

Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

What's Inside

Welcome Back, Jo!6



A July Baptism.....7



Praise in the Park!7



Sunday Service2

Worship Exchange.....2

August Calendar3

Committee Notes.....4

Call for Micah Nominees4

Our Open Door5

Caregiving and Hospice.....5-6

Music at the Meetinghouse8

Musical Drama Camp!8

The Pastoral Perspective

On a bright, hot day in late July I stepped out of the parsonage and made my way to the blueberry bushes on the side of our house. These bushes (or, more aptly, small trees) are fecund—they produce more berries than I or my family could ever hope to eat. Fortunately, we have birds and other neighborhood critters to help us.

I picked some fresh berries, putting them into a container so I could store them. Whether I'll get around to eating all I picked is an open question. I can always go out and pick more. And the day will come when I can't. Blueberry season will be over before we know it.

Tempus fugit. "Time flies," goes the old saying. The days will race by and we'll find ourselves wondering where they have gone. August is a good time to stop, to catch our breath, to resolve that we will not be complicit in this quick dispatch of every day. We might take a different approach. *Carpe diem!* Seize the day.

That sounds like a call to action, but I think it is more of a cry to focus on the moment. We live in a world where the big moment, the grand gesture, the historic action are what we prize. But for most of us, most of the time, our days and nights are filled with small moments, little gestures, and unremarkable actions—yet this is the stuff of which our lives are made, these are the things that give our lives meaning. They are what God has blessed us with.

Picking blueberries may not change the world, but for a moment, they brought peace to my world. What are your blueberry moments? What avenues has God laid out for you to explore, to gain perspective, to grow, to be faithful? I'm sure they are there. Rather than highways, they will most likely be quiet lanes.

As we enjoy these last weeks of summer, let's give thanks to God for blueberries and all the other small things—the small wonders—that make life worth living.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

SUNDAY SERVICE

WORSHIP EXCHANGE WITH WEST LEBANON UCC

Sundays, August 4 and 18, 10:00 am

** Congregational Breakfast at 8:30 am **

Next month we will once again share worship with the West Lebanon Congregational Church. We will gather **August 4 at WLCC**, with the Rev. Jo Shelnuitt preaching and our Deacons serving communion. (*Note: there will be no worship service at FCC that morning.*) Two weeks later on **August 18 at FCC**, the Rev. Jeff Scott will preach.

BREAKFAST VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

The WLCC men's group has again offered to serve a congregational breakfast at 8:30 am on August 4. We would like to do the same on August 18, so please contact the church office if you're willing to cook, serve, or otherwise contribute. *Thanks!*

Do Your Part to Fill the Cart!

Greater Lebanon is struggling with rising poverty and food insecurity, especially among children. To address this need, we're now collecting contributions year-round in a shopping cart in the Parish Hall, with a different beneficiary designated each month.

During the month of August, we will be collecting non-perishable food and personal-care items on behalf of

THE UPPER VALLEY HAVEN

Thanks to all for fighting local poverty and hunger!

Queued for Coffee Hour

August—Christian Education

September—Diaconate

October—Mission and Social Action

**SEPTEMBER 15
KICK-OFF
SUNDAY!**

Plan to join us next month for the Blessing of the Backpacks, a new year of Church School, pizza and ice cream, and lots of outdoor fun.

We will also gratefully recognize NAN PARSONS as she begins her service as Church School Superintendent. Looking forward to a great year!

Community Dinner

Sunday, July 28, 5:00 pm

Leaders: THE SCOUTING PROGRAM

Thanks to our resident Scouting Troop and its volunteer leadership for organizing this month's dinner! Please lend them a hand as needed, as we again provide this vital service to our neighbors.

Sign-ups to be posted in the Parish Hall.

Would You Like to Participate in Worship?

FCC invites greater lay participation in our worship service. Congregation members already serve as greeter/ushers and liturgists and sing in our church choir. Additional possibilities include reading prayers, sharing stewardship messages, or even leading children's moments.

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

If you're interested in this opportunity, please contact the church office.

STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH

Special UCC Offering—September 8

The UCC's Strengthen the Church project supports the expansion of ministry and the growth of local congregations nationwide.

By renewing older spiritual communities, building new ones, and funding fellowships for young, emerging leaders in our church, this program has become vital to the health of our denomination.

Please give as you are able. Thanks!

