

# 2017 ANNUAL REPORT



**First Congregational Church**  
Lebanon, New Hampshire



Annual Meeting  
Sunday, February 11, 2018

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### Abridged Version

[ For questions or additional information, please contact First Congregational Church directly at 603-448-4281 or church@fccleb.org.]

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ANNUAL MEETING 2018  
MODERATOR: Amy Driscoll

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Invocation
3. Reading of the Warrant
4. Reading of the Minutes of the 2017 Annual Meeting
5. Reports:
  - PASTOR: Rev. Stephen R. Silver
  - CHURCH COUNCIL: Corrine Erskine
  - OFFICERS: Clerk - Brian Clancy  
Auditor - N/A  
Treasurer - Terry Ellison
  - BOARDS: Board of Governors - John Gilliatt  
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 2018 (see pp. 14-15)
  - B. Proposed Resolution to Endorse the NH Immigrant Solidarity Network (see p. 40)
10. Closing Hymn: "Blest Be the Tie That Binds"
11. Benediction

## WARRANT FOR 2018 ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Lebanon, NH, will be held in the Parish Hall on Sunday, February 11, 2018, 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 Mission and Social Action Committee moves that First Congregational Church of Lebanon endorse and participate in the work of the New Hampshire Immigrant Solidarity Network. A full statement from the NHISN describing its work and commitment to solidarity is posted in the Parish Hall and online at [www.fcclcb.org](http://www.fcclcb.org); it may also be found in the Appendix of this Annual Report.

Respectfully submitted,  
Brian C. Clancy, *Clerk*  
Lebanon, NH 03766  
January 22, 2018

## MINUTES OF 2017 ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, February 19, 2017

*Please Note: The 2017 Annual Meeting, originally scheduled for February 12, was postponed for a week due to inclement weather.*

1. In the absence of a Moderator, the meeting was **called to order** at 11:10 by Corrine Erskine, Chair of Church Council. She explained that Amy Driscoll, as the incoming Moderator, had agreed to lead the meeting. It was noted that approximately thirty people were in attendance, constituting a quorum according to the church's By-laws.
2. The **invocation** was offered by Rev. Stephen R. Silver.
3. Amy Driscoll read the annual meeting **warrant** in full.
4. Reading of the **minutes** from the 2016 meeting: **Motion made** by Brian Clancy, seconded by Linda Jacobs, to dispense with reading the 2016 minutes. **Motion passed unanimously.**

### 5. Reports

**Pastor** (Rev. Steve Silver): In addition to his report in the Annual Report document, Rev. Silver highlighted three areas of opportunity in the coming year. The first is a chance to consider the church's organizational structure and ensure that volunteers are being spiritually fed, rather than burdened. The second is the approaching 250th anniversary of our congregation in 2018, an exciting moment for reflection and planning; it may well be an opportune time for a capital campaign to renovate our kitchen, on which we rely so heavily for both congregational and community programs. The third is a focus on faith formation for both children and adults; Steve invited and encouraged input regarding what our congregational needs are in this area.

Steve concluded his remarks by expressing his pride in our congregation and his gratitude for our tremendous service on behalf of FCC.

**Church Council** (Corrine Erskine, Chair): Report presented in Annual Report document.

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

**Auditor** (Vacant): Noting that the position of Auditor is currently vacant, Amy Driscoll invited interest from the congregation and emphasized the need for stronger financial supervision and oversight in church governance.

**Treasurer** (Barry Schuster): Steve Silver reported on Barry Schuster's behalf that our finances remain healthy and our budget is in good shape heading into 2017. Reiterating Amy's comment about the need for an Auditor, Wendell Smith moved that the "unaudited" Treasurer's Report be accepted. Valerie Nevel added that the Trustees would be discussing the Auditor role, expressing her firm belief that we should engage a professional auditor. It was noted that this is simply a question of financial best practices and creating security for our volunteers who are charged with financial management. **Motion made** by Wendell Smith, amended by Valerie Nevel and seconded by Biff Simpson, to accept the Treasurer's Report on the condition that a professional audit be conducted within the fiscal year. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**Board of Governors** (John Gilliatt): In addition to what is presented in the Annual Report, John Gilliatt invited questions and feedback from those present. Wendell Smith commended John's leadership through the year, noting the structure and systematic approach he had brought to the Board's work.

**Board of Trustees** (Valerie Nevel): In addition to her report in the Annual Report document, Valerie Nevel noted that our investments are in good shape and offered a few remarks about the church's investment strategies. She then read the list of names of those who had arranged for ongoing funding for the church in memorial gifts and bequests. Valerie encouraged all members to consider providing some legacy for the church in their estate planning.

**Diaconate** (Barbara Jones): Speaking on behalf of Barb Jones, Biff Simpson noted that what's presented in the Annual Report document represented only a portion of the Deacons' work this year. Steve Silver added clarification that FCC has already been an Open and Affirming congregation for several years; the Diaconate's work on this issue consists only in living into this mission more fully.

Linda Jacobs asked what was planned for the Called to Care program. Steve responded that the Diaconate is carefully considering how to transition from Called to Care into a broader program of lay pastoral care, inviting the whole congregation to participate in this effort as they are most comfortable.

Nothing further was added to the Diaconate Treasurer's report.

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

**Memorial Gardens Committee** (Pete Mason): In addition to his report in the Annual Report document, Pete Mason clarified the membership of the committee and solicited help in planting the gardens this spring, now that Nora Miller has finished her service on the committee.

**Mission and Social Action Committee** (Corrine Erskine): Report presented in Annual Report document.

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

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

**Women of the Church**: Report presented in Annual Report document.

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

**Motion made** by Rachel Silver, seconded by Linda Jacobs, to accept the reports of all the church's boards and committees. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**6. Nominating Committee Report** (Amy Driscoll): Referring to the new roster of committees, Amy Driscoll noted a few additions since the printing of the Annual Report—Linda Jacobs would serve as Vice Chair of Council, Ike Jacobs would continue on the Memorial Gardens Committee, and both Jacobs would share a position on Christian Education. Barb Teeter volunteered from the floor to fill the vacant at-large position on Council, which was gratefully accepted.

