

MINISTER'S COLUMN, Scott Couper

I saw on the news today that at an opening game of the National Football League, many in the crowd booed the action of two football teams who stood in silence to recognize both teams' unity and solidarity in opposing racism. Today, I saw on a Facebook post the following message: "I can do without Starbucks. I can do without Nike shoes. I can do without Hollywood. And I can do without athletes and all sporting events who disrespect our flag."

How are we to 'be' Christians? One of the skills that we must learn as Christians is to read the 'Signs of the Times'. This is first process of the '**See, Judge, Act**' Process developed by Catholic Social Teaching Principles (dignity of the human person, subsidiarity, the common good, solidarity). The second step in the process us to *interpret*, or judge, those signs. Last, we are to respond to, or act upon, the interpretations of the signs read.

See: What sign do I see when spectators boo athletes for standing together to raise awareness and a need for justice and equality under the law in our country? I see a nation bitterly divided, and on the verge of an as-of-yet unknown manifestation of civil war. When the fundamental ideals of justice and equality under the law held by the United States of America are opposed by a large segment of the population, then that country is bitterly divided over what the nature of our society should be. When people oppose Starbucks, Nike shoes, Hollywood, and even professional athletes for taking positions in favor of justice and equality under the law, we know that our country is bitterly divided over what the nature of our society should be.

Judge: If an athlete kneels to raise awareness about injustice, that is considered an affront to many. If athletes stand in silence to raise awareness about injustice, that too is considered an affront to many. So the issue is not about kneeling or standing in silence. And the issue is certainly not about disrespecting the flag, since the flag itself is a symbol of justice and equality under the law. That anyone raises awareness or advocates for justice and equality of the law is not a matter left or right, Democrat or Republican, liberal or conservative, nor capitalist or socialist. Justice and equality under the law are fundamental tenets of the United States of America. We see them to be 'rights'. So, how then can some understand those who wish to advocate for justice and equality under the law to be 'wrong'? Therefore, to support or to boost efforts to attain greater justice and equality under the law in our country is not a matter of left and right; it is a matter of right and wrong.

Act: To be a Christian is to act as a Christian. Christians are to respond to that which is right and that which is wrong. All Christians, no matter their political ilk, should advocate for justice and equality under the law. All United States citizens, all Christians, and all Congregationalists should advocate for the right and oppose the wrong – it matters not whether we are Republican or Democrat, liberal or conservative. All citizens of the United States, all Christians, and all Congregationalists should be able to agree that greater justice and more equality under the law is needed in our country so as to form "a more perfect union" or in theological terms, the "Kingdom of God".

I invite you to participate in Solidarity Fridays from 5:30pm to 6:30pm at Pliny Park in Brattleboro. Solidarity Fridays is hosted by Brattleboro Solidarity, the Tenants Union of Brattleboro, and the Root Social Justice Center, and Lost River Social Justice. As Christians and USA citizens, we do not necessarily need to agree on *how* we increase justice and increase equality in our society – we need only agree that these things are right and worth advocating for and that booing and opposing them is wrong.

CENTRE BELLS

October 2020

The newsletter of
Centre Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ



Council Chair, LYNN HERZOG

September 13 was an important day at Centre Church. We worshipped in the sanctuary for the first time in six months. It was wonderful to see people in the flesh and be inspired by the sacred space. And it was the day we held our Program Meeting and elected new officers. Bill McCarty and Margo Neale were finally allowed to retire as Council Chair and Vice Chair – with our heartfelt thanks – and were replaced by me as Chair and Sue Rowell as Vice Chair. Jenifer Ambler continues as Clerk, and Anne Fecto as Treasurer. Bill will replace Lynn on the Deacons, and Margo will join Mission & Service – her “first love”.

Also on the 13th at the Annual Program Meeting, the new Long-Range Planning Committee was revealed, chaired by Bob Pu and Bonnie Girvan and with nine other members. No committee is more important, as they will be looking at the future of our church. We will be hearing more from them, I’m sure.

