



The Signpost

November 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
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Reflections from the Interim Minister for the Moment

In the Lord I'll be ever thankful
In the Lord I will rejoice
Look to God. Do not be afraid
Lift up your voices the Lord is near
Lift up your voices the Lord is near

Brother Jacques Berthier, Taizé Community, France © 1991

November is Thanks Giving Month.

In it we have the holiday that reminds us to be thankful. We also consider what we will give to the support the mission and ministry of the church. When considering our giving, we can look at what we have left over after our bills and expenses.

Or we might look at the church budget and consider what portion of that we can give.

Or we can consider what gift would adequately represent our gratitude. What offering would be sufficient to make us feel joyful about the gift we make, rather than grudging or resentful?

Joyful giving has the capacity to increase the amount of money the church has available to carry out its mission. It is based on our need to give rather than the church's need to pay bills.

Me? I'm thankful for Bolton Congregational United Church of Christ. I'm thankful for the faithful folk who have persisted throughout challenging times. I'm thankful that I have been called to be with you in this time. I'm thankful for the deep and real conversations about the church, about what matters to you. I'm thankful for the Discernment Team, their commitment to talk, imagine things they never considered, the way they listen to one another and work through their differences of opinion. I'm thankful for the differences - they move us to new ideas and understandings.

I'm thankful for those who gather for worship, in person and using the other means we have offered. I'm thankful that we are receiving a new member (Carol Staron) and have several baptisms coming up. I'm thankful for the diligence of church committee members and helpers who attend to the work of maintenance for building, grounds *and* for programs. I'm thankful for Jessica Romeo who has persistently offered Christian Education in difficult circumstances, and for leading this year's Confirmation class. I am thankful for the ideas people have for keeping the church vibrant and alive, and the efforts to include others in the processes.

God is good, all the time.

Reflections from the Interim Minister for the Moment (continued)

On Prayer

Do you wish you were better at prayer? Would you like to learn some new ways to do it? (Actually, mostly they are really old ways but they might be new to us). Would you be interested in developing a habit of prayer, or strengthening the one you already have? Would you be interested in talking with and hearing from others on the same journey?

Starting in November and going into the middle of December, we will offer a weekly book study on prayer. The book is *Unbinding the Gospel* by Martha Grace Reese. We have 4 people signed up and have room for 4 more. We will meet on Sunday, November 7 following worship to plan when to meet.

If you would like to participate in this inspiring study, please contact the church office or Pastor Bruce [interim_pastor.bcc@yahoo.com]

Faithfully,
Pastor Bruce

Church School News

November 2021! Wow! It has been a crazy 2 years. We are trying to go through the discernment process in the middle of a pandemic. We were forced to change the way we do Sunday School, and the way we worship. However, our faith hasn't changed. Our love for our neighbors hasn't changed and for these things I am grateful. Faces that haven't been around for a while are starting to come back. I have 6 students who have begun the confirmation process and I am excited and more are trickling in for Sunday school classes.

In November we start to prepare for the upcoming season of Advent. That being said I need some volunteers to assist with planning some events for the Sunday School kids. I would love to do some kind of in person Advent Workshop. I would also like to have an in person Christmas pageant if possible. We no longer have a CE Board, so in order to make these things happen I need a small committee to help me out. Without assistance I will not be able to make these things work. If you are interested in helping out please let me know. If we can make it happen the advent workshop will be on December 5, 2021.

Confirmation classes began at the end of October and the rest of the year promises to be exciting. We will meet twice a month through May and confirmation will happen the first Sunday of June.

Finance Committee Update

October Financial Snap Shot

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

1 Thessalonians 5:18_NIV

November is a time of Thanksgiving and for giving thanks. In contrast to October's Indian Summer and bright cheerful colors gracefully dotting our yards, November's weather brings a certain chill to the air. It prompts majestic trees to shed their browns and golds to prepare them for a long awaited and much needed winter's nap. Although it may be easy for us to be thankful for the beauty of fall, it

Finance Committee Update (continued)

seems a little harder to be grateful as the colder weather rolls in. Trees with their barren limbs and boles unadorned in grey and white bear stark comparison to those colorful autumn leaves. Can we really be thankful for what's to come?

