



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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The Pastoral Perspective

The Bible teaches us that the Israelites were never to forget that they had once been slaves, nor that they had been strangers in a strange land. Talk about making sure nobody ever grew too big for his or her britches! No heroic origins here. Instead, the descendants of Abraham were to instruct their children of their humble beginnings. In doing so, they would help their progeny to avoid the dangers of hubris. But even more importantly, they would help those who came after them to remember that no matter how lowly they or someone else was by society's standards, they were beloved of God, so valued that the Creator of the Universe made it his business to lead them to freedom and a new life.

I was reminded of this lesson recently when listening to a segment of NPR's *On Point* with Tom Ashbrook, exploring the horrific violence in Central America that is destabilizing countries and causing, among other things, parents to send their children north in search of safety, often unaccompanied. The danger they seek to escape stems from ruthless gang activity and an intense police response that has ravaged nations like El Salvador, which is home to San Jose Villanueva, where our church has built ties over the years. SJV is not immune to the peril posed by gangs, something I heard about in heartbreaking detail from Mike and Susie Jenkins, the longtime Epilogos representatives who hosted a group from our church in October 2014 and recently returned to New Hampshire.

The issues of immigration and refugees are complicated and can be emotionally charged, especially during a time of rapid demographic changes and heightened economic anxiety. But all too often the language that is used to discuss these issues is, well, un-Christian. We in the church, both locally and universally, are called to offer a witness that recognizes and insists upon the dignity of every man or woman, boy or girl, regardless of his or her faith, nationality, or race.

Continued on Page 6

SUNDAY SERVICE

Mother's Day is Blanket Sunday

On Sunday, May 8, we are pleased once again to participate in Church World Service's **CWS Blankets Program**, a special mission opportunity that provides blankets and other essential relief supplies to people in crisis around the world (for details, please visit <http://www.cwsglobal.org/get-involved/cws-blankets/>). Please consider making a contribution of any amount to this project, in honor or memory of the mother(s) in your life. *Dedications will appear in the bulletin on May 8.*

To contribute, please complete and return the bulletin insert or contact the church office directly with your contribution and dedication information (no later than Thursday, May 5).

New Members Joining!

Have you found a welcoming, spiritually nourishing church home here? If you're interested in joining our community of faith as a covenant member, you're warmly invited to **an informal conversation after worship on May 8** with members of the Diaconate and Rev. Steve Silver.

We will receive new members in worship on SUNDAY, MAY 15.

Queued for Coffee Hour

May—Women of the Church

June—Board of Governors

July—Church Council

Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, June 5

1:00 pm



Join us on the front lawn of the church with your animals of all shapes, sizes, and species! Photos, mementos, and stuffed friends are also welcome at this brief service in the spirit of St. Francis. **Treats afterward for humans and beasts alike!**

COMMUNITY DINNER

Sunday, May 22, 5:00 pm

Leaders: WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

Thanks to the Women of the Church for leading this month's dinner! Please consider lending a hand with this vital service to our neighbors. **Sign-ups in the Parish Hall.**

Never helped before but interested in trying? Make THIS your month!

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY!!

JUNE 12, 2016

Presentations to Children and Volunteers during Worship

Exhibits Exploring "Our Friends in the Bible"

Special Coffee Hour Food and Activities

Please join us for this celebration of our Church School! The children will share what they have learned, discussed, shared, and made while exploring this year's theme, "Bible Buddies." See you in June!

MAY 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10a Worship (Communion)/ Church School 11:15a MSA 1p Classicopia: The 'B's in Spring	2 6:15p Cub Scouts (Bears)	3 5:45p Cub Scouts (Wolves/ Tigers) 7p Boy Scouts	4 10a-1p UVIP 6p UVPRN	5 7p Choir	6	7 8/9a Breakfast and Spring Clean-Up! 10a Juneberry Music School 5:30p FCC Movie Night!
8 MOTHER'S DAY 10a Worship and Church School (Blanket Sunday)	9 9:30a-3p UVIP 3p WCBH After-School Group 6:15p Cub Scouts (Bears) 7p Diaconate	10 5:45p Cub Scouts (Wolves/ Tigers) 7p Boy Scouts	11 8a-4p NH-WIC 6p UVPRN 7p Christian Ed Committee	12 9:30a-4p Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Assn 6-9p UVIP 7p Choir	13	14 10a Juneberry Music School
15 PENTECOST 10a Worship and Church School (New Members) 12:30p FCC Outing Club at Trescott Lands, Hanover	16	17 11a Annual Senior Lunch 7p Church Council 7p Boy Scouts/ Troop Committee	18 6p UVPRN	19 7p Choir	20	21 10a Juneberry Music School (<i>last class</i>) 1p Piano Recital, Students of Eva Barker 4p Piano Recital, Students of Carol Hartman
22 10a Worship and Church School 11:15a Board of Governors 1p Classicopia: Violin Virtuoso 5p Community Dinner	23 JUNE NEWSLETTER CONTENT DUE 3p WCBH After-School Group 6:15p Cub Scouts (Bears)	24 5:45p Cub Scouts (Wolves/ Tigers) 7p Boy Scouts	25 6p UVPRN	26 10a-6p NH-WIC 7p Choir	27	28 3p Piano Recital, Students of Elizabeth Borowsky
29 10a Worship and Church School	30 MEMORIAL DAY (<i>FCC office closed</i>)	31 7p Boy Scouts	1 6p UVPRN	2 7p Choir	3	4 8a Men's Breakfast 12p Jane Brandt Memorial Svc (at Valley Cemetery, West Lebanon) 5:30p FCC Movie Night!

