



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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The "Pastoral" Perspective

Editor's Note: The Rev. Steve Silver is on sabbatical until mid-September 2017. While he is away, four of our Deacons have volunteered to write this feature. We're grateful this month to **Kathy Beckett** for offering her perspective.

The celebration of the signing of our Declaration of Independence has taken on additional meaning for me since a particular Fourth of July parade in 2013. On that day, I was honored to march with about 200 immigrants who proclaimed Jefferson's words that they "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Thousands of years before those words were written, the people of Israel affirmed that our Creator not only endowed us with life but exhorted us to *choose* life by "loving the Lord, your God, heeding his voice, and holding fast to him (Deut 30:20a)." Jews, Christians, and Muslims are united in their acceptance of this ancient, sacred text.

Loving God and holding fast to him seem clear. But how do we know that we are heeding God's voice? An online Jesuit meditation retreat tells us that it is "when we pay attention to what we've heard God say in our own hearts..."¹

As I reflect on the lives of my immigrant friends, it is clear that their decisions to choose life truly were the result of attention to God speaking in their "own hearts." One of these friends, an indigenous Mayan from Guatemala, fled military service when his heart rebelled against killing his own people. Other friends, a family with three sons, knew in their hearts that God would want them to be safe from the gang violence of their homeland and that one son, who suffered from serious breathing difficulties, deserved proper medical care. There are many stories like these among those who seek refuge in this country.

One such story is that of Heval Kelli, a Muslim Kurd. His family fled Syria after his father, an attorney, had been beaten and imprisoned by Syrian government forces. Heval was 11 years old when they left. Years later the family was granted permanent asylum in the U. S. and settled in Clarkston, GA, just two weeks before September 11, 2001. After the attack the family hid in their apartment for two days, fearing reactions

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SUNDAY SERVICE

PRAISE IN THE PARK!

Sunday, July 23, 10:00 am, Colburn Park

Plan to join us on the Lebanon Green for this annual ecumenical service with the Lebanon and White River Junction United Methodist Churches. The Rev. Becca Girrell will preach, and we'll enjoy fellowship and refreshments together afterward. (Our Sanctuary will serve as the rain location.) **The offering and a collection of non-perishable foods will benefit the food pantry at the UPPER VALLEY HAVEN.**

Worship Transportation

A Congregational Service

Some members of our congregation have difficulty getting to Sunday worship on their own. Many others of us could easily offer them rides. We'd like to get these two groups together!

If you need assistance getting to church on Sunday mornings, or if you're willing to give a ride to someone else who does, please contact the Church Administrator.

Our congregational life will be all the richer for this small but vital ministry!

COMMUNITY DINNER

Sunday, July 23, 5:00 pm

Leaders: GLORIA AND PHIL HAMMOND

Thanks to **first-time leaders Gloria and Phil Hammond** for leading this month's dinner! Please consider lending the Hammonds a hand to provide this vital service to our neighbors.

Never helped out at Community Dinner before? Make THIS your month!

Look for sign-ups in the Parish Hall.

Participate in Worship!

Serve as a Liturgist or Greeter/Usher

Ever wonder how your friends got to hand out bulletins on Sunday morning? Or deliver the call to worship and read scripture? Or walk gracefully from pew to pew to collect the offering?

It's easy—we asked, and they said yes.

No experience or training is required for these important roles in worship!

If you'd like to serve as either a liturgist or a greeter/usher, contact the church office.

Your congregation will thank you!

Worship Exchange with West Lebanon UCC

Sundays, August 6 and 13, 10:00 am

**** Congregational Breakfast at 8:30 am ****

On the first two Sundays of August, we will again share worship with West Lebanon Congregational Church. We'll all gather at FCC on August 6, with the Rev. Jeff Scott preaching; communion will also be served. The following Sunday at WLCC, the Rev. Jo Shelnutt will preach.

* * *

ATTENTION MEN'S FELLOWSHIP!

