The South Church Preschool

2020-2021

Program Guide

www.southchurchpreschool.org



A nurturing environment for young children . . .

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**PROGRAM**

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**Welcome to the South Church Preschool!**

This Program Guide introduces you to the South Church Preschool and may answer some frequently asked questions. In order to make this year a smooth one, please read the Guide carefully.

**PHILOSOPHY**

The philosophy of our program places emphasis on social skills, allowing children to learn through interactive and developmentally appropriate activities. These activities build self-confidence and autonomy. We provide an animated nurturing environment based on literacy, science and discovery, and creativity.

Our goal is to provide your child with a learning opportunity that will enrich his/her early childhood development and offer your family the best possible experience. We want to be partners with the families of our students. Parents or family members with specific questions or concerns about information contained within the Program Guide may first address these to the Director of the Preschool or may contact a member of the Preschool Committee.

**PROGRAM CURRICULUM**

Our curriculum is presented through learning activities, appropriate materials and structured group involvement within a loving, caring atmosphere. Moral values and empathy are modeled and encouraged. Each experience builds on another so that over the course of a school year, your child will have the benefit of learning and growing in an environment created with his/her developmental needs in mind.

Our teachers use learning center time to observe children at play (their work) and take note of behaviors and new skills including interpersonal (social) interactions. Teachers interact with students to maximize teachable moments, to assist with initiating play between peers, and toredirect negative or harmful behaviors.

**Learning Centers**

●Library - This area invites children to hear a story or create one. It enhances early literacy and language and sensory skills. It is a cozy, quiet center filled with interesting books that relate to our learning units; both fiction and non-fiction materials can be found here. It can be used as a listening center where audio CD’s can be set up so that children may enjoy listening to stories, either alone, or with a friend, as part of our library center.

●Construction Center - In this learning center, children explore the basic concepts of

 mathematics and physics through construction. Cardboard and wooden blocks provide an

 opportunity to build imagination and creativity as well as large motor skills.

●Housekeeping/Dress-Up Center - Here, children become anyone they choose within the structure of a safe classroom environment. Using creative role-playing, children can step into pretend roles of various people in their lives and enrich their social and language skills. Teachers remain nearby to assist and observe them. This is an enjoyable center for both girls and boys — our teachers, too!

●Art Center - A variety of art materials make this area one where children explore their

 artistic creativity. Age appropriate materials such as markers, scissors, stickers, envelopes,

 pencils, glue sticks and plenty of paper enliven the process. Easels are available where children

 can use markers, chalk and paint in open-ended activities that help them express themselves

 and develop their small motor skills.

●Sensory Art Center - Sand, water, play dough and shaving cream are some of the materials in

the sensory area. Children love to experience manipulating these materials in ways that are pleasing and relaxing. Here, they explore their sense of touch and smell.

**THE DAILY ROUTINE**

●Arrival - Parents sign their child(ren) in for the day as they enter the classroom. While

 parents prepare to leave; children begin to rotate through appropriate learning centers as

 described above.

●Greeting Circle - Teachers invite the class to meet on the carpet for an introduction to the

 day’s activities or to begin a unit. Students share and greet their peers during this time as well.

●Learning Centers and Projects - Children return to learning centers while teachers set up

 project tables. At project tables children are invited to explore new areas of interest in small

 groups as they work on a unit project or activity, which can take more than one day to

 complete. Children are encouraged but never forced to do a unit activity.

●Clean up - This is considered an important activity for learning teamwork and responsibility.

 Children work together with teachers each day to clean up play areas and toys. Teachers model

 clean up consistency and help children with simple instructions to expand their understanding.

●Second Circle - During this time children gather together for songs, stories and more. We may discuss the weather, mark our calendar, explore a new idea or review what we have learned. Colors, shapes, patterns, the seasons and stimulating stories provide the framework for many of our units. This is a cozy part of the program where teachers have a chance to work with their class as a large group and help bring children together.

●Snacks - Snack time provides a chance for children to enjoy social time at the tables.

 Everyone shares a daily snack together. With prior arrangements, school year and summer

birthdays can be celebrated at snack time.

