

Steeple Minute

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

August 1, 2024

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Goat: Notes from an Appalachian Trail Hiking Adventure 2024

The Presidentials, Wildcats, Carters and Mahoosucs

Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz

A tumble of massive gray boulders up the steep mountainside ahead. We look left, look right, for another way around. Seeing none, we stumble forward, seeking to find a way out of no way.

For the last two weeks my backpacking friends and I have been making our way out of no way. A steep ascent up a smooth rock ledge with not a hand-hold to be found. A precarious descent down a tumble of mossy wet rocks. Rotten dark planks over the bog at the top of Old Speck that disappear into thick brown and bottomless mud.

The trail looks so easy on the page, a little green line winding its cheerful way up and down the mountains. But here on the ground, it's another story. Sharp rocks and slippery roots, boulders to heave ourselves over on all fours. We'll ascend and descend the steepest sections of the AT, crawl our way through that tumble of house-sized boulders called Mahoosuc Notch, the most difficult mile of a difficult trail. Nothing is easy out here on the trail these weeks, and its easy to be overwhelmed.

That morning as we saw no other way than over the massive pile of boulders up the steep trail ahead, we happened to look down and see there below us the white blaze of the Appalachian Trail and an arrow pointing the way down and under the rock pile. We took off our packs and pushed them ahead of us through the cold tight cavern, making a way when none was to be found.

Neuroscientists like Norman Farb (co-author with Zindel Segal of [Better in Every Sense: How the New Science of Sensation Can Help you Reclaim Your Life](#)) explain how our minds use “mental maps” of navigation. Our brains seek simplicity and make patterns that we depend on to help us find our way less stressfully. We drive to the store, slowing down and turning right at the pond. We just do it without consciously thinking about it. And while our mental maps serve us, they can also get in our way and provide debilitating narratives or trapping stories that can keep us stuck in mind-map loops of ways of being in the world.

Here at the intersection of the AT and the Carlo Col Trail, we meet our through-hiker NOBO (Northbound) friend, Sully coming up the trail. He looks shaken.

It's rough going ahead. Right there, he turns and points to the little green rise in the trees ahead of us, It's downright dangerous. Be careful, go slow.

As we say goodbye, I pause to tighten my pack as Jen and Pat descend and cross the small brook ahead. We can now all see what made Sully pale. Dad called it a “chimney” and I can see why – ahead of us a vertical rise of massive rocks up the mountainside. Below me Jen and Pat have headed up towards the rocks. But from where I'm standing above, I can clearly see it, a goat, a brown line of a trail heading off just to the left of the rock face through the trees. Another possibility, a way out of no way.


Neuroscientists will tell you how our mental-maps can freeze us and trap us in mind-loops as we keep traumatizing ourselves with anxiety even though the trauma is no longer happening now and may have happened hours, days or decades before. But in our mind-loops it feels like the trauma is happening all over again. Look at that pile and familiar feelings of shutting down, clenched jaw, gnarled brow, fear and anxiety all take over.

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First Congregational Church

August 2024



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	KEY: FH – Fellowship Hall LP – Ladies Parlor CR – Classroom			1 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7:00 PM – AA – FH	2 Pastor Sabbath	3 7:00 PM-AA-FH
4 10:00 AM-Worship Service <i>Worship Leaders</i> Mary Menzies Lars Nielson	5 Happy Anniversary! Henny & Todd Bogardus Pastor Away 7:00 PM – AA – FH	6 Pastor Away	7 Pastor Away 7:00 PM-AA-FH	8 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7:00 PM-AA-FH	9 Pastor Away	10 Pastor Away 7:00 PM-AA-FH
11 10:00 AM-Worship Service Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz	12 7:00 PM – AA - FH	13 6:00 PM – Eastern Star – FH	14 Happy Birthday! Kristjar Nielson 7:00 PM-AA-FH	15 10:30 AM –Property - CR 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7 :00 PM-AA-FH	16 Happy Anniversary! Cynthia & Lars Nielson	17 7:00 PM-AA-FH
18 Remich Park 10:00 AM-Worship Service Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz FODD PANTRY SPECIAL OFFERING	19 7:00 PM – AA - FH	20 Pam - Vacation	21 Happy Birthday! Phil Krill 1:00 PM – Finance Mtng.- CR Pam - Vacation 7:00 PM-AA-FH	22 Noon – Council – FH & Zoom 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP Pam – Vacation 7:00 PM-AA-FH	23 Pastor Sabbath	24 7:00 PM-AA-FH
25 10:30 AM Worship at Community Church of Christ, Franconia	26 Pam - Vacation 7:00 PM – AA - FH	27 Pam - Vacation	28 Pam – Vacation 7:00 PM-AA-FH	29 Pam – Vacation 7:00 PM-AA-FH	30 Pastor Sabbath	31 7:00 PM-AA-FH

