

2013 ANNUAL REPORT



First Congregational Church
Lebanon, New Hampshire



Annual Meeting
Sunday, February 9, 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Agenda	2
Notice of Annual Meeting – 2014	3
Annual Meeting Minutes – 2013	4
Minister’s Report	7
Church Council Report	11
Church Clerk’s Report	13
Auditor’s Report	14
Treasurer’s Report (<i>Not available online*</i>)	16
Finance Committee – Proposed Budget for 2014 (<i>Not available online*</i>)	17
Board of Governors Report	18
Board of Trustees Report (<i>Not available online*</i>)	19
Diaconate Report	20
Diaconate Treasurer’s Report (<i>Not available online*</i>)	22
Church School and Christian Education Report	23
Memorial Gardens Committee Report	24
Memorials Committee Report	25
Mission and Social Action Committee Report	26
Music Committee Report	28
Stewardship Report	29
Women’s Fellowship Report	31
Women’s Fellowship Treasurer’s Report (<i>Not available online*</i>)	32
Church History	33
Nominating Committee Report	38
Closing Hymn	40
Appendix A: Proposed Amendment to Article V, Section 2 of Constitution	41
Appendix B: Composition of Pastoral Relations and Personnel Committees	42

***These reports are not available online.** For more information, please contact First Congregational Church of Lebanon, PO Box 230, Lebanon, NH 03766, 603-448-4281, church@fccleb.org.)

ANNUAL MEETING 2014
MODERATOR: Robert Moses

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Invocation
3. Reading of the Warrant
4. Reading of the Minutes of 2013 Annual Meeting
5. Reports:

PASTOR:	Rev. Stephen R. Silver
CHURCH COUNCIL:	Warren Belding
OFFICERS:	Auditor - Kathy Belding Church Clerk - Nan Parsons Treasurer - Todd Heatherton
BOARDS:	Board of Governors - Patricia Heatherton Board of Trustees - Robert Moses Diaconate - Valerie Nevel
COMMITTEES:	Committee Chairs
WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP:	Corrine Erskine
CHURCH HISTORIAN:	Corrine Erskine
6. Nominating Committee Report
7. Election of Officers and Committees
8. Old Business
9. New Business

Proposed Amendment to Article V, Section 2, of FCC Constitution and By-Laws (see Appendix A, page 48)
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10. Closing Hymn: "Blest Be the Tie That Binds"
11. Benediction

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING – 2014

The Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Lebanon, NH, will be held in the church sanctuary on Sunday, February 9, 2014, immediately following the worship service, for the purpose of:

1. The election of all officers provided for under the CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS of the church.
2. To hear the reports of all officers, committees, and organizations, as required under the CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS of the church.
3. To consider and act upon any other matters relating to the general church welfare that may properly come before this meeting, including but not limited to the following:
 - A. It is proposed to amend Article V, Section 2 of the BY-LAWS, concerning membership of the Diaconate, as follows:

Current: “The Diaconate shall consist of six deacons, six deaconesses, and two junior members, all covenant members. Two deacons and two deaconesses shall be elected at each annual meeting for a term of three years. Two junior deacons or deaconesses (preferably one of each) shall be elected at each annual meeting for a term of one year.”

Proposed: “The Diaconate shall consist of twelve deacons, all covenant members and representative of the congregation. Four deacons shall be elected at each annual meeting for a term of three years. The Diaconate may also include as many as two youth deacons, preferably covenant members, who shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year.”

Respectfully submitted,

Nan Parsons, Church Clerk
Lebanon, NH 03766
January 22, 2014

ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

Sunday, February 10, 2013

1. The meeting was **called to order** by Bob Moses at 11:10.
2. The **invocation** was given by Rev. Stephen Silver.
3. Reading of the **warrant**: Motion made by Linda Jacobs to dispense with reading the warrant, seconded by Todd Miller. Motion passed.
4. Reading of the **minutes** from the 2012 meeting: Motion made by Lynn Anderson to dispense with reading the minutes, seconded by Amy Driscoll. Motion passed.

5. Reports

Pastor: In addition to his report presented in the Annual Report document, Rev. Silver highlighted a focus on lay ministry, noting extensive collaboration with and among the volunteer boards and committees.

Church Clerk: Report presented in the Annual Report document.

Treasurer: In addition to Marcy Chong's report in the Annual Report document, Barry Schuster noted additionally that pledges were down for 2013 and that endowment funds had supported capital projects.

Auditor: Report presented in the Annual Report document.

Diaconate: In addition to her report presented in the Annual Report document, Deb Scott noted that the monthly reports in the FCC Newsletter reflect the work of the Diaconate throughout the year.

Board of Trustees: In addition to his report presented in the Annual Report document, Bob Moses noted that withdrawals were kept below 5% for endowment funds.

Board of Governors: Report presented in the Annual Report document. Trish Heatherton was publically thanked for her work in leading this board throughout the year.

Women's Fellowship: Report presented in the Annual Report document.

Church School and Christian Education Committee: Report presented in the Annual Report document.

Memorial Gardens Committee: Report presented in the Annual Report document.

Memorials Committee: Report presented in the Annual Report document.

Mission and Social Action Committee: Report presented in the Annual Report document.

Music Committee: Report presented in Annual Report document.

Stewardship Committee: Report presented in the Annual Report document.

Church Historian: Corrine Erskine and Brian Clancy noted that Steve Silver had joined the church in February 2009, not April 2009, as noted in the Historian's report in the Annual

Report document.

Church Council: Report presented in Annual Report document. Council Chair Ian Smith encouraged all members to actively participate in and attend meetings of church committees.

6. Nominating Committee Report

Report presented in Annual Report document. A request was made for the committee and Council to consider restructuring the church's committee structure and reducing the number of committees and their members. The committee members were thanked for their work.

7. Election of Officers and Committees and Commissioning of Deacons

Motion made by Linda Jacobs to accept the recommendations for the positions of Moderator, Vice Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, Assistant Treasures, Historian, Auditor, Church School Superintendent, seconded by Amy Driscoll. Motion passed.

Motion made by Barbara Jones to accept the recommendations for the positions on Church Council, seconded by Betty Tedeschi. Motion passed.

Motion made by Steve Teeter to accept the recommendations for the positions on the Diaconate, seconded by Todd Miller. Opened for discussion: Jon Scott spoke regarding the motion, with concerns regarding the process of nominating members for the Diaconate.

Steve Teeter withdrew his initial motion.

Motion made by Amy Driscoll to waive the by-laws for one year to appoint a seventh male deacon, seconded by Kathy Berger. Vote: 16 in favor, 16 opposed. Motion failed.

Motion made by Jen Petersson to replace John Gillatt on Diaconate with Jon Scott, seconded by Steve Teeter. Vote: 12 in favor, 18 opposed. Motion failed.

Motion made by Ike Jacobs to appoint the Diaconate as presented, seconded by Linda Oronte. Vote: 26 in favor, 4 opposed. Motion passed.

Motions were made to bring forward and accept nominations for the following:

Board of Governors—made by Lynn Anderson, seconded by Warren Belding. Motion passed.

Board of Trustees—made by Linda Jacobs, seconded by Amy Driscoll. Motion passed.

Finance Committee—made by Brian Clancy, seconded by Shelly Moses. Motion passed.