**7. Election of Officers and Committees**

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

Biff Simpson, observing that there is currently no clear oversight of the church's role as charter organization for the Scouting program, recommended that this be addressed. Linda Jacobs affirmed our decades-long history of sponsoring the Scouts, and Wendell Smith suggested that the program might fall under the purview of Mission and Social Action. Rachel Silver, while acknowledging the importance of the question, suggested that it would be better decided in Church Council outside of Annual Meeting. **Motion made** by Rachel Silver, seconded by Valerie Nevel, to have Council determine the appropriate group for oversight of the Scouting program. **Motion passed unanimously.**

## 8. Old Business

None brought forward.

## 9. New Business

**A. Proposed Budget for 2017:** Steve Silver thanked the Trustees, Finance Committee, and the various program-area committees for help in preparing the budget. He also stated his preference that the pastor be less directly involved in budget preparations than he has been.

Steve pointed out a few specific items, such as raises for the Music Director and Church Administrator and an increased budget for Christian Education to accommodate summer musical camp. He also noted that unlike in previous years, all income and expenses were now represented in the same budget, including items such as the Diaconate and MSA accounts and programs such as the Open Door Ministry. Wendell Smith added that the Pastoral Relations Committee had, after due diligence, submitted recommendations for changes in the Pastor's compensation package. Valerie Nevel then explained endowment spending practices, stressing that any draw from principal is done responsibly.

**Motion made** by Biff Simpson, seconded by Ginger Smith, to accept the church's proposed budget for 2017. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**B. Proposed Amendment to By-laws:** After reading aloud the proposal to remove the responsibility for securing childcare from the Diaconate's scope of work, Amy Driscoll invited comments from the meeting. John Gilliatt asked for clarification about whether this duty would be assigned to the Personnel Subcommittee or Church Council, recalling discussion in Council that Personnel wouldn't necessarily take this on. It was noted that the proposed amendment sought only to remove this duty from the Diaconate, not to assign it explicitly to anyone else. Without the Diaconate clause, the childcare duty would default to Personnel.

**Motion made** by Corrine Erskine, seconded by Steve Teeter, to accept the proposed amendment to the church's by-laws. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Linda Jacobs next publicly recognized Brian Clancy and Henry Danaher for their hard work and help in sustaining the life of the congregation and the church's programs.

Steve Silver then reminded everyone that he would be taking his sabbatical for four months over the summer, beginning sometime between mid-May and mid-June. He has been discussing plans

in depth with the Diaconate, and he assured everyone that consistent pastoral leadership would be arranged during his absence. He expressed his deep gratitude to the congregation for this wonderful opportunity, noting how much support he's received during his preparations.

Brian Clancy noted that printed copies of the current version of the FCC By-laws were available to anyone upon request at any time.

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

11. Rev. Silver offered the **benediction**, again sharing his gratitude and joy for the many strengths and gifts of our congregation.

12. Meeting **adjourned** at 12:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian C. Clancy, *Clerk*

## PASTOR'S REPORT



In the middle of Broad Street in the City of Oxford, by Balliol College, embedded in the road, is a cross formed from paving stones. All around the cross is asphalt, but the cross itself is a remnant of an earlier time. Heedless of the memorial, cars and buses pass over it all day long, and it is easily missed. During the night however, when the traffic is done for the day, it is visible to one wandering in the road.

This curiosity, this relic, is a reminder of the Reformation that shook England and the Continent 500 years ago. It was on or near this spot that Hugh Latimer, Bishop of Worcester; Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London; and Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, were burned at the stake in 1555 and 1556 for their beliefs, Protestant martyrs to the cause. A nearby marker on the mall of Balliol College helpfully explains the significance of the cross in the road. Without the marker, one might well not know that on that spot, a great crisis had unfolded. A memorial would otherwise be an oddity.

Of all the things I saw in Oxford during my sabbatical, this cross may have had the most impact on me. What we remember and how we remember what has gone by tell us not only about our past, but about our present, and even our future. That cross may not mean much to the Oxonians of today, but the execution of Latimer, Ridley, and Cranmer made an impression on an earlier generation who thought that their deaths were worth remembering.

What do we remember? What is important to us as we consider our past? This question is especially pertinent as our church approaches its 250th anniversary. On the front of our building is a plaque recording some significant events in the history of this congregation: the formation of this church by six people, the calling of a minister, the erection of our present building, and more. Essentially, this is a list of milestones. But it doesn't give the reader a feel for the place. To do that, one needs to visit our Parish Hall. There, on the wall, hangs a huge mural depicting life in our congregation. Given by the Mason family, it shows fellowship, worship, our building, our common life together. It is in part through the plaque and the mural that future generations will remember what their predecessors did. All of this begs the question: what do we want people to remember about us?

Last summer, I had the opportunity to take a sabbatical after more than seven years of service to this community. The high point for me was my time at Christ Church, Oxford, where I had the opportunity to study the Reformation. I was the only Congregationalist there, and to be honest, I was a bit surprised by how few people knew our story. But upon further reflection, I should not have been. After all, how well do we know our story?

The story we take for granted is easily lost, something I was reminded of when I saw that cross in the road in England. We need to actively work to keep our story alive.

So, what would I tell people about First Congregational Church of Lebanon in its 249th year?

I see a healthy congregation, one where people listen to and care for one another. I see a faithful company of women and men who worship God and serve his people. I see a church that has opened

its doors to the community, especially for music. I see an energetic people, who were able to welcome guest pastors during my absence and to manage the affairs of the church smoothly. I see a church with finances that give us the freedom to responsibly pursue mission and ministry and not simply engage in managing declining resources. All of this is encouraging and cause for excitement.