AUGUST 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 10a Praise in the Park! (<i>Colburn Pk</i>) 11:15a Bd of Govs 5p Community Dinner Ulman Fund 4K (<i>group overnight</i>)	29 7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	30 5:30p OA Group No BSA Troop 279	31 3p Camerata NE Cello Class 4:20p Camerata NE Violin Class 6p UVPRN	1 6:30p UVIP Micah Ad Training 7p Valley Improv	2	3
4 <i>Worship Exchange Part 1—@ WLCC</i> 8:30a Breakfast 10a Worship (Communion) <i>(No worship service at FCC today.)</i> No MSA	5 9a Kitchen Use: M. Durand 7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	6 9a Kitchen Use: M. Durand No Diaconate 7p BSA Troop 279	7 3p Camerata NE Cello Class 4:20p Camerata NE Violin Class 5:30p Cub Scout Pack Committee 6p UVPRN	8 7p Valley Improv	9	10
11 10a Worship 2p The Fischer Duo 4p Classicopia: Great Amer Song	12 1-4p Musical Drama Camp!	13 1-4p Musical Drama Camp! 7p BSA Troop 279	14 1-4p Musical Drama Camp! 8a-4p NH-WIC 6p UVPRN No Christian Ed Committee	15 1-4p Musical Drama Camp! 12:30p Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Assn (CoCM) 7p Valley Improv	16 1-4p Musical Drama Camp! 5p Performance	17 7:30p Classicopia: Power of Four
18 <i>Worship Exchange Part 2—@ FCC</i> 8:30a Breakfast 10a Worship 5p Deux Saisons	19	20 7p Church Council 7p BSA Troop 279/Committee	21 6p UVPRN	22 10a-6p NH-WIC 7p Valley Improv	23	24
25 10a Worship 11:15a Bd of Govs 5p Community Dinner	26	27 6p Bel Canto Auditions 7p BSA Troop 279	28 6p UVPRN 6p Bel Canto Auditions	29 7p Valley Improv	30	31
1 10a Worship (Communion) 11:15a MSA	2 LABOR DAY 9a Kitchen Use: M. Durand	3 9a Kitchen Use: M. Durand 7p BSA Troop 279	4 9a Kitchen Use: M. Durand 5:30p Cub Scout Pack Committee 6p UVPRN	5 7p Valley Improv	6	7 1-3p Wings of Hope, Colburn Park (<i>FCC if rain</i>)

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

COMMITTEE NOTES

Board of Governors Completes "Summer Clean-up"

Following a productive Spring Clean-up in early June, the Board of Governors in July arranged for a dumpster to collect trash and a variety of unused or broken items, from the dirt cellar under the Sanctuary and other storage spaces in our building. Some of the items had lain dormant for years (or decades?), and clearing them out makes our building safer while also enabling the cellar insulation project to move forward. **Thanks to the volunteers who help identify and remove everything we discarded!**

We are grateful to CASELLA WASTE MANAGEMENT for donating and transporting the dumpster. (FCC paid only a fee for the amount of waste removed.) Thanks also to Brandon Mason for working with Casella and leading this project. Another job well done for the Board of Governors!



August Meetings

Diaconate	(NO MTG)
Mission/Social Action	(TBD)
Christian Education	(NO MTG)
Church Council	8/20, 7:00
Board of Governors	8/25, 11:15

September Meetings

Diaconate	9/3, 7:00
Mission/Social Action	9/8, 11:15
Christian Education	(TBD)
Church Council	9/17, 7:00
Board of Governors	9/22, 11:15

Call for Nominations — 8th 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 citizens who live into the prophet's words in an exemplary manner—people who consistently contribute time and energy to community service, reliably volunteer themselves for a vital cause, and offer their community a living role model of faith in service. Each UVIP member organization is invited to recognize its own Micah Honoree every year.

All are welcome to nominate members of our congregation who best represent the spirit of the Micah Awards (only previous winners are ineligible: Ron Bailey, Pete Mason, the Teeters, Kathy Beckett, and the Jacobs). The individual with the most votes will be our congregation's Micah Honoree for 2019.

Nominations (up to three per person) must be submitted to the church office no later than TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3. Please contact the church office with any questions.



