

# The Bell Tower

Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Hatfield, UCC

2019

June

No. 6

## Don't get too comfortable = Pentecost

During June we celebrate the birthday of the Christian church on Pentecost and the birthday of the United Church of Christ on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Both occasions are Spirit-filled and Spirit-led. Where the Spirit plays, the status quo is not one of the rules. Especially when reading the Pentecost story in the Acts of the Apostles, it is clear that when the Spirit is involved, human fears of new frontiers are replaced by a surrender to an overwhelming imagination and freedom to become.

I'm afraid that church sometimes tries to coopt the Pentecost story to legitimate who it is already rather than being inspired by it to imagine and welcome the Spirit's drive toward what the church should become. This is only my orientation, but Pentecost isn't about the past; it skims the present, but its home is the future. Pentecost isn't history; it's journey.

I've heard the Pentecost story told almost as if the church were born like Aphrodite emerging fully formed from the sea. Supposedly, Pentecost imposed church order, structure, hierarchy and orthodoxy immediately and unalterably. This is comfortable for a church made uncomfortable by change, but comfortable is not a descriptive that fits the biblical Pentecost story.

First of all, *wind* (Acts 2:2) is a Greek word (*πνοή*, *pnōē*) used only one other time in the entirety of the New Testament. It is found again in the book of Acts, which speaks strongly to a connection between the two. In Acts 17, Luke tells his readers about Paul's visit to the city of Athens, and there Paul delivers his sermon about the statue to "an unknown god." (17:23)

Paul uses the inscription as an introduction to his remarks during which he states: "... since [God] gives to all mortals life and πνοή ..." (17:25) Here, *πνοή* means *breath* and it is a part of the hendiadys for *living*. When we connect this usage with *wind* in the Pentecost story, we have a creative, life-giving and life-sustaining breath of God, not unlike the Genesis creation story of "while a mighty wind swept over the face of the waters." (1:2)

Pentecost is another creation story. This wind is not a calm, summer breeze. This is a *violent* wind,

and the adjective *violent* is used only here in the New Testament. A form of this unique word is used one other time by Luke, but in his Gospel. There it means by force, coercion. This is a Big Bang creation story of church. It is immensely powerful. And while all the laws and contents of creation are present in that Big Bang, there is also chaos, the unknown and unexpected. The "violent wind" of Pentecost is not an "Oh my gosh" it is an "Oh my God!" experience.

God had revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush as Yahweh, *I Am*, but Everett Fox in the Shocken Bible makes a convincing argument that Yahweh may be translated as *I Will Be There*. Fox's translation emphasizes that God's being, God's nature, is always connected to becoming. God will be there wherever Israel will be, and then the Exodus story begins, the story of Israel's becoming begins.

If we transfer the fire image of the burning bush to the fiery tongues of Pentecost, we continue to hear reference to becoming. And as a matter of fact, the Jewish feast of Pentecost that drew people to Jerusalem in the Acts of the Apostles, is a celebration of the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai, the place and the persons of the burning bush story. The Torah, the Law, is the sacred foundation of the Jewish faith. The fiery tongues now equate that sacred foundation not with Law, but with Spirit and proclamation and becoming.

The amazing, transformative power of Pentecost is seen immediately in the changed behaviour not only of those who already believe, but in those who are open to belief. The followers of Jesus speak, but some in the crowd hear. Some in the crowd hear drunken babble, but some hear the Word of God. The Spirit is shared widely, in other words, not only within pre-determined boundaries.

This is the Spirit that gives both *life*, the church's beginning, and *breath*, the church's continuing vitality. The emergence of the UCC 62 years ago is a part of this birthing, this Spirit-fueled process of becoming, and we as church right now are as much a Pentecost church as was that first called gathering in Jerusalem. May that inspiration and excitement continue to lead us beyond the comfortable.

