



# Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

1768 • CELEBRATING 250 YEARS • 2018

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## The Pastoral Perspective

Once again Advent has arrived, and we prepare. To wait. And wait. And wait. Doesn't sound exciting, does it? Most of us want to get going, right now. Bring on Christmas, with its carols, its presents, its parties, now. But before you down that glass of eggnog, I invite you to pause for a moment, to consider this season of Advent.

Advent is not simply "pre-Christmas." It has its own hymns and rhythms that seek to ground us and prepare us for what is to come, for what has already come: the birth of the Christ Child, the arrival of God in our world.

Seriously, are we ready for this right now? Do we truly understand the implications of what will happen on Christmas Eve? Given that we've been killing and slandering and misconstruing the Gospel for 2,000 years, I think not. We still need time to contemplate what this all means. We still need to clear the decks, sit quietly, and listen.

When you do so, you may hear a loud, clear call from God. You may hear a gentle whisper. Or, perhaps, something that is unintelligible. You may even hear nothing. Each person's experience of Advent will be different. Yet we all share in common a belief that it's not about us talking, what we have to say. Instead, Advent is about preparing for the amazing thing God does for us in Jesus Christ. It is about listening.

One phrase I've struggled with over the years is "active listening." The implication is that there is "inactive listening." But maybe the modifier makes sense. It involves a focus on listening, on exerting ourselves to hear, to pay attention to the Word of God.

If we're to give ourselves a gift this season, it should be to listen. To God. To the Holy Spirit. To Jesus. To other people in our lives. To our hearts. What we may hear may surprise us, discomfort us, put us at ease, free us. So take a moment to be quiet, to listen. There's not much time before Christmas arrives. But rather than rush, wait. Take advantage of the blessings of this Advent.

Yours faithfully,

*Steve*

### **Advent Devotional Reflections**

If you'd like to get Rev. Steve Silver's daily devotional messages by email during Advent, please let him know or email [silver@fccleb.org](mailto:silver@fccleb.org).

# SUNDAY SERVICE

## Christmas Decorating Party!

Following Worship on Sunday, December 2

Plan to stay after worship to hang wreaths, string lights, trim our tree, and have fun getting the church ready for this festive season.

*No need to RSVP, but please bring some refreshments or treats to share!*

## New Members Welcome!

Have you worshiped with us a few times? Have you 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.*

## Would You Like to Participate in Worship?

The Diaconate and Rev. Steve Silver invite greater lay participation in our worship service. Members of our congregation already sing in our choir and serve as greeters, ushers, and liturgists. Additional roles for lay leadership include reading the prayers of invocation or dedication, sharing stewardship messages, or even leading children's moments.

*No experience or training is required to serve in these important worship roles!*

If you're interested in this opportunity to serve, please speak with a deacon or Rev. Silver, or just contact the church office.

## 2019 Annual Meeting and Potluck

Sunday, February 10—Following Worship

### Queued for Coffee Hour

December—Board of Governors

January—Stewardship Committee

February—Christian Education Committee



## 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 or order them through the church office. FCC will be purchasing both 6-inch (\$6) and 8-inch (\$13) poinsettias this year.

If you would like to be included in the church's poinsettia order, please contact the office no later than Wednesday, December 12.

If you plan to donate your own flowers, please bring them to church by Sunday, December 16.

All dedications must be received by Monday, December 17. Dedications will be listed in bulletins on Sunday, December 23, and on Christmas Eve.

## Christmas Community Dinner

Sunday, December 23, 5:00 pm

Leader: NAN PARSONS

Thanks to Nan Parsons for once again organizing the Christmas Community Dinner! Please lend a hand to provide this vital service to our neighbors, especially if you'd like to help for the first time.

Sign-ups will soon be posted in the Parish Hall.

## New Year, New Leaders!

We are always hoping to expand the group of dedicated leaders who generously commit their time and resources to our Community Dinners.

*Please consider organizing a meal in 2019!*

Menu resources are available, and a Community Dinner Fund helps cover costs. Below are the 2019 dates still available. If you're interested in leading or have questions, contact the church office.