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

COMMITTEE NOTES

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

At its April meeting the Board of Governors discussed how it hopes to operate this year, with everyone working on specific tasks.

The group considered the need for **permanent signage** on the exterior of the church building, to clarify for new and occasional visitors where particular entrances and spaces are located. While this is important when we worship in the Parish Hall, it's generally necessary for all outside groups as well.

A soapy water solution has curbed the presence of **box elder bugs** in the building, but this problem still requires further resolution. While summer weather generally keeps the bugs outside, it was agreed that we should address this before colder weather returns.

Wendell Smith and Brandon Mason will arrange for an **energy audit** to be completed sometime during the colder months (likely this fall). Cost estimates were previously obtained, and any resulting improvements could be supported by the Waldo Trust distribution. Rachel Silver suggested it might make sense to conduct an audit on the Parsonage, too. Brandon suggested that one Board of Governors meeting a year should be held at the Parsonage.

We are in the process of getting a detailed proposal from Dead River with options for a new **hot-water system for the kitchen**. The main issue is that hot water demands from the kitchen currently require the boiler to fire, and the hot water

needs to travel considerable distance to reach the kitchen, an arrangement which is inefficient and costly for relatively infrequent use. For a new instant-hot-water system, we would choose either propane or electric, each of which has particular issues. The ultimate cost of this project will be covered by Men's Fellowship.

The board also planned for the **Spring Clean-Up on May 7**. We expect about fifteen scouts to be available; all helpers are encouraged to bring extra rakes and tools. There is not a huge volume of outdoor work that needs completing. There are stumps that could be removed, shrubs to be trimmed, and a side garden that needs to be planted with perennials. There is also a fence at the parsonage that needs priming and painting, a good project for the scouts. It was also suggested that we investigate getting the outside walls of the church power-washed at some point.

Rachel Silver will coordinate the remaining painting that needs to be done in the **Sanctuary** (the proscenium arch, side walls, and some trim). After that project, we will address the Sanctuary carpet and perhaps other improvements such as pew cushions.

The board strategized about how to make the most effective use of its meeting times, with a focus on implementing achievable projects.

CHURCH COUNCIL

On April 21 Church Council heard from the Deacons about a proposal

for a **work trip to the Penobscot Tribe in Maine**, to clear land for a new Indian Women's Mission for the Intertribal Native American Council (date still to be decided). Members of the West Lebanon Congregational Church would also participate.

Pete Mason reported that Nora Miller would work with Brandon and Nicole Mason to **plant the memorial gardens** in May.

From **Stewardship**, Jon Scott noted the challenge of decreased weekly pledge payments during summer months, when many are away. He raised the possibility of setting up automatic contributions either by credit card or checking account. Jon asked the Finance Committee to investigate this possibility and report back to Council. He also recommended that members be given an option to give stock gifts directly to FCC; currently, they can do so only to the national UCC.

On behalf of Valerie Nevel and the **Trustees**, Steve Silver asked that Council consider how to apply the annual distribution from the Waldo Trust. Without choosing a specific purpose, it was agreed that the funds would well serve the church's operations and facility maintenance.

Steve noted that Interim Treasurer Barry Schuster was completing our **2015 financial report**, which should reconcile without any unexpected issues and supports assumptions that informed the 2016 budget.

Barry would also like to discuss the current division of bookkeeping and

COMMITTEE NOTES

check-writing duties. (Nan Parsons has continued to take care of the latter despite stepping down from the full Treasurer position.)

