



MARKINGS

The Newsletter of South Acton Congregational Church

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2019

Dear Friends,

The other night I was at yoga and as we were warming-up my instructor offered the advice, be aware of your movements in space. He gives this advice often but it struck me differently this week. Be aware, I have been thinking to myself. I often fly through the day checking things off my list. I know what needs to happen before I get into bed at night and I am off and going as soon as my feet touch the floor. Can anyone else relate? When getting things done is our orientation, our focus is more centered on the tasks that need to be accomplished than our movement in the space around us. Whether we are centered or not, we move through space every moment of the day. How often do you stop and pay attention to what surrounds you everyday? How often do you really notice who is moving in space next to you?

I do not usually make a New Year's resolution but I often set an intention for myself. This year, I am making space for things that are new, for old things that are longing to be reborn, and a general attitude of accepting what is offered. These intentions are making me more aware of the space around me and who is occupying that space. Saying yes and looking for what needs to be reborn is much harder than saying no, closing myself off and continuing down the expected trajectory. It has been interesting to notice the places of unexpected resistance inside myself - even in small ways. Our dishwasher died. It was a slow and slightly painful death but we have a new one. Who knew that I would suddenly have gut feelings about the way the dishes are loaded into this new dishwasher? Oh yes, I think to myself, I am accepting what is new and different. Deep breath. Let's begin again. I knew this intention would be a tough practice, I knew this practice would push me and stretch me. After all, If we are not growing, we are not living.

As I reflect on my own intention, I am wondering if you will consider joining me in this intention? I am wondering if we could adopt this intention as a faith community. There is so much at South Acton Church to make us excited for the future. You all are so good at saying yes! Even so, saying yes can be hard, it can trigger knee-jerk reactions and point to things inside of ourselves that we didn't know were there. Knowing all of this, will you choose to say yes anyway?

This month, I am inviting you to our first opportunity to say Yes! The second Sunday of every month will be Invite A Friend to Church Sunday. It's ok if this makes you a little uncomfortable. (Just between us, it is actually tough for me as well. Let's keep that on the down-low.) I have to ask us, Why is it tough? We invite friends to yoga. We invite friends to a new coffee shop or to try a new wine we discovered. I believe most of us come to South Acton Church because it is a meaningful place in our lives. Why wouldn't we invite people to check it out? What if they are looking for a faith community but they aren't sure where to look? Additionally, it is just an invitation so, it is ok if they say no. Can we be bold together?

My prayer for us is that our hearts will be open. My prayer for us is that we will be brave enough to make space for what is being re-born in our midst. I do not know what this year will bring but I am excited for the wild and wonderful adventure of being bold and saying yes.

♥ Rev. Amy

Rev. Amy Lunde-Whitler is Pastor at South Acton Congregational Church

From the Diaconate

It has been a busy time for the SACC, and thus the Deacons, since the last Markings went out. We have gone through Advent and Christmas Seasons and onto the Epiphany and Ordinary Time. Many individuals participated in church activities and services by lighting advent candles, going Christmas caroling, contra-dancing, attending our joint pot-luck supper with the folks from UCC Boxborough as well as their Long Winter Night's Service, coming to hear Ed's wonderful Christmas Candlelight piano concert, attending and/or participating in a truly classic children's Christmas pageant ("whatever"), or doing a reading at the Christmas Eve candlelight service. While the deacons played a role in most

of these events, what made them all special was the role the congregation had in making all of these events of shared preparation, presentation, or was simply presence possible and meaningful. Thank you so much to all who devoted their time and efforts to make this all happen.

Looking forward we will be entering Lent in early March, and Easter is on April 21st. But before then the "Second Sunday Bring a Friend to Church" effort begins, and our slightly weather delayed Sermon Discussion sessions kick off on (Feb 17th). Thank you in advance for your support of these activities, as well as all the other day to day ones that make SACC such a special place.

Please let your deacon (or any deacon) or Reverend Amy know if there are any issues or needs you wish to bring to the attention of the deacons. As always, you can contact your assigned deacon (see below) or let me know at DeaconChair@SouthActonC.org or by calling me at (978) 844-7320.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Babcock
Diaconate Chair

Deacon	Last Names
Amber Klauer	A & B
Martha Rounds	C & E
Bob Van Meter	D, F & G
Judy Hodge	H thru K
Laurie Thibodeau	L thru N
Angela Aaronson	O thru S
Tom Porcher	T thru Z

Congregational Board

The budget for 2019 was discussed and voted on at the Annual Budget meeting on January 13. We are happy to report it passed unanimously. Thank you to everyone who was able to attend the meeting. We are really excited about the health of our church and the growth in our members and attendance. We are looking forward to some new fellowship opportunities in the coming year. We hope if you haven't been to SACC in awhile, you will come join us again. There is nothing better than the calmness, warmth and love that is felt when we are sitting in the pews on Sunday morning. What better way to start the New Year!

