



The Signpost

September 2021
Volume 48, Issue 8

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

Good News!

We have Good News to share.

God is doing amazing things in our midst, helping us turn difficult things into good:

The challenges of the last few years have wakened us up, caught our attention and caused us to *have* to think about what it means to be church, what we believe, how we live together. It has caused us to imagine, really imagine what our lives would be like without the Church, and without Bolton Congregational Church in particular. That gets our attention.

The challenges that led to this Good News include

the season of physical distancing and masks,

a season of "sabbatical" in the spring of '20 when we took time out from ordinary church busyness as we sheltered, quarantined and learned some ways to adjust worship and being church;

as we fumbled to conduct on-line worship;

as we gathered for worship under the trees and sang duets with birds and a helicopter;

as we masked and gathered in Chandler Hall with open doors and coats in winter;

as we gathered gathered on the front steps on Christmas Eve;

as paraded into the sanctuary on Palm Sunday and continue to worship there since then;

as we held take out corned beef, pancake and BBQ meals;

as we learned how to Zoom and held significant, moving, deep conversations,

"Telling the Story of the Past" and

"Telling the Story of the Present"

with more than 50 people taking part

as we sorted out what to do with Pam Connelly's gracious gift of her house and began to talk about how to honor her memory and legacy;

as church members stepped up several times to lead worship and share reflections on their faith;

as the Board of Stewardship continued to maintain the property;

as the Board of Missions continued to find ways to serve those in need;

as church members and others generously contributed to those efforts;

as Jessica Romeo found new ways to offer Christian Education for families with children;

as MaryLou Prescher provided music;

as Ross Lally spearheaded updating church technology (still in process);

as Jim Bahre kept the books, paid the bills and worked the labyrinths of bureaucracies;

as the church store reopened;

Continued on next page

Reflections from the Interim Minister for the Moment (continued)

as Deacons, Pastoral Relations Board, Finance Committee and Church Council continued their work, and consider new, more agile ways of functioning;

[and others whose names and contributions elude me at the moment]

as we seek to improve communication and transparency;
as people learn how to talk honestly about differences of opinion; and to listen to one another;
as we learn how to engage vital issues on which people of faith and good will can disagree;
as we truly consider what things need to change and what things should not;
as the Discernment Team has met weekly for nearly a year to work out how to shape and shepherd the discernment process;
as people laugh, cry, care, and talk about hard things;
as we solicit various, differing perspectives and opinions;
as people listen and learn;
as people suggest topics to explore in depth as a way of figuring out who BCC is and can be.

All that is Good News!

When people ask, “How are things at BCC?”
tell them the Good News: we are building community,
caring for members, and for needs in the world;
we are worshiping and loving God,
and discovering ways God is leading and loving us through it all.

And next,
in September, we will begin gathering small groups to
“Tell the Story of the Future”.
Share your ideas, feelings, thoughts.
(Thursdays on Zoom, Sundays in person as we are able - registration needed)

Let’s see where God will take us - and rejoice!
God is good, all the time!

Faithfully,
Pastor Bruce

*****ATTENTION ALL 7th GRADERS AND ABOVE*****

We will be starting our confirmation classes soon.

If you want to sign your child up for confirmation please contact me at jessica.romeo.bcc@gmail.com or call the church.

The start date and times of classes to be determined.

Church School News

I hope everyone has been having a nice summer. We have been continuing with our in person Sunday School throughout the summer. We meet twice a month either in Chandler hall or outside. We haven't had many children, but that is the way it usually goes over the summer. We will continue with the twice a month format at this time until further notice. This month our classes will be September 12 and 26 and October's classes will be the 10th and 24th.

I am looking for a few people to join a team to meet and help make a plan going forward for the Church School. Last year we disbanded the CE Board and decided that we would try and work with smaller teams throughout the year for different projects. The first project is a plan for the church school. This would include what our curriculum should be, when we will have Church School. A very important part of Church is Christian Education. We need to feed the spiritual needs of the children and families of this congregation and this team will come together with ideas on how to do that. If you are interested in being part of this team please reach out to me. As soon as we have a team put together we can meet.

We cannot forget about the youth of our church, they are truly our future.

