



The Signpost

May 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

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION:

A Special Meeting of the Bolton Congregational Church UCC has been called by the Church Council to be held Sunday, May 16, 2021 immediately following worship service.

The purpose of the meeting will be the following:

1. To discuss and vote on a Motion from Church Council recommending the sale of the recently inherited property from Pamela Connelly located at 57 Vernon Road, Bolton, CT; and
2. To solicit input regarding the most appropriate use of the sales proceeds that best align with the intentions of Pamela Connelly in making her generous gift to the Church.

Calendar of Events

Worship: Sundays at 9:30 am in the Sanctuary

Mondays, 7pm, Planning Committee—Z

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

Tues., May 4, 6:15 pm Missions Committee Meeting—Z

Tues., May 4, 7:15 pm Stewardship Committee Meeting—Z

Wed., May 5, 6 pm Deacons Meeting—Z

Tues., May 11, 6:30 pm Finance Committee Meeting—Z

Wed., May 12, 6:30 pm Church Council Meeting—Z

Sun., May 16, 10 am Special Congregational Meeting (immediately following worship)

Wed., May 19, 6 pm Deacons Meeting—Z

Z—indicates meeting is taking place remotely via Zoom

Reflections from the Interim Minister for the Moment

Who Could Have Imagined?

I write this on the 103rd anniversary of my father's birth. He was born as World War I dragged on and in the midst of a flu pandemic. In 1918, who could have imagined what the next century would bring? Cars went from Flivvers to SUVs, 45 mph to as fast as we can get away with; from atom bombs and nuclear energy to solar cells on the roofs. Biplanes led to passenger jets, astronauts on the moon and a helicopter on Mars. Computers went from the abacus and adding machines to smart phones; movies from silents to live action and CGI. Jim Crow, the denial of civil and human rights for people of color eventually gave us civil rights legislation, the end of official segregation; and now renewed attempts to limit voting rights. Women couldn't vote when my father was born and now we have a woman as Vice President.

Who could have imagined how churches would grow in the 1940s, 50s and 60s? Who could have imagined the steady decline churches suffered from the 1980s through today?

For BCC, who could have imagined what would happen when Chuck Ericson retired? Who could have imagined that we would have to deal with a pandemic shut down, and how we would struggle and languish? Who could have imagined how people who care about BCC would step up and pull together, how they would do the hard work of trying to figure out what would come next?

Yet, that is where we are: deeply engaged in an intensive discernment, still trying to imagine what will come next. And making progress.

We have had about 15 Zoom sessions attended by 50 individuals over the past five months. We started with social gatherings (to practice the technology and get to know one another). We held a series of sessions where people embraced and remembered the joys of being part of BCC. More recently we had sessions where people voiced their sorrows and disappointments in regards to the church. This past Sunday, about 35 people gathered in Chandler Hall to talk. They spoke and listened respectfully, speaking of their own experience. People were engaged, honest and positive.

Most indicated they felt it had gone well despite people having and expressing differing opinions. The group expressed interest in more gatherings of the sort.

It is an exciting time to be part of BCC.

Who could have imagined?

I don't want to say I told you so, <wink> but I imagined it could happen, because I have seen God do it in other churches I have served. But more than that, it happened because God was able to imagine what could happen here. With God, all things are possible. Let's see what God imagines for what comes next. We may not be able to imagine it, but God sure can.

Faithfully,
Pastor Bruce

Church School News

Happy Spring! It is wonderful to see the trees blooming and the flowers popping up. It brings such hope. Finally after over a year of distance learning I am planning on how to bring Sunday School back to in person learning. Normally in mid-May we would take a break from Sunday School to allow the families to attend church together and prepare for what their summers will bring. This year we will be having Sunday School twice a month at the same time as church services. We will be having classes either in Chandler Hall or outside if the weather permits. This will enable us to remain socially distant and keep each other safe. We will have our first Summer Sunday School on Sunday June 6, 2021 at 9:30 and it will run until church services are over. All children pre-k - 8th grade are welcomed to attend; the older kids can either be helpers or participate as students. I am looking for High School age or parent volunteers as well depending on how many students we have in attendance. We will have rules in place. Masks will be required, the six foot (at least) between students will be enforced. The class will be less than an hour, so I am hoping these rules will not cause any issues. If for any reason the numbers of COVID cases start to go up again we will revisit the decision. Please be patient with me as I navigate how to do this to keep all the kids and myself healthy. I look forward to seeing those lovely faces and hearing those voices again. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

Finance Committee Update

April Financial Snapshot - Looking forward to May

Stop me if you heard this one: If April showers bring May flowers, what did the Mayflower bring? Oh, ok, you've heard it before. Sure, April has its daffodils, hyacinths and tulips, but to me, May is the month for sharing the joy which flowers bring.

