



# The Signpost

October 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.*

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## Reflections from the Interim Minister for the Moment

The Christian faith does not keep secrets. Our faith does not have secret rituals. When we celebrate the Rites of the Church, all are welcome to come and participate. Sure, secrets build a sense of community among those privy to them, but in the Church, we say all are welcome.

Of course there are different ways of "secreting". We say all are welcome, but if you have never been to a Church before, you might not know where to go - even which door to use? Where is the restroom? Are there places I should sit - or not sit? When do you stand? When do we kneel? Do you have to believe certain things? What kinds of clothes do you wear? What if my children are fussy, or just being children? Do you clap? Do you raise your hands? Do you say "Amen?"

Language, too can play a role in making guests feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, even. We thrive on acronyms: UCC? OGHS? MACC? PRB? SNEUCC? AD? OT? NT? VBS? BCC?

Full words aren't necessarily any better. What's a narthex? Or a doxology? What is a lesson, or a hymnal? I've heard of the Bible, but I don't really know what it is. What's the parlor or Chandler Hall? Sunday School? What is a Deacon or moderator? What's the difference between Pastor and Minister? What's an interim? What is discernment?

It's hard for us to remember what things visitors and guests might not know - what we didn't know when we first came to Church or first came to church. (And what's the difference between Church and church?)

Even people who attend regularly might not know how things get done. Who makes decisions? How do they make them? Does my opinion matter? Will I get shamed or shouted down if I disagree? How and when will we get a new minister? Will that lead to new conflict and division in the church the way it did a few years ago?

At BCC (Bolton Congregational Church), we have been trying to make things clearer to people. We have invited members and friends to share thoughts, ideas and opinions. We have tried to explain our reasoning and purpose, hoping, in the end, to express our mission as we understand it.

To that end, in addition to the Discernment Process gatherings, we have started holding open meetings after worship on the last Sunday of each month. In these meetings, various church leaders have shared outcomes of our work, discoveries, plans, hopes. We invite people to ask questions about the topic for the day or other questions they might have.

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

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(As an aside: What topics might you like to have addressed?)

On September 26th, Jim Bahre (Church Treasurer) talked about the church budget - how it's put together and what it includes. He pointed out that the budget is a map that shows the priorities and mission of the church.

Here in the Fall we begin to look at the budget for the coming year. It will show what BCC thinks matters, relative to other things.

Most of the money for the budget comes through the financial contributions of members and friends. We receive other income from fund raising activities and, to a much lesser degree, from rentals. Usually, we make up shortfalls with money from investments and savings. Last year we (like a lot of churches, other organizations and businesses) had help from the Federal Government's Payroll Protection Plan.

Soon, we will ask you to consider the contributions you will make for the coming year. Those contributions include time (volunteering), special skills or interests you may have and would like to share, and, of course financial contributions.

People often wonder how much they should give. Many people look at the needs of the church, and then decide what they can give. When the need goes up, they may adjust their contribution accordingly if their own budget allows. Others feel most motivated to give to special projects or requests - renovations, technology improvements or mission projects that help people in need.

I invite you to think about another way of giving. Rather than looking just at the financial needs of the church, which nearly always exceed the contributions and other income, take some time to consider what *you need* to give. When you look at your spending - the things you need to pay for and the things you either spend on frills, or on a whim, or have no idea where - does that represent the values you hold? Do you decide to give to the mission of the church (which includes paying for insurance, heat, light and staff compensation) out of what's left over?

What would happen if you start by setting aside money for the church's mission at the beginning?

Many people give what they believe they need to give as a way of setting priorities and living up to their values. Often they are still able to take care of their other needs, *and* feel good about their giving. Their gifts feel more like gratitude than a burden to them.

BCC is an amazing church, with a vital legacy in Bolton and beyond. I have heard people talk passionately about how BCC connects them with other people, builds good relationships, helps them feel closer to God, have good guidance for living a Christian life, makes it possible for them to help people in need, sing hymns that stir the soul and memories of loved ones, enjoy good fellowship ...

What do you need to give?

Faithfully,  
Pastor Bruce

## Church School News

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I type this article as we welcome the first day of autumn. Soon we will see the green leaves turn to bright yellow, orange and red as nature prepares for the slumber of winter. In church school we are not preparing for slumber, we are preparing for life to come back to our Sunday classes. We are looking forward to old friends returning and hopeful that new friends will join us. At this time we are still a one room Church School. However, I am hopeful that our numbers will grow and our volunteers will emerge and the education building will once again be bustling with our youth. I have visions of the bulletin boards going back up with crafts made in church school classes by the hands of excited children, and activities will be scheduled for all ages to enjoy.

