

Steeple Minute

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

May 1, 2025

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Issue 5

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Report from the Moderator

Alice Muh

Here I am on May 1 wondering where January, February, March and April have gone. The time has gone by quickly and wow, have we done a lot! We prepared ourselves for our annual meeting in January for February, only to be snowed out. Getting snowed out happened an unprecedented two more times! We have gotten good at responding in the moment and pivoting to our “Kitchen Table” church and reimagining all the ways we can do church. We moved through Ash Wednesday, Lent, and Easter, partnering with our sister churches for a richer experience. We continue to have lay-led worship when Peter is not with us. I know for some, this is quite an adjustment, but it is our reality as well as for most small churches in our state and in the country. I am grateful to those who are willing to do this.

We have worked out the bugs in our worship live-streaming which is going much more smoothly. Dave Boyle, Curran Smith, and Joyce Krill have been incredibly faithful in running the equipment on Sunday mornings. The next step will be to better utilize the equipment we have to enhance the in-church and streaming experiences using slides and our projector. Laurie Boswell and Curran will be taking the lead on this and will train more volunteers to feel comfortable with our technology.

Pastor Peter, Mary Menzies, and Amy Greene went to the NHCUCS Prepared to Serve in February coming back refreshed, connected, and with good ideas. It is a wonderful opportunity to connect with our sisters and brothers across the state, worshiping and learning from each other.

Peter led a leadership retreat on April 5 (postponed from March 29- another victim of the late snows we have had this year). Opening it up to the congregation gave the opportunity for more people to be heard and to talk about what kind of leadership we need now and into the future.

We have a new children’s space in the sanctuary for our littlest members. This is a wonderful way to welcome them into worship in keeping with their developmental abilities. Thank you, Kim Smith and Amy Greene.

At the end of June, Steve Jones, a lighting expert, will be coming to help us ‘re-lamp’ our church building, replacing old fluorescents lights with brighter LED lights. This will not only cut electricity costs but improve visibility in all areas of the church. The amazing thing about this is that it is not costing us any money. I made the connection with Steve at one of the NHCUCS events, as well as hearing a presentation by him through the UCC Rural Coalition for Small Town and Rural Churches, a group I linked up with at the last General Synod that meets monthly over Zoom. Steve’s personal mission is to help churches with their lighting issues. He volunteers his time to churches all over the country and provides the bulbs needed for the upgrades. Praise God!

The kind of flexibility we have been demonstrating is so important as we continue to look at how we need to respond to our identity as a small church, our environment, and changing culture. We have revealed our willingness to grow spiritually by adopting a new mission statement for the church as well as a diversity statement that reflects better who we have become in order to be a healthier body of Christ. It shows we are doing our best to be the light in the world, sharing the Gospel with all. We have started examining our church structure and how the old ways of doing things not only do not serve us, but truly hold us back. We have more work to do to live into our mission. There is still room to grow. Both the restructuring task group and the diversity task group are continuing to work on what this can look like.

Small churches are in the majority in our country and are not ‘less than’. We are still the hands and feet of Christ with a role to play in our communities and in our denominations. We have the benefit of being very responsive and family oriented. We create the opportunity to be a part of an extended family that is flexible and organic, yet with a common goal and purpose. Is there more change in our future? Most likely. Do we get nostalgic for ‘the way it used to be’? Absolutely. Do we understand that we cannot go backward, only forward? I hope so. Are we learning how to be a dynamic small church? We are. When we trust God’s amazing love and generosity, we have the strength to move through these chaotic times and into the unknown sharing the Gospel and God’s love with as many people as we can.

