



Return Service Requested

The CHALLENGE March 2017

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



*"Where the joy of life in Christ overflows"*

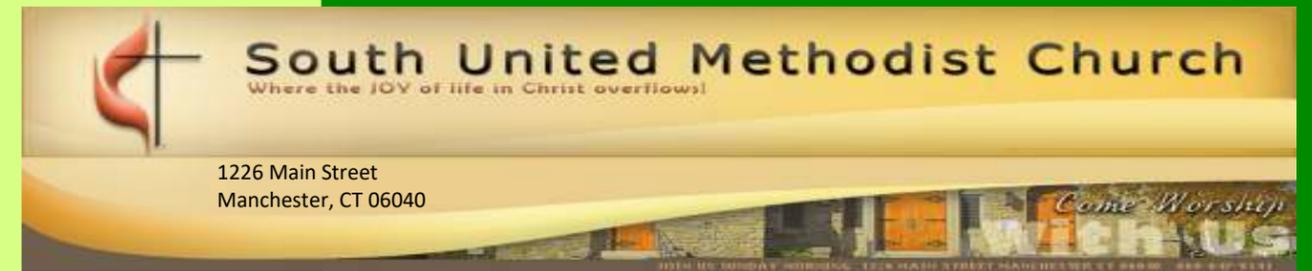
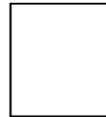
**Sunday Worship Schedule**

- 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)**

**April Challenge Deadline:**  
**Sunday, March 19, 2017**



**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
- Ash Wednesday Service  
March 1, 2017  
7:00pm

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**THE CHALLENGE MARCH 2017**

**The Servant Who Suffered**

*"When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of his experience, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins." (Isaiah 53:11, NLT)*

Dear Friends,

There is no aspect of the human condition more universally experienced than suffering. At the same time, most people actively seek to reduce or eliminate suffering from their lives. As those who believe in God, it is not uncommon to wonder and to ask Him why people, especially innocent people, have to go through so many types of suffering: from disease, to injustice to abuse. We wonder at times if God sees what we are going through, we question whether He understands the depths of our sorrow and pain.

In the passion of Jesus Christ, we can begin to find the answer. The suffering of our Lord was foretold in the Old Testament, recorded in the Gospels and reflected upon in the rest of the New Testament. In the book of Isaiah, we find one Old Testament passage which beautifully describes, and in fact both predicts and interprets, what Jesus Christ endured with great specificity. Isaiah not only tells his readers what this servant-Messiah would go through, but what God would make possible for all humanity through the pain He would endure.

The amazing central truth this passage seeks to explain is how the suffering, sacrificial death of one man could help so many people down through the centuries. Isaiah is clear that Jesus did not die as a mere martyr. Rather, God's purpose in the suffering He allowed His only Son, his righteous servant, to endure was to deal, once and for all, the sinful condition of the human race. Sin is that core disease that infects every human. It keeps us from doing the good we seek to do, it causes us to do great harm to ourselves and to other people. This sin is the origin of all the mistrust, greed, jealousy and insecurity that dwells in every human mind and heart.

In exchange for all of this, Jesus offered himself: love incarnate and embodied. To those filled with mistrust and insecurity, Christ offers confident faith in God's unconditional love. To those who battle greed, Jesus offers a deep soul satisfaction derived from God's complete and utter acceptance. Isaiah said it well, "my servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous." (Isaiah 53:11)

We will explore the meaning and significance of this amazing act of God's atoning love in worship each Sunday in March. As we reflect, we will be reminded once again that God is not indifferent to our suffering, but was wounded in Jesus so that everyone might know His loving presence in and through all of our sorrows.

**God's allowed Christ to suffer in order to deal, once and for all, with our human, sinful condition.**

In Service to Christ,  
John



# March 2017 Worship Themes

## March, 2017: Worship Themes

**Description:** We will explore the sufferings of Jesus from the standpoint of the prophet Isaiah. In the classic chapter 53, we see a portrait of a servant who suffered the worst torture ever devised. His horrific death was God's plan to take upon himself the sins of all people. . .

