



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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A Musical June8



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The Pastoral Perspective

By now we've all seen the photo of Oscar and Valeria Martinez, the Salvadoran father and daughter who drowned while trying to cross the Rio Grande. The picture was heartbreaking and disturbing, and, sadly, has already become a prop in the nation's interminable debate over immigration. As Christians, we have a part to play in this discussion, but it's one that should be formed by our faith first, and only then by our political preferences. We should not look at the image and think, "We need to tighten our asylum process" or "It's time to move to open borders," or see members of an invading horde or convenient stand-ins for the Holy Family. We might instead ask, "Is this what should be happening in a world that has been made by a loving God? Is this what I as a follower of Jesus Christ want to see happening?"

The answer to these questions is "no." But then what? What do we do next? We need to remain engaged with the issue. Last month we had a good discussion with Mike and Susie Jenkins when they visited our church to receive our children's gift to Epilogos. We learned about the current situation in San Jose Villanueva. Sadly, the violence and crime has only worsened in the years since a group from our congregation went to SJV to build a house for a local family.

It's one thing to know this and another to experience it. I've mentioned how Mike and I went on some pastoral care calls during that 2014 trip. He noticed that I was taking a lot of pictures with my phone. When we got to one location, where some women were running a business using portable stoves that Epilogos helped fund, he told me not to take any pictures—we were in a gang-infested area, with a headquarters very close by and lookouts on the street. Obviously, I didn't take any pictures. But all these years later I can't help but wonder what it would be like to live in a place where crime runs rampant. We hear people criticize MS-13 and other gangs, and I have no use for them, but what, honestly, are we doing to help Salvadorans and others resist this evil? It would be easy for us to say that it's not our problem, that what happens in El Salvador stays in El Salvador. But we know that's not true.

Recall the Parable of the Good Samaritan as recounted in Luke 10. You know the story: a traveler is waylaid by bandits and is left to suffer on the

SUNDAY SERVICE

PRAISE IN THE PARK!

SUNDAY, JULY 28, 10:00 AM, COLBURN PARK

Plan to join us on the Lebanon Green for this annual ecumenical service with the Lebanon and White River Junction United Methodist Churches. The Rev. Becca Girrell will preach, and we'll enjoy fellowship and refreshments together afterward. (Our Sanctuary will serve as the rain location.) **The offering and a collection of non-perishable foods will benefit the food pantry at the UPPER VALLEY HAVEN.**

Do Your Part to Fill the Cart!

Greater Lebanon is struggling with rising poverty and food insecurity, especially among children. To address this need, we're now collecting contributions year-round in a shopping cart in the Parish Hall, with a different beneficiary designated each month.

During the month of July, we will be collecting pet food and supplies on behalf of the

UPPER VALLEY HUMANE SOCIETY

Many who struggle with poverty manage to take care of themselves but cannot afford to keep their beloved pets, whose companionship is vital in difficult times. UVHS seeks to address this need, and this month we can help.

Thanks to all for fighting local poverty and hunger!

Welcome Back, Jo Shelnutt!

As Rev. Steve Silver takes vacation from mid-July into August, we are grateful that the Rev. Jo Shelnutt will serve once again as our guest preacher. Jo has often filled in for Steve in recent years, and we're happy to have her back this summer!

Community Dinner

Sunday, July 28, 5:00 pm

Leaders: CORRINE ERSKINE/BARB LARO

Many thanks to Corrine and Barb for leading this month's Community Dinner!

All are invited to help provide this vital service to our neighbors—and welcome the Ulman 4K for Cancer group! (See page 7.)

Sign-ups to be posted in the Parish Hall.

WORSHIP EXCHANGE WITH WEST LEBANON UCC

Sundays, August 4 and 11, 10:00 am
* *Congregational Breakfast at 8:30 am* *

Next month we will once again share worship with the West Lebanon Congregational Church. We will gather **August 4 at WLCC**, with the Rev. Jo Shelnutt preaching and our Deacons serving communion. (*Note: there will be no worship service at FCC that morning.*) The next week on **August 11 at FCC**, the Rev. Jeff Scott will preach.

