



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

1768 • CELEBRATING 250 YEARS • 2018

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Advent and Christmas7-8



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The Pastoral Perspective

I'm waiting for a new translation of the Old Testament to arrive, and I have to admit that I'm excited. Robert Alter's work has been universally praised, and I anticipate reading familiar stories rendered in a new yet accurate way. I felt this way a few years ago, when N. T. Wright released his version of the New Testament. I still find what he has done to be refreshing, jarring and, sometimes, provocative.

I have great respect for those who have translated Scripture. Having done some translation myself, I know how challenging this work can be. One wants to be precise in rendering words, to show fidelity in conveying the author's voice, and to make a text comprehensible to modern readers while respecting the context and culture in which it was written. In short, it's a lot of work! But it's worth it.

Paul in English translation can be cantankerous, but that's nothing compared to him in the Greek. The prophet Micah can be blistering in the translated word, but in the original Hebrew, well, buckle up. It's been said, and I think rightly so, that every act of translation is an act of interpretation.

The truth is we can never know what the ancient Greek or Hebrew actually meant when it was written. Too much time has passed, usage has changed, and there are some things we just don't and never will know. When we open our Bibles today, we do so confessing some ignorance, expressing some faith, and hopefully recognizing the limits on our ability to apprehend God.

During January and beyond, we will be in the season of Epiphany, celebrating the time when God made himself known to us. Coming as a baby, living as one of us, was and remains one of God's greatest gifts. He did this to make himself known, to eliminate the distance that had previously existed between humans and their creator. Still, gaps remain in our knowledge, and we will strive to fill them in. One way of doing so is through new translations. None will ever be definitive. Some will be enduring. Hopefully, all will enrich our walk with God.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

SUNDAY SERVICE

WORSHIP IN THE PARISH HALL
Sundays, January 13 through April 7

Community Dinner

Sunday, January 27, 5:00 pm

Leader: ALYSON AND TERRY ELLISON

Many thanks to the Ellisons for organizing the first Community Dinner of 2019! Please lend a hand to provide this vital service to our neighbors, especially if you'd like to help for the first time.

Sign-ups will be posted in the Parish Hall.

New Members to Be Received

Sunday, January 27

Open House—Sunday, January 20, 11:15

Have you worshiped with us a few times? Have you found a welcoming, spiritually nourishing church home here? If so, we warmly invite you to join our community of faith as a covenant member.

If you're interested in this invitation, please join Rev. Silver and members of the Diaconate for an informal discussion after worship on January 20.

We will receive new members on January 27.

Questions? Please contact Rev. Steve Silver or the church office.

Would You Like to Participate in Worship?

Members of our congregation already sing in our choir and serve as greeters, ushers, and liturgists. Additional roles for lay leadership include prayers of invocation or dedication, sharing stewardship messages, or even leading children's moments.

No experience or training is required to serve in these important worship roles!

If you're interested in this opportunity to serve, please contact the church office.

2019 Annual Meeting and Potluck
Sunday, February 10—Following Worship

SCOUT SUNDAY IS FEBRUARY 3

For years FCC has proudly served as the charter organization for **Boy Scout Troop 279** and **Cub Scout Pack 279**, offering meeting space to them throughout the year. Next month we will happily recognize this faithful relationship by inviting the scouts to participate in morning worship.

The **Cub Scouts** offer both boys and girls in grades K-5 (ages 5-10) a range of family-oriented activities and service projects. The **Boy Scouts**, traditionally for boys in grades 6-12 (ages 11-17), is now open to girls too! Scouting at this level focuses on leadership development, outdoor activities, and service work.

For more about any level of Scouting, contact **Biff Simpson** (biff.simpson@gmail.com). For the Cub Scouts specifically, you may also email **Lyndsey Boulton** (cubpack279@gmail.com); for the Boy Scouts, contact **Jere Rousseau** (167r@comcast.net).

All are encouraged to support this tradition of youth development and service. And please join us for Scout Sunday!

THE SOUPER BOWL IS COMING!!

No, that's not a typo, and we're not talking about football. Once again we're tackling hunger in our community with a collection of soup and other non-perishable items in early February. We'll give what we collect to Headrest, the Upper Valley Haven, and Listen Community Services.

