

The Bell Tower

Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Hatfield, UCC

2019

October

No. 10

Oh Those Dangerous Apple Pies

I was reading in September's *Smithsonian Magazine* that there is a nefarious history behind the delicious apple pies that Sharon makes for me every Autumn. The *New York Times* referred to pies as "an American evil" and an "unmoral food." Pie-eaters could be recognized by their "sallow complexions" and that they are "dyspeptic." Does it really matter that the *Times* article was written in 1902?

Pie-eaters were thought to be non-English speaking immigrants of the lower classes. Northern European cuisine was simpler and lighter. One educator opined that pie eating was similar to alcoholism and was a cause for divorce and broken families. The preferred choice was fresh fruit, not the sugary, foreign indulgence of pie. Does it really matter that these opinions were prevalent at the start of the 20th century?



Of course, it matters! Now some eleven decades later these opinions of then prominent Americans, I assume, are seen as silly and prejudiced. They were not based on facts, but rather were crafted to bolster predetermined biases against people whom they did not want to like in the first place. Too often we will tolerate nonsense to give the patina of rationality to the blatantly irrational.

I remember the character Gloria Stivic stumping her blue-collar, conservative father Archie Bunker and her college-educated, liberal husband Michael with this riddle: "A father and son are driving in a car. The car crashes, the father is killed and the boy is badly injured. So they rush him to the hospital and into the operating room. The surgeon walks in, takes a look at the boy, and says, "I can't operate on this boy — he's my own son!"

Back in 1972 all sorts of wild answers were offered by the men on the show, then finally Edith comes rushing down the stairs and the answer, the surgeon is the boy's mother. I don't think this riddle would baffle too many people today, but less than five decades ago this answer was even wilder than the father coming back from the dead.



Our unrecognized biases can blind us to the obvious. We can see it clearly in hindsight, but that's not much help when we're dealing with them in the present. I would hope that this gives us pause in our judgments, and also helps to keep us humble and open-minded.

Churches need to keep this in mind, as well. In our religious history, Israel was ruled by kings who claimed their appointment by God, but there are stories upon stories in the Old Testament of prophets challenging and condemning their kings.

Jesus was hounded and eventually sacrificed by Temple leaders who thought they were protecting God. Paul, the most successful apostle in the New Testament, was opposed by others who thought they were protecting Jesus.

On the last day of this month, we observe Reformation Day to commemorate the day in 1517 when Martin Luther nailed the 95 Theses to the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church, which came to be recognized as the beginning of the Reformation of the church. And the Congregational Church emerged as a protest against the Church of England.

I mention all of this as a lead-in to October's stewardship drive. We will be asking you to support the work of this congregation and through it our church denomination. I think stewardship requires that a person believe in what they are supporting. I, personally, believe in the UCC because of its extravagant welcome and its humility.

It is easy, as the pie example shows, to justify prejudice. The UCC recognizes this and consciously works to accept others for who they are. The UCC trumpets that it is a church of firsts, welcoming the outcast as did Jesus. "God calls the church to speak truth to power, liberate the oppressed, care for the poor and comfort the afflicted."

And we are humble enough to know that church is always in the building mode, that God has yet more to say, that we have more to do, that we are not perfect. We are on a journey, not at its destination.

This is a church worth investing in, with time and purse. I hope you will join me in supporting our congregation during this month's stewardship drive because hopefully you believe in this church too.

OCTOBER EVENTS

- Sat. 5th Super Saturday Worship and Workshop 9:00am – 4:00pm in Framingham.
Church clean-out work party at the church starting at 9:00am.
- Sun. 6th *Neighbors in Need* collection accepted.
Hampshire Association Youth Group meets in Southampton from 5:30 – 7:30pm.
- Wed. 9th Board of Trustees meets at 7:00pm.
- Thur. 10th Rev. Randy attends Hampshire Association Clergy Committee of Practice meeting in Hadley at noon.
Rev. Randy participates in the Hampshire Association Church and Ministry Committee meeting at 5:30pm.
- Sun. 13th CROP Hunger Walk in Sunderland at 1:00pm.
- Tue. 15th Volunteer opportunity at the Western Mass Food Bank from 1 – 4:00pm. (Please note special day due to the holiday.)
- Thur. 17th Rev. Randy attends the HEADS Up annual meeting at the Elementary School from 6 – 8:00pm.
- Mon. 21st Board of Deacons meets at 5:00pm.
Exploring the Bible study group meets at 7:00pm.

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 rehearses in the sanctuary at 6:30pm.

