



The Signpost

January 2021
Volume 48, Issue 1

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.

The Bolton Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ
228 Bolton Center St., Bolton, CT 06043

Notice of the 2021 Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Bolton Congregational Church, UCC, will be held on Sunday, January 24, 2021 at 11 am. The meeting will occur via zoom/phone. We still need a quorum, so it is important for as many people who are able to login.

The purpose of the meeting will be the following:

- I. To review and approve the reports of the various boards, committees, and staff;
- II. To review and approve the reports of the Church Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretaries;
- III. To elect the officers and board members for 2021;
- IV. To approve the proposed budget for 2021;
- V. To conduct any other business which will properly come before the congregation.

In the event of cancellation due to extreme bad weather, the Annual Meeting will be held the following Sunday, January 31, 2021 at 11 am, using the same format.

Every effort will be made to make the annual report available the Friday before the Annual Meeting. I would ask that anyone responsible for preparing a portion of the Annual Report do so and submit it to the Church Office no later than Friday, January 8, 2021, so that the report can be compiled and distributed in a timely manner. *~Bill Dakin, Moderator*

Calendar of Events

Mondays, 7pm, Planning Committee—Z

Tues., Jan. 5, 6:15 pm	Missions Committee Meeting—Z
Tues., Jan. 5, 7:15 pm	Stewardship Committee Meeting—Z
Wed., Jan. 6, 6 pm	Deacons Meeting—Z
Tues., Jan. 12, 6:30 pm	Finance Committee Meeting—Z
Wed., Jan. 13, 6:30 pm	Church Council Meeting—Z
Wed., Jan. 20, 6 pm	Deacons Meeting—Z
Sun., Jan. 24, 11 am	Congregational Meeting—Z
Sun., Jan. 31, 11 am	Congregational Meeting (back up date)—Z

Z—indicates meeting is taking place remotely via Zoom

Worship Schedule for January

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.

Reflections from the Interim Minister for the Moment

Several years ago I heard an unfamiliar word: liminal. The way the speaker said it, and the response of others in attendance, made me think I *should* know this word. I didn't. I got a sense of it from the context but I decided I needed to know more about it.

I looked it up.

Liminal: adjective

1. Relating to a transitional or initial stage of a process.
2. Occupying a position at, or on both sides of, a boundary or threshold.

Examples of liminality surround us:

The new year

A new administration

Interim time

Pandemic

Changes in how to be church

Remote contact and meetings

Liminal times:

-elicit grief about what we leave behind and what we leave undone there.

-give rise to anxiety about what the new world on the other side of the threshold will present to us.

-evoke excitement, enthusiasm and opportunities to try new things.

Our personality, and the decisions we make will determine how we each respond. They shape what we do with the situation. Will we make one of these our primary or only approach?

I hope, whichever attitude we take individually, that we will not neglect the others. Let's not focus only on the loss. Neither, let us see only the risks and hardships. Even those who see the opportunity and hope do well to acknowledge grief and sorrow as they honor the past, as well as the concern and even anxiety that accompanies uncertainty.

Past, present, and future combine to become wisdom. Each needs the others.

The same is true for us, as well.

Here on the threshold, let faith hold grief and anxiety for us, and lead us on to engagement in what lies before us.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Bruce

Church School News

Happy New Year!!!! Usually in our January Signpost I give you an idea about what is coming up for our Church School activities. Unfortunately everything is still quite uncertain. For now we will continue with distance learning. We will continue with our Spill the Beans curriculum each week. I am hoping we can get back to in person learning, but we will not do it until it is safe.

Lent this year will begin on February 17, 2021. Each year we take on a Lenten Mission project. We usually have a pancake breakfast on the first Sunday of Lent to kick off the season and collect donations for the mission we have chosen. This year with our communities being hit so hard by this pandemic and so many people have been laid off my feeling is that we still do our Lenten Mission and we keep it local. Possibly MACC or some other local organization that helps the needs of those in our surrounding communities. I will be reaching out to Missions and Church Council to come up with the right organization and let you know how we will collect donations. We can not do our normal pancake breakfast, but perhaps I can come up with something virtual. I will let you know. It is so important now more than ever to take care of one another.