But all is not perfect—it never is. I see a church with a median age that may not be as high as that of neighboring congregations, but is still higher than that of Lebanon overall. I would like to see more children, as kids and families are the future, our future. I would like to see more diversity, because that, too, is our future, though I am glad to say we have been taking strides in that direction. I would like to see more people, because, as Scripture says, we should not hide our light under a bushel.

What do you see, what would you like to see? This year, even more than in others, we will write our history. I hope and pray that you are excited about doing this. Your voice, your opinion matters. The story of First Congregational Church of Lebanon needs your contributions.

We have work to do in the year ahead. We need to tackle the problem of how we are organized and how we actually work; we need to identify and plan for a capital campaign; we need to agree on what kind of facility we need and can afford in order to do our ministry in the coming decades. This sounds like a lot, but our forebears faced similar questions and, guided by the Holy Spirit, made choices and built the church, both the building and community, that sustains and nourishes us.

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.

And thank you, too, to my colleagues: Brian Clancy, our Church Administrator, who works so hard, with such good humor and patience, serving the members of our church and the wider community; Henry Danaher, our Organist and Music Director, who brings dedication and passion to our worship and has built important ties to the Upper Valley music community; Marcia Corkins, our Church School Superintendent, who shares her love of learning and God with our young people in Sunday School and beyond; and Barb Teeter, our Sexton, who keeps our church neat with a welcome smile and lots of hugs. I would also like to express my appreciation to Heidi Hoskin, Kevin Schwartz, and, especially, Jo Shelnutt, for providing pastoral leadership during my time away.

Many feet have passed by that cross in Broad Street in Oxford: students, academics, tourists, the religious, and the atheist. Some have been aware of what transpired on that spot, others were ignorant. The generations have come and gone. So too with our church. We have offered a witness to the people of Lebanon and the Upper Valley for almost 250 years. With God's blessing, the example of Jesus Christ, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we will continue to do so with faith, with courage and with enthusiasm.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

## CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

Church Council started out the new year by authorizing the completion of the Sanctuary repainting project using funds provided by Virginia Hough's bequest.

At the Annual Meeting in February, the congregation resolved to re-assign oversight of our childcare program from the Diaconate to Council. While Ashley Oronte has been very dependable, capable, and consistent as our childcare assistant on Sunday mornings, finding additional staff has been a challenge for some time now. Council advertised and contacted Lebanon High School and Hartford Vocational School for help, but so far we have received no offers.

FCC hired the Rev. Jo Shelnett to provide worship leadership and pastoral care responsibilities while Steve Silver was away on his sabbatical last summer. Council also voted to compensate both her and Henry Danaher for their leadership of the Musical Drama Camp in August.

Jon Scott has been looking into a way for congregation members to make financial contributions online. We are hoping that this will make it easier for those who are away for prolonged periods to continue making contributions and pledge payments.

Treasurer Terry Ellison has looked into arranging a credit card for church purchases, but he has found that lenders require a longer, more thoroughly documented audit history than FCC can currently provide.

Respectfully submitted,

Corrine Erskine, *Chair*

## CLERK'S REPORT

During 2017 four people joined the church as covenant members, and three members died; no one transferred or withdrew membership. With these changes, we begin 2018 with 209 members.

### **New Members Received:**

Linda and Bob Gerlach, joined 2/26/2017.

Susan Pratt, joined 2/26/2017.

Nancy Ryder, joined by transfer of membership from First Congregational Church, Wellfleet (MA), 2/5/17, and from First Congregational Church, Chatham (MA), 2/10/17.

### **Members Who Died:**

Glenwyn P. Stewart, d. 3/23/2017.

Donald S. Rowell, d. 4/9/2017.

Marilyn G. Mason, d. 8/21/2017.

### **Members Who Transferred:**

*(None)*

### **Members Who Withdrew:**

*(None)*

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

Caleb A. Mason, 4/9/2017 at FCC.

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

*Members of the Church:*

Donald S. Rowell, d. 4/9/2017, memorial service 4/15/2017 at FCC.

Glenwyn P. Stewart, d. 3/23/2017, graveside service 4/29/2017 at Glenwood Cemetery, Lebanon, NH.

*Friends of the Church:*

Janice S. Russell, d. 12/26/2016, memorial service 1/9/2017 at Ricker Funeral Home, Lebanon, NH.

Carleen M. Pollard, d. 1/16/2017, memorial service 1/25/2017 at Ricker Funeral Home, Lebanon, NH.

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

*Members of the Church:*

Helen M. Wallace, d. 7/7/2016, memorial service 6/24/2017 at FCC Memorial Garden.

Marilyn G. Mason, d. 8/21/2017, memorial service 8/26/2017 at FCC.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian C. Clancy, *Clerk*

## AUDITOR'S REPORT

[ *\*Not available in this edition. For questions or additional information, please contact First Congregational Church directly at 603-448-4281 or church@fcclb.org.\** ]

TREASURER and FINANCE COMMITTEE

Report for the year January 1 to December 31, 2017 / Proposed Budget for 2018

[ *\*Not available in this edition. For questions or additional information, please contact First Congregational Church directly at 603-448-4281 or church@fcclb.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. The Board has traditionally met on the fourth Sunday of the month. For the 2017 term, our first meeting was held in March, with two additional monthly meetings throughout the year. All meeting agendas and meeting minutes are available in written or digital form.

