



# The Signpost

April 2021  
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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.*

The Bolton Congregational Church,  
United Church of Christ  
228 Bolton Center St., Bolton, CT 06043  
860-649-7077 ~ [www.boltonucc.org](http://www.boltonucc.org)

## Reflections from the Interim Minister for the Moment

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Holy Week, the Passion, Easter and Resurrection

On Palm Sunday we gathered for worship in the sanctuary for the first time in 56 weeks. It was a joy to see people there and to feel the excitement in the air. Deacons handed out palms as people climbed the front steps. Half the pews had streamers to block them, but as the 37 people found seats, I thought how full the sanctuary looked - people spread throughout the room.

This is a time of ferment in the life of BCC. The church has gone through some tough and trying times. The transitions in pastoral leadership caused great stress from which BCC has yet to recover fully. The challenges of physical distancing and attending to being church while reducing the risk of transmitting COVID have made matters even more difficult.

In the past few months we have seen signs of hope and life despite the constraints. We have gathered for worship nearly every week since last June - first out doors, then in Chandler Hall and now in the sanctuary. The boards and committees have met regularly, with Deacons meeting twice a month, and the Discernment / Transition Team meeting every week to plan. Jessica Romeo has faithfully provided educational material to families with children.

*Continued next page...*

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## Calendar of Events

**Mondays, 7pm**, Planning Committee—Z

**Tuesdays, 10:30am-1:30pm**—Crafters in Chandler Hall

**Tues., April 6, 6:15 pm** Missions Committee Meeting—Z

**Tues., April 6, 7:15 pm** Stewardship Committee Meeting—Z

**Wed., April 7, 6 pm** Deacons Meeting—Z

**Thurs., April 8, 7pm** Discernment Meeting—Z

**Sun., April 11, 11:15 am** Discernment Meeting—Z

**Tues., April 13, 6:30 pm** Finance Committee Meeting—Z

**Wed., April 14 6:30 pm** Church Council Meeting—Z

**Wed., April 21, 6 pm** Deacons Meeting—Z

Z—indicates meeting is taking place remotely via Zoom

## Reflections from the Interim Minister for the Moment *(continued)*

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We held 5 “Getting to Know You” Zoom sessions to learn how to use the technology in the late fall, attended by 34 people.

In the Winter, we held 5 sessions called “The Past - History 1a” (what kept you coming back to BCC?) attended by 46.

In March, we have held 5 sessions called “The Past - History 1b” - a chance to talk about some of the challenging times at BCC. So far, 30 people have taken part in these.

We have hosted a take-out Corned Beef Dinner and a take-out Pancake Breakfast.

The Board of Missions has had projects every month and BCC and friends have been extremely generous every time.

Some want to leap forward and embrace the return with gusto. Others feel uncomfortable with moving too quickly. They may still have legitimate concerns to resolve (e.g., getting the vaccine, or concerns about whether vaccinated people can still transmit the virus, or family members with significant health risks.)

In regards to the church, some still have unresolved issues and feelings about pastors (both positive and negative). Others were surprised when conflict arose and the church didn’t seem as welcoming, gracious or friendly as they had thought it was.

On that first Easter, we tend to think everyone was filled with joy and Alleluias! Yet, despite the rumors of Christ’s resurrection, his followers felt more confused and afraid than ever. They hid away in private places. Even after they had seen him and felt his breath, they weren’t ready to risk everything to share the good news.

It will take a while for BCC - people of faith and good will - to be ready to take the risks of the gospel. The tension between the excitement to move forward and not yet being ready, is normal and appropriate. We need both in conversation with one another - a tug of love, if you will.

Some will be ready sooner. Some will take longer. We will continue our discernment process and conversations. We will report out to the congregation the things we are learning. We will develop rituals to help people deal with and process the injuries they have experienced.

I hear repeatedly about how much BCC members care for one another. I believe you.

Believe one another, even if you had a different experience or can’t quite understand. Just because a 20 year old has never been 85 doesn’t make the elder person’s experience any less real.

Be willing to say, “I believe you.”

Be willing to say, “I pray God’s blessing and grace for you.”

