



The Forecaster - May, 2014

Official Publication of First Congregational Church, UCC
30 Main Street, Binghamton, New York 13905
The Rev. Dr. Arthur M. Suggs, Pastor



*No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here at First Congregational Church!*

Pastor's Perspective

Brian Eno's music drives me nuts. Generally, I like what is called "New Age" music, the kind that you hear in a spa or when you're getting a massage. It's minimalist, soothing, calming. Generally, it is not played with an accordion or trumpet. But Eno's music takes the minimalist notion to the extreme. There is not even a hint of a melody, let alone harmony or rhythm. It is more like listening to the subtle morphing of a tone. Once when I was alone in the house listening to Eno, or at least trying, certain unnamed others arrived and upon hearing the music remarked, "What is that? What's the matter with you?"

So then I come across an interview with Brian Eno, which piqued my interest, because I was curious to see why he would produce such unusual, extremist, niche music. He said...

"I think that sex, drugs, art and religion very much overlap with one another and sometimes one becomes another. So I thought, "What do all those things have in common?" The umbrella that they all exist under is this word, "surrender" because they are all forms of transcendence through surrender. They are ways of transcending your individuality and sense of yourself as a totally separate creature in the world. All of those things involve some kind of loosening of this boundary that is around this thing you call yourself"... This idea of surrender has become more and more what I've been thinking about for the last few years, and I've been wanting to make both visual art, which I do a lot of, and music, which says to an audience, "This is where you can surrender!" I consider surrender an active verb, in the sense that you have this spectrum ranging from control to surrender, and the model of post-enlightenment man is that we've become better and better at control. If you think of our distant genetic past, most of our time was spent around the surrender end of the spectrum because there wasn't much we could control. We were at the mercy of weather, creatures, geology, geography and everything else. We had to learn to surrender in a situation because when you are powerless, your option is to go with the flow and learn how to navigate it. That's what I call active surrender." (From The Polymath Perspective)

What I found so arresting about these thoughts was that any sense of control we have is generally an illusion. For example, do any of us truly believe that the Pastors, or the Deacons, or the Trustees control First Congregational Church? Ha! It's laughable. We have no control whatsoever over what others think about us. Whether its business, politics, the weather, the others in the family, the ordinary events of our daily lives, we really have minimal control. This then convinces me that a better use of our time and energy is to "...go with the flow and learn how to navigate it."

For me, that's a worthy thought. But the deeper thought is found in the first paragraph. And why are we so bent on transcendence? Because that is who we are as children of God, made in the image of God. We are linked to Divinity, to all the other children, and to this earthly home with all its beauty and wonder. And so we loosen the boundary. There are many ways, but the reason why, the primal motivation is to manifest who we are.

Blessings upon you all this Eastertide, as we experience and celebrate not just life, but all of its variety and abundance!



Happy Birthday to those celebrating their special day in May and June:

Robert Neill	5/3	Carolyn Blake	5/30
Becky Lewis	5/12	Warren Resseguie	6/1
Lacey Lewis	5/12	Stephanie Cirba	6/5
Jeff Dahlgren	5/15	Arlene Price	6/6
Katharina Krieger	5/15	Nancy Wildoner	6/8
Megan Griffiths Dovin	5/15	Jill Andrews	6/10
Richard Marderian	5/15	Teresa Cluff	6/11
Sharon Rhinebeck Gass	5/16	Michael Christian	6/16
Betty Lou Agard	5/17	Brian Thompson	6/19
Chuck Mallery	5/17	Barbara Larson	6/24
Joyce Eames	5/19	Ruth Prince	6/24
Lee Stradley	5/23	Jason Stevens	6/24
Kyle O'Neill	5/23	Bob Giblin	6/25
Amy Winans	5/24	Martin Rorapaugh	6/27
William Heim	5/27	Allyson White	6/29

Please inform the office if you notice an omission from our Birthday List.

CHOW SUNDAY REMINDER

Please mark your calendars for the following CHOW Sundays: May 4th and June 1st. Our CHOW pantry 'needs' list is posted outside the Parlor. If you can volunteer at the FCC Food Pantry desk, please call Karen at 648-4711. Thank you.



Bible Study

Throughout May and June, we will continue with the *Jewish Commentary on the New Testament*. We meet every Wednesday at noon, so feel free to bring a bag lunch. We will be taking a summer break near the end of June.



Jazz Vespers

The May Jazz Vespers Program will be on the 11th, at 5pm, and will feature The Doug Beardsley Trio, with Doug Beardsley on keyboards, Larry Lolli on guitar and Brad Nemcek on drums. Please join us and have Mom listen to some great music for Mothers' Day.

