



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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The Pastoral Perspective

October began with World Communion Sunday, an early-twentieth-century innovation of a Presbyterian member of the clergy. Something that promoted the universality of the Christian Church made sense during the heyday of the Social Gospel movement and at a time when malign forces were rising on the world scene. World Communion Sunday is an opportunity to contemplate the notion of a universal church, a notion as old as our faith. The church's claims to being worldwide have been, at their worst, pretentious and, at best, aspirational.

Today, though, Christianity is a truly global faith, with adherents in most every nation, speaking just about every language. True, there is a lot that divides us: cultural mores, theological disagreements, and more. But the idea that we, at least those of us in American churches, will consciously celebrate our commonality is something to think about.

Our church is of the Congregationalist tradition, a dissenting faction of "non-conformists" in the Church of England. The C of E was itself a breakaway—some claimed it was Henry VIII's brainchild, but many scholars argue that the Catholic Church in England had long been going its own way, with the Tudors giving it the final push into ecclesial independence. But it's worth remembering that the C of E, or Anglican Church, still acknowledges its catholicity, and it is part of a worldwide, if fractious, communion.

So, we are part of a band of rebels. At the same time, we believe we are part of something larger. The Congregational Convention merged with the Christian Connection in the 1920s, and those groups later joined in forming the United Church of Christ (UCC), in 1957.

The UCC is a strange beast, bringing together Christians of a variety of persuasions. Frankly, World Communion Sunday is something we might reflect on every week. When we gather at the table to share the Lord's Supper, we join with Christians the world over in celebrating our ties with God. We do so however we celebrate communion, no matter the language in which our prayers are said. We are, in that moment, truly one people of God. That is something worth celebrating. That is something we should never forget.

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SUNDAY SERVICE

All Are Welcome to Worship at FCC Sundays at 10:00 AM (In-Person/Zoom)

Coffee Hour (Usually) Served!

We've resumed this popular fellowship opportunity as often as possible; sign up in the kitchen. **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.

The 2023 Lebanon CROP Walk SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8, AT 12:30 PM

Begun in 1969 in Bismarck, ND, the **CROP Hunger Walk** is now run nationally by Church World Service. CROP Walks across the country raise about \$9 million a year to fight food insecurity and poverty worldwide.

FCC will offer light food and refreshments to all participants on the front lawn, renewing our long tradition of post-walk fellowship and hospitality.

YOU can help in any or all of these ways...

Walk!—On your own or with a group.

Serve!—Contribute food or help with post-walk fellowship (*details TBD*).

Donate!—Sponsor a walker or give directly online using the link below.

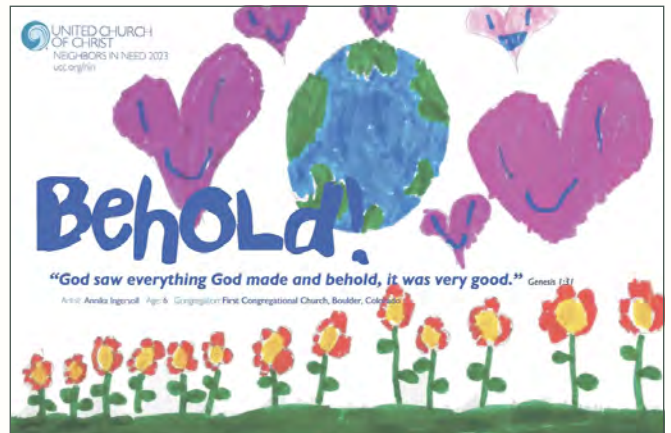


www.cropwalk.org

Questions? Contact the church office or visit crophungerwalk.org/2023/event/hanovernh.

Neighbors in Need: Behold!—Special UCC Mission Offering This Fall

Neighbors in Need supports ministries of justice and compassion across the US. Two-thirds of the collection funds the UCC's **Justice and Witness Ministries** for local and national initiatives, advocacy efforts, and the fight against systemic injustice. The rest goes to the **Council for American Indian Ministry**, the voice for Native Americans in the UCC, sustaining a proud denominational tradition of assisting Native groups. **This year, NIN focuses on environmental justice, addressing the egregious inequities and ecological harm of waste-disposal practices worldwide.**



Please contribute as you are able, either payable to FCC (memo "NIN") or online at ucc.org/nin.

