



The Signpost

September 2022
Volume 49, Issue 8

The Bolton Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ
228 Bolton Center St., Bolton, CT 06043
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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

“I’m not OK. You’re not OK.”

Does this statement - the exact opposite of the popular 1967 book by Thomas Anthony Harris - resonate with you? Or perhaps it makes the hairs on your neck bristle.

Doug Bixby wrote a book called The Honest to God Church. He starts it with the provocative assertion, “I’m not OK, you’re not OK.”

Whether you agree or disagree, it’s a great place to start some important conversations about church. What kind of church is BCC? What kind of church should it be?

Sharing our thoughts and feelings, and hearing those of others can help us develop a practice of having important conversations. This kind of dialogue deepens our relationship with God. It can help us explore important topics, while increasing our faith and our care for each other. It’s not about arguments or shouting.

Some churches are filled with nice people. In fact, they can be so nice that they never talk about deep or important things. Those conversations could prove controversial. They don’t talk about politics (national or local). They don’t even really talk about their faith lives, because, well, “No religion or politics”.

Deep conversations (politics, religion, sexuality, gender identity, race, abortion, the mission of the church) might lead to conflict. A “nice” church only talks about superficial things. As a result, people never really know much about one another. They share nothing personal, even when it comes to matters of faith. And the church never really does anything that really matters. (“If BCC closed its doors tomorrow, would anyone notice or miss us?”) Many people like church that way.

We don’t all have to agree, but we can become adept at listening and letting what others say help us clarify what we, ourselves think, feel and believe. Those conversations can lead to deeper encounters with God. They can cause us to care more about others we get to know better at church and beyond.

This all may sound scary. In some ways it is. It requires a greater commitment of our selves. It involves some risk. What happens if somebody I like disagrees with me? The world and the nation seem to say you can’t be friends, or care about someone who thinks or believes differently than you.

Continued on next page

Reflections from the Interim Minister for the Moment (continued)

Over the past 2 years, we at BCC have learned some skills for having good, deep, meaningful, inspiring dialogue. We listen to different opinions and ideas. We share our own. We listen carefully, respectfully because we are caring for and about one another. And better ideas arise. The Holy Spirit is at work. This ship isn't sinking.

On the morning of Saturday September 17, Doug Bixby will join us in Chandler Hall to talk about The Honest To God Church: A Pathway to God's Grace. All are welcome to attend - listen, participate as you feel comfortable or inspired to do so. I don't expect there will be any arguments.

You can get a copy of the book through your favorite source for books. We have a few available at the church for lending. Come whether you read it beforehand or not. The book is 120 pages long, reads easily and has lots of stories about church life that will sound familiar.

Call or email the church office if you can be there.

Grace and peace to you,
Pastor Bruce

Finance Financial Snapshot

Welcome Back and Looking Forward

Welcome back from summer hiatus and whatever activities you enjoyed, or endured, during the past few months. Students: Welcome back to school, school activities, your friends and, dare I say it, homework. Parents: Welcome back to soccer and field hockey practices, cheering on your kids' teams, zoom meetings, and adding even more trips (hopefully not into the office) to your agenda. And, to everyone: Welcome back to Church and Sunday School and fellowship and learning and sharing and growing and praying and rejuvenating within our Christian Community of faith.

Jesus said that if two or three of us are together, He is with us.

¹⁹ "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three gather in My name, there am I with them." *Mathew 18:19-20* (NIV)

But the Bible also explains that it takes all of us, working together, to be a strong church.

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. *1 Corinthians 12:12* (NIV)

So, welcome back no matter *"...what could ever lead ya, back here where we need ya!"* **

Okay, I know, a lot of us didn't really leave home or church for any length of time, but September seems to present a good opportunity for us to renew our faith, our hope and our commitment to the good works we are called to do.

Many have been active in support of our church throughout the summer. The Pastoral Search team had worked diligently on the Church Profile and developing interview questions and have now begun reviewing several profiles they received from interested parties. The Deacons and Pastoral Relations teams have been active as well, meeting every other week to discuss how best to support, what they

Finance Financial Snapshot (continued)

believe, will be an exciting Fall and Holiday season for our congregation as we all await the prospect of welcoming a new minister to lead us forward.

In preparation for welcoming a new minister and to greet people with a warm appeal and open hearts as they visit our church, the Deacons and Pastoral Relations teams have developed a list of things to spruce up the physical appearance of the church and help us to provide a shining beacon in the community. Some items are small, which we hope volunteers can tackle on their own and some are long-range ideas that will take additional planning and funding with the congregation's approval. Please, keep an eye out for upcoming Church Chirps on how you can participate and help our church to sparkle. If you have an idea of something with you feel needs sprucing up, please see Ross Lally, Arlis Bobb or Jim Bahre to add it to the list.

