



Return Service Requested

The CHALLENGE December 2015

**South United Methodist Church**  
with Rev. John Marshall



*“Where the joy of life in Christ overflows”*

**Sunday Worship Schedule**

- 9:30 a.m. Traditional Worship with Choir**  
Children’s Story in the Sanctuary  
Communion served monthly
- 10:45 a.m. Sunday School**  
For All Ages
- 11:45 a.m. Contemporary Worship with**  
Wildfire Worship Band in the Café  
Communion served monthly

**Contact Information:**

**Church office: (860) 647-9141**  
**Office Hours: Mon, Wed, Fri 9:00a-12:00p**  
**Tues, Thurs 6:00p-9:00p**  
**Email address: [office@southumc.com](mailto:office@southumc.com)**  
**Web address: [southumc.com](http://southumc.com)**  
  
**January Challenge Deadline:**  
**Sunday, December 20, 2015**



**SUNDAY  
WORSHIP  
SCHEDULE**

- 9:30a - Traditional  
Worship with Choir  
and Children’s Story
- 9:45a - Sunday School  
for Nursery-Grade 2
- 10:45a - Sunday School  
for all Ages
- 11:45a - Contemporary  
Worship with Wildfire  
Worship Band
- \*\*December 6th  
One Service 10am
- \*\*December 24th  
5:30pm Family Service  
10:00pm Traditional

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DECEMBER  
ISSUE**

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**THE CHALLENGE DECEMBER 2015**

***Come to Bethlehem and See***

***“God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. (1 John 4:9)”***

Dear Friends,

There is so much to see and experience during the holiday season. Soon enough those familiar television children’s Christmas specials will be airing: from Rudolph, Charlie Brown and perhaps your favorite version of the Christmas Carol. Festive lights decorate our homes and businesses, inside and out! We can see and hear wonderful music performed in holiday concerts. (Our candlelight concert is being held on Sunday, December 13 at 6:30pm.) And of course, there are loved ones to see at Christmas gatherings; nothing compares to being with these precious folks.

As followers of Jesus, the Advent/Christmas season is the time when we return to our roots, to the story of the birth of the Savior of the World in Bethlehem. As we listen once again to the familiar ancient story, we are transported back in time to Bethlehem, where we see Jesus, the child of Mary and Joseph, the Son of God, born among the animals in an ordinary cave/stable.

***As we come to Bethlehem, we will rediscover God’s love for all of humanity***

As we come to Bethlehem, we will rediscover God’s love for all of humanity on display. The apostle John shared the meaning and purpose behind the miraculous birth of Jesus. “God’s love was revealed among us, through His act of sending His only Son into the world, our world.” Yes, the sending of Jesus reveals God’s love for all people, including, but not limited to, people like us. Through Jesus God also offers life to the world, abundant, purposeful, never-ending life.

As we reflect on the story of Jesus birth, we may also remember that not everyone welcomed the arrival of the “newborn king.” Herod, the one in power at the time was threatened, by the idea that someone other than him might be intended by God to lead God’s people. And so, he determined to destroy Jesus just as he was entering the world, full of innocence and love. God warned Joseph about Herod’s despicably evil plan, telling him to “flee to Egypt.” Yes, Jesus, Mary and Joseph were refugees, running from tyranny and terror, looking for nothing more than safety, support, peace and the space to live the lives God had for them. (Read the story in Matthew 2:13-23)

Today, as we know, our world is filled with millions of refugees. These men, women and children are no different than Jesus’ family or our families for that matter. They don’t really need anything more than Jesus did, safety, support, peace and the opportunity to pursue their God-given dreams. Just this weekend I learned that we, the United Methodist Church are being given the opportunity and honor of helping them this Christmas season. “Beyond Bethlehem” is an outreach ministry to refugees worldwide, providing for basic support in their time of greatest need.

We are being invited to have a simpler Christmas. We are being encouraged to remember the Christmas is in fact Jesus birthday, not ours and to celebrate his birth by sharing with the least of these among us. You will be hearing much more about the timely opportunity to make a difference in our world, as it is today.

In Service to Christ,  
John



# December 2015 Worship Themes

**Description:** The word advent is derived from the Latin words adventus for “arrival” or advenire which can be translated “to come.” Advent is that season in the church year, that falls neatly between our American celebrations of Thanksgiving and Christmas. Traditionally it is time to reflect on the meaning and implications of the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. This year during Advent, we will be invited to Come to Bethlehem and See or witness once more the miracle of the birth of God’s Son and how His arrival changes everything!

