

The Bell Tower

Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Hatfield, UCC

2023

October

No. 10

“Original is to go back to the origin”

Reformation Sunday is the last Sunday in October, marking the occasion in 1517 when Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. This historic event is over half a millennium in the past. When events such as this persist through ages, however, they testify to their lasting importance. They are remembered because they continue to influence and inspire. The Reformation occurred over 500 years ago, but reformation is an on-going exercise of church renewal.

The Isabella Steward Gardner Museum in Boston, in a sense, is itself an institution locked in the past. The patron's will demands that the house stay exactly as it was when the heiress died. Paintings, chairs, colours, nothing may be altered. In this way, it is locked in the past.

The house as Museum, though, is very much relevant in the present in more ways than exhibiting the elegant home and its furnishings to succeeding generations. One way is through the Museum's programing. In November, for instance, they are hosting a panel discussion. One of the participants has stated, “Maintaining these techniques [of traditional clothing construction] and imbuing them with innovation became the root of [Mexican fashion designer Carla Fernandez's] practice. As she says, ‘To be original is to go back to the origin.’” (Isabella Steward Gardner Museum website, November 16, 2023 program)

There is merit to her definition of *original*. Absolutely, original can mean unprecedented, a wholly unforeseen breakthrough, but there is also the innovation of reinvigorating, reinterpreting and returning to the origin. I once had a clergy-teacher who was quite fond of quoting the Hollywood phrase, “Back to the future,” by which he meant that progress was to be made by furthering the original concept of church.

Our Bible study group is nearing its completion of reading the New Testament book of Acts of the Apostles. As the name indicates, this is the biblical account of the earliest church, the

church of the apostles. It is Luke's stylized telling of how that first generation of believers lived into their faith, but it is told from the intentional perspective of the next generation of believers. Skirmishes are tamped down and the original radicalness of the earliest believers is moderated so as to make it less contentious.

For example, Acts provides subtle clues that women were quite prominent in the earliest church, continuing their under-publicized presence among Jesus' disciples. The earliest community of believers offered women a radical equality (cf. Gal. 3:28) they could not enjoy elsewhere. As that community came to realize that their expectations of a swift Second Coming were misplaced, the church turned away from its more militant teachings and practices (cf. Col. 3:11) in order to not offend the more stratified world in which they would need to operate.

However, traces remain. Peter visits the house of Mary (Acts 12:12) and Paul the house of Lydia (16:15). These indicate house-churches in which the named women would have been more than hostesses. In Thessalonica, the first converts include “not a few of the leading women,” (17:4), in Beroea “including not a few Greek women.” (17:13) Are these reluctant references made necessary by the widely known fact that there were many women prominent in the earliest faith? At Athens special mention is made of “a woman named Damaris” (17:34) and in Corinth we meet for the first time Priscilla (18:2). These are women with church authority, although not an authority much publicized.

The example of women is but one drawn from our most recent Bible study group. The original church was not shy in its radicalism. It disputed and disrupted social norms in order to advance the equality, acceptance and opportunity that Jesus preached and embodied. For the church “to be original” in this month of the Reformation's anniversary it can do no better than to honour and continue that reformation by going “back to the origin” of the earliest church's disruption.

OCTOBER EVENTS

Sun. 1 st	World Communion Sunday. <i>Neighbors in Need</i> Collection. Congregational vote on goal budget following worship. Crop Hunger Walk in Orange, MA starting at 1:00pm.
Mon. 2 nd	Online <i>Exploring the Bible</i> study group from 7 – 8:00pm.
Tue. 3 rd	Rev. Randy will attend the monthly meeting of the Association Committee on Ministry at 5:45pm.
Sun. 8 th	2024 Stewardship Campaign begins.
Mon. 9 th	Monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees at 7:00pm.
Tue. 10 th	Rev. Randy will attend the Hampshire Clergy Gathering from 12 – 1:00pm in Hadley.
Sun. 15 th	Shawn Robinson will speak to the church about Prospect Meadow Farm at the beginning of worship.
Sun. 22 nd	Rev. Randy will be away on vacation. Our Guest Minister will be Rev. Bob Livingston.
Mon. 23 rd	Online <i>Exploring the Bible</i> study group from 7 – 8:00pm.
Tue. 24 th	Monthly meeting of the Board of Deacons in person at the church at 6:30pm.

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.

Mondays: The Joyful Ringers Bell Choir rehearses from 6 - 8:00pm.

Tuesdays: Yoga classes are offered every Tuesday in the church parlor at 5:30pm.

Thursdays: Choir rehearses in the parlor at 7:00pm, except July and August.

NEIGHBORS IN NEED COLLECTION

“In 2023, the *Neighbors in Need* ‘BEHOLD!’ theme continues. This year’s focus is on environmental justice. Plastics, electronics, and other non-compostable wastes are being shipped across, and even tossed into, our waterways, launched into space, as well as buried in landfills. As people of faith, we believe these egregious acts are sinful and unholy. We must be better stewards of our planet!

Join us by promoting this year’s NIN ‘Behold!’ campaign. As you may recall, one-third of the offering supports Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds are used by Justice and Witness Ministries to provide grants to UCC churches and organizations as well as supporting a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.”

This annual collection of the United Church of Christ will be accepted on Sunday, October 1st. Thank you for your generosity.

CROP HUNGER WALK



The CROP Hunger Walk will take place in Orange on Sunday, October 1st. Would you like to be a part of our congregation’s team? Would you like to walk with hundreds of others who are committed to the good work of helping people in need locally and around the globe? Would you like to make a donation to this worthy organization? These are the good things that churches should do. You can become a team member or make a donation by speaking with Amy N., Benevolence Chair, or by visiting <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2023/rev-randolph-calvo-2>.