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

Sept. 1, 6:30 PM—Deacons Meet—Z

Sept. 7, 6:30 PM—Finance Board Meeting—Z

Sept. 8, 6:30 PM—Council Meeting—Z

Sept. 12, 9:25 AM—Sunday School—Chandler Hall

Sept. 15, 6:30 PM—Deacons/Pastor Relations Board Meeting—Chandler Hall

Sept. 24—Signpost Deadline

Sept. 26, 9:25 AM—Sunday School—Chandler Hall

Z—indicates meeting is taking place remotely via Zoom

Finance Committee Update

Summer Financial Snapshot - Welcome Back (From Wherever You Have Been)

If you were fortunate enough to have had a Summer vacation, welcome back to your daily routine; If your kids have gone stir-crazy at home, welcome back their school routine;

If you are tired of the haze, humidity and heatwaves of summer, welcome back the clear, cool and crisp days of Fall;

If you have been missing fellowship, welcome back to sharing a sense of community in our congregation; In general, welcome back!

Now, time for the July/August Financial Update:

The good news is with everyone's support and continued contributions and with the hard work done by all in fundraising efforts, our total income is right on budget. With expenses currently under the year-to-date budget, we are keeping pace to reduce the deficit-gap in the overall 2021 approved budget.

For the months of July and August the combined contributions are \$2,001 less than the two-month budget amount of \$21,250;

Total contributions year-to-date are \$83,710 and with the total Income year to date of \$118,366, we are approximately \$96 above the year-to-date budget projection;

Total expenses for year-to-date are at \$108,099 which is less than the year-to-date projection of \$117,466;

The generous bequest by Pam Connelly of her lakefront home has been sold; the net proceeds are to be held as ideas for how best to honor her intent are being gathered to be reviewed by the congregation; look for an update on the sale of the property and some ideas brainstormed at a recent meeting in an upcoming Church Chirp.

Now is the time to look forward, to what is new, what is exciting and what is needed. Through discernment in the Fall timeframe, we all have a great opportunity to examine who we are and, who we want to be and most importantly who we are called to be as a congregation. Exciting to some, scary to others but needed in Building Christian Community.

*⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good,
for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.
¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people,
especially to those who belong to the family of believers.
- Galatians 6 verses 9,10 NIV*

Faithfully yours,
Jim Bahre

From the Missions Committee

WALK. GIVE. Change the World. CROP HUNGER WALK * Oct. 17

For October, the Board of Missions is joining Church World Service in the fight against hunger, in our local community, as well as offer assistance toward greater food security for over 750 million people around the world. 75% goes to Church World Service efforts and 25% goes to a local charity, which is MACC. MACC has invited Bolton Congregational Church to be part of this year's CROP Hunger Walk. BCC members are encouraged to join the MIGHTY MACC TEAM, and plan to walk on Sunday, October 17, 2021. The Registration is at 12:30pm, Walk begins at 1:00pm. If any BCC member is unavailable or unable to walk, they are welcome to make an online donation to the MIGHTY MACC/BCC Team.

The CROP Hunger Walk route chosen for this year is a two mile, round-trip, beginning and ending at The Wapping Community Church, 1790 Ellington Road, South Windsor, Ct 06074. Walkers can choose to walk any part of the two miles. They have made sure sidewalks are along the route for safety. PLEASE NOTE: If there are enough BCC members planning to walk, but prefer to walk a closer route, (such as in Bolton), a local route may be chosen by our BCC sub-group as the date approaches. Details to follow.

All BCC members are encouraged to support this worthy cause and visit the CROP Hunger Walk website to register as part of the MIGHTY MACC walking team, and/or donate under the Bolton Congregational Church Team member sub-heading. If you donate \$20. and are planning to walk on Oct. 17, you will receive a Team T-shirt. (T-shirt sizes are needed by Sept. 12). You may email details, comments and/or questions to deb-biekrawic@gmail.com. The secure website is <https://events.crophungerwalk.org> . #KINDNESSWINS

Crafters' Corner & Church Store

The Crafters and Store Volunteers have been meeting all through the summer months. We are now hanging our OPEN sign and have had many visitors to the Store..Many newcomers and all quite impressed with the variety of items offered and the quality. If you have not visited recently, please stop by either to shop or just have coffee and conversation. We meet every Tuesday from 10:30 - 3:00. AND, as always the Store is never locked. If the Education Building is open, the Store is open. If you do not come in on Tuesdays, you are usually shopping on a self-serve basis. There are several containers throughout the Store into which you may place your I.O.U., cash or check. If you have any questions you may call Lynn Ralston 860-643-6788 or text 860-402-3369

Looking forward to seeing you.