BREAKFAST VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

The WLCC men's group has again offered to serve a congregational breakfast at 8:30 am on August 4. We would like to do the same on August 11, so please contact the church office if you're willing to cook, serve, or otherwise contribute. *Thanks!*

Participate in Worship!

All are invited to serve a role in worship. Congregation members already serve as ushers and liturgists and sing in our choir. Additional possibilities include reading the prayer of invocation, sharing stewardship messages, even leading children's moments.

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

Queued for Coffee Hour

July—Church Council
August—Christian Education
September—Diaconate

JULY 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 10a Worship	1 7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	2 No Diaconate No BSA Troop 279	3 12p (IF RAIN) F. Douglass Reading 6p UVPRN	4 INDEPENDENCE DAY 4p Kitchen Use: Leb Rec Dept 7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	5	6
7 10a Worship (Communion) 11:15a MSA	8 7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	9 7p BSA Troop 279	10 8a-4p NH-WIC 6p UVPRN No Christian Ed Committee	11 1p Leb Commtty Nurse Steering Committee 7p Valley Improv	12	13
14 10a Worship (Baptism: Claire Thomson)	15 9a Kitchen Use: M. Durand 7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	16 9a Kitchen Use: M. Durand No Church Council No BSA Troop 279	17 9a Kitchen Use: M. Durand 6p UVPRN	18 10a-6p NH-WIC 12:30p Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Assn (CoCM) 7p Valley Improv 7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	19	20
21 10a Worship	22 7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	23 7p BSA Troop 279/Committee	24 6p UVPRN	25 7p Valley Improv 7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	26 3p NH Button Society (set-up)	27 7a-4p NH Button Society Conference
28 10a Praise in the Park! (Colburn Park; FCC if rain) 11:15a Bd of Govs 5p Community Dinner Ulman Fund 4K Run for Cancer (group overnight)	29 7p (IF RAIN) Leb Rec Concert	30 No BSA Troop 279	31 4:20p Camerata NE Class 6p UVPRN	1 7p Valley Improv	2	3

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

COMMITTEE NOTES

CHURCH COUNCIL

Treasurer Terry Ellison reported in June that our 2019 income to date is approximately \$98,000, toward a budgeted amount of \$226,000. Regular stewardship contributions total about \$40,000, halfway toward a goal of \$80,000, and expenditures now stand at \$85,000, less than half of the \$221,000 budgeted. Terry sees no issues at this time.

Board of Governors chair John Gilliatt reviewed work completed on Spring Clean-up Day, including the removal of two sumac trees (with a third still to come), the disposal of many old paint cans, and driveway patching at the Parsonage. John gratefully commended Leslie Thomson for her initiative and energy in repairing and refinishing the deck on the front of the church, which looks great. Another coat of stain may be applied sometime this summer or fall, and the lowest riser still requires some plaster patching. John also thanked Alyson Danyew-Ellison and Nan Parsons for their beautiful work in planting the front and side gardens.

John further reported the clearance of the dirt cellar in advance of more insulation work, and Wayne Braley's progress in designing railings for the chancel steps, which hopefully will be in place by the fall. These will be as visually unobtrusive as possible but permanently installed (rather than temporary, as once considered), as the primary goal is safety. At the Parsonage, Stearns Septic has cleared roots from the sewer line, but a long-term solution will be needed. It is now likely that

the energy audit of the Parsonage will happen in the fall.

Linda Jacobs expressed appreciation for the large turnout for **Betty Howard's interment service** in the Memorial Garden, attended by many from the wider community with connections beyond FCC. She and Steve Silver both gave thanks for broad participation and help with the reception afterward.

Brian Clancy noted that the prior month had been one of the busiest ever for **Music at the Meetinghouse**, series, with fourteen events over six weekends. The June 7 debut of the Anonymous Coffeehouse was quite successful, drawing between 40 and 60 people for three acts and making another favorable public impression of how FCC opens itself to the community.

In his **pastor's report** the Rev. Steve Silver informed us that Praise in the Park will be July 28, and our worship exchange with the West Lebanon church will happen on August 4 and 11, the first Sunday being at WLCC. Musical Drama Camp will return August 12-16, but we do need some volunteers to help Jo Shelnut with the campers. Steve thanked the many who provided hospitality to the Bike & Build group that visited June 15-17.