Donations accepted from January 27 to February 10; please look for the collection boxes in the Parish Hall.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Queued for Coffee Hour

January—Stewardship Committee

February—Christian Education Committee

March—Diaconate

JANUARY 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 10a Worship and Church School	31	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY	2 5:30p Cub Scout Pack Committee 6p UVPRN	3 No Choir	4	5 8a Men's Breakfast
6 EPIPHANY 10a Worship and Church School (Communion)	7 3p WCBH After-school Group 4p Juneberry Music Rehearsal 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bears/Webelos/Girls)	8 7p Boy Scouts/Cubs (AofL)	9 8a-4p NH-WIC 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers Auditions 7:15p Christian Ed Committee	10 12:30p G-O-S Assn (CoCM) 3p WCBH After-school Group 5:45p Cub Scouts (Lions) 7p Choir	11 Annual Report Content Due	12
13 10a Worship and Church School <i>Please Note: We will worship in the Parish Hall from today until Palm Sunday, April 14.</i>	14 3p WCBH After-school Group 7p Diaconate	15 7p Church Council 7p Boy Scouts/Troop Committee/Cubs (AofL)	16 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	17 7p Choir	18 6-9p Leb Rec Dept Quilters' Retreat	19 10a-5p Leb Rec Dept Quilters' Retreat
20 10a Worship and Church School 11:15a New Members Open House	21 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY	22 7p Boy Scouts/Cubs (AofL)	23 5:30p Cub Scout Pack Blue/Gold Meeting 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	24 10a-6p NH-WIC 3p WCBH After-school Group 7p Choir	25 7p Cantabile Rehearsal	26 3p Cantabile: Person, Place, or Thing
27 10a Worship and Church School 11:15a Bd of Govs 5p Community Dinner	28 3p WCBH After-school Group 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bears/Webelos/Girls)	29 7p Boy Scouts/Cubs (AofL)	30 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	31 10a Dufflebag Theater (LOH) 7p Choir	1	2 8a Men's Breakfast 4p Mother Tongue Vocal Recital

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

COMMITTEE NOTES

DIACONATE

At their December meeting, the Deacons discussed funding for the Open Door Ministry, for which expenditures totaled \$8000 in 2018. As demand for food and gas cards has risen sharply, this fall we've been spending about \$1000 monthly on them. At the Diaconate's request, Council approved a distribution of Dole mission funds to supplement communion receipts. In 2019, we could reduce our contribution to the NH Conference in order to increase funding available locally for our Open Door Ministry.

In his pastor's report Steve Silver discussed Advent and Christmas plans. He thanked Barb Teeter for again managing the Listen Giving Tree project, and Phil and Gloria Hammond for coordinating the Samaritan's Purse collection. (Barb noted that we completely filled our Listen requests, and Phil reported that a total of 33 Christmas Child boxes were contributed.) Steve also

reported that his November study leave had been abbreviated, but he thanked the congregation for its efforts to support the Boice family and host Alisha's memorial service that same week.

Steve explained that planning for our 250th anniversary campaign requires additional preparatory work, but congregational input will still be invited. He noted plans for English composer Paul Ayres to visit in March. Biff Simpson volunteered to follow up with his contacts at the *Valley News* for coverage.

The Deacons agreed to organize the July Community Dinner. Kathy Beckett volunteered to circulate menu ideas. Barb Jones added that Deacons should not hesitate to contact her for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for their Diaconate responsibilities.

Phil Hammond requested that we consider a review of church security, raising questions about open access in this climate of aggression and

political discord. The main concern is the safety of our nursery and childcare area. It was noted that volunteer Safety Monitors had served until a couple years ago, but that security protocol lapsed. It was agreed that this responsibility would be more appropriately handled by Church Council.

Biff Simpson reported that the Boy Scouts had partnered for their Peace Light service with Meriden Congregational. Biff has worked to improve the sound system and listening devices in the Sanctuary, which now run on rechargeable batteries. The Deacon of the Month will ensure that fresh batteries are installed in the devices each week. The Parish Hall sound system still needs to be addressed, and perhaps accounted for in the 2019 budget.

Steve Silver closed the meeting by appreciating the number of new visitors recently in worship, and he read a blessing he had received from one of them.

From Church Council and the Nominating Committee

Volunteer Opportunities Available

Have you been considering your ideal service opportunity at FCC?

Are you interested in a particular program or committee? Do you have creative ideas for aspects of congregational care and worship life, governance and stewardship, or community programs and mission?

We want to know!

As we approach a new year and a new term for FCC's volunteer committees, Church Council and the Nominating Committee ask you to consider how you might best contribute your skills, interests, and energy to the church's operations, ministries, and mission.

