



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

What's Inside

Our New Directory5



October Scenes.....6



Sunday Service2

Stewardship 20252

Ecumenical Thanksgiving.....2

November Calendar3

News and Notes.....4-5

Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Mtg.....4

Music at the Meetinghouse.....7

Looking Toward Advent.....8

LISTEN Holiday Baskets.....8

The Pastoral Perspective

I'm writing this the day before the election. Yes, it's a bit late for the November newsletter, but rather than wait to comment on the results—which will inevitably leave some part of the population upset or worried about the future—I am writing this now, because there is nothing I can do about what will happen on Tuesday.

Remember this passage from Matthew's Gospel (it also appears in Luke) about God knowing what is going on with the birds?

²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰And even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. (Matthew 10:29-31)

The Gospel writer is clear here: nothing is beyond God's knowledge or awareness, and thus, there is nothing for us to worry about. This isn't fatalism, or surrendering to events, but simply a recognition that as out-of-control the world seems to be, it isn't.

Things may seem hectic, even a bit crazed at this moment, but we will persevere. All of us. We may not see ourselves as one community, but that's what we are. In fact, to use a cliched phrase, we are family.

And, yes, that's in the Bible too, in Mark, Matthew, and Luke. As long as we do the will of God, we are siblings of Jesus.

Being a sibling can be tough sometimes. We don't always treat each other well. We may not like one another. But as those of us who aren't only children know, we are stuck with one another. And when push comes to shove, the knowledge that we are not alone is a comfort. Add to that the knowledge that Jesus loves us, and we should be able to feel the comfort, the reassurance, the confidence that things will work out.

So, the results are in. You may be excited. You may be worried. We (and I use that word advisedly) are going to be okay. For, turning to Scripture once again, specifically Romans 8, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" Paul knew a lot about adversity, far more than any of us will endure, hopefully. His faith held firm. My prayer is that ours will, too.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

SUNDAY SERVICE

All Are Welcome to Worship at FCC
Sundays at 10:00 AM (Sanctuary/Zoom)

Coffee Hour Served!

All are invited to share this fellowship opportunity each week. **Please sign up on the list at church.**

Zoom Greeters and Liturgists Needed!

Congregation members sing in the choir, serve as ushers and Zoom greeters, and read as liturgists. Additional options include reading prayers, sharing stewardship messages, or even leading children's moments. **All are invited to serve in these essential roles, and no prior experience is needed (though Zoom greeting requires some basic training).**

If you're interested in these opportunities to serve, please contact the church office.

STEWARDSHIP 2025

Doing What Is Right and Just

To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice. —Proverbs 21:3

Scripture teaches us that God is more pleased by what we *do*, rather than by what we give up. Our gifts of money are important and needed, but if we are looking to please God, we must do more.

This stewardship season we'll explore the concepts of righteousness and justice, and what those concepts mean for our church and for us individually. We'll explore these themes during what is traditionally seen as a season of giving in our wider society.

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY IS NOVEMBER 17.

Please consider your commitment, prayerfully and honestly, to FCC's mission and ministry in 2025, as we dedicate our pledges together.



Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service

Tuesday, November 26, 7:00
West Lebanon Cong. Church
18 Maple St, West Lebanon

All are invited to share in this inclusive, ecumenical opportunity to give thanks to God for all we have received this year. We'll gather across town in West Lebanon with friends from across the Upper Valley to faithfully observe Thanksgiving together.

Let us give thanks as a community!

Christmas Decorating!

Following Worship on Sunday, December 1

Yes, CHRISTMAS!! Advent begins the first Sunday in December, so plan to stay after worship to hang wreaths, string lights, trim our tree, and have fun getting the church ready for this festive season.

Join in welcoming the spirit of the season!

Community Dinner

Sunday, November 24, at 5:00 pm

Leaders: HEADREST STAFF AND RESIDENTS

Many, many thanks to our neighbors at Headrest for leading this month's dinner! Signups for food donations will be available soon in the Parish Hall. Anyone can lend a hand with setup, serving, and cleanup—friends, coworkers, neighbors, ANYONE!

If you're interested in organizing a future dinner, menu resources are available, and the church can reimburse costs. Please contact the church office.

All are warmly invited to come, eat, and share fellowship, regardless of need or affiliation.

