

The Bell Tower

Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Hatfield, UCC

2022

May

No. 5

“God-like technology” demands Easter

Easter Sunday hopefully reminded us that we are so much more than what can be seen. When Jesus is raised bodily from the grave, it is God’s testimony that another reality suffuses the physical. What Jesus accomplished through His life, death and resurrection as one us was for all of us. Jesus shows us the more sublime reality of who we really are. We are a resurrection people. Who we are is not limited by the physical.

This is why Jesus came back after Easter. I don’t know how many times you may have heard me say this, but if I were Jesus I would have high-tailed it for heaven as soon as the stone was rolled away from the entrance of the tomb. I would have taken a look at the wounds in my hands, my feet, my side, my head and remembered what all those humans had done to me, and I would have rushed into heaven’s peace. But thank God, Jesus is Jesus.

Jesus resurrected and returned to us. Jesus shares the mystery of the resurrection with us, and reveals that our graves are no more the end of our stories than they were of Jesus’. Easter awakens us to our higher calling. Easter challenges us to move beyond our natural instincts and to embrace our identity as a people created by God and like God.

We are not born sinners. We are born as creatures of evolution. We are Homo sapiens, which in Latin stands for our designation as “wise man.” We were never morally perfect and living in paradise. We have through eons evolved to be defined by our ability to think. Lurking within the physical us, is also our spiritual identity as revealed by Easter, the godliness the suffuses our entire being. It exists alongside our evolutionary human nature. We are created, therefore, in the image and likeness of God.

The spiritual calls us to higher ideals than physical instinct, and this is the inner conflict that Paul speaks of in Romans 7:14-25. What Paul portrays as an independent sinfulness seems rather to be our evolutionary instincts. These are natural limitations not inherited sin.

The famous biologist E.O. Wilson observed of humans, “We are a species endowed with Paleolithic emotions, medieval institutions, and God-like technology.” Maybe you have seen timelines of life on earth and have been surprised by how late we Homo sapiens finally arrive. And in our own story as Homo sapiens we have much more time accumulated as rather brutish beings than humans of say the Enlightenment. This is the evolutionary biology we carry with us, this natural human instinct of survival of the fittest.

Jesus carried the very same exact instinct. This shared human nature is why we cannot call our evolutionary condition sinful. Our natural inclinations bear heavily upon us, but Jesus proves to us that our higher selves can prevail. That’s the message of the Easter Season. And it is not one limited only to a heavenly reality. Our higher selves are the only way that we can survive the creation of our “God-like technology.” Our higher selves are practical in the extreme. They define our ability to survive as a species.

Nuclear weapons have returned to our vocabulary. I hear pundits speaking of the use of tactical nuclear weapons and worse. They speak of this in terms of strategy and goals. But there is no rationality to nuclear weapons! The world holds about 13,000 nuclear arms. 100 of them would cause such an abrupt climate change that world agriculture would collapse, starving literally hundreds of millions of people (not to mention the destruction of so many other species and habitats) and ending civilization as we know it.

Paul’s inner conflict is the reality of our primeval natural instinct and the calling to live in imitation of Jesus. Easter is not limited to funeral eulogies. Easter is God’s vindication of Jesus’ life and message, and Jesus’ gospel is the blueprint for building our better selves, not only to pass through heaven’s gates, but to survive in this world, to control our “God-like technology” with a God-like morality. May Easter raise up our better selves so that we don’t let our instincts kill us all. This worldly reality demands Easter.