I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to all the kids and their families for an untraditional Christmas Pageant. If you have not already done so, please check it out on YouTube https://youtu.be/SDr_t-Kq75A. 2020 was a tough year, but this pageant definitely put a little brightness in the year.

Blessings to you all and here is to a happy and HEALTHY 2021.

From the Missions Committee

Our November and December project has been successfully accomplished through the generous donations from members of our congregation and the joyful efforts of several Missions Board members. We participated in the MACC Joy of Community Sharing Program by adopting four area families for the holidays. Using funds from donations given by members of the congregation we purchased food and other items for the families' Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. Each family also received store gift cards prior to Christmas to purchase a present for each family member. A shopping list was devised with input from each family regarding food preferences in addition to customary holiday dinner items. A Mission Board member shopped for each family and delivered the bags of groceries to the family on the Sunday before Thanksgiving and Christmas. It was an uplifting experience. The amount of money donated exceeded the grocery shopping and gift card expenses for the four adopted families. A donation check from our church was sent to MACC to help other families. The Missions Board is proud of the generosity demonstrated by our congregation.

Finance Committee Update

Thank you all for your generous giving during very different times. You are keeping our church vital and active supporting those in need.

From the Heart

“A kind gesture can reach a wound that only compassion can heal” “Steve Maraboli”

In 2021, “From the Heart” is taking one of our most treasured programs and changing it up a bit to fit the current times. Our monthly Bingo Nights at Woodlake Nursing Home has always been one of our favorite programs to run.

Unfortunately, those bingo nights came to a halt in March, 2020 and it looks like it will be quite some time before we can resume them again. In place of the Bingo Nights From the Heart began to create and deliver gift bags and cards to Woodlake.

The number one communication I heard over the past year was that the isolation and the loss of visitation were very difficult. That isolation continues as the winter months have now begun with even less of a chance for the seniors to receive visitors or get outside. For those who are unable to be around their loved ones or even attend activities, like the Bingo Nights, the challenge to keep their spirit up on a daily basis is very real.

After receiving feedback of just how much the seniors enjoyed seeing what was inside their gift bags and enjoyed reading our notes each month, we recognized the importance of keeping these connections going and we decided it was the right time to expand upon this idea. With your help, our new program will bring friendship and encouragement where it is so needed by creating gift bags filled with all kinds of helpful items and adding a “Thinking of you” notecard signed by “From the Heart”.

Many of you have loved ones and friends in nursing homes, assisted living homes and seniors living independently at home and are staying isolated for health reasons. Please let me know if you have someone or someplace who would appreciate the opportunity to receive these gift bags. Encouraging positivity and connection is what they are all about.

How can you help?

Below is a current Wish List of items...OR...create your own gift bag(s) to donate and we will deliver them on your behalf. What a great opportunity to work together as a group or a family! Purchase even one item a week and in just a few weeks, you will have everything you need to bring joy to someone!

We feel by keeping the gift bags smaller in nature, we can reach more seniors so the items below are mainly the trial size or smaller items, however, any size will work because we have the medium size gift bags too! We are cautious about including a snack or candy/chocolate due to each person’s individual diet so we are focusing more on the personal items they always request. There are also items on the list below that we have delivered with a card as a separate item (lap blankets, prayer shawls).

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From the Heart (continued)

Hand Lotion	Tissues	Chap stick	Shower Gel
Writing pad/pens	Mesh Shower Scrub	Deodorant	Hand Soap
Mints	Playing Cards	24 Piece Puzzle	Moisture Eye Drops
Beanie Babies	Shampoo	Personal Wipes	Mouthwash
Non Slip Socks	Prayer Shawls	Scarves	Lap Blankets

In place of our monthly bingo nights, we will now be creating monthly gift bags! We hope you are encouraged to join us in making sure the seniors know we are still here thinking of them! Thank you for all of your support with this new program! We are really excited to kick 2021 off with this program and hope to share your positive connection with many this coming year!

