



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

1768 • CELEBRATING 250 YEARS • 2018

What's Inside

“Walks” in October8



Christmas Comes Early!9



Sunday Service2

Randy Balmer 11/42

Ecumenical Thanks 11/192

Community Dinners2

November Calendar.....3

Committee Notes.....4-6

Stewardship Sunday 11/254

Our Open Door7

Music at the Meetinghouse.....10

The Pastoral Perspective

When will we learn?

That question has been plaguing me these last couple weeks. The killings at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh were horrific. What wasn't supposed to happen in the present—and if it did, not here in America—had unfolded in Pennsylvania. A massacre of Jews at prayer: an evil reminder of pogroms, blood libels, and of course, the Holocaust.

Anti-Semitism has been described as the oldest hate of all. Sadly, it may be the oldest, but it is not alone. Despite all of our culture, our learning, our supposed wisdom, some among us hate others simply because of who they are. I could offer explanations citing ignorance or stupidity, but the truth is these are ultimately excuses. We humans can be awful. It doesn't matter if we're living in huts on the veldt in Africa thousands of years ago or in the midst of a technically advanced, modern consumer society like our own: we kill, we steal, we cheat, we hate.

End of story, turn off the lights, we're done. Or so it seems.

Our faith teaches that we are fallen. Now, to be honest, there are some signal problems with Augustine's concept of Original Sin, which was very much influenced by his decade as a practitioner of the dualistic and decidedly non-Christian religion of Manichaeism. But the idea that all is not sunny, that all is not good, that at our root we are flawed and fallible is something worth facing and not ignoring. Further, it's not just some of us, it's not just them. It's *all* of us. We are *all* fallen. But rather than surrender to a sense of futility and accept that we are condemned to a dismal Hobbesian fate, we can take this self-awareness as a starting point to grow.

Just because we're neither perfect nor perfectible doesn't mean we can't be better. Those little WWJD bracelets that were popular a few years ago are easy to ridicule. But I've come to appreciate them. Sometime in our lives, we're going to model our behavior on that of somebody else: a parent, a buddy, a sports figure, a celebrity. So why not Jesus? We could do a lot worse.

Continued on Page 5

SUNDAY SERVICE

Guest Preacher: Randall Balmer

Sunday, November 4

This month we welcome prize-winning author and historian Prof. Randall Balmer to FCC as our guest preacher. As both a priest and a distinguished scholar of American religion, Randy is uniquely suited to help us celebrate our 250th anniversary.

Having earned his Ph.D. from Princeton, Randy taught for many years at Columbia, took visiting positions at numerous universities, and now holds the John Phillips Chair in Religion at Dartmouth. He has published widely in scholarly journals and the popular press, including op-ed pieces in papers ranging from the *New York Times* to our own *Valley News*. He has authored more than a dozen books, including *Redeemer: The Life of Jimmy Carter* and *God in the White House: How Faith Shaped the Presidency from John F. Kennedy to George W. Bush*. His second book, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America*, was made into an award-winning, Emmy-nominated, three-part documentary for PBS in 1993. Randy was ordained as an Episcopal priest in 2006.

Please join us November 4 as we continue celebrating FCC's 250th Anniversary!

Christmas Decorating Party!

Following Worship on Sunday, December 2

Yes, CHRISTMAS!! Advent begins on the first Sunday in December. Plan to stay after worship to hang wreaths, string lights, trim our tree, and have fun getting the church ready for this festive season.

No need to RSVP, but bring some refreshments or treats to share!

Queued for Coffee Hour

November—Women of the Church

December—Board of Governors

January—Stewardship Committee

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25

We will dedicate our pledges for the coming year and celebrate our congregational community.
Please see additional information on Page 4.



Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service

Monday, November 19, 7:00

Lebanon United Methodist

18 School Street

All are welcome to share in this inclusive worship service, as we join our ecumenical friends on School Street for a faithful observation of Thanksgiving.

Let us give thanks together as a community!

