



# The Steeple

## February 2024



Lent is a time of reflection and renewed faith as we focus on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Take time to clear distractions and recommit your life to Jesus. Join us for Ash Wednesday service February 14 at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary, and Sunday services.

### **UPDATE FROM OUR LAY LEADER**

You may be wondering how we are doing. Let's see. We are having a worship service every Sunday, with communion once a month. People are supporting the church with their gifts and graces. Church Council and Trustees meet each month. SPRC is reaching out to people, asking if they will either lead worship or just give the message, and we have some favorites who have agreed. The custodian from Viability comes twice a week, AA continues to hold their administrative meetings in Fellowship Hall. The Grab and Go's continue on the third Friday every month. Ann does her many things in the office. Choir and bells rehearse on Thursdays.

Yup, everything is going along as usual.

But – that doesn't mean we should be complacent. We still need you in worship on Sundays, for it shows support for whoever is leading worship and/or giving the message. It's tough to speak to an empty room. Those of us who are there most every week appreciate it when you are with us. We, the church are stronger when we are together. There is always someone who needs the support that only comes from the church (us!). You may be that one.

We are also at a place where we need to examine how we connect with the community, or if we do. We are failing in our mission if we hunker down in our building and don't actively work to spread the Word. That doesn't mean standing on a soapbox and professing your faith. It means being the hands and feet of God, loving one another as we love God, feeding God's sheep. It has been said that the only bible some people may ever see is you. The goal is not to fill the church, the goal is to bring people to God, then God will fill the church.

The catch is that if you are not part of the planning, you are allowing others to represent you, and I for one, want to be part of that. I want to know that people are representing me (us, the church) in a way that is acceptable. Nobody should have to take on an entire project, and as the saying goes, many hands make light work.



Remember the fun we have had doing some things from the past? Apple dumplings were a LOT of work, but we had a good time. The tag sales were also lots of work, but think of the fellowship and the surprise of seeing old friends. You have to actually be there to have those experiences.

I am going to work to see if we can have a plant sale, so if you start seeds, divide plants or dig some up from your garden, please let me know. We have other sources to explore too. Such an activity brings people to us and we have a great opportunity to show them how nice we are. We don't need to evangelize, just be our friendly selves. If concern about not knowing anyone is keeping somebody from coming to worship, that might change their concerns. I learned from Karen that the name of the game is relationships, and the longer I live, the more I see that she is right. So, if you have an idea about an event that would help form relationships, speak up! I would love to hear your thoughts, so please email or text me, or grab me, or anyone, to talk about it. It would be helpful if you put a couple of notes on paper, so later when we try to recall what you said, it will be at our fingertips.

*Mary Lou*

## **A Resolution for 2024**

January 31, 2024

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! With our minds determined to set things right, each January we make pledges to things like better eating, more exercising, losing weight, etc. What better time than now to renew our pledge to our church. Commit ourselves to being more supportive. Try to attend Sunday service more often, say a daily thank you prayer to God for all the good in our lives, and pledge a financial gift to keep our church open. We have not done a pledge drive in a long time. Many of us have continued to send in our gifts and donations, but some have not. Our church needs everyone's financial support. Our church has done a great job of renting space in the facility to supplement our budget, but that is not enough. We need your help.

The church is there for us when we need it. It's always been there; to rally our faith, to give inspiration and counseling, for weddings, baptisms, funerals, grief support, Sunday school, church holiday celebrations and so much more. Sometimes we take that for granted. To ensure our church lives on we need everyone's financial gift.

We are trying something different with this drive. Sending out a request electronically and asking for your pledge of a financial gift that you will donate by the end of 2024. You can respond with your answer by replying to this email. All replies go directly to the church office. ([office@umcsouthhadley.org](mailto:office@umcsouthhadley.org))

*Please include in your reply:*

*Name:*

*Address:*

*Phone:*

*My pledge to the United Methodist Church of Holyoke, South Hadley and Granby for 2024 will be \$\_\_\_\_\_ (total gift amount) to be paid by December 31, 2024.*

*I will send in my gift \_\_\_\_\_. Please indicate weekly, monthly, annually.*

I know we all love our church and want it to always remain open. Please respond to this financial campaign today. We are not asking for money today – just your pledge to be paid by December 31, 2024. Please respond today.

Thank you,

Karen Motyka  
Pledge Drive Chair

Church office: 413-532-0500  
e-mail: [office@UMCSouthHadley.org](mailto:office@UMCSouthHadley.org)  
Dr. Heather Reichgott, Minister of Music  
Neighbors Helping Neighbors: 413-437-7593

Worship Sunday 10:00 a.m.  
web site: [UMCSouthHadley.org](http://UMCSouthHadley.org)  
Ann Felsentreger, Secretary



## **TOGETHER AGAIN**

We are resuming our joint services with Faith UMC for Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday. We will be hosting Ash Wednesday at 7PM on February 14. We hope you will join us.

Everyone enjoys the combined choirs, and you will see that in this service. You are not required by the United Methodist Church to receive ashes. The service is a way to begin Lent in a contemplative manner, and to think about your relationship with God.

## **LENTEN JOURNEY**

Well, here we are, almost at Lent, the time to explore and deepen our relationship with God. I realize many people don't participate in Lent in a deeply spiritual manner, but I hope they do more than give up chocolate. If more people went on this journey, I think the world would be a better place. All Jesus wanted was for all of us to take care of each other. I grew up hearing about "the Family of God" and I have come to truly embrace that feeling, may your journey lead you to that feeling.



