



The Forecaster—January, 2017

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

"An empathy gap." That is how an author recently described the state of our beloved country throughout 2016. The author was Ted Morgan, professor of political science just across the border at Lehigh University. Of some of his recent reading,* which hopefully he assigns to his students, he wrote:

"I was struck immediately by this reality: (There are) two very different communities of people who feel great pain because, for a variety of valid reasons, they both feel like outsiders in what they perceive to be mainstream American culture."

These outsiders, from the blue state perspective, are people of color, LGBTQ folks, a number of women, and some men who share their concerns. From the red state perspective, they would be many men and women in the white working class, most of rural America, and a fair number of those in small business.

He writes about how these two groups feel largely cut off from feeling empathy for each other. And he goes into length about how and why. He is very delicate with his language, but there are two ways in which we could do better. One is the media of our country which didn't serve us well. Ratings were driven by spectacle, conflict, and an outright encouragement to love our side and hate the other side.

But the other isn't so easy...it's us. We're the ones who have settled for coverage that we know is second rate and we don't demand better. We're the ones who, like a child, didn't do our homework.** Democracy depends upon an informed electorate, and we often make our decisions based upon sound bites and appearances rather than substance.

Let me admit that my hypocrisy meter is registering around seven or eight out of ten as I write. Post-election, I sort of feel duped. While I did do my homework, I still got hyped up by the print and TV media encouraging me to hate, encouraging me to input malintent into the heart of the other.

We have an economy which, over my lifetime, increasingly views people, their families, even communities, as things to be exploited. This has resulted in an income inequality which is wrecking so many lives, on par with a war in its destruction.

Morgan writes: *"Clearly it's up to us, the people, to do the work to come together, to hear each other's anxieties and fears, and share the reasons we view the world the way we do - and then to confront a political system that works hard to prevent this from happening."*

(Continued on page 2)

**Happy Birthday to those celebrating
their special day in
January and February...**



Bruce Doane	1/6	John Eidenier	2/2
John Roberts	1/9	Linda Excell	2/3
Charles Dearborn	1/10	Collin Miller	2/3
Chris O'Neill	1/10	Cindi West-Davidson	2/3
Rachel Youmans	1/12	Dr. Louis Mateya	2/6
Rev. Janet Abel	1/13	Pastor Art Suggs	2/7
Liana Railsback	1/13	Bruno Roberts	2/8
Brandon Bucker	1/14	Rob Hollander	2/9
Daniel Ray	1/14	Tom Treiman	2/11
Robert Cluff	1/20	Toni Rorapaugh	2/12
Heidi Bowne Roberts	1/21	Markus Krieger	2/13
Shirley Sullivan	1/23	Tim Mitchell	2/13
Robert Winans	1/23	Andrea Schaugency	2/18
Devin O'Neill	1/24	Lucinda Bucker	2/19
Debbie VanDusen	1/26	Timothy Christian	2/19
Andrea Bucker	1/27		
James Lewis	1/28	Darin Lewis	2/22
Conner John Gyllenhammer	1/30	Judy Giblin	2/23
	1/30	Candy Brown	2/23
Steven Excell	1/30	Maynard Fahs	2/27
Bob deVente	2/1	Jay Carstrom	2/27

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

Mission Committee

**Santa's Helpers
Christmas gifts 2016**

This is the fifth year our congregation has adopted needy families to give gifts to. Christ told us it is more blessed to give than to receive and a number of our members can feel blessed this Christmas. Working with Amanda Oakley, the guidance counselor at the Woodrow Wilson School (the school to which most of the kids in the neighborhood of our church attend) six families were selected. That was 27 people for at least two gifts each. Three other families came directly to church that we also adopted (one in Elizabeth Church Manor) and that was 16 more people. Over 100 beautifully wrapped gifts were distributed.

Jesus told us that when we give to the needy we are giving unto Him. This year we have given him a great birthday party. GOOD JOB FCC!

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Blessings upon you all.

