Lent 2025 Digital Edition #7

### >>> SOUTH CHURCH ANDOVER NEWSLETTER <<<

# THE CIRCLE

boldly embodying God's love and compassion



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It's hard to recognize transformation, isn't it? And it's even harder to see that capacity within ourselves. Even though the caterpillar has the ability to change within its very being, it can be full of resistance to newness. Just like all of us.

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Arriving filled with stress, filled with checklists that need to be completed, filled with anxiety, and pulled in a million directions—yet I arrive. "Here I Am Lord."

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### A NOTE FROM DANA

#### CREATING THE "FIELD OF POSSIBILITY"

More than ten years ago, my spiritual director shared this parable:

Two caterpillars are walking along on a branch when they look up and see a butterfly. One says to the other, "You'll never get me up in one of those things."

It's hard to recognize transformation, isn't it? And it's even harder to see that capacity within ourselves. Even though the caterpillar has the ability to change within its very being, it can be full of resistance to newness. Just like all of us.

Over my 18 years of ordained ministry, one of my greatest joys has been having a front row seat to transformation. I've witnessed change in both individual lives and in our church community:

Our church shifted from a scarcity mindset—'there will never be enough'—to the radical practice of giving away the offering plate each week, increasing our generosity by 90%.

We moved from being mired in conflict over the Lupine Road property to celebrating six families living in affordable housing units adjacent to our cemetery.



Most recently, we've transformed our narrative around Capital Campaigns from "they're not successful here" to one of positive engagement and generous investment in our church's future. Notably, 15% of pledges came from members who have been with us for less than four years.

I witness personal transformation among all of you—our staff, lay leaders, members and friends—when you reframe failure as liberation, allow forgiveness to carve new paths, or seek alignment between your inner and outer worlds.

My star word this year is FLOURISH. Unlike past words—such as "patience" or "salt," which took a year to understand—FLOURISH spoke to me immediately. It represents my deepest yearning: human flourishing.

This concept is best understood through Aristotle's eudaimonia, the ancient Greek word for "human flourishing." To Aristotle, eudaimonia isn't a fleeting emotion or individualistic pleasure—it's action. Leading a eudaimonic life requires cultivating your best moral and intellectual qualities and living up to your potential. It means contributing to society, engaging with your community, and realizing rather than squandering your talents.

This January, I began coach training with the International Coaching Federation (ICF) to hone the art of asking profound questions that spark self-discovery. Coaching embodies process theology—it's a "power-with" relationship rather than an expert-learner dynamic. It trusts that each person has the God-given resourcefulness, creativity, and wisdom needed for transformation. The coach's work is to create the "field of possibility" where we honor what is while reaching deep within to find out what's emerging. I'm training with the "Loaves & Fishes" Coach Training program through my executive coach from Princeton Theological Seminary. These coaching skills will enhance my work with our staff and laity, as well as in pastoral care.

This Lent, as South Church journeys into the bright, bold wilderness together, I am reminded of the caterpillar's hesitation to change. Yet here we are, already a community embracing transformation, discovering our wings, and learning to flourish.

Together, we're not just witnessing transformation—we're living it.

With love & gratitude,

Dana

## WHAT WILD & WONDERFUL THINGS 12 **MIGHT WE DISCOVER THIS LENT?**

Consider yourself invited "Into the Wild". From Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday, through worship, children's programs, art journaling and devotional guides, we'll explore the theme "Into the Wild". In the Bible, the wilderness is a place of challenge, transformation, and possibility.

Join us for worship on Sundays at 10:00 AM and on Maundy Thursday at 7:00 PM. in person and on YouTube

As we prepare to leave our sanctuary after Easter for a season of growth and construction, we'll reflect on the gifts that come with facing the unknown. What wild and wonderful things might we discover before our journey leads us home again?

#### Ash Wednesday, March 5th

If you would like to receive ashes and a blessing as we prepare our hearts to welcome Lent, stop by and come in between 9:00AM-4:00PM.

**Lenten Guidebook** The guidebook is a tool to help you in your journey. On its own or in combination with other practices, we hope the readings, questions, and prayers will inspire deeper personal reflection. The book is an invitation to explore the scripture readings for each Sunday and to dive deeper into our theme of "Into the Wild".

