

# The Bell Tower

Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Hatfield

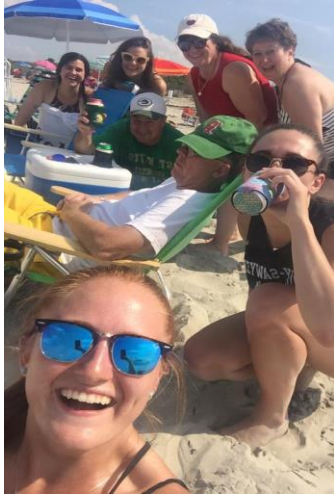
2018

August

No. 7

## Vacation , but not from church

Sharon, Kristin, Amanda and I are heading off with another family for a vacation in Maine this month.



This was us last year in Ogunquit. You can see quite obviously who was the only one who needed a restful vacation! Yup, the good looking guy in the bright yellow swim trunks. Now I enjoy my time at the beach with family and friends, just as I am sure you do. This year, however, is the

first time in an awfully long time that I am taking a weekend off for my vacation. This means I will not be able to come to church in Hatfield, but that does not mean that I will not be going to church. And no, I'm not talking about communing with God as I listen to the waves lapping up on the beach. I'm talking about going to church, sitting with other church goers, listening to church music and paying attention to church messages. When you are in church at 9:30am in Hatfield, Sharon and I will be in church with Rev. Anna Copeland and Rev. Dan Hollis in York, Maine. What I'm trying to say is that vacations do not have to imply vacations from church.

I know I am in the business of church; I get paid to go to church. However, long before I was in the business of church, I was a part of church. I know the statistics. When young adults head off to college, they often stop practicing their faith, whatever their faith may be, but I went to church more. It was right there on campus so I literally went every day of the week except for Saturdays. And it was not even the church denomination I belonged to at the time, but it was church. It was not only people coming together; it was people called together by Jesus.

I went to Brandeis University. I was talking the other evening with my old roommate. He remembers his father's agitation when our tuition and room and board crossed the \$10,000 mark. I'm so old that it's now seven times as expensive to attend

the same school. Brandeis is a secular Jewish university. Its Jewish roots inspire and influence, but



do not overshadow any other belief or lack thereof. This was symbolized beautifully in the construction of

their chapels. The three buildings are designed to represent the open book of Holy Scripture, and intentionally, no chapel casts a shadow over any other chapel, and just as intentionally, the three chapels surround a heart-shaped pond, the message being that all of these faiths come together around a common message of God's love.

When I first arrived in South Deerfield as a pastor back in 1988, another local pastor took me out to lunch. I remember him saying that church is any building with pews and an organ. This was not meant to be a dogmatic statement. He meant in his euphemistic way that church is church regardless of doctrine or denomination. This was his way of expressing no chapel casting a shadow upon another chapel and all called together by God's love.

Organized religion can be a force of violence, subjection and ignorance. I know this, and it embarrasses me greatly. Organized religion can also be liberating, uplifting and a powerful advocate for community and change. The latter is why I go to church on vacation and why I chose to be in the business of church.

I know many people are very successful at being good people without church, but church can challenge people to be better people. If I listen to the waves, I can feel God. I used to go on retreats along Long Island Sound. It was not hard to feel God there as I stood by myself. However, if that's all I did, the repetition of the gentle waves could be just like the repetition of my own thoughts. Then God is not holy as in wholly other, and others are not necessarily holy. Church challenges me to know God better and to act like I know God better, and church is Jesus' called community. The community helps me

to realize that many and different do not offend God, and that is a message we can't preach enough. This is why I'm going to go to church on vacation. I enjoy it. I need it. Not to mention that Jesus

deserves it. I hope you'll think about these few words before the summer is over because really, why would we want to take a vacation from church?

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**AUGUST EVENTS**

- Sat. 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Lobsterfest fundraiser.
- Sun. 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Benevolence Committee at 10:45am.
- Mon. 6<sup>th</sup> Bible study in church parlor from 7 – 8:00pm.
- Wed. 8<sup>th</sup> Trustees' meeting at 7:00pm.
- Sun. 12<sup>th</sup> Rev. Randy on vacation. Sunday Service still at 9:30am.
- Mon. 13<sup>th</sup> Volunteer opportunity at the Food Bank from 1- 4:00pm.
- Mon. 20<sup>th</sup> Bible study in church parlor from 7 – 8:00pm.
- Mon. 27<sup>th</sup> Deacons' meeting at 5:00pm.

