



## The Forecaster—May 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

Some of the greatest discoveries in science, and in life generally, have come when we have examined the basics, the underlying presumptions and beliefs that we always assume to be true but sometimes aren't. This, for example, is why the process of psychotherapy can be of such tremendous value in a person's life. We live our lives around basic stories, and what if the story at the center of our lives isn't true? What if we've been told over and over again that we aren't of value, and then in adulthood we live our lives and make our choices based upon that "truth"? Sometimes it is extremely helpful to look at the underlying beliefs of our lives.

I try to do that with church, religion, and spirituality as well. So let me ask, why is it important to pay attention to our spiritual lives? After all, some people don't and they seem to get along just fine. Why should a person attend to their spiritual life?

A blog I follow (*Sophia's Children*, by Jamie Walters) addressed that very question beautifully. She told the ancient story of The Golden Thread in which Ariadne helps Theseus find his way out of a dangerous labyrinth.

*"Ariadne secured a ball of yarn — sometimes said to be silver, sometimes gold — to help her beloved, the hero-warrior Theseus, find his way back out of a most challenging and complex labyrinth. Theseus's Hero's Journey required him to enter the labyrinth, kill the Taurean half-bull, half-man minotaur of Crete, Asterion, who was housed at its center. Then Theseus had to find his way back out again. Apparently not a Hero's Journey for the faint-hearted, this entry into a spectacularly complex maze with a frightening and powerful creature at its center. Does this sound or feel familiar in some way? Ariadne's ball of thread was Theseus's "shiny breadcrumb trail" that helped him retrace his steps to exit the maze rather than get trapped within, forever going down one false trail after another."*

The Golden Thread is, of course, a metaphor. It represents that wisdom and purpose that can serve as a guiding light in our lives, especially when the path is unclear (the labyrinth). What caught my attention in the above explanation was the very end... "forever going down one false trail after another." One of the observations I made further above isn't entirely true. There are some, indeed plenty, who don't pay attention to their spiritual lives and don't get along just fine. Rather, by my observation, they go down one false trail after another, and often go down the same false trail multiple times. We've all known those whose inner story is that they are unlovable, and therefore choose partnerships lacking in love, or they're not talented, and so they choose careers that don't require talent, or that they are not beautiful, and thus neglect their physical side chronically.

Spiritual disciplines, and attending to our inner spiritual nature, is the remedy. It cures us of falsehoods. It heals precisely because it brings our beliefs in line with the inner truth of who we really are as children of God – loved, talented, and beautiful.

(Continued on page 3)



## Happy Birthday to those celebrating their special day in May and June...

Judy Garnar	5/1	William Heim	5/27
Robert Neill	5/3	Carolyn Blake	5/30
Becky Lewis	5/12	Warren Resseguie	6/1
Lacey Lewis	5/12	Stephanie Cirba	6/5
Jeff Dahlgren	5/15	Arlene Price	6/6
Katharina Krieger	5/15	Doug Garnar	6/6
Megan Griffiths Dovin	5/15	Nancy Wildoner	6/8
	5/15	Jill Andrews	6/10
Richard Marderian		Tracy Suggs	6/10
	5/15	Teresa Cluff	6/11
Sharon Rhinebeck Gass		Michael Christian	6/16
	5/16	Brian Thompson	6/19
Betty Lou Agard	5/17	Kris deVente	6/20
Chuck Mallery	5/17	Jason Stevens	6/24
Lee Stradley	5/23	Bob Giblin	6/25
Kyle O'Neill	5/23	Martin Rorapaugh	6/27
Amy Winans	5/24	Allyson White	6/29

*Please call the office if you notice any omissions from the birthday list. Thank you.*

### Poets Needed

The Pastoral Team is currently looking at upcoming liturgies over the liturgical year, with an eye to greater lay person participation. There are larger and smaller projects on the horizon that could use the poetic talents of our FCC Community in writing liturgies, editing them, and structuring them. If you have or *might* have an interest in being part of this effort, please contact Dov Treiman at:

DovTreiman@aol.com or (607) 657-8473.

### Jazz Vespers



May Jazz Vespers on the 8th, at 5pm, will feature the Mason Warrington Orchestra with vocalists Judy Giblin and Ralph Muro. This is the finest band of its genre in New York state. We play the music you love and have danced to.

