

First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ

DECEMBER 2016

Grace Notes

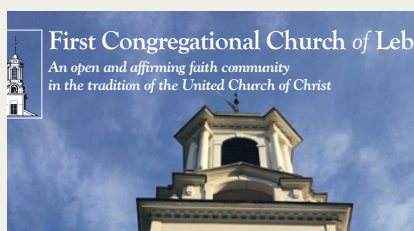
The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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The Pastoral Perspective

No.

No. No. No.

That is what I thought when I saw the sweater in the children's department at Target. In a world awash with cynicism and snark, this attempt at seasonal whimsy seemed so wrong, so contrary to the message of joy and possibility that is at the heart of the Christmas story. It was, to be honest, kind of depressing. But it was also a reminder of the witness to which the church is called in today's world.



There are lots of reasons for people to grouse, to worry about the state of affairs, to wish things were different. Hunger, hate, war, and suffering are still with us, along with greed, violence, and cruelty. Our civic discourse is angry and coarse. If in the past we had an Age of Reason, our contemporary era seems on track to be remembered as the Age of Cynicism.

There is, though, a different way, a healthier, holier approach to living—one we are called to contemplate, anticipate, and prepare for during this Advent Season. Rather than be captive to the oh-so-knowing, snide zeitgeist, we can embrace our call as Children of Light, as followers of Jesus. We can rededicate ourselves to furthering the Gospel's message of hope, to living as disciples of the One who offered the perfect expression and embodiment of that hope through his birth, life, death, and resurrection.

To do so requires making a choice, even taking a stand. It doesn't mean being naïve or ignoring the challenges that face us as individuals and as a society. But by opting to be an Advent people, a community that eagerly awaits the arrival of Emmanuel, God With Us, we join with all

Continued on Page 6

SUNDAY SERVICE



Poinsettias FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

If you wish to offer poinsettias for the Sanctuary in honor or memory of someone, you may either donate your own flowers or order them through the church office. The church will be purchasing 6-inch poinsettias from Longacre's for \$14 each.

If you would like to be included in the church's poinsettia order, please contact the church office no later than Friday, December 9.

If you plan to donate your own flowers, please deliver them to church by Sunday, December 18.

All dedications must be received by Thursday, December 15. Dedications will be listed in bulletins on Sunday, December 18, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.

New Members Welcome!

Have you worshiped with us a few times? Have you returned because you've found a welcoming, spiritually nourishing church home here? If so, we warmly invite you to join our community of faith as a covenant member.

If you would like to learn more about this invitation, please speak with Rev. Steve Silver or contact the church office.

Participate in Worship!

Serve as a Liturgist or Greeter/Usher

No experience or special training is required for these important roles in leading worship! If you'd like to serve in either capacity, please contact the church office.

*** We are particularly in need of liturgists! ***

Your congregation will thank you!

CHRISTMAS COMMUNITY DINNER

Sunday, December 25, 5:00 pm

Leader: NAN PARSONS

Thanks to Nan for leading this holiday effort, a vital service to our neighbors. Nan is asking for help with ingredients, serving, and clean-up—as well as a small Christmas gift for each guest.

Please participate! Sign-ups will be posted on the Missions board in the Parish Hall.

New Year, New Leaders!

We are grateful to have a consistent group of dedicated leaders who generously commit time and resources to our Community Dinners.

We would love to expand that group!

Please consider organizing a meal in 2017. There are menu resources available, and the Community Dinner Fund helps cover costs.

Below are our dinner dates in 2017. If you are interested in leading or have questions, please contact the church office.

January 22	(open)
February 26	Marcy Chong
March 26	John Gilliatt
April 23	Christian Education
May 28	Women of the Church
June 25	The Ellisons
July 23	(open)
August 27	(open)
September 24	Women of the Church
October 22	Christian Education
November 26	(open)
December 24	Nan Parsons

Queued for Coffee Hour

December—Board of Governors

January—Stewardship (Help Needed!)

