

First Church

CONNECTION

First Congregational Church, UCC
Hopkinton, NH

March 2023
Vol. 64 • Issue 3

Small Talk

Lent is a time for reflection and renewal. The season takes its name from the Latin word for “lengthen” and that’s about the sun giving us light for a longer time, day by day. We also can see Lent as a time to take a longer view, to embrace a vision that moved with prophets, apostles, and calls to us.

That kind of vision is grounded in faith. Faith is not simple acceptance of what someone else tells us. Yes, we do first ‘hear the story’ but that’s not where becoming a Christian unfolds. Faith invites us to use the gifts of thinking and feeling, our minds and our hearts, to wrestle with what it means to be a follower of Jesus. An unexamined faith is not much faith at all.

We are always a work in progress as the Church, as a congregation, as an individual person of faith. When we take time to invest in spiritual growth, the Spirit works with us. At least that has been my experience. I hope it also has been yours.

When we are intentional and consistent in paying attention to listening for the Still-speaking voice of God, the stage is set for something to amaze us. Multiply that by an entire congregation opening itself to deeper encounters with the Divine and the affect truly is transformational.

What we learn and how we respond to cultivating faith can make a difference not only to us individually or as a congregation. It also can bless everyone we encounter. That may seem idealistic, but it does in fact happen, in ways large and small.

During these 40 days of Lent, I encourage you to spend some time in a spiritual practice. It may be praying, reading Scripture, writing in a journal, meditating, or saying something encouraging to one other person each day. You may find it becomes a habit you’ll continue well past the Lenten season.

May we know the presence of the Holy One, Creator, Christ, and Comforter walking with us through Lent, toward a great horizon beyond our imagining, where the sun always lights the way.

Faithfully,,

Jill

The Reverend Dr. Jill H. Small

MARCH

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

SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE, MARCH 2023

With the church profile posted, we are now in the candidate review part of the search process. <https://firstchurchhopkinton.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/First-Church-of-Hopkinton-NH-UCC-Church-Profile-Website.pdf> Members of the Search Committee are reading candidate profiles, watching videos of candidates preaching, holding interviews (initially by Zoom but likely later in person), discussing candidates and seeking guidance from the holy spirit. We seek to discern which of the interested candidates appears to be the best fit for First Church as this time.

Jill was immensely helpful to the Search Committee as we worked on the church profile. She reviewed several drafts and used both her previous experiences and some very effective tough love to help us create a profile that we believe effectively reflects the current reality and vision of our church. She does not, however, have a role to play as we review candidate profiles. That task rests squarely with the Search Committee until we identify a candidate to recommend to the congregation.

The role of interim pastor can be bitter sweet – you come to serve the church, to help it assess its strengths and weaknesses and to provide a buffer between the former pastor and the soon-to-be-called new pastor. You help the Search Committee create a vibrant description of the church for the profile. When you succeed, you have worked yourself out of a job and have to say farewell to the people you have led and come to know and like who may be so excited about the new settled pastor that they forget to thank you for all you have helped with. So, here's one early but big THANK YOU to Jill for her time with us and all she has helped us learn.

At this point in the search and call process – candidate review - the utmost confidentiality is of critical importance. Search Committee members simply can't tell you anything about the candidates being reviewed – not how many, not their ages, genders, education, family situations or current locations. If you ask any member of the Search Committee about the process, the response you can expect to hear is "We are currently in the candidate review process."

You can help the Search Committee both by your prayers and by your enthusiastic participation in the life of the church. When you are thinking about whether to come to church on a Sunday morning, consider that this could be a service that a candidate might review on line when considering whether to submit their profile for FCCH review. The Loaves and Fishes Stewardship Campaign is taking place this month. When you are prayerfully considering what to pledge this year, think of the importance of being able to offer a competitive salary and appropriate housing allowance when the time comes to make financial arrangements with the selected candidate.

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 Schlepffhorst 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

Exchange Students

Brenda Lewis is currently recruiting to bring Education First exchange students to our community in the fall. Go to efexchangeyear.org for details.