The WLCC men's group has offered to serve everyone a congregational breakfast at 8:30 am on August 13. **We would like to do the same on August 6, so please contact the church office if you're willing to cook, serve, or otherwise contribute. Thanks!**

Queued for Coffee Hour

July—Church Council

August—Christian Education Committee

September—Diaconate

JULY 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25 10a Worship No Board of Governors 5p Community Dinner	26 7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	27 7p Boy Scouts	28 6p UVPRN	29 12p/7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	30 12:30p UVMC Summer Camp Recital	1 No Men's Breakfast
2 10a Worship (Communion) No MSA 4p Mairzy Doats Duo: Songs from the Homefront	3 7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	4 7p Boy Scouts	5 6p UVPRN No Diaconate	6 12p/7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	7	8
9 10a Worship 3p Durufle Requiem rehearsal	10 7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	11 7p Boy Scouts	12 8a-4p NH-WIC 1p UVIP Staff Meeting 6p UVPRN No Christian Ed Committee	13 12p/7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert 1p UVIP Senior Stories Meeting No G-O-S Assn CoCM	14	15
16 10a Worship	17 7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	18 No Church Council 7p Boy Scouts/ Troop Committee	19 6p UVPRN	20 12p/7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	21	22 9a-12p CPR Training Session
23 10a Praise in the Park! 11:15a Board of Governors 5p Community Dinner	24 AUGUST NEWSLETTER CONTENT DUE 10a-6p NH-WIC 7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	25 7p Boy Scouts	26 6p UVPRN	27 12p/7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	28	29
30 10a Worship	31 7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	1 7p Boy Scouts	2 6p UVPRN	3 12p/7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	4	5 No Men's Breakfast <i>(moved to 8/6 at FCC for exchange with WLCC)</i>

If your event is missing or incorrect, please notify us at church@fccleb.org or 603-448-4281.

COMMITTEE NOTES

CHURCH COUNCIL

At Council in June Terry Ellison reported as **Treasurer** that the audit of the church's books is in process, coordinated by Valerie Nevel with an outside professional firm. Terry has worked diligently with Barry Schuster to familiarize himself with treasury processes and reconcile budget figures from the past year. Terry plans to present a progress report on the current year's budget at our next meeting.

John Gilliatt inquired again about a **corporate credit card** for the church. Jon Scott, who hadn't been present for May's discussion, stated his strong support for a debit card and offered to work with Terry as he researches banks and card types.

On behalf of **Christian Ed**, Marcia Corkins reported that the Lindsay's Puppet Pals event in May was well attended (roughly 25, both kids and adults), although only three of the children were from FCC. It was unfortunate not to attract more children from the congregation.

Jon Scott reported for Stewardship that he's begun to set up the **process for online giving** with Network for Good, a respected company with favorable rates and terms. He plans to discuss with Terry Ellison and Brian Clancy how to integrate online giving into the existing stewardship process.

In obtaining information required to set up the online process, Jon has discovered that there are no internal or public records confirming **the church's non-profit status**. Our federal tax ID number is valid, and

churches are in a special category that doesn't require an official IRS determination of 501(c)(3) tax exemption. However, all agreed that it's advisable to have such a document available for donors or anyone else who requests it. All supported Jon's efforts to obtain the required form from the IRS.

Jon also reported that FCC had received a substantial gift this spring in **support of the music ministry**. This support is exciting, and Jon will be working with Henry Danaher and the Music Committee on how the church might put it to best use.

Jon Scott and Terry Ellison together reported for the **Diaconate**, which has been focused on working with three new Deacons, updating member lists, and improving congregational connections. One practice has involved committing to a common prayer time each week, when all deacons join in prayer regardless of where they may be in their daily routines. The group has also discussed worship transportation and how best to identify those who need rides and those who can give them. (Council requested that the Church Administrator include notices in the bulletin and weekly calendar emails.) Lastly, the Deacons have considered the prospect of recording worship services, although many wonder about both logistics and any legal implications regarding permission from those participating in and attending worship, especially children.

John Gilliatt reported on a few projects on which the **Board of**

July Meetings

<i>Mission/Social Action</i>	(no mtg)
<i>Diaconate</i>	(no mtg)
<i>Christian Education</i>	(no mtg)
<i>Church Council</i>	(no mtg)
<i>Board of Governors</i>	7/23, 11:15

August Meetings

<i>Mission/Social Action</i>	(no mtg)
<i>Diaconate</i>	8/9, 7:00
<i>Christian Education</i>	(tbd)
<i>Church Council</i>	8/22, 7:00
<i>Board of Governors</i>	8/27, 11:15

Governors is engaged, including several at the parsonage while Steve Silver remains on sabbatical.

