

The Forecaster - October, 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

We are on the threshold of what many consider the most beautiful of the four seasons. Not to take anything away from the glint of a low sun upon snowflakes, or the pastels and bold primaries of the crocuses, daffodils and tulips, let alone the lazy afternoon watching dragonflies and butterflies, and listening to crickets. But Autumn, so incredibly beautiful. The sumacs are always the first to turn. But then the yellows, oranges, reds, and golds build to a climax in mid October. This beauty, attended by an unspoken sense of time and temperature, comes with a range of emotions. Just like a musical climax, it is arresting in our attention, but it's all downhill from there. The colors signal an ending, a completion, a death. Yet also a sense of gratitude...for a season of growth, a harvest, a bounty, a choice between apple and pumpkin pie for Thanksgiving Dinner.

John O'Donohue, an Irish poet and philosopher, wrote a book called *Beauty: The Invisible Embrace*. I would like to share a couple of quotes from the book with you — for no other purpose than that they are both beautifully written and about beauty touching the soul. I hope you enjoy them.

"We live between the act of awakening and the act of surrender. Each morning we awaken to the light and the invitation to a new day in the world of time; each night we surrender to the dark to be taken to play in the world of dreams where time is no more. At birth we were awakened and emerged to become visible in the world. At death we will surrender again to the dark to become invisible. Awakening and surrender: they frame each day and each life; between them the journey where anything can happen, the beauty and the frailty."

"The human soul is hungry for beauty... When we experience the Beautiful, there is a sense of homecoming. Some of our most wonderful memories are beautiful places where we felt immediately at home. We feel most alive in the presence of the Beautiful for it meets the needs of our soul. For a while the strains of struggle and endurance are relieved and our frailty is illuminated by a different light in which we come to glimpse behind the shudder of appearances and sure form of things. In the experience of beauty we awaken and surrender in the same act. Beauty brings a sense of completion and sureness. Without any of the usual calculation, we can slip into the Beautiful with the same ease as we slip into the seamless embrace of water; something ancient within us already trusts that this embrace will hold us."

We are waves upon the ocean, and the day will come when we crash upon the far shore. But till then...enjoy the journey, smell the roses, stop and play with the child, find time for the kind word, and above all, stop and look, at the beauty of a face, or flower, or leaf, and allow God's gift to enter your soul.

Blessings upon you,

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
Alison Beautz	10/6	Amelia Christian	11/9
Joyce Marderian	10/6	Ann Marie Mateya	11/10
Brianna O'Neill	10/6	Delores Tower	11/12
Katie Izzo	10/13	Pete Perkins	11/14
Matthew Cluff	10/17	Abigail Rose Winans	11/19
James Mateya	10/25	Esther Joyce	11/23
Charles Wadsworth	10/26	Lynne Beautz	11/25
Riley Patrick Gyllenhammer	10/28	Nick Gabello	11/25
	10/28	Ethelyn Enos	11/26
Leslie Dahlgren	10/30	Dave Moody	11/29
Norene Robbins	10/30	Cotter Smith	11/30
Michael Schaughency	10/31		

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

School Kits Give-Away and Ice Cream Social

By all measures this year's social was a big success. We were able to distribute 342 packages of school supplies covering pre-school, elementary, and high school students. The distribution took about an hour and a half. A few people came late and were disappointed. The indications are that we could have serviced more. We served 24 gallons (600 dishes) of ice cream. Estelle Gerber played lively music on the keyboard. Bubbles were a big attraction! Everyone had a good time; it was a great neighborhood party. For anyone who helped in any way a great big THANK YOU. It was an all church effort. With the UNO Dough Raiser (\$245) and contributions (\$390) we took in \$635 dollars. Our expenses were \$437, leaving \$198 which has been put aside for future outreach activities.

Columbus Day Parade

The annual Columbus Day Parade will be on Monday, October 12th, at 10am. As is tradition, we will set up our Hospitality Tent. Strong arms will be needed at 8am to set up the tent, and volunteers for food service will be needed at 9am. A sign-up sheet will be posted. We are asking our church bakers for cookies to sell. Please consider how you can help and let us know by putting your name on the forms. This parade is an important part of our neighborhood outreach.

Heart Centered Living

Are you a Spiritual Seeker looking for a group of like-minded individuals where you can share your ideas, thoughts and gifts for a better world? Join us as we examine current and relevant topics related to energy, meditation, healing, health and wellness, global awareness, and sustainability. In addition, Heart Centered Living offers self-development and spirituality classes. Here are our October programs at First Congregational Church:

- 10/5, 6:30pm - Energy Exchange
- 10/19, 6pm - Open Discussion
- 10/30, 6:30pm - Heart Centered Healing Service

For questions, call Renée at 607-226-2354.

