



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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together in God's love!**

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The Pastoral Perspective

This month we will be hanging a new banner over the front door of our church, one that declares, "All are invited into the full life of our church. Join us as we grow together in God's love!" While this should be a non-controversial statement—after all, everybody should be welcome here—it is not. Sadly, the church, like every other human organization, is subject to division, the formation of cliques, and the sense that while some of the group's members are "in," others are "out."

Our church, like every other church, wants to share the blessing it has received with others. We know that God's love, made known to us in the Gospel, is not a finite resource; there is more than enough to go around. Unfortunately, some quarters of the Christian Church have gone out of their way to make some people feel unwelcome. Then, last month, I learned of an opportunity to send a different message, to make clear that our welcome is extended to all.

The occasion that gave rise to this opportunity was a meeting of people who work or volunteer at Upper Valley arts organizations. (Yes, FCC is an arts organization; consider all the concerts we host!) Among the topics that came up was Pride Month, and the various activities that take place surrounding the event. Jon Scott, a board member of the Lebanon Opera House and our Council Chair, was at this meeting, too, and we agreed it would be very appropriate for First Congregational Church of Lebanon to be an "endorser" of the LOH Pride event taking place in Colburn Park on Friday, June 16. We brought the idea to Council, which approved it along with the idea of the new banner. *(Please see the banner design on p. 5.)*

I know that this a loaded topic for some. But attitudes change. And if you look at Scripture, you will see that while Jesus talks about lots of things, he says nothing about homosexuality. The truth is that gay people can be smart, enthusiastic, hard-working, and faithful. There is absolutely no reason members of the LGBTQ+ community should not feel welcome in our church. We have a chance to let the wider community know that we are a truly welcoming place.

There's a really good probability that someone you know is LGBTQ+. You most likely know someone who is gay. That person may be a relative, a

Continued on Page 5

SUNDAY SERVICE

All Are Welcome to Worship at FCC

Sundays at 10:00 AM (In-Person/Zoom)

For in-person worshippers, masks and vaccination are strongly encouraged but not required.

Coffee Hour Served in June!

We've resumed this popular fellowship opportunity on occasional Sundays; sign up in the Parish Hall. New volunteers always welcome—on ANY Sunday!

Zoom Greeters and Liturgists Needed

Congregation members sing in the choir, serve as ushers and Zoom greeters, and read as liturgists. Additional options include reading prayers, sharing stewardship messages, or even leading children's moments. **All are invited to serve in these essential roles, and no prior experience is needed (though Zoom greeting requires some basic training).**

If you're interested in these opportunities to serve, please contact the church office.

Children's Sunday is June 11

Kids Lead Worship with Readings and Music
Presentations to Children and Volunteers

Join us for our annual, beloved celebration of the CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY CORNER! The children will lead worship and share some of what they've learned throughout this school year.

If you or children are interested in helping or participating, please contact Nan Parsons (nlp3721@yahoo.com / 603-863-8354).

Spend Some Time in the Corner!

The Children's Community Corner, that is! We'd love for more adults in our congregation to engage with FCC's kids, whether on Sundays or some other time. **The purpose of such interaction is mentorship and guidance, not just supervision.** Please consider offering your time. **THANKS!**



Upper Valley
Habitat
for Humanity®

SHELTER SUNDAY FATHER'S DAY, JUNE 18

Every Father's Day FCC makes a commitment to support the work of Upper Valley Habitat for Humanity, the local affiliate of an international, ecumenical ministry. Since 1976, Habitat has provided decent, affordable housing and home ownership for deserving families who could not otherwise afford to buy a home. Achieving home ownership is one of the most valuable steps a family can take to establish a firm footing, in order to thrive on their own. Families work alongside staff and volunteers, benefiting from discounted materials and services, to renovate or build their own home, which they are then able to purchase at cost with a zero-interest mortgage.

If you'd like to honor or remember the father(s) in your life with a contribution to Shelter Sunday, please contact the church office with your dedication information no later than noon on Thursday, June 15 (contributions gratefully accepted after that date). Any amount is welcome—thanks!