After much discussion, Council decided to use the hybrid model for worship services. The 35 people who came to the sanctuary were glad to be there, but there were many who were reluctant to come. And there were technical problems with the Facebook live-stream. So, in order to reach the largest number of people, we will continue with the ZOOM services most of the time, but will have worship in the sanctuary on the second Sunday of each month. Special thanks are due to Jenifer Ambler and Matt Kennedy, whose technical skills and hours of work make the ZOOM services possible.

I look forward to being part of the Church Council – a group of people full of spirit and wisdom - and to serving the congregation in whatever way I can.

From Music Director, MARYMILKEY-MAY

Many thanks go to Roger Miller for singing the hymns and responses on our first Sunday back in the Sanctuary (9/13). Roger did a terrific job and I greatly appreciate his willingness to do so. One Sunday per month when we are in the sanctuary, we will need a singer. It has been challenging to find one, as many choir members have not felt comfortable returning to in-person services yet. If you would like to lead hymns, please let me know. You do not have to be a choir member. Since the congregation isn't allowed to sing, the only way we will have hymns is to have a soloist singing many feet away, either masked or shielded.

I find myself to be short on news this month. Typically, the adult and youth choirs would be back in the swing of weekly rehearsals and singing on Sundays. It indeed feels strange to begin the programmatic year without them. It also limits my news! I continue to eagerly await the time when we can all sing again!



CHURCH GOVERNANCE

Changes in Church Leadership following the Annual Program Meeting on Sunday, September 13

<p>Council Chair: Lynn Herzog Vice Chair: Sue Rowell William McCarty, <i>ex officio</i>, per by-laws, as immediate past Chair</p>	<p>Long-Range Planning Committee Chair: Robert Pu Vice-Chair: Bonnie Girvan Members: Jack Bixby Margo Neale Matt Deen Holly Kennedy April Harkness Scott Couper Karen Rydant Al Rydant Haley Marcil Katherine Maisner</p>
<p>Deacons Bill McCarty</p>	
<p>Mission & Service Margo Neale</p>	

MISSION & SERVICE

September was a quieter month for Mission & Service, however our church still found ways to reach out to our local community. Loaves & Fishes was our Second Sunday offering and we celebrated this mission on our first Sunday back in the sanctuary, September 13. Loaves & Fishes continues to provide meals to Groundworks, Food Works, and to those individuals who come to church on Tuesday or Friday in need of a noon meal. Last month's total meals distributed was 1,857! Thank you to all involved and to all who help by contributing food, time and money to this mission.

October's Second Sunday offering recipient is *Neighbors in Need*, one of the UCC's 5 for 5 offerings. *Neighbors in Need (NIN)* is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. This year, due to Covid-19, the United Church of Christ determined that the highest priority for our churches was to offer relief where possible. Thus, they gathered monies from a variety of sources, which included NIN, and formed a COVID-19 relief fund.

Two smaller projects happened in September through Mission & Service. Through the generosity of time and talent, masks were made by Ann Doesburg and Laura Slate and donated to Green Street School. The nurse at Green Street was SO appreciative and thankful for these masks! We thank our seamstresses.

And before school started, seven backpacks were chosen by the children living at Morning-side Shelter. They were then ordered and delivered in time for the first day of school. According to Groundworks staff, these children were VERY excited to receive their new backpacks.

Looking ahead, we are still working for ways that we can send support to Cabanitas through the Luz del Mundo scholarship fund by the end of the year. It is difficult to fundraise this year, understandably, and we have a few ideas, but more from the congregation are warmly welcome.



DEACONS

After our months-long, unprecedented 'vacation', Deacons are back in the saddle again with brand new duties and challenges.

In preparation for our Grand Re-Opening on September 13, we spent a vigorous Saturday morning removing hundreds of hymnals and Bibles from the sanctuary, along with the collection envelopes, prayer cards, and tiny pencils from the pews, and miscellaneous other ephemera. On a following Friday, we damp-cleaned dust from the pews, coat racks, windows sills and moldings, installed roping on the pews for safe social distancing, and vacuumed the pew cushions.

Quite a workout! Special thanks to Lynn and Joy for their mighty muscle and many hours of devoted work.

We have also created and posted assisting signage, and purchased disposable face masks and gloves for the safety and convenience of the congregation.

