



# Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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## The Pastoral Perspective

The big story as I write this is the spread of COVID-19, which is the official name of the coronavirus that first emerged in Wuhan, China, at the end of last year. In just a few months, some 90,000 people have been infected worldwide and 3,000 have died, most of them, again, in China. Comparisons are already being drawn with the Spanish flu epidemic of 1918, in which an estimated 500 million were infected and some 50 million died—675,000 of them here in the United States. So, are we facing a modern day version of the Black Death? Or is this all a lot of overblown hokey, given that this season's flu illnesses will claim 32-54 million victims, of whom 18,000-46,000 will die.

I'm not a doctor, and this is not a medical newsletter. But as your pastor, and as a member of this faith community, I do see all of us having a responsibility to take an emerging health danger seriously but calmly; to provide comfort and support to those dealing with anxiety and fear or actual illness; and to remind ourselves that while science and religion have much to say to each other, they do not speak interchangeably. I can say with a high degree of confidence that COVID-19 is not being inflicted upon us either by a wrathful God or by a malevolent Devil. It is a simple case of nature making itself known to us, of a virus doing what viruses do, leaping from one species to another with devastating efficiency.

Yes, we should pray to God for those who are ill and those who care for them, seeking strength, comfort, and healing. Yes, we should remember that our church is open to all, including those who don't look like us. And yes, we should take to our hearts the words spoken in Scripture by divine messengers to Mary, the shepherds, and the women at the cave where Jesus had been laid to rest after the crucifixion—"Be not afraid."

"Be not afraid" doesn't mean setting aside precautions or indulging in foolhardy behavior. It means having the courage to face whatever life

*Continued on Page 5*

### *Daily Lenten Reflections from the Rev. Steve Silver*

Every day through Easter Sunday, receive a devotional reflection by email. Sign up by sending an email to [silver@fccleb.org](mailto:silver@fccleb.org).

# SUNDAY SERVICE

## Lenten Lunch Bag Offering

Beginning MARCH 10, our Church School children will again distribute decorated collection bags for two important organizations:

**WISE (wiseuv.org) and  
Epilogos Charities (epilogos.org)**

WISE seeks to end gender-based violence through survivor-centered advocacy and education. Our Lenten collection will fund welcome bags given to the children and women at WISE's Safe Home.

Epilogos seeks to improve lives of people in San Jose Villanueva, El Salvador, a model for focused global outreach and a town dear to many at FCC. Our offering funds scholarships for SJV's school.

**In both cases, this Lenten offering allows FCC's children to help other children in challenging circumstances, encouraging them to consider stewardship as a way to share God's love.**

You are asked to use the decorated bags to collect savings from the sacrifice of a regular treat during Lent. Suggestions include skipping a daily coffee or latte; foregoing munchies when watching TV; or having dinner at home and contributing the cost of eating out. **Whatever your sacrifices, please plan to return your donations on PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 5.**

## One Great Hour of Sharing

**SPECIAL MISSION OFFERING—MARCH 22**

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is a vital, nationwide UCC offering for mission initiatives around the world. It supports healthcare, education, agriculture, emergency relief, and refugee assistance in over 130 countries. OGHS funds are leveraged with local, national, and global service partners to maximize their impact in these areas.

***Please give as generously as you can. Thanks!***

**HOLY WEEK IS APRIL 5-12**

## Guest Preacher—Sunday, March 22 The Rev. Gordon M. Rankin

**Conference Minister, NH Conference UCC**

Plan to join us on March 22 as we welcome the Rev. Gordon Rankin, NH Conference Minister. In addition to preaching and leading worship, Rev. Rankin will engage us in a conversation at coffee hour about the UCC, the work of the NH Conference, his own life in ministry, and more.

## Do Your Part to Fill the Cart!

All are invited to join the fight against local poverty and food insecurity by leaving contributions in our shopping cart in the Parish Hall. FCC designates a different cart beneficiary each month.

Our March shopping-cart collection will benefit

### THE UPPER VALLEY HAVEN

with non-perishable food (cereal, peanut butter, tuna, pasta, canned vegetables and soups, etc.), personal-care items (bathroom supplies, hygiene products, diapers, etc.), and other needs (electric blankets, sweatpants, grocery bags).