* Two of the works are Eddie Glaude's *Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul*. Glaude is in the Dept. of Religion at Princeton University. The other is Arlie Russell Hochschild's *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. Hochschild is a sociologist at Berkeley University.

**I also want to be careful with language. This may sound partisan, but it most assuredly is not.

**The Sophia Center for Spirituality
January 2017 Programs**

Wednesday, Jan. 4 & 18: Centering Prayer bi-monthly practice ,6:30 p.m., at Sophia House Join us for this beautiful meditation form of prayer.

Saturday, Jan. 7: Meet a Mystic - Julian of Norwich, presented by Jane Comerford, CSJ 10:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at Sophia House. Explore the life of this 14th century anchoress who lived for the better part of her life in the church in Norwich, England. She was an important mystic and theologian. Suggested donation: \$30. Bring a lunch; dessert and beverages will be provided. REGISTER BY Jan. 4. Call (607) 644-0736 or send an email to hrtcenter12@gmail.com. SNOW DATE: Jan. 14.

Sunday, Jan. 15: Encounter With the Christos with Sr. Paula Matthew, CSJ, 1-5 p.m. at The Spiritual Center, Windsor, NY.

In November of 1974, Sister Paula Matthew created a sculpture and named it "The Resurrected." Today Sister Paula has given the sculpture a new name—"The Christos." Come see this artwork and learn what brought Sister Paula to a new understanding of her sculpture. Also, there will be a discussion of a way of prayer which can be offered as a daily practice for deepening one's personal spiritual life that is

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compatible with all the major world religions. To register, call Sister Elizabeth Michele Newell at 607-655-2264. Donation: \$40. Refreshments provided. Register by January 10th. To learn more about The Spiritual Center, visit spiritualcenterwindsor.com.

Sunday, Jan. 22: Taizé prayer service, 6pm. at the Sophia Center. A Taizé-style service usually includes several chants, a Scripture reading or two with silence in periods of reflection bringing peace.

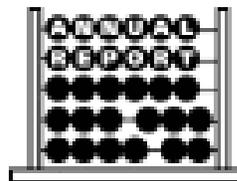
Monday, Jan. 23 & 30, Feb. 6 & 13: Into the Deep: Exploring the Wisdom that Emerges from Silence with Cheryl Lyon, C.P.C., 7- 8:15 pm, telephone conference call. Beneath the noise and chaos, beneath the endless to-do's, beneath the clutter of our lives, lies a boundless silence. From the silence, wisdom emerges. This FOUR-WEEK exploration of the wisdom that emerges from Silence is offered via telephone conference call. Cozy up in the comfort and privacy of your own home. Harness the quiet energy of mid-winter to plumb your own depths. \$45 (in addition, your regular long-distance charges, if any, will apply). Register by January 17 to receive a bonus 30-minute telephone consultation with Cheryl. To register, contact Cheryl at cheryl@wingedlifecoaching.com or register right now by paying for the class at this link: <http://wingedlifecoaching.com/specials.html>, Please register by January 21 to allow sufficient time to provide you with the dial-in information.

This course is co-sponsored by The Sophia Center for Spirituality and Winged Life Coaching.

Friday, Jan. 27 - Saturday, Jan. 28: Where is the NEW in this New Year? 24-hour retreat, 7:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. at Sophia House. Some of us may have made resolutions to begin the journey of the year. Perhaps we will be ready for a quick assessment of how we are doing. Some of us will not yet have started on any projects or programs for our lives. Perhaps our time together in the quiet will be a good chance to begin. This offers an opportunity to slow down, relax, reflect, renew – and (maybe the best idea) to BE - alone and together with kindred spirits in the beauty and peace of Sophia House. Donation of \$80 includes program, 3 meals & overnight accommodations. Limited to 5-7 people. Please call 607-644-0736 or e-mail thesophiacenter7@gmail.com Please register by January 23.

Annual Reports and Corporate Meeting

All 2016 reports from Pastors, Committees, Boards and Directors are due to the office by Thursday, January 12th. Please send them via email to FCC@binghamtonwireless.com. The Annual Report will be ready for distribution on Sunday, January 22nd and on the Sunday of our Annual Meeting, January 29th, as well.