The **Board of Governors** has met, with a good working group and some new members this year. The annual spring clean-up project has been set for May 7, following that month's Men's Breakfast, to which everyone is invited.

It was reported that the Church Administrator's keys had been stolen from his car; while this is unlikely to pose a security risk, it was agreed that it presented a good **opportunity to have the church rekeyed** once again. Since this was last done in 2011 (by Pete Mason, who will consult with Gatekeeper Lock & Key on the new system), a number of keys have been lost or not returned. Some wondered if the ramp door could have a code-

entry system instead of a key, but it was pointed out that this can be expensive and requires significant maintenance.

Subsequent discussion considered the **rent we collect for using church space**. Brian Clancy explained that many outside users have negotiated rates, particularly if they use the building weekly or monthly and have a social-service or charitable purpose. Others, however, pay our full published rates. Jon Scott added that he'd recently had the chance to observe the WIC Clinic operating here, enthusiastically lifting up this program as something we can be very proud to house and support.

Steve Silver reported on discussions with Marcia Corkins, Elizabeth Duvall, and Henry Danaher about planning a **Bible musical drama camp** for one of the last two weeks in August. Our own children would

be welcome, but other churches and the community would be invited to participate as well. More details will be forthcoming.

The **Lenten Lunch Bag offering** this year collected \$600, which will be divided evenly between David's House and the school in San Jose Villanueva. Receiving the check for the latter will be Epilogos founders Mike and Susie Jenkins, who will visit worship here on May 1 and be honored on the occasion of their retirement after decades working in El Salvador.

In his **pastor's report**, Steve Silver gladly noted that five people would be joining as covenant members on May 15. Also, Khuan-Yu Hall has begun the confirmation journey, working with Wendell Smith as his mentor. For the first two weeks in August, FCC will join the West Lebanon Congregational Church

Congregational Breakfast and Spring Clean-Up

Saturday, May 7—Breakfast at 8:00/Clean-Up at 9:00

Please help the Board of Governors with this seasonal effort to clean up the church yard after the winter. We'll rake lawns, trim hedges, and pick up around the grounds. Others will clean and organize the kitchen and take care of other indoor tasks.

Prior to our clean-up project, the **Men's Fellowship invites everyone to share in its monthly breakfast!** We will have coffee and plenty of delicious food, along with warm fellowship. We'll serve breakfast at 8:00 and be ready to work at 9:00.

If you would like to attend breakfast, RSVP to the church office so that we'll know how many we need to feed.

Bring a rake and any other tools that might be useful. After enjoying breakfast, we'll finish up before noon.

May Meetings

Mission/Social Action and Stewardship 5/1, 11:15

Diaconate 5/9, 7:00

Christian Education 5/11, 7:00

Church Council 5/17, 7:00

Board of Governors 5/22, 11:15

June Meetings

Mission/Social Action and Stewardship 6/5, 11:15

Diaconate 6/13, 7:00

Christian Education 6/8, 7:00

Church Council 6/21, 7:00

Board of Governors 6/26, 11:15

COMMITTEE NOTES

for worship (at WLCC August 7, at FCC August 14). West Lebanon's pastor Jeff Scott will be installed on May 15. The Horton Center Retreat this year will take place September 23-25. Lastly, in addition to his work with the Congregational Library and UCC Historical Council, Steve has been asked to serve as Moderator of the regional Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Association.

DIACONATE

At the April Deacons meeting, Kathy Beckett reported that UVIP and the Granite State Organizing Project hope to raise awareness of the need for a living wage in NH with a door-knocking campaign. She also reported on the April 6 meeting in Washington, DC, with Richard Cordray, Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, regarding the need to curb payday lending. A letter-writing campaign resulted in close to 500 letters to Director Cordray, who encouraged comments from people of faith during the 90-day period after the release of the new rule. UVIP will organize this effort for communities of faith.

The first "Movie Night" was a big success, drawing 12 children and 18 adults. Two more are planned for May 7 and June 4. There is some difficulty in choosing movies to suit a mixed audience of children and adults; it was decided that one children's movie should be shown at each event. It was suggested that we might show two films, one for kids followed by one for adults. Steve Silver congratulated Biff Simpson, Steve Teeter, and Hilary Ryder for bringing this project to fruition so quickly.

Steve Teeter noted that this year's **Bike & Build** group will be visiting June 19-21, on their route from Portsmouth to Seattle.

