

The Forecaster - November, 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

On the last Sunday of October I had the chance to preach and then do a workshop on the relationship of science and religion. During the workshop, I offered a PowerPoint and spent just over an hour going into some of the latest developments and had a marvelous time. Then came the time for Q & A. And one person asked, "All this information is great, but what about church? In light of all these incredible developments in physics and biology during the last century, why should someone come to church today?"

Ugh! Hard question. There are, of course, some extremely good answers to that question, and I hopefully touched on a couple of them. My main gripe with science is that it is now considered so successful and so glorious, but it has achieved that success and glory by severely limiting what it is willing to address. It makes the atom bomb but is mute when asked if it is ok to use it. Same thing with stem cells or drones. Liberal Protestantism, judging by the numbers, is an abject failure, something that historians will blow the dust off of, and behold with bemusement.* But what it is trying to do is pretty hard...to redefine divinity in response to the most illuminating century of human history, and to engage morally the deeper issues of our day, such as racism, climate change, wealth distribution, and the spectrum of human sexuality. None of these are easy to address.

Then Monday morning, checking my email, a new book was recommended to me. *Knocking on Heaven's Door: How Physics and Scientific Thinking Illuminate the Universe and the Modern World*, by Lisa Randall, a particle physicist and cosmologist at Harvard. Despite the title, which is a bit one-sided (to be forgiven, of course!), the book is actually about how art, science, and religion interplay to explain our world.

She writes, "Our universe is in many respects sublime. It prompts wonder but can be daunting – even frightening – in its complexity. Nonetheless, the components fit together in marvelous ways. Art, science, and religion all aim to channel people's curiosity and enlighten us by pushing the frontiers of our understanding. They promise, in their different ways, to help transcend the narrow confines of individual experience and allow us to enter into – and comprehend – the realm of the sublime."

With the notion of sublime in mind, she continues, "The word precisely captures what makes the universe so wonderful and so frustrating at the same time. A great deal seems beyond our reach and our comprehension, while still appearing to be close enough to tantalize us – to dare us to enter and understand. The challenge for all approaches to knowledge is to make those less accessible aspects of the universe more immediate, more understandable, and ultimately less foreign."

The church where I was speaking that Sunday (Schenectady, NY, home of General Electric) had several nuclear physicists attending. They work on the nuclear power plants for aircraft carriers and submarines. And there is a pair of stained glass windows, on either side of the main door into the sanctuary. On one side, in stained glass, was a representation of the Bohr atom. And on the other side, a mushroom cloud. I just stared at the two windows thinking, "How cool!" How appropriate! How sublime! The interplay of art, science, and religion.

(Continued on back cover)

**Happy Birthday to those celebrating
their special day in
November and December**



Christopher Gass	11/3	Dick Gormly	12/1
Steven Schaugency	11/5	Jack Brink	12/2
Amelia Christian	11/9	Art Price	12/3
Ann Marie Mateya	11/10	Kurt Kennicutt	12/6
Delores Tower	11/12	Deena Price	12/9
Pete Perkins	11/14	Justin Gass	12/10
Abigail Rose Winans	11/19	Barb Thompson	12/11
Esther Joyce	11/23	Evelyn Allen	12/14
Lynne Beautz	11/25	Renee Guidelli	12/18
Nick Gabello	11/25	Nancy Allan-Elliott	12/23
Ethelyn Enos	11/26	Eginhard Dominique	
Dave Moody	11/29	Jean-Philippe	12/24
Cotter Smith	11/30		

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

A Note from Pastor Janet Abel

I want to thank all of you for a really lovely Installation Service. Sue Frost, the Registrar for our UCC Association, said that she has never attended a nicer installation, with outstanding music and speaker, and a warm and lovely reception as well. Thank you so much for those refreshments, the beautiful cake, Chris, and the gift of the Alb—it will be worn with love.

Fellowship Evenings

In October we gathered at the home of Chris and Tim O'Neill for a potluck dinner and a fun evening of playing games supplied by members. We thank the O'Neill's for hosting this since Fellowship Hall was occupied with the Rummage Sale.

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."

