

First Congregational Church, Manchester NH

CHURCH WINDOW

NEWSLETTER



Serving God, Transforming Lives

PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE



*From this hour I ordain myself loos'd of limits and imaginary lines,
Going where I list, my own master total and absolute,...
I am larger, better than I thought,
I did not know I held so much goodness.
All seems beautiful to me,...*

--Excerpt from "Song of the Open Road" by Walt Whitman

Funny creatures, we are. We seem to be the most powerful creatures on this earth, but that is only relatively speaking. A tiny bacteria or virus that seems so small and powerless against our strength and superior intelligence can devastate the entire human race (and indeed this has happened recently and perhaps will happen again). But even so, we have such power and ability to shape our world both physically and culturally. God has created us with such ability. The story of creation in Genesis says, *"Then God said, 'Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves. They will be masters over all life--the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the livestock, wild animals, and small animals. So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:26-27)* To be made in the image of God is to be "like" him (or her? Or should we even designate gender to God? After all, "male and female he created them", to "be like ourselves.").

So what does it mean to be "like" God? It says in the above text that we are to be like God in that we "will be masters over all life". Whoa!! That's a pretty big statement to me and, frankly, feels a bit intimidating (maybe much more than a bit, actually). Sometimes I don't feel like I could fight my way out of a wet paper bag, let alone be a master over all life! Yet, this is how we were created.

There is a saying that I've mentioned a couple times from the pulpit that goes like this, "God only has two hands." Of course, God probably does not have hands per say, but we do. The

September 2025

UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual All Church Picnic!

**Sunday, September 14
following Worship Service**

Please join us for this annual gathering to celebrate the new church year! An opportunity to connect with old friends and welcome new.



Women's Connection 2025 Annual Potluck Kick-off!

**Sunday, September 21
at 12:00 pm**

We are gearing up for a new church year. Mark your calendars for our Fourteenth Kick-Off Pot Luck Luncheon Sunday, September 21 at 12 Noon in the dining room. Noel Villiard is coming to demonstrate how to make his famous Feta Dressing. Once made, we will all be able to try it on a salad. Along with eating and socializing, we will be planning for the 2025-26 church year. Please see the sign-up sheet on the church office window.



hands that we have are the hands of God. He has placed the power to be "masters" over our lives in our two hands. This doesn't give us the license for hubris nor should we be so afraid to use these two hands that we stick them in our pockets and ask others to be our masters. As Walt Whitman said, in our hands we hold "so much goodness." We are "larger, better" than we often think, but not larger or better than anyone else. God has given you all that you need to loose yourself of what you think are your limits and your "imaginary lines." As our own "master, total an absolute", we can choose to use God's two hands for great and "beautiful" things. Indeed, this is what he gave you your hands for. So step out on that open road of your life, with a song in your heart and an openness to see all that God can do through His two hands. I promise you that you will be surprised by the goodness that He wants to do in and through you every day of your life!!!

Blessings, Pastor Chris

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

Dear First Congregational Church of Manchester,

Thank you so much for the thoughtful and extremely generous parting gift. It has been a tremendous honor to make music with you over the past 11 years. It has been a true blessing to be part of a community so full of heart, faith, and song. I am especially grateful for the choir—your dedication, talent, and spirit have inspired me every week and made our time together deeply meaningful. Thank you for bringing such joy and beauty to every note, hymn, and postlude.

To the entire congregation, your support and warmth have made this journey unforgettable. The music we made together was more than just sound—it was an expression of love, community, and shared purpose. Though I may be moving on to Exeter, I will carry the memories and harmonies with me always. Thank you for everything.

Sincerely,
Adam Peithmann



Director of Music Ministry Search Committee Update

Ongoing work:

- Posting on new platforms such as Facebook, NH AGO, MCMS, Other state music organizations
- Continued conversations with the congregation
- Establishing audition and interview criteria
- Upcoming Related Needs::
- Re-establishment of FCC Music Committee whose role is to meet regularly to:
 - ⇒ Connect music director, admin., and congregation with regards to music ministry at FCC
 - ⇒ Oversee the maintenance of instruments, choir music and robes
 - ⇒ Evaluate and plan events

More news will be coming soon about the rebirth of the FCC Music Committee!

