



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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The Pastoral Perspective

How do you pray?

A simple question, with no right answer.

Each of us prays in his or her own way. Sometimes, we say the words that come to us from nowhere, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Other times, we offer up the words of a written prayer, like that taught to us by Jesus. We might find our prayers are sharp, focused, satisfying. We might find that they are nebulous, aimless, without form, a source of frustration.

Prayer is a discipline. It takes work and practice. The more we do it, the better we will be at it. As with anything else worth doing, we need to make a commitment to prayer.

Our Deacons have re-committed themselves to this discipline, and they would like you to join them. One way to do so is to become a member of the Prayer Team. Each week the Prayer Team lifts up the names of members of the congregation, their relatives and friends, and their issues of concern. You can always ring me up or be in touch with one of the Deacons if you'd like to submit a prayer concern, which we can hold in confidence if you like. You can also leave a note for the Prayer Team in the church office or in the Joys and Concerns book in the Sanctuary. Soon we will have an email box to which you can submit prayer requests.

Perhaps you will feel called to be part of this ministry. We would love that! At the least, I hope you will join us in renewing your prayer life. During Advent we will offer a workshop on prayer—how to do it, what it means, why it's important. This should be a great opportunity to focus on one of the oldest disciplines we share as Christians.

Prayer is an integral part of the life of faith. I hope—and pray—that you will find it to be so in your life, and that you will do so in the company of others here at First Congregational Church.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

SUNDAY SERVICE



Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service

Monday,
November 20,
7:00 pm

FCC Sanctuary

All are welcome to share in this community worship service, as we welcome area clergy and congregations to our Sanctuary for a faithful and grateful observation of Thanksgiving.

*Please join us as we give thanks together
as a community in worship!*

Triumph of the Reformation

Presentation after Worship on November 12

Hundreds of years, scores of players, complex developments. The Reformation was one of history's Big Events. Want to know more? Join Rev. Steve Silver for a PowerPoint presentation and lecture, originally delivered by Prof. Jonathan Arnold of Oxford University. **All are welcome!**

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

IS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19

We will dedicate our pledges for the coming year and celebrate our congregational community.

Please see additional information on Page 4.

Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Association Annual Meeting

Sunday, November 19, 1:30 pm, at FCC

All are invited to attend the annual meeting of our association of Upper Valley UCC churches. After a light reception, Charles Buck, Interim Minister of the NH Conference, will speak.

THANKSGIVING COMMUNITY DINNER

Sunday, November 26, 5:00 pm

Leaders: ALYSON AND TERRY ELLISON

Thanks to Alyson and Terry for organizing this month's dinner! Please lend a hand as you're able, to provide this vital service to our neighbors.

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 2018. Menu resources are available, and a Community Dinner Fund helps cover costs. Below are the dates that are available for 2018. If you're interested in leading or have questions, contact the office.

January 28

May 27

February 25

June 24

March 25

July 22

April 22

November 25

Christmas Decorating Party!

Following Worship on Sunday, December 3

Yes, CHRISTMAS!! Advent begins on the first Sunday in December. Plan to stay after worship to help hang wreaths, string lights, and have fun getting the church ready for this festive season.

