



**First Congregational Church
of Lebanon**
United Church of Christ

FEBRUARY 2017

Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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The Pastoral Perspective

Many years ago, when I worked for the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, I visited a congregation north of Boston to talk about stewardship. The conversation was wide-ranging and stimulating, and after a while headed in unanticipated directions, including ruminations about the Eucharist. We didn't discuss how it should be served—in Episcopal churches, the norm is to come forward to the altar to receive the elements. Instead, we discussed the matter of the elements themselves. Specifically, whether one might substitute things for bread and wine, like, oh, pizza and soda.

There is a fairly strong argument to be made, drawing on Scripture, that we should stick with bread and wine (or juice), as these are the things that Jesus served to his disciples. But another stance is possible, too. If the elements are meant to represent something (Jesus' body, Jesus' sacrifice for us), then might there be some flexibility around what is used to symbolize Jesus and his work? And is not the power of communion to be found in our sharing it with others? The first Christians, after all, celebrated the Eucharist while sharing a real meal. Maybe we could do that, too, over a large pepperoni pie and a diet Coke.

Fear not. We will not be experimenting with the elements at the table. We will not surprise you one month with exotic substitutes for familiar bread and juice. But I do hope that when the elements are brought to us, or we come forward to the table, we do so with open hearts and minds, with a faith-inspired curiosity that allows us to see anew the wonderful things that God has done and is doing and will do for us. By being open to the power of the Spirit, we can be as surprised as we would be if pizza and soda showed up one Sunday at the communion table.

May God spare us from experiencing communion as the "same old, same old" and instead bless us to come to the table with a sense of discovery, with the delight of encountering something beautiful and life-giving for the very first time. May we come to the table ready to experience something surprising, something amazing, something that will set our souls on fire.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

SUNDAY SERVICE

2017 Annual Meeting and Potluck

Sunday, February 12—Following Worship

IT'S SOUPER BOWL TIME!

Once again we're "tackling" hunger in our community with a soup collection in the first two weeks of February. We'll distribute all that we can collect to Headrest, Listen Community Services, and the Upper Valley Haven.

*Collection boxes are in the Parish Hall;
donations accepted through February 12.*

THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

New Members To Be Received

Sunday, February 26

Open House—February 19, 11:30 am

Have you found a welcoming, spiritually nourishing church home here? If so, we warmly invite you to an informal conversation about joining our community of faith as a covenant member, after worship on February 19.

On February 26 we will receive new members in worship. If you're interested in this invitation, please speak with Rev. Steve Silver or contact the office.



Ash Wednesday
Ecumenical Service

March 1, 7:00 pm
First Congregational Church

*Please join us as we host this
annual service to initiate the
holy season of Lent.*

Queued for Coffee Hour

February—Christian Education Committee

March—Diaconate

April—Mission and Social Action

COMMUNITY DINNER

Sunday, February 26, 5:00 pm

Leader: MARCY CHONG

Thanks to Marcy and her friends for leading this month's dinner. Please consider helping with this vital service to our neighbors!

***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.

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

Lenten Lunch Bag Offering

Beginning Sunday, March 5

The children of our Church School will again be distributing bags for their Lenten collection to benefit David's House and Epilogos. Giving up a little change each day during Lent can mean a lot of change after Easter!