Friendly Kitchen

Volunteers Sue Mitchell, Paul and Marie Martell, Elaine Lessels, Cynthia Marple and Maxine Petruccelli served 50 guests on January 25, 2023. A hearty and delicious meal of chili (meat and meatless), cornbread, mixed vegetables and dessert were served.



MUSIC & ARTS BOARD

We have much to be thankful for.....

.....a huge thank-you to those of you who brought in artistic items for our display on Music and Arts Sunday. We also thank the Chancel Choir, the Handbell Choir, the children for creating such beautiful music for our service. Sarah Ames, David Almond, Mindy Wolfe, and Judy Dibble provided wonderful leadership in all aspects of the service. All efforts created an inspirational Sunday.

.....We also are grateful to Ingrid Dinter for the wonderful brunch, beautiful Valentine decorations and enthusiasm with leading us in the art of waltzing. What fun and fellowship!!

.....On February 19, Lindy and Charlie Head shared a beautiful and worshipful violin and guitar duo. We are grateful for their talent and efforts.

We have much to look forward to.....

.....from March 12-19 the Music and Arts Board is providing a “Loaves and Fishes” artwork display for all to enjoy during this week in the Great Room of the Parish House. **We would welcome your sharing of your artwork (any media—pictures, fabric art, pottery, etc.) as part of this display. If you have an item(s) you would like to display, please notify Barb Shaltis (b.shaltis@att.net or 517-250-4331) by March 6.**

..... Holy Week provides opportunities for prayerful and joyful music. The Chancel Choir and Handbell Choir are preparing wonderful music as participants in this week of sorrows and joy.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Our Mansard Roof

At a Church meeting duly called for Sunday, January 22, 2023, those present, constituting a quorum, voted to expend up to \$84,000 to cover much needed repairs to, and the reshingling of, the roof on the original part of the parish house building. The main roof, not easily visible from the ground, has a very gentle slope as compared to the steep slope of its four sides — a mansard roof — a style not much seen in northern New England where winters are harsh and snow loads heavy (or used to be).



In Hopkinton, we can find at least four others: *en route* from Concord, shortly past Whittier Pond, on the left, on its own high rise, there is one at 1065 Hopkinton Road; in the village on the left, a much larger one at 303 Main Street; up the hill and around the curve on the way to Henniker there is one at 112 Old Henniker Road. The Huntoon (now the Curtis) commercial block in Contoocook Village at 902 Main Street is “mansarded”.

The Parish House was originally a “standard” two-story 1780-1790 Federal era dwelling with the usual gable roof. John Shackford Kimball (1812-1888) (see a photo and expansive account of him on pages 418-419 in Lord’s *Life and Times in Hopkinton, N.H.*), looking for a country home – and a place for his wife, Mary E. Stevens and their five children — purchased

the place from Dr. David O. Collins in 1855. During much of his residency Mr. Kimball “[divided] his time between Hopkinton and Boston,” writes Historian Lord who would have known that gentleman personally. “He was a man of a generous nature and a public spirit.”

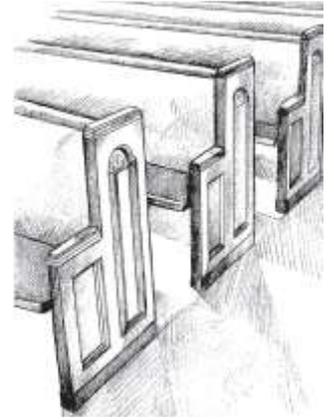
Mr. Kimball had the original roof removed and the mansard roof built. Between 1850 and 1890 in the United States it was popular as a stylistically-exciting modern upgrade to an old house. As well, it provided more bedrooms for the children. He kept the Federal-style front door. Three dormer windows across the front, one on the road side, a small one on the back and maybe more, and the addition of a piazza across the front, now long gone, completed the upgrade.

