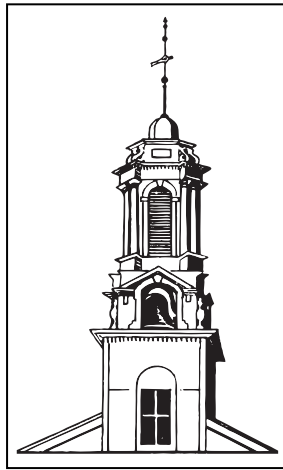


# 2015 ANNUAL REPORT



First Congregational Church  
Lebanon, New Hampshire



Annual Meeting  
Sunday, February 14, 2016

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**ANNUAL MEETING 2016**  
MODERATOR: Warren Belding

**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order

2. Invocation

3. Reading of the Warrant

4. Reading of the Minutes of the 2015 Annual Meeting

5. Reports:

PASTOR: Rev. Stephen R. Silver

CHURCH COUNCIL: Barry Schuster

OFFICERS: Clerk – Brian Clancy  
Auditor – Kathy Belding  
Treasurer – Nancy Parsons

BOARDS: Board of Governors – Don Rowell  
Board of Trustees – Valerie Nevel  
Diaconate – Barbara Jones

COMMITTEES: Committee Chairs

WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

CHURCH HISTORIAN: Corrine Erskine

6. Nominating Committee Report

7. Election of Officers and Committees

8. Old Business

9. New Business

A. Proposed Budget for 2016 (see pp. 16-17)

B. Recommendation for Alternative Witness to UCC “Boycott and Divest” Resolutions

10. Closing Hymn: “Blest Be the Tie That Binds”

11. Benediction

## WARRANT FOR 2016 ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Lebanon, NH, will be held in the Parish Hall on Sunday, February 14, 2016, 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. The Diaconate and Church Council recommend that the church vote to offer an alternative witness locally, regionally, and nationally to the resolutions of the 30th General Synod of the United Church of Christ and the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ to “boycott and divest” from companies doing business in the West Bank, and to the process that led to these resolutions. Our witness calls for peace in the Middle East, pursued in ways that do not vilify Israelis and Jews at home or abroad, but instead promote and bring about real and lasting peace in the region.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brian C. Clancy, Clerk  
Lebanon, NH 03766  
January 22, 2016

## MINUTES OF 2015 ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, February 8, 2015

1. The meeting was **called to order** by Warren Belding at 11:05.
2. The **invocation** was given by Rev. Stephen Silver.
3. Reading of the **warrant**: **Motion made** by Brian Clancy to dispense with reading the warrant, seconded by Todd Heatherton. **Motion passed unanimously.**
4. Reading of the **minutes** from the 2014 meeting: **Motion made** by Pete Mason to dispense with reading the minutes, seconded by Trish Heatherton. **Motion passed unanimously.**

### 5. Reports

**Pastor** (Rev. Steve Silver): In addition to his report in the Annual Report document, Rev. Silver extended thanks to all who offer ministry in and to our church. In particular, he thanked Jennifer Grant for her leadership of the Diaconate, Bob Moses for his leadership of the Trustees for many years, Gordon Sargent for his leadership of the Board of Governors, and Todd and Trish Heatherton for their years of work in the Treasurer position.

Steve also recognized that the church is in a transitional moment, with energy, enthusiasm, and excitement about moving forward with new ideas. He lifted up our ministry to families with young children and teens, calling on the entire congregation to join in that ministry and encouraging greater gender equity in our Church School leadership, to develop healthy mentor relationships. He also encouraged moving forward on our ministry and services for our older members as well.

Steve concluded his remarks by observing the fifth anniversary of his pastorate here at FCC. He feels blessed to be a part of this community, to share a Christian pilgrimage with each of us, and to grow in faith and live into God's will for this church. Steve and his family are grateful to have been so warmly welcomed into the life of this congregation.

**Church Council** (Barry Schuster, Chair): Report presented in Annual Report document.

**Clerk** (Nan Parsons): In addition to her report in the Annual Report document, Nan Parsons thanked Church Administrator Brian Clancy for keeping statistics for membership changes.

**Auditor** (Kathy Belding): In addition to her report in the Annual Report document, Kathy Belding noted that further work was needed to reconcile the Diaconate Treasurer's books, a challenge that had originated prior to the current Treasurer's tenure.

**Treasurer** (Todd Heatherton): In addition to his report in the Annual Report document, Todd Heatherton noted that expenses were on target for what was estimated. Heating costs had fallen from \$12,000 to \$8,000, due not only to the decreased price of oil but also to our decision to use the Sanctuary less in the winter. Pledges were down by roughly 25%, requiring us to draw more from our trust funds, a practice which is not sustainable. The Treasury also still owes itself roughly \$6,300 in escrow funds. Special offerings, on the other hand, increased significantly this year, and we raised the substantial amount of roughly \$9,000 for specific mission activities.

**Board of Governors** (Gordon Sargent): Report presented in Annual Report document.

**Board of Trustees** (Bob Moses): In addition to the report in the Annual Report document, Bob Moses thanked Valerie Nevel for taking over as chair of the Trustees in the coming year. In 2014 our endowment earned roughly \$20,000 less than what we distributed from it; while not harmful in a single year, the Trustees will need to think carefully about long-term direction.

Amy Driscoll read the list of names of people whose had been instrumental in the past for arranging ongoing funding for the church in memorial gifts and other contributions.

**Diaconate** (Jennifer Grant): Report presented in Annual Report document.

**Church School and Christian Education Committee** (Marcia Corkins): Report presented in Annual Report document.

**Memorial Gardens Committee** (Pete Mason): Report presented in Annual Report document.

**Mission and Social Action Committee** (Corrine Erskine): In addition to the report in the Annual Report document, Jon Scott noted the need to involve more people in the monthly Community Dinner; the job of dishwasher in particular needs support, so that we're not always dependent on Ron Bailey's generous, consistent help. It's also important to have clearer coordination of the CROP Walk, for both our post-walk lunch and our church's overall fundraising effort.

**Music Committee** (Brian Clancy): Report presented in Annual Report document.

**Stewardship Committee** (Jon Scott): Report presented in Annual Report document.

**Women of the Church** (Amy Driscoll and Barb Teeter): In addition to the report in the Annual Report document, Amy Driscoll highlighted the name change from Women's Fellowship and extended an invitation to all women in the congregation, whether formal members or not. She also lifted up the positive experience with Carmen Blandon Tarleton, suggesting that we could invite a similar speaker each year. Linda Jacobs appealed for broader participation and help with events like the Community Dinner. She added that the group decided not to fund-raise this year because its funds were healthy at this point.

**Men's Fellowship:** Wendell Smith informally offered a report from the floor on Men's Fellowship. He affirmed the valuable experience of monthly breakfasts and noted the group's sponsorship of new instant-hot-water units in the restrooms. He suggested that the group develop a formal budget.

**Church Historian** (Corrine Erskine): Report presented in Annual Report document.

## **6. Nominating Committee Report** (Amy Driscoll)

An updated Nominating Committee report was distributed and discussed at the meeting. Amy thanked those whose terms were ending and those who had agreed to take on new roles. She pointed out that even with membership changes in the By-laws, some committees still have fewer members than the By-laws require. Amy recognized that the Diaconate, however, had explicitly decided to remain a body of twelve, despite the challenge of filling all spots, partly for the symbolic value of that number.

## **7. Election of Officers and Committees**

**Motion made** by Linda Jacobs to accept the full slate of nominations as presented at the meeting, seconded by Barry Schuster. **Motion passed unanimously.**

## 8. Old Business

None brought forward.

