



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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The Pastoral Perspective

It's hard to believe, but Easter was a couple of weeks ago. We're now in the midst of Eastertide, and Pentecost beckons. A new world awaits!

So, why do I feel blasé? Why do I feel that nothing has changed? The Red Sox continue to disappoint. And the less said about the goings-on in Washington, DC, the better. Closer to home, the new fire station project continues, the structure growing each day.

But things do change. As I announced on Easter, the City Council has reversed its earlier decision regarding Church Street and has restored its familiar two-way traffic pattern upon completion of the station.

Someday, the project will be complete. No more banging, no more digging. No more disruption. I can almost feel it, I can almost see it.

And that's what it's like to be alive at this time. We're in what is an "already-not yet" moment. That means we can envision the future, maybe even taste it—though tomorrow has yet to arrive. This is what in theological terms is known as eschatology. It's how the Church explains Jesus' resurrection, the fulfillment of God's promises, and the still-sorry state of our world.

Back to the fire station. The framing is complete and interior walls and flooring are going up. External walls, too. Before we know it, the fire trucks will return. The station will be done. It's an already-not yet moment. We live with the reality of the new station, but we wait for it to open. Already-not yet.

So, live into the promise of Easter. Jesus has been resurrected. And everything is going to be different....

Yours faithfully,

Steve

SUNDAY SERVICE

Mother's Day is Blanket Sunday

We're pleased to participate again in the CWS BLANKETS program, a special mission project by which Church World Service offers blankets and other relief supplies to people in crisis around the world (for more details, visit cwsblankets.org). Please consider a contribution in honor or memory of the mother(s) in your life. A minimum of \$10 is suggested, but any amount is welcome. *Dedications will appear in the bulletin* **MOTHER'S DAY, MAY 11.**

Please submit your dedication information to the church office by Thursday, May 8. Contributions may be sent in after that date.



Spend Some Time in the Corner!

The **Children's Community Corner**, that is! We'd love to have more adults engage with FCC's fantastic kids, whether on Sundays or some other time. **The purpose is mentorship and guidance, not just supervision. Please consider offering your time. MANY THANKS!**

If you're interested in participating, please contact Rachel Silver at rachelsilver@live.com.

Children's Sunday is June 1

Kids Lead Worship with Readings and Music Presentations to Children and Volunteers

Join us for this beloved annual celebration of FCC's children! They will participate in worship and share with us some of what they've learned throughout the year.

Community Dinner Is Served!

Sunday, May 25, at 5:00 pm

Leader: BOB ROSS

Many thanks to Bob Ross for stepping forward to lead this month's dinner! Food signups to come.

All are warmly invited to come, eat, and share fellowship, regardless of need or affiliation.

Consider Leading a Future Dinner

If you're interested, menu resources are available, FCC can reimburse costs, and you'll *always* have help! Questions? Contact the church office.

As we continue to restore our monthly dinners as a focus of outreach, anyone can collaborate on leading one—friends, neighbors, coworkers, teams, book groups... ANYONE!

Steve Silver's Sabbatical Begins in June

For his second sabbatical this summer, Rev. Silver looks forward to pursuing theological study, mission experience, and travel—along with a “sabbath” of rest.

Steve will be away from FCC starting June 2 until late September. The Diaconate is still making our arrangements for summer worship coverage.

All Are Welcome to Worship at FCC Sundays at 10:00 AM (In-Person/Zoom)

Ushers, Zoom Greeters, Liturgists Needed!

All are invited to serve in these essential worship roles, and no prior experience is required.

Would You Like to Serve Coffee Hour?

Coffee hour is a beloved time for fellowship after worship. Please consider hosting a Sunday or two!

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

PENTECOST SUNDAY IS JUNE 8

Worship at 10:00 am—Wear Red!