### March 5, 2017: "The Servant Suffered"

**Scripture:** Isaiah 52:13-53:3; A Seemingly ordinary man who suffered extraordinarily.

**Focus Verse:** "He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account." (Isaiah 53:3)

**Theme:** The Lord understands what it mean to suffer.

### March 12, 2017: "The Servant Suffered For Others"

**Scripture:** Isaiah 53:4-6; Bruised, scarred for others.

**Focus Verse:** "But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)

**Theme:** The One who suffered for the benefit of other people.

### March 19, 2017: "The Servant Suffered without fighting back"

**Scripture:** Isaiah 53:7-9; The servant suffered in silence

**Focus Verse:** He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. (Isaiah 53:7)

**Theme:** The Lord suffered without retaliating, or fighting back

### March 26, 2017: "The Servant Suffered to Save Many"

**Scripture:** Isaiah 53:10-12; Through his anguish many were made righteous

**Focus Verse:** Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." (Isaiah 53:12)

**Theme:** God's plan was to offer forgiveness for all through the suffering of One.

## South United Methodist Church Contact Information

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**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)

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/southumc](https://www.facebook.com/southumc)

**Prayer Chain:** (860) 337-2793 or  
[prayer@southumc.com](mailto:prayer@southumc.com)

### South Church Staff

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

Sexton - Ken Schaller ext. 20

Sexton - Don Wilby ext. 20

Office Managers - Colleen Olbert/Patti LaForest ext. 10  
Rev. Richard Thompson (retired)

## Guided New Testament Tour is under way...

It is hard to believe but we are already at the start of the third month of the year. How are you doing in your Bible reading? If you have been following along with the readings from the Guided NT tour, that's great! However, if not and you feel a need or a nudge to become more consistent, why not consider using the South Church New Testament readings? You will find a list of this month's readings below, in the bulletin and at southumc.com (click on the devos tab). On the two Thursdays of the month, from 6:30-7:30pm in *The Café*, Pastor John will lead a session previewing the New Testament material to be read in the coming weeks. The next scheduled sessions will be held: March 2<sup>nd</sup> and March 16<sup>th</sup>

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94	3/1/17	Revelation 18-19
95	3/2/17	Rev. 20-22
		Session 10: 1,2 Thess., 1,2 Tim., Titus, Philemon

### Readings 96-105: 1,2 Thessalonians 1,2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon

96	3/3/17	1 Thessalonians 1-2
97	3/6/17	1 Thessalonians 3-4
98	3/7/17	1 Thessalonians 5, 2 Thessalonians 1
99	3/8/17	2 Thessalonians 2-3
100	3/9/17	1 Timothy 1-2
101	3/10/17	1 Timothy 3-4
102	3/13/17	1 Timothy 5-6
103	3/14/17	2 Timothy 1-2
104	3/15/17	2 Timothy 3-4
105	3/16/17	Titus 1-2, Philemon
		Session 11: Intro to Hebrews

### Readings 106-120: Hebrews

106	3/17/17	Hebrews 1
107	3/20/17	Hebrews 2
108	3/21/17	Hebrews 3
109	3/22/17	Hebrews 4
110	3/23/17	Hebrews 5
111	3/24/17	Hebrews 6
112	3/27/17	Hebrews 7
113	3/28/17	Hebrews 8
114	3/29/17	Hebrews 9
115	3/30/17	Hebrews 10:1-18
116	3/31/17	Hebrews 10:19-39



"Our trustees are in the process of reassessing the use of our various church properties. If you have an idea, or vision, for how space could be used in the future, please submit it in writing to Pastor John and The Board of Trustees before their next meeting, March 7. E-mail may be sent to: Pastorjohn@southumc.com and rmegggers@113law.com or ideas in writing can be submitted to the church office directly."



**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 ~ 3rd floor classroom



**STOP HUNGER NOW**

### PREPARING TO STOP HUNGER

Each spring, some sixty or so members of our congregation gather together and pack bag after bag of lunches for school kids in some impoverished part of the world. We have a great time. All the teacher at those schools has to do is add a little water and cook the combination of rice and soy and flavoring and vitamins.

We have collected up our money (more than the \$2900 minimum). We could use a few more volunteers to work on the packaging on April 1 (from 10:00 am to 11:30 am). Sign up on the sheets in Reception Hall or call Jane Thompson at 860-647-7099 if you would like to help.

Also talk to Jane if you have a strong back and would be willing to help us unload the truck at 9:00 am and set up Cooper Hall.



### Lenten Prayer Opportunity

There will be a weekly prayer time in the Cafe during the Lenten season. It is an opportunity for church family and friends to come together and explore ways to pray. Focus of prayer would be based on the book, "Draw the Circle, the 40 Day Prayer Challenge" by Mark Batterson. This is the tool that is being used by all of the Manchester churches who are part of Manchester CT United Prayer. There will be a prayer "leader" present to guide the group at each session. We will hold two back to back sessions on the following Fridays during lent: March 10, 17, 24, 31 and April 7th. The times will be 5:30 - 6:00 and 6:00 - 6:30. Please come and experience the joy and blessing of prayer and together we can seek what God wills to do in our midst. "if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14



**March New Testament Class**  
3-02-17  
&  
3-16-17



### Washington School News

Several new opportunities are available for our congregation to support Washington School. Some are 1-time commitments, others are ongoing, or ways to support the school from home. Please consider volunteering!