**Art Journaling Through Lent** Mondays at 7:00PM in the 5th/6th classroom This Lenten season, you are invited to learn something new (instead of giving something up)! Explore Scripture creatively and join us for a six-week journey with simple, colorful prompts—perfect for all skill levels. No art experience needed! The course is free but we ask that you register so we can prepare materials. Register at southchurch.com/Lent.

#### Palm Sunday, April 13th

Worship at 10:00AM followed by brunch, petting zoo, egg hunt

#### **Maundy Thursday, April 17th**

Worship at 7:00PM in-person and online

#### **Easter Sunday, April 20th Worship**

5:30AM outdoor (sunrise service behind South Church) 10:00AM (in the Sanctuary)

#### **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 Amy Morris, Assistant Office Administrator Michaela Barczak, Director of Youth Choirs Shannon Eldridge, Director of Youth Choirs Dennis Forgue, Moderator Anne Hemmer, Treasurer

## A MUSICAL THEATER CELEBRATION

>>> SATURDAY, MARCH 8TH AT 2:00PM IN OUR SANCTUARY

By SC Players

"Prepare Ye!" We've had a "Spark of Creation" and now we have "Magic to Do!" We hope you'll join us for an afternoon of top-notch musical theater and a stroll down memory lane presented by the South Church Players. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll wish you could see it again and again.

You can look forward to performances from several of our shows over the years, some new material from current pop-u-lar shows, testimonials, videos, photos, and special appearances by Players alums from near and far. Come and see "What [We] Did For Love."

Admission is free (and worth every penny), bring your friends and family!





### **UPCOMING CONSTRUCTION**

#### **WORSHIP & ACTIVITY PLANS DURING CONSTRUCTION**

We are excited to announce that we are close to our \$3 million goal for our Rooted in Faith, Growing in Hope Capital Campaign, enabling us to begin construction on our building this spring. Beginning on Sunday, April 27th, 2025, we will hold our worship services at the Cochran Chapel at Phillips Academy (2 Chapel Avenue, Andover). The chapel is located just a half-mile from South Church. Phillips Academy leadership is "enthusiastic" about their support of South Church during this time of construction and has offered the usage of the chapel free-of-charge.

Our regular 10:00 AM worship time will continue in this temporary location. Please note that on May 11th, June 1st, and June 8th, we will hold virtual-only services due to previously scheduled events at Phillips Academy.

#### IMPORTANT DETAILS FOR YOUR SUNDAY EXPERIENCE:

- Nursery Care and Sunday School | Continue through May 18th (except May 11th), utilizing classrooms below the Cochran Chapel sanctuary.
- **Fellowship Hour** | Refreshments will be served either on the chapel front steps or in the narthex (provided we have enough volunteers!)
- Accessibility | The chapel is fully accessible via the side entrance on Chapel Ave, with an elevator inside.
- Parking | Available in the adjacent lot (except for spots marked for Andover Inn) and along Bartlett and School Streets.
- Music Ministry | Cochran Chapel offers both piano and organ for our services.
- Sacred Rituals | Our baptismal font and communion table will both be available to us.
- **Livestream** | We're hopeful we'll be able to livestream worship each week from the Cochran Chapel.

We are grateful to Phillips Academy for their generous hospitality, which builds upon our centuries-old connection. The Academy's founder, Samuel Phillips Jr., was the grandson of Samuel Phillips, who served as our congregation's first pastor beginning in 1711. While this temporary relocation represents a change in our usual routine, we look forward to gathering in this historic space as our beloved sanctuary undergoes important renovations.

#### WHERE WILL THE REST OF THE SOUTH CHURCH ACTIVITIES TAKE PLACE? HERE'S A QUICK GUIDE:

- Small Groups | remain at South Church Plan for possible off-site parking.
- Farmers Market | in the lot between the Town Offices and The Park
- Youth Groups | remain at South Church Use the backdoor entrance starting April 27.
- Summer of Service | Christ Church (next door to South Church)
- Kids Summer Kickoff | shifting from a weeklong program to 3 summer events. Details coming soon!
- Music Ministry | remain at South Church Plan for possible off-site parking.
- A.A. | remains at South Church
- MVYMCA Childcare | remains at South Church

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Pastor Dana, Pastor Genna, Dennis Forgue (Moderator), or our Deacons.