MAY 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 10a Worship/CCC 2p VT Traditions Touring Group 5p Community Dinner	28 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program	29 1p Cameo Baroque 3:30p FCC Choir	30 3-6:30p UVMC 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	1 3:45p UVMC Children's Choir 7p NA Group	2 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers (dress rehearsal)	3 7p Bel Canto: On Beauty
4 10a Worship/CCC (Communion) 4p Bel Canto: On Beauty	5 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program	6 1p Cameo Baroque 3:30p FCC Choir	7 3-6:30p UVMC 7p Bel Canto CS Annual Mtg	8 3:45p UVMC Children's Choir 7p NA Group	9 7:30p Anon Coffeehouse (Season Finale)	10 12:30p Student Recital (Borowsky) 7p Cameo Baroque Benefit
11 <i>Mother's Day</i> 10a Worship/CCC	12 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program 7p Diaconate	13 1p Cameo Baroque 3:30p FCC Choir 5:30p UVMC Comm Chorus 7p Council	14 8a-3:30p WIC 3-6:30p UVMC	15 9:30a UVMC Cello Choir 3:45p UVMC Children's Choir 7p NA Group	16	17 9a-4p UVMC Sing & Play 30!
18 10a Worship/CCC 11:30a Bylaws 1p UVMC Sing & Play 30!	19 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program	20 1p Cameo Baroque 3:30p FCC Choir	21 3-6:30p UVMC	22 11a-6p WIC 3:45p UVMC Children's Choir 7p NA Group	23 6:30p Upper Valley Coalition	24 7:30p Classicopia: Alive and Kicking
25 10a Worship/CCC 5p Community Dinner	26 <i>Memorial Day</i> No UVMC	27 1p Cameo Baroque 3:30p FCC Choir 7p Cantabile Rehearsal	28 3-6:30p UVMC (make-up week)	29 3:45p UVMC Children's Choir (make-up week) 7p NA Group	30	31
1 10a Worship/CCC (Communion) 4p Cantabile: Oh Canada!	2 1p Acacia Reh. 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program (make-up week)	3 1p Cameo Baroque 3:30p FCC Choir	4 3-6:30p UVMC (make-up week)	5 10a Acacia Reh. 3:45p UVMC Children's Choir (make-up week) 7p NA Group	6	7 12p LHS Alumni Reunion '75 7p Upper Valley Voices: Standing Strong

If you have questions or corrections regarding any event, please notify us at church@fccleb.org or 603-448-4281.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Jon Scott opened Council's April meeting with a personal reflection about an accident he suffered early in life, which continues to offer him valuable perspective and gratitude amid any challenges he faces. He explained that such perspective is part of what draws him to a faith community like ours, reminding everyone to recognize and thank important people in their lives while that's still possible.

Jon then **invited everyone to reflect and check in** regarding the current stresses of life and political affairs. Linda Gerlach expressed shock at all that's happened in just 2-3 months; trying to remain optimistic and not give in to despair, she worried that present challenges seem uniquely dire compared to previous struggles. Brian Clancy shared the hopeful energy of the previous Saturday's demonstrations, which Linda noted are vital in influencing our elected representatives. Linda Jacobs added her plea for government officials to serve all people and common good, rather than pure self-interest. Jon observed that social movements can only succeed when bolstered by the arts, music, and grounding in faith.

In his **pastor's report** Rev. Steve Silver offered some details about evolving sabbatical plans. He has registered for a course at Baylor University in June with theologian NT Wright, exploring the Book of Isaiah and its relationship to the New Testament. Steve encouraged everyone to take part in all Holy Week services for the full experience from Passion to

Resurrection. Adding that he is still preoccupied with his health, he again thanked everyone for their cards, calls, questions, and other expressions of support in the past month.

For the **Diaconate**, Linda Gerlach acknowledged recent confusion in communion procedure, explaining that the group is planning a training session to refresh everyone on that procedure. She herself ensured that communion happened smoothly on Maundy Thursday, and Linda Jacobs assured everyone that the previous situation was easily resolved.

For **Mission and Social Action**, Linda Jacobs reported on the Upper Valley Haven's campaign to build a 20-bed emergency shelter and community center in White River Junction. She encouraged FCC to offer financial support, both organizationally and from individual members, and the committee recommended we give \$500 toward this project, which Council unanimously supported. Linda noted that the Haven is the current shopping-cart beneficiary, with a needs list posted on the cart. She confirmed that the committee itself could not lead a Community Dinner because of its membership limitations. She instead proposed that Council lead a dinner, insisting that others besides Corrine Erskine and herself would need to be involved. The Callahans and a Lebanon Middle School group are leading April, and in May several Council members will be away. Jon suggested that both the UV Haven project and the need for new dinner hosts be communicated to the congregation.

Jon offered a brief report for the **Personnel Committee**, which is working on several items. The group has discussed raising compensation for Jill Gravel, who weekly cleans our bathrooms. Jon also recognized that while the budget approved at Annual Meeting included compensation increases for all staff, those are not yet in effect; direct follow-up with staff members is forthcoming in the next month. The committee is also addressing a lack of specific policies for sick leave, vacation time, and public holidays. (Steve noted that in his case those details are included in his call agreement.) The group further seeks to correlate health insurance benefits with the actual cost of insurance. Valerie Nevel has worked hard in leading this effort to codify and improve staff policies.