MAY EVENTS

Sun. 1 st	<i>Children's Mental Health Acceptance Week</i> begins.
Mon. 2 nd	Rev. Randy will attend the monthly meeting of HEART (Hatfield Equity Alliance fighting against Racism Together) at 5:30pm.
Tue. 3 rd	Rev. Randy will attend the monthly meeting of the Hampshire Association Committee on Ministry at 5:45pm.
Sat. 7 th	Youth Group Spring Flower Sale pick-up at the church from 9:30 – 10:30am.
Sun. 8 th	Mother's Day. Special prayers offered during the worship Service.
Mon. 9 th	Monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees at 7:00pm in person.
Tue. 10 th	Online <i>Exploring the Bible</i> study group from 7-8:00pm.
Thurs. 12 th	Monthly meeting of HEADS Up at 6:30pm.
Sun. 15 th	Silver Lake Open House 1 – 5:00pm. Rev. Randy will attend the Installation of Rev. James Koyama as the settled pastor of the Montague Congregational Church, UCC at 2:00pm.
Wed. 18 th	Online meeting of the Benevolence Committee at 7:00pm.
Thurs. 19 th	Hatfield Historical Society's Annual Meeting and Program at the church at 6:30pm.
Sat. 21 st	Spring Roast Pork Supper
Sun. 22 nd	Hampshire Association Annual Meeting at Edwards Church at 3:00pm.
Mon. 23 rd	Online <i>Exploring the Bible</i> study group from 7-8:00pm.
Tue. 24 th	Clergy Brown Bag Lunch online gathering at 12:00pm. Monthly online meeting of the Board of Deacons at 6:00pm.
Wed. 25 th	Community-wide showing of the documentary "Race to Be Human" at 6:30pm followed by a panel discussion.
Thurs. 26 th	Ascension Day – the 40 th day after Easter.
Sun. 29 th	The Book of Remembrance ceremony during the 9:30am worship Service.
Mon. 30 th	Memorial Day.

REGULAR GATHERINGS

Sundays: Worship Service begins at 9:30am online and in person. Sunday School begins after the children's sermon during the worship Service.

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 7:00pm.

CHURCH COVID POLICIES

The Church Council has based its mask policy on the number of cases in Hampshire County. If the cases fall below 10 per day per 100,000 people, person worship. Please remember, as live-streamed via Zoom. If you are not join us online. Thank you for your possible.



we will rescind the mask requirement for in well, that all of our worship Services are feeling well on any given Sunday, please cooperation in keeping us all as safe as

YOUTH GROUP FLOWER SALE

We thank everyone who supported our Spring Flower Sale. Orders that have been placed may be picked-up outside the church on Saturday, May 7th. Please make sure to arrange for pick-up between 9:30 and 10:30am that day. The profits from this sale will be added to our Youth Group account. This will allow our young people to consider activities that otherwise may have been too expensive. Again, thank you for your support.

MOTHER'S DAY

Mother's Day is the second Sunday of May annually. On this day, special prayers will be offered for the mothers who have joined us in worship, the mothers of our families and communities, and those mothers who have passed on to their eternal reward. I hope you will join us at church on this special occasion.

BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Our online Bible study group is reading from the four Gospels at present. We have begun with Mark, the oldest of the Gospels, and will then move on to Matthew and Luke, finishing with John. If you would like to join us as we read these four distinct accounts of Jesus' life and ministry, we would love to have you join us. Send an email to randyc1897@gmail.com for the login. We meet on alternate weeks for one hour. If you have any questions about how Bible study works, send them along to the same email as above.

SILVER LAKE OPEN HOUSE

The annual Open House at Silver Lake Camp in Sharon, CT will take place on Sunday, May 15th from 1 – 5:00pm. This is a ministry of the Southern New England Conference, UCC. Silver Lake Camp & Retreat Center holds summer camp June through August for youth entering grades 4 through 12. For more information about the Open House in order to get more information about the summer camps, please visit: <https://www.silverlake.org/campsession/14954953>.

ROAST PORK SUPPER

The Spring Roast Pork Supper is scheduled for Saturday, May 21st. It will be a take-out-only dinner. The menu will be roast pork, mashed potatoes, gravy, roll, green beans, applesauce, and brownies. The cost is \$15/ticket. If you could help work the available at church, or you can email Rev. Randy at for help on Friday at 6PM with prep work, and then beginning at 10AM. This is an important fundraiser help and your support.



dinner, a volunteer sign-up sheet is randyc1897@gmail.com. We're looking we meet at the church on Saturday for our church. We do appreciate your

ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

The Hampshire Association Annual Meeting will be held in person at Edwards Church in Northampton on Sunday, May 22nd beginning at 3PM. Rev. Randy will be attending. Would you like to attend as one of our congregation's representatives? If so, please notify Jonathan Bardwell, church moderator. The theme of this year's Annual Meeting is "Gathering in Anticipation, Departing in Hope." Karen Ziel, the Assistant Director of the Conference's Center for Transformational Leadership, will be a keynote speaker. The day will begin and end with worship. It will be nice to meet in person again, to see others from our local congregations, and to share ideas and enthusiasm with one another.