## JUNE EVENTS

Sun. 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Combined Youth Group meeting HERE from 5:30 – 7:30pm.
Sun. 9 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Pentecost Sunday</b> Service at 10:00am. <i>Strengthen the Church Offering</i> will be accepted. Children's Sunday and Confirmation Sunday. Church family picnic after our Service.
Mon. 10 <sup>th</sup>	Volunteer opportunity at the Food Bank from 1 – 4:00pm.
Wed. 12 <sup>th</sup>	Monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees at 7:00pm.
Thur. 13 <sup>th</sup>	Rev. Calvo will participate in the Hampshire Association Clergy Committee of Practice meeting in Hadley at 12:00pm. Rev. Calvo will attend the Church and Ministry meeting in Huntington at 5:30pm.
Fri 14 <sup>th</sup>	Hampshire County Relay for Life at Look Park through Saturday.
Sun. 16 <sup>th</sup>	Father's Day will be observed during our church Service.
Sun. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Hampshire Association Summer Gathering at Conant Park from 3 – 6:00pm.
Tue. 25 <sup>th</sup>	62 <sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the organization of the United Church of Christ.
Sun. 30 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Open and Affirming Sunday</i>

## REGULAR GATHERINGS

Sundays: Worship Service begins at 10:00am. Sunday School at 10:15 am. Chat and Coffee at 11:00am.

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: Choir rehearsal every Thursday at 6:30pm.

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

## YOUTH GROUP

We'd like to thank everyone who supported our Youth Group's Spring Plant Sale last month. The sale helped us to reimburse the church for our March Confirmation retreat in Charlton, MA. It helped our young people invest themselves in our congregation.

We belong to a combined Youth Group of several congregations here in the Hampshire Association. We meet on the first Sunday of the month and June is our first opportunity to act as host. This involves a light meal, a fun activity and a brief religious lesson. It would be wonderful if all of our youth 12-18 could be involved. We'll be in touch.

## TIME WITH CHILDREN VOLUNTEERS?

Every Sunday during our worship Service we have a few moments with our children and youth before they leave for Sunday School. If you have a brief activity or lesson you would like to share with them at that time, we would invite you to do so. If you have some thoughts, please don't hesitate to reach out to Rev. Randy.

## PENTECOST SUNDAY

Pentecost is the birthday of the Christian Holy Spirit is shared with the earliest empowering them to begin the work of guide the church of all ages. The Spirit is Our authority and authenticity are not the present as we follow the leadership of



church. It is on this sacred day that the followers of Jesus inspiring and church. The Spirit continues to enliven and the living presence of the divine among us. found in the past. They are cultivated in the Spirit. In truth "God is still speaking."

## CONFIRMATION SUNDAY

It is highly appropriate that on Pentecost Sunday we Confirm four of our congregation's young adults. They are Madelyn Bell, Pari Ella Richotte Benson, Morgan Whidden and Jonathan Wilson. The gifts of the Holy Spirit will be shared with these four ushering them into Christian adulthood as they "confirm" for themselves the baptismal vows that were once said for them. The confirmands enter a covenant with the church and the church with them. Please make every effort to be with us on this special occasion to show our support for this class and to participate in our continuing covenant with each successive generation of the church.

## **CHILDREN'S SUNDAY / CHURCH PICNIC**

Pentecost Sunday is also Children's Sunday. We will acknowledge the ones who lead our Sunday School program throughout the year and the young people who participate in it.

In conjunction with this, we invite everyone to the church family picnic after our morning worship. The church provides the drinks, burgers, dogs, watermelon, etc. We ask that those attending bring along a side dish of some sort to share with everyone present. You should also bring along a lawn chair or a blanket to sit on – and a prayer for a nice sunny day would be appreciated as well. Donations are appreciated to help replenish the Supper's Committee account.

## **STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH OFFERING**

And finally, on Pentecost Sunday, faithful to Pentecost's message of the birth and growth of the church, the *Strengthen the Church* offering will expansion of ministry and growth of this offering will help the UCC fulfill world for all by investing in new emerging needs of local congregations to be the church in churches, awaken new ideas in spiritual life in our youth and young adults. Your generosity is appreciated.



be accepted. This offering supports the UCC local congregations. Your support of on its commitment to creating a just ministries and practices that meet the communities. As God calls our new ways, your generosity will plant new existing churches and develop the

## **HAMPSHIRE COUNTY RELAY FOR LIFE**

This event helps to support financially the American Cancer Society. It takes place at Look Park in Northampton from the 14<sup>th</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup>. Linda Milewski and Mary McCarthy are part of the Mary's Moo Cows team. If you would like to help support the good work of this organization and Mary's Moo Cows team, please speak to Linda or Mary. Checks may be made payable to the American Cancer Society.

## **FATHER'S DAY**

The nation celebrates Father's Day annually on the third Sunday of June. We will join in that observance at church with special prayers for fathers living and deceased. We invite you to come and be a part of our church's Father's Day Sunday.

