



The Bolton Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

228 Bolton Center Road, Bolton, CT 06043 ~ (860) 649-7077 ~ www.boltoncongregational.org

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...

I wanted to write something else. I wanted to write something that would say we have things all worked out. I wanted to write that we have plans for regathering. Unfortunately, I can't write that.

We have been told that because church is essential, we should reopen. On the other hand, based on the best scientific guidance currently available, the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ (along with many other denominations as well) encourages us to delay opening our buildings to gatherings until we can do so without significantly risking the health of our most vulnerable members, friends and neighbors.

We want to do our best to balance our need to gather for work and worship against the biblical direction to care for "the least of these" and for those who are most vulnerable.

In regard to practical issues, for us to gather in person again, we need to have plans in place for safety, health, and cleaning. These need to adhere to the guidance and direction of state officials and our local Board of Health.

Church gatherings have yielded large numbers of infections. Back in March, before rules for staying home had been imposed, a church in Canada gathered twice, strictly following the guidelines available to them at the time: 6 foot distance, masks, hand sanitizers, among other things. They did all the right things. A large number of people contracted covid-19 and three members died. The pastor said that she wished with her whole heart they could go back and do it again by not gathering. They were devastated.

We know that when we gather, we must not sing. Singing is almost as risky as sneezing— even with masks on. We would not be able to shake hands or hug. Even unison prayers and litanies would not be used. In the sanctuary, households could sit together, but others would have to be at least 6 feet away. Everyone would need to wear a mask. Worship would look very different than what we have known. A thorough cleaning will have to take place after each gathering.

So, for now, we wait. This is a time for faith, a time to show that we trust that God can reach us and be with us whether we gather in person, in electronic ways, or simply by prayer for others, phone calls or letters. For now we continue to figure out how to make the best of the situation. Church now has a Zoom account. MaryLou and I have talked about developing some new ways to connect and gather using that platform. Even those without the Internet can use Zoom if they have a telephone.

Some say to reopen churches. The building may be closed, but the Church is open. The Church has been open and being Church since day one. We are learning how to do what the Church is called to do in these circumstances. The Board of Missions continues to facilitate efforts to help those in need. We continue to worship and pray and seek to be faithful. Let's have the faith and courage to believe that God is present and active, filling the church with the Holy Spirit and leading us in this wilderness.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Bruce

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

Church School News

Hello from quarantine! I am thankful for warmer weather so I am able to do my work from my front porch with the birds, chipmunks, an occasional glimpse of the fox family that has taken up residence in the back of our property, and a daily visit from our friend's pup down the street. I do miss seeing my friends, family and BCC family, but being able to be creative outside amongst God's creatures is pretty great.

I am going to continue to create Sunday School lessons through the summer. After a zoom meeting with some faith formation leaders I was given the idea of using Disney in Sunday School. I thought "how perfect this idea is for me, the lover of all things Disney." However, there was one major question: How? So, I put it on the back burner and started planning my next lesson. While reading the scripture for that week (Acts 15) it tells of Paul and Barnabas' visit to Phoenicia. If any of you have been to Epcot and ridden Spaceship Earth (the one inside the big golf ball) you may recall Dame Judi Dench telling us to "thank the Phoenicians". That was my first sign. Then I go into the curriculum and read a story they have written called Raglan Road, which just happens to be the name of an Irish Pub in Disney Springs. So, I stopped and thought "someone is definitely trying to tell me something!" I just needed to figure out the how. I have since decided to use Disney movies. There are so many lessons hidden in these movies. Each week, I will send out the name of a movie for the families to watch together. If there is a family or families that do not have access to the movie we will figure out a way to get the movie to them. It is proving to be challenging but in a great way. If you don't have kids in our Sunday School program, but would still like to participate, please email me at jessica.romeo.bcc@gmail.com and I will add you to the list. The first three movies in our series will be:

- The Lion King
- Toy Story 4
- Ratatouille

I hope you are all happy and healthy and I look forward to the day when we are all together again.

Graduations

Shelby Pedersen is graduating this June 2020 from University of California, Santa Barbara with a Major in Psychological & Brain Sciences.

Callie Love (daughter of Dawn and Randy Love) will graduate from the University of Connecticut on May 9, 2020 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Physiology and Neurobiology. After graduation, she plans to take a gap year and continue working in the Emergency Department at St. Francis Hospital as a Medical Scribe. Callie's goal is to start medical school in August 2021.

