

**SOUTH  
CONGREGATIONAL  
CHURCH, UCC**

*e-Lation!*



### **Hearts in the Ash**

Although it's happening to all of us, I've been feeling the onslaught of age a bit more than usual lately. Some of it has been the effect of Alison's death: I still expect to see her whenever I'm passing by her office, and her death simply reminds me of my mortality. Some of it is noticing my Parkinson's symptoms creeping in ever so slightly. Time marches on whether we agree to it or not.

Last night about thirty of us gathered to mark the beginning of the Lenten trek to Holy Week we call Ash Wednesday. Because yesterday happened to be Valentine's Day as well, I offered people the option of getting the mark of a heart on their forehead instead of the traditional cross. Most people chose to receive a cross, but a few opted for the heart. The hearts didn't look like much other than a triangular smudge, but their effect has lingered on my mind.

Even a brief look at the ash heap of history will affirm human mortality and our propensity for sometimes getting things royally wrecked. Hearts get broken every day. War never seems to take a break. The rich get richer, and the poor get poorer. We track the ash of ourselves and our sin around wherever we go, not noticing the trails we leave. And yet, our trail of ashes is also the proof we have of having been alive at all!

Look closely, and every now and then you'll notice in your ash trail the outline of the tracing of God's finger in the shape of a heart. It's one of God's ways of saying, "I have loved you since before you were born... why do you think I would stop loving you now?"

Peace,

Jed

## February Moment for Mission

For the month of February, the Faith in Action Committee has chosen the NH Food Bank as our Moment for Mission. The NH Food Bank is the only food bank in the state! In addition to providing hunger relief to those suffering from food insecurity, the NH Food Bank has a number of other programs designed to support the community. They provide hands-on educational programs to teach parents and adults with limited food budgets how to shop for and cook healthy meals. The Food Bank also offers a free Culinary Job Training program to people seeking employment in the food service industry. And they maintain a production garden with the goal of providing fresh produce for the culinary program and their soup kitchens and educating people on how to maintain a garden. To donate to the NH Food Bank, please click below:



[Donate Now!](#)

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## 10 Years with Abby

Abby Charbeneau arrived at South Church in January, 2014. She has been a great gift to South Church over the last 10 years! In her own selfless way, she has invited a variety of members and styles of music into the worship, most particularly our very young instrumentalists. Please join us after the 9am service on **February 18**, the first Sunday of Lent, as we hold a special reception for Abby. Cards and monetary gifts may be sent to the church office.



## Family Promise

Greetings to our wonderful Family Promise Volunteers! Our host week begins this Sunday, **February 18 - 25**. We will be hosting families here at South Church. *Volunteers are needed!* Please [sign up](#) on our website or contact the office. Thank you!

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## Inventory Day!

Wondering how to celebrate leap year? We have scheduled an "Inventory Day" on **Thursday, February 29** 10 a.m.- 12 p.m. to inventory Sunday school and craft supplies in the church. Help us catalog and organize supplies and enjoy a treasure hunt with fellow South Churchers. Please [email Kayla](#) at the church office or talk to Betsy Clardy if you have questions.



## American Red Cross

### CPR Training

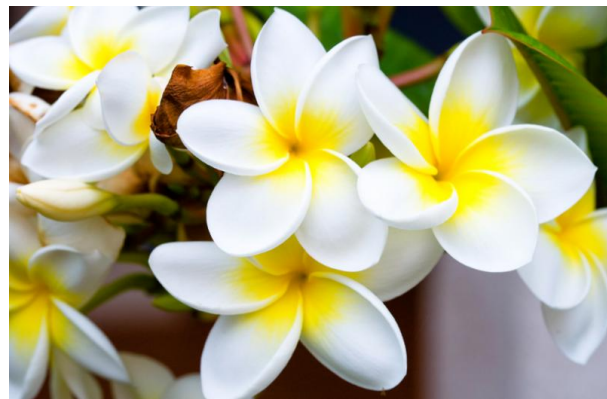
South Church now has an A.E.D. device which we hope to install in the Sanctuary soon! Before we can do that, we must be trained on its safe usage. Anyone willing to become certified in CPR/A.E.D. use

should sign-up online for our training on **Sunday, March 3**. Please [sign up online by Monday, February 26!](#)

All trainees must first complete online training, which takes about two hours. This online course is mandatory and must be completed *before* the in-person training on March 3. Please contact the office with questions.

### Easter Flowers

We will be celebrating, honoring, and remembering our loved ones this Easter with flowers. The cost of each plant is \$18. The deadline is **Monday, March 4**. Flowers and names will be printed in our Easter Sunday bulletins. Please order flowers [online here](#), or by submitting the order form found in the bulletin. Please contact the office with any questions.





**Save the Dates!**

# Celebrating Jed's Ministry!

**Saturday, February 17 – 5:30 p.m.**

**Breaking Bread**  
potluck honoring Jed

**Saturday, March 9 – 4:00 p.m.**


**Cabaret and Cookies**  
hear Jed's favorite songs performed,  
and stay to share your favorite cookies

**Saturday, April 13 – 4:00 p.m.**

**The Big Event**  
A celebration of Jed's Ministry

**Sunday, April 14 – 9:00 a.m.**

Jed's final service,  
followed by a special Coffee Hour



**Breaking Bread** - Faith Formation is looking forward to celebrating Jed at the **February 17** Breaking Bread event! It starts at 5:30pm. Please [sign up here](#) and bring a potluck dish or dessert to share. Any bakers out there-cakes would be fun!