Steve also reported on the potential to reinvest some or all of FCC's current investments with United Church Funds in the UCF's so-called Fossil Free Fund. Strongly advocated by Jon Scott, this would support our congregation's calling toward responsible environmental

July Meetings

<i>Diaconate</i>	(NO MTG)
<i>Mission/Social Action</i>	(TBD)
<i>Christian Education</i>	(NO MTG)
<i>Church Council</i>	(NO MTG)
<i>Board of Governors</i>	7/28, 11:15

August Meetings

<i>Diaconate</i>	(NO MTG)
<i>Mission/Social Action</i>	(TBD)
<i>Christian Education</i>	(NO MTG)
<i>Church Council</i>	(TBD)
<i>Board of Governors</i>	8/25, 11:15

stewardship. Council agreed that the Trustees should investigate this option and report back.

Steve plans to be away on vacation from July 15 through August 11; the Rev. Jo Shelnut will lead worship in his absence.

DIACONATE

In June Diaconate Treasurer Alyson Danyew-Ellison reviewed collections for the Open Door Ministry over the past few months—March (\$425), April (\$429), May (\$397), and June (\$294.50). Food and gas cards (\$500 of each) were purchased in March and April; the Deacons authorized an additional \$1,000 for June.

Rev. Steve Silver asked the Deacons to consider positive and negative reactions to the use of drums in worship. There was general support for Music Director Henry Danaher to offer a variety of music, conducive both to meditation before worship and to recession and interaction following the service.

COMMITTEE NOTES

Steve plans to meet with Eliot Fay, who is ending his time at Newport and is now looking at short-term chaplaincy roles, as he prepares to find a pastoral call in the long term. Steve's revision of FCC's welcome brochure is taking time, as it needs considerable updating; he will also review other churches' brochures. Steve asked for volunteers to assist with Musical Drama Camp, and Larry Doyle offered to help.

Although discussions on racism and food insecurity were deferred, the Deacons did consider the growing

reliance on home funerals and green burials. It was noted that people often shy away from focusing on their own death preparations, but burial practices have changed, with more than half now involving cremation. Barb Jones offered more information from Dartmouth's Aging Resource Center.

The Deacons also reviewed plans for the June Community Dinner, given that the May dinner served 30-35 guests but was short-staffed on set-up, serving, and clean-up.

Kathy Beckett drafted a menu, and

several offered to contribute food and work the dinner.

The Deacons also discussed the background of the Anonymous Coffeehouse. It was explained that the organizers approached FCC for a venue only, selecting performers and making all other arrangements on their own. The continuation of this project into the fall depends on that model continuing, and on the audiences attracted in June.

The Diaconate will not meet in July or August; its next meeting will be Tuesday, September 3.

Call for Nominations — 8th Annual UVIP Micah Awards

The prophet Micah calls us to consider what it means to live into God's expectations for us, offering guidance on how to live up to those expectations: "And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8)

UVIP's Micah Awards annually recognize local citizens who contribute time and energy to community causes, as living role models of faith in service. **All are welcome to nominate members of our congregation** who best represent the spirit of the Micah Awards (only previous winners are ineligible: Ron Bailey, Pete Mason, Kathy Beckett, the Teeters, and the Jacobs). The individual with the most votes will be our Micah Honoree for 2019. As this is an annual award, nominations typically reflect service during the past year.

Nominations (up to three per person) must be submitted to the church office no later than TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3. Please contact the church office with any questions.

The Pastoral Perspective, *continued from Page 1*

side of the road. The first two men who pass by leave him to his own devices. It is only the third, the foreign, despised Samaritan, who helps out.

I can't help but think of the Martinezes. Their demise is what happens when the third man doesn't stop to help. We live in an age where everybody is labeled, sorted, and thus separated. But before they were Salvadorans, migrants, father and daughter, Oscar and Valeria were human beings, just like you and me. They were and are children of God, and we all failed them.