Christian Education Committee—made by Amy Driscoll, seconded by Jen Petersson. Motion passed.

Music Committee—made by Amy Driscoll, seconded by Ike Jacobs. Motion passed.

Memorial Gardens Committee—made by Amy Driscoll, seconded by Ike Jacobs. Motion passed.

Nominating Committee—made by Amy Driscoll, seconded by Ike Jacobs. Motion passed.

A request was made for the by-laws to specify term limits for church committees and boards. The suggestion will be reviewed by the Diaconate and Council.

Memorials Committee—made by Amy Driscoll, seconded by Ike Jacobs. Motion passed.

Stewardship Committee—made by Amy Driscoll, seconded by Ike Jacobs. Motion passed.

Mission and Social Action Committee—made by Amy Driscoll, seconded by Ike Jacobs. Motion passed.

Delegates—made by Amy Driscoll, seconded by Ike Jacobs. Motion passed.

8. Old Business: None presented.

9. New Business:

Vote raised to approve the 2013 Budget, as presented in the Treasurer's report. Motion made by Barry Schuster to accept the proposed budget, seconded by Ike Jacobs. Motion passed.

Barbara Jones encouraged Jon Scott to continue serving in some capacity.

Amy Driscoll thanked the whole community for being able to speak openly at the meeting. She also thanked Bob Moses for moderating, with general agreement from others.

10. The congregation sang the **closing hymn**, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds."

11. The **benediction** was offered by Rev. Silver.

12. Meeting **adjourned** at 12:28.

Other: A transcript of today's sermon will be placed in the minutes. (Sermon transcript from 2/10/2013 available upon request.)

Respectfully submitted,

Nan Parsons
Church Clerk

MINISTER'S REPORT

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

–1 Corinthians 13:1-13

The above words of St. Paul, taken from his first letter to the Corinthians, are beloved, treasured not only by Christians, but also by those of other faiths and no faith. They have appeared in romantic greeting cards and are often requested by couples when asked if there is a Scripture passage they would like to have read at their wedding. And why not? This text, a lyrical, faith-filled poem, is a wondrous expression of what love is and ought to be.

St. Paul, though, wasn't writing of the love celebrated in Jane Austen novels or on the Big Screen. He wasn't concerned with romance at all. Instead, he wrote for the church, specifically for a first-century congregation that had experienced conflict and challenging times. Though this letter was penned 2,000 years ago, I believe it speaks powerfully to our community, offering perspective and guidance as First Congregational Church moves forward.

Our community began a difficult journey at last year's Annual Meeting. At that gathering tensions, disagreements, and disappointments, some of recent vintage, others of long standing, broke out into the open. It was clear that problems existed, that feelings and even hearts had been broken, and that healing was called for. In the months that followed we were fortunate to receive support and counsel from the Conference and to benefit from the guidance of Nancy Brown, who put her experience helping churches in conflict to work for us. This has not been an easy time for us. As your pastor, I have reflected on and prayed about my own contributions to what happened. For those I disappointed or hurt, I again offer my apologies, and I continue to extend the offer to talk and work together to make what is broken whole again.

What our community has experienced, though, is greater than the actions of any one or two people. I write this thinking not only of how people in our church have been hurt by the actions

of others, but also of the many ways in which God's grace, during a trying time, has been so clearly present, during worship, through service, and in fellowship activities. Members of the congregation stepped forward to provide wise, calming leadership that has enabled us not only to consider and begin acting upon the issues of communications, structures, and community that Nancy identified, but also to continue offering a vibrant ministry to God's people in Lebanon and beyond.

During this past year the Community Dinner program continued to serve our neighbors, providing delicious, healthful meals to as many as sixty guests a month and drawing in volunteers from across the church and beyond. The Music at the Meetinghouse series grew, drawing in larger audiences. The Mission and Social Action Committee continued the work of planning for a trip to San Jose Villanueva in El Salvador, continuing conversations with Epilogos that will hopefully result in members of FCC Lebanon heading south this November. The Women's Fellowship focused on ways to engage all the women of our community in its activities and moves into the new year with refreshed vitality. Members of our congregation continued to offer public witness in support of gun violence prevention. CROP Walkers, homeless vigilers, and Bike and Builders all found a welcome at our church.

A high point in the life of our church this year was our confirmation class. Three young people and their mentors took a voyage of faith discovery, exploring together what it means to be a Christian. Visits to a Buddhist sangha and a Shabbat service with the Upper Valley Jewish Center, which I was privileged to join, provided an opportunity to consider similarities across faith traditions while learning to appreciate what makes each distinctive. Two of our three participants chose to formally join the church, and all offered witness to their experience that was inspirational.

For the third year in a row, our church embarked upon major infrastructural work. The ceiling of the sanctuary was beautifully and expertly restored, while the meetinghouse roof was replaced. These projects were made possible, as with comparable efforts in years past, through the dedicated, creative efforts of the Board of Governors, Trustees, and Finance Committee. It is a testament to their efforts that we have been able to care for our heritage asset, the church building, while maintaining and preserving our financial assets, the endowment.

The contributions of these volunteers, along with those of so many others who give generously and faithfully of their time and abilities, make possible our mission and ministry. In our Congregational polity, which prizes the ministry of all believers, the efforts of members and friends are not only a necessity if the business of the church is to be done; it is a theological imperative, making real through action and service what we profess to be true.

Our church has been blessed to have an administrator of Brian Clancy's caliber. He has brought skill, dedication, and good humor to his work, reliably producing bulletins, graciously fielding calls from mission partners, and consistently providing support to our various committees, fellowships, and building users. He has been a true partner in ministry, and to him I offer my thanks.

Marcia Corkins, as ever, has been a blessing to both the children of our church and to their families. Each year she develops a new program of Christian Education designed to engage

young people in ways that help them learn about and take to heart God's love for us made known in Jesus.

And then there is Will Ögmundson. Will has been one of this worshipping community's great strengths, bringing a winning combination of talent and faith to his ministry among us. He has been a joy to work with. Alas, after seven years with FCC Lebanon, Will has been called to serve another congregation. We send him to the Congregational Church in Henniker, N.H., with our prayers, our friendship, and best wishes—and look forward to welcoming him back as a performer in our Music at the Meetinghouse series.

A mark of our church is its love of music. Honoring this and maintaining the high level of musical talent and proficiency to which we have become accustomed, the Music Committee and Personnel Committee will lead the search for a new musician and choir director, one who will be able to nurture and enhance our music ministry. During the interim period, we will enjoy the services of Tim Hansen, a talented young man with experience playing both organ and piano at St. Denis Parish in Hanover.

During the past year, I have been blessed to provide pastoral care to members of our community and to those beyond, to grieve with families and to celebrate great joys, to pray with and listen to your joys and concerns. I have been privileged to preach to a congregation that listens carefully and with faith to sermons, to join in song and prayer with a group of the faithful who care deeply about worship. I have learned and grown as a pastor (and pray that I will continue to do so in the year ahead), and through my ministry with you and among you have found my faith strengthened and refreshed.