Do Your Part to Fill the Cart!

We're currently collecting non-perishable food and personal-care items on behalf of:

LISTEN COMMUNITY SERVICES

For a list of current and ongoing needs, please visit listencs.org/food-pantry#Itemsweneedthemost.

NOVEMBER 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 10a Worship/CCC 2p Cameo Baroque Benefit for Open Door 5p Community Dinner	28 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program	29 12p Cameo Baroque 3:30p FCC Choir	30 2-6:30p UVMC 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	31 <i>Halloween</i> 3-5:15p UVMC Children's Choir 7p NA Group	1 <i>All Saints' Day</i> 6-9p Leb Rec Quilters Retreat	2 9a-5p Leb Rec Quilters Retreat
3 10a Worship/CCC (Communion)	4 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program	5 <i>Election Day</i> 12p Cameo Baroque 3:30p FCC Choir	6 2-6:30p UVMC 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	7 3-5:15p UVMC Children's Choir 7p NA Group	8 7:30p Anon Coffeehouse	9
10 10a Worship/CCC 1p Sunflower Quintet	11 <i>Veterans Day</i> 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program 7p Diaconate	12 12p Cameo Baroque 3:30p FCC Choir 7p Council	13 8a-3:30p WIC 2-6:30p UVMC 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	14 3-5:15p UVMC Children's Choir 7p NA Group	15	16 2p Student Piano Recital (Borowsky) 7:30p Classicopia: Jewish Jazz
17 STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY 10a Worship/CCC 2p GOS Assn Fall Meeting (at Lyme UCC)	18 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program	19 12p Cameo Baroque 3:30p FCC Choir 5-8p UVMC Commty Chorus	20 2-6:30p UVMC 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	21 11a-6p WIC 3-5:15p UVMC Children's Choir 7p NA Group	22 7:30p Anon Coffeehouse	23 4p UVMC Community Chorus 7p Henry Danaher, Organ
24 10a Worship/CCC 5p Community Dinner	25 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program	26 7p Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service (WLCC) 12p Cameo Baroque 3:30p FCC Choir	27 No UVMC No Bel Canto Chamber Singers	28 <i>Thanksgiving</i> No UVMC Choir 7p NA Group	29	30 2p Cameo Baroque Benefit for 19 Days
1 <i>ADVENT 1</i> 10a Worship/CCC (Communion) 11a Christmas Decorating!	2 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program	3 12p Cameo Baroque 3:30p FCC Choir	4 2-6:30p UVMC 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	5 3-5:15p UVMC Children's Choir 7p NA Group	6 7:30p Anon Coffeehouse	7 7p Upper Valley Voices

If you have questions or corrections regarding any event, please notify us at church@fccleb.org or 603-448-4281.

NEWS AND NOTES

CHURCH COUNCIL

Jon Scott opened Council in October with a devotion from his great uncle, about the blind leading the blind, based on the Gospel of Matthew. In his **pastor's report**, Rev. Steve Silver noted the Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Association fall meeting on November 17 in Lyme, at which the Association's future is to be discussed and voted on, relative to conference-wide reconsiderations of this model of governance. Steve also remarked on a large family from Michigan who had attended worship. Though active in the Church of the Nazarene, the family wanted to visit a traditional Congregational service while traveling in the area, and all appreciated the family's presence.

Jon asked about our congregation's experience with the **Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Association**. Steve replied that he couldn't think of any current members who had been involved with the Association, recalling only the late Carolin Bassett. Jon proposed we convene a short congregational discussion some Sunday following worship to raise our awareness and offer context for the November 17 meeting and vote.

Steve next mentioned the **CROP Walk** on October 13. Linda Jacobs reported that there would be food

served after the walk, which had fewer than 40 registered walkers. She and Corrine Erskine will check with organizer Rob Grabill regarding the provisions. Jon raised the question of why walk participation has declined so significantly over the years.

Steve commended Dawn Troutman and all those who helped provide the September **Community Dinner**, a huge success in reviving this monthly event. Dawn thanked Steve, looking forward to Council's leadership of the October meal. She further noted that her office (Susan Cole Realty) would organize November's dinner, an important step toward involving volunteers from outside our church. She invited others to consider groups they might ask to provide a dinner.