Following is a summary list of our work this year:

### *Spring Clean-up (May 14):*

- Leaf raking, basement paint cabinet cleanout, circuit-panel breaker assignment check, interior window cleaning

### *Maintenance and Repairs Completed:*

- Parish Hall and Kitchen—ceiling lamps replaced with brighter LED bulbs, large bathroom hot-water supply corrected, ovens cleaned and signage posted, refrigerator leveled and re-located, fluorescent ceiling fixtures repaired, basement glider rockers and tables repaired
- Sanctuary—hymn-board numbers replaced, pews spot-painted, bell rope replaced, balcony sconces re-installed and area cleaned up
- Grounds—lawn fertilized, trees and bushes trimmed, front portico deck repaired

### *Finished Projects:*

- Sanctuary walls and trim painted
- Energy audit conducted
- Parish Hall floor refinished
- Parsonage porch lattice replaced and steps re-painted
- Circuit panels checked and re-labeled
- Handicap ramp repaired and re-painted
- AED orientation training offered

### *Unfinished Projects:*

- Altar railings
- Front walk repair and sealing
- Evaluation of Parsonage sewer obstruction
- Parsonage chimney flue lining

### *Two-year plan components:*

- Church insulation—interior rooms, Sanctuary ceiling and basement

- Continued Sanctuary improvements—floor re-finishing, pew cushion and carpet replacement
- Kitchen remodeling

The chair wishes to thank all the committee members, as well as Brian Clancy and Steve Silver for all their support given.

Respectfully submitted,

John Gilliatt, *Chair*

Walter Scott, *Vice Chair and Secretary*

Wayne Braley

Brandon Mason

Nan Parsons

Wendell Smith

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT**

For the year ended December 31, 2017

[ *\*Not available in this edition. For questions or additional information, please contact First Congregational Church directly at 603-448-4281 or church@fcclb.org.\** ]

## DIACONATE REPORT

As I write the Diaconate report early in January, we are experiencing extremely cold temperatures, but the Deacons hope the projects that we have been involved with are warmly received by the members of our congregation and our community.

In addition to our ongoing responsibilities for serving monthly communion, encouraging and dispensing funds for our Open Door Ministry, and being involved with the United Valley Interfaith Project (UVIP)—including our own Kathy Beckett as FCC’s Micah recipient—we have been involved in supporting members of our congregation through prayers, cards, phone calls, visits, and the newly created Prayer Shawl Ministry. Various deacons continue to work toward a more fulfilling and robust prayer ministry as well. We have worked on transmitters and listening devices for the congregation, and we continue to work to solve Sanctuary sound system problems which arise too frequently. The church has held family movie nights and supported the important Cub Scout and Boy Scout programs affiliated with our church.

During Rev. Steve Silver’s sabbatical, the Deacons ably helped to cover worship leadership, supporting the ministerial skills of Heidi Hoskin, Kevin Schwartz, and Jo Shelnutt. Jo also mentored our student-in-discernment, John Torrey. There was a Farewell and Commissioning ceremony in June for Mark Rowell, as the Rowells moved on to their new church position in Pennsylvania. The Deacons were involved in Praise in the Park and a worship exchange with the West Lebanon Congregational Church. Deacons also took turns writing the Pastoral Perspective column for the newsletter each month while Steve was away.

We have usually been able to have our desired complement of twelve deacons, with some rotating off and then returning when their personal time commitments allowed. Barbara Teeter and Alyson Danyew-Ellison represent the Diaconate and FCC on the board of the Parish/Community Nurse program, sponsored by our church. Barb Jones and Susan Pratt have been trained in UVIP’s Aging with Dignity program, and they plan to participate in presenting the program jointly with some other churches. The Deacons also have worked to make the afternoon services that we conduct at Genesis more centered on what works best with the population that we serve there. Work has been done on the music and the message we convey.

Several members of the Diaconate have been involved individually with community and social justice matters, including race and racism, open-and-affirming issues, car-title lending, immigration matters, No Pipeline Here, the Fight for \$15, Black Lives Matter, and a program to raise active shooter awareness. We look forward to continuing these and other new objectives this year.

Respectfully submitted,

|                                   |                                 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Barbara Jones, <i>Chair</i>       | Kathy Beckett, <i>Secretary</i> |
| Barbara Teeter, <i>Vice-Chair</i> | Terry Ellison, <i>Treasurer</i> |
| Alyson Danyew-Ellison             | Jon Scott                       |
| Edward (Larry) Doyle              | Biff Simpson                    |
| Susan Montmagny                   | Ginger Smith                    |
| Susan Pratt                       | Steve Teeter                    |
| Hilary Ryder                      |                                 |

## DIACONATE TREASURER'S REPORT

[ *\*Not available in this edition. For questions or additional information, please contact First Congregational Church directly at 603-448-4281 or church@fcclb.org.\** ]

## CHURCH SCHOOL AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

Our 2016-17 Church School year began with Kick-off Sunday in September. The children and our church family enjoyed pizza, veggies, and popsicles, followed by a bouncy house and other activities on the front lawn. The year's Church School theme was "How the Bible Came to Be."

Christian Education and the children prepared two Community Dinners, in April and October. The children helped set up and serve the meal.

The Church School's "Lenten Lunch Bag Collection" allowed the children to donate money to a school in San Jose Villanueva, El Salvador, and to provide David's House with much-needed supplies. The children helped with the delivery to David's House and enjoyed a tour of this special home.

For the Christmas Eve Family Service, the children participated in a Christmas pageant based on a book by Tomie de Paola. On Easter Sunday, the children enjoyed an Easter Egg Hunt.

In June, on Children's Day, the children were participants in the service as ushers, greeters, readers, and musicians and singers. Following the service, they presented their "How the Bible Came to Be" projects. They also elected to purchase a goat for Heifer International with money from their weekly offering collection.

In August Christian Ed sponsored our second week-long Musical Drama Camp, led by the Rev. Jo Shelnett and featuring *Rescue in the Night: The Story of Daniel in the Lion's Den*. The children enjoyed music, daily lessons, and projects, followed by a performance and family barbecue for everyone on the last day of the week.

Many thanks, as always, to our special church family for their love and support.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Corkins, *Superintendent of Church School*

Laurie Braley

Elizabeth Duvall

Ike Jacobs

Linda Jacobs

Nicole Mason

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.

On August 26, 2017, the ashes of Marilyn G. Mason, who passed away on August 21, were interred in the family's chosen plot in front of the stone, following a memorial service in the Sanctuary. Engraving on the stone was completed.

In addition to Marilyn Mason, the stone is engraved with the names and birth/death years of these other deceased members of our church: Leif and Beryl Thorsrud, Frank and Helen 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, whether or not both are deceased.)