Pam Rogers
Congregational Board Chair

Winter Weather Reminders

A reminder to SACC members and friends: if you are able, please park in the School Street lot or behind the fire station. We reserve the spaces in front of the church for those needing to park close, or for our visitors. Thank you for your cooperation!

In case of snow, an email will be sent to the congregation and an announcement will be posted on Facebook as soon as a decision is made. Decisions are made by the Pastor, Deacon Chair, and Congregational Board Chair.



Missions & Outreach

SACC has been busy with Missions and Outreach even though we did not meet in December and still have to work out the schedule for January. Val Hadden and Janet Cowley organized the collections of gifts for teens hospitalized at McLean Hospital and many people donated. Angela Aaronson worked with the Acton Housing Authority to collect requested gifts for two families through Adopt A Family. This year some mothers of the children in the Indian dance program at the Center also gave generously to express their appreciation for being so welcomed at SACC.

The deacons continue to collect nonperishable food for the Acton Community Supper and Food Pantry on the

second Sunday of the Month. This Advent, families participating in the reverse advent calendar project donated even more food.

The SACC movers performed three mission moves in the midst of holiday preparations and festivities, helping families dealing with the stress of moving that is even harder at this time of year.

On Sunday, December 23, Amy and others from SACC joined with UCC Boxboro, St. Matthew's, and Congregation Beth Elohim for an Immigration Prayer Vigil on an overpass near the ICE Detention Center at the Suffolk County House of Correction. They held signs of support, sang songs, prayed, and waved to the immigrants detained under

harsh immigration and refugee enforcement.

SACC continues to support UCC special offerings, including the Christmas Offering for retired UCC ministers in need. The offerings on Christmas Eve were dedicated to the causes supported by the Missions and Outreach Committee.

New ideas, comments and questions are always welcome, and everyone is welcome to the next meeting, which will be announced as soon as the schedule gets worked out.

Submitted by Judy Hodge

DVSN Seeking Volunteers to Train as Advocates

Domestic Violence Services Network, Inc. is in need of community volunteers to become advocates. This organization collaborates with the police departments connected to Concord District court and follows up with families that have called the police for help with a domestic incident.

In March and June, DVSN will be holding trainings for police and for community volunteers who want to get involved in helping. The trainings are 40 hours, done over 3 weeks. Volunteers who are trained make a one year commitment. They can commit to either two 3-hour shifts per month at the Bedford Police station, doing following up interventions via telephone, or two morning or afternoon sessions per month at the Concord District Court, providing immediate intervention with victims of domestic violence.

If you are interested in learning more, contact Judy McKendry, jdmckendry@verizon.net

From the Treasurer

In December 2018 I presented what I anticipated our income and expenses to be for 2018 as well as a projected budget for 2019. Now that 2018 has closed we have the final reports for 2018 financials and the budget planned for 2019.

2018

In 2018 our ordinary income was \$126,910 which is \$9,522 over what was forecasted for the year. Although pledges were down by \$1,192, we easily made up for the gap with other contributions, with non-pledge contribution, loose change, and gifts, income from the SACC Movers, the Rummage Sale, The Center, and from rental income.

Expenses for the year totaled \$150,305. We worked very hard last year to manage our expenses and the effort paid off as we were \$11,915 under budget for the year. A significant portion of that amount was because of the lower than expected cost of the minister for the year. In general all of our other organizations within the church were at or under budget.

For the year therefore we had a deficit in the amount of \$23,395. This is significantly lower than what we projected, \$44,382, but nonetheless is a deficit.

As of December 31, 2018 we had \$21,798 in Middlesex Bank and \$217,549 in our investment fund held by United Church Funds. Beginning the year we had \$262,841 in our account. During the year (July and Sept) we withdrew a total of \$27,000. 2018 was not a good year for investments but ours was hurt less than most because our funds are held in a very conservative portfolio.

2019

The year ahead is projected to be similar to 2018 but with some differences. Income is projected to be down by approximately \$4,000. Most of this can be attributed to a lower income from the SACC Movers plus a lower average value per pledging unit. The SACC Movers generated \$6,420 in 2018 but 2019 is forecasted to be \$3,000. Ordinary income for the year is forecasted to be \$122,576.

Expenses too should be down slightly to \$146,642. The major factors that will influence expenses are a decrease in Properties expenses, down \$14,000 because we will not have the painting expense to deal with. Most wages and other costs are expected to remain at 2018 levels.