Holiday Dinner Baskets

Once again we will supply Thanksgiving Dinner Baskets for our less fortunate neighbors. Last year we were able to supply 30 dinners complete with a turkey and all the fixings. This year we will structure our appeal a little differently. Instead of asking for food and money we will restrict it to frozen turkeys and money. This will greatly simplify the process. All contributions will need to be at the church by Friday, November 20th. Please make your plans accordingly.

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 is what we have lined up for November:

11/2, 6:30pm, Energy Night w/Debbie Matsu-shima (Upstairs at FCC)

11/9, 6pm, Open discussion (Topic to be determined) (Upstairs at FCC)

11/16, 6:30pm, Funk, Flow and Flourish Yoga (Upstairs at FCC)

11/23, 6pm, Open discussion on Gratitude (Upstairs at FCC)

11/30, 6pm, Sacred Geometry Class w/ Peter Shell \$25 (Upstairs at FCC)

For questions, contact Renée at 607-226-2354 or follow Heart Centered Living on Facebook.

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

Science of Mind

Metanoia Spiritual Living Group (Science of Mind Philosophy and Principles) will change locations for the winter. Starting on Tuesday, October 27th, we will meet at First Congregational Church, 30 Main Street, Binghamton, from 6:30-8:30pm.

The team leaders are Lindie Heasler and Ethelyn Enos. Discussions will include books and Science of Mind Magazine articles. Suggestions for music, meditation and discussion are welcome!



From the Office...

Our next Forecaster will be a December publication, so please send me articles, programs, events, and any 'save-the-date' reminders. The due date for your articles is November 18th. Thanks, Leslie



Spiritual Book Group (SBG)

We will continue to meet in November on Wednesdays at Noon, studying the book *Zealot* by Reza Aslan. All are welcomed to join in! Please note we will not meet the Wednesday before Thanksgiving.

Columbus Day Parade

The annual Columbus Day Parade took place Monday, October 12th, at 10am. As usual, we provided our Hospitality Tent. We had a good number of volunteers who set up and served those who came to view the festivities. As usual, this parade was not as well attended as the St. Patrick's Day parade. We provided popcorn, coffee and hot chocolate without charge and sold cookies and hot dogs. Donations and the free-will offering totaled \$162.50. Expenses totaled \$115.65 giving us a net of \$46.85. A large number of hot dogs and rolls were left over which will be used for a Fellowship Evening. Overall, it was a great effort and a big thank you to all who helped in any way.

Dear All . . .

. . . who may not have seen this documentary on Facebook, and/or have asked me to notify you when it was published by AOL/Huffington Post Productions, here are a few links where you will find the interview to access the short video:

<http://www.booksbybobwhite.com>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nr84FnEU6Eg>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/09/23/bob-white-retired-novelist_n_8185188.html?utm_hp_ref=authors

Not only am I honored to have been selected for this series of State Farm's LifeStage Moments, but am amazed by the professionalism of the AOL/HuffPost people. It was fascinating to watch them convert our house into a Hollywood studio, direct, guide and put us at ease during the interviews and filming, and then put everything back so that you wouldn't even have known they were here. How they so skillfully edited nine hours of work into less than three minutes amazes me.

I'm also humbled by the amount of times the interview has been viewed and the positive response it has received.

Thanks so much for your support and interest. Enjoy.
Blessings and peace, *Bob White*

Board of Deacons Summary Report, Oct. 20, 2015

Pastor's Report—Art went over the upcoming worship schedule, including guest preacher/musician Tim Hamm on Oct. 25, and All Saints Day on Nov. 1 with formal communion. New members will be received on Nov. 8. Hanging 'O the Greens will be after service on Nov. 29. Christmas Eve service will be held at 7:00 pm. Art has been looking for a piece of music to replace "Spirit of the Living God" which has been used in worship for quite a while. Will try out "Oneness" by Connie Castro once permission has been received. Working on scheduling a class on spiritual writing (Soul Writing) to be taught by Ellyn Sanna probably beginning in January and will go for six weeks and limited to five students. More info when details are finalized.

Associate Pastor's Report—Janet submitted a written report and shared some highlights. Congratulations to Janet in that all during one week she celebrated the 20th anniversary of her ordination (Oct 15) and then was formally installed as Associate Pastor of FCC on Sunday, Oct. 18. It made for a meaningful and celebratory day.

