



The Signpost

Summer 2021
Volume 48, Issue 7

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

Reflections from the Interim Minister for the Moment

There's something going on here.

I know that a fair number of folk* at BCC think that's not true. Some feel that the church is in a holding pattern, or becalmed, and perception is its own reality.

But let me offer another way of looking at it: There's something going on here.

I've said it before, but it bears repeating. Saying it again encourages those who don't see it to look for it and see things differently. Saying it again encourages those who are working hard at discovering what God has in mind for BCC.

Perception is contagious. Negative perceptions of the state of the church beget negativity, and negativity can take over. Seeing the progress, a joy in what God is doing causes Godly good to grow.

There's something going on here.

You might wonder why I keep saying it. I do so because I have heard it said that for people to begin to believe something, they need to hear it 7 times (or more).

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Be careful! This Could Change Your Life!

Would you like to learn to pray, or to be a better pray-er? Would you like to become more comfortable with prayer? Would you like to do your part in terms of helping the church discover what God has in mind for BCC? Would you like to see the abundance of what God offers? Would you like to be embraced by an energy, excitement, joy that comes from God as BCC responds to all God has to offer?

If you would, please speak to Pastor Bruce. Let me know - email, text, phone, in person.

The Transition / Discernment Team has decided to try to learn about prayer, including how to be more comfortable offering prayer before others. We decided it might help us personally AND that it might help the church to hear what God has in mind for BCC as we move into Stage 3 of the Discernment Process - "Telling the Story of The Future". You can be part of it too - for yourself and/or for the church.

Reflections from the Interim Minister for the Moment (continued)

The Transition / Discernment Team continues to meet weekly. They have the most amazing conversations. After a tough last few years, they are discovering hope for the church. One of the most recent discoveries: It is not our job to save the church, or even make sure it survives. The church already has a savior; and it's not us. Our job is to be faithful to the Gospel. Our job is to make disciples, serve the needs of the world around us, and share the good news of God's love for all.

Something is going on here. God is doing some amazing and wonderful things. If you don't believe me, talk with members of the Transition / Discernment Team, the Deacons or the Pastoral Relations Board. Those (overlapping) groups have been most involved since last fall and have experienced the something that is going on here.

It may be happening out of sight, but something is going on here. We have had 35 people take part in conversations about the Present. In all of our sessions (social Zoom, The Past, and The Present) about 60 people have participated in at least one session. These conversations have been deep, heartfelt, honest, caring. People have talked about what concerns them. They have talked about their hopes. They have talked about thinking about things differently than they did before hearing what others had to say. We have explored how to be a beloved community, a Christian community, not despite different opinions and beliefs, but because of them. People have listened to one another. People have learned that it's possible to talk about hard things and care about people with different perspective. We are learning how to deal with conflict in healthy ways. We have laughed and cried.

There's something going on here. God is a work. You are doing good work. I hope and trust that it will continue.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Bruce

*Folx - a variation on the word folks, folx is meant to be a gender-neutral way to refer to members of, or signal identity in the LGBTQ community. [dictionary.com]

Church School News

Summer is in full swing and we have come back to in person Sunday School. The kids are enjoying our summer lessons. We have learned how faith is like a mustard seed and how God's love for us out numbers all the grains of sand. We planted herbs, and tried to count grains of sand while we made sand art. We will continue to have Sunday school classes twice a month through September. Our classes are from 9:30am until church ends.

I hope you are all having a wonderful start to the summer and I hope to see more faces in Sunday School.

~Jessica Romeo

Prayer Shawl Update

We have not been meeting over the past year, staying safe from the covid virus. Several members have continued to knit through it all, and we have a number of beautiful shawls ready for request. We have gifted a few over the year.

Our plan is to resume meeting one evening a month, as before. Our members will be available to teach knitting for all ages. Visitors are always welcome at our meetings.

Respectfully, Dot Lessard



Chicken BBQ

Saturday, August 21st

5-7 pm

Half chicken meal for \$15

Quarter chicken meal for \$12.50

Includes coleslaw & potato salad

AND an ice cream dessert!

Please email or call the church office to make reservations.

boltonucc@gmail.com or 860-649-7077



Finance Committee Update

June Financial Snapshot - *A Summer Prayer*

Long warm days...The pace of life slows...
A time for picnics and rest in the shade...
Lord, help me to rest awhile
in the cooling shade of your presence.
Slow down my restless heart and fill me with
gentle compassion for all your people.