We have been working closely with Rev. Scott, Nan Mann, and Priscilla Svec in the development of the Re-opening Guidelines and the COVID-19 Health Screening form. Nan and Priscilla's input based on their personal experiences in their respective professional roles has been invaluable.

For those who choose to return once a month for in-person worship, you will find quite a few changes. Deacons and ushers will be stationed at entry points to assist with the Health Screening forms, and to take your temperature upon arrival. We won't be passing the collection plate—instead, you are invited to place your donations and pledges in plates at the door as you enter or leave. Sadly, no warm embraces and handshakes will be permitted (I guess we can wave and text, though!). Further health and safety guidelines will be in place.

While our beloved sanctuary, now altered, stripped, and bare, might seem a bit forlorn right now, I like to think of this time as an opportunity to start clean and fresh and new, not only for our physical building and church community, but in our spiritual and personal lives as well. After all, the sun still pours through our windows glowing like jewels, the mighty organ awaits Mary's dancing fingers (and feet!) to bring the air alive with tonal magnificence, and the strong voices of faith, courage, and hope will be sounding once again from our time-tried pulpit and lectern.

Joyously, Centre Church opens her arms to you!

-Heidi Mario, *Chair*



The New Day After

By Tom Harriman

On that first day after, our minds were in limbo,
as if reason itself had been destroyed.
We were shell shocked from the impacts,
that came with the roar of Armageddon.
For what we were sure could never happen,
had happened the day before.

Misinformation, conspiracy theories and facts were blurred,
as we looked from our windows into the smoke filled sky,
swearing we saw the faces of those who perished,
as our minds kept repeating the image in the aftermath.

We sat in our living rooms, in bewilderment and disbelief,
perpetually reminded of the horror, shown on every newscast.
Our tears diffracting the scenes we saw, repeated
at ten minute intervals, hour after hour after hour.
Yet we couldn't take our eyes away from the screen.

Though years have passed, and romantic white clouds
slowly float where once was a curtain of smoke,
my grief still returns on the day after, like a tack in my shoe.
It reminds me that the pain is still real.

The pain of seeing death. The pain of seeking blame.
The pain of wanting retribution.
The pain of experiencing everything I didn't believe in.

Yet, for the wound of a scarred mind to heal, time is a cathartic salve,
and each year the wound opens a little less.
And on this new day after, though our faces are masked,
let the songs be heard, the hymns sung.
Let bells ring out. The majestic ones in church steeples,
the sweetest ones in the hands of rows of children.
Let this music replace the silence of that first day after.
The eerie quiet of shock. The stillness of despair.

While tears still well on this new day after,
I no longer cower at the sight of planes descending from the east.
For now they ride their air-lanes unencumbered.
Planes filled with people who will reach their destinations,
return to their families, put one foot on solid ground.
For on this new day after, the air is clear.
All is normal. All is safe. All is as it should be.

[reader's note: I wrote this last Saturday, 9/12. It is a companion poem to
"Anniversary", published in *eNews* on September 11, 2020]

OUR COMMUNITY

Dear Governor Scott,

We, as faith leaders from around the state, are writing to encourage you to allow passage of The Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) bill, [H.688](#). It has been a priority of the Legislature, and thus, of Vermont citizens, even through the COVID-19 pandemic which you have helped us endure with such grace and compassion.

As fires rage in the West and hurricanes loom in the South, as Vermont wells are going dry and we look ahead to another extreme winter, it would seem clear that this is the moment we, Vermonters, need to work together for solutions to global warming. Business owners have urged you to see the social responsibility in establishing regulations. Environmentalists point to the loss of the very fish, birds, bees and beauty which make our state the tourist destination it is.

Now we, as leaders of faith communities across the state, urge you to stand for Climate Justice. We, who work on the margins of society, are especially aware of the those who live in poverty. The COVID pandemic has made visible the fragility of the social fabric, made more fragile by extreme weather. We who look to the earth's complex beauty for inspiration and solace also mourn the economic impact of Hurricanes Irene and Sandy in our own state. The legislature has taken up these issues as priorities this session and the GWSA specifically addresses them.

We urge you to model leadership not only in the state but for the nation. The very same unity and collaboration you have fostered in fighting the pandemic can be mustered right now to find sustainable solutions to global warming. The time is now to sign the bill-- with confidence that the decision-making council will work in good faith and with wisdom, for the sake of our children and the future of Vermont.

