



First Church

CONNECTION

First Congregational Church, UCC
Hopkinton, NH

February 2023
Vol. 64 • Issue 2

Small Talk

Lent begins with ashes.

Like the ashes, Lent is a season of mixed emotion. It's a time for reflecting on the relentlessness of conflict in the world and remembering the call to justice, kindness, and humility. It's a time when we prepare to walk with Jesus through the most difficult days of his life. It's also a time of anticipation because we know already that the Christ was not defeated by death.

I sometimes find myself introspective in February. My best friend, Daniel, died on February 5, 1991. On February 11th Charles and I welcomed our beautiful daughter, Rebecca, into the world. No one can really know me without knowing about this week when deep sorrow and soaring joy walked side by side.

Daniel was with me in looking forward to my child's birth; Becca is with me in remembering my friend's death. They never saw one another, but their lives are entwined. What great gifts they been, are, and will be always, in my life.

Each of us has a story filled with names, faces, laughter, and tears. Our stories intertwine and as they do, they make us who we are. What a blessing it is to have people in our lives who change us, sometimes very dramatically and sometimes quite gently, forever.

In the approaching season of Lent, the light-time grows and the shadows fade. Use some of this time of preparation and reflection to think about the people who have made a difference in your life. Consider that you too have affected others' lives and that you have opportunity to do so now.

Yes, Lent begins with ashes, but it ends with songs of rejoicing and the promise of life everlasting. It's a story that has been, is, and will be life-changing. Thanks be to God.

Faithfully,

Jill

The Reverend Dr. Jill H. Small

FEBRUARY

Growing Deeper in FAITH
Looking up in HOPE
Reaching out in LOVE

SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE, FEBRUARY 2023

The Settled Pastor Search Committee is very pleased to let you know that after all the good input from you, the congregation, and all the committee's hard work, the Profile for First Church has been posted! Now potential candidates for the position of settled pastor with us will be able to see what our church and community are like and assess whether our needs and interests are a good fit with theirs.

YOU can see the profile directly [here](#) on the First Church website. Our Profile is also posted:

- at the New Hampshire Conference UCC [website](#). (The Search Committee is working with the conference to correct a few typos that crept into the summary of the position during transition.)
- at the national [site](#) for UCC pastors seeking new positions.

Soon we can expect to see responses to the profile. Following an initial review by the Search Committee, promising candidates will be invited to participate in interviews with the Search Committee via Zoom. The committee has already created a basic format and questions for first round interviews and is working to finalize the most important questions for a second round of interviews, based on forty-five possible questions the committee members drafted.

We have no idea how many candidates may take an interest in the position. We have to remind you again that at this point, the process becomes highly confidential: all the members of the Search Committee will adhere to strict confidentiality.

The Search Committee seeks your ongoing prayers for us and the process as we await both candidate profiles and the moving of the Holy Spirit among us. You can also help with the search process by remaining or becoming (re)engaged in the life of the church and by strongly supporting the upcoming stewardship campaign to ensure that First Church has the necessary funds to support a new pastor in this inflationary climate.

Shalom,

Dijit Taylor

For the Search Committee of Louise Dartnell, Paula Demers, Jenny Foster, Charlie Head, Heather Hearne, Jim Lewis, Nan McNicholas, Mike Metcalf, Brenda Quinn, Ruth Sanchez, Eric Schlepphorst and Dijit Taylor



Contribution Contacts

If you would like to help or contribute to any of the following regular activities, here are the people you need to contact:

Family Promise

Dawn Berry

746-5033

dcbnh@comcast.net

Friendly Kitchen

Charles and Maxine Petruccelli

MaxinePet@gmail.com

203-313-3893

Head Usher

Sue Mitchell

746-3685

spmitchell43@gmail.com

Sanctuary Flowers

Coordinator

Carol Howard

caroldawson640@comcast.net

(preferred)

603-496-5365

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ash Wednesday Service

February 22 at 7:00 p.m.

We are on a journey together in this Lenten season leading to the joy of Easter. That journey begins on Ash Wednesday, February 22nd at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. The service will include readings, choral and congregational singing, a brief meditation, the imposition of ashes and the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Save the Date!

Horton Center Women's Retreat

Thursday, August 3 – Sunday August 6

Get away to the mountains for a few days! Women from First Church have greatly enjoyed the annual women's retreat at Horton Center, the New Hampshire Conference United Church of Christ's outdoor ministry site on the north side of the White Mountains. Campers sleep in cabins, there are flush toilets and showers, the dining hall food is quite good, there are typical camp activities (archery has been especially popular with our group), time to explore one's faith through morning study groups and evening vespers and a stunning physical environment.

