



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

What's Inside

Advent and Christmas8-9



Music at the Meetinghouse ...9



Sunday Service	2
FCC and FBC	2
January Calendar	3
Committee Notes.....	4-6
Annual Meeting Warrant.....	4
Stewardship 2017	5
Fire and Ice Returns!.....	7
SOUPer Bowl.....	7

The Pastoral Perspective

It was 4:30 in the morning and I was on School Street, talking with a police officer and a fire fighter. In the distance, pumper trucks were pouring water into the charred remains of First Baptist Church, dousing the remnants of the conflagration that had consumed a familiar community landmark. Catty-corner across the street stood the Methodist Church, itself built following the loss of its predecessor to fire some twenty years earlier. And just down the street and across Colburn Park was the Mall, which in its current form came into being in the wake of the devastating fire that took so much of downtown in the 1960s.

While I have no actual data to support this belief, based on what I've learned about Lebanon's history over the years, our community seems to have experienced an unusually large number of destructive fires since its inception. Lives and property have been lost, and geographic touchstones that help define our individual and community mental landscapes have been erased. Left behind are ashes, debris—and memories. Of the three, it is the last that can have the greatest impact on our lives, shaping our perceptions of all around us. Fortunately, our faith can help us determine what we do with recollections of an irretrievable past.

It is tempting and all too easy to be caught up in endless mourning for what is lost. A church building can hold a lifetime's worth of memories from baptism to fellowship activities to marriage ceremonies. An office block could be the place where we had that first date in a soda shop or that first bookkeeping job in which we developed skills that allowed us to become the person we are today. What is true of a lost structure can be true of a changing society. The world in which we grew up is no more. It may be beloved, familiar, a source of comfort, but the past is gone.

Rather than the means by which we are trapped in the past, though, our memories can be the inspiration that sends us forth into the future. This is the approach that was taken by our forebears in faith. Prophets like Second Isaiah, who spoke to Israel in the wake of the destruction of Judah, referred to past glory as a way to highlight what God would do for his people in the future. Those who followed Jesus drew on his

Continued on Page 6

SUNDAY SERVICE

WORSHIP IN THE PARISH HALL

Sundays, January 8 *through* April 2

Annual Meeting 2017

Sunday, February 12—Following Worship

FEBRUARY 5 IS SCOUT SUNDAY

Our church is proud to serve as the host and charter organization for Boy Scout Troop 279 and Cub Scout Pack 279, offering them meeting space throughout the year. Next month we will recognize this faithful relationship by inviting the scouts to join us and participate in worship.

Please plan to attend and support Scouting!

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.

FCC and FBC

Congregational Support for Our Baptist Neighbors

Lebanon suffered a tragic loss when the historic First Baptist Church was destroyed by fire on the night of December 28. As FBC's congregation considers how best to move forward, they are searching for alternate venues for several vital ministries.

While no definite plans have been made as of this writing, our church will likely provide space for at least one of FBC's Wednesday-night community dinners each month, and perhaps for the Raven Food Pantry as well. Please stay tuned for more information on any further need for volunteer help.

COMMUNITY DINNER

Sunday, January 22, 5:00 pm

Leaders: CORRINE ERSKINE/BARB LARO

Thanks to Corrine and Barb for stepping up to lead 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.

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

January—Stewardship (*Help Needed!*)

February—Christian Education Committee

March—Diaconate

JANUARY 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 NEW YEAR'S DAY 10a Worship and Church School	2	3 7p Boy Scouts	4 6p UVPRN	5 7p Choir	6 EPIPHANY	7 8a Men's Breakfast 10a Juneberry Music Class
8 10a Worship (Communion) and Church School 11:15a MSA	9 5:30p Cub Scouts (Tigers) 5:45p Cub Scouts (Wolves) 7p Diaconate	10 5:45p Cub Scouts (Webelos) 7p Boy Scouts	11 8a-4p NH-WIC 6p UVPRN 6:30p Christian Ed Committee	12 9:30a-4p Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Assn 7p Choir	13 ANNUAL REPORT CONTENT DUE	14 10a Juneberry Music Class 2-5p UVIP Multi-Team Mtg
15 10a Worship and Church School	16 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY 5:30p Cub Scouts (Tigers) 5:45p Cub Scouts (Wolves)	17 5:45p Cub Scouts (Webelos) 7p Church Council 7p Boy Scouts/Troop Committee	18 6p UVPRN	19 7p Choir	20 6-9p Leb Rec Quilt Retreat	21 10a Juneberry Music Class <i>(last class of Session 1)</i> 10a-5p Leb Rec Quilt Retreat
22 10a Worship and Church School 5p Community Dinner	23 FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER CONTENT DUE	24 7p Boy Scouts	25 6p UVPRN	26 10a-6p NH-WIC 7p Choir	27	28 7p Danaher/Davis Concert
29 10a Worship and Church School 3p Apple Hill String Quartet	30 3p WCBH After-school Group 5:30p Cub Scouts (Tigers) 5:45p Cub Scouts (Wolves)	31 5:45p Cub Scouts (Webelos) 7p Boy Scouts	1 6p UVPRN	2 7p Choir	3	4 8a Men's Breakfast

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

COMMITTEE NOTES

CHURCH COUNCIL

At its December meeting Council approved a new **distribution from the Dole Fund** to the Mission and Social Action account. This will in part fund our annual dues for the United Valley Interfaith Project.