Susan Wilkes, Chair **Terri Pattee**
Bridget Thornton-Smith **Karen Hawver**



SEPTEMBER MEETINGS

- **Membership**—Tuesday, September 2 at 6:30 pm
 - **Senior Fellowship Board**—Monday, September 8 at 9:30 am
 - **Church Council**—Tuesday, September 9 at 6 pm
 - **Trustees**—Monday, September 15 at 6:30 pm
 - **Parish Visitors**—Sunday, Sept. 21 at 11:15 am
 - **Open & Affirming**—Sunday, September 21 at 11:30 am
 - **Stewardship**—Sunday, September 21 at 4pm
 - **Outreach Committee Meeting TBD**
- ⇒ 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.

SEPTEMBER SERVICES

Sunday, September 7 at 10:00 AM

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Guest Worship Leader
Chapel Communion Service following Worship

Sunday, September 14 at 10:00 AM

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday Friends
All Church Picnic following Worship Service

Sunday, September 21 at 10:00 AM

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday Friends
Women's Connection Kick-off Luncheon at 12:00 PM

Sunday, September 28 at 10:00 AM

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday Friends

Please note the church office will be closed on Monday, September 1st in observance of the Labor Day Holiday.



WOMEN'S CONNECTION NEWS



Women's Connection Fourteenth Kick-Off Pot Luck Luncheon! Mark your calendar for Sunday, September 21 at 12 Noon in the dining room



Noel Villiard is coming to demonstrate how to make his famous feta dressing. Along with eating and socializing, we will be planning for the 2025-26 church year. Please see the sign up sheet on the church office window.

September 6 is the first Saturday Break- fast of the church year at Longmeadow Church in Auburn!



The price is \$10.00 all-you-can-eat with lots of options to choose from. The church address is 4 Wilson Crossing or Corner of Rte. 121 and Wilson Crossing. Feel free to bring your husband, a friend or both. This is a money-maker for the Longmeadow Church so the more people the better for them!

Holiday Card Challenge for Soldiers

Women's Connection is participating in this challenge. However, this can be done by anyone in the church if interested. You can take a package of Christmas cards from the blue boxes in back of the church or you can use your own. If you have extra cards please bring them into Lauren or give them to Pam LeBlanc.



Add a sentence or two inside, For example: How do you celebrate the holidays? What are your family memories of holidays? The Troops enjoy learning about things that happen in your hometown or region of the Country.

The messages can be serious or funny or both, always keeping in mind that appropriate language and wording are important! **Sign with only your first name and First Congregational Church Manchester, NH. On the envelope please write "Dear Warrior" and DO NOT seal it! Return the cards back to the blue box by Sunday, October 26, 2025.**

How many cards can we gather to send in? Last year we collected 281 cards — that is 54 more cards from the year before! Let's try to do even more this year!

A SPECIAL BIRTHDAY MESSAGE

Happy 100th Birthday, Stanley Clark!

While we are definitely aware of the enduring nature of our church, we are blessed when we can celebrate the longevity of one of our long-time members. On September 5, Stanley Clark marks 100 years of good works, in his role as patriarch of his wonderful family, in his profession as engineer, and in his commitment to community.

Having joined FCC in 1953, Stan was a very active member of First Church for many of those years, especially as Moderator. As one of only two in my memory to hold that position, Stan led our church with distinction and caring, projecting a welcoming face for FCC for many years. He served on several senior pastor search committees, making certain we all read every word of the numerous profiles submitted. As trustee for many years, he paid particular attention to budget matters, working on spreadsheets in long hand. Well into his 90s, he attended church services regularly, distinguished by his upright gait, smart dress, and enviable salt and pepper hair! A man of many talents, he kept abreast of the latest technology yet was also skillful with his hands as witnessed by the impeccable maintenance of his lake house

Stan's three loving daughters and their children and grandchildren are devoted to him, as they were to Stan's wife Martha, who passed away earlier this year. His church family joins his loved ones in extending Stan heartfelt good wishes and countless blessings on this amazing milestone.

Happy 100th Birthday, Stan!



If you would like to send Stan a birthday card, his address is: Stanley Clark, The Residence at Pearl Street, 75 Pearl Street Apt #253, Reading MA 01867

VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Provide and Serve Dinner to the families in the *Resilience Reigns* Program at the UpReach Therapeutic Equestrian Center in Goffstown:



- **Weds., Sept. 24 from 6 to 7 pm.** Join the FCC team—sign up on the volunteer bulletin board today!

FIT Family Shelter

Sign up to join us for FUN NIGHT:

- **Thursday, September 25 from 6 to 7 pm**

Music and crafts with the kids while the parents cook dinner.

