

# Steeple Minute

First Congregational Church of Littleton  
189 Main Street, Littleton, NH 03561

May 1, 2023

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Issue 5

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## *Listening for the Holy Spirit*

As we wrap up Eastertide and approach Pentecost, I am reminded of the first few chapters in Acts that describe the disciples, after Jesus is taken up into heaven, waiting and waiting. Jesus told them to wait for “The gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about,” referring, of course, to the Holy Spirit. But I wonder if they really knew what that meant. I imagine them being quite fearful and not knowing what to do, while they were trying to remember all that Jesus had taught them.

It feels like we are in a similar place. Some of us are fearful about what will become of our church. Some of us are hopeful because we are seeing glimmers of new energy and excitement. Some of us are confused because we are not sure of the direction this church is going and feel we lack information. Some of us are all of the above.

The church council meets monthly and for periodic retreats wrestling with the same questions. We are working really hard with Pastor Peter to discover who we are, what is God calling us to become, and who is our neighbor. What does it mean to be a small church in this time and place? We have been tapping into resources, workshops, and conferences. We are making connections with others who are in a similar position and have discovered that we are not alone. We are all struggling to discern what it means to be church in 2023. Most churches in UCC are small (under 100 members). What does that mean going forward? What does life as a small church look like? What if growth means something other than bodies in the pews? The NH UCC has set up “A New Thing Task Force” with gatherings throughout the conference as an opportunity to learn from each other. The next one is May 20 at our church, and you are welcome to attend.

It seems like the questions beget more questions. Next steps beget next steps. This all takes time. The council is hoping to come up with some working goals for the next 3-5 years. As this process shakes out, you, the congregation, will be kept informed. We need your input and feedback. What are your questions? When you listen for the Holy Spirit, what do you hear? Please feel free to speak/email to any council member. Come to a council meeting (let moderator know in advance so we make sure you will be heard). Please know that your concerns are being brought to council meetings when you speak to any of us. We may not have an easy or quick solution, but these questions do help shape discussions on moving forward.

All that said, we are continuing to reach out into the community with Dinner Bell, Food Pantry, and SLLC. We have been welcoming some new people who have found their way to our sanctuary on Sunday morning. Through workshops, Bible study, and connecting with others, we explore, consider, pray, and listen for the Holy Spirit. It is a messy process with information, like strands of thread for a tapestry, lying all over the place, waiting to be woven into a new picture that will be the First Congregational Church of Littleton.

