

Steeple Minute

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

February 1, 2025

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Issue 2

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Find us on Facebook @FirstCongregationalChurchOfLittletonNh

“The Work of the People”

That was the definition of “worship” I learned in divinity school. However that “work” for most of us clergy meant lay members of our congregations serving as greeters, passing the offering plate and serving communion. Perhaps, reading the scripture and for sure tending to preparation of communion elements and coffee hour. It’s not that those are not vital and essential roles in the practice of community worship, they are. But clergy for the most part kept other parts of worship to themselves, the interpretation of scripture and offering of a sermon, pastoral prayers and the administration of sacraments, the structure and form of the worship service.

We live in a time of tremendous challenge and change including a changing relationship between the understanding of the form and practice of “faith” in a multicultural and interfaith society. Some scholars note that such radical changes happen every 500 years or so and 500 years ago we were in the midst of the chaos and challenge we now call the “Protestant Reformation.”

One of the core beliefs of the Protestant reformers was the “priesthood of all believers”. They understood that all of us, as the body of Christ, are called to “ministry”. However in our lifetimes many of the functions of “ministry” fell to a relatively new phenomenon in Christian life, a “professional clergy”. There were gifts of such a practice, I myself have spent all my career as a “professional clergy” but there were distinct losses as well including the disempowerment of our congregations and congregants to be the “ministers” we all are called in our various ways to be.

In our time of declining church attendance and closures, of great uncertainty about the future of the church, it is easy and understandable to turn to grief, fear and anxiety. And it is also a time to turn to wonder at what God is doing in the midst of the “dying and rising” of our institutional life to re-form the “work of the people” and the practice of ministry to meet the needs and challenges of our present time.

One aspect I am especially passionate and excited about in our time is the return to the ancient practice of worship as “the work of the people”. It’s not to say that there are not roles for pastors to play but perhaps instead of “doing the ministry” it will mean more the work of empowering and supporting our congregations to lead, to preach, to practice the “priesthood of all believers”.

Three of our local congregations depend on lay worship leaders to plan and lead worship services in our communities of faith. We have been meeting every few months to find ways to support each other. What unites our communities is not a feeling of desperation but a feeling of joy, that we all have gifts to share and an excitement about sharing them together.

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First Congregational Church

February 2025



Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

							1
	KEY: FH - Fellowship Hall LP - Ladies Parlor CR - Classroom						7:00 PM-AA-FH
2 9:00 AM – Adult Bible Class 10:00 AM-Worship Service <i>Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz</i>	3 7:00 PM – AA - FH	4 Pastor Away	5 8:30 AM – Bible Study & Prayer - Zoom 6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP Pastor Away 7:00 PM-AA-FH	6 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP Pastor Away 7 :00 PM-AA-FH	7 Happy Birthday! Lars Nielson Maxine Hadlock Pastor Away	8 Happy Birthday! Henny Bogardus Pastor Away 7:00 PM-AA-FH	
9 222 ND ANNUAL MEETING 9:00 AM – Adult Bible Class 10:00 AM-Worship Service 11:00 AM – Business Meeting-FH <i>Alice Muh</i>	10 11:00 AM – Aging discussion grp. - LP 7:00 PM – AA – FH	11 6:00 PM – SLLC BOD - Zoom Pastor Away	12 8:30 AM – Bible Study & Prayer - Zoom 6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP 7:00 PM-AA-FH Pastor Away Happy Birthday! Dick Searles	13 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP Pastor Away 7 :00 PM-AA-FH	14 Happy Anniversary Karen & Stuart Lord Pastor Away 	15 7:00 PM-AA-FH Pastor Away	
16 9:00 AM – Adult Bible Class 10:00 AM-Worship Service <i>Dan Kiefer</i>	17 Pastor Away Pam out of office 7:00 PM – AA - FH	18 	19 8:30 AM – Bible Study & Prayer - Zoom 6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP 7:00 PM – AA – FH	20 Noon – Council – FH/Zoom 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7 :00 PM-AA-FH	21 Pastor's Sabbath	22 8am-4pm – Prepared to Serve - Pembroke 7:00 PM-AA-FH	
23 9:00 AM – Adult Bible Class – Major Prophets 10:00 AM-Worship Service <i>Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz</i>	24 11:00 AM – Aging discussion grp. - LP Pastor Away Pam out of office 7:00 PM – AA - FH	25 Happy Birthday! Asa Gould	26 8:30 AM – Bible Study & Prayer - Zoom 6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP 7:00 PM – AA – FH Happy Anniversary Penny & Mark Blodgett	27 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7 :00 PM-AA-FH	28 Pastor's Sabbath		

Financial Report

December 31, 2024	YTD
Member support:	\$136,832
Scheduled w/d from trust funds	\$ 26,800
Other Income:	\$ 13,927
Total Income:	\$177,559
Total Expenses:	\$203,706
Net:	\$ - 26,147

TO THE MEMBERS of the FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH LITTLETON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

YOU ARE HEREBY CALLED TO ATTEND

THE 222nd ANNUAL MEETING

of the FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, U.C.C.