Jon next referred to a recent meeting of the **Finance Committee**, which, as Dawn and Valerie Nevel explained, reviewed current-year numbers and began to look at the 2025 budget. The meeting made a good start on the budget process.

Jon then offered a brief report on behalf of **Board of Governors** chair Walter Scott. One priority is repair of the Parsonage garage door, for which Walter has solicited estimates. Regarding the replacement of the church's front steps, the contractor has estimated \$12,000 for materials

and \$4800 for labor, assuming that FCC volunteers can help remove the current steps. When complete, the steps will look much nicer and require virtually no maintenance, far more durable than the current painted wood and crumbling plaster. Jon hopes the work might be done later this fall if the weather allows. Valerie asked whether the contractor had included a typical markup and offered references; Jon replied that it's a discounted rate, and he himself has had very good experience with the contractor. Steve and Valerie both commended Walter for his work on this, which he must balance against his family and full-time job.

The **Diaconate** hadn't yet met in October month, and chair Linda Gerlach reported nothing notable in advance of its meeting, although she remarked that the group always has good discussions. Jon suggested that all nametags be reviewed and updated, with extras always on hand for visitors to worship.

For **Mission and Social Action**, Valerie again noted the CROP Walk and the shopping cart. The **Trustees** will meet with UCF representatives either October 29 or November 6, pending participants' availability.

Lastly, Jon reported that at the May 10 season finale of the **Anonymous**

Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Association Fall Meeting

Sunday, November 17, at 2:00 pm—Lyme Congregational Church

The **Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Association** of the NH Conference (UCC) will discuss its future at its fall meeting this month at the Lyme Congregational Church. As the Conference reassesses the association model, the GOS Association will vote on whether to fold its operations into a new state-wide body. **All are invited to attend and participate.**

Committee Meetings

The following regular meetings will happen remotely via Zoom:

Diaconate 11/11 and 12/9, 7:00

Council 11/12 and 12/10, 7:00

For information on other groups' plans to meet, contact the church office.

NEWS AND NOTES

Coffeehouse, one of the musicians had used a considerable amount of obscenity in her set, performing (as all Coffeehouse musicians do) on the chancel in the Sanctuary. While he personally found that upsetting, his companion was so furious that they refuse to attend another Coffeehouse show. Jon raised the issue with Rev. Silver and the Church Administrator, asserting that our Sanctuary is first a place of worship, a sacred space—there are limits to what’s acceptable as artistic expression in that space. He asked that we raise this concern with Coffeehouse organizer Adam Sorscher and invited comments from others. Valerie observed the tension between free speech and obscenity, while Steve asserted that we have the right in this case to determine that certain speech should be prohibited. Linda Jacobs noted that this was the first instance of such language in five years of Coffeehouse shows, and all agreed at least that the performer in question should not be allowed to return. Based on her experience with the Coffeehouse over the years,

Linda volunteered to communicate Council’s concerns to Adam. We can’t fully control how all musicians express themselves, but Jon feels that Adam should be able to persuade them to respect this boundary.

DIACONATE

Bob Gerlach opened the Deacons’ October meeting by sharing the joy of mysteries and puzzles, expressing thanks for curiosity that brings new insights. The group reviewed and updated several **congregational-care situations**, assessing the needs for further support and follow-up.

Deacons also asked about the status of the **Diaconate welcome board and the new church directory**. In a subsequent follow-up, the Church Administrator reported that the new digital directory had been distributed several times in August in the “This Week” emails, with updates to come periodically. The Diaconate board awaits final input and approval. The Deacons further noted several new

faces in the congregation and the need for access to blank name tags. The Church Administrator will soon evaluate the status of our nametag collection and supplies.

In his pastor’s report, the Rev. Steve Silver emphasized the importance of congregational attendance and participation in the November 17 meeting of the **Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Association**. The meeting will determine the path forward as the NH Conference assesses the viability of the Association structure generally. Steve noted there would be a congregational discussion after worship on Sunday, October 20, to provide background.

Sue Pratt recommended we clarify the process for Deacons to secure **ushers and Zoom greeters**. The group also agreed that an in-person retraining session might be useful to highlight responsibilities as well as supplies. Steve plans to propose an ecumenical Thanksgiving service, for which he would like Deacons to assist with readings.

A New Directory Is Here... But We Still Need Photos!