**REGULAR GATHERINGS**

Sundays: **Worship Service at 9:30 am in July and August.** Sunday School at 9:45 am. Chat and Coffee at 10:30am.  
Tuesdays: Yoga classes are offered every Tuesday in the church parlor at 5:30pm.  
Wednesdays: Hatha Yoga classes take place every Wednesday at 6:00pm.  
Saturdays: AA meets at the church every Saturday at noon.

"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." - Frederick Buechner

**RE-DESIGNED WEBSITE COMING SOON**

The church has hired a professional consultant to build an improved website for us with integral links to social media platforms such as Facebook, etc. It will be easier to navigate and to send our message to our members and the community. Anita Wilson, Mark Gelotte and Rev. Randy are working with Rocket Strategies on this project. Please speak to any one of us about this upgrade. It will be up and running sometime this month.

**22<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL**

**LOBSTER-FEST**

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 4, 2018**

First Congregational Church of Hatfield  
41 Main Street

Menu: Steamed lobster w/drawn butter, baked potato, corn on the cob, coleslaw, rolls with butter, and fudge brownie dessert.

**For 'TAKE OUT ONLY' to be picked up at:**  
**5:00 5:30 6:00 6:30**

**TICKET PRICE: \$20.00**

**GROUP ORDERS WELCOMED**  
*Plan a LOBSTER PARTY!*

*Reservations required by AUGUST 1, 2018*

**Please call:**

**Marty Zigmont at 247-5453**  
**Jeannie Belden at 247-5905**



**BIBLE STUDY GROUP**

Our Bible study group continues to meet throughout the summer. We are now at the point in Mark's Gospel where Jesus is heading toward Jerusalem and all that awaits Him there. He is going to forewarn His disciples three times about His Passion, and three times they simply will not get it. Getting Jesus is not easy. It takes some time and effort. We need to give Jesus the chance to intrude into our lives and our thoughts. Bible study can help. I hope you will take the opportunity to let the biblical word still speak.

**FOOD BANK VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers from our church gather with Linda Milewski at the Western Mass Food Bank each second **Monday** of the month (Please note new day.) to help this worthwhile organization. If you can share three hours of your time, it will benefit those of our neighbours who do not have the ability to put enough food on their tables.



## Anniversary Celebrations

### ***New Life From Old Stories: Anniversary Celebrations That Make a Difference***

A church anniversary celebration is an opportunity to make meaningful and creative connections with the congregation's history. It's a time to learn more about the people who founded and led the church, and about the events that have shaped its unique personality. Even more, it is a chance to learn more about the larger Christian and Congregational traditions.

The Congregational Library at 14 Beacon Street in Boston provides a variety of resources on their website ([www.congregationallibrary.org](http://www.congregationallibrary.org)) and, for those signed up for our email alerts, information about conference calls and webinars on anniversary planning.

### ***Some Time-Tested Suggestions on Planning Church Anniversary Celebrations***

- Begin well in advance. Three or four years ahead of the event is not too soon!
- Create a core committee of creative and hardworking people, with a good representation across the age spectrum. History buffs are welcome, but so are good ideas of all kinds.
- Plan a celebration that goes beyond your church doors. An anniversary is an opportunity to re-introduce yourselves to your town or neighborhood, to build connections with other churches and community organizations, and to include them in the story you tell about yourselves.
- The resources available at [www.historysmiths.com](http://www.historysmiths.com) and similar organizations will be useful here.
- Involve the entire congregation in an oral history project.
- Use the resources at the Congregational Library to learn the bigger story behind your local one. Members have access to a full set of PowerPoint videos on Congregational Christian history. The online catalog also contains a wealth of information, much of it in digital form or available for borrowing by Library members.
- Think creatively about events that are fun and inspirational. Such as:
  - Write a pageant about your church's founding
  - Put together a scrapbook
  - Commission a hymn or special music
  - Create a timeline (church, community, and national events)
  - Organize a book club around historical themes
  - Make a commemorative quilt
  - Designate a special gift to an organization that your church played a role in establishing

### ***Writing a Church History that People Will Read***

Our pamphlet, [Writing a Church History That People Will Read](#), provides tips on research, organizing information, and editing, and suggests resources for publishing your final product.

