

# The Bell Tower

Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Hatfield

2018

June

No. 5

## 61<sup>st</sup> Anniversary

The United Church of Christ (UCC) was born on June 25, 1957. Our denomination is relatively young. This may seem incongruous in a congregation dating to 1670, and in an historical denomination that begins with the Pilgrims and the Puritans.

The UCC was formed by the merger of two denominations that were each formed by the previous merger of two other denominations. The Congregational Churches and the Christian Churches united on June 17, 1931 to form the Congregational Christian Churches. Both denominations emphasized freedom of religious expression and belief, and the autonomy of the local churches.

Three years later the Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America merged on June 26, 1934, forming the Evangelical and Reformed Church. These two denominations embodied the Reformed and Lutheran traditions of the Reformation.

Both merged-denominations shared a strong commitment to freedom of religious expression and thought dating back to important church reformers such as John Wyclif in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, John Hus in the 15<sup>th</sup>, and Martin Luther in the 16<sup>th</sup>. This common tradition led a 1937 study-group of clergy from these denominations to speak of a sense of “family.”

The study group did not leave this alone as a “feel good” moment. They followed-up with a telegram to church leadership inquiring about the possibility of “looking forward to union.” The telegram was met favourably and four years of private discussion on the topic followed.

The *Basis of Union* emerged from these discussions in 1943 (<http://www.ucc.org/beliefs/basis-of-union>). This document was the blueprint for each denomination’s own demise and their re-creation as the UCC. In its Preamble, Christian unity is sacrosanct to the point of their own denominational elimination so as to achieve the greater good of a united and uniting church. Each denomination accepted the wording of “and, if need be, die” in order to confront “the divisions and hostilities of our world” so that they could reconcile with each other and erase the scandal of Christian division.

The *Basis of Union* was ratified and a uniting General Synod was called in 1950, but legal injunctions prevented this from happening for another seven years. Finally, in 1957, a Uniting General Synod was convened of the two denominations, and on June 25<sup>th</sup> “as with faith in God and growing trust in one another” the UCC was born.

Once united, the UCC then called for the commissioning of a *Statement of Faith* (<http://www.ucc.org/beliefs/statement-of-faith>). The *Statement* was presented to the next General Synod in 1959 and endorsed. The heritage of religious freedom manifests itself in the fact that the *Statement’s* original language has been modified on two separate occasions to date. Creeds are not meant to last unchanged forever so that the particular words rather than their meaning and message become enshrined. They are meant to reflect the lived faith of the community in each generation.

The *Statement* reflects also another core tenet of the United Church of Christ – covenant. Covenant is the opposite of coercion. It is the framework that allows for freedom of thought and expression, and paradoxically for the union born out of the mutual respect for such freedom. This shared trust is the deeply held conviction of the church that allows for union and diversity to coexist in a meaningful and energetic fashion.

A principal spiritual motivation of the UCC is summarized in the quote from John’s Gospel: “That they may all be one” (17:21) The historical process of becoming the UCC and the intentional, on-going inclusiveness of its ministry and theology are a living expression of our faith. Two centuries ago, Philip Schaff taught that all churches are incomplete by their very nature. An historical progression is taking place under the guidance of the Holy Spirit toward the unity Jesus promised. The recently deceased Gabriel Fackre distinguished the UCC from dogmatic churches by saying: “Our eye [is] fixed on the horizon rather than the heritage.” This month we celebrate our 61<sup>st</sup> anniversary as a church inspired by what we are becoming. This is exciting and uncertain. Who knows where the Spirit will lead, but ours is the privilege to follow and to become together.