**Cabaret and Cookies** - One of the ways South Church is going to honor Jed is through an event that we are calling "Cabaret and Cookies." This event will be held at the church on **Saturday, March 9** starting at 4 p.m. with a Cabaret of music in the sanctuary. If you are a musician and would like to perform something, please contact [Sue Berlenbach](#). We anticipate the Cabaret will last around an hour. When it is over, we will move to the Fellowship Hall for the "Cookies" part of the celebration. Please feel free to bring a dessert of any kind to share with one another and we will have time to mingle, converse, and be present with one another as we celebrate Jed!

**The Big Event** - Join us on **Saturday, April 13** for a celebratory evening, with emcee Dave Fries, in honor of Rev. Jed! This event will include skits, choir songs, cake and punch, and so much more! Keep an eye on the website to RSVP. Please contact the office with any questions.



## Pledge Drive 2024-2025!

Greetings South Church! This year, we ask that you prayerfully consider participating in the pledge campaign, a key part of our planning for the coming year. We're on the threshold of an exciting new chapter in the life of our church. As a new incoming minister prepares to join us later this year, our financial support provides the foundation for a successful transition - and cultivates the conditions for new growth.

Pledges are critical to the financial health of our church. They are different from the loose offerings that you might put in the basket on Sunday morning. Pledges help the church plan for the coming year and ensure its obligations are met. In the 2024 budget (running from July to June), pledges accounted for 67% of the church's budgeted income. Fortunately, pledging is easy! Submit your pledge [online here](#) or contact the office for a paper copy. Thank you for your generous support of our community!

## Nursery Volunteers

Faith Formation is committed to supporting our South Church families by continuing to offer child care in the nursery during worship services. We're searching for volunteers! If you can help, please [sign up here](#) or in Fellowship Hall. Thank you!



## Is There a Techie in the House?

South Church needs the help of a technology-savvy volunteer to 1) lead a technology needs assessment and 2) help develop a technology plan for meeting our needs. This is a one-time, short-term project that will have a great impact on South Church's capacity to grow into our mission and vision. If you can lend

your technical expertise and skills to South Church, please contact South Church's co-Treasurer, Sue Marcotte-Jenkins, at 603-502-3456 or [sosume414@outlook.com](mailto:sosume414@outlook.com).

Volunteers Needed!

We are looking for volunteer Ushers and Lay Readers during Sunday morning services!

*Ushers* arrive 20 minutes early to welcome people at the doors, hand out bulletins, and pass the offertory plates during the service.

*Lay Readers* read the Scripture passages during worship service. The Scripture is provided the week before service for those who would like time to practice!

*Nursery Volunteers* are **highly** needed as well! Please see the previous blurb (above) for further information.

Please consider helping with these simple but very important tasks. You can either sign up online here, or by calling Kayla at the office, 603-224-2521. Thank you!



### Keys!

#### *Do You Have a Set of South Church Keys?*

If so, please [contact the office](#)! Kayla is in the process of updating our records, and she needs to know who has keys to the building. Please send an e-mail with your name, phone number, and the number inscribed on your external key (the brass one).

Thank you!

## Conference News

### Legislative Advocacy Training

Save the Date! **Tuesday, March 5** from 9a.m.-12p.m. at the NH Conference Office, 140 Sheep Davis Rd. Pembroke, NH.

Across the country - and here in New Hampshire - we hear about threats against an individual's right to bodily autonomy, including abortion access and gender affirming health care. What can faith leaders and clergy do to oppose these attacks?



Join Planned Parenthood New Hampshire Action Fund for a 3-hour workshop specifically for faith leaders, both lay and clergy. During the workshop, we will cover what's happening nationally, as well as in the NH State House, you'll hear first-hand experiences from clergy and faith leaders who have used their voices in these debates, and we'll cover the ins-and-outs of ways to get involved immediately. We need your help, now more than ever.

[Register Here](#)



## Quilting/Reduce/Reuse/Recycle

What if the goal isn't to throw away old forms of church, but rather to figure out how to reduce, reuse, and recycle our resources? The next form of church will be different, but will be based on our eternal foundation of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. How do we build creative strength for discerning God's New Thing for the next generation? We'll use quilt making as a model for how to select from our stash of habits and practices, how to cut off what we don't need, and then how to put it back together to create a beautiful new vision for God's work in the world.

9 am to 3 pm **Saturday March 2** at Rindge Congregational Church  
\$100 per church for 3-8 participants from your congregation.  
Lunch included.

Tell us you are coming at [pastoronthecommon@gmail.com](mailto:pastoronthecommon@gmail.com)

## Lenten Materials from Join the Movement

Engage in a weekly book study of [The Risk of Being Woke](#) throughout the season. Join the Movement will provide a Discussion Guide with facilitation hints, discussion questions, and session outlines to help guide you and your community. You could also use the questions for personal reflection in a journal or as seeds for meditations.

[Download the Discussion Guide – Click here](#)

Use their [40-Day Rising Up Journey – Woke Lent 2024 Calendar](#) which includes daily reflections on the themes and quotes from *The Risk of Being Woke*, ways to connect the Movement for Black Lives and Palestinian liberation, and spiritual practices and actions that help you build your capacity for racial justice activism and nourish your soul.

[Click here to download the Woke Lent 2024 Calendar](#)

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