



The Signpost

October 2020
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The Bolton Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ
228 Bolton Center St., Bolton, CT 06043
860-649-7077 ~ www.boltonucc.com

From the Interim Minister

Beloved in Christ,

You know all too well that we live in an extraordinary time. We are doing our best to learn as we go. Each church is experimenting and learning. We are trying to learn from one another.

Many anxiously await return to “normal”. By that I assume that people mean going back to the way things were before March. It will be a while before we can do that.

For some that causes anxiety, personally and for the church. Me? I see this as an amazing opportunity. I hope we don't rush past it and miss the chance to explore and experiment.

“If we go back to the way things were, we will have lost the lesson.” Willie Owens (on FB)

Worship? Deacons approved the Planning Team recommendation.

October 11 in Chandler Hall at 9:30.

We ask those who want to attend to email or call the church office so we may know how to set up the hall. Other protocols:

- Maximum of 50 people.
- Masks and a minimum of 6 feet distancing from those of other households.
- Hand sanitizer use upon entering Chandler Hall.
- Disinfecting wipes will be provided.
- Two exterior doors in Chandler Hall will remain open.
- Chandler Hall will be a quiet space. People should step outside to talk.
- One way traffic flow through doors.

Other things to keep in mind:

- Do not come to church if showing symptoms, even if you think they are a cold or allergies.
[fever or chills; cough; headache; muscle or body ache; shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; fatigue; new loss of taste or smell; sore throat; congestion or runny nose; nausea or vomiting; diarrhea; rash]
- those 65 and older and those with health issues are encouraged to make use of the materials we will send out by Church Chirps and post on Facebook.
- The service will be similar in format (no singing or praying aloud) to the abbreviated services we have held outside during the summer.
- print worship bulletin at home and bring it with you, or use your electronic device.

Just like the past 6 months, whatever we do now is an experiment. We will evaluate what we do and adjust as needed. What we do now is not what we will do forever. We may, however, discover some things we want to keep.

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 October

Worship will be held
at 9:30 am.
in Chandler Hall.

Please email or call the church office, if you plan to attend, so we know how to set up the hall.

From the Interim Minister (continued)

Now a personal plea. I need help.

For the most part, in church we extend “weak” invitations when we want volunteers. We make general announcements and hope some good soul will help.

“Strong” invitations would be better; pray about it, seeking God’s guidance to find someone with the gifts necessary. Then ask them personally. That works best when the asker knows people and their gifts well.

Unfortunately, I don’t know people here that well yet, so I’ll issue a “weak” invitation and seek the help of every person who reads this.

We want to record or stream our services for those who cannot or choose not to attend, for whatever reason. I cannot take care of recording or streaming while leading worship. I tried and it’s too much. I need one or more people who can do this for us. If you know someone who has the skills (or ability / willingness to learn), let me know. We can talk about extending a “strong” invitation.

What happens when we have things we think we want to do (or should do) and can’t find the people to do it? I believe in the deepest part of my soul that if God wants us to do something, then God will make sure we have the people to do it. If we cannot find people, then God is not asking us to do it at that point.

Let’s try and make God’s best of this time. I have seen many situations in churches where opening ourselves to experiments (many of which fail) has led to wondrous and grace-filled new ideas, approaches and life. If you want to move into the third stage of the Interim process, this is it. (You thought we hadn’t started it yet? We have, on day 1, though you may not have realized it.) If you would like to see this process move forward in other ways, contact me and say, “How can I help?” Let’s talk.

Be open. Be willing to fail at some things. Be willing to learn and grow. Follow where God leads us in this time.

God is good; All the time.

Super Saturday 10/24 and 10/31 - \$10/workshop

For several years the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ has held “Super Saturday” events in the spring and fall. These include worship, a featured speaker and a wide range of workshops. Last Spring we had a group of people from BCC who signed up to go. Then everything got cancelled.

Now Super Saturday is back - COVID season style: It will be held virtually (on-line). It will take place on 2 consecutive Saturdays (October 24 and 31). They needed to spread it out in order to accommodate the anticipated numbers.

Get info and sign up at

<https://www.sneucc.org/planning-event-detail/12871453?month=10&year=2020&day=1&display=m>

Check it out. Sign up for as much or as few as you like. Do it soon. Workshops tend to fill up quickly.

Church School News

I hope this issue of the Signpost finds you all well. We will begin our virtual Church School classes on Sunday October 18th at 11:00am. I will give the congregation periodic updates on how we are doing with virtual learning. I realize this is a new way of doing things and we will all be learning as we go. I am confident with the support of the congregation, and CE Board this will be a success.

Finance Committee Update

We thank you for keeping up your contributions to the general operating fund as well as supporting our missions work. As an update, our overall income is 20% less than the current budgeted amount with pledges running about 15% behind and non-pledge contributions running about 8% behind, which is great given the current circumstances. Expenses are also 20% less than the budgeted amount through September. The financials show that we are tracking to budget, but please note we have had limited funding for basic support to the UCC and other entities such as MACC. Keeping contributions up will help us help others in need. 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!

Joys and Concerns

Paul and Lisa Catanese welcomed their second grandchild, Nathan Catanese Zachau, born August 25 to their daughter Kristina and her husband Chris, joining his 2-year-old brother Max at their home in Southington.

