

THE OPEN DOORS

The Newsletter of the Ashby Congregational Church
February 2023

From the Pastor

We are starting this New Year by bringing back our “Open Door” newsletter. It has been a few years since the last one went out and it has been decided to start again with news and stories from our church.

Communications is absolutely necessary for a church to maintain the fellowship of its members. We have a very special church here in Ashby and we can make it stronger by spreading the word of who and what we are. It is our mission to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ into our community and beyond. By letting people know the positive message of God’s Word we can build our church and help others find what we have discovered for ourselves, the complete love of God for those who seek it.

When you receive the Open Doors, share it with those you know. If you know of someone who may appreciate this newsletter, let us know and we will put them on our list. It will be available electronically by email and copies will be available at the church. If there is anything that you want to see put in the Open Doors, let us know. There will be a regular list of coming events and articles regarding whatever you may find of interest.

Once the 1st issue is released, please let us know what we can do to make it interesting for you.

Blessing,
Pastor Ken



Sunday Morning Worship Service: 10:00 am

OUR CHURCH HERITAGE



Our church was organized in 1819. The Ashby Congregational Church, with a covenant dated 1776, had become divided by doctrinal differences which finally came to a crisis over calling a minister and supplying the pulpit. In 1818 a majority of the Church members withdrew, and in October 1819 they formed the Calvinistic Congregational Society, and a church. A state law did not then allow incorporation of groups admitting “non-persons at law” (women, minors), so a dual organization – a society (parish) to conduct business and a church to maintain worship – was necessary.

Our church was incorporated in 1885 as the Orthodox Congregational Church in Ashby. In 1974 the name was changed to Ashby Congregational Church.

Our church’s location has influenced its history. Well into the twentieth century, Ashby retained the character of a relatively remote hill town where small-scale farming supplemented by a variety of mills and enterprises gave a sense of local independence and self-sufficiency long after the reality was gone. Our church served as a social and civic center of town life. Besides all kinds of socials, musicals and meals – from a Harvest Supper to depression lunches, civic occasions such as High school graduations, town meeting dinners, Old Home Day festivities, and sewing sessions for wartime relief or local benevolence have taken place in this house of worship.

Taken from 1990 Church Directory



MEET THE ORGANIST

Laureen Shell

Laureen is a local musician from Ashburnham and comes from a musical family. Her father, U. Jon Pera was the director of the Ashby Band for many years. Her mother, Laila, was the organist/pianist at the Ashburnham Congregational Church for several years and also served as the accompanist for school concerts and dance recitals for Marion Rice. Her family continues to be involved in music. At family gatherings, they often blend their talents together through music.

Laureen was the organist at the German church, Trinity Congregational, which closed in 2019. She is not new to our church. Laureen served as a substitute on several occasions and in 2021, when Natalia Klauer retired, she agreed to take the position temporarily. It was not long before Laureen became our new permanent organist/pianist at the Ashby Congregational Church.

We are truly blessed to have her with us!



SUNDAY SCHOOL



We started off our curriculum this year with a unit study of the Miracles of the Bible. This unit of study covers Bible stories from the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. Through these Bible stories, the children are learning about the miracles, and understand not only did they actually happen, just as described in the Bible, but why they happened. It's these miracles that will give a unique insight into how God expects us to act and how real He is still today.

Each week, the children summarize and illustrate the story in a book that they each have created called, "Miracles of the Bible". Crafts and videos are also used in the lessons. Come and join us!



BIBLE STUDY

We will be having Bible Study on Tuesdays during the Spring and Fall. We will be announcing the topics before we begin a study. At present, we are studying the book of Romans with commentary from Max Lucado.

We meet in the church hall on Tuesdays at 1:00pm and at Pastor Ken's house at 7:00pm.

LADIES NIGHT

Ladies Night is coming back! It's been some time since we've met for fellowship and fun. We will be planning monthly events and hope to see many of you and your friends. Activity suggestions are welcomed. Let Cathy know at ckjohnson01431@comcast.net.

Movies

Arts

Crafts

Food



THE HISTORY OF THE ASHBY SUGAR SUPPER

The origin of the Sugar Supper in Ashby is believed to begin sometime in the 1960's at the Perna farm in their barn on South Road as a "thank you" dinner for those who helped collect and boil down the sap into syrup. It eventually evolved into an Ashby Grange event to raise money for local organizations in Ashby. After the Ashby Grange dissolved, a group of dedicated individuals kept it going until COVID-19 shut it down. While the Perna family brought it to Ashby, this Supper is in many communities throughout the Northeast. The dinner generally consists of maple baked ham, baked beans, deviled eggs, potato salad, but the star of the meal is the "Sugar on Snow". This involved heating pure maple syrup until it reaches 234 degrees F; then drizzling it over snow so that it turns into a taffy-like consistency. It is served with sour pickles and homemade plain donuts.

