



# Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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## The Pastoral Perspective

I was pleased that when I wrote my first check of the new year, I jotted “2020” and not “2019,” along with the day and month. This doesn’t seem like much, but how many times in the past have you or I written the wrong number when penning a check or letter during January? Maybe you have been immune to this mishap, but I have not. So as I get older, maybe I’m getting better. Of course, there’s a lot of January before us and opportunities abound to make mistakes. Fortunately, this a good season of the church calendar to reflect on them.

Do you ever wonder if the Magi ever doubted where they were heading, if they feared that at some point they had made a wrong turn? Or perhaps, whether John worried that he was being a bit rough when he baptized Jesus? And as a parent myself, I can’t help but wonder how often Mary and Joseph questioned their latest parenting decision. What I do know is that it all worked out: the Magi arrived to see the baby Jesus; John successfully baptized Jesus; Mary and Joseph guided their boy through childhood and into adulthood. In our life of faith, I know there is room for error—as long as we seek forgiveness and seek to change our ways.

Think again about the examples above. The Magi knew to follow the star, to check their progress along the way, to take direction. John would have been practiced at performing full-immersion baptism, for that’s what was done, and he would have known how to guide someone down into the water. Mary and Joseph would have learned from experience, figuring out what worked and what didn’t. They were alert, they were humble, they were faithful, and if something didn’t work, they would try something different.

Living our faith is a lot like this. There is no manual to tell us how and what to do. Yes, there’s the Bible, but often it is like a Japanese set of instructions that has been poorly translated into English—we still need to figure out how to do things. As we do this, we will err and hurt people, hurt God. It is at such moments that we need to confront what we have done so we don’t do it again. That’s not always easy, but the alternative is, what, hiding from our actions or deluding ourselves? We all know that never works.

*Continued on Page 5*

# SUNDAY SERVICE

## Do Your Part to Fill the Cart!

All are invited to join in fighting local poverty and food insecurity with contributions to our cart in the Parish Hall, for a new beneficiary each month.

During the month of January, we are collecting pet food and supplies on behalf of the **UPPER VALLEY HUMANE SOCIETY**

Many struggling to provide for themselves can't afford to keep their beloved pets, whose friendship is vital in difficult times. UVHS seeks to address this need, and this month we can help.

*Thanks for your generosity in fighting poverty and hunger in our community.*

## Would You Like to Participate in Worship?

The Diaconate and Rev. Steve Silver invite greater lay participation in our worship service. Members of our congregation already sing in our choir and serve as greeters, ushers, and liturgists. Additional roles for lay leadership include reading the 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.

## New Members Welcome!

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 would like to learn more about this invitation, please speak with Rev. Steve Silver or contact the church office.*

**2020 Annual Meeting and Potluck**  
Sunday, February 9—Following Worship

## THE SOUPER BOWL IS COMING!

No, that's not a typo, and we're not talking about football—especially not this year! Once again we're tackling local hunger with a collection of soup and other non-perishable food items. We'll distribute what we collect among **HEADREST**, the **UPPER VALLEY HAVEN**, and **LISTEN COMMUNITY SERVICES**.

*Donations accepted from January 26 through February 9; please look for collection boxes in the Parish Hall. And thank you!*

Please note that the SOUPER BOWL will serve as our shopping cart collection in February.

## Community Dinner

Sunday, January 26, 5:00 pm

Leaders: **CORRINE ERSKINE, LINDA JACOBS, BARB LARO**

Many thanks to **Corrine, Linda, and Barb** for once again serving our monthly dinner! Please lend a hand in providing this important meal to our friends and neighbors, especially if this is your first time.

*Look for sign-ups soon in the Parish Hall.*

## New Year, New Leaders!

We are always hoping to expand the reliable group of dedicated leaders who generously commit time and resources to our Community Dinners.

*Please consider organizing a meal on one of these dates in 2020—especially February 23!*

February 23    March 22    May 24    June 28  
July 26    September 27    November 22

Menu resources are available, and the church can reimburse costs. If you're interested in leading or have questions, please contact the church office.