Please join us for a wonderful program.

### Picture Directories



During the month of March, Bob Neill and Clare Price took a number of pictures for bringing the church picture directories up to date. On May 8, three supplemental pages will be available for those who have a picture directory.

For folks who have not received a church picture directory, new ones will be available. We have organized the directory to include our active friends and members, in addition to adding our new members.

Directory pages are also available with names and phone numbers of new members. The directories are made notebook style to allow changes. Here is your opportunity to keep your directory current.

### Strengthen the Church Offering

On Sunday, May 15, our congregation will take the annual Strengthen the Church Offering. This collection provides funds for the United Church of Christ to provide financial support for starting new congregations and assist congregations to grow or start new programs for their membership.

The theme this year is "Invest In The Vision." It is part of the Stillspeaking program. Stillspeaking is the shorter form of "God Is Still Speaking," a campaign by the United Church of Christ to remind us that God still has a lot more to say. Each week in our worship we use the Stillspeaking invitation, "No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here at First Congregational Church."

### Our New Neighbor

The old Ridley Lowell School, across from the church on Front Street, has been sold to an investor who will develop student apartments in the building. At a city public hearing, three FCC members went to express concern over those renters using our small parking lot for their parking.

In meetings with the city and our church Trustees, the new owner, Mr. Josh Bishop promised to work to prevent his tenants from parking in our lot. He has expressed his desire to help us and be a good neighbor. Rentals will not start until 2017.

## From Faith Works

### April Fellowship Meeting

Our April Meeting was on Friday the 15th. Ten members were present. What we lacked in numbers was made up in Fellowship. We missed all those who normally come.

### May Fellowship Meeting

In May we will meet on Friday May 20th. Following potluck dinner at 6pm, we will be treated to a 'trip to Italy.' Leslie Dahlgren will tell us about the trip that she and Frank took to Italy in January. Hearing where our members go on their vacation trips is always interesting. We are looking to having a large attendance. Mark your calendars and join us.

(Pastor's Perspective continued from front page)

But our lives often seem like the labyrinth, and the challenges we face seem like the minotaurs. But the Golden Thread, which is the inner truth of who we really are, can reliably and safely guide us.

*"The golden thread is a symbol of the inspiration, intuition, and guiding light that graces us throughout our lives. It is that which we follow, knowing that it will, in some mysterious way, guide us on our true paths in life. ... As we travel through literal and figurative labyrinths in our lives, the golden thread may easily go unnoticed, yet when it is recognized and followed, we may find that this archetypal strand of gold connects us to our true selves, to our beloveds, and to that which we discover to be home."* (Stellamara and Patrick Queen)

Blessings upon you all,



## Spiritual Book Group

Our group will start back up on Wednesday, May 18th, at Noon. Our new book will be, "Gnostic Gospels," by Elaine Pagels.

Gnosticism's Christian form grew to prominence in the 2nd century AD. Ultimately denounced as heretical by the early church, Gnosticism proposed a revealed knowledge of God (gnosis meaning knowledge in Greek), held as a secret tradition of the apostles.

In *The Gnostic Gospels*, author Elaine Pagels suggests that Christianity could have developed quite differently if Gnostic texts had become part of the Christian canon. Without a doubt, Gnosticism celebrates God as both Mother and Father, shows a very human Jesus relationship with Mary Magdalene, suggests the Resurrection is better understood symbolically, and speaks to self-knowledge as the route to union with God.

Pagels argues that Christian Orthodoxy grew out of the political considerations of the day, serving to legitimize and consolidate early church leadership. Her contrast of that developing orthodoxy with Gnostic teachings presents an intriguing trajectory on a world faith as it "might have become." *The Gnostic Gospels* provides engaging reading for those seeking a broader perspective on the early development of Christianity. -from amazon.com

## Cakes for the Queen of Heaven

### Lunch and Learn Starting Sundays in May

Cakes for the Queen of Heaven is a woman honoring adult religious education curriculum that examines pre-Judeo Christians that may have worshipped the female as divine. The concepts of equality and reverence for the female in a religious setting are eye opening to many participants. More than Goddess 101, this workshop series examines important elements of today's women's lives; personal, interpersonal and societal. It examines how our culture has been influenced by Judeo Christian values. The primary question raised is: How would your life have been different if, when growing up, the divine had been imaged as female? Participants are encouraged to share their own experiences and beliefs, creating trust and strong bonds of friendship. This will be a 5-week series with the schedule as follows below.