## 9. New Business

### A. Proposed Budget for 2015

Todd Heatherton introduced the proposed 2015 budget. While pledge totals are always difficult to predict, our draw from endowment funds will be reduced. We also count on a generous annual distribution from the Waldo Trust, which can be designated by Council to a specific purpose; we might use it to repay the Treasury's escrow funds. (Todd explained that Waldo Trust distributions had begun four years earlier, although FCC was only a contingent beneficiary.) The budget calls for modest raises for personnel. It is a balanced, lean budget, which cannot be cut much further.

There was some general discussion and caution about spending from our endowment principal, and Valerie Nevel repeated that a draw rate of no more than about 4% was advisable, especially as earnings had been down slightly from prior years. Noting his experience with the Stewardship process, Jon Scott suggested offering a congregational discussion about the basics of FCC's trust investments and budget process, a suggestion that met with general agreement.

**Motion made** by Amy Driscoll to accept the proposed budget for 2015, seconded by Barry Schuster. **Motion passed unanimously.**

### B. Proposed Amendments to FCC Constitution and By-laws, Concerning Composition and Membership of Committees

Amy Driscoll introduced this discussion by noting that the number of volunteer positions to be filled each year (roughly 70-80) is large relative to the number of active members in our church. Many have looked at the structure of our church committees and governance, and Council recently formed an ad-hoc task force to recommend ways to streamline that structure.

The recommendations attempt to reduce the overall number of positions while keeping the By-laws flexible enough to allow future growth and variations in eligible volunteers. Thus, ranges of membership are recommended. The recommendations also eliminate under-utilized positions (e.g., Vice Moderator and the Memorials Committee) whose functions are or can be assumed by other positions. (**Note:** All proposed amendments to the FCC Constitution and By-laws were made available for review by the congregation three weeks prior to the Annual Meeting.)

**Motion made** by Linda Jacobs to accept all the proposed amendments to the FCC Constitution and By-laws, seconded by Ron Bailey. **Motion passed unanimously.**

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 12:20.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brian C. Clancy, Clerk

## PASTOR'S REPORT

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” –*Hebrews 13:8*

Sometime around 500 B.C. a scholarly resident of Ionia wrote, “Upon those who step into the same river flows other and yet other waters. All things ... are in flux like a river.” The author of those ancient words was Heraclitus, one of the great pre-Socratic philosophers; today, his idea is more familiarly expressed as “the only thing that doesn’t change is change itself.”

Heraclitus hailed from Ephesus in Asia Minor and was notable not only for his intellect and depth of thought but for his challenging personality. Perhaps this reminds you of someone who features large in the imagination and history of the church. If so, you are not mistaken: Paul the Apostle wrote one of his great Epistles to the Ephesians and, like Heraclitus, has an enduring reputation for being difficult. And like Heraclitus, Paul was a thinker of the first order. Indeed, so great was Paul’s reputation in the early church that people wrote letters in his name, using his style. Among those epistles was the one to the Hebrews, which is part of the New Testament. It says something about the power of this letter’s argument and ideas that even though the early church disputed the notion of its Pauline authorship, Hebrews was included in the canon or “official” scripture of the church.

What, you may wonder, do these philosophical musings and historical lessons have to do with us today? Why include them in an annual report for a congregational church in northern New England in the early 21st century? The past has something to tell us in the present moment, especially as we look to the future. Those who came before us have insights that can help us make our way forward, whether as individuals or as a community.

Heraclitus knew nothing of smartphones, jihadis, climate change, rapidly shifting demographics, or globalization. But he recognized that a fundamental, ineluctable part of life is change: we are born, we age, we die. So, too, do those around us, whether they be loved ones or strangers we see on the street. Nothing stays the same—except, the author of Hebrews tells us, Jesus Christ. It is this confession of faith that guided the church through turbulent times in its infancy, and it is the truth that will sustain us during our own era of dizzying change.

In my six years as your pastor I have come to appreciate, ever more fully, the deeply meaningful reasons people have for coming to church and participating in our community of faith. Each person in this congregation has a story to tell, whether about a faith affirmed or called into question, a search for meaning that is yielding results or frustration, or spiritual hopes and needs recognized or undefined. These stories are told not only through shared words but in the many different parts of our common life. Whether singing in the choir, helping with church finances, offering pastoral care, feeding the hungry, teaching our children, or engaging in one of our many fellowships and ministries, people are sharing their stories, and in doing so are sharing the story of Jesus Christ.

Here are just a few of the ways I experienced members of our congregation tell our community’s story of faith this past year:

- The Community Dinner ministry enjoyed another successful year of providing delicious and nutritious meals to our Upper Valley neighbors. Over the course of 2015 approximately 500



dinners were prepared for and enjoyed by people who knew they could find a warm welcome in our Parish Hall. As the months have passed, many of us have to come to know our guests and their stories and been enriched by the experience. Preparation of these meals involved more than 300 volunteer hours, drawing people from all parts of our church family and beyond. All of this time, all of this effort is not just a means of providing sustenance; it is one way we reflect the love and grace of God that we receive at the communion table.

- The different ministries of our church continue to cross boundaries as they go about their work, reimagining what it means to “be a church.” Consider our congregation’s growing involvement with the United Valley Interfaith Project. This year FCC Lebanon formally joined UVIP, with which it has had an informal relationship over the years. While the Mission and Social Action Committee is the primary contact point for our involvement in UVIP, the decision to join was ratified by Council, and the Diaconate regularly considers the meaning of our participation as a spiritual act. By embracing this kind of blended approach, we mirror Jesus’ call and actions to break down barriers, helping us to see things in new a light and to serve God’s people in fresh ways.
- During this past year, through worship and discussion, our church has witnessed to the gift and challenge of being Christians in a multi-faith, pluralistic, culturally rich world. While embracing and celebrating our own tradition, we have engaged others—whether that of our Jewish brothers and sisters as we discuss actions of our denomination and how they might detract from interfaith relationships and even contribute to anti-Semitism, or that of our friends in the Native American community, which we began to explore through a special worship service in the fall and as a potential mission and service field in the coming year.

These are just three examples. I know that you could offer many more. But though speaking to different parts of our common life, they all share in common the expression of commitment to the unchanging love of Jesus Christ in the midst of a rapidly changing world.

This is good news for those of us who are guided by God’s news. It is also a pattern for us to follow as we move into 2016. We have many blessings and opportunities for which we can be grateful: strong lay leadership, a talented staff, passionate and faithful members and friends, a beautiful and well-maintained church home, and a solid financial foundation. But we cannot be complacent. We must continue to innovate if we are to be faithful disciples. Here are some areas of our common life to which we are called to give attention:

- *Organization.* In the coming months we as a congregation will need to look at how our various ministries are organized and ask ourselves if the structure we have today is the most effective model for us to do our work as a church. I am not here offering an answer to this question. However, I do believe that we need to make sure that the way we are organized honors the time that people so generously give to the church, provides for personal and spiritual enrichment, and enables the congregation to do those things it must do and wants to do.
- *Anniversary Planning.* In 2017 the Protestant world will celebrate the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther’s nailing his 95 Theses to the door of a church in Wittenberg. Many, many people and organizations will be making plans to mark this seminal event in the church’s history. I expect we will recognize this, too. However, the anniversary date that is foremost in

my mind right now is 2018, when First Congregational Church of Lebanon will celebrate 250 years of ministry to the people of this community and beyond. Our 250th anniversary will rightly be an opportunity to reflect on our centuries-long story. But even more important to our community of faith is reflection on and planning for how we will be a vibrant, dynamic, living church in the future. I hope we will begin making the most of this event in the coming months.

