



The Forecaster - June/July 2015

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

I'm not sure anymore if I have a favorite verse in the Bible, but I do have several on the short list. And one of them I have mentioned during a couple of recent funerals, and I've been asked to explain, sort of spell out the meaning.

The one I'm referring to is Ecclesiastes 3:11. The context is that rather famous list of there is a time for this and a time for that, living and dying, planting and harvesting, rearing and sewing, etc. Then comes this verse: "He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover, he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end." Despite appearances, I find the verse simply amazing. That "sense of past and future" is the word *olam*, which is that extraordinary word in Hebrew which is the ancient sense of Einsteinian space-time. Take past and future as far as they each go, and add to it the breadth of east to west, and north to south, and up to down, and the whole of it, to the limit of one's imagination, is *olam*.

And then when the verse says "their minds," what is behind that in the old Hebrew is *nephish*, which is the inner essence of the human being, probably best translated as soul. So there you have it, God has placed *olam* into your *nephish*. I find this verse/promise virtually identical to when Jesus was conversing with the disciples, and they were asking about the revealing of the Kingdom of God. And Jesus said don't look for it over here or over there, but "...the Kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:21)

The ramifications of this spiritual teaching are tremendous. Got a problem? Where should you look for an answer? Got a desire of your heart? Do you have a need for direction? Is there an unfulfilled need in your life? Where should we look for these things? And this great verse says clearly and unambiguously that all this has been placed by God into our souls. And that is why "everything is suitable for its time" including even our living and our dying.

"At the center of your being you have your answer; you know who you are and you know what you want." Lao Tzu (6th C. BCE, founder of Taoism)

Blessings,

Happy Birthday to those celebrating their special day in June, July and August



Warren Resseguie	6/1	Timmie Miller	7/15
Stephanie Cirba	6/5	Bernie Lewis	7/17
Arlene Price	6/6	Virginia Kronk	7/19
Nancy Wildoner	6/8	Judy Price	7/19
Jill Andrews	6/10	Sara Beautz	7/19
Teresa Cluff	6/11	Peter Cirba	7/23
Michael Christian	6/16	Robyn Griffiths	7/31
Brian Thompson	6/19	Christopher Brewton	8/6
Jason Stevens	6/24	Jessica Mihok Ford	8/6
Bob Giblin	6/25	Richard Langstaff	8/16
Martin Rorapaugh	6/27	Elizabeth Neill	8/24
Allyson White	6/29	Arlene Pewterbaugh	8/27
Diane Marderian	7/1	Susanne Krieger	8/27
Miran Brigham	7/4	David Agard	8/31
Liza Beautz Turner	7/14		

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

Christian Education News

For April and May, we focused on Spring and Growing in God's Love. We spent quite a bit of time on the story of the big flood with Noah and the first rainbow.

We made Caterpillars for Spring to represent one of God's many creations and the cycle of life. The lessons for May/June are focused on God's Paintbrush. A look at the way God has painted the world from children's perspective. We will take walks outside, feel the sunshine on our face, see God's Kingdom alive in our community and learn how and why it is important to nurture our relationship with God. There will also be special recognition for Dads at our Father's Day service on Sunday, June 21st, and, yes, there may be some painting involved.

Please note that if you would like your child or children to join us for "funday Sunday," we leave right after the ending of the first hymnal in service. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, you may contact me at 607-226-2354 or 607-723-8981. We look forward to bringing your child these wonderful lessons and experiences.

Warmly, Renee Guidelli

Summer Flowers For Our Altar

Soon many of you will have beautiful flowers in your gardens. Please consider bringing in a bouquet to share for Sunday worship.

You may use the flower sign-up sheet to designate when you are able to do so and hopefully we will have coverage throughout the summer months.

If you have a special occasion and would like to have an arrangement from our florist, you may do so.

Please let the office know of your wishes. Thank you.

-The Deacons

The Sophia Center for Spirituality
Programs for June



Mon., June 8, Mystic of the Month: Dorothy Day, presented by Mary Pat Hyland, 6:30 –8pm. A discussion of the life of an American worker for human and workers rights. Suggested donation: \$10

Mon., June 15, Spiritual Sampler: The Wisdom Way of Knowing, presented by Rev. Bill Redfield, 6:30-8pm. An introduction to the Wisdom Schools concept. Suggested donation: \$10

Mon., June 22, Centering Prayer monthly practice, 6:30-8pm.

Sun., June 28, Taizé prayer service, 6pm in the sanctuary.

Are you interested in becoming a member of First Congregational Church?

Do you have questions about what is involved? If you would like to learn more, please speak with one of the Pastors, either Janet Abel or Art Suggs.

Science of Mind

The Metanoia Science of Mind work study group will meet every Tuesday at 6:30pm at 3585 Carman Road, Binghamton. We are reading and discussing "How To Use Science of Mind" by Ernest Holmes. Our agendas follow a musical selection, a discussion on one of the Principles and Philosophies of Religious Science, a meditation, an experiential or personal moment, and a final discussion on "How To Use Science of Mind."



