
SOUTH CHINA COMMUNITY CHURCH



Rev. Paul Harwath, Pastor

Fall/Winter 2022-2023

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Advent is almost upon us! For the last couple of years, our Advent & Christmas season was not as festive as in earlier years. I think it's time to bring some community & excitement back to our celebrations. After all, that is why we share our Christmas season with those around us. God showed His love by giving His son Jesus to save us from our sins.

It's time to get together & share God's love with the world around us. The gift of love is the greatest, most enduring gift any person can give. It cannot be stolen, lasts forever & is life changing. Jesus's love changed the world & all Creation. When we share that love with our neighbors, it transforms the hearts of the recipients & that, in turn, fulfills God's promise of His kingdom. We become part of God's love. That can do nothing but change our very selves into the people of God! - *God's love and mine be with all of you, Pastor Paul*



CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS

President's Report:

Tis the Season for Giving Thanks! Happy Fall & Almost Winter! When I considered what to write about in this newsletter, all I came up with is how thankful I am for this church & everyone who's a part of it. We've been through a lot & continue to deal with the effects of the pandemic, related health issues & financial concerns.

I am grateful for your resilience & faithfulness - that's what's getting us through.

We also must recognize the caring members of our Council, whose gifts & talents are keeping us afloat. Our turkey pie meals, summer sale, BBQ & craft fair have all been resounding successes. In addition to the Council, a number of you have contributed a lot of time & talent as well.



We are blessed by the variety of Christian backgrounds which we share. I was raised Episcopalian & still have a 1977 edition of the, at the time, "Proposed" Book of Common Prayer. It offers a variety of "thanksgivings", depending upon the occasion & service used. For example: "We give you thanks, most gracious God, for the beauty of the earth and sky and sea; for the richness of mountains, plains, and rivers; for the songs of birds and the loveliness of flowers. We praise you for these good gifts, and pray that we may safeguard them for our posterity. Grant that we may continue to grow in our grateful enjoyment of your abundant creation..." (p. 840).

And another: "Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of His Word and the example of His life; for His steadfast obedience, by which He overcame temptation; for His dying, through which He overcame death; and for His rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom." (p. 836).

When we gather for Thanksgiving, let us remember that observing thankfulness

can & should always, extend beyond just one day!

We hope that once the viruses subside, we will welcome more people through our doors. Each one of us can act as a “pebble in the pond” to help make that happen: invite friends & neighbors, promote our events, spread the love!

One of my favorite dismissals appears on p. 366: “Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.” Amen. – *Blessings to you all, Emily Schroeder, Council President*



Missions & Benevolence:

Here we are, writing another snippet for the newsletter. It’s hard to believe our beautiful summer is behind us & now we are preparing for winter!

We continue to make a monthly donation of \$25 to the China Food Pantry & will also be sending an extra \$100 for Thanksgiving.



Susie has chosen to donate 50% of her goodie money to the PDF, up from 25%, & the other 50% to our Loose Offerings. A big thank you to Susie for her generosity!

Two individuals received contributions toward their electric bills in the last couple months. We hope to be able to help a few needy families this year at Christmas. - *Kathy Plaisted, Deacon*



Finance & Stewardship:

As we approach the end of the calendar year, we are pretty well on target as far as expenditures go. Our year-to-date spending at the end of October was \$62,982.27, about 78% of our budgeted amount for the year. Income at the end of October was \$53,091.77, which is only 66% of what we had hoped to bring in for the year. We have a new fundraiser (Soup for the Soul... to Go) that we hope will boost that amount to be more in line with our budgeted revenue. If it’s successful, we’ll do it again in December.



As I explained in my pledge letter, the Council will be proposing a 2023 budget that has a deficit of almost \$17,000. In order to stay afloat, we will have to use quite a bit of our savings. At the end of October, we had about \$120,000 in all our accounts.

We have kept the expense budget for the new year roughly the same as 2021-2022; to be exact, it is \$4.07 less than last year at \$80,315.91. Our budgeted revenue for 2022-2023 has decreased significantly from \$58,440 to \$48,000.