## **UWF LENTEN 40 DAY CHALLENGE**

The UWF are challenging all to pray every day for someone else, to find something every day to donate; whether it's from your closet, your pantry or to put money in a jar each day. Food and money will go to Food Pantry. There will be a jar for the money and a box in the back of sanctuary on Easter for your money or food items.

## **PRAYER**

O Lord, we look to you as our only hope. Help us to find your path through the confusing opinions that swirl around us. Teach us and give us clearer insights about how to live in these stressful times. Challenge us to be open to continually learning, to be open to giving up old comfortable ways, and to be open to admitting that we might have been wrong when we try to hang on to what seems to be security.

May our hope be in you, and some day may your fulfillment be in us.

Amen

*Victoria Wood Parrish – Retired Elder -Granite District*



**LENTEN PRAYER** God of goodness and mercy, Hear my prayer as I begin this Lenten journey with you. Let me be honest with myself as I look into my heart and soul, noticing the times I turn away from you. Guide me as I humbly seek to repent and return to your love. May humility guide my efforts to be reconciled with you and live forever in your abundant grace. Transform me this Lent, heavenly Father. Give me the strength to commit myself to grow closer to you each day. Amen.

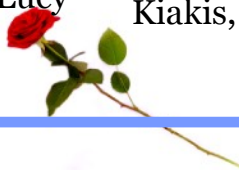
**CELEBRATION, CONCERNS & MORE**



**PLEASE PRAY FOR:**

Carol Brunelle, Beth Dietz, Jessica Guarnera, Dave Fanaras, Tim O'Donnell, Kathy Washburn, Lily Marion, Darlene Dout, Heidi Barta, Renata Cournoyer, Lucy

Huegli, Bill Guarnera, Andrea Schlachter, Kelly & Steve Camp, Kevin McLaughlin, Bill Beyer, Cathy Demers, Jerry Rubackin, Jim Anspach's Family - parents, Gene & Rene and Uncles Earl & Tom Anspach, George Kiakis, Mark Felsentreger, Bob Falgares.



So. Hadley Methodist Church

**Grab & Go**



**Shepherd's Pie & Brownie Trifle**

**February 16**

**5:00 to 5:30 p.m.**

**\$12.00**

Menu: **Shepherd's Pie**      **Bun**  
**Brownie trifle**      **Beverage**



To order: **call: 413 532-0500**      **Text 413 695-1212**  
**email: office@UMCSouthHadley.org**

Include your name, phone & number of meals  
They will be delivered to your car.

*Notify us if anyone in your party has a food allergy.*

**WILL YOU HELP with the Grab & Go?** Call 532-0500 or email the church if you will help peel veggies on Thursday 9:00 or put together meals on Friday. It's fun.

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the kings and the princes are  
home,  
When the shepherds are back with  
their flock,

### THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS BEGINS:

To find the lost,  
To heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry,  
To release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among brothers,  
To make music in the heart.

-By Howard Thurman



## MISSIONS

The missions of our church are only possible because of you.

- You can:
  - Make a casserole for Kate's Kitchen once a month
  - Make or buy hats an/or mittens for Secret Santa for next Christmas
  - Make prayer shawls or lap robes
  - Support Neighbors Helping Neighbors food pantry
  - Send a card or a note to our 'friends at home' and other members
  - Call & invite someone to join you at church
  - Become an 'Angel W/O Wings'

### PEOPLE ARE HUNGRY: CASSEROLES FOR KATE'S KITCHEN

Who: Will **you help?** Join us by making a casserole for Kate's Kitchen

When: Once a month or whenever you can. This month's casseroles are **due February 25<sup>th</sup>.**

What: Cook one pound of some sort of pasta, add pasta sauce, add ground meat and maybe cheese.

How: The UWF provides a pan and asks that the casseroles be frozen and then put in a plastic bag. You can bring it to church any time during the month and put it in the freezer.

Why: To do the work of God by helping feed hungry people.

Thank you for any help you can give towards this mission project.  
The casseroles are much appreciated. Eight casseroles were delivered in January.



## **MARK YOU CALENDAR**

- February 11: 9-12 Make Valentines
- February 13: 6:00 p.m. Council & Trustee on Zoom
- February 14: 9:00 a.m. United Women in Faith.  
7:00 p.m. Ash Wednesday Service
- February 15: 9:00 a.m. Bring your peeler & help prep vegetables for the Grab & Go
- February 16: 5-5:30 p.m. pick up Grab & Go meal
- February 25: Casseroles for Kate's Kitchen are due.
- Sundays after worship: Join us in Fellowship Hall for coffee and...
- Tuesdays 9:00 a.m. Join Pastor Ira in Fellowship Hall for coffee & conversation
- Thursdays 6:30 p.m. Bells rehearsal  
7:15 p.m. Choir rehearsal

## **CELEBRATE DIVERSITY**

All are welcome - loved for who you are, exactly as you are.  
Join us for worship or join in one of our missions.

### **United Methodist Church**

Of

Holyoke, South Hadley & Granby  
30 Carew Street  
South Hadley, MA 01075

Worship Sunday 10:00 a.m. in our Sanctuary and on Zoom and YouTube



### **Pastor Ira Cameron**

413 348-6282

[pastorira@juno.com](mailto:pastorira@juno.com)

If you are in need of prayers or need to speak with pastor call or email.

e-mail: [office@UMCSouthHadley.org](mailto:office@UMCSouthHadley.org)

Church office 413 532-0500 Leave a message.

web site: [UMCSouthHadley.org](http://UMCSouthHadley.org)



### **UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

30 Carew Street

South Hadley, Massachusetts 01075-2705

Return address service requested.