



The Bolton Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

228 Bolton Center Road, Bolton, CT 06043 ~ (860) 649-7077 ~ www.boltoncongregational.org

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.

NOTICE OF THE 2018 ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Bolton Congregational Church UCC will be held on Sunday, January 28, 2018 in the meetinghouse following the 10:00 a.m. worship service.

The purpose of the meeting will be the following:

- I. To review and approve the reports of the various boards, committees, and staff;
- II. To review and approve the reports of the Church Clerk, Treasurer, and Financial Secretaries;
- III. To elect the officers and board members for 2018;
- IV. To approve the proposed budget for 2018;
- V. To seek approval of congregation as to amendment to the BCC Constitution and Bylaws regarding membership changes.
- VI. To conduct any other business which will properly come before the congregation.

In the event of cancellation due to extreme bad weather, the Annual Meeting will be held the following Sunday, February 4, 2018, following the 10:00 a.m. worship service.

Every effort will be made to make the annual report available the Sunday before the Annual Meeting. I would ask that anyone responsible for preparing a portion of the Annual Report do so and submit it to the church office no later than Tuesday, January 9 so that the report can be compiled and distributed in a timely manner.

Bill Dakin
Moderator



Waking Up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race

Saturday, January 20, 9am - 3pm
In West Hartford

Join Pastor Nicolette, along with Christian neighbors from the greater Hartford area, in reading "Waking Up White" by Debby Irving. Irving will lead a day of enrichment and learning sponsored by the JP Webster Library in West Hartford on Saturday, January 20th from 9am-3pm. Please let Pastor Nicolette know by January 4th if you would like to attend as space is limited and lunch will be provided.

The book contains Irving's recollections of her own experiences as an American white woman learning about the complexities of race in America. She writes, "**Waking Up White** is the book I wish someone had handed me decades ago. My hope is that by sharing my sometimes cringe-worthy struggle to understand racism and racial tensions, I offer a fresh perspective on bias, stereotypes, manners, and tolerance. As I unpack my own long-held beliefs about colorblindness, being a good person, and wanting to help people of color, I reveal how each of these well-intentioned mindsets actually perpetuated my ill-conceived ideas about race. I also explain why and how I've changed the way I talk about racism, work in racially mixed groups, and understand the racial justice movement as a whole."

Your Stories - Told LIVE!

Mark your calendars! Storytelling resumes January 18th and will continue monthly on the Third Thursdays at 7pm in Chandler Hall throughout the year:

January 18 - "Heritage"

February 15 - "Love"

March 15 - "Betrayal"

April 19 - "Freedom"

May 17 - "Fire"

Please contact Pastor Nicolette to participate or go to Signup Genius at: www.SignUpGenius.com/go/30E0D4FA4A92EA7FF2-storytelling

From the Pastor...

For the past few months, I've been writing about the life cycles of all living things (plants, humans, churches) – how we are always either growing, or decaying, with just brief moments of 'staying the same.' Growing churches grow in three primary ways – they grow in spirit, in commitment, in numbers. Advent and the Christmas season are good times to dig into our spiritual practices and our commitments.

January, in the annual cycle of church life, is a time for numbers. It is the month when we put together our annual report, and amass all of the statistics about what happened the year before. It is the month when we begin to compile data about our finances, our attendance, and our programs, to send to the national offices of the UCC. It is the month when we set aside time to look at trends over the last several years. It is the month when we approve our budget.

January is a number-heavy month.

So how does a church grow in numbers? Our first instinct is to get new members. A second instinct is to re-engage lapsed members. These are both true and deserve time and attention – but NOT because we want our church to grow. Engaging new people is important because we value our relationship with God, with Christ, with the church; because we believe there is something special about the gospel, and want to spread the Good News to others. Re-engaging lapsed members is important because we value our relationship with each other, and we care for one another, even when circumstances have allowed us to drift apart.

So yes – we seek new people, and reach out to the disengaged, but not so that we can grow. When we want to grow in numbers, we first look at ourselves. Again, we focus on our spiritual growth, and then we grow in commitment, which leads us to grow in numbers.

For example, the easiest way to grow in attendance is for all of us to commit to coming more often. What does that look like? On an average Sunday morning, 90 people come to church. Say that of those 90, 50 are there every Sunday, 20 are there every other Sunday, and 20 are there once per month (at this time we don't track this data, so this is just an approximation). If everyone committed to showing up every Sunday, our attendance would go from 90 to 170, nearly doubling, without adding a single new member.

Of course, numbers only tell part of the story. So while January is a time when we will be bombarded with facts and figures, remember that the church is always so much more than what we can put on paper.

Pastor Nicolette

Worship Schedule for January

Sunday, January 7 – 8:45 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.

