



### **The Bolton Congregational Church, United Church of Christ**

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*The vision of the Bolton Congregational Church UCC is to be true to the model and example set by the early Church of the Apostles, in our own time.*

### *From the Pastor...*

#### How Is it With Your Soul?

I have a friend who asks this. I find it an intriguing and provoking question, though, often I'm not quite sure how to answer it. She comes from a more pietistic tradition than the Congregational and United Church of Christ one in which I grew up, live and serve. Yet, even though I struggle to know how to answer, it's a good question to ask and try to answer.

I would very much like to know how you would respond to it. What does it say to you? Does it provoke anything?

For me, it tends to leave me dumbfounded, speechless. I have no words. And perhaps that's just right. It causes me to stand before God in an uncharacteristic silence. It's almost as though God, with a smile, both playful and compassionate says, "Ha! Stumped you with that one!" For all my talk about faith and following Jesus, in the presence of God I would do well to fall silent and listen for what God might whisper to me.,

So, perhaps this time of isolation is good for that - listening for God's quiet uttering. Thus, I linger over prayers I need to write out for our scattered worship. I have rarely written out prayers in the last 35 years. This becomes a good discipline. I also read. Slowly. Noticing details in what I read that I would normally miss. When I wonder how my soul is, I spend time with hymns and songs of faith. They calm my doubts and fears, giving peace to my soul despite the disruption in which we live these days.

So perhaps that's how it is with my soul.

In my isolation, I would love to hear from you. How is it with your soul? I'd love to hear what and whom you pray for.

Preaching and prayers often seem like monologues with just the pastor speaking, but they tend to grow out of

conversations with people as I hear your concerns. The last 2 months have proved challenging because I don't know if what I say [write] or pray resonates. Does it speak to you or for you? For all I know, it misses the mark. I get little feedback. I don't even know if more than 6 people read the services I pour myself into. I suppose I have to do it trusting that it is what I am supposed to do - an act of faith.

That's a bad thing about this time. I miss church and gathering for worship - you.

A good thing about this time - I spend more time with God. It gives me a sense of the monastic ("living alone") tradition and the way that tradition re-orient's one's life toward contemplation: seeking and seeing God in nature, in chores, in not hurrying around to the next busyness and the next.

If March into April was a different kind of Lent, then this season of Easter is more like what the followers of Jesus experienced after the Resurrection: a waiting time, a time of trying to determine what Resurrection means and requires. We don't yet have direction or assignments. They will come in due time, in God's time.

Take this time to take stock. How is it with your soul?

Faithfully,  
Pastor Bruce

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***The Church Office is currently closed due to COVID-19. For assistance, email [boltonucc@gmail.com](mailto:boltonucc@gmail.com) (preferred) or call 860-649-7707. Messages are checked daily.***

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## Church School Updates

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I hope you are all doing well during this trying time. We continue with our Church School distance learning. Each week I plan out the lessons with crafts and activity instructions and send them out to the parents. Families have responded saying they are trying to complete the lessons each week. I understand that the children have a lot on their plates with distance learning and many parents still working full time at home. I will continue to plan the lessons and send them out to the families. I am also trying to come up with some new ways of reaching the children, stay tuned.

The CE Board met on April 26th via Zoom. It has been decided that due to the uncertainty we will not be having a Vacation Bible School program this summer. I will continue with the Sunday School lessons and when we finally get back to church, even if it is during the summer, we will continue with in classroom lessons.

Stay safe and stay healthy and we will all be together again soon.

*Jessica Romeo*

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## Prayer Shawl Ministry

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Your prayer shawl ministry is still at work, knitting shawls for your request. We will not be meeting this month, but we are still with you in spirit. If you wish to request a shawl, we will make every effort to get it to you in the safest way possible. For now, as we continue to knit, we hope that you are safe and well and know that you are in our thoughts and prayers. To request a shawl, please contact Dot Lessard or Barbara Maheu.

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## From the Board of Missions...

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hawkwing, a Native American non-profit, assists tribal members of the Cheyenne River Lakota/Sioux Reservation in South Dakota to meet critical needs arising from America's worst poverty. We focus on the children America has forgotten through medical missions, home/community repairs, food security, education support, and tribal program support. We foster cross cultural awareness and meaningful volunteerism. During this pandemic, we are providing Personal Protection Equipment to the front line workers including healthcare workers, food pantry staff, deputies

assisting with road barricades to limit who can enter the Reservation, shelter workers and more. We welcome donations of cloth masks for the Elders and those who are at high risk. We also are in need of cash donations to keep adequate food resources available for the tribal members. Donations to: hawkwing, 306 Cavan Lane, Glastonbury, CT 06033 or through PayPal from our website: [www.hawkwing.org](http://www.hawkwing.org). Rochelle Ripley, President, can be reached at 860-633-8933 from 9 am to 6 pm. Wopila Tanka ~ great thanks.

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## Crafters' Group

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Lynn Ralston  
For the BCC Crafters/Store volunteers

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## Socially Distant Work Day

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Your stewardship committee is working out details to accomplish our spring chores. Because we are unable to come together for our usual spring Work Day, a chore list is being designed, and families will be invited to sign up to complete a task at their own convenience. We will be keeping a schedule of families and chores, so that we can comply with social distancing recommendations. Keep an eye out for a Church Chirp with more information.

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## From the Heart

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Change is inevitable...look at the moon on any given night and it will remind us that the earth is always moving and that every day is different from the next. ...not necessarily good or bad...just different and ever changing.

Look at what is happening today since the Corona Virus began and we can all feel the changes within our daily life. How are you coping? Do you need anything? Are

you reaching out to others if you are having a tough day and then reaching out to support others when you feel strong?

Jesus taught us through many stories and through his own walk on this earth that when you take away anything material, when you take away any ego that says we are better than another, when you take away our security...you are left with the blessing of faith. If we have faith, then we feel that light of hope. Hope offers a belief that even in the midst of difficulties, our faith can bring the hope to others as well as be the hope we need.

During this time "From the Heart" is having to take a look at how we can donate safely. Some of our contacts are holding off receiving donations right now. We were only able to donate a few Easter pails before this all began. It is important not to introduce possible germs and still to be able to support those with needs.

If you are able to help the individuals and families we support through our "Adopted Family" program "From the Heart" is collecting donations of gift cards and gift certificates to local restaurants. Our goal is to provide support for local restaurants and grocery stores while supporting our families in need. Not only restaurants, but also gift cards to businesses who deliver items or use curbside pick up such as BJ Wholesalers, Target, Wal-Mart etc.

Many are home these days, many of us are still working....whatever your day begins and ends with, let it be a day filled with a grateful heart and a day filled with blessings...both that you give and that you receive. Thank you for your support and sending prayers of support and good health as we move through the coming month.

Laura Ann / From the Heart  
[www.fromtheheartct.com](http://www.fromtheheartct.com)

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## Prayers and Concerns

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Cathy Nelson's sister, Colleen Williams, who was diagnosed with lung cancer on April 10.