### MEMORIAL COLUMBARIUM GARDEN

#### A NEW RESTING PLACE OPTION AT SOUTH CHURCH

The new South Church Memorial Columbarium Garden will be constructed on the corner of the property bordered by School Street and Central Street. With pathways leading from Central Street and the parking lot, it will be fully accessible and welcoming to all and designed for gathering. The design includes benches, a labyrinth for walking meditation, and a butterfly garden. It is immediately adjacent to our fenced playground, making it a multi-use space for people of all ages.

#### WHY

Since 1710, the South Parish burial grounds have been a sacred place where families have buried their loved ones and come to honor their memories. With the cemetery at capacity, the opportunity to purchase

plots or bury loved ones was disappearing. Thus, the South Church Memorial Columbarium Garden was conceived. Construction begins in early spring 2025 and is expected to be completed by summer's end.

#### **DETAILS**

- Niches for burial of cremated remains will be available in both a columbarium wall and a garth.
- A columbarium is a structure that holds urns containing cremated remains.
- A garth is a yard or garden with spaces to bury urns containing cremated remains.



We are offering a 10% pre-construction

- 2 urns: \$6,000
- Columbarium Wall Niche (above-ground)
  - 2 urns in half niche: \$6,000
  - Up to 6 urns in full niche: \$10,000
- Individual Space in Columbarium Pillar (South Church members only)
  - 1 urn: \$1.500
- Entire Columbarium Pillar
  - Up to 16 urns: \$20,000

Questions? Interested? Email cemetery@southchurch.com or stop by the office.



### **WELCOME!**

We are delighted to announce two wonderful additions to our church staff! Please join us in warmly welcoming Amy Morris, our new Office Administrative Assistant, and Rob Heinze, our new student minister, to South Church.

### AMY MORRIS | OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

What aspect of your job brings you the most satisfaction or fulfillment? I love meeting and assisting people who are dedicated to helping others. It's fulfilling to support a mission that makes a positive impact in our community.

A favorite quote or Bible verse: "People are often unreasonable and self-centered. Forgive them anyway. If you are kind, people may accuse you of ulterior motives. Be kind anyway. If you are honest, people may cheat you. Be honest anyway. If you find happiness, people may be jealous. Be happy anyway. The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway. Give the world the best you have and it may never be enough. Give your best anyway. For you see, in the end, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway." -- Mother Teresa



If you could be an animal which one would you be? I would be my cat, Ziggy, who lives a charmed and pampered life.

What is the best gift you ever received? A first edition copy of "The Red Book" by Carl Jung.

What is one thing that few people know about you? I love reading legal documents.

What is the most daring thing you have done? I participated in a six-week Outward Bound in the San Juan Islands, where I learned to sail, rock climb, and survive in the wilderness.

What song would you say sums you up? "Sign on the Window" by Bob Dylan

What words do you try to live by? Feel the fear and do it anyway

### **>>>**

#### **ROB HEINZE I STUDENT MINISTER**

A second-year Presbyterian student PC(USA) at University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Rob is completing part of his Master of Divinity program with us. He'll spend a few hours each week assisting with Edgewood worship services, supporting the Caregivers group, and leading a new Bible study.

Rob brings fresh energy and perspective to our team, and we're excited to see his talents in action. He'll participate in weekly staff meetings, receive supervision from Pastor Dana and Pastor Genna, and work closely with a lay-led guidance committee.

A lifelong resident of Lawrence, Rob has a diverse work history, from laborer and sales to

teaching and nursing. After spending most of his nursing career on secure behavioral and mental health units, he retired in 2019 to care for his father. Active in the church from a young age, he has served in various leadership roles and currently sits on the Leadership Commission of the Presbytery of Northern New England and the Synod of the Northeast. First sensing the Holy Spirit in high school, Rob long felt called to seminary but resisted for decades. Despite detours, he remained engaged in lay ministry until, after 50 years, the path became clear. He answered the call and feels blessed every day. You can reach Rob at <a href="mailto:ubuggs@comcast.net">ubuggs@comcast.net</a>.



