



The Signpost

September 2020
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The Bolton Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
228 Bolton Center St., Bolton, CT 06043
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Pastor's Message

Here at the end of summer, we had hoped that by now things would have become clearer and we would be on our way toward some kind of normal. We *have* a kind of normal, but not one we hope becomes permanent. What will happen when the weather cools to the point where worshipping in the parking lot ceases to be a viable option? When, people wonder, will we return to worship in doors?

I don't know the answers to those questions. I don't know what will happen when school opens, either. In some ways, unfortunately, our children, teachers and other school staff will become an experiment, the outcome of which may well shape or determine what we can do.

We have a team of members who have just started meeting to consider how to proceed. Some dearly want to get back to in door worship as soon as possible. Some believe we should be extremely cautious. I hope we will use this as an opportunity to use our imaginations and creativity to adapt and try some new things. The team includes Susan Macdonald (coordinator), Ginny Wickersham, Lloyd Pedersen, Ruth Treat, Cathy Nelson and Randy Bobb.

As a church, we need to ask and consider the questions:

What do we long for in our desire to gather for worship in doors?

What do we expect it to look like?

What would you need in order to feel comfortable or safe to gather for in-person worship?

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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.

Worship Schedule for September

Worship will be held outdoors in the back parking lot, weather permitting, at 10am.

(Please note this is a time change from summer worship.)

Calendar of Events

Mondays, 7pm

Planning Committee

Fridays, 7:30pm

Al-anon (Meets outside in back parking lot weather permitting. Masks required.)

Tues., Sept. 8, 6:15pm

Missions Board

Tues., Sept. 8, 7pm

Finance Committee

Wed., Sept. 9, 7pm

Church Council

Wed., Sept. 30, 7pm

Deacons Meeting

All meetings are taking place remotely via Zoom.

Pastor's Message (continued)

This fall, at the very least in door worship *will* look and sound rather different than what we did before COVID building closures.

This is not a bad thing, in itself.

It gives us the chance, the obligation, to reflect and consider what matters most. We would do well to determine what we must keep and what we should change - and we need the wisdom to know the difference.

Let's try to articulate what actions, activities, feelings matter most. What, at its core, does it mean to be "Church" and to be BCC (which may overlap, but may not be exactly the same). Then we will be on the way to doing this interim work God has set before us.

This discernment is always the question for the interim time. Unfortunately, most people, most churches don't want to take it seriously, or can't quite get their heads around it. The demands of coping with COVID may actually be a blessing hiding out in our midst. This disruption of how we have done things invites us to notice what really matters.

I have learned that when confronted with the possibility of death (not just the idea of it), things can change for the good. I have seen churches that, when realizing that they might not survive, stop trying to survive and simply try to be faithful to God and the Gospel.

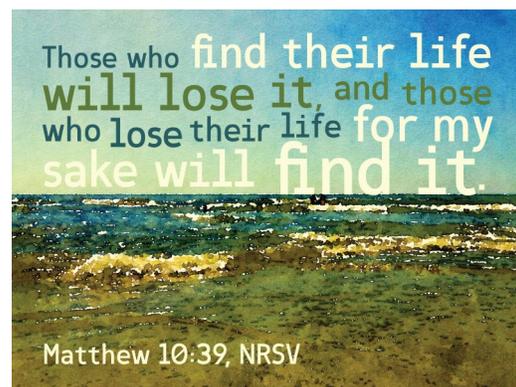
It makes sense. "Those who find their lives will lose them. Those who lose their life for my sake will find them." (Matthew 10:39)

Without such a crisis, without a realization that the church could die if we do nothing, we blindly proceed as if it will go on forever.

We will only have eternal life if we open our hearts to the reality of death and endings. Only when we are willing to die *for the sake of the Gospel* will Life come to us. If we are willing to risk it all, if we are willing to concern ourselves with serving the needs of the community and our neighbor, then God might grant us a new lease on life.

Let's see what wonderful things God has in mind.

Faithfully,
Pastor Bruce



Church School News

This is the Signpost article where I usually welcome the children back from summer break and let you all know when traditional Church School will begin. There is nothing traditional about this year. We are still unsure about coming back into the Sanctuary. As much as we would like things to come back to "normal", "normal" just is not the same. The most important thing right now is the safety and well being of our church family. We will continue to have Church School in a new way. I will be implementing distance learning with our Spill the Beans curriculum. The CE Board will be meeting to decide how that will look and when that will begin. It most likely will not start until the beginning of October. We will end our Disney lessons with The Incredibles 2. The children will have a break while I plan out the lessons. The plan is for me to run weekly zoom classes with the kids. I know this isn't perfect, but it is what we need to do right now. I would rather be overly cautious than not cautious enough. I have seen this virus do it's damage and I feel that it is important for us all to do whatever we can. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns you may have. ~Jessica Romeo

Notes of Gratitude

The new wreaths on the doors of the church and the flowers in the pots are from Carolyn Martus and her son Dana Lewis in memory of her husband Raymond Lewis.

