



January 2025



Pastor's Perspective

What Do We Do for the Other Eleven Months?

2 Thessalonians 1:3 ³ *We ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing.*

When the wrapping is all torn off the gifts and thrown into the dump. When the tree and the decorations are taken down and packed away for another year. When the "thank you" notes are written and sent. When the returns and exchanges are taken care of. When the bills start coming in. When the New Year's resolutions are made (and kept?). When all is said and done and life returns to "normal," what then do we do? Christmas can be such a massive production that it's often hard to adjust back to the routine of regular life. Some say that we need a vacation right after the holidays to recover from them. But, like it or not, however you find yourself in January, we must go back to the comparatively mundane non-Christmas months.

Most people say things like, "I can't believe it's over!" or, "Didn't Christmas fly by?" or, "It goes quicker every year!" Christmas is hard to hold on to, so it is important to take something from it to last throughout the year. I think that the best thing to take away from Christmas is a thankful heart. As I look back upon my first full year at the First Congregational Church, I am extremely grateful for the great people that I've gotten to know, for the ministry opportunities that I've been part of, and for the joy that

...serving this wonderful congregation has brought me. Thank you for all that you do!!! There are so many here that are willing to do so much, and I think that we are making a big difference in our community. For the year ahead, I can see our faith growing more and more as well as the impact that we have on this city. That sure is something to be thankful for! And it's something that we can keep from this holiday season that will last until we light the Advent wreath again.

New Year's Blessings to You All,

Pastor Chris

January Worship Schedule

Sunday, January 5th 10:00 AM

Second Sunday after Christmas

Sacrament of Communion

Sunday Friends

Sunday, January 12th 10:00 AM

First Sunday after Epiphany

Sunday Friends

Sunday, January 19th 10:00 AM

Second Sunday after the Epiphany

Sunday, January 26th 10:00 AM

Third Sunday after the Epiphany

Sunday Friends



Senior Moments

With Rev. Barbara Papagian

Happy New Year! I realize a lot of you are thinking how can she say that with all the problems in the world and the political craziness that is going on in this country.

We have just been through our Advent Season that emphasized hope, peace, joy, and love. If you haven't already breathed in these four words and started concentrating on them in your times of devotions and prayer, this is a good time to get started. Of course you can pray for the end of wars and more help for the homeless and the end of the violence in our schools, and on our streets. But you must have hope in your hearts if you are praying for all these things. You must be looking forward to a time of peace if you are praying for the end of wars. You must have joy in your hearts if you are thinking of peaceful times with no wars and fighting and violence. We need to spread that joy if we want others to do the same.

So as this new year gets going, don't be a worrier. The bible says not to worry. Be a person who cares about others and cares about helping others and bringing joy to others. Be a person who brings peace to others. Sit with them and pray with them and listen to gentle music with them. Let them know they are loved by you and by God. Bring them joy. One time I took a book of jokes to man I was visiting and we had some good laughs and he proceeded to tell about some of the funny things that happened in his younger days and we had more good laughs.

When you pray, pray with the expectation that you will hear God. It may be that you hear his voice speaking to you, or you may feel God talking to you through your heart.

This is a tough world, but always cling to God, spreading God's love and encouraging others to do the same. Always think hope, peace, joy, and love and don't give up on God.

Rev. Barbara Papagian



January Committee Meetings

- Sunday, January 5 at 11:15AM—Deacons
- Tuesday, January 7 at 6:30PM—Membership
- Monday, January 13 at 6PM—Stewardship
- Tuesday, January 14 at 6PM—Church Council
- Monday, January 19 at 11:30AM—Open & Affirming
- Monday, January 20 at 6:30PM—Church Trustees
- Tuesday, January 21 at 6:30PM—Outreach

⇒ If you do not see your meeting listed here, please reach out to Lauren in the church office—thank you!

⇒ Please confirm the location of your meeting with committee chairs especially during the winter months.

Our Christmas Cantata on Sunday, December 15th was a wonderful success! A large audience filled our beautiful sanctuary, and the music of the season filled our hearts with love and hope.

The free-will offering to support the Union Leader's Santa Fund totaled \$1840! Thank you to all for your generosity.



Many thanks to our choir, soloists, professional orchestra players, and very special thanks to Music Director, Adam Peithmann!