On behalf of the **Board of Governors**, Jon summarized efforts to schedule the front-steps renovation, which depends both on our events calendar and a volunteer project to dismantle the current steps. Brian discussed with Walter Scott the recent flooding in the Sanctuary cellar, considering its cause and possible remedies. Jon will meet with Susan Montmagny's son Ben, an audio-video consultant,

Committee Meetings

The following regular meetings will happen remotely via Zoom:

Diaconate	5/12 and 6/9, 7:00
Council	5/13 and 6/10, 7:00
Bylaws Review	5/18, 11:30
MSA Committee	6/23, 7:00

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

NEWS AND NOTES

regarding upgrades to the Sanctuary sound system. Ben van Vliet from UVMC will be involved, and other input is welcome, to improve audio for in-person and remote participants alike. Jon expects the process to be deliberative, with no plan until fall.

Speaking as **Treasurer**, Bob Gerlach asked Council members what kind of financial reports they prefer to receive each month, noting that our annual budget doesn't break down into twelve even months. (He noted, for example, that both income and expenses came in under 25% of annual figures through the year's first quarter.) The variations fall within expected margins, though, and Jon added that our endowment funds have served us well in smoothing out those irregularities.

DIACONATE

Deb Scott opened the Diaconate's April meeting with a reflection on Hagar, the Egyptian slave who with Abraham conceived Ishmael, father of a great nation, and Abraham's wife Sarah, who conceived Isaac, the heir to the covenant promise. Thus, she noted, the peoples of the world are all related; they should recognize that and get along better.

Rev. Silver noted that his **sabbatical plans** await approval by the Personnel Committee, but he expects it to start in early June with an opportunity to study with NT Wright in Texas. The Deacons discussed responsibilities for leading worship in his absence, generally intending to maintain the familiar order of worship to meet the congregation's expectations. Deb

expressed interest in leading worship one Sunday, and an ordained pastor such as Bob Ross will need to offer communion. Sermons should relate to a Bible passage, which need not be from the prescribed lectionary. Steve will draft a message with Linda Gerlach inviting the full congregation to indicate any interest in leading worship and discuss options with him in May. Based on that response, Steve will approach Gail Dimick about her availability to fill out the summer schedule.

The Deacons discussed Holy Week, and Steve encouraged everyone to participate in the complete liturgical experience. He also asked the group to review their communion service responsibilities, with more discussion to come at the May meeting.



SPRING SCENES. From a cozy Coffeehouse in March to gardening in late April, FCC emerged from winter in music and service—amidst ongoing construction disruption.



OUR LOCAL AND GLOBAL MISSION

The Children's Community Corner Thanks You!

This year's LENTEN LUNCH BAG OFFERING brought in \$700! We'll divide that total between assistance for families who find refuge at WISE's safe house and our annual support for student scholarships in San Jose Villanueva, El Salvador, through Epilogos Charities. *Many thanks to our generous congregation!*



THANKS FOR SHARING!

We're grateful to report that our congregation gave \$1,385 this spring to the UCC's One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering. With this donation we fund a variety of initiatives in healthcare, education, agriculture, refugee relief, and emergency assistance worldwide. A national, interdenominational campaign, OGHS is the UCC's most vital mission effort of the year, and we're proud to support it!

end violence
wise
share hope ♦ change lives

Volunteer and Donate!

Serving the Upper Valley from its facility in Lebanon, WISE provides crisis services, community education, and advocacy for those affected by domestic abuse, sexual violence, and stalking. It relies on both trained staff and dedicated, empathetic volunteer advocates.

To learn more about volunteering for WISE, please visit wiseuv.org/join-us/#training, email volunteers@wiseuv.org, or call 603-448-5922.



Supporting and Helping Asylees and Refugees

Founded in 2020, SHARE is dedicated to helping asylum seekers and refugees in the Upper Valley meet basic needs for housing, security, and community. SHARE funds legal assistance and offers resources for education, job training, and cultural navigation. Its volunteers are committed to respecting refugees' own goals, decisions, and resourcefulness.

For more information about SHARE's work, activities, and volunteer opportunities, visit sharevtnh.org or email sharevtnh@gmail.com.

Please join this vital local effort to welcome immigrants and refugees into our community.

Youth Treatment, Recovery, and Prevention Services



Second Growth strives to reduce substance abuse and violence among adolescents, working in schools and communities to offer training, counseling, group support, and prevention education. Its programs—including wellness education, suicide prevention efforts, and several summer camp sessions—build courage and resiliency skills to help young people navigate the challenges of adolescence.

If you'd like to learn more about Second Growth or donate, visit www.secondgrowth.org or contact director@secondgrowth.org.

Do Your Part to Fill the Cart! for

The Upper Valley Haven

Please consider a donation, and thanks!

