

# THE SPIRE

a newsletter of South Congregational Church

May 2009

## Stewardship drive to culminate in celebration—and commitment

by Frank Letizia  
FINANCE MINISTRY

**stew•ard** (stoo'ard) *n.* 1. a keeper. 2. a person put in charge of the affairs of a large household or estate. 3. one who acts as a supervisor or administrator, as of finances and property.

By now if you attend South Church on a regular basis, you are probably aware of the efforts of the Finance Ministry regarding the current stewardship drive that we have undertaken. Two brief presentations were given during Sunday services in both February and March, with another coming in April.

Additionally, our pastors will be preaching and teaching on this topic

for several Sundays following Easter, and then we'll be capping off the drive with a celebration dinner sometime in May on a Saturday evening.

The following Sunday we'll be asking our members and all those who consider South Church their home to bring their pledge cards to the altar during the worship service.

If you're like most folks, you might be wondering what this means to you. Maybe you're asking yourself what you can do to participate and how *you* can be a stew-

ard as we try to better manage the financial affairs of our church home.

Like any home, South Church has specific and ongoing financial needs. Obviously, money is required so that we can have heat, lights, music, and study materials, and so that we can offer programs and help those in need of short-term financial assistance. We also have to provide salaries for our pastors, church secretary, and

STEWARDSHIP, page 3

## Budget issues dominate annual meeting

by Jennifer Estabrooks  
EDITOR

Despite slashing ministry budgets and some staff benefits, South Church is faced with a potential \$37,500 deficit in 2009, according to the operating budget approved by the nearly 60 members in attendance at the annual meeting in March.

No raises were given to any staff member this year, and all ministries had their budgets trimmed. Additionally, Senior Pastor Grant Hoofnagle eliminated his telephone allowance and lowered his expense account, while Assistant Pastor Ray McDaid took reductions in education allowance and health benefits.

Still, without a dramatic increase in giving and total income coming in, the budget deficit is estimated to be more than \$37,500. When asked how the church is going to address the projected deficit, Paul Howell, chairman of the Finance Ministry, responded that they will continue to monitor the giving of the church and the expenses of the church throughout the year.

ANNUAL MEETING, page 4



### Let them eat hot cakes!

In between helping her sister, Caroline, wipe down sticky tablecloths after the diners were finished eating, Olivia Nazaire sits down to enjoy a plate of buttermilk pancakes, sausage, and fresh fruit at the first South Church Pancake Supper in March. For more photos of the event, see page 6.

Spire staff photo/Jennifer Estabrooks

### Church Financial Report

Jan. 1, 2009, through March 31, 2009

2009 full-year pledge giving required to meet budget	\$ 213,992
Amount required as of 3/31/09 to stay on budget	\$ 53,496
Total tithes and offerings received as of 3/31/09	\$ 47,910

As of 3/31/09 we are behind budget by \$5,586.

Figures provided by Financial Secretary Terry Mello.

## Commemorating Holy Week at South Church

*Holy Week is the most significant week on the Christian calendar. Make plans to join your South Church family as we observe this week with special services and events.*

### Candlelight service, April 9

Our traditional one-hour candlelight service known as Maundy Thursday will be held in the Sanctuary at 7:30 p.m. This is a very dramatic and somber service, which serves to heighten and give greater understanding to the joy of Easter. Communion will be shared.

### Sunrise service, April 12

When the sun comes up around 6 a.m. Easter morning, we'll be assembled on a hilltop at Brooksby Farm in Peabody to sing, pray, and worship together.

To get to Brooksby, turn right out of the church parking lot, take your first right onto Felton Street, and go up the hill. Dress appropriately for the dewy grass and early morning chill.

In the event of inclement weather, the service will be held in

the South Church Sanctuary instead.

### Easter breakfast, April 12

Eggs, hash browns, sausage, and French toast are on the menu for our annual Easter breakfast, held at 7 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. Even if you don't make it for the sunrise service, you're welcome to join us for breakfast. If you haven't signed up yet, please call the church office (978-531-1964) no later than Thursday morning.



### Easter worship service, April 12

Hallelujah, He is risen! Come worship with us Easter morning at our 10 a.m. service in the Sanctuary. A special children's church for pre-K through grade 5 will be offered.

We ask that as many of you as possible park across the street at the mall to leave room in our church lot for visitors, seniors, and families with young children.

Please note: There will be no Sunday Morning Coffee on Easter so that our serving team can enjoy the afternoon with their loved ones. †



## Spring work day May 16

Ahhh, Spring! It's the scent of fertilizer being spread, soil being tilled, and Windex wiping away the grime of winter. Our annual church work day will be Saturday, May 16, beginning at 8 a.m. and ending around 1 p.m.

Everyone is invited to come partake of the rituals of Spring cleaning. Parents, we'd love for you to bring your kids to help out.