FEBRUARY 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 10a Worship and Church School 3p Apple Hill String Quartet	30 3p WCBH After-school Group 5:45p Cub Scouts (Wolves)	31 5:45p Cub Scouts (Webelos) 7p Boy Scouts	1 6p UVPRN	2 7p Choir	3 5:30p Recital, Students of Sarah Slater	4 8a Men's Breakfast
5 SCOUT SUNDAY 10a Worship (Communion) and Church School 11:15a MSA 2p Juneberry Comm Chorus	6 5:45p Cub Scouts (Wolves)	7 5:45p Cub Scouts (Webelos) 7p Boy Scouts	8 8a-4p NH-WIC 6p UVPRN 6:30p Christian Ed Committee	9 9:30a-4p Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Assn 7p Choir	10	11 10a Juneberry Music Class <i>(first class of Session 2)</i> 5p Movie Night at FCC!
12 ANNUAL MEETING SUNDAY 10a Worship and Church School 11:15a 2017 Annual Meeting and Potluck	13 3p WCBH After-school Group 7p Diaconate	14 7p Boy Scouts	15 6p UVPRN	16 7p Choir	17	18 10a Juneberry Music Class 7:30p Classicopia: French Four-hand Frolic
19 10a Worship and Church School 12:30p Outing Club: Fire and Ice!	20 5:45p Cub Scouts (Wolves)	21 5:45p Cub Scouts (Webelos) 7p Church Council 7p Boy Scouts/Troop Committee	22 MARCH NEWSLETTER CONTENT DUE 6p UVPRN	23 7p Choir	24	25 8a-3:30p NHC-UCC Prepared to Serve (Pembroke NH) 10a Juneberry Music Class
26 10a Worship and Church School (New Members) 5p Community Dinner 7p Recital, Students of Kathy Andrew	27 10a-6p NH-WIC 3p WCBH After-school Group 5:45p Cub Scouts (Wolves)	28 5:45p Cub Scouts (Webelos) 7p Boy Scouts	1 ASH WEDNESDAY (Lent Begins) 6p UVPRN 7p Ecumenical Service	2 7p Choir	3	4 8a Men's Breakfast 10a Juneberry Music Class

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 January meeting, the Board of Governors discussed committee **membership and leaders** for the coming year. All supported John Gilliatt for continuing as chair and Walter Scott as vice-chair and scribe. Steve Silver commended the group for its efficiency and achievements in 2016. The group clarified its working process going forward and shared updates on their three-year plan, focusing on the Parish Hall floor refinishing and Sanctuary carpet and pew cushions.

Surveying other **projects in the Sanctuary**, the board considered design and installation of a railing for the altar steps, long desired to assist those who have difficulty on them. As the Sanctuary painting project concludes, Steve Silver proposed that the two front pews be replaced with half-pews from the corner boxes. This would provide long-needed space for wheelchair accommodation, as well as more space for communion, musical performances, and other events. Wendell Smith inquired about the provision of additional lighting for concerts, which Steve will discuss with Henry Danaher.

Around the grounds, a fall clean-up was not arranged this year, and the Boy Scouts will be approached for help with a thorough spring clean-up. Wayne Braley is assessing the need for repairs on the decking in front of the Sanctuary portico.

Brandon Mason will coordinate an **energy audit** to be completed by an outside contractor in the last week

of January. As a non-profit, we are receiving a discount on the cost of this comprehensive, long-discussed assessment. The group also checked in on hot-water system maintenance in the bathrooms and kitchen, and about proper oven operation.

The two **AED units** purchased in December will be installed in mid-February. They will be located on the back wall of the Sanctuary and near the larger bathroom in the Parish Hall. A state safety official has volunteered to provide us a

FCC ANNUAL MEETING 2017 Sunday, February 12, at 11:15 am

The Annual Meeting of First Congregational Church of Lebanon, NH, will be held in the Parish Hall on Sunday, February 12, 2017, immediately following the worship service, for the purpose of:

1. The election of all officers provided for under the CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS of the church.
2. To hear the reports of all officers, committees, and organizations, as required under the CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS of the church.
3. To consider and act upon any other matters relating to the general church welfare that may properly come before this meeting, including but not limited to the following:
 - A. Church Council, acting on a proposal from the Diaconate, recommends that the following be removed from the Diaconate's responsibilities, as listed in the church's Constitution and By-Laws (Feb. 2015 ed., p. 14): "They shall secure adequate childcare coverage during the worship services and other special events as required."With this clause removed, responsibility for securing childcare will fall to the Personnel Subcommittee of Church Council, which already is charged with "assist[ing] and mak[ing] recommendations for action to the Council regarding employees and volunteer staff (p. 13)."