\*Please bring a bagged lunch or something to eat as this will start at noon.

- 1) Sunday, May 1<sup>st</sup>-from 12-1:30 The Sacred Female
- 2) Sunday, May 8<sup>th</sup> from 12-1:30 In the Name of the Mother and the Daughter,
- 3) Sunday, May 15<sup>th</sup> from 12-1:30 Woman Power
- 4) Sunday May 22<sup>nd</sup> from 12-1:30 The First Turning from Goddess to God
- 5) Sunday May 29<sup>th</sup> from 12-1:30 Reclaiming Women's Heritage of Peace

Any questions, kindly contact Renée Guidelli, C.E. Director.



## The Binghamton Downtown Singers

The Binghamton Downtown Singers will present their Spring concert on Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm at the Sarah Jane Johnson Memorial United Methodist Church, 308 Main St. Johnson City, under the direction of artistic director, Marisa Crabb with soloists and full orchestra. The program will feature Sir Karl Jenkins' *The Peacemakers* using the words of various leaders such as Mother Teresa and Martin Luther King Jr., among others, plus Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem*. General admission tickets are \$15 and can be ordered by calling (607) 648-5032, online at [DTS\\_Concerts@stny.rr.com](mailto:DTS_Concerts@stny.rr.com), or contact Deb Miller. Tickets will also be available at the door. *Please note the start time this year is at 7:30pm.*

## Sleep-Out for the Homeless

On Friday night, April 29<sup>th</sup>, a sleep-out to raise money to help the homeless was held by students at SUNY Broome. Students found sponsors for their participation. Having seen our work for the homeless with our February "Super Giveaway," Doug Garnar suggested that we involve our church in the sleep-out, as well.

Four of our members -- Janet Abel, Doug Garnar, Julie Ann Johnson, and Clare Price -- "blended" in with the students and spent a night under the stars. Pledges from members of our congregation came to over \$100 for the homeless. Thank you!

## 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.

## The Sophia Center for Spirituality

Events in June:

June 13, 6:30 pm—Mystic of the Month -- Georges Ivanovich Gurdjieff, presented by David Peters. Join a fascinating discussion about this 20<sup>th</sup> Century Russian mystic, philosopher, composer and spiritual teacher.

June 26, 6:00 p.m.: Taizé monthly prayer service that includes several chants, Scripture readings and quiet reflection. (continued on back page)

## Binghamton Theater Organ Society

### Presents ...

Nancy Wildoner Pop Pipes: Show Stoppers, featuring vocalists Randy Messing and Judy Giblin. The program will be held at the Forum Theatre, May 15, 2pm, and feature "Broadway A to (almost) Z."

Ticket information and group rates are available. Call the Box Office at 607-773-1496. Web site is [binghamtonTOS.org](http://binghamtonTOS.org).

## Summary Report of the Board of Deacons

First Congregational Church, April 19, 2016

**Chairperson's Report**—Announcement about the Spring Association meeting this coming Saturday, 4/23 with the title "A Sacred Conversation on Race." Several from the church will be attending.

**Pastor's Report**—Art went over the upcoming worship schedule, highlighting the Sacred Sites tour sponsored by PAST (May 22, 11:30 – 1:30), and the People of Blessing Service on Wednesday, June 8, at 7:00 pm. Brief follow up conversation about the Congregational Conversation after worship on April 17. With BRSC (Binghamton Regional Sustainability Coalition) soon relocating to FCC, significant Spring Cleaning is needed in several of the rooms. Art is organizing that due to his natural aptitude in such matters! The Soul Writing class taught by Ellyn Sanna has been receiving excellent feedback. Janet reported that the Spiritual Book Group is nearing the end of their Brian McClaren book and will soon be choosing the next book.

**Council Report**—Judy reported on the highlights of that meeting. Discussion topics included office space for Dov, financial report on the budget and endowment, hosting the BCCC for their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the purchase of some new tables, and some landscaping that has been done and some that yet needs to be done.

**Old Business**—Three pianos received their six month tuning prior to Easter.

**New Business**—A proposal for summer breakfast was sent to Mission Committee. A proposal from Dov regarding using poetry and the Stations of the Cross for Good Friday, postponed till next meeting.

