
SOUTH CHINA COMMUNITY CHURCH



Rev. Paul Harwath, Pastor

Spring 2026

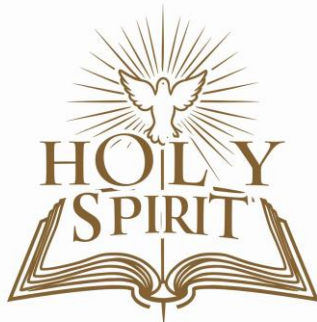
PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Holy Week is approaching. Have you taken time this Lenten season to meditate on what our Lord's death means for your life? What it meant in your life before now & what it means for your future?

Many people do not understand why Lent is so important. Each of us needs to be honest with ourselves, but more importantly, we need to be honest with God.

The question is not, "Am I living the life I want to live?" The question is, "Am I living the life my Father in Heaven wants me to live?" Life-changing & life-giving questions that need to be addressed.

Lent is the time to look into your hearts & answer these questions with all honesty before God. Always remember that the most important duty in your life is to build the closest relationship possible with our Lord & Savior. The closer you get to God, the more caring & loving you become to Him & those around you. You won't just change your life, but also every soul you touch, because the Holy Spirit will work through you! - *God's love & mine be with you, Pastor Paul*



CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

President's Report: Springing Ahead!

The word "spring" has a variety of meanings, as both a verb & a noun. It could be indicating a rapid upward movement, a quick emergence or sudden revelation. If you're springing for something, you could be paying for it. Other meanings include making something work, jumping out of place & even getting out of prison. A spring is a metal or plastic spiral, a source of underground water & a season of the year when plants & flowers start growing again. Appropriately enough, my dictionary states that it is a "time of renewal, a time of new growth and regeneration." (Encarta World English Dictionary, 1999, p. 1732.)



We grumble every year about losing an hour of sleep when we push the clocks ahead. We do gain an hour of daylight at the end of the day, which tells us that warmer weather is right around the corner. There is hope of new life. That hope is always with us as Christians. I was reminded of this just the other day by something seemingly ordinary.

I have a small Christmas cactus on my kitchen windowsill. It came from Hannaford's & had only tiny buds on it, which didn't amount to anything over the past several weeks, or so I thought. I was ready to give up on it when I turned it around & found, much to my amazement, the biggest & most beautiful



deep pink blossom I'd ever seen on a Christmas cactus! There's another bud right next to it. The lesson here is to simply hang on to your faith & be patient - hope is all around us.

The best evidence we have, the wellspring, is the Bible. Hebrews 6:19-20 says: "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf." And Romans 15:4: "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."

We must always remember that the event which provides the most hope to us is the Resurrection. God gives the same gift to all who accept it. We have the same opportunity to receive forgiveness of sin; we can start again, regenerate, with each day. May you continue to be blessed on your journey through Lent (and Spring), culminating in a joyous Easter. - *Love to all, Emily Schroeder, Council President*



Missions & Benevolence:

As we look ahead to the coming year, I only see good things happening in our church community. Due to the generosity of our members, we have already helped three people in the last two months. Quite remarkable if you ask me! Everyone deserves thanks, since without your help, we couldn't respond to these requests.

Please feel free to take a couple green Clynk bags located in the entryway to collect your returnable bottles. When the bag is full, you can bring it to the church

& I will then take it to Hannaford. If it's easier for you, just let me know & I will come to your house & pick it up. The money goes toward the Christian Education Fund, which includes Sunday school & Bible study expenses. Thank you in advance!



Just a reminder – donations for the China Food Pantry are always welcome. Just leave them in the front entryway & I will transport them to the Pantry. - *Kathy Plaisted, Deacon*

"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God" – Hebrews 13:16



Finance & Stewardship:

What a beautiful, although cold, winter we've had! It is nice to feel temperatures rise in anticipation of spring. As of February 28th, we held 8 out of 52 (15%) church services. Expenses are slightly high & revenue is slightly low at this point in the year.

YTD	Amount	% of Budget
Expenses	\$13,364.56	16%
Revenue	\$10,833.25	13%

Our average weekly offerings at the end of February were \$1,007.38, which was \$53.20 less than our target of \$1,060.58/week.

Due to the low checkbook balance at the end of February, we withdrew \$1,048.86,

our budgeted amount, from the Jordan Savings account to help pay expenses.

