

Steeple Minute

First Congregational Church of Littleton
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September 1, 2026

Issue 9

A Message from the Moderator

Alice Muh

How often have we heard “welcome to the first day of the rest of your life”? It feels like there have been many first days in our church life over the last few years –first day with new pastor, first day of new mission statement and structure, first day with our welcoming statement. It seems the more things that stay the same, the more they change– wait, did I get that backward? No, it was intentional because change seems to be a constant in our lives as individuals and as a community. What stays the same is our community’s covenant with God, the wider church and each other. What stays the same is our mission to love our neighbor as ourselves. The Bible, our statement of faith, and our mission statement are there to guide us, but we change, our abilities change, our community changes, our resources change. Our set of beliefs do not change, but how we live them out does. We do like the way things were, how it always used to be. Yet, the reality is this- every day we are faced with new opportunities and challenges.

Gearing up for September often means the start of new programs. We will be moving into our half-time settled pastorate with Pastor Peter. We celebrate that he will continue his ministry with us but also understand that there will be gaps we have to fill and expectations will have to be modified. The church council – now seven of us – will continue to represent the congregation in the church’s business affairs while also looking to the future. Some of the things we did at our council meeting in August was approve a new Safe Church Policy and ask for clarifications from the Personnel Team about the Personnel Policy. Keeping these things updated is critical. We endorsed the work of the Worship Team to continue with our ecumenical worship with the Methodist and Franconia churches, appreciating the vibrancy of worshipping together with our siblings in Christ. We approved a new pantry building for the Little Free Pantry, which has served us well, but is now in need of replacement. The Caring Team has done great work moving this forward.

We have a group of church members as well as a community member looking at how our building can be more of a blessing to the community as well as ways to look after this beautiful gift from our forebears. We have been looking at different ways to use the sanctuary but pushing its way to the top of the list are our impossible and crumbling front steps. A group of us met with Jim McMahon, a structural engineer, to examine possibilities other than continued patching which doesn’t last a year, nor does it address the nasty pitch. You will notice the east steps are blocked off, but the west steps have been patched as we try to make sure people are safe. The ramp, the lift or the Ladies Parlor steps are the best ways to get into the church for now as we work on how best to address the problem.

The council will be having a retreat in September to evaluate how our new structure is working and come up with goals for the coming year. We hope to have input from our communications consultant, Thaddeus Sieverding, and look at his recommendations about how to welcome and follow up with folks who visit us online and in person. In our retreat, we also will be brainstorming and wondering how God will use us in the next chapter of our church’s life. I am reminded of the hymn **“This is the Day of New Beginnings”** in our New Century Hymnal (page 417) written by Brian Wren. I first learned this hymn at The UCC General Synod in 2023 where the theme was “Making All Things New”, from Isaiah 43:18-19: *“Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”* The 4th verse of the hymn goes like this:

‘Christ is alive and goes before us to show and share what love can do.

This is a day of new beginnings – our God is making all things new.’

We celebrate the past but need to have faith that we can live into whatever the future holds for us, following where the Holy Spirit leads us. This faith binds us together in love and community. In this Christian community we have the opportunity to ‘show and share what love can do’, extending God’s love to everyone. It helps remind us of who God is and who we are in Christ. As a community in Christ, let’s continue to lean into our mission, addressing needs of the present as well as the looking to the future. This is a day of new beginnings.

First Congregational Church

September 2026



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Pastor Away Happy Anniversary! Pam & Jeff Nute Pam out of office	2 8:30 AM – Bible Study & Prayer - Zoom Pam out of office 7:00 PM-AA-FH	3 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP Pam out of office 7:00 PM-AA-FH	4 Pastor Away	5 Pastor Away Happy Birthday! Bob Warden 7:00 PM-AA-FH
6 10:00 AM- Worship Service <i>Mary Menzies</i> Pastor Away	7 OFFICE CLOSED SLLC CLOSED 7:00 PM – AA - FH	8 Pastor Away 6:00 PM – SLLC Board –CR & Zoom 6:00PM – Eastern Star – FH	9 Pastor Away 8:30 AM – Bible Study & Prayer - Zoom 5:30 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP 7:00 PM-AA-FH	10 Pastor Away 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7:00 PM-AA-FH	11 Pastor Away	12 Happy Birthday! Laurie Boswell 7:00 PM-AA-LP
13 10:00 AM-Worship Service - 20 th Anniversary Celebration for Shining Lights 11:00 AM – Brunch- FH <i>Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz</i>	14 11:00 AM – Conversation on Aging - LP 7:00 PM – AA - FH	15	16 8:30 AM – Bible Study & Prayer - Zoom 6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP 7:00 PM-AA-FH	17 Pastor Away 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7:00 PM-AA-FH	18 Pastor Away	19 8:30 AM – Leadership Retreat- LP 7:00 PM-AA-FH
20 9:00 AM – Adult Bible Class – CR - Ephesians 10:00 AM-Worship Service <i>Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz</i> <i>Little Free Pantry Special Offering</i>	21 Pastor Away Happy Anniversary! Elaine & Emil Pollak 7:00 PM – AA - FH	22 Pastor Away	23 8:30 AM – Bible Study & Prayer - Zoom 6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP 7:00 PM – AA – FH	24 Pastor Away 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7:00 PM-AA-FH	25 Pastor Away	26 7:00 PM-AA-FH
27 9:00 AM – Adult Bible Class – CR - Ephesians 9:30 AM- Depart for Worship Service at the Horton Center! <i>Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz</i>	28 11:00 AM – Conversation on Aging - LP 7:00 PM – AA - FH	29 Happy Birthday! Tim Gould	30 8:30 AM – Bible Study & Prayer - Zoom 6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP 7:00 PM – AA – FH	KEY: FH - Fellowship Hall LP - Ladies Parlor CR - Classroom		