First Congregational Church

May 2025



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's Sabbath	3 Happy Birthday! Karen Lord Noon to 5pm – Eastern Star event - FH Pastor Away 7:00 PM-AA-FH
4 THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER 9:00 AM – Adult Bible Class - Classroom 10:00 AM-Worship Service <i>Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz</i>	5 11:00 AM – Aging discussion grp. - LP 6:45 PM – White Mtn. Voices rehearsal - Sanctuary 7:00 PM – AA - FH	6 Happy Birthday! Elaine Pollak 5:00 PM – Dinner Bell Host – All Saints Church	7 8:30 AM – Bible Study & Prayer - Zoom 6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP 7:00 PM-AA-FH	8 Happy Birthday! Linda Warden 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7 :00 PM-AA-FH	9 Happy Birthday! Cynthia Nielson Pastor's Sabbath	10 Pastor Away 7:00 PM-AA-FH
11 FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 9:00 AM – Adult Bible Class – Classroom 10:00 AM-Worship Service Worship Leader : Amy Greene 6:00 PM – Community Band Practice - FH	12 8:30 AM – Personnel – Zoom 6:45 PM – White Mtn. Voices rehearsal - Sanctuary 7:00 PM – AA - FH	13 6:00 PM – SLLC BOD - Zoom 6:00PM – Eastern Star – FH Pam out of office	14 8:30 AM – Bible Study & Prayer - Zoom 1:00 PM – Finance Mtng. - CR 6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP 7:00 PM – AA – FH	15 Noon – Council Mtng – FH/Zoom 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 6:45 PM – White Mtn. Voices rehearsal - Sanctuary 7 :00 PM-AA-FH	16 Pastor's Sabbath	17 10:00 AM – Ecumenical Worship Mtng. – LP 7:30 PM – White Mtn. Voices Concert-Sanctuary 7:00 PM-AA-FH
18 FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 9:00 AM – Adult Bible Class – Classroom 10:00 AM-Worship Service <i>Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz</i> 3:00 PM – White Mtn. Voices Concert-Sanctuary 5:00PM – Fundraising Buffet Dinner - FH	19 11:00 AM – Aging discussion grp. - LP 7:00 PM – AA - FH	20 Happy Anniversary! Ali & Brian Muh	21 8:30 AM – Bible Study & Prayer - Zoom 6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP 7:00 PM – AA – FH	22 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7 :00 PM-AA-FH	23 Pastor's Sabbath	24 7:00 PM-AA-FH
25 SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 10:00 AM-Worship Service <i>Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz</i>	26 Happy Anniversary! Mary & Doug Menzies OFFICE CLOSED SLLC CLOSED 7:00 PM – AA - FH	27	28 8:30 AM – Bible Study & Prayer - Zoom 6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP 7:00 PM – AA – FH	29 Ascension Day 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7 :00 PM-AA-FH	30 Pastor's Sabbath	31 11:00 AM -Private Memorial Service – Sanctuary and Hall 7:00 PM-AA-FH

Financial Report

March 31, 2025	YTD
Member support:	\$37,001
Scheduled w/d from trust funds	\$ 0
Other Income:	\$ 5,279
Total Income:	\$42,280
Total Expenses:	\$53,588
Net:	\$ -11,308

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

with the White Mountain Youth Voices
 Victoria Cole, Music Director
 Joseph Hansalik, piano

A NEW ENGLAND PORTRAIT

MUSIC AND POETRY FROM NEW HAMPSHIRE AND OUR NEIGHBORS

Amy Beach, Robert Frost, Gwyneth Walker,
 Daniel Pinkham, Jonathan Santore and more

original painting by Patricia Lawrence Stone

FEATURING JOSEPH HANSALIK playing WOODLAND SKETCHES by EDWARD MACDOWELL

Saturday, May 17th at 7:30 p.m.
 Sunday, May 18th at 3:00 p.m.

First Congregational Church, Littleton, NH

Join First Congregational for a Fundraising Buffet Dinner downstairs after the Sunday concert!

Suggested donation \$15 at the door
www.whitemountainvoices.com Find us on Facebook

Worship in May: We turn this month to stories of the early church and wonder what they might have to say about being church and followers of Christ today.

May 4 - Stephen's Witness Acts 6:1-7, 54-60

May 11 - The Ethiopian Eunuch Acts 8:26-39. Grateful to Amy Greene who is preaching today!

