

# The Bell Tower

Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Hatfield, UCC

2022

June

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## Looking forward together

On May 12<sup>th</sup>, the *Event Horizon Telescope* released a first-time-ever picture of the Black Hole at the center of our Milky Way Galaxy. To get this picture required exquisitely tuned radio telescopes stationed around the globe focused on a singular point in space, thus turning the entire planet into one unified radio telescope. Working together achieved results that would be impossible alone.

What a perfect image for the events taking place in June – this idea of working together.

Now let me add another image to the mix: *One Day* (<https://2269.co/one-day/>) The organizers explain *One Day* as an outlandishly ambitious goal designed to remind people today of the bigger picture: life is short, but history is long. They continue by emphasizing that our time here is relatively short, but expanding our frame of reference into the distant future can help us make better choices in the present day.

Accordingly, every June 6<sup>th</sup>, henceforth known as *One Day*, they ask people to celebrate a day when all of humanity will come together to join in a celebration independent of nationality, language, religion and politics, for one moment in time – on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2269, 247 years from this June 6<sup>th</sup>, and all because people started receiving invitations 250 years earlier in 2019.

Look at a calendar, *One Day* organizers ask, and you'll see that all our holidays recognize past events or people that made great contributions in the past. They would like to introduce a day that instead looks to the future. As their motto says: "Make History. Create the Future."

What an extraordinary idea! Celebrating hope in the future by fostering community and purpose in the present.

Pentecost is all this and obviously more. It is the working together and the improving the present by hoping in the future, but with the added power of God's indwelling Spirit.

The Jewish feast of Pentecost celebrates the giving of the Law to Moses. The Christian Pentecost replaces Law's emphasis on immutability

with the Spirit's vitality. It is conveyed through images of wind and fire, which convey the message of change and transformation. And remember, it's not a gentle breeze. The Spirit is manifested as "the rush of a violent wind." (Acts 2:2)

Instead of longing for an idyllic past that never existed, Pentecost drives the first believers out of the confines of a locked room and out onto the streets of the city where they together begin the work of being the church, of changing the present because of the power of hope in the future.

Pentecost's hope calls us to be our better selves. The Spirit is shared with everyone, breaking down barriers and needlessly imposed limitations. Pentecost is God's act of re-creation. In Genesis, all people are created in the image of God. On Pentecost, this truth is reinvigorated. We're no longer made in the image of God; God dwells within us and transforms us.

This should not be taken lightly or halfheartedly. Think about these words of the Johannine Jesus: "'The glory that you [Father] have given me I have give them [my followers], so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one ...'" (17:22-23a) The union that the Gospel of John celebrates since the first words of the Prologue is the promised potential offered to all believers to be godly. This is the power of Pentecost.

The Spirit inspires men, and also, and equally, women and slaves. In a present day filled with separation and inequality, Pentecost drives us forward by believing that God's Spirit is poured out "upon all flesh," (Acts 2:17) making all people holy in the sight of God. And isn't this Pentecost enthusiasm the spiritual motivation behind the UCC's embrace of *Open and Affirming*? Aren't we trying to welcome all of God's people whoever they are, whoever they love, because whoever they are and whoever they love, God loves them just as much as God loves any of us? So this month let us celebrate Pentecost, *One Day*, and ONA Sunday. Let us look forward together to all that is possible.

## JUNE EVENTS

Sun. 5 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Pentecost Sunday.</b> <i>Strengthen the Church Offering</i> accepted.
Mon. 6 <sup>th</sup>	Rev. Randy will attend the monthly meeting of HEART (Hatfield Equity Alliance fighting against Racism Together) at 5:30pm. Online <i>Exploring the Bible</i> study group from 7-8:00pm.
Tue. 7 <sup>th</sup>	Rev. Randy will attend the monthly meeting of the Hampshire Association Committee on Ministry at 5:45pm.
Wed. 8 <sup>th</sup>	Monthly meeting of HEADS Up at 6:30pm.
Sun. 12 <sup>th</sup>	Trinity Sunday. Worship Service begins at <b>11:00am today</b> . All Church Picnic following the worship Service.
Mon. 13 <sup>th</sup>	Monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees at 7:00pm in person.
Sat. 18 <sup>th</sup>	Southern New England Conference Annual Meeting from 9:00am – 2:30pm online.
Sun. 19 <sup>th</sup>	Father's Day. Special prayers will be offered for fathers living and deceased. Juneteenth. The last slaves were freed after the Civil War. Special prayers offered for civil rights.
Mon. 20 <sup>th</sup>	Online <i>Exploring the Bible</i> study group from 7-8:00pm.
Sat. 25 <sup>th</sup>	65 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Church of Christ.
Sun. 26 <sup>th</sup>	Open and Affirming Sunday in the UCC.
Tue. 28 <sup>th</sup>	Clergy Brown Bag Lunch online gathering at 12:00pm. 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.

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. When the cases fall below 10 per day per 100,000 people, we will rescind the mask requirement for in person worship. At present, however, the numbers are high. Our mask policy is in place to try and keep us all as safe as possible. Please remember, as well, that all of our worship Services are live-streamed via Zoom. If you are not feeling well on any given Sunday, please join us online. Thank you for your cooperation.



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

Our June food drive is the *Hunger Doesn't Take the Summer Off* collection. This is scheduled on the church calendar to help families in need whose situation grows more dire without the school meal programs during the summer vacation months. If you are out shopping and there is a "2 for 1" think of those in need and leave it in the wagon as you walk into the church so that we can add it to our swimming pool of donations. 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. Thank you for your compassionate generosity.

