



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

What's Inside

Micah Awards6



October Scenes7



New Members.....8



Sunday Service2

Thanksgiving Worship2

November Calendar.....3

Committee Notes.....4-6

Stewardship Sunday 11/245

Christmas Near and Far6

Advent Schedule8

Music at the Meetinghouse9

The Pastoral Perspective

By the time you read this the “Holiday Season” will have begun, and with it, year’s end and a sense that there’s not enough time to do everything that requires one’s attention. Halloween leads into Thanksgiving, which will then shade into Christmas and New Year’s. We will be so busy doing things that we won’t necessarily take time to think about them. Or will we?

As Christians, we are called to resist temptation to be caught up in the hectic pace of the season. Next month we will observe Advent, a time of waiting and preparation. But this month we begin with All Saints’ Day and All Souls’ Day, a chance to think about those who have gone before us. Later in the month, we will celebrate Thanksgiving, a day to literally give thanks to God for the bounties and blessings of our lives, for the forebears who settled these lands, and, yes, to think about the indigenous people and the fate that befell them.

We are all creatures of history, products of the past, and someday, we will be history. Our time on this earth is limited, and as the Psalmist said, we live “three score and ten” years. Any given day can seem endless, hours and minutes moving at the speed of molasses. But those days will come to an end, and at some point, we will come to an end. Which prompts the question, “Why bother?”

The economist John Maynard Keynes famously observed that in the long run, we are all dead. But what we do before our time ends matters. The Church believes that history has a purpose, that we have a purpose. We need to be wise stewards of the time we have been allotted, to put ourselves in a position that when we pass on, we can feel good and proud of the way we spent our lives.

Over the next few weeks, even before Advent begins, I invite you to reflect on the beauty of creation, the miracle of life, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the opportunity you and I have been given to be part of God’s messy, miraculous world.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

SUNDAY SERVICE

Book Group: *Simply Christian*

Sundays, Starting November 10, at 11:15 am

This month we will offer a group study of *Simply Christian*, by acclaimed theologian, author, and retired Anglican bishop N. T. Wright. Meeting after worship and coffee hour, we'll read and discuss this short yet powerful book, which many have compared to C. S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*.

If you'd like to join the group, please contact the Rev. Steve Silver at revsrs@live.com.

Simply Christian is available in paperback for under \$9; FCC will help you buy it if needed.

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24

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

Please see additional information on Page 5.



Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service

Monday, November 25
7:00 pm

Greater Hartford
United Church of Christ

1721 Maple Street (Route 14), Hartford, VT

All are welcome to share this inclusive, ecumenical worship service, joining friends from across the Upper Valley to faithfully observe Thanksgiving.

Let us give thanks together as a community!

Do Your Part to Fill the Cart!

All are invited to join the fight against local poverty and food insecurity by leaving contributions in our shopping cart in the Parish Hall. FCC designates a different cart beneficiary each month.

During November, we will collect non-perishable food and personal-care items on behalf of

THE UPPER VALLEY HAVEN

Thanks for your generosity in fighting poverty and hunger in our community.

Christmas Decorating Party!

Following Worship on Sunday, December 1

Yes, CHRISTMAS!! Advent begins the first Sunday in December, so plan to stay after worship to hang wreaths, string lights, trim our tree, 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

Thanksgiving Community Dinner

Sunday, November 24, 5:00 pm

Leaders: BARB LARO AND CORRINE ERSKINE

Many thanks to Barb and Corrine for once again organizing this month's dinner. Please lend a hand in providing this vital service to our neighbors.

Look for sign-ups soon in the Parish Hall.

New Year, New Leaders!

We are always hoping to expand the group of dedicated leaders who generously commit time and resources to our Community Dinners.

Please consider organizing a meal in 2020, especially in January or February!

Menu resources are available, and the church can reimburse costs. If you're interested in leading or have questions, contact the church office.

