

The Steeple Chimes

AUGUST 2020 EDITION

Columbia Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

Established in 1720



Mission Statement

The Columbia Congregational United Church of Christ as part of the United Church of Christ and the worldwide Christian Church is called by God to be disciples of Jesus, the Christ. Therefore, the mission of the Columbia Congregational United Church of Christ is to worship God and to preach and teach the Gospel of Christ; to promote Christian fellowship among our members and friends, and to live in Christian fellowship with the Church Universal and the whole creation; that we might live faithfully, serving God and humanity, and striving for righteousness, justice, and peace.

Staff:

The Rev. Dr. Barry McCarthy, Interim Pastor

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Alexander Chiu, Organist and Choir Director

Michelle LaBrec, Administrative Assistant

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*Do not be conformed to this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your minds,
so that you may discern what is the will of God
—what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Paul's letter to the Romans 12:2

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Transformative times are upon us.

Does that sound a bit daunting? It may, but it is also a harbinger of an exciting new future for Columbia Congregational Church! Like the Hebrews who wandered in the desert for forty years before they were transformed into God's people, our congregation is wandering a bit as we pass through this time of Covid19. However, as always, we seek to discern God's call on our collective hearts. While this time may seem unsettled and even uncomfortable, God is providing us with the opportunity to walk more closely together.

As I write this letter at the end of July, our congregation is engaged in discerning a great deal about its future. Our Search Committee is engaged in the process of interviewing candidates for the settled pastorate. During this historic 300th year of this congregation, we know that whatever comes our way, we are not alone. The One whom we follow has provided throughout the past and we have the promise that we will continue to have the Lord's guidance through the unseen moments of the future.

My time among you is fast coming to a close. I will gather with you for a final time as your Interim Minister on August 16. It has been an interesting year, to say the least. I never could have envisioned a time when I'd be preaching from my kitchen counter, sitting room or back deck, but that's where I found myself this Spring. I hope you will forgive my ineptitude in negotiating technology platforms I hadn't previously used. It was a transforming challenge! You too were also transformed, finding new ways to be the people of God. Sunday School and Confirmation were presented through many creative efforts. We Zoomed our way through meetings, classes, even coffee hours! Our finances have remained strong because you recognize the importance of this congregation in your life and the lives of others. And how about those "Honkin' Hellos!" you reached

out and touched with joy, not just members, but the entire community. All transforming moments!

Of course, there are some interrupted projects that I would have liked to see completed. First, the pastor's office should be moved from its location on the second floor. Its current location is inaccessible to persons with disabilities and, in today's world, it is not appropriate for a pastor to be meeting in such an isolated space. We have identified a room in the Sunday School wing as a potential alternative.

The second item is the writing of an "Open and Affirming Statement" that describes the congregation's willingness and commitment to love all persons. Hopefully, both of these projects will be attended to prior to the start of your next pastor.

Please know that I think you are a wonderful, happy and loving congregation and I have greatly enjoyed our times together. So, as we separate, let us trust that, in our wanderings, God is present, leading, directing and using us for God's unseen purposes. What will our future be like? Only God knows.

And, while we don't know how, we will be transformed.

Blessings of Christ,

BARRY



**July 5th we started our
in-person Sunday morning
services.**

**We all gather, socially distanced, outside
on the lawn in front of the gazebo.
(Weather permitting.*)**

Safety guidelines we will follow:

- **Masks required.**
- **You'll need to bring your own lawn chair or blanket.**
- **A link will be provided to print out your own worship bulletins.**
- **Maintain at least a ten-foot distance between separate family units.**
- **There will be limited parking along the parsonage driveway for members with physical infirmities who will be able to listen via their car radios. Each car will be spaced at least ten foot away from adjacent cars. Please respect that this limited availability is reserved for those at highest risk.**
- **All others should use the regular parking lot and walk around the church building.**
- **THE CHURCH BUILDING ITSELF WILL REMAIN LOCKED AND UNAVAILABLE, INCLUDING THE REST ROOMS.**

***In the event of rain or very wet conditions, a cancellation email will be sent who receive the weekly email updates.**

Church School Updates

Our Heifer fundraising campaign was very successful. The Church School would like to thank everyone who donated!