Spiritual Book Group

We continue to study *The Seat of the Soul* by Gary Zukav. We are meeting every Wednesday (except 6/24 when Janet is on vacation) from now to the end of July. We are going to take a break in August.



Save-the-Date for Our Church Picnic!

Members Dave Moody and Lee Stradley would like to invite everyone to a church picnic at their house **Sunday, July 12** after church. We will provide the meat and beverages. Please bring a dish to pass. We're having a Hawaiian luau, so wear your Hawaiian shirts and grass skirts. (or not!) Note: If you would like directions, call the office and they can email it to you.



There will be no Fellowship Evenings scheduled through the summer months. Please plan on joining us when we 'restart' on Friday, September 18th, at 6pm.

Sacred Sites Tour at FCC

Thank you to everyone who helped make our church put our best foot forward for the Sacred Sites event, that was held on May 17. There were clean up folks, greeters, tour guides, bakers, refreshment preparation and servers, and Joyful Noise for their wonderful music.

The guests who came through our doors were very impressed by the beautiful Sanctuary and interesting history. Some even took photographs.

Thank you to Toni Rorapaugh for the printed information for our guides to have as an aid to our vast past. Bob Neill typed a handout for our guests to take home with some wonderful information of who we are and what we offer our community, near and far.

BOOK-WORDS!

(another new direction for our church)

Mennonite in a Little Black Dress, by Rhoda Janzen. *Recovering from a failed marriage and a serious car accident, the author journeys back home to her conservative family, an episode she describes with wit and honesty, as she learns about family, faith, love, and aging.* **811.6 JANZ**

Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence, by Karen Armstrong. *How did religions of peace become tied to modern violence? With typical, sweeping erudition and sympathetic understanding, the author examines many religions since prehistory to discover the connection.* **291.5697 ARMS**

Coming to our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World Through Mindfulness, by Jon Kabat-Zinn. *"All we know is now, and that is spectacularly sufficient." The premier author of mindfulness now tackles the self-inflicted distancing from actual life we practice on our cell-phones, tablets, and other devices.* **158.12 KABA**

Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith, by Anne Lamott. *The author applies passion, wisdom, and humor to this personal look at her road from apathy to belief, displaying the kind of courage that allows her to be divinely human—reverent in an irreverent way!* **813.5 LAMO**

Poems of Jesus Christ, by Willis Barnstone. *The author reveals the essential poetry of the Gospels in the original Aramaic language, the richness of their imagery lost in the translation into Greek and then English prose.* **226.05209 BARN**

Conscience: Two Soldiers, Two Pacifists, One Family..., by Louisa Thomas. *Norman, Ralph, Arthur, and Evan were four brothers, grandsons of missionaries and sons of a Presbyterian minister. When World War I began, each brother made his own choice about serving his country, living his faith, and fulfilling the obligations of citizenship.* **940.3 THOM**

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**

Board of Trustees, Meeting Summary, 5/19/15

- The financial reports for April were reviewed and reports accepted.
- The contract for organ repair has been signed. Discussion about security and storage during repairs, which will begin June 1 and continue throughout July and possibly August.
- A Congregational Conversation will be held June 14.
- Background checks and child protective training will be required for anyone dealing regularly with children at church. A letter will soon be sent to those who must participate.
- BSR will be contacted regarding new leaks on the second floor. Windows upstairs also need work. Further discussion of air conditioning in the library and the insurance company's subcontracting issue.
- A false alarm brought the discussion to Sentry Alarm system: what caused the false alarm, what should be done to preclude a second incident, and how accurate was the inspection following the incident? Sentry will be asked to make a presentation to the Trustees about changes.
- June 28: date for defibrillator training. Tom will make a presentation that day.
- A quote is coming for window washing on the first floor. Trustees are proceeding to get a permanent company to provide lawn service.
- Application for building use referred to Leslie to obtain details and check the calendar.

The meeting adjourned with a prayer at 9:15 p.m.

For Love: Walking in the Darkness

Congratulations go out to our friend, Janet Russo, who has had her book recently published.

This is a story of how one woman's climb to overcome a childhood steeped in domestic violence can help others in similar situations to also rise above one's beginnings and succeed.

Her book is available in soft cover as an e-book at alvapressinc.com, the kindle version is available on amazon and the nook version is available at Barnesandnoble.com.

Art's Assistance Fund

Last year we donated money to Art's Assistance Fund instead of doing Easter Food Baskets. The need is still great, so we will continue donating to the fund again this year. Please put your contribution in an envelope in the plate marked for the fund with your name, or mail to the office. Thank you.



From the Office...

Our next Forecaster will be a combined *August/September* publication, so please send me articles, programs, events, and any 'save-the-date' reminders for both months. The due date for your articles is July 20th. Thanks, Leslie

It's All in the Trying
Sometimes it's hard
to cross the bridge
that lets someone in.

If at times

I could not reach out to you,
I am reaching out to you now.

