First Congregational Church of Lebanon

United Church of Christ

SEPTEMBER 2018

race Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

1768 • CELEBRATING 250 YEARS • 2018

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Worship Exchange7



Musical Drama Camp!......7





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The Pastoral Perspective

One hundred and twenty five years ago, FCC Lebanon—or, as it was known then, the Congregational Church in Lebanon—was splashed above the fold on the front page of the Manchester *Union*. Our 125th anniversary was big news! The article was accompanied by illustrations of several of our ministers and our building, inside and out. The event was described as a "joyful celebration," and our people definitely could feel pride: there were "few societies with history of more stirring intent." This is heady stuff.

Today, supposedly, churches and church life are not of much interest. Even our local paper, the *Valley News*, told us to write a letter, as they weren't sure if they'd carry a proper story. So what? We need to tell our own story, to celebrate our own ministries, to witness to the work we do on behalf of Jesus Christ. We should not rely on the press to do our work, to live our vocation.

We will mark our 250th anniversary in various ways over the coming months. We will have guest preachers. We will get



Manchester Union, 27 Sept 1893

a chance to look at historical artifacts. We will have a campaign to fund our vision and hopes for the next 250 years. Most important, we will tell stories, recount triumphs, acknowledge hard times, commemorate great moments, and not forget those small but amusing events in our past. And it will be a blessing to do all of this.

I have already told you about the "spiritual practice of remembering," the subject of a great book by Peggy Bendroth (who will preach here on September 23, Anniversary Sunday). We Congregationalists have a lot

Continued on Page 6

SUNDAY SERVICE



SEPTEMBER 16 KICK-OFF SUNDAY!

The Blessing of the Backpacks!

Bring yours to worship!

Church School Registration!
Age 4-Grade 1, Grades 2-4, Grades 5-6

Lunch and Outdoor Fun!
Pizza, Salad, Games, and Other Stuff

This Year's Church School Theme—Calling All Disciples!

In the coming year our Church School children will get to know Jesus' disciples, those whom he called to walk and work with him and help spread his Good News of God's love. Witnessing Jesus' ministry, his miracles, his suffering and death, and his resurrection, the twelve disciples were the first to carry his message to the wider world. We'll learn about them all and consider the ways in which we are called to be disciples today—a calling that changes our lives and those around us.

Join us to kick-off the Church School year, renewing old friendships and beginning new ones!

ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 23

On this Sunday we will celebrate the 250th anniversary of our congregation's founding on SEPTEMBER 27, 1768.

Our guest preacher will be **Dr. Peggy Bendroth**, Executive Director of the Congregational Library and Archives in Boston. With degrees from Cornell and Johns Hopkins, she has published several books, for both academic and more general readership. In *The Spiritual Practice of Remembering* Peggy summons readers to remember and honor the past. Her most recent book, *The Last Puritans: Mainline Protestants and the Power of the Past*, tells the intriguing story of how Congregationalists have engaged deeply with their denomination's storied past and recast their modern identity. Peggy recently served as President of the American Society of Church History.

The Diaconate will host a special coffee hour on September 23 to recognize this important milestone in our congregation's history.

Charles Buck to Visit September 30

On the last Sunday of the month we will welcome another guest to worship for our 250th Anniversary, the Rev. Dr. Charles C. Buck, Interim Conference Minister for the NH Conference (UCC).

Community Dinner

Sunday, September 23, at 5:00 pm *Leaders:* WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

Thanks to **Women of the Church** for organizing this month's dinner! As we provide a vital service to our neighbors, please consider lending a hand as needed—particularly if you haven't before!

Look for sign-ups in the Parish Hall.