## **OPEN AND AFFIRMING SUNDAY**

We are an *Open and Affirming* congregation. Open and Affirming (ONA) is the United Church of Christ's (UCC) 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. Jesus lived a ministry of extravagant welcome. As His church, we strive, and sometimes struggle, to do the same. On this Sunday we acknowledge our ONA ministry and pray for its success.

## **BULLETIN COVERS**

A sign-up sheet is available in church. Special bulletin covers are used several times a year. If you would like to donate a set for any given occasion, it will be acknowledged in church. The cost is \$10.

## **HUNGER DOESN'T TAKE THE SUMMER OFF FOOD DRIVE**

Each June the congregation accepts donations for this food drive. Donations of non-perishable food items or monetary donations will be accepted on all June Sundays. A wagon will be located at the back of the church for this collection. The young people of the congregation will bring the donations forward during the Time with Children part of the Service. These donations will then be shared with the Northampton Survival Center. Summer can be a difficult time for many families because the children will not be receiving subsidized lunches at school. This is part of the important work we can do together as church. Thank you for your generosity.

## **SANCTUARY CLOCK**

In the 1860's, the Real Folks group donated an E. Howard Gallery Clock to the church. It is currently in the queue at *The British Clock Maker* in Newfane, Vermont waiting to be repaired and refurbished. Ray and Richard Bates are a father and son team who have been in the high-end clock repair business for over half a century. Their work is in such high demand that it may take up to 9 months for them to be able to start their work on our timepiece. This clock is an heirloom that the congregation should be proud of. Accordingly, we are budgeting the funds to restore this clock to its original condition as part of our congregation's 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The

estimated cost is \$2,500 - \$2,800. Real Folks has made a generous pledge toward this cost. We are also asking our members to consider a donation. If you would like to help in this way, your generosity will be much appreciated.

### **FOOD BANK VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers from our church gather with Linda Milewski at the Western Mass Food Bank on the second Monday of the month to help this worthwhile organization. If you can share three hours of your time or even an hour or two, it will benefit those of our neighbours who do not have the ability to put enough food on their tables. Please speak with Linda if you can help.

### **HATFIELD'S 350<sup>TH</sup>**

The town's 350<sup>th</sup> Committee is looking for old photos of town buildings, people, farms, even dogs and horses. They will be copied and returned to you. The Committee is hoping to print an anniversary book. Please contact Cher Nicholas at [CherNicholas@comcast.net](mailto:CherNicholas@comcast.net).

The Committee is already taking reservations for a walking tour of historic homes of Hatfield. It will take place on April 25, 2020 and is limited to 35 participants. They are sure this will be filled. I've already signed-up. If you would like to participate, please contact Cher Nicholas at the email above.

### **REQUEST**

Some of our members have breathing problems that are aggravated by perfumes and other scents. Please keep this in mind when getting ready for church, and we appreciate your attentiveness to the needs of others.

### **CONSIDER MEMBERSHIP AT HATFIELD CONGREGATIONAL**

If you may like to be a formal member of this church, it begins with an informal 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. Please contact Rev. Calvo if you are interested.

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

We air our Services twice 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. All of our taped Services may also be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/FCAT-Media/videos> or at <https://www.youtube.com/user/HatfieldCommunityTV>. 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, please speak to Rev. Randy.

### **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, Amy Novak 413 210-3965*

*Deacons, Mark Gelotte 413-247-9624*

*Trustees, Jonathan Bardwell 413-530-6262*

*Church Moderator, Glenda Flynn 413 247-5891*



And speaking of which ...

OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS OF HAMPSHIRE ASSOCIATION CHURCHES

★ ★ ★  
YOU'RE INVITED TO

# HAMPSHIRE ASSOCIATION SUMMER GATHERING

★ ★ ★

**JUNE 23RD • 3-6PM**

**CONANT PARK**

30 EAST ST., SOUTHAMPTON, MA

**JOIN US FOR AN AFTERNOON  
OF FUN & FRIENDSHIP**

**FOOD**

BBQ BY TAVERN ON  
THE HILL,  
EASTHAMPTON

**\$15**

**\$8**

**ADULTS CHILDREN  
PER PERSON**

**FUN**

BLUEGRASS  
MUSIC BY  
BARRY SEARLE  
& HIS BLUEGRASS BAND

**GAMES ★ ART**

- BRING A LAWN OR BEACH CHAIR -

- BRING A LAWN OR BEACH CHAIR -

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