Financial Report

June 30, 2024	YTD
Member support:	\$ 75,407
Scheduled w/d from trust funds	\$ 0
Other Income:	\$ 6,049
Total Income:	\$ 81,456
Total Expenses:	\$ 99,781
Net:	\$-18,325

Wireless Guest Account
 SSID: FCC Guests
 Password: fcc189main



Congratulations Amy Greene! Amy has been awarded a scholarship by Eastern Star for her ministry studies with Ministry 21, a program for supporting lay ministry, sponsored by the New Hampshire and Vermont Conferences

Nature Calling, Sunday, August 18, 4:00-5:30pm at the Rocks in Bethlehem

Celebrate with us for our monthly opportunity to listen, connect and be together with our wider community in nature.

August Worship:

Our Summer Worship Series on 1 John continues:

August 4 - 1 John 4:7-21 (God is Love). Lars and Mary Worship Leaders, Special Music Chris Sundman

August 11- 1 John 5:1-6 (Spirit is the Truth) Suzan Derby Special Music

August 18 - 1 John 5:9-13 **Outdoor Worship Remich Park**; Amy Worship Leader. Monthly Collection for Little Free Pantry (one week early this month)

August 25 - **10:30am Ecumenical Worship at Community Church of Christ, Franconia.** Join us to carpool from First Congregational at 10am!

September 1 - 1 John 5:14-2, Lars Worship Leader, Communion



Sunday, July 21st
 Cynthia Wysocki, violinist, Dottie Morton and Kristjar Nielson, soloist.

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The key for getting out of the stuck places of our mind-maps is letting in sensation and feeling that interrupt our debilitating mind-loops.

It's like I feel many mornings, lying in bed, watching my mind loop in familiar feelings and stories about yesterday's conversation or what the day ahead will bring. But then, and this is the key and hardest part, I choose to interrupt those patterns and sit up in bed. Now, slide over to the edge of the bed, feet on the floor. Feeling the soft rug, the cold wooden floorboards. I walk to the bathroom, brush me teeth, and I'm no longer there in a mind-map loop but here, present to the possibilities of a new day.

I call to my friends below to turn back to the goat trail they missed off to the left. We wade through ferns and hoist ourselves up holding to sturdy trees. We're feeling our way forward, finding our way to another possibility beyond the worn trail.

Unclench your jaw! Look for the goats!, become our daily reminders as we come across yet another impassable section of the trail.

Today, a few days following our hike, I sit here on the porch looking out at the mountains across the lake. My toes throbbing, rubbed red and raw, from wearing wet socks and boots down the twelve miles of our last day on the trail. I rub my itchy wrist where I have a long cut and my right forearm covered in cuts and scrapes. I bend down to scratch my shins, bloody cuts from the ascent up Wildcat.

It's easy to say (my own mind-map) that my cuts and scratches are signs of my failure to find a way out of the mind-maps that no longer serve me as well. On the other hand, perhaps the scrapes and sore toes are in fact the way we find our way forward as we feel our way to new possibilities beyond our worn mind-maps.

