

2014 ANNUAL REPORT



First Congregational Church
Lebanon, New Hampshire



Annual Meeting
Sunday, February 8, 2015

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***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@fcclb.org.

ANNUAL MEETING 2015
MODERATOR: Warren Belding

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Invocation
3. Reading of the Warrant
4. Reading of the Minutes of the 2014 Annual Meeting
5. Reports:
 - PASTOR: Rev. Stephen R. Silver
 - CHURCH COUNCIL: Barry Schuster
 - OFFICERS: Clerk - Nancy Parsons
Auditor - Kathy Belding
Treasurer - Todd Heatherton
 - BOARDS: Board of Governors - Gordon Sargent
Board of Trustees - Robert Moses
Diaconate - Jennifer Grant
 - COMMITTEES: Committee Chairs
 - WOMEN OF THE CHURCH: Amy Driscoll and Barbara Teeter
 - CHURCH HISTORIAN: Corrine Erskine
6. Nominating Committee Report
7. Election of Officers and Committees
8. Old Business
9. New Business
 - A. Proposed Budget for 2015 (see pp. 18-19)
 - B. Proposed Amendments to FCC Constitution and By-Laws, concerning composition and membership of committees
10. Closing Hymn: "Blest Be the Tie That Binds"
11. Benediction

WARRANT FOR 2015 ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Lebanon, NH, will be held in the church sanctuary on Sunday, February 8, 2015, 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. Church Council, following recommendations from the Nominating Committee and an ad-hoc task force for reviewing the church's committee structure, proposes a number of amendments to the CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS, all concerning the required membership of committees. The rationale behind these amendments is to allow the nominating process flexibility in cases when committee and officer vacancies exceed the number of congregation members willing and available to fill those vacancies.

Because the proposed amendments are fragmentary and widely dispersed throughout the BY-LAWS, their verbatim inclusion within this meeting warrant is impractical. Thus, a copy of the complete BY-LAWS with revisions clearly highlighted in bright yellow will be posted with this warrant for congregational review; additionally, the revised copy will be made available online on the church web site.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy L. Parsons, Clerk
Lebanon, NH 03766
January 16, 2015

ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

Sunday, February 9, 2014

1. The meeting was **called to order** by Bob Moses at 11:13.
2. The **invocation** was given by Rev. Stephen Silver.
3. Reading of the **warrant**: *Motion made* by Barry Schuster to dispense with reading the warrant, seconded by Barbara Jones. *Motion passed.*
4. Reading of the **minutes** from the 2013 meeting: *Motion made* by Warren Belding to dispense with reading the minutes, seconded by Amy Driscoll. *Motion passed.*

5. Reports

Pastor (Rev. Steve Silver): In addition to his report in the Annual Report document, Rev. Silver highlighted a full year of meetings, service projects, and events; the need to continue our collaborative work; our gratitude to Bob Moses for his years as Moderator, as he resigns that position; and the need to reflect on where we have been, where we are, and where we are going.

Church Council (Warren Belding, Chair): Report presented in Annual Report document.

Clerk (Nan Parsons): Report presented in Annual Report document.

Auditor (Kathy Belding): Report presented in Annual Report document.

Treasurer (Todd Heatherton): In addition to his report in the Annual Report document, Todd Heatherton noted that the church has undertaken four years of significant renovations. Additional money was taken out of trust funds in 2013 to meet these obligations.

Board of Governors (Trish Heatherton): In addition to her report in the Annual Report document, Trish Heatherton noted that the major remaining maintenance task is the painting of eastern exterior wall. The Board's focus in the coming year would be heating costs.

Board of Trustees (Bob Moses): In addition to his report in the Annual Report document, Bob Moses noted that the stock market did well in 2013. Also, while the Trustees' goal for trust-fund withdrawals is not to exceed 5%, the average in 2013 was 10%, due to capital improvements.

Diaconate (Valerie Nevel): In addition to her report in the Annual Report document, Valerie Nevel noted the Diaconate's continuing focus on "Growing Deeper," beginning with their strategic planning retreat. She also recognized the success of all-church forums with potluck lunches, several Outing Club events, and the fall Horton Center retreat.

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.

Memorials Committee (Barb Teeter): Report presented in Annual Report document.

Mission and Social Action Committee (Corrine Erskine): In addition to her report in the Annual Report document, Corrine Erskine noted the thousands of dollars and countless hours

of volunteer time given to Missions by the congregation, particularly in the reinvigoration of our ministry to feed the hungry. Wendell Smith also complimented the group for their work, including the commitment to Second Growth and WISE, the commitment to stand up for and talk about gun control, and the hopes for a mission trip to El Salvador in November.

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

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

Women's Fellowship: No report received for 2013.

Church Historian (Corrine Erskine): Report presented in Annual Report document. Shelly Moses pointed out that Ethan Guyer's confirmation, originally scheduled for June 23, 2013 (the date recorded in the Historian's Report), ultimately didn't occur until October 13.

6. Nominating Committee Report (Amy Driscoll)

An updated Nominating Committee report was distributed and discussed at the meeting.

In discussion, Priscilla Carr stated her concern about the potential conflict of interest in the pastor's wife serving on the Board of Governors. Gordon Sargent (current Board of Governors chair) stated that there had been no such conflicts reflected in his experience on the Board; he recommended accepting the nominations. Valerie Nevel reminded those in attendance that anyone can serve on a committee, and people may recuse themselves from votes that may present a conflict; former pastors' wives have been active members of our church.

Hilary Ryder had no concerns about the pastor's wife serving on the Board of Governors, although she did express concern about the vacancies on the Board. Linda Oronte expressed no concerns about the pastor's wife serving on the Board, adding that the former pastor had attended all meetings.

Lastly, Warren Belding pointed out that financial decisions had been removed from the Board of Governors with the creation of the Finance Committee.

Todd Heatherton commented that because heating costs have gone up significantly, the Board of Governors would be looking for new members who are interested in this area.

Amy Driscoll made a recommendation that the congregation look at the number of committees and the total number of members required to serve on those committees. She observed that we do not seem to have enough members to meet the numbers needed.

Opening discussion about Diaconate nominations and the related By-laws amendments being proposed, Barry Schuster explained that the By-laws as they stand require that the diaconate have six men and six women, with two junior members as nominated. The proposed nominations would not satisfy those requirements (See subsequent discussion under "New Business.")

Priscilla Carr expressed appreciation to Amy Driscoll for her work as chair of the Nominating Committee.

7. Election of Officers and Committees

Motion made by Amy Driscoll to accept all nominations with the changes presented, except for the Diaconate nominations, seconded by Barbara Jones. **Motion passed.**

8. Old Business

In response to a question regarding memorial gifts to the church, Bob Moses responded that memorials generally are added to the endowment funds.

9. New Business

Proposed Amendment to Article V, Section 2, of FCC Constitution and By-laws

Valerie Nevel noted that there are more women than men in our membership. Carolyn Crocker stated that the amendment should be discussed first by the Diaconate; when our processes are not followed, it weakens our church. Priscilla Carr agreed, expressing concern that decisions seem to happen suddenly so that she is not aware of them. Lynn Anderson shared concern that the church seemed to be operating at the last minute; she urged us to follow our By-laws.