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

Queued for Coffee Hour

November—Women of the Church

December—Board of Governors

January—Stewardship Committee

January—Christian Education Committee

NOVEMBER 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 10a Worship and Church School	30 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bears)	31 HALLOWEEN 7p Boy Scouts	1 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	2 7p Choir	3 1p UVIP Meeting 2p Recording in Sanctuary (D. Thron, piano) 6-9p Leb Rec Quilters' Retreat	4 8a Men's Breakfast 10a-5p Leb Rec Quilters' Retreat
5 10a Worship (w/ Communion) and Church School 2p Classicopia: Blowin' in the Winds	6 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bears)	7 6p Weatherize Lebanon Mtg 7p Boy Scouts	8 8a-4p NH-WIC 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers 7:15p Christian Ed Committee	9 12:30-4p G-O-S Assn CoCM 6p Choir (<i>note earlier time this week only</i>)	10 7p Violin Master Class, Students of K. Andrew	11 7:30p Roseminna Watson and Elizabeth Borowsky
12 10a Worship and Church School 11:15a Triumph of the Reformation 2p UVIP Micah Awards Event (in Claremont)	13 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bears) 7p Diaconate	14 7p Boy Scouts	15 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	16 7p Choir	17 7p LOH on Location! Johnny Gandelsman, Violin	18 10a Johnny Gandelsman, Violin Master Class
19 STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY 10a Worship and Church School 1:30p Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Assn Annual Mtg	20 10a-6p NH-WIC 7p Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service (FCC) DECEMBER NEWSLETTER CONTENT DUE	21 7p Church Council 7p Boy Scouts/Troop Committee	22 6p UVPRN No Bel Canto Chamber Singers	23 THANKSGIVING No Choir	24	25
26 10a Worship and Church School 11:15a Bd of Govs 5p Community Dinner	27 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bears)	28 7p Boy Scouts	29 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	30 7p Choir 7:30p Violin Recital, Students of K. Andrew	1	2 8a Men's Breakfast NOTE: ADVENT begins Sunday, December 3.

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

COMMITTEE NOTES

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Board of Governors has assessed and completed several **assorted projects around the church.**

Wayne Braley has presented a railing design for the chancel steps and will complete it when his work schedule allows. He also arranged for Valley Floors to submit an estimate for refinishing the Sanctuary floor. Nan Parsons is working on getting quotes for carpeting and cushions. Brandon Mason is coordinating with insulation contractors to improve our energy efficiency throughout the building.

Walter Scott has patched the cracks on the front walk, and while he's disappointed that the fills themselves have started cracking, all agreed that it looks better than before. Sealing the entire walk will help the longevity of these repairs. John Gilliatt has improved the front yard with some landscape maintenance before winter. It's possible that the Scouts may assist with a fall cleanup around the grounds, but the Board agreed we don't need a full effort from the congregation.

At the **Parsonage**, we received one estimate of \$5000 for chimney repairs and flue liner installation,

but we will get at least one other before proceeding. Other repairs at the parsonage have come out quite well. In August, however, there was a significant sewage backup in the laundry room, requiring emergency repairs by Stearns Septic. The cause was root infiltration along the sewer line, and further investigation will determine if additional maintenance is necessary.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Reporting to Council for **Mission and Social Action**, Corrine Erskine noted that we hope soon to have a guest speaker on immigration issues. She also noted the possibility that Barb Jones would offer a class using UVIP's curriculum on Aging with Dignity, although Barb's co-leader Sue Pratt has gone south for the winter. Several wondered if UVIP could suggest other opportunities for the class.

For **Stewardship**, Jon Scott reported that through three quarters of the year, we are at roughly the halfway point in pledge projections. That isn't so unusual, as pledge payments often lag during the summer and

many plan charitable giving late in the year. Stewardship Sunday will happen in November, after the annual pledge mailing. Council agreed that it would be helpful to send year-to-date contribution statements to all (whether they made a 2017 pledge or not), either by email or regular mail.

Valerie Nevel reported on a recent meeting of the **Trustees and Finance Committee**, noting that Trustee transfers were outpacing the expected schedule for the year. We are still drawing from investment income at a responsible rate, however. Valerie offered to present a Stewardship moment in worship to encourage the congregation to provide for FCC in estate planning. **Treasurer** Terry Ellison reported that the first three quarters of the year showed no areas of particular concern in our budget.