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

## Community Dinner

**Sunday, March 22, 5:00 pm**

*Leaders: THE ELLISONS*

Many thanks to **Alyson Danyew-Ellison and Terry Ellison** for organizing this month's dinner! Please lend a hand in providing this important meal to our neighbors—especially if this is your first time.

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

## Queued for Coffee Hour

**March—Diaconate**

**April—Mission and Social Action**

**May—Women of the Church**

# MARCH 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> 10a Worship/CCC (Communion) 11:15a MSA 12:30p Outing Club: Fire and Ice!	<b>2</b> 5:30p Cub Scouts (Girls)	<b>3</b> 7p BSA Troop 279	<b>4</b> 5:30p Cub Scout Pack Committee 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	<b>5</b> 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	<b>6</b> 11:45a LHS Life Skills Class	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> 10a Worship/CCC 12:30p Outing Club: Fire and Ice! (Back-up Date)	<b>9</b> 5:30p Cub Scouts (Girls) 7p Diaconate	<b>10</b> 7p BSA Troop 279	<b>11</b> 8a-4p NH-WIC 5:30p Cub Scouts (Webelos/Tigers) 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	<b>12</b> 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	<b>13</b> 11:45a LHS Life Skills Class 7:30p Anonymous Coffeehouse	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> 10a Worship/CCC	<b>16</b> 12:45p Spiritual Directors Group	<b>17</b> 7p Church Council 7p BSA Troop 279/Committee	<b>18</b> 5:30p Cub Scouts (Webelos/Tigers) 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	<b>19</b> 12:30p Grafton- Orange-Sullivan Assn (CoCM) 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	<b>20</b> 11:45a LHS Life Skills Class 12p UVMC Rehearsal 7p Revels North Spring Singers	<b>21</b> 4p UVMC Faculty Showcase
<b>22</b> 10a Worship/CCC (Guest Preacher: Gordon Rankin) 11:15a Bd of Govs 5p Community Dinner	<b>23</b> 5:30p Cub Scouts (Girls)	<b>24</b> 7p BSA Troop 279	<b>25</b> 5:30p Cub Scouts (Webelos/Tigers) 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	<b>26</b> 11a-7p NH-WIC 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	<b>27</b> 11:45a LHS Life Skills Class 7:30p Anonymous Coffeehouse	<b>28</b> 9a Master Class: E. Borowsky and Students
<b>29</b> 10a Worship/CCC	<b>30</b> 5:30p Cub Scouts (Girls)	<b>31</b> 7p BSA Troop 279	<b>1</b> 5:30p Cub Scout Pack Committee 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	<b>2</b> 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	<b>3</b> 11:45a LHS Life Skills Class 6-9p Leb Rec Dept Quilters	<b>4</b> 9a-5p Leb Rec Dept Quilters
<b>5</b> PALM SUNDAY 10a Liturgy of the Palms/CCC (Communion) 11:15a MSA 3p Piano Recital: Students of V. Dubroshina	<b>6</b> 5:30p Cub Scouts (Girls)	<b>7</b> 7p BSA Troop 279	<b>8</b> 8a-4p NH-WIC 5:30p Cub Scouts (Webelos/Tigers) 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	<b>9</b> MAUNDY THURSDAY 7p Communion and Tenebrae	<b>10</b> GOOD FRIDAY 12-3p Seven Last Words 7p Service of the Word and Prayer	<b>11</b>
	<b>H</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>E</b>
				<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>K</b>

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

# COMMITTEE NOTES

## ANNUAL MEETING 2020

FCC's 2020 Annual Meeting was an efficient, straightforward affair. After Moderator Amy Driscoll confirmed a quorum and the Rev. Steve Silver offered an invocation, **committee reports** proceeded smoothly, with few additions to what had been printed in the 2019 Annual Report. Trustee chair Valerie Nevel read aloud the names of those whose **bequests** have provided so generously for FCC over the years, and Stewardship chair Jon Scott added thanks for generations of congregation members who have supported the church financially.

On behalf of **Mission and Social Action**, Kathy Beckett noted that the committee wanted to serve the congregation better in determining purposes and beneficiaries of our mission support. Corrine Erskine acknowledged that her otherwise thorough **church history** omitted mention of the 23 shoebox gifts donated for Operation Christmas Child in November.