## Queued for Coffee Hour

January—Stewardship Committee  
February—Christian Education Committee  
March—Diaconate

# JANUARY 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 10a Worship/CCC	30	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY 3p Alexander Family Party 6p UVPRN	2 No Choir 7p Valley Improv	3	4
5 EPIPHANY SUNDAY 10a Worship/CCC (Communion, Recognition of Henry Danaher) 11:15a MSA	6 EPIPHANY 5:30p Cub Scouts (AoL/Girls) <i>Annual Report content due this week</i>	7 7p BSA Troop 279	8 8a-4p NH-WIC 5:30p Cub Scout Pack Committee 6p UVPRN 6p Bel Canto Auditions	9 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	10 11:45a LHS Life Skills Class	11
12 10a Worship/CCC	13 7p Diaconate	14 7p BSA Troop 279 7p Cantabile Rehearsal	15 5:30p Cub Scouts (Webelos/Tigers) 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	16 12:30p Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Assn (CoCM) 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	17 11:45a LHS Life Skills Class 7:30p Anonymous Coffeehouse	18
19 10a Worship/CCC 3p Cantabile: Words of Wisdom	20 MLK JR. DAY	21 7p Church Council 7p BSA Troop 279/Committee	22 5:30p Cub Scout Pack Committee 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	23 11a-7p NH-WIC 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	24 11:45a LHS Life Skills Class 6-9p Leb Rec Dept Quilters	25 9a-5p Leb Rec Dept Quilters
26 10a Worship/CCC 11:15a Bd of Govs 5p Community Dinner	27 5:30p Cub Scouts (AoL/Girls)	28 7p BSA Troop 279	29 5:30p Cub Scouts (Webelos/Tigers) 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	30 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	31 11:45a LHS Life Skills Class 7:30p Anonymous Coffeehouse	1
2 10a Worship/CCC (Communion; Scout Sunday) 11:15a MSA	3	4 7p BSA Troop 279	5 5:30p Cub Scout Pack Committee 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	6 5:30p Johnny Gandelsman Master Class 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	7 11:45a LHS Life Skills Class 7p LOH on Location: J. Gandelsman	8 7p William Ogmundson, Piano

If your event is missing or incorrect, please notify us at [church@fccleb.org](mailto:church@fccleb.org) or 603-448-4281.

# COMMITTEE NOTES

## BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Board of Governors has been discussing how best to gather fair, comparable estimates for work proposed in the **Parsonage energy audit**. The Board is also strategizing about various phases of **Sanctuary insulation**, which will start with ceiling work and a poly liner in the dirt cellar before addressing the walls. Insulation of the kitchen vent is another important step. Jon Scott has met with sustainable energy consultant Kim Quirk (who is Wendell Smith's daughter), who has asked for information about our heating oil usage history for further analysis.

Considering the church's dirt cellar, the Board is also evaluating our current **storage capacity**, relative to our own storage needs and those of the Scouts and other groups.

**Snow clearance** around the church this winter will be done by both Chip Silver and Terry Ellison, with the understanding that others will also need to pitch in on occasion.

The Board has completed several other minor tasks to prepare for the winter months. Looking ahead to warmer weather, we continue to assess necessary landscaping and walkway renovations.

The Board also has evaluated our November **fire drill**, with generally positive reports. Key issues include the speed with which we're able to clear the Sanctuary, the possible use of the side exit doors in the Narthex, and an accurate sense of the evacuation from downstairs.

## CHURCH COUNCIL

In lieu of its full monthly meeting (canceled due to weather), Council met briefly on December 22 after worship for two specific items.

First, Council considered **plans for our music ministry** in the weeks and months ahead, with Henry Danaher departing after January 5 for a new position at CCDC in Hanover. Discussion included the Music Committee's

role, possibilities for interim music coverage, and a full description of the permanent job's responsibilities, both as it has evolved in past years and as it may change in the future. The position has focused to this point entirely on worship music, with only a minimal, indirect role in the Music at the Meetinghouse concert series.

Council considered compensation possibilities for the position, given that Henry accepted his new post in large part because of significant increases in pay and benefits that we weren't able to offer. All agreed that we should also try to retain relationships with the many guest musicians that Henry brought to FCC, as far as possible. Council unanimously charged the Music Committee with securing interim coverage and forming a committee to search for a permanent organist and choir director.

Second, Treasurer Terry Ellison reported that **anticipated year-end expenses**, including the year's final

*From Church Council and the Nominating Committee*

## Volunteer Opportunities Available

Have you found an ideal service opportunity for yourself at FCC? Are you interested in a particular program or committee? Do you have creative ideas for aspects of congregational life or governance?

***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 church office or Amy Driscoll (603-448-0976 or [amykdriscoll@gmail.com](mailto:amykdriscoll@gmail.com)).**

## January Meetings

Mission/Social Action	1/5, 11:15
Diaconate	1/13, 7:00
Church Council	1/21, 7:00
Board of Governors	1/26, 11:15

## February Meetings

Mission/Social Action	2/2, 11:15
2020 ANNUAL MTG	2/9, 11:15
Diaconate	2/10, 7:00
Church Council	2/18, 7:00
Board of Governors	2/23, 11:15



## COMMITTEE NOTES

payroll distribution, would exceed the current balance of the general treasury account. Even allowing for larger offering collections and year-end donations, all agreed it would be prudent to request a transfer from FCC's trust funds. Council authorized the Trustees to make such a transfer.

