

Steeple Minute

First Congregational Church of Littleton
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August 1, 2023

Issue 7

Dear Friends at First Congregational,

It is wonderful to be back with you in Littleton this Monday morning and I look forward to catching up with you and hearing how this past month has been for you.

It's been a treasure of a time for me this month with my family on a little cabin on Lake Winnisquam and a wonderful week as Chaplain with Camp Pride at Pilgrim Lodge in Maine. We had an amazing group of 30 middle and high school youth and 12 counselors. I was most grateful for the 5 middle schoolers who got up early to join me for morning swim to start the day!

On Sunday, July 23, I joined our Confirmation class with United Community Church in St. Johnsbury and Lancaster Congregational Church to attend the Bread and Puppet Theatre in Glover, Vermont and a fun pizza dinner afterwards. Such a great afternoon of creativity, imagination, challenge and fun – I'm looking forward to going back again this summer! And it was so fun to welcome and introduce Bob and Alice Muh to the Church of the Woods in Canterbury that morning.

I've been catching up on what life's been like here. So grateful to deacons Ross Fairweather, Mary Menzies, and Lars Nielson leading worship the past weeks. So grateful to Dottie Morton for stepping back in to play for Sunday morning worship when substitute musician Dick Alberini was out sick.

So yes, some sickness and email scam, rain and floods, fire and smoke that has been this month in a time of challenge and change as well. **If you ever get an email or text message in a supposed emergency from me asking for you to send money or gift cards know this is a scam. Let me know you received it and report it as a scam.**

So yes, this month has reminded me how much we need each other and the church to help each other and those we serve celebrate the gifts and weather with faith the storms of life.

I look forward to hearing from you on Sunday how our July Sabbath Invitation was for you. What happened to you? What did you discover about the gifts and challenges of taking a Sabbath? Our scripture on this upcoming Sunday will be Luke 6:6-11.

A few special opportunities this month:

Friday Shabbat Service: Friday, August 11 – I hope you might join me at the Friday Shabbat Service with Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation at 6:30 pm. There is a string quartet concert beforehand at 5pm I'm hoping to attend as well before the service. This sounds like a great way to continue to learn, grow and deepen our own practice of Sabbath. I hope you might join me!

A Walk with God: I'll be joining the "Walk with God" with the Conway Village Congregational Church on **Saturday and Sunday August 19 and 20**. I'd love to have you join me and their congregation as we learn how we can learn from the church's past time of crisis to face the current crises and opportunities of today. I'll be away that following week (August 20-26) and back for worship on Sunday August 27. (See article on page 5 with more information on the trip.)

I keep you all in my heart, hopefulness and prayers and look forward to our next times to connect and catch up.

Gratefully! Peter 206-484-9814

First Congregational Church

August 2022



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7:00 PM – AA – FH	4	5 Happy Anniversary! Henny & Todd Bogardus 7:00 PM-AA-FH
6 10:00 AM-Worship Service Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz Music: Dick Alberini 1:00 PM – Shining Lights Celebration - FH	7 7:00 PM – AA - FH	8 6:00 PM – Eastern Star – FH	9 7:00 PM-AA-FH	10 11:30 AM – Property - CR 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7:00 PM-AA-FH	11	12 7:00 PM-AA-FH
13 10:00 AM-Worship Service Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz Music: Dick Alberini	14 Happy Birthday! Kristjar Nielson 7:00 PM – AA - FH	15	16 Happy Anniversary! Cynthia & Lars Nielson 7:00 PM-AA-FH	17 9:30 AM – Council - CR 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7:00 PM-AA-FH	18	19 7:00 PM-AA-FH
20 10:00 AM-Worship Service Worship Leader: Deacons Music: Dick Alberini	21 Pastor Away Happy Birthday! Phil Krill 7:00 PM – AA - FH	22 Pastor Away	23 1:00 PM – Finance Mtng.- CR Pastor Away (on call) Pam - Vacation 7:00 PM-AA-FH	24 Pastor Away (on call) Pam – Vacation 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7:00 PM-AA-FH	25 Pastor Away	26 7:00 PM-AA-FH
27 10:00 AM-Worship Service Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz 3:00-4:30 Confirmation Class - CR	28 Pam - Vacation 7:00 PM – AA - FH	29 Pam - Vacation	30 Pam – Vacation 7:00 PM-AA-FH	31 Pam – Vacation 7:00 PM-AA-FH	KEY: FH – Fellowship Hall LP – Ladies Parlor CR – Classroom	

Thank you to the Warden Family!

A generous contribution was made to the church’s “Fill the Gap” in Judy Warden’s name. Her family sends deep gratitude for her amazing service and is forever thankful for the support given to her and her family in her final days.

Judy loved the church and was very grateful that it was a part of her life.

