



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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The Pastoral Perspective

Mark your calendars: Pentecost will be here soon!

Sunday, May 19, to be exact. That day, we'll celebrate the birth of the church universal and God's gift of the Holy Spirit to each and all of us.

But why the 19th? Well, we know that we can't pinpoint this event on a calendar. What we can say is that Pentecost is a set number of days (fifty) after Easter. And, well, no one knows the actual date when Jesus was resurrected from the dead, so we're left approximating the occurrence.

Still, this event is something worth remembering. We know it happened. We know the Spirit is with us. And if we want to be brutally honest, the Holy Spirit must have been present for the church to have survived for two millennia, since the idea that the church could have made it this far under solely human stewardship beggars belief.

Oh, sure, we humans are pretty clever. But we're also self-destructive. We get in our own way, all too often. So, we need some help, and that's where the Spirit comes in.

Jesus promised (*Matt 28:20*) that he would always be with us—and he has been. After his death on the cross, God gave us the Holy Spirit, blessing us with God's presence, everywhere and always. It is the Holy Spirit that inspires and empowers us to follow the Way of Jesus, to be his disciples.

But being a disciple is hard. I mean, who wants to be a follower? We all claim to want to be leaders. But then we turn around and follow others, whether they be fashion gurus, financial wizards, glib politicians, engaging celebrities, or whoever else. And what do all of these "leaders" have in common? One thing: they will lead us nowhere good.

It is only by following Jesus that we will attain fulfillment, that we may lead full and meaningful lives. We must take up our crosses, set aside our delusions of grandeur, and be led by the Spirit.

Now, as we ready ourselves for the summer months, I would remind you that the work of Jesus is never done. We might adopt a lighter meeting schedule, but God does not take a vacation. And though we might take a

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SUNDAY SERVICE

Mother's Day is Blanket Sunday

We're pleased to participate again in the CWS BLANKETS program, a special mission project by which Church World Service offers blankets and other relief supplies to people in crisis around the world (for more details, visit cwsblankets.org). Please consider a contribution in honor or memory of the mother(s) in your life. A minimum of \$10 is suggested, but any amount is welcome. *Dedications will appear in the bulletin MOTHER'S DAY, MAY 12.*

Please submit your dedication information to the church office by Thursday, May 9. Contributions may be sent in after that date.



Do Your Part to Fill the Cart!

Join the fight against poverty and food insecurity by leaving contributions in our shopping cart in the Parish Hall, benefiting local service organizations. This month, we're collecting non-perishable food and personal-care items on behalf of:

THE UPPER VALLEY HAVEN

For a list of current and ongoing needs, please visit uppervalleyhaven.org.

Please consider a donation, and thank you!

PENTECOST SUNDAY IS MAY 19

Worship at 10:00 am—Wear Red!

All Are Welcome to Worship at FCC

Sundays at 10:00 AM (Sanctuary/Zoom)

Coffee Hour Served Weekly!

New volunteers welcome to provide food and serve for our weekly post-worship fellowship time.

Zoom Greeters and Liturgists Needed!

Congregation members sing in the choir, serve as ushers and Zoom greeters, and read as liturgists. Additional options include reading prayers, sharing stewardship messages, or even leading children's moments. **All are invited to serve in these essential roles, and no prior experience is needed.**

If you're interested in these opportunities to serve, please contact the church office.

Celebrate Children's Sunday in June!

Kids Lead Worship with Readings and Music Presentations to Children and Volunteers

Join us (*date TBD*) for our beloved annual celebration of the CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY CORNER! The children will lead worship and share some of what they've learned throughout this school year.

If you or children are interested in helping or participating, please contact Rachel Silver (rachelsilver@live.com) or the church office.