Cathy Nelson's brother, Conrad Shannon, passed away on Sunday evening in Georgia. We ask for prayers for Cathy and Conrad's family.

Calendar of Events

Mondays, 7pm, Planning Committee

Tues., Oct. 6, 6:15pm Missions Board

Tues., Oct. 13, 7pm Finance Committee

Wed., Oct. 14, 7pm Church Council

Wed., Oct. 28, 7pm Deacons Meeting

All meetings are taking place remotely via Zoom.

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.

Notes of Gratitude

Dear Members of Bolton Congregational Church,

On behalf of the Bolton Center School, I would like to thank you for your extremely generous donation to our students. Especially this year, your generosity is being used to help supply students with not only school supplies, but also other necessary items they need due to these challenging times.

We appreciate all you do for our students.

Elaine Allegretti, BCS Teacher

Cathy Nelson sends thanks for support and love through calls, cards and emails at the time of her brother's death.

The Board of Stewardship
will be hosting our

Fall Work Day

November 7th

9 am-12 pm

Rain date:
Nov. 14th

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.

From the Missions Board

The Board of Missions is asking you to participate in the Manchester area CROP Walk for Hunger as our October project. The virtual walk will be held on Sunday, October 18th. CROP Hunger Walks are community-based walk events sponsored by Church World Service and held across the United States raising funds to support a global response to combat hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster. Twenty five percent of the funds raised are returned to the host community which for our Manchester area walk is the MACC Food pantry. The remaining seventy five percent of the funds will be used by Church World Service to combat hunger, poverty, displacement and disaster globally.

Background

The Crop Project was organized in 1947 when farmers were asked to donate food and seed crops to our hungry neighbors in post-World War II Europe and Asia, a program known as the Christian Rural Overseas Program or CROP. In 1969 in Bismarck, North Dakota, and in 1970 in York, Pennsylvania, the first walk events were organized to raise funds to support CROP. Since then CROP Hunger Walk events have been held in hundreds of communities raising millions of dollars to eradicate hunger and poverty.

Get Involved

Hunger is one of the greatest injustices facing our world. More people are facing hunger and possible starvation due to the pandemic. It doesn't have to be this way. Ending hunger is possible. We can help make it happen as we participate in the CROP Hunger Walk, taking one step at a time to eradicate hunger. The steps we take and the funds we raise will make a real impact!

This is how to donate. Go online www.crophungerwalk.org/manchesterct

Scroll down and click on Bolton Congregational Church. You then click onto donate to make a contribution by providing needed information. If you want to be a Walker and raise funds by giving family and friends an opportunity to sponsor your walk then you need to click on Walker to register and provide needed information. To practice social distancing during the pandemic you can plan a private walk or join a small group of friends wearing masks and keeping distance from each other. Contact your family members and friends who you feel would like to support your walk by making a donation. Give them some background information about CROP Walks. Tell them the distance and date of your walk and how to make a donation online. Some of us become a little anxious about making donations online. You can mail a check to the Church. Please note on the check "Missions-CROP Walk" . The total sum of checks received will be sent to Church World Service.

During this difficult time we are all suffering in some way. When we help others through compassionate giving we feel more connected and hopeful.

Thanks you so much.
Please stay safe and feel loved.

From the Heart

“Lean on me, when you're not strong and I'll be your friend... I'll help you carry on. For... it won't be long... 'til I'm gonna need somebody to lean on”

YOU...have been making a huge difference this year by reading our newsletters and making donations that have been impacting those who truly need support. Thank you for your continued help as we keep our programs moving forward to reach those in need. With your support, we continue to:

- Mail** care packages filled with snack items to two Air Force teams currently stationed in Poland and Africa. Both teams are requesting snacks of any kind and have also enjoyed the artwork from your children. Please keep these items coming!

- Deliver** gift bags filled with tissues, personal items, handmade candy boxes and cards to the seniors at Woodlake Nursing Home and Rehabilitation center in Tolland. We miss our monthly bingo nights and we hear the seniors really miss the interaction with our volunteers. The care packages have been one way to make that contact each month.

- Mail** 80 plus Creative Cards and we thank all of the kids and adults creating the beautiful pictures and cards to send. Thank you for the stamps to mail them and for the decorated envelopes to make the presentation of the mailing a wonderful positive “gift” to receive.

- Purchase** and donate gift cards and all kinds of grocery needs for the individuals and families within our Adopted Family program. This is the one program that has not been affected as far as us being able to reach out...that is only happening because of your monetary and gift card donations...thank you!!!

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Chandler Book Nook

Where did summer go? It certainly was unusual but in some ways brought out the best in community life. Maybe you spent more time with neighbors and family, or walking on a trail or at the shore, or simply enjoying sunsets. And now, another change of season has arrived and some sense of normalcy should gradually appear.

The Library Ladies are returning to the Book Nook, taking stock of inventory. In order to make space for new books, we are putting some aside. We welcome your ideas and input on which books have inspired you, or a genre perhaps, as we add new books to the collection. If over the summer you discovered a surprise gem in a Little Free Library in your neighborhood, or you re-discovered a favorite, we'd love to hear from you.

We look forward to seeing you in the near future inside Chandler Hall when safety and guidelines allow. Until then, stay safe and be well.

The Library Ladies
Linda Brown





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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.