Queued for Coffee Hour

September—Diaconate
October—Mission and Social Action
November—Women of the Church

SEPTEMBER 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
10a Worship		7p Boy Scouts	6p UVPRN	6-9p Bel Canto Auditions	UVIP Micah Nominations	Labor Day Wknd
11:15a Bd of Govs			7-9p SURJ Community Mtg	Additions	Due	No Men's Breakfast
5p Community Dinner						Dioditiant.
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10a Worship (Communion; visit by Asma Elhuni, UVIP) 11:15a MSA	LABOR DAY	7p Boy Scouts/ Cubs (AofL)	5:30p Cub Scout Pack Committee 6p UVPRN	7p Choir	7:30p Samara Piano Quartet	1-3p Wings of Hope, Colburn Park (FCC if rain)
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	5:30p Cub Scouts		8a-4p NH-WIC		14	
10a Worship 2:30p Liz and Dan	(Bears/Webelos)	Cubs (AofL)	6p UVPRN	12:30p Grafton- Orange-Sullivan		1:30p UVMC Welcome Back
Faiella: At Long	7p Diaconate		7p Bel Canto	Assn (CoCM)		Parents Class/ Play-in
Last 5-7p Juneberry			Chamber Singers (first rehearsal)	7p Choir		
Community Chorus			7:15p Christian			
Potluck			Ed Committee			
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
KICK-OFF SUNDAY!	7p Wysocki	7p Church	6p UVPRN	7p Choir	21	7a-4p NH State
10a Worship and	Strings	Council	7p Bel Canto	7 P OHOII		Button Society Annual Conf
Church School		7p Boy Scouts/ Cubs (AofL)/ Troop Committee	Chamber Singers			
		Troop Committee				
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY!	5:30p Cub Scouts	· •	6p UVPRN	7p Choir		
10a Worship and	(Bears/Webelos) 7p Wysocki	7p Boy Scouts/ Cubs (AofL)	7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers			
Church School (Guest: Peggy Bendroth)	Strings	Cubs (AOIL)	Chamber Singers			
11:15a Bd of Govs						
5p Community Dinner						
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
10a Worship and	5:30p Cub Scouts		5:30p Cub Scout	7p Choir		8a Men's
Church School (Guest: Charles	(Bears/Webelos) 7p Wysocki	Cubs (AofL)	Pack Committee 6p UVPRN			Breakfast
Buck)	Strings		7p Bel Canto			
Tf vora			<u> </u>	 	200 20 602 118	

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

COMMITTEE NOTES

CHURCH COUNCIL

Council invited development consultant Bob Barr to its August meeting, to discuss assisting us with our 250th anniversary campaign. Bob had previously met with Barb Jones, Amy Driscoll, Jon Scott, and Steve Silver to discuss campaign planning and the work he has done with other area institutions, such as Dartmouth College, the Vermont Academy, St. Paul's School, and most recently our neighbors at the Upper Valley Music Center.

Bob began by listing various purposes that had already been identified in his previous meeting as possible campaign priorities: a fully renovated kitchen, a new organ, an extended outreach and mission program, and better accessibility for our building. He asked those present for ideas about what the church most needs. Suggestions included items such as Sanctuary improvements (flooring/ carpeting, pew cushions, sound system, etc.) and energy-efficient insulation; emphasis on serving our local community more effectively; and building our endowment and other financial resources. Jon Scott suggested a commitment to reduce or eliminate dependence on fossil fuels within a period of 20 years. Several advocated a visionary, bigpicture approach suiting our 250th anniversary, encouraging all of us to consider not just a new kitchen or organ (for example) but to be more expansive in imagining what we can do with those things to further our work as an active, socially responsible faith community.

Asked what his role in our campaign could be, Bob described himself as

"the missing piece of the pie," a consultant, manager, and facilitator of the process, responding to our needs and acting on purposes that we ourselves identify. He could write letters, proposals, grants, and other campaign communications. He could create forms, reports, and promotional materials. He offers expertise in asking for money, a difficult and awkward task for many people. He could help us approach key donors and strategize effectively about asking for particular purposes. He could provide services and work that FCC's current congregation and staff cannot take on themselves.