Ahead, two rotting plank boards disappear into the thick mud ahead. We poke in the mud with our trekking poles, continue to poke, looking for something solid below the surface to step securely onto. Here, a partly submerged rock, there what feels like the edge of the board. We continue to poke and step out, foot by careful foot, onto the submerged plank, ever so careful so as not to slip off like the through-hiker we talked with who ended up submerged to her waist and had to be pulled out and back onto the trail.

Now days off the trail, I witness how I've come home to the familiar routines of my life with a bit of welcome disorientation. I no longer just go through my daily routines without thinking but there's now a bit of space as I wonder what I am doing and why.

Something happened out there these past eleven days poking our way forward through the muck, grabbing the tree and twirling ourselves around to the rocky ledge below. Something happened feeling our way forward up the goat trail on the side of the ledge.

Through it all we felt our way into a little space of openness and curiosity we've carried with us home. A little opening of opportunity to do things another way. We see differently, in fact, are different. We have a choice we didn't see before, to keep on following the familiar worn trail of being in the world or to feel our way into something new.

I can sit here this morning watching the morning sunrise on the lake looping in my old familiar mind-maps, thinking my way forward into what the day will bring. And I can unclench my jaw, feel my feet on the porch, my breath rising and falling. Squinting in the sunlight, feel my way into here, now, the possibility of something more.

Our Church Community





QR Code to donate to



Thank you for joining us, **Sara Marean**, Associate Conference Minister, in June!

Melissa Kam, Director of Shining Lights Preschool, has accepted a position as a kindergarten teacher at Lyndon Town School this fall.

Melissa's last day will be **Friday, August 9th**. Melissa joined the Shining Lights staff in 2011 and became Director in 2013. This is a great time to send a card to Melissa to thank her for her incredible leadership at Shining Lights! While we are excited for this next step forward for Melissa as a classroom teacher, we all know how much she will be missed! Do keep the children, families, staff and board at Shining Lights in your prayers as well during this transition as we seek a new Director.



Pride in the Mountains Youth Camp

The first weekend of August Peter is off to the Horton Center and the Pride in the Mountains youth camp. There are eight middle and high school campers and a great team of six counselors. Peter will be there Saturday, August 3 to Wednesday, August 7. The theme for camp is "This is our Story" based on Psalm 139. Thank you for your prayers with our campers, counselors and for the camp to be full of caring connections and building community and support together.

Little Free Pantry Update

Thank you to everyone who is keeping the pantry stocked and clean this summer season! The “core group” (Dave B., Linda W., Su S., the Muh’s and Pam) keep at it, nearly daily. The pantry sees an ongoing, steady stream of people both dropping off and picking up. The demand appears to be higher during the summer months, so it has been quite the effort to have food on the shelves at all times. Thank you to the Rotary organization for their recent grant allocation to the pantry of \$500! A total of \$4,835 has been donated to the pantry and \$5,120 worth of food has been purchased so far this year. (Don’t worry, there was a \$3,765 surplus from last year that has covered the expense!) Maybe you could “shop” your own cupboards to see if there is anything that you may no longer enjoy that could be given to the pantry? The pantry is in need of proteins and snacks/kid friendly food, especially since school is out. Your help is appreciated!



Here is the QR code for an online donation to Food Ministries

Music and Shabbat, Friday August 23, Bethlehem Hebrew Congregation

Come join us for an all-church outing to the synagogue (39 Strawberry Hill Road) to hear a “Sounds in the Sanctuary concert” at 5:00-6:00pm with pianist Michael Arnowitz and stay for Friday night Shabbat service following at 6:30-7:30. Tickets for the concert are \$25 for general admission (you can pay at the door) or you can purchase tickets ahead of time through Catamount Arts. To hear more about the concert:

<https://www.bethlehemsynagogue.org/events/sounds-in-the-sanctuary-michael-arnowitz>

It was such a gift of connection and support to attend Shabbat last summer together and I hope you might like to join us this year. There is no special dress code for attending shabbat, modest attire befitting a holy space. No need for suit coats or ties for me or dresses for women, however. (And if you can’t come or might like to come again - let’s attend Shabbat services as well together on Friday September 20 at 6:00 pm.)

