



Tower Tidings

Congregational Church of Laconia United Church of Christ
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September 2021

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September 2021 Pastor's Letter

Dear friends,

I look back on my letter for August and where we are today regarding the reports of the Covid-19 virus particularly the Delta variant, I just want to be clear, I do not claim to be a prophet especially a prophet of doom! There are enough of those in the Bible and today! It seems that the perseverance I spoke of is going to be something we are all going to need!

This Sunday's (August 29) scripture is from James 1:22-27 where the author writes about being "doers of the word." He goes on in this short letter to also talk about faith and deeds. As I interpret this in the context of today, the author is saying, it is not enough to claim that I have faith that this pandemic will pass and not make any efforts myself. The author implies that faith will result in action. In other words, for me at least, yes, I have faith that God is at work in this pandemic, but I will also do what I can to help improve the situation.

Here at the Congregational Church of Laconia UCC we are making every effort to maintain in-person worship and the use of our Parish House for support groups that need that support now as much as ever! So, we have gone back to requiring masks whenever we are inside the church buildings around other people. (I refer you to the "What's Happening Now" article in this Tower Tidings.) None of us want to wear masks especially in this summer humidity! But most of us will, if this is what is required to break the back of this pandemic (this and getting vaccinated or the booster!)

Echoing what I said last month, we have gotten through this far, let's see it through to a better and healthier world not just for us but for everyone's grandchildren!

Doing my best through faith and in deeds to persevere with you!

Pastor Neil Wilson

What's Happening Now?

The Rev. Gordon Rankin, Conference Minister for the NH United Church of Christ, has recently issued new recommendations regarding in-person worship during the Covid-19 pandemic. We are in the midst of another surge of infections fueled by the highly contagious Delta-variant. Since August 10th, active cases in Belknap County have almost quadrupled, and Laconia has seen its active case numbers increase about five-fold. Test positivity rates are around 6% locally. Community transmission is considered substantial or high, depending on the data tracker you consult.

Because of this, the Conference is urging us to consider discontinuing indoor in-person worship again.

FOR THE TIME BEING, we are choosing to *continue worship* as we have most recently been experiencing it. We will meet **indoors** with **face masks** and **social distancing**. Coffee Hour will be outdoors weather-permitting. Live-stream worship will be available for any who feel more comfortable worshipping in that way.

The Reopening Team will continue to monitor the data and our compliance with face mask and social distancing guidelines. We have been blessed with the miracle of effective vaccines. Thanks be to God! Let us pray that the people of Laconia, New Hampshire, our country, and our world take advantage of this blessing for the sake of children and vulnerable adults who cannot be immunized and to put an end to this scourge at last. Guide us, o thou great Jehovah!



Bread for Bread



Thank you! to all who have contributed to the food pantry, items as well as funds for bread.

We continue to purchase 28 loaves of bread per week for the pantry and accept cash donations in the church office.

Approximately \$50 has been donated in the last 2 weeks.

Service of Hope and Remembrance

From March 22, 2020 through June 6, 2021, the Congregational Church of Laconia-UCC was closed for indoor worship due to the Covid-19 pandemic. None of us could have predicted that our closure would last so long. During those months of isolation, livestream worship, and Zoom meetings, much changed. Among the most profound of these changes was the passing of nineteen souls who were members of our church. Those nineteen were called home at a time when we could not gather as a church family to grieve our losses and celebrate their lives.

So, as part of the Sunday worship service on September 26th, a **Service of Hope and Remembrance** will be offered by Pastor Neil, Diaconate, and the Worship & Music Committee specifically honoring the lives of these nineteen souls and acknowledging any other losses you may have experienced during this time of apartness.

- | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Bill Zeckhausen | Pat Normandin | Steve Hatch | Susan Hayes |
| Ed Bastille | Ellie Kennard | Joan Thurston | Olyve Buckley |
| Peg Petrie | Bill Bell | Donnie Richards | Joni Stover |
| Priscilla Champagne | Evelyn MacMillan | Joanne Whitticom | Phyllis Veazey |
| Charlie Heslam | Ruth Gill | George Bryenton | |

We invite the families of these beloved people to bring a single item to adorn the Communion table for this time of worship--something that for you is emblematic of the person you long knew and loved. Or write something honoring your loved one and leave it on the table to be shared. You and others among us who lost loved ones during this time will be invited, during a musical selection, to light a candle to honor these losses allowing us to share your grief and surround you with our love.