JOIN US to help out with your FCC friends by signing up on the volunteer bulletin boards or call Lauren in the office Mon-Friday or contact Liz Verity, Volunteer Coordinator, at liz-v@comcast.net, call or text to 603-494-6785.

Serve Dinner at the FIT Adult Emergency Shelter at 199 Manchester Street from 4:30 pm to 6 pm.

September dates:

- **Tuesday, September 9**
- **Wednesday, September 17**
- **Friday, September 26**

Put your name on the sign-up sheet on the volunteer sign-up board.



If an afternoon time suits your schedule better... Volunteers are needed once per month at the FIT Food Pantry!

- **Tuesday, Sept. 23 from 1—3pm.**

We sort donations and stock shelves and help wherever needed—just 2 hours of your time to help the food insecure in Manchester.

Please see the sign-up sheet on the volunteer sign-up board.



New England Seafarers Mission in Boston

- **Monday, September 22 from 1 pm to 6 pm (Leaving FCC at 11:30 am)**

Willing volunteers spend the day serving the crews of the cruise ships, working in the shop or the package department of the mission.



Conversation Café is All the Talk

English for New Americans (ENA), an education service of Community Action Partnership of Hillsborough and Rockingham counties (CAPHR), offers English classes in Manchester for adult refugees, immigrants and limited English speaking residents who have settled in the community. Classes are held at the First Congregational Church and provide English learners instruction in speaking, reading and writing.

ENA also offers special events and programs including Conversation Café. Since 2011, FCC volunteers have hosted ENA students for monthly conversations giving students the opportunity to practice talking with native English speakers in a casual, friendly environment.

ENA recently partnered with FCC to hold Conversation Café twice weekly for 5 weeks. Thanks to Liz Verity and the amazing group of volunteers – Ann Friedman, Carol Ann Howe, Linda Radcliffe, Janie Shaklee, Rebecca Sharkey, Pat Turcotte, Jamie Vanagel and Noel Villiard - who generously offered their time, the program was a huge success. Students enjoyed engaging in conversations on a myriad of topics, reading and discussing short stories and playing games to enhance their English language skills.

ENA and FCC are excited to continue this partnership and are looking forward to co-hosting other fun, cultural and educational events during the 2025/2026 school year.

New dates for morning and evening conversations are coming soon!...



SERVE IN OUR COMMUNITY

A New Volunteer Opportunity in our neighborhood to help the Homeless!

1269 Café Ministries, just 1 block away from FCC in the old St. Cashmir's school building has been a Christian street-outreach for the homeless, and those living on the edge in Manchester for over 12 years. They are a non-profit 501C3 organization located in Manchester, NH 03103.

Their purpose is to live out God's instruction as set forth in Matthew 25:40. "...Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

Their mission is to assist marginalized and unhoused patrons to get back on their feet in a safe, wholesome and sober environment, effectively decreasing the recurrence of homelessness. They do this by providing a variety of services such as hot meals, showers, clothing, laundry service short term storage lockers, and an extensive food pantry. In addition, there are health care specialists on site, and comprehensive case management to assist with housing and jobs.



Where does FCC fit in?

"**The Twelve**" as it is known, has many volunteer opportunities which our FCC Community can take part in, starting with their **Outreach Café**.

The café provides approximately 150 meals every weekday during break fast and lunch service. Volunteers are needed to assist with some food preparation, serve café guests, and do light clean-up.

Our plan is to cover every Wednesday lunch from 11am-1pm starting on August 13th. There is a sign-up sheet on the volunteer boards for August and first weeks of September - sign up for one or as many as you can make time for.

Starting in September we will also be doing a clothing drive for 1269's *Compassion Closet*...see details below...

Volunteering is a great way to make a difference in your community.

Questions or concerns... contact Liz Verity by email liz-v@comcast.net or call or text to (603)-494-6785. Or Karen Hawver by email khawver@gmail.com text to (603) 759-1376. You can also call Lauren in the church office during the week at (603-625-5093).

Help serve lunch at the 1269 Café from 11 to 1 pm every Wednesday!

Located at 456 Union Street—just a short walk away from FCC.

Sign up on the volunteer bulletin board!

Helping fill the Compassion Closet at The Twelve on Union (1269)

One of the many things that "The Twelve" provides for it's clients is a *Compassion Closet*.