FCC's Memorial Garden

Is Open to All

Many longtime members of our congregation have chosen to have remains interred in our Memorial Garden. If you'd like to learn more about this choice, either for yourself or for a loved one, **please contact the church office.**



Phil Hammond sings "This Is My Father's World" (April 21)

MAY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 10a Worship/CCC 2p Piano Recital <i>(Students of Eliz. Borowsky)</i>	29 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program	30 1p Cameo Baroque 4:30p FCC Choir 7p UVMC Master Class	1 3-6:15p UVMC 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	2 4-6:15p UVMC/ Children's Choir 7p NA Group	3 5-6p UVMC Suzuki Program 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	4 7:30p Bel Canto: Your Soul Is Song
5 10a Worship/CCC (Communion) 4p Bel Canto: Your Soul Is Song	6 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program	7 1p Cameo Baroque 4:30p FCC Choir	8 8a-3:30p WIC 3-6:15p UVMC 6p Bel Canto Annual Meeting	9 FCC Audit 4-6:15p UVMC/ Children's Choir 7p NA Group	10 7:30p Anon Coffeehouse <i>(Season Finale)</i>	11 10a-12p UVMC Comm Chorus 7p Harmony Night
12 10a Worship/CCC 2p Cameo Baroque: Sonatas, Suites, and Psalms	13 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program 7p Diaconate	14 1p Cameo Baroque 4:30p FCC Choir 5-9p UV Baroque 7p Council	15 1-9p UV Baroque	16 9:30a UVMC Cello Choir 4-6:15p UVMC/ Children's Choir 7p NA Group	17 <i>(evening)</i> UVMC Rehearsals	18 UVMC Sing & Play Festival <i>(various times and locations all day)</i>
19 PENTECOST SUNDAY 10a Worship/CCC 2p Classicopia: Fabulous Females 7p Benefit Concert: Brooks Hubbard	20 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program	21 1p Cameo Baroque 4:30p FCC Choir	22 3-6:15p UVMC	23 11a-6p WIC 4-6:15p UVMC/ Children's Choir 7p NA Group	24	25
26 10a Worship/CCC	27 <i>Memorial Day</i>	28 1p Cameo Baroque 4:30p FCC Choir 7p Cantabile	29 3-6:15p UVMC <i>(make-up week)</i>	30 4-6:15p UVMC <i>(make-up week)</i> 7p NA Group	31	1 4p Cantabile: Early Voices
2 10a Worship/CCC (Communion)	3 4-9p UVMC <i>(make-up week)</i>	4 1p Cameo Baroque 4:30p FCC Choir	5 3-6:15p UVMC <i>(make-up week)</i>	6 4-6:15p UVMC <i>(make-up week)</i> 7p NA Group	7	8

If you have questions or corrections regarding any event, please notify us at church@fccleb.org or 603-448-4281.

NEWS AND NOTES

CHURCH COUNCIL

Barb Jones opened Council's April meeting with a reading of "The Guest House," by the mystic poet Rumi, and Rev. Steve Silver followed with an opening prayer. Referring to his **Pastor's Report**, Steve reiterated a question he'd posed in his April 7 sermon, asking what it would mean for us to walk the path of Jesus, both as individuals and as a community. He'd like us to engage in some form of conversation about this question.

Dawn Troutman invited questions about her **Treasurer's Report**, and Barb asked if income-expense figures were typical for this point in the year. Brian Clancy replied that there had been nothing unusual through March, other than the atypical stewardship total discussed last month.

Jon Scott then introduced a list of task areas he included in the meeting agenda, starting with our **bylaws review**. He proposed that a smaller leadership group meet as soon as possible to assess where the process stands and how to move it forward. That group will prepare for a meeting of the full bylaws subcommittee, in order to give it structure and direction and determine the questions to be addressed. Brian expressed concern that a "pre-meeting" might hinder the process, as it's been hard enough to convene one meeting. Jon and Steve countered that it would ensure better use of the full committee's time.

Jon next recommended that **Pastor-Parish Relations** set a meeting date, allowing time to communicate with the congregation beforehand about the process. It will be important to invite conversation and comments

in an affirmative way, without simply opening up a forum for complaints. The PPRC meeting should happen in May; chair Barb Jones will discuss with Jon and Steve how best to reach out for congregational input.

