

THE FORECASTER – November, 2018

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 –

This is arguable, of course, but it is widely believed that the most ignored of all the sayings of Jesus is when he tells us not to judge. Yet, there it is, right in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 7:1, followed by the story of the speck in their eye, and a log in your own.

On the face of it, it seems ridiculous. How could we possibly go through life without judging? I have in mind the hundred or so decisions that have gone into the entrance and hallway renovation at First Congregational Church. This wallpaper or that? How about the carpeting? Those decisions were all the result of considered judgment. It strikes me as impossible to avoid. And yet, I don't think we can dismiss Jesus' admonition so easily.

Two thoughts to share in defense of Jesus advice not to judge...

The first has to do with simple humility. Even though we may feel like we are the most intelligent person around, and our thoughts are the best ones compared to others, and our experience on most matters is the most relevant, and our judgment has always been the most sound, we also know deep inside that is absurd. We actually only have our perspective, our tiny slice of perception which is never comprehensive. Jane Goodall, the primatologist, put it beautifully.

"There are many windows through which we can look out into the world, searching for meaning ...

...Most of us, when we ponder on the meaning of our existence, peer through but one of these windows onto the world. And even that one is often misted over by the breath of our finite humanity.

We clear a tiny peephole and stare through. No wonder we are confused by the tiny fraction of a whole that we see.

It is, after all, like trying to comprehend the panorama of the desert or the sea through a rolled-up newspaper."

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There is a second, equally good reason not to judge. This has to do with something we all have experienced. Something happens that we then judge as bad, and we find out later that it was a good thing. There are a thousand examples. We initially judged it bad because of reason #1, our perspective was too small, our knowledge too limited, and we weren’t able to foresee the way it could result in good.

“Do not judge!” has some stiff competition for being ignored. “Don’t cast the first stone” comes to mind, as well as, “Don’t worry about tomorrow”. But despite the fact we need to make daily decisions, not judging is healthy advice. A sense of humility befits us. And when we haven’t made up our mind about a person or an event, it opens us up to seeing from a wider, and perhaps more godly, perspective.

Happy Thanksgiving to you and yours,

Art

Thanksgiving feast!

Chris and Tim O’Neill have again offered to organize a Thanksgiving dinner for our congregation. It will follow morning worship on Sunday, November 18.

There will be a sign-up sheet for folks who plan to attend. You welcome even if you miss putting your name on the list, but it helps a lot with shopping to have an idea how many potatoes to put in the pot!



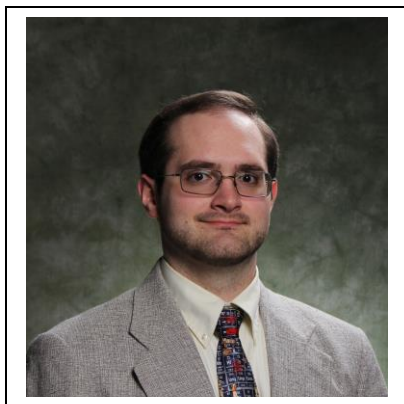
The meal is paid for by a free will offering and the generosity of merchants like Weis Markets who donate the turkeys. Thanksgiving is the most celebrated of all US holidays. Please put the date on your calendar. The food is great and so is the fellowship.

Deck the Halls

This year the calendar gives us an extra Sunday after Thanksgiving before the start of the Advent season. That Sunday - November 26 - will be used to decorate the church sanctuary before Advent. Folks are invited to wear “work” clothing to help with the project.

The church is always so warm and beautiful with the many Christmas decorations. Please plan to give another 30 minutes to help with the decorations.





“Doctor” Joe Izzo

Joseph Izzo is a fifth-year graduate student at Binghamton University in the chemistry department, and frequent attendee at FCC. On November 16th, he will be defending his dissertation thesis entitled: *Kinetic Isotope Effects and Density Functional Theory as Tools for Mechanistic Elucidation of Catalytic Reactions in Organic Chemistry: Secondary Amine catalysis, Non-covalent Organocatalysis, and Transition Metal Catalysis*.

The defense will be at 11:00 AM, in room 2004 of the University’s new “Smart Energy Building” (25 Murray Hill Rd.) and is open to the public. The defense will consist of a 30-45 minute presentation highlighting some of the work Joe has done at BU. After a short Q&A session, the audience will be asked to leave, and Joe will face questions from a committee of professors. Upon the completion and passing of this defense, he will spend the next two months continuing to work and live in Binghamton. Toward the end of January, Joe will be leaving Binghamton, New York, and the United States, to fulfill a post-doctoral position in the lab of Professor Karl Anker Jørgensen at Aarhus University, in Aarhus, Denmark. In this research position, Joe will continue his work in organic chemistry. After one-three years working in Denmark, he hopes to return to the US and serve as a professor at a university. He is sad to leave the friends and church family that he established in Binghamton, but is excited for this chance to explore the world and build his scientific career.