Here is how it works: When a person is in need of a new shirt, pants, shoes, coats etc. they can speak with a member of the staff, who will then ask the size they need and then go and pick something they feel that will person will get good use out of. What impressed us was that this was not a shopping experience, such as Outfitters it is meant to supply a person who has no resources to shop.

Here is what we can do in September...

Donate: items of men's or ladies, clothing, new or used shoes/sneakers, coats, unopened toiletries and underwear. *Next time you are in Walmart, Dollar Tree, Target, etc. Perhaps add a pair of socks or other item to your basket.* Bring the items to church with you on a Sunday or any time the office is open.

Help sort the items at church on Friday, September 26th: Volunteers would sort and fold donated clothes, and organize items by size, and get them ready to be taken over to "The Twelve". Have fun hanging out and sorting with your FCC family.

Find the sign up sheet on the volunteer board in the hallway. Questions?...contact Liz Verity @ liz-v@comcast.net, call or text to 603-494-6785 or Karen Hawver @ khawver@gmail.com, call or text 603-759-1376.



Donation items needed immediately:

- Men's shirts sized M, Lg & X-Lg
- Men's shoes (especially larger sizes)
- Socks
- Men & Women's new underwear
- Women's leggings

JOIN US SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18 AT THE HOLLY BERRY FAIR!

We are so excited and at the same time nervous and anxious in anticipation of this year's Holly Berry Fair! Last year's was a tremendous success.

While we started the Fair for camaraderie and a social outlet for FCC, we did make money. But our main purpose – our “why” – has always been to promote social outreach within FCC and our neighboring Manchester community. The proceeds were a bonus, not a measurement of our success – smiles and laughter are our goals. Feedback from those who attended was very positive as to the friendliness of the FCC workers! The proceeds from the October 2024 Fair were used for generous donations to the NH Food Bank for Manchester relief (given when matching funds were available) and *Missy's Closet*. This year we have been concentrating on using supplies from our Craft Room that have been donated to us. Additional supplies were bought, ads paid, and seed money for this year were also taken from the income. The balance is approximately \$8,000 that is being saved. We have been working with Peter Perich to replace the First Church sign out front as it is in dire need of being saved. We have been concentrating on keeping the same traditional sign. We will be consulting with the Trustees before any final decisions. Of course, we will let YOU know.



A sneak peek at some of the handmade items for sale

On October 18th, we need everyone's help!

Table Chairmen are looking for help before, during, and after the Fair. Setting up, baking, and contributing to the tables are some of the things you can do. Tables are Attic Treasures, Baked Goods and Candy, Children's Corner, General Crafts, Fall Crafts, Handmade Jewelry, Wooden Crafts, Raffles, Silent Auction, Lunch Counter, and Knit and Fabric Crafts. If you have a special interest in any of the areas and would like to help, please contact us. Thanking you in advance!

As last year, we will be distributing “post cards” (see example on back page) to EVERYONE to give or mail to

friends and neighbors to publicize the Fair. We will also be looking to distribute lawn signs. Our success depends upon everyone helping as they can! Look in the October Window for more info. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any questions or concerns. Thank you for your help.

Silent Auction Information

We need your help in obtaining items again for the Holly Berry Fair's "Silent Auction"! Items are needed such as gift cards, opportunities of services, tickets to a show, or donate an item, for some ideas. We have a Donation Letter that can assist you in requesting a donation from an area business. To receive a Donation Letter, please contact Fair Coordinators, Peggy and Pam, or reach out to the church office at LHenderson@FCCManchesterNH.org.

“Attic Treasures” for the Holly Berry Fair

While our multi-talented crafters have been out-doing themselves in preparation for the return of our holiday fair, there are many of us with no such talent, but who can also contribute. Many of us may wish to avoid spring and fall cleaning, but if doing so might benefit FCC, perhaps we should be taking a closer look at those items that we've ignored or no longer use. SAVE THEM, PLEASE!

Attic Treasures is looking for new, unused or very gently used items such as:

- China (no chips or cracks)
- Serving trays
- Games, puzzles (no missing pieces)
- Toys
- Contemporary adult books (no mold or crumpled pages)
- Children's books
- Knick-knacks
- Linens (clean)

Please avoid the following items:

- Clothes of any kind
- Plastic items or containers
- Broken small appliances

The Holly Berry Fair is looking for donations of Made-in-New Hampshire items including food to make a basket for the Silent Auction.