If you're interested in learning more about a committee or available opportunities for service and ministry, please contact the office or **Amy Driscoll (603-448-0976 or amykdriscoll@gmail.com).**

January Meetings

<i>Mission/Social Action</i>	1/6, 11:15
<i>Christian Education</i>	1/9, 7:15
<i>Diaconate</i>	1/14, 7:00
<i>Church Council</i>	1/15, 7:00
<i>Board of Governors</i>	1/27, 11:15

February Meetings

<i>Mission/Social Action</i>	2/3, 11:15
2019 ANNUAL MTG	2/10, 11:15
<i>Diaconate</i>	2/11, 7:00
<i>Christian Education</i>	2/13, 7:15
<i>Church Council</i>	2/19, 7:00
<i>Board of Governors</i>	2/24, 11:15

Building God’s Future: *A Legacy of Giving*

Each year we’re encouraged to recognize the many gifts that we have received from our most generous God. As we continue celebrating our congregation’s 250th anniversary, we consider Joshua’s provocative question for the children of the Israelites: “What do these stones mean to you?” (*Joshua 4:6*)

What does this church mean to us? Our answers to that question—the stories we’ve told and continue to tell about our congregation and its ministry—inspire our stewardship commitments, for 2019 and for the next 250 years. Regardless of the size of your pledge, your participation is vital to our plans for this year!

We have so far received nineteen generous pledges of time, talent, and money for FCC’s mission and ministry in 2019. Additional pledges will gratefully be received anytime—and thanks to all for your faithful stewardship!

Offering envelopes for 2019 are available in the Parish Hall. Please take whichever box you wish and record it on the list.

PLEASE NOTE THAT CONTENT FOR THE
2018 ANNUAL REPORT
is due to the Church Administrator by
Friday, January 11

FCC Annual Meeting 2019 Sunday, February 10, 11:15 am *Potluck and Fellowship Following*

The Annual Meeting of First Congregational Church of Lebanon, NH, will be held in the Parish Hall on Sunday, February 10, 2019, 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.



A MUSICAL ADVENT. The Bel Canto Chamber Singers filled the Sanctuary twice for “The Last Month of the Year”; the annual Messiah Sing gathered a wealth of vocal talent; video projected Dan Weiser and Elizabeth Borowsky’s four-hand skills; and a stunning Soir d’Automne brightened the longest night.

OUR LOCAL AND GLOBAL MISSION

Listen Community Services extends its thanks to everyone at FCC and elsewhere who contributed to this year's **Holiday Gift Basket** program. Listen was able to provide gifts for 230 families—more than 480 children and seniors across the Upper Valley. Following is just one testimony of how meaningful this program is each year:

"I am a single mother of two beautiful girls. Today I picked up their holiday baskets, and I felt like a kid on Christmas as I looked through everything. Each item was wonderful, and I appreciate the thought and generosity that was put into these gifts! I actually cried—it was pretty emotional, and I'm not sure I can find the right words. Let's just say blessed, thankful, grateful, appreciative, joyful, and warm.

I feel lucky to live in a community that is so caring and supportive. I pray that organizations such as Listen can continue to provide the amazing services they do. I thank you and all the donors from the bottom of my heart, because you've given me the chance to ensure my kids have a great day. So many people would struggle much more if it wasn't for you all! Merry Christmas and God Bless!" *(Edited for clarity.)*

Thanks again to Barb Teeter for coordinating FCC's participation in this vital program!

Thank You!
from
Listen Community Services



Prepared to Serve 2019

Saturday, February 23, 8:00–3:30
Pembroke Academy, Pembroke, NH

Prepared to Serve is a training event for members of the NH Conference of the UCC, offering workshops on topics ranging from stewardship, leadership, and finances to service, missions, and Christian education. All are invited to participate in this enriching day of classes, exhibits, and worship.

FEE: \$40 ONLINE THROUGH 2/13
or **\$55 AT THE DOOR**
(Includes resources, breakfast, and lunch.)

For registration and details, visit
www.nhcucc.org.

Greetings from El Salvador!

Last month we received our first letter from Mónica Daniela Martínez Sánchez, the student whom our Church School is now supporting with scholarship funds from the 2018 Lenten Lunch Bag offering. We certainly wish Mónica all the best as she progresses in her studies! *(Translated by the editor.)*

La Libertad, El Salvador, Dec 2018

Dear First Congregational Church,

I send cordial greetings to all who belong to Lebanon First Congregational Church, with my wish that this finds you and your loved ones well and enjoying good health and love.

The reason I write this letter is to thank you for the help that you have provided me. It makes me so glad, because for me it is a great blessing to receive this support that you've provided. I'm so grateful—because of your support I can continue my baccalaureate studies. I am grateful and happy as well, because thanks to you I am able to complete the current school year. I give thanks to God for this opportunity he's given me that people like you can help and support me.