Join the fight against local poverty and food insecurity by leaving contributions in our shopping cart in the Parish Hall, to benefit area service organizations. We're now collecting non-perishable food and personal-care items on behalf of the Haven. For a list of their current and ongoing needs, visit uppervalleyhaven.org.

MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



**Music
at the
Meetinghouse**

Spring Concerts

All in the Sanctuary at First Congregational Church

The Anonymous Coffeehouse: Season Finale!—Friday, May 9, at 7:30 pm

Our comfy community venue for live music wraps up its fifth season as an informal “listening room” for the finest folk musicians in New England. *Free admission, donations welcome. For more, visit anoncoffee.org.*

Cameo Baroque Benefit Concert: Handel and His Rivals—Saturday, May 10, at 7:00 pm

This superb ensemble explores the world of G. F. Handel, offering his music alongside pieces by John Frederick Lampe, Thomas Augustus Arne, and Giovanni Battista Bonocini, as well as selections from *The Beggar’s Opera*. *Free-will donation to benefit Vermont Foodbank; more at vtfoodbank.org and cameoarts.org.*

Upper Valley Music Center: Sing and Play 30 for 30!—Saturday-Sunday, May 17-18

Celebrating 30 years of music-making by each other, for each other! Recitals, class concerts, and individual performances will happen at FCC—and all over town! *Free and open to all; registration and more at uvmusic.org.*

Classicopia: Alive and Kicking (Trios by Living Composers)—Saturday, May 24, at 7:30 pm

Pianist Dan Weiser welcomes back the Borowsky siblings, violinist Emmanuel and cellist Frances, for a wonderful program of trios by Heleen Verleur, Paul Schoenfield, and Stephen Dankner—each drawing freely from various genres and periods. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; more at classicopia.org.*

Cantabile Women’s Voices: Oh Canada!—Sunday, June 1, at 4:00 pm

Directed by Kathy Sherlock-Green, this superb women’s ensemble presents a program surveying the choral landscape of our northern neighbor, in its rich traditional heritage as well as its contemporary composers.

Adults \$15 suggested donation, online or at the door; more details at cantabilewomen.org.

Upper Valley Voices: Standing Strong—Saturday, June 7, at 7:00 pm

Director Kevin Quigley and one of the area’s premier choral groups share a diverse collection of music exploring how fear confronts us in our lives—and how we can recognize, neutralize, and even utilize its force to empower ourselves. *Adults \$15 prepay online (\$20 at the door), students \$10; more at uppervalleyvoices.org.*

Acacia Chamber Music: Quartets, Trios, and Duos—Sunday, June 8, at 4:00 pm

Leslie Stroud (flute), Jason Smoller (oboe), Meghan Donahue (clarinet), and Matthew Odell (piano) return with more “music in uncommonly heard combinations,” this time by Camille Saint-Saëns, Darius Milhaud, Malcolm Arnold, and Heitor Villa-Lobos. *Free-will donation; for more about Acacia Music, find them on Facebook.*

Classicopia: Four Seasons Remix (Conversing with Vivaldi)—Sunday, June 22, at 2:00 pm

Dan Weiser joins violinist Veronika Sveshnikova and cellist Jacques-Pierre Malan for an intriguing juxtaposition of piano trios by Max Richter and Astor Piazzolla, each of which responds in distinctly divergent ways to Antonio Vivaldi’s best-known work. *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; more at classicopia.org.*

Oak Hill Music Festival: Season Four!—Week of June 23-29 (Concert Schedule TBD)

Having launched this innovative festival in 2022, Hanover-born bassoonist Leah Kohn and her violinist husband Niv Ashkenazi return with a coterie of other accomplished musicians for a week in residence.

They’ll play two concerts here and a third in Norwich. *Full details at www.oakhillmusicfestival.com.*

Register Now! Classicopia Summer Music Camp at FCC/UMVC—August 4-9, 9a-3p Daily

Instrumental and vocal instruction for students aged 8-17. *More details and registration at classicopia.org.*

HOLY WEEK 2025

ALLELUIA! Transcending the pathos of the Passion with the joy of the Resurrection, Holy Week brought us an expert palm-cross tutorial from Chip Silver, kids in their Sunday best, and the most sumptuous Easter coffee hour in recent memory—served on a cruciform table!



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

Blanket Sunday

MOTHER'S DAY, MAY 11

Children's Sunday

Celebrate on June 1!

PENTECOST

Sunday, June 8



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

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First Congregational Church of Lebanon

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organist and Choir Director • Brian Clancy, Church Administrator

Jon Scott, Chair of Church Council • Linda Gerlach, Chair of Deacons • Barbara Jones, Moderator

603-448-4281 • church@fccleb.org • prayer@fccleb.org • music@fccleb.org • www.fccleb.org