As we enjoy these long, summer days, let us remember that there are those who are not, who are facing challenges that we would find intolerable, perhaps unbearable. With the help of God, let us not make excuses, but find solutions so that there are no more Oscars and Valerias.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

FCC Contributes to UVIP's Asylum Support Fund



In May the Mission and Social Action Committee proposed that FCC make a financial contribution to UVIP's Asylum & Sanctuary Support Fund. Church Council unanimously approved the proposal, affirming that it lives into our congregation's 2018 resolution to endorse the work of the NH Immigrant Solidarity Network. It adds tangible action to the broader message of inclusion and welcome proclaimed by the banner above our door. (UVIP's June 11 acknowledgment below.)

Dear Rev. Silver,

Thank you so very much for the First Congregational Church of Lebanon's recent donation of \$1200 to the Asylum & Sanctuary Support Fund of the United Valley Interfaith Project. Your donation and many others are being used to support an Indonesian family of four under our care, seeking asylum. Soon, donations may be used to support a Zimbabwean man who is also seeking asylum.

People seek asylum in the U. S. because they fear their lives are in danger in their home country. But they must prove that they really are in danger, and that is not easy. For many, the trauma that produced the fear in the first place is relived as they seek to prove that it actually happened.

The asylum process is long and complicated. The initial application and a hearing are the first steps. If asylum is granted at the initial hearing, the journey is over, but that is rarely the case. If asylum is NOT granted at the initial hearing, the applicant can appeal to an immigration court. But court dates may be years in advance, and meanwhile the applicant must sit and wait... and wait... and wait, uncertain what the future holds.

Asylum applicants cannot work until at least 150 days after they apply for asylum, when a work permit request can be filed. In the meantime, they must rely on their own resources, or friends and family, or charitable organizations—or the Asylum & Sanctuary Support Fund.

Thanks again to First Congregational Church for helping asylum seekers in our community. They need our support in so many ways!

Sincerely,
Mary Chin, UVIP Asylum Support Fund Co-Coordinator

With generous contributions from our church community, **Blanket Sunday** (\$655) and **Shelter Sunday** (\$795) both generated vital support for two worthy causes—while also honoring our mothers and fathers past and present.

THANK YOU
For Blankets and Shelter!

FCC forwards Blanket Sunday contributions to the **CWS Blankets** program (cwsblankets.org), while Shelter Sunday gifts support the Upper Valley chapter of **Habitat for Humanity** (uppervalleyhabitat.org).

Each offering drew significantly more than in 2018. Many thanks to all who contributed!

OUR LOCAL AND GLOBAL MISSION

BIKE & BUILD RETURNS. During their annual June visit, twenty-six biker-builders enjoyed the generous hospitality of our congregation and Valley Improv once again shared their comedic entertainment!



The Ulman Fund 4K for Cancer

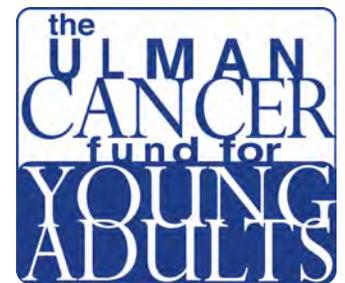
Coming to FCC on Sunday, July 28

On Sunday, July 28, a group of young adults will arrive in Lebanon—on foot! These ambitious, college-age runners will be finishing Day 43 of a cross-country run from San Francisco to Boston, all in an effort to raise money and offer compassionate service on behalf of the **Ulman Cancer Fund for Young Adults**.

The Ulman Cancer Fund was founded in 1997 by the family of Doug Ulman, a student and athlete at Brown University who, before his sophomore year, had been diagnosed with malignant chondrosarcoma. In addition to supporting young cancer patients and their families in a variety of ways, the Ulman Fund in 2011 took on the **4K for Cancer**, a cross-country bike journey that for ten years had raised funds for the fight against cancer.

Now comprised of three bike rides and three runs annually, the Ulman 4K for Cancer has raised over \$6,000,000 for cancer treatment, research, education, family support, and patient scholarships—with each participant committing to raise at least \$4500 for their trip. Runners cover 10-16 miles per day and join in a variety of service days at cancer centers and hospitals along their route. (For the 4K for Cancer, the Boston Run, and donation information, visit 4kforcancer.org/2019-team-boston/. For the Ulman Fund itself, visit ulmanfund.org.)