Now the time has come to look to the future, to discern where God might be calling us. As we do so, the words of St. Paul from his letter to the Corinthians beckon. All we do, all we plan, must be done with love. Otherwise, our Sunday services, our mission activities, our fellowship meetings will be for naught. To love one another in a Christian context requires honest communication, engagement with issues, exploration of disagreement, and listening to one another the way we would want others to listen to us. It requires a willingness on each of our parts to grow, to trust that God has endowed others with unique gifts, that we need not do it all on our own.

With this in mind, I would like to suggest three areas of opportunity for our church in the year to come:

First, over the decades this church has enjoyed an impressive level of lay leadership and commitment, a tradition that continues to the present day. The time and skills given to the church are, as our Stewardship Committee has reminded us, gifts to be valued as much as those of money. Just as our Trustees and Finance Committee handle church funds with prudence, forethought, and care, so too must we do with our volunteers' time. It's been noted in the past and must be noted again that FCC Lebanon needs to prayerfully consider how best to align its structures with the people we have, and with the way they live their lives in 2014. Service to the church is a high calling. It should also be a source of joy, fulfillment, and growth.

Second, there are times to charge ahead and there are times to pause and take stock. In the church, the latter times are known as Sabbath, a time of rest. Sabbath is an opportunity to reflect

on where we've been, to give thanks for what God is doing in our lives, and to prepare ourselves for the work we are called to do. Often and understandably, we focus on the role of Sabbath in our individual lives. In the midst of busy, demanding lives, Sunday, the Christian Sabbath, can be the one time in the week when we are able to stop, to catch our breath, and to ground ourselves. Sabbath is a powerful gift that renews and restores. And it is a gift meant to be enjoyed not only by individuals but by communities, too. Over the coming months I hope we will embrace the opportunity to engage in some congregational Sabbath reflection. This new year can be a time to give thanks for the blessings in our common life and to think about and pray on what God is calling us to do as we move forward into God's future, all while we continue to nurture the special community that has been entrusted to our care.

Third, continuing the work we have begun with Nancy Brown, I hope and pray that we will individually and as a community work together on the spiritual discipline of communication. That's right: communication is a religious practice. How we listen to one another, talk to one another, and engage with one another can be, indeed should be, a holy, sacred activity.

Members of any worshiping community will have differing opinions and varying preferences. But in the Christian church, we are called to weigh those differences against the hope that Jesus expresses in John's Gospel, "that they may all be one." That *they* is you and me. It's the First Congregational Church of Lebanon, called to join together in God's work with faith, hope, and love.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

This year has seen First Congregational Church travel through a troublesome time in its history. I'm sure there have been other times in our history when troubles have arisen, but this is the first time I've experienced it here in my more than 20 years as a member.

It appears likely there were underlying issues leading up to the Annual Meeting on February 10, 2013, but during that meeting statements, assertions, and pointed questions were made that hurt the feelings of some people. As a result, some withdrew their participation in the church, and others were left wondering how they could continue on. In addition, others of us stepped into roles we hadn't expected to fill. Thus, I became Council Chair almost overnight. It wasn't an unfamiliar role for me, having been Council Chair from 1998-2001, but it was a surprise to be back in this role.

The sudden sequence of events caused the church to refocus its attention on matters of reflection and ways of healing the congregation. We started this process by contracting with Nancy Brown of NPB & Associates to provide mediation services. Nancy was recommended by Rev. Gary Schulte of the NH Conference as someone who could provide steady support and help guide us through our issues.

Initially, some one-on-one meetings were established with church leadership and those most closely involved in the issues. Once Nancy had a grasp of the situation by talking to these people, she issued a report to Church Council and the congregation. This report provided the basis for our continued work throughout the year. During this process, we held some all-church meetings as well as a Saturday morning workshop, all part of an effort to engage as many people as possible in this process and move us forward.

The following update was printed in the December 2013 Church Newsletter:

* * *

Church Council met on November 19 in executive session with Nancy Brown, to review and clarify complex issues which precipitated our contract with NPB & Associates and to determine our next steps in helping our congregation move forward. Our goal has been, and continues to be, to learn from the past to ensure a healthy, functioning, and vibrant congregation.

While we recognize that incidents experienced by some church members may have been felt or perceived differently by others, we also recognize there are areas in which we need to review and strengthen the way we work together.

We reviewed concerns in the following general categories—issues primarily related to change; issues primarily related to the learning curve of a pastor new to ministry; issues of concern around the role and function of boards, committees, and other groups within the congregation; and general statements of concern.

We discussed the invitation sent to all members of the congregation to engage in a facilitated conversation, either with Steve or with others within the church. It was noted that this is an open-ended invitation—with no time limit. The hope is that accepting this invitation may offer a

way for healing to begin, both for those who felt the need to take a break from the life of the church and for any members who have stayed but have lingering issues they wish to address.

We concluded with a commitment to address the issues mentioned above and raised in the contract. I will work with Nancy to prioritize remaining issues. The Council will keep you posted on planned steps in this process as we proceed.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

* * *

Although working through these issues has commanded much of our attention this year, it is important to recognize the efforts of many who continued the work of our congregation, day in and day out. Church life did not cease: boards and committees met, to the best of their abilities, on a regular basis; monthly community dinners continued to serve our neighbors; musical programs continued to delight audiences; physical facilities continued to be maintained and improved; and regular Sunday worship continued to focus our spiritual life—to name a few examples.

Each person in the congregation has a responsibility to search their own conscience and ensure they are following the path they consider the right one, the one God would want us to follow. Our church has changed. Sometimes change can be good and sometimes it can be painful, but I have faith our church will continue on, as it has for well over 200 years.

Blest be the tie that binds,
Warren Belding
Chair, Church Council

CHURCH CLERK'S REPORT

During 2013 two individuals became covenant members of the church through the process of confirmation; one new member joined by transfer; two members died; and two transferred their membership out of Lebanon. With these changes, we begin 2014 with 204 members.

New Members Received:

James C. Ragan, transferred from Hope UCC (PA), 2/7/2013

Eric Petersson, confirmed 6/23/2013

Ethan Guyer, confirmed 10/13/2013

Members Who Died:

Stephen Whitney "Whit" Dickey, d. 2/21/2013

Charles Lewis Sargent, d. 4/20/2013

Members Who Transferred:

Lisa and Jay Shambaugh, transferred to Westmoreland Congregational UCC (MD), 10/6/2013

Rev. Stephen R. Silver performed the following **baptism**:

Abigail Lynn Renee Braley, 8/25/2013 at FCC

Rev. Silver presided at the following service of Christian **marriage**:

Melinda Burrell and Thomas Daughton, Montpelier, Virginia, 8/3/2013

Rev. Silver presided at the following **funeral, memorial, and graveside services**:

Members of the Church:

Stephen "Whit" Dickey, service 4/20/2013 at FCC, committal at 27 Jenkins Rd, Lebanon, NH

Charles L. Sargent, service 6/29/2013 at FCC, committal at Glenwood Cemetery, Lebanon, NH

Friends of the Church:

Dicksie A. Stickney, d. 6/7/2013, service and interment 6/12/2013 at West Lebanon Cemetery, Lebanon, NH

Jon C. Krueger, d. 11/21/2013, service 11/27/2013 at FCC, interment at Valley Cemetery, Lebanon, NH

Respectfully submitted,

Nan Parsons,
Church Clerk

AUDITOR'S REPORT

I write this report under the title of "Auditor's Report," but I will always refer to "reviewing the books" rather than auditing them. I am not a trained auditor, but I do have the experience of having been the church treasurer for seven years and assistant treasurer for two.