Let your heart be open...

Love is a precious thing
between two people...

And though at times
it may be difficult to give,
the trying is worthwhile.

By Janet Marie Russo 2010



Spotlight on Marian Simpson...

Our dear friend and member, Marian Simpson, will be presented with a Star at The Forum Theater, 236 Washington Street, Binghamton, on Friday June 26, 11am-Noon. Members are cordially invited to attend the ceremony. This is a lifetime achievement award in the field of Art. Congratulations to a wonderful artist who has shared her talents with us over many years. Let's celebrate with Marian on the 26th.



CHOW Sundays will be June 7, July 5, and August 2nd. Our pantry needs are fruit juice, canned fruit, soup, ramen noodles, pasta sauce, pasta, canned meats, canned green beans, peanut butter and potatoes. Thank you.



Jazz Vespers

The June Jazz Vespers program, on June 14th, at 5pm, will feature a home-grown quartet consisting of four of the best jazz musicians in the area:

Al Hamme on woodwinds
Gene Cothran on keyboards
Larry Lolli on guitar
Joe Roma on percussion

These four can really make music! Stop in and enjoy an hour of smooth, hot jazz. - Judy Giblin

It's not too late!

On Pentecost, the United Church of Christ held the annual *Strengthen the Church* special offering. The money collected in this offering is used to support both the start of new congregations as well as new programs that congregations develop to become stronger faith communities. With Pentecost falling on Memorial Day weekend, attendance was light this year in church. If you would like to contribute to this offering, we will still keep our collection open until the second week in June.

And it's not too early!

...To begin collecting school supplies. This may sound like a strange request with school not yet closed for summer vacation, but plans are being started for our annual Ice Cream Social for the neighborhood. This will be the fourth year we have held this community outreach program. Last year we gave away 23 gallons of ice cream in sundaes as well as over 200 school kits that included three note books, pens, crayons, pencils and erasers. The party also gives us a chance for fellowship with our neighbors. At the next meeting of the Mission/Outreach Committee on June 25, work will start on developing plans and responsibilities for the Social that has been held each year on the last Thursday in August. If you would like to help plan the event, all are welcome to the meeting at 7:15 PM. More details will be in the August Forecaster. But if you see a good deal on school supplies, it is not too early to shop. There will probably be a need for about 700 note pads.

Whether you want to help work on the event or want to get your FREE ice cream sundae and mix with our neighbors in the community, *save the date for Thursday, August, 27th.*

Deacon's Meeting Summary – May 19th

Pastor's Report—Art went over the upcoming worship schedule, highlighting several events. We will be a “neutral pulpit” on June 14, holding a Congregational Conversation on that date after worship discussing three topics so far: Christian Education, Trustees, and something from Art.

The summer Church Picnic will be held at the Moody-Stradley acres on July 12, and the Ice Cream Social will be held on August 27.

Art has been asked by the Susquehanna Association to serve as a mentor to Dov Treiman who is the lay minister for the Newark Valley UCC.

Art complimented the church on their hosting of the Interspirituality Conference and the recent statewide gathering of the UCC Committees on Ministry. Thanks in particular to Clare & Arlene Price for their help with the latter group, and to Tracy Suggs, Cindi West-Davidson, Alice Pettit and Leslie Dahlgren for their help with the former.

(Ed. Note – Since the meeting, two changes to the worship calendar. Markus Krieger will preach on July 19, and the church will receive new members on June 28.)

Associate Pastor's Report—Janet submitted a written report and shared some highlights. Several pastoral care issues were discussed. Helped lead the memorial service for Betty Cuddeback and will help with the upcoming service for Janet Reynolds.

Christian Education Report— Renee supplied her written report. She, along with Tracy Suggs and Diana Gildea, will meet and then present for discussion at the Congregational Conversation on June 14.

Old Business—Sacred Sites tour was last Sunday, with 35 in attendance. Thank you to all who helped in various ways. Janet's Installation is set for October 18th, 3pm.

New Business—Birthday Cakes will continue; however, people can buy them other times if they wish. Cards were passed around and signed for several people. Art along with other people will begin scheduling summer music. Tentative dates for the Summer Music will be June 28 to Sept. 6 (eleven Sundays). Rob Hollander is forming an Indie group (Kindred Spirits) that will provide additional music for our worship this summer and into the fall. On a given Sunday they might replace one of the hymns, or provide an additional piece in the service.

Heart Centered Living is currently meeting in the town of Maine for the Summer months with an occasional program at the church. Every Wednesday from 6-8pm in Maine we hold teachings around the medicine wheel. Please check out our facebook page for more details or go to www.heart-centered-living.org to check out the event information. Or kindly contact Renée Guidelli at 607-226-2354.

Monday, June 29th, 6-8pm, Summer Fermentation Workshop with Erick Clasen and Bonnie Pecka \$20/person at the First Congregational Church, 30 Main Street, Binghamton, NY.

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
Sharon Shaddock – 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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