From the Nominating Committee

Volunteer Opportunities Still Available!

As we begin the new year and a new term for our volunteer committees, Church Council and the Nominating Committee ask you to think about how you might best contribute your own skills, interests, and energy to our mission and ministry.

If you're interested in learning more about a particular committee or available opportunities for service and ministry, **please contact** Amy Driscoll (603-448-0976/amykdriscoll@gmail.com) or Barry Schuster (603-448-5937/ivylegal@gmail.com).

COMMITTEE NOTES

training session on proper use once we've received the units.

Members of the board worked on sundry projects around the church after their meeting. The congregation is grateful for their vital service and devotion to the care of our building!

CHURCH COUNCIL

In January at Council, Barb Jones reported that the **Diaconate** was discussing future directions for lay pastoral care and investigating what comparable programs other churches have. The group is also planning for Steve Silver's sabbatical this summer. Susan Montmagny has, unfortunately, had to step down from her Diaconate service.

Another critical issue the Deacons are facing is **the need to find new childcare assistants**, as Emma Petersson has indicated that she can't continue. Some suggestions were made for replacing Emma, including inquiring with local educational and early-childhood programs. All agreed that parents and Ashley Oronte (the other assistant) should both have input, and any candidates will be carefully screened. It was also agreed that no member of the congregation should be asked to do this (and thus be obligated to give up worship), unless someone actively seeks this role.

This development has prompted broader questions about whether the Diaconate should continue to have **responsibility for childcare staffing**, on top of its many other duties. (The Diaconate originally was given this task because of its

Stewardship 2017

Sing to the Lord: Worship, Giving, Service

Each fall we are encouraged to consider the many gifts, large and small, that we receive from our amazingly generous God. Let us be inspired by David's example to pray, serve, and give with a sense of life-affirming, joyous possibility. Please consider your commitment, prayerfully and honestly, to FCC's mission and ministry in 2017.

Thus far we are grateful to have received almost 30 pledges for this year, some from members who are pledging for the first time.

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.

relation to worship.) The Deacons asked the Council to re-assign this responsibility, either to the Personnel Subcommittee or Council itself. It was pointed out that because this duty is assigned in the church by-laws, any revision would require a congregational vote, which could be taken at Annual Meeting.

John Gillatt reported for the **Board of Governors** that the AED units purchased last fall would arrive in February. The Sanctuary paint color survey was completed by 43 people, of whom 19 chose light grey, against 15 for blue and 9 for either. Steve Silver has also talked to Don Collins to ensure that his crew will include the organ case and the doors at the front of the Sanctuary (on either side of the proscenium arch); Council members agreed that we should be able to have at least the doors included for no additional cost.

Another question arose regarding the status of our **fire inspections, alarms, and insurance** coverage, in the wake of the tragic fire at First

Baptist Church on December 28. All of these vital safety precautions are in good order and up-to-date. It was also noted that our entrances are all sufficiently secure, although the office door sometimes does not fully shut and latch on its own. (The Board of Governors will be addressing that.)

For **Stewardship**, Jon Scott strongly encouraged all members of Council and other committees to submit pledge forms, regardless of financial amount. Even the smallest pledge still carries weight as a commitment to the church's ministries in the coming year. Pledge reminders will be forthcoming by email and other church communications.

Brian Clancy reported for the **Music Committee** that the winter schedule includes more concerts than usual. He also shared exciting news that the Upper Valley Music Center is exploring the purchase of 8 South Park Street, the property immediately east of church. Not only would this be a huge upgrade for UVMC itself, it would enhance

COMMITTEE NOTES

the already strong relationship we have with them.

Amy Driscoll admitted that the **Nominating** process is somewhat behind this year, but she has been discussing key vacancies with Steve Silver, Barb Jones, and others. She continues to hope that we can increase congregational awareness of our different committees and, particularly, financial operations.

