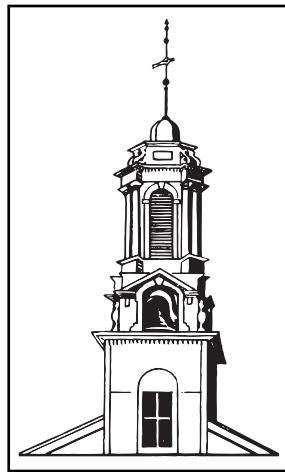


2016 ANNUAL REPORT



First Congregational Church
Lebanon, New Hampshire



Annual Meeting
Sunday, February 12, 2017

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ANNUAL MEETING 2017
MODERATOR: Amy Driscoll

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Invocation
3. Reading of the Warrant
4. Reading of the Minutes of the 2016 Annual Meeting
5. Reports:
 - PASTOR: Rev. Stephen R. Silver
 - CHURCH COUNCIL: Corrine Erskine
 - OFFICERS:
 - Clerk - Brian Clancy
 - Auditor - N/A
 - Treasurer - Barry Schuster
 - BOARDS:
 - Board of Governors - John Gilliatt
 - Board of Trustees - Valerie Nevel
 - Diaconate - Barbara Jones
 - COMMITTEES: Committee Chairs
 - WOMEN OF THE CHURCH
 - CHURCH HISTORIAN: Corrine Erskine
6. Nominating Committee Report
7. Election of Officers and Committees
8. Old Business
9. New Business
 - A. Proposed Budget for 2017 (see pp. 14-15)
 - B. Proposed Amendment to *Constitution and By-laws* (see p. 39)
10. Closing Hymn: "Blest Be the Tie That Binds"
11. Benediction

WARRANT FOR 2017 ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Lebanon, NH, will be held in the Parish Hall on Sunday, February 12, 2017, immediately following the worship service, for the purpose of:

1. The election of all officers provided for under the CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS of the church.
 2. To hear the reports of all officers, committees, and organizations, as required under the CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS of the church.
 3. To consider and act upon any other matters relating to the general church welfare that may properly come before this meeting, including but not limited to the following:
 - A. Church Council, acting on a proposal from the Diaconate, recommends that the following be removed from the Diaconate's responsibilities, as listed in the church's CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS (February 2015 edition, p. 14): "They shall secure adequate childcare coverage during the worship services and other special events as required."
- With this clause removed, responsibility for securing childcare will fall to the Personnel Subcommittee of Church Council, which already is charged with "assist[ing] and mak[ing] recommendations for action to the Council regarding employees and volunteer staff (p. 13)."

Respectfully submitted,
Brian C. Clancy, *Clerk*
Lebanon, NH 03766
January 20, 2017

MINUTES OF 2016 ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, February 14, 2016

1. The meeting was **called to order** by Warren Belding at 11:20. Warren noted that at least 25 people were in attendance, constituting a quorum according to the church By-laws.
2. The **invocation** was given by Rev. Stephen Silver.
3. Warren Belding read the annual meeting **warrant** in full.
4. Reading of the **minutes** from the 2015 meeting: **Motion made** by Barry Schuster to dispense with reading the minutes, seconded by Barbara Jones. **Motion passed unanimously.**
5. **Reports**

Pastor (Rev. Steve Silver): In addition to his report in the Annual Report document, Rev. Silver highlighted three areas of challenge and opportunity in the coming year. The first is a chance to consider whether the church's organizational structure best serves our congregation's participation, commitment, and strengths. The second is two anniversaries in the near future—the 500th of the Protestant Reformation (2017) and the 250th of our congregation (2018)—which ask us to look at our past while going forward. The third is faith formation, the directed work toward growing deeper in faith and spirituality.

Steve also extended thanks to Barry Schuster, concluding his term as Council chair and starting as interim Treasurer; Nan Parsons, concluding her service as Treasurer; and Don Rowell, concluding his service as chair of the Board of Governors.

Church Council (Barry Schuster, Chair): In addition to his report in the Annual Report document, Barry thanked those who come to Council regularly, address issues, and offer their service in the “democratic” process of our church. He expressed confidence in Corrine Erskine as she starts her term as Council chair.

Clerk (Brian Clancy): Rachel Silver pointed out that nine members had joined the church in 2015, rather than eight as incorrectly reported in the Annual Report. Thus, we began 2016 with a total of 202 members.

Auditor (Kathy Belding): Report presented in Annual Report document.

Treasurer: No report submitted for 2015.

Board of Governors: Report presented in Annual Report document. Wendell Smith added a note about our hopes to move forward with an energy-efficient hot-water system for the kitchen.

Board of Trustees (Valerie Nevel): In addition to her report in the Annual Report document, Valerie Nevel offered a few remarks about the church's investment strategies, then read the list of names of those who had arranged for ongoing funding for the church in memorial gifts.

Diaconate (Barbara Jones): In addition to her report in the Annual Report document, Barb Jones thanked all Deacons for their support and service throughout the year. She also welcomed new Deacon Kathy Beckett and noted that we still are two deacons short of the ideal number of twelve.

Church School and Christian Education Committee (Marcia Corkins): Report presented in Annual Report document.

Memorial Gardens Committee (Pete Mason): Report presented in Annual Report document.

Mission and Social Action Committee (Corrine Erskine): Report presented in Annual Report document.

Music Committee (Brian Clancy): Report presented in Annual Report document.

Stewardship Committee (Jon Scott): In addition to his report in the Annual Report document, Jon Scott emphasized that church members and friends had contributed so much more than financial support to sustain the church and its ministries. Our collective volunteer hours and love for the church and its mission represent an abundant source of strength. Jon also promoted the February 28 planned giving session to be led by Valerie Nevel.

Women of the Church: Report presented in Annual Report document.

Church Historian (Corrine Erskine): Report presented in Annual Report document.

6. Nominating Committee Report (Amy Driscoll): Referring to the roster of committees for the coming year, Amy Driscoll invited everyone to share any questions, concerns, or corrections they might have. While acknowledging some remaining vacancies, she encouraged everyone for their commitment and service, thanking in particular those who were finishing their terms as officers or committee members.

7. Election of Officers and Committees

Motion made by Linda Jacobs to accept the full slate of nominations as presented at the meeting, seconded by Pete Mason. *Motion passed unanimously.*

8. Old Business

None brought forward.