Brian Clancy noted, though, that the nomination slate had not been completed before the Deacons' most recent meeting on January 13. Barry Schuster suggested that the amendment be tabled until the Diaconate can speak as a full body. Bob Moses recommended that we approve the slate of Diaconate nominees as listed in the Annual Report (i.e. without the updates).

Todd Heatherton noted, however, that the By-laws currently require that two deacons and two deaconesses be nominated at each Annual Meeting, which neither the original or revised slates would do. Brian Clancy added that we seem to follow the By-laws strictly in some cases and more flexibly in others; he encouraged more consistent application, either strict or flexible.

Wendell Smith recommended that we nominate the first slate of the Diaconate (as listed in the Annual Report) but also invite Carol Kingston to serve; Bob Moses suggested that Carol Kingston serve only in an advisory role for the time being.

Motion made by Wendell Smith to accept the original slate of Diaconate nominees as brought forth by the Nominating Committee, with Carol Kingston serving in an advisory role, seconded by Barry Schuster. **Motion passed.**

Motion made by Barry Schuster to table the proposed By-laws amendment, in order to have further discussion by the Diaconate and Council, seconded by Amy Driscoll. In discussion, Jennifer Grant stated that there is no intention to rush the amendment or the nominations, and that she is focused more on having continuity and a fully functional Diaconate. **Motion passed.**

Budget

Valerie Nevel recommended an increase in the line item for heating costs, given the prior year's expenses. Todd Heatherton responded that he is negotiating with our service provider to reduce rates, and he added that some 2013 costs may in fact have been incurred in 2012 but carried over. **Motion made** by Barry Schuster to approve proposed budget, seconded by Brian Clancy. **Motion passed.**

Additional Business

Priscilla Carr stated that she holds the church in high affection, but that it has been a difficult year for her. She noted hurt and disillusion, the resignation of some members, and attempts to right the ship, some of which seemed off-target. She participated in forums during the year,

expressed her feelings and the dismay and distrust she felt. She acknowledged that she has not been on the front line and has avoided church attendance. She has felt a lack of connection with the worship service, except for the music. She recognized that many have stepped forward to fill the gaps and offer new initiatives for ongoing work. She has tried to find meaning and reconnect, but her discomfort with some of the church's leadership has continued with how decisions are made and the speed with which they are made. She concluded that she will be stepping away for a while, looking for her spiritual growth to happen somewhere else.

Heating costs and consumption. Steve Teeter echoed concerns about the church's consumption of energy, relative the Stewardship Committee's consideration of the stewardship of our environment. He believed we could work together to great advantage, adding that other local churches had (for example) held committee meetings at members' houses to save on heat. Jon Scott recommended that we at least be proactive about worshipping in the Parish Hall during winter months to reduce heating costs and consumption.

Lynn Anderson commended Priscilla Carr for sharing her thoughts, expressing some agreement with her. She has found that the church's spiritual life seems not to be what it was in the past.

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 12:23.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy L. Parsons, Clerk

MINISTER'S REPORT

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow...."

—*Matthew 13:1-3*

Telling and sharing stories is central to the Christian life. This only makes sense when we consider how Jesus inspired and instructed his followers. Through the telling of parables, through the enactment of God's saving power and reconciling love, he called people into the Kingdom. And so, as followers of Jesus, we, too, tell and share stories. We do this when we read lessons from Scripture on Sunday mornings and when we celebrate communion, when we engage in service and fellowship, and do the business of the First Congregational Church of Lebanon. In all these things, and in all we do as a faith community, we tell a story.

As we look back on the year that has passed, I would like to lift up three stories from our common life that illustrate how this church is responding to God's call—and also how it might move forward in the year ahead.

The first story took place close to home during Advent. One of this congregation's longstanding traditions is to go out into the community, particularly to assisted-living facilities, to share a gift of seasonal fellowship. Members old and young visit places like Genesis and Harvest Hill in addition to private homes, to sing the old familiar carols. This year was like the others—until we arrived at Ginny Hough's home. There, we encountered a surprise: a carol we didn't know. Or, to be more specific, a carol we the middle-aged adults didn't know. Ginny, on the cusp of celebrating her 100th birthday, and Josie Hall, Chip Silver, Katie Clancy, ninety years her junior, began singing, following each other's cues, and leading the rest of us into a round. It was a remarkable, joyful meeting of generations, one that only grew richer as we sang Happy Birthday. The moment was rich, alive, spontaneous, and faith-filled. It was, for a moment, an inspiring illustration of what it means to be God's new community, one that transcends the boundaries of age and history.

The second took place in our sanctuary this past March during the Grafton-Orange Association's Spring Training meeting. Since our church was hosting the event, I was asked by the program's organizers to lead worship. As this was to happen on a Saturday, I was quite prepared to do so on my own. But without any prompting, members of our congregation happily volunteered to help with communion, to serve as ushers, and to sing anthems. On top of all this, they provided tremendous hospitality throughout the day, treating those present not as participants in a conference but as welcome guests and friends. These days, there is a lot of talk in the wider church about offering "radical hospitality" and extending "extravagant welcome." That day, in worship, at the lunch table, and in a variety of workshops, the people of this congregation took what could easily have been a bit of empty jargon and made it into a reality that reflected a church that is open to the wider world.

And finally, speaking of the wider world, there was our mission trip to San Jose Villanueva. This effort engaged not just those who went to El Salvador but all of the people of this church, through the money that was committed to paying for the supplies to build a house and the prayers and

encouragement that were offered. You were present in Latin America, even if you remained in the Upper Valley. When at the Las Divinas cancer hospice I prayed over and blessed a woman who had just died, this church was there. When I provided pastoral care to members of the community, this church was there. When I presented the offerings of our Church School children to the students of the local school, this church was there. Our congregation's ties to San Jose Villanueva, going back many years, were deepened and strengthened during this mission trip. Also reinforced, I believe, was this church's sense of hands-on mission and what it is capable of doing. With this trip a long-discussed dream came to pass, and planning for another trip in 2016 has begun, proving that the desire to engage in mission and ministry with others is strong.

What do these stories tell us about FCC Lebanon? I believe they reflect a call to shared ministry, one that has room for everyone, a willingness to try something different while celebrating our most deeply treasured traditions. They also provide an opportunity to ask ourselves what story we as a community wish to tell in the future. What is the good news that we wish to share? Where have we been, and where are we going?

This past year, while one of accomplishment, has also been one of transition that has highlighted challenges and opportunities. There is a strong desire in this congregation to move forward and to do new things but also an awareness that our financial and volunteer resources are not unlimited. Fortunately, as we consider what God is calling us to do, we know that we are blessed with both long-term members who offer their experience and newcomers who refresh our common life, all of whom enable us to creatively engage in the mission and ministry of the church. We can also go forward knowing that after more than four years of capital investments, our facility is well cared for. What we do next, after taking a pause, is a chance for us to think about, even dream of, how our wonderful building—the sanctuary, the parish hall, the kitchen, the church school—can serve the people of this congregation and the wider community in the years ahead.

One thing I believe this church is called to do is grow. I say this not because our numbers are not what they have been in the past, or because we would like more people to staff committees and make pledges, but because the story—the Good News—we are called to tell is meant to be shared with others. The Gospel of Jesus Christ was never intended to be the foundation of a secret, exclusive club, but instead was, and still is, designed to invite people to be part of God's new creation.