Brian Clancy reported that the **survey on Sanctuary window treatment options** had generated 33 responses. The majority choice (19 votes) was to keep the windows as they are, without any covering or shades. Minimal discussion followed, with several expressing the need to keep the windows clean. Speaking to concerns about sun glare, Brian noted that since we schedule few afternoon events in the Sanctuary, it's relatively easy to manage this problem. He also feels that the open windows enhance FCC's public presence, allowing a clear view into our Sanctuary for many who have never been inside.

Brian reported that another survey would be distributed for the Board of Governors regarding **color options for the Sanctuary painting project**. Regarding two small sample patches already on view near the pulpit, several noted a general sense that the grey option was too dark a shade. (Council has agreed to proceed with this project with an appropriate use of funds from Ginny Hough's generous bequest.)

Jon Scott reported for **Stewardship** that 25 pledges for 2017 had so far been received. Although that's a few pledges short of this point last year, the total amount pledged has increased. Regardless of amounts,

however, Jon stressed that it was important to maximize participation across the congregation in our pledge effort. Several recent or new members have made pledges for the coming year. Follow-up will continue into the new year.

Marcia Corkins noted that **Christian Education** was focused on the Christmas pageant. The manger frame has been repaired.

Corrine Erskine reported for **Mission and Social Action** that the committee had discussed the need for housing for Magdaline Lelain, a member of our congregation. They had also considered how to address the inadequate supply of temporary shelter in town, given the Haven's limited capacity. The committee has further discussed initiating a title-lending program with other churches.

The **Board of Governors** has been working on finishing and adjusting the new hot-water system for the kitchen. John Gilliatt added that both ovens have been repaired and now work reliably. The church has purchased two AED units, which are expected to be delivered in January; John mentioned that a training session for their use would be offered early in the new year. Lastly, he noted that the Board would soon be conducting an energy audit.

Full discussion of the **2017 budget** is still pending, but those present agreed that any specific line items that may require discussion (e.g., compensation increases) could be addressed with a focused review once a draft budget is available.

For the **Diaconate**, Jon Scott reported on plans for Steve Silver's

Please note:

CONTENT FOR THE 2016 ANNUAL REPORT
must be submitted to the Church Administrator by
Friday, January 13, 2017

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.

COMMITTEE NOTES

four-month sabbatical this summer. The group thinks it best to appoint a visiting pastor for that time, rather than trying to cover worship duties in an ad-hoc manner; we are working with the NH conference office to find one. Also, efforts continue to strengthen the church's Open and Affirming (ONA) presence, with a rainbow stripe to be affixed to the front sign. Lastly, the Deacons are carefully and thoughtfully planning for transition in the Called to Care program, looking more broadly at the church's pastoral care efforts.

In his **pastor's report** (submitted prior to the meeting), Steve Silver noted a busy Advent season, with three services on Christmas Eve. He noted that January communion would not be offered on New Year's Day but rather on January 8, which also will be our first Sunday of worship in the Parish Hall. Steve asked the Deacons about leading a worship service at Genesis in the early afternoon on Christmas Day, as they have none planned. They are also considering leading services there again next November.

DIACONATE

At their December meeting the Deacons strategized about making their meetings more productive. Thoughts included the importance of devotional time, the need for additional opportunities to provide spiritual leadership to members of the congregation, and improving the ease and clarity of reporting.

Deacons agreed that it's important that we as a congregation respect

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.

our Administrator Brian Clancy's ability to worship on Sundays without having to be "at work." Deacons will step in to ensure this as necessary.

The decision was made to hold a service of commemoration for the **Called to Care** ministry. Deacons are also discerning a way forward to provide pastoral care to the church community, inviting feedback regarding how this ministry will take shape. All members of the congregation will be welcomed to participate.

The Deacons reviewed the extent of FCC's **Open Door Ministry**, which in 2016 provided 83 gas cards totaling \$2075, 76 grocery cards totaling \$1900, and \$941 in rent assistance. (The first two purposes are funded by the Diaconate, while rent assistance comes from Mission and Social Action funds.)

Biff Simpson reported that Movie Night attendance has dropped since this ministry began. The decision was made to transition to "family-

friendly" movies, and deacons were encouraged to attend. Biff will demonstrate and write instructions for setup of equipment; he will also instruct deacons in the use of transmitters and listening devices recently purchased as aids for those who experience hearing difficulty during worship.

Steve Silver reported that FCC has been invited to participate in a **study of psychological type** in church congregations using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). The study is meant "to find out more about how different worship styles and types of programs help people to come closer to God." FCC would receive a report of the distribution of different types in our community.