Steve Silver reported on the **draft budget for 2017**, which is largely complete. Discussion ensued on various specific items, such as the budgeted capacity for projects such as refinishing the Parish Hall floor and new pew cushions and carpet in the Sanctuary. While the budget does account for planned expenses as far as possible, additional projects are typically still possible during the year. Council approved the budget, pending revisions as noted, for a vote at the Annual Meeting.

Steve Silver submitted his **pastoral report** electronically, but he made particular mention of the inspiring congregational participation in Christmas events and ministries. He expressed how gratifying and spiritually rich it was to see so many join together at a busy time. Steve also noted the Diaconate's plans for a consistent, regular preacher and pastor during his sabbatical.

Lastly, he reported on a discussion he had shared with the Diaconate about his decision to leave the national and denominational flags out of the Sanctuary after the painting is completed. All present supported the rationale that the placement of potent symbols such

as flags in a place of worship poses a theological conflict. Steve said he plans to preach on this issue on January 22.

DIACONATE

In January the Deacons discussed the "Umbrella of Caring" envisioned for our **lay pastoral care ministry**. It was decided to emphasize prayer while considering other ways to encourage the congregation's participation in a variety of caring activities. Steve Silver offered to provide training on prayer which could lead to visitation training. Diaconate members will investigate resources for developing this ministry, and further discussion will take place in February.

The Deacons also approved more funding for gas and grocery cards for the **Open Door Ministry**. It was agreed that this ministry should be featured in the FCC newsletter. Services at Genesis are planned again for November, and Deacons were asked to consider an additional month or two (maybe March or July).

Emma Petersson wishes to finish her **childcare** work at FCC, and the issue of hiring a replacement will be taken to Council. In discussion, it was noted that this responsibility would be more appropriate for the Personnel Committee.

Steve Silver opened a discussion about his desire to remove the **flags from the Sanctuary** to the Parish Hall on a permanent basis. It was generally agreed that it is appropriate for the Cross to be the sole symbol in the Sanctuary, and that the

presence of state symbols may well pose a theological complication.

Biff Simpson presented a tentative schedule for **Movie Nights** from February through June. There is need to discuss the purpose of this event, to determine the appropriate time and selection of films as well as the future of this program. Two deacons are needed to volunteer to coordinate set-up of screen and chairs and arranging the Sunday worship configuration afterwards.

Susan Montmagny has stepped down from her position on the Diaconate—her service has been greatly appreciated. Deb Scott will be rotating off as of the Annual Meeting. Steve Silver plans to ask several congregation members to consider serving.

February Meetings

<i>Mission/Social Action</i>	2/5, 11:15
<i>Christian Education</i>	2/8, 6:30
2017 ANNUAL MTG	2/12, 11:15
<i>Diaconate</i>	2/13, 7:00
<i>Church Council</i>	2/21, 7:00
<i>Board of Governors</i>	2/26, 11:15

March Meetings

<i>Mission/Social Action</i>	3/5, 11:15
<i>Christian Education</i>	3/8, 6:30
<i>Diaconate</i>	3/13, 7:00
<i>Church Council</i>	3/21, 7:00
<i>Board of Governors</i>	3/26, 11:15

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



FIRE and **ICE**

Sunday, February 19, 12:30 (*alt. date March 5*)

Continuing our program of spiritual walks, FCC's "Outing Club" invites everyone to Ron Bailey's house in Plainfield (1103 NH Route 12A) for another edition of **FIRE AND ICE**. We'll grill hot dogs over a fire pit, enjoy some cocoa, then head out through fields and forest to Blow-Me-Down Brook, before returning to the fire for s'mores. Both one-hour and half-hour snowshoe loops available. (Don't have snowshoes? We'll lend you a pair!)

RSVP to the church office if you plan to come. Thanks!

