



The Forecaster - August and September, 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

In one of the blogs I follow, Rev. Lillian Daniel wrote an essay (2011) that went viral where she spoke about the “Spiritual But Not Religious” crowd. (Crowd is now the right term too in that SBNR’s now outnumber Atheists, Jews, and Muslims in America.) She is a Congregationalist minister outside of Chicago. The paragraph that really caught on was this one:

“On airplanes I dread the conversation with the person who finds out I am a minister and wants to use the flight time to explain to me that he is ‘spiritual but not religious.’ Such a person will always share this as if it is some kind of daring insight, unique to him, bold in its rebellion against the religious status quo.” Before you know it, “he’s telling me that he finds God in the sunsets.” She continues, “These people always find God in the sunsets. And in walks on the beach.”

Her original essay then got turned into a book called *When Spiritual But Not Religious Is Not Enough*. And then in a revisiting of this subject she wrote:

“...spirituality fits too snugly with complacency, even hedonism — after all, who doesn’t like walks in nature? — whereas religion is better at challenging people to face death, fight poverty and oppose injustice. Religion, by bringing people together, in community, at regular intervals, facilitates an ongoing conversation about matters outside the self.” “There is nothing challenging about having deep thoughts all by oneself. What is interesting is doing this work in community, where other people might call you on stuff or, heaven forbid, disagree with you. Where life with God gets rich and provocative is when you dig into a tradition that you did not invent all for yourself.”

The reason I’m bringing this up, other than the fact that I also dread those airplane conversations and share her overall frustration, is that few things really are as important as religion for the health of our world. Sounds like a weird statement, I realize. Usually people say the opposite, that religion is one of the main problems in our world and that is precisely why there are a growing number of SBNRs. But let me explain...

Re-lig-ion. The “re” is a prefix that means again, as in repeat. The “lig” is the core root of the word, and means to connect, as in ligament. So the word (as well as its intrinsic meaning) has to do with reconnecting that which has been separated. Every enmity in our world, every distrust, every act of violence, every fear or hatred, every lie, every theft, etc. etc. contributes to the separation between people. And what religion should be about is the reconnection. And the means to do so, all “religious” things, are forgiveness, reconciliation, mercy, understanding, kindness, and especially love.

And what religion should be about is the reconnection. Our job is to make sure that is what we are doing – reconnecting. Reconnecting people with each other, with nature, and with Divinity. Perhaps if religion would stick to its core business, people wouldn’t want to forsake it and just be spiritual.

Hope you are having a great Summer!

Blessings upon all,

Happy Birthday to those celebrating their special day in August and September:



| | | | |
|---------------------|-------|-----------------|------|
| Christopher Brewton | 8/6 | Delores Megyesi | 9/15 |
| Jessica Mihok Ford | 8/6 | Dorothy Gardner | 9/16 |
| Richard Langstaff | 8/16 | Peg Kingsbury | 9/17 |
| Elizabeth Neill | 8/24 | Dan Reissig | 9/17 |
| Arlene Pewterbaugh | 8/ 27 | Mattis Krieger | 9/19 |
| Susanne Krieger | 8/27 | David Adams | 9/20 |
| David Agard | 8/31 | Kim Reissig | 9/20 |
| Carole Resseguie | 9/1 | Robert Hemenway | 9/22 |
| Zeb Carstrom | 9/1 | Verna Griffiths | 9/25 |
| Aleda Stamboulian | 9/3 | Deb Miller | 9/25 |
| Marian Simpson | 9/12 | Jane Wadsworth | 9/27 |
| Mary Cuddeback | 9/14 | Doris Donnelly | 9/28 |
| Clare Price | 9/14 | | |

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: September 7th and October 5th. 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.

Bible Study



Bible Study will be getting back together on Wednesday, September 10th, at Noon. The book will be tba, so please check in with Pastor Janet or the Office during August for further details.

Congratulations, Tim O'Neill!

Tim O'Neill, who we see perform on the guitar with Joyful Noise each month, is a fireman for the City of Binghamton. This summer, Tim was promoted from Lieutenant to Captain in the Fire Department!

From the Office

Our next Forecaster will be an October publication. Please send me articles, programs, events, and any 'Save the Date' reminders by September 23 . Thank you, Leslie.

Please Note that the Trustees and Deacons will not be meeting in August. If a special meeting is needed, then board members will be notified. Church Council will meet on Tuesday, August 5th at the Price's home.

Youth Development



As we gear up for Sunday School, we look forward to another year of growth, learning and sharing in God's word. We are looking for people who would be interested in sharing what they do with the kids in our "Getting to Know You Program" for Sept-Dec.

The "Getting to Know You" format is: Arrive at the classroom by 11:00 AM. Have an activity to interact with the kids to accompany your talk. Engage the kids by asking the following questions:

- What do you love to do?
- What do you love best about this church?
- What would you tell your friends about this church?

