

The Bell Tower

Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Hatfield, UCC

2022

September

No. 9

Christian Education Should Never End

I have not had a September that brought me back to the classroom since 1992. I would have to say I miss it a tad bit. Even after these 30 years, though, I still associate September with the start of a new school year; and even after these 30 years I still associate the new academic year with the opportunity of learning, even of lifetime learning.

I would like to begin by thanking all who are involved with **Christian Education** in our congregation, especially Anita W. who has led this effort for I don't know how many years. This is where formal Christian learning begins for many of our youngest folk.

For me one of the most difficult portions of leading the worship Service is the children's sermon. It takes a good deal of effort to try and convey a religious lesson to young people. Our Christian Ed volunteers do this every Sunday all year round, and for a lot longer than the five minutes I spend with them on the steps of the Chancel. They are planting the intellectual seeds that I hope and pray will grow and develop for a lifetime. Christian Education is truly a ministry within the church and we want to make sure our volunteers know we appreciate them.

Another phase of Christian education is Confirmation. **Confirmation** is quite simply when a person chooses to *confirm* what was said for them or by them at Baptism. It is usually conferred on young adults at the age when they have reached a level of maturity where they are capable of making their own choice, but it can also be shared with any adult who was not Confirmed previously. In this sense, Confirmation is like the completion of Baptism.

To prepare for Confirmation means in part to be intellectually readied to promise solemnly "to be a faithful member of the church of Jesus Christ ..." (From the UCC rite of Confirmation) To make this promise in a meaningful way means to have lived the life of the church and to know the teachings of the church well enough to offer assent, which means Confirmation

preparation needs an active church life and further Christian education.

I would like to begin Confirmation classes for anyone 14 or older this September. If you may be interested, please let me know.

Christian education does not reach its summit, I would hope, as a young adult. If we're to follow the perfect example of Jesus and seek the perfect wisdom of God, then I would expect this to be a constant journey. In the UCC, every Christian is called to service, to ministry. Every Sunday we print in the bulletin, "Ministers: All who worship here." To serve God, to do the work of church, requires a certain depth of religious knowledge and curiosity. So adult Christian education is ongoing.

Our **Bible study group** is nearing the completion of a survey of the books of the Christian Bible. I am not sure if we follow this immediately by reading a particular biblical book in more depth **or if we try something new.**

I have read recently Diarmaid MacCulloch's *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years*. What an exceptional history of the church. I wonder if there would be an interest in exploring this topic. Or what about a book club sort of study? I am intrigued by Mohsin Hamid's new book *The Last White Man*, which confronts us with the themes of judgment and worth. Would that interest anyone? Do you have ideas, books, you would like to explore?

A sermon is a teaching tool, but it shares my thoughts. Adult Christian education allows us to share each other's thoughts. Interested?

Also, I post on our FaceBook page the links to offerings of the UCC or the Conference. There are many a worthwhile presentation that are only a Zoom link away. There are very talented and knowledgeable people in our church denomination, and they are available to share their expertise. **Check out our FaceBook page or website** to see what may be out there at any given time.

It's September, a time to think about learning. We should never want to outgrow this blessing.

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

Tue. 6 th	Rev. Randy will attend the Association Committee on Ministry meeting at 5:45pm.
Sun. 11 th	Home Coming Sunday. Service at 11:00am , reception to follow.
Mon. 12 th	Rev. Randy will attend the monthly meeting of HEART (Hatfield Equity Alliance fighting against Racism Together) at 5:30pm.
	Monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees at 7:00pm.
Tue 13 th	Online Exploring the Bible study group from 7-8:00pm.
Thur. 15 th	Rev. Randy will attend the Committee on Ministry chairs meeting at the Granby, CT church beginning at 10:00am.
Mon. 19 th	Rev. Randy will attend the online meeting of HEADS Up at 6:30pm.
Sat. 24 th	Chicken BBQ dinner, take-out's only, from 5 – 7:00pm.
Mon. 26 th	Online Exploring the Bible study group from 7-8:00pm.
Tue. 27 th	Monthly online meeting of the Board of Deacons at 6:00pm.

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.

Thursdays: Choir rehearses in the sanctuary at 7:00pm.

