

# the Torch Bearer

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## Adore Him!

Our 2016 Christmas concert was indeed a night to behold! We enjoyed our South Church Chamber Choir as they shared selections like: “This Holy Night,” “I Wonder As I Wonder, ” “The Holly and the Ivy, ” and “Coventry Carol. ” We also loved **Frank Pascale’s** solo on Mel Torme’s “The Christmas Song” as well as he and **Ryan** in a classic Christmas medley on kazoos! The **South Church Worship Team** also shared two songs and we were all blessed by the **South Church Kids Klub Singers** as they wowed us with a song called “Behold.”

On top of all the beautiful music, the Chamber Choir had decided to make



in Haiti. With their help

their concert this year a fundraiser to support our sister church

generous individuals we were able to raise over \$600. Praise God! Or as they say in Haiti, “Beni swa l’eter-nell” (“Blessed be the Lord!”)

The Bethesda Church of Camp Perrin was devastated this past October by Hurricane Matthew. They are currently holding school and worshipping in a shell of the building covered by tarps donated by the Bethesda Evangelical Mission ([bemhaiti.org](http://bemhaiti.org)) and the Haitian government. One hundred percent of all monies we raise goes directly to our sister church to help them rebuild. You can continue to be a blessing by visiting our gofundme page ([gofundme.com](http://gofundme.com)) typing in “From Hartford to Haiti” and giving as the Lord leads you. Thank you so much to all who supported our



Adore Him! concert and continue to support our Haiti mission. As Jesus said, *“I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!”* (Matt. 25:40)

South Church is so blessed to have such talented individuals willing to share their God-given gifts with us. Thank you: **Christine Macaluso** (Choir Director), **Ryan Dafgek**, **Mary Kayan**, **Darcey Lovell**, **Frank Pascale**, **Christine Melson** (Organist) and **Renée Söderberg** (flute). You are the best!



If you missed them on December 21, you can be blessed by them every Sunday morning at our 9:30 am traditional worship service. Come and Adore Him!

## Men At Work

**Men At Work** begins the new year with a new focus on learning what it means to be a godly man, father, and husband. We begin working on January 27 and will continue to meet on the last Friday of every month at 7:00 pm. Men, if you are a dad or a husband; or plan on being a dad or husband someday you will want to join us for our 8-week “Honor Begins at Home” study based on the great 2011 film *Courageous*.



## Help Wanted!

There is nothing more soothing than holding a baby making them feel safe and cared for! Our Nursery is booming at 11 am and we are looking for several adult volunteers. We are asking for **one week a month** during the 11 am service. We will provide all you need –we just need **YOU!** Please contact Vicki Huffman at [vhuffman@scchartford.org](mailto:vhuffman@scchartford.org) if you are interested! We will make it easy for you and best of all...you will be blessed. Thanks in advance for considering this vital volunteer position.

## Step Up!

In 2017, South Congregational church is launching some new exciting initiatives. One is called the “*Step Up!*” campaign.

We are so blessed to have our third meeting house built in 1827 still standing as a testimony to Christ in downtown Hartford. Imagine how many thousands, tens of thousands, even hundreds of thousands of pairs of feet walked up those steps over the last two centuries. People coming to worship. Baptizing believers. Being joined in marriage. Carrying caskets of those who have gone on to their reward. All of them walked up and down the front steps at South Congregational Church. Unfortunately, over the past 190 years our steps have started to slowly creep away from the building and are in need of repair. I truly believe God is challenging every single one of us to Step Up and address it! In 2017, it’s time we stop relying completely on the generosity of those who came before us and fix our front steps ourselves! You and me. The people who walk up and down them today!

And so, we are launching the *Step Up!* initiative in order to fix our front steps. Throughout the year we will be holding a

variety of fundraisers/events with the sole purpose raising to raise the resources needed to complete the project. You will see dedicated giving envelopes in the pews, as well as a *Step Up!* menu option on Pushpay and we will soon be launching a *Step Up!* GoFundMe page so we will be able to give online as well as share the link on our personal Facebook pages so our friends and family, who do not attend South Church, can also support the campaign.

If you have any ideas that can help our *Step Up!* campaign to be successful, please do not hesitate to contact the church: [info@scchartford.org](mailto:info@scchartford.org)

Let’s *Step Up!* and show the saints of 1827 the hearts of the saints of 2017!