From the Office



Our next Forecaster will be a joint June & July publication. Please send me articles, programs, events, and any 'Save the Date' reminders by May 21st for both these months. Also, I would like to know if any of your Board or Committee meetings will be taking a break for any of the summer months.



Youth Development

The class attendance for the month of April was between 17-21 children.

For the month of May we will focus on "Growing in God's Love," where lessons will be taken from the Seasons of the Spirit, The Tasty Faith Ministry, and the Metro Ministry curriculum. The children will learn about the many ways that we can grow in God's love with a focus on the seeds that we plant today towards our relationship with God. We will be coordinating some outdoor walks/ lessons with the help of Linda Malone and her affiliation with VINES, an organization that creates various gardens in the community.

We also look forward to continuing our "getting to know you" program that we would like to do every other Sunday, if possible. This is about a 20-30 minute presentation of who you are, and what you do in the community and church as a way to get to know the kids better and they, in return, get to know you.

We thank Clare Price for bringing in his Roto Rooter company vehicle and giving the kids an idea of what it takes to keep things moving in the right direction and how happy people are when that does indeed happen. Please let me know if you would be interested in sharing what you do with the kids some Sunday morning.

The Easter Egg Hunt was held in the Fellowship Hall during Sunday school. It was very successful and there was an abundance of goodies that not only filled the 120 eggs, but the Easter sacks as well. We thank Chris O'Neill for her help in filling the eggs.

We are in the midst of still trying to get the addresses and consent forms from all the children so we can take some field trips. At our recent CE meeting, we discussed the possibility of taking the kids to the Ross Park Zoo over the summer and holding an Ice Cream Social, as well.

We continue to create a safe, sacred space where the kids can learn more about themselves, each other and their relationship with God. Thank you for your time, patience and generosity and being a part of this wonderful mission that is changing little lives.

Warmly, Renee

Heart Centered Living

Explore, share, and experience different avenues of spiritual expression in a safe, sacred space every Monday evening from 6-8pm. Our theme for May's Programs is *Embracing the Divine Feminine*.

Monday, May 5th—Heart Healing Energy Share

Monday, May 12th—HCL Workshop: Opening to the Gifts of the Divine Feminine

Monday, May 19th—A Heart Centered Vision Activity—Celebrating and Honoring the Many Faces of the Divine Feminine

Monday, May 26th—Heart Centered Movie "The Mists of Avalon" with a heart healthy meal.

We are preparing some wonderful Heart Centered road trips in the weeks to come.

For details on the calendar of events, go to www.heart-centered-living.org, or like us on Facebook to connect with other Heart Centered People, or contact Renee Guidelli at 607226-2354 for more details and to determine which program might be best for you.

Faith Works Fellowship

May Fellowship Evening:

Since the third Friday in April fell on Good Friday, there was no Fellowship Evening last month.

For May, we will have Fellowship Evening on May 16th at 6pm. Several members requested that we schedule Poetry Evening.

We will start with a potluck dinner followed by participants reading and presenting their favorite poems (if you so desire).

These programs in the past have proven to be quite entertaining. Mark your calendars and come prepared to join the fun. Remember the word is *fellowship*.

Assistance Fund Reminder

Remember that it was decided not to collect money for Easter Food Baskets this year but to direct that effort towards a fund which Art uses to help folks in need who come to our door. We are still fundraising for this fund, so please make your contributions in the offering plate, in the office or to Art in person. Put it in an envelope appropriately marked. Please be generous as you have been in the past.

"Sharing our Stories"

Fun and Fellowship

Please join us for good conversation as we get to know each other better. We will start on Tuesday, May 6, at noon in the Parlor. Bring a sandwich if you'd like; we will provide coffee and tea.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Carole Resseguie and Mary Cuddeback

Caring Ministry

Please let the Office know if any of our members or friends are in need of a card sent from the Caring Ministry. It is always nice for someone to know we are thinking and praying during difficult times, but we would also love to share in members' happy times as well. Call Leslie in the Office and she will pass on any information to the Caring Ministry. Thanks.

Are you interested in becoming a member of FCC?

Do you have questions about what is involved? A New Member class will be forming soon. If you would like to learn more, please speak with one of the Pastors, either Janet Abel or Art Suggs.

From The Sophia Center for Spirituality

The Sophia Center for Spirituality continues our series, "Mystic of the Month" on May 12th with Marietta DellaPenna offering reflections on the great Sufi mystic, Jalaladin Rumi.

On June 9th, we will meet Hildegard of Bingen, a Christian mystic born at the turn of the first millennium (1098).

These gatherings are held at 6:30pm in the chapel at the First Congregational Church in Binghamton. All are welcome. (A free-will offering will be taken.)

We will then suspend these presentations for the summer but will resume on the second Monday of each month beginning on September 8th.

