

# Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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## The Pastoral Perspective

By the time you read this, I'll officially be on sabbatical. "What's that?" you might ask. Well, let me give you some particulars.

A sabbatical is a time of rest, reflection, and renewal. It's in my search-and-call agreement. It is *not* an overlong vacation. Nor is it a time to look for a new pulpit. I'll be back in three months, just after Labor Day. I'll even give you a report then on what I learned and did. However, let me share some teasers.

In June I will attend a continuing-education program with N. T. (Tom) Wright, the noted British biblical scholar and former Anglican bishop, who will be teaching a class on what the book of Isaiah has to say to us as Christians. You may recall that I spent a lot of time in graduate school with the 8th-century-BCE prophets, including Isaiah. I'm interested in what Wright has to say, especially as I am wary of anything that smacks of supercessionism.

I'll also be doing some reading and a little bit of regional travel during my sabbatical. Both of these are activities that I find grounding.

Finally, I will get some rest. My recent "cardiac event" is something that is still with me, and I hope I am able to fully adjust to this new reality during my sabbatical. I have not spoken much about this with you, but I have been confronting my own mortality. With a very intense health episode at the start of March and a child going off to college at the end of the summer, I have had to face the fact that time has continued its onward march. Put less delicately, I'm going to die. (So, too, are you.) That's a harsh reality we humans must confront. Our faith gives us tools, and it gives us hope. So, I'll be thinking about, and praying over, my ultimate end. What does it mean? What will be its impact?

Depressing? Well, only if I become irrationally morbid or hopelessly fatalistic. Things *do* change. Like the weather—the cloudy, cold days of early spring will be but a memory as we bask in the warm sunlight of summer. That, in turn, should be recognized as a gift from our God, who made us, each of us, with love and grace.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

## SUNDAY SERVICE



Upper Valley  
**Habitat  
for Humanity®**

## SHELTER SUNDAY FATHER'S DAY, JUNE 15

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 12 (contributions gratefully accepted after that date). Any amount is welcome—thanks!*



**STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH** supports the growth of ministry and local congregations across the country. This year's theme—"Great and Wide"—suggests the diversified purpose of establishing new churches and supporting existing ones. Renewing faith communities and funding fellowships for young, emerging leaders, the program is vital to the health of our denomination.

*Please contribute as you are able. Thanks!*

### Community Dinner Is Served!

Sunday, June 22, at 5:00 pm

Leader: DAWN TROUTMAN

All are warmly invited to come, eat, and share fellowship, regardless of need or affiliation.

### Consider Leading a Future Dinner

If you're interested, menu resources are available, FCC can reimburse costs, and you'll *always* have help! **Questions? Contact the church office.**

*Our monthly dinners are vital to our outreach, and anyone can join in leading one—friends, coworkers, teams, book groups... ANYONE!*

### Steve Silver on Sabbatical Until September

For his second sabbatical, Rev. Silver looks forward to pursuing theological study, mission experience, and regional travel—along with a "sabbath" of rest.

#### SUMMER PREACHING SCHEDULE

June 8	Rev. Beth Hilgartner
June 15	Bob Gerlach
June 22	Rev. Gail Dimick
June 29	Valerie Nevel
July 6	Rev. Gail Dimick
July 13	Candy Darcey
July 20	Rev. Gail Dimick
July 27	Rev. Gail Dimick
August 3	Rev. Bob Ross
August 10	Rev. Beth Hilgartner
August 17	Rev. Gail Dimick
August 24	Phil Hammond
August 31	Rev. Gail Dimick

### All Are Welcome to Worship at FCC

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

### Ushers, Zoom Greeters, Liturgists Needed!

All invited to serve in these essential worship roles.

### Would You Like to Serve Coffee Hour?

Coffee hour is a beloved time for fellowship after worship. Please consider hosting a Sunday or two!