● Lunch for 4 and 5 Day Programs – All 4 and 5 day programs will warrant that students bring a small lunch that can be eaten within a 20 minute time period. No beverages should be brought to school. State regulations require that ice packs **MUST** be put in the student’s lunch box.

Please know that we are an **Allergy Aware Center** and have designated the classrooms as Nut-Free Zones. That means no peanuts or tree nuts or products containing peanuts or tree nuts may be brought to school for snack. Students who have Food Allergies are required to bring in their own snack to ensure their health and safety.

\*See additional information under Health and Safety.

●Outdoor Play - In good weather, outdoor play is a daily activity. Each class has 15-20 minutes

 outdoors. Children are supervised by their teachers in the fenced play area and use their

whole bodies to develop and practice large motor skills. For our 4 Day and Pre-K classes, we provide an additional 15-20 minute playground experience.

●Closing - The class is invited to the carpet again for a closing circle. Children may share a

 closing song or hear a story. They are reminded to gather their belongings and are dismissed

 individually to their parents after they have been signed out for the day.

\*Please note that there will always be at least two teachers over the age of 18 on the premise during regular preschool hours.

**ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS**

●Gym Class- Once a week, our three, four and five day classes and twice a month our two day classes, students participate in a 30-minute Gym Class. Our gym teacher leads the children in age appropriate exercises and activities. On gym day, your child might be involved in running, jumping, scooters and sports basketball. The school owns a variety of equipment such as hula hoops, scooters, a parachute, mats, jump ropes, balls and more!

 Our goal is to help the students work on their motor skills while at the same time introducing

 them to some of the things they’ll encounter in a kindergarten gym class. By showing the

 children that gym and exercise can be fun and safe, we establish the foundation for a lifetime

 of fitness.

●Music - Once a month, all the children have an opportunity to enjoy the Music and Movement

 Class is for one hour with our music teacher. The children learn a variety of songs,

use rhythm instruments and are invited to participate in other music and movement exercises. This program helps children develop listening and differentiation skills and

provides a playful way to begin using their vocal skills and build confidence. Teachers incorporate the music into their classroom curriculum and circle time activities, as well as the special events that take place throughout the school year.

* Spanish – Children in our Pre-K program will be introduced to Spanish vocabulary words two days a week.

**FIELD TRIPS AND SPECIAL EVENTS**

●Field Trips - A variety of field trips are planned each year. These trips enhance and expand

 the classroom curriculum. Parents will be notified in writing prior to each trip and will need

 to sign permission forms in order for a child to participate. For safety reasons, parents must

provide all transportation to and from field trip sites. Please be aware that some field trips and/or special events may shorten the length of the school day. Parents will be notified in advance when this will happen.

●Special Events - Over the course of our year, your child will have an opportunity to learn from classroom visitors and participate in many special events. Your child will celebrate various holidays and seasons, giving each child a greater understanding of community rituals and traditions. Our staff is sensitive to the needs and traditions of all families and invites your participation. You may also have a skill, hobby or vocation to share with the children. Please speak to your child’s teacher if you would like to assist with any of the many special programs. Parents and Grandparents are invited to come into the class and read stories to the children and share snack.

●Field Trip and Special Events Fee - Each year families are asked to help defray the cost of

 special events and field trips. A special events fee of $50 will be requested from parents of

 3-Day, 4 Day and Pre-K students to cover all field trips and social events for the year, and a $35 special event fee will be requested from parents in our 2-day. This is a one-time payment. Parents will NOT be asked for any additional fees throughout the school year. Please note. - No child should be excluded because the family is unable to contribute. Please speak to your child’s teacher if you need special assistance.

**HEALTH**

**AND**

**SAFETY**

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**HEALTH AND SAFETY**



 The health and safety of our South Church Preschool students is an important part of our program. One component of the health aspect is to ensure that all students meet the state requirements of having a current physical and up-to-date immunizations.

●Physicals and Immunizations - The State of Connecticut Department of

 Education requires that all students in preschool programs have an annual

 physical and meet specific immunization requirements which includes an annual

 flu shot. The Health Assessment Record must be completed by the student’s

 primary care provider. This form and the immunization requirements may be found on the

 South Church Preschool website.

