

KEEPING IN TOUCH!!!
OCTOBER 2023

The First Community Church of Southborough

137 Southville Road

Southborough, Massachusetts 01772-1937

The Reverend Paul D. Sanderson, D.Min., Ph.D. – Pastor

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NOTE!!

Our Sunday worship service begins at 11:00 a.m. Please stay for coffee, refreshments, and fellowship following the worship service.

Sunday, October 1 is Communion Sunday. All are welcome to share in the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

The Pastor's Message

Greetings, Everyone!

Well, we have finally entered the fall season here in New England! Even though, probably because of the heavy rains of this past summer, the leaves have yet to change color, the days and especially the nights are cool enough to make us consider turning on the heat. In our family, to conserve energy, we "try" to postpone turning on the heat until Halloween (though, to be perfectly honest, we have never come close to realizing this goal)! My neighbors are beginning to move from entertained to slightly annoyed when, in response to their query of what I

think about the weather when we are walking our dogs in the early morning hours, I respond that I find it "brisk and invigorating."

So often in life, it is not the events of life but how we understand them, how we think about them, how we talk about them, how we frame them that shapes how we experience them. I would tell this to my neighbors, but I'm not sure that at seven o'clock in the morning I would make any converts!

I experience autumn as not only a season of its own, my favorite season of the year, but also as a liminal time—a time between the luxurious warmth of summer and the barren cold of winter. I find this to be true of the seasons of our lives as well. This is why it is so important not only to look ahead, but to look forward to that which is to come. We are entering a season of faith and also of hope. This is true of our little church.

New life is stirring in our church! We have several new members who have become regular attenders. A lot is happening, and a lot is planned for the next few months. The boards and committees are meeting. The Trustees have attended to a number of projects that needed attention. The first potluck supper we have had in many years is scheduled for Saturday, October 28. Near the end of the month, we will celebrate Reformation Sunday and, on the first Sunday in November, All Souls/All Saints Sunday, when we remember loved ones who have entered what our Episcopal brothers and sisters refer to as "the nearer presence of God."

This coming Sunday, October 1, is Re-Covenanting Sunday. This is when we renew the covenant into which we entered as pastor and parishioners and with our church twenty-six years ago on that date. I have been blessed to have spent the past twenty-six years with you, sharing our ministry to each other, to this community, and to the world. During this time, I believe we have shaped each other deeply; we are not the same for having walked the path to which God calls us not alone but with each other.

I encourage you to join with us in the richness of this season in any way you can. Let the fellowship for which our little church is known shape you deeply and give you resources for the living of whatever season of your life you are entering!

Faithfully yours,

Paul Sanderson

*Confidence isn't walking into a room thinking you are better than everyone;
it's walking in and not having to compare yourself to anyone at all.*

Anonymous

LOOKING AHEAD...

Sunday, October 1 is Communion Sunday.

It is also *Re-Covenanting Sunday*, a celebration of the twenty-sixth year of Reverend Sanderson's pastorate with us, a renewal of our covenant with each other as Pastor and parishioners, and a renewal of our covenant with our church.

Monday, October 9 is Indigenous People's Day

This is an important time to remember and repent for the genocides of indigenous peoples around the world, genocides that are still happening in many countries in the name of ethnic and religious nationalism.

Saturday, October 28 is the date of our Potluck Supper!!

On Saturday, October 28 at 5:00 p.m. we will join together in the first potluck supper our church has had in at least four years! The Stewardship/Growth/Fellowship, etc. Committee, who is hosting this event, will post a signup sheet on the easel at the foot of the stairs leading up to the sanctuary—just as a guideline for you so you will know what others are bringing. Our potluck suppers, just like our coffee hours, are

legendary! Please join us for a delicious meal, fellowship, and a brief trivia quiz as we take one more step toward returning to "normal" as a church!

Sunday, October 29 is Reformation Sunday

Reformation Sunday is a time when we reflect on those reformers whose vision of what the church was originally and is called to be in our time resulted in the birth of the Protestant branch of the Christian church. It is a time to pledge ourselves to the constant renewal of the church in general and our church in particular that it might truly bring our Lord's presence, his heart, mind, and fellowship to those in our church community and to the world.

Sunday, November 5 is All Saints/All Souls Sunday

On this day, immediately preceding our communion service, we enter into the sacred space of remembrance. We remember those near and dear to us who have preceded us into what the Episcopal church brilliantly calls "the nearer presence of God." During this service, we will read the names that you have submitted to us on 3x5 cards at the beginning of the worship service. Reverend Sanderson will also share brief Words of Remembrance for those members of our church family who have died during the past year, and the choir will grace our worship with "Remember the Souls," an anthem that was written by our own Darlene Sanderson and Michael Larson. This is a beautiful, meaningful, and touching service of celebration for those who have been an important part of our life and a grieving that they are no longer with us in human form.

Sunday, November 19 is Stewardship Sunday

Stewardship Sunday is celebrated in conjunction with Thanksgiving Sunday as an expression of our thanksgiving for our church and a renewal of our commitment to

its life and mission. On this day we consecrate our pledges of financial support to the General Fund, the operating expenses of our church. Your pledge, the sharing of your time, talent, and treasure, makes you a fundamental part of our life and mission. You will be receiving a missive from the Stewardship & Growth Committee as well as a pledge card prior to Stewardship Sunday. We can't emphasize enough how much we need your help as we try to emerge from the difficulty of the past few years!

Growing in the Faith

Sunday morning Bible study meets at 9:15 a.m. on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sundays of each month.