Financial Report

July 31, 2026	YTD
Member support:	\$ 88,297
Scheduled w/d from trust funds	\$ 16,000
Other Income:	\$ 5,901
Total Income:	\$110,198
Total Expenses:	\$122,404
Net:	\$ -12,206

Wireless Guest Account
SSID: FCC Guests
Password: fcc189main

Adult Bible Study

Adult Bible Study resumes on Sundays starting September 20th at 9am in the classroom. We will start with Ephesians 4:1-16... "Living our calling". Everyone is welcome to join the class. Looking forward to learning with you!

If you would like to join or have any questions, please contact:

Linda Warden
 603-444-2337

ldwarden@roadrunner.com



A big Thank You to Laurie Boswell's son, Matthew Hunt and her brother-in-law, Jim Hunt, for clearing trees that had overgrown the roof of the kitchen, the ramp leading into the kitchen, and some that were leaning up towards the kitchen wall from behind. There's still a bit to be done and they'll finish up soon.

Now that the branches have been removed from over the roof, we know the two windows need to be scraped and painted. On the list!



Sunday, August 16th



Celebrating a service of dedication with two of our Shining Lights families as they have their children, Westin, Everly and Paisley blessed on Sunday. A service of dedication for children is a practice that is common in churches that practice adult baptism such as churches in the Baptist or Disciples of Christ traditions. It is also a practice that is celebrated in the United Church of Christ and other Protestant denominations for families that choose the option to have their children make their own decision on when to be baptized and formerly become part of a congregation that helps them live into their baptismal promises.

Worship This Fall

Sunday, September 6 – Living Questions: A Summer Worship Series “What is the Holy Spirit?” Thanks to Mary Menzies for preaching today! We’ll celebrate communion today as well.

A Fall Worship Series – Forward Through the Ages

There is yet more light and truth to break forth from God’s Holy Word. (John Robinson, pastor of the Pilgrims). This fall we look back at the rich history of the church as a way to remember and highlight values and commitments that can strengthen us to move forward with faith, hope and love into the future unfolding before us.

We begin our worship series on **September 13** with a Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of Shining Lights Preschool. The children and teachers at Shining Lights will join us in worship for a sharing of songs and a blessing for the teachers and of backpacks and diaper bags. After worship, we’ll join the Shining Lights families downstairs for a special celebratory brunch.

On **September 20**, we’ll celebrate the gift and return of the Church Choir! We’ll focus this Sunday on the gifts of music and the rich history the church carries forth in its music ministry. Our text for the day will be Psalm 100 and Psalm 149. Phil Krill will share some of the recent history related to the stained glass windows and their renovation. We’ll have our monthly offering for the Little Free Pantry today.

September 27, we’ll head to Pine Mountain and join our North Country churches at the Horton Center for worship with lunch to follow. We’ll provide rides and the Horton Center lodge is handicapped accessible and provides a great view of Mount Madison. We’ll carpool at 9:30am and return by 2:00pm.

October 4 we’ll gather for a special ecumenical worship service at **First United Methodist Church** to celebrate World Communion Sunday. Worship is at 10am.

Then we will begin our six week part of our fall series with a focus on the stained glass windows. Each week a member of the community will reflect on the stories told in one of the windows and why that particular window speaks to them.



Calling all Singers!



Choir rehearsals start on Wednesdays! 6:00pm

We have enjoyed such beautiful music this summer. Thanks to Kristjar Nielson, JoBeth Dudley, Kim Smith, David Saiken, and Bill Tobin, for being such a special part of our worship services.

September is the start of choir rehearsals. We will begin on September 9th at 5:30pm with pizza upstairs and a rehearsal following. We welcome new members! You don't need to try out, just have a love for music and singing. Come join us!

If you have any questions regarding joining the choir, please contact
Dottie Morton, Music Director 802-684-1174 momssuzuki@gmail.com

October 11th

The UCC Office of Public Policy and Advocacy in Washington D.C. is funded in part by gifts to **Neighbors in Need**. The goal of the UCC Washington D.C. Office is to make a better world possible by addressing the systemic injustices we face as a country and as part of the world. **Neighbors in Need (NIN)** is a Special Mission Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion in the United States.