Another component is to ensure that students have access to medication(s) while at school. Since there is not a nurse on staff, teachers complete medication administration training annually. We expect that students may need to use their rescue medications at school, i.e. inhalers and/or epinephrine auto injectors. However, since our schedule is 2 ½ hours for our younger students and 4 hours for our older students, other medications should be administered at home.

●Medications – Staff are trained each year how to administer medication to young children.

 Students who have asthma may need to use their inhalers while at school and children who

 have food allergies may need access to the epinephrine auto-injectors while at school.

 When medication is brought to school, it must arrive in its original package with the pharmacy

 label. It must also be accompanied by the Authorization for the Administration of Medication

 by Child Day Care Personnel form completed by their Primary Care Provider. Parents should

 attach a recent picture of their student and should bring medication, forms and pictures to

 the school during their school visit.

Another component is to ensure that students are well when they come to school.

●Illness Considerations - For the health and well-being of all students, the following

 guidelines are carefully followed:

▪children who have a fever (temperature of 100° or higher), should not come to school

▪children who have signs and symptoms of illness such as a constant cough,

 sniffles, red eyes, sore throat, headache, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting

 or diarrhea with or without a fever should not come to school

 ▪children diagnosed with an infection (throat, eye, ear, etc.) should not be

 brought to school. These children should be on antibiotics for 24 hours

 before returning to school.

The staff may take the temperature of any child who appears ill during the school day. Any child who has fever or is showing obvious signs of illness will be sent home. When a child has been absent due to illness, he/she should not return to school until he/she has been without a fever or symptoms of illness for at least 24 - 48 hours.

Children are excluded from attending school for 24 – 48 hours for the following reasons:

1. Children need to come to school ready to learn and participate and it takes 1 – 2 days at a minimum to recover from an illness.
2. It is more difficult for children to fend off other germs that they may come in contact with while at school.
3. We want to promote health and safety for all children and staff and limit the spread of germs.

●Safety - As required by Connecticut state law, teachers complete

 first aid training, infant/child CPR and medication administration

●Fire Drills - State Guidelines require that we conduct monthly fire drills. Fortunately,

 we do not have to release the fire alarm for all of these drills. Our teachers will put strategies

 in place where students will be calmly instructed throughout these drills, so that we do not

 frighten the children.

What you need to know about being Allergy Aware . . .



Food allergies are ever increasing and some estimate that 1 in 13 children have a food allergy and half of those allergies are life threatening. With those numbers in mind, we are working to lessen the possibility that our young students will come into contact with their allergens while at school. To make that happen, we have developed the actions below to help keep our students healthy and safe. Please join us in our efforts to be Allergy Aware!

1. Celebrations – While cupcakes are permitted for birthday or holiday celebrations, there are other options to ensure that everyone is included in the celebration. Other options for these celebrations include:

•stickers or pencils,

•volunteering to be a mystery reader in the classroom or

•purchasing a book to donate to the classroom

•purchasing a game or educational item for the classroom.

1. Education - Teachers are educated on the signs and symptoms of an anaphylactic/ life-threatening reaction and know how to administer individual student’s auto-injector administered epinephrine.
2. Medication - Staff and families work together to make sure that appropriate medication and doctor’s orders are at the school.
3. Snacks – Please review the snack list provided to you for ideas. Always read the ingredient label to ensure that the product is peanut and tree nut free and is not processed in a factory that processes nut products. Please re-read the label each time the item is purchased as ingredients change. If you bake an item, please bring in the ingredient list for parent review.

Students who have been diagnosed with food allergies are required to bring in their own snack.

1. Zones – Our center is a Peanut and Tree Nut Free Zone, so any snack brought to school cannot contain any type of nut product or be made in a facility that handles nuts. Other precautions may be implemented to meet the specific needs of our students and those will be communicated to you as needed.

Although we cannot guarantee that your student will not come into contact with their allergen while at school, we do work to reduce the risk and have a plan in place if contact occurs. Thank you for helping us keep the South Church Preschool students healthy and safe!