Many Thanks for Mothers and Blankets!

Blanket Sunday this year brought in \$1240 from our congregation and friends—our second-highest total in over a decade! Thank you all for so generously honoring mothers and mother-figures past and present!

For more about the CWS Blankets program, visit cwsblankets.org.



JUNE 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 PENTECOST 10a Worship/CCC 2p Classicopia: Musical Mothers	29 <i>Memorial Day</i> (No UVMC Suzuki Program)	30 4:30p FCC Choir 7p Cantabile Rehearsal	31	1 7p NA Group	2 6-9p Leb Rec Quilters Retreat	3 9a-5p Leb Rec Quilters Retreat 7:30p Liz Simmons
4 10a Worship/CCC (Communion; WISE visit) 4p Cantabile: We Sing Her Song	5 4-8p UVMC Suzuki Program (last)	6 4:30p FCC Choir	7	8 7p NA Group	9 7p Cameo: French Baroque	10
11 CHILDREN'S SUNDAY! 10a Worship/CCC 12:45p Outing Club: Smith Pond 4:30p MUSE Spring Concert	12 7p Diaconate	13 4:30p FCC Choir (last) 7p Church Council	14 8a-4p NH-WIC 4:30p Student Piano Recital (S. Slater)	15 7p NA Group	16 6p LOH Pride! (Colburn Park)	17
18 <i>Father's Day</i> 10a Worship/CCC (Shelter Sunday)	19 <i>Juneteenth</i>	20	21 5p Student Voice Recital (J. Ness)	22 11a-6p NH-WIC 7p NA Group	23	24
25 10a Worship/CCC 2p Classicopia: Reed 'Em and Weep	26	27	28	29 2p G. Hammond Committal Svc (Epsom, NH) 7p NA Group	30	1
2 10a Worship/CCC (Communion)	3 (7p Leb Rec Concert Series: <i>RAIN LOCATION</i>)	4 <i>Independence Day</i> 11a F. Douglass Reading (Colburn Park, FCC if rain)	5	6 Oak Hill Music Festival (arrives) 7p NA Group (7p Leb Rec Concert Series: <i>RAIN LOCATION</i>)	7	8 7:30p A Cappella Showcase: Family Feud and Friends

If you have questions or corrections regarding any event, please notify us at church@fccleb.org or 603-448-4281.

NEWS AND NOTES

CHURCH COUNCIL

Jon Scott opened Council in May with a short quotation of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whose story offers an inspiring example of faith in action. Referring to the agenda, Jon focused on how we manage to get things done as a leadership group. He reported feedback that meetings involve too much time talking and less actually getting things done. He believes we accomplish a lot but don't take time to reflect on accomplishments. Jon cited Bonhoeffer again: "Action springs not from thought, but from a readiness for responsibility." While the Council Chair has traditionally planned agendas and run meetings, all members have a responsibility to help and work on various tasks.

Jon reported that the **Personnel Committee** had begun to address 2023 staff compensation. The group is meeting with Rev. Steve Silver to discuss pastoral compensation, but they'll also consider compensation for the administrator and organist positions, given Steve's role as "de facto supervisor" of those positions. The committee will produce a full proposal following those discussions. Beyond compensation, there is more and harder work to be done to clarify job descriptions and evaluations. Jon hopes to get at least the compensation portion finalized by the end of the month, to be fair to the staff, and then make serious headway on the rest before breaking for the summer.

Jon reported confirmation from Richard Paul CPA that someone in their office had failed to complete the filing for **IRS certification of our non-profit status**. He's working

with them to rectify that and finish the filing, without incurring further costs. In the meantime, he'll arrange with Steve to use the denomination's tax-ID status to validate our online donation process.

