

Bloomfield Congregational Community Newsletter

Celebrating Important Moments



Masks were made, individually wrapped, and placed on the pillars out front for anyone to come and have as part of our 1,000 Mask Ministry.



We installed a brand new stove and oven for our kitchen.



A great time was had by all who attended our Harvest Halloween Family Fun Event.

Looking Forward to what is Coming Soon!

November 1st

All Church Budget Meeting



November 15th - 17th

Thanksgiving Boxes



November 29th

Advent Begins



Pastor's Message



Hello Everyone,

I hope you are hanging in there. I grade on a curve these days, a “Crazy World Curve”. If you are hanging in there right now, with all that is going on, the way I see it, that’s worth at LEAST an A- in my book! If you’re doing better than that, that’s even better – A+.

The world is still upside down in many ways. Many of you are feeling the pressure of so many factors - including, but far from limited to - the pandemic, the election, social dynamics, the environment and global dynamics. Those don’t even include anything personal you are working through – including, “What the heck are we going to do about the holidays anyway!”

I get it. I feel it too. It’s hard and I am here for you if you need me.

Sometimes I hear people say, “I don’t want to bother you, I know you are so busy”. Sure, there is a lot going on, but I want you to know this. This is nothing more important to me as the pastor of this amazing Community of Faith than each of you. Nothing. I am here for you if you need me. Don’t hesitate. If you need me, make the call.

Inside the pages of this newsletter are some of the many wonderful things that continue to take place by the power of discipleship and the support of the Holy Spirit. I hope you enjoy going through them. It is all very impressive. That being said, I know many of you are wondering about what’s next with the church. Here is an update on the “Moving Forward” efforts – a LOT has been going on.

Survey

Thank you to everyone who make the time to complete the survey. We had an excellent response. If you haven’t done that yet and would like to do so, you are still welcome to send it in. If you need us to send you one, just let us know.

About half of the congregation wants to wait until there is a viable vaccine or other longer-term solution to Covid before returning to the building for worship. The other half of people who responded said they would be interested in returning under the parameters we outlined.

Creating a “Sanctuary Service” Team

Some work is already underway to prepare the sanctuary. Pews were sanitized and other steps taken to make sure we have a very safe space for everyone.

We need a group of people to help with various tasks – registering of people who come, ushers to help people get to the right “safe spots” designated in the pews and various other roles in order to do this. If you are willing to help in any of these roles, please reach out to Mary Laiuppa at (860) 242-1505 or laiuppa1@comcast.net.

Pastor's Message Cont...

Gatherings We Had

In an effort to begin Moving Forward even without worship in the building we had:

- Rally Day in the Church parking lot
- Blessing of the Animals on the front lawn of the church
- Halloween Harvest Family Fun Fest
- Seabury residents are now able to gather to see the service together in their chapel

We continue to brainstorm about additional events we could have in-person or online that would offer creative programming and ways to connect. We know you all have great ideas too, and we would like to hear them as well.

Most Recent Medical Information

Unfortunately, with all of the positives, the medical situation is rapidly moving against us. You have heard the trends on the national scale. Here in the State of Connecticut, a state that has done better than most if not all states in the Country in managing this pandemic, Positivity Rates are now over 4%. It was 1% in June and 3% last week. Deaths in the State were 33 in the month of August. They are already 87 in October with a week to go at the time of this writing.

Locally, here in Bloomfield, the Daily Case Rate per 100,000 people has steadily increased from the mid-single digits to 10.7 two weeks ago to 11.7 in the latest two-week trend report, with the second week higher than the first by 19%. Surrounding towns are also rising. Hartford has a daily case rate per 100,000 over 19. They could go much higher. New London is over 40.

Where We Stand Now

We will continue to build the appropriate protocols and train the right people for the proper positions for when we can return. We had hoped November 8th might be that date. However, with the recent medical trends increasing as significantly as they are, that wouldn't be the right decision at this time. We are now looking at sometime in Advent if the trends improve.