Nominating chair Amy Driscoll reviewed a revised **committee slate** given out at the meeting, pointing out a few updates since the printed report. She explained the difference between positions that are marked *vacant* (mandated by our by-laws) and those that are *open* (allowable but not required). Acknowledging the number of positions that need to be filled, Amy invited everyone to consider volunteering. She thanked those who already have found meaning in some service context or volunteer calling, but she recognized that we often end

up asking and relying on the same group of people.

Barb Jones added a plea specifically for **Nominating Committee** help, and Terry Ellison and Kathy Beckett both volunteered to join. In another nomination from the floor, Steve Teeter offered to serve on Christian Education.

Wendell Smith confirmed that he would continue as the Board of Governors' representative on the Finance Committee. He also asked whether the **Scouting** program had representation on any committee, offering to serve in that role; it was clarified that Council oversees our relationship with the Scouts.

Valerie Nevel confirmed that the representatives on the **Finance Committee** will be chosen by the other relevant committees, and she pointed out that the Auditor role is being filled by Parkers Accounting, a hired consultant. Amy clarified that both the Auditor and Assistant Treasurer positions still have to be listed because they both remain in the church's *By-laws*.

Since just four positions are listed on the nominating roster for **Church Council**, it was explained that the membership of Council consists mostly of the chairs of all the other committees and programs, chosen by the committees themselves and thus not elected by the congregation at Annual Meeting. This group of representatives and the four elected positions make up Council's voting members. Any of the congregation may attend any meeting of Church Council (or any other committee) without voting on business items.

The full slate of nominees for committee positions was approved unanimously at the meeting.

Amy Driscoll, as both Moderator and outgoing Nominating chair, asked that we all seriously consider our **collective volunteer load**. This has long been a challenge for our regular membership, and the many committees and roles established decades ago do not necessarily align with the activities, interests, and responsibilities that we currently need to accommodate and cover as a congregation. Rev. Steve Silver cautioned that assessing and revising our committee structure requires careful deliberation and may be long, as he's discussed with pastoral colleagues who have recently undertaken this process at their churches, such as the Rev. Amy Hayden at Lyme Congregational Church.

While he recognizes the importance of committee restructuring, Steve maintained that our priority now should be our **capital campaign**. Despite wide agreement about its necessity, campaign planning has

### March Meetings

Mission/Social Action	3/1, 11:15
Diaconate	3/9, 7:00
Church Council	3/17, 7:00
Board of Governors	3/22, 11:15

### April Meetings

Mission/Social Action	4/5, 11:15
Diaconate	4/13, 7:00
Church Council	4/21, 7:00
Board of Governors	4/26, 11:15

## COMMITTEE NOTES

moved slowly, and it's important to make some public, congregational affirmation of its goals. Steve then reviewed these three broad purposes, as the planning committee has refined them—Community Care (our facilities for congregational service and ministry), Creation Care (environmental stewardship and resource conservation), and Mission (our commitment to direct ten percent of the total raised toward local and global mission purposes). Each area offers scalable goals that can be addressed in whole or in part depending on money raised. The active campaign will have a short duration of just three months, after which pledges may be paid over a period of years. Steve thanked the individual members of the planning committee (Lola Baldwin, Kathy

Beckett, Amy Driscoll, Corrine Erskine, Barb Jones, Barb Laro, Sue Pratt, Jon Scott, and Wendell Smith). Those at the meeting unanimously endorsed the inauguration of the campaign.

The Moderator invited questions and discussion next of the Finance Committee's **proposed budget** for 2020, as published in the Annual Report. Without further discussion, the congregation unanimously approved the budget for this year.

In another item of new business, Steve Teeter proposed that FCC's **music library** be named in honor and memory of Ruth Friend, who passed away in June of 2019. There was general agreement that such a recognition would be an appropriate and thoughtful gesture, and it was

recommended that the Music Committee follow up.

Before the meeting adjourned, the Rev. Steve Silver thanked everyone for participating, and for offering such kind recognition of the **tenth anniversary of his service at FCC**. He expressed his gratitude for the congregation's vital role in his own faith journey, and he observed the passage of time, the growth of the church's families, and the ongoing history of congregational events. He shared his hopes for our future and reflected that we are together all called to be servants.

After Steve closed the meeting with the benediction, the congregation sang the final hymn and adjourned for a sumptuous, delicious potluck lunch and great fellowship.

### 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 each year when we make our pledges. Let our sacred, holy work here at FCC please the Lord, as we strive to better the world.