Some of the decrease can be attributed to the fact that the Meader Fund was tied up in an annuity last year (2020-2021). The money from this fund must be used for Capital Improvements. Because this fund was not available to us in 2021, the Capital Improvement line for 2022 included allocations for both last year and this year. The new budget line is ~\$3,500 less because it includes our allowable income for just one year.

The Fundraising line shows another big difference between this year & next. We had hoped to have more Chicken BBQs this year; because we were not able to, we have decreased that line by \$2,500.

Finally, we did not balance the budget using our Loose Offering line this time around. Instead, we used a more realistic figure, resulting in a difference on that line of \$10,000.

We look forward to your input & suggestions at the Annual Meeting in January. Thank you for everything each of you does to keep South China Community Church running smoothly. – *Respectfully, Janet Preston, Finance Chair*



Building & Grounds:

The ramp project is completed & hopefully you'll notice that the footing grip has improved. As of this writing, Bob Webber & his assistant are installing the new front door railings.

I've put in motion detector, solar-powered lights out front & will eventually install new spot lights for the large, side parking lot.

The next big project will be replacing the carpet in Memorial Hall with a sturdier, waterproof, scratch resistant flooring. It will extend into the kitchen as well. I'm watching Lowe's for sales, but if it's cost prohibitive right now, we'll wait until next year.

Don't hesitate to let me know if you have any building or property concerns. - *Thanks, Ron Maxwell, Deacon Building & Grounds*



Christian Education:

We continue to be blessed by the loving instruction of Lydia Biswell, "Miss Lydia." Her sidekick is Nancy Rogers, who helps with younger children whenever we have them. We certainly wish there were more young people in attendance to share the gifts of these ladies. Should you have any ideas for attracting Sunday School students, please let me or any Council member know! - *Blessings, Emily Schroeder, Elder*

Note from The Editor:

The Spider Who Saved Christmas is a book based on an Eastern European legend that tells the origin of tinsel. It isn't about removing obstacles that threaten to prevent Santa's delivery of gifts to children. It's about a lowly creature willingly accepting a dangerous mission to save the Son of God.

Briefly, it's about a spider & her dozens of older children that spin a thick web at the entrance to the cave where the Holy Family is hiding from Herod so that his soldiers will be tricked into thinking that no one is hiding inside.



"Kids who like *Charlotte's Web* will enjoy another story in which a friendly spider selflessly takes risks to save someone else."



Communications & Outreach:

Well, here we are into the holiday season already & soon to be celebrating the birth of our Lord. I feel so blessed to be a part of this church family & want others to experience our church. We are small in number at this point, but mighty in spirit!

In an effort to reach the local communities, we have put notices at area

town offices to let folks know that we have fellowship room space available to rent for events, as well as a pastor who can assist in various ways.

Our recent fundraising efforts have gone quite well. The October Craft Fair & Pie Sale, along with an afghan raffle (thanks to Joan Ferrone for providing the afghan) brought in roughly \$700 for the church. Also, thanks to Debbie Stowe for her many crafts provided for the church to sell. All the vendors brought in some monies for themselves after renting a table; it may not have been much, but they agreed to come back again for next year. Thank you to those who baked, helped set up, worked the tables, & helped clean up after.

We have one or two "Soup for The Soul" soup-to-go take-out lunches planned for November & possibly December. Thank you to Janet Preston for making the soups & to all those who are donating supplies, their time & baking.



A big thank you goes to Debbie Stowe & Phil Choate for their weekly creation of SCCC Needhams for sale at Tobey's & church. The items have our logo on them & the money raised goes to our church to help balance the budget. So, thank you for your act of love!