Financial Report

June 30, 2023	YTD
Member support:	\$ 60,329
Scheduled w/d from trust funds	\$ 14,000
Other Income:	\$ 11,903
Total Income:	\$ 86,232
Total Expenses:	\$103,931
Net:	\$-17,699



Alice and Bob Muh, Peter, and Rev. Stephen Blackmer, priest of The Church of the Woods in Canterbury.

Greeters Needed

We need people to sign up to be greeters for Sunday Service. Being greeted at the door or not makes an impact on how people respond to God’s word and remember their church experience, especially first time visitors. There is a Sign-up sheet in the back of the sanctuary. Thank you!



The Community Garden is Thriving!

The Shining Lights children planted cucumbers, tomatoes, squash, zucchini, peppers, basil, mint, lemon balm and marigolds. Look how well it is coming along! Everything is labeled and the public is welcome to pick items as they ripen and take produce home or deliver items to the Little Free Pantry.

Thank you to everyone who has donated/helped towards this effort and to Meadowstone Farm who provided compost.

**First Congregational Church of Littleton
Special Congregational Meeting
June 25, 2023
Location: Church Sanctuary
In Person and via Zoom**

The meeting was called to order at 11:15 am with a prayer by Alice Muh, Moderator.

A quorum of at least 20 members was present.

A motion was presented by the moderator to amend the by-laws to allow electronic participation in congregational meetings with presence and voting privileges.

Proposed: Shall we amend the church by-laws -Article IX – section:5 which states “Twenty (20) members present at any regular or special meetings of the Congregation shall be considered a quorum for the transaction of business.” to add the following:

“A member present by electronic means (for example- Zoom or other video conferencing platforms) will be counted as a full participant for the meeting.”

The motion was seconded by Mary Menzies and passed unanimously by voice vote.

A second motion was presented by the moderator relating to calling Peter Ilgenfritz as our designated term pastor.

Proposed: Shall we call Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz to be our Designated Term Pastor for a term of 3-5 years to help clarify the mission of the church and listen for the Holy Spirit for the following goals: Discover who we are as a community, discover who is our neighbor, and discover who God is calling us to be.

The motion was seconded by Su Schott. The motion was passed unanimously by voice vote, including two members who were participating remotely by Zoom.

The Reverend Peter Ilgenfritz was invited to rejoin the congregation in the sanctuary. The congregation’s vote was shared with him and he responded with his enthusiastic acceptance of the call.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 after a Closing Prayer.

It seems a long time ago now that Peter, Tina Peabody, Linda Warden, and I sat down to talk about **Diversity**, a task force of the Church Council. That was last December, I think, that we began our conversation and study. The group, who self-selected to attend, met five times, April through May. The title was “Loving Our Neighbor; a Conversation about the Church, the Bible, and Diversity”. An average of 10 people attended after church on Sundays. I think we had a successful group of people that came together to talk, to share our ideas and our knowledge.

The goal is to expand our group, have multiple groups, to have many conversations that allow us to better know each other and to learn how to engage in difficult conversations. Communication is in fact, a spiritual endeavor. I need to learn to have respect for any person and their opinion although I may not agree with them. My goal is to learn why they think the way they think, and then I can gain understanding of the person.

This Fall, we hope to restart and expand the conversations. The group offered many topics in which they have interest. More information will be coming, and we hope to see you there.

Suzanne Schott

We have been invited by the Conway Village Congregational Church to join them for this “Walk with God” Pilgrimage on August 19 and 20. Peter will be attending for his Sunday away in August and would love you to join him for what sounds like a unique opportunity to learn how the church has dealt and might deal better with times of crisis and conflict. Let Peter know if you’d like to attend.

A Walk with God

‘When Jacob awoke... he thought,
“Surely God is in this place,
and I was unaware of it.
Genesis 28:16

Would you like to set aside your everyday life and journey to revelations of faith? Perhaps you need “[A Walk with God](#)”. On [Saturday, August 19th](#) and [Sunday, August 20th](#), we will be offering a journey to historic places, graveyards, and museums to discover the realities of Christian faith during times of great duress.

[A Walk with God](#) will be studying the [Witch Hysteria of 1692](#) in Danvers and Salem Massachusetts. We will find ourselves rediscovering a time of hard work, thatched houses, indentured servants, and simple pleasures, an age when people believed evil was present, well defined, and concrete in nature. Would you like to discover an age of great deeds (*and great greed!*) when religious belief was considered paramount to survival?

Our Biblical faith begins, (*in the Hebrew Scriptures*), with Abram and Sarai leaving their home in Ur and venturing into unknown territory to discover God’s lessons for them. The Biblical story continues as Moses takes people into the wilderness as a pilgrim people to discover the unique revelations God has for them. The Christian faith is a faith of movement, of journeying, of seeking God’s presence in the darkest of times, so that the faithful can live out God’s revelations in a vital way. Jesus was constantly on a journey of faith to bring hope to the faithful in the hardest of times, bringing light to the darkest moments.