Now, for the numbers:

Contributions, for August to date, are \$4,445 behind this month's budget while total income year-to-date is about \$3,167 behind budget; income includes \$1,358 received for Missions Initiatives in July and August;

Expenses over income through August are projected to be approx. \$8,500 behind, slightly better than the year-to-date projection of \$10,462 behind, mostly due to unrealized salary expenses;

Bills and payroll for the month of August currently total \$13,077 with a revised projected monthly income of \$13,100;

Regarding investments, the latest update, July 31st, showed a slight recovery in the market in the past month; with the two withdrawals from the Connelly fund (BCC Connelly scholarship and a \$10,000 "loan" to cover summer operating expenses) investments are \$107k behind the year-end 2021 total;

Note investment withdrawals are \$7,010 less than projected year-to-date which does account for some of the year-to-date income shortfall;

The Finance team continues to look for ways to make up the projected annual deficit of \$16,715.58 without taking more than the allotted \$25k from Investments, less if possible.

** Welcome back,

We always could spot a friend

Welcome back,

And I smile when I think how you must have been;

And I know what a scene you were learning in.

Was there something that made you come back again?

And what could ever lead ya,

Back here where we need ya?

Welcome back, welcome back, welcome back.

John Sebastian - Welcome Back, Kotter Lyrics

These lyrics came to me while working this article. It really dates me and I apologize to everyone under 50 but, back in the mid-70's, if you were lucky enough to get channel 8, an ABC affiliate out of New Haven, with your roof-top antennae, you may have watched *Welcome Back Kotter*, a sitcom about a teacher who returned to teach at his hometown high school. I always saw myself as Vinnie Barbarino (John Travolta) but I was probably more of an Arnold Horshack-type of student. Good times...

I'm so glad we are all in this church together.

Yours in Christian Love, Jim Bahre

Church School News

I hope everyone has had a fun and restful summer. It's almost time to come back to Sunday School. I would like to go back to having Sunday School every week. However, in order to do that, I would need a few volunteers to teach on alternate Sundays. I would provide the lessons; all you would need to do is lead the class. Please let me know if you are interested.

At this time our first day of Sunday School will be September 18th. Children will attend the first half of church services and then head over to the classroom.

From the Missions Committee

Thank you for supporting the Mission Projects this summer. Many members of the congregation brought items for the Bolton Food Pantry to church on Sundays during July and August. The array of items included nonperishable foods, paper goods, toiletries, cleaning supplies and pet foods. A delivery was made to the Pantry located in the Bolton Senior Center each week by a member of the Missions Board. Your generous donations filled 30 grocery bags. Some members also made monetary donations to the Food Pantry and the Bolton Resident Assistance Fund totaling \$455.

Our church supported the MACC Charities by providing a six-member team to volunteer in the Community Kitchen and Threads Store on two Saturdays, July 23 and August 27. It was a rewarding experience for all.

During August members donated funds to the Adopt-a-Family project. The donations were used to buy store gift cards to assist families in purchasing school supplies for their children. The gift cards are distributed by the school counselor. The August contributions from members of the congregation totaled \$720.

Our compassionate giving makes a difference and is appreciated.

Crafters' Corner & Church Store

Our group has enjoyed meeting throughout the summer months. We have been here for our shoppers and those leaving donations as well as for each other and those who stop by for conversation over a cup of coffee/tea. We, also, continue to knit and crochet hats for the missions homeless project that takes place during the winter months.

We look forward to seeing more of you now that summer is almost over. Check out our offerings. We have items ranging from greeting cards (many hand crafted), jewelry, household, quilts and other handcrafted items and vintage etc.

Our hours are Tuesdays 10:30 - 3:30 and Sundays before and after the service. We look forward to your visit.

Thank you to everyone who continues to donate to the store.

Have a nice holiday,
The Crafters and Store Volunteers

From the Heart

“There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up” John Holmes

Thank you for all of the ways your donations make it possible for so many to have Hope for tomorrow and feel blessed in the moments of today!

We continue to create gift bags each month to donate to the residents at Manchester Manor, Vernon Manor, Brookdale and Evergreen. We have wonderful contacts at all of these facilities who give our donations to those who need a pick up in their day. Some of the gift bags are used as bingo prizes which has been quite a special event lately...while “From the Heart” is not able to go into the facilities and host the bingo nights as we did in the past, it feels good to know that the seniors look forward to this event for socialization and our prizes too!

If you would like to help us create these bags, we are always in need of items! Even one item makes a difference when we put them all together!

Some of the items we are always seeking are:

- Hand Lotion
- Tissues
- Stuffed Animals (new or excellent condition)
- Chap-stick
- Deck of Playing Cards
- Puzzles – 24 to 36 pieces (they love the animal puzzles)
- Non-breakable knick knacks

Thank you for any support you might be able to offer to help us continue to reach out through our faith to bring friendship, fellowship and care to those who could use the support.

Hope you have a great September!