Corrine Erskine inquired about the fundraising process generally, whether it would involve direct solicitations within our congregation, identifying funding sources beyond it, organizing events or sales that attract donations, or a combination of these. Bob explained that the primary focus would be direct contributions from members of our congregation, noting that major campaigns typically collect around 90 percent of their total goal from only about 5-10 percent of donors. Participation should be as broad as possible, and donations of any size matter, but the campaign's overall success will depend on significant contributions from a relatively small group of individuals. Major initial commitments from this small group will build excitement and momentum for contributions from the wider congregation. Approaching these donors would involve collaborations among Bob, Steve, and volunteers.

Each of the purposes identified for the campaign, which Bob noted can be thought of as "buckets" to be filled, will need individual advocates, since not everyone will feel equally strongly about funding all purposes. Institutional grants from beyond FCC might be sought for particular purposes suited to those sources (e.g., organ funding from a cultural foundation, or energy-efficiency upgrades from a utility company). Bob explained that campaigns often fill these buckets at different rates, and they may not all fill to the same level throughout the process.

Corrine asked how the campaign would relate to our usual patterns of annual giving, wondering what would happen if we don't raise the funds we hope to. Steve noted that campaign fundraising shouldn't affect regular support, pointing out that successful campaigns often increase levels of annual giving. It was also noted that as a bookkeeping practice, campaign transactions and funds would be kept separate from our established accounts and budget.

Bob thanked Council for inviting him to discuss our campaign and for considering his possible role in

September Meetings

Mission/Social Action 9/2, 11:15
Diaconate 9/10, 7:00
Christian Education 9/12, 7:15
Church Council 9/18, 7:00
Board of Governors 9/23, 11:15

October Meetings

Mission/Social Action 10/7, 11:15
Diaconate 10/8, 7:00
Christian Education 10/10, 7:15
Church Council 10/16, 7:00
NHC-UCC Annual Mtg 10/20
Board of Governors 10/28, 11:15

COMMITTEE NOTES

Campaign Visioning Session To Be Rescheduled

The visioning session planned for September 9 has been postponed to allow our new campaign consultant, Bob Barr, to begin his work (see Council report for more information!). We will still offer this forum, but at a later date. All are invited to share ideas, concerns, and questions about our campaign. Your hopes and dreams—indeed, your vision—are essential and welcome, as we discern what mission and ministries the Holy Spirit is calling us to invest in for our next 250 years.

Plan to join us for this opportunity to envision FCC's future!

managing it. After he left Council continued to discuss **two primary questions**, as Steve summarized them—1) Do we want to hire a campaign consultant at all? 2) Do we think that Bob Barr is the right person for that role?

Discussion of the first question considered whether any campaign could be successful using only our current staff and volunteers. Many in our church community have fundraising experience, including Steve himself. But as Amy Driscoll observed (to general agreement), while our volunteers may support a campaign and get involved in some role, they have limited time apart from their jobs, families, and other obligations. Steve clearly stated, moreover, that while he does have relevant experience, the congregation has called him to be its pastor, not a fundraiser, and that must remain his focus. Some also pointed out that an outside consultant would bring neutrality to the job, detached from the congregation's personal histories and assumptions, making some hard conversations easier.

Addressing concerns about the cost of a consultant, several pointed out that this expense would be quite small relative to possible campaign goals, and such goals are unrealistic without a consultant. Ultimately, there was general agreement that a consultant was an essential expense for any campaign to be successful.

To determine whether Bob Barr would be our best choice, Valerie Nevel asked for more background about him. Steve shared Bob's CV with Council. Several noted clear experience with and knowledge of other non-profit institutions in our community, some of which already is familiar to our church members. (Our initial reference was from Barb Jones, who had met Bob during his work for UVMC.) Bob is also active personally in a UCC congregation (at Dartmouth), an asset for working with a church like FCC.

Valerie also wondered what other options we might have in the Upper Valley, and how typical his estimated costs were. We haven't contacted other local fundraising consultants, but Steve Silver reported from his experience in Boston that consultants there might cost three or four times as much. Proximity to Dartmouth, too, can potentially inflate the rates of prospective consultants.