Where does FCC come in? We hosted the Ulman runners for the first time in 2018. This year, their visit falls on one of our monthly Community Dinner dates, and so the group and some parents will help us serve dinner that night. (The Ulman runners will be having their own dinner later, so we won't have to provide any extra food.) Given our years of experience with Bike & Build, we are well prepared to welcome a group like this, and all are encouraged to make them feel at home. **If you'd like to help with the July 28 Community Dinner, meet the group, or have questions, please contact the church office.**



A 4,000 MILE JOURNEY

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



WORSHIP, MUSIC, AND SPRING CLEANING. June brought musical variety in abundance, from a delightful benefit concert to the cozy atmosphere of the new Anonymous Coffeehouse to jazz drums in worship. Stacey Steele was commissioned as a new deacon, and many hands pitched in to clear brush and trees, plant gardens, and refinish the front steps—thanks to everyone!

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION

Children's Sunday 2019—Thanks, Marcia!

Our annual celebration of FCC's Church School program this year featured special recognition of **MARCIA CORKINS**, who retired in June after more than two decades of service and leadership in Christian Education. With cards, cake, a scrapbook of memories, and a standing ovation, the congregation shared its enthusiastic, deep appreciation for all that Marcia has given to FCC's children.



To My Church Family

Many thanks to my church family for my very special retirement party. I really appreciate the thoughtful gifts—the gift cards, flowers, cake, scrapbook, messages, and especially hugs from the children. Children have always been a large part of my life, so thank you, too, for sharing yours with me.

Many thanks for your love and support all these years.

Peace and love,
Marcia Corkins



The Flame

Elizabeth Millar Howard (1921-2019)

This poem was written by Elizabeth Howard, a longtime member of our church community who passed away on May 23 at the age of 98. Betty remained closely connected to FCC even after moving to Laconia for the last years of her life, and she is lovingly remembered by many in our congregation. *(Thanks to Linda Jacobs for sharing the poem.)*

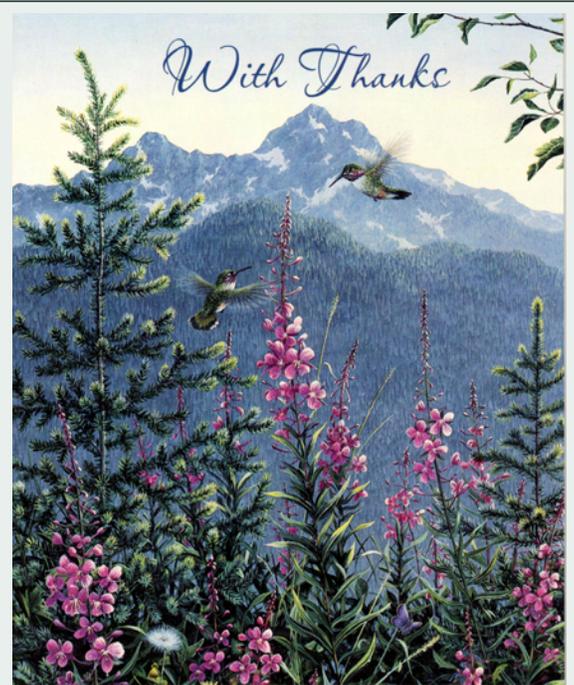
Let my life be as a flame—gentle and wavering,
Going where it must to warm and ignite,
Reaching always toward God, the infinite
source of warmth and light.

The earth colors appear and disappear—
blue of skies, dark of clouds, soft greens of spring,
bright reds and oranges of autumn.

Even my life has known the joy of spring days,
the intensity of August and the sadness
of the last vestiges of summer.

So as the fire burns with brightness in the beginning,
slowly fading into nothingness, may our lives
end slowly and quietly, as the energy of our fuel
becomes spent, leaving only the ashes of memories,
but having accomplished our goals and reasons for being.

Fogg's Cottage, Lake Ossipee, September 1992



Dear Rev. Silver,

This card makes me think of Mom. Her favorite verse is from Psalm 121: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills..."

Thank you for all that was done on Sunday for Mom. She loved you all.