To grow we will need to focus not so much on strategies or metrics but on the story we want to tell, and for that story to be compelling, we need to make sure that what we say and what we do reflects God's love, grace, and call to new life. With this in mind, I would like to encourage our church to focus on the following initiatives in the months ahead:

1. Continue to develop and implement our vision for ministry for families with young children. Building from the interests, enthusiasm, and needs of our vital core of families, we have begun to develop service, fellowship, and educational offerings that can engage both those currently part of our church and those whom we might invite to join. This ongoing effort will involve the entire church, meeting the needs of our kids, offering opportunities to forge relationships across generations, and invigorating our common life.
2. Dedicate ourselves to faith formation. Just as a focus on family ministry is not just about kids, "CE" isn't just for children, either. In the months ahead, we will offer new opportunities for

the people of our church to go deeper in faith and develop their spiritual gifts. And so, Christian education for adults this year will be designed to enrich and enliven faith, prayer, and vocation, taking place in worship and the classroom, in forms and settings both familiar and new.

3. Increase our presence in the community. We are blessed with a great location at the center of town and the heart of the Upper Valley. If we take seriously the call not to hide our light beneath a bushel, we need not only to continue to invite people inside our building, whether through Music at the Meetinghouse or presentations by figures like Carmen Tarleton and Randy Balmer, but also to go outside. We can do this in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to, service projects involving teams from FCC Lebanon and, during the summer, worship on the lawn (good weather providing!). Imagine an afternoon service with a barbecue afterwards. Fun and faith for all!
4. Move forward on Aging in Place/parish nurse. Finding ways to enable people to “age in place” has been a topic of active conversation in our church and other settings in the Upper Valley, including Alice Peck Day and the United Valley Interfaith Project. The need for such a resource, both in our congregation and in the wider community, is real. This year I believe our church should discuss and determine how it might implement on its own or participate with others in a community or parish nurse program. By doing so we will provide pastoral care and engage in mission. While this will not and should not represent all we seek to do to serve the older members of our church and surrounding community, it is a vital first step to which we are called.

Each of these initiatives involves our three longstanding congregational discernment goals of growing younger, growing older, and growing outward. And they also involve telling our story: one of a community that nurtures its members and invites others into its ranks, that seeks not to replace the old with the new but to instead make the old new again.

As your pastor, I have great confidence in the future of this church. There is energy, there is passion, there is talent, and, most critically, there is faith. That does not mean that we do not have challenges to address. We will need to be creative in how we manage our finances, faithfully stewarding the gifts of today’s members and those long gone.

Even more pressing than questions of money are those involving people. This year the Council considered the ratio of parishioners to volunteer slots and concluded that the time had come to prudently reduce the number of positions called for in the by-laws, while ensuring that the work of the church could still be done and done well. The fruits of this effort, contained in a revision of the by-laws, are being presented to the congregation for a vote. This takes place with the understanding that whenever the church invites someone to give of his or her time it does so knowing that a precious, irreplaceable commodity is being requested. As a community we must never let volunteering time and talents to the church become a burden; doing so should always be fulfilling and rewarding, a vocational activity that like worship is a way of giving glory to God.

As we look to the future, I would be remiss if I submitted an annual report without noting some highlights of the past year, events worth noting because they are worthy of celebration on their own and because they can serve to inspire our future efforts:

- A successful mission trip sponsored by our church to San Jose Villanueva, El Salvador, to build a house, along with additional support of a medical mission to Guatemala.
- Coordination of, and participation in, an ecumenical Thanksgiving service that included Christians, Jews, Muslims, and Zen Buddhists.
- Lectures by Carmen Blandin Tarleton, author and survivor of domestic abuse, and Prof. Randy Balmer, chair of the Department of Religion at Dartmouth.
- Twelve community dinners, involving and engaging people from across and beyond our congregation and feeding an average of 45 people each meal.
- Continued growth in our Music at the Meetinghouse series, which is introducing more and more people to our church building and community.

Finally, I would offer some well-deserved words of thanks. First, I would like to lift up Brian Clancy, our talented, dedicated, resourceful Church Administrator. Without him, the trains of First Congregational Church would not only not run on time, they would most likely be idling in the station. Second, it is a pleasure to thank Henry Danaher, our Organist and Choir Director, who has swiftly become an integral part of our congregation. His enthusiasm, professionalism, and love of the organ have all made a positive difference in the life of our congregation. Third, my hat's off to Marcia Corkins, who continues to lead our Church School with a love and devotion that is shaping the faith lives of our young people in wonderful ways that will be with them for decades to come. Fourth, I thank Barb Teeter, who with a smile, and usually a hug, keeps our church neat and tidy. Finally, I offer my deep, deep gratitude to the people of First Congregational Church, who offer their gifts, their vision, and their faith, through service in worship, on committees, singing, counting, recruiting, cooking, teaching, caring, and in so many other ways, reflecting through actions great and small the love of God made known to us in Jesus Christ.

In closing, let me suggest that the story we tell is one that acknowledges how truly blessed we are: we enjoy a landmark building, a strong financial foundation, vital and growing outreach to and engagement with the wider community, and a congregation of the faithful, each of whom brings distinct gifts to the worship and service of God. When we tell this story to others, I pray that they, too, will feel gratitude and wonder and seek to be part of a church where the Spirit is at work, helping people young and old, strong in faith and asking questions, to better know the God who came to us in Jesus.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

The year 2014 saw the spread of Ebola, Russian aggression in the Ukraine, record-setting global temperatures, and greater turmoil in the Middle East. On the other hand, more people had access to health care and relations with Cuba entered a new thaw. Here, at our church, where 2013 had seen challenge and change, 2014 brought a return to more familiar activities in our daily life.

The Church Council oversaw the departure of Will Ögmundson, the transition to interim organist Tim Hansen, and the selection of Henry Danaher as Organist and Choir Director. The church has become a familiar venue for a number of musical groups such as Classicopia, culminating in the LHS Choral Concert in December. During the year the Council discussed and evaluated the use of the church by these and other outside groups. We generally support such uses and have developed fiscal and scheduling policies that make our conveniently located Meetinghouse available.

The Council also continued its oversight of repairs and maintenance of the church building that had been anticipated, including the remaining painting of the east side of the church and some chimney repair. The Board of Governors worked diligently to bring these projects to completion.

Fiscal prudence required much of the Council's attention this year, as pledges and receipts have declined, a trend not dissimilar from churches around the country. For us, that means attention to the details that affect our budget. One response has been having worship services in the Parish Hall rather than the Sanctuary, which saves substantially on our fuel bill and reduces our use of fossil fuels. While keeping a close watch on the budget, the Church Council has supported the two substantial mission trips this year, to Guatemala and El Salvador, as essential to our wider mission. Locally, we continue to support our "back-door" ministry and monthly community dinners.

The Council focused in 2014 on both the church's daily affairs and its broader issues, all intended to assure a foundation for our sustained role in the community. While some of the challenges in the last several years have waned, in part just to the passage of time, change is always upon us. This year the Council brought its reason to address matters ranging from the needs of the Church and the congregation to the mundane operations of the building. That the Council addressed these issues perhaps reflects the Church's return to its own mission to grow deeper and outward.