Corrine Erskine noted that **Mission and Social Action** was focused primarily on the Bike & Build visit. All meals and other responsibilities have been planned and supported (thanks to Corrine, John Gilliatt, and Steve Teeter!), with only some food contributions still left to be volunteered. The group this year consists of 36 bikers.

Brian Clancy noted that the **Music at the Meetinghouse** series was finishing up a busy spring with Will Ögmundson on June 24 and the Mairzy Doats Duo from UVMC on July 2. Classicopia may return for a couple dates in August. Recent concerts by Cantabile and Harmony Night were very successful, the latter drawing well over 120 guests.

DIACONATE

At their June meeting the Deacons committed new support for food and gas cards for FCC's **Open Door**

COMMITTEE NOTES

Ministry. They noted the need for an increase in donations through the communion collection, and the ministry was highlighted in the June issue of *Grace Notes*.

The Deacons have named the lay pastoral care program the **Ministry of Caring**. They've reviewed and updated their individual lists of FCC community members, and they've discussed a system to provide worship transportation as needed. As in the past, visitations, calls and cards are suggested as means of contact. It was also proposed that new members be assigned to Deacons prior to their commitment as members, to best welcome them into the community.

Several suggestions were made regarding the Deacons' **practice of prayer**. Deacons agreed to pray for those community members assigned to them on a weekly basis. As Barb Jones learns of hospitalizations and other issues, she will ask if the

individual would like additional prayers. The prayer-list names can also be added to the newsletter.

Sue Pratt introduced the **Prayer Shawl Ministry** to the congregation on June 4. This ministry can offer comfort to individuals experiencing difficulties and to their caregivers. Community members were invited to join in this ministry.

Barb Jones and Sue Pratt have been attending facilitator training for UVIP's **Aging with Dignity** program. They plan to present the program to the FCC community, hopefully with facilitators from Grantham.

The Diaconate also confirmed **sabbatical coverage plans** and the inclusion of a liturgy of farewell and commissioning for Mark Rowell on June 18, Jo Shelnutt's first as sabbatical minister. Initially provided by Steve Silver, the liturgy will include a part for an individual

Mark knows. Rev. Shelnutt will not be a full-time minister; she will lead worship on Sundays and provide emergency pastoral care. She will also direct the Musical Drama Camp and thus requested not to preach on August 27. (Biff Simpson volunteered to preach that Sunday).

Susan Montmagny's son, who has expertise in sound systems, will provide three options this summer regarding the **sound system in our Sanctuary**, which has been less reliable. It was also suggested that Sunday services might be recorded and made available to those who cannot attend.

Susan also expressed gratitude to the congregation for its support of the **Relay for Life**, to which she and Elizabeth Duvall both devoted considerable effort and time.

The Diaconate will not meet in July; its next meeting will be on Wednesday, **August 9**.

Call for Nominations — 6th Annual Micah Awards

Sponsored by the United Valley Interfaith Project (UVIP)

The prophet Micah calls us to consider what it means to live into God's expectations for us, offering guidance on how to live up to those expectations: "And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8)

UVIP's Micah Awards annually recognize local "Micah Heroes" who live into the prophet's words in some exemplary manner—people who contribute time and energy to community service, consistently volunteer themselves to work for a vital cause, and offer their community a living role model of faith in service. Each UVIP member organization is invited to honor its own Micah Hero(es).

All are welcome to nominate up to three members of our congregation who best represent the spirit of the Micah Awards (only our previous winners, Ron Bailey, Pete Mason, and the Teeters, are ineligible). The individual receiving the most votes will be our congregation's Micah Hero for 2017. Keep in mind that this is an annual award, and so nominations typically reflect service during the past year.

Nominations (up to three per person) must be submitted to the church office no later than FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1. Please contact the church office with any questions.

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



THANKS, GUEST PREACHERS! On visits in May and June, Kevin Schwartz and Heidi Hoskin spent quality time with FCC's kids.