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REGISTRATION

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**REGISTRATION**

Our non-profit Preschool is open to all children regardless of race, nationality or religion. We are a nondenominational program. We celebrate all holidays and enjoy many different cultural events throughout the year.

Church members and families with students who are already enrolled in our program may register their child(ren) in December of the year prior to attendance; open enrollment for the community begins January 1st. A completed **registration** **fee of $100** will reserve a place for your child(ren). **This registration fee is non-refundable.**

Tuition is determined yearly by the Preschool Committee. Specific information about tuition can be obtained from the Business Manager.

**SCHOLARSHIPS**

It is important that every child have access to the South Church Preschool Program. Scholarship assistance is available and information can be obtained from the Business Manager. **The deadline for scholarship applications is the last Friday in March before the next school** **year**. Scholarships may also be available during the school year for families who experience unexpected hardship. Each scholarship application will be acted on by the Preschool Committee.

Annual scholarship assistance is awarded by the Preschool Committee. Each year during the budget process, the Committee determines a total dollar amount of assistance for the upcoming school year. The Preschool Committee receives scholarship applications during annual registration. Applications are reviewed by the Committee with identifying information removed. Assistance is awarded according to need, based upon a standard set of criteria such as total family income, number of dependents, and exceptional circumstances. These awards will be made at the first meeting of the Committee following the application deadline. Late applications may be considered if the total budgeted amount of assistance has not been awarded.

**CLASS PLACEMENT**

Class placement is the responsibility of the Preschool Director in cooperation with the staff and the Committee. In the best interest of every child and each class, placement for each year is considered permanent. Any withdrawal, late enrollment, or change in placement of a student may affect class dynamics. After the school year commences if a parent or teacher feels a different placement is in the best interests of a child, the parent or teacher must put that request in writing. Any request for change will be reviewed by the Preschool Committee. Written notification of a placement decision will be forwarded to parent / guardian within ten (10) school days.

**CALENDAR, SCHEDULE AND SESSIONS**

Our school year begins after Labor Day weekend and ends no later than first week of June.

Fall 2020 Programs:

**2-Day Session for 3 year olds**

The registration cut-off age for three year olds **in the 2 day program is December 31st of the current school year and students should be potty trained.** We do not have the staff or facilities for students who need to be changed regularly. Students who attend must be able to understand that they need to visit the bathroom for toileting issues. Teachers will **ASSIST** students, but the children must be fairly independent when it comes to using the toilet. Any child who enters our program and is having consistent issues in this area will be invited out of the program until he/she is ready to handle their personal hygiene more independently.

Two day morning classes meet Thursday and Friday 9:00 – 11:30 am.

**3-Day Session for 3 year Olds**

Students will meet Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 9:00 - 11:30 am. **Children must be 3 by September 1st of the current school year to be eligible for this program.**

Children should be potty trained.

**4-Day Session for 4 year olds**

Students will meet Monday through Thursday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. **Children must be turning 4 by December 31st of the current school year.**onday through Thursday from 9:00 am -1:00 pm. **Children must be turning four by December 31st of the school year to be eligible for this program.**

Fall 2020 Programs, cont.

**5-Day Pre-K Program**

Students will meet Monday through Friday from 9:00 am -1:00 pm. **Children must be turning five by December 31st of the current school year to be eligible for this program unless evaluated and authorized by our Director.**

POLICIES, PROCEDURES

AND

PRACTICES

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**ARRIVING and DEPARTING FROM SCHOOL**

For the protection and safety of our students, parents must sign their child in and out at each *session he/she attends. Parents* ***must*** *notify the staff if someone different will be provi*ding transportation for your child. Family members or friends who provide transportation should be prepared to present a **photo ID** if requested by our teaching staff before the child is released.

To ensure the safety of your children, prevent traffic congestion and potential accidents, we ask that parents enter through the South Church parking lot on Main Street and drive past the back of the church building into the High Street School parking lot. Parents should park and walk children into the building through the double doors next to the ramp. After signing the child in, parents should return through the same doors and exit the parking lot at the far end of High Street School onto High Street.