Old Business—Details are being formalized for the Stewardship Campaign. Art will write the letter, and the four speakers are lined up. Judy G. will be the Deacon's representative to the Nominating Committee.

New Business—The organ repair is complete. Discussion about a possible recital, perhaps after the holidays. Important note for future planning...2016 marks the 20th anniversary for both Jazz Vespers and Joyful Noise.

Deacon's Moment—Thank you to the many people who helped in so many ways to make the Rummage Sale a success, with \$1,450 being made after expenses. Several get well and thank you cards sent to appropriate people.

FCC is Now on Facebook!

The church is now on Facebook, so please consider viewing and liking the page....
<https://www.facebook.com/uccbinghamton>

Trustee's Summary Report for October 20, 2015

Financial reports for the previous month accepted by unanimous vote.
Discussion of Operating and Capital funds.
Motion passed to raise the ceiling on expenditure for Sentry Alarm upgrade.
Pastor Art discussed upcoming Worship Schedule.
New members will be accepted 11/8.
Discussed parking issues.

Old business:

Organ repairs completed.
Amplification device has been installed to eliminate hiss and allow for precision volume control.
Lawn care and landscaping to be handled by Janet Rik.
Audit showed no deficiencies.
Motion to approve expenditure for furniture cleaning, based on estimates received to date.
Discussed parking guidelines.
Discussed possibilities for Nominating Committee.
Exterior painting to be reconsidered in Spring.

New business:

Discussion of Capital Campaign committee.
Respectfully submitted,
Toni Rorapaugh, Trustee Secretary

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 be a part of our worship service on Sundays, 10am, where children are encouraged to participate in the ringing of the bell, passing of the peace, prayers for the people and first hymnal and then go to Sunday (F.U.N.D.A.Y.) School right after. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at 607-723-8981. Kindly, Renée Guidelli, Christian Education Director/Sunday School Supervisor

Summary Report of the Board of Deacons September 1, 2015

Pastor's Report—Art went over the upcoming worship schedule, including the upcoming Rally Day, World Communion Sunday, Janet's Installation of Oct 18, and new members received on Nov 8. Art has been in conversation with Mike Leahy, Director of CHOW, about the status of our pantry outlet in light of some recent losses of CHOW volunteers. Art informed the Board that he will not be going to Beirut, Lebanon next Fall as previously announced, citing several concerns including the political and refugee crisis in the area. The funeral service for Doris Donnelley was held September 17. She was a longtime member of FCC and former Church Administrator. The mentoring relationship between Art and Dov Treiman has been approved and will begin October 1.

Associate Pastor's Report—Janet submitted a written report and shared some highlights. Several pastoral care issues were discussed. Also she has done one funeral and two weddings this summer. The ACA is waiting to hear from Washington about how many Syrian families may come here, and our church has been put on their list to help out one to two families, when and if they arrive. The ACA will let us know.

Old Business—Thank you to Carolyn Blake and Mary Cuddeback for the beautiful flowers throughout this summer. Thank you note from Verna Griffiths regarding the passing of her husband Paul. Desire for more variety in the Summer Music program. Marian Simpson's drawing of the church is now framed and ready to hang.

New Business—The organ repair is nearly complete and will be back in service in a couple of weeks. CHOW walk was abruptly changed to September 20, deeply affecting the fundraising involved. (ed. Note: this was due to BU preempting the walk with a walk of their own memorializing a recent suicide of a student.) On October 25 Tim Hamm will provide both message and music, as well as a concert at 1:00 pm that afternoon.

Deacon's Moment—Thank you to the many people who helped in countless ways to make the Ice Cream Social a success, especially Estelle Gerber for playing piano so joyfully. Several pastoral care issues were discussed.



Our Annual Rummage Sale

Congratulations to all on a successful Rummage Sale! Despite all the hard work, we had fun and made \$1,450 for the church.

Thank you for all your help and your contributions to the sale.