You can now pay your pledge online or make a donation to the church using this QR code or link below.



Online giving: <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-YR4H/home>

Littleton

Saturday, September 7th
at 1:00 pm
Remich Park Pavilion
165 Pleasant Street
Littleton, NH 03561

Berlin

Saturday, September 14th
at 11:00 am
Friendship Park
4 Bell Lane
Berlin, NH 03570



7th Annual

BUTTERFLY RELEASE

A COMMUNITY MEMORIAL SERIES

CELEBRATING LIFE



north country healthcare

North Country Home
Health & Hospice Agency

Pre-order now open for butterflies.
bit.ly/Butterfly2024
All orders must be placed by
09/01/24 to guarantee availability.

Honor your loved ones as
butterflies take flight in
remembrance, accompanied by
music & readings, rain or shine

NCH North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency

7th Annual



BUTTERFLY RELEASE

a Community Memorial Series Celebrating Life

The Butterfly Release Series offers individuals the chance to honor and remember their loved ones in a beautiful and symbolic way. Each butterfly is available for purchase at \$20 for the first one, and \$15 for each additional butterfly. Pre-ordering is recommended to ensure availability for the ceremony. Each event will feature music, readings, and the uplifting sight of butterflies taking flight, rain or shine.

Saturday, September 7th at 1:00 pm
Remich Park Pavilion
165 Pleasant Street, Littleton, NH 03561

Saturday, September 14th at 11:00 am
Friendship Park
4 Bell Lane, Berlin, NH 03570

Saturday, September 14th at 3:00 pm
North Stratford Pavilion
US Route 3, Stratford, NH 03590

Sunday, September 15th at 11:00 am
Soldier's Park
Main Street Woodstock, NH 03262

If you would like to reserve a butterfly, please visit bit.ly/Butterfly2024 to make an online purchase or complete and mail the below form to **536 Cottage Street Littleton, NH 03561**

All butterfly orders must be placed by September 1, 2024.

If you cannot attend the event but still want to participate, you can purchase a butterfly, & our volunteers will be honored to release it for you.



PLEASE SELECT WHERE YOU'LL BE JOINING US:

- Littleton 9/7 @ 1p
- Berlin 9/14 @ 11a
- N. Stratford 9/14 @ 3p
- Woodstock 9/15 @ 11a
- I prefer to make a donation without an honoree

NAME: _____ PHONE#: (____) _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

BILLING ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE/ZIP: _____

In Loving Memory Of
(Please, only one name per butterfly purchased):

HOW MANY BUTTERFLIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO RELEASE:

First Butterfly \$20.00 x QTY : 1 =\$ 20.00

Additional Butterflies ea. \$15.00 x QTY: ____=\$ ____.

I'd like to support NCHHHA's community care through an additional donation of: \$ ____.

TOTAL \$ ____.

- PAYMENT OPTIONS:
- CHECK (enclosed)
 - CREDIT/DEBIT (complete information below)
 - VENMO ID Your Handle: @ _____



- PAYPAL ID Your Handle: @ _____



CARD#: _____ EXP DATE: _____ CVC: _____

NAME ON CARD: _____ SIGNATURE: _____

Please check box if you will not attend and would like a volunteer to release butterflies on your behalf

Mail or Drop Off At: 536 Cottage Street | Littleton, NH 03561 | 603.444.5317 | bit.ly/Butterfly2024

First Congregational Church, UCC
189 Main Street
Littleton, NH 03561
Return Service Requested

STEEPLE MINUTE

AUGUST 2024



Steeple Minute

A brief newsletter of the
First Congregational Church
of Littleton

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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: Tim Gould
Property Management: Laurie Boswell

Shining Lights Learning Center

Board Chair: Suzanne Schott
Director: Melissa Kam