- *Faith Formation.* I have mentioned this in the past and I do so again, firm in my conviction that this is an area in which we are called to grow. Whether it is continuing to innovate in our church school program, moving forward with mentors for the youth of our congregation, or helping adults grapple with questions of faith and spirituality, we need to be alert to both the rewards and challenges of trying new approaches and offering new opportunities for faith formation. Properly done, all of this will require resources and time. That, in turn, will involve praying, listening, and making choices.

As I have noted in past years, I am optimistic about this church and its future. We as a community have been blessed with much with which to respond to God's call to be a faithful, adventuresome people.

None of this would be possible without you, the people of First Congregational Church of Lebanon. You give so much of yourselves to enable the mission and ministry of this church in our community. You are an inspiration. Thank you!

And thank you, too, to my colleagues: Brian Clancy, our Church Administrator, who works so hard, with such good humor, to make so much happen; Henry Danaher, our Organist and Choir Director, who brings leadership and passion to the musical life in our common life; Marcia Corkins, our Church School Superintendent, who shares her love of learning and God with our young people on Sunday mornings and beyond; and Barb Teeter, our Sexton, who keeps our church neat with a welcome smile and a hug.

So much has changed over the years. The river does indeed flow by. But not Jesus, the living water; he remains constant. So, too, does God's commitment to his people, made known through the workings of the Holy Spirit. And, yes, in the potential for the church—indeed, for *this* church, First Congregational Church of Lebanon—to be a channel for our Creator's grace, a firm rock on which a pilgrim people can rely with hope, confidence, and faith in an age of disruption and disorientation, confusion and anxiety, but also possibility unimagined.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

## CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

The report of the Church Council each year usually includes a list of activities and accomplishments. This year, like all prior years, the Council again undertook a number of matters that affect the daily life of the church, some weighty and even theoretical, and some quite mundane, like repairs to our church building.

The monthly meetings this year included discussions of the budget, pledges, amendments to our By-laws, safety monitoring, the United Valley Interfaith Project (UVIP), the CROP Walk, communion practice, UCC political concerns, and building repairs.

Perhaps most important, however, were the contributions of those who faithfully attended Council meetings. Without their concern and participation, the work of the Council and the important work of our church would not occur. So, this year, rather than simply listing accomplishments, the Council would like to thank all those whose efforts make possible the running of the church, the operation of its building, and the fulfillment of its mission.

The following is not a complete list, but it includes those who managed to have their names included in Council minutes, and any omission is this author's alone. Thank you to all.

Ron Bailey	John Gilliatt	Ashley Oronte	Rachel Silver
Warren Belding	Todd Heatherton	Jim Oronte	Steve Silver
Kathy Berger	Trish Heatherton	Linda Oronte	Biff Simpson
Brian Clancy	Linda Jacobs	Nan Parsons	Ginger Smith
Marcia Corkins	Ike Jacobs	Don Rowell	Wendell Smith
Henry Danaher	Barb Jones	Hilary Ryder	Barb Teeter
Amy Driscoll	Pete Mason	Gordon Sargent	Steve Teeter
Elizabeth Duvall	Susan Montmagny	Barry Schuster	
Corrine Erskine	Valerie Nevel	Jon Scott	

Respectfully submitted,  
Barry Schuster, Chair

## CLERK'S REPORT

During 2015 eight people joined the church as covenant members; three members died; two members transferred their membership; and one member withdrew her membership. With these changes, we begin 2016 with 201 members.

### **New Members Received:**

Henry F. Danaher, joined 1/11/2015.  
Denise Moriearty, joined 1/11/2015.  
Donald S. Rowell, joined 1/11/2015.  
Kathleen Beckett, joined 12/20/2015.  
Mary-Thérèse Braun, joined 12/20/2015.  
Edward L. Doyle, joined 12/20/2015.  
Nicole and Brandon Mason, joined 12/20/2015.  
Jo Shelnutt, joined 12/20/2015.

### **Members Who Died:**

Virginia Hough, d. 7/21/2015  
Harry W. Reed, d. 10/26/2015  
The Rev. Norman E. Dubie, Sr., d. 12/6/2015

### **Members Who Transferred:**

Shelly and Robert Moses, transferred membership to Peace Dale Congregational Church (Peace Dale, RI), 12/24/2015.

### **Members Who Withdrew:**

Lynn Anderson, withdrew membership per letter to Diaconate, 2/20/2015.

Rev. Stephen R. Silver presided at the following **services of Christian marriage:**

Erica Hinsley and Christopher Losak, Hanover, NH, 6/27/2015.  
Chantelle M. Perry and Joshua L. Neily, Cornish, NH, 8/22/2015.  
Kareen M. Miller and Lincoln McGregor, FCC, 12/19/2015.

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

*Members of the Church:*

Virginia Hough, d. 7/21/2015, memorial service 8/15/2015 at Ricker Funeral Home, Lebanon, NH.  
Harry W. Reed, d. 10/26/2015, service 11/28/2015 at FCC.  
The Rev. Norman E. Dubie, Sr., d. 12/6/2015, graveside memorial service 12/14/2015 at Hartland Village Cemetery, Hartland, VT.

*Friends of the Church:*

Frederick G. Cushing, Jr., d. 11/16/2014, memorial service 4/25/2015 at FCC.

Stanley R. Remsberg, d. 4/18/2015, memorial service 6/9/2015 in Needham, MA.

Beverly B. Pasch, d. 1/26/2015, memorial service 6/13/2015 at FCC.

Janet A. Rhodes, d. 5/23/2014, interment 6/19/2015 at Glenwood Cemetery, Lebanon, NH.

Helene C. Chase, d. 5/20/2015, memorial service 6/20/2015 at Kendal at Hanover, NH.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian C. Clancy, Clerk

## AUDITOR'S REPORT

I begin this report, as I always do, by declaring I am not a trained auditor. I have the experience of having been the church treasurer for seven years and assistant treasurer for two.

I also will declare that, as always, I have included a review of the books held by the Board of Trustees. This year, it so happens, I am a member of the Board of Trustees. This was brought to the attention of the Board at the beginning of the year, and I raise it here to avoid concerns about any conflict of interest.

**Women of the Church Report**—I was provided with bank statements for 1/1/15 through 5/19/15 from Citizens Bank. On May 19, 2015, the Citizens Bank account was apparently closed with a remaining balance of \$5,270.82.

On August 12, 2015, an account was opened at the Mascoma Savings Bank with an opening deposit of \$5,370. 82. According to a handwritten note, there was a \$100 donation given to WOC between the closing of one account and the opening of the second, which explains the difference in figures.

I was provided a handwritten account of activity for the Mascoma Savings Bank account from 8/12/15 through 12/6/15. The ending balance was \$5,014.41, which did match the balance on the bank statement for December. I was not provided with a checkbook or register for the Mascoma account and therefore could not verify check numbers.

**Mission and Social Action Report**—I was provided with the checkbook, register, and bank statements for the entire year, 2015. I was not provided with all deposit slips.

Due to small mathematical errors and incorrect amounts being recorded in the register, I was not able to balance the checkbook. This does not reflect a big deficit, and I am confident that it is due to the small miscalculations and incorrect amounts being recorded. I have touched base with the treasurer and we will be meeting to go over the small contradictions I found.

**Diaconate Report**—I was provided with bank statements and treasurer reports for the entire year of 2015. I was also provided with the checkbook, register, and deposit slips. I was informed that the books do not balance, but if one refers to the 2014 Annual Report, they didn't balance then either.