9. New Business

A. Proposed Budget for 2016

As the proposed budget for 2016 had been distributed in draft form to Church Council in the prior two weeks, no significant discussion occurred in the meeting.

Motion made by Amy Driscoll to accept the proposed budget for 2016, seconded by Ron Bailey. *Motion passed unanimously.*

B. Recommendation for Alternative Witness to UCC “Boycott and Divest” Resolutions

Speaking on behalf of the Diaconate, Jon Scott introduced this issue with some background on the resolutions in question and the process that led to their adoption by the UCC and NH Conference. He reiterated the principles that guided the Diaconate’s proposal for an alternative witness, and he emphasized concerns about the approval process.

Jon reported that the Diaconate had determined it advisable, based on recent feedback and conversations, to table the proposed recommendation (see 2016 Warrant). All recognize that this

is a complicated set of issues; there has already been much consideration and discernment, but there remains a need for broader congregational review and input. Thus, it is hoped to offer two congregational forums on this matter in the near future, followed by a congregational vote by mid-May. (The first such forum was tentatively suggested for Saturday, March 5.)

Jon invited discussion from all those present.

Linda Jacobs, speaking for FCC's delegates to the NH Conference, pointed out that there was a discussion and vote at the NH Conference annual meeting, suggesting a democratic process. While he appreciated this confirmation, Steve Silver clarified that the vote was only the end of a rushed process and followed a typical pattern, by which planning and discussion of the resolution was in effect biased toward a particular position before it reached the conference.

Ron Bailey expressed concern that the Diaconate's own process could have involved the wider congregation earlier. He hoped to hear more from our delegates and wanted to know more about where the proposed response would go. How would we take this message beyond FCC? What are the mechanisms for voicing our alternative witness and criticism? He hoped the statement would be expanded.

Steve Silver noted that the Diaconate followed the example of our conversations about a new welcome statement a few years ago, although perhaps that didn't guarantee success in this case. He emphasized, though, that we all want to be peacemakers. Barry Schuster added that the Diaconate had appropriately brought the proposal to Church Council, which recommended wider congregational discussion. It's clear that more may be needed, and Barry welcomed a substantive exchange on this issue.

Jon Scott expressed the hope that we focus on what we all agree on, rather than potential points of contention. Hilary Ryder encouraged everyone to convey any further comments and questions to the Diaconate sooner rather than later, to keep the process moving forward.

Steve Teeter asked whether other NHC congregations would be involved in the conversation. Jon agreed that would perhaps be beneficial, but only *after* we clarify what our congregation believes on this matter (i.e., after a new vote).

Motion made by Jon Scott to table the Diaconate's proposal to allow two congregational forums and an anticipated vote in mid-May, after which our alternative witness would be communicated to the national UCC; seconded by Linda Jacobs. **Motion passed unanimously.**

10. The congregation sang the **closing hymn**, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds."

11. Before offering the **benediction**, Rev. Silver shared his gratitude and joy for the many strengths and gifts of our congregation. Whenever he is engaged in wider-church work, he is proud to tell others about our congregation.

12. Meeting **adjourned** at 12:15.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian C. Clancy, *Clerk*

PASTOR'S REPORT

A safe stronghold our God is still,
A trusty shield and weapon;
He'll help us clear from all the ill
That hath us now o'ertaken.
The ancient prince of hell
Hath risen with purpose fell;
Strong mail of craft and power
He weareth in this hour;
On earth is not his fellow.

–Thomas Carlyle's 1831 translation of Martin Luther's "Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott"

It was 500 years ago that Martin Luther, a brilliant, acerbic monk, nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg. While the waters of European Christianity had long been turbulent, it was Luther's defiant act that has come to be recognized as the spark that set off the explosion of the Reformation. This may all seem like ancient history, but in reality, what Luther began continues to unfold. The story of First Congregational Church of Lebanon, rooted here in the Upper Valley yet part of the world-spanning saga of the Body of Christ in all its wondrous glory, is, I believe, that of a vibrant, lively church that continues to be ready to grow in faith and service and embark on new and daring things, as it responds to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Never was this clearer to me than over two days at the end of 2016: Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. During a 27-hour period, our church offered five worship services in addition to hosting our monthly Community Dinner. Each of those services was unique, offering a different worship experience to those who attended. They ranged from the controlled but joyful chaos of what has become our primary Christmas Eve service, the 5:00 pm Pageant, in which the children of the church (and some of their older friends) reenact the story of the Nativity, to a traditional service of lessons and carols at 8:00, followed by a contemplative service of light and communion at 11:00.

The next morning we gathered around the communion table to celebrate Jesus' birth, and later that day a number of deacons and your pastor offered a Christmas service to the residents of the Lebanon Genesis Center. None of this would have been possible without the hard work, faith, love, and sharing of talents of the people of this church, who worked with children, sang in the choir, read prayers, greeted guests, and shared the love of God that came to us in the Christ-child. And then to cap it off was the fourth-Sunday Community Dinner, transformed into a Christmas Feast that was prepared by and served to and shared with our neighbors. Scores of church members made all of this possible.

In the midst of all of this, though, one experience in particular stood out for me: at the 5:00 and 8:00 services we had visitors from Southeast Asia. They were not Christian but were fascinated by what they saw. After each service our guests were drawn to the crèche, wanting to know more and asking if they might take pictures. They could only have felt comfortable doing this if members of our congregation were committed to offering hospitality to strangers. This attitude, though, is not simply a matter of being friendly. It is a theological statement that recognizes that as God has

welcomed us without reservation into his kingdom, we are similarly called to welcome others into our common life.

Martin Luther's ministry unfolded during a time of profound uncertainty and volatility. So, too, does ours. And for this we should give thanks. For it is at moments like this that the witness of the church, offered through worship, service, fellowship, and mutual care, is most needed. We are blessed to be God's gathered people here in this place at this moment.

And we are fortunate to have been graced with so many strengths as we contemplate how we might do ministry in the months and years ahead. Our lay leaders are creative and committed, our staff is dedicated, our members and friends are enthusiastic and faithful. Our congregation has attracted new people, and our giving to and understanding of mission have grown. Our finances continue to provide a firm foundation for our mission and ministry. Our meetinghouse is resplendent after the recently completed restoration of the Sanctuary, a project begun a few years ago. Our Music at the Meetinghouse series continues to raise our profile in the community, while our music ministry is richer and broader.