Faithfully,  
Pastor Bruce

## Church School News

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As I walk around my yard and see all the flowers popping up, different bushes starting to sprout buds it brings me hope. I hear the birds singing outside my window, hear the frogs croaking in the pond, watch nature all around coming back to life after the cold of winter. We too are slowly coming back after a brutal and year long "winter". I am given hope by the vaccine, hope that after all we have given up over the last year and all we have lost, that we can get back some sort of normalcy. Worship is being moved into the sanctuary with precautions and this gives me the opportunity to use Chandler Hall for a safe and socially distant church school. I will start planning and when I am fully vaccinated we will bring church school back to in person. Keep an eye on your inboxes for more details. If you are interested in helping in any way, let me know.

We had our annual Lenten Mission Pancake Breakfast on Saturday March 27th to raise money for MACC. This year things looked a little different. We were serving our guests as they drove through in their cars, but the giving nature of our community was the same as always. We pre-reserved 49 meals and we were able to raise \$561 in donations for MACC. Thank you to the Pospisil Family, The Martin Family and the Walsh Family for volunteering to serve meals. Thank you to Ken and Joe Romeo and Tyler Maguire for making a delicious breakfast and thanks to all those that donated money and were able to enjoy a delicious pancake breakfast while supporting MACC.

### Worship Schedule

#### Holy Week

*Maundy Thursday, April 1*

*Communion and Tenebrae Service will be conducted remotely only.  
(Check Facebook and Church Chirps)*

#### ***Easter Sunday***

***Sunrise service 6:00 am***

***Regular Service 9:30 am***

*The services will be the same and help in the parking lot  
by the Education Building in order to accommodate more people.*

*Church Chirps will be sent out with more information.*

***Sunday Services in the sanctuary will resume  
on April 11 at 9:30 am.***

## From the Missions Committee

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Rebuilding Together is back!!! Saturday, April 24th is National Rebuilding Day, 2021, and Bolton Congregational Church will once again be fielding a team of volunteers (working with Rebuilding Together Manchester) to clean up leaves, trash and weeds from around a property (perhaps raking or leaf blowing), cleaning and organizing outdoor yard materials (bricks, patio furniture, etc.), or painting decks. Team assignments will be arranged by the local Rebuilding Together coordinator and after they have the BCC sign-up sheet we will be getting instruction as to where to report, and what work we will be doing. If you have not been part of a Rebuilding Together day in the past, ask anyone who has been part of those weed-pulling, house-painting, tree-planting, lawn-cutting, friendship-building Saturday mornings in years past and you'll likely hear that they can't wait to do it again.

So if you are interested, please get your contact information to Lloyd Pedersen so he can sign you up. He is at [Lloyd.Pedersen@me.com](mailto:Lloyd.Pedersen@me.com), or cell (860) 987-7700. Lloyd will want to e-mail or otherwise get to you the Rebuilding Together information pages that we are all asked to read — because there are a few changes this year, driven by covid and to make sure everything done is done with safety in mind. All participants will also be asked to sign a “Volunteer’s Agreement and Release From Liability” form.

Come join us. It’s a great feeling. And you will be making someone’s day.



## Crafters' Corner & Church Store

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Continued from last month...

FLASH..(September 2011) The Church Store has moved to a new location.. A room had been vacated by a preschool class that had been meeting for about 40 years in the education Building. Many of you remember this group as many of your children and/or grandchildren attended classes here before they started kindergarten. We always enjoyed them and were sorry to see them leave but at the same time were delighted to be offered the classroom! We had more space to set up the store, and the church got the space back in Chandler Hall.

However, the church library immediately moved into Chandler Hall from the church basement. Everyone was looking for space, and I think at this point everyone was very happy. We were very excited with our new space. We spent many hours for a few weeks, cleaning , painting, setting up display areas, and moving everything from Chandler Hall. We now had a huge room with a bay window facing the street where we could display items and perhaps interest the public in shopping with us. We hung a sign, made business cards and kept copies of our monthly Signpost to give to new shoppers and let them know about dinners and other functions that were happening. Everyone seemed very interested in supporting our new project. We decided to extend our hours on Tuesdays from 10:00 to 12:00 to 3:00 and invited the public in. We even had a period that we tried opening two evenings each month. We soon found that we had visitors from many of the surrounding towns. They not only shopped but started to donate too.

At the same time we were putting some of our items into a consignment store called Select Seconds in Vernon. When they closed we rented some space at the Antiques Mall on Main Street in Manchester and after about a year without much success we moved on to Everlasting Designs on Route 30. They did not charge us rent as we were a church and only took their commission on goods sold each month. Their organization supported the disabled which made us feel that we were also supporting a worthwhile cause by showing items there. During all of this.....