I found two instances of items being added rather than subtracted and a deposit that was made but apparently not recorded.

I have provided the treasurer with a written list of the items mentioned above so that corrections can be made.

**Board of Trustees Report**—I am a member of the Board of Trustees. My contribution to the board was to enter financial data into these spreadsheets based on information in these Trustee accounts:

Dole Fund account at Mascoma Savings Bank  
Church Trustee account at Mascoma Savings Bank  
Pastor's Endowment Fund

I was provided with statements from Mascoma Savings Bank for the Dole Fund and Church Trustee accounts, as well as statements from the other church investment funds.

I then sent the completed spreadsheets to the chair of the Trustees for review.

As a committee member entering the data, I was able to review the account balances.

**Treasurer Report**—Due to current circumstances, I was not provided with any reports or statements related to the Treasurer's accounts.

I thank everyone for their work on these committees, and, as in the past, I always suggest that a trained auditor would be most beneficial to review all books of the church.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy Belding

## TREASURER'S REPORT

For the year January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015

[ *\*Not available in this edition\** ]



FINANCE COMMITTEE  
PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2016

[ *\*Not available in this edition\** ]

## BOARD OF GOVERNORS REPORT

“The Board of Governors shall have general charge and care of the church’s physical property,” according to our church’s Constitution and By-Laws.

The Board has traditionally met after services on the fourth Sunday of the month. Due to the excellent condition of our facilities and a light workload, the Board did not have to meet each month in 2015.

The major project for the year involved repairing damage to the church office caused in October when a garbage truck backed into the building. Don Collins and High Meadow Builders, who have already done significant work on our church, evaluated the damage, conducted a full inspection of both the office extension and the Parlor, and presented a plan of repair. The work was carried out in early January 2016 to accommodate the busy Christmas season schedule and avoid problems that might have arisen from adverse weather conditions. The full cost of the repairs was borne by Casella Waste Management.

The annual outside clean-up was done by board members with assistance from our Cub Scout pack. Kevin Charbono and Nate Cole again have taken care of snow removal.

The energy audit of the church building, originally scheduled for the spring of 2015, will be performed in 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne Braley

Nan Parsons

Don Rowell

Walter Scott

Rachel Silver

Wendell Smith

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT**  
For the year ended December 31, 2015

[ *\*Not available in this edition\** ]

## DIACONATE REPORT

The responsibilities of the Diaconate are to serve as spiritual leaders of the church with continuing oversight of the spiritual life of the church. As I sit down to write our report for 2015, I am in such a positive mood just thinking about the 24 members of the Mason family in church for the baptism of Coby Mason on the first Sunday of 2016. In addition, we have recently added six new members to our church family—Kathy Beckett, Mary-Thérèse Braun, Edward (Larry) Doyle, Nicole and Brandon Mason (Coby's parents), and Jo Shelnutt. Led by Henry Danaher, the music ministry and the growth of the choir have been positive events. What seemed most evident this year is that while we are named as deacons, the entire church family was participating as spiritual leaders and encouraging the growth of our church.

On February 9 the Diaconate welcomed first-time deacons Susan Montmagny, Biff Simpson, and Steve Teeter and returning deacon Jon Scott. The officers appointed were Barbara Jones, Chair; Barb Teeter, Vice-Chair; John Gilliatt, Secretary; and Ginger Smith, Treasurer. Susan Montmagny represents us on the Pastoral Relations Committee, as Jon Scott does on Church Council. Barb Teeter reports on Called to Care, Steve Teeter on the United Valley Interfaith Project.

On March 9 we reviewed the Fire and Ice Event held at Ron Bailey's home, the Ecumenical Ash Wednesday service hosted by FCC, and upcoming Lent and Easter services. It was decided that the Deacon of the Month will be responsible for arranging for ushers for the month assigned. Deacon lists were distributed and updated by the group. The goal for each deacon was to contact people on their list before Easter. Susan passed out an Open and Affirming survey, which she asked all deacons to complete. It was decided that the Laying on of Hands for new deacons would be held on April 12.

The April 13 meeting clarified what the Communion offering is to be used for. The money supports our Open-Door Ministry (formerly the Back-Door Ministry), which supplies gas cards and grocery cards; spiritual projects such as mission trips and the electronic hymnal; and contributions to local mission partners such as Second Growth and WISE. The Diaconate implemented a suggestion given by the Scotts that deacons sign cards for people we know who are ill or need a little extra support. Brian Clancy provided information on Lifetouch, who will produce our new church directory. The issue of safety monitors will be discussed with the Church Council to see if there is a way to satisfactorily accomplish what needs to be done.

On May 11 it was decided to post the Diaconate communion schedule on the bulletin board next to the coffee maker in the kitchen. It was recommended that if a person is unable to fulfill those duties, it was that person's responsibility to find a sub and note the change on the posted schedule. Hilary purchased cards and other deacons have supplemented those, so that we have cards available to be signed for church members. The Diaconate again reviewed issues of church safety and security being reviewed by Church Council. We discussed signage and other issues. Church service coverage for Steve during his summer vacation was offered by Biff and Hilary. Jon Scott suggested that we test using Facebook to see if we can attract more new members through that medium. WISE and Second Growth were each to receive \$500.

Jon provided an update on the Facebook trial at the June 8 meeting. We reviewed the dates that Steve Silver would not be in the pulpit and the fact that we would join the Baptists and Methodists

on July 26 for Praise in the Park. Steve Teeter reviewed the UVIP presentation given following worship on May 31 and will get the membership schedule to present at a Mission Committee meeting. Susan volunteered to supply gluten-free bread and Hilary volunteered to supply juice for communion.

The July 27 meeting (combining July and August) clarified the church photo directory schedule for October 28, 2-9 pm and November 14, 10 am – 5 pm. The Horton Center retreat was scheduled for September 25-27 and was very successful. UVIP Micah Award nominations need to be given to Brian by August 31. FCC has officially joined UVIP, and Steve Teeter and Ron Bailey are our representatives. The next church hike of the FCC “Outing Club,” led by Ron, was set for September 20. The deacons will present services at Genesis during the month of November in teams of two. We will use abbreviated bulletins and hymn booklets prepared by John Gilliatt. There was a discussion of communion presentation methods and most spoke to the merits of intinction. Discussion was begun on the so-called “BDS” (boycott, divest, and sanction) anti-Zionist movement that Hilary and Steve Silver have mentioned in their sermons.

On September 14 discussion centered around the Thanksgiving service, and the decision was made to have an ecumenical service, rather than the interfaith service we participated in last year. The Diaconate expressed its desire to help Brian during the church directory update. We also decided that two deacons, one being the Deacon of the Month, should help to count the Sunday morning offering and to place it in a safe location for the church administrator to deposit. Susan has developed a worksheet for us to use. We again discussed the need for a 12th deacon, and we were urged to offer possible candidates, even though the Nominating Committee would ultimately make the decision. Steve Teeter spoke about the process of selecting an executive director for UVIP and discussed purchasing tickets for those who want to support our Micah Award winner, Pete Mason. Jon Scott and Barb Jones will try to attend Church Council meetings, but Barb would appreciate help from others. Barb J requested that committee reports be sent ahead of the meeting to expedite the meeting process.

On October 12 the Diaconate decided each deacon should contact the church members on their deacon’s list to encourage them to be photographed for the directory; in addition, members we have not seen in some time should be encouraged to come and be photographed. Pairs of deacons determined when they would go to Genesis to cover the services there. November 22 was set for a congregational discussion of the serving of communion. It was decided that concerns relating to BDS would be discussed at the November Diaconate meeting.