Joan Ferrone has graciously accepted filling in for me for Communications & Outreach on the Council while I am away in Florida for 5 months. Thank you, Joan! Thanks also to Jayne Winters, who coordinates the newsletter, & to Russell Poulin, our webmaster & Facebook page coordinator. Check out our site at southchinacommunitychurch.org. - *In Christ's Love & Service, Diane Rawson, Elder*

Worship Committee:

We have hired Josh Kaplan as our new Music Director; he's a Colby College student who lives in New York. He's very talented & seems to be enjoying his new position. The choir has enjoyed getting to know him & working with him. The down side for us is that he will go home for holidays & during the summer, so we're still in need of pianists to fill in when he is away. Please remain on the alert for such a person! Richard Preston will be playing for the Thanksgiving Eve service, as well as Christmas Eve.

We're always looking for more choir members, so please consider joining us! We'll be minus Diane



for the winter months & don't forget: singing is healthy for you! It relieves stress, may boost your immune system, improves lung function, develops a sense of belonging & connection, enhances memory, & improves mood & your sense of well-being. A win-win for everyone!

I would like to thank Glenna for her reliable decorating of the church sanctuary with beautiful flowers each week. It's greatly appreciated.



Speaking of decorating, we'll be getting out our Christmas décor on Sunday, Nov 27th, immediately after church, to green up the sanctuary & Memorial Hall. Please stay & help if you can.

We're changing the bulletin slightly to reflect Pastor Paul's teachings each week. Instead of First Lesson, Message, & Reading, you will now see First Lesson, Second Lesson, & Third Lesson. This method works well for Paul & I think we all enjoy his heartfelt sharing of stories & perspectives.

Suggestions for changes in the music or service are always welcome! - Respectfully submitted, Janet Preston, Worship Chair



Positive Quotes



“Sometimes circumstances conspire to remind us or even let us glimpse how thin the membrane is between here & there, between birth & the grave, between the human & the divine.” – **Anne Lamott, Author**

“Faith sees the invisible, believes the unbelievable & receives the impossible.”
– **Corrie ten Boom, Christian writer, best remembered for her strong faith & hope in God while imprisoned in a concentration camp during the Holocaust**

“Faith is the unfailing lamp that lights us on our way.” - **Helen Keller**

“Our actions reflect our theology. The way we treat others is the way we think God is like. The first Bible many people read will be your life. Jesus cared for people as he found them.” – **Rebecca Peppert, Author**

“Prayer is not about getting what we want when we want it. Prayer is about learning to trust God; it’s about growing in relationship with God by voicing the cares of our hearts and sharing with God the joys and sorrows of our lives. Prayer is not the clenched fist demanding that our will be done; it is the open hand receiving God’s provisions for this day. Prayer is the means by which we acknowledge that God is God and we are not.” - **Andrew Murray, Author**

“In his devotional, **Eugene Peterson** compares wishing & hoping. He says we can picture wishing as though it were a line coming out from us with an arrow on the end, pointing into the future, pointing toward that thing we most want to possess. Hope is just the opposite. It's a line that comes from God out of the future, with its arrow pointing toward us.”



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

NOTE: Living Memorial Funds have been started for Pastor Jim & Chris Faris. Those wishing to donate to either or both funds can issue their check to South China Community Church & comment in the memo section that it is for the Memorial Fund for Pastor Jim or Chris Faris. Contributions not only honor individuals, but help our Memorial Fund gather a few more much needed dollars.

Did you know....?

On October 3, 1789, Congress sent a message to President George Washington requesting him "to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer."

He declared that the day "be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be."

More than 230 years later, we continue to celebrate Thanksgiving with an eye toward God as the original source of all for which we have to be grateful.



The word "Advent" comes from the Latin word "adventus" which means "a coming, approach, arrival." In Advent, we prepare for Jesus's arrival & the light gets brighter as we near Christmas Day. St. Gregory of Nyssa wrote:

"Today, the darkness begins to grow shorter and the light to lengthen... Do you see that the beams of light are more intense and the sun higher than it has been? Realize that the true light is now here and, through the rays of the Gospel, is illuminating the whole earth."

[Editor's Note: This ties in with our December solstice, when the dark days of winter start increasing in daylight right before Christmas.]