For more information, see Dijit Taylor, Nancy Emery or Janet Ward, all enthusiastic participants.



LOAVES AND FISHES: FCCH's 2023-24 ANNUAL GIVING PROGRAM

This is an exciting time for First Church! It's a time to remember, to renew our commitments to one another, and to call a new pastor to be our spiritual shepherd.

We want to welcome our next settled pastor with every assurance that we are eager to live into our commitment to *Growing Deeper in FAITH, Looking Up in HOPE, Reaching Out in LOVE*. One way we do that is through our annual pledges of financial support.

We're also excited about this Annual Giving Campaign. We look forward to involving as many people as possible including our Sunday School and Youth, and our wonderful musicians and artists!

Please join us for worship on FEBRUARY 26 followed by the Loaves and Fish Luncheon as we begin our four-week campaign toward a pledge goal is \$328,257.

Throughout the Interim Process, we have learned that we appreciate information. We've included two tables for you to consider as you prepare your financial pledge. The first shows our pledge distribution for the present fiscal year.



Dollars pledged	Number of pledges at this amount
\$1 – 100	4
\$101 – 300	10
\$301 – 500	19
\$501 – 1000	22
\$1001 – 2500	37
\$2501 – 5000	25
\$5001 – 10,000	10
\$10,000 – 15,000	5
Over \$15,000	1

This is an ambitious goal for an ambitious time. While we are optimistic, like many other churches, First Church is still rebounding from the pandemic. You all know that costs have increased. We prefer to fund our budget fully from pledges alone, but we recognize that families also face changes in the economy. The growth of our endowment allows us to use \$40,000 toward the total budget of \$377,277. If our pledge goal is exceeded, we'll reduce the amount withdrawn from interest earned on our endowment.

An Annual Giving Guide, below, is a useful tool for making your pledge in proportion to your income.

AN ANNUAL GIVING GUIDE – Divide by 12 for monthly numbers or by 52 for weekly numbers			
Annual income	(1-2% of income)	(3-4% of income)	(5-10% of income)
\$10,000	\$100-200	\$300-400	\$500-1000
\$25,000	\$250-500	\$750-1000	\$1250-2500
\$50,000	\$500-1000	\$1500-2000	\$2500-5000
\$100,000	\$1000-2000	\$3000-4000	\$5000-10,000
\$250,000	\$2500-5000	\$7500-10,000	\$12,500-\$25,000

We will announce the pledge total in worship on Palm Sunday, April 2, 2023, so look for your pledge packet in the mail soon and please return your pledge card by March 31st.

Thank you for your prayers and pledges!

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Excommunication

The seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates

At a Thursday, December 30, 1824 meeting of the Church, after a vote to excommunicate Brothers Herrick and Ober was finished, Brother David Gile “arose & stated to the Church that he had recently traveled on the Sabbath without any necessity for so doing except that he had not got along as fast as he expected & the traveling was bad,” the Scribe recorded.

David Gile was born in Plaistow in 1770 and had married in 1791 Sarah “Sally” Ayer who had died in 1803 at the same time as two of their four children; in 1805 he married Anna Goodwin who died before March 1810 when he and Susan Bruce were married in Londonderry. In the 1810 Census they are resident in Hopkinton with three young girls. By 1819 with son David, there were four Gile children.

The children’s father was admitted to First Church on March 4, 1819 and was an active member. He was Moderator of the First Congregational Society for 1819, -20, -22, and -24, and elected to the thirteen-member Standing Committee of the Church in 1822. In 1823 he was appointed by the Church to assist as a delegate to a Council at Warner. He would have known first-hand the financial affairs of the Society and seen the “cases” of Eliphalet Holmes, Asa Herrick and Andrew Ober re “traveling on the Sabbath” being dealt with by the Church.

In the new year three members of the Church’s Standing Committee called on him at his home to convince him of his error: He apparently felt he had done nothing to be ashamed of or penitent for. They didn’t convince him, so together with Pastor the Reverend Roger Conant Hatch, they prepared a list of fourteen questions for him to answer.