Our November 9 meeting focused on Called to Care and the Thanksgiving ecumenical service, as well as the upcoming second date for photographs to be taken for the directory. Deacons were assigned names to contact of those who have not yet signed up. Deacons signed up for Genesis lay services. All were reminded of the communion serving discussion to be held following church on November 22; Barb Jones will moderate. A broader discussion about our church’s position relating to BDS was held. Our response to the positions stated by the NH Conference of the UCC and the General Synod are the issues under discussion, both as to the process used and the substance of the resolutions. Jon Scott distributed “Examples of Possible Courses of Action for Our Church.” Steve Silver and Hilary added significantly to the discussion. Hilary will work with Steve to draft a position statement which will go to Church Council at their next meeting.

Our final meeting of 2015 was held on December 14. All were reminded to send Christmas cards to the people on their deacon's list. Brian circulated an email list of people who are not currently active with the church to get feedback about what information we know about them, primarily to decide whether to include them in the directory. All were pleased to hear of the enthusiasm and positive reasons expressed by the new members who will be received into the church on December 20. Further refinements were made to the Sunday morning offering process. Suggestions and recommendations for future services at Genesis were raised and discussed. Steve Teeter reported for UVIP on the Economic Justice Committee providing support on matters of a livable wage and predatory lending practices. Carolin Bassett has joined Steve and Ron Bailey representing our church with UVIP. She will work on the Committee on Aging. The decision about serving communion is that we will use the distribution method when we are in the Parish Hall; on the first Sunday in January, communion will be served by distribution despite our worshiping in the Sanctuary due to the baptism of Coby Mason. Discussion on the issue of BDS was fruitful, and Susan and Jon Scott will present the Diaconate's recommendations to Church Council at their meeting on December 15. Biff suggested that we consider showing family-friendly movies during winter months in the Parish Hall. Biff will supply a list of movies and information on the logistics and legalities involved. In our closing prayer, we recognized the third anniversary of the Sandy Hook shootings.

As chair, I would like to commend and thank Steve Silver and each and every deacon for the support they have given to me and, far more importantly, to this church. They are very hard-working, dedicated, and fully committed to the essential work of this church. We look forward to accomplishing many things in 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Jones, Chair

Barbara Teeter, Vice-Chair

John Gilliatt, Secretary

Ginger Smith, Treasurer

Susan Montmagny

Hilary Ryder

Deb Scott

Jon Scott

Biff Simpson

Steve Teeter

Mark Yeager

## DIACONATE TREASURER'S REPORT

[ *\*Not available in this edition\** ]

## CHURCH SCHOOL AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

The 2014-15 Church School year began with Kick-off Sunday on September 14, with everyone enjoying a lunch of pizza and popsicles, along with the children's favorite entertainment—the Bouncy House! Our theme for the year was “God’s Big World: Building Diverse Communities.” The children had the chance to discover and celebrate the wonder, diversity, and creativity of God’s people around the world. On Children’s Sunday in June, the children presented and shared a display of their projects.

Thanks to our generous church family, the children’s annual Lenten Lunch Bag fund-raiser collected \$1,000, which was divided evenly between David’s House and a school in El Salvador (in partnership with Epilogos). The children always look forward to delivering needed supplies to David’s House, which always includes a fun tour.

The children also collected enough money with their weekly offerings to purchase chickens and two goats for the Heifer International program. In May, families visited the Heifer Farm in Rutland, MA, which was a huge success. Everyone enjoyed visiting the animals.

Christian Ed is responsible for two Community Dinners each year. The children are the servers and lead the prayer before the meal.

On Christmas Eve, the children once again presented a wonderful pageant for the congregation at the Family Service.

The Christian Education Committee and the children of the Church School wish to thank the parents and congregation for their patience, love, and support. It was a great year, thanks to our wonderful church family and our precious children. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted,  
Marcia Corkins,  
Superintendent of Church School  
Laurie Braley  
Ike Jacobs  
Linda Jacobs  
Shawna Osmer  
Biff Simpson



## 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 2015.

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. Once again, Nora Miller generously did the planting work for both gardens in 2015.

Anyone who would like more information about either of the Memorial Gardens or would like to contribute to them should 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

Ike Jacobs

Nora Miller

## MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Mission and Social Action Committee had a successful year.

We were not able to send anyone to El Salvador this year due to the unrest and violence in the country, so we will be looking for a new global mission in the new year. Because Second Growth is one of our local mission partners, we invited Barbara Farnsworth to talk to us about what their organization has been doing this year. She gave a very informative presentation, and they do need our help, both in volunteers and financial support.

In June we hosted the Bike and Build Northern Route group again. We had a good group of 28 young adults who were very appreciative of all our efforts. We served them two suppers, one breakfast, and snacks.

We also hosted the CROP Walk again this year. Because it conflicted with the ChaD Walk, we didn't host as many people as usual, but everyone enjoyed Jim Oronte's sausage soup again. The Lebanon Diner provided a vegetarian minestrone.

We decided that FCC should become an official member of UVIP (United Valley Interfaith Project). The organization's major goals this year are economic justice and aging with dignity. Ron Bailey, Steve Teeter, and Carolin Bassett are our representatives. (We need more people too; anyone interested should let Ron know.) One way to be involved is to become a so-called 5-Minute Friend, for which there is information on our bulletin board in the Parish Hall.

Because we could not volunteer in El Salvador this year, we decided to put out a survey to the congregation to see what local and international missions they would like us to consider. We will tally the surveys up and begin working on another mission project for the coming year.

Our Community Dinners are still being well received. The gossip mill says that our meals are the best around, because the food is always good, fresh, and homemade. Please think about becoming involved in this service by either organizing a meal, contributing food, or helping to serve or clean up. Ron Bailey could use a new dishwasher to give him a break!

Respectfully submitted,

Corrine Erskine, Chair

Ron Bailey

Barbara Laro

Deb Scott

Wendell Smith

Steve Teeter

## MUSIC COMMITTEE REPORT

The Music Committee did not often meet in 2015, but we did act and serve in several ways to fulfill our mission of furthering the church's music ministry.

Our primary concern has been to support Henry Danaher, as he develops and gains confidence in his leadership of our music program. Henry continues to grow as a choral director, and while his relative inexperience still shows on occasion, what's much clearer is his active, willing enthusiasm for learning and self-improvement. He has worked with Bel Canto Chamber Singers director Jane Woods (and observes her regularly as a baritone in Bel Canto), he now holds a position as choral accompanist at Hanover High School, and he has participated in a variety of musical productions in the Upper Valley. The committee and Church Council also supported and unanimously approved funding for Henry's proposal to study organ with Diane Belcher, one of the region's elite organists.

The committee has also sustained the growth of our choir and worship music. The choir's core group has expanded, and as Henry grows in his leadership, it enriches our worship experience significantly. Ruth Friend remains a committed, tireless lay leader, and even as this report appears is coordinating the 10th Biennial Lebanon-Area Choir Festival, which FCC will host in early March. We're grateful to have Elizabeth (Montmagny) Duvall return as an active member of our church, not only adding her soprano voice to the choir but also making considerable efforts to revive both a handbell choir and a children's choir at FCC. Despite challenges in both projects, the fact that these groups now participate in worship at all—even on an irregular basis—is a tremendous achievement in our music ministry.

Henry, too, has shown creativity and initiative in broadening the character of our worship music. Working with Brian Clancy, Music Committee chair (and, conveniently, Church Administrator), Henry has arranged for a variety of guest musicians, including a harpist, a flautist, two violists, two clarinetists, even a jazz guitarist. We are fortunate to have probably the only church-clarinetist-in-residence in northern New England, Meghan Davis, who plays regularly in worship in exchange for using church space to teach privately. (As a result, Meg and her children have become increasingly attached to our congregation.)