Children's Ministry News



Bring your family and friends and join us! Sunday Friends, our children & youth program, meets in the rec room after the *Musical Offering* and includes lessons, crafts and games. We can't wait to see you there!

January dates are Sunday, Jan. 5th; Sunday, Jan. 12th and Sunday, Jan. 26th.

Upcoming February dates are 2/2, 2/9 & 2/16.



News from the HOME TEAM! Hands on Mission for Everyone

Thank You!

Thank You to all those who have volunteered at our various H.O.M.E opportunities in 2024, and do so with a will-

ing heart ... You truly do make a difference.

What a wonderful church community we have, so many people donate their time to helping others in our local community and our church family.

A note From Stephanie Costello,
Director of the FIT Family Shelter on
Lake Avenue...

I just wanted to reach out again and say thank you to your congregation! You all do so much to help support the mission at FIT in just about every supportive services department. Thank you all for the time you dedicate to do activities with the kids . Living in the family shelter during the holidays can be extremely difficult so I truly appreciate you all helping make the holiday special for our families!

Dates for upcoming opportunities

FIT Adult Emergency Shelter Dinner service: Tuesday, January 14th; Wednesday, January 15th and Friday, January 24th. From 4:30 pm - 5:45 pm we help serve the evening meal.



FIT Food Pantry:

Our January date will be Tuesday afternoon January 28th from 1 pm—3 pm. We help by sorting donations, stocking shelves or helping in the pantry store.

FIT Family Center:

Do crafts with the children (ages 5 - 12) while parents are preparing their dinners in the kitchen. The next date to volunteer is Wednesday,

January 29th from 6 pm - 7 pm.



Conversation Cafe's with the ENA program:

Morning Conversation Café is Monday, January 27th from 10:45 - noon and an Evening Conversation Café is Monday, February 3rd with a time to be announced. It's a wonderful experience

both for students and FCC volunteers. Volunteers provide conversation, laughter, connection and encouragement for the students.



Resilience Reins At UpReach Therapeutic Equestrian Center:

We are now once again serving and providing dinner for this wonderful program on Wednesday, February 5th at 6 pm. If you would like to help by providing food or serving please, contact Liz (see contact info below).



It would be so appreciated if you can help out. If you are able, please sign up on the church office window, or contact Liz at 603-494-6785 or liz-v@comcast.net.

- Liz Verity HOME Coordinator -



News From FCC Outreach January 2025



The FCC Outreach Committee would like to thank EVERYONE for their generosity in December as we continued to serve our community.



Food donations to the food closet have made a big difference in what we can offer those who face hunger insecurity during the winter months. The Angel Tree gifts (173!!!) were gratefully accepted by our partnering charities: Liberty House, Christian Aftercare Ministries, The Families in Transition Shelter, Helping Hands, Manchester Mental Health, and New Life Home. If you bought a gift card, purchased some gifts, or just helped out with the many tasks involved, we sincerely appreciate your help. Jennifer Thornton did an amazing job of organizing and implementing this project and we are grateful for the gift of her skills and time.

Looking ahead, our Food Closet food of the month in January is peanut butter



- 16 oz jars or less. We are also grateful for the contribution of paper grocery bags, if you are able to save and bring those into FCC.

We will be collecting soon for the annual Greater Manchester Food drive in February, information will be coming soon so please stay tuned!



Our next meeting of the FCC Outreach Committee will be held via Zoom on Tuesday, January 21st at 6:30 PM.

Open & Affirming Committee January 2025 News and Reflections

The Open and Affirming Committee extends best wishes to all for the coming year. In the spirit of love and hope, we offer excerpts from a prayer by Rev. Derek Terry, a UCC pastor in Cincinnati, Ohio.



Loving God,

As we stand at the threshold of a new year, ...we lift up those who have struggled—those who are weary, grieving, and uncertain about what the future holds.

Your Word reminds us in 1 Thessalonians 4:13 not to grieve like those who have no hope...Help us, Lord, to anchor our hope in You. Let that hope be the wellspring from which we draw the strength to care for ourselves and for one another. Teach us to rest when we are weary, to find joy even in small moments, and to persevere in the work of love, justice, and mercy.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Manchester

All are Welcome and Wanted

www.fccmanchesternh.org

Empower us not to grow weary in well-doing as we continue to create, protect, and inspire positive change in the world. Remind us that every act of kindness, every stand for justice, and every word of encouragement matters. As we enter 2025, may we walk boldly in Your light, remembering that the struggles of today are not the end of the story. You are with us, guiding us, and calling us to be instruments of Your peace.

