gardening, and traveling. Norma has been to over 22 Caribbean islands, loves all things Christmas, and every year, she crochets 14-16 baby blankets for Project Linus. Norma has one stepson and one step-grandson (who recently got married). She lives with her sweetheart Bill, her 3-year-old Ragdoll cat named Simeon, and Bill's terror of a cat named Frank.



## »»» CONNIE GOURDEAU

Connie raised her four kids in Hamilton MA, where she was actively involved in volunteer life. She worked as a middle and high school Spanish teacher. Two of Connie's four kids now live in Andover, one is in Maine, and one is still in Hamilton, so Connie enjoys seeing all four of her kids frequently.



## »»» MAURA GRIMANIS

Maura works as a crossing guard for the town of Andover and has a son named Andrew, who is the light of her life. She has come to South Church in the hopes of exploring and growing her faith.

## »»» MARCIA LIER

Marcia was born in Canada into a large, Dutch immigrant family and met her husband, Roger, in Switzerland. After spending time at Gordon College and in Seminary, Marcia and Roger started their family—two sets of twins followed by a single child. Concerned for the refugees after the Vietnam war, Marcia and Roger became involved in refugee resettlement. For eight years, they welcomed refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia in their home. After moving to Andover 27 years ago, Marcia began working with the immigrant community in Lawrence, starting a string program to teach children violin. Marcia says, "I recently retired and am proud to be a part of a faith community that shares Christ's command to welcome the stranger."





# WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

## »»» ROGER LIER

Roger is an ordained UCC minister who pastored churches for 35 years, taught New Testament Greek at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and was the New England Regional Coordinator for Refugee Resettlement by World Relief. Roger has been married for 53 years to Marcia, the most amazing woman he knows. Together they have 5 children (including two sets of girl/boy twins), as well as a beloved dog and cat.



## »»» BETH LISTERMAN

Beth moved from outside of Cleveland, Ohio, four and a half years ago, to join the Edgewood retirement community and be closer to her two daughters and their children. She is enjoying her work in Edgewood's library, and also enjoys reading to 3-5 year olds at the Bremen School in Lawrence. In her spare time, Beth is currently dabbling in watercolor.



## »»» JILL MANNING DE SOUSA

Jill lives in Andover with her husband Bobby, four-year old (and rookie Honeycomb choir member) Charlie, and their sweet pup, Scout, who is five years old. In her early career, Jill worked with adolescents living with cognitive behavioral challenges, physical disabilities, and housing insecurity. She attended grad school for Public Health and Bioethics and now works in pediatric research protections at Boston Children's Hospital. Jill is looking forward to the family's first Advent Season at South Church, and is excited to engage with South Church in different ways as Charlie grows.



## »»» LIZ MONROE

Liz is the mom of a fabulous 11 year old son named James. She works as the senior director of sales, enablement, and effectiveness at a software company, and is an overall dot-connector of ideas and people. She is also a public speaker, a cellist, a traveler, and an amateur historian.

## »»» ROB & NOAH MULBERRY, & THEIR KIDS, OLIVIA & BAILEY

Rob is originally from Portugal and is a physician working in pharma for rare diseases. Rob likes to paint, sing and make furniture, and is an avid traveler, cook, and digital enthusiast. Noah is a classical Pilates instructor whose work is rooted in helping his fellow humans build strength in their bodies so they can focus on all the wonderful things that life on this earth offers us. He says that he and Rob also enjoy spending time together with their two beautiful children at their home in Haverhill.



# WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

## »»» JUDITH PARE'

Judith is a mother to two incredible women and a grandmother to five amazing and joyful children. She has been a registered nurse for 45-years. Educating novice and experienced nurses alike fills her with a professional purpose that she is very grateful for. Judy's husband died in 2022, and she is looking forward to finding community and connection here at South Church.