Next Steps

We will continue to prepare ourselves to be ready for worship in the sanctuary when the conditions permit. We will closely monitor the medial trends. We will also work to create more ways for us to gather in meaningful ways in small groups where we can and online. No matter what, we will continue to offer a high-quality Online Worship Experience. Again, please send us your ideas as to what you feel would be helpful for you and it very well may be helpful for others as well.

Peace, Pastor Shawn

Stones Of Hope



Stones of Hope

“Stones of Hope” is the opportunity for our congregation to spread God’s love, hope and compassion throughout our community. In many ways it is therapeutic for the artist and a sign of hope, renewal and love for those who see the Stones of Hope in our world. Here’s how it works;

The Deacons will have a basket of 2”-3” river rocks that will be kept on the front stairs of our Church.

They are there for those who would like to take a stone or two and to paint them with acrylic paints. The paintings can be representative of whatever moves you to share God’s love with others. Typical paintings use the words LOVE, PEACE, JOY, GOD LOVES YOU, STAY STRONG, YOU WILL SURVIVE, YOU GOT THIS, BLM, etc. You can also paint the stones with a scripture verse or a picture. Please also turn the stones over and do your best to paint Bloomfield Congregational Church (or BCC) on the back. After the paint dries you can put a coat of polyurethane on the stone to protect your work from the weather.

Once your “Stones of Hope” are done you have two choices. You can take them out into the community and leave them in places where people will take notice or you can bring them back and place them on the front stairs. The Deacons will distribute the “Stones of Hope” throughout our community.

The stones that you paint will be uplifting to many who see them in the community as they go about their day. They may see one that has a profound impact on them or someone they love. They may pick up the stone and carry it in their pocket or place it in their house where it will continue to provide them with a sense that they are not alone and that God loves them.

Our hope is that this will catch on and spread throughout our community, State and Country. It is a simple gift that you can provide to others, most of whom you will never know. Have fun, be creative and help us spread God’s love in Bloomfield and beyond!!

God’s Peace, Your Deacons,

Carolyn Delgado, Lucy Hurston, Dee Hart, Leslie Mills, Jon DeHoyos, and Chip McIsaac

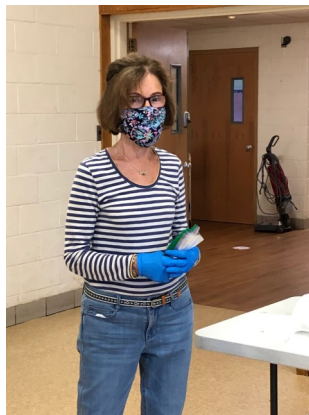
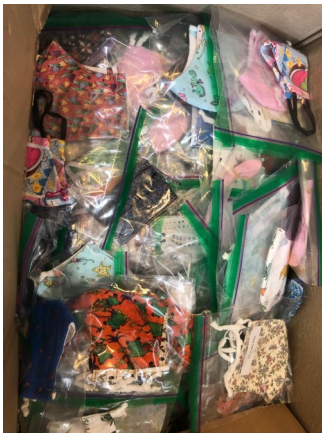
Missions

1,000 Mask Ministry

Many people in our community don't have access to enough quality masks. So, we began "The 1,000 Mask Ministry"! We got masks from many people and were able to provide them for ages ranging from the very youngest through all age ranges through adults. This is in addition to the hundreds of masks we already gave away with our "Meals and a Mask" program earlier on in the Covid outbreak. We placed these between the pillars of our church so people would see them and know they are there, and also to have people feel more comfortable approaching our church and getting something good when they do come those pillars. The masks are flying off the ropes - and making a difference in people's lives.



{Above} Ozma Gibbs and Priscilla McCatty hang masks on ropes that hang between the pillars of our church.



{Above Left} We received masks from many people, from in Town and places many towns away. {Middle and Right} Maurise Benson, Anne Weaver, Pam Covington, Ozma, Priscilla, and others help sort the masks.