Just In Case There Weren't Enough Ones and Zeros In Your Life

Dov Treiman

Here at FCC, we have a ministry that began the week before Christmas. For those who have consented to have their email addresses used for the purpose, we have The FCC E-Pistle. It is published at random intervals, but averages at least once a week and includes as an attachment the sound file of the weekly sermon as well as the weekly worship bulletin and the monthly Forecaster. It includes some original content and news as well as prayer requests and general announcements. It is emailed in a way that you will not have your email address revealed to anyone else nor will you see who else receives it. If this is something you would like to be receiving on an ongoing basis, please simply contact me at DovTreiman@aol.com and tell me you'd like it. Also, if there is anyone else of whom you are aware who would like to be getting this, whether FCC members or not, please give me their email addresses as well. There is no charge to you, no charge to the recipients, and no charge to the church. It's out there for whoever wants it. While this is ideal for our snowbirds, it's also useful for any of our local folks who find they cannot attend a service, but would like to hear the sermon or read about what's going on.

Summary of the Board of Deacons

First Congregational Church

December 13, 2016

Chairperson's Report -Judy Giblin, Toni Rorapaugh. and spouses attended the Susq. Association examination of former member Rachel Ditch, resulting in the Association's approval for her to proceed forward with ordination in the UCC.

Pastor's Report- Art

Art went over the upcoming worship schedule, highlighting the upcoming holiday season. We are exploring having FCC be a Field Education site for seminarian Amber Brown. Clare Price and Deb VanDusen volunteered to organize the Fellowship activities for 2017. Deb will get that group started. FCC will be obtaining a banner stating "Immigrants and Refugees Welcome" and will install along with the replacement banner of "God is Still Speaking" on the south side of the education wing.

Approved, with some questions and requests, having the Binghamton Crosby Group, a capella mens group from BU, sing at the Jan 15 service.

Pastor's Report- Janet

Press & Sun Bulletin has requested holiday stories. Janet will provide text regarding anxieties in troubled times, and how the church offers a radical welcome, hosts multiple groups and religions, inclusive worship, offering sanctuary, and our mission statement. Dov and Janet now sharing office space – friendly, inviting, and comfortable. Caroling this Saturday, 12/17, meeting 4:00 pm in the parking lot. Singing for several of our homebound, followed by party at Bernie Lewis' home.

Deacon Advisor Report – Dov

Healing Service with anointing quarterly beginning in 2017. Healing administers by non-clergy persons. Good Friday liturgy nearly complete – 13 of 14 poems complete, and several b&w graphics provided.

Christian Education Committee

Averaging 4 walk-ins per Sunday. Cookie bag gifts for any children who are in church.

Mission Committee

Clare reported on the Christmas Fund offering, taking place now. All the Christmas Angel gifts are ready to distribute, for a total of nine families.

New Business

Dov spoke about an idea he has seen work well in another church, of an E-pistle, which is a way of staying in communication with an email to those away for the winter. The E-pistle email would provide info about what the church is doing and about the weekly worship service, or perhaps more often. Dov offered to provide this email, and the idea was approved. Those wishing to receive it while away merely need to let Dov or the church office know.

Broken Promises

Dr. Dov Treiman

Of all of the silly human inventions, New Year's Resolutions undoubtedly rank with the silliest. It's easier to take a whoopy cushion seriously than a New Year's Resolution. For most of us, by the time we have formulated the resolution itself, we have *first* formulated ways to get around it, "cheating" that "won't count" by some ridiculous stretch of pharisaic logic. But never you fear. No sooner have we developed the pharisaic cheat, then we simply abandon the thing altogether. After all, it's too cold to drive to the gym in winter or we don't *really* want the expense of purchasing the new wardrobe to go with our newer slender figure or people live into their *thousands* while still smoking. And so on it goes.

So far as I can tell, the only purpose New Year's Resolutions really serve is to give God something to giggle about and, given the immense pile of things we give God to cry about, giving The Divine a good hearty belly laugh may not be such a bad idea.