Thanksgiving Community Dinner

Sunday, November 25, 5:00 pm

Leaders: AMY DRISCOLL AND RACHEL SILVER

Thanks to Amy and Rachel for organizing this month's dinner! Please lend a hand as you're able, to provide this vital service to our neighbors.
Sign-ups will soon be posted in the Parish Hall.

New Year, New Leaders!

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

Please consider organizing a meal in 2019!

Menu resources are available, and a Community Dinner Fund helps cover costs. Below are the available dates for 2019. If you're interested in leading or have questions, contact the office.

February 24

July 28

May 26

November 24

June 23

December 22

NOVEMBER 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 10a Worship and Church School 11:15a Bd of Govs 3p Micah Awards (Claremont) 5p Community Dinner	29 3p WCBH After-school Group 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bears/Webelos/Girls) 7p Baroque String Ensemble	30 7p Boy Scouts/Cubs (AofL)	31 HALLOWEEN 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	1 2:30p WCBH After-school Group 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	2 6-9p Leb Rec Dept Quilters	3 8a Men's Breakfast 10a-5p Leb Rec Dept Quilters 7:30p Borowsky & Borowsky: Dance Off!
4 10a Worship and Church School (Communion; Guest: Randall Balmer) 11:15a MSA	5 3p WCBH After-school Group 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bears/Webelos/Girls) 7p Baroque String Ensemble	6 ELECTION DAY 7p Boy Scouts/Cubs (AofL)	7 5:30p Cub Scout Pack Committee 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	8 12:30p Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Assn (CoCM) 2:30p WCBH After-school 5:45p Cub Scouts (Lions) 7p Choir	9 7p Recital: Students of E. Borowsky	10
11 10a Worship and Church School	12 3p WCBH After-school Group 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bears/Webelos/Girls) 7p Diaconate	13 7p Boy Scouts/Cubs (AofL)	14 8a-4p NH-WIC 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers 7:15p Christian Ed Committee	15 2:30p WCBH After-school Group 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	16 7p Soir d'Automne: An Evening of French Music	17
18 10a Worship and Church School 2p (time tbd) Bel Canto Chamber Singers (make-up)	19 3p WCBH After-school Group 7p Baroque String Ensemble 7p (tentative) Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service (LUMC)	20 7p Church Council 7p Boy Scouts/Troop Committee/Cubs (AofL)	21 6p UVPRN No Bel Canto Chamber Singers	22 THANKSGIVING No Choir	23	24
25 STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY 10a Worship and Church School 11:15a Bd of Govs 5p Community Dinner	26 3p WCBH After-school Group 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bears/Webelos/Girls) 7p Baroque String Ensemble	27 7p Boy Scouts/Cubs (AofL)	28 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	29 10a-6p NH-WIC 2:30p WCBH After-school Group 7p Choir	30	1 8a Men's Breakfast NOTE: Advent begins Sunday, December 2.

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

COMMITTEE NOTES

CHURCH COUNCIL

At Council in October Barb Jones reported for the **Diaconate** that we have increased spending on food and gas cards for the Open Door Ministry. Phil Hammond proposed offering a new Christmas-gift option from Samaritan's Purse, which sends shoe-box-sized gift packages to children worldwide. Many agreed that this would nicely complement the local focus of our annual Giving Tree for Listen.

For **Mission and Social Action**, Kathy Beckett noted the success of Kate Semple Barta's presentation on October 14, which began to open ways for our congregation to support immigrant families. The discussion addressed misconceptions about immigrant experiences, such as rules around work permits. Noting that the problem is more complex than most realize, Steve Silver encouraged us to be thoughtful and realistic about what we can commit to doing as a church. Juliet Steele's recent need for transportation to Manchester suggested that we could maintain a list of volunteers for such purposes. Some also wonder whether we might sponsor a specific family in some

way. It's been proposed to continue this discussion in another after-worship conversation in November.

Treasurer Terry Ellison reported that while expenses have exceeded income thus far in 2018, our pledge totals are near expected levels for this point in the year. Discussion about our lack of major capital expenditures this year considered that Sanctuary projects (flooring, carpeting, and pew cushions) must be done in coordinated fashion.