We now offer our church directory in a digital format that can easily be updated as our congregation grows and changes. Available to everyone as a PDF document, the directory will be distributed by email on the first Friday of each month, with printed copies also available on request.

If you haven’t yet done so, please submit a current photo (along with any updated contact details) to the church office as soon as possible. Photos should be JPG or PNG files, in a frontal, head-and-shoulders format clearly showing faces (like these fine examples above!).

EVERYONE who feels connected to FCC’s congregation is invited to be listed in our directory—regardless of whether or not they have formally joined the church as a covenant member.



THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



FALL AT FCC. October opened with the Children's Community Corner enjoying mild weather on a lovely morning. Renowned pianist Jacqueline Schwab offered a thoughtfully conceived concert encouraging social engagement; a week later the CROP Walk made its annual trek through town, finishing with refreshments at FCC. The month also brought more infrastructural fun, as a water-main break disrupted life in Lebanon.



MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



**Music
at the
Meetinghouse**

FALL CONCERTS

All in the Sanctuary. Masks welcome but optional.

The Anonymous Coffeehouse—Fridays, Nov. 8 and 22; Dec. 6; Jan. 3, 17, and 31; all at 7:30 pm

Our comfy community venue for live music continues its fifth season as an informal “listening room” for the finest folk musicians in New England! *Free admission, donations welcome. For more, visit anoncoffee.org.*

The Sunflower Quintet (Presented by UVMC)—Sunday, November 10, at 1:00 pm

This excellent wind ensemble offers impressive musical variety from classical showpieces to dance tunes and a new commission, “Turning Toward.” *Free-will donation benefits UVMC tuition assistance; more at uvmusic.org.*

Classicopia: Jewish Jazz—Saturday, November 16, at 7:30 pm

Pianist Dan Weiser welcomes clarinetist Seth Kibel for a new iteration of one of Classicopia’s most popular programs, exploring the exciting early-20th-century interconnections among Klezmer, classical, and jazz influences. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; more at classicopia.org/concert/jewish-jazz.*

Upper Valley Music Center Community Chorus—Saturday, November 23, at 4:00 pm

Directed by Annie Arrington and accompanied by Will Ögmundson, the Community Chorus at UVMC offers a joyous celebration of song! The program includes a lively mix of popular songs, folk music, and contemporary compositions. *Free-will donation; more at uvmusic.org/event/community-chorus-fall-concert.*

Henry Danaher, Organ—Saturday, November 23, at 7:00 pm

Former FCC organist Henry Danaher, now thriving at the Church of Christ at Dartmouth, returns for a fall evening of organ music by German composers of the 19th century. *Free-will donation.*

Cameo Baroque: Benefit for the Upper Valley Haven’s 19 Days—Saturday, November 30, at 7:00 pm

Ernie Drown’s superb period-instrument ensemble offers its annual benefit for the Haven’s 19 DAYS OF THE VALLEY campaign. *Free-will donation; more at uppervalleyhaven.org/events/19days and cameoarts.org.*

Upper Valley Voices: Spirits of Yule—Saturday, December 7, at 7:00 pm

Leading one of the area’s premier choral ensembles (formerly Thetford Chamber Singers), director Kevin Quigley creatively programs repertoire drawn from around the world. *Spirits of Yule* explores the magical, mystical beings associated with the holiday season. *Admission TBD; more at uppervalleyvoices.org.*

Classicopia: Four-Hand Holiday—Sunday, December 8, at 2:00 pm

Good friends Dan Weiser and Philip Liston-Kraft share the keyboard for festive, four-hand arrangements of seasonal favorites, from the Blue Danube Waltz and the Nutcracker Suite to jazzy carols and show tunes. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; more at classicopia.org/concert/four-hand-holiday4.*

Bel Canto Chamber Singers: In Dulci Jubilo—Sat., Dec. 14, 7:30 pm / Sun., Dec. 15, 4:00 pm

Bel Canto celebrates winter and the Christmas season with music for choir, strings, and piano, featuring the *Magnificat* of Antonio Vivaldi, pieces by Ola Gjeilo and Eric Whitacre, and settings of traditional English, Spanish, German, and Nigerian carols. *Admission by donation (\$15 suggested); more at www.belcantosingers.org.*

Upper Valley Music Center Messiah Sing!—Sunday, December 22, at 3:00 pm

Organized by UVMC’s voice faculty and directed by Mark Nelson, this annual performance of G. F. Handel’s beloved oratorio features student soloists and chamber orchestra. All are welcome to join the chorus (scores are available!) or just listen. *Free-will donation (\$20 suggested); more at uvmusic.org/event/messiah-sing.*

LOOKING TOWARD ADVENT

ADVENT IS COMING—PREPARE YE THE WAY!