Send Us Your Photos and Contact Info!

As we update our congregational directory, please check the information we have for you (sent with "This Week @ FCC" emails), and submit any corrections to the office. Photos should be JPG or PNG files, in frontal, head-and-shoulders format clearly showing faces (like these fine examples!).



EVERYONE who feels connected to FCC's congregation is invited to be listed in the directory—regardless of whether or not they have formally joined the church as a covenant member.

OCTOBER 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
24 10a Worship/CCC 2p Classicopia: By George!	25 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program	26 10a-12p UVMC 1p Cameo Baroque 4:30p FCC Choir	27 3-6:30p UVMC 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	28 11a-6p WIC 4-6:30p UVMC/Children's Choir 7p NA Group	29 5-6p UVMC Suzuki Program 6-9p Leb Rec Quilters Retreat	30 9a-5p Leb Rec Quilters Retreat 7:30p Anon Coffeehouse
1 10a Worship/CCC (Communion)	2 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program	3 10a-12p UVMC 1p Cameo Baroque 4:30p FCC Choir	4 3-6:30p UVMC 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	5 4-6:30p UVMC/Children's Choir 7p NA Group	6 5-6p UVMC Suzuki Program	7
8 10a Worship/CCC 12:30p Lebanon CROP Walk	9 <i>Indigenous Peoples' Day</i> 7p Diaconate	10 10a-12p UVMC 1p Cameo Baroque 4:30p FCC Choir 6p Contemplative Dance 7p Council	11 8a-3:30p WIC 3-6:30p UVMC 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	12 4-6:30p UVMC/Children's Choir 7p NA Group	13 5-6p UVMC Suzuki Program 7:30p Anon Coffeehouse	14 3p UVMC Studio Recital (A. Casey) 7p Cameo Baroque Benefit Concert
15 10a Worship/CCC (D. Watson Baptism) 1p Outing Club: Old Highway 38	16 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program	17 10a-12p UVMC 1p Cameo Baroque 4:30p FCC Choir	18 3-6:30p UVMC 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	19 4-6:30p UVMC/Children's Choir 7p NA Group	20 5-6p UVMC Suzuki Program	21
22 10a Worship/CCC	23 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program 7p MSA Comm	24 10a-12p UVMC 1p Cameo Baroque 4:30p FCC Choir 6p Contemplative Dance	25 3-6:30p UVMC 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	26 11a-6p WIC 4-6:30p UVMC/Children's Choir 7p NA Group	27 5-6p UVMC Suzuki Program 7:30p Anon Coffeehouse	28 5p UVMC Early Music: Ensemble Halcyon
29 10a Worship/CCC 2p Classicopia: Mendelssohns and Schumanns	30 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program	31 <i>Halloween</i> 10a-12p UVMC 1p Cameo Baroque 4:30p FCC Choir	1 <i>All Saints Day</i> 3-6:30p UVMC 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	2 4-6:30p UVMC/Children's Choir 7p NA Group	3 5-6p UVMC Suzuki Program	4

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 invited those present at Council's September meeting to reflect on something from the past few weeks that had brought them joy. Rev. Steve Silver expressed his gratitude that Jacobe Lisotto, who feels supported by our congregation, had asked to be baptized at FCC on September 17. Steve appreciated that the Deacons offered to help with that service and a reception to follow. Others shared joys and hopes related to summer travel, health, families, relationships, and professional work.

Having been on vacation for August, Steve gave no formal **pastor's report** but noted interactions with Jacobe and the Callahan family, who have moved to Andover for Brendan's new position at Proctor Academy. He expressed gratitude on behalf of his family for his being able to take those weeks of vacation. This month he will travel to attend meetings at UCC headquarters in Cleveland. Steve further shared his regret about Nan Parsons' decision to step away from her role as coordinator of the Children's Community Corner.

Nan's reasons are compelling and she deserves our full support, but we do need to provide for the program's leadership. Despite this transition, Steve was happy with the energy and participation on Kick-off Sunday.