This past year saw a lot of activity and many achievements. But in the spirit of the Reformation we are called to look at how we might do old things differently and what new things we might take up.

- *Organization.* It remains clear that our congregation must look seriously at how its various ministries are organized and ask how we might best organize ourselves so that the work of the church gets done while those who respond to the call to serve have their faith nourished. While I as your pastor can offer ideas and support, this is a Congregational church. So, I believe that if FCC Lebanon is to be true to its polity and, even more important, its vocation as a place that asks its members to share their gifts and talents in ministry with one another, the members of the church will need to embrace this challenge and opportunity for us to thrive and grow in the years ahead.
- *250th Anniversary.* Our church will celebrate its 250th anniversary in 2018, marking two and a half centuries of Christian service, worship, and ministry to the people of the Upper Valley and the wider world. We will remember and give thanks for our past, but I hope and trust we will devote equal energy to discerning where God would have us go in the future. This milestone date offers the opportunity to engage in bold thinking, to consider who we want to be as a community of faith and what we must do to make that happen—including the possibility of a capital campaign.
- *Faith Formation.* Last year I wrote of faith formation that “this is an area in which we are called to grow. Whether it is continuing to innovate in our church school program, moving forward with mentors for the youth of our congregation, or helping adults grapple with questions of faith and spirituality, we need to be alert to both the rewards and challenges of trying new approaches and offering new opportunities for faith formation. Properly done, all of this will require resources and time. That, in turn, will involve praying, listening, and making choices.” What was true last year is true today.
- *Membership.* Related to faith formation is the question of membership in our, or indeed any, church community. What does it mean to be a “member” of a church in 2016? With our 250th anniversary coming upon us, I believe that this is an opportune moment for our

congregation to think about what it means to be in covenant with one another, to ask what it means to be a member of First Congregational Church of Lebanon, and to consider how one does this. I pose these questions without any agenda or preferred answer, but simply with the hope that we may reflect together on something that is all too easy to take for granted—yet is central to what it means to be the body of Christ gathered together.

With the 2017 Annual Meeting I will have served as your pastor for seven years. Much has changed during that time, yet much has remained the same. New people have joined this fellowship and new ministries have been launched, as some old ones have been retired. At the same time, individuals and families who have been part of this community for decades provide inspiration through their faith and commitment, and our congregation draws strength and assurance from enduring programs and fellowships that continue to nourish us and our neighbors beyond the walls of our meetinghouse. As I have noted in past years, I am optimistic about this church and its future. We as a community have been blessed with much with which to respond to God’s call to be a faithful, adventuresome people.

None of this would be possible without you, the members and friends of First Congregational Church of Lebanon. You, inspired by the Holy Spirit, are what make this a living, vital congregation.

I would be remiss if I did not extend my heartfelt thanks to my colleagues in ministry: Brian Clancy, our Church Administrator, whose dedication and creativity makes so much of what we do possible; Henry Danaher, our Organist and Music Director, who continues to show us just how much music can enrich our lives of faith and sustain our connection to and with the wider community; Marcia Corkins, our Church School Superintendent, who with faith and love creates an environment in which children cheer as they run off to church school; and Barb Teeter, our Sexton, who cares for our church home with affection and good humor.

Reading the epigram at the start of my message, you may have thought it was familiar but a bit off. These words are the first stanza of “A Mighty Fortress is Our God,” but the translation is not the one with which we are familiar here in the United States. Americans usually sing the version rendered by Frederick Henry Hodge in 1852 (*Pilgrim Hymnal* #363). The translation by Thomas Carlyle, the Scottish historian and essayist, is the one sung in Britain. I think it is helpful for us to see an old, familiar text with new eyes, because it will enable us to appreciate anew what we have long taken for granted. We have grown up with this hymn. But it is worth remembering there was a time when it was new, written just 12 years after Luther nailed his theses to the church door. Remembering this, along with other parts of our past, can provide us with inspiration and enrich our faith.

Dynamism rooted in Scripture. The ministry of all believers. A trust in God, not institutions. The Reformation is indeed history, our history. But it is also the present, our present—and our future. With the confidence of Martin Luther and countless others who have gone before us, let us place our hope and trust in the God who has made himself known in Jesus Christ and who through the power of the Holy Spirit seeks to lead us forward in our worship, service, fellowship, and love.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

CHURCH COUNCIL REPORT

The Church Council met throughout the year, providing a place to explore and address the challenges and opportunities before our congregation, while doing the business of the church.

In 2016 Council supported the Diaconate's proposal for an alternative witness on UCC resolutions; authorized the repair and repainting of the sanctuary walls, including the proscenium, consulting with congregation on color choice; made a decision about window treatments in the sanctuary, again after consulting with the congregation; worked with the Personnel Committee to make sure Henry Danaher, our music director, was appropriately compensated in light of all he is doing for the church; and approved a draft budget for 2017 for approval by the congregation at Annual Meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Corrine Erskine, *Chair*

CLERK'S REPORT

During 2016 eleven people joined the church as covenant members; four members died; and one member transferred her membership.

With these changes, we begin 2017 with 208 members.

New Members Received:

Lorraine Cushing, joined 5/15/2016.

Meghan Davis, joined 5/15/2016.

Elizabeth and Jim Duvall, joined 5/15/2016.

Alyson Danyew-Ellison and Terry Ellison, joined 5/15/2016.

Eliot Fay, joined 5/15/2016.

Arthur French, joined 5/15/2016.

Judy Macnab, joined 5/15/2016.

Harriet Oman, joined by transfer of membership from the United Church of Strafford, Strafford (VT), 11/28/16.

Nancy Ulf, joined by transfer of membership from Kearsarge Community Presbyterian Church, New London (NH), 12/9/16.

Members Who Died:

Maurice J. Bergeron, d. 1/1/2016.

Jane S. Brandt, d. 1/16/2016.

Helen M. Wallace, d. 7/7/2016.

Deborah Wentworth, d. 12/17/2016.

Members Who Transferred:

Karen Wadsworth, transferred membership to South Congregational Church (Concord, NH), 3/30/2016.

Members Who Withdrew:

(None)

Rev. Stephen R. Silver performed the following **baptisms**:

Coby J. Mason, 1/3/2016 at FCC.

Clayton J. Davis, Jr., 6/12/2016 at FCC.

Kailyn L. Rappaport, 6/12/2016 at FCC.

