
SOUTH CHINA COMMUNITY CHURCH



Rev. Paul Harwath, Pastor

Winter 2024-2025

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

What is the most important subject to address in our world today? Without any doubt, every person on this planet should be working on their relationship with our God. This is more important than any conflict, disaster, bill paying, or other worldly care.

All cares of this world will pass into nothingness. The only thing that will last for eternity will be your relationship with God, Who controls all things, sees all things, creates all things. This world has much good in it, but it also has evil. Grasp on to all that is good & from our Lord God. All evil will pass away & those who love God with all their strength will not pass away, but be welcomed into God's Kingdom. Not one earthly care will survive in Heaven.

Sure, here on earth we have bills to pay, grumpy people to deal with, downright evil people & evil organizations, as well as evil governments. Do not be drawn into this earthly conflict, deal with the conflict within yourself. If you eliminate the evil inside yourself, you will open up to the world of God. Loving others & sharing your love of God with those around you - this will be your world. Nothing else matters. You will be a member of the Kingdom of God! - *God's love & mine be with you all, Pastor Paul*



CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

President's Report:

Everyday Miracles. Christmas is right around the corner, a time when we celebrate the miracle of Jesus' birth. During His time on earth, He performed many miracles & we've spent our lives learning about them: walking on water, turning water into wine, healing the sick, raising the dead, feeding the 5,000. Though we cannot see Him, He works through us & for us every day.

Here are some things I consider "everyday miracles": sunrises & sunsets, rain instead of snow, singing birds, blooming flowers, smiles (and all the muscles it takes to make just one), surprise gifts, a warm home, happy cats (and dogs, too), health, vision, freedom, the ability to help someone else (and the blessing of the people who help us!), the gift of the Holy Spirit...I'm sure you can add to this list!



Have you ever just missed being in an accident? Avoided a contagious illness? Escaped a fire? (Both Carl & my mother managed this feat...) Met an old friend at an unlikely place & time? Thought of someone & had them contact you not long after? Received a compliment from a surprising source? Found something you were sure was lost forever?

I'm a believer that everything happens to us when & where it's supposed to; we are part of a giant system that orders our

days & lives. When we do something wrong, there is a sort of back-up plan – God - Who rights us so we can thrive & move forward. That's another miracle.

My "Encarta World English Dictionary" (1999) defines a miracle as "an event that appears to be contrary to the laws of nature & is regarded as an act of God" (p. 1154). I would add that perhaps this stems from our incomplete understanding of these laws, since it all comes from God. My goal is to simply be thankful & not to over-analyze...

In this season of Christmas, may you find many miracles in your days & give thanks to the One who provides them. – Blessings! Emily Schroeder, Council President



Missions & Benevolence:

All this snow is certainly getting us in the holiday spirit & Christmas will be here before we know it! Gifts for "our" three families from all our very generous parishioners were delivered December 15. A big thank you to everyone who bought gifts or contributed money for purchases. It's always overwhelming & heartwarming to see how generous people are when donating to our causes. We also received



a significant amount of money at our free Thanksgiving dinner, which was used to buy household essentials for all the families.

We have had many food donations for the China Food Pantry. They're happy to see us coming with our arms loaded up!

I have to say an especially BIG thank you to Adele Suga for her generous donation to our Pastor's Discretionary Fund (PDF) from her recent equipment & tool sale. It was very overwhelming to learn we were one of three lucky organizations to receive a portion of her proceeds. This means we will definitely be able to help more people in the coming winter months. Thank you & Merry Christmas to everyone! - Kathy Plaisted, Deacon



Finance & Stewardship:

I would like to share a conversation I had recently with a friend who used to attend a church in Waterville. She was expressing her disappointment that the church had become divided about spending money. Apparently, they are purchasing "unimportant" things instead of helping each other & their community.

I was so proud to share with her that not only are your offerings very generous, but you have also contributed almost \$5,000 towards our Pastor's Discretionary Fund! And we have spent almost \$3,500 so far to help many people in our church & in the China community.

Thank you, Susie, for providing your delicious treats that give us an excuse to put money into that red jar each week. We help ourselves to Susie's goodies & we help our community in the process.

Debbie's brainstorm, the Thanksgiving dinner we provided at no cost to the many who attended, was a huge success. What an inspired idea - it obviously filled a great need. The donations collected were used

to purchase gift certificates for the families we sponsored at Christmas, in addition to the individual gifts we provided for them. You are thoughtful, generous & caring beyond words. When there is a need, you always answer the call. I feel so fortunate to be part of this church family.

We've had no major unexpected expenses during the last four months, just our budgeted costs of maintaining our church & programs. The same goes for our revenue; we are receiving your weekly donations & money from our fundraisers as usual. We have spent & raised more than we budgeted, with our spending exceeding our income by about \$6,000 with a few weeks to go. Thank you for your never-ending support. - *Janet Preston, Finance Chair*



Building & Grounds:

Please be advised that the (207) 445-4111 landline phone number the Council thought had automatically transferred to our cell phone is no longer in effect. **SCCC's new number is (207) 313-7591** and will be corrected on our websites, flyers, ads, stationery, TOWN LINE, etc. The outgoing message provides Paul's number if the call is an emergency. Messages will be checked intermittently, but at least once a week. The Deacon/Elder of the Month will check them every Sunday, referring to Paul as needed.