Bar Harbor Bank & Trust	Balance
Checkbook	986.11
Faith Ames Savings	1,150.74
Memorial Savings	5,839.81
Meader Savings	2,093.13
Total	\$10,069.79

Maine State Credit Union	Balance	YTD Interest
Memorial CD	\$82,224.27	364.08
Meader CD	\$30,909.68	212.04
Jordan CD	\$35,527.69	235.48
Jordan Savings	\$4,294.78	7.45
Savings	\$80.79	0.00
Total	\$153,037.21	819.05
Total Assets	\$163,107.00	

The Jordan CD will mature at the end of March. At that time, we'll take \$1,329.96, which is the interest earned on this CD in 2025, & reinvest what remains. Our other two CDs will mature in June. Their combined interest from 2025 amounts to \$5,364.29 & will also go towards our revenue budget.

Thank you, as always, for your continuous generosity & support! Please let me know if you have any questions. - *With appreciation, Janet Preston, Finance Chair*

Building & Grounds:

Now that the carpet & chairs in Memorial Hall have been deep cleaned, the walls have been re-painted & most of the items on the stage relocated. The long tables need to be replaced as the frames/joint plastic are breaking down, so I'm looking at options & pricing new ones.

As weather permits this spring, the outside ramp & stairs will be repaired & shrubs will be trimmed. We usually have Erskine students help with raking & other outside spring clean-up, but they're not available until mid-May.

It has been suggested that we form a "Garden Group" to clean, refresh & maintain the front garden beds & in particular, the Geneva Holton Memorial Garden behind the church. If anyone is interested, please let Kathy Plaisted or Jayne Winters know. Work will be done as weather, time & volunteers permit, so don't feel you have to make a long-term commitment. - *Regards, Ron Maxwell, Chair, Building & Grounds*



Christian Education:

Our adult group is now up to 1 Corinthians, learning more about Paul & the people he's addressing. We are finding many parallels between Corinth & today's society!

"Miss Lydia" is continuing with her one young student; we thank her for her devotion & wisdom! We are also blessed to have our own Paul to guide us all!

Feel free to join us, at any time, 9AM Sunday mornings! - *Thank you all for your continuing support, Emily Schroeder, Elder*



Communications & Outreach:

Happy spring! Yeah! As rains come & new growth occurs after a long winter, it may seem our spirits need that also. As we journey through Lent & experience the joy of Easter, I have a song that repeats in my mind: "Create In Me A Clean Heart, O God." A fresh slate, a new chance, a new vision towards life.



Even though I've been away, I watch our church services & keep tabs on the many community events SCCC does. What a hard group of worker bees you all are! I'll be glad to be home in May & get involved & help. Thank you to everyone who keep things rolling. May we spread the joy of the Risen Christ to encourage others to join our church family! - *In Christ's Service, Diane Rawson, Elder*



Worship Committee:

What a beautiful day! It is great to see the sun & very little snow. I am more than ready for spring to come. We are blessed to be in a state that has different seasons: winter, mud, spring, summer, & fall. The Lord gave them all to us.

Mary is gearing up for the Easter season. I know she will have beautiful music for praise to God. Pastor Paul is providing his usual excellent services. We are in good hands.

I hope to see everyone who normally comes, plus new friends at the Easter services. I love this church as it makes everyone feel accepted & wanted. If anyone likes to get involved, that is gratefully appreciated! Many hands make light work & it's fun to work together! - *Yours in Christ, Debra Stowe, Worship Chair*

If you'd like to bring plants or flowers for the sanctuary on Easter Sunday, there's a sign-up sheet in Memorial Hall. Thank you!

Why Singing in Church Matters...

This article was submitted by Music/Choir Director Mary Matteson from:
<https://share.google/FHXWnMnXioFI1nz3f>

When we say "worship," most of us picture the front of the church. The platform. The instruments. The people who look confident holding a mic.

But the longer I've studied hymns—and the longer I've watched churches sing—the more I'm convinced the most important voice in the room is the one we tend to overlook: the congregation's.

And before I go any further, here's my own confession. I'm a musician... and I still don't really like my voice.

I can play. I can teach. I can lead from the piano. But singing out loud—especially



if I feel like people can hear *me*—still makes me a little self-conscious. So, if you've ever thought, "Singing is for the confident people," I get it.

But I also think we've misunderstood what congregational singing is for. It's not a performance. It's not a reward for people who are "good at music." Rather, it's one of the simplest ways God invites the whole church to participate—together.

And that's what I've been focusing on this month: not just hymns as content, but the act of singing itself. Why God keeps weaving it into worship. Why it matters. Why it's worth doing even when we feel awkward, tired, or unsure. Because singing does something that plain speaking doesn't.

Singing makes truth easier to carry. Singing helps the Word stay with us longer than the sermon notes do. Singing gives our emotions somewhere to go—joy, repentance, grief, hope. And somehow, it turns a room full of individuals into one person.



I've also been thinking about how often God asks His people to sing—not just as background music, but as part of how we remember, how we testify, how we encourage each other, how we pray.