Jon also recognized the Board of Governors' support of the **Lebanon Community Power** plan, by which the city has contracted for electric supply to all its residents from the Community Power Coalition of NH. This new program uses collective action to achieve lower rates than Liberty and other providers charge, while also offering higher reliance on renewable sources. As Board of Governors chair Walter Scott explains, customers are enrolled by default at a 33% renewable level, and even the more expensive, fully-renewable rate is 2-3 cents less per kilowatt-hour than the current Liberty supply rate. The Board of Governors recommends this fully-renewable option. Church Administrator Brian Clancy added that he'd already verified enrollment and chosen the fully renewable rate for two accounts and a 50% option for the third. (After some uncertainty about applying the new program to our exterior lighting account, all three accounts are now set at the 100% renewable level.) There is no cost for this change—all Lebanon residents and businesses benefit from it.

Adding to his **pastor's report**, Rev. Silver noted that he'll follow up with Nan Parsons to plan for Children's Sunday. He also reported that the Parsonage insulation project was underway, a temporary inconvenience for the sake of long-term energy and cost efficiency. He is grateful to the

congregation for providing and maintaining a home for his family. Steve is also planning his summer vacation schedule and will update the Diaconate and Council soon.

Jon regretted that we were unable to take advantage of Gordon Rankin's visit as guest preacher to have an in-person review of the **conference's consultation process last year**. Jon noted that some wished to convey feedback to the conference, but the general agreement was to move on and focus our limited resources on other tasks. Jon will try as best as he can to communicate our frustration and dissatisfaction with the process.

Barb Jones again took responsibility to move the **Pastor-Parish Relations Committee** forward. Jon explained that he and Barb would meet with conference staff to seek guidance and precedents for the committee's process and operation, which could be simplified. Jon invited Council feedback regarding the committee's role, how frequently it should meet, and even whether it should again be involved in determining pastoral compensation, as in the past. (Brian reminded everyone that FCC's bylaws have never assigned that role to the PPRC; Steve added that our practice

Committee Meetings

The following regular meetings will happen remotely via Zoom:

Diaconate	6/12, 7:00
Council	6/13, 7:00
MSA	6/26, 7:00

July and August meeting schedules TBD. For information on other groups' plans to meet, contact the office.

should follow our bylaws, which has not always been the case.) Several agreed that the committee should meet at least twice a year, or more often as needed. It was clarified that the committee should serve two-way communication, which need not be only critical or negative. Jon hopes to have the initial organizing meeting of the PPRC before the end of June, and all would be welcome.

Linda Gerlach reported the **Deacons** had a good meeting on May 8. The group proposed several good ideas for membership recruitment, though Linda cautioned that any such effort depends on volunteer involvement in it; we need to be realistic. She also noted the Deacons will resume a role in setting up and serving communion, and they've discussed reinstating the Passing of the Peace, a meaningful moment that many have missed. Lastly, all recognize the recent revival of coffee hours as very positive; Linda encouraged sign-ups, and Dawn Troutman thanked those who've provided food in recent weeks.

In her **Treasurer's** report Dawn observed that while income has been supplemented by endowment draws, stewardship seems to be on track. Valerie Nevel stressed that we need

All are invited into the full life of our church.
Join us as we grow together in God's love!

June is Pride Month

FCC recognizes Pride Month and the LGBTQIA+ community.

When our congregation adopted an Open and Affirming statement in 2008, it initiated a living, ongoing commitment to welcoming all into the church's worship life, sacraments, and rites—regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, race or ethnicity, economic circumstance, physical and mental ability, or any other perceived difference.

With enthusiastic endorsement from Church Council, FCC is excited to promote **Lebanon Opera House's LOH PRIDE CELEBRATION, Friday, June 16, on Colburn Park.** Featuring a Pride Picnic at 6:00 followed by a Silent Disco at 9:00, this important event offers public recognition and advocacy for the LGBTQIA+ community in the Upper Valley and beyond, and FCC is proud to endorse it. **All are welcome!**

For complete details, visit lebanonoperahouse.org/pride/.

to remain aware of the proportion of income that is coming from our endowment rather than offering collections and donations. She also offered to arrange a Zoom meeting with UCF representatives.

Brian clarified that a large portion of our **stewardship** income derives from a single gift set up as an annual bequest, not from a current response by the congregation. Jon noted that

such support could still be counted in our stewardship effort, expanding on the point by encouraging everyone to draw up wills and estate plans. (Rev. Silver observed the inevitable truth that the government decides what happens to our estate if we don't.) Valerie offered again to lead a conversation about estate planning.