**December 6, 2015: “Christmas Pageant” (one 10am worship service!)**  
Our Sunday school children and youth will present the Pageant entitled “Ornaments of Christmas,” followed by a pancake breakfast hosted and prepared by our youth.

**December 13, 2015: “Nothing is Impossible with God”**  
**Scripture:** Luke 1:26-38  
**Focus Verse:** “The angel said to Mary, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. (Luke 1:35)”  
**Theme:** The birth of Jesus, divine yet human, was truly supernatural and miraculous

**December 20, 2015: “Blessed is She who Believes”**  
**Scripture:** Luke 1:39-45  
**Focus Verse:** “Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished! (Luke 1:45).”  
**Theme:** Blessing come to those who trust the Lord and His words.

**December 24, 2015: “Come to Bethlehem and See”**  
**Scripture:** Matthew 1:18-25, 1 John 4:9.  
**Focus Verse:** “God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. (1 John 4:9)”  
**Theme:** The birth of Jesus reveals God’s love for all people.

**December 27, 2015: “When Jesus Needed Refuge”**  
**Scripture:** Matthew 2:13-18.  
**Focus Verse:** Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, (Matthew 2:14)”  
**Theme:** The Lord watches over people when they are in danger.

## South United Methodist Church Contact Information

<b>Church office:</b> (860) 647-9141	<b>South Church Staff</b>
<b>Office Hours:</b> Mon Wed Fri 9:00a -12:00p Tues, Thurs 6:00p-9:00p	Pastor - Rev. John Marshall ext. 14 Director of Music - Earle Bidwell ext. 11 Organist - Christopher Walton Director of Ministries - Terry Marshall ext. 15 Director Next Gen Ministries - J.T. Himmelstein ext. 13 Pastoral Intern - Derek Wilson ext. 16 Sexton - Ken Schaller ext. 20 Sexton - Don Wilby ext. 20 Office Managers - Colleen Olbert/Patti LaForest ext. 10 Rev. Richard Thompson (retired)
<b>Email address:</b> <a href="mailto:office@southumc.com">office@southumc.com</a>	
<b>Web address:</b> <a href="http://southumc.com">southumc.com</a>	
<b>Facebook:</b> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/southumc">facebook.com/southumc</a>	
<b>Prayer Chain:</b> (860) 337-2793 or <a href="mailto:prayer@southumc.com">prayer@southumc.com</a>	

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# Christmas Candlelight Concert

Sunday, December 13, 2015

6:30 p.m.

South United Methodist Church  
1226 Main Street  
Manchester, CT

Case Memorial Chime  
Chancel Concert Choir  
Soloists

Wesley Ringers Handbell Choir

Director of Music, Earle Bidwell

Accompanist  
Tanya Lukyanova  
Jill Smith  
Christopher Walton

*A free will offering will be gratefully accepted*



On Friday, December 18th, the Young Adults will be helping to pack meals for families-in-need in the Manchester area. This event will take place at the church in Cooper Hall and will start at 6:00 pm. After that we will be heading out for a meal of our own, so bring \$10 cash with you and plan to be ending around 8:45. If you have questions please connect with JT and/or Catey. We hope to see you there!



**Cup of Joy ~ Women**

Join us any Sunday  
10:45am ~ Cooper Hall

**Cup of Joe ~ Men**

Join us any Sunday  
10:45am ~ 3rd floor classroom



**Social Justice Class**

Join us any Sunday  
10:45am ~ Sanctuary "round table"

**SUMC 2015 CHRISTMAS PAGEANT:  
ORNAMENTS OF CHRISTMAS**



**Dec 5th Dress Rehearsal and pizza lunch  
10:00 to 12:00 in Sanctuary**

**Showtime**

**Dec 6th at 10am Service  
(only service)**

**Pancake Breakfast**

**At 11:00  
In Cooper Hall**

**\$3 Kids/\$5 Adults  
\$15 max**



**Youth will be serving and singing  
for tips!!**

**Upcoming Youth Events**

Hello Youth and Youth Families! Welcome to the wonderful and crazy month of Christmas...Our Schedule is unique this time of year, so please pay attention to the schedule provided below, and you can find the most up to date calendar info on our website (just fyi).