The **Neighbors in Need** offering supports ministries of justice and compassion, with one-third of the offering given to the Council for American Indian Ministries and the remaining two-thirds supporting UCC justice ministries. In 2025 the **Neighbors in Need** Offering supported 26 grant recipients across the UCC who were engaged in projects of direct service and advocacy. Thank you for your support and generosity!

20th Anniversary Celebration



DATE & TIME:

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13 AT 10:00

BRUNCH

FEATURING
MAGIC
FRED

LOCATION:

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
189 MAIN ST. LITTLETON, NH 03561
CHURCH SANCTUARY

FACEPAINT
AND GLITTER
TATTOOS

DETAILS

WE WILL BEGIN WITH A CHILDREN'S SONG SERVICE, FOLLOWED BY A BLESSING OF THE BACKPACK, DIAPER BAG, BLANKIE, OR STUFFY (MAKE SURE ALL KIDS BRING THEIR ITEM TO BE BLESSED).

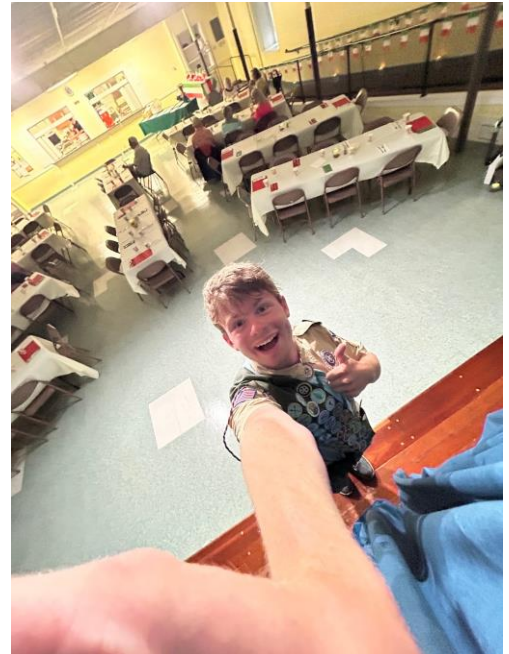
AFTER THE BLESSING AND SONGS, CHILDREN WILL BE INVITED TO GO DOWNSTAIRS TO THE HALL FOR ENTERTAINMENT. FAMILIES HAVE THE OPTION OF STAYING FOR THE CHURCH SERVICE, OR JOINING THEIR CHILDREN IN THE HALL. BRUNCH WILL BE SERVED AFTER THE CHURCH SERVICE.



The green bench above is the product of all the plastic recycling everyone has done! It sits in the Shining Lights playground for the teachers and children to enjoy. Thank you to **Jeff Nute** for putting it together!



Thank you to **Jeff Nute** for installing the new banner celebrating Shining Lights 20th anniversary!



I wanted to thank everyone for supporting my Eagle Project. Huge thank you, especially to **Pam and Jeff Nute** and **Reg LaFlam** for helping out in the kitchen. Because of all your donations, I have managed to raise more than what was expected, meaning that the rest of the funds will be donated to ACT to continue adding to the Gale Family Forest!

Thank you all again, and I hope you all join me for a picnic sometime!!

Sincerely, Curran Smith



At the Nature's Calling gathering in August, Peter got to see the newly installed memorial for Tom Blanchette bench made by Cory (seated) at Ski Hearth Farm in Sugar Hill. Tom was a beloved member of our congregation who died in a fall felling a tree last summer. The bench is made from wood from the tree Tom fell from. Below is a picture from the same event on the Gale River.



Nature's Calling will meet at Ski Hearth Farm on Tuesday, **September 22 at 6-7:30pm** to celebrate the Fall Equinox and on Saturday, October 10 at 10AM to celebrate Apple Season!

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SEPTEMBER 2026



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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

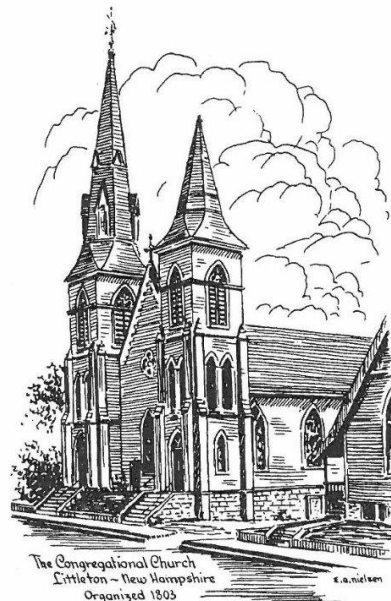
Moderator: Alice Muh
Secretary: Jo Beth Dudley
Treasurer: Joyce Krill
Council: Tim Gould, Elaine Pollak, Kim Smith
Mary Menzies

Team Leads

Administration: Laurie Boswell/TimGould
Caring: Elaine Pollak
Christian Formation: Kim Smith
Worship: Mary Menzies

Shining Lights Learning Center

Board Chair: Suzanne Schott
Director: Vanessa Neuroth



The Congregational Church
Littleton - New Hampshire
Organized 1803