Laura Ann / From the Heart
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Notes of Thanks

Dear Family of BCC,

The statement “we are in this together,” that came out shortly after the pandemic hit, did not mean much more than a clever cliché to me at the time, but it has deep meaning to me now, nine months later. MACC’s resources have been easily depleted by COVID 19, if not for one thing called support, which is shown up in three incredible ways, called donors.

We are beyond grateful to our **faithful donors**, who have the heart for what MACC does and can always be counted on to show up. We are thankful for the return of **old donors**, who have revisited the good work MACC is known for and trusts us to help the community during this crisis, and we are greatly encouraged by **new donors**, who are partnering with MACC for the first time in response to this current emergency that threatens everyone in some way. We hope that all three groups merge to form a strong alliance to fight whatever comes next. For now, whatever donor group you belong to, your giving is saying the same thing, “we are in this together.”

Thank you for your faithful partnership with MACC Charities.

Wishing you the peace you have given to us,
Beth Stafford
Executive Director/CEO
MACC Charities

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Crafters' Corner & Church Store

The group has been meeting for a few hours each week on Tuesdays 10:30 - 1:30 for the several months. We will not be meeting again until the middle or near the end of January due to concerns of possible further "spikes" in the virus due to holiday gatherings.

We did manage to do a little Christmas decorating for the pleasure of those who meet in Chandler Hall and also used the space to try to raise a little money for the Church Store (all proceeds support our church).

Ed Biske will, once again, be building bird houses that we will be selling in the Store in the Spring. They have been a very popular item in the past and are always sold out. If you missed out on this item before, perhaps this is your chance to purchase one for your own yard or to gift to someone else.

The Store doors are still always open for your convenience (just make sure you distance and wear your mask). Shopping is primarily on a self-serve basis with several containers into which you may place your money, check, or I.O.U. You are, also, always welcome to come on Tuesdays when we meet and can shop alone or call Lynn 860-643-6788 and I will be happy to open for you by appointment.

We all wish you a HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Lynn Ralston
Crafters, and Store Volunteers

Notes of Thanks (continued)

Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you for your generous donation to the United Church of Christ to support USA Emergencies. Because of your kindness, we will help people rebuild their communities and bring comfort to their lives.

Aid provided to individuals from the early days of recovery and relief through the long-term recovery phase makes a big difference. Communities faced with devastating challenges find strength and hope in knowing that you care. Your support allows UCC Disaster Ministries to bridge the gaps between the assistance offered by first-time responders and community revitalization.

Thank you for spreading God's hope, peace and love through your financial assistance as the United Church of Christ continues to build a just world for all.

May God's grace sustain you!

Sincerely,
Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer
General Minister and President

Chandler Book Nook



"We will open the book. Its pages are blank.
We are going to put words on them ourselves.

The book is called Opportunity
And its first chapter is New Year's Day."

Edith Lovejoy Pierce

Happy New Year... 2021!

Hermit haven is here again. The excitement of the holiday wanes and we once again settle into isolation. But wait...

"Reading gives us someplace to go when we have to stay where we are." (Mason Cooley)

As we worship in Chandler Hall, some have found our Book Nook to be very convenient for providing volumes of entertainment. We are happy to see books circulating and encourage you to borrow.

We're excited to have several new books purchased and should have them ready to borrow next month. Our collection continues to expand and evolve. Our goal is to offer diverse subjects, to contribute to a richer spiritual life.

If you have recently read any inspirational books, we'd love to hear about them. We are always looking for new titles for Chandler Book Nook.

The Library Ladies

Linda Brown & Denise McLennon

Prayer Shawl Ministry

We are still making shawls in our isolation. We have some ready for requests as needed. We are hoping that someday soon we will be able to gather again and offer knitting lessons and fellowship. Christmas Blessings to all.

Dot Lessard



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



THE SIGNPOST ~ JANUARY 2021

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

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