If you would like to donate please bring the items to the church office, mark it for the Holly Berry Fair with your name and Lauren will be happy to let us know it's there. You can also email Peggy frannys1@aol.com or Pam blancp@comcast.net and we can make arrangements to pick it up. Thank you in advance for all the help that everyone has done for the fair in the last four years. It's people like all of you that make it fun!



OPEN & AFFIRMING COMMITTEE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Manchester

During a sermon in early August, Pastor Chris encouraged us to think about our purposes as Christians and as a faith community. He reminded us that, "What we do here should make a difference," and that "...Our point and our purpose is *out there*." We're proud and grateful that so many FCC volunteers are busy working out in the community and making a difference.

At the same time, as the Open and Affirming Committee, we try to lead and support FCC's efforts to communicate key messages to those *in here* (our church) and *out there*. We want everyone to know they are welcome and will be

fully included at FCC, and that we believe that each person is a child of God.

Do you know the inspiration for Jeffrey Frye's beloved song, "We Are Unbroken (Even After All)?" He shared that background during the Pride Sunday service in June. Find out as you listen to his beautiful composition and hear his touching words about what his 24 years of FCC membership means

to him. See the YouTube link further in article...

Also, did you watch and hear Justin May's sermon from the Pride Sunday service? His love of FCC, and his trust and feelings of support from us likely helped him share his personal story and struggles. He also talked about his faith

and thoughts about being authentic, being a Christian, and making a difference. Please watch and listen. You'll laugh, maybe tear up, think deeply, and appreciate what a gifted, courageous, and faithful man Justin is. You'll be inspired and will no doubt enjoy learning what attending a church service has to do with a car and a garage! Follow the YouTube link below for his sermon, "Be Yourself and Not What Others Want You To Be."

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Me_46Tq28S4

Jeffrey's song at 13:43 minutes and Justin's sermon at 33:50 minutes

Or watch the entire service. You will be inspired.

The ONA Committee looks forward to this church year, when together with you we'll consider how we interact with every person, and how we do the things that make us authentically ourselves and authentically Christian. We will meet on **Sunday, September 21 at 11:30 am.**

ONA Committee

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



Watch Justin May's sermon to find out what being in church has to do with a car.....

NEWS FROM OUTREACH

Christmas in July at Helping Hands

Christmas Eve this July was a welcome event for us and the men at Helping Hands. We held a lively Christmas carol sing-a-long; exchanged hugs; gave gift cards and goodie bags to each man; and enjoyed plenty of delicious refreshments and conversation before heading home Thursday evening.

FCC people who helped out were Karen and Michael Hawver, Ruth and Sam Knowles, Carolyn Lane, Justin May, JoAnn and Bob Ward, and Susan Wilkes. From its website, Helping Hands Outreach Center offers a supportive, safe, and sober environment in which men can make major steps toward autonomous, responsible living. The FCC Outreach Committee has had a 30 year plus relationship with the organization, including being part of our Angel Tree.

Pictured is HH Exec. Dir. Larry Nice, JoAnn and Bob Ward, and Carolyn Lane



Friday Link Submissions Needed!

We are always looking for your stories, photos, favorite poems, vacation recaps, appropriate jokes, favorite Bible passages, book/movie recommendations., etc.!

Please consider contributing to our *Friday Link* online newsletter. *You can remain anonymous, too, if you'd like to!* Email submissions to the church office at LHenderson@FCCManchesterNH.org.



Cradle Roll Help Needed!

We invite anyone interested in helping with staffing Cradle Roll for the year to please email Jennifer Thornton at jthornton0792@gmail.com. It is a great way to stand by and support our youngest members and their families in Christian education!

Interfaith Women of New Hampshire Announce their Fall Event!

Ancestry... Our Spiritual Heritage

Thursday September 18th, 2025

Held at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church, 18 Baboosic Lake Road, Merrimack NH 03054



Program starts at 6:45 pm. Check in begins at 6:15 pm. Our Lady of Mercy is located just a couple of miles south of the Bedford line.

Ancestry....Our Spiritual Heritage will be presented in-person and streamed on Facebook Live through the Interfaith Women of NH Facebook page. Join us for social time and refreshments after the program. *Please respect everyone's individual choice for masking.*

TO REGISTER: email interfaithwomennh@gmail.com or call **603-490-3584**. Visit our website: interfaithwomennh.org to learn more about us.



