

The Forecaster - October 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

It's been a bit of a nostalgic year for me.

It started last Spring when one week I had two funerals and one wedding. It makes for a busy week, of course, but that wasn't the real issue. Both people I buried were old friends whom I had known for about 25 years. And while performing the funeral, trying to be professional, it still sort of gets to you to say goodbye to an old friend. And then the wedding was for a young woman in her 20's whom I had baptized as a baby. And there she was, graduated from college, gainfully employed, deeply in love, and not a kid anymore. And while performing the marriage service I'm thinking to myself, Where did the time go?

And then there is this week, the week where Summer gives way to Autumn. During this week, my family celebrated the birth of a second grandchild, a little girl named Beatrice, and I will be remembering my ordination into the ministry that took place on September 30, 1984. (Yes, 1984, when gas was \$1.10, Reagan defeated Mondale, Ghostbusters and The Terminator came out, Indira Gandhi was assassinated, Prince Harry was born, and the Summer Olympics were held in LA but were boycotted by the USSR!) (OMG!) And once again, Where did the time go?

As I look back over the years, there are so many things which come to mind, but there is one I want to mention now. It is such an unbelievable honor to be present with people during transition times in their lives. Baptisms...Weddings...Funerals. Those are the big ones, but there are also transitions of confirmation, engagement parties, retirement parties, and the more private conversations where one decides to pursue a divorce, or sit in the hospital room when one learns about the presence of cancer. I've listened and counseled families as they deliberate whether to stop life support of a loved one. And, a handful of times I have literally been holding the hand of a friend when they died.

To be with the human family during these times – what an honor. In many ways it is a front row seat to life, for good or for ill. Doing this for thirty years has also given me a sense of the way God works in our lives. Only now have I begun to get a sense of what Jesus meant when he made the observation that the Kingdom of God is like when yeast is added to a lump of dough. It infuses in. It grows, but slowly, incrementally. And if you're distracted, you may not notice. But it is happening, and suddenly you look back and you see that life all along was saturated with divinity.

So it has been an honor to be a minister, but it has been a real honor to be *your* minister. I could not have imagined a better group of people with whom to walk this journey. So, as we enter into the Autumn of 2014, thank you for being my Church, my friends, as we walk the road.

Blessings upon all,

Happy Birthday to those celebrating their special day in October and November



Erick Clasen	10/6	Christopher Gass	11/3
David Ely	10/6	Steven Schaughency	11/5
Janie Heminway	10/6	Amelia Christian	11/9
Alison Beautz	10/6	Ann Marie Mateya	11/10
Joyce Marderian	10/6	Delores Tower	11/12
Brianna O'Neill	10/6	Pete Perkins	11/14
Katie Izzo	10/13	Abigail Rose Winans	11/19
Jim Fekete	10/13	Evelyn Goetz	11/22
Matthew Cluff	10/17	Esther Joyce	11/23
James Mateya	10/25	Jeannette Southworth	
Charles Wadsworth	10/26		11/23
Riley Patrick Gyllenhammer		Lynne Beautz	11/25
	10/28	Nick Gabello	11/25
Leslie Dahlgren	10/30	Ethelyn Enos	11/26
Norene Robbins	10/30	Dave Moody	11/29
Michael Schaughency	10/31	Cotter Smith	11/30

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

CHOW SUNDAY REMINDER

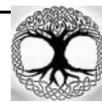
Please mark your calendars for the following CHOW Sundays: October 5th and November 5th. Our pantry needs are listed outside the parlor. In addition, if you can volunteer at the FCC Food Pantry desk, please call Karen at 648-4711.



Bible Study

We continue to meet at Noon on Wednesdays in the Parlor. Currently, we are discussing "Why Christianity Must Change Or Die" by John Shelby Spong, the former Episcopal Bishop of Newark, N.J. and a very prolific author. From the book, "An important and respected voice for liberal American Christianity for the past 20 years, Bishop John Shelby Spong integrates his often controversial stands on the Bible, Jesus, theism, and morality into an intelligible creed that speaks to today's thinking Christian. In this compelling and heartfelt book, he sounds a rousing call for a Christianity based on critical thought rather than blind faith, on love rather than judgment, and that focuses on life more than religion." Please join us.