### **HERE I AM**

#### >>> A WOMEN'S RETREAT REFLECTION

By Loren Olmstead

Joining, not knowing fully what to expect, but feeling called to prioritize time for myself and for feminine energy.

"Here I Am Lord."

Arriving filled with stress, filled with checklists that need to be completed, filled with anxiety, and pulled in a million directions —yet I arrive.

"Here I Am Lord."

Feelings of stress and anxiety begin to melt away as I am filled with different energies: sisterhood, music, companionship, community, togetherness.

"Here I Am Lord."

A new day is here. The checklist is replaced with kinesthetic art which evokes emotional release. The million directions I am pulled come to a single pull during forest therapy. I am connected with the creator and the created-feeling the life force flow through each of us—thankful for the beauty in the world. "Here I Am Lord."

Moments of grief, moments of guilt, and moments of feeling unworthy slip away and are replaced by feelings of joy, peace, and worthiness in the connection with the word and the sisterhood.

"Here I Am Lord."

A realization that one does not have to be "worthy" or "remarkable" to be called into action. One can simply exist unapologetically as themselves and be considered full, worthy, and truly remarkable for their creation and so I answer the call and say, "Here I Am Lord."

Big "Thank You" to the **Planning Team:** 

Jay Hudak, Chris Ouimet, Emily O'Hara, Lauren Sprague, Donna Kelly, Lori Wyckoff, and Pastor Genna







Attendees of our recent Women's Retreat donated over 2,200 pads (55 packs) and 270 tampons (9 boxes) to be distributed to new moms through the Neighbors In Need Diaper Pantry. Additionally, they contributed four boxes of Ziplock bags to help distribute the donations more effectively! Beyond diapers and formula for their newborns, one of the most significant needs of vulnerable new moms is access to menstrual products during their postpartum recovery.



### **SOUTH CHURCH RINGERS TOO!**

#### AND THE TEAM WORKING WITH OUR YOUNGEST BELL RINGERS

by Deryck Morales

It is not easy to convince a group of kids with irresistibly noisy instruments in their hands to be still and pay attention to their music and director until it is their turn to play! And yet, this is exactly what Cheryl Kraley and Laura Rex are able to do each rehearsal with the "South Church Ringers Too" ensemble.

We are very blessed to have Cheryl and Laura dedicating their time and energy to the preparation and quidance of our young musicians. There are tables and music stands, the hand bells and printed music to manage. Each performer has distinct notes to color code, and of course the proper techniques demonstrated and encouraged.



This past winter session, the kids got the chance to play with mallets as well as traditional handbell ringing. It was my privilege to demonstrate proper grip and single stroke rolls for the kids, and assist with timekeeping and following along in their music.

The kids have a fun time and, along the way, learn the value of teamwork diligent practice. They bear the responsibility of playing their individual parts, and gain self confidence when they succeed in playing the songs together in front of friends and family.

The hand bells offer a special combination of being easy to pick up and play while also experiencing musical ensemble participation. I know my daughters enjoyed putting in the time and effort and are looking forward to the next opportunity. I hope everyone that is able to join in these offerings does so moving forward!



"The most fun part of children's bell rehearsals for me is incorporating games that teach bell skills. It makes it fun for all of us and accommodates different learning styles, benefiting all the kids."

## THE HARD WORK OF COMMUNITY

By Pastor Genna

This past November, I had the joy of participating in my third gathering as part of the Next Generation Leadership Initiative (NGLI). Every year, NGLI hosts two gatherings for each cohort: a trip in the spring or summer to explore some aspect of church life, and an educational gathering in the fall. A "cohort" is another name for a group of participating individuals.

The fall gathering brings together all of the current NGLI cohorts for a week together in Arizona, where each cohort takes a class on an important topic related to ministry. This year, my cohort learned about Bowen Family Systems Theory.

Bowen Theory is a way of looking at families (or any group of people) as an interconnected whole. Bowen Theory is based in observations from biological research, and it centers on the idea that humans are evolutionarily built for community-- our survival is connected to our ability to work together. We influence others and are influenced by them in deep and profound ways. In fact, Bowen Theory looks not only at the individuals in a group, but also at the generations before them, recognizing that their lives influenced our own.