Lastly, perhaps the most visible responsibility of the committee itself remains its role in sustaining the Music at the Meetinghouse concert series. Classicopia and Dan Weiser, with both new and familiar collaborators, again delighted audiences on several dates, including with a full quintet in August. The Upper Valley Music Center used our Sanctuary for a variety of concerts and recitals, as did several local instrumental instructors. Former music director Will Ögmundson returned to give a piano concert in May, and Henry's "Danaher-Davis-Turbes Trio" offered a sensational program to a large audience in October. Other fall events included a master class with baritone and performance coach Richard Lissemore, a benefit chamber concert for the Upper Valley Waldorf School, a return performance by the *a cappella* quartet Aged to Perfection, and an appearance by acclaimed violinist Letitia Quante. Music Committee members generously provided hospitality in some form to almost all of these events.

While not formally part of the concert series, Juneberry Music is now in its second year using church space for its weekly choral singing school, bringing more community members into our church on a

regular basis. Juneberry also organized a series of Community Sings across the Upper Valley during the summer, coming to FCC in early August.

It is clear from that summary of concerts and programs—and from regular feedback from audiences and performers—that our church has built a reputation throughout the Upper Valley not only for its Sanctuary’s superb acoustics but also for our congregation’s lively support of musical culture in the area. Those of us who worship here and participate in the life of this congregation may also feel confident and grateful that such a reputation rests on a living relationship between music and faith. FCC certainly supports music, but more than that our church is dedicated to music *ministry*.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Clancy, Chair

Kathy Berger

Ruth Friend

Susan Montmagny

Denise Moriearty

Gail Wasson

## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Our church is blessed with a generous, giving, caring congregation. Once again in 2015, our pledges and offerings of money and countless volunteer hours helped to support a vibrant year of ministry and mission.

In our annual stewardship pledge drive a number of individuals and families stepped up for the first time with their commitments of faithful support for 2016. Together with congregation members who renewed—and in some cases increased—their pledges, our church leadership has been able to put forth a financially responsible and balanced budget proposal for the coming year. That budget is based on your generous giving and also on the foresight of those whose legacy has included generous estate gifts and bequests for ongoing support of this church.

During 2016, the Stewardship Committee hopes to be able to share more details on a regular basis about what we receive in regular and special offerings and on some of the programs being supported in our church and the wider community. It is sometimes easy to overlook the cumulative impact of our collective generosity, which in 2015 included:

- Monthly community suppers, each serving between 25 and 60 guests in need of good food and warm company.
- A thriving “open-door ministry” that provides emergency food, fuel, and other relief to neighbors in need, made possible by your monthly offerings on Communion Sundays.
- Generous giving by our Sunday School children in support of Heifer International.
- Active partnerships with WISE, Second Growth, the United Valley Interfaith Project, and David’s House, as well as ongoing support of communities in need in Guatemala and El Salvador.
- Participation by congregation in five major national church offerings: Our Church’s Wider Mission, One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, and the Christmas Fund.
- Special offerings received on Mothers Day (supporting CWS Blankets) and Fathers Day (supporting Upper Valley Habitat for Humanity).
- Our hosting and support for the annual interfaith CROP Walk, raising funds for Church World Service and local service agencies.
- A growing Music at the Meetinghouse ministry, bringing in people from across our region for world-class musical performances in an intimate and acoustically perfect setting.
- Use of our building for regular meetings by the Scout troops we sponsor and by many other service organizations and community groups.

All of this really adds up, whether one is counting funds raised and donated or volunteer hours faithfully provided. Consider for a moment that a single Sunday worship service, including music, lay liturgy, ushers/greeters, coffee hour, and Sunday school, involves upwards of 40-50 hours of combined volunteer time and talent. That’s an annual total of over 2,500 hours each year for

Sunday and special worship services. Each community dinner involves upwards of 20-30 volunteer hours between set-up, shopping, planning, cooking, cleanup, and hospitality, for an annual total of at least 300 volunteer hours. Church boards and committees that involve monthly meetings and other service accounts for at least another 120 volunteer hours per month or 1,500 per year. Our prayer team, Called-to-Care program, Diaconate, and other congregational care programs depend on at least another 1,000 volunteer hours each year.

These are staggering totals, no matter how one might calculate them. What makes it all possible is the faithful commitment and witness offered by so many members of our church community. We are blessed with so many opportunities to share and to serve, and we know that members of First Congregational Church of Lebanon, when called, will respond.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Scott, Chair

Steve Teeter

## WOMEN OF THE CHURCH REPORT

The Women of the Church did not submit a formal report for 2015.

The group organized and served two Community Dinners during the year, as it has for several years. The WOC also coordinated a summer drive to donate welcome packets for families staying at the new safe house operated by WISE, challenging the congregation to share in this project. In all, FCC ultimately gave WISE (at least) sixteen complete welcome packets by Labor Day.

To avoid monthly maintenance fees on its Citizens Bank checking account, the WOC transferred its funds in August to Mascoma Savings Bank, where FCC's other accounts are held.

The group also organized a social outing during Advent to Burdick Chocolate in Walpole, NH, and Basketville.

## WOMEN OF THE CHURCH, TREASURER'S REPORT

[ *\*Not available in this edition\** ]



## CHURCH HISTORY

This is the history of First Congregational Church of Lebanon for the year 2015.

The second week in January we held a conversation about family ministry. It was to discuss how to plan for the ministry for the children and how to best meet their needs. What was learned from this conversation will be used to plan two or three activities in the spring.

New members Denise Moriarty, Don Rowell, and Henry Danaher were received into the church on January 11. Welcome to the family!

On January 18, we held an all-church forum and potluck to learn about our local mental health court, Halls of Hope. Various members of the local government presented us with how a new program in our country is encouraging the mentally ill to seek treatment.

February coffee hours were hosted by Christian Education. On the 15th, the children created all the coffee hour snacks.

On February 7 the Men's Fellowship hosted a Valentine's Breakfast open to the congregation. It was attended by 21 people. Chris Belding attended with his parents (Kathy and Warren) and his 7-month-old daughter, Arianna. She was the hit of the breakfast.

The Annual Meeting was held on February 8. Due to inclement weather, there were only 28 people present, but every item was passed. Valerie Nevel did caution us about using any more money from the endowment than we earn in interest for that year, and Todd Heatherton suggested that we use the Waldo Trust Fund to restore the escrow accounts. The Nominating Committee is still having trouble filling all the committee spots.

February 15 was Scout Sunday. The Scouts served as ushers and lay readers. For the "Souper" Bowl, with Ron Bailey in charge, we collected three full boxes of food for the Haven, Headrest, and Listen.

The holy season of Lent opened with an Ecumenical Ash Wednesday Service at our church. Thank you to Kathie Schuster for the beautiful Lenten altar arrangement. The Christian Education children prepared and distributed the Lenten paper bags. They will be collected on March 29, Palm Sunday.

About 15-20 people attended the Fire and Ice event at Ron Bailey's house in Plainfield. Snowshoeing, hot chocolate, hot dogs, and s'mores were enjoyed by all.

In March, Steve started the adult education series "Who Do You Say I Am?" This will be an exploration and discussion of Jesus Christ. Over three weeks we will look at Jesus, the man of Nazareth, Christ, the messiah described in the New Testament, and Jesus, the living redeemer who is the center of our faith today.