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

SUPER SATURDAY GATHERING

Twice a year the Southern New England (So New) Conference gathers for Super Saturday workshops. This Fall's gathering takes place in Framingham. The day begins with worship, which will be led by Bp. Dwayne Royster. He is the Political Director of Faith in Action, the nation's largest faith-based organizing movement committed to racial and economic justice. He is also the pastor of the Faith United Church of Christ in our nation's capital.

There are so many different sessions offered that the event takes place at Keefe Regional Technical High School. I have signed up for "From Membership to Discipleship" and "Telling Your Church's Story Beyond Your Own Walls." The first session will be led by Rev. Corey Sanderson who has visited our church and spoken to us about discipleship and church growth. The second session is about learning how to promote our church and inspiring others in our local community. I'm sure it will be an exciting and uplifting day.

CHURCH CLEAN-OUT WORK PARTY

On Saturday, October 5th, volunteers are asked to gather at the church starting at 9:00am. We will have a dumpster available. We need to clean-out some of the materials that have accumulated in our building over the years that are no longer needed. It's a big complex from balcony to basement, from sanctuary to kitchen, and your help will be very much appreciated. Thanks for what you can do.

NEIGHBORS IN NEED COLLECTION

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion. One-third of NIN funds support Ministry. Two-thirds of this Justice and Witness Ministries to



throughout the United States. the Council for American Indian offering is used by the UCC's support a variety of justice

initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice. This year, special consideration will be given to projects focusing on serving our immigrant neighbors and communities.

CROP HUNGER WALK

CROP Hunger Walks help support the overall work of Church World Service, particularly grassroots development efforts around the world.

Hunger Walk will return 25% of fighting programs in our local



In addition, our local CROP the funds it raises to hunger-communities. Anyone who would

like to be a part of our team can pick up a collection envelop at church; and anyone who would like to donate may speak to any team member. Anyone who wishes to contribute online or even join our team is asked to visit <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/bernardstonma/Team/View/114596/Hatfield-Congregational>. The Walk is in Sunderland on Sunday, October 13th, at 1PM.

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*. It begins with an overview of the text itself, a discussion of the authority of the Bible, and even



an introduction to the Bible that offers a discussion of the different perspectives the archaeological witness. Volume Two takes us through the books of the Old Testament, and Volume Three introduces us to the New Testament.

If you have ever wanted to know more about the Bible in general, this study group may be what you are looking for. We will meet on alternate weeks, which will give us plenty of time to read the text and the Bible. This will allow us to come together and discuss what we have read.

The *Exploring the Bible* books may be purchased in advance, online for about \$40. If you have any questions, please contact Rev. Randy. This group is open to anyone interested in learning more about the Bible.

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. However, that day is a holiday in October so we will gather one day later on Tuesday. If you can share three hours of your time or even an hour or two, it will help our neighbours who struggle to feed their families. Please speak with Linda about this.

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.

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 350th 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.

REQUESTS

- 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. We appreciate your attentiveness to the needs of others.
- Also, the church purchased a pop-up tent to use at outdoor functions. It cannot be found. If you may know where it is, please let us know. Thanks.
- The annual Craft Fair will take place on December 7th. If you have collectibles, handmade crafts, jewelry or books that you would like to donate, please start to set them aside for us. Please visit our website and FaceBook page for more information.

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/FCATMedia/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.

HATFIELD'S 350TH

The town's 350th 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.

The Committee is 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.

Full Event Schedule

- ✓ December 31, 2019 - *New Year's Eve Gala*
- ✓ April 25, 2020 - *Historic Homes Tour*
- ✓ May 16, 2020 - *Farm 5K Run/Walk*
- ✓ May 21, 2020 - *HHS Annual Meeting and presentation, "A History of the Connecticut River"*
- ✓ May 31, 2020 - *Incorporation Day*
- ✓ June 13, 2020 - *350th Parade*
- ✓ June 20, 2020 - *Strawberry Festival (partnership w/ Hatfield PTA)*
- ✓ August 22, 2020 - *Summer Celebration*
- ✓ September 12, 2020 - *Barn Mural Wagon Tour*
- ✓ October 3, 2020 - *Tractor Parade*
- ✓ October 10, 2020 - *Bonfire (partnership with Hatfield Firefighters Association)*
- ✓ October 11, 2020 - *Wagon Ride Historical Tours*
- ✓ October 17, 2020 - *Hatfield Cemetery Tours*
- ✓ November 19, 2020 - *350 Years of History Presentation*
- ✓ December 19, 2020 - *Luminarium/Fireworks*

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:

Christian Education, Anita Wilson 413 247-5229

Music Minister, 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