The Pastoral Perspective, *continued from Page 1*

from their neighbors. Then one Sunday morning members of All Saints Episcopal Church showed up at their doorstep to welcome them. “We were surprised,” Havel recalled. “I mean, how does a Southern Christian Church welcome a Muslim-Sunni refugee family right after 9/11?”²

Deuteronomy tells us that actions such as these do not come from the human heart alone but from attention to what God says in that human heart. When we heed that voice, our choices are true to love of God and hold fast to him.

The support that Heval’s family received did not end with that welcome. However, like many immigrants, they struggled financially. So, when he was a 17-year-old high-school senior, Heval helped by washing dishes 30 to 40 hours per week. Rather than rebel against the tedious nature of the job, he used those hours as an opportunity to focus on learning English and on his studies: a page read for each washed plate. He excelled as a student and was admitted to Georgia State University in 2002. Heval then attended Morehouse School of Medicine and Emory University for internal medicine. Now Dr. Mohamed Kelli, he was awarded the prestigious Katz Fellowship in Preventive Cardiology. Through that fellowship, Dr. Kelli served refugees in a free clinic just one block away from the place where he had washed dishes. He has also been involved in bringing veterans and refugees together to promote mutual understanding.³

Heval’s perseverance and work reflect his decision to “choose life.” May we too make the same choice, as we open “our own hearts” to welcome the “strangers among us.”

Yours faithfully,
KATHY BECKETT

¹<http://www.loyolapress.com/retreats/choosing-life-start-retreat>

²<http://www.npr.org/2017/06/11/532457897/the-call-in-the-refugee-experience-in-the-us>

³http://www.emory.edu/EMORY_MAGAZINE/issues/2015/autumn/features/Kelli.html

FCC's Musical Drama Camp Returns NEXT MONTH!

Monday-Friday, 1-4 pm, August 21-25 / Performance and Cookout, Friday at 5:00 pm

Christian Education is excited to bring back FCC's Musical Drama Camp, to be led this year by the Rev. Jo Shelnett, Marcia Corkins, and Henry Danaher. Campers will learn about God, have fun, and produce a musical to be performed Friday afternoon, followed by a family cookout.

All children ages 6-12 are invited to participate. Campers needn't be members of our congregation—they just have to be ready to have a great time! There is no cost, although free-will donations to support the church's Christian Education ministry are gratefully welcome.

Get the most out of your summer—plan to join us for camp in August!

Warmer Blankets, Stronger Shelter!

Supported by generous contributions from our church community, **Blanket Sunday** (\$800) and **Shelter Sunday** (\$735) both generated more for their respective causes than they had in the previous four years—while also honoring our mothers and fathers past and present.

FCC forwards Blanket Sunday gifts to the **CWS Blankets** program. Shelter Sunday contributions support the Upper Valley chapter of **Habitat for Humanity**.

Many thanks to all who contributed!

To the Church School Children—

Thank you all for a wonderful Children's Day! You were awesome at greeting, ushering, reading, singing, cello-playing, and sharing your Church-School projects from the year.

I'm very proud of you!

Have a fun summer!

Love you,

Mrs. C.

Katie Clancy presents a poster of thank-you notes from the Church School kids to Marcia Corkins on Children's Sunday.



Coming in September — Save These Dates!

SEPTEMBER 17 KICK-OFF SUNDAY!

Plan to join in the Blessing of the Backpacks, registration for Church School, pizza and ice cream, and lots of outdoor fun. And we welcome Rev. Steve Silver back from his sabbatical!

Until then, enjoy summer!

ALL-CHURCH RETREAT Friday to Sunday, September 22-24 UCC HORTON CENTER, WHITE MOUNTAINS

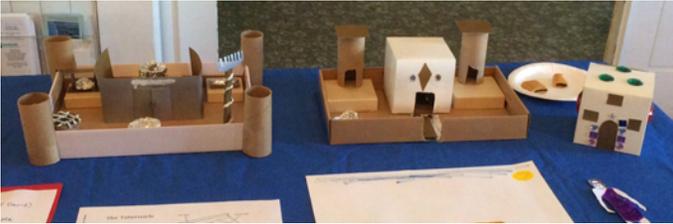
Look for more information next month about this weekend experience of building community and faith in gorgeous natural surroundings. All are invited to come, especially families. The schedule is completely flexible and open; attending the whole weekend is not required.

Don't miss this incredible opportunity!