# JUNE 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>25</b> 10a Worship/CCC <b>5p Community Dinner</b>	<b>26</b> <i>Memorial Day</i> No UVMC	<b>27</b> 1p Cameo Baroque 3:30p FCC Choir 7p Cantabile Rehearsal	<b>28</b> 3-6:30p UVMC (make-up week) 6p UV Symphony Orchestra	<b>29</b> 3:45p UVMC Children's Choir (make-up week) 7p NA Group	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>1</b> <b>CHILDREN'S SUNDAY!</b> 10a Worship/CCC (Communion) <b>4p Cantabile: Oh Canada!</b>	<b>2</b> 1p Acacia Reh. 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program (make-up week)	<b>3</b> 1p Acacia Reh. 3:30p FCC Choir (last)	<b>4</b> 3-6:30p UVMC (make-up week)	<b>5</b> 3:45p UVMC Children's Choir (make-up week) 7p NA Group	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 12p LHS Alumni Reunion '75 <b>7p Upper Valley Voices: Standing Strong</b>
<b>8</b> 10a Worship <b>4p Acacia Chamber Music</b>	<b>9</b> 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program (make-up week) 7p Diaconate	<b>10</b> 1p Cameo Baroque 7p Council	<b>11</b> 3-6:30p UVMC (make-up week) 8a-3:30p WIC	<b>12</b> 7p NA Group	<b>13</b> 5p Piano Recital (Students of Sarah Slater)	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> <i>Father's Day</i> 10a Worship	<b>16</b> 5:30p Bylaws	<b>17</b> 1p Cameo Baroque 6p Voice Recital (Students of Julie Ness)	<b>18</b> 7p Voice Recital (Students of Julie Ness)	<b>19</b> <i>Juneteenth</i> 7p NA Group	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> <b>Oak Hill Music Festival</b> (arrives until 6/29) <b>5p UV-AA Open Mic Night</b>
<b>22</b> 10a Worship 2p Classicopia: Four Seasons Remix <b>5p Community Dinner</b>	<b>23</b> 10a-5p Oak Hill	<b>24</b> 10a-5p Oak Hill	<b>25</b> 10a-5p Oak Hill 7p Oak Hill MF: Brahms Piano Quintet	<b>26</b> 10a-5p Oak Hill 11a-6p WIC 7p NA Group	<b>27</b> 10a-5p Oak Hill	<b>28</b> 12p F. Douglass Reading (RAIN LOCATION)
<b>29</b> 10a Worship 6:30p Upper Valley Coalition	<b>30</b>	<b>1</b> 1p Cameo Baroque	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> (7p Leb Rec Concert Series: RAIN LOCATION) 7p NA Group	<b>4</b> <i>Independence Day</i>	<b>5</b>

If you have questions or corrections regarding any event, please notify us at [church@fccleb.org](mailto:church@fccleb.org) or 603-448-4281.

## CHURCH COUNCIL

Barb Jones opened the May meeting of Council with prayer for guidance for our congregation and church leadership. Jon Scott noted there was a limited agenda of committee reports and more details regarding Rev. Steve Silver's sabbatical.

In his **pastor's report**, Steve followed up on the baptism planned for the previous Sunday, for which the Salomond family did not attend as expected, causing confusion and concern. He spoke with the family and confirmed that everyone is well. They rescheduled the baptism for June 1, which is Children's Sunday and his final Sunday before going on sabbatical.

While awaiting formal notification from church leadership of the dates and duration of his **sabbatical**, Steve worked under the assumption that it will include the summer. In early June he'll travel to Texas for a week-long program with theologian N. T. Wright, after which he plans to participate in a program with Mary Luti in Craigville on Cape Cod. He has discussed some expense details with Valerie Nevel but is unclear about when he will be allowed to take vacation, as distinct from his sabbatical. Jon confirmed that Steve would be able to take both vacation and sabbatical.

Jon asked Steve what most excited him regarding his sabbatical. Steve replied that simply the change of venue itself would be refreshing, though he will miss the work of our church. He looks forward to working

with N. T. Wright, a great teacher, on a longtime interest of his, the relationship between Christianity and the Book of Isaiah. He'll also value the extended time to recover from his cardiac incident in March, renew habits of self-care, and prepare for his son Chip's departure for college in August. Jon noted that he'd like to add Steve to the prayer list while he's away, for which Steve is grateful. Lastly, Steve explained that while Rev. Gail Dimick will cover the pulpit for much of his time away, there will be several Sundays when deacons and others from the congregation will preach and lead worship, including Bob Gerlach, Bob Ross, Phil Hammond, Deb Scott, and Beth Hilgartner.

For the **Diaconate**, Linda Gerlach reported that the group discussed the recent success of Community Dinners. She added that Deb Scott had rediscovered a Church-School cookbook from 2003 (when Walter was in 3rd grade!), suggesting that we collect new favorite recipes from current children and release a 25th-anniversary edition in 2028. The Diaconate and Council have kept current on several pastoral-care issues. Jon commended the practice of having the congregation sign cards for individual church members, on Easter and other occasions.

