



# Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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## The Pastoral Perspective

Jesus Christ is risen. He is risen indeed!

This is the traditional proclamation shared by Christians.

However, it begs the logical question: "What next?"

Sure, it's great to learn about the Resurrection. It's wonderful to know that Jesus has returned, that God has kept his promise, and, as we will learn on Pentecost Sunday in a few weeks, that the Holy Spirit is abroad in the world.

"But my bills have to be paid. My loved one is gone. Work is hard. My relationship is strained." These are all things we may have to deal with. And even if everything is just fine at home, we look at the proverbial Big Picture, and we don't know what to do. Politics is a mess. The climate is endangered. The list goes on.

We're left wondering what difference the resurrection of Jesus will make in our lives.

My answer is that the resurrection of Jesus makes all the difference in the world. My belief is grounded in hope, and that's what God wants us to do. Not to believe in pie-in-the-sky dreams, but to have hope, to yearn for a better world, to be confident we are not alone.

True, things may not work out for us some of the time. For some of us, things never seem to work out. But my prayer is that we will all still have hope and our faith in God will remain steadfast. The Gospel is meant to carry us through the worst of times. And as I say this, I recall that the early Christians were isolated, marginalized, often ostracized. They were, to the rest of society at least, losers.

Yet these so-called losers persisted, their religion caught on, and today Christianity is the largest faith in the world, present in most every country. I think that humility is in order. The Church has not spread because of our diligence, but because of what it has taught and how its adherents have brought their faith to the community.

People throughout the Upper Valley know about FCC Lebanon because of our Open Door Ministry and the musical performances and other

Continued on Page 4

# SUNDAY SERVICE

## All Are Welcome to Worship at FCC

*Sundays at 10:00 AM (In-Person/Zoom)*

*For in-person worshippers, masks and vaccination are strongly encouraged but not required.*

### Coffee Hour Served April 16

We've resumed this popular fellowship opportunity on one Sunday each month. Many thanks to our April volunteer, Corrine Erskine. **New volunteers are always welcome—on ANY Sunday!**

### Zoom Greeters and Liturgists Needed

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

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

### SPRING BIBLE STUDY:

## THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Wednesdays at 7:00 on Zoom (Through 4/19)

All are invited to explore this fascinating book with the Rev. Steve Silver. Come weekly or just once—all you need is a bible, your faith, and some curiosity!

*If you'd like to participate, please contact the church office or Rev. Silver directly.*

## Spend Some Time in the Corner!

The **Children's Community Corner**, that is! We'd like more adults in our congregation to engage with FCC's fantastic kids, whether on Sundays or some other time. Our purpose for such interaction is **mentorship and guidance, not just supervision.** Please think about offering your time—thanks!

*For more, please contact Nan Parsons at [nlp3721@yahoo.com](mailto:nlp3721@yahoo.com) or 603-863-8354.*

## Guest Preacher—Sunday, May 7 The Rev. Gordon M. Rankin Conference Minister, NH Conference (UCC)

Plan to join us the first Sunday in May to welcome the Rev. Gordon Rankin, NH Conference Minister.

In addition to leading worship, preaching, and sharing communion with us, Rev. Rankin will join us briefly at coffee hour to talk about the work of the NH Conference and his own life in ministry.

## Focus on Stewardship

Whether dropped in the offering plate on a Sunday or mailed into the office, your contributions remain vital to our ministry—pandemic or not. We realize that not everyone can give at the same level, especially amidst ongoing economic challenges. But FCC is grateful for **any contribution** to these purposes:

**Regular Offering**—Collected as unrestricted support at any time, for our general operations, ministries, and programs. This includes all your pledges and payments in our annual stewardship effort.

**Communion/Open Door Offering**—Collected on first (communion) Sundays, directly funding our Open Door Ministry for community assistance (see p. 5 below). Any donation in a communion envelope goes to this fund, but you may contribute to the Open Door Ministry at any other time, too.

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

**THANKS TO ALL for so generously supporting these diverse purposes—in our congregation, in the Upper Valley, and beyond!**