Online giving remains dependent on obtaining IRS confirmation of our tax-exempt status, which may require changing our federal tax ID number. Despite some concern about reduced offering collections on Sunday morning, there is general support for enabling online giving. It should regularize pledge income and encourage contributions from congregation members who attend worship less often.

Jon Scott reported for the **Pastoral Relations Committee** that it hadn't received word of any concerns or issues from the congregation prior to its recent meeting. Some on the committee have also joined with Finance Committee members to

review **pastoral compensation**. Jon noted that this group had made substantial progress toward a fair, reasonable, and generous package, including several important changes and updates. One item that arose in that discussion was the uncertain status of various escrow accounts in our budget.

Jon Scott also updated the group on **campaign planning**. A campaign subcommittee has begun productive discussion of three broad target areas, with the intention of canvassing relevant church committees about them. That framework will then provide structure for a broader congregational conversation.

Brian Clancy noted a relatively light concert schedule this fall for **Music at the Meetinghouse**, with a couple Classicopia events and seasonal concerts in December. The latest event in our "LOH on Location" collaboration featured the Egyptian singer-songwriter Youssra El Hawary, who drew a great, high-energy crowd on October 12.

Brian also reported that the **Cub Scouts'** leadership still reports some difficulty from having too few keys, despite their schedule being mostly

Stewardship Sunday is November 25 **Building God's Future: A Legacy of Giving**

Each fall we are encouraged to recognize the many gifts that we have received from our most generous God. As we celebrate our congregation's 250th anniversary, we will approach Stewardship Sunday by considering Joshua's question for the children of the Israelites: "What do these stones mean to you?" (*Joshua 4:6*)

What does this church mean to us? Our answers—the stories we've told and will continue to tell about this congregation and its ministry—will inspire our stewardship commitments, for 2019 and the next 250 years.

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY IS NOVEMBER 25. Please consider your commitment, prayerfully and honestly, to our church's mission and ministry in 2019, and join us as we dedicate our pledges this month.

COMMITTEE NOTES

unchanged from last year. Council maintains concern about issuing additional keys and expanding the scouts' building use, particularly as we receive no rental compensation from the program. However, all agreed that these issues would be best resolved in a meeting with Cub Scout leaders, involving both Steve Silver and FCC's scouting liaison Biff Simpson.

In his **pastor's report**, Steve Silver pointed out the installation of 250th Anniversary banners on South Park Street, which were generously paid for by a congregation member. He noted the energy and atmosphere of our celebrations on Anniversary Sunday, and he was grateful for the warm welcome extended both to Peggy Bendroth that day and also to Charles Buck the next week. Randy Balmer will visit November 4, the Sunday prior to Election Day. Steve also noted the constructive work and momentum of the campaign subcommittee.

Steve appealed on behalf of the Diaconate for help leading Sunday afternoon services in November at

Genesis. He noted that the annual ecumenical Thanksgiving service will take place elsewhere this year. Steve plans to take a week of study leave November 12-18, pursuing online courses and developing plans for future study.

Steve commended Henry Danaher on his continued success in growing the **music ministry**, especially with guest musicians. Henry would like to conduct a new congregational survey of music at FCC, to update the survey from the fall of 2013. Steve also reminded everyone of composer Paul Ayres' visit on the first weekend in March, involving a choral workshop and concert.

Lastly, it was suggested that we identify a more formalized plan for **medical emergencies in worship**. An incident on a recent Sunday was quickly and safely resolved with the capable assistance of several people, aided by the proximity of the fire station. While this particular outcome was fortunate, we should do what we can to ensure that any future incidents will be handled as effectively.