During worship on November 18, the congregation will participate in a “blessing ceremony” for Joe.

Armistice Day – Veterans’ Day

November 11 will mark the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, “the war to end all wars”! Because the fighting was happening all around the world, when the armistice was agreed to, there was concern that everyone stop fighting at the same time. The decision was to make the end on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. At the time that was about a week away.

After World War II, our government changed the holiday to Veterans’ Day. With the holiday falling on Sunday this year, our congregation plans to recognize veterans during worship. A special tribute is planned for Jack Brink. Drafted from high school at the age of 18, Jack was in the infantry fighting across Germany. He has been active in working for peace for many years. That morning at 11:00 AM, Veterans for Peace will ring our church bell – as many churches did 100 years ago.

Daylight Savings Time – November 4

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees held its monthly meeting On October 16. Consistently meeting with the Board have been Leslie Lipski, Office Manager, and Bill Cuddeback, Financial Officer. I want to start by thanking both of these individuals for all their efforts. The input, reports and knowledge both Leslie and Bill provide have helped the Board of Trustees and our church understand our position in our day-to-day dealings along with having a clear understanding of all financial matters. Thank you both!

As we all have seen in the last couple of months, the new handicap entryway at our parking lot along with handicap bathroom updates near the Main Street end of our hallway are progressing nicely. Since this project has been managed quite well, the board has approved the opportunity of the construction to renovate the main hallway as a continuation of the initial project. Pete Perkins has been an outstanding advocate for our facility while acting as the General Contractor for our renovations. His thriftiness and foresight are the reasons we are able to accomplish many more updates to our facility than originally considered. We all owe Pete a great deal of thanks.

As with any renovation, the process will uncover other projects that need to be considered. These renovations are no exception. With the ceiling down, it was very obvious the need to update our internet capabilities. A contract is now in place and work will soon be underway to update our internet to a wi-fi system. This update will not be funded from the renovation project but as part of our normal yearly budget in a line item dedicated for major repairs to our church. In other words, we already have the finances available because of the foresight of the budget committee; both our yearly budget and the renovation project are still financially sound.

Other business and church details were discussed including the purchase of a new 12-foot Christmas tree. If at any time you have any questions, please feel free to contact or speak to anyone on our board. The final item the Board discussed was the resignation of Dubbie Agard from the Board of Trustees. Dubbie felt there were a few reasons that it was not the right time for her to be serving on the Board any longer. While I understand them, the Board of Trustees and I personally will miss having her knowledge, passion, guidance and input. Thank you, Dubbie, for all that you have give

Art Price, Chairman, Board of Trustees

Almost Done

The new doors are in. The concrete ramp and curbs are poured, the inside walls, ceiling and floors finished – the construction is looking great!

Hand rails and canopy over the top of the ramp and some paving still need to be done. The goal is to be done by Thanksgiving. Sure is a much more welcoming entry from the parking lot.



Thank You Cindi!



The work to remodel the church hall and make a new lobby and handicap ramp has been a lot of work. The contractors have worked hard while trying to allow church programs to continue. Pet Perkins has given a lot of his time, both coordinating the various contractors and working with them. But the church staff person who really put in a lot of extra effort was the custodian, Cindi West-Davidson.

It started in late July helping Toni to move the library to another room. In early August she received a call that demolition would start in two days. That required clearing the walls in the hall from the offices to Main Street. Then the cinder block walls

were knocked down, ceilings removed, paper pulled off the walls, and new walls built and plastered.

In addition to moving and finding a hiding place for all the “stuff”, she had to keep the dirt and dust controlled and try to not let it be tracked around the building. Not only did she succeed at that project, but she kept smiling most of the time.

On Sunday, October 14 the congregation thanked Cindi with a cake and a couple of \$250 checks. It was a happy time to say, “Thank you Cindi, for a job well done”!

Neighbors in Need

In order to justify himself the man asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbor”? In reply Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan. The United Church of Christ holds four special offerings each year. One is “Neighbors in Need” where like the Good Samaritan, we can help neighbors we don’t even know. Money collected is used by the Justice and Witness of the UCC. One third goes to the Council for American Indian Ministry, and two thirds is used for grants to churches working for social issues. Items like programs to help the LGBTQ community, immigrants, and projects for the poor in third world countries. This year special consideration is being given to serving our immigrant neighbors and communities.