Together we can affect positive change in ourselves, our community, and create a more heart-centered world.

Are you interested in becoming a member of FCC?

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 continues reading and discussing the Ernest Holmes book, "How to Use the Science of Mind," on Tuesdays 6:30-8:30pm at Carman Rd. Please call Ethy for directions and further information at 727-1068.

Save the Date 

We are privileged to have Tim Hamm join us for worship on Sunday, October 25th, with a concert following in our Sanctuary. Tim is a writer, and composer of music suitable for all spirituality and uplifting life messages.



From the Office...

Our next Forecaster will be a November publication, so please send me articles, programs, events, and any 'save-the-date' reminders. The due date for your articles is October 19th. Thanks, Leslie



Spiritual Book Group (SBG)

The SBG is beginning September and the fall season with a new book: *Zealot* by Dr. Reza Aslan. Dr. Aslan has a BA in Religious studies, a minor in biblical Greek, a Masters in Theology of World Religions from Harvard, and a PhD in the Sociology of Religions from the University of California Santa Barbara.

About his book *Zealot* from Publishers Weekly: "The person and work of Jesus of Nazareth has been a topic of constant interest since he lived and died some 2,000 years ago. Much speculation about who he was and what he taught has led to confusion and doubt. Aslan, who authored the much acclaimed *No God But God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam*, offers a compelling argument for a fresh look at the Nazarene, focusing on how Jesus the man evolved into Jesus the Christ. Approaching the subject from a purely academic perspective, the author parts an important curtain that has long hidden from view the man Jesus, who is every bit as compelling, charismatic, and praiseworthy as Jesus the Christ. Carefully comparing extra-biblical historical records with the New Testament accounts, Aslan develops a convincing and coherent story of how the Christian church, and in particular Paul, reshaped Christianity's essence, obscuring the very real man who was Jesus of Nazareth. Compulsively readable and written at a popular level, this superb work is highly recommended."

Dr. Aslan was the keynote speaker and preacher at the annual UCC Conference for NY that Art and Tracy, Mary and Bill Cuddeback and Janet attended, and he was an excellent and interesting speaker.

Please join us on Wednesdays at noon in the parlor for our discussion of *Zealot*. Also, Dr. Aslan was interviewed by Fox News on his book, which you can find on YouTube.

Save the Date !



Our Annual Rummage Sale will be held on Saturday, October 17th, from 9-2pm. Save your household items, toys, jewelry, linens, children's clothing, men's and ladies apparel, books and coats for this fundraiser.

We can also use lots of helping hands! Thank you.

CE Committee News:

Adult Forums planned for 2015-2016

Adult Forums will start again on Sunday, October 11th, following worship. We are planning the agenda around engaging conversations with some of the fourteen various groups that share the facilities with our FCC worshipping body.

Did you know that two different expressions of Buddhism meet in our church?

What is the history and voice for Unity Church?

Christian Scientists have been with us the longest. Yet many don't know much about their faith.

The *Conversations With God* group has had phone call conversations with author Neale Donald Walsh.

As well...Heart Centered Living, *A Course in Miracles* study group, the Sophia Center for Spirituality, and Metanoia studying Science of Mind, all promoting spiritual wholeness and growth within our walls.

Come and engage in the rich expressions of our diversity ever present in the working out of our faith and belief systems.

Our speaker for October 11th is Diane McCarty from the Southern Tier Unity Church.

Details about other monthly Forums will be in Forecaster and bulletin articles.

First Congregational Church is now on Facebook!

The church is now on Facebook, please consider viewing and liking the page....

<https://www.facebook.com/uccbinghamton>

It is also possible to view the Facebook feed directly from the church website at the very bottom of each page. So even if you don't use Facebook, you can still view the latest posts easily.

Trustee's Summary Report for September 15, 2015

June minutes accepted by unanimous vote.

Financial reports for August accepted by unanimous vote. Draft audit available.

Pastor's Report:

Art has cancelled his Beirut trip, citing safety concerns.

Discussions of CHOW issue and Capital Campaign issue, repeating highlights of Sunday's Congregational Conversation. Discussion of possible concert to "welcome back" our repaired pipe organ.

Old Business:

Organ nearly put back together after repairs.

Updated quote received from Sentry Alarm.

Motion passed to spend no more than \$5K.

Training to be arranged for caregivers.

Audio system equipment to eliminate hiss on order.

Lawn mowing has been arranged. Need landscaping.

New Business:

Discussion regarding parking lot.

Furniture cleaning to be scheduled during November. Trustees will gather names of firms to do this work.