The **Finance Committee**, Jon stated, needs to determine how to assign a recent bequest, which was given with a recommendation only that it be used "where the church needs it most." Steve feels strongly that this gift should go to something other than defraying current expenses. Jon hopes that the Finance Committee can consider this question within a broader policy about how we allocate bequests and invest and manage our endowment. He suggested exploring UCF's fossil-fuel-free investment options, for example, and assessing how we balance long-term growth with short-term income needs.

Steve next reported on the process of **growing our program for children and youth**, namely the search for new leadership. He did not yet have a plan to present, but he added that CCDC in Hanover would now be looking for a youth minister, making this a good time for us to consider carefully what we want for our program. Linda Jacobs asked if Steve had consulted current parents; Steve replied that such conversations had revealed only a shared desire to bring Nan Parsons or Marcia Corkins back, which is unrealistic. He stated that a proposal would be forthcoming that will meet their needs. Jon hopes Council will see that in May or June, so that a search over the summer might find someone to start in the fall. Steve agreed that that timing would be ideal, inviting Council to keep after

him about moving the process along. Corrine suggested that Steve consult Nan about how to structure the job and frame the search listing; Steve agreed, noting that the position will be listed through the NH Conference and national settings. Reminding Council that virtually every member named the growth of the children's program as a priority, Jon urged all to support Steve in the search.

Walter Scott had little to report for the **Board of Governors**, and he was asked what timeline we might expect for addressing the front steps. As we haven't yet solicited any bids for the project, much time will be required simply due to scheduling lag among contractors; Walter hopes something will be possible by next winter. Steve cautioned against having volunteers do the work, despite potential cost savings. On a related note, Jon said he's disappointed that the church's last exterior paint job (roughly 12-15 years ago) has not aged well, and we may need to address that in the near future. Jon wondered if new church signage, a much easier task, might be accomplished this summer. Walter will convene the Board of Governors to address these issues.

Jon next addressed the time frame for possibly reviving our **community dinners**, ideally under the purview of

Committee Meetings

The following regular meetings will happen remotely via Zoom:

Diaconate	5/13 and 6/10, 7:00
Council	5/14 and 6/11, 7:00
MSA	TBD and 6/24, 7:00

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

NEWS AND NOTES

Mission and Social Action. Dawn is working on a proposal for this, but all agreed that our past experience should provide enough framework for resuming the dinners. Realistically, we wouldn't be able to serve any until late summer or fall. And while MSA might oversee this, Dawn was careful to note that the labor of preparing and serving dinners could be done by anyone, even by outside groups.

Jon also reported that the **Personnel Committee** had much work to do, partly regarding the new Christian Education position but more broadly to update processes, documentation, and systems for all staff. Valerie Nevel is a key member of this effort, and we may seek an outside HR consultant.

Corrine inquired about essential upgrades to the **Sanctuary sound system**, specifically about what is involved and who is leading this effort. Jon himself has taken a close interest, as he has useful background knowledge, but he explained that it will be a Board of Governors project. He noted that Ben Van Vliet, a Board member and UVMC director, also has a personal interest here, and it's likely that we will seek an outside consultant for this as well.

Jon asked next to affirm **things that we've already accomplished**, noting

the new welcome cards in the pews, for example—the Diaconate had recommended these, and Brian designed and produced them. Dawn added that we are offering weekly coffee hour again, an important way to foster community and service in our congregation. Jon also celebrated new members and new deacons.

Lastly, Dawn suggested we **prioritize items from the long list of tasks** reviewed during the meeting. Barb suggested the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, and Jon next listed the leadership search for Christian Ed. Walter reiterated his intention to reconvene the Board of Governors; Dawn offered to help coordinate arrangements with contractors. Jon concluded with a final mention of the bylaws review, for which Dawn suggested a focused mini-retreat, as an alternative to Zoom meetings.