Council reached a consensus about both the idea of a consultant and

Bob specifically. Discussion focused on the parameters of a contract, the extent of our commitment to Bob, and the importance of informing the wider congregation. The first step of any campaign would be a feasibility study, trying to identify big-picture goals and the viability of funding them, based primarily on the smaller group of potential major contributors. This may take as little as a couple months, but Bob has recommended that this happen before a larger conversation among the whole congregation. A feasibility study would set up the campaign for wider participation, but it may determine that we should consider a reduced campaign or none at all. (Thus, the Visioning Session that had been planned for September will happen at a later date.)

All agreed that the congregation should be informed that we plan to hire a consultant to pursue the feasibility study. And Council, it was noted, may collectively decide at any time either that the campaign doesn't seem viable or that Bob himself may not be the best choice to work on it—that is, hiring Bob now doesn't commit us to a full campaign or a year's contract with him. With general agreement on these points, Council unanimously voted to hire Bob Barr to work as a consultant to begin exploring and planning for a campaign.

Before closing the meeting with a prayer, Steve Silver gladly thanked everyone for such a thoughtful and thorough discussion of complicated issues. He expressed his optimism about and deep gratitude for our congregational leadership.

COMMITTEE NOTES

DIACONATE

The Deacons met after a late-July barbecue/potluck hosted by Susan Montmagny. Susan opened the gathering by inviting everyone to list the things they do to help serve the community, locally, regionally, or globally. She affirmed that what we do comes back to us tenfold.

Treasurer Alyson Danyew-Ellison submitted her report prior to the meeting. Communion collections for the Open Door Ministry in 2018 have surpassed \$4,000. We have in turn purchased a total of \$5,000 in food and gas cards from, respectively, Price Chopper and Jake's (including an expenditure approved by the Deacons at the July meeting.

In his pastor's report, Steve Silver expressed appreciation for his July vacation and thanked Jo Shelnutt for her well-received leadership of worship during the month. He confirmed arrangements for our worship exchange with WLCC. He also noted that the NH Conference was convening a special meeting for August 4 in Laconia, to call Gordon Rankin to serve as our new conference minister. Although FCC currently has no delegates to the conference, Steve himself is able to vote.

Steve added that planning for our 250th anniversary includes three guest preachers in the fall and the return of composer Paul Ayres in the spring. For Peggy Bendroth's

visit on September 23, the Deacons will plan a special coffee hour to observe Anniversary Sunday.

While a full review of the Deacons' member contact lists was tabled, the group did review a letter that Phil Hammond sent to members on his list as an example of how deacons might introduce themselves and their role in the congregation. On a curious note, it was explained that the box marked "Diaconate" on the wall inside the front door in the Narthex was meant for congregants to communicate with the Deacons in the past.

Revisiting the possibility of recording our worship services on video, Biff Simpson shared several options for

The Pastoral Perspective, continued from Page 1

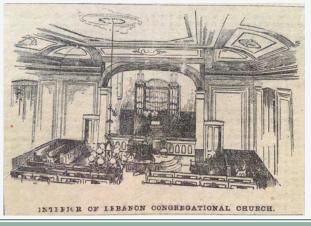
of experience engaging in this practice in America, more than 400 years to be exact. In this context, 250 years doesn't seem like a long time. There were already plenty of well-established Congregationalist churches in southern New England when FCC was founded. In some ways, we're new. But in others, we're old. At 250 years, we are eight years older than the Republic. And we're 189 years older than the denomination of which we are now a part.

We've got some history. But that only really matters if we believe we have a future. As Christians, we know what has happened already matters: God made promises and he fulfilled them in Jesus. But we also know that what will happen matters, too. For while Jesus has been here, we teach that he will come again. That's basic eschatology. In English, we can describe this as "Already, Not Yet"—the Kingdom has triumphed (it did on Easter, long ago), but it has yet to fully manifest itself. There is still work to be done. As John Robinson, pastor to the Puritans, put it in 1620 before they sailed for the new world, "I am verily persuaded the Lord hath more truth and light yet to break forth from His holy word."

