



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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The Pastoral Perspective

This has been a season of change for me. My long tenure as Treasurer of the Congregational Library and Archives comes to an end on June 30. As I write this, I'm actually in Boston for my last board meeting. I've been in this role for around a decade, and I've seen a lot of change. But it's time for me to step down, for the Library to benefit from a fresh pair of eyes. Still, I'll miss my work there, and the ACA, or CLA as we now call it, will remain important to me. It will continue on into the future, going from strength to strength.

Another change, more personal and hard-hitting, was having to put our dog Henley to sleep at the beginning of June. Henley was a member of our family for more than fourteen years, joining as just after his birth and passing away with us at the parsonage. He was also our unofficial church dog, greeting members and visitors with a friendly mien and wag of the tail. He will be missed.

So, with apologies to TS Eliot, April is NOT the cruelest month. This year, for me at least, it is June, a time of change and recognition of how I am getting older and life goes on, regardless of my own involvement in a particular organization or activity. And that's not a bad thing.

Knowing that the world does not depend on any single one of us can be liberating. It also allows us to gain perspective, to hopefully see things in a new light.

I will miss our dog deeply. His loss is real. But I also give thanks to God for the day we picked out Henley from the litter. (And I thank Rachel for her wisdom and instinct on this choice; the pup I initially was drawn to went home with a neighbor of ours in Massachusetts—and, frankly, he is not the friendly dog Henley was.) That day was a blessing. And so I look upon those who remain in my life, the people in my family, the people in our church, and I give thanks for all of them and for all of you.

As I look out the window this morning, I see the sun shining, and the temperature is warm but pleasant. My melancholy is real, but I am reminded that there is so much to live for. A trite saying has it that "life is a journey." If so, I thank you for being my companions.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

SUNDAY SERVICE

Children's Sunday is June 12!

Kids Lead Worship with Readings and Music

Join us for our annual celebration of the **Children's Community Corner!** The children will share some of what they've learned throughout the year.

If you're interested in participating or have questions, please contact Nan Parsons (nlp3721@yahoo.com/603-863-8354).

All are invited to gather after the service at Storrs Hill (Goodwin Park) to share a special rite of baptism for Mac and Jack Callahan.

Upstanders for the Children of Ukraine

Concerned about the children caught amid the tragedies of war in Ukraine, FCC's kids want to help! They have decided to make Ukrainian-style eggs, cross necklaces, and baked goods to offer the congregation for a donation on Children's Sunday.



Delivery may be arranged for those who'd like something but cannot attend church that day.

All donations will be sent to a reputable charity providing resources for the children of Ukraine. Please contact Nan

Parsons with questions and delivery requests.

All Are Welcome to Worship at FCC

Sundays at 10:00 am (Sanctuary/Zoom)

In-person worshipers are required to wear masks and observe distancing in the pews; we have not yet resumed coffee hour. Please contact the church office with questions, or to receive the Zoom link.

Greeters and Liturgists Needed!

Members of our congregation sing in the choir, serve as greeters and ushers, and read as liturgists. Additional roles include reading prayers, sharing stewardship messages, or even leading children's moments. All are invited to serve in these ways.

As we continue to offer services online, we also need a volunteer **"ZOOM GREETER"** each week.

No experience is required for these important roles! If you're interested in this opportunity to serve, please contact the church office.

Service of Ordination for Eliot Fay

Sunday, June 26, at 2:00 pm—FCC Sanctuary

All are invited to join in celebrating this momentous achievement in Eliot's journey in ministry—which our congregation has helped shepherd and sponsor for the past several years through the Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Association. **Congratulations, Eliot!**



Upper Valley
Habitat
for Humanity®

SHELTER SUNDAY FATHER'S DAY, JUNE 19

Every Father's Day FCC makes a commitment to support the work of **Upper Valley Habitat for Humanity**, the local affiliate of an international, ecumenical ministry. Since 1976, Habitat has provided decent, affordable housing and home ownership for deserving families who could not otherwise afford to buy a home. Achieving home ownership is one of the most valuable steps a family can take to establish a firm footing, in order to thrive on their own. Families work alongside staff and volunteers, benefiting from discounted materials and services, to renovate or build their own home, which they are then able to purchase at cost with a zero-interest mortgage.

If you'd like to honor or remember the father(s) in your life with a contribution to Shelter Sunday, please contact the church office with your dedication information no later than noon on Thursday, June 16 (contributions gratefully accepted after that date). Any amount is welcome—thanks!