Kids (at every age) welcome in May by gathering wild flowers to fill artfully decorated cups or cans, and with boisterous knocks or the doorbell rings, they leave their surprise to the delight of neighbors and friends. Mother's Day finds all sorts of flowering gifts, from bouquets to bulbs or shrubs in need of planting in just the right spot. Closing out May, showy petunias of red-white-and-blue help to commemorate loved ones on Memorial Day, this year celebrated on May 31st.

I hope May flowers lift will your spirits and brighten your day. In a sense, like the May flowers, as we shed the isolation of having to have been on hiatus, and we begin to gather together in our church's sanctuary, we are beginning to bloom again. By participating in the discernment process in order to prepare for the search and call of a settled pastor, the joy of our church family and the spirit of our congregation is spread throughout the community and we didn't even need to ring a door bell or run away.

Just an update on the April financial numbers to-date:

- April's monthly contributions are projected to be under budget by approximately \$2,500; Year to-date contributions of \$41,480 is approximately \$1,020 below projections; Thank you all for keeping up with your intentional giving throughout the year;
- We have received the Forgiveness letter from the SBA for the Paycheck Protection Plan Loan so \$20,470 is now considered income and is longer a liability to be paid back;
- Including the PPP Loan, the Year-to-date total Income through April is \$73,650, approximately \$720 below projections;
- Expenses are in-line with our year-to-date projection.

Thank you all for your support!

Oh, the Mayflower brought Pilgrims, but that is a story for another time.

Jim Bahre

From the Missions Committee

hawkwing, a Native American non-profit, assists tribal members of the Cheyenne River Lakota/Sioux Reservation in South Dakota to meet critical needs arising from America's worst poverty. We focus on the children America has forgotten through medical missions, home/community repairs, food security, education support, and tribal program support. We foster cross cultural awareness and meaningful volunteerism. During this pandemic, we are providing Personal Protection Equipment to the front line workers, including healthcare workers, food pantry staff, deputies assisting with road barricades to limit who can enter the Reservation, shelter workers and more. We welcome donations of cloth masks for the Elders and those who are at high risk. We also are in need of cash donations to keep adequate food resources available for the tribal members. Donations to: hawkwing, 306 Cavan Lane, Glastonbury, CT 06033 or through PayPal from our website: www.hawkwing.org. Rochelle Ripley, President, can be reached at 860-633-8933 from 9 am to 6 pm. Wopila Tanka ~ great thanks.

From the Heart

“Spring reminds us that resilience is only a season away”. This quote speaks to exactly how “From the Heart” has been moving forward in 2021! Thankfully, so many roadblocks that had crept up over the past year, are quickly fading away. The pathway of support is opening once again allowing FTH to get back to fulfilling the needs outlined in our programs! Yes!

It's exciting to share with you the joy the new Gift Bag program is bringing to many seniors! The new program has made it possible to bring support to even more seniors on a regular basis. In April, we were able to create and donate 50 gift bags! We hear how much it continues to make a difference to keep the lines of communication going right now and the same holds true in the form of the gift bags and notecards each month. A visit from a staff member, when delivering our gift bags, creates a pocket of time to spend together checking out the gifts and even sharing stories because of the items inside. The feedback has been wonderful, and our contacts really want you to know how much you are helping to brighten the days of those who need the contact...and the items right now!

One item I had forgotten about, that we used to use as Bingo Prizes were the decorated napkins. Christmas Tree Shops always had fun designs with animals, flowers, beach themes etc. Because the seniors are still mainly having meals in their rooms, the napkins add something special to their meal. Please add decorated napkins to our list of Gift Bag wishes each month! They are a perfect way to add some fun into a day. Many times when we would serve snack at the Bingo Nights the napkins would have fun designs on them and at the end of the night when we would help pack their winnings up, many seniors would say, “I want to keep the napkin too” because they enjoyed the design so much. Would love to add these to our bags each month if you see some fun designs so thank you for keeping an eye out for them!

Our other programs are also doing very well!

Our Foster program continues to accept donations of Pails (just like our Easter pail donations) filled with brand new toys, coloring books, crayons, bubbles, chalk, etc. and gift bags for the older children filled with personal items so please do keep these items coming! We are able to create these donations monthly thanks to your continued support to this special program! We are also grateful for the brand new pillows, fleece and knit/crocheted blankets you continue to donate!!

Our Adopted Family program still is in need of non-perishable, paper products, cleaning products and gift cards to Wal-Mart, Stop & Shop, Aldi, Big Y and BJ's. Thank you to everyone who continues to help with this program! The positive impact, on so many lives over the years, is more than can be put into words. Please see a recent thank you on the collage from one of the families your donations helps.

From the Heart (continued)

Another 80 Creative Cards, with a spring theme, were mailed in April! Please see a recent thank you, on our May collage, from a long-time recipient who has enjoyed them so much that she has nominated some of her friends and family to receive monthly mailings as well. If you know of someone who could use a pick-me-up each month, please let us know and we will be happy to add them to the mailings! We LOVE the artwork the children created in April with pictures of flowers, butterflies, rainbows, animals, and fun messages! Please keep these coming!

