

# The Bell Tower

Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Hatfield, UCC

2020

June

No. 6

## Juneteenth

During June, Alabama and Florida observe Jefferson Davis Day for the disgraced President of the Confederate States. Many southern states observe Confederate Memorial Day in June. Why June? It's intentional, and it's because June 19, *Juneteenth*, marks the day in 1865 when Union Army General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas and issued an order emancipating the last enslaved people in our "land of the free."

It is an attempt to draw attention and responsibility away from the embarrassment and barbarity that was the nation's "peculiar institution," which is the euphemism for slavery. The euphemism was necessary because while the word *slavery* was too embarrassing to speak of in polite society, its reality was not.

On July 4, 1776, the nation and the world recognized the revolution inherent in the words: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." The man who wrote these words owned people and forced himself upon Sally Hemings. The nation that celebrated these words knowingly left four million slaves outside of its parameters.

*Juneteenth* was only possible after the Civil War was fought because of this detestable institution. Even then, the word *slavery* disappeared, but its effects remained in place through the KKK, Jim Crow laws, segregation and separate but equal.

1954's *Brown vs. the Board of Education* and the voting rights legislation of the 1960's were huge steps forward. Martin Luther King Jr's peaceful protests galvanized the nation and brought to light the continuing effects of our "peculiar institution." I believed naively that the election of President Obama was the death knell of institutional racism. I knew there would be pockets of racism and racists, but I thought these would be the dying remnants of a dying screech. I was wrong.

Racism is alive and well, and growing in our country. It can take the form of Confederate Memorial Days scheduled intentionally around the time of *Juneteenth*. It can manifest itself in the daytime

murder of Ahmaud Arbery on February 23<sup>rd</sup> in Brunswick, Georgia, but was not seriously investigated until



May. There are also the inequalities appearing in the COVID-19

cases. An April 7<sup>th</sup> article in the *Washington Post* was titled "The coronavirus is infecting and killing black Americans at an alarmingly high rate." The reporters quoted Dr. Fauci as saying that the crisis is "shining a bright light on how unacceptable" those disparities are.

I hate to think that low wage workers, who are often people of color, are forced to work in dangerous conditions during this pandemic because they are desperate and powerless. It would be criminal if meat-packing plants were ordered by the federal government to continue operations so that there are no shortages in our supermarkets without first taking significant action to prevent sickness and death among those workers.

The Southern Poverty Law Center in 2019 was tracking 940 hate groups in our country, 15 here in Massachusetts. <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map>

We are in the midst of our 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. As the history of our congregation makes clear, we have faced and also faced-down prejudice since the 17<sup>th</sup> century (<https://www.hatfieldchurch.org/pews-news/category/events-activities>). But our stance against prejudice reaches so much further back in our story. At Mount Sinai, God commands: "You shall not oppress a resident alien. You know the heart of an alien for you were aliens in the land of Egypt." (Exodus 23:9) The whole story of Jesus is one of reaching out to the oppressed whether it be Samaritan, women, sinners, tax collectors, etc. and recognizing them all as valued by God. Jesus' in-group is outsiders. All belong in Christ.

In this time of rising racism, let us remember the end of slavery on June 19, 1865, and let us carry its freedom forward so that the long-overdue death of racism and prejudice in all its forms will not be naïve anymore.

## JUNE EVENTS

Mon. 1 <sup>st</sup>	On-line <i>Exploring the Bible</i> study group from 7-8:00pm.
Sun. 7 <sup>th</sup>	On-line Association Youth Group meeting at 5:30pm.
Wed. 10 <sup>th</sup>	On-line monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees at 7:00pm.
Thur. 11 <sup>th</sup>	On-line meeting of the Association Committee on Ministry at 5:30pm.
Sun. 14 <sup>th</sup>	On-line Association Annual Meeting at 3:00pm.
Mon. 15 <sup>th</sup>	On-line <i>Exploring the Bible</i> study group from 7-8:00pm.
Fri. 19 <sup>th</sup>	Juneteenth observance.
Sun. 21 <sup>st</sup>	Father's Day.
Thur. 25 <sup>th</sup>	63 <sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the United Church of Christ. On-line meeting of the Church Council at 7:00pm.
Mon. 29 <sup>th</sup>	On-line <i>Exploring the Bible</i> study group from 7-8:00pm.
Tue. 30 <sup>th</sup>	On-line monthly meeting of the Board of Deacons at 6:00pm.