NOVEMBER 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 10a Worship/CCC 11:15a Bd of Govs 3p Micah Awards (Claremont) 5p Community Dinner	28 5:30p Cub Scouts (AoL/Girls)	29 7p BSA Troop 279	30 5:30p Cub Scouts (Webelos/Tigers) 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	31 HALLOWEEN 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	1 11:45a LHS Life Skills Class 6-9p Leb Rec Dept Quilters	2 9a-5p Leb Rec Dept Quilters
3 10a Worship/CCC (Communion) 11:15a MSA 2p Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Assn Annual Mtg (Meriden UCC)	4 5:30p Cub Scouts (AoL/Girls)	5 7p Diaconate 7p BSA Troop 279	6 5:30p Cub Scout Pack Committee 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	7 No Choir 7p LOH on Location: Infinitus	8 11:45a LHS Life Skills Class 7:30p Anonymous Coffeehouse	9 11a Student Piano Recital (A. Leary) 3p Kulp/Turbes Concert
10 10a Worship/CCC 11:15a <i>Simply Christian Group</i> 1-3p Choir	11 VETERANS DAY	12 7p BSA Troop 279	13 8a-4p NH-WIC 5:30p Cub Scouts (Webelos/Tigers) 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	14 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	15 9a-3:30p Upstream UV Trauma Impact Training 7:30p Classicopia: Jazzical	16 9a-12p UVIP
17 10a Worship/CCC (Fire Drill Today) 11:15a <i>Simply Christian Group</i>	18	19 7p Church Council 7p BSA Troop 279/Committee	20 5:30p Cub Scouts (Webelos/Tigers) 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	21 12:30p Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Assn (CoCM) 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	22 11:45a LHS Life Skills Class 7:30p NH Master Chorale: Voices of the Silenced	23 1p BSA Eagle Scout Court 7:30p Anonymous Coffeehouse
24 STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY 10a Worship/CCC 11:15a Bd of Govs 11:15a <i>Simply Christian Group</i> 5p Community Dinner	25 10a-6p NH-WIC 5:30p Cub Scouts (AoL/Girls) 7p Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service (Greater Hartford UCC)	26 7p BSA Troop 279	27 6p UVPRN No Bel Canto Chamber Singers	28 THANKSGIVING No Choir	29	30
1 FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT 10a Worship/CCC (Communion) 11:15a Christmas Decorating Party!	2 5:30p Cub Scouts (AoL/Girls)	3 7p Diaconate 7p BSA Troop 279	4 5:30p Cub Scout Pack Committee 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	5 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	6 11:45a LHS Life Skills Class 7:30p Anonymous Coffeehouse	7 2p Leb Holiday Celebration

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 been busy with several projects, including Terry Ellison's hard work to finish repainting the front portico deck and steps. In the process of disposing of all old paint, a registry of paint colors and brands was made. Wayne Braley will be working on chancel railings and more insulation projects, and John Gilliatt continues to look into options for renovating the front walk, in either pavement or concrete. An energy audit has been completed at the Parsonage.

The clearout of **basement storage** spaces is largely complete, although the storage of some Scouting items remains unresolved. We now have plenty of room for storing church items. We've also supported Nan Parsons' renovation of Children's Community Corner areas, including the removal of interior doors to improve circulation and ventilation.

The Board also discussed our **fire-evacuation plans**, considering our intention to hold a fire drill this fall in worship. Our current fire safety plan needs updating, as it relies on the now-discontinued position of Safety Monitor. The group discussed safe zones in the front and rear of the building, the use of walkie-talkies, and the designation of a "sweeper" or two who would ensure that all have evacuated. The congregation will be notified of the fire-drill date but not the precise timing. It was further noted that planning for a potential active-shooter incident should be considered separately.

As winter approaches, the Board also revisited responsibilities for

snow clearance. While Chip Silver was able to do some of this last year, we need a more complete solution.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Jon Scott reported to Council for **Stewardship** on the renewed effort to secure formal recognition of tax-exempt status from the IRS. This process will likely incur some costs for filing and accountant fees (maybe up to \$2000), but all agreed this is necessary. Ideally, we can complete the process by year's end.

On behalf of the **campaign planning** committee, Jon proposed that FCC open a capital campaign around the next Annual Meeting in February, toward a goal of \$500,000. This will address three purposes—1) Creation Care, broadly conceived as efforts to reduce our carbon footprint and follow responsible environmental stewardship at both the church and the parsonage; 2) Community Care, broadly conceived as improving our facilities and capacity for serving our congregation and community, including but not limited to our kitchen; and 3) Mission, committing no less than 10% of the campaign total to serving community purposes beyond FCC. Jon stressed that these purposes encourage participation from beyond our congregation as well, as each of them serves greater Lebanon in some way.