The CROP Walks were the first “walks.” The model has been copied by many other worthy causes, but the CROP Walks are the oldest. It is important for people to see in various hosting communities that people are out



walking in solidarity with people in need throughout the world. The slogan is “We walk because they walk.” In many poor countries, people must walk long distances for water, food, medical treatment and the such. The walks are reminders to everyone who sees them of these too often forgotten populations.

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

October 1st is also World Communion Sunday. This day offers congregations a distinctive opportunity to experience Holy Communion in the context of the global community of faith. The first Sunday of October is when Christians in every culture break bread and pour the cup to remember and affirm Christ as the Head of the Church. On this day, we recognize that we are part of the whole body of believers. Whether shared in a grand cathedral, a mud hut, outside on a hilltop, in a meetinghouse, or a storefront, or in white steepled church in the center of town, Christians celebrate the communion liturgy in as many ways as there are congregations. So as we gather for October’s Communion Sunday let us do so with an awareness that we are sharing in Communion with Christians around the globe, all sitting at Christ’s one table, all sharing in the one bread and the one cup.



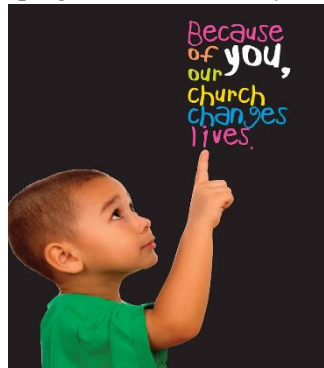
ONLINE BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Our online Bible study group is reading from the Acts of the Apostles and then the Gospel of John. If you would like to join us as we read of the early days of the church and then of John’s unique take on Jesus’ life and ministry, 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.

2024 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

The theme of this year’s Stewardship Campaign is “Because of you, our church changes lives.” Each church organization has submitted its budget Trustees then developed a Goal Budget for congregation will vote to accept or revise meeting will take place in the sanctuary Service. It will be open to those joining us Zoom Sunday Service link for the

Once the Goal Budget has been Stewardship Campaign will begin. Please allow the church to plan for the future, to worship in a beautiful sanctuary, and to and care that Jesus expects. Please be as



proposal to the Board of Trustees. The 2024. On Sunday, October 1st, the the Goal Budget. This congregational immediately following our worship in person and via Zoom (remain on the meeting).

approved by the congregation, our remember that it is our pledges that continue and offer us meaningful serve the community with the charity generous to our church as you are able.

GUEST SPEAKER

On Sunday, October 15th, Shawn Robinson, Director of Prospect Meadow Farm and Director of Vocational Services, Hampshire/Franklin/Hampden for ServiceNet, Inc will speak to us at the start of worship about the mission of Prospect Meadow Farm and the services they provide to individuals with disabilities locally, talk about the growth of their culinary program that took off starting from our church kitchen, and a story or two of the impact this work has had on actually changing/improving lives.

JOYFUL RINGERS BELL CHOIR



The Joyful Ringers rehearse on Mondays from 6 – 8:00pm. Anyone who is interested is welcome to become a part of the Bell Choir. Younger or older, church member or bell enthusiast, experienced or novice, we would love it if you would come forward and add the gift of more music to our sanctuary. If you may be interested, please reach out to Rev. Randy at randyc1897@gmail.com or Sue M., the Music Committee Chair.

Also, we do have a set of *chimes that the children may play at worship*. If your daughter or son may be interested in learning how to play the chimes, we would love to hear from you. It may even be fun for them.

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR and CRAFT FAIR

We are a long way off from December’s fundraiser, but if you have some extra downtime during these summer months, would you consider working on your special craft talents so that they may be shared with the church at the Bazaar. People love handmade crafts. Thank you for whatever you can do for our church.

HEADS UP FUNDRAISER

I would like to mention that I have raffle tickets for the HEADS Up (Hatfield Embraces Acceptance and Dismantles Stigma) fundraiser. HEADS Up is a church donated two BBQ tickets because a "wellness wonder." This is a coffee can to decide which prizes you would most like the Council on Aging Health Fair – I'll be at by letting me know on Sunday the 24th. Here



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- * 90 min. Massage (& a nap!)
- * 60 min Regular or Craniosacral Massage
- * Pediatric Hypnosis Session
- * 60 min. Float Tank Experience in Northampton (King Street)
- * 1 Initial Consult + Accupuncture Session
- * 1 Accupuncture Session
- * 3 Personal Training Sessions at Fitness Together
- * A Sensory-Friendly Birthday Party at The Fields Center
- * 2 Tickets: Hatfield Congregational Church Chicken Barbecue on Sep. 30
- * 1 \$50 Gift Certificate to Eastside Grill
- * 1 Heartsaver Adult CPR class for up to 6 participants

The drawing will take place on the 27th and winners will be notified.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Don't forget to check in at our website and FaceBook page. The links are directly below. They are updated several times each week and often share information from the larger church that we may not know of otherwise. Please like our pages and posts and share them as you choose.

GIFT CARDS

Big Y 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

Music Minister: Anthony Tracia anthonytracia@gmail.com

Committee Chairpersons:

<i>Benevolence, Amy N.</i>	<i>Music Committee, Sue M.</i>
<i>Christian Education, Anita W.</i>	<i>Real Folks Society, Martha Z.</i>
<i>Church Moderator, Jonathan B.</i>	<i>Trustees, Ed M.</i>
<i>Deacons, Jeff F.</i>	



AND a SCARY HALLOWEEN to all the young and young at heart.