None of these efforts would have been possible without generous contributions of time and effort from so many, but Trish and Todd Heatherton deserve credit for their work on both Board of Governors and the church Treasury, preparing and maintaining the financial records for the Church. Thanks also to Amy Driscoll for her thoughtfulness throughout the year and her effort on the Nominating Committee; to Nan Parsons for her good-natured service as Clerk; and to Brian Clancy for his skilled work as Church Administrator and for preparing *Grace Notes* each month. The Council would not have been as effective without all of their help, or without help from all other committee members who comprise Council and attend our monthly meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Barry Schuster, Chair

CLERK'S REPORT

During 2014 no one joined the church as a covenant member; three members died; and two transferred their membership. With these changes, we begin 2015 with 199 members.

Members Who Died:

Laurel S. Letter, d. 3/13/2014
Janet A. Rhodes, d. 5/23/2014
Regina E. Sweet, d. 9/18/2014

Members Who Transferred:

Karen Morganelli, transferred to First Parish Congregational UCC (Gorham, ME), 10/6/2014
Carolyn Crocker, transferred to Church of Christ at Dartmouth UCC (Hanover, NH), 12/14/2014

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

Alexandra Stoehr and Kristopher Minsinger, Woodstock, VT, 6/21/2014

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

Members of the Church:

Janet A. Rhodes, service 5/28/2014 at FCC

Friends of the Church:

Mary H. Brown, d. 5/30/2014, service 6/8/2014 at FCC, committal at Glenwood Cemetery,
Lebanon, NH

Eleanor B. Hemenway, d. 12/3/2013, committal 7/21/2014 at Valley Cemetery, Lebanon, NH

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy L. Parsons, Clerk

AUDITOR'S REPORT

As always, I start my report by declaring that I am not a trained auditor. I have had the experience of having been the church treasurer for seven years and assistant treasurer for two.

I have reviewed the accounts for 2014 held by the following committees and officers:

Diaconate—Books currently maintained by Ginger Smith. I was provided with bank statements through 12/10/2014, checkbook, some receipts, and treasurer reports. I have no concerns about the overall status of funds in this account, but for the second year in a row I was unable to balance these books. I feel that the issues described in last year's report are still factors in why this year's books do not balance. I offered to assist the Diaconate with the books last year at the Annual Meeting, and the same offer is extended this year. I would be glad to work with the Diaconate Treasurer to get their books back in order.

Mission and Social Action—Books currently maintained by Rev. Steve Silver. I was provided with bank statements and checkbook. I was able to balance this account.

Treasurer—Books currently maintained by Todd Heatherton. To the best of my ability I reviewed the books from 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. He patiently answered all of my questions, and I found his books in order.

Women of the Church—Books currently maintained by Barb Laro. I was provided with bank statements, checkbook, and receipts. 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.

Given their planned departure from their respective positions as of the Annual Meeting, I wish to add that it has been a pleasure to work with both Todd and Bob over the past few years.

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 2015**

(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

“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.

This year the Board has been meeting after services on the fourth Sunday of each month. This allowed for excellent attendance and, once in a while, a member of the congregation to join in.

The major project for the year was the completion of the outside painting on the east side of the building, including the removal of lead paint. During this project significant dry rot was discovered around the north-facing door near the access ramp. The removal, repair, and replacement increased the cost of the project.

Electric, tankless water heaters were installed in each restroom, providing instant warm water while saving the costs of using heating oil for this. Funding was provided by the Men’s Fellowship. Additional plumbing work was done earlier in the year to increase the water flow and temperature to the kitchen sink and dishwasher. Annual outside clean-up was done by board members. Kevin Charbono and Nate and Ben Cole again have taken care of the snow removal.

Furnace service contracts were signed with Dead River for the two furnaces and boiler at the church, and the furnace at the parsonage, at a cost saving compared to our previous contracts. Delivery of oil and propane at the church and parsonage by Dead River will help to reduce the cost of heating. New thermostats were also installed throughout the church. During the year the board has discussed energy costs, and in the fall met with a representative of an energy audit firm. An energy audit of the church building will be scheduled in the spring of 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Gordon Sargent, Chair

Wayne Braley

Pete Mason

Nan Parsons

Rachel Silver

Wendell Smith

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@fcclb.org.)

DIACONATE REPORT

This year, Jennifer Grant served as Chair, John Gilliatt as Vice Chair, Barb Teeter as Secretary, and Ginger Smith as Treasurer. Deb Scott served as Communion Food Coordinator. Barb Teeter kept the Diaconate informed on Called to Care, supplementing reports to the Chair from Called to Care leader Linda Jacobs.

We started the year with a discussion both among the deacons and in the wider church family on whether the Diaconate should be composed of equal numbers of women and men. The final determination was that while a gender balance was a desirable goal, it should not be a constraint upon service to the Diaconate.

Because of the many volunteer roles required by the church, we did not have a full complement of twelve deacons available, but rather had a total of nine. Individual deacons took on extra duties in order to ensure that we had a successful year.

There were many continuations of past successes and supports. The all-church retreat to Horton Center was offered again in September, in partnership with the Meriden and Hooksett Congregational Churches. The Diaconate continued to support Mark Rowell on his journey, as he completes the final steps towards ordination.

Communion offerings continue to fund Back-Door Ministry needs, such as gas cards from Jake's Market. The offerings also enabled our church to assist families within or connected to our church, who were suffering from hardship, illness, or loss.

We continued outreach to members of the congregation, with a particular focus on key times such as Holy Week and Advent. We had a good turnout for the Stations of the Cross ecumenical walk, a trend we hope to build on. When Steve had to be elsewhere during the year, a subset of the Diaconate led the worship services, including summer and winter hymn sings.

The Diaconate's main work this year was structured around the action plan which came out of our 2014 retreat, which in turn grew from the themes of our discernment process: Growing Outward, Growing Younger, and Growing Deeper.

We sought to help our church **grow outward** through co-sponsorship of mission trips to two Central American countries, Guatemala and El Salvador. Deacons Deb Scott, Ron Bailey, and Barb Jones led or participated in these trips. Individual deacons supported the Community Dinners, WISE, and Second Growth. Deacon Ron Bailey was honored with a Micah Award by the United Valley Interfaith Project. Finally, we prepared to host a forum on the Mental Health Courts (MHC) of Grafton County, with a particular focus on Halls of Hope, the Lebanon MHC.

Steve Silver encouraged participation in spiritually broadening opportunities, such as Praise in the Park, Randy Balmer's talk, or the Thanksgiving Interfaith service.

We sought to help our church **grow younger** through multi-generational offerings. We initiated a new "Fire & Ice" event on Ron Bailey's property in Plainfield, which included snowshoeing and toasting marshmallows. We made an annual tradition (both family- and dog-friendly) of our spiritual hikes at Boston Lot and Farnum Hill.

We also discussed ways to strengthen the church's connection to youth and create a more hospitable space for families. We reviewed a needs checklist created by our childcare staff. We sought Council approval to initiate a mini-group to work with childcare staff, Christian Education, and the Board of Governors to address these needs. The goal is to make our church both safe and welcoming to young families. Individual deacons addressed urgent needs, such as new first aid supplies.