To be continued.....

*Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to check out our Store offerings and did a little bit of shopping (and donating) with us during the short period that Chandler Hall has been open for the Sunday service. Ed's birdhouses have been a "hit" with most sold. We have been making more "Adult" bibs that were a hit in the past and seem to be selling quite well. Seniors really seem to like them and others continue to purchase them for loved ones in nursing facilities. We have been requested to make some that are even longer by someone who often eats "on the go" and finds that the regular ones are not quite long enough when eating in the car!*

HAPPY EASTER.

Lynn Ralston, Crafters and Store Volunteers

## From the Heart

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Happy Easter! Thank you for your support to help create Easter Pails for children in foster care. This was From the Heart's first drive of 2021 and you helped to make it a success! It requires many items to make it all happen and so many children benefit from the generosity and kindness you showed. Truly grateful!

So many changes have taken place over the past year. While most of "From the Heart" programs are back up and running, one of our biggest program changes has led us to create our new Gift Bag project. The Gift Bag project replaced our monthly in-person Bingo Night at Woodlake Nursing Home. Because many seniors were going without visits (for safety reasons) and were struggling emotionally without the normal daily activities they were used to, our contacts expressed how important it was to continue to find a way to stay in touch...and so our Gift Bags project began. We are basically donating the same kinds of items the seniors enjoyed to win for prizes on Bingo Nights and the response has been super!

**Our mission:** To bring support and friendship to those impacted by the pandemic so that, despite the socially distanced times, they know others care about their emotional wellbeing.

**Our goal:** To donate gift bags on a monthly basis filled with personal care items, seasonal and holiday themed items and a Thinking of You card.

In March, we were able to deliver over **one hundred** St. Patrick's Day themed gift bags to three nursing home and assisted living facilities: Woodlake in Tolland; Evergreen in Stafford; and Brookdale in South Windsor.

Would you like to help us with the Gift Bag project? Please consider a donation of: **hand soap; hand/body lotion; shower gel; tissues; Chapstick; small unbreakable Knick-knacks; non-slip socks; brand new stuffed animals (any size); prayer shawls etc.; large print word finds; adult coloring books and colored pencils etc.**

Thank you again BCC! Our church may have undergone many changes over the past few years but one thing remains constant...the heart of the church which are the members who without a doubt are caring, giving, empathetic, generous, kind and....faithful!

Thank you for your continued support!

Laura Ann / From the Heart

## Finance Committee Update

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### March Financial Snapshot

Happy Easter and a happy return to the sanctuary! Our clocks have been turned forward, March Madness is on us, and Spring has sprung! Thank you all for keeping your Annual Intentional Giving up-to-date and for the generous donations to One Great Hour of Sharing, the MACC Food Bank and the Christian Ed Lenten Pancake Breakfast. Just a quick update on the financial numbers to-date:

March's income ended the month with year to-date contributions at \$34,162 about \$2,300 ahead of projections, again thank you all for keeping up with your intentional giving;

Expenses are in-line with our year-to-date projection;

Processing the request for Forgiveness of the Paycheck Protection Plan Loan is underway and we expect that the entire \$20,470 will be forgiven;

The Corned Beef dinner was a great success and a big thank you to the Mainville and Wierzbicki families for putting this together and to all who helped or were able to enjoy the take-out dinner, it was truly the best we have had and a great reminder that we are a vital and active church;

Proceeds from the Lenten Breakfast benefited MACC and with your generous free-will donations, we gave MACC \$561 dollars for their needs. Thank you all!

Once again, Happy Easter, Christ has Risen, Christ has indeed!

Jim Bahre



The Bolton Congregational Church UCC  
228 Bolton Center Road  
Bolton, CT 06043-7636

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**



## THE SIGNPOST ~ APRIL 2021

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

*The Rev. Bruce MacLeod, Intentional Interim Pastor; MaryLou Prescher, Organist and Choir Director; Jessica Romeo, Director of Children & Youth Programming; Amanda Andersen, Church Office Administrator; Bob Bagley, Custodial Services; Lisa Catanese, Webmaster; The Rev. Dr. Chris Davies, Minister in Mission; The Rev. Charles H. Ericson, Pastor Emeritus*

The Church Office Hours are currently by appointment only. Amanda can be reached via the office email at [boltonucc@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:interim_pastor.bcc@yahoo.com), or 24/7 in case of pastoral emergency.