



## The Forecaster - March, 2016

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

There is a quote that I've had on my mind recently. It is one of those philosophical thoughts that has application to most facets of our lives. It is by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1900-1944), a French aviator, poet, and perhaps most famously the author of *The Little Prince*. The quote, however, is found in another work, *The Wisdom of the Sands*.

*"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea."*

To be honest, that is the way I feel about building a church. The wrong way to do it is to say that we need a few more people to fill out the committees and the boards. Round up some more people to do this task or take on that job. If good old Antoine is right, a better way is to instill a love for why the church exists in the first place.

I'm sort of sensitive to this issue from some of my experiences over the years. Two quick examples... churches exist usually within denominations. The purpose of the denominational structure is to serve the churches. But over time it seems to get turned around, and the churches find themselves serving the denominational structure and typically a higher paid hierarchy. The other nearly identical example is school districts. Schools exist for teachers to teach students. Similarly the administration exists to support and assist that core teaching, making sure those pure student-teacher relationships remain healthy and strong. One doesn't have to look hard to find ways in which it gets turned around.

Churches exist to nourish The God-Human relationship. Period. All the rest of it is secondary. But here's the rub, the God-Human relationship is not just sacred, holy, and good. It is one of the most beautiful things ever. So the linkage back to Antoine is this...teach people about that relationship, that is about holiness and grace and forgiveness and love. Teach them that it is there in their soul, whether they know about it or not... and it is intrinsically lovely. Remember the line from our Statement of Oneness, *"Humanity, the Image of God, is beautiful in God's sight, part of a magnificent creation; therefore we are beautiful in God's eyes."*

We are beautiful, and deeply loved. Teach people that...first and foremost...and then Church (which exists for that very message) will follow naturally.

*"Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea."*

Blessings upon you all,

**Happy Birthday to those celebrating  
their special day in  
March and April**



Liz O'Neill	3/1	Catherine Cornelius	3/29
Leanne Lott Morrell	3/3	Heather Excell Proppe	3/29
Evan Brigham	3/4	Thomas Bucker	4/1
Angelo Dadamio	3/4	Alice Pettit	4/4
Laura Mateya	3/5	Timothy O'Neill	4/5
Robin Whalen	3/6	Bob White	4/6
Alexander O'Brien	3/14	Cynthia Jones	4/9
Kay Rhinebeck	3/15	Christopher Kronk	4/9
David Excell	3/19	Tricia Larson	4/12
Ethelyn Enos, Sr.	3/22	Karen Holman	4/17
William Cluff	3/22	Taylor Mihok	4/20
Germaine Smith	3/26	Matthew Christian	4/22
Dorothy Doane	3/28	Bill Cuddeback	4/22
Lola Schumann	3/29	David DeMars	4/26

*Please call the office if you notice an omission from our listing.*

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

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 Pastors  
Janet Abel or Art Suggs.



**From the Office...**

Our next Forecaster will be an April publication, so  
please send me articles, programs, events, and any  
'save-the-date' reminders. The due date for your  
articles is *March 25th*. Thanks, Leslie

**Jazz Vespers**  
*March 13 at 5pm*

March Jazz Vespers, on March 13th, will feature  
vocalist Cookie Coogan from Ithaca along with two  
powerhouse instrumentalists, David Solazzo, a jazz  
pianist from Syracuse, and Doug Robinson, who has  
performed recently at Jazz Vespers, on guitar.  
Cookie has graciously invited Judy Giblin to join her  
in a number.

**Faith Works Fellowship**

**February Fellowship Meeting**

The Fellowship met on Friday the 19th. We started  
with a Haitian dinner prepared by Bernadette the  
wife of Louis Jean-Phillipe, one of our members.  
For our program, Tom Bucker presented a slide  
show describing a mission trip he took in January  
to Haiti. He and a group of Dental Students from  
SUNY Broome spent a week providing free dental  
services. It was very interesting and informative.  
Thank you Tom.

**March Fellowship Meeting**

The March meeting will be on Friday the 18th, at  
6pm. We will have potluck to start and then the  
Front Street Players (FSP/FCC/UCC) will debut  
with the reading of a dramatic sketch entitled,  
"On the Road with Jesus." A brief discussion of  
this stimulating drama will follow. Bring a friend  
or two for an evening of fun and fellowship and  
your favorite dish-to-pass.

**Children of Abraham Food Drive**

It has been painful to see the stories of the many  
people trying to flee the fighting in the Middle  
East. Thousands are in refugee camps where the  
local governments have no funds to feed the peo-  
ple. Our church has offered to host a refugee  
family, but there are none in this area now.