**Treasurer** Bob Gerlach explained that he's still unsure of Council's preferences for monthly financial reporting, but he offered summary observations on year-to-date figures. Through one third of the year, both income and expenses are just under

30% of the annual budget, both within expected ranges.

For **Mission and Social Action**, Steve reported that he's been in touch with the Upper Valley Haven about visiting FCC to discuss its general services and its campaign for a community shelter. As the Haven's executive director has just stepped down, it seems best to postpone a visit until the fall, after new leadership is in place.

Steve also reported a concern that re-hanging our immigrant-themed welcome banner might make us a target in the current political climate. He and Jon, though, both expressed confidence that it was the right message to convey, regardless of any such risk, and others agreed; Steve invoked the long-standing identity of churches as sanctuaries. Bob distinguished between individual and organizational expression, with caution about jeopardizing our tax-exempt status.

Jon offered a summary on behalf of the **Board of Governors**, primarily plans to complete the front-steps renovation in July. He has reached out to Ben Montmagny to address the sound-system upgrade, a plan that will involve multiple parties and last into the fall. He invited suggestions and requests for particular capabilities.

Lastly, Steve repeated confirmation that the City of Lebanon has voted to restore two-way traffic on Church Street upon the completion of the new fire station. Barb Jones asked a related question about requesting



## NEWS AND NOTES

leniency from the owners of the Carriage House (6 South Park St) regarding their parking lot, from which many cars have recently been towed. Unfortunately, there seems to be little chance of flexibility on that issue.

### DIACONATE

After Bob Ross opened the Deacons' May meeting with a devotional reflection by St. Francis of Assisi, Rev. Silver reported plans for Children's Sunday on June 1, his

last before taking his sabbatical. Steve has arranged to have Rev. Gail Dimick cover many of the Sundays he'll be gone, but other weeks will be covered by Diaconate volunteers, including Bob Ross, Bob Gerlach, Phil Hammond, and Deb Scott. The Deacons will also review the process for setting up and serving communion.

The Deacons considered several pastoral-care cases, from longterm aging-related issues to the effects of recent health procedures. Deb Scott also reported her rediscovery

of recipe book produced in 2003 by the children of the Church School (including her older son Walter). She proposed that new recipes be requested from current children and included in both the monthly newsletter and a 25th-anniversary collection in 2028.

Considering the recent sustained success of our monthly Community Dinners, the Deacons heard plans for various congregation members to lead the next few dinners, along with interest from the new Italian deli next door.

### Con-GRAD-ulations!

*FCC joins in celebrating this spring's graduations! Whether from high school or college, and whether they have a close or distant connection to our congregation, we wish the new graduates ALL THE BEST in whatever they pursue next.*



Remember this guy? Charles Silver (LHS '25) in archival photos.



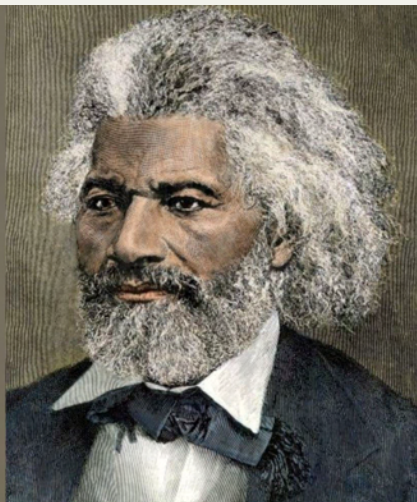
STATEWIDE  
COMMUNITY  
READING

FREDERICK  
DOUGLASS

"WHAT, TO THE  
SLAVE, IS YOUR  
FOURTH OF JULY"

SATURDAY, JUNE 28, 2025  
12:00, NOON

WWW.BLACKHERITAGETRAILNH.ORG



### Frederick Douglass Reading

**Saturday, June 28, 12:00 Noon**  
**Colburn Park, Lebanon**

All are welcome to attend this annual reading, in coordination with readings in twenty other towns statewide, a powerful event organized by the BLACK HERITAGE TRAIL OF NH.