I have reviewed the accounts for 2013 held by the following committees and officers:

Diaconate—Books maintained this year by Valerie Nevel, Matthew Goodrich, and Steve Silver

I was provided with bank statements, checkbook, some receipts, and all treasurer reports. I have no concerns about the overall status of funds in this account, but unfortunately, after a significant amount of time, I was not able to balance these books to the penny.

There were several issues that contributed to my not being able to balance this account in the time I had available. I had to wait for the December statements to come in (often this is well into January), which means I have a short window to review these accounts and submit my report. It is difficult to set up meetings for questions within such a short timeline. I believe the main contributing factor is the number of people involved in maintaining the Diaconate books over the past year. There are checks being written from two different series of checks; one is the regular checkbook with sequenced, numbered checks, while the other series appears to be starter checks. All of the checks written in 2013 to the end of the year were from the starter checks, not from the regular checkbook. No check register was maintained with a running balance after March. This makes it difficult to reconcile the account. On a positive note, there are treasurer reports, and it was these plus the bank statements that I used to try and account for all the transactions normally found in the check register.

My recommendation is that steps be taken immediately to tighten the record keeping associated with this account. I would be happy to help set this up with the new treasurer. The current process is not working well from the point of view of someone reviewing these books. A single register needs to be maintained, so that account balances are readily available throughout the year.

I realize that it might be more convenient for Rev. Silver to be able to write checks on behalf of the Diaconate, because he is on the front lines and needs to be able to provide help on short notice. However, in my opinion, only one person should be writing checks from this account. If the committee decides it needs the flexibility of two people writing checks, then a plan needs to be worked out for accounting for each and every transaction in a single location.

Mission and Social Action—Books currently maintained by Rev. Steve Silver

I was provided with bank statements and checkbook. Rev. Silver was available for any questions I had. I was able to balance this account.

Treasurer—Books currently maintained by Todd Heatherton

To the best of my ability I reviewed the books of the Treasurer. Todd provided me with bank statements as well as all of his spreadsheets and reports. Todd was available for questions, and I found his books in order.

Board of Trustees—Books currently maintained by Robert Moses

To the best of my ability I have reviewed the books of the Trustees' accounts with Bob. He provided me with spreadsheets, bank statements for all accounts, and his reports for the annual report. I found his books in order.

Women's Fellowship—Books currently maintained by Barb Laro

I was provided with bank statements, checkbook, and receipts. Barb was able to answer any questions I had. I was able to balance this account.

I appreciate the efforts of all involved with the accounts I reviewed. These are time-consuming positions, and volunteering for them is commendable. I thank each and every one of you for your hard work and dedication.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Belding

TREASURER'S REPORT

(Not available online. For more information, please contact First Congregational Church of Lebanon, PO Box 230, Lebanon, NH 03766, 603-448-4281, church@fccleb.org.)

**FINANCE COMMITTEE
PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2014**

(Not available online. For more information, please contact First Congregational Church of Lebanon, PO Box 230, Lebanon, NH 03766, 603-448-4281, church@fccleb.org.)

BOARD OF GOVERNORS REPORT

It is prescribed by the church's Constitution and By-Laws that the Board of Governors shall have general charge and care of the physical properties of the Church. The members of this board take these duties seriously, and it is our intent to accomplish these tasks to the best of our ability each year.

In January and February renovations continued on the Sanctuary ceiling. The plaster ceiling was reinforced using an injected epoxy, before being replastered and beautifully repainted. The Melanson firm replaced the Sanctuary roof in May.

Throughout the year various regular maintenance tasks were carried out. The fire extinguishers had their annual inspection and were updated as necessary. Fresh batteries were put in all thermostats and fire alarms. Air conditioners were installed and removed as the seasons dictated. We continue to have excellent assistance with snow removal and grounds maintenance thanks to Kevin Charbono and Nate and Ben Cole. The Cub Scouts of Pack 279 and Boy Scouts of Troop 279 assisted with church and lawn clean up. During the fall an exterminator was hired to deal with box elder bugs, wasps, and carpenter ants. In October the handicap access ramp was repainted with textured paint, thanks to community volunteers from TomTom.

Service contracts were established with Cota & Cota. These will ensure regular maintenance and cleaning of the two furnaces and boiler at the church, and the boiler at the parsonage. The church's two chimneys were also cleaned out, and stainless-steel chimney liners were installed in December. These liners will protect the masonry in the chimneys for many years to come.

One remaining exterior wall of the Sanctuary (on the east) requires lead-paint containment, repair, and repainting. Church Council voted in December for this work to be completed in the spring of 2014.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Heatherton, Chair

Wayne Braley

Gordon Sargent

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT

(Not available online. For more information, please contact First Congregational Church of Lebanon, PO Box 230, Lebanon, NH 03766, 603-448-4281, church@fccleb.org.)

DIACONATE REPORT

May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant that you live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

—Romans 15:5-6

In this difficult year for our church, the deacons have sought to find ways to grow deeper and to aid in reconciliation.

After the resignations of three elected deacons in February, the Diaconate welcomed the appointments of Ike and Linda Jacobs and Barb Teeter for the remainder of the 2013 year. Valerie Nevel was chair of the Diaconate and representative to the Pastoral Relations Committee along with Deb Scott; Carolyn Crocker served as secretary and Matt Goodrich as treasurer. A position of Vice Chair, filled by Jen Grant, was created to ensure continuity at Council meetings in the event of the chair's absence. Called to Care was headed by Linda Jacobs and Barb Teeter after March, and the Prayer Team was headed by Betty Tedeschi until December, when Deb Scott filled in temporarily.

A deacons' retreat was held April 27 to focus on Growing Deeper, resulting in an understanding of behaviors and concepts as well as an action plan for the congregation. Both current and former deacons were in attendance. Ways to grow deeper were planned through mission and activities, ways to engage the congregation, support youth, and deepen worship experiences and foster spiritual development. As a result, after-worship forums with potluck lunches and spiritual hikes on local trails were introduced; an all-church retreat at the Horton Center was offered in September; support was sought for the community dinners, Called to Care, the Prayer Team; and mission partnerships with WISE and Second Growth were provided by individual deacons and the communion offering. Five current deacons attended the "What to Do Right When Things Go Wrong" workshop led by Nancy Brown.

A confirmation class was held from mid-April through June 23, Confirmation Sunday. Ron Bailey, Pete Mason, and Linda Oronte served as mentors, respectively, to Ethan Guyer, Eric Petersson, and Emma Petersson. (Eric was confirmed June 23, but because of a scheduling conflict, Ethan was not formally confirmed until October 13. Emma chose not to be confirmed.)

Student-in-Care Mark Rowell presented his ordination paper to the Diaconate and former deacons who had been part of this process. At the Diaconate's request, the Grafton-Orange Association granted Mark license to preside over communion services. He supplied the pulpit on Sundays during Steve Silver's study leave and vacation, and in December he became interim pastor of First Congregational Church, Croydon.

Thirteen members of the church attended the retreat at the Horton Center during the weekend of September 27-29, sharing the experience with members of the Meriden and Hooksett Congregational churches.