We have never done anything quite like this before, but we have never experienced anything quite like this before either. Please plan to join us in worship on September 26th as the words to the familiar hymn say, for all the saints...

For those of you who are visiting for our Service of Hope and Remembrance and may need to use the elevator our policy is that only one family group use the elevator at a time. And we will have an usher there to assist you if needed.



The Diaconate invite you to a Bereavement Support Group on Wednesday, September 29, at 10 AM in the Bean Parlor. We hope you can join us...Beth Shehadi and Margie Kreitler

FAITH FORMATION AND NURSERY

UPDATES BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 12

FAITH FORMATION- Faith Formation this fall will be held outside on the Church grounds and occasionally in Church Hall. Wherever we are we'll be wearing masks and practicing social distancing. We will be celebrating Creation so it will be wonderfully appropriate to meet outside! We have kids as young as second grade up to seniors in high school who participate and help each other to be a part of our Church community. Bring your enthusiasm and stories as we gather together for the first time in 18 months!!!

NURSERY- Due to concerns for children, families, and church members our nursery offering will be a little different for the time being. We will be providing a welcoming space in Church Hall for young children to use during the service as needed. Parents and caregivers will need to stay with and supervise their young ones (first graders and younger) and not those of another family as we strive to be a safe space for all. Please remember, **children of all ages are always welcome during the Church service!**

Book Discussion

The book discussion group will meet on Thursday, September 23. Come at noon or 6:00pm in the Beane Conference Room. The book is **Hamnet** by Maggie O'Farrell. Join us whether you have read the book or not.

Help to decide the titles for the coming year.

A zoom link will be sent if needed.

Digital Stewardship

Your Stewardship Committee has been discussing our digital presence in the Community. The pandemic has accelerated a shift in the way people learn about churches. Driven by younger people long before the pandemic, now all age groups are learning about our mission digitally, including our own members! For better or worse, our on-line presence is our welcoming mat, and we need to welcome folks electronically. How do we do that? We have been looking into the possibility of getting help from a tech-savvy intern to look at what we have and offer suggestions on how that can be expanded to reflect a vibrant, relevant ministry. If you have suggestions, please send them our way.

Muff Kruse, Dan Tinkham, Jaylene Bengtson, and Pat Wood

Thanks, Dan

Ministry of Meals--VOLUNTEERS Appreciated!

As you are probably aware, our church assists in providing food for community members through various local organizations besides Got Lunch and the Little Free Pantry. One such organization is the Salvation Army. If you would like to assist in providing periodic meals to usually about fifty-five people, please contact Hollis Thompson (512) 970-6592.

Belknap House is another opportunity to provide a meal once a week on Thursdays. The headcount for this meal has always been below twenty. Contact Diane Tinkham (603) 455-2427 for more information .

If you and a friend feel called to this ministry, for one time or more, try it.

Brick Pavers

Be a part of the Congregational Church of Laconia history by purchasing a brick for the walkway with your

name or family on it

business name

honored Veteran's name

in memory of a loved one

or just because!

you can even add small symbols like a heart or cross

* small brick \$125

4' x 8'

2 lines, maximum 20 spaces per line

* medium brick \$250

8" x 8"

4 lines, maximum 20 spaces per line

* Granite Walkway Marker \$1000

If you are interested in purchasing a forever brick, or have any questions please speak with Carolyn Jorgensen at the church.

603-524-0668 carolyn@laconiaucc.org



September Birthdays

- 1—Elaine Morrison Smith
- 2—Daniel Makely III
- 4—Chad Vaillancourt
- 4--Sara Ellerbeck
- 9—Nancy Hemlin
- 10—Eric Nelson
- 10--Tara Shore
- 13—Cindy Bronson
- 14--Martha Clement
- 14--Robert Harrington
- 14--Carol Veer
- 16--Judith Yeaton
- 17--Angela McCarty
- 19--Diane Tinkham
- 19--Sally Tinkham
- 20--Bill Gile
- 23--Ashley Coddington
- 26--David Furber
- 26--Bobbie Thomas
- 27--Molly Hazelton
- 29--Robert Hunt
- 29--Gail Miller



Early October Birthdays

- 2--Warren Clement
- 7--Betsy Fosburgh
- 9--Catherine Tokarz
- 10--John Walker Jr.
- 11--Daniel Makely Jr.
- 13--Carol Gable