Rev. Stephen R. Silver presided at the following **services of Christian marriage**:

(None)

Rev. Silver presided at the following **memorial and graveside services**:

Members of the Church:

Maurice J. Bergeron, d. 1/1/2016, memorial service 1/6/2016 at FCC.

Jane S. Brandt, d. 1/16/2016, graveside service 6/4/2016 at Valley Cemetery, Lebanon, NH.

Helen M. Wallace, d. 7/7/2016, interment 10/14/2016 at FCC.

Friends of the Church:

Robert W. "Pete" Cummings, d. 3/8/2016, graveside service 4/18/2016 at Canaan Street Cemetery, Canaan, NH.

Mary C. Stone, d. 2/10/2016, graveside service 4/23/2016 at Countryside Cemetery, Enfield, NH.

Charlotte L. Jamback, d. 5/31/2016, graveside service 8/19/2016 at Glenwood Cemetery, Lebanon, NH.

Janet C. Reagan, d. 9/12/2016, graveside service 9/22/2016 at Valley Cemetery, Lebanon, NH.

George Laber, d. 9/22/2016, memorial service 9/27/2016 at Knight Funeral Home, White River Junction, VT.

John E. Neidozetko, d. 12/14/2016, memorial service 12/20/2016 at Ricker Funeral Home, Lebanon, NH.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian C. Clancy, *Clerk*

AUDITOR'S REPORT

[The position of Auditor is currently vacant. Thus, no auditor's report was submitted for 2016.]

TREASURER and FINANCE COMMITTEE

Report for the year January 1 to December 31, 2016 / Proposed Budget for 2017

[**Not available in this edition. For questions or additional information, please contact First Congregational Church directly at 603-448-4281 or church@fcclb.org.**]

BOARD OF GOVERNORS REPORT

“The Board of Governors shall have general charge and care of the church’s physical property,” according to our church’s Constitution and By-Laws. The Board has traditionally met on the fourth Sunday of the month. For the 2016 term, our first meeting was held in March, with seven additional monthly meetings throughout the year. All meeting agendas and meeting minutes are available in written or digital form.

Following is a summary list of our work this year:

Policies Formulated:

- Minimum number of committee members required to hold meeting
- Bid solicitation policy
- Vice chair to preside in chair’s absence
- Maintenance expenditures under \$1,000 do not require Church Council approval
- Tentative schedule of working meetings on Wednesday evening and Saturday morning the fourth week of each month

Spring Clean-up (May 7):

- Tree stump removal, leaf raking, trash collection, perennial garden tilling, kitchen cleaning, parsonage fence painting
- Assistance provided by the Women of the Church, Boy Scouts, and various church members

Maintenance and Repairs Completed:

- Kitchen—convection and regular ovens repaired, lighting fixtures cleaned and bulbs replaced, mice intrusion controlled in four visits by JP Pest Services, door screen replaced and steps repaired
- Sanctuary—lectern leveled and wiring secured, thermostat replaced, windows cleaned (both storm and interior), bell hammer rope replaced, exhaust fan mounting rebuilt
- Large bathroom—ground-fault receptacles replaced, faucet replaced, point-of-use water heater repaired, toilet seat replaced
- Grounds—perennial garden planted and mulched, front lawn spot-seeded and fertilized, landscape lighting restored, front signposts painted, front entrance flower pots planted, rear walk repaired
- Parsonage—bathroom vents repaired
- Snow removal arrangements—Kevin Charbono for plowing, Nate Cole for walks

Finished Projects:

- Kitchen hot-water re-circulation system installed

- Two AED units purchased

Unfinished Projects:

- Energy audit
- Sanctuary repainting
- Front walk repair and sealing
- Exterior building signage
- Oven operation signage
- AED installation and training
- Relocation of public-address system components
- Altar railing prototype

Three-year plan components:

- Completion of Sanctuary painting
- Replacement of pew cushions and Sanctuary carpet
- Refinishing of Parish Hall floor
- Landscaping of front lawn

The chair wishes to thank all the committee members, as well as Brian Clancy and Steve Silver for all their support given.

Respectfully submitted,

John Gilliatt, *Chair*

Walter Scott, *Vice Chair and Secretary*

Wayne Braley

Brandon Mason

Nan Parsons

Rachel Silver

Wendell Smith

BOARD OF TRUSTEES REPORT
For the year ended December 31, 2016

[**Not available in this edition. For questions or additional information, please contact First Congregational Church directly at 603-448-4281 or church@fcclb.org.**]

DIACONATE REPORT

For those who do not know, the responsibilities of the Diaconate are to serve as spiritual leaders of the church with continuing oversight of the spiritual life of the church. Officers appointed for 2016 were Barbara Jones, Chair; Barb Teeter, Vice-Chair; Kathy Beckett, Secretary; and Ginger Smith, Treasurer. In addition, Deacons participated on the Pastoral Relations Committee, Called to Care, the United Valley Interfaith Project, Genesis worship services, and Church Council meetings.

The church welcomed nine new members to the congregation in May: Lorraine Cushing, Meghan Davis, Elizabeth and Jim Duvall, Terry Ellison and Alyson Danyew-Ellison, Eliot Fay, Arthur French, and Judy Macnab. Also in May, the Diaconate welcomed new member Edward (Larry) Doyle on a three-year term.

Below are matters we were involved with through the year:

- A productive and pleasurable Diaconate retreat was held June 11 at the home of Ginger and Wendell Smith. Key issues discussed were the Diaconate's priorities, individual member lists, stewardship, encouraging volunteer participation, matters related to being Open and Affirming, and faith formation.
- We pursued extensive and broad-ranging discussion, in terms of both process and substance, of resolutions passed by the national UCC General Synod and the NH Conference, calling for member churches to "boycott and divest" from companies doing business in the West Bank. After many meetings and presentations to the Council and the congregation, we affirmed that our church does not support these partisan resolutions and that we instead take an active role as true peacemakers, encouraging both sides toward a peaceful future for the Middle East.
- FCC Outing Club events were again popular.
- We investigated a mission trip opportunity to the Penobscot Tribe to help build a women's center.
- The church directory was updated and completed.
- We reaffirmed our position as an Open and Affirming church. We've offered rainbow ribbons for those choosing to show support, mentioned ONA in our church ads, bulletin, and letterhead, and will place a rainbow strip along the edge of our church sign.
- We continue to use communion offerings for our Open Door Ministry (gas cards and grocery cards), mission trips, and Second Growth and WISE.
- We discussed our role in helping Eliot Fay pursue ordination in the UCC.
- Deacons continue to send cards to people who are ill or in need of a little extra support.
- We joined with the Methodists for the Praise in the Park service.
- The Horton Center retreat was scheduled in September and was successful.
- Micah nominations were made in late summer, and our co-nominees, Barb and Steve Teeter, were duly honored, as they deserved.