The campaign will invite donations over a wide range of giving levels, emphasizing 100% participation from our congregation rather than specific, minimum gifts. Outright contributions, multi-year pledges,

and legacy or estate gifts would all be accepted; Valerie Nevel offered to consult with anyone interested in pursuing the third option. Jon emphasized that we will have to be comfortable discussing money and financial planning in an honest and open way, which isn't always easy. Council unanimously approved the campaign proposal.

A discussion of this year's **CROP Walk** considered that both the walk and the lunch at FCC seem to have drawn fewer people, continuing a steady decrease in recent years. It was noted, however, that FCC itself was represented by about ten walkers, more than have participated in several years. Some wonder whether MSA should more actively recruit walkers and donors, both within the congregation and beyond it. It was also observed that it is important to acknowledge all gifts from sponsors after the walk, whether by CWS or the walkers themselves.

Nan Parsons reported that although the **Christian Education** committee itself has very few members, she has had volunteers help with particular

November Meetings

<i>Mission/Social Action</i>	11/3, 11:15
<i>Diaconate</i>	11/5, 7:00
<i>Church Council</i>	11/19, 7:00
<i>Board of Governors</i>	11/24, 11:15

December Meetings

<i>Mission/Social Action</i>	TBD
<i>Diaconate</i>	12/3, 7:00
<i>Church Council</i>	12/17, 7:00
<i>Board of Governors</i>	12/22, 11:15

COMMITTEE NOTES

events and the weekly meetings of the CCC. For the moment, Nan thinks this model will suffice for a relatively small group of children, but she will need sustained help if more participate. It was noted that Council remains responsible for ensuring childcare during worship; again, Nan feels we have enough childcare for the moment.

Reviewing fall events in the **Music at the Meetinghouse** series, Brian Clancy noted that the Anonymous Coffeehouse is supplying enough volunteers for its bi-weekly events. Recent clearing of downstairs space has created a dedicated room for staging equipment used by the Coffeehouse, Bel Canto, and other groups who regularly perform at FCC. Jon Scott commended the Coffeehouse for offering local musicians a unique opportunity that reflects favorably on FCC, drawing audiences who might not otherwise enter our building.

Valerie Nevel reported that the **Finance Committee** will meet in November. She observed that our expenses seem to be higher than usual at this point in the year,

suggesting that we may need a transfer from Trustee funds. She also remarked on the recent city-wide appeal from the First Baptist Church for help funding its new building in the face of rising costs. She proposed that FCC contribute something as an institution, and she also reiterated the importance of reviewing our own insurance coverage. Council unanimously approved a \$500 contribution to the Baptist Church.

In his **pastor's report**, the Rev. Steve Silver expressed his support for the proposed campaign and for the new Children's Community Corner curriculum, with hopes that we can attract more children. He and the Deacons hope to have a revised welcome brochure by Advent; we will eventually produce a new one specifically for children as well.

Steve noted that FCC hasn't named delegates to the NH Conference in a couple years, perhaps indicating diminished interest in the state and national organization of the UCC. Without explicit recommendation, Steve suggested that we might wish to assess our role in the UCC and

our alternatives as an "independent" Congregational church. Others feel that our congregation might simply benefit from more education about the work of the NH Conference and national UCC. Keeping in mind the sometimes hierarchical nature of UCC policies, our congregation should discern whether these larger organizations may (or may not) lend support to our ministries, programs, and local concerns.

DIACONATE

The Deacons invited Nan Parsons to their October meeting to speak about the **Children's Community Corner**. Nan discussed the "Godly Play" curriculum, reviewing lesson plans and its emphasis on tying Biblical stories to youth experience. The approach combines structures for learning with opportunities for tapping curiosity. Nan led a tour of downstairs spaces, noting areas for specific aspects of the curriculum.

The Deacons also discussed the ongoing **shopping-cart collection**, reviewing the monthly rotation of beneficiaries, considering the addition

Stewardship Sunday is November 24

Doing Good, Sharing Gifts: Stewardship and Our Faith

"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."

As **Hebrews 13:13** reminds us, when we participate in Stewardship with our time, skills, and resources, we are not just being philanthropic or community-minded—we are making a sacrifice. We recall that when the Israelites presented their offerings at the temple, they were engaged in worship. So, when we make our pledges each fall for the coming year, we are worshiping the Almighty. As we approach Stewardship Sunday, let's join together in this sacred, holy work, which will please the Lord as we strive to better the world.

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY IS NOVEMBER 24. Please consider your commitment, prayerfully and honestly, to our church's mission and ministry in 2020, and join us as we dedicate our pledges this month.