We sought to help our church **grow deeper** by looking forward, backward, and around. We piloted an informational session by Lee Webster on home funerals. In our future planning, we are considering a forum on church forebears, intended to help current members understand the church's human history.

As a Diaconate, we added a new spiritual component to our monthly meetings. Each month we discussed a different question about "Experiencing the Divine," opening a window on the myriad ways that God reaches out to each of us.

We are blessed to serve a congregation filled with so many of the saints of God, and we thank you for the opportunity to guide you in this year's spiritual journey.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Grant, Chair

John Gilliatt, Vice-Chair

Ginger Smith, Treasurer

Barb Teeter (asst. Steve Teeter), Secretary

Ron Bailey

Barbara Jones

Hilary Ryder

Deb Scott

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

The Church School year began with Kick-off Sunday in September 2013. The church family enjoyed lunch of pizza, salad, and popsicles, along with a bouncy house and games on the front lawn. The Church School theme for the year was “Life in Bible Times.”

In October 2013, Christian Education Committee members and friends greeted trick-or-treaters in front of the church on Halloween. (This past October, we decided that this was not the best use of our committee and church’s time and resources.)

In December the children continued their tradition of decorating the Christmas tree in the Parlor. They also each received an ornament for their own tree and participated in the Christmas Eve pageant.

Thanks to our generous church family, our 2014 “Lenten Lunch Bag” fund raised enough money to allow the children to make a donation to a school in El Salvador (in partnership with the Epilogos program) and to purchase needed supplies for David’s House at DHMC. Several children helped deliver the supplies to David’s House and enjoyed a tour of the facility.

The children have been servers at the two Community Dinners that the Christian Education Committee has organized during the year, and they’ve helped at several others too. They have also made greeting cards for the Called to Care ministry. Their weekly offering for the year earned enough for them to purchase a water buffalo in the Heifer International program.

On Children’s Day in June 2014, the children shared the projects they had been preparing throughout the school year, representing all that they had learned about “Life in Bible Times.” They dressed in costume and shared information, crafts, and visual displays exploring a variety of cultural themes—home, food, holidays, money, instruments, work, leisure, clothing, animals, and crafts. Coffee hour that morning included “Biblical” foods such as olives, figs, dates, grapes, hummus, cheese, and grape juice.

The Christian Education Committee and the children of the Church School wish to thank the parents and congregation for their patience, love, and support. And most of all, we thank the children themselves—thank you for being you!

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Corkins,
Superintendent of Church School

Cathy Bourgon
Laurie Braley
Ike Jacobs
Linda Jacobs
Shelley Shipley

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 2014.

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 2014.

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

Carolyn Bassett

Ike Jacobs

Nora Miller

MEMORIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

In 2014, memorial funds were received in the name of:

Janet A. Rhodes

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 was very busy this year. Our biggest effort was to send ten people to El Salvador on a mission trip to help build a house for the Lopez family, under the auspices of Epilogos Charities. We hosted two informational talks on this project, one in January and one in May. Our volunteers were gone for a week and came back tired but renewed. They gave the congregation a presentation about their trip during a potluck lunch on December 7.

We are still managing to host a Community Dinner on the fourth Sunday of every month. We usually feed about 40-50 people each supper. We are hoping to get more of the outside community involved in helping us.

In June we hosted the Bike-and-Build group again for two days. They came from Portsmouth and were on their way to Vancouver, British Columbia. We served them meals and watched a presentation the night before they left for their next destination.

The United Valley Interfaith Project (UVIP) has given us some presentations about their work in the community, dealing mainly with the health concerns of the elderly and the community at large.

LIGHT, a community nursing program, offered us a presentation in October. Representatives of the program discussed how they help the elderly stay comfortable in their homes.

Ron Bailey and Steve Silver have continued to go to Concord to lend our support against gun violence and the problem of predatory money lending.

The CROP Walk was a success again this year. The Lebanon walk raised \$11,498 overall, of which FCC walkers generated a bit more than 10% (about \$1,275). However, the committee recognizes the need to be more proactive in taking leadership to plan the post-walk lunch at church.

Ron Bailey was one of this year's recipients of UVIP's Micah Awards, for his exemplary volunteerism on behalf of both the church and community.

Respectfully submitted,

Corrine Erskine, Chair

Barbara Jones

Barbara Laro

Deb Scott

Wendell Smith

Steve Teeter

MUSIC COMMITTEE REPORT

The primary concern of the Music Committee at the outset of 2014 was a smooth transition from Will Ögmundson's tenure as organist and choir director to that of his successor. Will's decision last December to leave FCC initiated a search process that proved quite productive in a number of ways. We celebrated Will's seven wonderful years here in a reception on January 26, by which time the hard work of replacing him was well underway.

First, we were quite fortunate that our inquiries for an interim organist brought us Tim Hansen, a senior at Lebanon High School. Tim's musical talents and maturity belied his relatively young age, and he offered an immediate contribution to music and worship here. He was ideal for our interim period, and we confidently left the music of worship in his hands while we continued looking for a permanent organist. We're grateful to have welcomed Tim into our community for five months. In June, he even gave his senior recital—in *voice*, no less—in our Sanctuary.

Meanwhile, we conducted a thorough search for a new choir director and organist, using the committee and congregation's collective network of musical and professional connections. Advertised as a quarter-time position, the job was admittedly difficult to promote on more than a regional (let alone national) scale. We ultimately attracted four serious applicants, however, two of whom we invited to church for interviews with a group of both current and former committee members. Our unanimous choice was Henry Danaher, formerly a long-term musician at the Lyme Congregational Church and very active musically during his college and graduate education at Dartmouth. Henry's greatest strengths are his facility with sight-reading and, even more welcome for many in the congregation, his genuine enthusiasm for organ repertoire. From his first Sunday here on July 6, we've all been pleased to hear the organ consistently in worship.

And aside from his musical contributions, Henry and his son Finn have happily entered into the life of our congregation, participating and helping out beyond his professional responsibilities. Indeed, Henry has just made the commitment of joining FCC as a covenant member. We are delighted and grateful to have him here, both on our staff and in our congregation.

The choir, too, has continued to build its presence in worship. Even during the interim period, we were extremely fortunate to have Ruth Friend step forward as an able and effective choral director. Not only did Ruth successfully prepare the choir to participate in the 9th Biennial Lebanon Area Choir Festival in February; she also led us through a musically rich Lent and Easter season without missing a beat. Ruth has been an important support for Henry as well during his first six months. Despite his relative lack of choral directing experience, Henry is clearly devoted to strengthening this component of his (and our) music ministry.

Alongside this successful transition of musical leadership, the committee is proud to report another wonderful year for the Music at the Meetinghouse series. Classicopia, still driven by the energetic leadership of pianist Dan Weiser and an assortment of talented colleagues, presented another series of excellent performances in our Sanctuary. In November, Dan and cellist Lawrence Stomberg even offered a "free sample" of several pieces during morning worship. After three years rehearsing and performing here, Bel Canto Chamber Singers decided this summer to move to the logistically more compatible Methodist Church, but the Upper Valley Music Center continues to use our Sanctuary

for a variety of concerts and recitals, which we are happy to support. Guitarist Peter Griggs visited for the third consecutive year, the group Aged to Perfection brought several friends for an evening of tuneful *a cappella* harmony, and the choral group Ensemble Zephyrus offered a musical-literary program on the nightingale.