- We have continued to discuss the importance of having twelve deacons and the need to suggest possible candidates.
- The Diaconate reaffirmed that each deacon should contact the people on their member lists on a regular basis.
- Steve Teeter and Kathy Beckett reported for UVIP on the Economic Justice Committee providing support on matters of a livable wage and predatory lending.
- Our decision about serving communion is to use the distribution method when we are in the Parish Hall and intinction when we are in the Sanctuary.
- Family-friendly movies were shown during the spring months in the Parish Hall.
- Worship services were held at Genesis in November.
- Written instructions for ushers and greeters were updated.
- The church sponsored CPR/AED classes.
- Listen Center holiday baskets went off without a hitch.

I want to thank Steve Silver and every deacon for the support they have given to me and to this church. They are hard-working, dedicated and fully committed to the essential work of this congregation. We look forward to accomplishing many things in 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Jones, *Chair*

Barbara Teeter, *Vice-Chair*

Kathy Beckett, *Secretary*

Ginger Smith, *Treasurer*

Edward (Larry) Doyle

Susan Montmagny

Hilary Ryder

Deb Scott

Jon Scott

Biff Simpson

Steve Teeter

DIACONATE TREASURER'S REPORT

[**Not available in this edition. For questions or additional information, please contact First Congregational Church directly at 603-448-4281 or church@fcclb.org.**]

CHURCH SCHOOL AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

The 2015-16 Church School year began with Kick-off Sunday in September. We celebrated with our church family, enjoying pizza, veggies, and popsicles followed by the ever-popular “bouncy house” outside!

The year’s Church School theme was “Bible Buddies: Heroes, Heels, and Other Friends in Faith.” On Children’s Day in June, the children shared their related projects. On the same Sunday, church families with young children received a special book, Church School children received their book awards, and several people were recognized for their help during the year.

Our committee and Church School children were responsible for two Community Dinners, in April and October.

Their Lenten Lunch Bag Collection allowed the children to donate money to the school in San Jose Villanueva in El Salvador (in partnership with Epilogos) and to purchase needed supplies for David’s House.

Several children and adults participated in our annual Christmas Eve pageant at the Family Service. With weekly donations from our Church School children, they were able to purchase two goats and chickens for the Heifer International program.

In August we presented our first vacation Bible school musical—*King David and the National Treasure*. It was a huge success! Some of our children were joined by children from outside of our congregation for a week of crafts, lessons, and rehearsals. Elizabeth Duvall directed the program. A barbecue followed the presentation on Friday of that week.

We wish to thank our children for their enthusiasm and our church family for their support. It was a wonderful year!

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Corkins, *Superintendent of Church School*

Laurie Braley

Elizabeth Duvall

Ike Jacobs

Linda Jacobs

Nicole Mason

Shawna Osmer

Biff Simpson

MEMORIAL GARDENS COMMITTEE REPORT

The Memorial Gardens Committee is responsible for overseeing the maintenance and planting of our two memorial gardens. The garden in front by the church sign is in honor of Betty and Ellis Howard, given by their family. The Memorial Garden in front of the stone is where cremated ashes of deceased church members and their families may be buried. The ashes of Helen Wallace, who died on July 7, 2016, were interred in a brief ceremony on October 14.

The stone is engraved with the names and birth/death years of the following deceased members of our church: Leif and Beryl Thorsrud, Frank and Helen Wallace, Hank Watson, Robert Bassett, Dr. Gordon Place, Ellis Howard, and Willmott “Bin” Lewis. (The year 2016 was added in October to Helen Wallace’s listing on the stone.) The names of spouses may be engraved at the same time, whether or not both are deceased.

Committee members maintain the gardens and plant flowers in the garden each spring. Once again, Nora Miller generously did the planting work for both gardens in 2016.

Anyone who would like more information about either of the Memorial Gardens or would like to contribute to them should please contact one of the committee members. To reserve a spot in the interment garden, please contact a committee member or the Church Administrator.

Respectfully submitted,

C. Pete Mason, *Chair*

Ike Jacobs

Brandon Mason

Nora Miller

MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE REPORT

The Mission and Social Action Committee started out the year by surveying the congregation about what cause they would like to work with this year. The results suggested interest in working with a Native American group, and Susan Montmagny had a family connection to a the Penobscot Nation in Maine. While we had meetings with a member of their community, many more things needed to be in place for a work trip to be productive. We decided to keep this idea on the back burner until a better time.

We sponsored Bike & Build again this summer. We hosted about thirty young adults, offered them meals, and offered a community potluck with a presentation about their trip. They like coming to our church because the food is so good!

Speaking of food, our community dinners are still going strong. We pride ourselves in serving meals that are fresh and healthy. This year many of the diners wanted us to have a dinner on Christmas, so Nan Parsons agreed to do the supper. Thanks, Nan!

Our CROP Walk efforts were successful again this year. As in years past, our church was responsible for the post-walk lunch.

We are also involved in the United Valley Interfaith Project. Their main goals this year were trying to change legislation involving the title-loan industry and Aging in Place. We would like to see if local churches could get together and offer our own title loans at a much lower interest rate. UVIP is also working with APD and DHMC to make it easier for seniors to stay in their own homes as long as possible.

We were also involved in helping a young woman in our congregation find a place to live. There is no place in the Upper Valley for her to stay, and the Haven has a waiting list. A GoFundMe web page was started on her behalf. The committee would love to help someone start a campaign for building another Haven to help homeless people—a work in progress.

Respectfully submitted,

Corrine Erskine, *Chair*

Ron Bailey

Kathy Beckett

Barbara Laro

Jon Scott

Wendell Smith

MUSIC COMMITTEE REPORT

The Music Committee did not formally meet in 2016, but its members did work individually to support and promote the music ministry at First Congregational Church.