On the other hand, in 2019 we will have Amy in the budget full time and for the entire year so we will see an increase in wages, pension, and health care. Health care costs most notably are up. All in all we are planning for a deficit of approximately \$24,066 in 2019. We expect to cover any monthly shortfall we incur by withdrawing from our investment fund as we did in 2018. We do not expect to see such a need until early summer. Details of income and expenses for 2018 and 2019 budget are available on request.

I will close with some observations. The number of pledging units had steadily decreased from a high of 98 in 2001 down to 58 in 2017. I am happy to report that in 2019 we appear to have reversed the trend. Pledging units are up to 60 for the year 2019. Based on church attendance for the year, I believe this is a sign of things to come.

We continue to improve our physical facility with improved and more efficient lighting and a fully painted outside of the building. The new lighting system will save us money in the long run. We continue to add groups renting space, thereby exposing more of our neighbors to what we are

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and what we do. And they produce revenue. The Spiritual Center continues to grow, is making more use of the church, and is improving the space used as it grows.

Getting the word out about SACC has improved and will continue to do so as we improve our website.

SACC is known to folks within the town offices as an active organization who provide a much needed resource to the town. We have had more success at getting our activities published in the local newspaper in 2018. SACC is drawing attention, all positive, and we intend to continue to let people know we are here.

This report could not have been provided without the help of Karen Fisk, our church administrator. Karen has become a key contributor to maintaining the church's financial records as well as our managing our marketing and general church administration. We are lucky to have her with us.

Respectively,

James N Willis
Treasurer

Days for Girls

"Days for Girls provides access to menstrual care and education by developing global partnerships, cultivating social enterprises, mobilizing volunteers, and innovating sustainable solutions that shatter stigmas and limitations for women and girls." Each kit contains a drawstring bag, washable pads (including liners and a shield to hold them), a washcloth, soap, new underwear, and instructions. The SACC group was asked to sew bags and liners. At our second session, we produced 30 bags and 46 liners!

Days for Girls is a new mission at SACC. This organization pulls groups of volunteers together to sew reusable feminine hygiene kits for girls in other countries that otherwise miss a tremendous amount of school because of the lack of materials, money, and education surrounding feminine hygiene. And DfG does not mail these hygiene kits; they take them by hand and deliver them directly to the girls, and also educate them on women's health and menstrual issues. There is also a presentation for men and boys to reduce stigma and educate about consent.

SACC has had two sewing sessions for DfG already. We set up 8-10 sewing machines, some cutting tables, ironing boards, and assembly areas. We've been having a lot of fun! I recently participated in the Metro West chapter's sew-a-thon for Days for Girls. I arrived to a huge room full of people sewing! It was a warm and welcoming group. They gave a presentation on the mission and personally thanked SACC for our contributions. I set up my serger, and it turned out that I had the only serger in the room, so I was instantly a curiosity! I serged the edges of 50 bags, sometimes with an audience of those that wanted to see a serger in action. What I didn't know was that the woman who has always serged for their group had passed away suddenly 2 weeks prior, so I was a bit like a serging angel:) Come join us at our next SACC DfG session! No sewing expertise necessary, as there are plenty of other jobs!

SACC Notes

Mini-Retreat with Seth Monk

Join us at SACC on Saturday, **February 23** from 9am—1pm for a Mini-Retreat with Seth Monk.

In our busy and fast paced world, we need times we can slow down, recenter, and reset ourselves to live life with a greater sense of wellbeing.

For beginner and advanced practitioners, we will have rounds of sitting and walking meditation with talks, instruction, and group sharing.

Seth is a former Buddhist monk who has been leading weekly meditation classes in Acton and around the Boston area.

Please bring a cushion, yoga mat, and blanket. Chairs are also available for those who wish.

Mission Trip to Puerto Rico?

Anyone interested in a Mission Trip to Puerto Rico? The devastation of Hurricane Maria to Puerto Rico in 2017 has hung heavily in our hearts ever since. The (lack of) response from our government has left us feeling even more driven to reach out and help our neighbors in Puerto Rico recover and rebuild. The time is now!

There are many good organizations leading trips to help with the rebuilding efforts and Sal and I (Linsey Hurley) am interested in connecting with one, rolling up our sleeves, and helping out. If this is going to work, I need at least two other people to help with the planning. With the blessing of the Missions' Committee, I am getting the ball rolling and if this is going to happen, I need help from a couple of other people. If you want to help, let us know! Linsey: linsey@newview.org or Sal: alonzo.sal@gmail.com.

SACC Kids Game Night!