February—Christian Education Committee

D E C E M B E R 2 0 1 6

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 ADVENT 1 10a Worship and Church School 11:15a Christmas Decorating Party 5p Community Dinner 7p K. Andrew Student Recital	28 5:30p Cub Scouts (Tigers) 5:45p Cub Scouts (Wolves)	29 5:45p Cub Scouts (Webelos) 7p Boy Scouts	30 6p UVPRN	1 7p Choir	2	3 8a Men's Breakfast 10a Juneberry Music Class 7:30p Classicopia: Vagabond Violin
4 ADVENT 2 10a Worship (Communion) and Church School 11:15a MSA 2p Juneberry Comm Chorus 5p FCC Choir at La Salette	5 3p WCBH After-school Group 5:30p Cub Scouts (Tigers) 5:45p Cub Scouts (Wolves)	6 5:45p Cub Scouts (Webelos) 7p Boy Scouts	7 6p UVPRN	8 9:30a-4p Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Assn 5p Pastoral Relations Committee 7p Choir	9	10 10a Juneberry Music Class 7p FCC Movie Night!
11 ADVENT 3 10a Worship and Church School 4p Christmas Party at the Parsonage 7:30p Cafaro/Borowsky Concert	12 5:30p Cub Scouts (Tigers) 5:45p Cub Scouts (Wolves) 7p Diaconate	13 5:45p Cub Scouts (Webelos) 7p Church Council (<i>revised date</i>) 7p Boy Scouts/Troop Committee	14 8a-4p NH-WIC 6p UVPRN 6:30p Christian Ed Committee	15 7p Choir	16 7p William Ögmundson Concert	17 No Juneberry Music Class 1:30p UVIP Multi-Team Mtg
18 ADVENT 4 8:30a Blue Christmas 10a Worship and Church School 11:15a Board of Governors 11:30a Community Caroling 6:30p Messiah Sing!	19 3p WCBH After-school Group	20 No Church Council (<i>moved to 12/13</i>) 7p Boy Scouts JANUARY NEWSLETTER CONTENT DUE	21 5:30p Homeless Memorial Vigil at Tri-County CAP 6p UVPRN	22 7p Choir	23	24 CHRISTMAS EVE 5p Family Service 8p Lessons and Carols 11p Candlelight Communion
25 CHRISTMAS 10a Worship and Church School 5p Community Dinner	26	27 No Boy Scouts	28 6p UVPRN	29 10a-6p NH-WIC No Choir	30	31 No Juneberry Music Class

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

CELEBRATE THE SEASON

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS AT FCC

Please join us as we celebrate Advent and prepare to welcome the Christ child!

Saturday, December 10, 6:00 pm—(It's a Wonderful) Movie Night at FCC! (see page 7)

Sunday, December 11, 4:00 pm—Christmas Party and Carol Sing at the Parsonage (see below)

Sunday, December 11, 7:30 pm—Bob Cafaro and Elizabeth Borowsky (see page 9)

Friday, December 16, 7:00 pm—Christmas with William Ögmundson (see page 9)

Sunday, December 18, 8:30 am—"Blue Christmas" Morning Communion (see below)

Sunday, December 18, 11:30 am—FCC Community Caroling (see below)

Sunday, December 18, 6:30 pm—Messiah Sing! (see page 9)

Wednesday, December 21, 5:30 pm—Homeless Memorial Vigil at Tri-County CAP (see page 8)

Saturday, December 24—CHRISTMAS EVE

5:00 pm—Family Service

A time for Christmas song and story for families and the young at heart. Kids are invited to participate in a pageant and living crèche (prep at 4:00).

8:00 pm—Lessons and Carols

The story of our Savior's birth in lessons from Scripture and traditional carols.

11:00 pm—Candlelight Communion

A service of light and song, rejoicing in Christ's birth with the celebration of the Lord's Supper.



Sunday, December 25, 10:00 am—CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP

Sunday, December 25, 5:00 pm—CHRISTMAS COMMUNITY DINNER

Church Christmas Party and Carol Sing at the Parsonage!

Sunday, December 11, 4:00-6:00 pm—15 Kimball Street (Corner of Kimball/Elm)

All are warmly invited to the Parsonage for some pre-Christmas cheer! We'll gather around the fireplace for fellowship, song, and seasonal fun. You are welcome to bring an appetizer or dessert to share.

Blue Christmas Morning Communion

Sunday, December 18, 8:30 am, in the Parlor

For those carrying burdens or dealing with loss, this can be a challenging time of year. Join us for this brief, intimate communion service, a chance for quiet reflection on the hopeful light of Christ, as we approach the darkness of the Winter Solstice.