The origin of the Advent wreath has been traced back to Germany, when people would light candles around wreaths in the dark winter months in anticipation of the warmer, lighter months in springtime. This likely evolved into the "Advent wreath"

during the Middle Ages, transforming the pagan tradition into a Christian one.

The circular shape of the Advent wreath symbolizes God's infinite love for us: it is never-ending. The materials of the wreath also lead us to reflect on the everlasting nature of God: evergreen boughs which maintain their green color beyond the season in which they are collected.

The four candles of Advent represent the four Sundays of Advent & symbolize hope, peace, joy & love. Sometimes a fifth candle is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day to represent the birth of Jesus; it is typically white & larger than the other candles & is placed in the center of the wreath.

- Advent Week 1 – Hope: Prophecy Candle (purple). The first candle leads us to anticipate the birth of Christ & the beginning of a new liturgical season. Purple symbolizes royalty.
- Advent Week 2 – Peace: Bethlehem Candle (purple). The second candle reminds us of Mary & Joseph's journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Jesus is coming & so is His Kingdom of Peace.
- Advent Week 3 – Joy: Shepherd's Candle (pink). The third candle represents the joyful anticipation of the shepherds. Pink is the liturgical color for joy.
- Advent Week 4 – Love: Angel's Candle (purple). The fourth candle symbolizes the ultimate of God, Who sent His only Son for us. Its purple color of royalty represents the new Kingdom of God on earth.

(From: [www.https://hallow.com/blog/advent-candles-and-advent-wreaths/](https://hallow.com/blog/advent-candles-and-advent-wreaths/))



An “epiphany” is an insight or “intuitive grasp of reality through something (as an event) usually simple & striking an illuminating discovery.” The Epiphany marks the visit of the Magi, when the three wise men visited Baby Jesus. It is the time that Jesus was revealed or shown to the world & is always celebrated on January 6.

And looking ahead, did you know...?

Valentine was a priest who lived during the reign of Roman Emperor Claudius II (268 - 270 AD). Claudius needed many men to fight his wars, but they weren't enlisting, he assumed because they were married & had families. He issued a ruling that single men were not to be married, expecting enlistment would improve.



Valentine did not abide by this ruling. He secretly married many couples & also helped persecuted Christians. Claudius found out about Valentine's disobedience & imprisoned him. Valentine refused to give up his deep faith in Christianity & even tried to convert Claudius. However, around 269 AD, Valentine was beheaded for his disregard of the law & refusal to renounce his faith of Christianity.

In 496 AD, Pope Gelasius proclaimed February 14th (believed to be the day Valentine died) as the day on which St. Valentine would be honored for his martyrdom.

St. Valentine is patron saint of engaged couples, happy marriages, beekeepers & travelers. Mass printing of Valentine's Day cards was begun in 1847, by Ester Howland of Worcester, MA.



- ✝ ADULT BIBLE STUDY & SUNDAY SCHOOL, SUNDAY MORNINGS, 9AM
- ✝ SUNDAY CHURCH SERVICE, 10AM
- ✝ COMMUNION: DEC 4 - JAN 1 - FEB 5 - MARCH 5
- ✝ COUNCIL MEETINGS, TBA
- ✝ PASTOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND (PDF) DONATION SUNDAY: JAN 29
- ✝ THANKSGIVING EVE SERVICE, WEDNESDAY NOV 23, 6:30PM
- ✝ HANGING OF THE GREENS, NOV 27 AFTER SUNDAY SERVICE, 11AM
- ✝ ADVENT I - NOV 27
ADVENT II - DEC 4
ADVENT III - DEC 11
ADVENT IV - DEC 18
- ✝ CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE, DEC 24, 7PM
- ✝ CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE, DEC 25, 10AM
- ✝ EPIPHANY, JAN 6
- ✝ ST. VALENTINE'S DAY, FEB 14
- ✝ ST. PATRICK'S DAY, MARCH 17



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*“A new commandment I give to
you, that you love one another:
just as I have loved you, you
also are to love one another.”
- John 13:34*