NEWS AND NOTES

CHURCH COUNCIL

Jon Scott opened Council's May meeting by asking members to **reflect on how Holy Week had gone**. Some noted the challenge of finding the right spiritual space within a work week, others reported engaging with the Passion drama in services on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Observations were made about the liturgy compared to previous years, the sadness of missing friends and loved ones at this time of year, and the joyous atmosphere of bells and trumpet on Easter morning. Several appreciated the choir and organ, as well as the welcome sight of robust attendance in the Sanctuary.

Treasurer Dawn Troutman reported that income and expense totals were roughly equal, at expected levels for this time of year. She'll be working on year-to-year comparisons, but the pandemic makes such comparisons less straightforward.

Board of Governors chair John Gilliatt reported on a variety of small projects around the building, from wheelchair repair and AED updates to ramp-door hinge repair and tree pruning. He also offered an update on the front walk replacement and landscaping improvements, which we hope will be underway in June. John has just finished repairing and painting the concrete and railing on the kitchen steps, and he plans to replace the screen door as well.

Council also revisited our **current COVID precautions**, particularly our requirement of masks at worship and all other events in the building. Considering the recent sharp rise in cases in the region—for which

Linda Oronte offered front-line testimony from her hospital work—there was unanimous support for continuing current policies without changes. Expanding on the COVID discussion, Brian Clancy asked for suggestions regarding the visit of the **Bike & Build** group on June 14-16, as that visit in the past has involved the kind of communal meals that we have not yet resumed because of the pandemic. He explained that the group's own needs are still somewhat in flux, as were the contributions of other partner organizations. Several observed that any solution should be well within the capacity of the MSA Committee, which its chair Valerie Nevel suggested convening following the meeting. Corrine Erskine volunteered her experience with past Bike & Build visits.

Jon Scott next asked members to strategize **ways to reach concert audiences and other non-FCC users** of our building about our worship services and ministries. He felt that we may be missing opportunities to grow the congregation by inviting these users to join us for worship. It was also noted that visitors at Easter had not been encouraged to sign the guest book in the Narthex. All agreed that we should collectively do more to welcome visitors and new people to our congregation. Discussion focused on reviving some sort of flyer, signage, or pew card that would be visible to audiences. Brian Clancy offered to work with the Diaconate on some possibilities.

In his **pastor's report** the Rev. Steve Silver promoted Children's Sunday on June 12 and lifted up the efforts of Nan Parsons to connect with and

involve families in advance of that important date. Nan added that the children have planned a fundraiser for Children's Sunday, offering baked goods and other things for donations toward helping Ukrainian children in some way. She and Steve are trying to identify an appropriate beneficiary, but the congregation is invited to support this project.

Steve further noted that while his summer vacation plans are still in flux, he knows that he will be away for the weekend on Sunday, July 3, and probably taking study leave in late June. He reported that Eliot Fay's ordination will be taking place in June or July. This fall Steve would like to offer another book group, perhaps discussing Esau McCaulley's engaging, beautifully written book *Reading While Black*.

DIACONATE

Stacey Steele opened May's meeting of the Diaconate by singing "Let There Be Peace" and noting the power of speech as a tool of ministry. She encouraged everyone to seek a peaceful tone in speech and other communication. The Deacons also shared several congregational care updates, namely for Ginny Bennett, Sue Pratt, and Barb Teeter.

Committee Meetings

The following regular meetings will happen remotely via Zoom:

Diaconate 6/13, 7:00

Council 6/14, 7:00

Summer meeting plans are still to be determined. For information about other groups' plans to meet in person or online, contact the church office.

NEWS AND NOTES

Securing Sunday worship volunteers prior to the start of the month has proved helpful. Rev. Steve Silver appreciates the recruitment of Zoom greeters in particular, hoping that these efforts will continue.

Steve is planning his summer study-leave and vacation schedule. He'll be away the weekend of July 3, and so he solicited volunteers to lead worship that Sunday; Chris Chase expressed interest in an August date. In June and July Steve is planning for Children's Sunday, the Callahan baptisms, and Eliot Fay's ordination, along with a service of remembrance for Larry Doyle, celebrating Larry's exemplary hospitality in our church life. Steve is also considering options for a fall book study.



OUR GENEROUS, CARING CONGREGATION. Doors, steps, and ramps aren't very exciting on their own, but these all represent thoughtful acts of service. John Gilliatt added to his impressive record of maintenance around our property by fixing the hinges on our much-used ramp door and repairing and painting the kitchen-door steps and railing—before replacing the screen door itself. Deb and Jon Scott, meanwhile, hearing that Dawn Troutman needed a ramp to ease her recovery from a fractured ankle, offered one serendipitously acquired from the home of Jon's beloved late aunt Jeanie.

Bike & Build Returns to FCC!