I am happy to announce that we will be having a confirmation class of at least 5 students this year. We have room for more. Therefore, if you have a child (or even you) that is in 7th grade or above and has not been confirmed and wishes to be, please let me know. We are diving into a new curriculum for confirmation this year called Confirm not Conform. The blurb below is taken directly from the CnC curriculum and I believe gives a great insight as to what this confirmation program is and what the confirmands will get out of it:

***Our goal is for youth to have an active faith, one that they build for themselves using all the tools at their disposal; not a passive faith, thrust upon them with no say in the matter—a faith that is easily lost and rarely missed. Although youth may be part of the program because of a parent’s wish rather than their own desire, we do not want youth to merely attend, listen, and respond as they are expected to respond. To that end, Confirm not Conform doesn’t provide answers but instead offers lots of space for exploration and questions.***

We are still following CDC recommendations at BCC. I am so proud of our community as they do what is best for the health of all who live, work, play and worship here. Yes, masks are quite annoying, but if wearing a mask helps me protect the vulnerable, then I will be happy to do so. Yes, we continue to wear masks in the classroom and we will do so until further notice. The children have never once complained about having their masks on and if we need a mask break we do so safely. We still enjoy a snack together, we are just a little further apart than we used to be. I welcome any donations of hand sanitizer, so that we can always have it available in the classroom.

Finally, the church school is in need of some new supplies. So, if you are looking for away to donate to the church and would like to support our Christian Education program we are in need of the following:

- New magic markers (most of ours are dried out)
- Cardstock in different colors
- Tissue paper
- Adult scissors
- Masking tape
- Plain white paper plates (the cheapest kind we just use them for different crafts)
- Brown paper lunch bags

Thank you all for your continued support of our Christian education program here at BCC.

~Jessica Romeo

## Finance Committee Update

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### September Financial Snap Shot

Ah, September, the end of summer and the start of fall, what does the change in seasons evoke in you? There is a crispness in the air, not the kind of cold you feel closer to winter, but somehow, one that invites us to go outside and enjoy the beautiful fall foliage, the smell of apples in an orchard or the taste the final harvest of late golden and silver corn. Each September day seems more and more perfect to me. Many of them do make it to my Top-10-Days-of-the-Year list. To me it proves that change is good, we especially welcome ones that come with the turn of a page on a calendar.

Those changes hold both a bit of sadness for the passing of one season but more so, a feeling of anticipation for what opportunities the next one will bear. Other changes, that are new to us, can provoke anxiety and dread, but the more you experience them, the more comfortable those changes become and maybe even welcomed when you embrace the opportunities they bring forward.

Just as each new day brings us a gift from God, changes that bring opportunities to grow and share are also a gift from God. Embrace the changes happening in our church. Through the discernment process, become familiar with them and find your passion in the good things that are happening to Build Christian Community in our congregation.

Now, time for the September Financial Update:

So far year to date we are very close to the planned budget with expenses as well donations/income being behind

For the month of September contributions to date are \$4,57 less than the September monthly budget amount of \$10,625 and combined contributions plus income is \$4,017 less than the \$125,324 budgeted amount of \$10,975;

Total contributions year-to-date is \$89,978 and with the total combined income year to date of \$125,324, we are \$3921 behind the year-to-date budget projection;

Total expenses for year-to-date are at \$122,272 which is \$7,829 less than the year-to-date expense projection of \$130,101;

As noted in the Monthly gathering on Sunday, Sept 26, meeting the faithful budget takes all of our continued support; We will be talking more about the budget and will keep everyone updated on next year's expectations.

Your continued generous support is greatly appreciated.