The house remained in the family until grandson Robert Warren Kimball’s death in 1956 (he kept a barbershop in one of the front rooms); his estate sold it to Northern Hardware, Inc.; the firm turned the two ground-floor front rooms into “show rooms” and made the second floor into two small apartments. The firm did not succeed, and the building was put up for sale in 1958, and in 1959 First Church purchased the property for a parish house and for Sunday School rooms and received the income from the two apartments. Among others, our member Louis Dartnell (soprano in the Senior Choir) and her late husband, Doug, rented one of them, and members Bruce and Gail Ellsworth (bass and alto) rented one. (No, a promise to sing with the Senior Choir was not a stipulation for occupancy.)

That grand old mansard roof has kept us dry for a good many years, and with needed repairs, it should serve us well for many more.

Steve Thomas
First Church Historian

DEACON'S BENCH



Dear First Church Family and Friends,

Have you ever taken a moment to consider how many ways our church enables us to come together? Here is just a smattering of First Church's many opportunities to connect right now, along with the names of some of the people who will welcome you along.

Come Together in Service and Fellowship:

Donate and dedicate sanctuary flowers (Carol Howard)

Bake cookies to share in Fellowship (Nancy Emery)

Join the Youth Group (Trish Walton)

Serve on one of our boards or committees (Janet DeVito & Eric Schleppehorst)

Take part in the Know Your Neighbor program (Ingrid Dinter)

Enjoy a performance of the Dessert Theater, coming in March (Paula Demers)

Play together at Family Potluck and Game Night (Elizabeth Sides)

Make a joyful noise with our choirs (Sarah Ames)

Become a member of one of our Caring Communities (Pastor Jill)

Breakfast with family & friends at our monthly Waffle Church (Trish Walton)

Participate in a Service Sunday activity (Chuck Gagnel)

Contribute to the Hopkinton Food Pantry by filling our Hope Basket (Pamela Keilig)

Comfort those who are grieving or ailing with a Prayer Shawl (Dijit Taylor)

Feed the hungry at Concord's Friendly Kitchen (Maxine Petruccelli)

Volunteer during Family Promise hosting weeks (Dawn Berry & Nancy Emery)

Come Together to Study and Grow:

Check out the Thursday Morning Book Group (Barb Shaltis)

Join a Bible Study Group (Kathi Dustin or Pastor Jill)

Come Together to Worship:

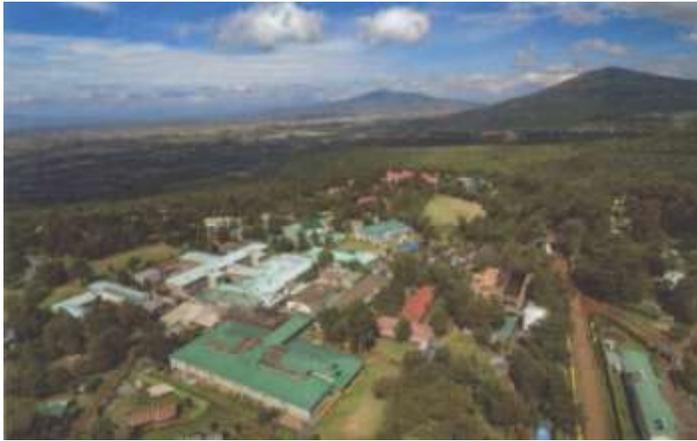
As we enter the joyous season of Easter, there are many special worship services to consider attending. Palm Sunday will be a day filled with music and pageantry. Each morning of Holy Week our sanctuary will be open for quiet, more contemplative 20-minute-long services remembering Jesus' final days on earth. Maundy Thursday's evening service is a moving re-telling of Christ's Passion. Celebrate Easter morning at the ecumenical sunrise service held outside on Putney Hill, or come fill our sanctuary at 10am!