BOOK-WORDS

The Rumi Collection: an anthology of translations of Mevlâna Jalâluddin Rumi, edited by Kabir Hellminski. *An introductory selection of the poetry of Rumi, the thirteenth-century mystic poet of the Sufi tradition. Includes a biography of the poet. From the back cover: "Through his masterful verse, Rumi shows us that not only could God be our Beloved, but that we are the beloved of God."* 891.5511 JALA

Work as a Spiritual Practice: a practical Buddhist approach to Inner Growth and Satisfaction on the Job, by Lewis Richmond. *Explores the side of Buddhism that fosters engagement and activity, allowing us to find creativity, inspiration, and accomplishment in our work lives, no matter our status at our workplace. Reminds us that "regardless of your rank and title at work, you are always the chief executive of your inner life."* 294.3 RICH

Living Peacefully in a Stressful World: a strategy for replacing Stress with Peace, by Ron Hutchcraft. *Pursuing peace isn't easy in our fast-paced, hectic world. The author explains how to get off the treadmill and go after the peace we all need, using Scripture as both inspiration and admonition.* 248.4 HUTC

The Gnostic Bible, edited by Willis Barnstone and Marvin Meyer. *Although we might associate the word "gnostic" with only the Jewish or early Christian world, there have been gnostics in many other religious traditions. This work assembles Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Manichean, and other gnostic literature.* 299.932 GNOS

The Soul would have no Rainbow if the Eyes had no Tears, and other Native American Proverbs, edited by Guy A. Zona. *Pithy sayings from the wise among the native peoples of this country. Two examples: "Man has responsibility, not power. (Tuscarora)," and "It takes a whole village to raise a child. (Omaha)."* 398.9 SOUL

News from The Sophia Center for Spirituality

The programs scheduled At FCC in November:

MYSTIC OF THE MONTH: Thérèse of Lisieux, presented by Dorothy Hathaway-Forbes. Nov 9, 6:30 pm.
Suggested donation \$10

TAIZÉ PRAYER: Nov 22, 6-7pm. Taizé is an ecumenical prayer service comprised of simple chants, readings and silence, accompanied by live music.

CENTERING PRAYER: A prayer of intention during which the practitioner seeks to let go of all thoughts in order to be in God's presence. Nov 23, 6:30pm-8pm.

LUNCH WITH THE PSALMS: Tuesdays, 12:15-12:45pm

Mission/Outreach Committee

During the month of September, our congregation gave an offering of \$218 for the "Neighbors in Need" special collection of the United Church of Christ. This money will be used one-third for Native American Ministries and two-thirds for Justice and Witness ministry work. Thank you for your generosity.

The last Sunday in November is the first Sunday of Lent. On that Sunday, November 29, the Mission Committee will have available "angels" that will have sizes and wishes of kids from the neighborhood for Christmas gifts. As we have done for the last four years, we have asked the guidance counselor of the Woodrow Wilson school for names of needy families. FCC members and friends are invited to take an angel and bring the gift - wrapped in Christmas paper - by Sunday, December 15th. This helps us to "give to one of the least of these..." that Christ challenged us to care for.

Next month you will hear more about a trip Dr. Tom Bucker will be making to Haiti in early January. He is again donating his dental services to people in Haiti as part of a group going from SUNY Broome. We plan to give him some financial support for supplies. More information to follow.

The Committee appreciates all your help. The next meeting of the Mission/Outreach Committee is November 19th at 7:15pm. Anyone is welcome to join the Committee.

Senior Choir News

We will be singing and rehearsing on November 1st and 8th, at 9:15am. Then, rehearsal only (9:30am) on November 22 and 29. *New members welcome!*



Jazz Vespers

The November Jazz Vespers, on the 8th at 5pm, will feature Judy Giblin as vocalist, Larry Lolli on guitar, Doug Robinson on bass and Brad Nemcek on percussion. The group is called Judy Giblin & Friends. We'll be doing a lineup of standards, and the trio will be featured in two instrumental numbers. I'm very excited to perform for Jazz Vespers and for my friends.

(Pastor's Perspective continued from front page)

It serves as a reminder that as we play with the universe and fiddle with the tools we have created, remember to be careful, be just, and be moral.

Blessings upon you all.

*One bit of evidence was a recent online article about Liberal Protestantism calling it the most interesting religious group you've never heard of. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michelle-tang/the-christian-leftpossibl_b_8270596.html

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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