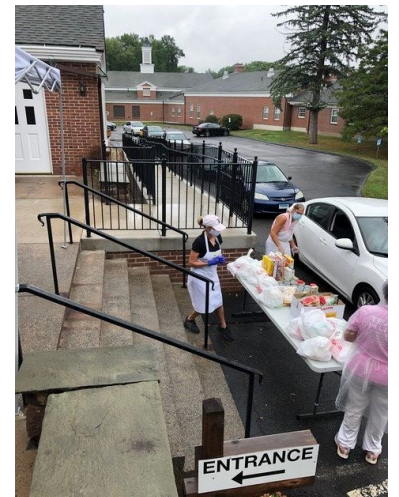
Missions Cont...

Community Kitchen Reaches 2nd Anniversary

WOW - just wow. Two years ago, on October 20th of 2018, we served our first Community Meal of our Bloomfield Congregational Church Community Kitchen! Wow - just wow. We started with a vision. That vision was to do more than simply feed people. It was to build community in a time when human connections are under attack. We also served over 19,000 meals. Nineteen THOUSAND meals. In two years... Wow.



Then in March, we completely pivoted the program when Covid hit. Turning the program into a “Drive Through” precision operation of love. In the seven months since we shifted to the “Drive Through” format, the Community Kitchen has served over 8,500 meals. Eight THOUSAND, five hundred - in seven months.



Thank you to so many people who helped us get this off the ground, grow it and keep it going safely during the pandemic. You are amazing.

Social Justice

Sacred Conversations Hits One Year Anniversary



In October, we reached an amazing milestone in our Sacred Conversations Towards Ending Racism. We reached the One Year Anniversary of the start of this important initiative. A lot was done by many people. I'm not just talking about the important work of the Sacred Conversations Team, our faithful facilitator Martey Rhine, our Council, Deacons and others who helped to make this possible.

I'm talking about the good work, the hard work, the necessary work done by everyone who participated. Things like digging into the history, doing the deeper discernment in our own time

and by doing the assignments in between sessions. All of this in order to have the important, often difficult conversations to make this a valuable process. Rather than describe this more, here are some of the thoughts participants had as they reflected on what they experienced in this year:

- "I thought the world was fair. I thought we were beyond these racial issues. I'm glad my world was opened up and that I can now see the truth and do something about it."
- "I was nervous going into this. Worried about reliving hurts. However, it turns out this has been a very positive and healing process for me."
- "I'm glad we did this. It is making a real difference."
- "These sessions are eye opening as we learn about our history, our white privilege, and open ourselves to hear the perspectives of Black, Indigenous and other People of Color (BIPOC) and other white people. It is helping us to build and deepen our relationships. It is also therapeutic and cathartic to have a space where we can be honest about our viewpoints and experiences."
- "We appreciate the church's and Pastor Shawn's willingness to do this work on a long-term basis."
- "We need to speak up and speak out."

Indeed. This is a long-term investment, and we do need to speak up and speak out. We will. We are invested in this. Jesus calls us to learn and to speak and to act in matters of social justice. And that is exactly what we will do - together.

Peace, Pastor Shawn



In the News

Now on BATV!

Our services are now broadcast on Bloomfield Access Television (BATV)! Thanks to a new partnership with BATV, previously recorded services will be aired Friday's at 3pm and Sunday's at 10am. They can be found as "Local 1" on Comcast Channel 5 or in the HD area as "Local 1" Channel 1070. This will expand how we spread the "Word" and also enable people who don't have smartphones or computers to experience our services. Please help us let people know about this great opportunity, for us and for them.



Messenger Features "1,000 Mask Ministry"



Good News spreads in this Town. Our "1,000 Mask Ministry" is no exception.

The Bloomfield Messenger made our mask ministry the top story for their October 2nd edition of the paper.

If you haven't seen a copy of this and would like one, let us know and we'll send one to you. Also, if you are able, please help us spread the word to others when we get good press like this.

Community Engagement

Blessing of the Animals



On Sunday, October 25th we had our Blessing of the Animals. It was a little different with masks and keeping people “at a dog’s leash length” but it was wonderful. We had people from church and people from the wider community participate. And, for those who couldn’t make it, some even sent pictures via email and Facebook so their beloved animal could be blessed that way. The times may be different, but we will continue to make ways to connect with each other and the community.