The list of outdoor tasks includes edging all flower beds, planting annuals, shaping trees, raking, and sweeping. Bring rakes, clippers, shovels, planting tools, wheelbarrows, work gloves, and the like. The church also has a number of tools and supplies.

Indoors, we will dust, vacuum, and clean the carpets in the offices and library. We'll also be decluttering a few problem areas. Please bring cleaning supplies, vacuum cleaners, and whatever else you think you'll need.

If you checked off any of the above tasks on the Service Ministry survey, expect a personal e-mail invitation soon. For a complete list of chores, see the flyer in the Sunday bulletin. †

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Thanks to Jonathan Tromp (See Genesis 6-8)

12-12-2001

GOD NEVER GAVE NOAH A BUDGET TO FOLLOW WHILE BUILDING THE ARK

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## The Spire

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## Stewardship *from page 1*

music director.

So, to start, you can be praying about what you are able to place in the offering plate each Sunday to meet these monetary needs. But you can also be thinking about the gifts, abilities, and talents you possess that can be used to help keep our church building, grounds, and programs running. The Service Ministry's survey is a tool through which you can find your place in ministry at South Church and use your talents for our church's needs.

Remember that a steward is someone who is put in charge of a large estate or property. While South Church is a large physical property, with a real building, it is also more a spiritual property commissioned to help spread the Good News of the Gospel and to lead others to the Savior and Our Lord, Jesus Christ.

That is our ultimate and foremost goal, but to achieve it we do have the reality of keeping our church's doors open, enabling us to conduct the work of His Kingdom here in Peabody and its environs. God bless.

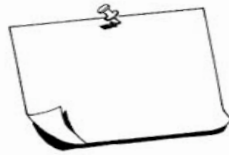
—Frank Letizia, Paul Howell, Mark Bartkiewicz, and Elaine Watts †

## Got a story about God's faithfulness?

*As another part of the Finance Ministry's stewardship drive, we would love to hear your testimonies of God's faithfulness and how you have been blessed in your financial situation. He does provide for His children, and we're sure that if you have been faithful in your giving, He has honored that and blessed you through it.*

*Maybe in these recent difficult economic times, you have lost your job, or possibly even your home. Yet, if you are still giving to Him what you can, He is still seeing you through and providing for your needs.*

*We are hoping that some of you will be willing to share your story and that we could also share them at the celebration dinner event in May. If you have a story of God's faithfulness to you, please contact Frank Letizia. You can find him Sundays at church, call him at 617-257-1540, or e-mail letiziafamily@juno.com. †*



# Bulletin Board

## The sound of music

Do you think you have a good ear for sound and music? If so, you might be a candidate for learning how to run our new sound board and media equipment on Sunday mornings. No previous experience necessary—we'll provide whatever training you need. If interested, contact Brad Coon at 805-459-0426 or [bradley.coon@gmail.com](mailto:bradley.coon@gmail.com). Teens are encouraged to give it a try too!

## Hey, what's cooking?

When members of our South Church family are undergoing a time of crisis, one of the ways the Hospitality Ministry reaches out to those folks is to provide an occasional meal. Many volunteers signed up on the Service Ministry survey to help with meals, but due to the large number of folks becoming seriously ill or having surgery in recent months, we find ourselves needing even more volunteers to call upon.

If you would like to help but don't care to cook, you can always purchase prepared meals at the Epicurean, Costco, or a local grocery store. Please get in touch with Sharon Bishop at [sharonebishop@hotmail.com](mailto:sharonebishop@hotmail.com) or 978-531-0361 if you can lend a hand. Remember, *you* might be the one in crisis one day, and a hot meal would be a tremendous blessing.



## Ready to rummage

If you're been cleaning out your closets this spring, remember to set aside clothes, shoes, and purses in excellent condition that you'd like to see go to someone special at our upcoming rummage sale in August (date to be determined). We'll also gladly accept bed linens, table linens, or anything else that is fabric.

Please save other household items, toys, sporting goods, etc. for the Attic Treasures room at our annual Holiday Fair in November. Many thanks for your generous contributions! If you have any questions, contact Valerie Eadie at 978-532-8582 or [valerie.eadie@yahoo.com](mailto:valerie.eadie@yahoo.com).

## Treasure seeker sought

Seeking a person of cheerful demeanor, hard working, enjoys gleaning "treasures." No experience needed! The pay? Happy customers and a grateful Fair Committee.

The Fair Committee needs someone to manage the "Attic Treasures" room at our annual Holiday Fair Nov. 7. The job involves going through the donated items, pricing items, overseeing the room setup the day before the fair, and then selling the items. After the fair is over, the room has to be cleaned up and made ready for Sunday School use.