We generally offer prayer in the style of Taize on the 4th Sunday of the month *but our next offering will be held instead on June 1st, 6pm*, when we will be graced by composer of chants and player of the harmonium, Darlene Franz, who will travel to us from the state of Washington.

Stay tuned for more information about this and other events to come.

BOOK-WORDS!

(another new direction for our church)

John Adams, by David McCullough. *This biography of one of our nation's founding fathers is the premier examination of the life of this eighteenth-century American farmer, lawyer, politician, pragmatist, and philosopher.*

973.44092 MCCU

Calm and compassionate children, by Susan Usha Dermond. *It may be difficult to find a quiet place in a parent's life to connect with a child about some important things, such as kindness, love, and joy. The author teaches parents and others how to model and nurture such qualities in the young people around them.*

372.019 DERM

I am Malala, by Malala Yousafzai. *Encouraged by her father to attend to her schooling, Malala, living in Pakistan, took her life in her hands to do so. Having survived a murder attempt, she now speaks out on behalf of girls' education worldwide.*

371.822 YOUS

The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and their secret world war, by Stephen Kinzer. *During the 1950s Allen Dulles headed the F.B.I. and John Foster Dulles was U.S. Secretary of State. Religious piety and Western movies, among other impulses and delusions, led these two amazingly powerful figures to shape a violent world during the Cold War, involving such places as Iran and Vietnam. Their actions reverberate throughout the world to this day.*

327.1273 KINZ

Every Monday matters: 52 ways to make a difference, by Matthew Emerzian. *What if everyone started his or her week with the mindset of "It's time to be awesome. I'm going to make a difference today. I'm going to be a better friend, a better husband, a better coworker, a better citizen." What if every Monday was seen as a day to be better than we were the week before?*

303.484 EMER

Republic of mind and spirit, a cultural history of American metaphysical religion, by Catherine Albanese. *Covers American metaphysical religion from its origins in Renaissance Europe, and from Colonial times through Transcendentalism, Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism, to New Age. The author explains how the combinative nature of, for example, Masonic thought and Mormonism, Puritan self-reliance and Buddhism, Christianity and spiritualism, have been a feature of American religious thought for centuries.*

299.93

Church Council Summary Report

April 4, 7:15pm

The Boards and Church Council have been working on updating the Mode of Operations (duties and responsibilities) of the various boards and committees of the church. Pastor Art Suggs and Clare Price will study the personnel portion of the Polity Manual to bring it in line with present day practice.

It was noted on behalf of the Board of Deacons that Delores Megyesi has resigned, along with Kim Reissig resigning from the Mission Committee. Both resignations were received with regret. New members will be chosen as soon as the Nominating Committee is filled.

John Roberts reported for the Board of Trustees that they are looking at many areas needing repair and, in some cases, replacements of old equipment. Unfortunately, much time is used in waiting for the bids and estimates. Once received, the Trustees will move forward with decisions of the projects. A new process is also being set forth regarding the various Maintenance Agreements with suppliers, the handling of church usage requests, as well as the income derived from rental of the church facilities.

After further discussion, the Trustees have decided to keep the Finance Committee as part of the Board. Two members, Tom Bucker and Pete Perkins, have agreed to serve on this committee, and a third Trustee will be chosen shortly.

Pastor Suggs announced two special programs being presented in this church. The first is "Living A Course in Miracles," led by nationally known author Dr. Jon Mundy. This lecture will be held on Tuesday, April 29, at 7pm. The second program is titled "Creating a Moral Economy for the Common Good," to be held Thursday May 1st. After meeting at the MLK statue in Binghamton (from 5-6pm), participants will walk to the church to continue the program at 6:30pm.

It is extremely helpful to have such good attendance at Council meetings. By sharing reports and cooperating with the various boards and committees, the church certainly runs more smoothly and is a valuable asset to the pastors as well as the church members.

Arlene M. Price, Secretary

Taizé Service at First Congregational Church

The Sophia Center for Spirituality will hold their monthly Taizé service, on May 25th, 6pm, in our Sanctuary. The services are modeled after the services created by the Taizé monastic community, which is an ecumenical monastic order in Taizé, Saône-et-Loire, Burgundy, France. It is composed of more than 100 brothers, from Protestant and Catholic traditions, who originated from about 30 countries across the world. It is emphatically ecumenical, and interfaith.