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

# APRIL 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 10a Worship/CCC 1p UVMC Suzuki Solo Recitals	27 4-8p UVMC Suzuki Program	28 4:30p FCC Choir	29 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers 7p Bible Study: Book of Daniel	30 4:45p UVMC Children's Choir 7p NA Group	31 7:30p Anon Coffeehouse	1 3-7p UVMC Cello Festival
2 PALM SUNDAY 10a Worship/CCC (Liturgy of the Palms; Communion)	3 4-8p UVMC Suzuki Program	4 4:30p FCC Choir	5 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers 7p Bible Study: Book of Daniel	6 MAUNDY THURSDAY 7p Communion and Tenebrae (No UVMC Choir or NA Group)	7 GOOD FRIDAY 12-3p Seven Last Words 7p Service of the Word and Prayer	8
<b>H O L Y W E E K</b>						
9 EASTER SUNDAY 6a Ecumenical Sunrise Service (Colburn Park) 10a Festival Worship/CCC	10 (No UVMC Suzuki Program) 7p Diaconate	11 4:30p FCC Choir 7p Church Council	12 8a-4p NH-WIC 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers 7p Bible Study: Book of Daniel	13 (No UVMC Children's Choir) 7p NA Group	14 7:30p Anon Coffeehouse	15
16 10a Worship/CCC 1p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	17 4-8p UVMC Suzuki Program	18 4:30p FCC Choir	19 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers 7p Bible Study: Book of Daniel	20 4:45p UVMC Children's Choir 5:30p Bel Canto Piano Rehearsal 7p NA Group	21 7:30p Acacia Chamber Music: Promenades	22
23 10a Worship/CCC	24 4-8p UVMC Suzuki Program	25 4:30p FCC Choir	26 10a-6p UV Baroque Chorus 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	27 11a-6p NH-WIC 4:45p UVMC Children's Choir 7p NA Group	28 7:30p Anon Coffeehouse	29 5p Classicopia Master Class
30 10a Worship/CCC 2p Classicopia: Vibrant Violin	1 4-8p UVMC Suzuki Program	2 4:30p FCC Choir	3 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	4 4:45p UVMC Children's Choir 7p NA Group	5 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	6 1p Jennifer Turbes, Viola 7:30p Bel Canto CS: Journeys
7 10a Worship/CCC (Communion) 4p Bel Canto CS: Journeys	8 4-8p UVMC Suzuki Program 7p Diaconate	9 4:30p FCC Choir 7p Church Council	10 8a-4p NH-WIC	11 4:45p UVMC Children's Choir 7p NA Group	12 7:30p Anon Coffeehouse	13 4p Borowsky Student Recital

If you have questions or corrections regarding any event, please notify us at [church@fccleb.org](mailto:church@fccleb.org) or 603-448-4281.

# NEWS AND NOTES

## DIACONATE

Linda Gerlach opened the March Diaconate meeting with a reading on tolerance and understanding. The Deacons addressed several congregational care needs as well, primarily the Hammonds and Sargents.

A couple Deacons have investigated a web-based church membership directory, to which congregation members would upload contact information and photos, which could be updated as needed. Deb Scott and Stacey Steele will follow up with Rev. Steve Silver.

Dawn Troutman proposed a series of member recruitment strategies, to reach out beyond our Sanctuary and worship services. Possible settings include activities on the front lawn, an FCC contingent at community or service events (e.g., Habitat for Humanity), delivery of meals to residential contexts (e.g., Dismas House), making contact with neighboring institutions such as Headrest, Rogers House, Lebanon Towers, and schools. Sue Pratt will assist in developing ideas. Within the church, the Deacons discussed updating pew welcome brochures and offering non-worship gatherings



**UVMC FACULTY SHOWCASE!** We know there are superb musicians teaching next door, but it's a rare and rewarding treat to have them all perform on the same afternoon!



such as trivia nights. The Deacons will develop these ideas further for discussion with Council.

Rev. Silver noted minimal FCC participation in the ecumenical Ash Wednesday service at the United Methodist Church. He asked for help in promoting such joint events, including the Easter sunrise service in Colburn Park.

### Committee Meetings

The following regular meetings will happen remotely via Zoom:

- Diaconate** 4/10 and 5/8, 7:00
- Council** 4/11 and 5/9, 7:00
- MSA** 4/24 and 5/22, 7:00

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

## The Pastoral Perspective, *continued from Page 1*

events we host. In other words, we're known for charity and hospitality. People know that we care for our neighbors, and that we share our space with the community. Not a bad reputation to have. Our challenge is to make clear that this work stems from our belief in the Risen Christ—to answer the "what next?" with our collective action, this month and through the years to come.

Christ is Risen. Christ is Risen Indeed!

Yours faithfully, *Steve*

# THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



**LENT TO EASTER.** Laurel Stavis offered one of several superb solo and duet pieces from our choir; Chip Silver gave an expert palm-cross tutorial; the Easter sunrise brought the faithful together for worship and breakfast; and lobster and moose hats made their annual appearance.



# Our Open Door Ministry

## Supporting Our Community, One Gift Card at a Time

Throughout the year our neighbors come to the church office seeking assistance. Whether it's a tank of gas, food for dinner, or payment toward rent or utility bills, our congregation offers help through the OPEN DOOR MINISTRY. Available to anyone in Lebanon and nearby towns, this ministry is one of the most vital services we extend to our community, especially beyond the challenges of the pandemic.