Crafters' Group

We miss seeing each other and everyone else. We hope that you and your families are staying well and finding new and exciting things to do. I have recently heard of one teenager who has realized exactly what he is missing by not attending school. A schedule in his life was a good thing as were all of his friends that he has not seen or interacted with for two months now. I am sure that many of us will have time to think about all of the "good things" we have (or had) that we took for granted of as well as discover just how creative we are or can be as we navigate our new world. HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

Lynn Ralston for all of our crafters and Store volunteers

Prayer Shawl Ministry

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.

Board of Missions

During June we will focus on a local charity- the Bolton Food Pantry. Many families are in need, and we can help. The food pantry is located in the Senior Center in the Municipal Building located at 104 Notch Road. Due to the pandemic the Center is mostly closed but has restricted hours for the pantry. Distribution of pre-bagged outdoor pickup and receiving of bagged donations is held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2 to 4 p.m. Upon arrival please stay in your car if someone else is at the front door to the Senior Center. Then go to the door and ring the bell. Leave the bag with your donations outside the door. Move away and wait for a staff member to open the door and take your donation. Please attach a card to the bag indicating that the donation is from a member of the Bolton Congregational Church. The pantry needs non perishable canned and packaged foods for breakfast, lunch & dinner; paper goods; cleaning supplies; toiletries. If you wish to make a monetary donation make a check out to Resident Assistance Fund and mail it to the Bolton Senior Center attention Food Pantry, 104 Notch Road, Bolton, CT 06043. Please print on the notation line on the check "donation from a member of Bolton Congregational Church". I am asking Carrie to keep a tally of the number of donation bags and total cash received from BCC members during June. It always helps to have a goal. Let's try to donate 30 or more bags of items and \$300 or more monetary contributions.

FYI- Here is a brief report of the outcome of some 2020 BCC Mission Projects.

In February, donations to MACC Food Pantry totaled \$617.86. During March, contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing totaled \$322. The March Corned Beef Dinner and the April projects Heroes with Halos and Bloom & Rebuild Bolton were cancelled due to sheltering in place and social distancing. The monetary donations for hawkwing during May were sent directly to the organization. The total contribution is forthcoming.

During this difficult time we are all dealing with some challenges- physically, mentally, spiritually, socially, financially. Practicing patience, kindness, faith, compassion, and love will provide strength and comfort. We are in this together.

As always thank you for your generosity.

Susan Schardt, Board of Missions

From the Heart

"From the Heart" sends a sincere thank you to all of the Sunday School children at Bolton Congregational Church for selecting us for this year's Lenten mission!

While things changed a bit because Covid 19 hit at the same time, you still raised funds through your pancake breakfast, and those funds have and will help many children and families during this time! I know you had intended to collect items to be donated to children in foster care and helping the individuals and families within our Adopted Family program. We will be honoring your intention by purchasing items and gift cards for these programs.

Please know that your idea, and the generosity of everyone at BCC, is helping to bring grocery items where they are needed. In order to protect the privacy of those we support, I cannot share specifics, however, please know that a portion of your donation is helping a grandmother raising her grandson with special needs. He is thriving under the love and care that she is giving him and is on a fixed budget being retired...your donation is helping her to continue to provide a loving and stable home and is making a difference!

A portion of your donation has been able to be donated to our contact at Covenant to Care. We were able to donate some of the "Easter" Beach Pails filled with brand new toys and brand new personal items. She has several places who are in need of these donations and she is getting them to the children and adults within the programs she sees on a consistent basis.

We were able to purchase some gift cards for Communitas, a wonderful local organization helping people with disabilities live independent lives. "From the Heart" has been partnering with them for over 20 years....there is no shortage of words to explain how hands on this organization is when it comes to giving every person an opportunity to be the very best they can be and to challenge themselves and aim high for the goals and dreams they have.

Please know that because of your decision during Lent, your kindness and generosity is still

reaching out to help where it is needed! Thank you!!

Laura Ann / From the Heart /
www.fromtheheartct.com / fheart@comcast.net

Our Joys and Concerns

Jessica Romeo: My niece Mia has made a full recovery from COVID-19. My Uncle Brian, still remains in the hospital, but he has been taken off the ventilator and has been moved to the ICU step down unit and continues to make improvements.

Jennifer Daly: Prayers for my husband, Phil, who has been hospitalized & in ICU.