First Sunday after Epiphany

Message: "Celebrate with Friends" ~ Pastor Nicolette

Sunday, January 14 – 8:45 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.

Second Sunday after Epiphany

Message: "Celebrate with Wine" ~ Pastor Nicolette

Sunday, January 21 – 8:45 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.

Third Sunday after Epiphany

Message: "Jesus: The Righteous" ~ Pastor Nicolette

Sunday, January 28 – 8:45 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany *Annual Meeting Sunday*

Message: "Jesus: The Son" ~ Pastor Nicolette

Monday, January 15th is



Winter is Here...

A reminder that on Sunday mornings, church will occur as scheduled, except in extreme weather circumstances (in consultation with the Deacons, and under the advisement of our first responders). If church is in fact closed, an outgoing message will be recorded on our phone, the local TV stations which post school and church closings will be notified, and our facebook page will be updated (depending on what technology is working at the time of the storm). This is both for your safety, and for the safety of our first responders who will have enough on their hands without potential accidents. On weekdays, the office will be closed if the Bolton Public Schools are closed. If you are uncertain if the office will be open, it is best to call ahead.



Prayer Shawl Ministry

Our meetings will resume on the fourth Monday of the month, January 22, at 7:00 p.m. We have shawls ready to fill any request and we will continue to make hats, scarves and blanket squares.



Come join us if you would like to learn to knit or just to visit.

Many thanks for your generous gifts and support. You may make requests year round to Dot Lessard, Barbara Maheu, or any member of our knitting group.

Dot Lessard

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Church School News...

Happy New Year to you all!

I hope this article finds you well and that you were able to enjoy your Christmas and New Year. If you were unable to be in Church on December 17th to see the children perform in the Christmas Pageant, you missed a truly a wonderful and entertaining show. We tried a new pageant this year and it worked out great! The children never let me down. They bring such joy into the Church and help you truly feel the presence of God. Who will ever forget the Christmas Ninja! A little background on that, I asked Beau if he wanted to be an animal in the pageant, he said no. I asked him if he would like to be an angel or a shepherd, he said no. So I asked him what he wanted to be and he said a ninja! I had to figure out a way to write that into the script and that is how the Christmas Ninja came to be. Thank you to all the parents and teachers who helped organize the pageant. I could not have done it without your support. We now have to figure out how we can top this next year!

We continue our lessons from Spill the Beans. The change in our curriculum has been a positive one. Both students and teachers are enjoying the lessons each week. It is also so wonderful that the families can continue the conversation at home because they are all hearing the same scripture.

We have been unable to find the amount of teachers that we need so beginning on January 7th we will reconfigure our classes again. We will have a Pre-K/K group, 1st/2nd/3rd/4th grade group and a 5th/6th/7th/8th grade group. Thank you to the teachers for their flexibility.

Jessica Romeo

Director of Christian Education

Crafters'/Store Corner

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT
DURING 2017.

~ FROM ALL OF THE STORE VOLUNTEERS

Chandler Book Nook

"Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers." ~Charles William Eliot

A NEW YEAR! We hope one of your new year's resolutions is to make friends with one of our newest books added to Chandler Book Nook:

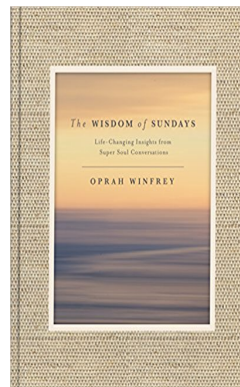
1. [The Wisdom of Sundays: Life-Changing Insights from Super Soul Conversations](#) by Oprah Winfrey (reviewed below by Denise)
2. [The Beloved Christmas Quilt](#) by Wanda Brunstetter (Donated by Kay Peterson)
3. [The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks](#) by Rebecca Skloot (Donated by Barbara Maheu)
4. [Proof of Heaven](#) by Eben Alexander (Donated by Dick Brown)

Recommendation For January

We seek it, we feel secure in it, yet find it hard to describe or define – spirituality. A new addition to the Chandler Book Nook is titled:

The Wisdom of Sundays

It offers sage words from very thoughtful and accomplished writers, philosophers, and influential cultural leaders. Their personal and inspiring anecdotes are offered in conversational form, led by Oprah Winfrey. Written in chapters, one can easily set the book down and pick it up again later. I would encourage anyone to borrow this enlightening book, which was gifted by an anonymous donor.



Blessings for 2018: a new year filled with some inspiring reads!

The Library Ladies
Linda Brown
Denise McLennon

Hymnal Update

The search for a new hymnal is underway, and the hymnal search committee wants to keep the congregation informed about the process every step of the way. Articles will be published in the Signpost, announcements will be in the bulletin and committee members welcome input.

