



The Signpost

May 2022
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The Bolton Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ
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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.

Reflections from the Interim Minister for the Moment

Surely, a lot of things going on around us these days can make us less than optimistic. At times we may despair for the future, with lots of good evidence. (*You may enumerate for yourself here...*)

While I have my own list of things that contribute to a bleak view, even so, I feel grateful (and here I *will* offer a few examples):

1. It is spring - the weather hints of warmth and new life. Trees and flowers bloom in glorious riot. Nature can heal (itself and people, body, mind and spirit); even more so if we help it.
2. Some people love me and I love some people, deep in my soul. Others - we have to work at it, and working at it makes me a better person I think.
3. When I pause, when I slow down, I notice things I miss when focused on busyness or distraction. I used to think that stopping to cherish the view, or savor a taste, or enjoy a person / moment was the distraction. Now? less so.
4. However miserable I can be to others, I can also be remarkably gracious, so I'm not just a horrible, irritating, nit-picking, argumentative, complaining noodle. I *can* be those things, but I can also commit love and compassion.

BCC - I am affiliated with a faithful and wonderful, Spirit-filled community of faith.

continued



Bolton Congregational Church Sunrise Service overlooking Heritage Farm . Photo by Linda Brown

Reflections from the Interim Minister for the Moment (continued)

One might think I am being unduly rose-colored in this reflection, ignoring reality. Perhaps, but I am all too aware of the negatives. I see them easily. They make themselves obvious. The thanks-inducing things to which I refer make themselves obvious too, but I often fail to notice them unless I pause, unless I look, unless I say “that is glorious. I almost missed it. Thanks!”

Jesus suffered betrayal, abandonment, and death on a cross. As bad as that was, the good is that those things didn’t have the last word. “The most precious Word of Life”* has the last Word, IS the Last Word.

In this Easter Season, notice what good is. Be in awe. Be inspired by grace. Notice what surprising things God is doing. Give thanks and alleluias!

Grace and peace,
Pastor Bruce

* “In a Byre Near Bethlehem” by John Bell and Graham Maule of the Iona Community in Scotland.

5. In a garden, just at dawn,
near the grave of human violence,
the most precious Word of Life
cleared his throat and ended silence
for the good of us all.

[Songs of God’s People: The Church of Scotland, Supplement to the Church Hymnary, Third Edition. Oxford University Press, © 1988 *The Panel on Worship, The Church of Scotland*]

Church School News

As we welcome in May we come to the end of our Church School year. We are happy to announce that we will be able to have a Church School Sunday this year. On May 22nd the children will take over church. We will need to use the TV, so that Sunday church will be held in Chandler Hall.

June 5th will be confirmation Sunday. The students that have completed the confirmation classes and have decided that being confirmed is the next step they want to take in their spiritual journey will be confirmed on that day.

As summer approaches I will keep you all up to date through the Church Chirps of any activities that Christian Education will have.

Finance Financial Snapshot

April Financial Snapshot

Beloved Church Family,

Spring has sprung, it has indeed and there is so much in bloom! Things are blooming in our church too, literally and figuratively. The walkway to our Education Building/Chandler Hall has been refreshed, enlivened with beautiful spring flowers, including stunning tulips, a big thank you goes to Lori Vadnais for her work. The Confirmation class is blooming in their Christian faith, as it is led by Jessica Romeo with support from several members from our congregation. There is a bloom of babies and children growing in our church family too, some of whom will be happily baptized in May. Our attendance in church is also growing, with more people attending as the COVID protocols are relaxed. We are so blessed!

Growth and opportunities to serve are popping up in our congregation with so many projects underway: our Pastoral Search Team is actively working on the Church Profile for the congregation to review in May; a small group is working how we can thrive more nimbly as a congregation by updating the way we govern our church for success. Other small teams have formed to handle near-term matters: the Mission Board has assembled a team of church members, led by Lloyd Pedersen, to support Rebuilding Together in Manchester; a small team, led by Gwen Marrion, is working on a presentation for May 3rd to respond to the town selectmen's proposal to site a temporary modular building between the Town Hall and our church as they have reported a need for office space. So much is alive and blooming in our church.