Henry Danaher has continued to impress us and enrich our musical life, particularly in his contributions to worship. The choir has at times struggled to sustain consistent participation, but Henry has always worked well with what he has and occasionally recruited additional singers to supplement the core group. He has been more intentional and focused as a choral director and continues to study, learn, and seek growth in this area. He has also developed a broad professional network in the Upper Valley, and he invited several guest musicians to play or sing at our worship services throughout the year. One particular landmark in this effort was his leadership of a guest choir to sing Thomas Tallis' *Lamentations of Jeremiah* for a special service commemorating the 15th anniversary of the September 11 attacks.

Meghan Davis, having joined the church as a member in May, continues to teach clarinet at church and plays regularly in worship. Starting from her example, Henry secured Council approval to use one of the downstairs classrooms as a practice space, which we can offer to other instrumental instructors. Juneberry Music, now operating within the Upper Valley Music Center, continues to hold weekly singing classes at church and this year added a community chorus, which rehearses here once a month. These are just some of the ways in which our active support of the Upper Valley musical community has brought additional people into our building on a regular basis.

The greatest responsibility of the committee itself remains its role in the Music at the Meetinghouse series. Classicopia and Dan Weiser delighted increasingly larger audiences throughout the year. The UVMC used our Sanctuary for a variety of concerts and recitals, as did several local teachers. Former music director Will Ögmundson returned for two great performances, and a *cappella* groups Aged to Perfection and Harmony Night both gave popular concerts. During Advent we welcomed Bob Cafaro, a cellist with the Philadelphia Orchestra who shared his inspiring story of overcoming MS, and a week later UVMC's Messiah Sing returned to FCC, with local soloists and orchestra. As always, committee members generously provided hospitality for almost all these events. Comments from both performers and audience members, moreover, affirm not only our Sanctuary's acoustics and atmosphere but also our increasingly strong reputation as a welcoming home for music.

Once again this year, the congregation may trust that our emphasis on the importance of music in spiritual life enriches both our common worship and our community presence. We are grateful to everyone for their enthusiastic support of our music ministry.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Clancy, *Chair*

Ruth Friend

Susan Montmagny

Gail Wasson

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Our church is blessed with a generous, giving, caring congregation. Once again, our pledges and offerings of money and countless volunteer hours helped to support a vibrant year of ministry and mission. Once again, pledges, offerings, and volunteer contributions of time and talent exceeded expectations and the amounts we had budgeted for 2016.

Last year, we estimated that congregation members provided more than 2500 hours of service—on committees; in worship and Sunday school; in congregational care through prayers, letters, calls and visits, serving meals; volunteering in our community; and extending a friendly welcome and Christian fellowship to members and visitors alike. A recalculation for 2016 suggests that the figure exceeded 3000 hours this year.

If we were a financial institution or an investment, we might say that our congregation “outperformed” relative to our budget and other expectations. That may be true, but we could also describe this as, “God called. We responded faithfully.”

The budget for 2017 reflects a new effort to make the financial aspects of our stewardship more transparent. For the first time, our Church School fundraising, Open Door Ministry, and other generous practices are explicitly called out in our budget.

The Stewardship Committee and Church Council are grateful for the generous responses we have received—pledges of time and money—in response to our fall campaign. A number of families and individuals stepped up to pledge their support for the first time, and this is reflected in the 2017 budget. At the same time, a number of individuals and families who continue to provide regular support for our church have not yet submitted their pledges for 2017. The committee has two concluding thoughts:

- If you have not yet completed your 2017 Stewardship Pledge Form, it is never too late, and the information you provide will allow us to become better stewards of the resources you entrust to our care. Forms are available from the church office and may be submitted at any time.
- On behalf of First Congregational Church of Lebanon, we express our sincere gratitude for all that our members have done, and have committed to do, in support of the missions and ministry of our church.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Scott, *Chair*
Steve Teeter

WOMEN OF THE CHURCH REPORT

The Women of the Church did not submit a formal report for 2016. The group did hold a meeting in early May.

The group organized and served two Community Dinners during the year, as it has for several years. The WOC is also coordinating donations of Christmas items for a “Nearly-New” Sale, planned for November 2017, which will benefit FCC mission projects.

The WOC organized a social outing in July to a Sunday afternoon concert at St. Gaudens and the Song Garden in Cornish, NH. The group also sponsored a well-attended Zentangle class at the church on August 6.

WOMEN OF THE CHURCH, TREASURER'S REPORT

[**Not available in this edition. For questions or additional information, please contact First Congregational Church directly at 603-448-4281 or church@fcclb.org.**]

CHURCH HISTORY

We started out 2016 on both sad and happy notes. We lost Maurice Bergeron, after a long illness, at the beginning of the year. All our prayers and thoughts were with Janet and his family. We also lost Jane Brandt on January 16, after a short illness; we have missed this feisty woman. On the first Sunday of the year, though, we baptized Nicole and Brandon Mason's son Coby, Pete and Marilyn's great grandson. And at the end of the month we celebrated Edith Wheeler's 90th birthday, with a cake made by John Gilliatt.

We began having our services in the Parish Hall for the winter. Funny how our voices sound so wonderful in there! By doing this last winter, we noticed a positive difference in fuel consumption. Worship on January 17 featured Meghan Davis on clarinet and Don Buck on guitar, along with the choir singing Henry Danaher's new arrangement of Duke Ellington's *Savior God Above*. On the last Sunday of the month our church hosted a neutral pulpit for a pastoral search committee from Keene. Their candidate was very good, with a sense of humor and a good message. It's always nice to help other churches choose a new pastor.

The first Sunday in February was Scout Sunday. Prior to the service about ten people attended an informational session on the Diaconate's stand on the UCC's so-called "boycott and divest" resolution concerning businesses in the West Bank.

On Ash Wednesday (February 10) Steve offered ashes on the sidewalk in front of the church during the day, to anyone who wished to stop by the church. This was an effort to make Ash Wednesday more visible and more accessible to folks who couldn't get to a service. The ecumenical service that evening was at the West Lebanon church.

The following Sunday, the children handed out their Lenten lunch bags to the congregation, for a collection to benefit David's House and El Salvador. Our annual meeting was held after worship, followed by a potluck lunch. About thirty people stayed for the potluck—delicious as always. Two weeks later, Valerie Nevel led a discussion about estate planning, an informal conversation about how to be faithful, wise stewards of our financial resources.