OUR LOCAL AND GLOBAL MISSION

of Headrest, and offering to work with Mission and Social Action on deliveries. The Deacons approved purchases of gas and food cards for the Open Door Ministry, and they reconfirmed that it was appropriate to designate any contribution in a communion envelope to this fund.

In his **pastor's report**, Steve Silver circulated a draft revision of our welcome brochure, inviting feedback in the hope that it can be produced by Advent. He also noted the end of his term as moderator of the Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Association, which is responsible (among other things) for ordinations. Steve also discussed the upcoming book study of N. T. Wright's *Simply Christian*. He further reported that the West Lebanon church proposed another inter-faith Thanksgiving service, but there are some mixed thoughts on this based on past experience.

The Deacons were asked to review **FCC membership lists** so that a full revision can be completed by the Annual Meeting in February. Given the size of our congregation, Steve proposed revisiting the extensive volunteer requirements of FCC's current committee structure.

In other discussion, the Deacons considered how best to facilitate participation in a planned **fire drill** this fall. They also noted a variety of personal circumstances within the congregation, including Susan Montmagny's successful surgery and recovery.

The Diaconate will next meet on November 5, although there is some interest in finding a post-worship meeting time going forward.

Christmas Is Coming 🎄 Give Locally, Give Globally!

FCC will again sponsor families for Christmas through LISTEN COMMUNITY SERVICES' annual holiday basket drive. Barb Teeter (603-448-4529) faithfully coordinates our "Giving Tree" selection of clothing needs and gift cards. **Look for gift and collection information in mid-November.**



We are also participating again in **OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD**, a global gift delivery project sponsored by Samaritan's Purse and generously managed at FCC by Gloria and Phil Hammond (802-295-3749). **Pick up your shoeboxes and deliver them to church by November 17.**



The 8th Annual UVIP Micah Awards

On October 27 in Claremont, almost 200 people joined to recognize Micah Award winners from the sixteen faith communities and service organizations that comprise UVIP, the United Valley Interfaith Project. This annual event connects community leaders and friends from across the region and celebrates



the Old Testament prophet Micah's enduring and inspiring call to "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God." **Congratulations again to MARCIA CORKINS, the latest member of our congregation to represent FCC with distinction as a Micah Honoree!**



FCC PAST AND PRESENT. Surrounding Marcia Corkins, Pete Mason, and Marcia's daughter Jen is a distinguished group, including the Slaters and Laura Place (at left), Steve Silver, and several others from our current congregation.

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



WALKING, LEARNING, AND SERVING IN OCTOBER.

The annual CROP Walk lunch again invited friends from the wider community into our building; an Outing Club excursion to Signal Hill benefited from a gorgeous fall afternoon; and kids and volunteers of the revitalized Children's Community Corner shared activities and served Community Dinner.



THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS! On October 20 we gladly received four new covenant members: **Karen and Chris Chase, Karen Miller-McGregor, and Dawn Troutman.**



LOOKING AHEAD TO ADVENT—PREPARE YE THE WAY!

Sunday, December 1, 11:15 am (Following Worship)—Christmas Decorating Party

Join us to help hang wreaths, string lights, trim our tree, and have fun getting the church ready for this festive season. Please bring a potluck snack to share, and your creative eye for holiday decor!

Sunday, December 8, 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.

Sat., Dec. 14, 7:30 pm / Sun., Dec. 15, 4:00 pm—Bel Canto Chamber Singers: Make We Joy

Directed by Jane Woods, Bel Canto celebrates the joy of the Christmas season with festive music for choir, brass, and piano. The program features a brass quintet on Kevin Siegfried's *Vidimus Stellam* and Michael Praetorius' *In Dulci Jubilo*, along with a selection of carol and gospel arrangements.

Sunday, December 15, 11:30 am (Following Coffee Hour)—FCC Community Caroling

Bring some Christmas joy and beloved carols to our friends at Genesis, Harvest Hill, and elsewhere.

Saturday, December 21, 3:30 pm—UVMC Messiah Sing!

Organized by UVMC faculty and staff 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 22, 5:00 pm—Christmas Community Dinner

We will serve our monthly dinner with plenty of warm, Christmas spirit for our neighbors and friends.