## New Beginnings at South

Our Youth and Young Adults Ministries has had some growth and some falls. What made them worth it all was learning from it. Even though there were moments of discouragement, God used the people around me to see His work still moving through the ministries. That being said, many times we see what we consider failure as a crutch, but those moments should be used as times to grow. Plus when we seek God, He will be faithful to help us through our hard times. He will show His glory through your weakness.

Lost & Found has moved around in the days, of which we met, but things seem to be working for Saturdays. We now meet on Saturdays at the church from 10am-12pm. The first 45 minutes is dedicated to cleaning around the city, the church, or somewhere needed. Sometimes we will do some work needed around the church as Todd Case provides the opportunities for them to serve the church. We have had a lot of great talks from Temptation to Faith without Works is Dead. We had some great small talks and fun fellowship opportunities.

(Un)Captive has had a rough start, and it will currently be meeting every other Tuesday from 6-8pm. Phil will continue to lead it, and I will still join them when I can. They will be meeting to do some fellowship fun and some small studies. My hope that this will become a small group for those who are 18-25 year olds.

C3, our youth and young adult’s Christian Education class, has been growing and observing the cultivating of many of the students who attend. It meets on Sunday mornings 9:30am-10:45pm. It is all about teaching and discussions, and we have gone through What is Faith?, Knowing God, and soon Christian Finances. Later, we will doing a special Sunday C3 on Christian Dating. Carol Bracken and I will be splitting the students into 2 groups, boys and girls. No worries, this is not about sex, health class, or anything of this nature. It will be all about relationships and God as the Author of Love.

On December 31<sup>st</sup> will be a Lost & Found Bowling or Duckpin event. This will be open to the church to join us so you can get to know our youth group. We should be a church in unity, and that means you being a part of their lives. Plus you get to have fun as you meet them.

January will have a lot of ideas in the making that will bring something new to South and the Student Ministries. I will need prayer because

it will require some people from the church to step up and build this idea with me. It will be interesting to see how God will move in this plan, and the hope is to see other youth and young adults come to South. Prayer and patience will be the key to growth!

**Dido Montijo**

*“Often God does things in our life that may not fit our grid of ‘normal’. But normal to God isn’t a set formula; its obedience no matter what the cost, and total dependence upon Him for the outcome”*

**Eric Ludy**

## Children & Family Ministry

Happy New Year friends! November and December were joyful and busy months in the Children and Family Ministry department. In preparing for this season we enjoyed our annual **Church Family Advent Celebration**, decorating the building, sharing a meal, making crafts and lighting our community Christmas tree in the front yard! The crafts were a big hit this year!

Moving into December, we were incredibly blessed by a toy



donation from the Religious education department at Corpus Christi Church in Wethersfield. This is the third year in a row that **over 200 toys for elementary and middle school ages** were

given to us to make South Church kids' Christmas a little brighter. A special thank you to the Director of the CCD department at Corpus, Sharon Reynolds, for thinking of us. Several church members and friends from other churches helped with sorting and wrapping the gifts, which is so appreciated! The children's Christmas party was held on December 18<sup>th</sup>, including a yummy breakfast, the Christmas story, crafts and presents for all the children.

As we head into the new year, we look forward to more skating at **Bushnell Park's rink**, and enjoying fellowship with all ages. Our first skate was held on December 11<sup>th</sup>! Lots of fun was had!

The next opportunity for fellowship for all ages will be our **Reindeer Games** event! On Saturday, January 14, from 1-4 pm come and enjoy playing games together, meeting new friends and connecting with your South Church family. We will have all sorts of board games available to play, and



there's talk of a cribbage tournament with Pastor Adam. Use our games or bring your favorite, mine are Password and Clue, and a snack to share with the group! Let's start off the new Year right-having a good time together.

## KIDS KLUB

other area churches and have our choice of Christian music.

2017 also brings the expansion of **Kids Klub Afterschool**, increasing from one day a week to two. Would you like to help one or two elementary students with their homework, as well as be a friend as the children learn life skills, Bible lessons, while having lots of fun? Afterschool will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:30-5:45 pm. Please contact me if you'd like to volunteer at [vhuffman@scchartford.org](mailto:vhuffman@scchartford.org) and pick either day that works for you. Monday is the additional day being added and needs the most volunteers at this point. Speak to anyone who has served with the afterschool program and you will learn what a blessing it is to work with our great kids. This program will help them along the road to becoming great citizens of Hartford and the world! You will get much more in return than you give.