**Volunteer readers needed! If you'd like to read a paragraph or two, please contact Brian Clancy (in the church office).**

**Do Your Part to Fill the Cart!**  
*for*  
**LISTEN Community Services**  
*Please consider a donation, and thanks!*

Join the fight against local poverty and food insecurity by leaving contributions in our shopping cart in the Parish Hall, to benefit area service organizations. We're now collecting non-perishable food and personal-care items for LISTEN Community Services. For a list of their current and ongoing needs, visit [listencs.org](https://listencs.org).



# THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



## Children's Sunday!



**Victoria Rose Marguerite Toussaint**  
Baptized June 1, 2025



# MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



**Music  
at the  
Meetinghouse**

## Summer Concerts

*All in the Sanctuary at First Congregational Church*

### **Upper Valley Voices: Standing Strong—Saturday, June 7, at 7:00 pm**

Director Kevin Quigley and one of the area's premier choral groups share a diverse collection of music exploring how fear confronts us in our lives—and how we can recognize, neutralize, and even utilize its force to empower ourselves. *Adults \$15 prepay online (\$20 at the door), students \$10; more at [uppervalleyvoices.org](http://uppervalleyvoices.org).*

### **Acacia Chamber Music: Quartets, Trios, and Duos—Sunday, June 8, at 4:00 pm**

Leslie Stroud (flute), Jason Smoller (oboe), Meghan Donahue (clarinet), and Matthew Odell (piano) return with more “music in uncommonly heard combinations,” this time by Camille Saint-Saëns, Darius Milhaud, Malcolm Arnold, and Heitor Villa-Lobos. *Free-will donation; for more about Acacia Music, find them on Facebook.*

### **Classicopia: Four Seasons Remix (Conversing with Vivaldi)—Sunday, June 22, at 2:00 pm**

Dan Weiser joins violinist Veronika Sveshnikova and cellist Jacques-Pierre Malan for an intriguing juxtaposition of piano trios by Max Richter and Astor Piazzolla, each of which responds in distinctly divergent ways to Antonio Vivaldi's best-known work. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; more at [classicopia.org](http://classicopia.org).*

### **Oak Hill Music Festival: Season Four!—Week of June 23-29**

Having launched this innovative festival in 2022, Hanover-born bassoonist Leah Kohn and her violinist husband Niv Ashkenazi return with a coterie of other accomplished musicians for a week in residence. They'll play three wonderful programs: **Brahms' Piano Quintet** (at FCC, June 25), **Around the World** (Norwich, June 28), and **Schubert Octet** (Hanover, June 29). *Full details at [www.oakhillmusicfestival.com](http://www.oakhillmusicfestival.com).*

### **Classicopia: Mendelssohn Mania—Friday, July 18, at 7:30 pm**

Dan Weiser welcomes violinist Andréa Picard Boecker and cellist Alicia Ward for an exciting program of piano trios by Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn. Limited in their time by disgraceful anti-semitism and sexism, these siblings survive today in powerful music. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; more at [classicopia.org](http://classicopia.org).*

### **Counterpoint: In the Good Old Summertime—Saturday, July 19, at 7:00 pm**

Director Nathaniel Lew brings Vermont's professional choral ensemble back to FCC for the first time in three years with a delightful selection of American popular songs of the Gilded Age. *Adults \$20, seniors \$15, students and limited means \$5; more at [counterpointchorus.org/upcoming/](http://counterpointchorus.org/upcoming/).*

## **Classicopia Summer Music Camp at FCC/UVMC—August 4-9, 9a-3p Daily**

This immersive but seriously fun program offers instrumental and vocal instruction to students aged 8-17, with outstanding faculty and guest artists. *Details and registration at [classicopia.org/summer-camp/](http://classicopia.org/summer-camp/).*

**Faculty Concert—Friday, August 8, at 7:00 pm / Student Concert—Saturday, August 9, at 10:00 am**

### **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

**PENTECOST**  
Sunday, June 8

**SHELTER SUNDAY**  
FATHER'S DAY, JUNE 15

**Steve Silver on Sabbatical Until September**  
*Summer Worship Schedule on Page 2*



Music  
at the  
Meetinghouse

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## First Congregational Church of Lebanon

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organist and Choir Director • Brian Clancy, Church Administrator

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

603-448-4281 • [church@fccleb.org](mailto:church@fccleb.org) • [prayer@fccleb.org](mailto:prayer@fccleb.org) • [music@fccleb.org](mailto:music@fccleb.org) • [www.fccleb.org](http://www.fccleb.org)