- *Author Unknown*

I came across this prayer while Googling “Summer Quotes in the Bible” and it struck me as fitting for our times especially at this time of year. Summer is a time to pick your favorite berries and garden produce such as tomatoes and squash; or to visit a farm stand for those items and maybe a bouquet of fresh cut sunflowers. But Summer is also a time to find refuge from the scorching sun, or the heat of our changing times, and to take rest in God’s cooling shade, to slow down.

In this time of transition, some of us are wary, wanting to toss away masks to be socially active and enjoy each other’s company while others hold tight, maintaining socially imposed distances, wanting to be safe and secure. Either feeling is personal and neither is wrong, be patient and ask God for your heart to be filled with gentle compassion for all His people.

After much prayerful and thoughtful consideration, the congregation has voted to sell the estate bequeathed to the Bolton Congregational Church by Pam Connelly. The property is now listed for sale on MLS. Church Council and the Finance Committee are looking for ways in which to use the proceeds that will honor Pam’s wishes to provide people a means to be spiritually rejuvenated and to help our church continue to grow. If you have a suggestion, please let the either group know.

Now, for the June financial update:

June’s monthly contributions are \$2,700 below the budgeted amount of \$10,625;

Total contributions year to date are \$64,461 and with the total Income year to date of \$97,424, we are approximately \$1,100 above the budget projections;

Total expenses for year-to-date are at \$86,731 which is less than our year-to-date projection;

With quarterly payroll taxes and several seasonal bills that will come due in July, we expect the Income to Expenses to be slightly off track to projections over the upcoming months.

Once again, thank you all for keeping up with your intentional giving throughout the year. You know that our church bills don’t take a Summer vacation even while many of us may, so please remember to try and continue your intentional giving. Enjoy this Summer, sense God’s cooling shade, and pick your summer bounty.

Oh yeah, as a Summer Bible quote, I had found -

“Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer;”

- *Proverbs 30, verse 25*

Just make sure they aren’t taking it all from your picnic baskets!

Faithfully yours,
Jim Bahre

From the Missions Committee

Thank you for supporting the recent mission projects. During the month of May we focused on monetary donations to hawkwing which provides basic need items and critical services to the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in South Dakota. Donations from the congregation totaled \$550. During June the mission project has been the Church World Services (CWS) Blankets of Love and Tools of Hope Programs. Funds from these programs are used by CWS to respond quickly with compassion to help people to survive and rebuild when disaster strikes. The total donations from the congregation was \$475. Several individuals made donations in honor of loved ones as follows:

- Lori Vadnais gave in memory of her mother, Rita, and her dads, Donald and Maurice.
- Barbara Maheu gave in memory of her husband Warren, Aurius and Marie Maheu; also Harry and Florence Carlson.
- Lynn Ralston gave in memory of her husband Bruce.
- Susan Schardt gave in memory of her parents Janet and Gaston Verhulst and her mother and father-in-law Pat and Walter Schardt.
- Amy and Jim Bahre to honor their parents who gave them tools and warmth for life.

In the spring we received correspondence from Alexandre Americo the child whom our church sponsors by sending a monthly contribution to Childfund Mozambique. He is now 12 years old and in grade 6. He resides with his mother, a sister, and a brother. He reports that he is in good health and enjoys school, playing soccer, and cooking. He hopes to become a teacher so that he can give knowledge to others and support himself. He expressed gratitude to us.

During July and August one of our mission projects will focus on supporting the Bolton Social Services. We are asking you to provide grocery bags of items for the Bolton Food pantry. Needed items are nonperishable foods for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Also needed are paper goods, cleaning supplies, and personal hygiene items. Please bring paper grocery bags with items for the Bolton Food pantry to church on Sundays during July and August. Put the bag on the landing at the top of the steps to the left of the front doors. On the bag please print "From a BCC member". A Mission Board member will deliver the bags to the Bolton Food pantry each week. If you are not attending church and want to make a contribution you can bring your donation bag to the Bolton Senior Center at 104 Notch Road where the Food Pantry is located. Although the Senior Center is currently closed for activities staff is present on Monday through Thursday 9 to 4 and on Friday 9 to 3. Ring the bell next to the entrance and a staff member will come for your donation. Please print "From a BCC Member" on the bag. Last summer 14 bags were donated. Lets set a goal of 25 bags for this summer. You could also make a monetary donation to the Bolton Resident Assistance Fund. This fund is used to stock the Food Pantry as needed and at the discretion of the Social Service Director to help Bolton residents who are faced an urgent financial difficulty related to a basic need. You can make a donation by placing an envelope with a check made out to BCC in the collection plate on the table in the narthex. Please note on the check "Bolton Resident Assistance Fund". If you are not attending church you can mail the check directly to the Bolton Senior Center. Last summer \$395 was given to this fund by BCC members. The Mission board is hopeful that we will be generous again in 2021.

