

THE FORECASTER – March, 2019

Official Publication of First Congregational Church, UCC
30 Main Street, Binghamton, New York 13905
Rev. Lisa Heckman, Interim Pastor

**No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here at
First Congregational Church!**

Pastor's Ponderings



For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord,

plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.

-- Jeremiah 29:11

Dear Friends,

God sends that message of hope through Jeremiah at a time when the people were hopeless. Recently exiled from their homes in Judea, now displaced in Babylon, they thought God had forsaken them. We at FCC are not hopeless by any means (!) and we have even more assurance in God's plans for our hope-filled future. Our challenge is discerning what those plans are. That's gonna take some time!

Those who were here before Art Suggs may remember a period of tribulation with several interims and a significant loss in membership. Add to that the normal anxiety of a time of transition and the immediate reaction is to get the next installed pastor in place as quickly as possible! While understandable, a fast solution is rarely the best solution. A quick fix can create even more problems in the long term.

The Transition Team stated the Goal of the Transitional Period as:

*To help the leadership and thus the congregation refresh, evolve, and/or clarify the vision and mission,
and affirm or create anew a really clear sense of the values and mission-elements*

that are important to these times and help us to move forward.

More than qualifying what attributes are needed for FCC's next installed pastor, the transition period is an important time to reassess who we are **now** as this particular part of the Body of Christ and what is the direction God wants us to go.

This work will dovetail with what is needed to create the church's profile for the pastoral search. The profile is an extremely detailed and comprehensive description of our ministry.

(Cont. on Page 2 – Pastor's)

(Cont. from Page 1 – Pastor's)

It incorporates the usual statistical and demographic information about FCC, but goes much deeper, asking us to examine what that information discloses. It also requires the same kind of exploration of mission, ministry, and calling that we already wish to do during the transition. A team of people will be

needed to develop the profile and it is my hope to work closely with them on uncovering who we are and where God is leading us.

While all this is going on, our ministry will keep moving forward! We will worship, study, serve the community, be in fellowship with one another, laugh and cry together, and live the Spirit filled lives we are called to live. God has good plans in store for us and we can be assured of Jesus' presence with us every step of the way.

Grace and Peace.

Lisa

Worship Schedule for March

3/3	Lk 9:28-36, Ex 34:29-35	Liturgist: Phyllis Martin; Transfiguration
3/6	Ash Wednesday Worship at 7:00 pm in the Chapel	
3/10	Lk 4:1-13, Deut 26:1-11	Liturgist: Deb Miller; Communion ; Lent 1; Temptation of Jesus
5pm	Jazz Vespers	Cookie Coogan & Friends
3/13	Music & Meditation	Meditation: Lisa Heckman; Music:
3/17 Noise;	Gen 15:1-12,14-18; Ps 27	Liturgist: JulieAnn Johnson; Joyful Lent 2; covenant
3/20	Music & Meditation	Meditation: Jim Dunn; Music: x
3/24 gardener	Lk 13:1-9; Ps 63:1-8	Liturgist: Pokey Crocker; Lent 3; patient
3/27	Music & Meditation	Meditation: Clare Price; Music: x
3/31	Lk 15:1-3,11b-32;2 Cor 5:16-21	Liturgist: x; Lent 4; Prodigal Father



Like us on Facebook!

FCC's Facebook page is called

"UCC, First Congregational Church of Binghamton, NY"

We are starting to put more events and information on the page, so like us to follow what is happening.

Church Council off to a good Start!

With 12 leaders present at the first meeting of the new year, almost all activity groups in church were represented. The various reports helped the new leadership know what is happening. It also was helpful for Rev. Heckman to get a feel of how the Congregational “system” works.



Rev. Heckman also used the meeting to share what she feels called to do as pastor of our congregation. An important part of that work is to survey our membership and find what we believe and want for our church.

That will be part of the challenge of a committee to be appointed to write a church profile. When that is put together, a search committee will be able to identify the qualities to look for in a new pastor. The profile committee will be established very soon. Council will also organize an installation of newly elected church leaders on Sunday, March 3, 2019.

Jazz Vespers

The featured group for Jazz Vespers on Sunday, March 10, will be ~~COOKIE COOGAN COOGAN COOGAN COOGAN~~ Cookie Coogan is a jazz vocalist and music educator throughout the upstate New York region. She performs solo, leads her own bands, and serves as an “occasional” vocalist for many other area bandleaders.

Mike Solazzo has worked with jazz luminaries Joe Megnarelli, Bill Watrous and Nick Brignola. He has also worked with the Four Lads, the Glenn Miller Orchestra, and the Syracuse Symphony.