With hearts full of hope and trust, we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the One who is our Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Our Door, our strength, and our refuge. Amen

We will meet on **Sunday, January 19th at 11:30 am.** Please feel free to join us. If you have questions, please reach out to a committee member.

The Open and Affirming Committee

Jeanine Finefrock, Jeffrey Frye, Karen Hawver, Justin May, John and Kathy Rowe, and Carol Soucy, Chair

Women's Connection News January 2025



Women's Connection has been busy this past month of December! On Saturday, December 7th, five ladies packed six boxes of cookies and goodies and sent them off to our college students in time for their finals.



They are so appreciated and here are a couple of thank you's we received:
"I am reaching out to thank you very much for the cookies and treats I received in the mail. This is always a busy and

stressful time of year with school and final but this package never fails to put a smile on my face. I hope you all enjoy your Christmas!" Thank you, Ethan Krueger

"Hi! Just got the package! Thank you so much, just the thing I need to make it through finals!" - Caitlyn Knowles, Sophomore Villanova University.

Reading these, tells us how important this annual event is for our college students who are not around much but are glad to know we haven't forgotten them at this time of giving. After packing the boxes we swapped cookies among us and then had our White Elephant Yankee Swap. We all went home with our favorite gift. It's always a good time and it gets all of us in the Christmas spirit.



This year we did a spur of the moment activity! On Wednesday, December 11th ten ladies went to see the movie "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever".



This was a wonderful movie and if we were not in the spirit of Christmas yet, we walked away with the real meaning of Christmas.

The Holiday Cards for the Military Challenge was a great success this year. We delivered 281 cards!

That is the most we have ever done. Thanks to everyone who took time to write the cards and get them into church on time. We do not have any cards left to pass out next year so when they start going on sale after Christmas it would be great if some of you would buy some to either share with others our sign them yourself to participate next year. We have a big number to beat!



Mark your calendar for January 13th, 2025 for our Annual Zoom BINGO Night!



It's always a lot of fun playing the game and catching up. Those of you who are already BINGO Queens, dust off your crowns to wear that night Who will be the first BINGO Queen of 2025? Come and play, it might be you... Sign up on the BINGO sheet on the church office window or just email Pam LeBlanc at (blancp@comcast.net) or Denise Beurivage at (beau.de@comcast.net) to let us know you want to play, and you will receive the Zoom invite a few days before. If you need a BINGO playing card let us know that too.

Save Saturday, February 15th, 2025 for the Annual WC Valentine's Day Breakfast!

If anyone has ideas of a program or activity please let us know so we can plan.

The Deadline for the February Church Window Newsletter is Friday, January 17th!

Please submit your articles & pictures to Lauren Henderson at LHenderson@FCCManchesterNH.org



Prepared to Serve is the annual workshop day put on by the New Hampshire Conference.

This event will boost your skills, connect you with others who share your vision, and equip you with tools to bring back to your congregations! Mark your calendars: Prepared to Serve will take place on **February 22, 2025** at Pembroke Academy.

Knitting Ministry News!

The people of the Knitting Ministry at FCC create wonderful warm items we donate to people in our congregation, Manchester and the world. Please say, "Thank you," when you see Ruth Allen, Diane Brown, Sabrina



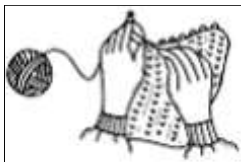
Maltby, Kathy Rowe, JoAnn Ward, and Donna Willey. Many of us buy our own supplies, but some of us depend upon the generous people who donate yarn or funds. So, join me in a huge "Thank you" to Donna Goodreau through her brother-in-law Dick Jarvis, Fran Hastings, Pam LeBlanc and Peggy Neveu who passed along yarn from the Holly Berry Fair, Auburn's Longmeadow Church via Peggy Neveu, Gretchen Meisel, Len and Carolyn Morrill, and Lucie Weeks.