The Children of Abraham of Southern New York  
includes the faith communities of Christian, Jewish  
and Muslim. All three religions trace their faith  
ancestry to Abraham. The Children of Abraham is  
partnering with "Kids Against Hunger" to provide  
meals for refugees in Jordan and Greece. Help can  
be given in two ways. A gift of \$1.00 will buy 4  
meals. C of A is planning to provide 20,000 meals  
that will cost \$5,000. A number of FCC members  
have given to the project and if you haven't, you  
still can.

The other way we can help is to go to St. Mi-  
chael's Church on Clinton Street, Binghamton on  
Sunday April 3 in the afternoon and help assemble  
the meal packages. This is a hands-on way we can  
help those in need in a faraway place we can't get  
to in person. More information is on the church  
bulletin board.



Soul Writing Workshop  
*Writing as a Spiritual Practice*  
Ellyn Sanna

*We cannot live in a world that is interpreted for us by others....  
Part of the terror is to take back our own listening.  
To use our own voice. To see our own light.*

—Hildegard von Bingen

Do you love writing—and yet lack confidence in your abilities? Does something always seem to hold you back from completing any writing project you begin? Do you wonder if you really have anything to say? And if you have something to say, do you feel unable to put it in words?

Soul Writing is a method of writing that allows you take back your own listening and see your own light (to use Hildegard's language). It empowers your writing from a spiritual perspective. This six-session workshop creates a space where you will be invited to give yourself your undivided attention. The workshop is a creative sanctuary, a place that is free from judgments and expectations, where you can learn to use your own voice. Each session will offer a different set of practical exercises and attitudes that will allow you to create your own sacred space for powerful writing and inner transformation.

We won't be talking much about writing style and structure in this workshop. It won't be a class where you'll learn the craft of writing so much as you'll learn to cultivate the inner awareness that will bring integrity and authority to your writing (and to your life). Craft and mechanics are important to good writing, of course, but they come later in the process. First—whether you're writing poetry or essays, nonfiction or novels, a memoir or a short story—you need to have the courageous curiosity of an explorer, willing to venture into the unknown territory of your own inner being.

Soul Writing is a practice that reconnects us in new ways with the Self (versus the ego), our own bodies, our Shadows (the dark parts of ourselves we'd rather not face), the world around us, and our personal Muse. In the process, we find ourselves encountering something that contains all of these—a Mystery that lies beyond our ability to ever express with words and yet is what gives the deepest meaning to both our writing and our lives.

**Group sessions will meet Mondays at First Congregational, April 4, 11, 18 and May 9, 16, 23, 7:00 – 8:30 pm. Cost: \$150 and includes a one-on-one session with Ellyn with each participant. Space is limited.**

**To register or for more information, please e-mail to [SoulWriting.Anamchara@gmail.com](mailto:SoulWriting.Anamchara@gmail.com).**

*Ellyn Sanna has been an author, editor, and writing mentor for more than 25 years. As a writing mentor, she combines her own years of writing experience with a Jungian approach (based on her studies with the New York Center for Jungian Studies and Pacifica University, as well as her own constant reading). She has been a frequent speaker at writers' conferences, and she has worked one-on-one with hundreds of authors. She is also the executive editor of Anamchara Books. Beside authoring numerous nonfiction books for young readers, she has written many spiritual nonfiction books, including *All Shall Be Well: A Modern-Language Version of the Revelation of Julian of Norwich* and *Touching God: Experiencing Divine Metaphors for God*, and a young adult fantasy titled *The Thread* (under the name Lucie Stone.)*

## WE BOUGHT 2 COWS!

Last December, as the Mission Committee ended the meeting, the possibility of buying an animal through Heifer International came up and was put off until our next meeting (in February 2016). At the February meeting the Committee voted to purchase a heifer (cow) by putting up \$200 and challenging the congregation to donate the \$300 balance to buy a \$500 cow.

We decided to ask Rev. Dr. Barry Downing who frequently worships with us to present the challenge. He has raised cattle for many years. Barry did a great job sharing the project at worship on February 28. Among his other comments he assured everyone that the cow would not be kept in the pastor's study! He called for a collection at that time and generously started the collection with a \$100 gift from Eleanor and the same from him. When everything was counted, we collected \$1,000 – enough to buy two heifers!

The money will be sent to Heifer International and they will send two heifers to needy people in third world countries. The goal is to provide people a way to improve their life, not just buy them a meal.  
THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR GENEROSITY.