Caroling in Our Community

Sunday, December 18, 11:30 am

(Following Coffee Hour)

Plan to join us for this annual Christmas ministry, as we share favorite carols with homebound (but enthusiastic and grateful!) church members and neighbors around town.

COMMITTEE NOTES

DIACONATE

At their November meeting the Deacons discussed **new materials to welcome members**, opting to provide three separate documents: an updated pew brochure for visitors, a “Frequently Asked Questions” document to be put on the FCC website, and a welcome packet for new members. One FAQ, with a response, will be offered in each monthly newsletter.

Linda Jacobs recently stepped down from her leadership of the **Called to Care** program. The mission of this ministry, as described by Barb Teeter, has been to reach out to individuals who can no longer attend FCC but who wish to remain connected to the church. As active participation in the program has gradually declined, it was decided that the Deacons could assume the duties of this ministry and allow Called to Care to be retired. Steve Silver will keep a list of those desiring to benefit from this lay pastoral care. Further discussion will follow.

The Deacons also discussed their leadership of Sunday afternoon services at **Genesis** during the month of November. It’s likely this program will be repeated in 2017. Responding to an issue raised in worship during Joys and Concerns, they also approved the purchase of several **personal listening devices** to aid hearing in the Sanctuary.

Susan Montmagny reported that there are currently about 1300

Open and Affirming (ONA) churches in the UCC, which represents 27% of UCC churches overall. While the movement is strong and going forward, prayers are requested for continuing progress. As previously approved, a rainbow stripe for our sign on the front lawn will be ordered soon, to designate FCC as an ONA church. Steve Silver would also like to join

with the Dartmouth Campus Ministry in reaching out to the college’s LGBTQ community, particularly graduate students who may live in the Lebanon area.

Biff Simpson reported on the need for a new DVD player, for **Movie Night** and other events. The Deacons have decided to offer a Movie Night every other month through June.

December Meetings

Mission/Social Action	12/4, 11:15
Pastoral Relations	12/8, 5:00
Diaconate	12/12, 7:00
Church Council	12/13, 7:00
Christian Education	12/14, 6:30
Board of Governors	12/18, 11:15

January Meetings

Mission/Social Action	1/8, 11:15
Diaconate	1/9, 7:00
Christian Education	1/11, 6:30
Church Council	1/17, 7:00
Board of Governors	1/22, 11:15

From Church Council and the Nominating Committee

Are You Being Served?

Have you found an ideal service opportunity for yourself at FCC? Have you considered working on a new program or committee?

Do you have creative ideas for aspects of congregational life or governance? We want to know!

If you’re interested in an FCC program or committee, please contact the church office or **Amy Driscoll (603-448-0976 or amykdriscoll@gmail.com)**.

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Thursday, December 8, 5:00 pm

FCC’s Pastoral Relations Committee will meet this month. If you have comments, feedback, questions, or other matters that you’d like to share with the committee prior to their meeting, **please contact one of its members—Nan Parsons (acting chair), Barbara Jones, Jon Scott, Wendell Smith, or Steve Silver.**

Please note:

CONTENT FOR THE 2016 ANNUAL REPORT
must be submitted to the Church Administrator by
Monday, January 9, 2017

COMMITTEE NOTES

Stewardship 2017 **Sing to the Lord!** **Worship, Giving, Service**

In 2 Samuel 6 we read of the joyful abandon and prayerful generosity that David exhibited when he brought the ark to its new home. Giving, prayer, and exuberance all inspired a moment of ecstatic worship. Each fall we are encouraged to consider the many gifts, large and small, that we receive from our amazingly generous God. This year, may we respond to that generosity, like David, in a spirit of joyful thanksgiving. Let us be inspired by David's example to pray, to serve, and to give with a sense of life-affirming, joyous possibility.

We come to know the joy of the Christian life through the love of God, a redemptive, never-ending, life-sustaining, and freely given gift. This joy inspires us to be active stewards, returning to God and giving to God's people some of what he has so generously shared with us.

Please consider your commitment, prayerfully and honestly, to FCC's mission and ministry in 2017.

Offering envelopes for 2017 are available in the Parish Hall. Once you've submitted a pledge form, please take whichever box you wish and record your name and number on the list.