Communion offerings have funded the church's BackDoor Ministry with gas cards from Jake's

Market and food vouchers from Shaw's and the Coop. Those offerings also enabled the visiting Zimbabwean pastor of a small NH congregation to attend a clergy retreat. Year-end donations to WISE and Second Growth supported our partnership with these community service agencies.

As the deacons seek to serve the church with steadfastness and promote harmony among its members and those beyond its walls, we recognize the gifts of time, talent, and caring offered by all in the congregation. We welcome your ideas and suggestions.

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Nevel, Chair

Jennifer Grant, Vice-Chair

Carolyn Crocker, Secretary

Matthew Goodrich, Treasurer

Ron Bailey

John Gilliatt

Alden Hall

Ike Jacobs

Linda Jacobs

Deb Scott

Barb Teeter

Mark Yeager

DIACONATE TREASURER'S REPORT

(Not available online. For more information, please contact First Congregational Church of Lebanon, PO Box 230, Lebanon, NH 03766, 603-448-4281, church@fccleb.org.)

CHURCH SCHOOL AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

On Kick-off Sunday in September (2012), after worship, we enjoyed lunch, games, and a bounce house on the front lawn. The Church School theme for the year 2012-13 was "The Life of Jesus." Topics covered included Jesus the Storyteller, Jesus the Teacher, and Jesus Calls His Disciples.

For Halloween, the committee and friends enjoyed passing out treats to many children on the front lawn of the church. In December the Church School children decorated the Parlor Christmas tree, and each child received an ornament to take home. Many of them participated in the pageant on Christmas Eve.

The Church School's annual Lenten fund raiser allowed the children to donate \$540 for a scholarship in El Salvador (through the Epilogos program) and to fund the purchase of needed supplies for David's House at DHMC. Several children and adults delivered the supplies to David's House and enjoyed a tour of the facility. The children also purchased an animal from Heifer International with their weekly collection money. During the year, the children have also been more involved in our Community Dinners, by serving food and helping with set-up.

The school year ended on Children's Sunday in June, with presentations of thank-you gifts and bibles, followed after worship by lunch and fun on the front lawn.

The Christian Education Committee and I must thank all parents and our church family for their support. Most of all, our thanks go to the children for making our church even more special!

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Corkins

Superintendent of Church School

Cathy Bourgon

Laurie Braley

Ike Jacobs

Shelley Shipley

Jody Thompson

MEMORIAL GARDENS COMMITTEE REPORT

The Memorial Gardens Committee is responsible for overseeing the maintenance and planting of our two memorial gardens. The garden in front by the church sign is in honor of Betty and Ellis Howard given by their family. The memorial garden in front of the stone is where cremated ashes of deceased church members and their families may be buried. There were no ashes interred during 2013.

The stone is engraved with the names of the following deceased members of our church: Leif and Beryl Thorsrud, Frank Wallace, Hank Watson, Robert Bassett, Dr. Gordon Place, Ellis Howard, and Willmott "Bin" Lewis. The names of spouses may be engraved at the same time.

Committee members maintain the gardens and plant flowers in the garden each spring. Nora Miller generously did the planting work for both gardens in 2013.

We also thank Trish Heatherton for making the biodegradable bags used for interment of ashes.

Anyone who would like any more information about either of the Memorial Gardens or would like to contribute to them please contact one of the committee members. To reserve a spot in the interment garden please contact a committee member or the Church Administrator.

Respectfully submitted,

C. Pete Mason, Chair

Carolin Bassett

Ike Jacobs

Nora Miller

Beverly Sassorossi

MEMORIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

In 2013, memorial funds were received in the name of:

Dicksie A. Stickney

Memorial gifts and other bequests, gifts, and trust income are of the utmost importance to the church. Besides reflecting the generosity of the donor and providing a special remembrance of them at the annual meeting, these enable special projects and resultant income, which help to insure the future of this church.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Belding

Jean Cole

Barb Teeter

MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Mission and Social Action Committee had a busy and successful year, thanks to the involvement of so many active and committed volunteer groups in our church. Highlights of the year include the following:

Upper Valley Communities:

- Monthly, volunteer-led community dinners offering hospitality and excellent food for dozens of guests in our Parish Hall, often providing additional food for take-away, which is always appreciated.
- Strengthening engagement with our local mission partners, Second Growth (serving youth with substance abuse problems and related issues) and WISE (offering shelter and resources for victims of domestic and sexual violence), including financial support and meetings with church members.
- Offering to host training and teaching sessions at our church for Second Growth, and exploring the possibility of providing their young clients with a meeting place.
- Organizing an improv comedy night to raise funds for WISE.
- Providing emergency food, fuel and other support for families and individuals in need through the Diaconate's "backdoor" ministry, using funds received during communion offerings.
- Contributing to local service organizations and families in need through the Souper Bowl Sunday soup collection and our Christmas Giving Tree for the Listen Center.
- Continuing to serve as a base of operations for the annual CROP Walk, hosting and serving lunch and providing fellowship to scores of walkers and friends. Overall, 168 walkers raised \$15,070; of that total, FCC walkers raised \$1,559.

Statewide/National:

- Providing opportunities for congregation members to engage and join with other faith communities to advocate for solutions to gun violence, including vigils, updates on policy decisions and public debates, and visits to meet with state lawmakers.
- Providing shelter and food for thirty college-age bikers on a cross-country route in the Bike-and-Build program, who worked locally with COVER on two sites during their stay.
- Contributing significantly to the UCC, Church World Service, and other organizations through special offerings (e.g., Neighbors in Need, One Great Hour of Sharing) and commemorative projects (e.g., Mother's Day Blanket Sunday, Father's Day Shelter Sunday).

International:

- Engaging with our El Salvador mission partner, Epilogos, to organize three church-wide presentations, provide scholarship funds, and lay the groundwork for 2014 mission trip

opportunities. Given sufficient interest from church members, the committee may lead or join a November 2014 mission trip to El Salvador.

Looking back on the year, FCC can be proud of its mission contributions, while always keeping in mind that we can do more with the resources we are fortunate to have.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendell Smith, Chair

John Bourgon

Priscilla Carr

Marcy Chong

Corrine Erskine

Barbara Jones

Barbara Laro

MUSIC COMMITTEE REPORT

The Music Committee in 2013 dedicated itself to strengthening the Music at the Meetinghouse series and to revisiting the role of music in the congregation's spiritual life. It was a busy year for the church's music ministry, and we achieved and learned a great deal.

The Music at the Meetinghouse series offered a consistently high quality of performances. Classicopia, led by the engaging and knowledgeable Dan Weiser, presented seven concerts during the year, involving piano, violin, cello, oboe, and voice in various combinations and a range of repertoire. The Bel Canto Chamber Singers, which both rehearses and performs at FCC, drew large audiences for spring and fall concerts. Guitarist Peter Griggs returned with a "Latin Café" program, and the Upper Valley Music Center sponsored another fabulous bluegrass mandolin festival. In the fall the *a cappella* women's quartet Zazzle, joined by their companion men's quartet Fast Track, sang for an enthusiastic, close-to-full house. The Sunflower Wind Quartet celebrated longtime leader Earl North's retirement at FCC in November.