- 12/6 Youth at Pancake Breakfast 9:30am to 12:00pm
- 12/13 Christmas Concert 5:30pm to 8:00pm
- 12/20 Youth Group at 5pm at South
- 12/27 NO Youth Group



We really need helpers for cooking, clean up and facilitation of the Pancake Breakfast, so if you are willing and able to help please let JT know ASAP. Also, we will be selling baked goods and collecting the offering for the Concert. The proceeds that we gather will help support our Winter Retreat trip to Berea, so let JT know if you are willing to bake! If you have any questions please let JT know. Merry Christmas!

**South United Methodist Church**

1226 Main Street  
Manchester, CT 06040 860-647-9141

Pastor: Rev. John Marshall  
Stephen Leaders: Alberta Hoagland, Terry Marshall, Don Wilby  
& Dave Bidwell



There are times when everyone of us experiences difficulties. . .

Please consider this excerpt taken from a letter written by one of our current Stephen Ministers. . .

*"For those of you who don't know me, my name is Amy Cooper. I have attended SUMC since 2005. I joined the church and was baptized on Easter Sunday, April 8, 2012.*

*As I came to know more of you and was so richly embraced, I wanted to find ways to be a better servant of God. On May 18, 2014, I was commissioned as a Stephen Minister.*

*At some points in life, everyone faces periods of crisis, transition or difficulty. It is during these times, people can receive great benefit from a confidential, caring relationship with someone who will faithfully listen, empathize, pray with, and for them, and encourage them with Christ's love and care.*

*Since my involvement with the Stephen Ministry, I have been faced with many things in my personal life including: a change in employment after 13 years with a company, the suicide of my former boyfriend, personal health concerns, long distance care giving for my mother and father in Northern NY, the death of my father the day after my 49th birthday, my Aunt's diagnosis of breast cancer, not to mention bouts of frustration, depression and anxiety.*

*I want to encourage each and every one of you to consider the real people in our congregation who care about you and have gone through at least 50 hours of training as well as making a 2 year commitment to "Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Galatians 6:2.*

*There are no small or inconsequential challenges, everything is real and relative to the individual facing it. Whether you, or someone close to you, is going through grief, relationship struggles, cancer, financial difficulties, job loss, spiritual crisis, or just want to have someone to talk with, Stephen Ministers are here in our congregation to care for you.*

My life has been blessed through my training, and through the support of our Stephen Ministers."

If you are interested in more information about Stephen Ministry, please see Pastor John or Terry, or call the church office at [860-647-9141](tel:860-647-9141).

**ANNUAL ALL-CHURCH CONFERENCE**



**Tuesday, December 8  
7:00pm  
in The Cafe**

**Everyone is encouraged and invited to attend**

# December 2015 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>29</b> 9:30am Traditional Children's Story 9:45am K- 2nd Children's Church 10:45am Sunday School 10:45am SS Family Advent Event 11:30am NO Pageant rehearsal 11:45am Contemporary in Café 5:00pm NO Youth Group	<b>30</b> 6:30pm Young Women's Studies	<b>1</b> 12pm Bulletin Deadline 7:00pm Committees & Commissions	<b>2</b> 11:00am Staff Mtg 6:30pm Wildfire 6:30pm Wesley Ringers 7:30pm Concert Choir	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 7:30am Men's Fellowship 9:30am Knitting Group 10:00am Pageant Dress Rehearsal/Pizza
<b>6</b> 10:00am One Service w/Pageant 11:00am Pancake Breakfast w/Youth	<b>7</b> 6:30pm Young Women's Studies	<b>8</b> 12pm Bulletin Deadline 7:00pm Annual All-Church Conference	<b>9</b> 11:00am Staff Mtg 6:30pm Wildfire 6:30pm Wesley Ringers 7:30pm Concert Choir	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b> 9:30am Traditional Children's Story 9:45am K- 2nd Children's Church 10:45am Sunday School 11:45am Contemporary in Café 6:30pm Youth Group @Concert 6:30pm Christmas Candlelight Concert	<b>14</b> 6:30pm Young Women's Studies	<b>15</b> 12pm Bulletin Deadline 7:30pm Staff Parish Mtg	<b>16</b> 11:00am Staff Mtg 6:30pm Wildfire 6:30pm Wesley Ringers 7:30pm Chancel Choir	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 6:00pm Seasonal Sharing packing	<b>19</b> 9:30am Knitting Group
<b>20</b> 9:30am Traditional Children's Story 9:45am K- 2nd Children's Church 10:30am Seasonal Sharing delivery 10:45am Sunday School 11:45am Contemporary in Café 5:00pm Youth Group <b>**Challenge deadline</b>	<b>21</b> 6:30pm Young Women's Studies	<b>22</b> 12pm Bulletin Deadline 7:30pm Finance Mtg	<b>23</b> 11:00am Staff Mtg 6:30pm Wildfire 6:30pm Wesley Ringers 7:30pm Chancel Choir	<b>24</b> 5:30pm Family Service 10:00pm Traditional Service	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>27</b> 9:30am Traditional Children's Story 9:45am K- 2nd Children's Church 10:45am Sunday School 11:45am Contemporary in Café 5:00pm NO Youth Group	<b>28</b> 6:30pm NO Women's Studies	<b>29</b> 12pm Bulletin Deadline	<b>30</b> 11:00am Staff Mtg 6:30pm Wildfire 6:30pm Wesley Ringers 7:30pm Chancel Choir	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 7:30am Men's Fellowship 9:30am Knitting Group

# CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

## DECEMBER 24

### 5:30PM

## FAMILY SERVICE W/CHILDREN'S STORY

### 10:00PM

## TRADITIONAL SERVICE W/ CHOIR

## EVERYONE WELCOME

## SOUTHUMC.COM

### South Church is Reaching out Through:

**OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD** Our thanks to Jill Smith and her crew for introducing this program for children around the world through Samaritan's Purse. About 130 shoeboxes have been filled and delivered to the collection point.

**MITTEN TREE** Mitten Trees are up in the Narthex and Reception Hall. You could pick up some inexpensive hats or mittens or sweat pants and put them on the tree. They will then be passed on to Washington School to use with children who don't have adequate clothing when they come to school this winter.

**SEASONAL SHARING** Thanksgiving has come and gone, and we gathered food to help about twenty families enjoy their Thanksgiving dinners. Now we are moving on to Christmas. Bill McGugan and Ginny Hartzog already have a list of family names and you can check with them if you have any questions or want to contribute cash for things like pies or fresh vegetables or butter and milk and eggs that have to be purchased at the last minute. Requests for Christmas gifts are on cards and can be picked up at church. These gifts will go with the food items we give out for Christmas.

Packing will be done on Friday night, December 18 in Cooper Hall. Come and join us, and bring your family. Delivery will be on Sunday, December 20.

**IMAGINE NO MALARIA** We still have much of the matching challenge gift available. Every dollar you give means two dollars that will go to fight malaria (which we hear is spreading once again).

**STOP HUNGER NOW** We have a definite date set for Saturday morning, April 16, and we'll have sign up sheets available as it gets closer. Meanwhile we will be soon starting to collect the \$2900 we need to underwrite the food we will be packing and sending off somewhere. Checks designated to this project may be sent to the church.

**WARM WELCOMES** Good reports have been coming in about ordinary folks in our congregation who have gone outside their comfort zones to make visitors feel welcome. If that includes you, well done. You never can tell what lives we might touch with such a warm start.

**WASHINGTON SCHOOL** Thanks for all of the donations to Washington School. So far this school year we have donated 72 sweatpants, 67 underwear, 80 pairs of socks, 36 hats and 30 pairs of mittens. Other school supplies have also been donated. They would like more sweatpants, hats and mittens. (Maybe our mitten trees can help with this.)

### Christmas Seasonal Sharing

Many thanks to all of you who helped make Thanksgiving a lot happier for the 22 families who received food from South Church.

At Christmas we will have the same 22 families plus 5 more. We will be providing similar foods plus a gift for each member of the family. Additionally, we are supplying Christmas gifts for residents of Green Lodge.

Food items needed: juice, canned sweet potato, vegetables, stuffing, gravy, cranberry sauce, chicken broth and coffee. Monetary donations will be needed to purchase pies, rolls, fresh vegetables, milk, margarine and eggs.

Christmas Gifts: there will be an index card for each person indicating age, gender, first name, code # and a specific gift request. Cards and sign-up sheets will be in Reception Hall. Please return gifts no later than December 13<sup>th</sup>. MACC has suggested that the amount that you spend on each individual's gift is about \$20- \$25. In an effort to provide comparable gifts to siblings in a family, some cards have been grouped together.

December 18th (Friday) at 6 P.M. sort and pack in Cooper Hall.

December 20th (Sunday) delivery of food and gifts.

Please sign up in Reception Hall to deliver food and/or bring ham or turkey.