Which Offering Is Which?

As any semi-regular visitor to Sunday worship knows, our stewardship effort asks us to consider a variety of offering collections throughout the year. It's helpful to recognize that each offering serves a distinct purpose:

Regular offering—Collected every Sunday, and treated as general, unrestricted support for FCC's operations, ministries, and programming. This includes all stewardship pledges and payments.

Communion offering—Collected every first Sunday of the month, directly supporting the Diaconate's Open-Door Ministry for community assistance (primarily gas and grocery cards) or occasionally designated for a specific mission need. Any contribution received in a communion envelope goes to this fund.

Special UCC offerings (e.g., One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, Christmas Fund)—Each collected once annually, as part of a national or international campaign for a particular mission or service cause.

***No matter which envelopes we use,
THANKS TO ALL for so generously and
consistently supporting this diversity of
purposes, here at FCC and far beyond!***

The Pastoral Perspective, *continued from Page 1*

of those who, throughout the ages, have taken seriously the promises made by the God of Israel, the commitment that the church confesses was fulfilled in Jesus.

So let's try a different approach. During this Advent and then in the Christmastide that follows, let us give thanks to God and celebrate with abandon all he has done for us, especially his coming in Jesus, the infant born in Bethlehem. Instead of putting on a clever sweater, let us put on the mantle of love that our Creator gave us on a night long ago—that he continues to give us in this very hour.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION

MOVIE NIGHT AT FCC!

Saturday, December 10, 6:00 pm

Featuring *It's a Wonderful Life*

All are invited to share this Christmas classic for all ages! Come as you are, even if that's in PJ's with pillows and blankets. Popcorn and beverages provided. Please bring favorite snacks or other items to share—and your friends! All are welcome!



The Perfect Gift for Our Congregation... FCC's New Church Directory!



Our new church directory is here! Printed directories were delivered as expected to FCC on December 7; they may be picked up anytime. Thanks again to everyone for your patience!

Everyone in our congregation is entitled to a copy of the directory, whether or not you're a full member—you don't even have to be listed in it! (One per household, please.)

Now we can all send Christmas cards, right?

Donate to FCC's “Nearly New” Christmas Sale!

*Too many Christmas decorations? Trying to downsize?
The Women of the Church have just the answer!*

In November 2017 we plan to host a “Nearly New” Christmas sale. As you decorate this month—and put things away next month—keep us in mind for any gently-used items you might like to donate to raise funds for mission projects at FCC. The only requirement is that items be in fairly good condition; donations may be stored at the church for the year.

Let's make this a fun, successful day for the WOC, the congregation, and the community!

Questions? Please contact Corrine Erskine at 603-448-3919 or cerskine2@yahoo.com.



KEEPING OUR KITCHEN SAFE AND HEALTHY. Jim Oronte leads an informal discussion of best practices in our well-used church kitchen, in early November. Thanks, Jim!

OUR LOCAL AND GLOBAL MISSION

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

First Congregational Church extends its warmest wishes for a blessed Christmas season and a peaceful, prosperous new year to all those who use our building for regular events:

Boy Scout Troop 279 / Cub Scout Pack 279

The Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Association

Juneberry Music School and Chorus

Lebanon Recreation Department

NH Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

United Valley Interfaith Project

UV Professional Resource Network

West Central Behavioral Health

White River Valley Ambulance

...and the many performers in our

Music at the Meetinghouse Series

27th Annual Homeless Memorial Vigil

Wednesday, December 21, at 5:30 pm

TRI-COUNTY CAP OFFICE

57 Mechanic Street, Lebanon

All are welcome to share in this important annual observance—on the longest night of the year—in commemoration of all those in New Hampshire who have lost their lives during the previous year because they've lacked an adequate, stable place to live. Donations of non-perishable food items will be gratefully accepted.

For more information, please contact the Tri-County Community Action Program at 603-443-6150.

THANK YOU!

First Congregational Church is grateful to the **BYRNE FOUNDATION** for a significant grant toward the purchase of **two AED units**, which are expected to be installed in early January. This grant finally enables our congregation to acquire this vital, effective lifesaving device, addressing a long-felt need initially inspired by a gift in memory of Dr. Gordon Place.