From the church council  
Alice Muh, Moderator

# First Congregational Church

## May 2023



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>Happy Birthday!</b></p> <p><b>Karen Lord 5/3</b>  <b>Elaine Pollak 5/6</b>  <b>Linda Warden 5/8</b>  <b>Cynthia Nielson 5/9</b>  <b>Judy Warden 5/28</b></p>	<p><b>1</b></p> <p>6:45 PM – White Mtn. Voices rehearsal - Sanctuary</p> <p>7:00 PM – AA - FH</p>	<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP</p> <p>7:00 PM-AA-FH</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>6:00 PM –AIAnon-LP</p> <p>7 :00 PM-AA-FH</p>	<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>7:00 PM-AA-FH</p>
<p><b>7 FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER</b></p> <p>9:00 AM – Adult Bible Class – Revelation</p> <p>10:00 AM-Worship Service</p> <p><i>Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz</i></p> <p>11:30 AM-Diversity Group- LP</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p>5:30 PM – SLLC BOD - Zoom</p> <p>6:45 PM – White Mtn. Voices rehearsal - Sanctuary</p> <p><b>Pastor Away</b></p> <p>7:00 PM – AA - FH</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>6:00PM – Eastern Star – FH</p> <p><b>Pastor Away</b></p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p>1:00PM – Finance Meeting – CR</p> <p>6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP</p> <p><b>Pastor Away</b></p> <p>7:00 PM-AA-FH</p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p>8:00AM – Property Meeting – CR</p> <p>1:00 PM – Ladies Society - LP</p> <p>6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP</p> <p><b>Pastor Away</b></p> <p>7 :00 PM-AA-FH</p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p><b>Pastor Away</b></p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p>9:00 AM – Church Clean Up Day</p>  <p><b>Pastor Away</b></p> <p>7:00 PM-AA-FH</p>
<p><b>14 SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER</b></p> <p>9:00 AM – Adult Bible Class – Revelation</p> <p>10:00 AM-Worship Service</p> <p><i>Worship Leader Ross Fairweather</i></p> <p>11:30 AM-Diversity Group- LP</p>	<p><b>15</b></p> <p>6:45 PM – White Mtn. Voices rehearsal - Sanctuary</p> <p>7:00 PM – AA - FH</p>	<p><b>16</b></p>	<p><b>17</b></p> <p>6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP</p> <p>7:00 PM – AA – FH</p>	<p><b>18 Ascension Day</b></p> <p>9:30AM Council-CR</p> <p>6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP</p> <p>7 :00 PM-AA-FH</p>	<p><b>19</b></p> <p>Pastor's Sabbath</p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p>9AM-2 PM New Thing Task Force - NH Conf. - FH</p> <p><b>Happy Anniversary!</b></p> <p><b>Ali &amp; Brian Muh</b></p> <p>7:00 PM-AA-FH</p>
<p><b>21 SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER</b></p> <p>9:00 AM – Adult Bible Class – Revelation</p> <p>10:00 AM-Worship Service</p> <p><i>Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz</i></p> <p>11:30 AM-Diversity Group-LP</p> <p>3:00 PM – White Mtn. Voices Concert-Sanctuary</p> <p>6:00PM – Marching Band Practice – FH</p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p>7:00 PM – AA - FH</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p><b>Happy Anniversary!</b></p> <p><b>Dianne &amp; Val Poulsen</b></p>	<p><b>24</b></p> <p>6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP</p> <p>7:00 PM – AA – FH</p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p>6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP</p> <p>7 :00 PM-AA-FH</p>	<p><b>26</b></p> <p><b>Happy Anniversary!</b></p> <p><b>Mary &amp; Doug Menzies</b></p> <p>Pastor's Sabbath</p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <p>7:00 PM-AA-FH</p>
<p><b>28 PENTECOST SUNDAY</b></p> <p>9:00 AM – Adult Bible Class – Revelation</p> <p>10:00 AM-Worship Service</p> <p><i>Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz</i></p> <p><i>Strengthen the Church Special Offering</i></p>	<p><b>29</b></p> <p>OFFICE CLOSED SLLC CLOSED</p> <p>7:00 PM – AA - FH</p>	<p><b>30</b></p>	<p><b>31</b></p> <p>6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP</p> <p>7:00 PM – AA – FH</p>	<p><b>KEY:</b></p> <p><b>FH - Fellowship Hall</b>  <b>LP - Ladies Parlor</b>  <b>CR - Classroom</b></p>		

**APOLOGIES**

*Correction to the February financial reporting in last month's Steeple Minute. Here is the updated information:*

Wireless Guest Account  
 SSID: FCC Guests  
 Password: fcc189main  
 Enjoy!

**Financial Report**

February 28, 2023	YTD
Member support:	\$22,218
Scheduled w/d from trust funds	\$ 4,000
Other Income:	\$ 3,097
Total Income:	\$29,315
Total Expenses:	\$34,365
<b>Net:</b>	<b>\$ -5,050</b>

**Financial Report**

March 31, 2023	YTD
Member support:	\$34,604
Scheduled w/d from trust funds	\$ 6,000
Other Income:	\$ 4,853
Total Income:	\$45,457
Total Expenses:	\$54,386
<b>Net:</b>	<b>\$ -8,929</b>

**Thank you!**

\$1,200 was raised at the Italian Dinner



**Caring Tree – thank you!**

Every week the Caring Tree makes real our commitment to be a community of care and prayer. They send Easter cards, notes to those who are in need of prayers, welcome notes to visitors and those we haven't seen for a while in worship. Abundant thanks to Elaine Pollak who is the convener of the group and to Rachel Clark. To Dottie Morton who has been part of the group since its inception and is now moving on to other opportunities and welcome to Karen Lord who has joined the group! And yes, let them know of those you know who might appreciate prayers and a card! Thank you Caring Tree for being here for us!



*Thank you Judy Oleary for heading this fundraising effort!  
 Thank you to everyone who participated!*



***"I came that you may have life and have it abundantly!" (Jesus, in the Gospel of John 10:10)***

Dear Friends of First Congregational,

This morning I saw the first fiddlehead I'd seen, a trillium, and a white bloodroot flower. The lawn across the street keeps getting greener and greener each day. Abundance is breaking forth – and spring is here! I hope you too have been taking in the gifts of this changing and growing spring season.