A number of questions arose at the beginning of the process:

- Why do we need new hymnals?
- Will the new hymnal have my favorite hymns?
- How will the church pay for them?
- What will happen to the current books?
- How will the new hymnal be chosen?

This article will address the first question and others will be addressed in future articles.

One reason for a new hymnal is to introduce new music into our church. The red Pilgrim Hymnal was first published in 1931 and the blue hymnal in 1968, so we have not been singing new music for at least four decades, except when hymns are copied and inserted into the bulletin. As we foster the next generation of parishioners, the committee believes we should include music written by the next generation of composers. "The Old Rugged Cross," "Just a Closer Walk With Thee," and "Amazing Grace" were new hymns once, and perhaps the next new "old favorite" is ready to be discovered. The committee is adamant that the new hymnal must contain old favorites, but we also feel the congregation should be open to hearing hymns that might engage our younger members, possibly become their favorites or even become the new favorite hymns of longtime members.

Another reason for looking for a new hymnal is to find one that uses language that is more appropriate in today's society and which reflects the values of our congregation. In our red hymnal the beautiful Good Friday hymn "Were You There" and the solemn communion hymn "Let Us Break Bread Together" are called "Negro Spirituals." Our blue hymnal often uses hierarchical or male-dominant words such as "King" and "his," but the same hymn in a newer hymnal uses more inclusive terms such as "God" and "your" without losing the tone or meaning of the hymn. Some might say language merely reflects the time when the music was written, but the search committee feels that the language used in our services and in our hymnals reflects the values of our congregation and conveys those values to the community, to our younger members and to visitors.

Another reason for new hymnals is that the books are wearing out. While the worn appearance reflects the many hands that have held the books, their faded and frayed condition is not in keeping with the high standard to which we maintain the meetinghouse, parlor, gardens and Chandler Hall. The worn books also don't reflect the vibrancy of our congregation, and to a newcomer their appearance could suggest a resistance to change. Please feel free to contact any member of the hymnal search committee if you would like to share your thoughts.

Hymnal Committee members:

Gwen Marrion – gmarrion@snet.net

Andrea Sauer – sauerct@att.net

Beth Mortimer bmortimer@comcast.net

Barbara Maheu wmaheu@comcast.net

Rick Bulach bluechiptl@aol.com

Ben Davies bdavies2303@hotmail.com

Pastor Nicolette pastornicolette@gmail.com

Mary Lou Prescher

Gwen Marrion

FESTIVAL OF TREES

Thank you to everyone who made the Festival of Trees such a great success! The festival featured 25 decorated trees (including 18 by local non-profits) admired by 400 people who attended over the 3 days. We gave away \$1550 to charity thanks to the generosity of our business donors and brought in \$2300 from the teacup auction. It was a time of music, laughter, food, wonder, light, community, and joy. Folks are already looking forward to next year, so mark your calendars for Nov. 30, Dec. 1, and Dec. 2

Do you have a suggestion for ways to make it better? Do you want to be more involved? Do you have a business or non-profit that you hope will participate next year? Please contact Pastor Nicolette or another member of the planning team.

Financial Update

Thank you to everyone who has turned in a pledge card! Your pledges help the finance team to create a faithful and accurate 2018 budget. As of now, we have received 48 pledges (including 8 who did not pledge in 2017) totaling \$123,935. The final day to turn in your pledge is Sunday, 1/7 (though earlier is better).

This update is being written a few weeks shy from the end of the year, but we are expecting to end this year in the red (though with a smaller deficit than projected due to lower than expected expenses and higher than expected income). Working together, we make our church a vibrant, healthy, joyful, and faithful community where God is worshipped through our words and actions. Thank you for all of the ways that you give – whether in the plate, or in another way.



Our Joys and Concerns

Birthdays...Todd D.; Laureen M.'s granddaughter (4th); Sharon S. (52nd) & (13th with new heart); Joe R. (15th) Kayla R. (19th); Chris P.'s daughter, Lydia (20th); Linda B.'s mom (90th); Jan F.

Anniversaries...Susan & Mark S. (43rd).

Other Joys...the love in our church; Jennifer D. in worship; Festival of Trees; Tom M. & Samantha L.'s music; Jane H. thankful to be in church; random acts of kindness; Deb B.'s time with granddaughter; Shirley B.'s nephew & friends here; Victor V.'s baptism; children.

Hospitalized, Ill, etc...Karan B.'s friend; Lori V.'s Uncle Normand.

Concerns...Traveling mercies; Karen F.'s mom; Barb M.; hope for a return to civility in society; Arlis B.'s friend; seasonal ills of family members; Ron A.'s 107-year-old mom forced to move to new facility; Bev A. recovering; addictions and families dealing with those afflicted; Donna F.; Pam B.; Cathy N.'s friend Jack.

Bereaved...John Toomey & family upon the death of John Toomey, Sr.