March brought a Lenten series on "Death and Dying," beginning with a talk on March 2 by Irene Kacandes, Professor of German Studies and Comparative Literature at Dartmouth. Prof. Kacandes explored ideas from her book *Let's Talk About Death: Asking the Questions that Profoundly Change the Way We Live and Die*. A week later Brian Clancy offered a presentation on the many ways artists have portrayed death and dying across the centuries. Steve Silver led the final discussion in the series, an exploration of how music has prepared the faithful for the end of life.

The season also featured two great concerts at church. In late February a chamber group led by cellist Margaret Gilmore presented "All Baroque." On March 6 our church hosted the Tenth Biennial Lebanon-Area Choir Festival. The community was invited, and a reception was held in the Parish Hall afterward.

Holy Week services began with Palm Sunday on March 20. A week later on Easter, the Sunrise Service was followed by a community breakfast to benefit WISE. Later that morning there was an

Easter egg hunt for the children.

The month of April opened with our very first Movie Night, organized by the Diaconate. A crowd of about thirty, including many children, enjoyed a night of fellowship and family entertainment with a showing of *The Princess Bride*. Pizza and snacks were enjoyed by all.

On May 1 we welcomed special guests to worship, Epilogos founders Mike and Susie Jenkins. Along with the group's president, Ed Warren, these missionaries from El Salvador accepted a \$300 check from the children of the Church School. The money had been raised in the Lenten Lunch Bag collection. Afterward, we celebrated the Jenkins' retirement with cake and coffee.

Also in early May, the Board of Governors held a Spring Clean-Up Day, which was very well attended. We started out with a breakfast then off to clean inside and out. Later that day, a number of families enjoyed the second of our Movie Nights.

On May 15 our church welcomed eight new members to the congregation. Later that day the FCC Outing Club went for an expedition to the Trescott Lands in Hanover, which brought a good turnout despite a very cold day. The following Tuesday was the annual Senior Luncheon, another great treat prepared by Trish Heatherton. About twenty attendees enjoyed fellowship and a serenade from the LHS Superlatives.

The spring brought a number of concerts to the church. Classicopia offered three performances—four-hand piano in “Deutschland Duo” on April 10, three great composers in “The B's in Spring” on May 1, and Fauré and Beethoven violin sonatas on May 22. Dan Signor's Harmony Night *a cappella* group gave a concert on June 11. The season also featured a number of student recitals.

June was a busy month. On the 4th, a memorial service was held at Valley Cemetery for Jane Brandt, with a reception afterward back at church. The next day after worship, the children presented David's House with supplies purchased with proceeds from the Lenten collection. And what do a few dogs, a cat, a couple ferrets, some ashes, and a picture of a chicken all have to do with each other? They all were present later that afternoon for the Blessing of the Animals!

The Diaconate held a retreat on June 11 at the lake home of Ginger and Wendell Smith, and the next day was Children's Sunday. The Bike & Build group arrived on June 19. They were treated to snacks from Trish Heatherton, followed that night by a pizza party put together by Amy Driscoll and an improv comedy show led by Biff Simpson. The next night was a community potluck and slide presentation; these young people were a terrific group, as usual.

In early July we hosted a concert by a violin ensemble from the Suzuki Royal Oak School in Michigan, sponsored by the Upper Valley Music Center. We were also very lucky to have a guest singer from Opera North at worship on the second Sunday of the month. So beautiful to listen to. We thank Henry Danaher for inviting him. Classicopia returned for two concerts in August, a cello program (on a steamy summer evening) and another “Quintessence” concert.

For Praise in the Park on July 31, we were joined by members of the Lebanon and White River Junction Methodist churches, about sixty people in all. After a beautiful week, it decided to rain, so we held the service in our Sanctuary, followed by a coffee hour offering treats from Panera Bread.

On the first two Sundays in August we combined services with the West Lebanon Congregational

Church. Steve Silver preached in West Lebanon on August 7, while Jeff Scott preached at FCC on August 14. Each week the Men's Fellowship group from each host church served breakfast.

The third week in August our church hosted the first Musical Drama Camp for children. Thirteen children attended the afternoon camp, under the direction of Elizabeth Duvall. The culmination of the week was a Friday afternoon performance of the musical *King David and the National Treasure*. An audience of about forty people clapped and cheered enthusiastically for the great job the children did, and everyone celebrated afterward with a family cookout.

While Steve enjoyed his vacation in late August, Kevin Schwartz and Heidi Hoskin both visited as guest preachers.

On September 10 Steve Silver and members of the FCC choir participated in the annual Wings of Hope event in Colburn Park, a commemoration of hospice work by the VNHA. The following day we were very lucky to hold a special service marking the fifteenth anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington. Accompanying the reading of the first verses of the Book of Lamentations, a guest choir directed by Henry Danaher performed the *Lamentations of Jeremiah* by composer Thomas Tallis. The singing was beautiful, complex, and sorrowful.

The following week was Kick-off Sunday for the Church School, for which the year's theme was *Word Search: The Who, What, When, Where, Why and How of the Bible*. Backpacks were blessed during worship, then after the service everyone enjoyed a pizza lunch. After uncertain weather, the bounce house showed up just in time, and a good time was had by all.

A smaller-than-usual group attended the Horton Center retreat in late September. A week later the FCC Outing Club began October with an walk on Farnum Hill, led by Ron Bailey. On October 9 the annual CROP Walk generated strong support for CWS's efforts to fight hunger, and around 100 people gathered afterward at FCC for lunch, featuring Jim Oronte's famous sausage soup.

On October 23 we held a special meeting to vote on a resolution affirming that our congregation does *not* support the UCC's partisan support for boycott and divestment of companies doing business in the West Bank. The resolution passed unanimously.

The United Valley Interfaith Project held its annual Micah Awards ceremony in Claremont at the end of the month. Barb and Steve Teeter were the nominees selected from our church this year.

October also featured a total of four concerts at the church—another Classicopia performance, an *a cappella* show with Aged to Perfection, an open sing of Fauré's *Requiem*, and a return appearance by the Sunflower Woodwind Quartet. In November Classicopia returned, and our own Henry Danaher gave a concert with violinist Alexander Spivakovsky.

Stewardship Sunday was November 20. The next evening, the West Lebanon church hosted the Ecumenical Thanksgiving service. Advent began on the following Sunday, and after worship that day we joined in decorating the church for the season. Barb Teeter once again coordinated our church's participation in the Listen Center's Christmas gift program, and we fulfilled about 25 wishes from the "Giving Tree."