In looking for bible quotes regarding thanksgiving, there were so many that seemed to fit this time of year. This verse though, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, made me think: why should we give thanks for even the difficult things in life? From simple disappointments to serious concerns for personal health and financial welfare or for the difficult times and tasks our church faces such as discernment and the uncertainties encountered when searching for our next pastor, how do we give thanks?

Digging a little deeper to find the meaning of Paul's letter, in commentaries by Matthew Henry and John Gill, I understand that the verse is really not about thanking God for presenting us with difficult things in life but rather it is about thanking God for God's promise/covenant that through our trust and love of Jesus, God's grace will be with us, no matter how daunting the mission. For that we can really be thankful.

Time for the October 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 October, with one Sunday to go, contributions for the month are \$7,632, which is \$2,993 less than the October monthly budget amount of \$10,625; combined contributions plus income is \$3,446 less than the budgeted amount of \$10,975;

Total contributions year-to-date is \$97,610 and with the total combined income year to date of \$133,000, income is \$3,446 behind the year-to-date budget projection;

Total expenses for year-to-date are approx. \$133,970 which is \$13,158 less than the year-to-date expense projection of \$147,128;

The year-to-date Expense to Income is a deficit of \$970;

As noted in the monthly gathering on Sunday, Sept 26, the Finance committee is working on a projected 2022 budget and we will be talking more about the budget to keep everyone updated on next year's expectations.

Your continued generous support is greatly appreciated.

As Dad prepared to carve the Thanksgiving turkey, he asked little Johnny, "What are you thankful for?" Johnny smiled and quickly responded, "I am thankful that I'm not a turkey."

I hope you all can enjoy a family get together and are able to share what you are thankful for. If perhaps you find yourself alone, remember that you can be thankful that God is with you, sharing love and grace.

Yours in Christian Faith,
Jim Bahre, Finance Committee

From the Missions Committee

October Project

Five church members registered to join the Mighty MACC Team on October 17th in the Manchester CROP Hunger Walk. For safety reasons during the pandemic the BCC walkers conducted their walk separate from the large group assembled for Manchester CROP Walk. It was a picture perfect autumn day with crisp air and warm sunshine. Some of the walkers who registered on the CROP Hunger Walk Website were sponsored by friends and family who made online donations. Members from the congregation also sent donations to the church office for the CROP Hunger Walk. Given information to date it is expected that the BCC Walkers raised about \$1000 for this worthwhile cause. We are grateful for the compassionate giving by the walkers and those individuals who donated to this Church World Service charity which fights hunger locally, nationally, and around the world "one step at a time".

November & December Project

We will participate in the MACC Joy of Community Sharing Program by adopting four area families for the holidays. These families have requested help providing holiday meals and Christmas gifts for family members. Due to safety concerns and practicality during the pandemic we have altered past procedures to accomplish this project. Instead of a food collection during the church service we are asking members of the congregation to send monetary donations to the church office at the beginning of November and December. Donations can be put in the collection plate, mailed to the office, or made online at the BCC website. Please note on your check or when making a donation online that the donation is for the Missions Holiday Project. The funds will be used to purchase food and items for the Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners for the four families. Members of the Missions Board will shop, package, and deliver the bags of groceries to the families. The delivery dates are November 21 and December 19. In December the families will also receive a \$25 store gift card for each immediate family member to be used to purchase a Christmas gift. Please be generous in supporting this project which gives a joyful holiday to others. Together we can do this!

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

Nov. 3, 6:30 PM—Deacons Meet—Z

Nov. 9, 6:30 PM—Finance Board Meeting—Z

Nov. 10, 6:30 PM—Council Meeting—Z

Nov. 14 , 9:25 AM—Sunday School—Chandler Hall

Nov. 17, 6:30 PM—Deacons—Z

Nov. 26. —Signpost Deadline

Nov. 28 , 9:25 AM—Sunday School—Chandler Hall

Nov. 28, After Worship—Open Church Meeting—Chandler Hall

From the Heart



“From the Heart” is once again seeking donations of brand new **Hats, Mittens, Gloves, Socks and Fleece or crochet/knit blankets!**

We will be collecting these much needed items throughout the fall and winter months and will be distributing them as we receive them!