Brother Gile wrote out his responses, filling four, 7 ½” x 12” pages with tight, close writing, and read them to the Church on March 4, 1825:

Brother Gile cites the trials of Brother Holmes who was “restored into fellowship,” and [“yet,” he seems to say] Brothers Herrick and Ober “have been tried by the same Church and for the same crime and cut off.” He believes there is some uncertainty around the issue. “I expected that some of my Brethren would feel in duty bound to call me to account for my conduct whilst there are others that I charitably believe would suffer a crime like mine under the same circumstances to pass by without bringing me to the Bar before which I am now on trial, and notwithstanding the fact that I have confessed if nothing else —”

As to stopping on the Sabbath and attending meeting wherever the member may be on the road, he poses this:

“...I believe that we are justifiable in the sight of God to pass on and try to make our meditations as suitable to the day as we possibly can. The meditation of the heart is what God looks at. The bowing of the head like a bulrush, whether it be in the Sanctuary or any other place [with] no Suitable Reflections flowing from the heart is nothing better than abomination in his Sight. Now if we take a traveller into our Meeting, [right away] the first thing the eyes of a great part of the congregation is upon him, and if he has been from home for some time his clothes must be dirty. A whisper will soon commence: Who is that? He looks too dirty to go to Meeting, and then some will begin to laugh, and their laughing will cause others to laugh and very often [it] terminates in a great deal of levity. I see no good in this. [So] let the man keep the Sabbath where [in his mind and heart, he suggests] God in his providence has appointed him to keep it” wherever on the road he may be.

David Gile attended no further meetings, and on December 29, 1825 after a full year of sessions on his “case,” he was excommunicated by First Church. The same day he wrote to Thomas Bailey, Jr., Clerk, withdrawing from the Society. He thought himself “treated in a very unchristian like manner, expecting soon to be deprived of a privilege that I think belongs to all the weary and heavy laden with sin to which Class I humbly hope I belong. I think it not to be [a] duty for me to support people where they bite and devour one another without rendering any reason but their own faith which faith they make no pretense to support by the Gospel...”

The Reverend John Mitchell of Northampton, Mass. devotes some thought to “Treatment of Excommunicated Persons” in his *Guide...to the Congregational Churches of New England* (1838) with citations from the Bible: “We are to have *no company with the excommunicate*, that he may be ashamed...He is disowned of the Christian family, and while he remains so, we are to have no further communion or fellowship with him. He is not to be recognized as a professor of religion, or as a Christian.”

The excommunication was officially read before the Church and congregation on Sabbath day January 1, 1826, no doubt *without* David in the old meeting-house. He continued without benefit of the fellowship, living and farming in town, moving to Concord after 1840 where he died at age 72 after which his remains were interred in Hopkinton Old Cemetery.

Steve Thomas, First Church Historian

THANK YOU NOTES

Below is a thank you from Dora D'Almeida to all those who contributed to her Go Fund Me page, raising funds to enable her to buy a car last summer.

Dear church family,
I will like to thank each and everyone of you for helping me and my family get a car during these hard times. I honestly don't know how I would have managed without your flexibility and willingness. Thank you all for the support may God continue to bless each and everyone of you.

- love the Dalmeida's

A thank you note written by Louise Dartnell to the First Church Carolers who serenaded residents of Havenwood Heritage Heights in December.

Lois and Harry Scammon
Sue Mitchell
Betty French
Jibba Ottery
Alden Finney
Jodi and Robin Reed
Ruth and Ed Pickler
Louise Dartnell
Marilyn Rogers

(neighbors listening in:
Dorice Benson and Jim Hanley?
Dave and Claire Powell
Mona Lane
Valerie McLean)

December 31, 2022
Dear First Church Carolers,
What a special start to Christmas week you provided to members of Church who reside at Havenwood Heritage Heights! The folks are still raving about the experience! Thank you so much for your joyful visit and for coming to Concord to serenade us!
Blessings!

To First Church Giving Tree Givers:

You've done it again! Giving Tree 2022 was "over the top" successful this year. All the Sign-Up Genius Slots were very quickly taken, and as always, your generosity was astounding. I am amazed every year at what our congregation donates for our town's children, seniors, and refugees. Your gift selections are great quality, requested gift cards are extremely generous; often multiple and extra gifts are purchased. On behalf of all gift recipients, many many thanks for the abundance of gifts! Your thoughtful selections are true blessings.

Nan McNicholas

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Blood Drive

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

354 Main St. Hopkinton, NH 03229 - Great Hall

Wednesday, February 22, 2023

1:30 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.

Sponsored by St. Andrew's Episcopal Church and
the First Congregational Church of Hopkinton.

Maximize your donation. Help more patients.
If you are an eligible type O, B-, or A- donor, consider making a Power Red
donation. Red blood cells are the most transfused blood component.