Insert: *Neighbors in Need* is a special mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the US.



The mission of The Sophia Center for Spirituality, located at FCC is to serve as a resource for all people and faith communities seeking to deepen their relationship with God.

Our new calendar for 2014-2015 is ready:

- Taizé Prayer Service at 6 p.m. in the Sanctuary, 4th Sunday of the month;
- Mystic of the Month lecture series at 6:30 p.m. on the 2nd Monday of the month;
- Spiritual Sampler, an exploration of various spiritual practices, at 6:30 p.m. on the 3rd Monday of the month;
- Centering Prayer, a form of Christian meditation, at 6:30 p.m. on the 4th Monday of the month;
- Lunch with the Psalms, Scripture reflection, 12:15-12:45 p.m. every Tuesday.

For more information, visit our website <http://thesophiacenterforspirituality.org/>.

From the Office

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



Academic Scholarships

All of the Scholarship dollars have been awarded, and wonderful, heartfelt thank you letters or messages were received from every recipient. We were happy to assist Jeffrey Dahlgren, Eginhard Jean-Philippe, Conner Gyllenhammer, Katherine Larson, Shanie Louis, Richard Langstaff, Jr., and Valerie Louis to further their academic careers.

Church Women United

CWU will have a program at FCC on Sunday, Oct. 26, from 3-4:30pm. Dorothy Pierce will share a mission trip she recently made to Kenya. Please come and enjoy the fellowship of women from area churches. - Alice Pettit and Karen Holman.

Jazz Vespers

Jazz Vespers will lead off its 2014-2015 season with the very popular jazz quartet, Miles Ahead, on Sunday, October 12th, at 5pm. The group features Mike Carbone on woodwinds, Gene Cothran on keyboards, Joe Roma on drums and Tom Weston on string bass. Please join us and see what we've been bragging about all these years.

Adult Forums are coming...

The Christian Education Committee is planning to offer programs for the adults in our Sunday worshipping family to explore ideas together. These Forums will be offered after our Sunday worship service on the first Sunday of most months. In October, however, the Forum will be held the *second* Sunday, the 12th, and will feature Anneke Peereboom leading our discussions after church on that Sunday. The theme of the discussion will be "Worship of God Around the World." Anneke's extensive travel experience and her heart for ministry will make this an excellent start to our new Adult Forum program.

Our speakers will be led both by volunteers from our church family and by contacting others from our larger community – all sharing their particular expertise.

Christian Education

After a short summer recess, we resumed Sunday School classes on Sept 21st with six kids. After various conversations with kids and parents, there is a strong possibility that we may be losing a few families due to relocation.

For the next few weeks as we ease into Sunday School, our curriculum comes from the Seasons of Creation. These lessons invite our students to join with all the members of God's Creation as we celebrate Earth as a sacred planet filled with God's vibrant presence- Forest Sunday Acts 17: 22-28, Land Sunday Psalm 139 Wilderness/Outback Sunday Romans 8: 18-27 and River Sunday Revelations 22: 1-5.

The 'Getting to Know You' program will be starting up again next month and there will be a sign-up sheet in the hallway for upcoming months. This is a great opportunity for the kids to learn a little bit more about our church and the various roles it takes to run a church. We will be serving breakfast as part of the Sunday School program and not in addition as what was done prior. We will have several choices for the children to choose from. On occasion ingredients and resources that are on-hand will be incorporated in making breakfast into a lesson. If someone would like to coordinate a special breakfast program once a month, that would be welcomed too.

We look forward to another wonderful Sunday School year where we can continue to teach God's word and Christ's principals. - Renee Guidelli, C.E. Director

Altar Flowers

You may sign up to sponsor the Altar Flowers in two ways. You can contribute towards the Deacon's sponsored flowers which will be here each Sunday, OR we can order a specialized arrangement through our florist. If you would like a remembrance included in the bulletin, please email Leslie the information at: fcc@binghamtonwireless.com.



Columbus Day Parade

The parade will be on Monday, October 13th, with set-up at 8am, and preparation and serving at 9am. We will follow our custom of setting up the hospitality tent and providing free popcorn, hot chocolate and coffee. The usual cookie sale will be presented to benefit CHOW. Helpers will be needed so mark your calendars and put your name on the signup sheets when they appear. If the weather cooperates, this is a fun event! See you there.