Our speakers for the evening are:

Valerie Earnshaw:

Valerie leads a network of 10 Relief Societies—the women's organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—whose motto, "Charity Never Faileth", inspires women to serve, build unity, and grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. In this role, she supports and trains local leaders, helping them strengthen their communities. Valerie holds a degree in Business Finance and a master's in leadership, and is passionate about teaching Emotional Intelligence, empowering people to grow in ways that positively impact their work, families, and communities. She and her husband Scott have four grown children, six grandchildren, and a shared love of family, entertaining, hiking and pickleball.

Marilyn Cavanaugh:

Marilyn grew up on Long Island, earned a BA in English from Hofstra University, and moved to NH with her husband over 50 years ago. The daughter of a Holocaust survivor, she is a Board member of Temple Adath Yeshurun in Manchester where she chairs the Lifelong Learning Committee and is co-founder and co-facilitator of the temple's Current Events Discussion Group. Marilyn is an Auburn Library Trustee, a member of Granite State Organizing Project, a participant in Compassionate Listening Workshops and on the Leadership Team of Interfaith Women of New Hampshire. Marilyn lives in Auburn and is a proud mother and grandmother. She enjoys reading, walking, sailing and above all, family.

Kristen Oser-Allen:

Kristen is of Passamaquoddy heritage on her mother and mother's father's side. She has been involved in the Indigenous community since she was a child and along with her husband, have raised their five children within the community. She is a Trustee for Mt. Kearsarge Indian Museum, chairs the Events Committee handling logistical and cultural aspects of each museum event, and co-chairs the Education Committee assisting with exhibits, workshops, and training employees and volunteers. She has been a singer and dancer within the Indigenous community for over 20 years and currently sings with the southern style drum The Walking Bear Singers and the northern style drum The Black Thunder Singers. In her spare time, she enjoys creating regalia and beadwork for her family and community.

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



224th Annual Meeting of the New Hampshire Conference & 1st Annual Meeting of the Granite State Association

Saturday, October 25, 2025

Held at: Geneva Point Conference Center, Moultonborough, NH

Theme: "Another Way"

Theme Scripture: Jeremiah 6:16

Keynote Speaker: Reverend Derek Terry, Acting Executive Director

UCC Open and Affirming Coalition

Registration opens: September 8 (at 5 pm)

Registration closed: October 6 (at 11:59 pm)

Link to Registration:

<https://www.nhcucc.org/events/am-2025>

A New Staff Position at First Congregational Church

Dear Members and Friends,

First Congregational Church has been deeply rooted in the history and culture of Manchester for nearly 200 years.

Throughout these two centuries, this dynamic congregation has been a leader amongst the churches, making significant contributions to the spiritual and social well-being of Manchester. As our culture progresses further into a changing world of technology and communications, it is important for us to embrace these new methods with the same enthusiasm that we have always shown. There is a brand-new realm of opportunity that awaits FCC as we have yet only scratched the surface of the possibilities.

The recent retirement of our Associate Pastor gives us the opportunity to review the best use of staff positions, while making sure all important aspects of church life are maintained. The congregational care that was a large part of the Associate Pastor's role is being maintained by our Parish Visitors and Kindness Team. These are outstanding groups that deeply care for the members and friends of FCC and offer truly meaningful love and support to this church family.

Currently, 35% of our Sunday attendance is online. Those who are tuning in via Facebook and YouTube enjoy a professional-grade livestream church service experience. They don't, however, have many ways to connect to each other and to the congregation as a whole. This is something that we want to change. Also, we haven't put much

effort into cultivating our online attendance and we are hoping that by doing so, we can significantly grow this part of our church. Our vision is to have a "hybrid" church, consisting of both in-person and online/social media attendance that, when taken as a whole, represents a vibrant, modern faith presence in the Manchester area.



Because of all this, we are now seeking to continue our rich tradition of ministry by expanding our presence through modern channels of communication. We will accomplish this in part by creating a new position on the staff of FCC. The title of this position will be, "Social Media and Communications Director". This individual will be primarily responsible for creating compelling content across various online platforms, managing our social media accounts, and collaborating with our staff and committees to ensure our digital presence is effectively engaging people and connecting them to our church's mission. We hope that this new role will strengthen our online church community and ultimately grow our congregation in appreciable ways. The church Council has reviewed and approved this new direction.

We hope that you will share in our excitement for what lies ahead. God has great plans for this church as we together walk with Him into our common future!

Blessings to all,

Bill Jones, Moderator

Memory Garden News!

What a summer this has been, even with the very rainy spring and 90 degree heat this summer, the Memory Garden has continued to look beautiful.