Let's begin 2017 with a commitment to fellowship together, as we encourage each other along our faith journey. ***"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching."*** (Hebrews 10:25)

With Joy in Serving the Lord with you,  
**Vicki Huffman**

## Past & future

So many people believe we are currently divided as a nation. Well, we have an opportunity as "the church" to proclaim that is not so! Sure, we may come from different traditions, belong to different denominations, and worship in different ways but we are still brothers and sisters-in-Christ. As such, you are all invited to the House of Restoration Church 1665 Main Street, Hartford, for 2017's **Unity Worship Service** on Friday, January 13, at 7:00 pm. Let us declare boldly that for those who proclaim Jesus as Lord and Savior, we are all one in the body of Christ! Mark your calendars and join us as we gather in one place to pray and worship together.

*Dear Rev. Söderberg and South Church family,*

*Thank you for your thoughtful card and condolences as well as inviting us to join you on October 30<sup>th</sup> for the Service of Remembrance.*

*It meant a lot for Cindy and I to return to the beautiful sanctuary where we spent many Sundays sitting with Alyce. We are also grateful for the warm welcome from so many familiar faces.*

*Thank you again and our best wishes,  
John, Cindy, and the Elmore family.*

The Rev. Dr. John Elmore and his wife Alyce faithfully served South Congregational Church from 1956-1992.

## South Church Awards

South Church was blessed to recognize some of our members this year with the inaugural “Member Appreciation Awards.”

**The George Grave Award** is named after the first Deacon of South Church (1670-1673). As Deacons are called in Acts 6 to a caring and concern ministry. This award is for someone who has gone above and beyond in caring for members of our church. It was awarded to **Peg Barles**.

**The J. Hubbard Wells Award** is named after the first Superintendent of Sunday School (1828-1829). This award is for someone who has done outstanding work in our Sunday School ministry. It was awarded to **Mary Symkowicz**.

**The Jonathan Bull Award** is named after the first Treasurer of South Church (1775-1797). This award is for someone who has faithfully served in a financial ministry of our church. It was awarded to **David Ford**.

**The John Church Award** is named after one of the children of the church who owned the covenant when we were formed in 1670. This award would be for a male youth whose faithful service should be recognized. It was awarded to **David Casiano**.

**The Sarah Richards Award** is named after one of the children of the church who owned the covenant when we were formed in 1670. This award would be for a female youth whose faithful service should be recognized. It was awarded to

**Sarah Savery**.

**The John Whiting Award** is named after the first minister of South Church (1670). This award would be for a male adult whose faithful service should be recognized. It was awarded to **Karl Robertson**.

**The Susanna Whiting Award** is named after the wife of our first minister the Reverend John Whiting. This award would be for a female adult whose faithful service should be recognized. It was awarded to **Renée Söderberg**.

Congratulations to all our recipients for jobs well done! We are who we are in large part because of faithful servants like you.



From L to R: Carolyn Ford (For David), Mary Symkowicz, Renée Söderberg, Peg Barles, Karl Robertson, and Ginny Pratt

## Cooking With Christ

Cooking with Christ's Third Annual Cookie Walk was a huge success! We made 27 different types of cookies and provided pre-made trays this year. The Bryant Room became party central for the adults while the children's party was going on in Gray Hall. Thank you so much to all who bought cookies and supported us so that we were able to donate almost \$200 to the rebuilding fund of South Church's M25 Haiti Mission.

We will be continuing our cooking classes in the new year with dishes like Baked Haddock with Roasted Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Roast Pork Loin Stuffed with Kielbasa and Roasted Potatoes, Soups, Stews, and of course baked treats and desserts. Join us every Wednesday in the kitchen from 6:30-8:30.

**Renée Söderberg**

## Happy Birthday!

### January

04 – Elaine Johnson  
 05 – Gerald Hancock  
       Frances Trombley  
 06 – Chris Savery  
 09 – Shelly Casiano  
       Carl Williams

### February

01 – Barbara Bradley  
 08 – Kelly Travers  
 09 – Theresa Carpenter  
 12 – Linda Conner  
 15 – Pam Mautino  
       Winston Paul  
 22 – South Church  
 26 – Marj Weidlich  
 27 – John Magnee

## Happy 347<sup>th</sup> SCC!

On February 22, 2017, the Second Church of Christ, Hartford (South Congregational Church) will celebrate our 347<sup>th</sup> birthday! We are so blessed to be serving the Lord in this city and a part of such a storied history. Only three years before we are 350 years old! What a celebration that will be. I promise you!