We should be very proud of ourselves this month. The children's Lenten bags raised \$1000!

The first Thursday of April was Maundy Thursday, with about 15 in attendance. Easter Sunday (April 5) was attended by about 85 people.

On April 12 in worship we swore in the new deacons: Susan Montmagny, Steve Teeter, Biff Simpson, and Jon Scott. That afternoon, Classicopia held a program entitled "More Four-Hand Fun" with pianists Dan Weiser and Philip Liston-Kraft.

We celebrated the life of Fred Cushing at the church on April 25. A reception was held in the Parish Hall after the service.

The annual Senior Luncheon was held on April 28. We fed around 20 seniors as they were serenaded by the Lebanon High School Superlatives. The children had made favors for each person, and one person from each table won the centerpiece. A good time was had by all.

May 3 brought another Classicopia concert to the church. Violinist Tim Schwartz joined pianist Dan Weiser in a program of Beethoven, Still, de Falla, and Bernstein. On May 15 Will Ögmundson returned with a program of music and fun. It was good to have him back.

Adult Education classes were held on May 10 and 17. The focus was “Green Letter Bible.” What does it mean for a Christian to be a “steward of the environment”?

On May 16 about 20 adults and children took a field trip to Rutland, Ma., to visit the Heifer Farm. Everyone had a fun and informative time petting the animals (Marcia Corkins has been dubbed “the baby goat whisperer”) and going to the different villages to see where and how their donations are used.

On Sunday, May 17, the church presented Ed Warren with a check for \$500 for Epilogos Charities, half of the children’s Lenten Lunch Bag offering. The other \$500 will be used for purchasing food and other supplies to be given to David’s House. Later that afternoon we had the Blessing of the Animals on the front lawn.

The first Sunday in June was Children’s Sunday. New members were given bibles, and the oldies were given a book of bible stories. The children sang a song for us using sign language. After church we were treated to an exhibition of all they have been studying this year. Very impressive, as usual. Our church was again the base for Bike and Build later in June. This year we housed and fed 28 young adults from all over the country. They began their bike ride in Portsmouth and will end in Vancouver! We provided a place for them to stay for two days and three meals, while they worked for Cover and Habitat for Humanity.

Classicopia gave a concert on June 20 of “Broadway Melodies” and another concert on June 26 entitled, “A-Cello-Rondo.”

June 21 was Father’s Day and Shelter Sunday, a day we honored the fathers in our lives by contributing to Habitat for Humanity.

On July 26 we celebrated Praise in the Park, our annual summer worship service with the Methodist, Baptist, and White River Methodist churches. Under stormy but dry skies, about 100 people enjoyed the service. We all raised \$411.66 for the Raven Food Pantry at the Baptist church.

That evening the Men’s Fellowship hosted the Community Dinner, where they provided guests with a barbecue.

We lost one of our longtime members, Ginee Hough, on July 21. Her memorial service was held at the Ricker Funeral Home on August 15. We will miss her humor and intelligence.

While Rev. Silver was away on vacation for two weeks in July, Deacons Biff Simpson and Hilary Ryder led worship services and gave the sermons. Steve was away again at the end of August, when pastors Kevin Schwartz and Heidi Hoskin replaced him in the pulpit.

Kick-off Sunday was held on September 13. Because of the weather, the bouncy house was postponed a week. We had a lunch of pizza, salad, and ice cream. We also blessed the backpacks of the children who attended. The theme this year is "Bible Buddies."

The FCC Outing Club, headed by park ranger Ron Bailey, had another hike on September 20. This time they went on a 10-minute hike to the summit of Balch Hill, then to Pine Park along the Connecticut River. As usual, a good time was had by all.

Twelve members of the church attended the Horton Center Retreat on September 25-27. We were joined by members of the Meriden and Hooksett Congregational Churches.

Those who enjoy musical concerts had a treat in store for them on October 2. The Danaher-Davis-Turbes Trio gave a spectacular concert for the community. It was very well attended. Perhaps there will be more to come? Classicopia put on a Halloween concert called Spooky Serenade. Our concert series have been going very well, as word gets out that our church is welcoming and has great acoustics!

On October 18 we were blessed to have harpist Judi Byron in worship with us. The children are studying "heroes of the bible" this year, so she came to explain and show them what David's instrument looks and sounds like.

This week was also the Crop Walk. It was another successful walk, and everyone clamored for Jim Oronte's sausage soup once again!

Pete Mason was celebrated as our second Micah Award recipient. About 170 people attended the awards event on October 25, which was sponsored by the United Valley Interfaith Project. Pete was nominated by our church for his work in the church and community.

November 8 was Native American Sunday at church. Elizabeth (Montmagny) Duvall and Susan Montmagny brought their heritage to the service with wonderful music. Elizabeth played a Native American song on the flute and sang the Lord's Prayer while Susan interpreted it in sign language. Not many dry eyes in the church. What a beautiful voice she has. The choir sang the "Shoshone Love Song (The Heart's Friend)," which was also beautiful. Very nice service.

Because Steve took the second week of November as his study leave, worship on November 15 was led by Pastor Eliot Fay, who recently stepped down from the pulpit of First Baptist Church.

We have not had a directory for over five years so the Diaconate has decided to create a new one. Our congregation has changed so much in that time, so it was something that needed to be done. Everyone had their pictures taken, and we should have the new directory by the end of the winter.

We had three concerts at church in November, by Classicopia, Aged to Perfection, and violinist Letitia Quante.

Now that we have Elizabeth Duvall back, the handbell choir has been resurrected. They performed for us for the first time in November and were amazing.

The Mission and Social Action Committee distributed a survey to see what the congregation would like to do for our mission work. We will compile the results and start work on a project.

We lost another beloved church member this month, Harry Reed. He died on October 26, and his memorial service was held in the Sanctuary on November 28.

On November 23 an Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service was held at our church, with the pastors of the White River Methodist, Lebanon Methodist, and West Lebanon Congregational Churches joining us.

The last Sunday of the month opened Advent, with the lighting of the Advent wreath. During the children's moment, the children got to put the animals in the creche. A new animal was added this year, a dinosaur! The new children's choir sang two songs for us. Despite the fact that only four were able to participate that day, they sounded beautiful. After worship we had a Christmas decorating party. We are now ready for Advent and the holidays.

A few Women of the Church started out the month of December with a trip to CJ Burdick Chocolates and Basketville.

The first Sunday of December started out on a sad note. We lost Rev. Norman Dubie this morning, and we will keep Doris in our prayers.

December is always a busy month in the church. We had Christmas caroling at Valley Terrace, Genesis, and Closey Dickey's house on the 13th, a Blue Christmas service in the Parlor on the morning of the 20th, then a party and carol sing that afternoon at the Parsonage. We chose names from the "giving tree" and presented those gifts to Listen.

On Saturday the 19th, Steve married Lincoln "Frankie" McGregor and Kareen Miller. The whole congregation was invited to join the celebration!

After a new members open house on December 13, we welcomed six new members to our congregation on the 20th—Kathy Beckett, Mary-Thérèse Braun, Larry Doyle, Brandon and Nicole Mason, and Jo Shelnutt. Welcome!

On Christmas Eve the children did an excellent job on their Nativity play. The church was full of proud parents and relatives.

We ended the year with a Christmas Community Dinner led by Nan Parsons, which was enjoyed by all who helped and attended.

Another year has ended. I hope I have done justice to our history. My apologies if I forgot anyone or anything.