If you are seeking a volunteer opportunity this summer you may want to sign up as a member of the BCC team to serve at the MACC Community Kitchen or Community Threads Shop on Saturday, July 31st or August 28th from 9:45 to 1 pm. Four volunteers are needed to work with the chef at the Kitchen to make bag lunches for that day and prepare food for hot meals which will be served later in the week. Two volunteers are needed to sort and organize donations at the Community Threads Shop under the supervision of a staff member. Please bring a mask. Gloves are provided. Sign up by contacting Susan Schardt at wmschardt@comcast.net by July 26th and August 23rd.

Last but not least is the August mission project Adopt-a-Family to help Bolton families who need some assistance with the not-insignificant costs that attend return to school. Your donations are used to purchase store gift cards

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From the Missions Committee (continued)

which are given to the Bolton Schools Counselor. As you might imagine the list of items that the parents of kindergarteners is not long, but by the time that the student is in middle and high school the supplies are costly. Imagine the burden when the family has many school age children. Please consider making a contribution to Adopt-a-Family. You can mail a check to the church office or on a Sunday in August place a check in the collection plate in the narthex. Please print "Adopt-a-Family" in the memo section on the check. A Missions Board member will turn the funds into gift cards which the schools' counselor can make available to families known to need them. Year after year our efforts have been warmly received with profound thanks.

Thank you for the numerous gifts that you joyfully give to others!

Crafters' Corner & Church Store

How nice it was to be able to hang the "OPEN" sign out again and invite the public into the Church Store on June 15th. It was the first time since March 1, 2020. We no sooner put it out and we had three shoppers all happy to see that we were open once again. On the 22nd, same thing..

We, also, had a wonderful donation on that day of four completely upholstered (seat, back and legs) dining room chairs that are in beautiful condition. They are upholstered with a special scotchgard fabric and are very comfortable. I was told that they originally cost \$300.00 each. At the moment, we have them on display in the entry of the Education Building and have priced them at \$200.00 for the set of four. If you are looking for a set of chairs (quite modern) then you may like to take a look at these. You can call me, Lynn, at 860-643-6788 or text me at 860-402-3369, stop by on Tuesdays between 10:30 - 2:00 or on Sunday mornings if the building is open.

Thank you to the many of you who have continued to do some shopping at the Store in the last few months and continue to make donations. We continue to add to our offerings and look forward to seeing more visitors.

Once again, I would like to highlight our greeting card selection. You must have noticed how the prices of greeting cards have gone up since the pandemic started. I have seen some selling as high as \$8.99 each! We have not raised our prices for greeting cards and they still sell for as little as .25 cents and as high as \$2.00. Many are handcrafted and many are sold in packets of 2, 4, and 10. You are still able to send greetings to family and friends on those special occasions without "breaking the bank". AND, remember that your Church Store is all volunteer and exists only because of the many donors and shoppers from our church family, friends and the community. All proceeds go directly to the missions of our church.

P.S, We meet from 10:30 - 2:00 on Tuesdays.. We have not been wearing masks with each other as we have been together for some time now and all have our shots. We do wear our masks when new people join us until they tell us that they are o.k. without our masks. All are welcome to join us but we ask that if you have not had your shots that you wear a mask and if you prefer us to wear our masks also, please request it. We are willing to do whatever makes everyone feel welcome and safe.

HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY.

Lynn Ralston, for the Crafters and Store Volunteers

BACKPACKS

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

BACK TO SCHOOL IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER, AND FOR MOST CHILDREN, IT IS FILLED WITH EXCITEMENT AND NEW SCHOOL SUPPLIES!

FOR MANY OTHERS, THERE IS A GREAT NEED FOR SUPPORT! "FROM THE HEART" NEEDS HELP WITH BACK TO SCHOOL ITEMS. ALL BACKPACKS AND SCHOOL SUPPLIES WE COLLECT WILL BE DONATED TO CHILDREN IN OUR "ADOPTED FAMILY PROGRAM" AND CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE IN CONNECTICUT. GRADE APPROPRIATE SUPPLY BAGS ARE BEING CREATED FOR DONATION ALL MONTH LONG AND WE NEED YOUR HELP!

EVEN ONE DONATED ITEM WILL HELP TO SEND A CHILD TO SCHOOL WITH THE NECESSITIES THEY NEED TO BEGIN THEIR NEW SCHOOL YEAR, OFTEN TIMES IN A NEW TOWN WITH NEW TEACHERS AND PEERS!