Throughout the year, Music at the Meetinghouse brought church members, friends, musicians, and other community members to our church for great music in the warm atmosphere and fine acoustics of our Sanctuary. The committee continues to assess and consider ways to promote the series more effectively and consistently. A new banner for the church's front lawn enhanced the series' visual presence. E-mail notices have become the primary means of reaching potential audiences, although social media, which we have yet to utilize fully, may be more effective.

Addressing FCC's music ministry more directly, we conducted a comprehensive survey of the congregation in the fall. Questions assessed church members' opinions regarding worship music, hymns and hymnals, choir, the organ, and Music at the Meetinghouse. Survey results validated some practices while suggesting possible changes for others. The primary lesson, however, is that music continues to be a tremendously significant part of our worship and spiritual life.

December brought the bittersweet news of Will Ögmundson's imminent departure from FCC, after six years of wonderful service. He treated us to one last concert just before Christmas. He will certainly be missed, for his warm, gentle personality as much as for his sensational talent.

With the guidance of its congregational survey, the ongoing potential of Music at the Meetinghouse, and the challenge and opportunity of finding a new organist and choir director, the Music Committee looks forward to 2014.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Clancy, Chair

Ruth Friend

Susan Montmagny

Barry Schuster

Kathie Schuster

Ginger Smith

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

The Stewardship Committee has worked toward several goals throughout 2013:

- Better integrating financial and non-financial support of the church in committee activities and communications
- Beginning a longer-term process of making church members more comfortable talking about money and the financial aspects of stewardship
- Starting to provide more detailed and more frequent reports and information to the congregation on stewardship-related matters
- Expanding the committee's role to include leadership of congregational activities related to energy conservation, environmental sustainability, and Creation care
- Exploring the potential for offering online pledging and donations
- Gaining a better understanding of church members' volunteer interests and their needs for support from the church community
- Learning more about the whole of church finances and operations so that committee members could begin engaging more of the congregation in understanding and supporting church programs, operations, and mission
- Working with the Pastor and Administrator to implement the annual stewardship pledge drive and encourage more church members to participate in annual pledging of financial and volunteer support for the church

For the last few months of the year, the committee decided to combine its monthly meetings with those of the Nominating and Mission and Social Action Committees. This was done to accommodate members serving on both committees and enable closer connections between the committees' closely related work.

The 2013 stewardship pledge campaign included a revival of Jane Mason's musical comedy, "It's That Time of Year Again!" Stewardship pledge forms were redesigned to include more information on calculating monthly pledge amounts and to reinforce volunteer interest surveys developed by the Diaconate and Nominating Committee. The congregation's stewardship response to date (with pledges continuing to come in) is proving comparable to previous years, in financial terms. In addition, church members have committed thousands of hours of volunteer service in support of the church's worship, music, operations, and mission needs.

The committee has been active with the Men's Fellowship breakfast group exploring options for providing warm hand-washing water without requiring costly, always-on, boiler-connected, hot-water heat. We will present options to the Board of Governors and Church Council in 2014.

One of the most impressive acts of stewardship by congregation members in 2013 was the support of monthly community dinners for people in need. Altogether, almost 750 meals were served, reflecting a collective effort of more than 350 volunteer hours at minimal financial cost to the church.

The church has also continued its generous support of “back-door” ministries (providing financial assistance for food, fuel, and other urgent community needs) via monthly communion offerings and administered by the Diaconate. In addition, the church continued its generous support of the United Church of Christ’s broader mission and ministry, through a \$10,000 pledge to the New Hampshire Conference, special offerings collected periodically throughout the year (such as Neighbors in Need and One Great Hour of Sharing), and our hosting of the annual CROP Walk supporting the work of Church World Service.

Congregation members faithfully fulfilled greeting and ushering duties, shared in leading worship, and enlivened it with beautiful music. They regularly provided refreshments and fellowship, both following worship and for musical events, memorial and baptismal services, confirmation celebrations, and other special occasions throughout the year.

We are blessed to have such an engaged, caring, and giving church family. Together we bring great dedication, enthusiasm, and joy to our many acts of stewardship—including but by no means limited to those mentioned in this report—and for this we are forever grateful.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Scott and Barry Schuster, Co-chairs

Alden Hall

Wendell Smith

Steve Teeter

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP REPORT

Women's Fellowship has not held regular meetings during the past year. The group has continued to hold pie sales at the Lebanon Farmers' Market, and it has occasionally organized the monthly Community Dinner.

No formal report was submitted for Women's Fellowship for 2013.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP TREASURER'S REPORT

(Not available online. For more information, please contact First Congregational Church of Lebanon, PO Box 230, Lebanon, NH 03766, 603-448-4281, church@fccleb.org.)

CHURCH HISTORY

The events and activities in our church during the year 2013 began with a celebration of Carolin Bassett's 80th birthday on the first Sunday of January, complete with cake and coffee. Work began on the church parlor soon after New Year's. The wallpaper was stripped, the walls newly painted, and the fireplace cleaned (though still not useable). We also have a new rug on the floor, new curtains, and new pillows on the window bench. A grandfather clock was restored to the corner, and new, child-sized rocking chairs were placed in the reading corner. Thanks to the ad-hoc Decorating Committee for all of its hard work.

Also in January, renovation of the sanctuary ceiling started, continuing into late February. The ceiling was strengthened with an epoxy coating, then the cracks in the plaster were repaired and repainted. The gold and painted border was redone with stencils made to match the previous design, which had been obscured by dirt and earlier repaintings. During the renovations, with staging and construction equipment in the Sanctuary, worship was often held in the Parish Hall, with chairs arranged in the round. Needless to say, we were cozy, and our voices have never sounded so good! By March the Sanctuary was finished, and it looks wonderful.

In January the church hosted a community forum for Hannah House, a residential and daycare program for pregnant teens that discontinued its programming because of funding decreases. The entire Upper Valley community was invited to discuss how Hannah House can best serve the community in the future.

January 27 marked the one year anniversary of our Community Dinners, and we are still going strong. We are now serving up to 50 people each month. In another effort to address hunger in our community, February was ushered in with Souper Bowl Sunday. Cans of soup were donated and then distributed to Headrest, Listen, and the Upper Valley Haven.

Our Annual Meeting was held on February 10. Todd Miller asked that we try to streamline our committees this year, and Ian Smith asked that all committee chairs try to attend Church Council meetings. We had a lengthy discussion about the way the Nominating Committee process works, and we will have to address this issue in the future.

In March the church invited Nancy Brown, a mediator recommended by the NH Conference of the UCC, to meet with those who were most closely involved in some difficult issues that had hurt and divided the congregation. Nancy held individual meetings with eighteen church members over two days.

On March 10 the Mission and Social Action Committee brought Dr. Ed Warren to speak about Epilogos after worship. We hoped to support this organization by giving an educational scholarship and by sending people to help build houses at Epilogos sites in El Salvador. The church school children dedicated their Lenten Lunch Bag offering project to the Epilogos scholarship, as well as to David's House at DHMC.

On March 21 Brian Clancy held a discussion on some of the ways artists have represented Christ's passion and resurrection. Our group examined and discussed Masaccio's fresco of *The*

Holy Trinity in Florence, Peter Paul Rubens' and Rembrandt's interpretations of *The Elevation of the Cross*, and a few other images.