The spring annuals planted this spring added a cheerful color, with their pinks and purples. The New garden, designed to replicate the arch shape of the stained glass windows of the sanctuary, and provide another area of beauty to comple-



ment our historic church building and grounds. Creating this garden, a labor of love for Noel Villiard, with lots of help from Steve Payne, Maryann Linscott, Bill Jones, Pam Leblanc and Matt Krimmer. It contains some new plantings and plants donated from Noel's own garden.

By next Spring this garden will start to show it's beauty for all to enjoy. I hope you have had the opportunity to take a look for yourself the gardens are located on the Union Street side of our church. There is much more "thinning out" needed to be done this Fall as plants do tend to keep

growing larger ;-). We are going to split a lot of the Hosta plants and move them to other areas in the church garden. We will also have plants to spare if you would like to take some for your own gardens please let myself or Noel know, as they need good homes!

Weather permitting, **Saturday, September 20th from 9-noon** is the day we are planning to do the above work if you would like to help out. Please add your name to the sign up sheet on the volunteer bulletin board or call the church office and Lauren will add your name.

Our Memory garden is totally funded by the donations we receive, and we are grateful to all who have given in memory or in honor of a loved one. Donation slips are available in the hallway on the table opposite the Parlor door or you can send a check to First Congregational Church, with the "Memory Garden fund" in the memo line. Should you wish to honor a loved one by your donation please specify their name, which will be recorded in the Memory Book.



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWS

It's that time of year! On September 14, Sunday Friends will begin again! Children who are in kindergarten through middle school are welcome to join us on Sunday mornings for a fun time with games, activities and discussions about the bible and how we can use the lessons we learn in our everyday lives. This year's theme is Friendship; how to be a good friend, how to deal with adversity, forgiveness and courage. Of course we'll also have our advent/Christmas celebrations and Easter series! If you're interested in helping to teach, we are looking for volunteers! Please reach out to Kelda York for more information! Keldamyork@gmail.com



We meet in September on the following Sundays: 9/14, 9/21, 9/28!

October thru December dates are 10/5, 10/19, 10/26, 11/9, 11/16, 11/23, 11/30, 12/7, 12/14, 12/21.



Horton Center Peace, Faith, and Rejuvenation Women's Retreat - July 27- August 3, 2025

From the afternoon of July 27 to the morning of August 3, I had the privilege of spending time on Pine Mountain with 21 women. This number did not include the staff who welcomed us to Horton Center. The group was varied in many ways which included, but were not limited to age, abilities, interests, personalities. Some women were first timers like me and others had been attending for years. Our theme was "Another Way." The programing was typical of a retreat/camp program. There were campfires with serious conversations about faith and change and finding ways to support and



Chapel Rock

care and pray for each other as well as those who were not physically present at the campfire. We sang serious and silly songs and toasted marshmallows for s'mores. Morning worship encompassed traveling up trail with a spectacular view of Mount Madison and Mount Washington for worship. Then we spent the rest of the morning in small groups doing team building activities, planning vespers, and discussing scripture that related to how change affected our lives.



Campfire on first night of retreat

Other opportunities included a siesta time, organized activities such as arts and crafts, hiking, praying the labyrinth, swimming, archery, rock climbing,



doing board games, or one could decide to do something on their own. From 3:30 to 4pm everyone came to the lodge for ice cream, buying souvenirs, sitting on the porch in Adirondack rocking chairs in the shadow of Mount Madison, and conversation.

So in the midst of all this, what stood out for me? I was a stranger as there were only 3 people I knew and 2 were leaders. Yet I felt welcomed, by the staff as well as the participants. The young people who made up the staff were hospitable, friendly, and went out of their way to make sure all our needs were met. Yet it was not simply the staff who made this a meaningful time for me. It was the entire community that was built during and for these few days. Tackling the more difficult trail on the grounds, I learned I could do it but it took time and help, in addition to my hiking pole. Both staff and participants made sure I was not left along. They gave me pointers in how to traverse the roots. They put out a hand to help when I needed it for balance or the next step required longer legs than I have. One woman even carried my camera part of the way and took pictures to prove that I made to the top. This group made sure no one was left behind and it was all done in caring and gentle ways.

At this retreat I found peace, strengthen my faith, was rejuvenated, and experienced community on Pine Mountain. I plan to go back next year.