Even heaven isn't silent.

And sometimes I wonder if part of the reason we feel spiritually thin is because we've slowly turned singing into something we "listen to" instead of something we *do*.

A quick side note: one reason I love hymn history is because it quietly reminds us of this. For example, the tune source for "O When Shall I See Jesus" traces back to **The Sacred Harp**, a shape-note hymnal designed for regular church members. The notes were printed in different shapes to help "untrained" singers learn the music and join in.

I love that. Not because it's a fun fact—but because the message behind it is so simple: This was always meant to be sung by the whole church.

So, here's what I'm hoping for—especially as we head into another Sabbath. Not louder singing for the sake of volume. Just *real* singing. Congregational singing. The kind that says, "Lord, I'm here," even if your voice is quiet. The kind that joins in even if you don't love how you sound. The kind that lifts truth up when you don't have the words on your own.

Because when the church sings, we're not just filling time. We're practicing faith out loud. And sometimes that's exactly what our hearts need.



Did You Know....?



A couple of our newer attendees have asked about our 'Flock Lists' – what are they? Why is my name & contact information listed? Am I on a committee for something?

While putting together a time line for our web site's history section, I discovered an article written by former SCCC member & Council President Jack Kurtzman, which will answer those questions:

Our flocks are comprised of church members & those who attend regularly or seasonally. Each Elder or Deacon serves as a Flock Leader. Flocks were developed for three reasons:

- 1) To provide two-way communication
- 2) To support our weekly fellowship
- 3) To assist flock members when needed

Flock Leaders are a conduit for the flow of information. They pass information to flock members & carry their concerns to the minister & church Council.

Flock members support the weekly fellowship time, which follows Sunday worship service, with refreshments. A flock has that responsibility on a rotational basis once every six weeks.

Flock Leaders coordinate meals & needed support for their flock members in times of illness or injury.

If you would like to become a member of a flock, let the minister or church Council President know & you will be contacted by a flock leader.

Thank you for your interest in being part of our church family. Our congregation is strengthened through mutual service, support & Christian love.

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock” ... (Acts 20:28)

Editor's Note: Although we no longer have weekly refreshments provided by flocks (Susie's treats are now eagerly looked forward to!) & we use an email distribution list for Prayer Requests, newsletters, Memorial Services, cancellation notices, etc., we've maintained the Flock Lists to keep folks up-to-date on contact information & to welcome new attendees. If your info changes or you know someone who might like to be added, please let me know!



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

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 or call (207) 458-7283 for further info.
- ♥ Call (207) 619-2492 or go to mbingomountaincoffee.com for info about Mbingo Mountain Coffee, the Waterville coffee roasting business founded by **Churchill Elangwe-Preston**.

♥ This poem was written by **Abigail Maxwell** & is especially fitting for this time of year:

Carrying Our Cross

Jesus only said, "Thy will be done"
once out loud.
But did He have to repeat it in His
heart?
Did He say it each time
terror and agony overwhelmed?
Every lash of the whip?
Every stab of the thorns?
Every step to the cross?
As He carried out obedience
did He have to surrender
every fresh thought
and new wave of fear
as I do?



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

Don Pauley (12/31/25)
Lori Washburn (1/29/26)
Mimi Roughgarden (2/2/26)

Pay attention to the words you speak today—to others and to yourself. Let them be patient, kind, and hope-filled, trusting that God can use even small moments to reflect His light. *Guideposts Daily Reflection*



- ✝ ADULT BIBLE STUDY, SUNDAYS AT 9AM
- ✝ SUNDAY CHURCH SERVICE, 10AM
- ✝ SOUP LUNCH, SATURDAY MARCH 28, 11AM - 1PM
- ✝ **HOLY WEEK SERVICES:**
 - PALM SUNDAY - MARCH 29, 10AM
 - MAUNDY THURSDAY - APRIL 2, 6PM*
 - GOOD FRIDAY - APRIL 3, 6PM*
 - EASTER - APRIL 5, 10AM
 - *Shroud of Turin viewing, 7PM
- ✝ COMMUNION: APRIL 5 - MAY 3 - JUNE 7 - JULY 5 - AUGUST 2
- ✝ PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND (PDF)
DONATION SUNDAY: MAY 31 - AUGUST 30
- ✝ BLESSED BREAKFAST, 2ND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH, 8-10 AM: APRIL 11 - MAY 9 - JUNE 13 - JULY 11 (AUGUST, SEE BELOW)
- ✝ ANNUAL BBQ/COOKIE WALK/RUMMAGE SALE - AUGUST 8, 9AM - 2PM



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*“I am certain in my heart that all
that I am, I have received from
God.” – St. Patrick*