Jon Scott reported on the March breakfast forum about our church's **response to the UCC's "boycott and divest" resolutions**. Changes to the resolution and summary include the deletion of redundant points, a new emphasis on concern for those on all sides of the issue, and the removal of a commitment to communicate the decision via letters to the editor. The resolution would also be broadened to call for a better decision process going

forward and to enable us to do more on the issue in the future (i.e. our church as peacemaker rather than as sidetaker).

Susan Montmagny reported on a meeting she had with Steve Silver, Ron Bailey, and Peter Newell, her brother and representative of the Penobscot Tribe in Maine. The discussion considered a **work trip to the Penobscot Reservation** to assist with erecting a building for the Indian Women's Mission Center in Old Town, Maine. The trip addresses the congregation's wish to engage in mission activity closer to home, and Steve hopes that this could build a relationship with the Penobscot community.

Susan also reported on a recent conference she attended about the **UCC's Open and Affirming (ONA) policies**. She asked whether it's well known that FCC is an open and affirming congregation, and the discussion considered how we might make this clearer in signage in the front. Susan also distributed a self-evaluation tool for ONA congregations, which Deacons were asked to complete in a spirit of graceful engagement.

The Pastoral Perspective, *continued from Page 1*

So, the next time we see images of or hear about immigrants and refugees, we should remember that, as followers of Jesus who claim to be heirs to the promises made to Israel, we are seeing our brothers and sisters. Perhaps we should pray to God that we will have the courage and the faith to respond with understanding, generosity, and love.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

FCC Outing Club Trescott Lands, Hanover

SUNDAY, MAY 15, 12:30 PM

Plan to join us for the next adventure of FCC's "Outing Club," led as always by our beloved, in-house park ranger, Ron Bailey! May's expedition will take us to the Trescott Water Supply Lands in Hanover, which only recently were opened for public hiking. A moderate incline leads to gorgeous views for miles around..

All church members and friends are invited to share this experience of God's creation!

Meet at the trailhead parking area at the bend in Trescott Road, between Etna and Hanover. Bring a picnic lunch, water, a blanket or chair, bug spray, and sunscreen.

Don't miss this latest opportunity to grow deeper by walking farther!

MOVIE NIGHT AT FCC!

Saturday, May 7, 5:30 pm—Featuring *UP!*

The Diaconate invites everyone to enjoy **another** night of fellowship and family fun—guaranteed to be better than staying home with Netflix. Come as you are, even if that's in PJ's with pillows and blankets. We'll serve pizza and beverages; feel free to bring snacks—and your friends!



Women of the Church
invites

All Seniors in the Church Family
to be our guests for

Luncheon
served in your honor

TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2016

Coffee, tea, and fellowship starting at **11:00 am**

Performance by the Superlatives of Lebanon High School at **12:00 noon**

Luncheon served at **12:30 pm**

RSVP to the Church Office by May 13

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



Celebrating Epilogos. Church School children present a check to Epilogos president Ed Warren and Mike and Susie Jenkins, the organization's inspiring leaders. Later, Mike and Susie enjoyed a cake to honor their retirement.

Thank You from our Children!

This year's LENTEN LUNCH BAG OFFERING raised \$600, which will be split between supplies for David's House and support for the schoolchildren of San Jose Villanueva. Many thanks to all those who participated!

Dear Members of FCC,

We thank you for your generous contributions towards David's House and SJV. During Lent we were able to raise roughly \$300 for each of the previously mentioned organizations. We aspire to surpass this sum in following years.

Your donations will be used toward improving the lives of families in SJV, and providing support for families in times of need at David's House. Thank you so much—this would not have been possible without your support.

The Children of the Church School



Called to Care offers special assistance to those in our congregation who need it, for whatever reason—illness, loss of a loved one, loneliness, depression, aging issues, and divorce, to name a few. We offer support in the form of cards, phone calls, visits, meals, and transportation.

Now with just eight caregivers, Called to Care needs help! If the Spirit moves you to join this rewarding group, please contact Linda Jacobs (mrandmrs.j@comcast.net / 802-296-8251) or Steve Silver.

A Farewell from the Beldings

Following is an edited version of an April 22 email to the church office from Kathy Belding; it's reprinted here with her permission.

In its mention of Kathy's mom Glenda Perkins (a resident at Genesis), Laura Place (a longtime member of FCC now living in Concord), and the Beldings' own family relationships, the letter bears witness to the bonds that sustain our larger church family.

Hi Steve and Brian,

First, thank you for the beautiful write-up about Warren's retirement in the newsletter. It meant a lot to both of us.