Dawn Troutman summarized **year-to-date income and expenses**. The former is about \$168,000, of which roughly \$50,000 comes from direct stewardship contributions; expenses total roughly \$170,000. Steve pointed out that the endowment income that supplements offerings, while higher than in past years, is still a form of stewardship, as it originates from contributions made by members of our congregation in the past. We need to be responsible about spending it, but it shouldn't be excluded from stewardship considerations.

Barb Jones reported that the **Pastor-Parish Relations Committee** had an initial meeting to consider a framework from the denomination for the committee's role. The group will soon meet again to discuss its process and ground rules for future operation, with a recommendation for bylaws revision.

Linda Gerlach reported that the **Deacons** had finalized an attractive T-shirt design and color choice, a process which Deb Scott has been coordinating. She also expressed the Deacons' shared support for Jacobe's baptism, with plans for a reception afterward at coffee hour.

Valerie Nevel reported on the **Mission and Social Action Committee's** upcoming plans for the CROP Walk and revisiting the monthly shopping cart collection. Regarding the latter, there seems to be support both for direct financial contributions and for this more tangible donation of food items, so perhaps we'll try to encourage both.

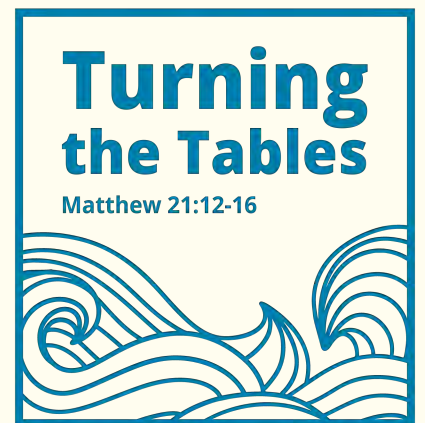
Valerie also reviewed the current **Trustee outlook**. Most of the total return distribution budgeted for the year has been made. A final net income payment expected in October will cover a few weeks' expenses, but Valerie estimated that we may need significant additional transfers prior to year's end. Lacking a clear solution to this rather steep challenge, she asked for help in determining the best course for ongoing funding. Jon

NHC-UCC ANNUAL MEETING 2023

All are invited—lay or ordained leaders, congregation members, friends, and visitors—to participate in the **222nd Annual Meeting** of the NH Conference of the UCC. The theme this year, **"Turning the Tables,"** draws inspiration from Matthew 21:12-16, and the keynote speaker is Bekah Maren Anderson, a prominent queer disabled writer, theologian, and activist.

In addition to worship, the business meeting, and other plenary events on October 21, optional connecting sessions online run October 10-26. For complete schedule and details, visit www.nhcucc.info/annualmeeting.

FCC will pay for up to four delegates to attend (either in person or via Zoom); registration is open until 5:00 pm on Thursday, October 5. If you're interested, please contact the church office.



NEWS AND NOTES

Scott recognized that our endowment at least is healthy enough to handle this, provided we don't do it every year. Valerie pointed out, though, that we haven't had any particularly unusual expenses this year to cause this issue, and it will soon be time to plan the 2024 budget. (The Finance Committee has met twice since the September Council meeting.)

Jon invited Council members each to identify one priority in which they would either lead or participate this fall. He first referred to a selection of possible **Board of Governors** projects that Walter Scott had shared prior to the meeting. (Steve expressed his appreciation for some recent, much needed plumbing repairs.)

Jon himself identified the priority of offering families a rich program of **children's education and fellowship**. He observed that the health of our children's program would be decisive in the whole congregation's future. Dawn expanded on Jon's point by emphasizing **membership growth and development**. She stressed the

need for our congregation to be visible in the community, to model and lead by Christian example. We need to connect people to events beyond Sunday mornings. Valerie added her support for membership recruitment, encouraging everyone to invite friends and visitors to FCC.

Rev. Silver led several in advocating urgency in **reviewing and revising our bylaws**, to create a structure appropriate not only to the size of our congregation but also to the ways in which people currently live their lives. Volunteers need to know that their time will be valued and used well. Several indicated the need to identify how best to cover FCC's essential operations and functions. There is frustration that we have long identified this as a priority without making visible progress, but it was also acknowledged that it's an exceptionally challenging task, requiring input and participation from many people. Dawn suggested an extended working retreat, with a strict agenda dedicated to bylaw revision.