We helped a lot of people by raising a TOTAL OF **\$4000!!**



We were able to purchase the following animals:

Ducks	\$	20
Geese	\$	20
Chicks (2 flocks)	\$	40
Rabbits	\$	60
Beehives (3)	\$	90
Pig	\$	120
Sheep	\$	120
Water Buffalo	\$	250
Alpacas - Mating pair	\$	300
Fish	\$	300
Knitter's Gift Basket*	\$	480
Cattle - Mating pair	\$	1,000
Goats (Group)	\$	1,200
	\$	4,000

*includes a llama, an alpaca, a sheep, and an Angora rabbit.

Weekly Lessons for the Summer for young elementary age are available on the [church website](#). (Password is 'WWJD') The curriculum is called '**Loving God, Loving Neighbor**' and the theme is COMMUNITIES. It teaches what communities are, how they change, grow, and worship. The materials include a bible story, activities, crafts, and family activities.

As we all well know, 2020 has been incredibly challenging so far, and may continue to be so. We do not yet know what the upcoming school year will look like. We are ordering a **Church School Curriculum** for all ages that we can teach in person or at home.

We are also extremely proud of our confirmands, **Mia and Riley**, who persevered and were confirmed at our Gazebo service on Sunday, July 19th.

I would also like to thank our Church School Teachers for their continued support! They planned and participated in HONKIN' HELLOS every Sunday for 2 months along with several special birthday parades!! And a special thanks to Nancy Douton who coordinated a very successful 4th of JULY CAR PARADE! It was amazing to see so many smiles and waves while we drove through Columbia! Thank you to all the church members and friends who drove in the parades and waved from their front yards!

As always, if you have any Church School questions, concerns or ideas, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Wendy Tomlinson

Church Website

The church Website is now secure, we have a valid Certificate and HTTPS: as part of our Domain name. (**HTTPS** (Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure) is an internet communication protocol that protects the integrity and confidentiality of data between the user's computer and the website.) Basically this means any data on our site is secure and encrypted for our member's safety. I have received notes before from members who were afraid to make online donations or pledges because our site was displayed as "Not Secure" in their web browsers. This has been corrected and our site is now been certified by our web host and in independent certification company. Thanks to Michele for being available to confirm our information with them.

<https://columbiacongregationalchurch.org/>

Church Calendar

We would like to keep the church calendar on the website updated as much as possible. Please email Michele with any scheduled meetings.

300th Anniversary

Commemorative Book

The 300th Anniversary Commemorative is off the press! Copies will be on sale AFTER services on August 2nd and August 16th, weather permitting, at a table set upon the green. Price is \$5.00 a copy. You may purchase as many as you like. Please have correct change or a check made out to Columbia Congregational Church. If you are unable to attend the above services, please contact me at 860-228-4509 and I will arrange to get you a copy.

Jan Thibodeau

Walking Group

The walking group will be starting up again. Masks will need to be worn and keep distance as best you can. We will also have to caravan instead of carpool, but we can get out and walk!

Starting easy at the Lebanon Town Green. It's easy to step off the path if need be and people can stop at various points if need be.

Unfortunately there isn't a lot of shade so bring water and a hat might be wise.

Meet at church at 1:00 on Sunday to caravan or meet at Lebanon Green at 1:15.

Hope to see you, I've missed this group.

Nancy Douton

Pastoral Search Committee

*Please pray for the committee
as they seek to discern
the next pastoral leader for
our congregation.*

*Dave Coley - Joyce Nasin
Denise Parmenter - Dave Pearce
Brian Pedersen - Lynn Sharpe -
Audrey Tuttle*

REMINDER

Annual Report Information
is due by August 14th.
Please email it to the
church email address.

**To contact Pastor Barry
Please Call or Text Directly:
774-314-0223
eMail: bjmccarthy@mac.com**

**To contact Michelle LaBrec
Now working from home: Please
Call or Text Directly:
860-734-3899**