## »»» LEANNE PARZIALE

Leanne has lived in Andover for over two decades with her husband and daughters. Her daughters are now out of the house, and Leanne is glad to have found South Church for its extremely welcoming and accepting environment. She currently works in Boston at Morgan Stanley and enjoys traveling and cooking.



## »»» THE PASKAL FAMILY

Brittany and Ben Paskal have three young kids: Wesley, Holten, and Cameron. In between work and school, the Paskal family loves to be outdoors—hiking, biking, skiing, and exploring!



## »»» ALVYN REYES

Alvyn was born and raised in the Dominican Republic, and now lives and works in the Merrimac Valley. Alvyn has a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering. He was raised in a Catholic Church and says that he now wants to be part of a church that accepts him for who he is.



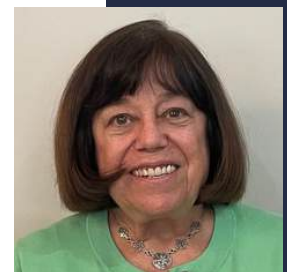
## »»» JEFF SMALL, HEATHER OLSON, & THEIR KIDS, MADELEINE & HADLEY

Jeff and Heather moved from Newton with their older daughter Maddie in Fall of 2020, and one week later, Hadley was born. Jeff works in sales leadership for a growing software startup and enjoys working from home. Heather is a child neurologist at Boston Children's Hospital. For fun, they enjoy hiking, biking, and spending time with their girls.



## »»» CAROL TOMKIEWICZ

Carol grew up in Mendham, New Jersey and moved to Northeastern Pennsylvania after college, where she raised her four children. After the loss of her husband and the urging of her children, Carol moved to Edgewood in North Andover in February to be closer to her son and daughter-in-law. Besides the greatest joys of her life: her three sons, her wonderful daughters-in-law, and her four grandchildren, Carol enjoys reading, quilting, crafts of all kinds, and exploring the marvelous areas surrounding Andover. Carol says, "A highlight of my move is finding South Church. I am very grateful and blessed to become a member."



# STAFF OUT IN THE WORLD

19

## ➤➤➤ PASTOR DANA: IRON SHARPENING IRON

In October, Pastor Dana returned to Princeton Theology Seminary for a special alumnae gathering of the Iron Sharpening Iron executive leadership program. Dana was part of the second graduating class (2022) from this flagship program designed to resource and build community among women leaders across the country.

As part of this milestone event, Dana had the honor of hearing from acclaimed author Priya Parker, whose work explores the art and importance of how we gather. Parker's insights resonated deeply with the cohort. She spoke to the unique challenges of bringing people together in our fragmented world, but also the profound impact that intentional gatherings can have. "Gatherings crackle and flourish," Parker wrote, "when real thought goes into them, when (often invisible) structure is baked into them, and when a host has the curiosity, willingness, and generosity of spirit to try." ➤➤➤

That ethos has been at the heart of Iron Sharpening Iron from the beginning. Rather than simply "empowering" women leaders, the program has focused on seeing, celebrating, and resourcing the gifts and abilities clergy already inhabit. As Dana shared, "The Iron Sharpening Iron program has been one of the most transformative continuing education programs that I've engaged with over my eighteen years of ministry. I'm grateful for the ways that ministry draws me into deeper connection with other clergy and invites me to learn and grow as a person and a leader."



## ➤➤➤ CATHY MEYER: CAPPELLA NOVA MUNDI

Over the last weekend in October, Cathy travelled to Colby College in Waterville, Maine, with [Cappella Nova Mundi](#), a specialized chamber choir that focuses on unfamiliar Renaissance and modern works for small ensembles. In addition to a well-attended concert, there were several rehearsals, one of which was open to Colby singers. Included in those rehearsals was freshman and South Church member, Owen Finlay, who joined them in sightreading material for upcoming concerts. The two groups shared a meal together, and Owen gave Cathy and several others a walking tour of campus. Cathy commented on how wonderful it was to see Owen in his new environment, with teachers who are delighted to have him in their program. Watch for Owen singing at South Church over the holiday season, as we hope he'll back with the choir while he's home over break.