Transition Team

July 31st the Church Council identified members to appoint to a Transition team. The team is tasked to celebrate the pastorate of Rev. Suggs and find leadership while a search is made for a new called pastor. The team (Tom Bucker, Chris O’Neil, Art Price, Heidi Roberts, Marty Rorapaugh, and Jamie Walters) has met with Rev. Dr. Marsha Williams, our UCC Conference Minister, to begin the process of selecting an interim Minister upon Art’s retirement December 31, 2018. We will be gathering information for our Church Profile. If any church members have any specific questions for an interim candidate, please speak to one of the Transition Team members.

Faith Works Fellowship

The October Fellowship meeting was held on the 19th. It was our annual game night. Chris and Tim O'Neill were our hosts, and we thank them for their hospitality. It was the first meeting since May, and from the noise we made, it seems everyone enjoyed themselves. The annual Rummage Sale filled Fellowship Hall. It was well supported by the church – a big THANK YOU to Judy Giblin for putting in many hours of work in this project, as well as many, many others!

October 28th we began collecting funds and frozen turkeys for the Thanksgiving dinner baskets which are given to our needy neighbors. The baskets will be assembled at our meeting on November 16, for distribution the next week by the Southern Tier AIDS program. We have partnered with them for the past several years and it works well. Last year we provided 31 turkey dinners. Please have your contribution in by Sunday, November 18. If you put your donation in the offering plate, please designate it for the Thanksgiving baskets.

Pegos Baptism



Sunday, October 21, Bowen Randall Pegos, son of Douglas and Judy Price Pegos, was baptized during morning worship. Pastor Suggs was assisted in the ceremony by Margie Price, aunt of Bowen. As Bowen was introduced to the congregation, members of the Price family sang “Child of Blessing”. The Pegos family lives in Hobe Sound, Florida; however, Judy has maintained her

membership in First Congregational Church, UCC in Binghamton. They enjoyed seeing old friends and worshipping with the Binghamton “church family” and friends.

Board of Deacons

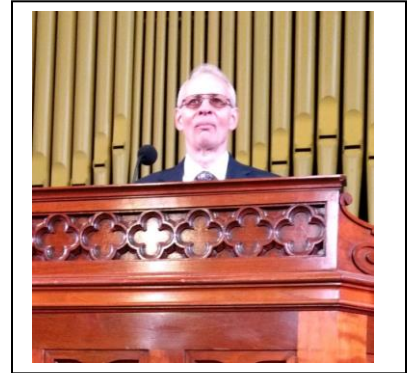
The Board of Deacons met on October 16 and heard reports from various committees. The schedule for November Sundays was reviewed including Veterans’ recognition on the 100th anniversary of World War I; Joe Izzo recognition, and Thanksgiving turkey meal.

The Susquehanna Association report included the fact that the New York Conference has been running a deficit budget for a number of years. To help close the budget gap, a \$2 per capita tax is being asked for from each church. The Association is going to pay half - \$1 for each person - the first year from an unused fund.

Deacons reported on visits made to shut-ins last month; Deb Miller was nominated as the Deacon representative to the church Nominating Committee.

Our Wider Mission

Mark Behle, a missionary from Southern Africa spent most of a week with us in Binghamton and told and showed us where some of Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM) money is being spent. He spent over 30 years as a missionary for the United Church of Christ.



In his Sunday sermon he taught us some wisdom from Losoto, the country he last served, such as “If you want to go fast, work alone. If you want to go far, work with others”. It has been several years since our church has hosted a missionary. It was good to hear what the UCC is doing around the world.



How to contact us
Mon-Thurs, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
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Web: www.uccbinghamton.org

The Rev. Dr. Arthur M. Suggs – Pastor
Leslie Lipski – Church Administrator
Art Price – Trustee Chairman
Clare Price – Deacon Chairman
Doug Garnar – Church Council Chairman
Nancy Wildoner – Organist & Choir Director
Judy Giblin – Director of Jazz Vespers
Sharon Shaddock – Childcare Provider
William Cuddeback – Treasurer
Martin Rorapaugh – Financial Secretary
Vanessa Warren – Bookkeeper
Cindi West-Davidson – Custodian
Julie Ann Johnson – Evening Coordinator
Toni Rorapaugh – Librarian & Historian
Arlene Price – Membership & Forecaster Ed.

Celebrating November birthdays

3 Christopher Gass
5 Steven Schaughency
8 Shelbi Dubord
9 Amelia Christian
10 Ann Marie Mateya
12 Delelores Tower
14 Pete Perkins
19 Abigail Rose Winans
25 Nick Gabello
26 Ethelyn Enos
29 Dave Moody
30 Cotter Smith

November Anniversary

20, 2013 – Chris & Tim O’Neill