1. Consider buying a box of plastic bags (all sizes needed) and leaving them in the Washington School container. These are materials that are needed by teachers, and often not provided for in their budgets!
2. Interested in volunteering? Once you submit your one page application to the school office, you can begin! The school is looking for volunteers from 12:10 to 1:00 pm daily to be involved in small group activities and games with Kindergarten and First Graders. The school is also interested in volunteers to attend their monthly "Grow Ceremony". Many students do not have parents who can attend. This time commitment is only an hour a month!
3. Two Family Nights, A Zumba Night (April 26<sup>th</sup>), and a Math Night (Sometime in May) are opportunities for people to volunteer in all capacities, from sign in to snacks, to Zumba participation!!! More details to follow!!

Please consider these wonderful opportunities to be active in our community! Any questions, please call Donna Costello at 860-539-8151, or email donna.costello@sbcglobal.net

### Upcoming Youth Events

The Youth program will be meeting every Sunday this month for Teen Class and Youth Group! On March 19th the Youth will go to Launch, a trampoline park located in Hartford, for a fun outing, and we will be meeting there at 5! The cost is \$15 plus change for snacks and arcade games, and pick up will be at the park at 7! Please see JT with any questions.

- 3/5 Youth Group @5pm
- 3/12 Youth Group @5pm
- 3/19 Youth Group @5pm (@ Launch)
- 3/26 Youth Group @5pm



### SUMC will once again be hosting a Community-wide Prayer Meeting

**Sunday, March 5  
at 6:00pm**

in The Cafe with the Wildfire Worship Band  
Please come and help lift our community in prayer with Christians from other Manchester Churches.

Services are held on the 1st Sunday of each month and the location varies from Church to Church. See Pastor John or Terry for more details

# March 2017 Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>26</b> 9:30am Traditional Service w/Children's Story 9:45am K- 2nd Children's Church 10:45am Sunday School 11:45am Contemporary in Café 5:00pm Youth Group	<b>27</b> 6:30pm NO Young Men 6:30pm NO Young Women's Studies	<b>28</b> 12pm Bulletin Deadline 7:00pm Staff-Parish	<b>1</b> 11:00am Staff Mtg 6:30pm NO Wildfire 6:30pm NO Wesley Ringers 7:30pm NO Chancel Choir 7:00pm Ash Wednesday Service	<b>2</b> 6:30pm New Testament Class 7:30pm SM Supervision	<b>3</b> 6:30pm Night of Prayer Event	<b>4</b> 7:30am Men's Fellowship 9:30am Knitting Group
<b>5</b> 9:30am Traditional Service w/Children's Story 9:45am K- 2nd Children's Church 10:45am Sunday School 11:45am Contemporary in Café 5:00pm Youth Group 6:00pm Community Prayer	<b>6</b> 6:30pm NO Young Men 6:30pm Young Women's Studies	<b>7</b> 12pm Bulletin Deadline 7:00pm Committees & Commissions	<b>8</b> 11:00am Staff Mtg 6:30pm Wildfire 6:30pm Wesley Ringers 7:30pm Chancel Choir	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> 5:30pm Prayer Event 6:00pm Prayer Event	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> 9:30am Traditional Service w/Children's Story 9:45am K- 2nd Children's Church 10:45am Sunday School 11:45am Contemporary in Café 5:00pm Youth Group	<b>13</b> 6:30pm NO Young Men 6:30pm Young Women's Studies	<b>14</b> 12pm Bulletin Deadline 7:30pm Ad Board	<b>15</b> 11:00am Staff Mtg 6:30pm Wildfire 6:30pm Wesley Ringers 7:30pm Chancel Choir	<b>16</b> 6:30pm New Testament Class 7:30pm SM Supervision	<b>17</b> 5:30pm Prayer Event 6:00pm Prayer Event	<b>18</b> 9:30am Knitting Group
<b>19</b> 9:30am Traditional Service w/Children's Story 9:45am K- 2nd Children's Church 10:45am Sunday School 11:45am Contemporary in Café 5:00pm Youth Group <b>**Challenge deadline</b>	<b>20</b> 6:30pm NO Young Men 6:30pm Young Women's Studies	<b>21</b> 12pm Bulletin Deadline 7:00pm Lydia Circle 7:30pm Staff Parish	<b>22</b> 11:00am Staff Mtg 6:30pm Wildfire 6:30pm Wesley Ringers 7:30pm Chancel Choir	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 5:30pm Prayer Event 6:00pm Prayer Event	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> 9:30am Traditional Service w/Children's Story 9:45am K- 2nd Children's Church 10:45am Sunday School 11:45am Contemporary in Café 5:00pm Youth Group	<b>27</b> 6:30pm NO Young Men 6:30pm Young Women's Studies	<b>28</b> 12pm Bulletin Deadline 7:30pm Finance Committee	<b>29</b> 11:00am Staff Mtg 6:30pm Wildfire 6:30pm Wesley Ringers 7:30pm Concert Choir	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 5:30pm Prayer Event 6:00pm Prayer Event	<b>1</b> 7:30am Men's Fellowship 9:30am Knitting Group 10:am Stop Hunger Now Event