## JUNE EVENTS

- Sun. 3<sup>rd</sup> Benevolence Committee meets in the church parlor at 11:20 am.  
Sun. 10<sup>th</sup> Children's Sunday during worship.  
All Church Picnic on the church grounds at 11:00 am.  
Mon. 11<sup>th</sup> Bible study group will meet in the church parlor from 7 – 8:00 pm.  
Wed. 13<sup>th</sup> Trustee's Board will meet in the church parlor at 7:00pm.  
Fri. 15<sup>th</sup> & Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Conference will begin in Springfield at the Mass  
Sat. 16<sup>th</sup> Mutual Center and will continue through Saturday.  
Hampshire County Relay for Life will take place at Look Park on Friday through Saturday. Thank you to all who supported this fundraiser for the American Cancer Society.  
Sun. 17<sup>th</sup> Father's Day. Prayers will be offered for fathers living and deceased.  
Mon. 18<sup>th</sup> Church kitchen floor repair work scheduled. Kitchen will be unavailable through the 21<sup>st</sup>.  
Sun. 24<sup>th</sup> Open and Affirming Sunday throughout the United Church of Christ.  
Final Choir Performance before Summer Break till September  
Mon. 25<sup>th</sup> Bible study group will meet in the church parlor from 7 – 8:00pm.  
**61<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the organization of the United Church of Christ.**

## REGULAR GATHERINGS

Sundays: Worship Service at 10 am. Sunday School at 10:15 am. Chat and Coffee at 11am.

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.

Thursdays: The church choir rehearses on Thursdays at 6:15pm.

Saturdays: AA meets at the church every Saturday at noon.

## JUNE FOOD DRIVE

Every June the congregation accepts donations for the "Hunger Does Not Take the Summer Off" food drive. Donations of non-perishable food items will be accepted on all the Sundays of June beginning on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. A wagon will be located at the back of the church for your donations. The young people of the congregation will bring the wagon forward during the Time with Children portion of the Service. We will collect the donations in the Sanctuary throughout June and then deliver them to the Northampton Survival Center. Summer is often a difficult time for many families because the children do not receive subsidized lunches at school. Please remember this collection when you come to church in June. If you would like to make a monetary donation, please make your check payable to the church and indicate clearly that it is for the food drive. Thank you.

## CHILDREN'S SUNDAY

On June 10<sup>th</sup> we will observe Children's Sunday. On this day, Bibles will be presented to those children moving from third to fourth grades. During the Service, we acknowledge and thank the ones who lead our Sunday School. We will also ask the youth to participate in the Service by taking on some of the roles needed during worship. We hope that all of our young people will be in church on this day.

## ALL CHURCH PICNIC

A church family picnic will take place after our Service on June 10<sup>th</sup>. Weather permitting, we will gather on the lawn behind the church. The church will provide the drinks, hamburgers, kielbasa, watermelon, chicken and hot dogs. If you prefer veggie burgers, make sure to contact Linda Milewski.

Those attending are asked to bring a side dish to share with each other and also bring a lawn chair or a blanket from home to sit on. If your children will be playing with the hose, make sure to bring a towel also. Donations will be accepted, but this is not intended as a fundraiser, but rather as an opportunity to come together as the community of our church.

## BIBLE STUDY GROUP

We are reading from the oldest Gospel, which is the Gospel of Mark. It is in this Gospel that we have the first written attempt to tell the story of Jesus' life and ministry. This is the first account of the earliest Christians

who are trying to remember and convey the oral stories that they had heard and shared about Jesus. We are reaching back into the infancy of our faith and seeing how what we believe was born. If you would like to come and join us as we read, discuss and share our thoughts about these biblical passages, please feel free to pop-in. No prior Bible knowledge is required, only a desire to know the Bible better.

### **ANNUAL MEETING MASSACHUSETTS CONFERENCE**

The Second Tri-Conference Annual Meeting will take place June 15 - 16, 2018 at the Mass Mutual Center, Springfield, MA. The theme of the Conference is: "Hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us." (Romans 5:5) In the invitation shared, it states: "These are indeed times filled with hope as we – the Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island Conferences – consider voting to form a new, united conference with the hope of making our region a more just, loving, and compassionate place." In addition to the business to be conducted at the Conference, there will be dynamic worship and a keynote address by the Rev. Traci Blackmon, the Executive Minister of Justice and Witness Ministries of the United Church of Christ, and Senior Pastor of Christ The King UCC in Florissant, Missouri. We will be represented by Rev. Calvo and Amy Novak, our Head Deacon.