Bill McGugan, runbillrun01@gmail.com, 860-649-9072

**SUMC Administrative Board Meeting  
September 15, 2015  
Meeting Minutes**

**In Attendance:** Carol Goodwin, Jane Zadnik, Derek Wilson, Pastor John Marshall, Margaret Callaway, Pastor Dick Thompson, Kim Grehn, Patti LaForest, Bill Hyde, J.T. Himmelstein, Randy Meek, Don Wilby, Janet Schmidt, Terry Marshall

**Opening Prayer/Reading of Vision and Mission Statements:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Chairperson Deb Grehn and Derek Wilson read John Wesley's Rule.

**Acceptance of Outstanding Minutes:**

Draft minutes from the June 9, 2015 meeting were reviewed and minor edits were raised.

*There was a motion (Bill Hyde, Margaret Callaway) to accept the minutes inclusive of the edits; all were in favor and the motion carried.*

**Unfinished Business:**

**Church Directory:** Janet Schmidt reported that another meeting was held to discuss plans for a new church directory and the small group working on this does not have sufficient resources to carry out the project. They suggest establishment of a dedicated team to take on this large project. Pastor John will explore recruiting a point person and a team to work on the new directory.

Terry Marshall introduced Derek Wilson to the group. Derek is serving as an intern for Pastor John and he will be working on a congregational care plan and program for our church. There may be an opportunity to address the need for a directory as part of this larger initiative.

**Committee Reports:**

**Trustees:** Randy Meek reported that Trustees have been working to resolve heating issues in the education wing. The Susanna Wesley Hall conversion to natural gas is experiencing challenges and more analysis is needed. Options are being explored to address a housing need for the pastoral intern. A new refrigerator has been purchased for the church kitchen and a generator for the church is also being considered. We are moving forward with the sale of Jesse Lee House to Walden Behavioral.

**Next Generation Ministries:** J.T. Himmelstein reported that young men's and young women's bible studies were held through the summer and are continuing this fall. Youth Group met over the summer as well. Youth and young adults (17 total) attended a concert in Boston where two Christian bands performed. Most of the youth volunteered at VBS. There will be a corn maize event September 26 for the youth.

**Finance:** Bill Hyde presented a June through August view of income and expenses. Income has exceeded budget and expenses are also running well. We've paid over 67% of our annual mission shares budget, we're in a good cash position and all bills have been paid. The Finance Committee will use current budgets for committees/commissions for 2016, unless they receive a specific request otherwise.

**Outreach:** Pastor Dick reported that the Outreach Commission has been trying to respond to needs at Washington School including socks, sweatpants and underwear. October 18 is the Crop Hunger Walk. VBS food contributions for MACC were very generous – two carloads full! Though we've already raised our committed funds for the Imagine No Malaria campaign, more is needed to reach the goal, and we will attempt to raise additional funds.

**Social Justice Group:** Pastor Dick reported that the Social Justice Group met. Several topics are under discussion for further exploration.

**Education:** Terry Marshall reported that the Fair has been moved to November 7 due to concerns about the elevator not being finished. Nichole Taggart and Karen Bufford have been submitted as new additions to the Education Commission.

*There was a motion (Education Commission, Bill Hyde) to add Nichole Taggart and Karen Bufford to the Education Commission. All were in favor and the motion carried.*

There will be some shifting of Sunday School classes on completion of the elevator. We had a very successful VBS with 86 volunteers and over 90 children each day. Spirit Sunday was also a success. There is a new adult education offering – a Spiritual Gifts Class taught by Derek Wilson. The class starts October 1 and runs for 7 weeks on Thursday evenings in the Café.

**Memorials:** Jane Zadnik reported that the memorial fund received \$445 in gifts for the period July 1 through September 15.

**Staff Parish Relations (SPRC):** Janet Schmidt reported that SPRC will meet the last week of September. The 2016 budget and Conference reports are the first items on the agenda. Nursery coverage is another focus. A church clean up day after completion of the elevator is under consideration.

**Lay Leader:** Don Wilby attended Annual Conference in Manchester, NH. It was a good experience and he shared some highlights. Don shared information about several upcoming events, including Bishops Day November 12 at Stafford U.M. Church, Alleluia Sunday October 18 at Wesley U.M. Church in Springfield and several upcoming District Ministry Team events.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor John commented that the elevator construction has been a long process, but the work is high quality and the end is in sight. We received a recent contribution from Allen Ward Jr., in memory of his father, to be used toward Christian education.

**Closing Prayer / Adjournment:**

Pastor John offered a closing prayer and the meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carol E. Goodwin, Recording Secretary

# 2015 Christmas Pageant Ornaments of Christmas



December 6th

One Service  
10:00 a.m.

Pancake Breakfast to follow