Advent brought a full schedule of events. We were delighted to host Vermont's professional chorus Counterpoint for a Christmas program, in which they graciously invited our own choir to participate. Will Ögmundson returned with his highly entertaining musical *Night of Las Posadas*, and Lebanon High School was grateful to use our Sanctuary for its holiday choral concert, which drew a full audience. Finally, a seasonally appropriate *Messiah* Sing, organized by Jennifer Hansen and accompanied by Henry Danaher, packed our Sanctuary with choristers and listeners on the Sunday before Christmas.

As music continues to flourish at FCC, both within our worship life and as a gift to our local community, the Music Committee continues to consider and invite ways to enrich the church's music ministry. We look forward to hearing everyone's voices in 2015.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Clancy, Chair

Kathy Berger

Ruth Friend

Susan Montmagny

Kathie Schuster

Gail Wasson

Ginger Smith (*interview committee only*)

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

The year 2014 was both challenging and fulfilling for stewardship at the First Congregational Church of Lebanon. On the surface, “stewardship” is about weekly, monthly, or annual pledges of money and volunteer hours made by members and friends of our church. We use the information to inform our stewardship and management of church resources so that we can be more efficient, effective and responsible in fulfilling our mission. Our members and others who participate in stewardship can use the pledging process as a time for prayer, reflection, and re-dedication to this church and our mission of service in our community and around the world. In fact, however, stewardship at our church is about much, much more.

Because our pledge process is imperfect, the information we collect ends up being only a portion of what goes into making each year’s budgets and plans. We also rely on information from previous years about what actually happened, and our Finance Committee factors all these things into its annual budget proposals.

First, the challenging: financial pledges made for 2014 reflected changes in the numbers and involvement of individuals and families in our congregation. We recorded around 33 pledges, totaling a bit over \$40,000. So far, for 2015, we have recorded 25 pledges, but the total amount pledged is up significantly, to more than \$43,000. We still expect some 2014 pledges to be renewed for 2015, along with some new pledges, so that our 2015 pledge total may eventually exceed \$50,000.

But this is only part of the story. We will receive final numbers for 2014 from our Treasurer and Finance Committee during the Annual Meeting (and/or elsewhere in this Annual Report). Those reports track what we actually collected, which always exceeds the amount that was pledged. While the numbers and amounts of pledges were lower for 2014 than for previous years, our actual collections were significantly higher than what was pledged—almost double that amount.

When one includes special offerings (the monthly communion offering towards the Deacons’ funds for our “back-door ministry” in the community, additional offerings received in support of 2014 mission trips, and denominational offerings such as One Great Hour of Sharing and Neighbors in Need) the numbers for 2014 are even higher.

Add in donations of food, time, talent, and love for our monthly community dinners and area food shelves, the numbers start getting really big. Add to those literally thousands of hours volunteered—supporting worship, music, ministry, hospitality, and fellowship; serving on committees and boards; providing space for community groups, concerts, scouting, and other activities; hosting the annual CROP Walk lunch; and providing loving care to people in our congregation and community—your generosity and accomplishments are simply staggering. Look around, and you will see the true measure of stewardship at our church reflected in these activities. Our stewardship is there in all our shared activities and achievements, and it’s there in all the quiet, behind-the-scenes ways we share our faith and mission through care and service in our congregation, in our community and around the world.

For 2015 your Stewardship Committee will work to improve our pledge process and the ways in which we quantify (where possible) and report to the congregation how things are going. We are blessed to have so many loyal and generous people in our church family. We also continue to benefit

from the generosity of those whose earlier gifts and bequests help our church remain faithful to its mission and ministry, even during financially challenging times. But what really makes it all happen is the way all of our members and extended church family commit and re-commit themselves to living our faith, expressed through service and support of our church. In this and for this, we are truly blessed and truly thankful.

During 2014 the Stewardship Committee met and worked together with our Mission and Social Action Committee, reflecting the important overlap between the work of these two committees and also the overlap between our committees' membership. We expect to continue this informal collaboration during 2015. Priorities include planning new fundraising for mission activities and recruitment of additional volunteers, including potential collaboration with other churches and Upper Valley groups to reduce pressures on our core group of Community Dinner volunteers.

In terms of environmental stewardship, the committee encouraged the Men's Fellowship in its efforts to install new point-of-use water heaters in the church bathrooms. These save energy and funds by heating the water at the sinks, instead of causing the main boiler to fire up each time water is used. The Stewardship Committee will assist the Men's Fellowship with additional fundraising to cover the costs of these new heaters and possibly other energy-related initiatives, in coordination with the Board of Governors. An energy audit to be scheduled for later in 2015 will inform future planning. In the meantime, our practice of moving worship to the Parish Hall during the coldest months is expected to save several thousand dollars in heating costs this winter.

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, and for this we are forever grateful.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Scott, Chair

Wendell Smith

Steve Teeter

WOMEN OF THE CHURCH REPORT

This year, at a meeting on January 26, the Women's Fellowship voted to change its name to Women of the Church. We met three times during the year, provided Community Dinners in January and October, and gathered once for a dinner out at Koto in West Lebanon in November. We also organized and enjoyed a baking class, led by Amy Driscoll, to which the whole congregation was invited. Our primary event in 2014 was a talk and book-signing in June by domestic-violence survivor Carmen Blandin Tarleton, to which the congregation and local community were invited.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Driscoll and Barb Teeter, Co-chairs

WOMEN OF THE CHURCH, 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

This is the history of First Congregational Church of Lebanon for the year 2014.

On January 12 there was an All-Church Forum and Potluck, with an informal discussion of FCC's mission program. We learned more about plans for a mission trip to El Salvador. Dr. Ed Warren, now the head of Epilogos Charities, was the guest speaker. The third week of the month was very busy. On the 25th an enthusiastic group met at the church to enjoy a lesson in bread and scone-making from Amy Driscoll. The bread we made was then served at the Community Dinner the next day. We also had a going-away reception on January 26 for Will Ögmundson, featuring a cake, goodies, and lots of accolades and thanks. At a meeting the same morning, the Women's Fellowship voted to rename itself the Women of the Church (WOC); they served a successful Community Dinner that night.

The first Sunday of February was "Souper Bowl" Sunday. Thanks to all who participated—a collection of canned goods was distributed among Headrest, Listen, and the Haven. A week later was the 2014 Annual Meeting. On February 23, our choir participated in the 9th Biennial Lebanon Area Choir Festival at West Lebanon Congregational Church, under the direction of Hal Sheeler. Among the participating choirs was a group from the Roth Center for Jewish Life, making this the first truly interfaith choir festival. A collection was taken to benefit Listen and the Haven.

On March 2, Ron Bailey hosted the first annual "Fire and Ice" gathering at his house in Plainfield. An enthusiastic FCC Outing Club group went snowshoeing, grilled hot dogs over the fire pit, and enjoyed hot chocolate and s'mores. On March 15 the Grafton-Orange Association held its "Spring Training" conference at our church. We provided food for their coffee hour and treated them to a delicious lunch prepared by Barb Laro and Marcia Corkins. About 60 people attended the all-day session, and the keynote speaker was Mary Luti.