The Annual CHOW Walk will be held on Sunday, Oct. 19th, at 2 pm, on the Binghamton University campus. You can participate in 2 ways: you can join me in the 6-mile walk around the campus & get your sponsors, Or you can sponsor whoever walks in the event. Either way, you are participating & helping CHOW fight the growing problem of hunger in our area. Thank you for your continuing support. Your walk coordinator, Deb Miller



Ice Cream Social

We held our third annual Ice Cream Social for the neighborhood. It was another big hit. Twenty-three gallons of ice cream were served to 500 to 600 people, and we handed out over 200 kits of school supplies. Three back-packs were raffled off as well. Estelle Gerber provided live music, there were games for the kids to play and balloons for the young folks. As always, a lot of church members came to help setup, serve and cleanup. A special thank you to Huff Ice Cream for donating some ice cream and selling the rest to us at a reduced price. In addition to a good time, there were a lot of grateful families who received school supplies for their children for the new school year. This mission always takes a lot of planning and volunteers, so thank you to all who helped.

BOOK-WORDS!

(another new direction for our church)

I'm doing something a bit different this month, i.e., highlighting some of our holdings authored by one person: William Barclay, 1907-1978. He was a minister of the Church of Scotland, as well as Lecturer and Professor at the University of Glasgow in New Testament studies; in addition to which, he dedicated his life to bringing the best Biblical scholarship to the average reader in more than thirty popular and well-respected volumes.

Some older works by Barclay:

The Mind of Jesus. *Barclay's almost conversational style draws the reader into more intimate knowledge and understanding of the person, Jesus.* **232 BARC**

The Mind of St. Paul. *Barclay examines Paul's origins and the development of his great themes, elucidating such concepts as justification by faith and reconciliation.* **225.92 BARC**

The Apostle's Creed for everyman.

Professor Barclay reminds us that the Creed should be seen not so much as a yardstick of orthodoxy, but rather as a symbolic, pictorial, and poetic representation of a truth. **238.11 BARC**

The old law and the new law. *This is Barclay's treatise on the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount, raising questions about materialism, war and peace, and human relationships.* **241.5 BARC**

Daily celebration: devotional readings for every day of the year. *These devotional readings are unlike any others you might read in similar books. Topics are not confined to piety, but range throughout the sorts of issues ordinary people experience.* **242.2 BARC**

New edition of an older title:

The New daily study Bible, N.T. set [in 17 volumes]. *Probably Barclay's best-known work, this is a commentary on each book of the New Testament. The new edition includes more contemporary language (the first edition was published in the 1950s) and clarifications of some less well-known illustrations.* **225.7 BARC**

Church Campout

Our church campout was held August 15-17 in Leroy, NY. We enjoyed Fiddlers Weekend at the Genesee Country Village and Museum in Mumford, New York. The weather was perfect for the day and so was the company. In the evening, the Neills, Prices and Rorapoughs had a delightful dinner in the old train station in Leroy.

Board of Deacons Report,

September 16, 2014

Treasurer's Report - Balance was reported. Deacons will make their annual donation to the Family Counseling Ministry.

Pastor's Report - Rev. Suggs noted that Marion Shearer, longtime and beloved Associate Conference Minister will be retiring at the end of March, 2015. A letter was received from Vicki Johnson regarding an Association wide event on Confirmation to be held in the Spring, here at FCC. This was approved. It was approved to purchase a new "God is Still Speaking" banner to replace the one stolen. Rev. Suggs described the brief history of the Council for the Parliament of World Religions and that they will be meeting again in Salt Lake City in October, 2015. Deacons will cover the cost of the Bibles purchased for the Sunday School youth.

Rev. Suggs reviewed the upcoming worship schedule. Beginning Nov. 2, and continuing for four weeks, we will have the Stewardship Messages presented by church members. Deb Miller will be the Deacon participating in this for this season.

Associate Pastor's Report - Janet distributed her report detailing her visitations, teaching, worship leadership and preaching, and assistance with Christian Education duties. Her summer work were the People of Pride service in June, the group trip to the Cloisters, and the "Fair NY" portion of the NY State Fair.