EVERY DONATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE! ANY AND ALL SCHOOL ITEMS ARE NEEDED, HOWEVER LISTED BELOW IS A SUGGESTED LIST OF ITEMS WE KNOW ARE ALWAYS REQUESTED...

#2 PENCILS	BLACK/RED/BLUE PENS	CRAYONS
ERASER TOPS	LARGE ERASERS	MARKERS
RULERS	PENCIL BOXES	PENCIL POUCHES
GLUE STICKS	HIGHLIGHTERS	FLASH DRIVES
FILLER PAPER	CALCULATORS	TRAPPER KEEPER
INDEX CARDS	3 RINGED BINDERS	CORRECT TAPE
POST ITS	STAPLES & STAPLERS	<u>BACKPACKS</u>

THANK YOU! "FROM THE HEART"

www.fromtheheartct.com

Discernment Update

The Discernment Process Stage 2: "Telling the Story of the Present" is drawing to a close. We will offer one more small group Zoom session on Thursday, July 8 at 7:00 pm. Please contact the church office to register

On Sunday, July 25, we will have a "Wrap up" Conversation for Stage 2. The conversation is open to all members and friends about where BCC is at the moment and will take place on Sunday, July 25, 10:45 am-12:15 pm in Chandler Hall. We will send out a Summary of our Previous sessions and a set of prompting questions the week before so you can reflect on them beforehand

(Working around vacations) The Discernment/ Transition Team will spend August planning Stage 3: Telling The Story of the Future for the fall.



The 33rd biennial meeting of the United Church of Christ will be held online this year, making it a unique opportunity for anyone in the denomination to attend without the burden of travel expenses or time away from family and work. The event is packed full of activities, worship, and workshops that are designed to give a glimpse into the wider church and allow access to educational opportunities that can help local congregation's in leadership, growth, and giving.

[Rooted in Love: General Synod 33](#) will be held from July 11 to 18 online, with workshops being held July 7- 10. Registration is open to all. The cost for visitors is \$100.

Keynote speakers for the event are Social Activist and Author Valarie Kaur and Author and Minister the Rev. Adam Russell Taylor. Preachers will be the Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, the Rev Michelle Higgins and Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr.

Plenary sessions will include votes on a variety of resolutions. The 50 workshops will cover a wide variety of topics such as the Bible, money, white privilege, interfaith dialogue, the science of gender and sexual diversity, creating healthy conflict, supporting those healing from trauma and much more. Registrants can attend the workshops live beginning July 7 or they will be able to access recordings of them during and after Synod.

There are also a host of online gatherings for people with a variety of connections, from alumni of various schools, to authors, to interim ministers, to those interested in particular issues. There are also separate activities for [youth](#) and for [young adults](#).

Synod organizers have issued a [Congregational Challenge](#), in which they will recognize the Conference that has the best representation at Synod.

The Southern New England Conference is "sending" 98 delegates to Synod - a number determined by the number of persons that have membership in Conference churches. It's the first time the new Conference will seat a single delegation. The group recently had an online orientation, and will also be attending Synod training.

Calendar of Events

Worship: Sundays at 9:30 am in the Sanctuary

Mondays, 7pm—Discernment/Transition Team—Z

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

Church Store Open

Fridays, 7:30pm—Al-anon in Chandler Hall

JULY

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

Wed., July 7, 6:30 pm Deacons Meeting—Z

Thurs., July 8, 7pm Discernment Meeting—Z

Sun., July 11, 9:25 am Sunday School

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

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

Wed., July 21, 6:30 pm Deacons Meeting—Z

Sat., July 24, 9am—5pm Buddhist Retreat in Chandler Hall

Sun., July 25, 9:25 am Sunday School

Sun., July 25, 10:45am Discernment Stage 2 “Wrap up” Meeting in Chandler Hall

AUGUST

Tues., August 3, 6:15 pm Missions Committee Meeting—Z

Wed., August 4, 6:30 pm Deacons Meeting—Z

Sun., August 8, 9:25 am Sunday School

Tues., August 10, 6:30 pm Finance Committee Meeting—Z

Wed., August 11, 6:30 pm Church Council Meeting—Z


Wed., August 18, 6:30 pm Deacons Meeting—Z

Sat., August 14, 9am—5pm Buddhist Retreat in Chandler Hall

Sat., August 21, 5pm—7pm Chicken BBQ

Sun., August 22, 9:25 am Sunday School

Z—indicates meeting is taking place remotely via Zoom



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



THE SIGNPOST ~ SUMMER 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.