New to South Church? What a great way to meet a few people and help out at a one-time event. You'll also get to greet interesting shoppers, get a first peek at donated items, and develop a camaraderie with other fair workers. It will be a joyful experience!

Questions? More info needed? Contact Loretta Howell at 978-535-2319 or [pnhlah@verizon.net](mailto:pnhlah@verizon.net). We need you! †



## Annual meeting *from page 1*

They have already launched a stewardship drive (see related articles on pages 1 and 3) to highlight the importance of pledged giving. "But if we see that gap widening, something will have to occur to address that gap," he said.

In 2008 South Church was faced with a similar deficit. In the fall, the Finance Ministry asked all ministries to freeze spending, except for those monies that had already been committed, such as donations to missionaries. Faced with a shortfall of \$19,000 on Dec. 29, the Treasurer prepared to close out the books for the year.

Then, on Dec. 30, in what Paul Howell termed a "miraculous occurrence," a check for \$16,400 arrived in the mail. It was a gift from a former member of the church. That, coupled with unspent Missions and Outreach money, enabled the church to finish 2008 on budget.

Moderator Dana Watts explained that having unspent Missions money "does create a rather unique issue." Unlike other ministries, Missions traditionally spends its entire budgeted amount each year because of a congregational meeting more than 10 years ago that voted to tithe a tenth of the church's giving to support missionaries.

However, because that tithe amount is calculated based on the previous year's giving total, Dana said there is a bit of uncertainty of what to do when giving doesn't reach the expected budgeted amount. He said the Cabinet will work on a proposal to clarify how to accurately calculate Missions funding and will come back to the membership for a vote in May or June.

Paul Howell said that given the "miraculous" way 2008 ended, this year is "another opportunity to see what God is going to do." Pastor Hoofnagle echoed that sentiment, referring to the surprise year-end check. "I'd like to think it (was) God's way of saying, 'I bless this ministry here at South Church,'" he said.

At the close of the meeting, Marylou Bartkiewicz representing the Deacons asked for a moment of silence to remember all those beloved members who passed away last year: Priscilla Blake, Anne Cunningham, Harold Richard, and Hazel Towler. †



## New course begins April 16

"Christianity Explored," a 10-week course similar to Alpha, will be offered at South Church Thursday evenings April 16 to June 18. It's a study of the gospel of Mark that attempts to answer three basic questions: Who was Jesus? Why did He come? What does it mean to follow Him?

As with other courses we have run in the past, "Christianity Explored" serves as both a Christian education program and an outreach that you can invite friends and relatives to attend.

Because this study will run concurrently with our spring small group semester, we encourage most of you to continue in your home groups unless bringing a guest with you to "Christianity Explored."

The evening will begin each Thursday with an optional dinner catered by local restaurant from 6 to 7 p.m., followed by the program from 7 to 9 p.m. There is no cost for the program, but there will be a \$5 request for a program booklet and an \$8 per dinner cost.

To sign up, please contact Pastor Ray at 978-531-1964, ext. 3, or [RMcDaid@comcast.net](mailto:RMcDaid@comcast.net). †

## How '40 Days' touched those who participated

The "40 Days of Purpose" program concluded with a celebration dinner and sharing of testimonies. One participant, Melissa Norkon, shared a poem she had written.

*Troubles are no longer my own to bear  
House of God and House of fellowship*

### South Church 40 Days

*Seeking refuge from my troubles I came  
Outreaching of support and caring is what I found  
Unable to endure pain alone,  
strangers offering hugs and prayers*

*Christians living by example  
Helping in unique ways  
Understanding and respecting all who come  
Reaching out to the community to build faith  
Community and church coming together for 40 days  
Healing and friendship begins. †*

## YOUTH MINISTRY NEWS

### Free Friday flick April 10

On Good Friday, April 10, the youth group will be going to the Merrimack Valley Christian Film Festival at the Showcase Cinema in Lawrence to see *Saving God*, an urban drama starring Ving Rhames as a man who, after serving 15 years in prison, returns to the church that his father once pastored. Now a pastor himself, Rhames' character reaches out to a young man who's involved in dealing drugs.

Our evening will begin at the church at 6:30 p.m. for a get-together in Fellowship Hall. Then we'll leave for the movie theater at 7:45. Transportation will be provided. We plan on dropping everyone at home by around 11 p.m. The film is free, but the theater will be selling its usual snacks and beverages, so please send some spending money along with your kids.

Parents, we need you to sign up for this event so that we can arrange transportation. Contact Assistant Pastor Ray McDaid at [RMcDaid@comcast.net](mailto:RMcDaid@comcast.net) or 978-531-1964, ext. 3. †

# "If people don't want to come out to the ball park, nobody's gonna stop 'em" —Yogi Berra

The sounds are all there. Birds are chirping, motorcycles are chugging, and gloves are being oiled and smacked as Spring comes to New England and a new softball season is about to get underway.