Brian Clancy promoted the Music at the Meetinghouse fall series, making special mention of **LOH on Location**, our new collaboration with the Lebanon Opera House, which is handling ticketing and publicity for these two events. Details of our financial arrangement with LOH aren't yet confirmed, but at the very

Stewardship Sunday is November 19

Giving in Community: Sharing God's Gifts with One Another

Each fall we are encouraged to recognize the many gifts, large and small, that we receive from our amazingly generous God. As we approach Stewardship Sunday this year, we'll be exploring Acts 4-5, with its stories of remarkable sharing and shocking selfishness. Giving, lying, trust, community—it's all here. We'll see how the first church dealt with these issues and explore the lessons we might draw as we consider our own stewardship and engagement with the church, as individuals and as a community.

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY IS NOVEMBER 19. Please consider your commitment, prayerfully and honestly, to our church's mission and ministry in 2018, and join us as we dedicate our pledges this month.

COMMITTEE NOTES

least we are assured of covering our operational costs of hosting these concerts, while also drawing an expanded audience here. Building on this, Steve Silver noted his desire to explore the creation of a cultural district around the Green, working with LOH, AVA Gallery, and our new neighbor, UVMC.

Marcia Corkins noted that Christian Ed would be serving this month's **Community Dinner**. Council then discussed the monthly dinners in general, noting declining attendance and the ongoing challenge of finding new volunteers to lead each month. Some wondered whether it could be promoted more widely than by the banner and word-of-mouth, which have typically sufficed in the past to draw a regular crowd. All were reminded of the availability of funds to reimburse dinner expenses; meal organizers have seldom asked for such reimbursement.

In his **pastor's report**, Steve Silver noted enthusiastic attendance for his sabbatical presentation after worship on October 15. He will be offering a talk in November on the Protestant Reformation, based on his Oxford coursework this summer. He has also arranged for the Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Association to hold its annual meeting here on Sunday, November 19. The Association will elect officers and hear from interim conference minister Charles Buck regarding the search for a permanent minister. Also in November, the Deacons will once again lead Sunday afternoon services at Genesis.

Looking outward in our community, Steve noted that a weekly vigil in

Colburn Park has been initiated by supporters of the Black Lives Matter movement. While we're not directly involved in the vigils, their proximity across the street encourages us as a congregation to engage this critical social issue and perhaps take a more official position on the matter. Similarly, Steve noted that the Boy Scouts' decision nationally to include girls would prompt our own Troop 279 to consider how to accommodate this change. While FCC need not adopt any official position on its own, it's important as a charter organization to be sensitive to this development as Troop 279 responds. Steve also confirmed that UVIP's effort to create an alternative loan program has been tabled.

Steve raised the need to plan for a **capital campaign in the next year**, considering the opportunity of our congregation's 250th anniversary in 2018. Council agreed that such a campaign is advisable, provided that the congregation would collectively identify clear objectives and purposes for funds to be raised. Renovation of our kitchen, for example, would be a logical goal given its frequent use for church and community functions. (Aside from the kitchen, it was noted that our physical plant overall is in relatively good condition.) Valerie Nevel asked whether a feasibility study would be done, primarily to determine how the campaign would be staffed and supervised.

The campaign conversation raised the topic of **budget preparations for 2018**. Having not yet participated in annual budget planning, Terry Ellison asked what the process has been in previous years. All agreed

November Meetings

Mission/Social Action	11/5, 11:15
Christian Education	11/8, 7:15
Diaconate	11/13, 7:00
Church Council	(no mtg)
Board of Governors	11/26, 11:15

December Meetings

Mission/Social Action	12/3, 11:15
Diaconate	12/11, 7:00
Christian Education	12/13, 7:15
Church Council	12/19, 7:00
Board of Governors	(tbd)

From Church Council and the Nominating Committee

Are You Being Served?

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!

Please contact the church office or **Amy Driscoll (603-448-0976 or amykdriscoll@gmail.com)**.

Community Dinner Fund Available

Please be aware that funds exist to support preparation of our monthly Community Dinners, in order to encourage broader leadership of this vital service.

To request reimbursement, dinner leaders should submit receipts to the church office.