DIACONATE

Deb Scott opened the April meeting of the Diaconate with a reading from Mark, affirming the importance of believing, forgiving, and trusting in God's love for us. The group also discussed congregational care, and Rev. Silver will visit the Beldings and Ginny Bennett in the Concord area. The Sargent family has asked about

adding Barbara and Gordon's names to the memorial stone, even though neither had ashes interred in the garden. Deacons generally endorsed the idea, pending arrangements with the Memorial Gardens Committee.

Deacons also discussed the service of communion, namely how many were needed to assist and how best they can do so. That might include inviting successive rows to come forward, holding a second cup for intinction to move the process more smoothly, and lastly, offering the elements to Steve himself.

Only one somewhat imprecise note has so far been deposited in the new Diaconate box in the Narthex. It is hoped that future comments will offer more details and be signed whenever possible, to ensure effective follow-up.

Steve also invited the Deacons to consider his recent sermon question about what it means to walk the path of Jesus. The group suggested a mix of individual and group discussions.

Steve is planning summer vacation for sometime in late July and early August. In his absence, the Diaconate will pursue the possibility of having congregation members give sermons based in scripture. The Deacons also support outdoor services on special occasions, weather permitting.

The Pastoral Perspective, *continued from Page 1*

break, each of us needs a sabbath, for we will need to resume our work. It might be appealing to set everything aside until the fall, but my hope is that we, as a church, will be able to maintain our momentum and do some of the work that beckons during the summer. Let us be prepared to respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, now and in the future. **Happy Pentecost!**

Yours faithfully,

Steve

MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

Spring Concerts

All in the Sanctuary. Masks welcome but optional.

Bel Canto Chamber Singers: Your Soul is Song—Saturday, May 4, at 7:30 / Sunday, May 5, at 4:00

Director Jane Woods and Bel Canto celebrate the hope and renewal of spring in a varied program for choir, piano, and strings, featuring music of J. S. Bach, Felix Mendelssohn, Eric Whitacre, Joan Szymko, Ola Gjeilo, and more. *Adults \$15, students \$10, under 13 free; for more, visit www.belcantosingers.org.*

The Anonymous Coffeehouse: Season Finale!—Friday, May 10, at 7:30 pm

Our comfy community venue for live folk music wraps up another wildly successful year before taking the summer off. Baked goods and hot drinks available. *Donations welcome; performers and more at anoncoffee.org/.*

Harmony Night: An A Cappella Celebration—Saturday, May 11, at 7:00 pm

Harmony Night, the Upper Valley's multi-generational a cappella community chorus directed by Mark Nelson, offers a spring program drawn from a variety of eras, cultures, and genres. Music of Estonia, Georgia, Ireland, and India—along with a few surprises! *Free-will donation.*

Cameo Baroque Benefit for WISE: Sonatas, Suites, and Psalms—Sunday, May 12, at 2:00 pm

This superb ensemble (Ernie Drown, Beth Hilgartner, Leslie Stroud, and Laurie Rabut) shares some “unusual” music of the French Baroque, by François Couperin, Marin Marais, Jean-Baptiste Quentin, and Jacques de Bournonville. *Free-will donation to benefit WISE (see pg. 7); more at wiseuv.org and cameoarts.org.*

UVMC Sing & Play Festival 2024—Saturday, May 18 (various times/events throughout the day)

A celebration of music making by each other, for each other! Various studio recitals and class performances will happen at FCC and elsewhere in downtown Lebanon. *Free to all; full details at uvmusic.org/events.*

Classicopia: Fabulous Females—Sunday, May 19, at 2:00 pm

Siblings Emmanuel and Frances Borowsky (violin and cello), soprano Laura Compton, and pianist Daniel Weiser join in celebrating women composers, including Rebecca Clarke, Mel Bonis, and NH's own Amy Beach. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; more at classicopia.org/concert/fabulous-females-2/.*