Your support, over the years, has helped to bring warmth and comfort to children in foster care and helped children and adults in our “Adopted Family” program. Even one item makes a difference when we put our donations together! All sizes, all styles are accepted and one size is not more important than another. A child without mittens, a teen without socks, an adult without a hat...in the midst of fall and winter...they are still cold.

“From the Heart” also has a program called “Squares of Care”. We collect knit and crocheted 10” X 10” squares and attached them with others making squares to create blankets! Our intention was to find a way to donate additional blankets and we love the idea that each square is unique in color and design just as each child is unique.

Thank you for your help and wishing you all a very Happy Thanksgiving!

Laura Ann / From the Heart
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Prayer Shawl Update

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

The **SALE** we had last month went very well and we were able to find a good home for the four Mid Century Modern upholstered chairs that “graced” the Education Buildings entry for quite a few weeks. They were really beautiful chairs and I for one was thrilled that we were finally able to find the perfect buyer for them.

In the weeks to come we will be adding many holiday items to the Store offerings. We would welcome any donations of handcrafted items, decorations for our tree, new games, puzzles and books. For your pets we are adding a few handmade quilts. Both my friends and my own pets just love cuddling up on our quilts. **WHY NOT GET YOUR PET ONE OF THEIR OWN.** It will certainly save your furniture from all of that dog and cat fur and will keep it cleaner and your dog or cat will love you for it.

Again, I want to remind you of our great prices for greeting cards. Individual card prices start at .25 cents with the highest price at \$2.00. We also have a great selection of hand crafted cards starting at .75 cents and some of these packaged at a discount. We have our 10/\$1.00 cards that we call “charity cards” as they are cards sent to individuals by organizations looking for donations. We have one couple in our community that continues to donate a great quantity of these cards to us. They are really nice all-occasion, Christmas and blank cards but have the name of the organization on the reverse of the card. These cards might just “fit the bill” if you are someone who still sends out many cards each month. You can certainly save money if you purchase your cards from our church store and support the missions of our church at the same time.

We have really enjoyed being back in the Store on Sunday mornings to greet everyone. It has been nice to have shoppers back again and a little activity in the building.

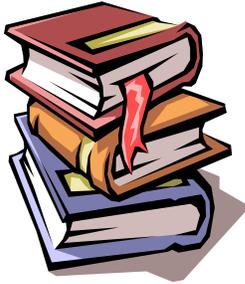
Please feel free to join us on Tuesdays. Come to shop or for conversation over a cup of coffee or tea. We are there from 10:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Lynn Ralston and all of the crafters and Store volunteers



Chandler Book Nook



"Books are the perfect entertainment: no commercials, no batteries, hours of enjoyment for each dollar spent."
~Stephen King

As November temperatures dip and daylight disappears ever so early, an interesting book awaits you in our Chandler Book Nook.

You might enjoy a new acquisition, thanks to a donation by Denise McLennon: The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry by Rachel Joyce.

The title character of this book seems familiar somehow; an ordinary, likeable and steady guy, now retired. Nothing prepared him for this journey: Harold receives a note from an old colleague, Queenie, who has a terminal illness and is in hospice. On a whim, he decides to deliver by hand his letter to her- 600 miles away. Walking. He leaves one very confused wife behind. But off he goes. As the days pass, Harold encounters wonderful people on his journey, and develops personal insights, and wisdom into the life he's shared with his wife for so many years. It's a sweet and comic story of soul searching, recognizing our joys and triumphs, and struggles, with each day being an act of faith.

~Reviewed by Denise McLennon

BOOK TALK

We are planning for **Sunday, January 16, 2022** for our next book talk. The book we've selected is:

Trevor Noah; Born A Crime by Trevor Noah

A wonderful review of this book is on our CBN table...authored by Lori Vadnais. We do not have multiple copies for lending...only one copy in CBN. Bentley Memorial Library in Bolton can obtain copies for borrowing. Call them to request a copy: 860-646-7349. As in the past, there will be a signup sheet in Chandler Hall in December. We're excited to be meeting once again in person and hope to see you there.

Library Ladies,
Linda Brown
Denise McLennon



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



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

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