
The Signpost

SUMMER 2020

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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.

Summer Worship Schedule

The Deacons have evaluated the two in-person worship services we have held in June. They have decided to continue gathering in the parking lot through the summer when the weather makes that feasible. We will covenant to keep the guidelines established by the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ.

On Fridays, looking at the weather forecast, we will send a Church Chirp that will indicate whether we will meet on Sunday morning (the hour will be earlier starting in July), or Saturday afternoon at 5:00. If the weather looks too uncertain or foul weather is forecast for both days, we will not try to gather.

From the Pastor

Duet With A Bird

On June 21st, a group of about 20 people gathered for worship in the parking lot below Chandler Hall. Masked people brought their own chairs and sat (at appropriate distances), MaryLou Prescher alone did not join us in the parking lot. She sat behind the piano in the entrance of the building. The weather was clear and warm. We recorded the service as a test to see how that would work. MaryLou played several familiar hymns and at least some of us hummed along quietly.

As I looked out across the farm, it felt good to be with God's people on such a beautiful day. As I hummed, I heard a bird singing its song, loud and clear.

And I thought, "We're doing a duet! How wonderful!"

These test runs have presented us with some challenges: keeping cool; keeping distance; wearing masks; hearing above the ambient noise of nature and humanity; how to share joys and concerns; how to be safe; how to worship and praise God when singing presents a high risk way of spreading viruses.

Each week we have learned some things.

We plan and hope to continue gathering in this way through the summer, trying things, learning things, evaluating them and trying other things.

What happens when it gets too cold to gather outside remains anyone's guess right now.

Whatever happens, I see an opportunity here to try some new ways to worship and serve God. We do well to think of this not simply as a timeout from what we have always done. Try thinking of it as a sabbatical, or a time of transition. We would do well to use this time to evaluate worship in the life of the church with an eye to discovering what is most important to us and why. We don't have to keep doing things simply because that's the way you have always done them. That's what interim times are for. Churches don't necessarily like to do such deep reflection and discernment. They usually want to move through transitions as quickly as possible and so they lose the opportunity the interim time presents. It is when a church perceives that it might not survive that it begins to clean house and encourage new, creative ideas and possibilities.

If you were starting a new church, in which you won't have the resources to do everything you were doing as an old church, what would be most important to include? What would you do? Why? What would you not do?

The things that made it possible for the faith of God's people to continue through 3500 years came out of huge disruptions in the "the way they always did things": The Exodus. Wandering in the wilderness. Moving into the Land of the Promise and settling there. Building the Temple. The destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. The Exile. The Roman Empire.

The death of Jesus Christ and the Pentecost arrival of the Holy Spirit...

Covid-19

May we be devoted followers of our forebears in faith. They did not want, nor choose to live in those disruptive times. May we commit ourselves to their legacy, trusting God enough to discover what God has in mind.

As I hummed, I heard a bird singing its song, loud and clear. I thought, "We're doing a duet! How wonderful!"

Grace and peace,
Pastor Bruce

From the Director Of Children & Youth

I hope this article finds you all well. We continue with distance learning church school. Our church school lessons have "gone Disney". For the last month we have been watching Disney movies and finding the lessons hidden inside. So far we have watched Lion King, Toy Story 4, Ratatouille, and Onward. I hope the kids and families are enjoying this as much as I am. Our upcoming movies are Moana, and Emperor's New Groove and after that we will be watching Zootopia, Princess and the Frog, and Big Hero 6. As I have stated before, I am happy to share the lessons with anyone that may be interested, all you have to do is email me and I will put you on the list.

I miss seeing everyone on Sunday mornings. My seasonal allergies are keeping me from attending the outdoor services. I am constantly coughing, sneezing and sniffing. So, I thought it would be in everyone's best interest for me to stay home.

I look forward to the day when we are all able to worship together again. In the meantime, if you need me for any reason you can drop me an email or a text.

Jessica Romeo

From the Treasurer

Summer time is usually when we see a lag in income from contributions. While our church has been closed for worship and committee meetings due to safety concerns regarding COVID-19, our expenses such as basic building and grounds upkeep, utilities and property insurance, remain to be met. Pastor Bruce and the entire staff continue their work, providing support and upholding their duties. As a congregation, we need to continue our support of the church's work through our thoughtful giving.

The Finance Committee is asking everyone, who can, to please catch up with your planned giving as we enter the summertime. Please send your checks into the Church Office by mail. We all look forward to the time when we can meet and worship as a congregation in person. Thank You!

Jim Bahre, Treasurer

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.



Our Joys and Concerns

Cathy Nelson...a big thank you for all the cards and phone calls after my sister's death. It was appreciated.