Even now in these days of challenge and change, we still come together to connect with one another, forge the ties that bind, grow in spirit, and be the body of Christ in the world. Remember the oft repeated refrain Jill taught us, words both comforting and empowering, "**Whoever we are, wherever we are, we are the church together!**"

Yours in God's grace,

Nancy Emery

THANK YOU NOTES



Gracious thanks to everyone for prayers, thoughts, and cards concerning my recent surgery. All went very well, and recovery at home is also progressing! Looks like I will be having chemo beginning in mid-March, so stand by for further prayers!

Blessings,

Jim Howard

*To the First Congregational Church of Hopkinton,
Thank you so much for your generous support of Eijabe
Nurse training through the Valerie Hill Memorial
Scholarship. Your generous contribution of \$2800
means we are able to sponsor two students this year -
amazing! Richard L-R are current students Samuel,
Margaret, Janet, Lottie, Moses and Hannah, please keep
them in your prayers to grow in knowledge and faith!*

Blessings,

David Shirk

E.D. Friends of Eijabe

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR

Know Your Neighbor's February event, The Valentine's Day Brunch and Dance was a huge success!

Festive decorations, a wonderful food buffet and beautiful Viennese Waltz Music created the perfect framework for a morning filled with smiles and laughter. After a joyful fellowship time, sharing food and stories, the attendees were introduced to the basics of the Viennese Waltz, one of the oldest and easiest to learn original Ballroom Dances. A big takeaway for many was, that paying attention to the right posture knowing the different roles in dancing is much more important than remembering the right steps. All attendees did very well and many voiced that this should be done more often.

The Know your Neighbor project would like to thank The Deacons for their support and Judy Dibble for a generous donation to purchase some of the decorations.

We are always open to other suggestions for events, presentations or displays. Please reach out to Ingrid Dinter at Ingrid@IngridDinter.com to share your ideas!



MORE PHOTOS!



Horton Center Camp Schedule

Even though it is still winter at Horton Center, the summer schedule of camping activities is available. In addition to the Women's Retreat described in the February newsletter, there are camp sessions and activities for (nearly) everyone: Camp weeks for kids entering grades 3 – 12, special weeks for music, arts, dance and drama, archery, Hogwarts, water and hiking adventures, a grandparent-grandchild camp, family camp and more. Check out the schedule here <https://hortoncenter.org/summer-camp-sessions/>.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

In February, First Church youth enjoyed a Pat's Peak snow tube outing as well as a trip to serve at the Friendly Kitchen.

Ms. Walton is planning a **summer mission trip** to focus on human service help in Manchester or Boston. Please let her know if the first or second week of August would be better for you if you would like to participate! You can contact her at Trishwalton65@gmail.com.

All are invited to **Waffle Church** at 8:30 am on Sundays March 5, April 2, May 7, and June 4. Come for waffles and fellowship with children and adults!



Donations to Earthquake Victims

If you are considering donating to the victims of the earthquake, the UCC has mounted an appeal. Donations to the Turkey and Syria Earthquake Fund can be made through the United Church of Christ's website. Here is the link: https://support.ucc.org/global-h-o-p-e/turkey-syria-emergency-appeal/donate?inf_contact_key=552b198fff7fab004c0df5d17cbc15b01b0a3f0fd3ee5d9b43fb34c6613498d7

You can also mail a check made payable to the United Church of Christ, PO Box 71957 Cleveland OH 44194. Please be sure to note "Turkey and Syria" on your check in the memo section.

First Congregational Church of Hopkinton, UCC

Snickers & Sweets

Dessert and a Musical Review

**Parish House Great Room
1548 Hopkinton Road**

Friday, March 24th at 7:00 PM
Saturday, March 25th at 2:00 PM
Saturday, March 25th at 7:00 PM
Sunday, March 26th at 2:00 PM

***Tickets - \$15, available starting March 1st in the church
office weekdays and after church on Sundays***

***All Proceeds to Support
FCCH Racial Justice Team***

1548 Hopkinton Rd.
Hopkinton, NH 03229

Address Service Requested

First Church

NEWSLETTER

MARCH

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Deadline for April newsletter: Wednesday, March 22