All SACC kids are invited to come play board games, Sunday, **Feb 10** 4:30-6:30pm. Dinner entrée will be provided. Bring your favorite game and a snack/side dish, drink, or treat for everyone if you can. Contact Michele at mnigh@yahoo.com with any questions.

Second Sunday Food Collection

Please bring in canned and nonperishable foods for our Second Sunday collection for the Community Supper Food Pantry on **February 10**. Soup, cereal, canned fruits & veggies, pasta & sauce, tuna, peanut butter and jelly can be left in the green bin.

Super Saturday

The next Super Saturday is **March 16** at Minnechaug Regional High School in Wilbraham, MA. Each participant attending Super Saturday can take part in morning worship, two workshops, an optional lunch activity, continental breakfast, lunch, marketplace and closing worship. The main speaker will be Rebekah Anderson, who has presented on disability theology at the National Church Leadership Institute, Eastern Regional Youth Event, and Super Saturday. She is an alum of the Thinking About Working for God Apprenticeship of the Connecticut Conference, and the Young Adult Service Communities program of the UCC. She is in her first year at Union Theological Seminary. Visit <https://www.macucc.org/eventdetail/11156586?> for more information and to register.

SACC Kids Game Night!

We are hosting 7 college students March 4th - 10th who are coming to help with the School Street Habitat Project and we need your help! Are you close to School Street? Would you be able to host a couple of students in your home that week? If you are not close to School Street, do not fear! You can still help. We are working to organize a few meals for the students as well. Please contact Rev. Amy (lunde.whitler@gmail.com) or Curt Logee (curtlogee@gmail.com) if you are able to help.

Cleaning Teams for February

- February 2: Pam Rogers's Team
- February 9: Tom Porcher's Team
- February 16: Angela Aaronson's Team
- February 23: Linsey Hurley's Team

February

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 3:00 Violin Lessons	2 8:30 Therapeutic Yoga 1:30 Days for Girls
3 10:30 Worship 12:00 Junior Choir 5:00 Indian Dance	4	5 8:15 Visit with Amy 3:45 Meditation Walk 7:00 NA Bridge to Recovery	6 6:45 Mindfulness Workshop 7:45 Choir Rehearsal	7 10:00 Stitch and a Prayer 7:00 Metro-West Boston Divorce Support Group	8 3:00 Violin Lessons	9 8:30 Therapeutic Yoga 11:00 Scrapbook Class
10 10:30 Worship 2nd Sunday Food Collection 12:00 Junior Choir 4:30 SACC Kids Game Night 5:00 Indian Dance	11 6:00 Cong. Board Meeting	12 8:15 Visit with Amy 3:45 Meditation Walk 7:00 NA Bridge to Recovery	13 6:45 Mindfulness Workshop 7:45 Choir Rehearsal	14 10:00 Stitch and a Prayer 7:00 FOGES 7:00 Metro-West Boston Divorce Support Group	15 3:00 Violin Lessons	16 8:30 Therapeutic Yoga
17 10:30 Worship 12:00 Junior Choir 5:00 Indian Dance 6:30 Sermon Discussion Group	18 10:00 Prayer Shawl Ministry	19 8:15 Visit with Amy 3:45 Meditation Walk 7:00 NA Bridge to Recovery	20 Markings Deadline 6:45 Mindfulness Workshop	21 10:00 Stitch and a Prayer 7:00 Metro-West Boston Divorce Support Group	22	23 8:30 Therapeutic Yoga
24 10:30 Worship 12:00 Jr. Choir 5:00 Indian Dance	25	26 8:15 Visit with Amy 3:45 Meditation Walk 7:00 NA Bridge to Recovery	27 6:45 Mindfulness Workshop 7:45 Choir Rehearsal	28 10:00 Stitch and a Prayer 7:00 Metro-West Boston Divorce Support Group		



South Acton Congregational Church

35 School Street · Acton, Massachusetts 01720



South Acton Congregational Church

where you are loved and valued just as you are

Reverend Amy Lunde-Whitler, *Pastor*

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FOLLOW US! twitter.com/SACC_Church

www.facebook.com/SACC.Church

OFFICE HOURS Monday, Wednesday & Thursday, 9am-1pm

Welcome to **South Acton Congregational Church**.

The foundation of our beloved church rests on God's unconditional love and boundless grace. We seek to know God and follow the teachings of Jesus.

We welcome people of every race and culture who are young and old; single, married and divorced. We welcome people of every physical, mental and intellectual ability; sexual orientation and gender identity; every educational background and economic circumstance. We believe diversity enriches our faith community.

CONTACTING REV. AMY

Rev. Amy is reachable by phone: 281-744-3429 or by email: pastor@southactoncc.org Sunday–Thursday and on Fridays and Saturdays for emergencies.