Steve has discussed his **sabbatical plans** with the Pastoral Relations Committee and consulted with Gary Schulte about options for pastoral coverage. Retired ministers who may suit our congregation will be interviewed. Deacons may also lead worship.

COMMITTEE NOTES

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

February Meetings

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

Community Dinner Fund Available

The Mission & Social Action Committee reminds us that a fund exists to help subsidize preparation of Community Dinners. This fund was created to encourage the provision of more nutritional and (where possible) locally-sourced food for these important meals.

To request reimbursement from the Community Dinner Fund, team leaders should submit receipts and an explanatory note to the Church Administrator.

The Pastoral Perspective, *continued from Page 1*

example, his life and death on a cross, not to succumb to grief over a lost teacher and friend but instead to share the Good News of resurrection and new life.

Like those earliest followers, we do this every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper. Listen to the liturgy and you'll hear clear references to the night of Jesus' betrayal. But continue to pay attention and you'll see all of this is in the service of remembering the gift Jesus gave the disciples and us when he shared the command to recall the bread and the cup. When we come to the table, we engage in an act of sacred memory that is meant to sustain us as we deal with the past, live in the present, and move into the future.

It is a cliché, perhaps, to say that a church or a town is defined not by a building or block but by its people. But as we see how businesses thrive on the Mall today, how the Methodists continue to share their witness with the community, and how the Baptists are rallying in the wake of their loss, we are reminded that clichés are often rooted in truth.

As we begin a new year, then, let us engage in the holy practice of remembering: of drawing on the stories of the past, some filled with joy, others with heartbreak. Let us do this so that we may continue to be faithful disciples of the God who transcends time yet chose—and chooses still—to live with us as history unfolds.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



Returning in February—Mark Your Calendars!

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 village 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!)



Donate to FCC's

"Nearly New" Christmas Sale!

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

As you put things away after the holiday, keep us in mind for any gently-used items you might like to donate to this sale in November, which will raise funds for mission projects at FCC. Items should 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.**

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS



OUR LOCAL AND GLOBAL MISSION

THE SOUPER BOWL IS COMING!!

No, that's not a typo, and we're not talking about football. 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.

Please look for collection boxes in the Parish Hall; donations accepted from January 29 to February 12.

THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

PREPARED TO SERVE 2017:

"I Planted, Others Watered, but God Gives the Growth"

Saturday, February 25, 8:00 to 3:30

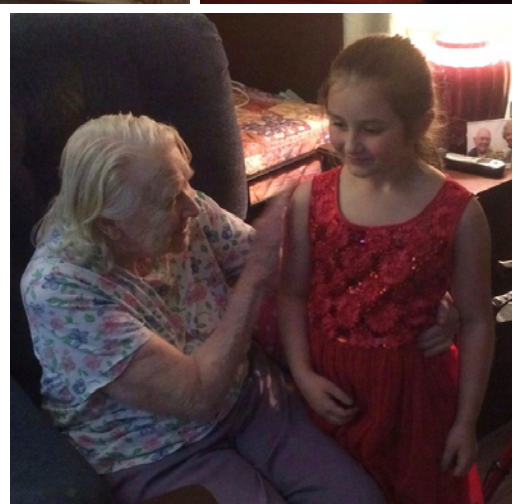
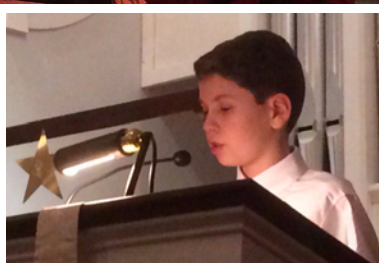
Pembroke Academy, Pembroke, NH

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

FEE: \$40 ONLINE THROUGH 2/21, \$50 AT THE DOOR

(Includes resources, breakfast, and lunch.)

For more details and registration materials, please visit www.nheucc.org.



A delightful cast enlivens the Christmas pageant; Kailyn Rappaport carols with Gwen Stewart; choir members catch up with former director Will Ögmundson; and Santa visits the Community Dinner.

MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music *at the* Meetinghouse

WINTER CONCERTS

In the Sanctuary, First Congregational Church

Henry Danaher, Piano, and Meghan Davis, Clarinet—Saturday, January 28, at 7:00 pm

Henry and Meg warm up our newly painted Sanctuary with an enticing program of twentieth-century music by Camille Saint-Saëns, Gerald Finzi, Witold Lutosławski, and Paul Reade.

Free-will donation to benefit Syrian refugee assistance efforts.

The Apple Hill String Quartet—Sunday, January 29, at 3:00 pm

We are excited to welcome New Hampshire's only resident string quartet for an excellent program to benefit the Upper Valley Music Center, where the quartet will lead a workshop the previous day.

Classicopia—Saturday, February 18, at 7:30 pm

Dan Weiser brings us another wonderful guest musician for a rare winter appearance!

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 this exuberant piece, directed by Hal Sheeler.

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

Enjoy the wealth of musical talent possessed by the faculty of our excellent local music school.

Messiah Sing, December 18, 2016



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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