The holy season of Lent opened with an Ecumenical Ash Wednesday service in our church on March 5. For this season the Church School children again handed out lunch bags for the purpose of saving our change to give to Epilogos and David's House. Rev. Silver offered a Lenten sermon series focused around the question "Where Are You?" and exploring the stories of Naomi, Jonah, Job, and Mary. Steve also led an adult education discussion series on Jonah in particular.

The spring concert season began on March 30 with BHAM IV, featuring members of the Bel Canto Chamber singers. Classicopia offered three programs, in April, May, and June. Our church also served as the venue for a number of student recitals, including that of our own Interim Organist Tim Hansen, a senior at LHS.

On April 5 the Quicksilver Comedy Players returned to FCC for another evening of zany antics in support of our mission partner WISE. A dinner prepared by Jon Scott was followed by their improv comedy production—a very enjoyable and funny evening!

April 13 was Palm Sunday, when the children led a procession with palms waving. They collected the Lenten lunch bags they handed out in March, supporting both David's House and our mission scholarship fund for Epilogos in El Salvador. On Easter Sunday the sunrise service was attended by around 50 people, most of whom came afterward to the Easter breakfast at church, served by the

Men's Fellowship. We raised \$110 for Second Growth. The Sanctuary altar was very beautifully adorned for Easter with a large number of tulips, daffodils, gardenias, and of course lilies.

On April 27 there was a special meeting of the congregation to vote on an amendment to Article V, Section 2 of the By-laws, which outlines the membership of the Diaconate. The revision specifies that the Diaconate "shall consist of twelve deacons, all covenant members and, when possible, equally balanced between men and women..., [with] as many as two youth deacons, preferably covenant members." The amendment was passed unanimously.

On the first Sunday in May we were graced with a presentation by Dr. Peter Abel, his wife, and Mike and Susie Jenkins, who all furthered the discussion about our mission trip to El Salvador. About 25 people attended. On May 7 the Diaconate sponsored a presentation by Lee Webster, Director of NH Funeral Resources, who discussed ways in which we might pursue a less expensive, greener option for the burial of loved ones.

For our spring clean-up day on May 3, Pete Mason and Ike Jacobs cooked everyone breakfast. Three days later the annual Senior Lunch featured a tasty luncheon of quiche, salad, and cheesecake, followed by entertainment by the Lebanon High School Superlatives. A very nice way to spend a few hours in the afternoon.

At our annual Children's Sunday celebration on June 8, each child and his/her family were given a story book. After worship we were treated to an exhibition in the Parish Hall of all the work the Church School children had done during their year of studying "Life in Biblical Times." What an informative and creative display! The children were very proud. Kudos to Marcia Corkins for another successful year!

Memorial services were held on June 8 for Mary Brown and on May 28 for longtime member Janet Rhodes.

On June 14 we were graced with the presence of Carmen Blandin Tarleton, who shared her harrowing experience of horrific attacks by her husband and the ongoing challenges of her recovery. She is one of a handful of people in the world to have had a complete, successful facial transplant. A truly amazing woman, Ms. Tarleton answered many questions and signed copies of her book, *Overcome: Burned, Blinded, and Blessed*.

On Tuesday June 17 the young adult women and men from Bike and Build arrived at our church for a two-day stay. They had begun their trek in Portsmouth and planned to end it in Vancouver two months later. We fed them snacks, two dinners, and breakfast, and on Wednesday evening they treated us to a slide show presentation. Many of them also attended a student voice recital that happened to have been scheduled that evening in the Sanctuary. As always they were very appreciative of our hospitality.

On June 22 we had the pleasure in worship of welcoming back Elizabeth Montmagny. She and her mother Susan graced us with three pieces during the service: *For the Beauty of the Earth*, *Pie Jesu*, and *How Great Thou Art*. After the last hymn there wasn't a dry eye in the congregation! Elizabeth also told us what she had been undertaking during this past year in Browning, Montana, and looked forward to being home again in the fall for her wedding. That afternoon the FCC "Outing Club" once again met at Boston Lot for an afternoon of hiking and picnicking. It was a beautiful day and

about 15 people participated.

The last Sunday of the month was bittersweet, as we had to say “goodbye” to Tim Hansen, who had served since February as our Interim Organist. Tim was an excellent choice to bridge the gap, while we looked for Will Ögmundson’s permanent replacement. He and Brian gave us a great vocal duet during the service that morning. Having graduated from LHS, Tim enrolled at Middlebury College in the fall. We hope he will be back to visit us in the future!

The following week on July 6, we were introduced to our new Organist and Choir Director, Henry Danaher. Attendance was somewhat sparse because of the holiday weekend, but the welcome was enthusiastic! In the months since, we have gratefully continued to enjoy Henry’s contributions to the life of our church, musically and otherwise.

On July 13 we hosted a roundtable discussion on aging issues, in conjunction with the United Valley Interfaith Project; about ten people attended. July also featured two concerts—guitarist Peter Griggs’ program on “The Guitar in America” and a beautiful performance by Classicopia entitled, “Russian Elegy.” In August our church hosted a screening of Jay Craven’s film adaptation of Frank Howard Mosher’s book *Northern Borders*. About 50 members of the community came to view it, but alas, no popcorn!

July concluded with our annual Praise in the Park ecumenical service, for which the Baptist Church joined us this year. Sadly, the weather did not cooperate, so everyone gathered inside our Sanctuary for the service. It was nice to see the church almost full! The offering resulted in \$375 for the Baptist Church’s Raven Food Pantry.

Rev. Silver took vacation in August and the Diaconate filled in leading worship. Ron Bailey, Jennifer Grant, and Biff Simpson each did a Sunday sermon and ran the service. Thanks to all of you for once again keeping the Congregational spirit alive!

September kicked off a new program year of Church School. This year’s theme is “God’s Big World: Building Diverse Communities.” The children brought their backpacks to worship to be blessed for the year ahead. We once again offered pizza and veggies for lunch, along with a bouncy house, which somehow managed to bounce Wendell Smith out on his head!

In August and September, Brian organized a voting process to name our monthly newsletter. The call for suggestions generated 15 choices for the congregation to consider. The winning entry was *Grace Notes*, which appeared atop the newsletter beginning with the October issue.

On September 21, our church hosted a presentation and discussion with Dartmouth religion professor Randall Balmer. Prof. Balmer spoke about his newest book, *Redeemer: The Life of Jimmy Carter*, and took questions and signed copies of the book afterward.

On the last weekend of the month about 15 people participated in the All-Church Retreat at the Horton Center near Gorham. We were once again joined by the Meriden and Hooksett churches for a weekend of fellowship in this beautiful spot in the White Mountains. In October the FCC Outing Club, led as always by Ron Bailey, hiked Farnum Hill.

The fall concert season again featured programs by Classicopia—“Four-hand Rhapsody” in September, “Triple Threat” in October, and “Beethoven’s Cello” in November. For the last of these, pianist Dan

Weiser and cellist Lawrence Stomberg generously provided us with a sample of their music during worship. Music at the Meetinghouse also presented the a cappella group Aged to Perfection and friends, along with “Madrigals of the Nightingale” by the choral group Ensemble Zephyrus. Attendance for these concerts has been growing steadily each time.