Thanksgiving Community Dinner

November 27

Some of our children serve a holiday meal of Marcy Chong's delicious turkey meatloaf. Yum!

**Interested in
helping in the
New Year?
See Page 2...**



Epilogos Returns to El Salvador

February 23/24 to March 3, 2017



Epilogos Charities, Inc., is once again managing mission trips to San Jose Villanueva, El Salvador—a town very dear to our congregation. While it's uncertain when we might plan FCC's next trip on our own, there is one from the Upper Valley scheduled for next February.

If you're interested in joining this trip, please contact Ignatius MacLellan at 603-203-6677 or igpax@comcast.net, as soon as possible.

Additional information (cost estimates and other details) available in the church office.

MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music at the Meetinghouse

DECEMBER CONCERTS

In the Sanctuary, First Congregational Church

Classicopia: Vagabond Violin—Saturday, December 3, at 7:30 pm

Violinist Paul Chou joins pianist Dan Weiser for folk-influenced music by Bedrich Smetana, Manuel de Falla, Edvard Grieg, Fritz Kreisler, and George Gershwin.

Bob Cafaro and Elizabeth Borowsky—Sunday, December 11, at 7:30 pm

Locally based, internationally renowned pianist Elizabeth Borowsky welcomes Bob Cafaro, Philadelphia Orchestra cellist and author of *When the Music Stopped*, which follows Bob's inspiring success in battling multiple sclerosis. Copies of the book will be available for purchase and signing.

Christmas with William Ögmundson—Friday, December 16, at 7:00 pm

Former FCC music director Will Ögmundson helps us celebrate the season of Advent with another lively program, including a number of virtuosic new arrangements of familiar carols and seasonal songs. He may also offer us a gift-wrapped audience-request medley!

Messiah Sing!—Sunday, December 18, at 6:30 pm

Organized by Jennifer Hansen and conducted by Jane Woods, this annual tradition features local soloists and chamber orchestra. All are welcome to come and listen, or even join the chorus (scores available!).

Music at the Meetinghouse PRESENTS



Bob Cafaro
cello



Elizabeth Borowsky
piano

Music of J. S. Bach, Franz Schubert,
Robert Schumann, and David Popper

Sunday, December 11, at 7:30 pm
First Congregational Church of Lebanon

Free-will Donation
ALL ARE WELCOME!

Music at the Meetinghouse

First Congregational Church of Lebanon
10 South Park St. • PO Box 230 • Lebanon, NH 03766
(603) 448-4281 • www.fccleb.org • church@fccleb.org

Music at the Meetinghouse PRESENTS

CHRISTMAS
WITH
WILLIAM ÖGMUNDSON
PIANO

Virtuosity and Delight in New Arrangements
of Familiar Carols and Songs

Friday, December 16, at 7:00 pm
First Congregational Church of Lebanon

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UPPER VALLEY MUSIC CENTER



Join friends and neighbors for a seasonal favorite
and bring this great choral-orchestral masterpiece to life!

Messiah Sing
with ORCHESTRA

Sing in the Chorus, Play in the Orchestra!

Sunday, December 18 | 6:30 pm
First Congregational Church of Lebanon
10 South Park St, Lebanon, NH

Handel's Messiah
Jane Woods, conductor
Soloists from the vocal studios of Jennifer Hansen and Julie Ness
Assisted by UVMC faculty on violin, viola, cello, bass, percussion and keyboard - and YOU!




Sing, Play, Celebrate!
It's a wonderful, participatory music event,
and there's going to be an orchestra!

3 Ways to Participate:

ORCHESTRA Orchestral Musicians (all strings, oboe, bassoon). Register online at www.ummusic.org by December 16 so we can provide a chair and music for you! \$10 participation/production fee.	CHORUS Choral Singers: Just show up or register online at www.ummusic.org . \$10 participation fee covers a score for you to use and production costs.	AUDIENCE Just want to enjoy the beautiful music and wonderful community gathering? Admission is free - donations appreciated. Tickets available at the door.
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be curious. be challenged. be inspired.

Upper Valley Music Center • 63 Harwood St. • PO Box 820 • Lebanon, NH 03766 • (603) 448-1642 • www.ummusic.org

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

DATED MATERIAL

PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS AT FCC

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