Rev. Linda J. Rackliffe

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

Monday, September 1

Church Office Closed for Labor Day Holiday

Tuesday, September 2

10:00 AM Staff Meeting

6:30 PM Membership Committee Meeting

Wednesday, September 3

11:00 AM 1269 Café Lunch Service Volunteer Opportunity

Thursday, September 4

9:00 AM Holly Berry Fair Craft Workshop

Friday, September 5

No Church Activities Scheduled

Saturday, September 6

8:00 AM Women's Connection Breakfast Outing to Longmeadow Church in Auburn

Sunday, September 7

Guest Preacher

10:00 AM Worship Service

11:00 AM Chapel Communion Service

Monday, September 8

9:30 AM Senior Fellowship Board Meeting

Tuesday, September 9

4:30 PM FIT Kitchen Volunteer Evening

6:00 PM Church Council Meeting

Wednesday, September 10

11:00 AM 1269 Café Lunch Service Volunteer Opportunity

Thursday, September 11

9:00 AM Holly Berry Fair Craft Workshop

Friday, September 12

No Church Activities Scheduled

Saturday, September 13

No Church Activities Scheduled

Sunday, September 14

10:00 AM Worship Service & Sunday Friends

11:00 AM All Church Picnic

Monday, September 15

5:30 PM Special Olympics Young Athletes

6:30 PM Church Trustees' Meeting

Tuesday, September 16

No Church Activities Scheduled

Wednesday, September 17

11:00 AM 1269 Café Lunch Service Volunteer Opportunity

4:30 PM FIT Kitchen Volunteer Evening

Thursday, September 18

9:00 AM Holly Berry Fair Craft Workshop

6:45 PM Interfaith Women of NH Event: Ancestry—Our Spiritual Heritage at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church, Merrimack, NH

Friday, September 19

No Church Activities Scheduled

Saturday, September 20

9:00 AM Memory Garden Clean-up

4:00 PM Private Wedding & Tentative Reception

Sunday, September 21

10:00 AM Worship Service & Sunday Friends

11:15 AM Parish Visitors Team Meeting

11:30 AM Open & Affirming Committee Meeting

12:00 PM Women's Connection Kick-off

4:00 Stewardship Committee Meeting

Monday, September 22

5:30 Special Olympics Young Athletes

1:00 PM New England Seafarer's Mission Event (Leaving FCC at 11:30 am to go to Boston)

Tuesday, September 23

1:00 PM FIT Food Pantry Volunteer Opportunity

Wednesday, September 24

11:00 AM 1269 Café Lunch Service Volunteer Opportunity

6:00 PM Resilience Reigns Dinner Service

Thursday, September 25

9:00 AM Holly Berry Fair Craft Workshop

6:00 PM FIT Family Center Activity Night

Friday, September 26

Compassion Closet Clothing Sorting

4:30 PM FIT Kitchen Volunteer Evening

Saturday, September 27

No Church Activities Scheduled

Sunday, September 28

10:00 AM Worship Service & Sunday Friends

Monday, September 29

5:30 Special Olympics Young Athletes

Tuesday, September 30

10:00 AM Worship Service

Outreach Committee September Meeting to be announced.

Choir Rehearsals to be announced.

The Kindness Team at FCC shares support, comfort, kindness and smiles with the members and friends of FCC.

Please consider baking cookies, soup or a casserole for their outreach. *Your act of kindness shows the recipients how much we CARE!* If you would like to contribute or have any questions please reach out to Coordinator, Peggy Neveu at frannys1@aol.com.

The Deadline for the October Church Newsletter is Friday, September 19!

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





The September 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

Church Office Hours

Monday through Friday from 9AM to 3PM

Sunday Worship 10:00 AM

*In-person with livestream option available
from our homepage:*

www.FCCManchesterNH.org

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.



Holly Berry Fair



Saturday, October 18
9:00 — 2:00



**One-of-a-kind Handmade
Items, Silent Auction, Attic Treasures,
Baked Goods including Cookies and
Candy, Handmade Jewelry, Children's
Games and Crafts, Lunch Counter and so
much more!**

First Congregational Church

www.FCCManchesterNH.org

Inscriptions inside new Bibles!

If you would like to have
an inscription placed in a
new Bible, a contribution
can be made to the
Memorial Trust Fund.
Donations can be made in
any amount.



Please reach out to Peter
Perich for more infor-
mation at [PPerich](mailto:PPerich@FCCManchesterNH.org)
[@FCCManchesterNH.org](mailto:PPerich@FCCManchesterNH.org)
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