Laura Ann / From the Heart
PO Box 804
Manchester, CT 06042
ftheart@comcast.net
www.fromtheheartct.com



Thank you!

Dear Friends:

Thank you for your generous gift to the CWS Blankets program. As families and communities around the world recover from emergencies and struggle in the face of unprecedented challenges, you are standing with them. Now more than ever, we are so grateful for your generous support.

Your contribution provides warmth, comfort and hope to neighbors near and far. It provides a tangible reminder to migrant families that they are not alone as they seek safety. It wraps refugees in warmth as they arrive in the United States to build a new future. It provides comfort to our neighbors who have lost homes or are struggling in the face of extreme challenges. Around the world, your support means relief and hope.

Because of you, Church World Service is able to respond when disasters occur and support is needed. Thanks to your compassion, we can—and will—change lives.

Sincerely,
Rick Santos
President and CEO
Church World Service

Dear Bolton Congregation Church Members,

Thank you so much for your generous gift of \$500.00 to MACC to support the work we provide to our fellow brothers and sisters in our Communities.

May this August be sprinkled with rest and renewal for you. Generous giving helps MACC respond quickly and effectively to emergencies in our community, and certainly brings rest and rejuvenation to the people who receive help with their basic needs.

Many Blessings,
Shannon Baldassario
Assistant Executive Director

Invitation to Crafters to Join the Church Fair:

46th Annual Craft & Harvest Fair at St. George's Episcopal Church
1150 Boston Turnpike, Route 44 - Bolton, CT
Saturday, September 24, 2022 - 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Information - 860.643.9203 or bkalina333@gmail.com

Thank yous! (continued)

Dear Family Bolton Congregational Church,

Thank you so much for your generous gift of \$20.00 to MACC Charities for food.

May this August be sprinkled with rest and renewal for you. Generous giving helps MACC respond quickly and effectively to emergencies in our community; and certainly brings rest and rejuvenation to the people who receive help with their basic needs.

Many Blessings,
Shannon Baldassario
Assistant Executive Director

Dear Bolton Congregational Church,

Thank you so much for your generous scholarship! It will greatly aid me in my studies as well as my future. Mrs. Connelly sounds like a remarkable woman, and I hope to commemorate her by continuing my community service, especially as an EMT, like she did. Thank you again, and enjoy your summer!

Sincerely,
Lilly Mae Dudek

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.





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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



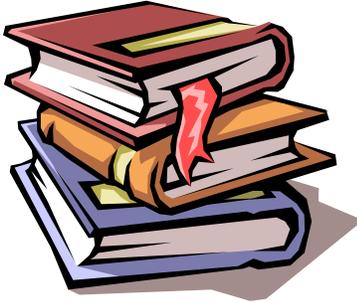
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The Signpost is a publication of the Bolton Congregational Church UCC, Bolton, CT.

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.

Chandler Book Nook



"Book love is something like romantic love. When you are reading a really great book, burdens feel lighter, cares seem smaller."
~Steve Leveen

We hope you have had a wonderful relaxing summer. As the season changes and we continue to enjoy the abundance and beauty of our Bolton community, Chandler Book Nook is also looking forward to a new season. We are currently exploring new titles for your enjoyment.

We love your donations! Please remember we take current titles that educate and inspire. We have limited space, so if your book is one that we cannot use, it goes to the Book Barn in Niantic. The funds acquired from these donations are used to purchase new books. Thank you to Ernie and Millie Harris for their recent donations.

Don't forget to take a peek at our free, recent magazines in the plastic bin under the library table. These are yours to keep! You're sure to find one that suits your fancy.

Read on!

Library Ladies

Linda Brown

Denise McLennon

September 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	7:30 pm Al-Anon - C 2	3
4 9:30 am Worship - S	Labor Day 5	6 10:30 am Crafters - C Church Store Open 6:30 pm Missions - Z	7 6:30 pm Deacons - P/Z	8	9 7:30 pm Al-Anon - C	10
11 9:30 am Worship - S	12 6:30 pm Search Cmt. Mtg. - C	13 10:30 am Crafters - C Church Store Open 6:30 pm Finance - Z	14 6:30 pm Council - P/Z	15	16 7:30 pm Al-Anon - C	17 9 am -12 pm Honest to God Church with Doug Bixby - C
18 First Day of Sunday School 9:30 am Worship - S	19 6:30 pm Search Cmt. Mtg. - C	20 10:30 am Crafters - C Church Store Open	21 6:30 pm Deacons - P/Z	22	23 7:30 pm Al-Anon - C	24
25 9:30 am Worship - S	26 October Signpost Deadline 6:30 pm Search Cmt. Mtg. - C	27 10:30 am Crafters - C Church Store Open	28	29	30 7:30 pm Al-Anon - C	

Meeting Locations

C - Chandler Hall
 Z - Zoom
 S - Sanctuary
 R - Classroom
 P - Parlor