The Bel Canto Chamber Singers, who rehearse in the church on Wednesday evenings, put on a benefit concert in March called BHAM! Bel Canto also offered their wonderful regular concerts in the spring (April 27) and fall (December 14), and they twice provided worship music as a thank-you to the church.

The last week of March was a busy one. Council invited all members of the church to a special meeting on March 26, to discuss a report and proposal submitted by Nancy Brown regarding the issues facing our church. She observed that our congregation has undergone a great deal of change over the past several years and that we have ineffective communication patterns. Several members stated that we have a wonderful and loving church and that we should use her services as an investment in our future. In April Council held another open meeting for the congregation to decide whether or not to hire Nancy Brown for mediation. After considerable discussion, we decided to hire her with some changes to her proposal. All her visits were to be available to **everyone** in the church to attend. One of the most important messages during this time came from guest preacher Richard Crocker in his sermon on April 14: "Truth spoken in love is truth spoken in kindness." Nancy offered an all-day workshop in June, "What To Do Right When Things Go Wrong," which attracted about 25 participants from the congregation.

The season of Lent, which had begun in February with an ecumenical Ash Wednesday service at the Methodist Church, culminated with Holy Week, March 24-31. Palm Sunday featured that month's Community Dinner. Maundy Thursday's Service of Communion concluded with the Stripping of the Altar, always a solemn ceremony. Good Friday offered quiet meditation in the Sanctuary, followed by the Ecumenical Stations of the Cross Walk through downtown Lebanon in the afternoon. On Easter morning, our church was once again the meeting place for everyone who attended the Sunrise Service in the park. The Men's Fellowship group served breakfast after the service. Our Easter worship service was a joyful one, filled with the ringing of bells at every hallelujah sung during the service, even for Handel's Hallelujah Chorus, sung by an expanded choir. The altar was beautifully adorned with Easter lilies, dedicated in honor or memory of loved ones. The Church School children went on an Easter egg hunt after the service.

A memorial service was held on April 20 for Whit Dickey, a beloved church member who had passed away in February. On the same day, we were greatly saddened to learn of the unexpected passing of Charles Sargent, son of longtime members Barbara and Gordon Sargent. Charlie's memorial service was held at the church in June.

At the end of April the Deacons held an all-day retreat at the Meriden Congregational Church, to work on spiritual growth and, particularly, our call to Grow Deeper. The retreat was also meant to develop a plan of action to guide the church in the year to come. May saw the return of the Adult Education Forum, with a series exploring the history of the early church as revealed in the Book of Acts.

On May 4 the church hosted a dinner-theater-style benefit event. After a meal headed up by Jon Scott and friends, we were treated to an evening of improv by the Quicksilver Comedy Players, including church member Biff Simpson. The evening's proceeds benefited WISE, a local shelter

and resource for victims of domestic violence. Also in early May, senior church members were treated to another great luncheon by Trish Heatherton and Women's Fellowship, as well as entertainment by the LHS Superlatives.

Everyone at worship on Mother's Day received a special gift, as Susan Montmagny and her daughter Elizabeth sang three beautiful pieces. We are so grateful to have them as part of our community. The Music at the Meetinghouse series continued with the return of Classicopia and recitals by local piano and vocal students.

Also in May, the Sanctuary received a new roof, which looks fantastic from far away (and up close!). We stopped traffic for about a week but the results were worth it. The new Cub Scout Pack 279 cleaned up around the church for us as their community service project, so now our church is a focal point for anyone visiting the city.

A confirmation class that had begun in April culminated on Confirmation Sunday on June 23. Eric Petersson and Ethan Guyer were confirmed, while Emma Petersson completed the class but chose not to be confirmed. (Because of a scheduling conflict, Ethan was not formally confirmed until October 13.) June also saw the graduation of Joel Anderson from Hanover High School, Sarah Heatherton from Lebanon High School, Eric Petersson from Mascoma High School, MacKenzie Anderson from The Culinary Institute of America, Brian Moses from the University of Montana, and Eric Weber from the University of Vermont. Congratulations everyone!

On Children's Day, the Church School presented a check to Epilogos for a scholarship program in El Salvador, a result of their Lenten Lunch Bag collection project. A group of children and adults also visited David's House to deliver supplies, also purchased with the lunch bag offering. A week later on June 16, we celebrated Father's Day with the Shelter Sunday collection for Habitat for Humanity. That afternoon Classicopia presented a concert entitled "Love Songs."

We saw the arrival of thirty bikers with the Bike & Build group on June 22. Due to a scheduling conflict, the Methodist Church could not offer its support this year, so we hosted them ourselves. We provided them shelter and meals and were treated to a slide show presentation. We managed to serve them dinner on Saturday and breakfast on Sunday. Fortunately, it was also the weekend for our Community Dinner—we fed them, and they did the clean up! Earlier that afternoon (June 23) a group of about twenty church members took a "spiritual walk" at Boston Lot, led by Jennifer Grant and Ron Bailey—Lebanon's Park Ranger! The group enjoyed a picnic lunch by the lake and, despite steamy summer weather, hiked the perimeter of the lake.

As in most years, July and August were quieter months at church. On July 21 we once again enjoyed Praise in the Park with our friends in other churches around town. The service was very well attended, thanks in part to a beautiful morning. On August 25 we celebrated the baptism of Laurie and Wayne Braley's daughter Abigail. On August 28 the church joined in a national celebration of the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington, DC. At 3:00 pm, we rang our church bell for three minutes, as other churches across the country did the same.

We ushered in a new program year in September with Kickoff Sunday. After worship we had a pizza lunch, and the children got to play outside in a bouncy house. Music at the Meetinghouse resumed on September 14 with the return of guitarist Peter Griggs and his "Latin Café"

program. At the end of the month, members of the church joined others from Meriden and Hooksett for a weekend retreat at the UCC's Horton Center in the White Mountains. The weekend was a full experience of worship, prayer, spiritual study, and fellowship, along with hiking, caving, and other outdoor activities.

On October 6, the church hosted lunch for the annual CROP Walk, a wonderful, well-attended community event despite some light rain. Our raised over \$1,500, while the walk overall generated around \$15,000, surpassing the previous year's total by about \$4,000. Jim Oronte once again served his delicious sausage soup, complemented by a vegetarian minestrone from Three Tomatoes. Big thanks to all who helped out, either by walking or working!

On October 20 Jennifer Grant and Ron Bailey led about fifteen people (and 3 pets!) on another "spiritual walk" expedition, this time on Farnum Hill, which features glacial boulders, beautiful stone walls, and gorgeous stands of hardwood trees. The Diaconate also offered another All-church Forum and Potluck, this time exploring the responsibilities and work of the church's volunteer committees.

Throughout October, Steve Silver offered sermons and an Adult Education series that surveyed "A History of Our Faith in Three Objects." His first topic was the Magnificat in wood and paint; the second was the clay Cyrus Cylinder and the "Return of the Exiles"; third was an image of the sacrifice of Isaac in stained glass.

In October Mark Rowell presented his ordination paper to the Diaconate, an exploration of his understanding of Christian theology, ordained ministry, and the life and history of our denomination. In November Mark met with the Grafton-Orange Association's Committee on Church and Ministry, and in early December he began a call as Interim Pastor at First Congregational Church in Croydon. The entire congregation is proud of Mark's accomplishment in working through the ordination process.