That light still shines. My prayer is that we will take inspiration from our past to move into the future, that while we may not receive a lot of news coverage, we will still make a mark on our community and the wider world.

Yours faithfully,







THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION

this project. He also brought ideas for upgrading the Sanctuary sound system, such as wireless microphones and other equipment. The Deacons approved purchasing some of these items, pending presentation of the video recording and sound system options to Church Council.

Barb Jones reported that required paperwork had been filed to move forward Eliot Fay's discernment process, which FCC is sponsoring. Barb has been in communication with Eliot, and she and others plan to hear him preach in Newport in August.

Phil Hammond opened discussion of the Deacons' responsibilities for serving communion each month, suggesting that servers be in touch with each other during the prior week to work out roles and details. It was also suggested that it might help to choose a "leader" for each month's team of three Deacons. Steve Silver recommended servers arrive at 9:00 to set up.

Lastly, Susan Montmagny reviewed the steps our church had taken in the past two years to support our status as an Open and Affirming, LGBTQ-friendly congregation. These include prominent display of the "Open and Affirming" phrase on our bulletins, advertisements, letterhead, and other communications; a rainbow stripe on our front sign; and the distribution of over 200 rainbow pins to our congregation and visitors to worship. Susan hopes that we will collaborate with the West Lebanon congregation to continue this progress.

Would You Like to Participate in Worship?

The Diaconate and Rev. Steve Silver invite greater lay participation in our worship service. Congregation members already sing in our choir and serve as greeters, ushers, and liturgists. Additional possible roles for lay leadership include reading prayers of invocation or dedication, sharing stewardship messages, or even leading children's moments.

No experience or training is required for this important service! If you're interested in this opportunity to serve, please speak with a deacon or Rev. Silver, or just contact the church office.



WORSHIP WITH WEST LEB. Our annual exchange brought two Sundays of crosstown fellowship, as we shared breakfast and worship with our WLCC friends.

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION

Musical Drama Camp!

Jo Shelnutt, Marcia Corkins, Henry Danaher, and other volunteers provided a great week of Musical Drama Camp. Fourteen lively campers explored the Good Samaritan story in their spirited production of A Not So Terrible Parable.





















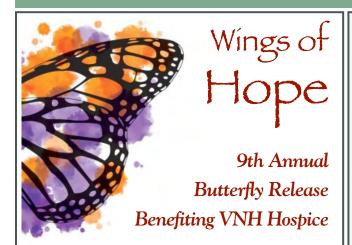






THANK YOU, SCOUTS! Members of Scout Troop 279 volunteered to provide and serve our August Community Dinner for the second consecutive year—and they've already signed up for next year!

OUR LOCAL AND NATIONAL MISSION



Saturday, September 8, 1-3 pm Colburn Park (Rain Location: FCC)

The Visiting Nurse and Hospice for VT/NH again offers this memorial and benefit event, honoring those who have benefited from hospice care. To participate, you may purchase butterflies to be released for \$20 each, or simply attend as a spectator.

For more information, call 888-300-8853 or visit www.vnhcare.org.

2018 Lebanon CROP Walk

Sunday, October 7—Register 12:30/Walk 1:00 Lunch Following at FCC

Begun in 1969 as a single walk in Bismarck, ND, the CROP Hunger Walk is now a national project run by Church World Service. CROP Walks across the US raise about \$9 million annually to combat hunger, food insecurity, and poverty worldwide.

YOU can help in one or more of these ways...

Walk!—Participate in the walk itself and get pledges and donations.

Serve!—FCC will again host a post-walk meal. We need help!

Donate!—Sponsor a walker, or give online at www.cropwalk.org.



www.cropwalk.org

Participant materials and volunteer sign-ups will be available in the Parish Hall later this month.

Questions? Contact the church office or visit www.cropwalk.org.