*"Every Good and Perfect day is a gift from above."*

*James 1:17*

Yours in Christian Faith,  
Jim Bahre

## From the Missions Committee

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WALK. GIVE. Change the World. CROP HUNGER WALK \* OCTOBER 17

**As published in the last Signpost**, 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. **\*Donations may also be made each Sunday, through the collection plate. Please kindly note "CWS/Crop Hunger Walk" on your check or envelope.**

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 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. **As of today, there are five BCC Members planning to walk; three as a group, one with family members, and one is even planning to walk while out of State. We would be grateful if you would please support our BCC Team with your heartfelt donation!** You may email details, comments and/or questions to [debbiekrawic@gmail.com](mailto:debbiekrawic@gmail.com). The secure website is <https://events.crophungerwalk.org>. #KINDNESSWINS

**Blessings, Debbie Krawic  
Board of Missions**

## Prayer Shawl Update

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Our Prayer Shawl Knitters continue to produce beautiful shawls year round. We have several ready in a variety of colors. We have not resumed our regular meetings yet, but we are available to help with any knitting issues. I am at the Church Store on Tuesday, if you need help or have knitting questions.

Shawls are available for love and comfort during any event of your life.

Warm regard,  
Dot Lessard

## Crafters' Corner & Church Store

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STOREWIDE SALE--50% off on most items in the store.

This sale will be with the exception of a few handcrafted items that will be 25% off and will be placed in the room across from the main store. We are making room for new items that we have been unable to put on display due to a lack of space and items for the holiday seasons. The sale will run between Sunday, October 3 and Sunday October 17 and there will be an attendant at the Store on each Sunday of the sale to greet and assist you. We are also at the church each Tuesday between 10:30 and 3:30. AND, if you have access to the building you are always welcome to shop and place your money, check or I.O.U. into one of the containers located throughout the Store.

For those who would like to support the efforts of the From The Heart programs please remember that the Store has a Container in the entry of the Education Building where you may leave your donations. These donations are picked up on a weekly basis by Mary Lou Prescher ( Laura Anne's mother).

## Festival of Trees Update

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Cathy Nelson has contacted the town's First Selectman to find out if the Santa Parade and Tree Lighting will be happening this year. They are uncertain as to whether the Tree Lighting will be live or virtual this year and there has been no planning for the Santa Parade.

Since our Festival of Trees was designed around these events, we will not be hosting the festival this year. However, we would like to decorate Chandler Hall to make it a drive by experience. If anyone in the church would like to bring in and decorate a tree in one of the classrooms, please let Cathy Nelson or Susan MacDonald know. We want to offer the opportunity to church members before reaching out to our Not for Profit partners.

Let's make our little white church in the center of town a beacon of hope for our community.

Thank you, Cathy and Susan

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## Calendar of Events

*(Z indicates meeting taking place via Zoom)*

**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

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Oct. 6, 6:30 PM—Deacons Meet—Z

Oct. 10 , 9:25 AM—Sunday School—Chandler Hall

Oct. 12, 6:30 PM—Finance Board Meeting—Z

Oct. 13, 6:30 PM—Council Meeting—Z

Oct. 20, 6:30 PM—Deacons/Pastor Relations Board Meeting—Chandler Hall

Oct 25. —Signpost Deadline

Oct. 29, After Worship—Open Church Meeting—Chandler Hall

## From the Heart

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September was a busy month! We were able to donate gift bags filled with prayer shawls, lap blankets, boxes of tissues, personal items, snacks, fall decorations and more to Evergreen Nursing home, Manchester Manor, Fox Hill and Brookdale! We continue to hear how important these gift bags are for the seniors and what a joy they are bringing to their day! Although we had hoped to host a Bingo at one point, it does not look possible right now so we will continue to create these monthly gift bags with your donations! Thank you so much for your support!

Once again, over 80 Creative Cards were mailed to recipients who have been nominated to receive them each month! We are always looking for children to create pictures, using crayons and markers, to add to our monthly mailings. Fall is a great time to draw leaves, trees, pumpkins etc! The children can add a personal message if they want like "have a great day" etc. and sign their first names! Our recipients LOVE to receive them!

### **Items we are always in need of:**

#### **Gift Cards:**

**Stop & Shop**

**Big Y**

**Aldi**

**BJ's**

**Gas Card**

**Walmart**

**Subway/McDonalds/Burger King/Wendy's**

**Brand New Stuffed Animals – any size**

**Tissue Boxes and individual tissue packs**

**Hand or body lotion**

**Prayer Shawls or Lap Blankets**

**Decorative Napkins**

**Deodorant (men & women)**

**Paper Towels**

**Toilet Paper**

**Laundry & Dish Detergent**

**Cleaning sponges and wipes**

**Non-perishable food items**

**Snacks**

**Brand new Hats and Gloves/Mittens (for younger children especially)**

Laura Ann / From the Heart

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## THE SIGNPOST ~ OCTOBER 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](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.