Lynn Ralston,
and all of the Crafters and Store volunteers

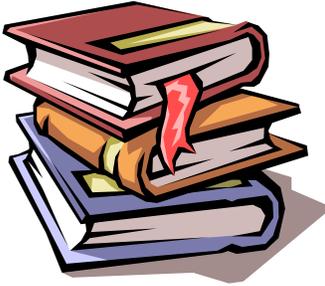
Prayer Shawl Update

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

Chandler Book Nook



"Speaking personally, you can have my gun,
but you'll take my book when you pry my
cold, dead fingers off the binding."
~Stephen King

Summer blessings from Chandler Book Nook.

Chandler Book Nook is always open for business. Please come browse
and borrow. NO MASK OR SANITIZING REQUIRED.

BOOK TALK

Our plan for an October book talk has been put on hold. We are
hoping for Sunday, January 16, 2022. The book we've selected is:
Trevor Noah; Born A Crime

We do not have multiple copies for lending but in November, Bentley
Public Library in Bolton will reserve copies for borrowing. Updates to
follow.

If you have read any intriguing spiritual books this summer, we'd love
to hear about them. We are always looking for new titles to add to our
collection.

Read on!

Library Ladies

Linda Brown
Denise McClennon

From the Heart

“A smile is the shortest distance between two people”

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Back-to-School drive! Timing was essential for the donation to all come together and, once again, you helped to make it happen! Backpacks, markers, crayons, colored pencils, erasers, index cards, highlighters, pencil pouches and so much more...every item you donated made a difference! Donations were made to the children within our Adopted Family Program and to our contacts at both DCF and Hopewell.

We are still in need of items to fill the requests that will come in over the next couple of months so there is still time to help! Another item we are always in need of are gift cards. We received requests to help specific children/teens with the purchase of sneakers, clothes and one young man recently requested a wallet. What makes it even more special is the kids can select their own items which is always a big deal to them! Thank you for your generous support to our Back-to-school program!

We continue to create gift bags each month for the seniors in our local nursing homes. In August, gift bags were donated to Manchester Manor, Evergreen and Fox Hill. The gift bags contained Tissues, hand lotions, Chapstick prayer shawls, brand-new stuffed animals and personalized messages wishing each recipient a happy and healthy summer. Since we began this new program in January, between the support of BCC and others within From the Heart, over 800 gifts have reached the seniors...our contacts can't say enough about the support you are providing!

As we head into the months ahead, isolation will again be a factor. Our mission is to continue to send a message of hope and friendship. What items do we always need? Tissues, decorative dinner napkins, hand lotions, Chapstick, hand soap, shower gel, deodorant, decorative seasonal items (unbreakable), prayer shawls and brand-new stuffed animals! Thank you for all your help with our new program!

Twice a year From the Heart ships a barrel to Haiti. We've been working with the same contacts, who have missioned in Haiti year after year, for several years now. The barrel we send goes directly to a school where the children have the opportunity to select items that they need. We continue to send sneakers, flip flops and shoes. Our contacts share that many children walk to school and over time their feet have flattened and become wider, therefore larger sizes are always in need. We also collect bars of soap and washcloths. When the earthquake took place in 2010, cholera was everywhere. Soap was in great demand and continues to be. Other needed items include masks, toothbrushes/toothpaste, vegetables seeds packets for their gardens, sewing kits (thread, needles etc). The barrels are large enough to fit about 50 pairs of shoes and we use every inch of the space by filling the shoes with the other items we are collecting. Our barrel was picked up on August 18th to be added with others that will be shipping in another week. We know the items reach those in need because of the contacts they have in Haiti. If you would like to help fill our next barrel, we would love your donations and there is plenty of time now to help us fill it up!

All of our programs are going strong now so please continue to check out the website at www.fromtheheartct.com and read our email updates throughout the month to see how you can become involved!

Laura Ann / From the Heart
PO Box 804, Manchester, CT 06045
ftheart@comcast.net

Hover over the symbol with your phone
(as if you were going to take a photo).





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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



THE SIGNPOST ~ SEPTEMBER 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 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.