



The Steeple

September 2020



ANNUAL CHARGE CONFERENCE: Official Notice

The date for our Charge Conference will be Tuesday, September 29, at 7:00 p.m. - you may participate in person & zoom. Check for the link in the Weekly Invitation.

The Annual Charge Conference is the annual meeting for our church. Every church member is invited to attend. During this meeting we will review what has happened during the past year, consider the Nominating Committee's work of forming committees, consider the recommendations of the Staff Pastor Relations Committee and look ahead to 2021. The charge conference is our church's form of democracy. All church members can vote at it and all are invited to attend.

FROM OUR PASTOR

When I was a lad, we learned how America got started. Some English people came over in 1620 on a ship called Mayflower and landed at Plymouth Rock. That's here in Massachusetts, of course, but I learned about it 1,400 miles west of here because it was the beginning of OUR story. Never mind that we had never been near Massachusetts; never mind that few of us were aware of any English ancestry (we were mostly Irish and Bohemian in my school). We were taught to regard this as the founding of America, and we were Americans—though our ancestors came over more than 200 years after the Mayflower.

We also learned that the Pilgrims came here because they wanted freedom of religion. We of course got that mixed up with the religious freedom clause in the Bill of Rights, though that was written 167 years later. We assumed the Pilgrims wanted all people to be free to choose their own religion. In my school we were all Catholic, so we connected the dots: we're free to be Catholics in America because the Pilgrims established religious freedom. We knew they weren't Catholics, but we identified with them anyway: they were the first Americans, and they were our forefathers.

Let's take a detour into another story. Long ago, some slaves escaped from Egypt. They passed through the wilderness and settled in the highlands of Canaan. Many other people were already living there. The ex-slaves brought with them a strong devotion to a god called Yahweh. Eventually they

assimilated into the Canaanite culture, where other gods were worshiped. But some of the Canaanites began to worship Yahweh as well as their traditional gods. The ex-slaves and the highland Canaanites coalesced into a group of confederated tribes which some called Israel. They developed a story of their common origin, even though some of them had come into Canaan from elsewhere.

Well, that's not exactly how the Old Testament tells the story, but it's the way many scholars have reconstructed what actually happened. It's one illustration of how many people develop their ethnic identity by blending different cultures and adopting a story of how they became a nation—a story which often has at least a kernel of historical truth. In our worship services, we're beginning a string of nine Sundays in which the Old Testament readings are all from the book of Exodus, which tells of the Israelites escaping from Egypt and encountering Yahweh in the wilderness. We're free to take some of the details with a grain of salt, but we're also free to imagine the story as a series of real events. We've gone further, in fact: we Christians have imagined our way into Israel's story and made it all about us. We won't be in Exodus for all nine of these Sundays, but we'll visit it several times.

By the way, how much truth was there in the story I learned about becoming Americans? Well, to start with, there were millions of people living in North America before anybody came from Europe. Also, some Africans came over here in 1619, a year before Mayflower. They were brought as slaves to Virginia, where some English people had arrived 13 years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock. And those Pilgrims wanted religious freedom for themselves, not for everybody. Kinda gives you a different spin on OUR story, doesn't it?

Peter Milloy

UPDATE FOR THE SERVICES

We continue to have worship outdoors under the pavilion and in the parking lot. You can stay in your car, or you can bring a chair and put it in our picnic area.

When we can worship in our sanctuary we will need lots of sanitizing products - sanitizing sprays and wipes. And we will need hand sanitizer and extra masks (for people who forget theirs). **Thank you** to those who have already made donations. More supplies will be needed. If you would like to donate any to the church or if you want to pick up any of these sanitizing items for the church it would be greatly appreciated; as we all know they can be hard to find. We are trying to plan ahead.

We are also looking for Scott 1000 sheet single ply toilet paper. This is what we are supposed to use so we do not block the pipes, it is also hard to find.

CELEBRATIONS & CONCERNS



Carol Brunelle, Carol Szulc, Eunice Mittler, Harry Thomas, Beth Dietz, Pauline Kiakis, Samantha Snopek, Adele Reynolds, Bev Pead & Family, Doug & Dee Brooksbank, Frank Hudgik, Dave Fanaras, Tom Deren, Tim O'Donnell, Vinnie Deitner, Darlene Dout, Stafford Bent, Tom O'Dea, Jailyn Laguerre

CASSEROLES

Ten casseroles were delivered in August to Kate's Kitchen. Casseroles will be delivered at 9:30 a.m. on September 27. If you need your casserole picked up call Ann 695-1212 or Carol at 575-1491 and make arrangements for your casserole to be picked up curb side. Thank you to Carol Deren for delivering them.

STEEPLE LIGHTING

If you would like to have the steeple lit for one month, the fee is \$25.00. More than one person/family may participate.



PRAYER

Romans 10:8-13

Holy, Loving and All-Seeing God: We come as your people, burdened with fear and uncertainty. Mourning the loss of family members and friends. Unable to be in the presence or embrace those we care about. Worrying about what the future holds!

We are a struggling people, seeking your guidance. Through all of this we know that you are our strength and hope. We know that you are always with us.

Father, during the times that we forget you are God, All-Mighty, help us to remember that "On Christ the solid rock we stand! All other ground is sinking sand! All other ground is sinking sand!" In the name of Jesus, The Christ, we pray.
AMEN!

*By Ruby L. Blake, Lay Leader,
Commonwealth East District & Lay Leader,
Union (Boston, MA)*

All are welcome! Join us for worship or join in one of our missions.

South Hadley Methodist Church
30 Carew Street
South Hadley MA 01075



Rev. Peter Milloy: 413-310-5027

Worship Sunday 10:00 a.m.

Church office: 413-532-0500

e-mail: churchoffice@thesteepinthefalls.org

web site: www.thesteepinthefalls.org

Dr. Heather Reichgott, Minister of Music

Ann Felsentreger, Secretary

Neighbors Helping Neighbors: 413-437-7593

WANTED: ANGELS WITHOUT WINGS

Who: Anyone! Any age!

What: Call, send a card or note to a member of our church family.

When: Once a month

Why: Let that person know you and the people in church are thinking of them and praying for them.

How: Call or email Ann at 413 695-1212
churchoffice@thesteepinthefalls.org

This is especially a good time to let someone know they are thought of - many people are feeling isolated. Carol Deren & Kay Washburn have some interesting stories about being an angel without wings.



SOUTH HADLEY METHODIST CHURCH

30 Carew Street

South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075-2705

Return address service requested.