June 23      July 28      November 24

*Thanks to those who recently volunteered for a month in 2019!*

# DECEMBER 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>25</b> STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY 10a Worship 11:15a Bd of Govs 5p Comm Dinner	<b>26</b> 3p WCBH After-school Group 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bears/Webelos/Girls)	<b>27</b> 7p Boy Scouts/Cubs (AofL)	<b>28</b> 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	<b>29</b> 10a-6p NH-WIC 2:30p WCBH After-school 7p Choir 7p Student Recital	<b>30</b>	<b>1</b> 8a Men's Breakfast
<b>2 ADVENT 1</b> 10a Worship and Church School (Communion) 11:30a Christmas Decorating 2p Classicopia: Spanish Serenade	<b>3</b> 3p WCBH After-school Group 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bears/Webelos/Girls)	<b>4</b> 7p Boy Scouts/Cubs (AofL)	<b>5</b> 5:30p Cub Scout Pack Committee 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	<b>6</b> 2:30p WCBH After-school 7p Choir	<b>7</b> 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	<b>8</b> 7:30p Bel Canto: Last Month of the Year
<b>9 ADVENT 2</b> 10a Worship and Church School 11:30a Community Caroling 4p Bel Canto: Last Month of the Year	<b>10</b> 3p WCBH After-school Group 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bears/Webelos/Girls) 7p Diaconate	<b>11</b> 7p Boy Scouts/Cubs (AofL)	<b>12</b> 8a-4p NH-WIC 6p UVPRN 7:15p Christian Ed Committee	<b>13</b> 12:30p G-O-S Assn (CoCM) 2:30p WCBH After-school 5:45p Cub Scouts (Lions) 7p Choir	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 3-6p Messiah Rehearsals
<b>16 ADVENT 3</b> 10a Worship and Church School 1p Parsonage Christmas Party 3:30p UVMC Messiah Sing!	<b>17</b> 3p WCBH After-school Group	<b>18</b> 7p Church Council 7p Boy Scouts/Troop Committee/Cubs (AofL)	<b>19</b> 6p UVPRN	<b>20</b> 2:30p WCBH After-school 7p Choir	<b>21</b> 7p Soir d'Automne: An Evening of French Music	<b>22</b>
<b>23 ADVENT 4</b> 10a Worship and Church School 11:15a Bd of Govs 5p Community Dinner	<b>24</b> CHRISTMAS EVE 5p Family Svc 8p Lessons/Carols 11p Candlelight Communion	<b>25</b> CHRISTMAS DAY	<b>26</b> 6p UVPRN	<b>27</b> 10a-6p NH-WIC No Choir	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> 10a Worship and Church School	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b> NEW YEAR'S DAY	<b>2</b> 6p UVPRN	<b>3</b> 2:30p WCBH After-school 7p Choir	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 8a Men's Breakfast

If your event is missing or incorrect, please notify us at [church@fccleb.org](mailto: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!*

Four Sundays, December 2 through 23, 10:00 am—Advent Worship and Church School

Sunday, December 2, 11:30 am—Christmas Decorating Party (Page 2)

Sat., Dec. 8, 7:30 / Sun., Dec. 9, 4:00—Bel Canto Chamber Singers: Last Month of the Year (Page 8)

Sunday, December 9, 11:30 am—FCC Community Caroling (Below)

Wednesday, December 12, 6:30 pm—Blue Christmas Service at WLCC (Below)

Sunday, December 16, 1:00 pm—Christmas Party and Carol Sing at the Parsonage (Below)

Sunday, December 16, 3:30 pm (Note earlier time!)—UVMC Messiah Sing (Page 8)

Friday, December 21, 7:00 pm—Blue Christmas Service at LUMC (Below)

Sunday, December 23, 5:00 pm—Christmas Community Dinner (Page 2)

### MONDAY, DECEMBER 24—CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

#### 5:00 pm—Family Service and Pageant

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.



## Christmas Party and Carol Sing at the Parsonage!

Sunday, December 16, 1:00-3:00 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. Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share. (Note earlier time.)

### Community Caroling

Sunday, December 9, 11:30 am

(Following Coffee Hour)

Join us for this Christmas ministry as we share favorite carols and good cheer with the enthusiastic and grateful residents of the Towers, Genesis, Harvest Hill, and elsewhere around town.

### Blue Christmas at WLCC and LUMC

Dec. 12, 6:30 pm—West Lebanon Congregational

Dec. 21, 7:00 pm—Lebanon United Methodist

For those carrying burdens or dealing with loss, this can be a challenging time of year. All are welcome to share these intimate services observing **The Longest Night** of the year—a chance for quiet reflection, hope, peace, and love.

# COMMITTEE NOTES

*From Church Council and the Nominating Committee*

## **Volunteer Opportunities Available**

Have you found an ideal service opportunity for yourself at FCC? Are you interested in a particular program or committee? Do you have creative ideas for aspects of congregational life or governance?