Some updates and celebrations on life and new-life we've been witnessing:

- Ed O'Brien is settling in well at the Taylor Home in The Taylor Community in Laconia. You can send a note to Ed at The Taylor Home, 435 Union Avenue, Laconia, NH 03246. He is so grateful for the send-off at church.
- Sara Marean, the new Associate Conference Minister, was with us last month and met with the Church Council to get updated on our work in the transition process.
- Dottie Morton and I attended the North Country Association Meeting with our 11 North Country UCC Churches and Pam Spain was installed as the Designated Pastor in Lancaster.
- We have joined with the United Church of Christ congregations in St. Johnsbury and Lancaster to have a confirmation class for our youth. We have a great group of 10 including Curran Smith.
- Members of church council have taken part in a conversation with other church leaders in our region about the challenges and opportunities for church's today and what makes for church vitality.
- Join us on Saturday, May 20 from 9-2 when we are hosting a workshop here with the "New Thing Task Force" of the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ. "What if the goal isn't to throw away old forms of church, but rather to figure out how to reduce, reuse, and recycle our resources? The next form of church will be different, but will be based on our eternal foundation of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. How do we build creative strength for discerning God's New Thing for the next generation? We'll use quilt making as a model for how to select from our stash of habits and practices, how to cut off what we don't need, and then how to put it back together to create a beautiful new vision for God's work in the world." Thanks to June Davis and the Ladies Society who are providing refreshments and lunch. Let me know if you'd like to come!
- Dudley Bailey, Lars Nielson and Phil Krill are in a series of classes with other UCC churches on Cultivating Generous Congregations. One thing we've learned is the importance of sharing what a difference our giving makes. You'll be hearing more reflections this month on the difference generosity has made to our lives, faith and community.
- We've had three informative and engaging conversations on "Loving our Neighbor: The Bible, Sexuality and Diversity" after church on Sundays and continuing for the next three weeks. Thanks to Linda Warden, Tina Peabody and Su Schott for their leadership.
- The Loving our Neighbor Task Group invites you to join us for the North Country Chorus Concert, "Considering Matthew Shepard: An oratorio exploring the life, death and legacy of a young gay man" on this Saturday, May 6 at 7:30 at the South Church Hall in St Johnsbury. We're glad to pick you up or you can meet us at the church at 6:30 to get a ride over with us. Let me know if you'd like to attend with us. Tina sings in the choir!
- What about you? Are you in a performance this Spring? If you are, let us know and we'll put out the word to come cheer you on! Two opportunities coming up...  
 Sunday, May 21 – White Mountain Voices concert here at 3:00 pm. Alison Bolt, Kathy Searles and I sing in the choir!  
 Thursday, May 25 – Come cheer on Brayden Smith who is a lead in his school musical! We'll meet at church to commute over to Lisbon together and get supper afterwards.

How can your church be there with you and for you? Would you like to connect for a conversation? Give me a call and let's find a time.

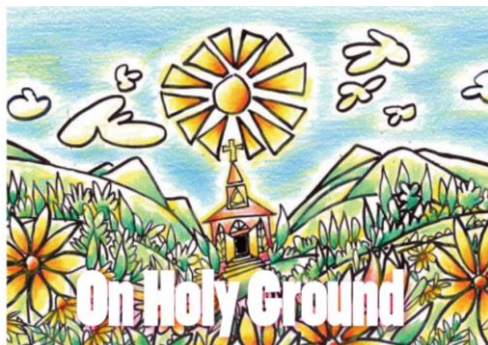
Know your church keeps you in our hearts, hopefulness and prayers,

Gratefully,

Peter 206-484-9814

## MISSIONS SPOTLIGHT

May 28<sup>th</sup>



The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. **By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ.**

As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults.

### Team Work!

**The children at Shining Lights help to build a community garden on the side lawn in collaboration with FCC, UNH Cooperative Ext. and Meadowstone Farm. Watch it grow!**



## CAKE WALK

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Cake Walk on April 2<sup>nd</sup>!

Benefitting Shining Lights Learning Center! \$563 was raised!



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Littleton, NH 03561  
Return Service Requested

# **STEEPLE MINUTE**

## **MAY 2023**



### **Steeple Minute**

A brief newsletter of the  
First Congregational Church  
of Littleton

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[www.1stconglittleton.org](http://www.1stconglittleton.org)

### **Church Staff**

Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz, Pastor  
Administrative Assistant: Pam Nute  
Organist & Choir Director: Dottie Morton  
Sexton: Reg LaFlam

### **Officers**

Moderator: Alice Muh  
Vice Moderator: Dan Kiefer  
Treasurer: Joyce Krill  
Assistant Treasurer: Rachel Clark

### **Committee Chairs**

Christian Education: Kim Smith  
Deacons: Mary Menzies  
Finance: Phil Krill  
Mission: Linda Warden  
Music: Tina Peabody  
Personnel Relations: Tina Peabody  
Property Management: Laurie Boswell

### **Shining Lights Learning Center**

Board Chair: Suzanne Schott  
Director: Melissa Kam