## REGULAR GATHERINGS (All in-person church gatherings are on hold until further notice.)

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 rehearses in the sanctuary at 6:30pm.

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

The congregation holds this food drive annually because the need increases over the summer when children do not have the meals provided in the public schools. Well, that need has grown exponentially. Schools have been closed since March and we can only say "hopefully" they will reopen in September. Additionally, many more families are being served by food pantries due to the economic turmoil born of the pandemic. Here is a link to an NEPR story about the Northampton Survival Center (<https://www.nepr.net/post/food-pantry-staffer-embraces-rewarding-exhaustion-essential-duties#stream/o>). One way or another we plan to conduct this food drive in June. The logistics are undecided because of our fluid situation so please check your emails from the church, FaceBook or our website to find out how you can help those in desperate need. And thank you.

## "ON-LINE"

You may have noticed all of the *on-lines* once again in this month's calendar. You will see them again below. We are not sure at this point when we will come together in person. As decisions are made, they will be emailed and posted so make sure and to check your emails and our website. In the meanwhile, we have been worshiping and meeting on-line. We live-stream our Services, meetings, Bible study, Sunday School, and Youth Group. Log-in information is sent to everyone on our church's email mailing list. If you would like to be added to that list, please drop me an email at [randyc1897@gmail.com](mailto:randyc1897@gmail.com). We are posting the recordings of our worship Service, but we do hope that people will join us live so that we may all gather just like on a regular Sunday, but in accordance with the constraints of these irregular times.

## LIVE-STREAMED WORSHIP SERVICES UPDATE

We have been conducting our Sunday worship Services since March 15<sup>th</sup> in tandem with our sister congregation in Whately. Rev. Cynthia and I are working together on the Services, and Anthony has been adding his gift of music. Church Council met on May 24<sup>th</sup> and **decided to remain on-line for the month of June rather than take the risk of meeting in person.** We meet again on June 25<sup>th</sup> to reassess the situation.

We are hoping to get internet service into the church. This would, at first, allow Anthony and Rev. Randy to lead the worship Service from the church. As it is judged safer, we would then return to church under the protocols Gov. Baker has issued (<https://www.mass.gov/lists/safety-standards-for-places-of-worship>) and with the recommendations of the Conference (<https://www.sneucc.org/phasingforward>).

We are looking at an approximate cost of \$75/month to get an internet connection at the church. We are wondering if some of you may be interested in sponsoring any given month for \$50, with the congregation covering the other third of the cost. Three months have already been pledged! Please contact Mark Gelotte if you are able to help in this way.

## CHURCH FINANCES

Even though we are not able to meet in the church building, we continue as church. As such, we continue to need your financial assistance. We have already canceled several church fundraisers and we may have to cancel even more. If you attend these events, (1) please consider sending in a donation as if you were buying a ticket. Also, we are not passing the collection plate in person, but (2) please send in your church pledges and contributions regularly. Finally, most all of us have received stimulus checks from the government during this time of economic hardship. They are appreciated, I'm sure. However, if we are not in desperate need, (3) please consider sharing some of this largess with the church so that we may continue to minister as church. If you choose, you can dedicate your contribution to our Benevolence Fund, which supports ministries and those in need outside of our congregation. Any of these contributions may be sent directly to Marty or to the church at 41 Main Street. Thank you for your continuing financial support.

## EXPLORING THE BIBLE STUDY GROUP

The Massachusetts Bible Society's Executive Director Rev. Anne Robertson has authored a three-volume text called *Exploring the Bible*. We are reading Volume II on the Old Testament. If you would like to the Bible, I encourage you to join us everyone talks about but few read transforming lives for thousands of years. It continues to do so today if we give it the chance, and these stay-at-home days are the perfect chance.



become more comfortable with for Bible study. This book that has been informing and

Because of the pandemic, we will be meeting on-line. If you would like to join us from the comfort of your own home, please send me an email ([randyc1897@gmail.com](mailto:randyc1897@gmail.com)) and I will send you the log-in information. We would love to have you join us.