## More South News

### Mad MACC Shoppers

The Mad MACC shoppers are back. Once again the Outreach Committee will be collecting monetary donations and coupons to shop for the MACC food pantry. Our shoppers will search out the best bargains we possibly can and deliver the food to MACC. The plan is to spend half the money in March and April when the shelves are annually bare and the other half in the summer when children are home and missing school lunches. Please continue to bring in food if you prefer, the need is great.

Collecting Monetary Donations March 12 and 19 after the 9:30 service in Reception Hall and after the 11:45 service in The Café.



REBUILDING TOGETHER is looking for volunteers for its 2017 program. The mission of this community based volunteer program is to bring volunteers and communities together to ensure that our neighbors are living in warmth, safety and independence. Last year 700 volunteers came together & their donations of time, talent, materials and money assisted 66 families. This year's

rebuilding day will take place on SATURDAY, APRIL 29. Look for the display in Reception Hall where you can sign up beginning February 19 through March 12. You will also need to fill out a waiver form which you will find next to the sign up sheet.

Please consider joining our SUMC team and this National non-profit organization celebrating its 25 years of service. You can help by choosing to paint or participating in yard work. Everyone is invited to attend the Town barbecue that follows the event & is given a free tee-shirt, but those gifts cannot compare to the rewards of giving back to your community and the gift of your time. Just ask those who have volunteered year after year!

As one grateful recipient wrote: "To us Rebuilding Together is an impressive display of community spirit to see so many people helping a neighbor whom they don't know..." Won't you please join us on April 29 to enrich the lives of others less fortunate than ourselves by helping them to live in a safe and healthy home. You'll be so glad that you did.

Outreach Commission

## Outreach News

### South Church is Reaching out Through:

#### REBUILDING TOGETHER

It's hard to believe we are already looking toward working on someone's house and yard at the end of April, but the town leaders need to know how many people will be there on that Saturday and what skills we have, so the sign-up sheets are in Reception Hall at church. Give it some real thought; it's always a rewarding day.

#### SUPPORTING STOP HUNGER NOW

We have the necessary money, but, as this is being written, there is still need for some more workers to package the food on April 1 at 10:00 am. Come one, come all, young and old; there is work for everyone. Sign-up sheets are located in Reception Hall.

#### SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY

We were excited to hear that our youth were able to raise about \$1,342 with their bowls (and pans) on Sunday morning, February 5. All the proceeds went to MACC to help feed the hungry in Manchester. Thanks once again for your generosity; we do make a difference.

#### WORKING WITH THE CHILDREN AT WASHINGTON SCHOOL

Donna Costello has agreed to take over our long-standing relationship with the families at Washington School. She will be sharing news on upcoming projects in coming weeks... everything from recruiting individual helpers to supporting Math night.

#### CARE PACKAGES TO COLLEGE STUDENTS

Our congratulations to J.T. and his crew for getting out care packages to our college students during exam time and letting them know they are still in our prayers.

#### CARE PACKAGES TO OUR SHUT-INS

Our congratulations also to Bill McGugan and his team for the 23 baskets of midwinter cheer that were delivered for Valentine's Day to some of our members who can't get to church regularly.



### South UMC

#### ASH Wednesday Service

March 1 at 7pm in The Sanctuary

Pastor John will bring an inspiring message and  
The Chancel Choir will sing

As we embark on the Holy season of Lent for 2017,  
Everyone is encouraged to attend

**Ash Wednesday** is the first day of Lent in the Western Christian calendar. Occurring 46 days before Easter, it is a moveable fast that can fall as early as February 4 and as late as March 10.

According to the canonical gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke; Jesus spent 40 days fasting in the desert, where he endured temptation by Satan. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of this 40-day liturgical period of prayer and fasting or abstinence. Of the 46 days until Easter, six are Sundays. As the Christian sabbath, Sundays are not included in the fasting period and are instead "feast" days during Lent.

Ash Wednesday derives its name from the practice of placing ashes on the foreheads of adherents as a celebration and reminder of human mortality, and as a sign of mourning and repentance to God. The ashes used are typically gathered from the burning of the palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday.

Although generally seen as a Catholic practice, as it was mostly abandoned by Protestants except for Anglicans after the Protestant Reformation, it has become increasingly common in much of Christianity, now being observed by many Lutherans and Methodists in addition to Catholics and Anglicans.