***We want to know!***

As we approach a new year and a new term for FCC's volunteer committees, Church Council and the Nominating Committee ask you to consider how you might best contribute your skills, interests, and energy to the church's operations, ministries, and mission.

If you're interested in learning more about a committee or available opportunities for service and ministry, please contact the office or Amy Driscoll (603-448-0976 or [amykdriscoll@gmail.com](mailto:amykdriscoll@gmail.com)).

## **December Meetings**

Mission/Social Action	12/2, 11:15
Diaconate	12/10, 7:00
Christian Education	12/12, 7:15
Church Council	12/18, 7:00
Board of Governors	12/23, 11:15

## **January Meetings**

Mission/Social Action	1/6, 11:15
Christian Education	1/9, 7:15
Diaconate	1/14, 7:00
Church Council	1/15, 7:00
Board of Governors	1/27, 11:15

## **Building God's Future: *A Legacy of Giving***

Each fall we're encouraged to recognize the many gifts that we have received from our most generous God. As we celebrate our congregation's 250th anniversary, we consider Joshua's question for the children of the Israelites: "What do these stones mean to you?" (4:6)

***What does this church mean to us?*** Our answers to that question—the stories we've told and will continue to tell about our congregation and its ministry—inspire our stewardship commitments, for 2019 and for the next 250 years. Regardless of the size of your pledge, your participation is vital to our plans for next year!

***Please prayerfully consider your commitment to our church's ministry and mission in 2019. And thanks to all for your faithful stewardship!***

**Offering envelopes for 2019 are available in the Parish Hall.** Once you've submitted a pledge form, please take whichever box you wish and record it on the list.

**CONTENT FOR THE 2018 ANNUAL REPORT  
must be submitted to the Church Administrator by  
Monday, January 7, 2019**

## **Which Offering Is Which?**

Our stewardship effort asks us to consider a variety of offering collections throughout the year. Each offering serves a distinct purpose:

***Regular offering***—Collected every Sunday, and treated as unrestricted support for FCC's general operations, ministries, and programs. This includes all pledges and payments in our annual stewardship effort.

***Communion offering***—Collected on the first Sunday of each month, directly funding our church's Open Door Ministry for community assistance (gas/grocery cards) or, occasionally, designated for some other 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 campaign for a particular mission or service cause.

***No matter which envelopes we use, THANKS TO ALL for so generously and consistently supporting these diverse purposes, at FCC and far beyond!***

## OUR LOCAL AND GLOBAL MISSION



### Thank You!

Many thanks to all who agreed to donate clothing items and grocery cards for the families we're sponsoring through Listen's Christmas Gift Basket program.

**All gifts must be brought to church no later than Sunday, December 9.**

Questions? Please contact Barb Teeter (603-448-4529/[barbarateeter802@gmail.com](mailto:barbarateeter802@gmail.com)).

### Volunteer for CASA-NH Claremont Training Begins January 7

CASA of NH trains compassionate and concerned citizens to advocate for abused and neglected children in the court system. Offering common sense, experience, and skills in just 10-15 hours a month, these advocates help give children the chance to grow up in a safe, permanent home.

For more, contact Diane at 800-626-0622 or [diane@casanh.org](mailto:diane@casanh.org). Application at [www.casanh.org/onlineapplication](http://www.casanh.org/onlineapplication).



**SAMARITAN'S PURSE: OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD.** Thanks again to the Hammonds and to all who filled over 30 boxes for this wonderful project!

### MERRY CHRISTMAS!

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

*The Bel Canto Chamber Singers  
Boy Scout Troop 279 / Cub Scout Pack 279  
The Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Association  
Lebanon Recreation Department  
NH Women, Infants, and Children Program  
United Valley Interfaith Project  
Upper Valley Music Center  
UV Professional Resource Network  
Valley Improv  
West Central Behavioral Health*  
...and the many performers in our  
*Music at the Meetinghouse Series*

### FCC SUPPORTS SCOUTING!

As many are aware, First Congregational Church of Lebanon has maintained a close relationship with the Scouting program for decades. Currently, we sponsor both **Cub Scout Pack 279** and **Boy Scout Troop 279**.

**Cub Scouting** is for both boys and girls in grades K-5 (5-10 years old), offering a range of family-oriented activities and service projects. In addition to dens for boys at various levels, we currently have a den with three girls—and we're looking for more!

The **Boy Scouts**, which has traditionally been for boys in grades 6-12 (11-17 years old), will also be open to girls beginning in January 2019. Scouting at this level tailors its activities to leadership development, outdoor activities, and service projects.