Committee members maintain the gardens and plant flowers in the garden each spring. Alyson Danyew-Ellison, who has replaced Nora Miller on the committee, generously did the planting work for both gardens in 2017.

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*  
Alyson Danyew-Ellison  
Ike Jacobs  
Brandon Mason

## MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Mission and Social Action Committee had a fairly quiet year. We started out the year by deciding that when the Upper Valley Haven purchases a new residential building in Lebanon, as is hoped, we would get involved and help in whatever way they need us.

We also decided that we would work with other churches and UVIP to develop an alternative lending program, as a fair resource to rival the title-loan business. We had talks with Mascoma Bank, but the project has been put on hold for now, due to its complicated nature and other existing efforts in this direction.

We have kept in touch with Ed Warren about Epilogos Charities, but we don't currently have any plans to go to El Salvador. We will still donate a share of the children's Lent collection to Epilogos, to support the school in San Jose Villanueva.

Bike & Build returned in June with 36 participants. We provided them two dinners and one breakfast. Biff Simpson's improv-comedy team entertained them one night, which the group really seemed to enjoy. Hopefully Biff might have his comedy troupe return again next year.

The annual CROP Walk in early October once again brought the community into our church for a time of lunch and fellowship following the walk itself. Participation in the walk has declined over the years, as several similar benefit events (walks, runs, and rides) have developed in the area.

Barb Jones and Sue Pratt took a training course to lead UVIP's "Aging with Dignity" curriculum. It is hoped that Barb and Sue will be able to lead a class at some point in 2018.

Respectfully submitted,

Corrine Erskine, *Chair*

Ron Bailey

Kathy Beckett

Barbara Laro

Jon Scott

Wendell Smith

## MUSIC COMMITTEE REPORT

The Music Committee, which unfortunately had only three members in 2017, did not meet during the year. Many people, however—committee members and others—worked hard to support and promote the music ministry at First Congregational Church.

Music Director Henry Danaher has sustained his tireless, expansive efforts to bring music to FCC, both in worship and beyond. He continues to offer his guidance and good humor to our choir, a vibrant, active group that proudly helps to lead worship with 8-10 singers each week. In addition, Henry reports that more than 30 distinct instrumentalists, vocalists, and ensembles provided special music on 37 of 54 Sundays in 2017, in a range from classical to contemporary and everything in between. The appearance of so many guest musicians was made possible primarily by a generous anonymous gift for our music ministry, and with it Henry has been able to enhance FCC's reputation for the support and advocacy of music throughout the Upper Valley. In particular, Henry highlights a collaboration during Advent with Linda Radtke (alto and host of VPR's weekly Choral Hour), a jazz band accompanying our regular choir, and four summer Sundays featuring young soloists from Opera North. Henry also worked with his colleague Hal Sheeler to provide three more Open Sing events at FCC, each drawing between 35 and 60 singers from across the Upper Valley.

Music at the Meetinghouse series again made our church one of the busiest concert venues in the Upper Valley during 2017. We hosted more than 30 events in the series, as well as several student recitals. Classicopia provided another abundant selection of music and musicians in many concerts throughout the year. The Upper Valley Music Center regularly used our Sanctuary for concerts, master classes, and recitals, and in September UVMC moved into its new home next door on South Park Street, further strengthening our relationship. Cantabile Women's Chorus gave its first concert here in June, intending to make FCC one of its regular venues twice a year. And in the fall the Bel Canto Chamber Singers returned to FCC for weekly rehearsals and two concerts in December. All of these performers and their audiences gratefully continue to appreciate both our Sanctuary and our efforts to support musical culture in the area.

The fall also brought us LOH on Location, an exciting new partnership with the Lebanon Opera House that uses our Sanctuary as a smaller, alternative venue for performers booked by LOH, with a share of proceeds going to FCC. We are grateful to FCC member Jon Scott, who serves on the LOH board, for help in facilitating this arrangement. The first two shows in the series, featuring violinist Johnny Gandelsman and the Eric Mintel Jazz Quartet, were a great success, filling the Sanctuary with enthusiastic concertgoers—many no doubt visiting our church for the first time. We're excited to build FCC's reputation in Upper Valley musical life with more LOH on Location events in the future.

Music surely has enhanced both our worship life and our community presence. We are grateful to the congregation for supporting FCC's thriving music ministry.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Clancy, *Chair*

Henry Danaher, *Music Director (ex-officio)*

Meghan Davis

Gail Wasson

## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

This year's report will convey only one small but important part of the stewardship picture at FCC. We define, value and measure our stewardship in many ways. The financial support we provide to the church each year and the financial support we pledge allow us to pay our church bills and fund a critical part of the mission and ministry of this church. Without the immeasurable value of the time and talent that are faithfully donated by many of the same people, our church might be nothing but a building.

Nevertheless, the money part gets built into our budget, and it can be the easiest thing to measure and report on. That is the focus for this year's report, using the best numbers available as of this writing.

For 2017, members of our congregation pledged \$52,508, toward which total those individuals and families contributed \$50,717. But we received over \$88,500 overall in unrestricted giving, primarily through offerings made during worship but also through separate contributions and other means. This means that the church received more than \$37,000 in 2017 from individuals and families who had made no formal pledge.

In addition, the church received \$5,409 in offerings for our Open Door Ministry, which provides food and fuel assistance for people in need in our community. These were mainly collected as special offerings on Communion Sundays, but some made contributions directly to the Open Door Ministry outside of communion collections.

We collected \$5,955 in special offerings for purposes beyond FCC, including the four United Church of Christ sponsored offerings, our own Blanket Sunday and Shelter Sunday collections, various ecumenical services, and the Church School's Lenten Lunch Bag and Heifer Project offerings.

Finally, the church received over \$8,100 in special designated gifts, most notably gifts received in support of the church's music ministry and toward the purchase of illustrated children's bibles for distribution via our pews.