## Mission Committee Meeting

At the February committee meeting, the members reviewed the Christmas gift program that was another success. Tom Bucker told some about his mission trip to Haiti with SUNY Broome in January. For the full report he said we had to attend the Fellowship Dinner and see his show (which most of us did).

Thank you letters were received from SUNY Broome for the \$500 support of the Haiti project as well as thank you letters from Broome County Council of Churches for our support of the Jail Ministry and CHOW program of \$500 for each. We also discussed how to supply and operate the Pantry we have in our church.

Each spring around the beginning of May, SUNY Broome holds a sleep out. It is a Saturday night where students get sponsors and sleep in the open like the homeless. Doug Garnar asked if our church would help sponsor the program and we voted to do that. You will hear more about that next month. You can be a "sleeper" or sponsor a person doing it and raise money for the homeless.

(Continued next column)

(Continued from previous column)

The Committee also voted to send financial support to the American Bible Society, Church Women United, Habitat for Humanity, The Humane Society, Mom's House, NYHelp, Open and Affirming Coalition of the UCC, Rescue Mission in Binghamton, and WSKG Public Media. Tom Bucker agreed to remain as Co-chair of the Committee.

## Our Church "Food" Pantry

Last year after years of faithful service, Karen Holman retired as coordinator of our CHOW pantry at FCC. Another volunteer died and another moved, leaving the church short of staff for the pantry. As a result we withdrew as a Council of Churches CHOW outlet. Another church in our neighborhood now fills that roll.

We still find many people coming to the FCC doors looking for help. As a result, the church wants to provide some help. For the last couple of years, the first Sunday of each month FCC members and friends have brought food for the Pantry.

Presently, we are not trying to provide supplies for a full meal. Rather we want to supply food for a "quick meal" and some supplies that CHOW and food stamps do not cover. Following is a list of donations we are looking to supply:

Soups	Feminine products
Stews	Toilet paper
Dish soap	Bread (for freezer)
Hand soap	Ramen noodles
Spam	Diapers
PB & J	

Cash is always helpful for that is given out, too.

## F.U.N.DAY SCHOOL UPDATE:

We are so happy to have the children participating in the lighting of the candles now. They are becoming very comfortable in their new roles and truly enjoy helping out during the service and even during fellowship time. We look forward to more creative and helpful ways to engage the children in worship as well as with our church family.

As we look to the month of March, we prepare to pass out the palms for palm Sunday and participate in our annual Easter Egg Hunt which will be held downstairs in the Fellowship Hall.

## New Ministries

My pastoral internship here at FCC is based on a covenant setting as minimum standards that I would attend the meetings of the Deacons and the Council and at least two Sunday services a month at FCC while keeping up my preaching schedule in Newark Valley.

Those were the minimum standards. The rest was to be shaped by my interaction with the Congregation itself and to take the directions those interactions suggested. Mostly, that has entailed a good deal of listening on my part, listening to your concerns, your ideas of spirituality, your ideas of experiencing the extravagant love of Jesus the Christ. And yes, it has also included some listening for you as well, as we share our journeys and stories.

The New Testament word for "church," ἐκκλησία, originally meaning "congregation" or "gathering." So, the Church we call FCC is about our interactions with each other. Our being a church is about our doing church. It's about listening.

We are a generously blessed congregation with a multitude of talents and abilities, but with an amazing heart as well. Rare amongst churches it has a social gathering after and before the service. We are a family of listeners.

I therefore count myself blessed that this church has enabled me to listen, to hear our stories, to hear your stories, to grow in our shared stories. Please, then, keep bringing me your stories and allow me to be a thread in your tale as well.

Dov Treiman, Pastoral Intern

## 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  
Dr. Dov Treiman - Pastoral Intern  
William Cuddeback - Treasurer  
Curtis Hartwig - Assistant Treasurer  
Arlene Price - Membership Clerk  
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 – Church Administrator  
Sharon Shaddock – Childcare Provider  
Alice Pettit – Treasurer Emerita, Church Hostess  
Martin Rorapaugh- Financial Secretary  
Erick Clasen – Web Master  
Vanessa Warren – Bookkeeper  
Cindi West-Davidson – Custodian  
Toni Rorapaugh - Librarian, Historian



**Return Service Requested**

**First Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
30 Main Street  
Binghamton, NY 13905**

BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

PERMIT NO. 52

PAID

U.S. POSTAGE

NON-PROFIT ORG.