### DIACONATE

The Diaconate reports that 2019 spending for **food and gas cards** (\$8000) approached total donations through December. Contributions were boosted in part by an unusually large gift early in the year.

The congregation enjoyed the open house in the **Children's Community Corner** on December 8 following worship. Deacons appreciate the great work of Nan Parsons, Ashley Oronte, Linda Gerlach, and other volunteers, and they support the monthly role of children in worship.

The Deacons have reviewed lists of members in preparation for **revising our active rolls**, ideally in time for Annual Meeting. The group also discussed possible new deacons, as Denise Moriearty has had to step down from her role.

In his **pastor's report** the Rev. Steve Silver reviewed plans and needs for

our three Christmas Eve services. He also noted that a welcome card was produced and placed in the pews for Advent, in lieu of a more permanent version still in progress. This year's ecumenical Thanksgiving service in Hartford was well attended, and November's book study was deemed a success, with hopes for additional topics and increased participation in the future. Steve also noted an ongoing discussion of end-of-life and estate planning, which all agree is important to our congregation.

The Deacons will next meet on January 13, returning to the second Monday of the month.

### FCC ANNUAL MEETING 2020 Sunday, February 9, 11:15 am *Potluck and Fellowship Following*

The Annual Meeting of First Congregational Church of Lebanon, NH, will be held Sunday, February 9, 2020, 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.

### Doing Good, Sharing Gifts: Stewardship and Our Faith

*"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."*

As **Hebrews 13:16** reminds us, when we participate in Stewardship with our time, skills, and resources, we're not just being philanthropic or community-minded—we are making a sacrifice. When the Israelites presented their offerings at the temple, they were engaged in worship, as we are when we make our pledges. Let our sacred, holy work please the Lord, as we strive to better the world.

**We are grateful to have received 31 pledges for 2020! No matter the size of your pledge, your participation is vital to our plans for this year. Please prayerfully consider your commitment to FCC's mission and ministry, and thanks for your faithful stewardship!**

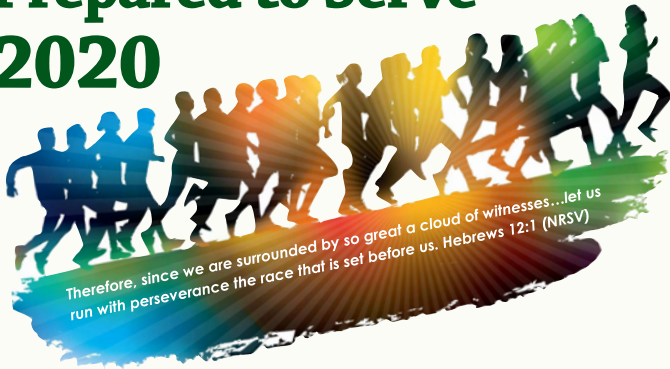
### The Pastoral Perspective, *continued from Page 1*

So as we begin 2020, I encourage you to join me in owning up to mistakes, rectifying them, and celebrating when we get things right. In doing so, we will grow deeper in our faith and come closer to being what God wants us to be.

Yours faithfully, *Steve*

## OUR MINISTRY AND MISSION

### Prepared to Serve 2020



Saturday, February 22, 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 2/12) / \$55 at the door  
(Includes resources, breakfast, and lunch.)

Registration and details at [www.nhcucc.org](http://www.nhcucc.org).

### SUPPORT LOCAL SCOUTING!

For years FCC has proudly served as the charter organization for **Scout Troop 279** and **Cub Scout Pack 279**, offering meeting space and supporting Scouting programs year-round. We recognize this faithful relationship each year by inviting the Scouts to help lead worship (2020 date TBD).

The **Cub Scouts** offer boys and girls grades K-5 (ages 5-10) a range of family-oriented activities and service projects. The **Scouts BSA** (formerly Boy Scouts of America) welcomes all those in grades 6-12 (ages 11-17). Scouting at this level focuses on leadership development, outdoor activities, and service work.

For more about any level of Scouting, contact **Bill McGonigle** ([bill@mcgonigle.us](mailto:bill@mcgonigle.us)). For the Cub Scouts specifically, you may also email **Lyndsey Boulton** ([cubpack279@gmail.com](mailto:cubpack279@gmail.com)).