On top of all of the above, the church continues to benefit from gifts made by bequest as part of legacy plans made by loyal members over the year, including some received during 2017. These are detailed elsewhere in this annual report.

During 2018, the Stewardship Committee plans to work with a larger ad hoc group to plan for a possible fundraising and capital campaign on the occasion of our congregation's upcoming 250th anniversary. As part of that initiative we hope to conduct a thorough assessment of long-term future needs, looking for ways our dollars can be combined with our offerings of time and talent to carry our mission and ministry forward into the next 250 years of service in God's name.

We will also seek to increase the number of regular attendees and others who are willing to share information about the support they will provide in the form of our annual stewardship pledges. There's no question we are a blessed, faithful, and generous congregation. The faithful commitments shared with the church through our pledging are critical tools for effective stewardship of those blessings. The church is able to receive your 2018 pledge commitments at any time. If you haven't

already done so, please complete a pledge form, which will be available at Annual Meeting or from the church office.

As of this writing, the church has received 2018 pledges totaling slightly over \$62,000. We hope and expect that our final tally of pledges will increase, as additional pledges come in. As in past years, total collections and offerings can be expected to exceed pledged amounts in total.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Scott, *Chair*

Steve Teeter

## WOMEN OF THE CHURCH REPORT

The Women of the Church had only one activity this year. Having collected an array of decorative items during the year, from numerous members of the congregation, we organized and ran a “Nearly New” Christmas Sale on Saturday, October 27. The sale generated a net profit of around \$350, which will be given to a charity to be determined. The remaining, unsold items were given to the Lebanon United Methodist Church for their annual Christmas Bazaar.

The group also organized and served two Community Dinners during the year, in May and September, as it has for several years.

Respectfully submitted,  
Corrine Erskine, *Acting Chair*

## WOMEN OF THE CHURCH, TREASURER'S REPORT

[ *\*Not available in this edition. For questions or additional information, please contact First Congregational Church directly at 603-448-4281 or church@fcclb.org.\** ]

## CHURCH HISTORY

It's with a heavy heart that I start this history of 2017. On December 29, 2016, Lebanon's First Baptist church burned down. The whole community reached out to its members, and we hope that the past year and the new year to come bring healing and a new place of worship.

Our first service of the new year was led by members of the Diaconate. Job well done. We again worshiped in the Parish Hall for the winter. On January 15 in worship we were treated to music by the North Country Chordsmen. On the 28th Henry Danaher and Meghan Davis gave a concert to benefit Syrian refugee relief, and the following day the Apple Hill String Quartet gave a concert for the Upper Valley Music Center.

February brought back Souper Bowl Sunday, for which the collection was divided among Headrest, Listen, and the Haven. Boys from Troop 279 participated in worship on Scout Sunday, February 5. A family Movie Night on the 11th featured *ET*. Our Annual Meeting was postponed a week because of a major snowstorm, but a few people braved the weather to be at church. After the rescheduled meeting on February 19, the FCC "Outing Club" hosted another Fire and Ice event at Ron Bailey's house. A number of members snowshoed through fields to the Blow-Me-Down-Brook and back to Ron's house for cocoa. A week later on the 26th, new members were received—a big welcome to Bob and Linda Gerlach, Sue Pratt, Nancy Ryder, Harriet Oman, and Nancy Ulf.

On Ash Wednesday at the beginning of March, Steve provided "Ashes to Go" again on the front walk, and an ecumenical service was held that night. The Sunday School children distributed their Lenten Lunch Bags, with hopes for a big collection for David's House and the school in San Jose Villanueva! FCC also hosted three concerts this month, one of which was a St. Patrick's Day program, along with another of Henry Danaher's Open Sing events.

On the first Sunday of April we celebrated our return to the Sanctuary with a rededication ceremony of our newly repainted worship space. After the service, everyone enjoyed cake! Another movie night on the following weekend featured *Milo and Otis*. After Palm Sunday on April 9, we observed Maundy Thursday and Good Friday with services at the church. On Easter morning we had the sunrise service, followed by a breakfast put on by the Men's Fellowship and our festival worship service at 10.

We hosted two more concerts in April, including the first of several Classicopia spring concerts and a performance by Meghan Davis and Victoria Nooe. The annual Senior Luncheon was held on April 27, with a lovely luncheon of chicken pot pie and a serenade from the Lebanon High School Superlatives. We served about 24 seniors. Then on the 30th, our worship service included the commissioning of new Diaconate members Terry and Alyson Ellison and Sue Pratt.

The second Sunday in May was Steve's last before he started his sabbatical. We wished him "farewell" with cake during coffee hour. Steve then led a forum on prayer, attended by about 10 people. It was hoped that feedback would help the Diaconate proceed with a new plan for Called to Care. Steve also did a Blessing of the Animals service that afternoon. During the first few weeks of Steve's sabbatical we arranged to have visiting preachers Kevin Schwartz and Heidi Hoskin lead services. Jo Shelnuitt started her term as Sabbatical Minister on June 18, leading worship through the summer until Steve's return in September.

On May 20 the Christian Education Committee hosted a special treat for the young and young-at-heart. Lindsay Aucella and her “Puppet Pals” performed their magic for a handful of adults and children. Ron Bailey also led another Outing Club hike, this time to the historic Tipping Rock site.

June was the month for music at our church. We had concerts by the Cantable Women’s Chorus, Harmony Night with Dan Signor, and another Open Sing with Henry and Hal Sheeler. Will Ögmundson came back for a concert, and the Upper Valley Music Center offered a faculty concert. Also in June Family Movie Night made another appearance. They decided to show *The Black Stallion*.

On June 11 the children presented Ed Warren with a check for \$350 to be used by Epilogos for school scholarships in San Jose Villanueva, El Salvador. A week later on June 18, Jo Shelnutt’s first Sunday as our Sabbatical Minister, was Children’s Sunday. Once again, the children did an amazing job with their presentation. Congratulations to Marcia Corkins for all the work she does.