Please contact Ron Bailey with questions at ronbaileymtman@gmail.com or 603-675-2326.

MOVIE NIGHT AT FCC!

Saturday, February 11, 5:00 pm

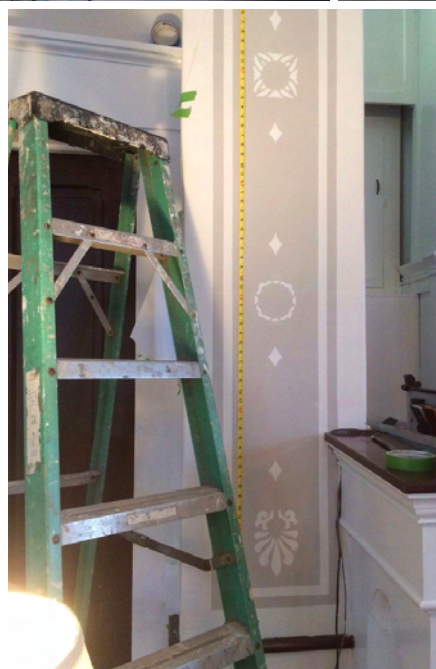
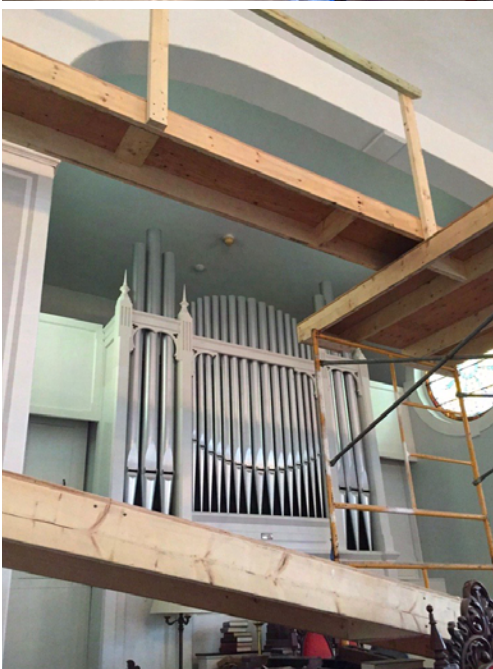
Featuring E.T.

The Diaconate invites everyone to enjoy a night of family fellowship and fun. Come as you are, even if that's in PJ's with pillows and blankets. **Please bring favorite snacks to share—and your friends!**



SCENES FROM JANUARY. Nan Parsons, Kailyn Rappaport, and Deb Scott marching in DC, with colorful sashes made by Susan Montmagny; a fun children's moment in the Parish Hall; Henry Danaher and Meghan Davis christen the newly painted Sanctuary with a superb concert on the 28th. *Next page:* Don Collins and his crew do their fine work.

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

WINTER CONCERTS

All in the Sanctuary, First Congregational Church

Classicopia: French Four-hand Frolic—Saturday, February 18, at 7:30 pm

Pianists Dan Weiser and Elizabeth Borowsky offer a wonderful program of four-hand piano, highlighting the influence of cabaret, jazz, and ragtime on early-20th-century French music. Works by Fauré, Chabrier, Satie, Poulenc, Milhaud, and Gershwin.

Open Sing: Vivaldi's Gloria—Sunday, March 12, at 3:00 pm

All are invited—either to join the chorus or just to listen!—to share in a performance of this exuberant piece. Hal Sheeler will direct, and our own Henry Danaher will accompany on piano.

St. Patrick's Day Concert—Friday, March 17, at 4:30 pm

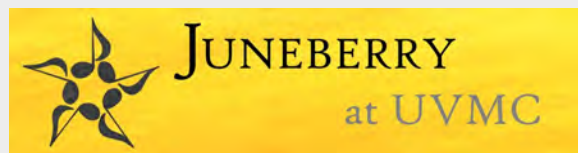
Please join us, regardless of your ethnic background, for this performance of traditional Irish music by Anthony Santoro on the uilleann pipes and Roger Burrige on fiddle.