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION

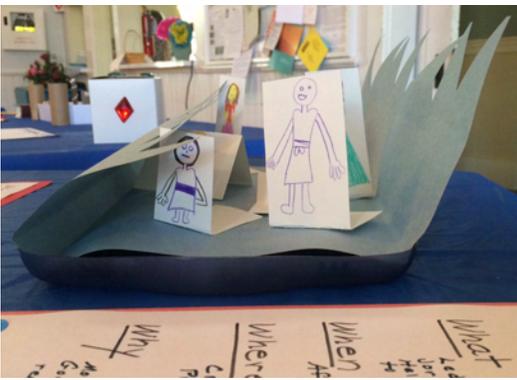


SEEN ON SABBATICAL. Steve Silver sent greetings from a recent trip to Atlanta, where he, Rachel, and Chip visited Martin Luther King's Ebenezer Baptist Church and met former President Jimmy Carter.



A BUSY CHILDREN'S SUNDAY. On June 18, as the Rev. Jo Shelnett began her summer tenure as Sabbatical Minister, we celebrated our Church School children and volunteers. We also bid farewell to Mark and Marty Rowell with a commissioning liturgy and laying-on of hands, as Mark prepares to take up his new pastoral position in Pennsylvania.

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



BIKE & BUILD AT FCC. Thirty-six riders on Bike & Build's Northern U. S. route were our guests for two nights in June. On their build day they worked with UV Habitat for Humanity and COVER Home Repair, whose Executive Director, Bill Neukomm (*below right*), shared his experience with the group.



MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE

Requiem Maurice Duruflé

Sunday, August 27, at 2:00 pm
MARY KEANE CHAPEL, ENFIELD

Coming next month in Enfield... All are welcome to enjoy a special musical afternoon in late August!

Continuing their tireless work on behalf of choral singing in the Upper Valley, Hal Sheeler and FCC music director Henry Danaher have organized an informal group of singers to perform Maurice Duruflé's most beloved work, his poignant and comforting *Requiem* (1947). The chorus will be accompanied by the magnificent Casavant organ in the **Mary Keane Chapel** on the grounds of the Enfield Shaker Museum.

Free-will donations will support the maintenance of this wonderful Upper Valley treasure.



"LET ME FLY." Cantabile Women's Chorus offers a gorgeous, spring-themed program on June 3.



Thank you so much for being an amazing host to us! We appreciate you!

Thanks! - Colleen
Thank you! - Spencer
WE APPRECIATE YOU ALEX
Thank You! - Matt
Thank You! - Whitney Erdson
Thank You! - Casy
Thank you so much! - Amos Han
Thank you! - Kelly Rose
Thank You! - Thomas!
Thank You! - Elizabeth
Thank You! - Deya
Thank You! - Vanni
Thank you! - Hunter
Thank you! - Emily Lloyd
Thank you! - Alian
Thank you! - Taylor
Thank you! - Bri
Thank you! - Camille
Thank you! - Matt Ryan
Thanks so much!! - Chris
Thanks so much!! - Annie's
Thank you! - Kelly Rose
Thanks amillion! - San
Thank you! - JAKULIE garscel
Thank you! - Marco!
B+B LOVES YOU ↓
Thanks! - Kim

First Congregational Church of Lebanon

Weekly Worship and Church School: Sundays, 10:00 am • Office Hours: Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 9-12
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Rev. Stephen R. Silver — silver@fccleb.org • Newsletter Submissions — church@fccleb.org



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

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DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**PRAISE
IN THE
PARK!**

Ecumenical Worship Service
Sunday, July 23, 10:00 am
Colburn Park

Worship Exchange
with West Lebanon UCC

Sunday, August 6—at FCC (*Communion*)

Sunday, August 13—at WLCC

Joint Worship Services at 10:00 am

** Congregational Breakfast at 8:30 am **

Musical Drama Camp!

Monday-Friday, 1:00-4:00 pm, August 21-25
Performance and Cookout, Friday at 5:00 pm

All children ages 6-12 are invited to participate, and campers needn't be members of our congregation—they just have to be ready to have a great time! There is no cost, although free-will donations to support the church's Christian Education ministry are welcome.

For registration and questions, please contact the church office (603-448-4281/church@fccleb.org) or the Rev. Jo Shelnett (jo.shelnett54@gmail.com).