Other...Randy B. thanks congregation for cards & expressions of sympathy.



Wishing you all a Blessed, Healthy, and
Happy New Year!

~ From the Signpost Staff

From the Heart

Happy New Year and I hope you had a nice holiday!

I know one little girl who made the holidays special for many children in need. Emma, age 9, decided one afternoon that she wanted to help kids in need. She decided, on her own, that she wanted to use her allowance money to buy toys for children for Christmas!

Her mom reached out to FTH and shared Emma's idea. Naturally, my response was one of awe and amazement that a child who worked hard to earn her allowance had made a heartfelt decision to use it for someone else. Her mom shared the response with Emma and the next thing you knew Emma's siblings Anna, age 8, and Jack, age 5 decided that they also wanted to get involved.

Long story short, the kids all decided to add to Emma's idea by setting up a Hot Chocolate stand in front of their house. They outlined what the proceeds were going to be used for and simply asked for a "free will donation." Emma's idea raised an amazing \$285! They only shut their stand down that day because they ran out of cups to serve their hot chocolate in. J

Their parents took them shopping and together the kids spent every penny on toys that were donated to FTH's Adopted Family program and children in our Foster Care program.

THAT....is what the "Season of Giving" is all about. Emma had an idea that came from her heart. Her idea ended up getting her whole family involved (including grandparents) and rippled out into the community to include people who stopped to purchase their hot chocolate and make a donation. It does not get any better than that! Thank you Emma, Anna, and Jack!! Great idea!

God shows us opportunities every single day of the year to be a blessing to others. When we keep our hearts open, we see how even the smallest of ideas can produce much fruit and include many, all to help those around us in love and support.

The BCC family continues to come up with new and inventive ways all the time to help others! What a wonderful family to be a part of! Can't wait to see what 2018 brings to BCC and to everyone who reaches out in support of others in need.

Happy New Year!

Laura Ann

january 2018



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>Every Sunday: † 8:45 a.m. & 10 a.m. <i>Worship Services</i> (Unless otherwise noted) † Church School at 10:00am service † Church Store Open: 10:00am-Noon</p>	<p>1</p> <p>OFFICE CLOSED</p> <p><i>New Year's Day</i></p>	<p>2</p> <p>Crafters/Time to Socialize 10:00am <i>Church Store Open 10am-3pm</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p>Choir ~ 6:30pm Refuge Recovery Group 7:00pm</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Al-Anon 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Festival of Trees Clean Up</p> <p>Epiphany</p>
<p>7</p> <p>Communion Sunday</p> <p>Board of Missions 11:15am</p> <p>Girl Scouts 2-5pm</p> <p><i>First Sunday after Epiphany</i></p>	<p>8</p> <p>OFFICE CLOSED</p> <p>Hymnal Team 5:00pm</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Crafters/Time to Socialize 10:00am <i>Church Store Open 10am-3pm</i> Board of Stewardship 6:30pm</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Choir ~ 6:30pm Refuge Recovery Group 7:00pm</p> <p>Church Council 7:30pm</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Al-Anon 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>13</p>
<p>14</p> <p><i>2nd Sunday after Epiphany</i></p>	<p>15</p> <p>OFFICE CLOSED</p> <p><i>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</i></p>	<p>16</p> <p>Crafters/Time to Socialize 10:00am <i>Church Store Open 10am-3pm</i></p>	<p>17</p> <p>Choir ~ 6:30pm Refuge Recovery Group 7:00pm</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Legacy Team 1:00pm</p> <p>Storytelling 7:00pm</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Al-Anon 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>"Waking Up White" 9am-3pm (Offsite)</p>
<p>21</p> <p>Budget Q&A 11:30am Chandler Hall</p> <p>Bd. Of Christian Ed. 11:45am</p> <p><i>3rd Sunday after Epiphany</i></p>	<p>22</p> <p>OFFICE CLOSED</p> <p>Prayer Shawl Gathering 7:00 p.m.</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Crafters/Time to Socialize 10:00am <i>Church Store Open 10am-3pm</i> Caregiver Collective 7:00pm Chandler Hall</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Choir ~ 6:30pm Refuge Recovery Group 7:00pm</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Al-Anon 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>27</p>
<p>28</p> <p>BCC ANNUAL MEETING 11 A.M. MEETINGHOUSE</p> <p>Girl Scouts 1-5pm</p> <p><i>4th Sunday after Epiphany</i></p>	<p>29</p> <p>OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Crafters/Time to Socialize 10:00am <i>Church Store Open 10am-3pm</i></p>	<p>31</p> <p>Choir ~ 6:30pm Refuge Recovery Group 7:00pm</p> <p>Board of Deacons 7:30pm</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Al-Anon 7:30 p.m.</p>	<p>3</p>

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