November Meetings

Mission/Social Action	11/4, 11:15
Diaconate	11/12, 7:00
Christian Education	11/14, 7:15
Church Council	11/20, 7:00
Board of Governors	11/25, 11:15

December Meetings

Mission/Social Action	12/2, 11:15
Diaconate	12/10, 7:00
Christian Education	12/12, 7:15
Church Council	12/18, 7:00
Board of Governors	12/23, 11:15

DIACONATE

At the October Diaconate meeting, Alyson Danyew-Ellison reported that while we budgeted \$6,000 for the **Open Door Ministry** in 2018, actual expenses are averaging \$1,000 monthly. Communion offerings through September have totaled \$4,637. The Deacons' Fund is not yet overdrawn, which is no longer an immediate issue anyway, now that the fund is part of the general treasury account. But Steve Silver

The Pastoral Perspective, *continued from Page 1*

We may not be able to perfectly imitate Christ, but we can surely emulate him. We can pray more. We can focus on God more. We can serve more. You know the drill. So do I. So I wonder, what keeps us from doing so? There are many, many excuses, but they all serve to draw us away from God and ultimately to darkness, including that which made itself known in Pittsburgh. We may not be the ones pulling the trigger next time, but our indifference, our inattention fosters an environment in which such things may occur.

Nobody should be hated. Nobody should be scorned. Nobody should be abandoned. That's not what God wants.

If we are ever going to learn, let it be now.

Yours faithfully,



COMMITTEE NOTES

feels that the Diaconate should continue to respect the limits of the Deacons' Fund. We use the Mission and Social Action account for rental and heating assistance, and if need be, we could request a disbursement from Dole Trust mission funds.

To control distribution, Open Door assistance is not given in cash, and individuals are expected to wait at least four months between requests. A "do not assist" notation is made in cases of deception or overuse.

Steve noted in his **pastor's report** that Anniversary Sunday went well, and he was happy to have Charles Buck at the September 30 service. CROP Walk participation was down, but it did come close to the Feast Day observance of several churches. The campaign planning committee will identify needs and priorities. Deacons observed the need for a larger kitchen area,

notably a dishwasher and second sink; other items include exterior lighting on the east side and a downstairs bathroom.

Barb Jones reported from Biff Simpson that rechargeable batteries will be purchased for the personal **audio devices in the Sanctuary**.

The lavalier microphone seems to work well when hand-held. It may project better than the pulpit mic, and Steve Silver will test it on a sermon.

Deacons discussed and reviewed their **member contact lists**, and shared information on some assignments. It was noted that member assignments should not prevent contacts by other deacons. Suggestions are still sought for the nomination of a new deacon.

Phil Hammond recommended participation in **Samaritan's Purse**

National Collection Week, which provides boxes of children's gifts to kids beyond the Upper Valley. This initiative will not compete with the locally-focused Listen Giving Tree or the Church School's periodic targeted adoptions of a child. Phil will provide more information, with a November 4 deadline to participate. Steve Teeter and Larry Doyle volunteered to help.

In Biff's absence, consideration of a **Peace Light service** for the Scouting program was tabled. Steve Silver noted that Advent already is a busy time for services and other activities, and this additional service requires the Scouts to take the initiative.

The Deacons will again lead Sunday afternoon services at **Genesis in November**. Kathy Beckett will write up instructions, and Steve Teeter will assist. Steve Silver will ask the congregation for additional help.



Christian Education
Community Dinner,
October 28



Ike and Linda Jacobs, UVIP Executive Director Rod Wendt, and Steve Silver

7th Annual UVIP Micah Awards

On October 28 in Claremont, almost 200 people joined to recognize Micah Award winners from the fifteen faith communities and service organizations that comprise the United Valley Interfaith Project (UVIP). This annual event connects community leaders from across the region and celebrates the Old Testament prophet Micah's call to "do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God."

Congratulations again to Linda and Ike Jacobs, who represented FCC with distinction!

Our Open Door Ministry

Supporting Our Community, One Gift Card at a Time

Throughout the year, our neighbors come to the church office seeking assistance. Whether it's a tank of gas for the car, some food for dinner, or a payment toward rent or an electric bill, our congregation is able to help, thanks to the **OPEN DOOR MINISTRY**. Available to anyone in greater Lebanon, this ministry is one of the most vital services we extend to our community.