Using Our Location to Send Messages to the Community

The location of our Church matters. We have a prominent place with a lot of people going by. So, it’s important for us to use that to send messages that are important for the community. We’ve been doing that more and more with our signs. No longer just putting up a sermon title, we have been placing messages for people to see. Some have been funny. Some have stood for issues of social justice. Others reminded people to do the Census or to Register and Vote.

Then, we got some “cows”. We practically got a herd of cows! And, we are using them to send messages as well. As we change what we show out there, it recaptures people’s attention and we get to send a message. One of the cows is a “Black Lives Matter” cow. You’ll see how we use the others in our next Newsletter...:-).



Harvest Family Fun Fest

Our Harvest Halloween Family Fun Fest was great! So glad to see all of you there! We played Wrap Your Mummy, Bean Bag Toss, Paint a Pumpkin, and The Pumpkin Roll Race! Awesome costumes too! Check out the pictures! Thank you all and thank you Faith Formation! It was a wonderful day! *We are looking forward to the next events to get together and have some fun and build community!!*



{Above} There were many wonderful costumes from witches to ducks, and plenty of pumpkins to paint. Plus, we could see lots of smiles (even behind the masks!)



{Above} Garrett Fisher wraps his mom Linda while a little witch chases Pastor Shawn. Pat Robair helps Dorine get everything ready for the day! Over 25 people shared in this fun-filled time being together.

Facilities

New Equipment Arrives!

When the old stove in the church kitchen could no longer boil water, we knew it was time for a new one. So, with the help of funds provided from several places, we purchased an excellent new stove and oven (with a griddle on the side) that should serve us for a generation! This will serve our important missions of our Child Development Center, our Bloomfield Congregational Community Kitchen, Loaves and Fishes and many other occasions.



{Above} First the old stove was removed, then the big day when the truck arrived, and finally, the wonderful new stove is in-place and already in-use!



In addition to a new stove, we also needed additional refrigerator and freezer space for various uses. We thought this was going to cost us at least \$3,000. However, Home Depot, through Foodshare donated this brand new refrigerator/ freezer for our Community Kitchen for free! Then another quality one was donated by someone who heard on Facebook that we needed one. So, both were donated at no cost! The Spirit is good!

From Your Deacons



As we move toward Advent, the Deacons are working with Pastor Shawn to create opportunities for small, safe group gatherings and celebrations. We welcome your ideas and thoughts so please send any ideas in an email to the office or contact a deacon. We welcome your input...especially since this community of faith is very creative!

In an effort to deepen our spiritual life and faith, we as deacons are reading and discussing the book, “Meeting Jesus again for The First Time”, by Marcus Borg. We take very seriously our responsibility to be spiritual leaders for this amazing community of faith.

We continue to pray for you during these challenging times. And we also continue to be amazed by the generosity of time, talents and financial support that this faith community provides in abundance. Thank you!

We launched the Stones of Hope Project. Please come and get a stone, paint a word or phrase on it and then leave it somewhere for someone else to find. It could provide a measure of hope to the individual finding it. And make you feel better also!

We are staying informed about the Moving Forward efforts that will help us determine when and how we can safely worship in the sanctuary again. We will continue to be informed by local and state guidelines, recommendations from the Southern New England Conference of the United Church of Christ (SNEUCC) and the results of the survey that many of you completed.

We are praying hard for all of you! Please keep us in your prayers as we work with you to build the kingdom of God right here in Bloomfield.

Peace and grace to you, Your Deacons,

Jon DeHoyos, Carolyn Delgado, Dee Hart, Lucy Hurston, Chip McIsaac, Leslie Mills



New Executive Conference Minister of SNEUCC



Recently, after several years of discernment, discussion and transition, the Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island Conferences of the United Church of Christ (UCC) came together as one. This new conference is now called the Southern New England Conference, also known as the SNEUCC. A national search took place to find the first leader of this newly merged SNEUCC Conference. We are truly blessed to let you know that Rev. Darrell Goodwin was offered the

position, accepted the offer and was voted into the role at a recent gathering of pastors and lay leaders of the new SNEUCC. Below is some of his background. You may also be interested to know that he decided to make Bloomfield his home! We plan to have him with us (in person or virtually) on Sunday, February 14th. Here is a bit of his background.