Of course, these ways of knowing feel deeply resonant with the wisdom of our own tradition. We acknowledge the Communion of Saints as a way of recognizing that our ancestors live on into the present. As we were reflecting on everything we had learned that week, my colleague Rev. Bob Feeny said something that stuck with me: "Our ancestors live in us. This could be fate; this could be resurrection." And as the Body of Christ, we know that we live in a unique and radically interdependent system, in which the gifts and struggles of individuals come together to make a cohesive and beautiful whole.

Bowen and the Bible seem to agree that the hard work of community is our highest calling, and I feel fortunate to have gained another tool to help with that work.



## **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 neighbors, learn about our innermost selves and build a transformational relationship with God. Register at <u>southchurch.com/family</u>.

### DID YOU KNOW...

#### >>> THAT FELLOWSHIP GETS REALLY LOUD WHEN LOTS OF PEOPLE TALK AT ONCE?

By Char Lyons, South Church Historian

With both Capital Campaign and Memorial Gifts funds, we have preliminary plans to install sound-dampening materials.

Why Memorial Gifts? While many financial gifts given to South Church have a distinct designation, others may not be so well-defined. This leaves the Memorial Gift Committee the liberty to coordinate purchasing things outside of our annual budget, yet within the guidelines of the gifts. Many are for building improvements, and here we are.

This Capital Campaign has grand plans, including firming up the steeple, weatherizing windows, creating new worship space, updating the kitchen, and implementing heat pumps—all to keep this a safe, efficient, and effective community building for all. And yet, the number one complaint about the building is the noise in Fellowship Hall.

This is actually a great problem to have—it means we love gathering here after church for brunches, the Chili Cook-Off, and other events. However, as we undertake major renovations, it's time to address this relatively small project, which will have a significant impact on our community experience.

#### A History of Adaptation

The space beneath the Sanctuary has been modified multiple times to meet various needs. In the early 1900s, we welcomed community groups for meetings because our building had heat. During the World Wars, the Town turned off most lights except in churches, allowing them to continue hosting meetings—both to conserve resources and to signal that a house of worship was in use in the event of an attack. South Church was not reimbursed by the Town for the fuel used, nor acknowledged for the space the Town used.

Being the Meetinghouse, this church has been a community center since 1710. The sacrifice of keeping the doors and building open and warm has been a burden carried by the congregation for generations... continued



### DID YOU KNOW...CONTINUED

By Char Lyons, South Church Historian

#### ... Changes Over Time

The present configuration of the first floor of the building came about between 1956 and 2004 with building additions. In 1956, the long hallway and a parlor and offices on the south side of the building were created. To accommodate more Sunday School and meeting spaces, the movable partitions in Fellowship Hall were installed circa 2000, but that still wasn't enough space, thus the addition in 2004.

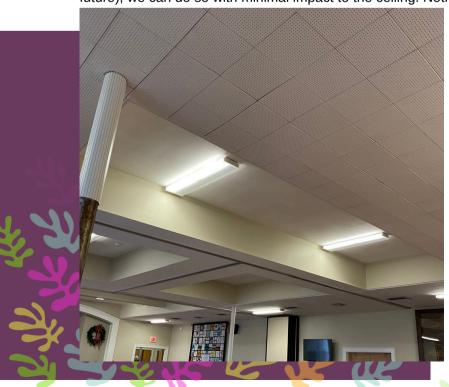
In Fellowship Hall, the stage area—once a real stage with a curtain—was underutilized and transformed into what we now call the Family Room. The floor was previously carpeted, which helped with sound, but during the 2004 upgrades, the worn-out carpet was replaced with linoleum. This change was a game-changer for housekeeping—easy to clean, sweep, and mop, and it felt so modern!

With that, we embraced more gatherings—because if you feed them, they will come! Conversations after church foster a strong sense of community. Now, through the Capital Campaign, we have the opportunity to restore balance—preserving our warm, welcoming space while ensuring we can hear one another.