Some things you might want to address in your talk (between 20-30 minutes) is:

- What you love the most about what you do.
- How you feel it helps the community.
- What is your role/job or responsibility in the church.
- What made you decide to do what you do.

It would be great if you could make a connection between what you do as a living in reference as to how God sees you. This is also open to members of various committees and boards of the church to give the kids more of an idea of what your affiliation is with the church. There will be a sign up list in the hall if you are interested in participating. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

As done in previous years, we begin our Sunday School lessons with the Seasons of Creation curriculum taken from Seasons of the Spirit. These lessons invite our students to join with all the members of Earth's community to "celebrate Earth as a sacred planet filled with God's vibrant presence. The lessons are as follows: Forest Sunday- Acts 17:22-28, Land Sunday- Psalm 139, Wilderness/Outback Sunday- Romans 8:18-27 and River Sunday- Revelation 22:1-5.

Adult Forums are coming... once a month...starting this Fall!

What's this, you say?

Consider it an opportunity to engage in informed discussions with interested and interesting adults as a monthly "Sunday School Class." The Christian Education Committee is planning to offer this venue for the adults in our Sunday worshiping family to explore ideas together. The Adult Forums will be offered after our Sunday worship service on the first Sunday of most months. Note: For October, however, the Forum will be held the *second* Sunday, on the 12th. We envision discussions being lead both by willing adults within our church family and requesting others from our larger community to participate by sharing their particular expertise.

Plan on listening, thinking, feeling, considering, conversing, and having fun, all within a manageable time frame after our Sunday Service!

Adult Forums are coming... starting this Fall...be there!



ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Thursday, August 28, 5-7 PM

This year our congregation is again holding an Ice Cream Social for the neighborhood. There will be free ice cream sundaes for everyone who comes. Balloons will be given out to the children. A boy's and girl's backpack will be raffled off as well. Some games and music will also be provided. We will be offering free bags of school supplies. They will include notebooks, pads, pens, pencils, folders and in some crayons, craft scissors and colored pens.

The committee hopes that members of our congregation will again be generous in contributing items for the supply bags. Last year we assembled 215 and all were distributed at the party. We also invite anyone who would like to help to join in. People are needed to assemble kits, set up in the parking lot, serve and just lend some helping hands. All of our members are invited; as a congregation, we are part of the neighborhood. While no "head count" has been taken, several hundred folks have come each time.

Come and be part of the party!

Church Picture Directory

Through the spring, many shared their smiles in photos for our directory. The pictures and other information are being assembled into a book format that combines the full address directory of our congregation. We hope to have it ready by fall. If we didn't get your photo, or want a retake, please let Bernie Lewis, Bob Neill or Clare Price know by August 6th. Thanks for participating. It will help us all become a closer family.

The CHOW program provides food each month to the 33,000 residents that live in poverty. Forty percent of those are children. The NYS funding has been reduced to a third of previous years, leaving an even greater need for donations to this program. Each month we bring food on the first Sunday, but your supplies or monetary donations are welcome any time. Our shelves are pretty bare! Please remember our less fortunate neighbors.



Choir Practice Resumes

Senior Choir

New members are encouraged to join us—it's fun and a great way to serve!

Senior Choir rehearsals will begin in September: 7, 21, and 28 at 9:30am. We will sing on September 21, then back to our usual schedule of the 1st two Sundays of each month.

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.

FYI—Special Dates:

- Labor Day, September 1
- National Grandparents Day, September 7
- Patriot Day, September 11
- First Day of Autumn, September 23

BOOK-WORDS!

A History of religion in 5½ objects: bringing the spiritual to its senses, by S. Brent Plate.

Stones, incense, crosses, drums, and bread. From prehistory, not only have these kinds of items been part of human life concretely, but also symbolically. The author explores how such concrete and symbolic objects have found their place in religious life, and what he means by that “½.”

291.38 PLAT

A Call to action: women, religion, violence, and power, by Jimmy Carter.

If you have ever heard the Bible being quoted to justify oppression, warfare, hatred, or intolerance, then you may have also heard it used to justify sexual violence and the denial of rights to women. President Carter uses Bible quotations to point out that Jesus and his followers treated women as equals. Hmmm...

323.34 CART

Redeemer: the life of Jimmy Carter,

by Randall Balmer. When was the last time “evangelical” and “progressive” or “liberal” meant the same thing? The answer: during the presidency of Jimmy Carter. Read about this openly religious President, what happened to progressives in government, and what has happened since Carter left the White House.

973.926 CARTER B

Jesus: the human face of God, by Jay Parini.

Not just another biography of Jesus, this slim volume by a renowned interpreter of literature is part sermon and part literary exegesis of the Gospel stories, providing fresh interpretations of those familiar events.

232.901 PARI

Seven masters, one path: meditation secrets from the world’s greatest teachers, by John Selby.

This text offers one meditation each from seven great teachers (Jesus, Buddha, Lao-Tso, Krishnamurti, Gurdjieff, Mohammed, and Patanjali), emphasizing what these diverse traditions have in common.