Christian Education Report - Renee supplied a report on the Sunday School. Two aspects were highlighted. One is upcoming Adult Forums, presently scheduled for October 12 (Anneke Peerboom) and November 9, (Steven Heiss).

Other Business - Ice Cream Social was a huge success, with more packets given out than ever before. Also the Summer Music was very well received...many compliments to the musicians, singers and organizers. Thanks! We will continue to have special musicians throughout the year. Work is underway for building four A-frame signs, two that say "Funeral Parking Only" and two that say "Wedding Parking Only." All of the Scholarship dollars have been awarded, and wonderful, heartfelt thank you letters or messages during worship have been received from every recipient.

New Business - Altar Flowers - we will be having new altar decorations for Autumn through Advent, with seasonal large plants plus smaller ones to give to guests who attend worship. The monthly birthday cake during the Coffee Hour will continue for a while.

Rummage Sale

Our Rummage Sale is set for Saturday, October 18th, 9-2pm. The office has many flyers for church members to pick up and bring to local stores to have them posted. If you are interested in working on the project, please let Cindi West know. Items may be brought in at any time, but call ahead so Cindi can be here to help. Thank you.

Stewardship Reflection

Autumn is here and that signals the start of the new church programs. One of the things we need to consider is our personal level of stewardship commitment. That includes our willingness to share our TIME for the work of the church, our TALENT in the various programs, boards and committees of the congregation and our TREASURE in supporting the expense of our property and program.

The Nominating Committee is working to fill the boards and committees, as well as a slate of officers for the coming year. Please give prayerful consideration to the request by the committee. If you feel a call to serve, speak to a committee member (their names are in your new church directory).

Treasure! Always a concern in the fall as we develop the financial plan for the coming year. Probably nothing we do in church is a more private act. We operate a large and expensive facility as well as supporting a very talented staff. While I want to tell of the dollars needed, the real message is understanding what percent of our income we are called to give God. If we all give prayerful thought to what God asks of us, and do our part, the financial plan will be fine.

- Clare Price, Church Council Chairperson

The Knitting Circle has made some wonderful afghans over the summer months. Please remember that now is the time for hats and scarves. Thank you all for your expertise.

Heart Centered Living

The Open House which was held in August proved to be quite fruitful for our programs and beneficial to our Sunday School program as well.

One of our ladies from HCL was able to bring down three boxes of donated items through Addco in Sidney for our school give away three days later,

Another one of our members had two boxes of chips donated from Frito Lay which also came in handy for the Ice Cream Social and will be used with our Sunday School students.

And we gained 4-6 volunteers that showed up and were more than willing to help out that evening. Which we were all very thankful for.

Many hands make light work no matter whose hands they are (-:

Faith & Fellowship

About 25 attended our gathering in September. After a potluck dinner, which included hot dogs and sausage left over from the picnic, a slide show on Newfoundland was presented. There will be no Fellowship Evening in October because the Rummage Sale will be in Fellowship Hall. Our November meeting will involve packing the Thanksgiving food baskets. Mark your calendars for Friday, November 21st. And, as usual there will be no meeting in December.

Deck the Hall

Sunday Nov. 30th is the start of Advent. In recent years this is the Sunday when we stay after church to put up our Christmas decorations. They include the large wreath over the choir loft, the two wreaths over the doors in the front of the sanctuary, five large banners, two wreaths outside beside the front doors, the Christmas tree, and candles on the window sills. If you can help, please let us know by signing the sheet when it appears. Many hands make light and quick work and we enjoy the fellowship at this time of year.

Picture Directories are Here!

On Rally Day, the picture directories were distributed to the congregation. There are 77 pictures of 111 people, along with pictures of staff and activities of the congregation. This directory has addresses and phone numbers of members and friends.

We want to thank the members and friends for sharing their smiles. A special thanks to Bernie Lewis, Bob Neill and Clare Price for the photography, and Bob and Clare for laying out, and putting the book together. A tip of the hat to Elizabeth Neill and Arlene Price who had to live with Bob and Clare as they fought with their computers to make it happen. They put up with a lot! If you have not picked up your copy, there are more directories at church. They are free. The cost to make them is about \$5.00 each, so if you would like to contribute to that cost, it would be nice – but definitely not required.

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.



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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