Prompt arrival and departure is important! On time arrival allows our teachers to make the most of the children’s day; children walk in with their classmates and join in the introduction to the day’s activities. Punctuality also helps with separation anxiety. Parents may assist their child with **settling in**. Social conversations should be held in the corridors or outside the building.

**School Rules and Routines**

**ARRIVAL**

Our center has a security system, which keeps our building locked throughout the day. The main door will open at 8:55 and a teacher will be there to greet and let parents into our building. At 9:15 we lock doors promptly. Anyone who arrives after that time will be buzzed in by our classroom teachers. Our classroom doors will open promptly at 9:00 and parents will sign in their child once inside our classrooms. Parents are welcome to stay until they feel their child has made teacher contact and/or is integrated into play. We then ask parents to please leave the classroom, so the teachers can prepare to gather students to the carpet for our Greeting Circle.

**Tardiness:** It is so important that parents arrive at school on time so that the students can enter the classroom with the rest of their peers. If your child arrives late, it makes for a much more difficult start to the day. Arriving on time helps with separation anxiety and social relationships, so we are asking that parents please cooperate in helping us get their students acclimated to school by arriving on time. Late pick-ups also work against helping the students feel comfortable being at school.

Your child counts on you to arrive on time for pick up and so do your teachers. We are hoping that this year parents will especially arrive on time for drop off and pick up so that we may secure our building and give the students the most for their day.

**DISMISSAL**

 Parents of students in the 3 year old programs will be buzzed into school at **11:30** by classroom teachers. At dismissal time for the 4 and 5 day programs, the door will open at **12:55** and lock again at **1:15**. Consistent routines play an important role in a child's school experience. Pick up routines should be prompt and consistent. Your child and their teachers should be made aware of who will be picking up each day. If there is a change in pick up routine, please make sure that your teachers know whom this person will be when you drop off in the morning. We have a sign in and sign out sheet, so parents can fill that information in on the clipboard. If there is a change in the day, we ask that you please call the classroom number ahead of time and inform us of that change. **No child will be dismissed to anyone who shows up unannounced.**

If a parent runs into a problem arriving on time for pick up, we ask that you call us and inform us that you will be late. If teachers do not receive a phone call when you are late picking up, they will then call you and/or your emergency contact. If a pick up person is more than 20 minutes late, without a phone call, our business manager will automatically charge a fee of $25.00 to you. If no one shows up to pick up the student, and no one can be reached within 45 minutes, Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the police will be contacted. Consistent tardiness will warrant a meeting with teachers and/or a fee of $25.00.

Please help us keep your child feeling safe emotionally, while they are at school, by following these important rules and routines. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated by your child and their teachers.

**Our 2-Day and 3-day classes will be dismissed at 11:30**

**Our 4-Day and Pre-K classes will be dismissed at 1:00**

Once parents are inside the building,they should wait outside of their child's classroom at pick up. Students will be dismissed individually at the end of their school day and signed out by their teachers.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

It is our goal to create a partnership with parents to ensure a positive experience for each student. In an effort to keep parents informed, a monthly newsletter is published and notices are placed on an informational bulletin board in the school corridor.

In case of an emergency or special concern, a message may be left for our staff on the classroom phone at (860) 633-9554. After school hours, all messages received will be returned as soon as possible. During the summer parents should call the office phone at (860) 657-3966 to leave a message or contact our Director at (860) 836-4174.

**CONCERNS AND EXCEPTIONS**

Any concern, inquiry or request for an exception to a policy from parent(s) or guardian(s) should be submitted in writing to the Director, with a copy to the Preschool Committee in care of the Business Manager. All requests will be reviewed and a written response will be provided.

**DISCIPLINE**

Our discipline policy is derived from our belief that good discipline is education and guidance.

Our goal is to build leadership and self-confidence in our students with the idea that our students feel secure that they are in a safe and fair environment.

The strategies we use in our classroom are as follows:

* The use of positive guidance
* Redirection
* Setting clear limits
* Continuous supervision by staff throughout the day and especially when the students are interacting independently at school
* Specifically prohibiting abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating or frightening punishment
* Prohibiting physical restraint, unless such restraint is necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or other people
* Managing a child’s behavior using techniques based on developmentally appropriate practice

**PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Each year there are many opportunities for parents and other family members to participate in and to support our Preschool program. The newsletter and bulletin board will suggest many of these opportunities, which include parties, field trips, holiday celebrations, classroom visits, book sales, etc. Our staff welcomes your ideas and interests in the many ways you might be involved. We are grateful for your partnership.