But, there's a real problem with New Year's Resolutions. We use them with the same alacrity for incredibly mundane things like cleaning out the garage as we do for more spiritual matters, like increasing our outreach to the poor of our community. That, my friends, is nothing for God to giggle about.

So, how do we fix that? Well, for starters, we take them away from any association with New Years. The turn of the calendar, in the final analysis, is little more than an excuse to drink some more champagne. It should not be the basis of our reorientation of our relationship with The Divine. God waits; God awaits; God's patience with our peccadillos infinitely exceeds our ability to engage them. But, in turning to God, we need to take it away from some silly annual custom and to put it firmly in that basket of things we really do do because we know our lives and health—physical, mental, and spiritual—really do depend on it, *all year long*. Let me then suggest a New Year's Resolution for all of us: "This year, we resolve not to have any New Year's Resolutions." Once we have shaken *that* dust off our feet, let us go ahead and just do what we need to do.

Note: *Joyful Noise will play during the January 22nd worship and on February 19th,*



From the Office...

Our next Forecaster will be a February publication. I will include your programs, events, reports and any 'save-the-date' reminders for January. *The due date for this publication is January 25th.* Thanks, Leslie

Jazz Vespers

The next Jazz Vespers program will be on Sunday, January 8th at 5pm.



The New Year rings in with, "The Southern Tier Brass Quintet" with musicians Christopher Weber, Jud Spena, Nathan Raboy, Peter Perfetti, Adam Peck, Jim Hillman, and Joel Smales.

Updates from the Church Administrator...

Please take a look at the most recent birthday listing to see if your name is on this list. If not, please let me know so I can rebuild an up-to-date listing. The list is on Alice's desk for your review, or you can email me your birth date and I can update if needed. Additionally, if you had requested room usage (that isn't currently on a recurring basis), please send me your program or event date so I can make sure it is included on our facility use calendar. I appreciate all your assistance on this.

Your new keypad entry codes are now up and running for you to use as your SENTRY arm/disarm codes as well. Please remember to add a '1' (off) or '2' (away) after your 4-digit code. Please contact me if you have any questions. -Leslie

Angel Wings Dancing

On a foggy early morning

around me as the mist
slowly dances
my mind ponders
the chances

are we but
perhaps in heaven
upon this earth
from the very start

be it heaven or earth
i trust the knowing
deep within
my heart

we are each
dearly loved and protected
by our god
wearing his golden crown

surrounded and embraced
by his legion of angels
with their wings
of soft feathered down

Dancing Angel Wings

Dedicated to Carolyn Blake-n-Her Beloved Sister, Janet
Julie Ann Johnson 2016

Faith Works

Fellowship Night

Mark your calendars for January 20th, 6pm, and plan to attend our first Fellowship meeting of the new year. We will start with a potluck dinner followed by our annual planning session. Think about what activities and programs you would like in 2017 and come ready to contribute. Remember our fellowship is what we make it. HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Organist Nancy Wildoner presents her Pop Pipes-Chart Toppers program at The Forum on Sunday, January 22nd at 2pm with special guest DJ, TeJay from MAGIC 101.7FM. Playing top ten radio hits from the 50's to today, it'll be a blast from the past (and present).

Please call 607-773-1495 for tickets.

Metonoia Spiritual Living Group will reconvene for the Winter Semester on January 30th, 2017 and will continue through March, 2017 every other week on Monday evenings at 6:45pm in the Parlor. Required text will be "Living the Science of mind" by Ernest Holmes. Julie Ann Johnson will be hosting in partnership with Karla Hill, RScP. If any questions, please call 707-621-2249.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



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 - Assistant to the Pastors
Leslie Dahlgren – Church Administrator
William Cuddeback - Treasurer
Curtis Hartwig - Assistant Treasurer
Arlene Price - Membership Clerk
Nancy Wildoner – Organist & Choir Director
Maureen Helms – Director of Joyful Noise
Judy Giblin – Director of Jazz Vespers
Sharon Shadduck – 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
Julie Ann Johnson—Evening Coordinator



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