291.435 SELB

Reminder: the FCC Library is open Sundays from 11:45 to 12:30 and Wednesdays from 10:30 to 3:00. Come in and browse; get a borrower’s card; take home a new reading experience!



ANNUAL RUMMAGE SALE

The Rummage Sale for our church is scheduled for Saturday, October 18, 2014. Cindi West- Davidson has agreed to chair the committee that will organize the event. If you are

interested in working on the project, please let Cindi know.

Above all else, please do some house cleaning and put aside your lightly-used articles that no longer get used. This is a great time to clear them out and recycle them for a person who will make use of the items.

You will hear more about this next month. The Rummage Sale raises money for the church and is another nice ministry for less fortunate folks in the neighborhood.

A Weekend Campout

A small campout is being organized for the weekend of August 15-17th. For folks with motor homes or travel trailers, a caravan is being organized to visit the Genesee Village and Country Museum located in the town of Mumford, southwest of Rochester. The Genesee Village is the third largest historic community in the country (and one of the best kept secrets in Upstate New York). The theme for the village that weekend is "Old-Time Fiddlers' Fair."

The plan is Friday afternoon to drive to the home of Sue Price in LeRoy, NY and park/camp for Friday and Saturday nights. Saturday we will spend the day at the museum 10am to 4pm. Then we will return to the camp area for a potluck dinner and evening campfire. Sunday morning we will attend a local church and return home in the afternoon.

If you are interested in the weekend of fellowship (all or part), please speak to Arlene or Clare Price at 607-238-1662.

Save the Date

Our Jazz Vespers programs will begin in October—Sunday, October 12th, at 5pm. Details of the program are tba.

Rally Day, September 14th!



Church life gets busy again in September (as if the church was not busy this summer!) and we commemorate the renewal of Sunday School. Please join us in unity by wearing red and celebrating a new school year on Rally Day.

Heart Centered Living

Heart Centered Living will have an Open House on Monday, August 25th from 4-8pm. Come and meet some of our members, see what programs we have coming up, and experience what Heart Centered Living is all about. There will be mini-demonstrations and programs, heart healthy snacks and lots of information to take home. To learn more about Heart Centered Living go to www.heart-centered-living.org or follow our heart centered community on Facebook.

Kyat Healing Circle Workshop/Concert with Rembrandt, Saturday August 9 from 10-5pm. Learn the history of the Didgeridoo, experience group healing, as well as selected individual healings, and discover some hands-on healing practices for yourself accompanied by the melodious sounds of the didgeridoo.

Whether you are new to healing and would like to learn some hands-on techniques, or looking to reset, recharge and recalibrate your mind, body and spirit, this part workshop/part concert full-day event is sure to pack a powerful punch on a very subtle heart opening level.

To learn more about this event, please contact Renée Guidelli @ 607-226-2354.

Our Presenter: Rembrandt is a holistic energy specialist with over 10 years experience in Health and Fitness. A practitioner of many Hands-On Energetic Disciplines and an avid Didgeridoo player, he has made it his life's work to bring healing and inner peace to his clients through the movement of Qi.

Our regular HCL programs will resume on Monday, September 8th.

Fellowship & Fundraiser Dinner at UNO'S

Wednesday, August 20, 2014

Our Congregation is going to have another "Dough Raiser" benefit dinner at Uno's Chicago Grill in Vestal. The goal is to raise money to support the Ice Cream Social, while we enjoy good food and fellowship at Uno's Restaurant.

Anyone who presents a fundraiser certificate (can obtain from Clare Price or in the Office) on Wednesday, August 20, will have 20% of their bill donated back to us. We have reserved the back room at the restaurant for 6:00 PM for those who want to share their food and fellowship together. On previous occasions, we have pretty well filled that room.

Please consider having a fun evening with the congregation while raising money for our neighborhood Ice Cream Social. Below is a sample of the coupon/certificate you will need to bring to the restaurant.



Sharing Our Stories

Our group has been meeting every other Tuesday, at Noon, in our Parlor. We have been sharing our stories and getting to know each other better. Anyone can join in so please visit with us August 12, August 26, and September 9 and 23rd. Bring a bag lunch if you wish and enjoy some fellowship time.

Science of Mind

Starting in September, the Science of Mind group will be meeting back in the church parlor on alternating Tuesday evenings, starting September 2nd at 7pm.

As September approaches, we will be needing sponsors for our Sunday Altar Flowers and hosts for our Coffee Hour & fellowship time following worship.

We will be posting sign-up sheets to hopefully cover all Sundays.

Thank you.

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
Maureen Helms – Director of Joyful Noise
Judy Giblin – Director of Jazz Vespers
Leslie Dahlgren – Office Manager
Brooke Shadduck – Childcare Provider
Alice Pettit – Treasurer
Chuck Mallery—Financial Secretary
Erick Clasen – Web Master
Vanessa Warren— Bookkeeper
Cindi West-Davidson – Custodian
Toni Rorapaugh—Librarian



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