Sunday, December 1, 11:00 am (Following Worship)—Christmas Decorating Party

Join us to hang wreaths, string lights, trim our tree, and have fun getting the church ready for the season.

Sunday, December 8, 4:00-6:00 pm—Christmas Party and Carol Sing at the Parsonage

All the congregation is invited to enjoy fellowship, delicious food, and good cheer on Kimball Street.

Tuesday, December 24—CHRISTMAS EVE: Family Service at 5:00, Lessons and Carols at 8:00

MUSIC FOR THE SEASON *(See previous page for more information.)*

Saturday, November 30, 7:00 pm—Cameo Baroque: Benefit for the Haven's 19 Days

Saturday, December 7, 7:00 pm—Upper Valley Voices: Spirits of Yule

Sunday, December 8, 2:00 pm—Classicopia: Four-Hand Holiday

Sat., Dec. 14, 7:30 pm / Sun., Dec. 15, 4:00 pm—Bel Canto Chamber Singers: In Dulci Jubilo

Sunday, December 22, 3:00 pm—Upper Valley Music Center Messiah Sing

Lebanon Downtown Holiday Celebration

Saturday, December 7

(Various locations throughout town, all day)

Lebanon Recreation and local businesses offer an impressive array of festivities around the Green, and the Upper Valley Music Center will present student recitals, caroling, and other events. **More details at lebanonnh.gov and uvmusic.org.**

CHRISTMAS COMES TO ALL The Holiday Basket Program



For years FCC has participated in the HOLIDAY BASKET PROGRAM organized by LISTEN Community Services. Demand for the program is as high as ever, as families struggle to provide warm clothing for their children and food for holiday meals. **There is always a wait list.**

LISTEN will again be using FCC space to manage the collection and distribution of gifts—a vast operation! While our church will donate that space, individuals in our congregation will also donate gift cards and new items from wish lists that families have supplied to LISTEN.

Gift lists will be emailed and posted in the Parish Hall. Thanks to all for giving to our neighbors in the true spirit of Christmas!

UCC Hurricane Relief

Following prolonged and staggering devastation in the Southeast, the United Church of Christ's Global HOPE team has appealed for help in addressing the needs of the many affected families and communities, in both urgent and long-term relief.

Donating online is the fastest and most effective way to contribute:

support.ucc.org/hurricane-helene-relief

You may also mail a check to the UCC (memo "Hurricanes 2024"), PO Box 71957, Cleveland, OH 44194.

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 • Music: music@fccleb.org • Newsletter Submissions: church@fccleb.org



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

10 South Park Street
PO Box 230
Lebanon, NH 03766

DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Stewardship 2025
Doing What Is Right and Just
Stewardship Sunday is November 17

CHRISTMAS COMES TO ALL
The LISTEN Holiday Basket Program
Support local families and seniors!



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

NOVEMBER CONCERTS

All in the Sanctuary. Masks welcome but optional.

The Anonymous Coffeehouse—Fridays, Nov. 8 and 22; Dec. 6; Jan. 3, 17, and 31; all at 7:30 pm

The Sunflower Quintet (Presented by UVMC)—Sunday, November 10, at 1:00 pm

Classicopia: Jewish Jazz—Saturday, November 16, at 7:30 pm

Upper Valley Music Center Community Chorus—Saturday, November 23, at 4:00 pm

Henry Danaher, Organ—Saturday, November 23, at 7:00 pm

Cameo Baroque: Benefit for the Upper Valley Haven's 19 Days—Saturday, November 30, at 7:00 pm

First Congregational Church of Lebanon

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organist and Choir Director • Brian Clancy, Church Administrator

Jon Scott, Chair of Church Council • Linda Gerlach, Chair of Deacons • Barbara Jones, Moderator

603-448-4281 • church@fccleb.org • prayer@fccleb.org • music@fccleb.org • www.fccleb.org