CHURCH COVID POLICIES

The Church Council met on August 15th. It was decided that while the numbers remain higher than we would like, the COVID vaccines and COVID of this pandemic virus. Accordingly, person to wear a facemask for the immunocompromised, but face will continue to monitor the COVID treatments have combined to lower the risks the Council encourages those attending in benefit of those who may be coverings are now optional. The Council numbers. If the numbers spike upwards due to the cooler weather’s bringing us more indoors, then we may return to the mask requirement if needed.



HOME COMING SUNDAY

On the second Sunday of September, we will again gather for our annual *Home Coming Sunday*. With summer vacations in the rearview mirror, we are getting ready to return to a more active church life. We look forward to seeing familiar faces again and new as well. Home Coming Sunday is a wonderful opportunity to share an invitation to church with neighbours or family who may not be worshipping anywhere. It is also the perfect time to return to church if you haven’t joined us for a while.

To allow us to gather and spend time with one another after worship, our Service will begin at 11:00am rather than the usual 9:30am. Then we will head outdoors for a gathering and light lunch of turkey sandwiches and hot dogs and beans. The *Texas Roadhouse* in Hadley has donated the salad and iced teas, and we thank them for their kind generosity. Desserts will also be available. Make sure to bring a lawn chair or a blanket to sit on. So say those prayers for a nice day.

The meal is put on by the Suppers Committee. They can only do this through our support when we put something on their collection plate. The money collected at one gathering pays for the next so please don’t pass by that plate if you are able to contribute.

CROP HUNGER WALK

This year’s Church World Service’s CROP Hunger Walk will take place on Sunday, October 2nd. The Methodist Church in Greenfield is this year’s host thing about CROP is that 25% of the area to support people in need. The world through projects that help in-themselves. Not with a hand out, but



congregation. The wonderful collected funds remain in our other 75% is shared around the need communities support with a hand up.

We now have donation envelopes for part of our congregation’s team. Randy. You may also join our team contribution by visiting <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2022/team/hatfield-congregational-church-united-church-of-christ>

anyone who would like to be a Please see either Amy N. or Rev. online or make an online

CONFIRMATION CLASS?

Confirmation is the sacred rite of passage in the church. It is when young adults *confirm* what was said for them at their baptisms. It is an oath taken before God, to God. I take this to be extremely important. Plus, a person's word should mean something. If you are 14 or older and would like to investigate your readiness to be Confirmed, I would like to invite you to become a part of the Fall's Confirmation class. Once I receive the names, I will reach out to all of you so that together we can plan how we will meet. Confirmation will take place next Spring.

NEW MEMBER MEETING INVITATION

If you may be interested in learning more about formal membership in our congregation, a New Members Meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 21st at 7:00pm. You can attend either in person at the church or online. Please speak to Rev. Calvo if you are interested in learning more about this. And please know that formal membership is meaningful as a covenant entered into by church and member to support one another, but formal membership is not necessary to join us in worship or community.

BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Our online Bible study group is reading from Luke, Acts and John at present. If you would like to join us as we read these distinct accounts of Jesus' life and ministry, and then of the early days of the church, we would love to have you join us. Let's read, study and discuss the book that literally has changed the world. 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.

CHURCH CHOIR

A pastor posted this on FaceBook: "How much to hire a church singing group?" "You mean a choir?" "Fine, how much to acquire a church singing group?" We are truly fortunate to have our very talented Music Minister, Anthony, with us. Music adds so much to our worship. What adds on top of what Anthony has to offer is our volunteer choir. They can do amazing things. The pandemic shut down the choir, and then they came back to us through videos and occasional in person pieces. There's the possibility that we may be able to return this Fall to the choir again seated in the Chancel and leading us with their voices. If you would like to join the choir and share in the gift they give to us, please contact Anthony. I know we all welcome the thought of the choir's return.

BUDGET PROCESS BEGINS

At the Annual Meeting we vote on the budget, and that process begins now. All budgeted church groups are asked to submit their budgets to the Board of Trustees, Ed M. chair, no later than September 1st. Thank you for your cooperation.

REQUEST

We are planning a return to our Christmas Craft Fair this year. If you have costume jewelry to share, please contact Jeannie Belden. And if you have a crafting ability, please consider sharing your talents with us.

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.



CHICKEN BARBECUE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24TH

FROM 5 – 7PM --- TAKE OUT ONLY

AT

HATFIELD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST,

MAIN STREET, HATFIELD

\$15.00 / MEAL

RESERVATIONS ENCOURAGED:

413-247-5604 OR | 413-247-5905



THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUING SUPPORT!