On that same Sunday we had a commissioning and laying on of hands for Mark and Marty Rowell, who left us soon after to start Mark’s new pastoral position in Pennsylvania. On June 24 Jo Shelnutt led a committal service in the Memorial Garden for Helen Wallace.

Bike & Build descended upon us on June 19. We treated them to two suppers and one breakfast. We served 35 bikers this year. What a great group of young adults.

July was a relatively quiet month. We had Praise in the Park on the 23rd, a beautiful day to enjoy with our neighbors from the Methodist Church. Rev. Jo Shelnutt gave the children’s moment (for which she used a wheelbarrow full of rocks to illustrate an Old Testament story), and the Rev. Becca Girrell from the Methodist Church gave the sermon. About 70 people attended. We also enjoyed singing from Elisabeth Slaten from Opera North.

We celebrated Communion Sunday in August with the West Lebanon Congregational Church, the first Sunday of our annual Pulpit Exchange. Jeff Scott presided over the service. The Men’s group served breakfast to everyone and Christian Education provided goodies for coffee hour. The next Sunday we went to their church, where Jo Shelnutt presided.

On the 20th we were treated to music during the service by Leslie Stroud on flute, accompanied by our own Henry Danaher. So beautiful. We also listened to John Torrey, our student in discernment, who gave his first of two sermons. Well done!

August 21 was the first day of Musical Drama Camp. The theme for this year’s camp was “Daniel in the Lion’s Den.” Jo Shelnutt, Marcia Corkins, and Henry Danaher did an outstanding job with the fourteen children who attended. On Friday, they gave their performance of *Rescue in the Night*, followed by a cookout. A good time was had by all.

The next day, August 26, was a somber one for our congregation. We said goodbye to a wonderful woman and mainstay of our church, Marilyn Mason, who had passed away on the 21st. After a beautiful service, her remains were interred in our Memorial Garden, followed by a reception for many friends and family.

During the last week of August the Parish Hall floor was refinished—it looks marvelous! September 3 was John Torrey’s last Sunday before returning to Andover Newton for his final year of Seminary. We gave him a send-off with his promise to come back to visit on his school break.

The following Sunday we had to say goodbye to Jo Shelnutt. She did a marvelous job as our pastor during Steve's absence, and we will all miss her. Continuing as a member of our congregation, she will hopefully join us for worship occasionally and lend her beautiful voice to our choir.

Kick-Off Sunday was September 17, Steve's first Sunday back from sabbatical. The theme for this year's Church School is "Bible Beliefs," and the children will be examining their beliefs as rooted in Bible stories this year. Following the service, we had a bounce house and pizza and ice cream!

The annual retreat at Horton Center took place on September 22-24. Despite another beautiful fall weekend, only a handful from FCC attended, joining larger groups from Meriden and Hooksett.

October started out with Classicopia's second "Jewish Jazz" concert. The annual CROP Walk was held on the 8th. We hosted the lunch again this year—it seems that some people walk just to get some of Jim Oronte's sausage soup!

After church on the 15th, Steve treated us to a slide show of his sabbatical. His account was very informative and interesting, but we found out that he has a problem passing up a good bookstore!

On October 28 the Women of the Church held their "Nearly New" Christmas Sale, offering donations from the congregation. Although attendance was low, many people helped out and we did have fun. Remaining items from the sale went to the Methodist Church for their bazaar.

The following day in worship we observed the 500th anniversary of the start of the Reformation, with appropriate music and a special sermon. A couple weeks later on November 12, Steve shared a presentation on the Reformation, which he borrowed from a professor he studied with in Oxford while on sabbatical.

The 2017 UVIP Micah Awards were presented in Claremont on the afternoon of November 12, and FCC proudly recognized Kathy Beckett as our "Micah Hero" this year. A week later, after worship on Stewardship Sunday, the Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Association held its annual meeting here at FCC. The following day we hosted an Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service for our community.

In November we also inaugurated an exciting partnership with the Lebanon Opera House, "LOH on Location." The Opera House booked and sold tickets for a solo performance in our Sanctuary on November 17 by virtuoso violinist Johnny Gandelsman. Two weeks later LOH brought us a holiday program with the Eric Mintel Jazz Quartet. Both concerts were very well attended, and we look forward to continuing that success in future LOH on Location events.

Advent started on December 3. The Bel Canto Chamber Singers treated us to music during worship and then we decorated the church for the Christmas season. The following weekend Bel Canto gave two performances at FCC, which were well attended despite snow the night of their first show.

After worship on December 10, a good-sized group went caroling out in the community to Genesis, Harvest Hill, and Lebanon Towers. The following weekend was our annual Christmas party at the Parsonage. About 20 church members met to sing Christmas songs and sample some delicious food. I have to say, we sounded pretty good! Chip accompanied us for some of the songs on his cello. That evening, many enjoyed UVMC's popular *Messiah* Sing in our Sanctuary.

The fourth Sunday of Advent was December 24 (Christmas Eve), making for a very busy day. After our regular Advent service in the morning, Nan Parsons organized the Community Dinner at an

earlier time, 12:00 noon. Everyone who attended received a gift and a great meal. That evening we had the Family Service, which as usual highlighted the children in the Christmas pageant. Then the 8:00 service was Lessons and Carols. The 11:00 pm service was sparsely attended but beautiful, ending with the usual candlelight singing of Silent Night. Thanks to Steve and choir members for working so hard this day to make everything meaningful.

Over a week of winter temperatures in the single digits rounded out the year for us. It was a little chilly in the Sanctuary, so we all huddled up front with cups of coffee to keep us a little warmer.

Happy New Year, everyone!

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 membership as specified in the By-laws; those marked *Open* are available but not required. (Required membership or membership ranges are shown in parentheses.)