For the **Board of Governors**, Walter Scott promoted the benefits of the

The Pastoral Perspective, *continued from Page 1*

colleague, an old friend, even a person who sits by you every Sunday during worship. We welcome these people—all people—into our common life at the church.

By extending the hand of friendship, by offering hospitality, we acknowledge another person's humanity, and we remember that it is God who has welcomed us. That is the least we can do as Christians. It's what Jesus would do. And Jesus' example is always a good one to follow.

Yours faithfully, *Steve*

NEWS AND NOTES

Parsonage insulation project and invited volunteers to join the Spring Clean-Up effort on May 13. Corrine Erskine asked also about arranging to have the Parlor carpet cleaned professionally this spring.

Valerie reported for **Mission and Social Action** on the upcoming visit of Peggy O'Neil, Executive Director of WISE, which has needs for those currently sheltering in its apartment building. We will present Peggy with a check for WISE's share (\$450) of the Lenten Lunch Bag offering. Nan Parsons will have the children themselves present the check.

For Council's **summer schedule**, Jon proposed not meeting in August and leaving a July meeting tentative. Urgent issues may be discussed as needed over email.

DIACONATE

Deb Scott opened the Deacons' May meeting with a devotional reflection on the fulfillment God's promises beyond the ancient Israelites and early Christians. The group reviewed current pastoral-care needs, including the Sargents at home and Jan Bergeron at Hanover Terrace. Calls, cards, and visits are encouraged.

Turning to **member recruitment** strategies, Dawn Troutman recommended outreach events on church grounds and elsewhere, offering a visible presence in the community. Options include cookouts, children's celebrations, and seasonal festivals.

Dawn noted the Spring Clean-Up on May 13 as an opportunity for community visibility and interaction; she and Steve will coordinate with Nan Parsons, who is also planning for Children's Sunday on June 11.

The group also discussed **potential outreach** to Rogers House and Leb Towers, along with more information and intentional engagement with non-member audiences at musical events at FCC. The Anonymous Coffeehouse is of particular interest in this respect. New gatherings such as sewing, knitting, or writing circles are also possible. The Deacons will select one priority to focus on initially, and the key to any of these plans will be volunteer commitment.

The Diaconate continues to consider options for a new, easily updated **member directory**. Administrator Brian Clancy has offered ideas and information, and Deacons have contacted other churches and the NH Conference for guidance.

Rev. Steve Silver surveyed upcoming dates, especially Pentecost Sunday on May 28 and Children's Sunday on June 11. He suggested resuming a pulpit exchange with West Leb Congregational this summer, which the Deacons support. He also invited volunteers to lead worship during his summer vacation. Additionally, the group discussed the importance of sharing the Passing of the Peace and involving Deacons in service of communion again, practices that were disrupted by the pandemic.

MOTHERS AND MUSIC IN MAY. We again celebrated mothers on Blanket Sunday; Rev. Gordon Rankin shared communion and preached on May 7; and concerts featured violist Jennifer Turbes, Bel Canto's "Journeys," and a very timely Classicopia program.



Subscribe to the NHC-UCC Weekly Newsletter

If you'd like to receive weekly news and information from the NH Conference of the UCC, please contact communications@nhcucc.org.

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION

FCC Outing Club in Enfield Smith Pond and Little Dog Falls

SUNDAY, JUNE 11, 12:45 PM

After the festivities of Children's Sunday, Ranger Ron Bailey leads this spring foray of our Outing Club—a chance for our congregation and friends to explore God's creation together. We'll enjoy an easy, family-friendly hike to Smith Pond and Little Dog Falls.

Bring water, sunscreen, bug/tick spray, and snack if desired. There is limited parking at the trailhead, which is on Smith Pond Rd, off Exit 15 of I-89. Carpooling is recommended—RSVP to the church office to coordinate.



SPRING CLEAN-UP! Raking, planting, tidying—along with playing, bubble blowing, and lemonade making/drinking!