UVMC Faculty Showcase—Sunday, March 19, at 4:00 pm

We are proud to offer this special exhibition of the broad range of talents possessed by the faculty of our excellent local music school. All are welcome; proceeds will support UVMC.

The Borowsky Trio—Friday, March 24, at 7:00 pm

Pianist Elizabeth Borowsky welcomes her sister Frances on cello and brother Emmanuel on violin for a virtuosic program of familiar and original compositions. All are invited to enjoy this trio of siblings, who have delighted and dazzled international audiences with their music.



Do you like to sing? Do you want to improve vocal skills and sing in a choir without performance pressure? Would you like to connect with others and improve your health in a choral setting?

Get out of the shower and into the choir!

Founded in 2012, Juneberry Music—now affiliated with the Upper Valley Music Center!—helps people of all ages and backgrounds develop singing skills in a fun and affordable way. We welcome you wherever you are, whether completely inexperienced and untrained or more comfortable and ready to challenge yourself. Participants in this 16-week class encounter music from across centuries and cultures, while gaining the skills and confidence to sing in church choirs, community choruses, and other groups..

Vocal Exploration Class—Saturday Mornings at FCC, 10:00-11:30 am, Starting February 11

Cost—\$25 registration fee, plus \$160 for full 16-week course or \$120 for 8-week “mini-course”

For more information, complete schedules, and registration, please visit www.juneberrymusic.com or contact the Upper Valley Music Center (info@uvmusic.org/603-448-1642).

JUNEBERRY COMMUNITY CHORUS

Rehearsals on Sundays, 3:30-5:00 pm, at UVMC (occasionally at FCC)

Contact Juneberry Music for more information. All are welcome!!

OUR LOCAL MISSION

“Come In...” *FCC’s Open-Door Ministry and Community Assistance*



Upper-Valley residents routinely call or visit the church office to ask for help with gas, food, and other basic living expenses. FCC has responded to these needs for years, but demand for assistance has increased considerably in the recent past. Supported by our monthly communion offering, the Diaconate funds the purchase of \$25 gift cards from **JAKE’S** and **PRICE CHOPPER**, while the Mission and Social Action Committee (funded by the Dole Trust) provides additional assistance in modest amounts for rent and utilities. Recipients need offer nothing other than their names (and, as applicable, that of their landlord or utility company), and they are asked only to wait 4-6 months between requests to ensure a fairer distribution of resources.

Long known as the “Back-Door” Ministry for our office’s location at the rear of the building, this vital community program in 2015 was renamed the **Open-Door Ministry**, removing any hint of secrecy or shame from this assistance in favor of a more inclusive, welcoming spirit. Our neighbors are genuinely grateful for this support.

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

PREPARED TO SERVE 2017

**“I Planted, Others Watered, but
God Gives the Growth”**

**Saturday, February 25, 8:00 to 3:30
Pembroke Academy, Pembroke, NH**

Prepared to Serve is a training and study event for all members of the NH Conference of the UCC, offering workshops on topics ranging from leadership, stewardship, and finances to global missions and Christian education. All are invited to participate in this enriching, informative day of classes, exhibits, and worship.



FEE: \$40 ONLINE THROUGH 2/15, \$50 AT THE DOOR
(Includes resources, breakfast, and lunch.)

**For more details and registration materials,
please visit www.nhcucc.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



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

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All in the Sanctuary, First Congregational Church

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The Borowsky Trio—Friday, March 24, at 7:00 pm

2017 ANNUAL MEETING
and Family Potluck

Sunday, February 12
FOLLOWING WORSHIP

FIRE *and* **ICE**

Sunday, February 19, 12:30 pm
(Alternate Date: March 5)

Home of Ron Bailey, Plainfield

RSVP to the Church Office