## ASSOCIATION YOUTH GROUP

The Hampshire Association Youth Group will gather on-line for this month's meeting. We will share the Zoom log-in information with our Youth Group members. Then we can all come together from our own homes. We're looking into playing an on-line game. We will share our stories, and join in prayer and a meditation. Let's keep our Association Youth Group together in these strange times.

## FOOD BANK VOLUNTEERS

Unfortunately, volunteering opportunities at the Food Bank have been put on hold until further notice due to the pandemic.

## ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

The Hampshire Association Annual Meeting that had been scheduled for April 19<sup>th</sup> has been moved to Sunday, June 14<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm. This will be a virtual meeting. Each congregation is entitled to up to four delegates and the pastor. If you would like to represent our church at this meeting, please let Rev. Randy know. Thank you.

## FATHER'S DAY

The third Sunday of June is recognized as Father's Day annually. On this day we honour the fathers among us and in our memories. A parent's calling is both responsibility and reward. We pray that fathers may fulfill their roles with love and compassion, and we celebrate those fathers who do so.

## UCC ANNIVERSARY

"On Tuesday, June 25, 1957, at Cleveland, Ohio, the Evangelical and Reformed Church, 23 years old, passionate in its impulse to unity, committed to 'liberty of conscience inherent in the Gospel,' and the Congregational Christian Churches, 26 years old, a fellowship of biblical people under a mutual covenant for responsible freedom in Christ, joined together as the United Church of Christ." The 1957 Uniting General Synod declared: "Differences in ecclesiastical procedure, which in sundry places and times have occasioned tensions and disorders, are appointed their secondary place and are divested of evil effect." Differences would no longer be of primary concern. Rather, we would raise-up and live Jesus' hope "that they all may be one." (John 17:21). This tenet and foundational belief has led the UCC to be a united and uniting church denomination that seeks to express Christ's extravagant welcome consistently. This year we celebrate and give thanks to God on our 63<sup>rd</sup> anniversary.



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**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:**

*Benevolence, Amy N.*

*Christian Education, Anita W.*

*Church Moderator, Amy N.*

*Deacons, Jeff F.*

*Music Minister, Anthony T.*

*Real Folks Society, Martha Z.*

*Trustees, Jonathan B.*

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

Due to the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 Steering Committee has made the difficult schedule as follows:



pandemic, the Hatfield 350th Anniversary decision to change their upcoming event

**General Community Events**

Rescheduled until date to be determined in 2021 – 350th Anniversary Parade  
Strawberry Festival has been canceled for 2020 – Annual Strawberry Festival (Partnership w/ Hatfield PTA)

Rescheduled to **July 18th** – Historic Homes of Hatfield Walking Tour. This event is limited to 30 people. To register please email Cher Nicholas at [CherNicholas@comcast.net](mailto:CherNicholas@comcast.net).

**August 22<sup>nd</sup>** – Summer Celebration

**October 10<sup>th</sup>** – Annual Bonfire (Partnership w/ Firefighters Association)

**December 19<sup>th</sup>** – Luminarium/Fireworks (Partnership w/ Firefighters Association)

**Historical Events & Tours**

**May 31<sup>st</sup>** – Incorporation Day and the Crossing of the CT River. Incorporation Day Celebration will go forward as a modified event – more details to follow. Ceremonial Crossing of the river is postponed until a date TBD.

**July 18<sup>th</sup>** – Historic Homes of Hatfield Walking Tour

**October 10<sup>th</sup>** – Narrated Wagon Rides

**Agricultural Events & Tours**

Rescheduled until **July 23<sup>rd</sup>** – Farm to Table Dinner

Rescheduled to **August 22<sup>nd</sup>** as part of the Summer Celebration – Farm 5K Race

**September 12<sup>th</sup>** – Barn Mural Wagon Tour

Rescheduled to **October 3<sup>rd</sup>** - Cow Pie Bingo as part of the Tractor Parade and Harvest Festival

For the latest information, visit [www.hatfield350.com](http://www.hatfield350.com) or follow us on Facebook @Hatfield350th.