COMMITTEE NOTES

that budget preparation should happen earlier (before the end of the calendar year) and involve a larger group of people than it has in the recent past. While the Board of Governors has already identified some budget items for 2018, it was recommended that other committees provide more explicit input about programming and other needs.

Lastly, Council recognized the need to support the Mission and Social Action account with designated mission funds in the Dole Trust.

DIACONATE

At their October meeting Deacons discussed their responsibility for collecting Sunday offering, which should involve two counters to avoid errors and accountability concerns. They also addressed funding for the **Open Door Ministry**. Suggestions for increasing donations to this ministry include telling recipients' stories anonymously; informing congregants that they can donate at any time and that any participation matters (including prayer); changing communion envelopes to designate the Open Door Ministry; dedicating more space in the bulletin; and

reminding the congregation on the last Sunday each month to consider giving to this collection the following Sunday. Biff Simpson also offered the services of Valley Improv to hold a fundraising dinner and a show.

Discussion of the **Ministry of Caring** included developing a structured approach to sharing a list of prayer concerns. Primary communication will be by email to deacons and other members of the congregation who wish to participate. (Some other format will be used for those who don't use email.) All were reminded to call and check on those not at Sunday worship, to send cards and pray for those members of our community. Transportation needs seem to be covered at this time, but publicizing specific requests as they occur was recommended. Several deacons and others are working on providing shawls for the Prayer Shawl Ministry; Linda Jacobs also asked for participation in making scarves for community dinner guests.

This year's **CROP Walk** drew 72 participants. FCC hosted our traditional meal for walkers with soups provided by Jim Oronte and the Lebanon Diner. More advance

notice and recruitment were recommended to increase turnout.

Steve Silver reminded the Deacons that we have agreed to lead **services at Genesis** in November. We have been asked to do this again next year, and it was recommended that we commit again for November.

Deacons expressed concern about having four **services on Christmas Eve**, which falls on a Sunday this year. Steve expressed appreciation for the Deacons' help with these services, but he does not wish to eliminate any of them due to their particular appeal for attendees.

The Mission and Social Action Committee has expressed strong interest in FCC's presentation of UVIP's curriculum on **Ageing with Dignity**. Steve will make an announcement from the pulpit to discern the congregation's interest, considering a five-week commitment on the part of participants. Barb Jones suggested an informational meeting and will ask for help from other facilitators, since Sue Pratt has left for Florida. Deacons also warmly congratulated our UVIP Micah Award winner this year, Kathy Beckett.



With church members in rapt attention, Steve Silver recounts his sabbatical experiences—from Atlanta to Oxford and everywhere in between.

LOOKING AHEAD TO ADVENT

Sunday, December 3, 11:30 am (Following Worship)—Christmas Decorating Party

Come help hang wreaths, string lights, and have fun getting the church ready for this festive season.

Sunday, December 3, 4:00 pm—LOH on Location: The Eric Mintel Jazz Quartet

Lebanon Opera House presents Jazz pianist Eric Mintel and friends, who will share new twists on holiday classics—including a tribute to Vince Guaraldi and his beloved music for *A Charlie Brown Christmas*.

Sat., Dec. 9, 7:30 pm / Sun., Dec. 10, 4:00 pm—Bel Canto Chamber Singers: What Sweeter Music

Directed by Jane Woods, the Bel Canto Chamber Singers celebrate their 40th anniversary with choral music from chant to contemporary. In addition to seasonal choices, the program features the premiere of a setting of the *Magnificat* by Upper Valley composer Travis Ramsey, commissioned for this anniversary.

Sunday, December 10, 11:30 am (Following Worship)—FCC Community Caroling

Bring some Christmas fellowship to homebound church members and nearby friends and neighbors.

Sunday, December 17, 4:00-6:00 pm—Christmas Party and Carol Sing at the Parsonage

All the congregation is invited to enjoy fellowship, delicious food, and Christmas cheer on Kimball Street.