Motion to nominate Trustee for Nominating Committee. Brief discussion of replacing Trustees leaving the Board.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

T. Rorapaugh

Secretary, Board of Trustees

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST Neighbors In Need

The Neighbors in Need Offering was created by an action of the United Church of Christ General Synod in 1997 as one of the four special offerings of Our Churches Wider Mission. The offering is divided (one-third) to the UCC Council for American Indian Ministry and (two-thirds) for Justice and Witness Ministries. The offering is intended to be taken between American Indian Ministry Sunday and World Communion Sunday, October 4. Both of these ministries give us as a church ways to reach out to people on the margins of our society. Many times the work is not popular, but breaks ground on social issues in our country.

In the spring we held a special collection called *One Great Hour of Sharing*. The money is used to help in disasters. One of the great disasters that the money is being used for is to help the refugee crisis in Europe. A number of folks have asked if we can do something to help in the refugee problem. You can make an additional donation to OGHs. Mark it on the check and the UCC will use all the money for the people in need. Unlike many charities, none of the money is used for "administration."

Fellowship Evenings

On Friday September 3rd, 18 of us gathered for a potluck dinner. This was followed by a slide presentation by Bernie Lewis describing her trip in February to Iceland. It was well done and a chance for most of us to see a part of our world that few will ever see. Thank you, Bernie.

In October, we will gather on the third Friday Oct. 16th, at the home of Chris and Tim O'Neill for potluck dinner and Game Night. (Fellowship Hall will be filled with Rummage that night so the O'Neills' graciously offered their home for which we thank them.)

The November meeting will be on Friday, the 20th, when we will be packing Thanksgiving Food Baskets for those less fortunate. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. It is all of us who make it "FELLOWSHIP."



CHOW Sundays will be October 4th and November 1st. 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 October Jazz Vespers will open our 2015-2016 season on Sunday the 11th. It will feature The Doug Beardsley Trio. Doug is an amazing keyboard player who has taught many other popular local keyboard players. He will be joined by Brad Nemcek on percussion and Jim Wilding on guitar. Please join us on Sunday, October 11th at 5pm.



Christian Education

Kids, GROW IN GODS LOVE and make every SUNDAY a F.U.N.D.A.Y

FIND out who Jesus is through stories, songs and lessons.

UNDERSTAND how to connect with God through prayer and concentration.

NOURISH your creative imagination with crafts, games and activities.

DEEPEN your relationship with yourself, your family and the world around you.

ACTIVATE the Holy Spirit within you so that you can.....

YELL it out to the mountain tops and share it with everyone you meet and wherever you go!

Families, we welcome you to our worship service on Sundays, 10am, where children can participate in the ringing of the bell, passing of the peace, prayers for the people and then attend Sunday School. Call Renee at 226-2354 if you have any questions.

News from The Sophia Center for Spirituality

The Sophia Center for Spirituality will debut its Fall 2015/Winter-Spring 2016 schedule in October. We will shift the focus of our Spiritual Sampler to getting to know our neighbors through a series of potluck dinners that focus on different faiths. Our ongoing events include *Lunch With the Psalms* on Tuesdays at 12:15pm.; *Taizé* on the fourth Sunday of the Month at 6pm and *Centering Prayer* monthly practice on the fourth Monday of the month at 6:30pm. For dates and times of special events, please visit our webpage and see upcoming events: thesophiacenterforspirituality.org.



Blessing of the Animals Service



Rev Janet will be leading a special Blessing of the Animals service on October 4th at 2 pm in the Elizabeth Church Manor courtyard, 831 Front Street, Binghamton. You are all invited to bring your pets, leashed or in a carrier for this service. Animals are a great blessing in our lives, give us unconditional love, and are constant companions. It is an ancient tradition to hold a special service for all animals on the Sunday nearest St. Francis Day, which is October 3rd this year.

For more information please see Janet.

Service of Installation for the Rev. Janet Abel

All are welcome to the Installation Service for Associate Pastor Janet Abel on Sunday, October 18th, at 3pm in our Sanctuary. This is a service of the Susquehanna Association of the UCC, with various pastors, Rev Art, and some guests of Janet -- Dr. Kirk Wegter-McNelly will sing, and Rev. Jennifer Wegter-McNelly will be our guest preacher.

A guest musician, Becky Mebert, will be playing the organ.

Refreshments will follow the service in the parlor.

Senior Choir News

We will be singing and rehearsing October 4 and 11, and November 1 and 8, at 9:15am. Then, rehearsal only (9:30am) on October 25, November 22 and 29. New members welcome! - Nancy Wildoner

Art's Assistance Fund

Last year we donated money to Art's Assistance Fund instead of doing the Easter Baskets. The need is still great, so we will continue donating to the fund.

Please put your contribution in an envelope in the plate marked for the fund with your name, or mail to the office. 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
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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