On the first Sunday in October we participated in another successful CROP Walk, hosting the post-walk lunch at church as in previous years. Jim Oronte was in charge of the kitchen again, and he’s become famous for his sausage soup! A big thank-you to Amy Driscoll and Barb Jones for bringing in their soup as well, as Three Tomatoes was unable to donate this year. Welcoming the community into our Parish Hall for this event was once again a wonderful fellowship event.

The following weekend the Women of the Church gathered for a breakfast meeting. Despite sparse attendance, we did manage to map out an agenda for the year, while eating a delicious breakfast.

In October we also supported two important mission trips to Central America. Deb Scott and a group of other physicians traveled to Guatemala to provide medical aid and other resources. The church helped with some financial support and a collection of various items for her to take with her. On October 18 a group of ten, including Rev. Silver, traveled to El Salvador for a week to construct a new home for the Lopez family. For this trip we also collected supplies for donation and funded construction costs. Upon their return Steve gave us a brief account of the trip during worship. We hosted a potluck lunch and presentation by the participants in both of these trips on the first Sunday in December. It seems that despite muddy boots, some backbreaking work in hot weather, and other challenges, they all felt blessed to have participated in these experiences. And the food was excellent!

On the last weekend in October, the leaders of the LIGHT community nursing program offered us an informative presentation after church. They described their goals and programs for helping senior citizens to be more comfortable in their homes during their final years. On the same Sunday afternoon, Ron Bailey accepted one of this year’s Micah Awards from the United Valley Interfaith Project, recognizing his tireless volunteer service. We were all very proud to have Ron represent our church family at this event at the Listen Center in White River, which was attended by about 170 people representing ten local faith communities.

In November Rev. Silver led an adult education series on the subject “Just War, Holy War, Any War?” We examined what scripture and our Christian faith teach us about war. Later that month, at West Lebanon Congregational Church, the annual ecumenical service for Thanksgiving was, for the first time, a truly interfaith service. Clergy and congregations from Methodist, Congregational, Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist communities gathered for a truly inclusive service. You shouldn’t be surprised if this becomes an annual event. Even the *Valley News* covered it!

Stewardship Sunday was November 23. Although this has been a somewhat lean year for our church, our pledges will hopefully help. The congregation was reminded, too, that volunteering is another important way to show a commitment to the church with a contribution of time and talent.

Advent began on November 30, and after worship we celebrated with a decorating party to get the church ready for the holiday season. December was a busy month, as always.

The Music at the Meetinghouse series offered several events for the season. On December 13 we hosted “A Counterpoint Christmas,” for which the well-known professional chorus invited our own

choir to share selections from Handel's *Messiah*. Brian Clancy sang a solo that lasted four minutes! Our organist and choir director, Henry Danaher, also provided some of the music for the concert. The next afternoon, Will Ögmundson returned to present his Christmas musical *Night of Las Posadas*. It was great to have him back. On December 16 we hosted the Lebanon High School Choral Concert, which filled the Sanctuary to capacity. Finally, on December 21 there was a *Messiah* Sing at the church, featuring voice students of Jennifer Hansen and choral singers from across the Upper Valley.

On December 14, some of the congregation went Christmas caroling in the community. About 15 people visited residents at Genesis and Harvest Hill, as well as Closey Dickey. While at Harvest Hill, the group was happy to celebrate with Ginee Hough, who turned 100 on December 20!

The fourth Sunday of Advent (December 21) was a busy one. After worship there was a new members open house for anyone who wished to join our church or at least learn more about us. That afternoon was the annual Christmas party and carol sing at the parsonage, followed by the *Messiah* back at church. Also that evening, the "Longest Night" service at the Methodist Church offered solace for those whose Christmas might not be as joyful this holiday season.

The year ended with our three services on Christmas Eve, and our last Community Dinner, which was hosted by Nan Parsons.

This is the year 2014 as I have remembered and recorded it. 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 with an asterisk (*), which denotes a one-year term. According to By-law amendments passed 2/8/15, positions marked “open” are not required to meet committee membership minimums; those marked “vacant” are still required to be filled.

*MODERATOR	Warren Belding
* VICE MODERATOR	<i>(Position eliminated per By-law amendment, 2/8/15)</i>
*CLERK	Vacant
*TREASURER	Nancy Parsons
*ASSISTANT TREASURER	Susan Montmagny
*HISTORIAN	Corrine Erskine
*AUDITOR	Kathy Belding
*CHURCH SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT <i>(Term: July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016)</i>	Marcia Corkins

CHURCH COUNCIL

*CHAIR	Barry Schuster
*VICE CHAIR	Vacant
*MEMBER-AT-LARGE	Warren Belding
*MEMBER-AT-LARGE	Linda Oronte

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Walter Scott	2018
<i>Open</i>	2018
Nancy Parsons	2017
Rachel Silver	2017
Wayne Braley	2016
Wendell Smith	2016

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Kathy Belding	2018
Valerie Nevel	2017
Barry Schuster	2016

FINANCE COMMITTEE

*Treasurer	2016
*Member Board of Govs	2016
*Member Stewardship Comm	2016
*Member Trustees	2016
Lisa Thompson (At-Large)	2016

DIACONATE

Susan Montmagny	2018
Jon Scott	2018
Biff Simpson	2018
Vacant	2018
Barbara Jones	2017
Deb Scott	2017
Ginger Smith	2017
Vacant	2017
John Gilliatt	2016
Hilary Ryder	2016
Barbara Teeter	2016
Mark Yeager	2016

PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE

*Church Council Chair	2016
*Diaconate Chair <i>(or designate)</i>	2016
*Bd of Govs Chair <i>(or designate)</i>	2016
*Member Finance Comm	2016

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Shawna Osmer	2018
Biff Simpson	2018
Laurie Braley	2017
Linda Jacobs	2017
Ike Jacobs	2016
Open	2016

MEMORIAL GARDENS COMMITTEE

C. Pete Mason	2018
Ike Jacobs	2017
Nora Miller	2017

MEMORIALS COMMITTEE

(Committee eliminated per By-law amendment, 2/8/15)

MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

Ron Bailey	2018
Wendell Smith	2018
Vacant	2018
Barbara Laro	2016
Deb Scott	2016
Steve Teeter	2016

MUSIC COMMITTEE

Susan Montmagny	2018
Denise Moriearty	2018
Ruth Friend	2017
Gail Wasson	2017
Kathy Berger	2016
Brian Clancy	2016

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Steve Teeter	2018
Vacant	2018
Vacant	2017
Open	2017
Jon Scott	2016
Open	2016

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Barry Schuster	2018
Amy Driscoll	2017
Vacant	2016

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Member At-Large (Wendell Smith)	2017
Member Bd of Govs (Nancy Parsons)	2017
*Moderator (Warren Belding)	2016
*Diaconate Chair	2016
*Other deacon	2016

NHC-UCC DELEGATES

*Carolyn Bassett	2016
*Marcia Corkins	2016
*Ike Jacobs	2016
*Linda Jacobs	2016

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)