The Rev. Darrell L. Goodwin, a Chicago native, served the Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Conferences as an Associate Conference Minister based in Omaha, NE. Rev. Darrell is also the Program Director of the Pension Boards' Faith and Personal Finance Initiative, a project funded by a \$1 million grant from the Lilly Endowment's National Initiative to Address Economic Challenges Facing Pastoral Leaders.

In his 20 years of ministerial experience, the Rev. Goodwin has also served in higher education and in varied ministry settings of the United Church of Christ and Church of God in Christ.

The Rev. Goodwin holds a Bachelor of Arts in Human Development and Theology from Boston College; a Master of Education in Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration from The University of Vermont; a Master of Arts in Transforming Spirituality from Seattle University; and is currently a doctoral candidate in San Francisco Theological Seminary's Doctor of Ministry program.

"My desire to serve the people of the Southern New England Conference is inspired by your boldness to form a new conference with a mission and vision toward the marginalized," he said. "I hope to bring my commitment to justice which has been curated by the Holy Spirit, my love of God's people, and administrative gifts to propel this vision forward."

Looking Forward



Thanksgiving Boxes Plan

It's turkey time! It has been our tradition to provide 67 boxes for Bloomfield families in need. **This year we will collect food at the church after service on Sunday, November 15, noon – 2:00 as well as Monday, the 16th from 10 – 2:00 and Tuesday, the 17th from**

3:00 – 6:00. Please choose items from the list below or bring an entire meal!

- 1 can cranberry sauce
- 4 cans vegetables (peas, corn, green beans)
- 1 can turkey gravy
- 5 pound bag white or sweet potatoes
- 2 pound bag of onions
- 2 cans fruit pie filling (apple, peach or cherry)
- 2 boxes pie crust mix
- stuffing mix or corn bread mix

We also need monetary donations for the \$25 gift cards we will give with each basket. Donations go to Bloomfield Congregational Church with “Thanksgiving Baskets” in the memo section of your check. Donations also help us buy whatever is not donated.

People are needed to staff the drop off days in two or three hour shifts. Please call Marnie Clark (434-409-0386) to volunteer. And we need people to help pack the boxes on Thursday, November 19, 9:00 – noon. Please wear your masks.

Thank you in advance for your generosity. May your Thanksgiving be blessed.

The Missions Ministry Team

Looking Forward continued...



November 1st All Church Meeting and All Saints Day

November 3rd Election Day

November 15th - 17th Collection of Food for Thanksgiving Baskets

November 26th Thanksgiving

November 29th - 1st Sunday of Advent

Birthdays

Nov. 9th - Connie Robinson

Nov. 15th - Gwen Iloani

Nov. 18th - John Casner

Nov. 18th - Emily Owens

Nov. 26th - Kurt Robair



Dec. 2nd Libbie Merrow

Dec. 3rd Kelly Correa

Dec. 4th Larry Wild

Dec. 6th Dianne McKitty

Dec. 9th Paul Martel

Dec. 10th Sue Thompson

Dec. 11th Charles Walker

Dec. 15th Dee Hart

Dec. 16th Priscilla McCatty

Dec. 25th Michelle Alves

Dec. 29th Leslie Mills

November Anniversaries

November 8th - Charlotte and Stuart Babcock



Transitions

We are saddened to inform you of the death of Lois Robert. She is remembered fondly by many people and we are sorry for your loss. A link to her obituary can be found in the Friday, October 30th E-News.

KEY CONTACT INFORMATION:

Bloomfield Congregational Church

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Church Office: (860) 242-0776

Pastor Shawn Fisher: ext. 201

Director of Faith Formation Dorine DeCarli: ext. 203

Minister of Music Eustace Straker: ext. 202

Child Development Center: ext. 204

www.firstchurchbloomfield.org

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FirstChurchBloomfield.org/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/>

[UCxk_KR0fMB3wNWxBa86FVMQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxk_KR0fMB3wNWxBa86FVMQ)

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/bloomfield.cc/>