NHC-UCC ANNUAL MEETING 2019

Step Up and Speak Out: From Complicity to Courage

Saturday, October 19, 8:00–4:30 / Registration Opens August 26
Grappone Conference Center, Concord, NH

For complete details and registration information, please visit the meeting page on the NH Conference website (www.nhcucc.org/conference-ministries/2019-annual-meeting).

Our Open Door Ministry

Supporting Our Community, One Gift Card at a Time

Throughout the year, our neighbors come to the church office seeking assistance. Whether it's a tank of gas for the car, some food for dinner, or a payment toward rent or an electric bill, our congregation is able to help, thanks to the **OPEN DOOR MINISTRY**. Available to anyone in Lebanon and surrounding towns, this ministry is one of the most vital services we extend to our community.

We don't ask questions about need or use; the "Open" Door is just that. We do ask that people wait four-to-six months between requests, only because the overall need is so great. FCC has been able to respond to that need for years, but we *never* have enough to assist all those who need it—and **demand has increased considerably over the past six years, during which time we've helped over 350 people.**

Those who seek help from us haven't been irresponsible or lazy, and the large majority (about 75%) request assistance just once or twice. With just occasional exceptions, they don't become dependent or try to take advantage of the program. Some are chronically homeless; some have just been evicted for reasons beyond their control. Sometimes they've just moved to the area and need a hand getting started; sometimes they've lost a job or just started a new one. Some are driving to and from the hospital more often because they're caring for a family member; some have been referred to us by a counselor at WISE. **All are our neighbors.**



The Open Door is kept open by contributions to the monthly Communion Offering, with which we purchase \$25 gift cards for gas and food from **JAKE'S** and **PRICE CHOPPER**, respectively. This is supplemented by the Mission and Social Action Fund (from the Dole Trust), which provides modest assistance for rent and utilities. **In any of these cases, our ability to support those in need depends on you, our congregation. Because you give each month, we can help a lot of people. Your neighbors thank you!**

For more details, please contact your Deacon or the church office.



Powerful Tools for Caregivers

A Course Offered by Service Link of Grafton County

Thursdays, August 22—September 26, 1:00-3:30 pm

Upper Valley Senior Center, 10 Campbell St, Lebanon



If you or someone you know is actively serving as a caregiver for someone with a chronic illness, Service Link offers this free, six-week class designed to provide caregivers with essential tools for taking care of themselves. Participants will learn to reduce stress, improve self-confidence, better communicate feelings, sharpen decision-making abilities, find balance in life, and locate helpful resources.

For more information and registration, contact the DHMC Aging Resource Center at 603-653-3460 or agingcenter@hitchcock.org.

OUR LOCAL AND GLOBAL MISSION



Wings of Hope

**10th Annual
Butterfly Release
Benefiting VNH Hospice**

**Saturday, September 7, 1-3 pm
Colburn Park (Rain Location: FCC)**

The Visiting Nurse and Hospice for VT/NH again offers this memorial and benefit event, honoring those who have benefited from hospice care. To participate, you may purchase butterflies to be released for \$20 each, or simply attend as a spectator.

**For more information, call 888-300-8853
or visit vnhcare.org/wings-of-hope/.**

Lake Sunapee Region VNA & Hospice Hospice Volunteer Training

Lake Sunapee Region VNA seeks volunteers to help support patients and their loved ones in their time of need. We also welcome those who have served in the military to serve as companions for our veteran clients. Once trained, volunteers may serve as much or as little as their schedule allows.

This FREE, 16-hour training program will be held at Trinity Episcopal Church, 120 Broad St, Claremont, on the following schedule:

**Saturday, September 7, 9:00-Noon
Wednesday, September 11, 5:30-8:00 pm
Wednesday, September 18, 5:30-8:00 pm
Saturday, September 21, 9:00-Noon
Wednesday, September 25, 5:30-8:00 pm
Wednesday, October 2, 5:30-8:00 pm**

**RSVP by August 23 to Lori O'Connor
(603-526-4077/loconnor@lakesunapeevna.org)**



SUPPORT FOR EPILOGOS AND GIFTS FROM AMOS.

On June 23 we presented our annual donation for school scholarships in SJV, El Salvador, to Mike and Susie Jenkins. In July, Jo Shelnett began her tenure as guest preacher with one of the engaging children's moments she does so well.



THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



A JULY BAPTISM AND PLEASANT PRAISE. On July 14 we celebrated the baptism of Claire Thomson, with proud mother Leslie and extended family and friends looking on. Two weeks later we enjoyed enough of a break from summer heat and humidity to worship once again with our Methodist friends in Colburn Park.



MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

AUGUST CONCERTS

All in the Sanctuary, FCC

The Fischer Duo: Presented by UVMC—Sunday, August 11, 2:00 pm

Upper Valley Music Center presents this special appearance by cellist Norman Fischer and pianist Jeanne Kierman. The renowned duo will play music of François Couperin, Lili Boulanger, Maurice Ravel, Ludwig van Beethoven, and Robert Schumann. *Adults \$25, under 18 free; for more, visit uvmusic.org/events.*

Classicopia: The Great American Songbook—Sunday, August 11, 4:00 pm

Pianist Dan Weiser and beloved mezzo-soprano Erma Mellinger offer a delightful program of favorites by Irving Berlin, Richard Rodgers, George Gershwin, Jerome Kern, and many more. Come enjoy an afternoon with this engaging pair of musicians! *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; for more, visit classicopia.org.*

Classicopia: The Power of Four—Saturday, August 17, 7:30 pm

Dan Weiser welcomes violinist Ralph Allen, violist Sarah Hill, and cellist Iris Jortner for an evening of sublime piano quartets by Robert Schumann and Gabriel Fauré. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free.*

Deux Saisons: Christopher Schoelen and Keri Lee Pierson—Sunday, August 18, 5:00 pm

South Carolina-based classical guitarist Christopher Schoelen and soprano Keri Lee Pierson range from the Renaissance to the present, presenting music by Dowland, Giuliani, and Britten, as well as pieces written for this award-winning duo. *Suggested donation \$10-25; for more, please visit christopherschoelen.com.*

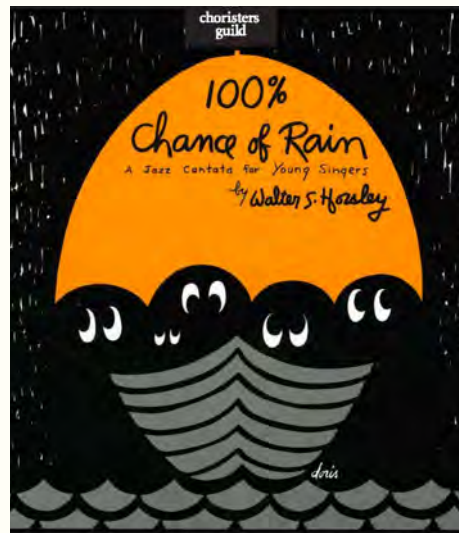
Musical Drama Camp Returns This Month!

100 Percent Chance of Rain

Monday-Friday, August 12-16, 1:00-4:00 pm Daily
(Performance and Dinner—Friday at 5:00)

We're excited to bring back FCC's Musical Drama Camp, again led by the Rev. Jo Shelnutt, Henry Danaher, and congregational volunteers. Campers will spend the week enjoying fun activities and working on a production of *100 Percent Chance of Rain*, a jazzy, humorous, uplifting retelling of the story of Noah's Ark. On Friday afternoon the group will share an open performance for family, friends, and anyone else from our congregation who'd like to come, followed by a pizza dinner.

ALL CHILDREN AGES 6-12 ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE. Campers need not be FCC members or have a prior connection to our congregation—they just have to be ready to have a great time! **THERE IS NO COST,** although free-will donations to support our Christian Education ministry are gratefully welcome. Please contact the office with questions, or if you're interested in volunteering!



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

**WORSHIP EXCHANGE
WITH WEST LEBANON UCC**

Sunday, August 4—at WLCC

Sunday, August 18—at FCC

Joint Worship Services at 10:00 am

** Congregational Breakfast at 8:30 am **

FCC's Musical Drama Camp Returns!

100 Percent Chance of Rain

Monday-Friday, August 12-16

1:00-4:00 pm Daily, Performance Friday at 5:00

All Children 6-12 Welcome!



**Music
at the
Meetinghouse**

AUGUST CONCERTS

All in the Sanctuary, FCC

The Fischer Duo: Presented by UVMC—Sunday, August 11, 2:00 pm

Adults \$25, under 18 free; for more information, please visit uvmusic.org/events.

Classicopia: The Great American Songbook—Sunday, August 11, 4:00 pm

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