Most *Spire* readers know who I am and about my passion for softball and the Crusaders. The Crusaders are starting sign up for the softball season, so here are the basic facts for the team: Any player (male or female) must be 15 years old before the end of the season in August. Each player must want to play.

That's it folks. Pretty hard rules to go by, huh? Sounds very familiar that all you need is a desire to be part of it.

This year I would also like to invite our fans and church family to use the softball team as an outreach. If you know someone who enjoys playing softball, please invite them to join the team. Once they see

## April 26 get ready for the wildest week of your life

Ready or not, summer will soon be here, and we are busy gearing up for our summer day camp (or Vacation Bible School) at South Church. This summer we're heading to the Bayou Aug. 24-28 for "Crocodile Dock: Where Fearless Kids Shine God's Light."

There will be an informational meeting Sunday, April 26, following the worship service for anyone interested in helping out with VBS. If you are unable to attend the meeting, contact Lisa Resendiz at [1-craftygirl@comcast.net](mailto:1-craftygirl@comcast.net) or Kerri Devine at [kerri\\_devine@comcast.net](mailto:kerri_devine@comcast.net).



## FIELD of Dreams



by  
Ralph Sherrick

how much fun we have, we can invite them to church on Sundays.

No equipment is needed. We can provide gloves, and we do provide bats and balls. We can also provide transportation to games. If you are an older player or feel you don't want to commit to playing the entire game, come out and fellowship.

We play in a slow-pitch co-ed Christian league where good sportsmanship and having fun is valued above winning. Last year we won only one game. But other teams commented that at the end of the game, spectators were not able to tell who had won and who hadn't, because the Crusaders were laughing and high-fiving and having a grand old time. At the end of the season we have a BBQ where awards are passed out.



To sign up for the team, please see either Bruce Grout or Ralph

Sherrick. Bruce, by the way, won the Cal Ripken Award last season for being at every game we played. This award can be won by a player or a fan.

Speaking of fans, make sure to pencil in June 22 as the tentative date for the annual tailgate party put on by the Fellowship Ministry and attended by the who's who of the church. At the party, there will be hot dogs, soda, chips, watermelon, popcorn, and other treats, as well as play-by-play announcers and many surprises to be announced later.



To keep up with the team's news and reports, please see our web page: [www.geocities.com/sandysherrick/](http://www.geocities.com/sandysherrick/). It can also be accessed through [www.southchurch.net](http://www.southchurch.net). There you'll find the latest news and photos, as well as blogs on the game and comments from fans.

Let's look forward to another great season of Crusaders' ball and lots of new fans as well as players coming to the games. †

### CLASSIFIEDS

The Classifieds section runs notices for rentals, employment opportunities, sales of various items, services, and giveaways to the church family. Submit notices to [southchurch.spire@comcast.net](mailto:southchurch.spire@comcast.net) or in the Spire box in the church office.

#### FOR SALE

Godin acoustic/electric guitar. 12-string shallow body in excellent condition. Hard shell case in very good condition. Asking \$400. Call John Eadie 978-532-8582 (home) or 978-325-0042 (cell).

Electric power chair. Hardly used. Paid \$4,200 new. Must sell. \$595. Call Richard Silva 978-921-2055.

#### FOR SALE

2-bedroom mobile home. West Peabody co-op park. Low park fee. Eat-in kitchen with stainless appliances. Large deck. Open lot on dead end. \$59,900. Call Richard Silva 978-921-2055 for info. Pictures available online [www.redcoachrealty.com](http://www.redcoachrealty.com) (white with black trim). Call Rick 781-233-3331 for showing.

South Congregational Church  
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Peabody, MA 01960-1624

THE SPIRE  
May 2009



**Strong Faith,  
Strong Families**



### **If you cook 'em, they will eat!**

And eat and eat and eat. While Leah Curtin (left) was busy flipping flapjacks in the kitchen during the Pancake Supper in March, Sandy MacMillan's grandson Alex (right) was making short work of a short stack.

### **Kids' praise team forming**

Once again Children's Sunday (June 21) will feature a kids' praise team to help lead worship.

We're looking for singers, tambourine and shaker players, a drummer for the congas, and a piano or keyboard player. We're also open to using other instruments that kids play.

Those wishing to join the praise team will need to commit to making six 30-minute practice sessions directly after the Sunday service May 10, 17, 24, and 31, and June 7 and 15. The morning of Children's Sunday, all praise team members need to be at the church by 8:15 a.m.

Parents, if your child is interested and can commit to the practice schedule, please contact Pastor Ray at 978-531-1964, ext 3, or [RMcDaid@comcast.net](mailto:RMcDaid@comcast.net). †

Spire staff photos/Jennifer Estabrooks