Thank you to all who contributed to the missions board's back-to-school project. Your response will enable us to make delivery next week of gift cards, for families who need them, worth hundreds and hundreds of dollars. It is very much appreciated.

Dear Bolton Congregational Church, UCC,

Thank you very much for your support of Silver Lake Conference Center. It is a joy to be in ministry with you.

With your support we are changing lives, forming leaders, growing disciples, and sharing God's Love. Thank you for all you so to support this life changing ministry.

Blessings.

Crafters' Corner & Church Store

"HELLO" from all of the crafters and Store volunteers. We are thinking of everyone and wondering (as all of you probably are) where this year has gone. What a crazy time it has been! We are keeping you all in our thoughts and prayers and looking to the day that we will all be back together and have some normalcy, as we once knew it, in our world.

We pray that you keep well and stay safe.

Church Office

The church office remains closed. You can reach Amanda via the office email boltonucc@gmail.com (preferred). Messages left on the office phone are checked regularly.

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.

Thank
You!



From the Missions Board

We have wrapped up the Back to School Project which benefits Bolton Public School students. Donations will be used to purchase store gift cards which families can use to buy school supplies for their children. The total donated will be shared at a later date. Thank you for contributing to this project.

During the summer months members of our congregation have donated 17 bags of nonperishable foods, paper goods, and toiletries to the Bolton Food pantry. Also \$395 was donated to the Bolton Resident Assistance Fund. Please continue to donate to the Pantry. Goods can be dropped off at the Senior Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2 to 4 p.m. Thank you for your support.

May you be safe and healthy.

May you feel connected to others.

May you give and receive love.

Finance Committee Update

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. We thank you all for continuing your pledges and regular giving that allows us to continue our support of the church's work through our thoughtful giving. Please continue to 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!

Bequest to the Church

As many of you know, a devoted member of the Church, Pamela Connelly, passed away recently. She will be missed. She generously named the Bolton Congregational Church as a beneficiary in her Will, along with numerous other beneficiaries. She directed a cash bequest of \$10,000 to the Church with a request for the planting of a tree near the entry of Chandler Hall. In addition, she directed that the Church receive her residence located at 57 Vernon Road, Bolton CT. The BCC Finance Committee is monitoring the estate administration process, and will provide further updates as the process continues.

From the Heart

2020 has been a challenging year for many people. Please keep “From the Heart” in mind when situations arise where we may be able to help with one of our programs.

While we are struggling to receive donations this year for our “Adopted Family” Program and with our “Back-to-School” drive, we are truly thankful to everyone who was able to donate gift cards, monetary donations and other special donations over the past few months. We recognize that we are all not getting to the stores as we once were and when we are in the stores, it is not as easy to get around...so we appreciate the efforts you are making! We are still waiting for our drop off locations to open so if you have donations please hold onto them for when our drop off locations open up or email me and we can make accommodations to get them. The needs will still be there so don't hesitate to scoop up the deals as you see them.

What are the most needed items right now?

- School Supplies for our grade appropriate supply bags and Backpacks
- Non-perishable food items, personal products, paper products, cleaning products, gift cards to Stop & Shop, Big Y, Shop Rite, Aldi, Wal-Mart, Target
- Items to mail to our Adopted Soldiers – Air Force stationed in Poland and Africa

If you know of someone who has been isolated due to Covid or simply needs a pick up, perhaps consider nominating them to receive our “Creative Card” pictures and cards that are handmade and mailed each month! Simply email their address to: ftheart@comcast.net and we will begin to mail them out. . A notice will be sent letting the recipient know you have nominated them. To those who continue to make the beautiful cards and pictures...thank you! We hear how much fun you have making them knowing they will be headed in the mail to brighten someone else's day! That's what it is all about!

Hope you have a great rest of your week and thank you for all that you do to help others keep moving forward each day! It matters!!

Laura Ann
From the Heart
www.fromtheheartct.com

Joys & Concerns

From Ernie and Millie Harris, Please keep all the beings, two-legged and other-than human affected by the Ca. fires. Our Ca. kids have evacuated their home in Sebastopol and are camped up north. Also the kids, parents and teachers facing back-to-school risks.





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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



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The Signpost is a publication of the Bolton Congregational Church UCC, Bolton, CT.

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The Church Office Hours are: The church office is currently closed due to COVID-19. Amanda can be reached via the office email at boltonucc@gmail.com or by leaving a voice mail at (860) 649-7077 (Email is best, although voicemails are checked regularly.) Pastor Bruce is available via phone (508) 769-1809 or email at interim_pastor.bcc@yahoo.com, or 24/7 in case of pastoral emergency.