SUNDAY, February 9, 2025 AT 10:00 A.M.

If you are unable to come in person, join by Zoom! The link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87098610797?pwd=6hBBbZoWbh1XJRdVSIS9na1X2jQOqE.1>

Annual Reports are available at the back of the sanctuary

1,025 lbs. of soft plastic has been collected!

Thank you to all who have contributed to collaborative effort.

Hilary from All Saints reports that the goal of 1,000 lbs. has been reached to make a bench, but wants us to continue to collect clean, soft (stretchable) plastic because we are doing it again!

The collection box is outside of the office.

Wireless Guest Account

SSID: FCC Guests

Password: fcc189main

Littleton Winter Shelter Needs Your Support

Like many communities across our nation, we have an unhoused population. With winter setting in and freezing night temperatures becoming the norm, we have established a winter shelter to ensure no one has to sleep outside.

We currently have set up a 10-bed overnight emergency shelter with thanks to support and space provided at First United Methodist church. We have been active for many months collaborating with the town of Littleton and church and nonprofit organizations. All of us are concerned about the unhoused in our community and want to work together to help this population so individuals without housing won't have to sleep outdoors or in cars during the winter season.

Our non-profit status request has been filed and we will soon have our assigned tax ID Number.

We do have some grant funding to purchase supplies but we need your help to have the financial resources for the operational expenses necessary to run the shelter and to ensure the continuation of this project.

Here are ways you can help by making a donation:

Send a check to PO Box 26, Littleton, NH 03561

Donate on our Venmo account at Littleton Winter Shelter

Contact the Shelter Director, Chloe Duff at CHLOE.DUFF@LITTLETONWINTERSHELTER.ORG

February 22, 2025
8:00 am to 4:00 pm



Prepared to Serve

February 22, 2025 | Pembroke Academy



Prepared to Serve is the annual workshop day put on by the New Hampshire Conference. This event will boost your skills, connect you with others who share your vision, and equip you with tools to bring back to the congregation!

Here is the link to see the workshop booklet and to register: [pts-2025](#)



Shining Lights Learning Center

Thank you to **Karen Lord** who read out loud to the preschool children recently and made some crafts together. And last week they made caterpillars with her!

Prayers for the children and teachers as there has been a lot of illness going around.

Continued from cover page

The gifts we practice each week in worship are practices that we all need in times like ours of great uncertainty and change, chaos and anxiety. Each week as we gather, we participate in practices that ground and center us as we pray and sing, keep silence and share. We are reminded each week of stories of faith that give us perspective and remind us that others have been through times like our own. We are reminded that we need each other and that we are stronger by joining in a diverse community to unite in acts of care and service. We are reminded of the familiar themes of our faith every week - mercy and justice for the “least of these”, love for neighbor and enemy, a call to walk in the way of humility and remember God’s presence with us all now, always.

A work that we do together that each week fills me again to step out with renewed hope and love, trust and joy.

Peter

Worship in February, The Season of Epiphany:

We’ll continue to follow the Narrative Lectionary this winter and work our way through the Gospel of Luke.

February 2 - Luke 6:1-6

February 9 - Luke 7:1-17 (Annual Meeting following worship)

February 16 - Luke 7:18-35

February 23 - Luke 7:36-50

Join us each Wednesday morning at 8:30-9:15 on zoom for a chance to talk together about the upcoming scripture reading.

Bible Study Wednesday Mornings Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85447221746?pwd=DgeZr6nocjmpln0bb4arss3m8UHYwaM.1>

Mondays, February 10 and 24, 11:00am – Conversations on the Joy and Challenge of Aging (in the Ladies Parlor and by Zoom):

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85086700243?pwd=kseCP6Mmbmnitw0JbaQwiUxhTGyuyw.1>

We gather every other week for a time of sharing the everyday joys and challenges of aging. For our next gathering we’ll talk about memory and memory loss, and ways we can support each other with realities that are or will affect all of us in different ways. Come join our growing circle and for extra credit: Bring a laugh or a joke to share!

Church Ski Tuesdays: Join our great group of skiers for some fun runs on the slopes on Tuesdays. Let Peter know if you’d like to be added to our text notice.

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FEBRUARY 2025



Steeple Minute

A brief newsletter of the
First Congregational Church
of Littleton

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www.1stconglittleton.org

Church Staff

Minister, Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz
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: Vanessa Neuroth