**We are grateful to have received 32 pledges so far for 2020! Regardless of its size, your stewardship commitment is vital to FCC's mission and ministry. Thanks to all for doing good and sharing gifts!**

*Offering envelopes for 2020 are in the Parish Hall. Please help yourself to a box and record it on the list.*

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

throws at us, no matter how hard that might be, to have faith that the God we know in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit will be with us in all we do.

As our community, here in the Upper Valley and around the world, continues to monitor and contend with COVID-19, I pray that we will all stay informed, wash our hands, and work towards the day when we can see this illness as a fading memory, and not a present threat.

Yours faithfully, *Steve*

## COMMITTEE NOTES

### DIACONATE

In February the Deacons welcomed their two **newest members**, Linda Gerlach and Dawn Troutman. Barb Teeter is now serving as Diaconate chair, with Alyson Danyew-Ellison and Bob Gerlach continuing as Treasurer and Secretary, respectively. Stacey Steele volunteered to serve as a co-chair. Barb also asked for a second Diaconate representative on the Pastoral Relations Committee, for which Bob volunteered.

Following up an Annual Meeting discussion, the Deacons anticipate an update of **church membership**

rolls and their individual member contact lists. The group discussed the basis on which inactive members should be retained, depending on how recently they've had contact with the church. The Deacons also considered ways of introducing and integrating new members, and raised the prospect of a new church directory, perhaps self-published rather than produced by an outside photography studio. (*Note: Copies of the 2016 directory are available for anyone who would like one.*)

In his pastor's report, Steve Silver noted the installation of the first of

two railings on the chancel steps, of which the Deacons enthusiastically approved. He commended interim organist Susan Sorensen for her work so far, adding that the search for a permanent successor is underway. He also thanked everyone, on behalf of his family, for the recognition of his tenth anniversary at FCC.

Steve invited the Deacons to attend Eliot Fay's ecclesiastical council on March 8 in Bradford, VT. This is the next step in Eliot's journey toward ordination and a pastoral call, ideally back in New Hampshire, where his family would like to return.

**LENT IS A TIME FOR US TO REFLECT** upon our relationship with God, to examine our walk with Jesus, and to take stock of our lives as we prepare for the great miracle and gift of Easter.

**LENT IS A TIME TO LOOK WITHIN** our souls and hearts, to set aside those things that separate us from God and God's people.

**LENT IS A TIME TO JOURNEY** into the wilderness, so that we may fully enter into the New Creation.

## HOLY WEEK WORSHIP AT FCC

### April 5—Palm Sunday

10 am: Liturgy of the Palms, Sanctuary

### April 9—Maundy Thursday

7 pm: Service of Communion and Tenebrae, Stripping of the Altar

### April 10—Good Friday

12-3 pm: Quiet Meditation on the Seven Last Words, Sanctuary

7 pm: Service of the Word and Prayer, Sanctuary

### April 12—EASTER SUNDAY

6 am: Ecumenical Sunrise Service, Colburn Park

6:30 am: Community Breakfast (*beneficiary TBD*), Parish Hall

10 am: Festival Worship Service, Sanctuary

# THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION

## Happy 10th Anniversary, Steve!

On February 9—Annual Meeting Sunday—we all celebrated ten years since Steve Silver began his ministry as our pastor here at FCC. With a box of donut holes, a cake, a bookmark made by the children of the church, and gift certificates for an evening at the movies and more books (!!!), the congregation offered just a small measure of its abundant gratitude for Steve's decade of pastoral care and leadership. And many thanks to Rachel and Chip, too, for making it through with him!



## ANNUAL MEETING POTLUCK!



# THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



**A FULL FEBRUARY.** On Scout Sunday on February 16, Linda Gerlach and Dawn Troutman were commissioned as Deacons; Will Ögmundson returned for ragtime on the 8th; cellist Ben Kulp played superbly in worship with Susan Sorensen; the Chong-Hall family served up Community Dinner; and Steve Silver opened Lent with Ashes to Go.





# MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music  
at the  
Meetinghouse

## Spring Concerts

at First Congregational Church

### **Revels North Spring Singers—Friday, March 20, at 7:00 pm**

The multi-generational community chorus of Revels North welcomes spring with a popular program celebrating the rich, living tradition of folk music. *Admission by free-will donation; more at [revelsnorth.org](http://revelsnorth.org).*

### **Upper Valley Music Center Faculty Showcase—Saturday, March 21, at 4:00 pm**

All are welcome to this diverse program featuring the vocal and instrumental excellence of the faculty next door at UVMC. *Adults \$15, under 18 free; proceeds benefit UVMC tuition assistance fund. More at [www.uvmusic.org](http://www.uvmusic.org).*

### **Classicopia: Dan Weiser and Roseminna Watson—Saturday, April 18, at 7:30 pm**

Pianist Daniel Weiser welcomes back virtuoso violinist and local favorite Roseminna Watson for what's sure to be a wonderful program. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; for more, visit [classicopia.org](http://classicopia.org).*

### **Camerata New England: Spring Piano Trios—Sunday, April 19, at 2:00 pm**

This acclaimed chamber music group returns to FCC with glorious piano trios by Mozart and Brahms. Violinist Omar Chen Güey, cellist Linda Galvan, and pianist Hannah Shields have all performed on international stages. *Adults \$28, under 18 free; tickets online at [cameratanewengland.org](http://cameratanewengland.org) or at the door.*

### **Bel Canto Chamber Singers: American Voices—Sat., May 2, 7:30 pm / Sun., May 3, 5:00 pm**

Directed by Jane Woods, the Bel Canto Chamber Singers explore a wide variety of American music, from the colonial period and the Shakers to 20th-century jazz standards, gospel, and spiritual arrangements. The program features a newly commissioned work by Vermont composer Travis Ramsey, based on three Walt Whitman poems. *Adults \$15, students \$10, under 13 free; more at [www.belcantosingers.org/concerts.html](http://www.belcantosingers.org/concerts.html).*

### **Upper Valley Music Center Suzuki Solo Recitals—Sat., May 2, 2:00 pm / Sun., May 3, 12:30 pm**

The students in UVMC's excellent Suzuki program offer their year-end recitals. *Free and open to the public.*

### **Upper Valley Music Center Sing & Play Festival—Saturday, May 16, at 12:00 pm**

The annual Sing & Play event returns, with a full afternoon of performances, jams, and pick-up ensembles around downtown Lebanon. Music for and by our community! *More at [uvmusic.org/event/sing-play-festival](http://uvmusic.org/event/sing-play-festival).*

### **Joseph Jewett and Friends: Violin, Cello, and Piano—Saturday, May 16, at 7:30 pm**

### **Classicopia: Piano Trios by Women Composers—Saturday, May 30, at 7:30 pm**

### **Lebanon's newest hit... The ANONYMOUS COFFEEHOUSE—Fridays, Mar. 13 and 27, Apr. 17, 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).*

## 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)  
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**First Congregational Church of Lebanon**

10 South Park Street  
PO Box 230  
Lebanon, NH 03766

DATED MATERIAL  
PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**HOLY WEEK**  
AT FCC  
**APRIL 5-12**

<b>Palm Sunday</b>	<b>10a</b> Liturgy of the Palms, Children's Procession
<b>Maundy Thursday</b>	<b>7p</b> Communion, Tenebrae, Stripping of Altar
<b>Good Friday</b>	<b>12-3p</b> Quiet Meditation on the Seven Last Words <b>7p</b> Service of the Word and Prayer
<b>Easter Sunday</b>	<b>6a</b> Ecumenical Sunrise Service ( <i>Colburn Park</i> ) <b>6:30a</b> Community Breakfast ( <i>Beneficiary TBD</i> ) <b>10a</b> Festival Worship Service, Easter Egg Hunt



**Music**  
*at the*  
**Meetinghouse**

**SPRING CONCERTS**  
*at First Congregational Church*

*Revels North Spring Singers—Friday, March 20, at 7:00 pm*

*Upper Valley Music Center Faculty Showcase—Saturday, March 21, at 4:00 pm*

*Classicopia: Dan Weiser and Roseminna Watson—Saturday, April 18, at 7:30 pm*

*Camerata New England: Spring Piano Trios—Sunday, April 19, at 2:00 pm*

*Bel Canto Chamber Singers: American Voices—Sat., May 2, 7:30 pm / Sun., May 3, 5:00 pm*

*And Lebanon's newest hit... The ANONYMOUS COFFEEHOUSE—Fridays, Mar. 13 and 27, Apr. 17, all 7:30 pm*