We don't ask for proof of need; the "Open" Door is just that. We do ask recipients to wait at least four months between requests, just to ensure fairer distribution. FCC has responded to these needs for years, but we *never* have enough to assist everyone—**demand has increased considerably, and we now have helped almost 600 people.**

Those who come to us aren't irresponsible or lazy, and most (about 75%) request help just once or twice, rather than becoming dependent on the program. Some are chronically unhoused; some have just been evicted or moved to the area. Some have just lost a job or started a new one. Some are driving more to care for an ill family member; some are referred to us by a counselor at LISTEN or WISE. **All are our neighbors.**



The Open Door is kept open by your contributions, including monthly communion offerings, supplemented by the Mission and Social Action Fund (from the Dole Trust). We distribute \$25 gift cards for gas and food (purchased from Jake's Market and Price Chopper, respectively), and we write checks in modest amounts for rent and utilities. **In every case, our ability to help those in need depends on you, our congregation. And because of you, we can serve a lot of people—your neighbors thank you!**



### Moments for Mission



## 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](http://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 37 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 [davids-house.org/about/](http://davids-house.org/about/).*



# MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music  
at the  
Meetinghouse

## Spring Concert Schedule

All in the Sanctuary. Masks and vaccination recommended.

### **The Anonymous Coffeehouse—Fridays, April 14, 28, and May 12, all at 7:30 pm**

Come enjoy our popular community venue for live local music! Conceived as an informal “listening room” for emerging musicians, each show features several acoustic acts. Patrons come and go as they please; baked goods and non-alcoholic drinks available. *Free admission. For performers and more, visit [anoncoffee.org/](http://anoncoffee.org/).*

### **Acacia Chamber Music: Promenades—Friday, April 21, at 7:30 pm**

Leslie Stroud (flute), Meghan Donahue (clarinet), and Matthew Odell (piano) return as an ensemble for the first time in three years, dedicated as always to “promoting music in uncommonly heard combinations.” They share a wonderful spring program of Camille Saint-Saëns, Claude Debussy, and Modest Mussorgsky. *Freewill donation; for more, contact [acaciamusic@outlook.com](mailto:acaciamusic@outlook.com) or visit [www.facebook.com/AcaciaChamberMusic](http://www.facebook.com/AcaciaChamberMusic).*

### **Classicopia: Vibrant Violin—Sunday, April 30, at 2:00 pm**

Pianist Dan Weiser welcomes back the always-entertaining, Hanover-born violinist Roseminna Watson for a selection of thrilling music by W. A. Mozart, Pyotr Tchaikovsky, Béla Bartók, and César Franck. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; for more, visit [classicopia.org/concert/vibrant-violin-2/](http://classicopia.org/concert/vibrant-violin-2/).*

### **Take Pause, Take Courage: A Viola Recital with Jennifer Turbes—Saturday, May 6, at 1:00 pm**

UVMC’s Jennifer Turbes and pianist Will Ögmundson share a thoughtful selection of music by Reena Esmail, Jessie Montgomery, Harry Burleigh, and more. *Admission TBD; more at [uvmusic.org/events](http://uvmusic.org/events).*

### **Bel Canto Chamber Singers: Journeys—Saturday, May 6, at 7:30 pm / Sunday, May 7, at 4:00 pm**

Jane Woods directs Bel Canto in a musical survey of journeys in their many forms, from physical travel to imaginative and spiritual exploration, from past memories to future hopes. The program features a variety of genres in music for choir, piano, and the handbells of the Church of Christ at Dartmouth. *Adults \$15, students \$10, under 13 free; for tickets and more, visit [www.belcantosingers.org/spring-2023-concert.html](http://www.belcantosingers.org/spring-2023-concert.html).*

### **UVMC Sing & Play Festival 2023—Saturday, May 20 (various times and locations)**

#### **Classicopia: Musical Mothers—Sunday, May 28, at 2:00 pm**

#### **Liz Simmons and Casey Murray—Saturday, June 3, at 7:30 pm**

#### **Cantabile Women’s Chorus: We Sing Her Song—Sunday, June 4, at 4:00 pm**

#### **Cameo Baroque: Music of the French Baroque—Friday, June 9, at 7:00 pm**

#### **Mosaic Union String Ensemble (MUSE)—Sunday, June 11 (time TBD)**

## **Register Now! Classicopia Summer Music Camp at FCC/UVMC—August 14-19, 9a-3p Daily**

A rousing success last summer, this immersive 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/](http://classicopia.org/summer-camp/).*

### **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](mailto:church@fccleb.org) • [www.fccleb.org](http://www.fccleb.org)  
Rev. Stephen R. Silver: [silver@fccleb.org](mailto:silver@fccleb.org) • Music: [music@fccleb.org](mailto:music@fccleb.org) • Newsletter Submissions: [church@fccleb.org](mailto:church@fccleb.org)



**First Congregational Church of Lebanon**

10 South Park Street  
PO Box 230  
Lebanon, NH 03766

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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 • 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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