As you are aware, we are under contract to purchase a new home in Concord, just off Exit 2 of I-89. We hope to see lots of company once we move (hint hint!). This was the area we were hoping to relocate to. It is a ranch house, all one-floor living, all brand-new on the inside. The wiring, plumbing, roof, bathrooms, kitchen, and floors are all new or rehabbed, much less work for Warren. We have lived in our current house for 32 years (the only home we've ever owned) and we have a lot of packing to do. We close on May 20 on the Concord home and May 25 on the Lebanon house. Yikes!!

I did not see mom yesterday, but I hear she received a nice card from the church. I can't tell you how much it means to me that you have adopted my mom and visit her, Steve (Barb too). She was a 50+ year member of her church and loves feeling like she is still part of a church. She thinks the world of you, Steve. We will still be coming up a couple times a week to visit her, and visit family and friends. We will still be quite connected to Lebanon!

We are sad to be leaving but take comfort in knowing that we are a little less than an hour away. We needed a change and look forward to being closer to one of our sons; and living close to one means that when the other one visits, we will all have time together. Possibly our CT son will be up more often, knowing we are within minutes of each other now.

We have promised Laura Place that we will bring her with us occasionally when we come up. She is already a good friend of Ariana's and welcomes this busy two-year-old into her home always. She is brave—I sit on pins and needles the whole time, but Laura brings out her Teddy bear collection and just enjoys the youthfulness of having Ari there. Laura lives about ten minutes from us or Chris, about halfway between us.

Well, I've rambled on long enough, and as I sit here looking at boxes and packing tape, I know I should be working.

Our hearts will always be with the church, and eventually our names will be on the memorial stone. Our kids' names are on a seat at the Opera House that we purchased and dedicated to them as they were involved with the drama club (Wet Paint Players) in high school. So, we will all be a part of Lebanon, and our roots will be there forever!

Thanks for listening,

Kathy

Our hearts will always be with the church...



THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



Ms. Beckett Goes to Washington. FCC's Kathy Beckett, representing the United Valley Interfaith Project, delivers over 500 letters (including quite a few from FCC members and friends) to Richard Cordray, Director of the Consumer Financial Protection Board, seeking regulatory action on abusive and usurious payday-lending practices.



Children's Moments, Children's Choir, and Earth Day. Elizabeth Duvall played her guitar and led the children and congregation in two songs on April 24. Afterward, a not-easily-inflatable prop supported a discussion of our role as stewards of the planet.

MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music at the Meetinghouse

Spring Concerts!

All in the Sanctuary, First Congregational Church

CLASSICOPIA: VIOLIN VIRTUOSO—Sunday, May 22, at 1:00 pm

Violinist and Hanover native Roseminna Watson brings her national reputation back to the Upper Valley. She and Dan Weiser will perform Faure, Beethoven, and more.

A CAPPELLA SHOWCASE WITH HARMONY NIGHT—Saturday, June 11, at 7:00 pm

Dan Signor brings his community *a cappella* group Harmony Night to our Sanctuary for a program of popular favorites, upbeat rhythms, and rich chords. *Free-will donation to benefit summer music scholarships.*

WILLIAM ÖGMUNDSON: NEW MUSIC FOR PIANO—Friday, June 24, at 7:30 pm

Will Ögmundson returns to share his piano virtuosity on a program featuring all-new material from not one but **two** recordings he's releasing in June. And an audience-request medley is always a possibility!

STUDENT RECITALS

Piano Students of Eva Barker—Saturday, May 21, 1:00 pm

Piano Students of Carol Hartman—Saturday, May 21, 4:00 pm

Piano Students of Elizabeth Borowsky—Saturday, May 28, 3:00 pm

Voice Students of Jennifer Hansen—Sunday, June 19, 4:00 pm

Our First Bible Musical Camp!

Monday-Friday, 1-4 pm, August 15-19

Performance and Cookout, Friday at 5:00

Christian Education is excited to announce FCC's first Bible Musical Camp, to be led by Elizabeth Duvall and Henry Danaher.

All children are invited to participate, whether or not they already have a connection to FCC.

Full details are still to come, but campers will produce a musical drama entitled *King David and the National Treasure*. They will perform it Friday afternoon, followed by a family cookout.

Plan to join us in August!



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

Weekly Worship and Church School: Sundays, 10:00 am • Office Hours: Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 9-12
10 South Park Street, P.O. Box 230, Lebanon, NH 03766 • 603-448-4281 • church@fccleb.org • www.fccleb.org
Rev. Stephen R. Silver — silver@fccleb.org • Newsletter Submissions — church@fccleb.org



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

10 South Park Street

PO Box 230

Lebanon, NH 03766

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Music
at the
Meetinghouse

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