From the Missions Board

Thank you for supporting the recent mission projects. During the month of May, we focused on monetary donations to hawkwing which totaled \$350 from the congregation. During June, we have been encouraging members to make donations of nonperishable foods, paper goods, cleaning and personal hygiene supplies to the Bolton Food Pantry. Also, information for members to make monetary donations to the town Resident Assistance Fund was provided. The need continues, so please keep up this effort. A reminder- The Bolton Food pantry is located in the Senior Center at 104 Notch Road. The Pantry is open for distribution and donations on Tuesdays & Thursdays from 2 to 4 p.m. To make a donation go to the right side of the building where the main entrance to the Senior Center is located. Ring the door bell. Move back 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 of goods is from a member of the Bolton Congregational Church. If you want 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 the Bolton Congregational Church". A goal has been set for our congregation to donate 30 or more bags of goods and \$300 or more monetary donations. The outcome will be included in the September Signpost.

If you are seeking a volunteer opportunity, you may consider volunteering some time helping at Foodshare can go to the following web site: Foodshare.org

In the upper righthand corner drop down box, hit it and go to the midscreen volunteer box.

Once you register an email and password you can scan by date for available opportunities to volunteer. Many are available locally as well as the Greater Hartford area. Foodshare staff regularly does screening via phone for health and safety. Service time can be as much or as little as is open for needing assistance.

Looking forward to August, the mission's project will be connected to Bolton School students. In past years, church members have made monetary

donations which were used by the Mission Board to purchase store cards that were distributed to families by the school counselor to help purchase school supplies for their youngsters. The format for the school program is currently being developed with necessary modifications to keep students and staff protected from the virus. Lloyd Petersen will contact the school counselor to discuss how we can best support students at this time. Information will be sent via Church Chirps in August.

The members of the Mission Board thank the congregation for support of mission projects. Your time and generosity makes a difference to others. May you be safe and healthy. May you feel loved and protected.

And then the whole world walked inside and shut their doors.

And said we shall stop it all, everything

To protect our weaker ones, our sicker ones, our older ones.

And nothing, nothing in the history of mankind ever felt more

like LOVE than this.

Scheduling Notes

- The church office remains closed for the summer. You can reach Amanda through the office email boltonucc@gmail.com (preferred). Messages left on the office phone are checked regularly.
- Al-Anon has resumed meeting on Friday nights at 7:30 pm, weather permitting, in the church parking lot. Masks and social distancing are required. Please bring your own chair. Access to the building, including rest rooms, is not available.
- The annual BCC Golf Tournament has been postponed this year. We thank our sponsors and golfers for their support in the past and hope to be able to hold this event or something similar in the future.

From the Heart

Slowly, slowly the state is beginning to open up. People are headed back to work and are making that adjustment. Others who have been working the whole time are also making the adjustment. Change is not easy.

This whole pandemic has been challenging to say the least. Loss has taken place and the support people had in place was not as easy to maintain, leaving people vulnerable. Programs and donations that were helping others, have been halted or slowed...that has been tough.

Where is the positive message in all of this? Through our faith, we look to God for answers. If we are "quiet" enough, we learn from Him what we need to know. His message (among many) "Be Kind".

Every second of the day we make instant decisions to act and react to our surroundings. How many people are making masks nowadays...so many! How many people are shopping for others so they can remain safe in their homes...so many! How many people are coming up with new and creative ways to continue to donate to places they know need the help...so many! I heard one little girl recently started a Tic-Tac-Toe game with her postman. Every day she places an X and when he delivers the mail he places an O. Simple...yet powerful!

"From the Heart" is continuing to reach those who we support on an on-going basis. We were able to donate the Lenten project Beach Pails filled with brand new summer items and our contact at Covenant-to-Care is hoping we can donate many more! There are so many children who have been home for the past few months and have not been able to get together with friends. It does take its toll. Our contact said the Activity Pails have really helped!

How can you help? It's so easy! We need summer items! We need brand new sidewalk chalk, bubbles, card games, craft kits, lego kits, kites, puzzles, coloring books, markers, crayons etc! We have some pails ready to fill or you can definitely fill your own pail so they are ready for

donation if you would like! They are also in need of brand new pillows (still in the wrapping).

There are many needs all over the world these days. While we cannot reach them all...we can reach those closest to our home right now to make a difference.

Feel free to contact me at fheart@comcast.net if you have donations or if you can get them to Chandler Hall when it opens. I will make arrangements to pick them up if you leave them in the "From the Heart" bin.

God speaks to us every day. "Be Kind" he says over and over and over again. Thank you God for reminding us what a blessing it can be to others to simply "Be Kind".

Laura Ann

"From the Heart"

www.fromtheheartct.com