THIS YEAR - The Friends of The Ashby COA, will be hosting the dinner in the Ashby Congregational Church Fellowship Hall

Menu: Baked Ham, Maple Baked Beans, Coleslaw & Potato Salad
"Homemade Donuts and a Big Draw Maple sugar on snow"

March 25th at 5:30pm

Tickets are: \$15
\$12 for seniors and kids 10 yrs. old and under

Seating is limited to 100 and *reservations are required*

Call 978-386-5579 for reservations

MISSIONS

*God at Work,
Faith in Action*

MISSIONS NEWS

The Missions committee met in January to discuss where the church's next donations would be sent. Over the course of the fiscal year, we try to apportion the missions' budget to three major areas: regional, national and international. With this in mind, we elected to send a donation of \$250 to Operation Smile, an international mission that operates on children born with severely disfiguring mouths and pallets that impair normal speech; and \$300 to The Maine Seacoast Outreach, a regional mission that serves the dense island population off the coast of Maine.

*****SPECIAL COLLECTION for the EARTHQUAKE in SYRIA and TURKEY*****

Due to the devastating earthquake of 7.8, plus severe after-shocks, in Syria and Turkey on February 7th, the Missions Committee would like to provide an opportunity to it church membership and friends to make their own financial contributions to the relief efforts. The money collected will be included with an additional \$200 from Missions. A check will be mailed to the Samaritan's Purse in VA, which is always a first-responder wherever aid is needed! Checks can be made out to The Ashby Congregational Church and mailed to the same, Box 126, Ashby, MA 01431. ****Please note on your check "Earthquake" donation**** Donations can also be made at the church on Sundays in a specially marked basket. Donations will be accepted for the next two weeks, through Sunday, February 28th.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH

SWEATSHIRT SALE - ASHBY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

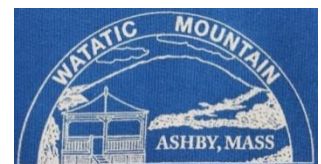
\$24 - Crew Neck Sweatshirt

\$38 – Full Zip Front Hooded Sweatshirt

Various Colors

(Red, Orange, Forest Green, Royal Blue, Navy Blue,
Heather Gray, Black, Cranberry, Purple & Pink)

To Preorder Call Cathy at: 978-386-5502



*Youth & Adult
Sizes Available*

Chicken Soup with Egg-Lemon Sauce (Avgolemono)

From the recipe box of Nancy Peeler



Prep Time: 25 min
Inactive Prep Time: 2 hr. 0 min
Cook Time: 1 hr. 20 min

Level: Easy
Serves: about 8 servings

1 (3 pound) free range chicken
12 cups cold water
3 tablespoons kosher salt
1 leek, cleaned and quartered
1 carrot, peeled and quartered
2 bay leaves
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 cups finely diced onion (about 1 medium onion)
2/3 cups Arborio rice
1/2 cup fresh lemon juice
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

In a 6 to 8-quart stockpot, combine the chicken, water, and 2 tablespoons salt. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat; immediately reduce the heat to a very low simmer, and skim the foam from the surface. Add the leek, carrot, and bay leaves and continue to simmer with the chicken until the chicken is thoroughly cooked, about 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring, until translucent, about 6 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside.

Remove chicken from the broth, and allow meat to cool. Strain the broth and skim.

Dice the meat into large cubes; refrigerate until ready to use.

Return the broth to high heat, add the rice and onion and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until the rice is almost cooked through, about 20 minutes. Add the chicken and reduce the broth to a low simmer.

In a medium sized bowl, beat the lemon juice, eggs, and pepper. Ladle 2 cups of hot broth into a measuring cup with a pourable spout. While whisking, slowly pour the 2 cups of broth into the egg mixture. Pour the egg mixture back into the pot with the remaining 1 tablespoon of salt. Stir well to blend.

Divide among bowls and serve immediately.

LOOKING AHEAD

Ash Wednesday – February 22, 2023. Ashes may be received at the Church;
1:30-3:30PM and 7:30-9:00 PM

Sugar Supper – March 25th – 5:30pm Ashby Friends of the COA - Fellowship Hall

Palm Sunday – April 2nd

Maundy Thursday – April 6th – 7:00PM in the Sanctuary

Good Friday – April 7th

Easter Sunday – April 9th Sunrise Service – 6:10 AM Band Stand
Sunrise Breakfast in Fellowship Hall
Church Service – 10:00AM

The Open Doors

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Pastor Ken Johnson
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