NHC-UCC ANNUAL MEETING 2018 This Is the Day of the Poured-Out Spirit

Saturday, October 20, 8:00 am-4:30 pm Grappone Conference Center, Concord, NH Online Registration Now Open

Be a part of the experience! All are welcome—lay and ordained church leaders, congregation members, friends, visitors, everyone!—to attend the 217th Annual Meeting of the NH Conference of the UCC. The theme this year draws from Joel 2:28: "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh." The keynote speaker will be the Rev. Dr. Stephen Ray, Jr., president of Chicago Theological Seminary and an authority on systematic theology, African-American religion, and the intersection of religion, human rights, and politics. Conference participants will worship together, share communion and fellowship, and address the business of the NH Conference.

For further details and registration information, please visit the meeting page on the NH Conference website (www.nhcucc.org/conference-ministries/2018-annual-meeting).

MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Upcoming Concerts

All in the Sanctuary, FCC

Samara Piano Quartet—Friday, September 7, at 7:30 pm

Keene-based pianist Nicholas Burns and his wife, violinist Louisa Stonehill, formed this excellent chamber ensemble last year with violist Marcia Cassidy and cellist Paul Cohen. They've performed at Marlboro College, Dartmouth, and elsewhere in the region. For their concert at FCC, they'll play music of W. A. Mozart, Joaquín Turina, and Johannes Brahms. Admission \$20; for more, please visit samarapianoquartet.org.

Liz and Dan Faiella: At Long Last-Sunday, September 9, at 2:30 pm

For much of their young lives, NH-based siblings Liz and Dan Faiella have played traditional Irish, Celtic, and New England folk music for enthusiastic audiences at festivals, contradances, and other venues throughout the region. They're celebrating the release of their new album, At Long Last. Admission by donation; for more, please visit <u>lizanddanmusic.com</u> or the Facebook event site at <u>bit.ly/2MPEdM1</u>.

Open Sing VII-Sunday, September 30, at 3:00 pm

Fresh from their successful August concert with the Upper Valley Singers, Henry Danaher and Hal Sheeler offer another community choral opportunity. Repertoire TBD, scores provided; all are welcome! Freewill donation.

Classicopia: Jewish Jazz 3—October 19 or 20 (DATE/TIME TBD)

Pianist Dan Weiser and clarinetist Steve Loew return for another edition of this wildly popular concert. They'll offer an all-new selection of music celebrating the exchange among Jewish culture, classical music, and jazz in the early 20th century. Admission \$20, FCC members \$15; more at classicopia.org.

LOH on Location Returns in October!

Youssra El Hawary-Friday, October 12, at 7:30 pm

Drawing inspiration from the revolutionary climate in her native Egypt, singer-songwriter Youssra El Hawary and her five-piece band have enjoyed great success with an eclectic blend of French *chanson*, indie rock, and jazz. Continuing FCC's collaboration with Lebanon Opera House, this concert is also part of "Center Stage," a public diplomacy initiative of the US State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Adults \$18.50, youth \$8.50; tickets and more at Lebanonoperahouse.org/events/youssrael-hawary/.

AND COMING TO THE MEETINGHOUSE LATER THIS FALL:

Classicopia: Four-hand Piano (Weiser/Borowsky)—Nov. 30 or Dec. 1-2 (DATE/TIME TBD)

Bel Canto Chamber Singers—Saturday, December 8, 7:30 pm/Sunday, December 9, 4:00 pm

UVMC Messiah Sing!—Sunday, December 16, at 3:30 pm

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

KICK-OFF SUNDAY

September 16

Blessing of the Backpacks, outdoor fun, pizza lunch, and a new Church School year!

ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY

September 23

Guest Preacher: Dr. Peggy Bendroth, Executive Director of the Congregational Library

2018 CROP Walk

Sunday, October 7

Registration 12:30 Walk 1:00 Lunch Following at FCC

Walk! Serve! Donate!

STOP HUNGER

Questions?

Contact the church or visit www.cropwalk.org.



Upcoming Concerts

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