Now is the time for Vermont and you to take the lead.

Sincerely,

Rev. Shawn Bracebridge, Dummerston Congregational Church, UCC

Rev. Dr. Lynn Bujnak Conference Minister, Vermont Conference, UCC

Rev. Dr. Don Chatfield, Lead Pastor, All Souls Interfaith Gathering

Rev. Dr. Scott Everett Couper, Centre Congregational Church, UCC, Brattleboro

Rev. Rob Hamm, Newfane Congregational Church, UCC

Cantor Kate Judd, Brattleboro Area Jewish Community

Rev. Mary Lindquist, St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Brattleboro

Rev. Elisa Lucozzi, Guilford Community Church, UCC

Rev. Jean Smith, St Michael's Episcopal Church, Brattleboro

Rev. Dr. Lise Sparrow, Guilford Community Church, UCC

Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno, Congregational Church, Westminster West, UCC

Rev. Audrey Walker, First Congregational Church, UCC, West Brattleboro

Rev. Randy Wilburn, Trinity Lutheran Church, Brattleboro

...et. al., not included

[The bill was vetoed by Governor Scott. The veto was overridden by the legislature.]



PEOPLE



Dr. Gregory Nicholas Prah died unexpectedly on September 3, 2020. He appeared in excellent health and was unaware of the underlying cancer affecting his heart. He maintained his strength and vigor to the end, collapsing after a day taking care of patients and working outside on his property in West Chesterfield. He was 54.

Greg was born November 27, 1965, in Allentown, PA at Sacred Heart Hospital, the fourth of Theresa and the late Dr. Joseph Prah's five children. In addition to his mother, Greg is survived by his wife, Christine; his children Nicholas, Andrew, and Victoria; his siblings Mary, Chris, and Ted; and many nieces, nephews and cousins. His brother Joe predeceased him two months ago.

After graduating with a chemistry degree from the University of Pennsylvania, Greg earned his medical degree at the Medical College of Pennsylvania, now known as Drexel College of Medicine. He completed a surgical residency at Boston City Hospital and an anesthesia residency and cardiothoracic fellowship at Tufts Medical Center. After working at Albany Medical Center in Albany, NY, and Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge, MA, Greg moved his practice to Brattleboro Memorial Hospital in Vermont, where he led the department of anesthesiology for many years.

Greg overcame serious health conditions of his youth to enjoy a healthy, rewarding life. His world revolved around his family, and he enjoyed family vacations at Bethany Beach and Cape Cod, family sailing trips in Maine, and traveling. He loved a challenging cross-word puzzle, a good poker game, working outside, and making his own apple cider and maple syrup. Greg was known by friends and family for his out-sized personality, generosity, sense of humor, and playful mischievousness, which enlivened many a gathering.

Greg loved and was loved by many. He will be sorely missed. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, services will be private. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to The American Cancer Society to advance scientific research in the fight against cancer at <https://donate3.cancer.org/>.

Fletcher Funeral Home of Keene has been entrusted with arrangements. To express condolences or share a memory of Greg, please visit www.FletcherFuneralHome.com.



A word of good cheer would be warmly received by members and friends of our church who are in nursing homes, assisted living centers, or are housebound as of September 26.

Fran Burrows—Langdon Place
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Phyllis Hickok
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802.257.0307

Karen Getty Peter—Pine Rock Manor
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The Rev. Allen Vander Meulen
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802.380.0735

Sylvia Eaton
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Alta Barber
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Pat Neer—Thompson House
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Bob & Dee Keller
153 Spruce St., Brattleboro, VT 05301
802.257.4588

Please let the Administrator know if we've missed someone.

BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Steve Fecto
- 5 Duo XI
- 17 Tara Rydant
- 30 John Trumper



NEW CONTACT INFORMATION

Margit Brosnan: margitbrosnan5@gmail.com

Diane Bassett: dabassett286@gmail.com

David & Barbara Henry: barb-dave.henry@comcast.net

Isabelle Mann: imkm@myfairpoint.net

OCTOBER 2020

*ZOOM events

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional* 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion* 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	2 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 5 ⁰⁰ Unsung Heroes Awards	3
4 10 ⁰⁰ Worship / Communion ZOOM 12 ⁰⁰ Deacons 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	5 4 ⁰⁰ BCC Board	6 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	7 8 ⁴⁵ Staff Meeting	8 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional* 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion* 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	9 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	10
11 10 ⁰⁰ Worship CHURCH 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	12 Indigenous People's Day OFFICE CLOSED	13 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	14 8 ⁴⁵ Staff Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ Mission & Service	15 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional* 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion* 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	16 CB DEADLINE 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	17
18 10 ⁰⁰ Worship ZOOM 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	19 1 ⁰⁰ Compassionate Brattleboro	20 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	21 8 ⁴⁵ Staff Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ Church Council	22 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional* 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion* 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	23 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	24
25 10 ⁰⁰ Worship ZOOM 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	26	27 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	28 MAIL CB 8 ⁴⁵ Staff Meeting	29 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional* 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion* 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	30 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	31 HALLOWEEN

SCOTT'S SERMONS can be accessed at the church website: www.centrechurhvermont.org -or- facebook page: <http://www.centrechurhvermont.org/audio-video.html> -or- https://www.facebook.com/pg/Centre-Congregational-Church-Brattleboro-VT-632678343519640/notes/?ref=page_internal -or- From the website *Welcome* page, click *Audio & Video* in the top list (or click *More* or *Other* on the top right).

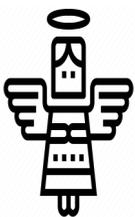
NEW FRIENDS OF CENTRE CHURCH

Welcome baby **Kevin Scot Young**, son of Charlie & Daniel Young of Maine, grandson of Bette Lynn & Arnold Young Jr, great grandson of Arnold & Marilyn Young.

He was born September 4, 2020 and all are doing well.

So wonderful to welcome a new baby to our family!

Dear Centre Church Members,



We would like to thank you for your healing thoughts, prayers, cards, emails, phone calls and meals. You have nourished us physically, mentally, and spiritually. We are very thankful for our Centre Church Family!

Al & Karen Rydant



Centre Bells is published monthly by Centre Congregational Church, UCC

News items, articles, address changes, and requests to be added or removed from the *Centre Bells* mailing list should be submitted to the church office:

802.254.4730 / admin@centrechurhvt.org

CALENDAR CHANGES:

Church Council, under new leadership of Lynn Herzog, has changed its monthly meeting to the **second Wednesday of each month** at 6pm.

Worship Services—Based on the experience with live in-person worship on Sunday, September 13, for the foreseeable future, Centre Church will continue to worship in-person in the sanctuary on the **second Sunday of each month** only.

ZOOM services will resume on the remaining Sundays of each month.

OCTOBER LECTIONARY TEXTS

Sunday, October 4, 18th Sunday after Pentecost
Ex 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20 and Ps 19; Isa 5:1-7 and Ps 80:7-15; Phil 3:4b-14; Matt 21:33-46

Sunday, October 11, 19th Sunday after Pentecost
Ex 32:1-14 and Ps 106:1-6, 19-23; Isa 25:1-9 and Ps 23; **Phil 4:1-9**; Matt 22:1-14

Sunday, October 18, 20th Sunday after Pentecost
Ex 33:12-23 and Ps 99; Isa 45:1-7 and Ps 96:1-9, (10-13); **1 Thess 1:1-10**; Matt 22:15-22

Sunday, October 25, 21st Sunday after Pentecost
Deut 34:1-12 and Ps 90:1-6, 13-17; Lev 19:1-2, 15-18 and Ps 1; 1 Thes 2:1-8; **Matt 22:34-46**

OCTOBER



2020

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**CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Facebook: [Centre Congregational Church-Brattleboro VT](https://www.facebook.com/Centre-Congregational-Church-Brattleboro-VT)

Instagram: @centrechurchvt

Current news/information in the larger UCC Community:

VT Conference: www.vtcucc.org / National: www.ucc.org

CHURCH STAFF AND LEADERSHIP

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Custodian: Emelio McCalla

Council Chair: Lynn Herzog

Treasurer: Anne Fecto

Clerk: Jenifer Ambler