



# Congregational Church of Burlington

Established 1774

September 2019

## Pastor's Message

As summer draws to a close I always find myself mourning its loss. Maybe that's because summer is my favorite season which seems to always speed by and not last as long as the other seasons. As someone who is from Washington DC, and is accustomed to the heat and humidity, I especially enjoyed this summer's higher than average temperatures and days spent at the ocean or by the pool.

One of the highlights of my summer was our early nine o'clock outdoor worship. The Deacons and others help set up and take down chairs, and a loyal and varied congregation of thirty or more gathered around the labyrinth. The small numbers lent themselves to a more intimate atmosphere which enabled me to almost literally reach out and touch people and made church members and visitors feel the warmth of welcome and fellowship. Jackie gamely tackled the music with an electric organ and piano, and guest musicians and a variety of hymns were played. Except for a couple of weeks of early morning heat, and gnats, worship usually concluded before the real heat set in which sometimes was accompanied by a soothing breeze.

As a new church year will soon begin it will be good to see many of you return more regularly to worship and take part in our church's ministry and mission. New programs are already being planned, especially in the areas of church school, stewardship, evangelism, and adult education.

Over the years I have provided the church with one adult education opportunity – that being a six-week Lenten Bible Study. At the conclusion of each study participants often yearn and thirst for more. Fitting another Bible study in during the other seasons of the church year is difficult. My feeling has always been it's better to get parishioners interested in one study that they might attend – and, a loyal, and varied group of 20 or more usually do attend. But this year I thought I would offer the church an additional Bible study on Tuesday evenings from October to mid-November.

Instead of the more intense academic Lenten Bible study, this one will be more devotional in nature. Its focus will be on the sermon text of the upcoming week provided from the lectionary and its Sunday readings. Examining the sermon text several days before it is preached on will better prepare participants for worship.

Our Bible study will begin by reading all the texts provided by the weekly lectionary; one from the Psalms, one from another book of the Old Testament, one from the New Testament Epistles, and one from the New Testament Gospels. We will then focus on the reading that is the suggested preaching text for the upcoming Sunday. Our study will be based on the Ignatian model (a 16<sup>th</sup>-Century priest who co-founded The Society of Jesus – better known as the Jesuits). In this model Ignatius "invites us to read scripture as if we were there in person. We use all our senses to let ourselves see, hear, taste and smell the events and places and people in the story. Mere reading is transformed into a lively, imaginative experience." This comes about first by slowly and deliberately reading the selected text three times, and then "entering into it" and finally discussing it.

Each class will then conclude with ten or more minutes of what is called "centering prayer" – prayer accompanied by a "prayer word, or mantra," repeated silently throughout.

I think you will find the class both informative and spiritually refreshing, and a great way to prepare for your week and Sunday worship. I look forward to seeing you there this fall, and hearing about your summer.

God bless you,

Wendell M. Taylor, Pastor