On November 10 we enjoyed a rousing rendition of Jane Mason's dramatization of the meaning of stewardship, "It's That Time of Year Again," as a prelude to Stewardship Sunday the following week. November also featured four concerts in the Music at the Meetinghouse series, offering a mandolin festival, an *a cappella* barbershop concert, a wind quartet, and a violin program from Classicopia. Later in the month, an ecumenical Thanksgiving service was held at the Methodist church.

We began the month of December with a festive, all-church Christmas decorating party. The children decorated the tree in the parlor, while adults hung wreaths and garlands and decorated the tree in the Sanctuary. We enjoyed a small luncheon along with hot chocolate made by Ike Jacobs. The following Sunday was our community caroling outing, which this year involved over twenty people and visits to Rogers House, Harvest Hill, Genesis, and one member's home. We also did our Giving Tree again this year with the Listen Center, by which we were able to donate Christmas gifts for at least three families. On December 15 Rachel and Steve Silver graciously invited everyone to the Parsonage for a Christmas party. Carol singing and wonderful food made for a great evening.

We also hosted concerts in December by Classicopia, Bel Canto, and our own Will Ögmundson. Sadly, Will had informed us earlier in the month that he had taken a new position

in Henniker; his last Sunday at FCC will be January 26, 2014. The congregation will surely miss Will's playing as well as his cheerful personality, and we wish him well.

The Sanctuary was beautiful once again during this time of year, with all the poinsettias that had been donated in honor or memory of loved ones. A Christmas-themed, family-style Community Dinner was served by Nan Parsons the Sunday before Christmas. Worship for the Christmas season included an ecumenical Blue Christmas service on December 20, followed by three services on Christmas Eve.

Our last worship service of the year was led by guest minister Robert Grabill, from the Church of Christ at Dartmouth. We were treated to some beautiful music by Will and Nicole Densmore on flute—a beautiful way to end 2013.

This has been my accounting of the news, events, and remembrances of life in our church during 2013. If I have forgotten anything or anyone, please let me apologize in advance.

Respectfully submitted,

Corrine Erskine, Church Historian

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

*Note: All positions are three-year terms, unless marked *(one-year terms) or **(two-year terms).*

*MODERATOR	Warren Belding
*VICE MODERATOR	Wendell Smith
*CLERK	Nan Parsons
*TREASURER	Todd Heatherton
*ASSISTANT TREASURER	Lee Ann Marsh
*HISTORIAN	Corrine Erskine
*AUDITOR	Kathy Belding
*CHURCH SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT (Term: July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014)	Marcia Corkins

CHURCH COUNCIL

*CHAIR	Barry Schuster
*VICE CHAIR	<i>Vacant</i>
*MEMBER-AT-LARGE	Warren Belding
*MEMBER-AT-LARGE	Patricia Heatherton

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Nan Parsons	2017
Rachel Silver	2017
<i>Vacant</i>	2016
<i>Vacant</i>	2016
Wayne Braley	2015
Gordon Sargent	2015

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Valerie Nevel	2017
Barry Schuster	2016
Bob Moses	2015

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Lisa Poirier	2016
*Treasurer (Todd Heatherton)	2015
*Member from Board of Govs.	2015
*Member from Stewardship	2015
*Member from Trustees	2015

DIACONATE

Barbara Jones	2017
Deb Scott	2017
Ginger Smith	2017
<i>Vacant</i>	2017
John Gilliatt	2016
Hilary Ryder	2016
Barb Teeter	2016
Mark Yeager	2016
Ron Bailey	2015
Jennifer Grant	2015
<i>Vacant</i>	2015
<i>Vacant</i>	2015

PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE*

Church Council Chair	2015
Diaconate Chair (or designate)	2015
Bd of Govs Chair (or designate)	2015
Member from Finance Comm.	2015

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Linda Jacobs	2017
Shelley Shipley	2017
Ike Jacobs	2016
<i>Vacant</i>	2016
Cathy Bourgon	2015
Laurie Braley	2015

MEMORIAL GARDENS COMMITTEE

Ike Jacobs	2017
Nora Miller	2017
Carolin Bassett	2016
C. Pete Mason	2015

MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

Kathy Belding	2017
Barb Teeter	2016
Jean Cole	2015

MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION
COMMITTEE**

Barbara Laro	2016
Deb Scott	2016
Steve Teeter	2016
<i>Vacant</i>	2016
Priscilla Carr	2015
Corrine Erskine	2015
Barbara Jones	2015
Wendell Smith	2015

MUSIC COMMITTEE

Ruth Friend	2017
Gail Wasson	2017
Brian Clancy	2016
Kathy Berger	2016
Susan Montmagny	2015
Kathie Schuster	2015

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

<i>Vacant</i>	2017
<i>Vacant</i>	2017
<i>Vacant</i>	2016
Jon Scott	2016
Wendell Smith	2015
Steve Teeter	2015

NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

<i>Vacant</i>	2016
<i>Vacant</i>	2016
Amy Driscoll	2015
<i>Vacant</i>	2015

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Nan Parsons	2017
*Member from Board of Govs.	2017
*Moderator (Warren Belding)	2015
*Diaconate Chair	2015
*Other member from Diaconate	2015

NHC-UCC DELEGATES*

Carolin Bassett	2015
Marcia Corkins	2015
Ike Jacobs	2015
Linda Jacobs	2015

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Driscoll

BLEST BE THE TIE THAT BINDS

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.

We share each other's woes,
Each other's burdens bear,
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.

When we are called to part
It gives us inward pain,
But we shall still be joined in heart,
And hope to meet again.

— John Fawcett (1739/40-1817)

APPENDIX A

Proposed Amendment to Article V, Section 2, of FCC CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

The Nominating Committee, in consultation with the Diaconate chair and Pastor, proposes to amend Article V, Section 2 of the CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS, concerning membership of the Diaconate, as follows:

Current: “The Diaconate shall consist of six deacons, six deaconesses, and two junior members, all covenant members. Two deacons and two deaconesses shall be elected at each annual meeting for a term of three years. Two junior deacons or deaconesses (preferably one of each) shall be elected at each annual meeting for a term of one year.”

Proposed: “The Diaconate shall consist of twelve deacons, all covenant members and representative of the congregation. Four deacons shall be elected at each annual meeting for a term of three years. The Diaconate may also include as many as two youth deacons, preferably covenant members, who shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year.”

Rationale: The proposed amendment removes the obligation to nominate equal numbers of men and women to the Diaconate, an obligation which, while it continues to be preferable as an ideal, is not possible in practice every year. The amendment further removes the obligation to nominate two youth, one of each gender, in order to accommodate the changing availability of youth candidates from year to year.

Church Council voted unanimously on January 21, 2014, to offer this amendment for a vote at the Annual Meeting on February 9, 2014.

APPENDIX B

Composition of Pastoral Relations and Personnel Committees

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Moderator (Chair)

Diaconate Chair

Other member from Diaconate

Member from Board of Governors

Member-at-Large from Congregation

Pastor (ex-officio)

PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE of CHURCH COUNCIL

Chair of Church Council (Chair)

Diaconate Chair, or designate

Board of Governors Chair, or designate

Member from Finance Committee

Pastor (ex-officio)