Now, for the numbers:

- Church Council has approved the recommendation for establishing a Bolton Congregational Church Scholarship Fund in memory of Pam Connelly, starting this year with \$7,500 from the Connelly Bequest fund, \$1,000 is to awarded each year to a Bolton High School senior or graduate who demonstrates a passion for service and helping others by pursuing a career in social services, social justice, or serving as first responders, EMT, and firefighters;
- As of this writing, no portion of the budgeted \$8,504.68 Investments disbursement has been taken; Please note that the Finance Team is considering taking a disbursement in the coming months if warranted;
- Year-to-Date total contributions are ahead of budget by \$3,115.90 while total income of \$57,689.10 is \$3,372.62 behind the budgeted YTD income manly because no disbursements have been taken from Investments;
- The year to-date Expenses as of the end of April are \$65,397.25, which is \$7,708.15 greater than our year to-date Income, driven primarily by Oil Heat and Insurance costs.

Given that the 2022 Approved budget projected a deficit of \$9,284.04 by this time of year, and since no disbursements from the Investment/Endowment funds have been made, we are better than projected but still have a lot left to go before we hit the Summer slow-down Please keep up your intentional giving so that we will be in a good position going forward with our mission and projects throughout this year.

If you feel a tap on your shoulder, you may just find someone from one budding team or another, asking for your help. Or possibly, it could be God asking you to use your gifts to help nurture any of our blooms or even to help cultivate new ones, no matter how great or small. We are truly blessed.

Jim Bahre

Crafters' Corner & Church Store

We have been having a great time as we continue to knit and crochet hats for the winter missions project for the homeless and others who are in need of warm items during the cold months. We have discovered the knitting looms for those of us who do not know how to knit or crochet. It is so much fun making hats on the looms and we have found something new to do while we watch TV at night too. One of us has stopped smoking as much and another snacks less. So, this project is benefiting many. Some of us are also knitting and crocheting the "Squares for Care" for From the Heart that are made into small colorful blankets for children in foster care.

We are finally finding that we are able to use a great deal of the yarn that has been donated in the past. If you would like to try using the knitting looms, come to Chandler Hall on Tuesdays. We are there from 10:30 - 3:30. At present we can supply the yarn for these projects. And, if anyone has yarn to donate, we would welcome it.

Don't forget, on the second Tuesday in May (10th) at 12:30 we will be celebrating all May birthdays. Feel free to join us and we will celebrate you.

For your convenience our Mother's Day greeting cards are on sale in the entry of the Education Building.

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

From the BCC Crafters and Store Volunteers

From the Missions Committee

It has been a long two years of pandemic and challenges. hawkwing has continued to work to help the Lakota People of the Cheyenne River Reservation. The help from Bolton Congregational Church has been integral to our ability to continue to assist them. The pandemic hit them hard: their medical services, as many of you know, are limited and cautious distrust of the Federal Government historically, kept vaccination rates low. We have not visited the Reservation since COVID began. We look forward to a trip perhaps this coming fall. But, despite all the challenges, the work has gone on including the holiday Give Away for the children through all the schools, Headstart and the Infant/Toddler program. We are also excited to announce that we are expanding our giving locally in the Greater Hartford area this spring and are looking for groups and individuals to help us set up "pop-up" sites for distribution to those in need. Our partnership with Amazon has tripled in size and the overflow of household goods, toys, care products and more will be given locally as well as to the Reservation. I look forward to joining you on May 22 (hopefully in person) to speak about our ongoing work together and launch this new initiative. Thank you for all you do.

Blessings,
Rochelle Ripley
President and Founder of hawkwing
860-402-1064
www.hawkwing.com

From the Heart

"Today I pray for you...a heart free of sadness, a mind free of worries, a life full of gladness, a body free of illness, and a day full of God's blessings!"



"From the Heart" is currently seeking donations of paper products and non-perishable items for a foster family. Here is the request we just received and some of items they are in need of:

"We have a foster family who is caring for a relative and their own 8 year old son was struck by a car and now he is in leg and arm casts. The family member cannot work for the next three months while she cares for him 24/7. They are trying to keep their heads above water but really need help with groceries."

Gift Cards, Pasta, White Rice, Stuffing, Mac & Cheese, Canned Potatoes, Carrots, Corn, canned or jars of fruit, Peanut Butter, Jelly, Raisin Bran, Shredded Wheat, Lucky Charms, Fruity Pebbles, Pancake Mix & Syrup, Canned fruit, cereal bars, fruit snacks, cookies, honey buns, chips, Paper Towels, Tissues, Toilet Paper, Laundry Detergent, etc.