# MISSION TRIP REGISTRATION

## ➤➤➤ HIGH SCHOOL MISSION TRIP 2025

We'll leave from South Church at 5am on Sat., April 19th and return late in the day on Sat., April 26th. It is an opportunity for all area high schoolers to serve our neighbor, learn about our innermost selves and build a transformational relationship with God. Register at [southchurch.com/family](https://southchurch.com/family).



# THE STEEPLE IS LIT IN LOVING MEMORY OF

20



## »»» IN DECEMBER

**Jim Carpentier and his parents Marian and Al Carpentier**  
by the Batchelder and Carpentier families

**Our parents, Everett and Dorothy Dearborn**  
by Deborah D. Brent, David Dearborn, Peter Dearborn and their families

**Reed Holton Henderson**  
by Mom, Dad and Luke

**Our beloved father/grandfather Gary LaPierre & parents/grandparents Al & Colette Hudson**  
by Lysanne, Dean, Nicole & Cameron LaPierre

**Our parents and to honor our children and grandchildren**  
by Laura and Dale Lattanzio

**Walter and Barbara Schoen**  
by their daughter, Sheryl Poole

## »»» IN JANUARY

**Ted and Mildred Nowell**  
by their family

**My father Wilfred Hemmer, mother Patricia Hemmer, and brother Mike Hemmer.**  
I miss you every day, love, Anne Hemmer

## »»» IN FEBRUARY

**Aunt Ann & Uncle Harry Newton and their son Wayne T. Newton**  
by their nieces Rachel Cloutier, Karen Foster-Gervacio and Cheryl Foster and Wayne's wife JoAnn Latvaitis

**Donald and Janyce Sagaser**  
by their family

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

# CARING

## >>> CONDOLENCES TO

- **Doris Chapman** who passed away at the age of 105 on Tuesday, September 24th

## >>> WE CELEBRATE

- the birth of **Reya June Brandon** in July to parents Haley and Michael Brandon. Grandparents are Laura and Tom Jordan.
- the wedding of **Erica Shaw and Sam Evans** in November. Erica is the daughter of Wayne and Alyson Shaw.

## >>> IN GRATITUDE

Thank you for your continued support. You have helped to make a huge difference in the lives of many youth in Guatemala. In gratitude. *Jean Kiser, Only A Child Board Member*

I truly appreciate worshipping with you all online. *Peace, Ruth Sargent, Sandy Creek, NY*

Thank you for the space to host ten people for Practices for Peace this fall. We shared our intention of growing peace together. I so appreciate all that South Church brings to our community. *Taisha Weber, Fundamental Yoga and Wellness LLC*

Thank you for all the joy South Church brings to my life. *Linda Williams*

Thank you for generously supporting construction of the Maternal Center of Excellence with Partners in Health. This will be transformative for women and families in Sierra Leone. *Gratefully, Elena*

Thank you for your generosity to our shared ministry responding to God's call to live the love and justice of Jesus. *Blessings, Lisa Maria Andreoli Steinberg, Southern New England Conference, UCC*

Your incredibly generous support means so much to us at North Shore Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth (NAGLY). Thank you! *With much gratitude, James Giessler, Executive Director*

Thank you for your generous donation and for all you do for Essex County Habitat for Humanity. *Sincerely, Kevin J. Hudson, Director of Charitable Giving*

How does one say "thank you" for all the prayers, support, concern, meals, cards, and visits? You have loved us into healing. *We are grateful, Janet & Gary Clarke*

Thank you for remembering Cynthia and me on Day of Service and making us feel a part of the day. We are always inspired watching the sermons on YouTube. *Blessings, Marilyn Gulla*

## 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  
Dennis Forgue, Moderator  
Janna Roop, Treasurer