TUESDAY TO THURSDAY, JUNE 14-16



After a two-year, pandemic-induced hiatus, a group of young adults from **BIKE & BUILD** will return to FCC next month. Familiar to many in our congregation, this program advocates and raises funds for affordable-housing reform. Riders on its cross-country routes work with Habitat for Humanity and local organizations on a variety of home-repair and construction projects, meeting with community members along the way to discuss housing-related issues. To participate, each of these spirited, enterprising twenty-somethings raises at least \$4,000 to support costs and the program's grant-making foundation.

Since 2003, over 3,800 biker-builders have generated more than \$6.6 million, contributed about 255,000 hours of labor, and pedaled over 11 million miles, biking from site to site while raising awareness of our national housing crisis.

Starting in Portsmouth and finishing in late August in Bellingham, WA, Bike & Build's Northern Route has stopped in Lebanon almost since its beginning, staying at FCC since 2008. The group sleeps and eats meals here but spends its "build day" working with Upper Valley Habitat and COVER Home Repair.

How can you participate? Look for an email with a list of food items to contribute for dinner and breakfast for the group. You may also join us for dinner on either Tuesday or Wednesday if you wish. For either of these options, you must contact the church office. To learn more about this inspiring program, its mission and impact, and the riders on the Northern US Route, please visit bikeandbuild.org.

Please consider supporting this incredible program and the work of Bike & Build's local partners, COVER Home Repair and Upper Valley Habitat for Humanity.

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



SPRINGTIME SCENERY. Seasonal blooms brought lovely color and life to the church grounds. Nicole Mason and son Caleb tidied and planted annuals in the gardens, and Brandon cleaned the memorial stone. The crab trees in front blossomed as spectacularly as always, to the delight of the Jacobs, whose children were among the Sunday School kids who planted them some four decades ago. (Sadly, days later a storm crippled a large branch of the eastern tree.) The Outing Club (in this case just Ron Bailey and Brian Clancy) hiked back into Shaker history and high above Mascoma Lake. Inside, Mother's Day brought an in-person children's moment, and Margaret Gilmore enriched worship with gorgeous cello music on May 29.

MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



**Music
at the
Meetinghouse**

Upcoming Concerts at FCC

All in the Sanctuary. Masks, distanced seating, and vaccination required.

Rolf Schulte, Violin, and James Winn, Piano—Saturday, June 11, at 3:00 pm (Master Class at 5:30)

UVMC presents these talented musicians for a full afternoon of performance and instruction. They'll first share selections by W. A. Mozart, Johannes Brahms, and Robert Schumann, followed by a violin master class which is open to observers. *Adults \$20 concert, \$10 class observation, or \$25 for both; under 18 free. More at uvmusic.org/event/rolf-schulte-violin-and-james-winn-piano.*

Counterpoint: The Woods and the Waters—Friday, July 15, at 7:30 pm

Director Nathaniel Lew brings Vermont's professional choral ensemble back to Lebanon for the first time in four years with a program celebrating landscapes near and far, with guest pianist Alison Cerutti. Music by Jude Navari, Joan Szymko, Benjamin Britten, and NH's own Amy Beach, along with the premiere of a piece by composer Travis Ramsey and poet Jim Schley—who both live in the Upper Valley. *Adults \$20, seniors \$15, students and limited means \$5; more at counterpointchorus.org/upcoming/.*

A New Upper Valley Music Festival!—Wednesday, July 13, and Saturday, July 16, at 7:30 pm

Hanover-born bassoonist Leah Kohn, who has relocated to the Upper Valley after establishing an impressive performance career in Los Angeles, inaugurates what she hopes will become an annual festival featuring a variety of professional musicians at several venues—based here at FCC. *More details to follow soon!*

Register Now! Classicopia Summer Music Camp—Two Sessions: August 8-13 and 15-20

An immersive summer program for instrumental and vocal instruction—right here in Lebanon! Students 8-18 work with outstanding faculty and guests, 9a-3p daily. *Details and registration at classicopia.org/summer-camp/.*



MAY AT THE MEETINGHOUSE. Classicopia's Jewish Broadway led the hit parade, followed by Cameo Baroque's benefit for Doctors Without Borders and Cantabile's 20th-anniversary concert, their first since 2019.

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

Children's Sunday

June 12

Celebrate Our Kids!

**Bike & Build
Returns to FCC!**

Tuesday to Thursday,
June 14-16

**SHELTER
SUNDAY**

FATHER'S DAY, JUNE 19



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First Congregational Church of Lebanon

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organist and Choir Director • Nancy Parsons, Children's Community Corner

Jon Scott, Chair of Church Council • Linda Gerlach, Chair of Deacons • Barbara Jones, Moderator

Brian Clancy, Church Administrator

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