*All are invited to support this tradition of youth development and service!*



Exploring our faith through story  
The Marcia Corkins'  
Godly Playroom

*Dear Church Family,*

I still do not believe it—a Micah Award and now a Church School room dedicated to me! They mean so much to me!

Special thanks to God and my very special church family for giving me the support and opportunity to be involved with children for so many years.

*Love to all,  
Marcia*





# THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION

## ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS 2019

The Advent season again brought festive worship and warm fellowship all month long. *This page*—Dominic Watson, Stacey Steele, and Juliet Steele present the first Advent banner; flautist Hilary Lynch plays Poulenc; a spread of delicious food and caroling by a roaring fire at the Parsonage; Finn and Henry Danaher read and light Advent candles together; and Kailyn Rappaport expertly narrates our Christmas pageant. *Next page*—A superb cast of children and adults enact our annual pageant; Nicole Mason’s donkey leads the way to the manger; the royal Heathersons sing praises to the baby Jesus; Leslie and Claire Thomson light the Christ candle, followed later in the evening by Wallace Ragan and Valerie Nevel; and *Silent Night* by candlelight brings warm, heavenly peace to all—and to all a good night!





# THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION





# MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music  
at the  
Meetinghouse

## WINTER CONCERTS

at First Congregational Church

### ***Cantabile Women's Chorus: Words of Wisdom—Sunday, January 19, 3:00 pm***

Founded in 2001 and directed by Kathy Sherlock-Green, this superb women's ensemble returns to FCC for its winter concert. The program offers familiar works by Mozart and Bach along with choral settings of Emily Dickinson, John Keats, Louisa May Alcott, Anne Frank, and William Shakespeare. *Adults \$15, seniors \$10, students \$5, under 12 free; for more, visit [www.cantabilewomen.org/](http://www.cantabilewomen.org/).*

### ***LOH ON LOCATION: Johnny Gandelsman, Violin—Friday, February 7, 7:00 pm***

Our partnership with Lebanon Opera House began in 2017 with a stunning performance by this sensational violinist, renowned for his virtuosity with the Silk Road Ensemble, Brooklyn Rider, and artists ranging from Béla Fleck to Renée Fleming. He returns in February to play Bach's complete cello suites on violin. *Admission \$18-33; for tickets and more, visit [lebanonoperahouse.org/events/johnny-gandelsman-violin-2/](http://lebanonoperahouse.org/events/johnny-gandelsman-violin-2/).*

### ***William Ögmundson, Piano—Saturday, February 8, 7:00 pm***

Will Ögmundson returns with a dazzling program surveying 100 years of American music, from Stephen Foster and John Philip Sousa to George Gershwin. *Details TBD; for more, visit [www.williamogmundson.com/](http://www.williamogmundson.com/).*

### ***Classicopia: Go Tell It on the Mountain—Saturday, February 15, 7:30 pm***

Pianist Daniel Weiser joins mezzo-soprano Laura Compton in a wonderful musical celebration for African-American History Month, with a stirring selection of spirituals and ragtime arrangements. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; for tickets and more, visit [classicopia.org/concert/go-tell-it-on-the-mountain/](http://classicopia.org/concert/go-tell-it-on-the-mountain/).*

### ***Lebanon's newest hit... The ANONYMOUS COFFEEHOUSE—Fridays, Jan. 17 and 31, Feb. 14, all 7:30 pm***

FCC is delighted to host this increasingly popular venue for live, local music! An informal "listening room" for established and emerging musicians, each show features several acoustic acts, and patrons may come and go as they wish. Baked goods and non-alcoholic drinks available. And it's all free of charge, so please come and enjoy! *For more information, please visit [anoncoffee.org](http://anoncoffee.org) or email [anoncoffeehouse@gmail.com](mailto:anoncoffeehouse@gmail.com).*



Bel Canto Chamber Singers



Messiah Sing 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](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**

**WINTER CONCERTS**

*at First Congregational Church*

*Cantabile Women's Chorus: Words of Wisdom*—Sunday, January 19, 3:00 pm

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*William Ögmundson, Piano*—Saturday, February 8, 7:00 pm

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*And Lebanon's newest hit... The ANONYMOUS COFFEEHOUSE*—Fridays, Jan. 17 and 31, Feb. 14, all 7:30 pm

**THE SOUPER BOWL IS COMING!**

Food collection benefiting HEADREST, the UPPER VALLEY HAVEN, and LISTEN COMMUNITY SERVICES

*Donations accepted January 26 to February 9*

Look for collection boxes in the Parish Hall. Thank you!

**FCC-Lebanon**

**2020 Annual Meeting**

**Sunday, February 9, 11:15 am**

*Potluck and Fellowship Following*