The knitters were busy this year. This year we donated:

- 1 Full-Size Prayer Shawls/Scarves to FCC family and friends
- 16 Pocket Prayer Shawls to FCC family and friends
- 24 Balaclavas to the New England Seafarers Mission
- 53 Children's hat and mittens sets to Bakersville, Beech St, and Jewett St. Schools and New Life Home for Women and Children
- 65 Adult Hats to Helping Hands Outreach Center, Liberty House, Manchester Mental Health Home on Brown Ave, and New Life Home for Women and Children
- 5 Scarves to Longmeadow Church for Manchester Scarves in the Park for the homeless
- 6 Infant hats to Dress-A-Girl

170 Total items

We welcome anyone else with some time to give for this very worthwhile mission and we continue to knit for future editions of our Fair. Completed items can be labeled and dropped off with Lauren at the church office, or given to me on a Sunday or at my home. Thank you to Lauren who is always gracious as our go-between. We hope that the people who received our work were warmed in body and in spirit and know that those of us who knit were truly warmed in spirit. It can be a small or major time commitment --- your choice. There are additional people who knit items for the Fair and donated them directly.



Thank you, and may the gifts you create help people feel the spirit of Jesus Christ and our church community,
JoAnn Ward

Interfaith Women of NH Presents their Winter Event!

Humor, Wisdom & Faith

January 22nd at 6:30pm

**Held at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
105 Windsong Avenue, Manchester
(check in begins at 6 pm)**

Our Presenters:

We look forward to hearing from our three presenters:

Rev. Barbara Brawley: Interfaith Chaplain at Elliot Hospital.

Munise Ulker: Muslim Member IWNH Leadership.

Arielle Kaplan: Jewish Leader/Actor each bringing a perspective from Christian, Muslim and Jewish faith perspectives.

Our intention is to share uplifting experiences, lightheartedness and joy during the darker days of winter. We have asked each of our presenters to share a verse or passage from the Holy Scriptures of each faith that references the importance of humor/ lightheartedness and/or wisdom in how we live out our faith.

*In person and streamed live on Interfaith Women of NH Facebook page! Join us for social time and refreshments after the program.

Please RSVP to interfaithwomennh@gmail.com or call 603-233-7760. Visit us online at interfaithwomennh.org.

Interfaith Women of NH Mission:

To share religious beliefs, cultures, and traditions among women of diverse faiths in order to develop understanding and friendship between us and within our community.

Rev. Stevens Announces 6-session Bible/Book Study

January sessions held 10:00 AM in the parlor 1/16 & 1/30.

Making Sense of the Bible, Rediscovering the Power of Scripture Today by Adam Hamilton



Reach out with questions via email to: cstevens@FCCManchesterNH.org.

Please note that Rev. Stevens will be offering future sessions of this same study at different times/modes (zoom) to accommodate different schedules.

Friday Link Submissions Needed!

We are always looking for your stories, photos, favorite poems, vacation recaps, appropriate jokes, favorite Bible passages, book recs., etc.! Please consider



contributing to our *Friday Link* online newsletter. We need your help to keep it interesting and meaningful, and we appreciate your involvement. (You can remain anonymous, too, if you'd like to.)

Email submissions to Rev. Papagian at BPapagian@fccmanchesternh.org.

THIS MONTH AT FCC

ACTIVITIES, DATES AND TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. PLEASE REFER TO THE PRINTED CALENDARS BY THE OFFICE OR GO TO WWW.FCCMANCHESTERNH.ORG