We don't ask questions about need or use; the "Open" Door is just that. We do ask that people wait four-to-six months between requests, only because the overall need is so great. FCC has been able to respond to that need for years, but we *never* have enough to assist all those who need it—and **demand has increased considerably in the past four years, during which we've helped almost 300 people.**

Those who seek help from us haven't been irresponsible or lazy, and the clear majority (about 80%) request assistance just once or twice. With just an occasional exception, they don't become dependent or try to take advantage of the program. Some are chronically homeless; some have just been evicted for reasons beyond their control. Sometimes they've just moved to the area and need a hand getting started; sometimes they've lost a job or just started a new one. Some are driving to and from the hospital more often because they're caring for a family member; some have been referred to us by a counselor at WISE. **All are our neighbors.**

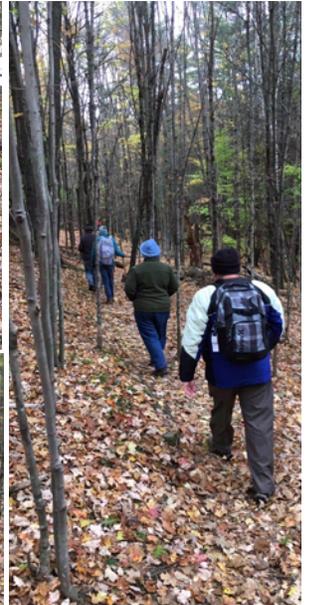


The Open Door is kept open by contributions to the monthly Communion Offering, with which we purchase \$25 gift cards for gas and food from **JAKE'S** and **PRICE CHOPPER**, respectively. This is supplemented by the Mission and Social Action Fund (from the Dole Trust), which provides modest assistance for rent and utilities. **In any of these cases, our ability to support those in need depends on you, our congregation. Because you give each month, we can help a lot of people. Your neighbors thank you!**

For more details, please contact your Deacon or the church office.



THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



WALKING FOR HUNGER, WALKING FOR PLEASURE. Despite a somewhat smaller turnout, this year's CROP Walk once again brought the Upper Valley community together to combat hunger and food insecurity—in part with a delicious hot meal and warm fellowship in the Parish Hall. A couple weeks later a hardy group of six hiked up Balch Hill in Hanover for late-season color, gnarled tree trunks, and lovely views on a blustery day.



**BOY SCOUT TROOP 279
Court of Honor, October 23**

LOOKING AHEAD TO ADVENT

Sunday, December 2, 11:30 am (Following Worship)—Christmas Decorating Party

Join us to help hang wreaths, string lights, trim our tree, and have fun getting the church ready for this festive season. Please bring a potluck snack to share, and your creative eye for holiday decor!

Sunday, December 2, 2:00 pm—Classicopia: Spanish Serenade

Pianists Dan Weiser and Elizabeth Borowsky present a four-hand program with Spanish flair—though mostly by French composers, including Georges Bizet, Maurice Ravel, and Emmanuel Chabrier.

Sat., Dec. 8, 7:30 pm / Sun., Dec. 9, 4:00 pm—Bel Canto Chamber Singers: Last Month of the Year

Directed by Jane Woods, Bel Canto offers choral music for winter and the holiday season, accompanied by string ensemble and solo cellist Margaret Gilmore. This seasonal program features music of Dieterich Buxtehude, Ola Gjeilo, and Ernest Bloch, along with traditional carols and spirituals.

Sunday, December 9, 11:30 am (Following Coffee Hour)—FCC Community Caroling

Bring some Christmas joy and beloved carols to our friends at Genesis, Harvest Hill, and elsewhere.

Sunday, December 16, 3:30 pm (Note earlier time)—UVMC Messiah Sing!

Organized by Jennifer Hansen and conducted by Jane Woods, this annual tradition features local soloists and chamber orchestra. All are welcome to join the chorus (scores available!) or simply listen.

Sunday, December 16, 4:00-6:00 pm—Christmas Party and Carol Sing at the Parsonage

All the congregation is invited to enjoy fellowship, delicious food, and Christmas cheer on Kimball Street.

Sunday, December 23, 5:00 pm—Christmas Community Dinner

We will serve our monthly dinner with plenty of warm, Christmas spirit for our neighbors and friends.

Monday, December 24—CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Family Service at 5:00, Lessons and Carols at 8:00, and Candlelight Communion at 11:00.