For more details about any level of Scouting, please contact **Biff Simpson** ([biff.simpson@gmail.com](mailto:biff.simpson@gmail.com)). For Cub Scouts specifically, you may also email **Lyndsey Boulton** ([cubpack279@gmail.com](mailto:cubpack279@gmail.com)); for the Boy Scouts, contact **Jere Rousseau** ([167r@comcast.net](mailto:167r@comcast.net)).

*All are encouraged to learn more and support this tradition of youth development and service!*

# THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



**NOVEMBER INTO ADVENT.** Guest preacher Randall Balmer continues our 250th anniversary observations; Steve Silver talks church history, including a moment with our congregation's "honor roll" on the centenary of Armistice Day; Jo Shelnutt shares laughter in a Children's Moment; the November Community Dinner offers a meatball-sub break from turkey; and the Steele family and Bel Canto Singers help welcome a new church year.

# MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music  
at the  
Meetinghouse

## DECEMBER CONCERTS

All in the Sanctuary, FCC

### **Classicopia: Spanish Serenade—Sunday, December 2, 2:00 pm**

Pianists Dan Weiser and Elizabeth Borowsky present an exciting four-hand program with Spanish flair—though mostly by French composers, including Georges Bizet, Maurice Ravel, and Emmanuel Chabrier.

Admission \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; tickets and more at [classicopia.org/concert/spanish-serenade/](http://classicopia.org/concert/spanish-serenade/).

### **The Bel Canto Chamber Singers: Last Month of the Year— Saturday, December 8, 7:30 pm / Sunday, December 9, 4:00 pm**

Directed by Jane Woods, the Bel Canto Chamber Singers offer choral music for winter and the holiday season, featuring Dieterich Buxtehude's *Das Neugeborne Kindelein* and works by Norwegian composer Ola Gjeilo, accompanied by string ensemble. The program also includes traditional carols, spirituals, and Ernest Bloch's "Prayer" (*From Jewish Life*), with cellist Margaret Gilmore. Come support FCC's "resident chorus" in December! Adults \$15, students \$10, under 13 free; more at [www.belcantosingers.org](http://www.belcantosingers.org).

### **UVMC Messiah Sing!—Sunday, December 16, 3:30 pm**

Organized by Jennifer Hansen and conducted by Jane Woods, this annual tradition features UVMC student soloists and chamber orchestra. All are welcome to join the chorus (scores available!) or simply listen. Fee \$15 for choral/orchestral participants; suggested \$10 donation for audience. More at [www.uvmusic.org](http://www.uvmusic.org).

### **Soir d'Automne: An Evening of French Chamber Music—Friday, December 21, 7:00 pm**

Pianist Henry Danaher joins flautist Leslie Stroud, cellist Margaret Gilmore, and soprano Chiho Kaneko for a rich and diverse program of chamber music by French composers, featuring Maurice Ravel, Philippe Gaubert, and the virtuoso 19th-century pianist Louise Farrenc. Rescheduled from November 16; admission \$15.

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## AND COMING IN THE NEW YEAR...

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### **Cantabile Women's Chorus: Person, Place, or Thing—Saturday, January 26, 3:00 pm**

Founded in 2001 and directed by Kathy Sherlock-Green, this superb women's ensemble returns to FCC with classical works, traditional tunes, and folks songs. The program includes music of Gwyneth Walker, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Matthew Harris, Felix Mendelssohn, W. A. Mozart, Pablo Casals, and more.

Admission \$15 adults, \$10 seniors, \$5 students, under 12 free; more at [www.cantabilewomen.org](http://www.cantabilewomen.org).

### **LOH ON LOCATION: Lula Wiles—Friday, February 8, 7:30 pm**

A band rooted in traditional folk music but devoted to modern songcraft, Lula Wiles offers a musical range from heartbreak-drenched acoustic ballads to honky-tonk swagger, all in rich, three-part vocal harmonies. They bring their fiercely honest lyrics and evocative imagery to Lebanon in early February.

Adults \$18.50, youth \$8.50; tickets and more at [lebanonoperahouse.org/events/lula-wiles-2/](http://lebanonoperahouse.org/events/lula-wiles-2/).

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## 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](mailto:church@fccleb.org) • [www.fccleb.org](http://www.fccleb.org)  
Rev. Stephen R. Silver: [silver@fccleb.org](mailto:silver@fccleb.org) • Music: [music@fccleb.org](mailto:music@fccleb.org) • Newsletter Submissions: [church@fccleb.org](mailto: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

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