Pre-planning for the insurance coverage projects is well underway, but nothing will take place until after the holidays. We may hold work day(s) for church members

to help with some of the simpler tasks. - *Ron Maxwell, Deacon Building & Grounds*



Christian Education:

There are no children for Sunday School, but Adult Bible Study continues to go well, with a few new attendees. Everyone is welcome to join us at any time! - *Blessings, Emily Schroeder, Elder*

Communications & Outreach:

Christmas blessings! We have some wonderful events happening soon, but some have already taken place, such as the yearly Holiday Sing-A-Long with Mary Matteson & the December Blessed Breakfast with Santa! We look forward to the Christmas Eve & Christmas Day services. We plan to have some heart-warming soup fundraisers this winter.

I must thank Debbie Stowe for spearheading the very successful community Thanksgiving Dinner where ~55 people were served at our church. What a wonderful outreach & way of sharing with others all God has given us! Many hands helped & were much appreciated.

I also wish to thank Russell Poulin for taping our services every week (on YouTube) & for maintaining the church website southchinacommunitychurch.org, as well as the music platform my.christian.music.com. Thank you also, Jayne Winters, for all your creative artwork on posters & getting information out.

I am here in Florida, but my spirit is with you all! May you have a meaningful Christmas season & share God's love with

one another & in your community. - *In Christ's Service, Diane Rawson, Elder*



Worship Committee:

We had a busy & fun month! We were able to get sponsors for our first free Thanksgiving dinner. Many thanks to Sam's Club, Shaw's, Hannaford, Walmart & Tobey's. Thanks also to everyone who donated food or their time: serving, cooking, dishes & all the rest that goes with putting on a big meal. We served approximately 55 people & were able to bring the leftovers to the Bread of Life Ministries to be divided between the shelters in Augusta & Waterville.

What a Blessing this event was! It was fantastic to see so many people enjoying the food & company of others. Some of the people gave a free will offering, all of which went to gifts and/or household supplies for the three families that the church sponsored for Christmas. Everyone wins! Hopefully we can serve even more people next year!
- *May God's Blessing be with you, Debbie Stowe, Worship Chair*



PLEASE NOTE: Any SCCC or individual Needham sales need to be recorded on the calendar in the kitchen - thank you!



SYMPATHY & CONTINUED PRAYERS for the families & friends of those who have passed into God's hands.

Roy Rettew (9/15/24, Bible Study attendee)
Edwena "Eddy" Nichols (10/10/24)



Did you know....

The first American Christmas tree can be credited to a Hessian soldier who was captured at the Battle of Bennington (VT) in 1776. He later went to work on a farm in Windsor Locks, CT & for 14 years put up & decorated Christmas trees in the family's home.

The first Christmas tree retail lot was established in 1851 by Pennsylvanian Mark Carr, who hauled ox sleds loaded with trees from the Catskill Mtns. to the sidewalks of New York City.

On December 22, 1882, Edward Johnson, an associate of Thomas Edison, created the first string of Christmas lights, which were sold in New York City.

The first president to set up a Christmas tree in the White House was Franklin Pierce in 1859.

The first president to establish the National Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony on the White House lawn was Calvin Coolidge.

In 1895, Grover & Frances Cleveland were the first to use electric Christmas lights on a presidential tree (candles were used previously).

***Please e-mail or speak to me or a Council member with any tidbits you have for...**



MEMBER NEWS:

♥ **Gillian Welch & Galen Lichterfeld** (Certified Arborist) of SymmeTree Tree & Garden Services in Vassalboro are offering discounts to SCCC members. Check out their Facebook page & call (207) 458-7283 for more information.

♥ For info about Mbingo Mountain Coffee, the Waterville coffee roasting business founded by **Churchill Elangwe-Preston**, call (207) 619-2492 or go to mbingomountaincoffee.com.

♥ Please keep **Nancy Harwath**, Pastor Paul's mom, in your prayers as she is receiving hospice care at home.

♥ New e-mail address for Diane Rawson is dianerawson1000@gmail.com



On the lighter side:

Q: Are waterbeds bouncy?
A: Yes, if you use spring water

Q: How do cats settle an argument?
A: They hiss & make up

Q: I heard you quit your job digging wells.
A: Yeah, I got fed up with the hole business

Q: What does a gingerbread man use when he breaks his leg?
A: A candy cane

- ✚ ADULT BIBLE STUDY & SUNDAY SCHOOL, 9AM
- ✚ SUNDAY CHURCH SERVICE, 10AM
- ✚ COMMUNION: JAN 5 - FEB 2 - MARCH 2
- ✚ COUNCIL MEETINGS, 3PM ON THE 2ND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH: JAN 12 - FEB 9 - MARCH 9
- ✚ PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND (PDF) DONATION SUNDAY: DEC 29 - MARCH 30
- ✚ BLESSED BREAKFAST, 8-10AM, 2ND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH: JAN 11 - FEB 8 - MARCH 8
- ✚ SOUP FUNDRAISER (**TAKE-OUT ONLY**): JAN 25, 11AM - 12:30PM
- ✚ JANUARY 26: ANNUAL MEETING, 11AM

Positive Quotes



"Your journey is not the same as mine, and my journey is not yours, but if we meet on a certain path, may we encourage each other." - (Unknown)

"Some of the biggest achievements in your life will come from helping others achieve." - (Unknown)

South China Community Church
246 Village Street, PO Box 335
South China, ME 04358
southchinacommunitychurch.org

*“For God so loved the world,
that He gave His only Son, that
whoever believes in Him should
not perish but have eternal life.”
- John 3:16*