Are we living in such a time of darkness?

Are we in need of God’s revelations more than ever?

Why not take the time to take “[A Walk with God](#)” by journeying through history to a time of darkness when the truth of true faith is vividly realized? Why not visit original homesteads, the remains of a parsonage, churches, graveyards, and memorials dedicated to giving perspective to the Witch Hysteria of 1692?

Why not seek the lessons of the past, the Time-tested Spiritual Knowledge, that we need for our lives today.

We look forward to discovering God’s presence in historic places so we, like Jacob, may say “[Surely God is in this place, and I was unaware of it.](#)”

Rev. John Hughes
Conway Village Congregational Church
Conway, NH.



UCC General Synod 34 June 30- July 4, 2023: Report on Resolutions

By Alice Muh

It is hard to believe it has been only 3 weeks since I returned home from my remarkable trip to the 34th General Synod of the United Church of Christ in Indianapolis, Indiana as one of a dozen delegates from local churches in New Hampshire representing the New Hampshire Conference, UCC. There were 726 delegates there from all over the country representing 36 conferences. We worshipped together, prayed together, laughed and cried together, learned together, exchanged ideas, agreed and disagreed. Much like our own annual meetings, delegates decided on many issues that were before the synod. I touched on some of these on Sunday, July 16, when I shared some reflections with you. One of the most challenging things we had to do was to consider resolutions brought before the assembly by conferences from around the country.

The resolutions presented provided Biblical context around what is God calling us to do and how do we carry the Gospel of God's love to others. When passed, resolutions and pronouncements become the witness of the United Church of Christ and are commended to all members for their consideration. Through these resolutions, the UCC to then speaks to, but not for, the local church. They are a platform for giving voice to specific issues and a way for others to join and provide strength in numbers. They are also a way to form partnerships around an issue, with the weight of the UCC behind you. They have significant influence on the mission and ministry of the national bodies of the denomination and provide a significant teaching role for the church in all settings.

There were 14 resolutions that came before the General Synod. Each delegate was randomly assigned to a resolution group to attend educational sessions, then meet to prayerfully come up with final versions to present to the whole assembly for their vote. Of these 14, two were combined into one, one was defeated, and 12 passed. None were without emotion or contention, and most had very valid points. The local church now has the opportunity to study and see which of the resolutions they feel called to adopt. What is God calling us to do?

These resolutions presented hard truths that are difficult to face and each church needs to see how they are called to respond. The resolutions in their entirety can be found at the UCC website at <https://generalsynod.org/proposed-resolutions>. Even though they are all called resolutions of witness, and all include advocacy, I grouped them into 3 categories: creation care, advocacy for vulnerable populations, and reparations work.

(continued next page)

Creation care:

Resolution #4: A Resolution Urging Planning for and Implementing Electrification

Resolution #8: Encouraging a Plant-Based Life (this one did not pass)

Resolution #9: Freedom from Plastic Pollution

Advocacy for vulnerable populations:

Resolution #1: Denouncing the Dobbs Decision and Proclaiming Abortion as Healthcare

Resolution #3: Closing the Digital Divide: Calling on the United Church of Christ to Seek Digital Justice and Inclusion

Resolution #5: Faithful Advocacy for Intersectional and Transformational Healing in Harm Reduction Harm – regarding substance abuse.

Resolution #6: Affirming Guns to Gardens and Other Gun Violence Prevention Ministries

Resolution #12: A Resolution Condemning Prolonged Solitary Confinement as a Form of Torture

Resolution #13: Actively Affirming the Human Dignity of Transgender and Nonbinary Persons

Reparations: Recognizing and Repairing generational harm done by our forebearers in the faith:

Resolution #2: A Resolution Calling for a New Study by our Church on our Relationship with the Indian Boarding Schools and the Boarding Schools in Hawai'i

Resolution #7: A Resolution to Urge All Responsible Entities to Join in Reparations to Fund Christian Hawaiian Language Education Programs to Undo a Century of Extinction.

Americanization and Indoctrination Policies Extinguished the Original Christian Hawaiian Alphabet

Resolution #11: A Resolution to Study and Develop Reparations Proposals for African Americans

Resolution #14: A Resolution Calling on United Church of Christ Local Churches to Witness “A White Supremacy Free Zone” & Confronting White Supremacy

As you can see, these are very difficult topics, none of which can be engaged with lightly. As the spirit moves you, I would urge you to go the General Synod webpage as noted above and read the resolutions as amended. If you have any questions, I would be happy to talk to you about them.

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Return Service Requested

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AUGUST 2023



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A brief newsletter of the
First Congregational Church
of Littleton

Page 8

www.1stconglittleton.org

Church Staff

Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz, Pastor
Office Manager: 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