JANUARY

Wednesday, January 1st

Church Office Closed for New Year's Day Holiday

Thursday, January 2nd

9:00 AM "Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

10:00 AM Bible Study

Friday, January 3rd

No Church Activities Scheduled

Saturday, January 4th

No Church Activities Scheduled

Sunday, January 5th

10:00 AM Worship Service, Sacrament of Communion & Sunday Friends

11:15 AM Deacons' Meeting

Monday, January 6th

9:00 AM "Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

5:30 PM *Special Olympics Young Athletes*

Tuesday, January 7th

9:00 AM "Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

6:30 PM Membership Committee Meeting

Wednesday, January 8th

9:00 AM "Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

7:00 PM Chancel Choir

Thursday, January 9th

9:00 AM "Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

Friday, January 10th

No Church Activities Scheduled

Saturday, January 11th

No Church Activities Scheduled

Sunday, January 12th

10:00 AM Worship Service & Sunday Friends

Monday, January 13th

9:00 AM "Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

5:30 PM *Special Olympics Young Athletes*

6:00 PM Stewardship Committee Meeting

6:30 PM Women's Connection Zoom BINGO

Tuesday, January 14th

9:00 AM "Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

10:00 AM Staff Meeting

4:30 PM *FIT/New Horizons Kitchen Volunteer Evening*

6:00 PM Church Council Meeting

Wednesday, January 15th

9:00 AM "Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

4:30 PM *FIT/New Horizons Kitchen Volunteer Evening*

7:00 PM Chancel Choir

Thursday, January 16th

9:00 AM "Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

10:00 AM Bible Study

Friday, January 17th

No Church Activities Scheduled

Saturday, January 18th

No Church Activities Scheduled

Sunday, January 19th

10:00 AM Worship Service

11:30 AM Open & Affirming Committee Meeting

Monday, January 20th

Church Office Closed for MLK Jr. Holiday

6:30 PM Church Trustees' Meeting

Tuesday, January 21st

9:00 AM "Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

6:30 PM Outreach Committee Meeting

Wednesday, January 22nd

9:00 AM "Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

6:30 PM *Interfaith Women of NH Event: "Humor, Wisdom and Faith" at the Church of Jesus Christ & Latter Day Saints (105 Windsong Avenue in Manchester)*

7:00 PM Chancel Choir

Thursday, January 23rd

9:00 AM "Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

Friday, January 24th

4:30 PM *FIT Kitchen Volunteer Evening*

Saturday, January 25th

No Church Activities Scheduled

Sunday, January 26th

10:00 AM Worship Service & Sunday Friends

Monday, January 27th

9:00 AM "Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

10:45 AM ENA Morning Conversation Café

5:30 PM *Special Olympics Young Athletes*

Tuesday, January 28th

9:00 AM "Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

10:00 AM Staff Meeting

1:00 PM *FIT Food Pantry Volunteer Opportunity*

Wednesday, January 29th

9:00 AM "Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

6:00 PM *FIT Family Center Activity Night*

7:00 PM Chancel Choir

Thursday, January 30th

9:00 AM "Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

10:00 AM Bible Study

Friday, January 31st

No Church Activities Scheduled

Please note the FCC Food Pantry is currently open to the public Monday from 9 am to 12 noon & Thursday 12 noon to 3 pm.

Join Coach Bill Jones as a Young Athletes volunteer coach on Mondays from 5:30-6:30pm at the Manchester Music School!

Please contact Bill via cell or email:

603-860-1236 or wjones0615@comcast.net.





The January 2025 Church Window

Our monthly newsletter

First Congregational Church

508 Union Street
Manchester, NH 03104-4890
(603) 625-5093
www.fccmanchesternh.org

Rev. Christopher Stevens
Senior Pastor

Rev. Barbara Papagian
Associate Pastor

Adam Peithmann
Director of Music Ministry

Sunday Worship 10:00 AM

*In-person with livestream option available
from our homepage
www.FCCManchesterNH.org*



The Church Office Hours

M—F from 9AM to 3PM

Please note that the office is closed on major holidays.

Please consider volunteering at the FCC Community Food Pantry!

*The Pantry is currently open to the public on
Mondays from 9 to noon and Thursdays from 12
to 3. If you are interested in volunteering during
open hours to serve our visitors, please see the
sign-up sheet on the church office window or
reach out to the church office!*

Inclement Weather and Church Office Hours

FCC Church policy is that when
Manchester schools are closed
or open late due to inclement
weather, the Church office
follows the same schedule.

**Please note that Worship
Service
cancellations are posted
on WMUR.com.**



Pledges & Donations

Your monetary gift has a big impact on our ministries and
those we serve!

Scan this QR code to learn more.



1. Place smart phone camera over the QR code and click
the link that appears.
No need to "log in" for one time giving
2. Scroll the giving categories and make your
offering.

Thank you for continuing to mail in your pledges!
It's ok to consolidate a month. You can also send via your own
bank's Bill Pay, or go to Vanco via our website. Call Nikki Brown, FCC
Bookkeeper, if you need help at 603-625-5093 x23.



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