RACE TO BE HUMAN DOCUMENTARY

HEADS Up and HEART are two local, Hatfield organizations that are teaming up to present a community-wide showing of the documentary *Race to Be Human*. This is part of the effort to "Let's start a conversation." Join us for a special screening of the documentary and a panel discussion with neighbors on May 25th at 6:30 at Hatfield Elementary. The documentary has been created for schools, communities and corporations. "Race to Be Human" addresses the apprehension and confusion so many of us feel when it comes to talking about race and racism. The film shares how we can participate and build empathy through conversations at home, work and school. There is no charge to attend.



BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE

The Book of Remembrance offers our members the opportunity to memorialize a departed loved one. Their names are added to the Book of Remembrance in a solemn ceremony. This has taken place on Maundy Thursday in the past. However, this year Maundy Thursday was observed at the Sunderland Church in a combined worship Service. The Board of Deacons would, therefore, like to conduct the Book of Remembrance ceremony on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend, May 29th. If someone you loved has passed away in the past 12 months, we hope you will come forward at this time and add his or her name to the book.

CHURH DIRECTORY REQUETS

The Board of Deacons has decided to compile an electronic church directory for our use. Maybe you have seen printed church directories in the past. A directory helps members, long-time members and brand new, to put faces and names together. A directory is also a useful tool to reach out to others in the congregation. The problem with printed directories is that first of all they are expensive, and second, they become outdated rather quickly.

The Board of Deacons would like to ask all of our members and friends to submit an electronic photo of themselves – individual, couple or family, and to include names and contact information, which would be address, phone and email. The Deacons will then share the directories only with those who have submitted such information, and will stress that the directories are not to be shared freely. We want to keep contact information for our use only. The directory will not be posted online anywhere.

We ask that you send your photo and contact information to our Head Deacon, Jeff F., at jeffrun82@yahoo.com. Or you may have your picture taken at church on a Sunday morning. Since the directory is electronic, it will be updated periodically. We think this will be good for our church and a welcome tool for our members so we hope that you will all choose to participate. Thank you.

FOOD DRIVE

Our next food drive is the *Hunger Doesn't Take the Summer Off* collection. This is scheduled to help families in need whose situation grows more dire without the school meal programs during the summer vacation months. However, please remember that we are ALWAYS collecting for the Survival Center/Food Kitchen in Northampton. This serves the Northampton area and welcomes all kinds of non-perishable foods. If you are at the food store and there is a "2 for 1" think of those in need and leave it in the wagon as you walk into the church. Some of the most needed items are: canned fruit juice, canned vegetables, soups, spaghetti sauce, crackers, rice, cereal, pasta, canned tuna, baked beans, and peanut butter. They are always so grateful! Thanks to those who give what and when they can.

GIFT CARDS

Big Y and *Stop and Shop* gift card sales are a continuing fundraiser of our congregation. Please contact Linda M. if you would like to purchase any. The church earns 5% on all sales. Thank you.

CONTACT INFO: HATFIELD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Website: www.hatfieldchurch.org Facebook: www.facebook.com/First-Congregational-Church-of-Hatfield-UCC

Pastor: Rev. Randy Calvo 413-824-1630 randyc1897@gmail.com

Committee Chairpersons:

Benevolence, Amy N.

Christian Education, Anita W.

Church Moderator, Jonathan B.

Deacons, Jeff F.

Music Minister, Anthony T.

Real Folks Society, Martha Z.

Trustees, Ed M.