## **PENTECOST SUNDAY / STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH OFFERING**

Pentecost is considered the birthday of the Christian church. According to the Acts of the Apostles, on the 50<sup>th</sup> day after Easter, the Holy Spirit descended upon the first followers in Jerusalem. The once timid and confused believers in Jesus were transformed. In the Spirit, they found the will to go out into the streets and proclaim Jesus. With this the followers pick-up the mantle of Jesus' mission and message, and this signifies the birth of the Christian church.

On Pentecost Sunday, we do not only remember the history of this day. We call upon it. We ask the Holy Spirit to inspire and guide us still today. We that we can know the power of our faith. as we strive to build a better world. I hope this especially sacred day.



We invoke the Holy Spirit to descend upon us so And in the Spirit, we seek to reach out to others you will join with our worshiping community on

The United Church of Christ calls upon our support of the *Strengthen the Church* offering in this way: "The Strengthen the Church Offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ. As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults." The Benevolence Fund contributes to this collection through our pledged funds on behalf of the congregation, but if you would like to make an offering it will be accepted on Sunday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, and thank you!

this Pentecost renewal as it asks annually for *Offering*. The UCC explains the work of this

### **BIBLE STUDY GROUP**

Our online Bible study group is reading from the four Gospels at present. We have finished with Mark, the oldest of the Gospels, and are moving on to Matthew and Luke, then finishing with John. If you would like to join us as we read these distinct accounts of Jesus' life and ministry, we would love to have you join us. Send an email to [randyc1897@gmail.com](mailto: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.

### **CONFERENCE ANNUAL MEETING**

The Annual Meeting of the Southern New England Conference of the UCC will take place on Saturday, the 18<sup>th</sup> from 9:00am – 2:30pm. It will be held online once again this year. The theme of this year's Conference is "A Sure Foundation: Built Upon 400 Years of Service." This refers to the fact that the churches of our Conference trace their founding back to the Pilgrims of 1620. To read a synopsis of these 400 years, click on this link: <https://www.sneucc.org/eventdetail/15483325/item/16455766> The keynote speaker this year will be Rev. Dr. Patrick G. Duggan who is the Executive Director of the Church Building & Loan Fund of the United Church of Christ. Rev. Randy is already registered to attend. If you would like to represent our congregation, as well, the registration deadline is June 13<sup>th</sup>. Please let Jonathan Bardwell, Church Moderator, know if you are interested.



### **FATHER'S DAY / JUNETEENTH**

The church will join in the nation's Father's Day celebration. Prayers will be offered for fathers living and deceased in appreciation for all that they do for their families and communities.

June 19<sup>th</sup> is also Juneteenth. On January 1, 1863, then President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation outlawing slavery in the original Confederate States was enacted. It was on June 19, 1865 that Union Army General Gordon Granger enforced the freedom of enslaved people in the last holdout state in the Confederacy, Texas. Juneteenth celebrates the freeing of the last owned people in our country's history – 250,000 African-American slaves. We will celebrate this American holiday that rights the wrong of slavery and testifies to our struggle to live up to our founding ideal that all people are created equal.

### **UCC 65<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

The United Church of Christ came into existence on June 25, 1957. In 1931, two separate church denominations, the Congregational Churches and the Christian Churches, united to form the Congregational Christian Churches. Three years later, the German Reformed Church and Evangelical Synod united to form the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Almost immediately efforts began to unite these two new denominations, but due to legal difficulties it would take more than two decades to accomplish. The United Church of Christ was formed

at the Uniting Synod in Cleveland in 1957. The *Statement of Faith* was approved in 1959 and the Congregational Churches were encouraged to vote on the merger at their meetings. In our congregation's archives, are bylaws that were revised on June 29, 1960. There are hand-written additions included, which may reflect the congregation's decision to join the United Church of Christ on this date. We will include this anniversary in our worship Service of June 26<sup>th</sup>.

### **OPEN AND AFFIRMING (ONA) SUNDAY**

The Stonewall riots were a series of spontaneous demonstrations by members of the gay community in response to a police raid that began in the early morning hours of June 28, 1969, at the Stonewall Inn in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of Lower Manhattan in New York City. The community looks upon this as the beginning of the gay rights movement. The UCC will observe Open and Affirming Sunday on the 26<sup>th</sup>. We voted to become an ONA congregation in June 2017. It is good for us to remind ourselves about our ONA Statement:

"Jesus teaches us that we are to Love one another and to Love our neighbor as ourselves. So we pledge to Love by listening to what each of us has to say, respecting and embracing every one of our brothers and sisters and understanding we all have a vital place in Kingdom of God on earth and in Heaven. In this way each of us becomes Open and Affirming, opening our hearts to the condition of our neighbor and opening our minds to the many ideas and cultures of the world. We affirm the dignity of every person as created in the image of God.

As a congregation of Christians, travelling together on the diverse paths of Christianity we welcome and invite all persons of every race, age, gender, gender expression and gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, culture, physical ability, mental capacity or economic condition, to become full and equal participants in the life of this body of Christ. We do so in imitation of the boundary defying and moral defining embrace of all people that Jesus revealed in His life."

### **CHURCH DIRECTORY REQUESTS**

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](mailto:jeffrun82@yahoo.com). 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.

### **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](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, Jonathan B.*

*Deacons, Jeff F.*

*Music Minister, Anthony T.*

*Real Folks Society, Martha Z.*

*Trustees, Ed M.*



**The *All Church Picnic* returns on Sunday,  
June 12<sup>th</sup>!**

**Our worship Service will begin at 11AM on  
this Sunday and the picnic follows at noon.**

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**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 Suppers' Committee account.**