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| *MODERATOR   | Amy Driscoll    |
| *CLERK   | Brian Clancy    |
| *TREASURER   | Terry Ellison   |
| *ASSISTANT TREASURER   | <i>Vacant</i>   |
| *HISTORIAN   | Corrine Erskine |
| *AUDITOR   | <i>Vacant</i>   |
| *CHURCH SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT<br>(Term: July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019) | Marcia Corkins  |

### CHURCH COUNCIL

|                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| *CHAIR           | Corrine Erskine |
| *VICE CHAIR      | Linda Jacobs    |
| *MEMBER-AT-LARGE | Linda Oronte    |
| *MEMBER-AT-LARGE | Barbara Teeter  |

### BOARD OF GOVERNORS (4-9)

|               |      |
|---------------|------|
| Walter Scott  | 2021 |
| <i>Open</i>   | 2021 |
| <i>Open</i>   | 2021 |
| Nancy Parsons | 2020 |
| <i>Open</i>   | 2020 |
| <i>Open</i>   | 2020 |
| John Gilliatt | 2019 |
| Brandon Mason | 2019 |
| Wendell Smith | 2019 |

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES (3)

|                |      |
|----------------|------|
| Barry Schuster | 2021 |
| Valerie Nevel  | 2020 |
| Wendell Smith  | 2019 |

### FINANCE COMMITTEE (5)

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

### DIACONATE (12)

|                       |      |
|-----------------------|------|
| Edward L. Doyle       | 2021 |
| Philip Hammond        | 2021 |
| Denise Moriearty      | 2021 |
| Biff Simpson          | 2021 |
| Alyson Danyew-Ellison | 2020 |
| Barbara Jones         | 2020 |
| Susan Pratt           | 2020 |
| Ginger Smith          | 2020 |
| Kathy Beckett         | 2019 |
| Susan Montmagny       | 2019 |
| Barbara Teeter        | 2019 |
| Steve Teeter          | 2019 |

### PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE (4)

|   |      |
|---|------|
| *Church Council Chair                     | 2019 |
| *Diaconate Chair ( <i>or designate</i> )  | 2019 |
| *Bd of Govs Chair ( <i>or designate</i> ) | 2019 |
| *Member Finance Comm                      | 2019 |

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE (4-6)

|                  |      |
|------------------|------|
| Ike Jacobs       | 2021 |
| Linda Jacobs     | 2021 |
| Laurie Braley    | 2020 |
| <i>Open</i>      | 2020 |
| Elizabeth Duvall | 2019 |
| Nicole Mason     | 2019 |

MEMORIAL GARDENS COMMITTEE (3)

|               |      |
|---------------|------|
| Ike Jacobs    | 2021 |
| C. Pete Mason | 2020 |
| Brandon Mason | 2019 |

MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION  
COMMITTEE (6-8)

|               |      |
|---------------|------|
| Ron Bailey    | 2021 |
| Wendell Smith | 2021 |
| Laurel Stavis | 2021 |
| Linda Jacobs  | 2020 |
| Jon Scott     | 2020 |
| Kathy Beckett | 2019 |
| Barbara Laro  | 2019 |
| <i>Open</i>   | 2019 |

MUSIC COMMITTEE (4-6)

|               |      |
|---------------|------|
| <i>Vacant</i> | 2021 |
| <i>Open</i>   | 2021 |
| Meghan Davis  | 2020 |
| Gail Wasson   | 2020 |
| Brian Clancy  | 2019 |
| <i>Open</i>   | 2019 |

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE (4-6)

|               |      |
|---------------|------|
| Steve Teeter  | 2021 |
| <i>Vacant</i> | 2021 |
| <i>Vacant</i> | 2020 |
| <i>Open</i>   | 2020 |
| Jon Scott     | 2019 |
| <i>Open</i>   | 2019 |

NOMINATING COMMITTEE (3)

|               |      |
|---------------|------|
| <i>Vacant</i> | 2021 |
| Barbara Jones | 2020 |
| Amy Driscoll  | 2019 |

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE (5)

|                                   |      |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| Nan Parsons (At-Large)            | 2020 |
| Wendell Smith (Member Bd of Govs) | 2020 |
| *Moderator (A. Driscoll)          | 2019 |
| *Diaconate Chair                  | 2019 |
| *Other Member Diaconate           | 2019 |

NHC-UCC DELEGATES (4)

|                 |      |
|-----------------|------|
| * <i>Vacant</i> | 2019 |

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Driscoll, *Chair*  
Barbara Jones  
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

### Proposed Resolution to Endorse the NH Immigrant Solidarity Network

The Mission and Social Action Committee moves that First Congregational Church of Lebanon endorse and participate in the work of the New Hampshire Immigrant Solidarity Network, as described in this statement from the NHISN:

*“E pluribus unum. Out of many, one.*

“This is a core statement of our identity as a nation and speaks of one of the fundamental ideals of who we are as a people; that we as a nation of immigrants seeking a better life come together and work together to forge out of our diversity and shared humanity a sense of common purpose to be a beacon of light and hope for the rest of the world. This treasured principle is anchored in our shared commitment to loving our neighbor and offering hospitality to the stranger. This is what has made our nation great. This is our strength; this is the very fabric of who we are.

“Rooted in our heritage, grounded in the fundamental precepts of our faith and practice, we come together to place ourselves in reverence before the spirit seeking assistance as we bear witness to stand in solidarity with all immigrants, with people of all color, documented and undocumented. The urgency of this moment of our nation’s history calls us, compels us to stand against the unconscionable acts of deportation by Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) and the immoral expressions of racism that are currently tearing families apart and seeking to fragment and divide us as a nation.

“Therefore, we the undersigned members of the New Hampshire faith community place ourselves in solidarity with our immigrant neighbors, and join with other people of faith and practice, of all traditions, in opposing the separation of families and the tearing apart of the fabric of our community.

“Therefore, we the undersigned faith community endorse the objectives, strategies, and tactics of the New Hampshire Immigrant Solidarity Network. We hereby pledge our faith, our time, our energy, our prayers, and our resources to the Network. We will do everything in our power, along with people of conscience and good will throughout our state, to provide support, accompaniment, advocacy, and/or sanctuary in solidarity with our immigrant friends and neighbors.”