Christmas Gifts for Our Community

This year FCC will again sponsor families for Christmas through Listen Community Services, with a Giving Tree selection of clothing needs and grocery vouchers.

Look for collection information in the Parish Hall in mid-November or contact Barb Teeter (603-448-4529).



GIFTS FOR CHILDREN WORLDWIDE. Just five of the dozen-plus boxes filled and donated by congregation members for the Samaritan's Purse project, generously coordinated by Gloria and Phil Hammond. The boxes will bring Christmas cheer to children around the world.

MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

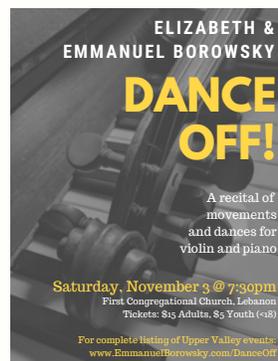
November and Advent

All in the Sanctuary, FCC

Elizabeth and Emmanuel Borowsky: Dance Off!

Saturday, November 3, 7:30 pm

This program of “dances and movements” features friendly sibling rivals Elizabeth and Emmanuel Borowsky on piano and violin, respectively. Sure to delight listeners of all ages and musical interests, the concert offers a scintillating array of dances from around the world, including music of Claude Debussy, Frédéric Chopin, J. S. Bach, Franz Liszt, Ignacy Paderewski, and many others. *Admission \$15, youth 18 and under \$5; for more about the program and performers, please visit www.emmanuelborowsky.com/danceoff.html.*



Soir d'Automne: An Evening of French Chamber Music

Friday, November 16, 7:30 pm

Henry Danaher joins flautist Leslie Stroud, cellist Margaret Gilmore, and soprano Chiho Kaneko for a rich and diverse program of chamber music by French composers, featuring Maurice Ravel, Philippe Gaubert, and the virtuoso 19th-century pianist Louise Farrenc. *Admission \$15.*



Classicopia: Spanish Serenade—Sunday, December 2, 2:00 pm

Pianists Dan Weiser and Elizabeth Borowsky present an exciting four-hand program with Spanish flair—though mostly by French composers, including Georges Bizet, Maurice Ravel, and Emmanuel Chabrier. *Admission \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; tickets and more at classicopia.org/concert/spanish-serenade/.*

The Bel Canto Chamber Singers: Last Month of the Year— Saturday, December 8, 7:30 pm / Sunday, December 9, 4:00 pm

Directed by Jane Woods, the Bel Canto Chamber Singers offer choral music for winter and the holiday season, featuring Dieterich Buxtehude's *Das Neugeborne Kindelein* and works by Norwegian composer Ola Gjeilo, accompanied by string ensemble. The program also includes traditional carols, spirituals, and Ernest Bloch's "Prayer" (*From Jewish Life*), with cellist Margaret Gilmore. Come support FCC's "resident chorus" in December! *Adults \$15, students \$10, under 13 free; more at www.belcantosingers.org.*

UVMC Messiah Sing!—Sunday, December 16, 3:30 pm

Organized by Jennifer Hansen and conducted by Jane Woods, this annual tradition features UVMC student soloists and chamber orchestra. All are welcome to join the chorus (scores available!) or simply listen. *Fee \$15 for choral/orchestral participants; suggested \$10 donation for audience. More at www.uvmusic.org.*

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



*Ecumenical
Thanksgiving
Service*

Monday, November 19, 7:00 pm
Lebanon United Methodist Church

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY
November 25

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



**Music
at the
Meetinghouse**

November and Advent

All in the Sanctuary, FCC

Elizabeth and Emmanuel Borowsky: Dance Off!—Saturday, November 3, 7:30 pm

Soir d'Automne: An Evening of French Chamber Music—Friday, November 16, 7:30 pm

Classicopia: Spanish Serenade—Sunday, December 2, 2:00 pm

The Bel Canto Chamber Singers: Last Month of the Year—
Saturday, December 8, 7:30 pm / Sunday, December 9, 4:00 pm

UVMC Messiah Sing!—Sunday, December 16, 3:30 pm