Our collection will be helpful in pulling together your story. If you are close enough to Boston to come in for a visit, Library staff are always happy to assist with research. We have many town and county histories and a very large collection of local church histories for you to consult. Our sermon collection may well include one or two from a past minister. There are many digital resources on our website, including denominational year-books which will show, for example, names of clergy. Our obituary database provides search information on some 29,000 ministers and missionaries.

### ***Organizing and maintaining good church records***

An anniversary year is the time to get your church archive in order. The Library can help with tips and guidelines for creating and maintaining old records. Our members have access to a PowerPoint video on records management, and we also provide a written a guide for churches, [Managing Church Records](#). Our archivists are always ready and willing to help with your records management questions.

Churches with very old records (up to 1800 in most cases) are eligible for [our Hidden Histories program](#). We provide free digitizing and secure, climate-controlled space in our archives. Please [contact our digital archivist](#) for more information.

## **BENEVOLENCE NEWS**

The Benevolence Committee has a fund called *Kindness to Kids*. It will be administered through the Hatfield Elementary School's nurse. As occasional needs may arise, such as a student who may need help buying back to school supplies or another needing a pair of boots for winter, we will try to step-in and help. The students will need to be participating in the subsidized lunch program at the school to qualify. Some of these needs slip through the cracks and that is where we can step-in and hopefully make a difference. If you would like to contribute to this work in our own neighbourhood, please contact Carolyn Forsyth.

Also, Benevolence is planning tentatively a Pancake Breakfast for this coming February to benefit the Kindness to Kids fund. This fundraiser will be open to the community for the benefit of the community. If you would like to get more involved with the good work of this group, please contact Carolyn. Thank you.

## **VIEW CHURCH SERVICES ON-LINE AND ON TV**

We are airing our Services a couple of times a month on public access television. They take place on alternate Sundays. This allows people to see what happens inside our church building and it also reaches into the homes of people who are unable to be with us in church. The recorded Services air on Hatfield Community Television on Saturdays and Sundays at 8 am and 4 pm. It may also be seen at [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=hatfield+congregational+church](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=hatfield+congregational+church).

We could use the help of a few more volunteers to operate the camera on a rotating basis during the Services. If you could help in this way, please speak to Rev. Randy.

## **CONSIDER MEMBERSHIP AT HATFIELD CONGREGATIONAL**

If you feel you would like to be a formal member of the church, it begins with a group meeting with Rev. Calvo and members of the Board of Deacons. We talk about the church, its organization, how things work, and our core values and covenants. We will hold this orientation meeting this summer. Talk with Reverend Calvo or Amy Novak of the Board of Deacons if you are interested.

## **CAN WE INTEREST YOU?**

On the table by the church hall entrance to the Sanctuary are sign-up sheets for Sunday flower offerings and coffee and chat hostings. The flowers will be placed on the Communion Table and the donation will be printed in the bulletin and announced from the pulpit. Our Sunday morning coffee and chats are a wonderful opportunity to gather together after worship as friends and neighbors. To host does not entail feeding us all until we are full. It is rather an opportunity to linger over a cup of coffee or tea and chat. Thanks for helping.

## **SHARE AN INVITATION**

If someone you know is not attending church anywhere, please share an invitation with them to come and join us at Hatfield Congregational Church because "Whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."

## **CONTACT INFO: HATFIELD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

Website: [www.hatfieldchurch.org](http://www.hatfieldchurch.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/First-Congregational-Church-of-Hatfield-UCC](https://www.facebook.com/First-Congregational-Church-of-Hatfield-UCC)

Pastor: Rev. Randy Calvo 413-824-1630 [randyc1897@gmail.com](mailto:randyc1897@gmail.com)

### Committee Chairpersons:

*Christian Education, Anita Wilson 413 247-5229*

*Music, Anthony Tracia 781 738-6284*

*Real Folks Society, Martha Zigmont 413 247-5453*

*Benevolence, Carolyn Forsyth*

*Deacons, Amy Novak 413 210-3965*

*Trustees, Jonathan Bardwell 413-530-6262*

*Church Moderator, Glenda Flynn 413 247-5891*