We are currently focusing on the Gnostic gospels, gospels that were written in the first few centuries of the church that have been referred to as "the secret sayings of Jesus." The Gospel of Thomas, which we are reading, contains many sayings of Jesus that were not included in the canon, the four gospel books of the Bible. This book provides us with a slightly different perspective on Jesus and his teaching, one that is grounded in an outlook that is consonant with the perspective of depth psychology, the belief that Jesus' teachings are not only about the outer world; they are also true of us in a very deep way.

As with all our study groups in this church, we begin with the assumption that each of us knows nothing. In other words, we try to approach something new with what the Zen master Shunryu Suzuki calls "beginner's mind." So, yes, there is a place for you in this Bible study!

Tuesday afternoon Spiritual Study & Growth Group meets every Tuesday at 2:30 p.m.

This fall we will be concluding our study of the writings and theology of the German mystic Meister Eckhart who lived from CE 1260-1338. We will read together two chapters of Matthew Fox's *Meister Eckhart—A Spiritual Warrior for Our Time*. Meister Eckhart, a feminist before his time, provides us with an alternative theology from the traditional sin and salvation theology of the mainstream church. His theology, a monistic theology, collapses the distance, the separation, the alienation of humanity and all of creation from God. When we conclude our study of the parallels between Meister Eckhart's spiritual path and that of Thich Nhat Hahn's Buddhism and C. G. Jung's Depth Psychology, we will decide as a group what we will study next.

Invitation to Prospective New Members

We will be welcoming new members into full fellowship with our church on a Sunday in November. If you are considering deepening your relationship with the life, fellowship, and mission of our church, please contact Reverend Sanderson.

Birthdays in October

Mitchell Hilbert	1 st
Lisa Nelson	17 th
Beth Hook	25 th
Bob L'Heureux	30 th

Anniversaries in October

Bob & Karin Farmer	8 th
Alan Towne & Rick Belejack	15 th

With all our new members, our listing of birthdays and anniversaries is outdated. Please update Reverend Sanderson on your special celebrations so we can bring our list up to date. And remember—people like to be remembered with a phone call, text, or email on their special days!

Thank you!!

Thank you to Darlene Sanderson, Dianne Simmons, Emma Gohlke, and Cheryl Holmes for providing the luncheon on Rally Sunday.

Thank you to Bob Farmer, Rick Belejack, and David Crane (the Board of Trustees) for:

- replacing the bulbs and installing new ballast in two overhead lights in the kitchen;
- replacing several overhead bulbs in the vestry;
- arranging to have our gutters cleaned and a gutter cover installed;
- arranging to have our church power washed.

A special thank-you to Rick Belejack and his "Advisory Committee" of Karin Farmer, Beverly Lees, and Sandy McKeen for putting our downstairs church rooms in order by arranging what we need to save and chucking the rest (which has been a lot)! The downstairs of our church has never looked this good! And they aren't even finished! The church's Administrator's/Secretary's office (which used to be the Pastor's study a long time ago) is next on the list!

The Southborough Fire Department and Town Inspector have inspected our church for safety, and, once again, we passed!

We can't say this enough, but we extend a very grateful thank-you to Michael Larson, Jim Duncan, and our choir: Cathy Ambler, Emma Gohlke, Cheryl Holmes, Jim Holmes, and Darlene Sanderson for enriching our worship with their voices!

Updates From the Boards and Committees of our Church--

The Diaconate

The Diaconate, chaired by Sandy McKeen and comprised of Sandy, Karin Farmer, Dianne Simmons, Alan Towne, Joyce Harrington, Cheryl Holmes, and Reverend Sanderson will meet regularly following our worship service on the fourth Sunday of every month.

The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees, comprised of Rick Belejack, Bob Farmer, David Crane, and Reverend Sanderson, will keep in touch by email and meet when there is a problem having to do with the church building and grounds that needs to be addressed.

The Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee, which should more properly be called the Stewardship, Growth, Communication, Fellowship, Fund-Raising, and Outreach Committee, is chaired by Darlene Sanderson. Its members are Cathy Ambler, Emma Gohlke, Diane Hagan, Emily Harris, Dianne Simmons, and Reverend Sanderson. In the coming year, we will meet at 4:00 p.m. once a month on a Tuesday afternoon when the choir is not rehearsing.

The Church Council

The Church Council, which is chaired by Lou Dundin, our Church Moderator, is comprised of a representative from every church board and committee, the choir, Women's Fellowship, the Treasurer, the Collector, the Clerk, and our Deacon Emeritus.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Thursday evening, December 14, at 6:00 p.m. This is a hybrid meeting, so you can attend either in person or by Zoom (please let Lou know prior to the meeting if you would like him to send you a Zoom invitation).

Notice to every board and committee—please select a person from your board or committee to attend Church Council, to bring us up to date on what your board or committee is doing, and to vote on whatever issues come before the Council. The Church Council functions as the primary decision-making body during those times of the year when we are not meeting either at our Annual Meeting or any other special all-church meetings that may be called.

The Church in the World

Taking Loving Care of God's Creation

On December 27, 1973, the Endangered Species Act became the primary law in the United States for protecting endangered or threatened plant and wildlife species. Its purpose: to prevent species from disappearing and to recover them to the point where the law's protections are no longer needed. This piece of legislation has helped save 99% of listed species from extinction thanks to collaboration between federal and local governments, indigenous leaders, conservation organizations, communities, and businesses.

Massachusetts has one of the strongest state-based endangered species acts in the country. Established in 1990 and implemented by MassWildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, it protects 432 of the state's most vulnerable plant and animal species.