Hugh Douglass has been performing and teaching guitar for over 40 years. Currently he resides in Elmira, where he teaches at the Robert M. Sides School of Music and performs regularly in various jazz and blues groups.

Brad Nemcek is a native of the Triple Cities. He has performed in concert with jazz greats Marion McPartland and Slam Stewart, and currently plays with the Mason Warrington Orchestra, the Los Vega, Basin Street Dixieland Band, Music Unlimited, Swing Street Jazztet and the Doug Beardsley Trio.

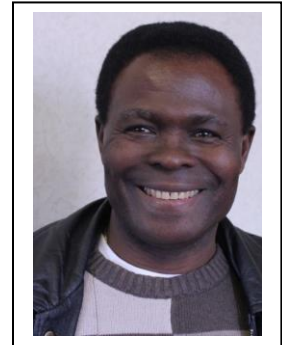
This is a fine group of professional musicians and you will enjoy the tunes they have chosen. Judy will also be joining Cookie for a duet. We’d love to see you on March 10, at 5:00 PM in the Sanctuary.

Congregational Conversation

All are invited to join in a Congregational Conversation following worship on **March 3rd**. Gathered around tables in Fellowship Hall, we’ll create a timeline of the history of FCC. By exploring our past, we can gain insight and inspiration for our future. Please come and be a part of the conversation!

Mission Committee looking to help a Haiti Orphanage

Dominique Louis Jean-Philippe is a long time member of our congregation in Binghamton. He is a native of Haiti and visits there quite often. This winter he brought to our attention the plight of two orphanages in Haiti. One in the capital of Port-au-Prince is close to closing for lack of money. A woman and her husband took in children who lost their parents (and in some cases siblings) in the terrible earth quake of 2010 where thousands died. He spoke English and communicated with some sponsors for support. He has died and she does not speak English – thus lost much of the support for the orphanage.



The Mission committee asked Louis to get us more details, and we hope to see if some support is available from the United Church of Christ Global Missions. The committee is also thinking of trying to send some financial support. One of the challenges in Haiti is the theft of things sent to the country. With Louis there, we feel he can get money where it should go.

He went back to Haiti in February (is staying with his brother) and sent this email report after arriving:
[REDACTED] orphanages in Port-au-Prince and in Gros-Morne (Gonaives), Haiti.

As you know, I left the unites States on 02-09-19 in destination of Haiti. I arrived that day, but struggle to get home because of the Street movements, they blocked every single Street in the Capital, they were fighting everywhere, but a smart driver take me home anyway. since that Saturday the country stay closed, it was already closed since Thursday the 7th of February. Everything is bad in the country. I should already send you some information (report), but the lady responsible for the orphanage in Port-Au-Prince get stuck in Dominican Republic and cannot come back to Port-au-Prince up to now.

She wants to give to us a complete report for the orphanage and all the detail as well, but she is unable while away.

Her name is: Marie Yveline Adam. The address is: 9-10 Rue La Pierre Vivante off of Rue Cassagnol, Delmas 75 Prolonge, Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

She does have people working with her for the orphanage and the kids go to school every day. They started the orphanage right after the 01-12-2010 earthquake. But, she will be coming for a complete
[REDACTED]

(Pictured to the right are some of the children in the orphanage in Port-au-Prince.)

In addition to this project, the committee selected some programs to help support, using the interest
[REDACTED]



Lisa

Delores (Dee) Tower Dies



February 15 - Dee Tower, a long-time member of First Congregational Church died. She had been ill for quite a while, but when not in the hospital on Sunday mornings, she was worshipping in church. With her dear friend, Arlene Pewterbaugh, they were almost always the first seated in the sanctuary.

Dee sang in the church choir, and when “Joyful Noise” began, she became an active member. She loved to crochet and made countless hats, blankets, shawls, and lap robes. Dee was also generous in sending out greeting cards.

A funeral service was held on Wednesday, February 20, in the sanctuary at First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ. About 70 family, friends and FCC members attended the service.

Rev. Lisa Heckman led a beautiful service sharing a number of stories about Dee and poems from family members; “Joyful Noise” also performed in the service in tribute to Dee.

Faith Works Fellowship

The February meeting was held in Fellowship Hall. After a pot-luck dinner, we enjoyed a fine movie about Fred Rogers entitled, “Won’t you be my neighbor?” This seemed to speak to us given some of our outreach activities. We thank Judy & Doug Garnar for setting it up.