A sincere and heartfelt THANK YOU for all of your support to the three adult women and four young girls who fled Ukraine and are staying with my friend's cousin in Poland. They have already been through so much and what they have ahead is not known. What IS known is how much you have already helped to be a friend and bring support in the midst of such a difficult and transformative time for each of them.

Baby Daniel was born via C-section on April 15th! As of writing this newsletter mom was still in the hospital with a complication from the delivery but is expected to be fine! We learned that a month before the war began; Daniel's father was in a construction accident in Ukraine and passed away. Truly a difficult start for mom and baby but they are currently surrounded with love and support. With your help, we just ordered diapers and baby clothes to help them out.

continued

From the Heart (continued)

We can only imagine what they have all been through. Being safe together and in the presence of a truly amazing, loving and caring family in Poland offers them hope for today and tomorrow. We have learned that all of their homes were destroyed and there is nothing left in their town to go home to. One of the adult women has lost her husband in the war and the other, and father to three of the girls, is still in Ukraine defending their country. Not trying to only give sad updates...but this is their reality. This is why your donations have truly made a big difference!

If you are on the "From the Heart" mailings and had a chance to read the updates throughout the month, you will have read that the sneakers and other items have reached them. We recently ordered diapers, baby clothes, laundry detergent, towels, and snacks for everyone. The girls will be attending camp in June and we have set aside funds to help with items they will need.

Your support has been a tremendous help. We are purchasing items based upon immediate needs and will keep you updated as we fill these needs. We will continue to help them for some time to come so if you are able and would like to help, monetary donations are most needed. It can be costly to mail packages so we continue to order products off of the Polish Amazon which is just like ours. Product is available quickly and often times without shipping costs. We have mailed clothing from the US which takes longer but my friend knew what clothing styles they girls liked and found some great deals. They will be very excited to receive them!

Items do not replace what is real...people, home, safety...our goal is to help them find a way forward... step by step. As they shared with us "one day we were having a normal day, making lunches for the kids to go to school...and the next, we were fleeing the country and sleeping on the cold train station floor". They are safe now but they are not the same. Thank you for your kindness....they feel it and it means so very much!

Laura Ann / From the Heart
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Prayer Shawl Update

We have not been able to meet since the start of Covid, but we are still knitting and providing beautiful shawls to be given for loving comfort when needed. A shawl can be a wonderful expression of support for friends or family.

We do appreciate your generous support all these years and will continue to offer shawls as long as they are requested.


We are not teaching at this time but would be willing to help with any small knitting problems.

May 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:30 am Worship - S After Worship Open Meeting - Clism Toula Maroney Baptism	2 6:30 pm Search Cmt. Mtg. - C	3 10:30 am Crafters - C Church Store Open 6:30 pm Missions - Z	4	5	6 7:30 pm Alt-Anon - C	7
8 Mother's Day 9:25 am Sunday Sch - C 9:30 am Worship - S 11:30 - Confirmation - C	9 6:30 pm Search Cmt. Mtg. - C	10 10:30 am Crafters - C Church Store Open 6:30 pm Finance - Z	11 6:30 pm Council - Z	12	13 7:30 pm Alt-Anon - C	14
15 9:30 am Worship - S	16 6:30 pm Search Cmt. Mtg. - C	17 10:30 am Crafters - C Church Store Open	18 6:30 pm Deacons - C/Z	19 11 am Men's Group - C	20 7:30 pm Alt-Anon - C	21
22 Church School Sunday 9:25 am Sunday Sch - C 9:30 am Worship - S 11:30 - Confirmation - C Hannah Walsh Baptism	23 6:30 pm Search Cmt. Mtg. - C	24 10:30 am Crafters - C Church Store Open June Signpost Submission Deadline	25	26	27 7:30 pm Alt-Anon - C	28
29 9:30 am Worship - S	30 Memorial Day	31 10:30 am Crafters - C Church Store Open				

Meeting Locations

C - Chandler Hall
Z - Zoom
S - Sanctuary
Clism. - Classroom



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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



THE SIGNPOST ~ MAY 2022

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.