Jon further invited Steve to present at next month's meeting on what a **campaign** might look like, how long it would last, how much we might seek to raise, and other considerations. Jon and others recognized that any campaign visioning would tie into financial planning for 2024.

DIACONATE

At their September meeting the Deacons discussed whether **weekly offering** collection poses any imposition on those who contribute less frequently. The consensus was that an offering is a traditional element of worship, dating from the beginning of the Church. This issue will be considered further at Council.

The group planned for the **baptism of Jacobe Lisotto**, scheduled for September 17. Deacons will organize a reception following the service. Jacobe's pending relocation highlighted the need for a card ministry for remote parishioners.

The Pastoral Perspective, *continued from Page 1*

Our denomination's motto is "That they may all be one," which is taken from John 17. This is a creed of aspiration and hope, and a belief that God wishes for us to put aside our petty differences so that we may come together, as one body, to do the work to which we are called. Let us respond attentively and with faith. And let us give thanks to God for believing in us.

Yours faithfully, *Steve*

Committee Meetings

The following regular meetings will happen remotely via Zoom:

Diaconate	10/9 and 11/13, 7:00
Council	10/10 and 11/14, 7:00
MSA	10/23 and 11/27, 7:00

For information on other groups' plans to meet, contact the church office.

Subscribe to the NHC-UCC Weekly Newsletter

If you'd like to receive weekly news from the **NH Conference of the UCC**, including information about the Horton Center, the annual conference in October, and other topics, please contact communications@nhcucc.org.

Rev. Steve Silver reported he had visited with the Callahans during his vacation in August. Brendan's new job has taken the family to Proctor Academy in Andover. The major item on Steve's mind is new leadership needs for the **Children's Community Corner**. He feels it is important that leadership of the children's program should not be the sole responsibility of parents.

Deb Scott reported that feedback on **T-shirt design** has led to a merged version. Cost is one consideration, but the group consensus favored a bright blue shirt featuring the phrase "God is my rock" (and a rock image) on the front and FCC on the back.

Regarding the update to the **church directory**, it was recommended that membership status not be included as a distinguishing characteristic. (It will still be recorded in the church office.) The current listing shows several members not assigned to any Deacon, which is unsatisfactory; Rev. Silver will review the list and divvy up those who should have an assigned Deacon. Members will send any new pictures to their assigned Deacon, and we will continue to take photos after worship on Sundays.

Dawn Troutman has left fruit at the church to be given out with gas/food cards. The Deacons will each prepare cards for Open Door recipients, too.

Lastly, the Diaconate considered a return to **in-person meetings**, which would allow improved engagement among participants. It was agreed that meetings will need to be hybrid while Sue Pratt is in Florida or the weather is bad. The Deacons agreed to vote at their October meeting.

Focus on Stewardship

Whether dropped in the plate on a Sunday or mailed into the office, your offering contributions continue to be vital to our ministry. We realize that not everyone can give to the same degree, especially as economic conditions have remained challenging. But FCC is grateful to receive contributions of **any amount** to these purposes:

Regular Offering—Collected anytime as unrestricted support for the church's general operations, ministries, and programs. This includes all pledges and payments in our annual stewardship effort.

Communion/Open Door Offering—Collected on first (communion) Sundays, directly funding our Open Door Ministry for community assistance (gas/food cards, rent, utilities, lodging, etc.). Any donation in a communion envelope goes to this fund, but you may contribute to the Open Door Ministry at any other time, too.

Special Offerings (e.g., the Lenten Lunch Bag Offering, Blanket and Shelter Sundays, and UCC offerings such as Neighbors in Need or One Great Hour of Sharing)—Collected once a year, in conjunction with an event or national campaign for a mission or service cause.

THANKS TO ALL for so generously supporting these diverse purposes, at FCC, in the Upper Valley, and beyond!

All contributions should be made payable to FCC, with any specific purpose (as applicable) written in the memo line, and either dropped in the collection plate or mailed to PO Box 230, Lebanon, NH 03766.