On Saturday, March 2, we hope to present our Hospitality Tent at the annual St. Patrick’s Day parade. For the last two years the weather prevented us from doing so. The sign-up sheets have been posted, and several have signed to help. This endeavor requires a fair amount of work, so we can always use more workers. Art Suggs used to sell hot dogs, but he has retired. If any of you would like to do this, please let me know. We have the steamer and I will buy the supplies.

March 15th the Fellowship will gather for a lasagna dinner prepared by Clare & Arlene Price. See the article, [“Where do I come from – what is my heritage?”](#) on the following page for more details.

Bob and Elizabeth Neill
Discretionary Fund

A common occurrence in most churches is someone stopping by asking for financial assistance. They need gas to get to a doctor's appointment; they need money for food because their food stamps haven't made it thru the month; they need help paying for medication. Being next door to Social Services increases our visibility to those who require aid. The Pastor's Discretionary expense line in the budget provides a means to offer that help.

We try to be grace-full in our assistance, giving people the benefit of the doubt as much as possible. We also offer dignity with the gift, asking, when appropriate, that the person help with tasks here at the church, so that it is a mutual exchange.

When you feel inspired, donations to the discretionary fund enable this ministry to continue and would be appreciated.

Deacons report

The February meeting was the first opportunity for the Board to meet with Rev. Lisa Heckman. Conversation covered reasons for order of worship, things to accomplish during the interim ministry, and plans for the Lent and Easter worship. Lisa looks forward to a Congregational Conversation on March 3 to discuss these issues with the wider congregation.

Other business was Jim Dunn will continue as deacon representative to church council, Deb VanDusen will order Easter flowers, Joyful Noise will do the 8:00 AM Easter service at Recreation Park. Lisa also asked deacons to accompany her for introduction to visits with church members. Four of the eleven people who received conditional letters for membership asked to be placed on the inactive list. The board also appreciated Phyllis Martin's continuing service sending cards on behalf of the church. Plans were made for the funeral of Dee Tower on February 27.



“Where do I come from – what is my heritage?”

The March meeting of Faith Works Fellowship will be held on Friday, the 15th. A lasagna dinner will be served. A sign-up sheet is posted in the church parlor. This helps greatly in purchasing food; however, you are always welcome to attend whether you signed in or not.

Many folks have studied their genealogy, know their ethnic background and can list generations of ancestors. Others may be able to name only one or two grandparents. This evening we will attempt to explain how you can discover your ancestry in a

relaxed and fun evening. You are requested to bring a baby/childhood picture to share. Please bring it in an envelope – this way we can guess whose picture it is. There will be handouts to take home, and opportunities to share your heritage and ancestral homeland with one another.

Please join us on Friday, March 15, at 6:00 PM in Fellowship Hall.

Clare & Arlene Price

A HOUSE DIVIDED

....Steve Chapman, a reporter for the *CHICAGO TRIBUNE* has suggested that American Politics today is “...like a bicycle with a rusty chain, flat tires and no brakes. It is broken and it is not taking any of us where we want to go.”

On Sunday, March 17. we will run a public deliberation on a new National Issues Forum entitled, “A House Divided: What Would We Have to Give Up to Get the Political System We Want?”

The forum offers three options:

- 1. Reduce toxic talk** by kicking abusive people off social media; require opposing viewpoints on TV; take steps against false advertising
- 2. Make fairer rules of politics and follow them** by removing voting blocks to voting, strengthen voting rights for minorities, draw fairer and more competitive election districts, limit campaign spending
- 3. Take control and make decisions closer to home** by letting local communities make their own rules, give Federal funds to State without restrictions, rely more on community groups and give back control to local schools and their school boards

Each of the actions for each option has a counterpoint action. Through deliberation we will look at the strengths and weaknesses of each action, understand the tradeoffs and hopefully find some consensus which could be catalyst for future activities.

The deliberation will be preceded by a light lunch at 11:30 and the deliberation will run from 12-2 PM. Issue Maps will be available starting March 3. There will also be a limited number of the full issue books. People are encouraged to sign up starting March 3 so a headcount for both the light lunch and the issue maps/books can be determined. The signup will be on a bulletin board in the church parlor.

Doug Garnar will be the moderator and any questions should be directed to him (garnardc@sunybroome.edu)

Rummage Sale

The annual Rummage Sale was held on Saturday, October 20. While I am the titular head of this undertaking, if decisions were left to me, it would never get off the ground. I can't praise those who work on this highly enough. I hate to name names for fear of leaving someone out, but I will say that Cindi and Bernie Lewis are two of the hardest workers I've ever known, especially with the grunt work that is left the week after the sale.