One of our long-time missions is to offer HOPE = **H**elping **O**thers **P**ersevere **E**veryday

Your support allows for that to happen every day of the year!!

Hope you have a resilient spring!

Laura Ann / From the Heart

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In Memory

In honor and memory of our friend Pam Connelly, a tree has been planted on the Bolton Center Road side of Chandler Hall. Pam passed in February 2020 after a long battle with Ovarian Cancer. She was inspired by our church and the love and support that we offered her. Pam had asked us to plant “a sturdy tree by the entry way with her name on it so she can hug her church family when they are heading to events.” We are working on a stone or plaque to place at the tree base with this quote by Pam: “Respond with love, always.”

~Amy Bahre

Please join us for our
Spring Work Day

May 8th

9 am—12 pm

All help is greatly appreciated!

Crafters' Corner & Church Store

Continued from last month...

During all of this we were able to set up a Store section on our church website with its own email address with the expertise of our webmaster, Lisa Catanese. It was intended for the benefit of members who were unable to get to the Store and, also, featured items that were in storage due to lack of space. What we found was that all of those who contacted and purchased from us were from outside of our church and State! Google picked up our items and they were out there for the world to see. We heard from people from Florida, California, Arizona, New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Washington and even Canada, England and Peru.

It was great meeting and making friends with people from all of these places and from all walks of life. They all seemed very excited to be purchasing from a church store, shared stories of their own churches and their own life stories. One even called Chuck to discuss his service on Thunder Hole in Maine as he was familiar with the site.

We spent many hours researching and comparing prices for items that went onto the website, answering emails, packing and shipping items.. It was well worth the experience and was exciting, and so rewarding on so many levels. A couple of years ago the church changed its website and due to a lack of space (as our pictures and information took a great deal) on the new site our store items were removed. To be continued.....

SO MANY TO THANK!

-The crafters and Store volunteers continue to meet on Tuesdays from 10:30 - 1:30 and even though we are basically closed people keep donating in various ways...some are items, as in the past, that we have to price and incorporate into the store or put into storage as they are seasonal. These we find in the Store behind our counter, are delivered while we are there and many come from our own volunteers. THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND THOUGHTS.

-Many of us are working from home to create new items ..wren and bluebird houses. Every year Ed has made several and they sell as fast as he makes them! We have one left. THANK YOU ED

-Adult Bibs in several sizes which always sold out in the past--now we are making them in three sizes. Seniors seem to love them. THANK YOU CORENDA AND LYNN

-Dot knits all year and her daughter-in-law took a large basket of her items and shared them with friends and made free will donations. Dot came in with sales of \$90.00 and \$102.00. THANK YOU DOT AND DOREEN.

-We had a wonderful donation of quality fabric donated by a quilter that Corenda knows from her dance class. We can use this fabric for our bibs, for quilts, and to share with others who do charitable work. THANK YOU DIANA (I enjoyed our email conversations)

-We received a wonderful donation that I found outside of the Education Building one Tuesday morning. It was two grocery bags filled with items (wonderful items, all new and in multiples-a lot of thought and dollars went into these bags) that From the Heart always requests for children in the Dept of Children and Family and Foster Care programs. There was no note as to the donors intent. After three weeks waiting for someone to be looking for them, we decided that they be given to From the Heart. Laura Ann was totally excited, overwhelmed and thankful. This was a great donation that will serve many and bring much happiness. THANK YOU ANONYMOUS

Note; it would be very helpful if you would leave a note on your donations especially if they are for a specific program.

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!

~Lynn Ralston, Crafters and Store volunteers

Words of Thanks

Thank you for all the cards, texts, phone calls and prayers after my dad's death. It meant a lot to me. I feel blessed to have such a caring and compassionate church family especially when you need loving support.

Thank you!
Sharon Witham

Dear Jessica and Family of Bolton Congregational Church.

Thank you for your generous gifts of \$75.00 for food and \$561.00 to support MACC's efforts to help the poor. It is a pleasure to do this work with partners like you. (P.S.. The pancakes were really yummy!!! And the service was sweet, too!)

Your support for our work is what keeps the good results coming to the lives of those who are near believing there is no hope to recover from hunger, unemployment or unexpected financial or medical emergencies. You are the unseen force that inspires and serves them.

Your kindness matters,

Beth Stafford
Executive Director/CEO

Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you for your generous donation to the United Church of Christ to support USA EMergencies. Your gift of \$50.00 was received on 4/7/2021. 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 again 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 you all. If you have questions regarding your donation, please feel free to contact us at giving@ucc.org or 800-846-6822.

May God's grace sustain you!

Sincerely,

Rev. John Dorhauer
General Minister and President



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



THE SIGNPOST ~ MAY 2021

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

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The Church Office Hours are currently by appointment only. 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.