The Healing House

Are you wondering what to do with those sometimes stinky bottles and cans you have laying around? Do you find that sometimes it is easier to throw them away then take them to a store to be recycled? And then feel badly that you or someone else lost out on a little money? Well, do we have the solution for you. For the next few months when you bring in your bottles and cans, there will be a designated area behind the CHOW desk. And the best part is, they are going to go to a great cause and a wonderful community organization called The Healing House. The Healing House serves adult survivors of sexual and childhood abuse and is working with kids that might be in that situation as well. They provide free support groups to the community, bring in guest speakers to educate our area professionals and help connect survivors with the resources they need to heal. We are always looking at ways that we can give back to the community as well as reach out. Linda and myself thought this would be a win-win for everyone. Thank you for doing your part in making this community a better place to live.
In gratitude- Renée

Metanoia Spiritual Living

A Work Study Group, based on Science of Mind principles will be held every other Tuesday at Ethelyn's home at 3585 Carman Rd, Binghamton. Please ask Ethy for directions at 727-1068. The next meeting will be on May 13, 7pm. (Next meeting will then be May 27) New participants always welcome.



Scholarship Committee

For Scholarship application details, watch the June Forecaster for further information.

Board of Deacons Summary Report, April 15, 2014

Chairperson's Comments—Attendance averaged 76 over the last month. The Board accepted with regret the resignation of Dolores Megyesi. On April 26, the Susquehanna Association of the UCC will meet in Homer, NY.

Pastor's Report —Rev. Suggs reviewed the upcoming worship schedule. Highlights include the events of Holy Week, and both Easter Services. Particular attention was given to the schedule for June due to the NY Conf. Annual Meeting and several weddings. Rev. Suggs also reported on Jon Mundy (A Course in Miracles) speaking at the church on April 29 at 7pm. Also Kim Bobo (Exec. Director of the Interfaith Worker Justice in Chicago) will speak at the church on May 1 at 6:30pm. Finally there are plans for a regular class to be taught at the church on Conversations with God materials. Details aren't firm yet.

Associate Pastor's Report —Janet distributed her written report, which contained the details of her visitation, teaching, worship leadership and preaching, and assistance with Christian Education duties. The NYC trip is set for June 21, with one or both of these options: Cloisters museum-church history branch of the Met or the 9/11 memorial and museum. As well she will be seeing all of the home-bound church members prior to Easter.

Christian Education Report —Renee supplied a report on the Sunday School, updating the Deacons on the status of the lessons and other aspects of the Sunday School. In addition we will be receiving a generous donation of Sunday School items by U. S. Toy, a mail order toy company once they learned of the nature of our ministry here. Linda Malone has been hired as an additional Sunday School teacher and is working out very well. Welcome Linda! Possible Easter Egg hunt and breakfast with the kids and parents after the Easter Service, depending upon RSVPs.

Other Business — One final small change was made to the Manual of Operations. The Conditional Letters have received several responses which were addressed on an individual basis. The Easter flowers will arrive on Friday at 9:00 am and will be then displayed. Ethy suggested that we bring in musician Matt Venuti: <http://www.mattvenuti.com/#videos> with the possible date of June 22.

The meeting concluded with discussion of various pastoral care issues.

Board of Trustees Summary Report, April 16, 2014

Financial Report was read. Trustees would like to have one or two church members participate in the Finance Committee as “advisors” instead of it consisting only of current Trustees.

Pastor’s report: We will be hosting a *Course In Miracles* speaker on April 29th. There will be a guest musician for the 6:00 Taizé service on June 22nd.

Old business: We have received two bids for painting the window frames on the east and south sides of the sanctuary. Trustees approved the bid we received from Mr. Pappas. Will discuss possible alternatives to replacing the side lights in the sanctuary. Tabled. Clare Price will bring in people to clear out the exterior next to the Fell Hall windows and will then examine the crack in the wall.

The decision to replace vs. repair the dishwasher was tabled. The Stuart Organ Co. has completed their study of the organ and has provided a repair estimate and insurance form.

Respectfully submitted,
Judith A. Giblin, Secretary

How To Contact Us:

Mon –Thurs, 9:00-3:00 pm,
(607)723-8981

fcc@binghamtonwireless.com

Web: www.uccbinghamton.org

The Rev. Dr. Arthur M. Suggs – Senior Pastor
The Rev. Janet Abel – Associate Pastor
Renee Guidelli – Director of Christian Education
Nancy Wildoner – Organist & Choir Director
Ethelyn Enos – Director of Joyful Noise
Judy Giblin – Director of Jazz Vespers
Leslie Dahlgren – Office Manager
Brooke Shaddock – Childcare Provider
Alice Pettit – Treasurer
Erick Clasen – Web Master
Vanessa Warren– Bookkeeper
Cindi West-Davidson – Custodian
Toni Rorapaugh—Librarian



BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

PERMIT NO. 52

PAID

U.S. POSTAGE

NON-PROFIT ORG.

First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
30 Main Street
Binghamton, NY 13905