Respectfully submitted,

Corrine Erskine, Church Historian

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

*Note: All positions are three-year terms, ending in February of the year listed; positions marked with an asterisk (\*) carry only a one-year term. Positions marked Vacant must be filled to meet minimum committee memberships as specified in the By-laws; those marked Open are available but not required.*

*MODERATOR	Warren Belding
*CLERK	Brian Clancy
*TREASURER	Barry Schuster ( <i>temporary</i> )
*ASSISTANT TREASURER	Susan Montmagny
*HISTORIAN	Corrine Erskine
*AUDITOR	Vacant
*CHURCH SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT (Term: July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017)	Marcia Corkins

### CHURCH COUNCIL

*CHAIR	Corrine Erskine
*VICE CHAIR	Vacant
*MEMBER-AT-LARGE	Warren Belding
*MEMBER-AT-LARGE	Linda Oronte

### BOARD OF GOVERNORS

John Gilliatt	2019
Brandon Mason	2019
Wayne Braley	2018
Walter Scott	2018
Nancy Parsons	2017
Rachel Silver	2017

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Wendell Smith	2019
Barry Schuster	2018
Valerie Nevel	2017

### FINANCE COMMITTEE

*Treasurer	2017
*Member Board of Gops	2017
*Member Stewardship Comm	2017
*Member Trustees	2017
Gordon Sargent (At-Large)	2019

### DIACONATE

Kathy Beckett	2019
Hilary Ryder	2019
Barbara Teeter	2019
Steve Teeter	2019
Susan Montmagny	2018
Jon Scott	2018
Biff Simpson	2018
Vacant	2018
Barbara Jones	2017
Deb Scott	2017
Ginger Smith	2017
Vacant	2017

### PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE

*Church Council Chair	2017
*Diaconate Chair ( <i>or designate</i> )	2017
*Bd of Gops Chair ( <i>or designate</i> )	2017
*Member Finance Comm	2017

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Elizabeth Duvall	2019
Nicole Mason	2019
Shawna Osmer	2018
Biff Simpson	2018
Laurie Braley	2017
Ike Jacobs	2017
Linda Jacobs	2017

MEMORIAL GARDENS COMMITTEE

Brandon Mason	2019
C. Pete Mason	2018
Ike Jacobs	2017
Nora Miller	2017

MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION  
COMMITTEE

Kathy Beckett	2019
Barbara Laro	2019
Ron Bailey	2018
Corrine Erskine	2018
Wendell Smith	2018
Jon Scott	2017

MUSIC COMMITTEE

Brian Clancy	2019
Open	2019
Susan Montmagny	2018
Denise Moriearty	2018
Ruth Friend	2017
Gail Wasson	2017

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Jon Scott	2019
Open	2019
Steve Teeter	2018
Vacant	2018
Vacant	2017
Open	2017

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Vacant	2019
Barry Schuster	2018
Amy Driscoll	2017

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Member At-Large (Wendell Smith)	2017
Member Bd of Gvs (Nancy Parsons)	2017
*Moderator (Warren Belding)	2017
*Diaconate Chair	2017
*Other deacon	2017

NHC-UCC DELEGATES

*Carolyn Bassett	2017
*Marcia Corkins	2017
*Ike Jacobs	2017
*Linda Jacobs	2017

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Driscoll, Chair  
Barry Schuster

## 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

### Summary Statement on UCC “Boycott and Divest” Resolutions

**Background:** Following several months of study and prayer, our Diaconate has recommended that our congregation take a formal position in response to resolutions adopted in 2014 and 2015 by both the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ (UCC) and the General Synod of the United Church of Christ (the UCC’s national meeting) on “the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.” These strongly-worded resolutions call upon the national UCC and its member churches to “boycott and divest” from companies doing business in the West Bank.

Our congregational structure and governance mean that these actions are non-binding; that each congregation is free to adopt its own position (or none at all); and that actions taken by the NH Conference and national UCC do not necessarily reflect endorsement by UCC member churches, including our own.

**The First Congregational Church of Lebanon did not endorse or vote on these NH Conference and national UCC resolutions.** Some within our congregation did communicate with state and national church leaders in advance of these actions, expressing serious concern and opposition, but did so only as individuals and not in any formal capacity on behalf of the First Congregational Church of Lebanon.

**Concerns:** Our discussions within the Diaconate have raised serious concerns with both the **substance** of these resolutions and with the **process** by which they were adopted at the state and national levels. In addition, the Diaconate believes that in the absence of a formal position taken by our own local church, people in our community and region may wrongly conclude that we and other UCC congregations are supportive of these actions. This misperception is harmful to our relations with the public and with other faith communities, particularly the Jewish community here in the Upper Valley.

**Call to Action:** At its November meeting, the Diaconate adopted a draft statement opposing the UCC and NH Conference’s “boycott and divest” resolutions and brought this recommendation to the December Church Council meeting to request consideration and action by our congregation as a whole. The Diaconate’s recommendation is based in part on these core principles:

- We believe we are called to offer a different witness on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict than that communicated by recent UCC and NH conference actions.
- We believe that the best future for all residents of the Middle East is a peaceful future.
- We believe that peace and justice in the Middle East should be pursued in ways that do not promote anti-Semitism at home or abroad.
- We believe that the UCC should take an active role in promoting peace in the Middle East—as peacemakers, not partisans. UCC peacemakers should work to develop ties with and to encourage both sides; we should act in ways that promote and bring about real change for good.



- We believe that partisan resolutions like those adopted by the NH Conference and the UCC can make peace harder to achieve by alienating Jews and Israelis and enabling some Palestinians to believe they do not need to negotiate for peace.

Regardless of the intent of the “boycott and divest” resolutions, we have seen that they impair our ability to engage in important interfaith dialogue with our brothers and sisters in the Jewish community and impede our ability to offer an effective, credible, and compelling public witness as a church.

*The Diaconate therefore recommends that First Congregational Church of Lebanon offer a public witness opposing these UCC and NH Conference resolutions. We must state that they do not speak for our church.*

With support from our congregation, we would allow our Diaconate, Pastor, and other church representatives to communicate our witness to our brothers and sisters in the Jewish community, including the Upper Valley Jewish Community, Dartmouth College Hillel, and Congregation Shir Shalom in Woodstock; to other UCC churches in New Hampshire and Vermont; to the Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Association, the NH Conference, the national UCC, and their leaders; and to the public via articles or letters submitted to the *Valley News* and other publications, and statements on our church web site.

**Additional Background:** Some in the “boycott, divest, and sanction” (“BDS”) movement seek to punish Israel and dictate how Israelis and Palestinians should resolve the core issues of their conflict. At a time when anti-Semitism is on the rise, our denomination’s embrace of this movement can unfortunately be perceived as maligning and undermining Israel and the Jewish people.

The General Synod’s 2015 “boycott and divest” resolution was one of three singling out Israel for punitive action, among a total of five resolutions on international affairs. The UCC has taken no similar action on other pressing regional concerns, such as Islamic State terrorism and beheadings, Boko Haram’s kidnapping and trafficking, or Hamas and other groups dedicated to eliminating the state of Israel. Before approving the resolution, the UCC Synod invited presentations only by speakers advocating action against Israel, and much of the justification was based on the “Kairos Palestine” document, a highly partisan narrative from 2009 that overlooks the Jewish people’s historical ties to the land of Israel.

As Christians, we recognize and repent of a long history of anti-Semitism supported and advocated by the institutional church. Our denomination’s recent actions threaten to undermine the peaceful and fruitful relationship, the healing and reconciliation, experienced between Christians and Jews in the last 100 years. The complex issues surrounding the Middle East conflict deserve more even-handed treatment—especially within the UCC and other Christian churches—allowing meaningful dialogue and healing to take place.