Brooks Hubbard: A Benefit for Good Neighbor Health Clinic—Sunday, May 19, at 7:00 pm

Now a nationally recognized touring artist, singer-songwriter Brooks Hubbard first developed his particular folk-rock sound as a kid in Enfield, NH. He'll perform for the benefit of Good Neighbor Health Clinic, a vital community health resource. *Adults \$25, benefiting Good Neighbor; more at goodneighborhealthclinic.org.*

Cantabile Women's Chorus: Early Voices—Saturday, June 1, at 4:00 pm

This outstanding ensemble returns with a captivating program of music from the Baroque and earlier. They'll sing pieces by G. F. Handel, Thomas Tallis, Claudio Monteverdi, and Antonio Vivaldi, the last accompanied by string quartet. *Admission by donation (\$15 suggested, or pay-as-you-can); more details at cantabilewomen.org.*

AND COMING LATER THIS SUMMER... More from Classicopia, the 2024 Carolan Festival, the NH Music Festival Chamber Series, and the third annual Oak Hill Music Festival!

Register Now! Classicopia Summer Music Camp at FCC/UVMC—August 5-10, 9a-3p Daily

This immersive but seriously fun program offers instrumental and vocal instruction to students aged 8-18, with outstanding faculty and guest artists. *Details and registration at classicopia.org/summer-camp/.*

OUR LOCAL MISSION

The Children's Community Corner Thanks You!

This year's LENTEN LUNCH BAG OFFERING brought in \$850! We'll divide that total between assistance for families who find refuge at WISE's safe house and our annual support for student scholarships in San Jose Villanueva, El Salvador, through Epilogos Charities. *Many thanks to our generous congregation!*



THANKS FOR SHARING!

We're grateful to report that our congregation gave \$1,180 this spring to the UCC's One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering. With this donation we support worldwide initiatives in healthcare, education, agriculture, and refugee and emergency relief. A national, interdenominational campaign, OGHS is the most vital UCC mission effort of the year, and we're proud to support it!

end violence
wise
share hope • change lives

Volunteer and Donate!

Serving the Upper Valley from its facility in Lebanon, WISE provides crisis services, community education, and advocacy for those affected by domestic abuse, sexual violence, and stalking. It relies on both trained staff and dedicated, empathetic volunteer advocates.

To learn more about volunteering for WISE, please visit wiseuv.org/join-us/#training, email volunteers@wiseuv.org, or call 603-448-5922.

FCC Mission Partner
since 2021



Dismas of Vermont

HARTFORD DISMAS HOUSE is part of a network that assists recently incarcerated women and men as they return and readjust to life outside of prison. Located on Maple Street in Hartford, the house offers residents a safe environment while they develop skills, daily habits, and relationships to facilitate their transition—"reconciling prisoners to society, and society to prisoners."



For more about the Hartford Dismas House and the Dismas of Vermont organization generally, or to volunteer and donate, call 802-698-8661 or visit www.dismasofvt.org.

DAVID'S HOUSE is the dream of a boy named David Cyr, who died in 1984 after a struggle with leukemia. During hospital treatments in Hanover, David and his father Dick met families who were determined not to leave their sick children but had nowhere to stay locally and could not afford a hotel. Soon after David's passing, his parents and friends established David's House, which in 38 years has welcomed over 16,000 families from around the world, while their kids get the care they need at DHMC next door.

David's House relies on support from a range of sources. If you'd like to donate, provide meals, or volunteer, please visit davidshouse.org/about/.



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

Blanket Sunday

MOTHER'S DAY, MAY 12

PENTECOST

Sunday, May 19

Children's Sunday

Celebrate in June!



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

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First Congregational Church of Lebanon

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organist and Choir Director • Brian Clancy, Church Administrator

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

603-448-4281 • church@fccleb.org • prayer@fccleb.org • music@fccleb.org • www.fccleb.org