Tuesday, December 24—CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

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

MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

UPCOMING CONCERTS

at First Congregational Church

LOH ON LOCATION! *Infinitus*—Thursday, November 7, 7:00 pm

Our friends at Lebanon Opera House bring us this high-energy, beatboxing string trio from Vancouver, which has established itself among North America's premier chamber ensembles with an incomparable mix of classical repertoire, hip hop, and jazz. Their concert will culminate a four-day residency working with students and faculty at UVMC, who will collaborate on part of the program. *Admission ranges from \$10-23; for tickets and more information, please visit lebanonoperahouse.org/events/infinitus/.*

UVMC Faculty Concert: *Ben Kulp and Jennifer Turbes*—Saturday, November 9, 3:00 pm

Cellist Benjamin Kulp and violist Jennifer Turbes share a program of modern music with melodic appeal, including pieces by Caroline Shaw, Kenji Bunch, Chenery Ung, and NH composer Travis Ramsey, along with some Beethoven for good measure! *Adults \$15, under 18 free; for more, visit www.uvmusic.org.*

Classicopia: *Jazzical*—Friday, November 15, 7:30 pm

Violinist Tim Schwarz, double-bassist Craig Sandberg, and pianist Daniel Weiser explore the crossover between classical and jazz in Claude Bolling's *Suite for Violin and Jazz Piano*, originally written for Pinchas Zukerman, along with pieces by William Grant Still, George Gershwin, and Leonard Bernstein. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; for tickets and more, visit classicopia.org/concert/jazzical/.*

NH Master Chorale: *Voices of the Silenced*—Friday, November 22, 7:30 pm

Celebrating its 17th season under the dynamic direction of Daniel Perkins, NHMC is one of the region's premier vocal ensembles. Their fall program features a world premiere by Norwegian composer Kim André Arnesen, with lyrics drawn from a variety of disenfranchised social and cultural groups. *Adults \$30, seniors \$25, or pay what you can; tickets and more at nhmasterchorale.wixsite.com/nhmc/current-season.*

Bel Canto Chamber Singers: *Make We Joy*—Saturday, Dec. 14, 7:30 / Sunday, Dec. 15, 4:00

Directed by Jane Woods, Bel Canto celebrates the joy of the Christmas season with festive music for choir, brass, and piano. The program features a brass quintet on Kevin Siegfried's *Vidimus Stellam* and Michael Praetorius' *In Dulci Jubilo*, along with a selection of carol and gospel arrangements. Come support FCC's "resident chorus" in December! *Adults \$15, students \$10, under 13 free; more at www.belcantosingers.org.*

UVMC *Messiah Sing!*—Saturday, December 21, 3:30 pm

Organized by UVMC faculty and conducted by Jane Woods, this annual tradition features student soloists and chamber orchestra. Join the chorus or just listen! *Suggested \$10 donation; more at www.uvmusic.org.*

Lebanon's newest hit... *The ANONYMOUS COFFEEHOUSE*—Nov. 8, Nov. 23, and Dec. 6, all 7:30 pm

FCC is delighted to host this increasingly popular venue for live, local music! An informal "listening room" for established and emerging musicians, each show features several acoustic acts, and patrons may come and go as they wish. Baked goods and non-alcoholic drinks available. And it's all free of charge, so please come and enjoy! *For more information, please visit anoncoffee.org or email anoncoffeehouse@gmail.com.*

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



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

Upcoming Concerts
at First Congregational Church

LOH ON LOCATION: *Infinitus*—Thursday, November 7, 7:00 pm

UVMC Faculty Concert: *Ben Kulp and Jennifer Turbes*—Saturday, November 9, 3:00 pm

Classicopia: Jazzical—Friday, November 15, 7:30 pm

NH Master Chorale: *Voices of the Silenced*—Friday, November 22, 7:30 pm

Bel Canto Chamber Singers: Make We Joy—Saturday, Dec. 14, 7:30 / Sunday, Dec. 15, 4:00

UVMC Messiah Sing!—Saturday, December 21, 3:30 pm

And Lebanon's newest success... The ANONYMOUS COFFEEHOUSE—Nov. 8, Nov. 23, and Dec. 6, at 7:30 pm



Ecumenical
Thanksgiving
Service

Monday, November 25, 7:00 pm
Greater Hartford United Church

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY
November 24

Doing Good, Sharing Gifts:
Stewardship and Our Faith

ADVENT BEGINS DECEMBER 1 *Prepare to Celebrate the Season of Christ's Birth!*