I will say goodbye by giving you renewed thanks and wishing many blessings and success in your lives, in your work as well as your family.

Mónica Daniela Martínez Sánchez
Complejo Educativo Católico San José Villanueva

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS 2018

The Advent season once again brought festive worship, warm fellowship, and delicious food, within our congregation and beyond. Carolers at church and around town, candle lighters and readers, guests at the Parsonage party, and the impressive cast in our beloved Christmas Eve pageant—all joined to welcome Christ's birth.

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

MID-WINTER CONCERTS

All in the Sanctuary, FCC

Cantabile Women's Chorus: Person, Place, or Thing—Saturday, January 26, 3:00 pm

Founded in 2001 and directed by Kathy Sherlock-Green, this superb women's ensemble returns to FCC with classical works, traditional tunes, and folk songs. The program includes music of Gwyneth Walker, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Matthew Harris, Felix Mendelssohn, W. A. Mozart, Pablo Casals, and more.

Admission \$15 adults, \$10 seniors, \$5 students, under 12 free; more at www.cantabilewomen.org.

Mother Tongue: A Vocal Recital—Saturday, February 2, 4:00 pm

Mezzo-sopranos Betsy Alexander and Laurel Stavis, devoted members of FCC's choir, will join Henry Danaher on piano to offer a delightful selection of English music, including pieces by Ralph Vaughan Williams, Benjamin Britten, Herbert Howells, Roger Quilter, and others. Admission by donation.

LOH ON LOCATION: Lula Wiles—Friday, February 8, 7:30 pm

A band rooted in traditional folk music but devoted to modern songcraft, Lula Wiles offers a musical range from heartbreak-drenched acoustic ballads to honky-tonk swagger, all in rich, three-part vocal harmonies. They bring their fiercely honest lyrics and evocative imagery to Lebanon in early February.

Adults \$18.50, youth \$8.50; tickets and more at lebanonoperahouse.org/events/lula-wiles-2/.

FCC WELCOMES PAUL AYRES IN MARCH!

As we continue celebrating our congregation's 250th anniversary, we look forward to welcoming composer, conductor, and organist Paul Ayres to Lebanon on the first weekend in March. A native of London who studied music at Oxford, Paul has composed extensively for solo voice, choral ensembles, and theatrical productions. He particularly enjoys arranging and "re-composing" music from classical, folk, jazz, and pop repertoire. Paul has conducted numerous choral groups, served as musical director for a variety of projects, and devoted himself to musical education and advocacy. As an organist and accompanist, he has given concerts around the world. **For more about Paul's background and music, visit www.paulayres.co.uk.**

Choral Workshop on Psalm Settings—Saturday, March 2 (Times TBD)

Open to all singers and interested observers, this workshop will explore the rich, centuries-long tradition of setting Psalm texts to music, including early Gregorian chant, Scottish metrical hymns and Anglican chant, choral anthems, and Paul's own treatments of these beloved Biblical verses.

250th Anniversary Commission: The Spacious Firmament—Sunday, March 3, 10:00 am

In worship on March 3, we will enjoy the premiere of *The Spacious Firmament*, commissioned from Paul for our 250th anniversary. The piece is based on Joseph Addison's 1712 poem, a familiar hymn text.

Paul Ayres Organ Recital—Sunday, March 3, 2:00 pm

Rounding out Paul's visit with us, this afternoon concert will feature music by J. S. Bach and the astronomer William Herschel, along with his own classical reinterpretations of Beatles songs.

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

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Music
at the
Meetinghouse

MID-WINTER CONCERTS

All in the Sanctuary, FCC

Cantabile Women's Chorus: Person, Place, or Thing—Saturday, January 26, 3:00 pm

Mother Tongue: A Vocal Recital—Saturday, February 2, 4:00 pm

LOH ON LOCATION: *Lula Wiles*—Friday, February 8, 7:30 pm

FCC Welcomes Composer and Organist Paul Ayres—Saturday-Sunday, March 2-3

Choral Workshop (*Saturday*), Organ Recital (*Sunday 2:00*), and the premiere of *The Spacious Firmament*, commissioned for the 250th anniversary of FCC's congregation (*Sunday Worship, 10:00*).

New Members Welcome!

Open House—Sunday, January 20, 11:15

New Members Received—Sunday, January 27

All are invited to join FCC in covenant membership. If you're interested or have questions, please contact the Rev. Stephen Silver or the church office.

FCC-Lebanon

2019 Annual Meeting

Sunday, February 10, 11:15 am

Potluck and Fellowship Following