**PICTURES, FUND-RAISERS and MORE …**

●Class pictures are taken in October of each year. Individual and group photos may be purchased at a modest cost.

 Our staff takes pictures of students during the school day, during enrichments programs as

 well as during special events and field trips. Parents receive consent forms that ask for

 permission for students’ photos to be posted on our website. Names are NOT used on our

 website.

●Book Clubs are a monthly opportunity for your family to build a library at a discount. The book

 list will be available to parents and caregivers. The classroom library benefits from the

 proceeds of books that are purchased.

●Fund-Raisers are held during the year to assist our school in acquiring special materials

 and equipment that enhance and enrich our program. Very often, the costs of these items

 cannot be sustained within the operating budget. Your support and cooperation are helpful in

 assuring the success of these endeavors.

**SNOW DAYS and SCHOOL CANCELLATIONS**

The South Church Preschool follows the Glastonbury Public School’s snow cancellations, late openings and early dismissals. You may call the Glastonbury School Hotline at 860.652.7853 for information. If school is cancelled for the Glastonbury Public Schools, South Church Preschool will also be cancelled. If there is a 2 hour delay, the following schedule will be in place:

 The Pre-K Session will be held from 11:00 am – 1:00, pm

 The 4 Day Session will be held from 11:00 am – 1:00 pm

 The 2 and 3 Day Morning Sessions (9:00 – 11:30) will be cancelled

If the public schools announce an early dismissal, all classes will be dismissed at 11:30 am.

We urge parents to use their discretion in driving children to school during inclement weather.

**TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Your child’s teacher will make every effort to keep you informed of your child’s individual progress. In the spring, parents of our students receive a progress report. In addition, parents of our four and five year old students will have a conference with their child’s teacher. All students will receive a written achievement report in the spring of the school year.

If at any time during the school year, you have questions regarding your child’s adjustment to school or his/her progress, please feel free to contact the Director of our school.

**WITHDRAWAL POLICY**

Once a child is accepted into the program and a space is held for him/her, the family is financially obligated for the total annual tuition unless another child fills the space. Waiver of tuition is granted in the following circumstances:

●A family moves more than thirty-five (35) miles from South Glastonbury.

●A child is five by December 31st and the family decides to send him/her to public school.

●A child on the waiting list fills the vacancy.

***If a vacancy in the class is not filled by another child, the registered family is responsible for the tuition for the remainder of the year.***

In ***exceptional circumstances***, if it is determined that the needs of a child are beyond the capabilities of our program, he/she may be asked to leave and tuition will be refunded on a pro-rata basis.

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Staff

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**Professional Staff**

Ms. Stephanie Letizia, Director and Head Teacher

Ms. Claire McRae, Administrative Assistant and Head Teacher

Ms. Lynne David, Business Manager

**Teachers:**

Ms. Tracy Bancroft

Ms. Tracy Benoit

Ms. Lori Bigliazzi

Ms. Tamara Carella

Ms. Heidi Gourley

Ms. Katherine Marks

Ms. Stephanie Murtha

Ms. Larissa Nardi

Ms. Jennifer Ruchwa

Ms. Angela Salonia

Ms. Susan Thompson

Ms. Susan Vartenigian

**Specials:**

Ms. Elizabeth Wegner, Gym Teacher

Ms. Kathye Flanagan, Music Teacher

**Preschool Committee**

Jan Helyer

Matt MacEwen, Chair

Cheryl MacEwen

Sarah Pettingell

Jeni Waldo

Liz Whynacht

Charlie Whynacht

Diana Zilahy

**Phone Numbers**

Preschool Classrooms and Staff (860) 633-9554

Glastonbury School Snow Cancellation Hotline (860) 652-7853

Preschool Office, Director and Administrative Ass’t. (860) 430-6734

The Congregational Church in South Glastonbury Office (860) 633-4651