#### **Solutions for Sound**

So let's see how the noise can be dampened. We are working with a specialist on how to configure baffles that compliment the room. In addition, using loose and airy cloth diffuses the sound waves as well. Installing ceiling baffles and perhaps seasonal cloth décor should significantly improve acoustics!

The ceiling lights are in cut out spaces called coffers, which are architecturally used to give the room a bigger feel. All those added surfaces also give sound waves lots of room to bounce. The best part of installing baffles in these places is that they are not permanent. We can hang them in a way for easy cleaning, and if we need to add more and rearrange (for instance, perhaps we modify the lighting in the future), we can do so with minimal impact to the ceiling. Nothing is permanent!



This improvement is one of those confluences of ideas and monies coming together at the right time. The benefits of lower noise come with the wonderful options of baffle placement, blending in, adding more, making complimentary seasonal decorations, and using the wonderful funds of Memorial Gifts and the Campaign to make such a big difference in the quality of congregating in Fellowship Hall.

And now you know...

### **CARING**

#### **WE CELEBRATE**

- the birth of Colette Pauline Maher in December to parents Andrea Desaulniers and Phil Meagher.
- the birth of Grace Mae Pyle in January to parents Thomas and Sarah. Grandparents are Polly and Duncan Pyle.
- the wedding of Michaela Barczak and Trevor O'Brien in January.
- the birth of **Mary Goddard Brennan** in February to parents Jackie and John Brennan. Grandparents are Marty and Kath Mason.

#### IN GRATITUDE

With your loyalty and support and the participating young men's hard work and determination, they have hope and a future in their own country, Guatemala. *Thank you, Jean Kiser, Board of Directors Only A Child* 

Thanks to your generosity, we continue to guide and encourage young people of Greater Lawrence to reach their full potential. I am especially proud to report that 100% of our seniors graduated from high school last year! With gratitude, Markus Fischer, Ex. Director Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence

Thanks for thinking of me at Christmas, for the readings, & the wishes of joy. Warm greetings, Anne Wiehe

Thank you for sending Jennifer Bouchard to visit with a poinsettia and cookies! Jane Vondell

Thank you, and Cheryl Foster, for the cheerful poinsettia. Jim & Debbie Brent

Thank you for your continued support and love as we serve Haitians on La Gonave in Haiti. *Warmly, Melissa* 

Thank you for your generous donation and confidence in our work helping us to build affordable homes. Sincerely, Kevin Hudson, Essex County Habitat for Humanity

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to common cathedral enabling us to build an intentional, spiritual community with an for unhoused people in Boston. *Rev. Carrington Moore* 

Thank you for your donation in support of our response to Hurricanes Helene and Milton. We are grateful for your help as we use the power of food to nourish the world.

Sincerely, Erin Gore, CEO World Central Kitchen

Thank you for your generosity allowing us to provide wonderful ministries to the Greater Lawrence community. *Gratefully, Leslie Burke, Communities Together* 

Thank you for your help with the Christmas stockings for the kids at Little Heroes Home! Best, Kayla Stanzione

Thank you for your donation and for being a vital Neighbors in Need partner making a real difference for local families. Sincerely, Lisa Smith, Executive Director



### THE STEEPLE IS LIT IN LOVING MEMORY OF 14



#### IN APRIL

#### Joseph and Rose Big

by their daughter Susan Big and granddaughter Alicia Bursey

#### Loved ones

by the Ziegenbein, Collins, Kea, Flint, and Brosnan families

#### **Marjorie West Emmons**

by her daughter, Joanne Smith

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

### **MONTHLY MISSION UPDATE**

In January, the Mission Team voted to THANK allocate \$2,500 from their Impact Fund to California Community Foundation -Wildfire Recovery Fund

> **Oct: Capital Campaign** \$670

> > **Nov: FL Hurricane Relief \$**5,697

**Dec: Eliot Center** \$7,183

Jan: Under The Same Moon

The Mission Team continues to distribute our budgeted funds to our Core Mission Partners; International partners include Honduras Hope, La Gonave (Haiti) and Only a Child (Guatemala). Our local partners include Neighbors in Need, Lazarus House, Bread and Roses, A Better Chance of Andover, Habitat for Humanity, South Church Giving Garden and Communities Together. Thirty percent of our budget goes towards supporting the United Church of Christ.