December was a very busy month for Music at the Meetinghouse. Classicopia opened the month, followed by a concert on the 11th by pianist Elizabeth Borowsky and cellist Bob Cafaro, who spoke

about his inspiring success battling multiple sclerosis. Former FCC music director Will Ögmundson offered a Christmas-themed concert on December 16, and two days later the Upper Valley Music Center sponsored a grand Messiah Sing with local soloists and orchestra.

Movie Night returned on the 10th with a showing of the classic *It's a Wonderful Life*. The next afternoon about thirty people enjoyed the annual Christmas party and carol sing at the Parsonage. Unfortunately, Steve himself had to retire early because of illness, but he enjoyed the singing from downstairs!

On the fourth Sunday of Advent, December 18, we offered a Blue Christmas morning communion service in the Parlor for anyone grieving or carrying a heavy burden during this sometimes difficult season. After the full worship service that morning, a group of about fifteen visited Genesis and Harvest Hill for caroling.

Christmas Day fell on a Sunday this year, and so, even after three Christmas Eve services the night before, a small congregation celebrated Christ's birth in our regular worship service that morning. And thanks to Nan Parsons and many volunteers, we also offered our last community dinner of the year later that afternoon, sharing Christmas with our neighbors.

This is a summary of a very busy year. Thank you everyone.

Respectfully submitted,

Corrine Erskine, *Church Historian*

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Note: All positions are three-year terms, ending in February of the year listed; positions marked with an asterisk () carry only a one-year term. Positions marked *Vacant* must be filled to meet minimum membership as specified in the By-laws; those marked *Open* are available but not required. (Required membership or membership ranges are shown in parentheses.)*

*MODERATOR	Amy Driscoll
*CLERK	Brian Clancy
*TREASURER	Terry Ellison
*ASSISTANT TREASURER	Nan Parsons
*HISTORIAN	Corrine Erskine
*AUDITOR	<i>Vacant</i>
*CHURCH SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT (Term: July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018)	Marcia Corkins

CHURCH COUNCIL

*CHAIR	Corrine Erskine
*VICE CHAIR	<i>Vacant</i>
*MEMBER-AT-LARGE	Linda Oronte
*MEMBER-AT-LARGE	<i>Vacant</i>

BOARD OF GOVERNORS (4-9)

Nancy Parsons	2020
John Gilliatt	2019
Brandon Mason	2019
Wendell Smith	2019
Wayne Braley	2018
Walter Scott	2018

BOARD OF TRUSTEES (3)

Valerie Nevel	2020
Wendell Smith	2019
Barry Schuster	2018

FINANCE COMMITTEE (5)

*Treasurer	2018
*Member Board of Govs	2018
*Member Stewardship Comm	2018
*Member Trustees	2018
Gordon Sargent (At-Large)	2019

DIACONATE (12)

Alyson Danyew-Ellison	2020
Barbara Jones	2020
Susan Pratt	2020
Ginger Smith	2020
Kathy Beckett	2019
Hilary Ryder	2019
Barbara Teeter	2019
Steve Teeter	2019
Edward L. Doyle	2018
Terry Ellison	2018
Jon Scott	2018
Biff Simpson	2018

PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE (4)

*Church Council Chair	2018
*Diaconate Chair (or designate)	2018
*Bd of Govs Chair (or designate)	2018
*Member Finance Comm	2018

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE (4-6)

Laurie Braley	2020
<i>Open</i>	2020
Elizabeth Duvall	2019
Nicole Mason	2019
Shawna Osmer	2018
Biff Simpson	2018

MEMORIAL GARDENS COMMITTEE (3)

C. Pete Mason	2020
Brandon Mason	2019
<i>Vacant</i>	2018

MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION
COMMITTEE (6-8)

Jon Scott	2020
<i>Open</i>	2020
Kathy Beckett	2019
Barbara Laro	2019
<i>Open</i>	2019
Ron Bailey	2018
Corrine Erskine	2018
Wendell Smith	2018

MUSIC COMMITTEE (4-6)

Meghan Davis	2020
Gail Wasson	2020
Brian Clancy	2019
<i>Vacant</i>	2019
<i>Open</i>	2018
<i>Open</i>	2018

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE (4-6)

<i>Vacant</i>	2020
<i>Vacant</i>	2020
Jon Scott	2019
<i>Open</i>	2019
Steve Teeter	2018
<i>Open</i>	2018

NOMINATING COMMITTEE (3)

Barbara Jones	2020
<i>Vacant</i>	2019
Barry Schuster	2018

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE (5)

Member At-Large	2020
Member Bd of Govs	2020
*Moderator (A. Driscoll)	2018
*Diaconate Chair	2018
*Other Member Diaconate	2018

NHC-UCC DELEGATES (4)

* <i>Vacant</i>	2018
* <i>Vacant</i>	2018
* <i>Vacant</i>	2018
* <i>Vacant</i>	2018

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Driscoll, *Chair*
Barry Schuster

BLEST BE THE TIE THAT BINDS

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.

We share each other's woes,
Each other's burdens bear,
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.

When we are called to part
It gives us inward pain,
But we shall still be joined in heart,
And hope to meet again.

— John Fawcett (1739/40-1817)

APPENDIX

Proposed Amendment to FCC Constitution and By-laws

The Diaconate has asked Church Council to be relieved of the responsibility of having to secure and manage childcare for worship and other events at church. While the Diaconate was originally given this task because of its relation to worship, the church's employment of childcare staff is in fact a personnel matter, not substantively different from its other employment concerns. In order to allow the Diaconate to devote itself fully to its spiritual leadership of the congregation, Church Council agrees that it is more appropriate for some other group, either the Personnel Subcommittee or Council itself, to be responsible for childcare.

Thus, Church Council recommends that the following be removed from the responsibilities now assigned to the Diaconate, as those responsibilities are listed in the church's *Constitution and By-Laws* (February 2015 edition, p. 14): "They shall secure adequate childcare coverage during the worship services and other special events as required."

With this clause removed, responsibility for securing childcare will pass by default to the Personnel Subcommittee of Church Council, which already is charged in the *Constitution and By-laws* with "assist[ing] and mak[ing] recommendations for action to the Council regarding employees and volunteer staff" and with "review[ing] applications for paid and unpaid staff, and mak[ing] hiring recommendations to the Council (p. 13)."