Very gratefully,

Peter W. Howard

June 11, 2019

MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

AUGUST CONCERTS

All in the Sanctuary, FCC

Classicopia: Erma Mellinger and Dan Weiser—Sunday, August 11, 4:00 pm

Pianist Dan Weiser welcomes back beloved mezzo-soprano Erma Mellinger for another delightful vocal program for a summer afternoon. Details still to come, but plan to enjoy these two engaging musicians and some beautiful music! Admission \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; for more, please visit classicopia.org.

Classicopia: Piano Quartets—Saturday, August 17, 7:30 pm

Dan Weiser welcomes back violinist Ralph Allen, cellist Iris Jortner, and violist Marcia Cassidy for a selection of piano quartets. Program details TBD; admission \$20, FCC members \$15, children free.

Deux Saisons: Christopher Schoelen and Keri Lee Pierson—Sunday, August 18 (time TBD)

South Carolina-based classical guitarist Christopher Schoelen and soprano Keri Lee Pierson bring their duet program to Lebanon on a tour through northern New England. For more, please visit christopherschoelen.com.

Musical Drama Camp Returns Next Month!

100 Percent Chance of Rain

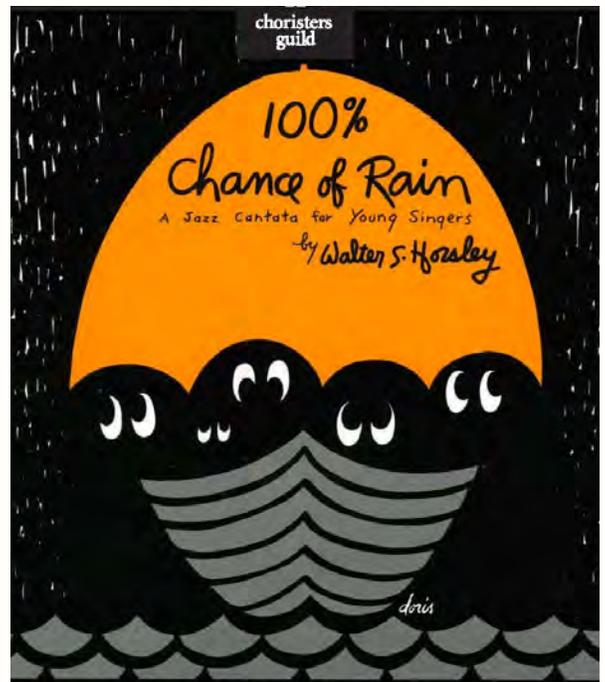
Monday-Friday, August 12-16, 1:00-4:00 pm Daily
(Performance and Dinner Friday at 5:00)

We're excited to bring back FCC's Musical Drama Camp, led once again by the Rev. Jo Shelnett, Henry Danaher, and congregational volunteers. Campers will spend the week enjoying fun activities and working together on a production of *100 Percent Chance of Rain*, a jazzy, tuneful, humorous, and uplifting retelling of the story of Noah's Ark. On Friday afternoon the group will present an open performance for family, friends, and anyone else from our congregation, followed by a pizza dinner.

Get the most out of the summer—Join us for camp!

All children ages 6-12 are invited to participate. Campers need not be members or have a prior connection to our congregation—they just have to be ready to have a great time! There is no cost, although free-will donations to support our Christian Education ministry are gratefully welcome.

Please contact the office with questions, or if you're interested in volunteering!



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

PRAISE IN THE PARK!

Ecumenical Worship with the Lebanon and
WRJ United Methodist Churches

Sunday, July 28, at 10:00 am

Colburn Park (or FCC if rain)

FCC's Musical Drama Camp Returns!

100 Percent Chance of Rain

Monday-Friday, August 12-16

1:00-4:00 pm Daily, Performance Friday at 5:00

All Children 6-12 Welcome!



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

AUGUST CONCERTS

All in the Sanctuary, FCC

Classicopia: Erma Mellinger and Dan Weiser—Sunday, August 11, 4:00 pm

Admission \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; for more, please visit classicopia.org.

Classicopia: Piano Quartets—Saturday, August 17, 7:30 pm

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Deux Saisons: Christopher Schoelen and Keri Lee Pierson—Sunday, August 18 (time TBD)

Details TBD; for more about the performers, please visit christopherschoelen.com.