Give Something That Means Something

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit RedCrossBlood.org
and enter: HOPKINTONNH to **schedule an appointment.**



Scan to be directed to
RedCrossBlood.org



Scan to schedule
an appointment

Schedule a blood donation appointment today:

Download the Blood Donor App | RedCrossBlood.org | 1 800 733 2767

To sign up to volunteer at the drive go to
<https://standrewshopkinton.org/blood-drive> and click on the volunteer link

See other side for Volunteer positions

ANNOUNCEMENTS

YOU ARE INVITED TO FIRST
CHURCH'S FIRST EVER

**VALENTINE'S
BRUNCH POTLUCK
AND DANCE**



*A Waltz Dance Lesson for
Beginners will be provided!*

**SUNDAY, FEB 12 DURING
FELLOWSHIP HOUR**

*What to bring:
A brunch item to share
Shoes other than boots*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Save the Date!

2023 First Church Flea Market Saturday, April 15

After two years, get ready to clean out your closets and find those lightly used items to donate in support of our church's mission work. All the details will follow. Any questions or if you want to help, please email beckyewing@comcast.net.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Waffle Church

Everyone is welcome at Waffle Church. Upcoming dates: February 5, March 5, April 2, May 7. Come at 8:30 for waffles, fruit, juice and coffee. Children share a story and a song, and adults share time to chat and connect.

Family Pot Luck and Game Night

The CE Board invites everyone to a low-key potluck and game night on the 3rd Saturday of each month, starting Saturday, February 18. 5 pm to 7 pm (ish). Bring a dish to share, but it does not have to be fancy. Feel free to bring a game your family enjoys, and the church has games to share as well. All ages are welcome.

Youth Group News

Stay tuned for dates from Trish Walton with upcoming outings including a Pat's Peak snow tubing trip!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF
HOPKINTON, NH

Music & Arts Sunday

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands!

February 12, 2023
10:00 AM Service

The Music & Arts Board invites you to a celebration of song, dance, and art on Sunday, February 12th. The 10:00 service will highlight the gifts and talents of this congregation as we worship our Lord through the arts.

We ask that you bring a piece of your creativity to share (i.e., painting, knitting, poem, etc.). This artwork will create a collective altar display during the service.



MUSIC & ARTS BOARD

The Music and Arts Board has been quite busy this fall and winter. We have been blessed with our new Choir Director, Sarah Ames, who has been working hard with the choir to provide wonderful music for our Sunday services and the Christmas Eve services. Thanks to Sarah, David Almond, and the choir for “making a joyful noise” to celebrate our faith. Soloists this fall include Paul McAuliffe, Beth Spaulding, Barb Shaltis, Aimee Gangel, and Larry Shaltis—your talents are greatly appreciated.

We have also been blessed by the return of our Bell Choir, directed by Mindy Wolfe. It has been wonderful hearing them play during some worship services, and we look forward to more. As one of the “newbie” bell ringers, it is a joy to play with this group!!

We have also enjoyed a return of our congregation’s children singing during worship. They have looked as excited as we have been listening to them. Thank you to Sarah, Heather Hearne, and Trish Walton.

There will be a busy winter and spring ahead. Our Music and Arts Sunday will be held on February 12, so “stay tuned” for more information. We will incorporate the Chancel Choir, the Bell Choir, Sacred Dance, and the Children’s Choir into worship. In addition to much music during the service, we will rejoice with all of you who enjoy doing various visual arts and crafts. After the service, the fun of dance will be part of fellowship time. Thank-you to the Music and Arts Board members for putting this together.

In the future, we will participate in the Stewardship Campaign’s “Loaves and Fishes,” and we will also be having a “craftsman’s exhibit” in the future to celebrate the artistic gifts from so many in our congregation. Music will also be an important part of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Easter. Whew!

Music and Arts has always been a way to share our faith with others, to tell and celebrate faith, and to use the gifts we have been given by God. We are so thankful for all of you who support and participate in this ministry.

Barb Shaltis
Chairperson

FRIENDLY KITCHEN



The December 28th meal was a terrific dish of Shrimp and Vegetables (a choice between sweet and spicy), rice, bread, and a dessert. Trish Walton, Steph Elrick, Jack Kohl, Carol Sweny, and Maxine Petruccelli served 48 guests.

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Hopkinton, NH 03229

Address Service Requested

First Church

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY

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8:00 am-12:00 pm

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Deadline for March newsletter: Wednesday, February 22