Sunday, December 17, 6:30 pm—UVMC Messiah Sing!

Organized by Jennifer Hansen and conducted by Jane Woods, this annual tradition features local soloists and chamber orchestra. All are welcome to join the chorus (scores available!) or simply listen.

Sunday, December 24, 12:00 pm (Note earlier time!)—CHRISTMAS EVE COMMUNITY DINNER

We will serve our monthly dinner at **midday**, offering our neighbors warmth and cheer on Christmas Eve.

Sunday, December 24—CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Family Service at 5:00, Lessons and Carols at 8:00, and Candlelight Communion at 11:00.

Christmas Gifts for Our Community

This year FCC will again sponsor families for Christmas through Listen Community Services, with a Giving Tree selection of clothing and grocery vouchers.

Look for collection information in the Parish Hall in mid-November or contact Barb Teeter (603-448-4529).



BLESSING OUR PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY. Sue Pratt, Alyson Danyew-Ellison, and Ginger Smith display beautiful shawls they've created to help bring the warmth of prayer to members of our congregation.

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



OCTOBER SCENES AT FCC AND BEYOND. Steve Silver shares a moment with a small but sharply dressed group of children; Kylee Pierce offers a preview of Halloween; a large group enjoys a fall hike on Farnum Hill, led by Ranger Ron Bailey; and flautists Linda Alexander and Leslie Stroud share some music from their October concert in worship.



CONGRATULATIONS TO TWO NEW EAGLE SCOUTS. With families and peers looking on, Boy Scout Troop 279 recognized Justin Rogers (left) and Suhan Song (above) last month for this highest of achievements.



UVIP Micah Awards Ceremony—“Local Heroes, Local Foods” Sunday, November 12, 2:00 pm, Claremont Senior Center

FCC’s Kathy Beckett will join other UVIP honorees on November 12 at the Claremont Senior Center (5 Acer Heights Road, Claremont). This annual “Local Heroes, Local Foods” event offers UVIP member groups and supportive businesses and non-profits a chance to connect and build support for community engagement. FCC has a limited number of tickets available for anyone who would like to attend—\$30 in advance, \$35 at the door (\$10 in either case for children 13 and under); proceeds support the vital work of UVIP. Assistance is available for anyone wishing to attend; please contact Steve Silver or the church office.

Our Open Door Ministry *Supporting Our Community, One Gift Card at a Time*

Throughout the year, our neighbors come to the church office seeking assistance. Whether it’s a tank of gas for the car, some food for dinner, or a contribution toward rent or the electric bill, our congregation is able to help, thanks to the **Open Door Ministry**. Available to anyone in greater Lebanon, this is one of the most vital services we extend to our community.

We don’t ask questions about need or use; the Open Door is just that. We do ask that people wait between four and six months between their requests, only because the overall need is great. We *never* have enough money to help all those who need assistance, and that’s not an exaggeration—it’s the truth. **While FCC has responded to these needs for years, demand for assistance has increased considerably in the recent past.**

Those who seek help from us haven’t been irresponsible or lazy, and the clear majority of them (about 80%) request assistance just once or twice. With just a handful of exceptions in the past several years, they don’t become dependent or try to take advantage of the program. Some are chronically homeless; some have just been evicted for reasons beyond their control. Sometimes they’ve just moved to the area and need a hand getting started; sometimes they’ve lost a job or just started a new one. Some are driving to and from the hospital more often because they’re caring for a sick family member; some have been referred to us by a counselor at WISE. So many of our neighbors in the Upper Valley need our help.



The Open Door is kept open by contributions to the monthly Communion Offering, from which the Diaconate purchases of \$25 gift cards for gas and food from JAKE’S and PRICE CHOPPER, respectively. This is supplemented by the Mission and Social Action Fund (from the Dole Trust), which provides assistance in modest amounts for rent and utilities. **In any of these cases, our ability to support those in need depends on you, our congregation. Because you give each month to the communion offering, we can help a lot of people. We hope you’ll participate in this vital act of stewardship, this month and in the months that follow.**

Your neighbors thank you! For more details, please contact your Deacon or the church office.



MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

NOVEMBER AND ADVENT

All in the Sanctuary, FCC

Classicopia: Blowin' in the Winds—Sunday, November 5, 2:00 pm

Pianist Dan Weiser welcomes oboist Margaret Herlehy and bassoonist Janet Polk for a performance of beautiful French trios for piano and winds. The program includes music of Francis Poulenc, Georges Bizet, and Marie Grandval, a much under-appreciated female composer from the late 19th century.

Elizabeth Borowsky, Piano, and Roseminna Watson, Violin—Saturday, November 11, 7:30 pm

Pianist Elizabeth Borowsky and violinist Roseminna Watson return to FCC for a passionate journey through sonatas by Sergei Prokofiev, Claude Debussy, and Johannes Brahms, as well as their own compositions.

Bel Canto Chamber Singers: What Sweeter Music—

Saturday, December 9, 7:30 pm / Sunday, December 10, 4:00 pm

Directed by Jane Woods, the Bel Canto Chamber Singers celebrate their 40th anniversary with choral music from chant to contemporary. The program includes Johann Pachelbel, John Rutter, Tomás Luis de Victoria, and familiar and reimagined Christmas and gospel arrangements. Bel Canto will also premiere a setting of the *Magnificat* by Upper Valley composer Travis Ramsey, commissioned for this anniversary.

Classicopia: Dan Weiser, Piano, and Roseminna Watson, Violin—Friday, December 15, 7:30 pm

UVMC Messiah Sing!—Sunday, December 17, 6:30 pm

And introducing...

LOH ON LOCATION

Two special events at FCC presented by the Lebanon Opera House!

Johnny Gandelsman, Violin—Friday, November 17, 7:00 pm

Violinist Johnny Gandelsman, renowned for his virtuosity with the Silk Road Ensemble and Brooklyn Rider, plays J. S. Bach's *Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin* from memory. For more information and tickets, please visit lebanonoperahouse.org/event/details/johnny-gandelsman-violin/.

Johnny Gandelsman Master Class—Saturday, November 18, 10:00 am

UVMC and LOH are co-sponsoring this violin master class in our Sanctuary. Johnny will work with students and discuss his Bach interpretations the previous night. For student registration and more details, contact UVMC (603-448-1642/info@uvmusic.org); observers welcome for a \$10 suggested donation.

The Eric Mintel Jazz Quartet—Sunday, December 3, 4:00 pm

Jazz pianist Eric Mintel and friends will share new twists on holiday classics—including a tribute to Vince Guaraldi and his beloved music for *A Charlie Brown Christmas*. For more information and tickets, lebanonoperahouse.org/event/details/eric-mintel-quartet/.

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



*Ecumenical
Thanksgiving
Service*

Monday,
November 20,
7:00 pm
FCC Sanctuary

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY
November 19

Giving in Community:
Sharing God's Gifts
with One Another



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

Upcoming Concerts

All in the Sanctuary, FCC (See page 10)

Elizabeth Borowsky, Piano, and Roseminna Watson, Violin—Saturday, November 11, at 7:30 pm

Johnny Gandelsman, Violin—Friday, November 17, at 7:00 pm (LOH on Location!)

The Eric Mintel Jazz Quartet—Sunday, December 3, 4:00 pm (LOH on Location!)

Bel Canto Chamber Singers: What Sweeter Music—Sat., Dec. 9, 7:30 pm / Sun., Dec. 10, 4:00 pm

Classicopia: Dan Weiser, Piano, and Roseminna Watson, Violin—Friday, December 15, 7:30 pm

UVMC Messiah Sing!—Sunday, December 17, 6:30 pm