All are invited—and bring your friends!



MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music at the Meetinghouse

Spring Concerts!

All in the Sanctuary. Masks and vaccination recommended.

Liz Simmons and Casey Murray: Folk, Roots, and Cello—Saturday, June 3, at 7:30 pm

Celebrating the release of her solo recording *Poets*, Brattleboro singer-songwriter Liz Simmons offers a program with versatile, classically-trained cellist Casey Murray. *Suggested donation \$10-20; more at lizsimmons.net.*

Cantabile Women's Chorus: We Sing Her Song—Sunday, June 4, at 4:00 pm

This superb ensemble honors the lives and experiences of historical, biblical, and ordinary women in a varied program of music. *Adults \$15, seniors \$10, students \$5, under 13 free; more at www.cantabilewomen.org.*

Cameo Baroque: Music of the French Baroque (Benefit for Willing Hands)—Friday, June 9, at 7:00 pm

Ernie Drown's excellent Baroque group shares a delightful taste of François Couperin, Jacques-Martin Hotteterre, and other composers. *Free-will donation to benefit Willing Hands; more at www.cameoarts.org.*

Mosaic Union String Ensemble (MUSE) Spring Concert—Sunday, June 11, at 4:30 pm

Based in Hanover and led by the inimitable Glee Charlestream, MUSE features student musicians of diverse ages and backgrounds. *Free admission; more at www.mosaicunionstringensemble.org.*

Classicopia: Reed 'Em and Weep—Sunday, June 25, at 2:00 pm

In an uncommon but expressive combination, pianist Dan Weiser welcomes back oboist Margaret Herlehy and bassoonist Janet Polk for a wonderful program of trios by Ludwig van Beethoven, Ludwig Milde, Geoffrey Bush, Margaret Dring, and Paul Carr. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; more at classicopia.org.*

A Cappella Showcase: Family Feud and Friends—Saturday, July 8, at 7:30 pm

Dan Signor and Gaye LaCasce, longtime leaders of the local *a cappella* community who moved to Virginia four years ago, return to the Upper Valley as Family Feud for a program with Fast Track, the Honeymooners, Jeff Russell, North Country Chordsmen, Valley Chords, and Vox Stars. *Free admission; donations welcome.*

Oak Hill Music Festival—Wednesday, July 12, and Friday, July 14, both at 7:00 pm

Having successfully launched this innovative festival a year ago, Hanover-born bassoonist Leah Kohn and her violinist husband Niv Ashkenazi return with other professional musicians for a week in residence at FCC. They'll play two concerts here—"Four Seasons" and "Music of Exile"—and a third in Norwich ("Chemistry") on Saturday, July 15. *Complete details, musician information, and ticket options at www.oakhillmusicfestival.com.*

NH Music Festival Chamber Series—Monday, July 17, at 7:00 pm

The long-running, Plymouth-based festival expands with a chamber series. *Details TBD; more at www.nhmf.org.*

Classicopia: The Russian Cello—Sunday, July 23, at 2:00 pm

Cellist Alicia Ward joins pianist Dan Weiser. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; more at classicopia.org.*

Register Now! Classicopia Summer Music Camp at FCC/UVMC—August 14-19, 9a-3p Daily

A rousing success last summer, this immersive program offers instrumental and vocal instruction to students aged 8-18, with outstanding faculty and guest artists. *Details and registration at classicopia.org/summer-camp/.*

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

Children's Sunday

Celebrate on June 11!

June is Pride Month

LOH Pride—Friday, June 16
Colburn Park

SHELTER SUNDAY

FATHER'S DAY, JUNE 18



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

Upcoming Concerts

All in the Sanctuary. Masks and vaccination recommended.

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First Congregational Church of Lebanon

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organist and Choir Director • Nancy Parsons, Children's Community Corner

Jon Scott, Chair of Church Council • Linda Gerlach, Chair of Deacons • Barbara Jones, Moderator

Brian Clancy, Church Administrator

603-448-4281 • church@fccleb.org • prayer@fccleb.org • music@fccleb.org • www.fccleb.org