CHRISTMAS
COMES TO ALL

The Holiday Basket Program



For years FCC has participated in the **HOLIDAY BASKET PROGRAM** organized by **LISTEN Community Services**. Demand for the program is higher than ever, as families struggle to provide warm clothing for their children and food for holiday meals. **There is always a wait list.**

LISTEN will again be using FCC space to manage the collection and distribution of gifts—a vast operation! While our church will donate that space, individuals in our congregation will also have the chance to donate new items and gift cards from our "Giving Tree."

Giving Tree opportunities coming next month. Thanks to all of you for giving to our neighbors in the true spirit of Christmas!

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



KICK-OFF SUNDAY!

September 10, 2023



Fall Foliage with FCC's Outing Club—Old Highway 38, Hanover

Sunday, October 15, at 1:00 pm—Meet at Trailhead on Greensboro Rd

All are welcome—regardless of ability!—to enjoy this low-impact hike with FCC's Outing Club, led as always by ranger-extraordinaire **Ron Bailey**. We'll follow the historical route of Town Highway 38, first laid out in 1795. The trail leads to the former Hudson Farm, now part of conservation land along the Appalachian Trail.



Trailhead and parking are on Greensboro Rd, near its intersection with Great Hollow and Etna Rds; bring water, lunch or snacks, bug/tick repellent, and appropriate clothing. More at www.hanoverconservancy.org.

All church members, friends, and/or dogs are invited to share this experience of God's creation!

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



A FAREWELL BAPTISM. On September 17 we celebrated the baptism of Jacobe Lisotto, who is moving to Hooksett, NH. Grateful for the support of the congregation over the past few years, Jacobe wanted to affirm his connection to FCC in the rite of baptism prior to leaving town. *We wish you well, Jacobe!*



MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

October Concerts

All in the Sanctuary. Masks welcome but optional.

***The Anonymous Coffeehouse: Season Four!*—Fridays, Oct. 13 and 27, Nov. 10 and 24, all 7:30 pm**

Our comfy community venue for live folk music returns for its fourth season! An informal “listening room” for emerging musicians, each show features several acoustic acts. Come and go as you please; baked goods and hot drinks available. *Free admission, donations welcome. For performers and more, visit anoncoffee.org/.*

***Cameo Baroque: The Very Versatile Telemann*—Saturday, October 14, at 7:00 pm**

This excellent Baroque ensemble (Ernie Drown, Beth Hilgartner, Leslie Stroud, and Laurie Rabut) shares a selection of pieces from the rich and immense output of this German composer, the most accomplished contemporary and friend of J. S. Bach. *Free-will donation for VT flood relief; more at www.cameoarts.org.*

***UVMC Presents Ensemble Halcyon*—Saturday, October 28, at 5:00 pm**

In conjunction with its day-long workshop in early music, the Upper Valley Music Center offers this special concert by Ensemble Halcyon—Chris Rua and Sarah Cantor on recorders, Jane Hershey on viola da gamba, and our own Ernie Drown on harpsichord. Reception to follow! *Adults \$20; more at uvmusic.org.*

***Classicopia: The Mendelssohns and the Schumanns*—Sunday, October 29, at 2:00 pm**

Cellist Jacques Pierre Malan joins Dan Weiser for a program exploring the connections between these two musically prominent families in the early-Romantic period. While the men gained wider fame as composers, Felix’s sister Fanny and Robert’s wife Clara also distinguished themselves from a young age as composers, performers, and musical advocates. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; more at classicopia.org.*

AND COMING IN DECEMBER... UVMC’s Holiday Music Festival, Classicopia’s Four-Hand Holiday, the Bel Canto Chamber Singers, and our annual Messiah Sing!



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



**2023 Lebanon
CROP Walk**

Walk! Serve! Donate!

Sunday, October 8, 12:30 pm

events.crophungerwalk.org/2023/event/hanovernh

**Neighbors in Need:
BEHOLD!**

*UCC Mission Offering
This Fall*

**FCC Outing Club:
Old Highway 38**

Sunday, October 15, 1:00
(Trailhead on Greensboro Rd)



*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

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