### From the Office...



Our next Forecaster will be a Summer June/July publication, so please send me articles, programs, events, and any 'save-the-date' reminders. *The due date for this joint publication is May 19th.* Please remember to include any June and July dates or heads-up dates for future events. Thanks, Leslie

### Happy Birthday!

May 15, this year is the Sunday we celebrate Pentecost, known as the "Birthday of the Church," that is, you and me and not any particular building. It is our birthday.

Back in my days as a practicing orthodox Jew, Pentecost was the celebration of the giving of the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai, the moment that transformed the Jewish people from a rabble just delivered from oppression to a People of God in covenant with God, living under a set of rules from God—even if, like us, a people that slips into sin again and again.

On Pentecost, 2000 years ago, God took advantage of the fact that there are three major festivals in the Jewish calendar that call for large gatherings in Jerusalem, Passover (when the crucifixion occurred), Pentecost, and the autumn first fruits Festival of Booths.

God took advantage of it by empowering the Disciples to proclaim the same Good News that we proclaim 2000 years later—that God is in relationship with God's people.

2000 years ago, it was the miracle of making that good news understandable to folks who spoke a whole world of languages. Nowadays, it is our responsibility to proclaim it with whatever tongues we possess.

FCC shines a light in Binghamton doing just that, proclaiming the love of God not just through our congregation, but through the many groups that meet in our building.

That is a ministry deeply to cherish and upon which to build.

Happy Birthday!

Dr. Dov Treiman

### Bereavement Support by Merri Warren

I want to share some of my God given gifts with you, my Church Family. My lack of eye sight has given me insight—less things to distract me from just being with someone. If you are dealing with grief, I can offer to meet with you or discuss by phone. I have lost two spouses and ran a support group for widows and widowers.

I also had a miscarriage and lost my six-year-old daughter in a car accident. Shortly thereafter, I led The Compassionate Friends Support group for bereaved parents, was involved in the Empty Arms group, and was a Hospice volunteer.

You do not have to go it alone –we can walk the path together. I can organize a workshop on grief and bereavement, or start a support group. "A burden shared is but half a burden and a joy shared is twice the joy!"

### Sacred Mirrors...

#### Reflecting

You Are Me  
And  
I Am Thee.

Dearest Beloved,  
When I Gaze Upon Your Face  
I Behold An Illumined Grace.

Deep Within Your Eyes  
Your Soul Beseeches Me...

- ♪ Behold!
- ♪ I Am The Light!
- ♪ Let!... Oh Let!
- ♪ Me Shine Bright!

Gently, I Release All My Fears.  
With Courage, I Hold Your Hand  
And  
Take A Stand.  
No More Tears.

As Within  
So With  
All About.

Our Light  
Our Love  
Our Life Divine...

You Are Mine  
And I Am Thine.

### Sacred Mirrors...

#### Reflecting

Julie Ann Johnson, 2016

### Sacred Sites Open House

The Preservation Association of the Southern Tier is sponsoring the Sacred Sites Open House on Sunday, May 22. Our church is included on the tour and we will host visitors from approximately 11-1pm. Most sites will offer guided or non-guided tours. Please contact Janet Abel if you would like to help.

(The Sophia Center continued)

June 27, 6:30 p.m.: Centering Prayer monthly session

Tuesdays, 12:15-12:45 p.m.: Lunch With the Psalms

As always, check our website at:

<http://thesophiacenterforspirituality.org/> for schedule.



### Reminder for the Senior Choir

The Sr. Choir is singing the first two Sundays in May & June.

### Heart Centered Living

Are you a spiritual seeker? As a seeker, HCL is the place to witness and experience your own truth. If you want to make a difference in the world but don't know where to start, join us in sharing and examining current and relevant topics such as Healing, Meditation, Health and Wellness, Sustainability and Spirituality. Together we can affect positive change in ourselves, our community, and create a more heart centered world. To learn more contact Renee at 607-226-2354 or go to [www.heart-centered-living.org](http://www.heart-centered-living.org).

### How To Contact Us:

Mon –Thurs, 9:00-3:00 pm,  
(607)723-8981

[fcc@binghamtonwireless.com](mailto:fcc@binghamtonwireless.com)

Web: [www.uccbinghamton.org](http://www.uccbinghamton.org)

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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  
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