We not only made over \$1K this year, we helped out a lot of people who needed it, and in my estimation that's as important, if not more so, than the money. This is my second year “running” this event and it's never a cake walk but does get a little easier every year. Of course, I say this from the peaceful point of view of someone who knows the next sale is 10 months away.

Thank you, everyone who donated items, set up tables (of which I hope to have lighter ones next year), arranged stuff, made sure electric and electronic things worked, hung up and hung up and hung up clothes, worked a booth and aided in the cleanup afterward. We have a really good family of workers and I appreciate each and every one of you.

Judy Giblin

Ash Wednesday Worship

Ash Wednesday, **March 6th**, there will be a service of prayer and meditation including the imposition of ashes. We'll gather at **7:00 pm in the chapel**.

Liturgists Wanted!

We are blessed with a few members who regularly serve as liturgist, but I would love to see a wider group involved in worship. This is a fulfilling ministry that all are invited to participate in. The liturgist is provided with everything needed, so the only preparation necessary is to practice before Sunday morning.

Also, with a female pastor in the pulpit, it is important that we have more men serving as liturgist to have a balance of genders leading in worship.

If you feel the Spirit nudging you to serve in a new way, please sign up on the sheet in the Parlor.

Lisa

IGEN: WHY TODAY'S KIDS ARE SUPER-CONNECTED, ARE GROWING UP LESS REBELLIOUS, MORE TOLERANT, LESS HAPPY AND COMPLETELY UNPREPARED FOR ADULTHOOD

Jean M. Twenge is the author of this new book and will be this year's Convocation speaker at SUNY Broome on Tuesday April 9 in the West Gym. As our church begins to look to new pastoral leadership it must look at the future and who we wish to draw into our faith community. I am hopeful that some of our congregation might look at this book (now available in paperback) and also look at a taped edition of her talk which will be available shortly after she delivers the college's annual Convocation Address. Her book is divided into 10 chapters with a conclusion. Chapters that might be of interest include: "In no hurry: growing up slowly"; "In person no more: I'm with you, but only virtually"; "Insecure: the new mental health crisis"; "Irreligious: losing my religion (and spirituality)"; "Indefinite: sex, marriage and children".

The aforementioned chapters give you a sense of the wide sweep of her topics. I am always cautious about books that make sweeping generalizations. This said, I think the book is worth reading if only for the chapter on "Irreligious: losing my religion". Once the video of her address is available I will follow up on how you can access it. If you have any questions contact Doug Garnar at garnardc@sunybroome.edu or in church.



LENT: THE SEASON OF SACRED STORIES

We enter Lent amidst a chorus of confidence in God's presence and guidance. God is with us as we move through wilderness and promised land alike. The call of Lent is to deepen our faith in God's abiding presence.

Lent is "desert time" in the church year, writes Elaine Ward, long time church educator/storyteller. Our inner space is empty, our path is dark. We have rubbed ashes on foreheads. We await the crucifixion. So how do we irrigate the desert? By telling the old, old story of Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection. By telling new stories that give us hope to tide us through the desert time."

"Telling stories during Lent gives substance to our hopes and fears, our loves and hates, our faith and doubt, the good and evil in our lives. They are our inner selves speaking the language of imagination. Every time we tell a story we add another character with whom the hearer can identify and choose to copy or renounce, another idea or feeling, another experience to ponder and explore. Every time we tell a story we enrich and enlarge the hearer's world."

The Christian Education Committee and volunteers will be sharing some "sacred stories, poems, and legends" in worship during Lent. Let us all "breathe the story alive" (Ward) as we move through Lent to the most glorious story of Easter.

How to contact us
Mon-Thurs, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

fcc@binghamtonwireless.com

Web: www.uccbinghamton.org

Rev. Lisa Heckman – Interim Pastor
Leslie Lipski – Church Administrator
Tim O’Neill – Trustee Chairman
Deb Miller – Deacon Chairwoman
Clare Price – Church Council Chairman
Arlene Price – Church Clerk
Nancy Wildoner – Organist & Choir Director
Judy Giblin – Director of Jazz Vespers
Sharon Shadduck – Childcare/Teacher
Martin Rorapaugh – Financial Secretary
Cindi West-Davidson – Custodian
Toni Rorapaugh – Librarian & Historian
Arlene Price – Membership & Forecaster Ed.

Celebrating March Birthdays

1 Liz O’Neill
4 Evan Brigham
5 Laura Mateya
6 Robin Whalen
11 David Crocker
14 Alexander O’Brien
15 Kay Rhinebeck
19 David Excell
21 Pokey Crocker
22 Ethelyn Enos, Sr.
26 Germaine Smith
29 Catherine Cornelius
 Heather Excell
 Lola Schumann