### **HAMPSHIRE COUNTY RELAY FOR LIFE**

The church supports this annual effort of the American Cancer Society by working with Mary's Moo Cows team. Our very own Linda Milewski has been named spokesperson for the Hampshire County Relay. She will speak at 6PM on Friday, then cut the ribbon to let the walkers begin the Relay. Mary McCarthy is at church every Sunday. She is more than happy to accept your contributions. Please make checks payable to "The American Cancer Society." There are very few families that have not been touched in some way by cancer, help us to help the American Cancer Society fight this terrible disease.

### **FATHER'S DAY**

The nation celebrates Father's Day on the third Sunday of June annually. We will participate in this celebration with special prayers for fathers living and deceased on this day. I invite all of our church's fathers to come to church on this special day.

### **OPEN & AFFIRMING SUNDAY**

"*Open and Affirming* is the United Church of Christ's designation for congregations, campus ministries and other bodies in the UCC which make a public covenant of welcome into their full life and ministry to persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions."

The following covenant has been voted and adopted by the First Congregational Church of Hatfield: "Jesus teaches us that we are to love one another and to love our neighbor as ourselves. So we pledge to love by listening to what each of us has to say, respecting and embracing every one of our brothers and sisters and understanding we all have a vital place in the way each of us becomes Open and Affirm-neighbor and opening our minds to the the dignity of every person as created in the travelling together on the diverse paths of of every race, age, gender expression and status, culture, physical ability, mental capacity or economic condition, to become full and equal participants in the life of this body of Christ."



Kingdom of God on earth and in heaven. In this ing, opening our hearts to the condition of our many idea and cultures of the world. We affirm image of God. As a congregation of Christians, Christianity, we welcome and invite all persons gender identity, sexual orientation, marital sta-

tus, culture, physical ability, mental capacity or economic condition, to become full and equal participants in the life of this body of Christ." This spirit of a truly compassionate community will be celebrated on ONA Sunday. For me, this is what it means to be a traditional Christian church because loving without distinction or category is the example given to us by Jesus. I look forward to being with you on this special Sunday.

### **NEW SOUND SYSTEM INSTALLED**

A new sound system has been installed in the church at a cost of \$3,020.00. This upgrade improves the sound quality through the church speakers, allows for hearing assist packs for the hard of hearing, installs a portable handheld microphone for when needed, dedicates a portable microphone for the celebrant, and allows for a direct link to the camera when we videotape our Services. If we invest an additional \$1120, we could upgrade to better new microphones, have the electronic piano hardwired into the system and set-up a remote camera station in the balcony. If you would like to use one of the hearing assist packs, speak to Jona-

than Bardwell. If you would like to make a donation toward the expense of the new sound system, your contribution would be appreciated. Thank you.

### **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 hope to hold this orientation meeting sometime in June. Talk with Reverend Calvo or Amy Novak of the Board of Deacons if you are interested.

### **FOOD BANK VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers from our church gather with Linda Milewski at the Western Mass Food Bank each second Thursday of the month 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.

### **VIEW CHURCH SERVICES ONLINE 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 hopefully may entice them to come and join us. It also reaches into the homes of people who are unable to be with us in church. They can participate in our worship by watching the recorded Services on Hatfield Community Television on Saturdays and Sundays at 8 am and 4 pm. It may also be seen anywhere at any time by visiting [www.fcat.tv](http://www.fcat.tv).

And YouTube, May 13<sup>th</sup> Service: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bShqCKYZPVY>

And YouTube May 20<sup>th</sup> Service: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ox4aO\\_WoTN4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ox4aO_WoTN4)

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.

### **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.

### **BENEVOLENCE NEWS**

The Benevolence Committee has decided to start 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 a pair of boots for winter or another who may need a coat, we will try to step in and help. The students will need to be participating in the subsidized lunch program at the school. 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 make a contribution to this work, please contact Carolyn Forsyth. Thank you.

### **LOBSTERFEST**

The 22nd annual Lobsterfest is scheduled for Saturday, August 4, 2018. **Please save the date!** This is a scrumptious meal, steamed lobsters with ALL the fixings, ready for you to take out and enjoy. Plan a backyard lobster party for your family and friends, or volunteer to lend a hand at this important church fundraiser.

### **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.

### **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*