May 18 - The Council at Jerusalem Acts 15:1-18

May 25 - Living by Faith Galatians 1:13-17, 2:11-21

Flourishing in Worship Together! We have two gatherings to May with worship leaders to plan future ways to support lay worship leadership and grow our connections in sharing worship together. Join us if you'd like to learn more or take part in our planning!

Wednesday, **May 7** at 9am - Worship Leaders Breakfast at the Littleton Diner - We'll gather for breakfast, checking in, sharing about Holy Week services and plan next steps.

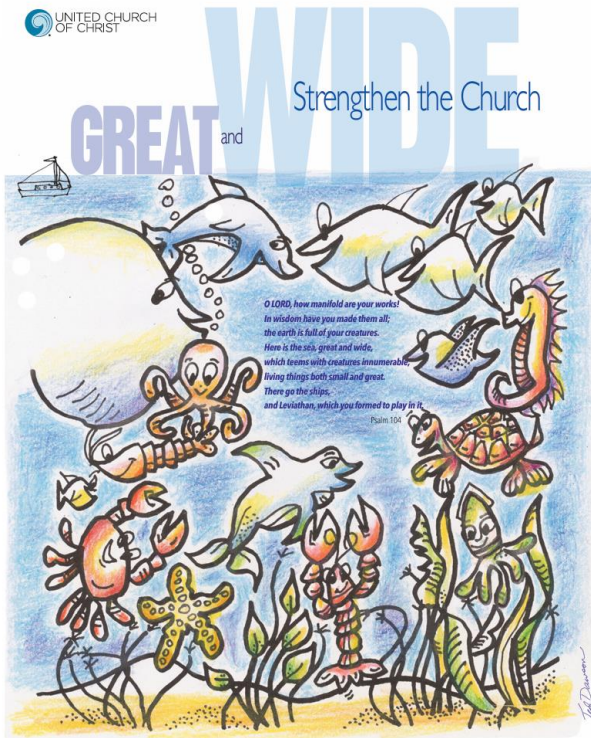
Saturday, **May 17** at 10am at Community Church of Christ in Franconia to discuss summer worship schedule with Franconia, First United Methodist and First Congregational and any others who would be interested in joining our joint monthly worship services this summer!

MISSIONS SPOTLIGHT

**One Great Hour of Sharing
\$2,420 was raised in March and April!**



June 8th



The Strengthen the Church Offering furthers the work of our conferences and the national UCC as we work together to strengthen and renew existing congregations, fund leadership development, and provide exciting new programs for youth and young adults. The offering is divided with 50% staying regionally within your conference and 50% supporting the National Ministries.

Dinner Bell – Tuesday, May 6th, 5:00pm - All Saint’s Episcopal Church.
Sign up to participate on the board at the back of the sanctuary.
Thank you to Cynthia Nielson for coordinating!

CAKE WALK

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Cake Walk on April 13th!
Benefitting Shining Lights Learning Center! \$515 was raised!



Buffet Dinner Fundraiser

The First Congregational Church Invites You

Sunday, May 18, 2025

5pm

Following the White Mountain Voices Spring Concert

Suggested Donation

\$15 Adults

\$ 6 Children (ages 4-12)

Children 3 & under Free

Classic comfort foods including lasagna, chicken pie, Shepherd's pie, baked beans, baked ham, BBQ pulled pork, macaroni and cheese, salads, assorted beverages and desserts

Celebrating community spirit, homemade food and support for vital local outreach programs

Painting by Patricia Lawrence Ritzo



Continuous seating ~ Take-out available!

189 Main Street, Littleton, NH



Desserts, Donations and Help Needed!

Please see the sign up board at the back of the sanctuary to see how you can help!

Other Happenings!

Peter's Time-Away: I will not be away for any extended time this month in May. I will instead be taking a few weeks away in June (June 8-28) as I work with my backpacking friends to finish hiking the Appalachian Trail in Maine. (We'll see how far we get!) I will also be a counselor at Camp Pride at Pilgrim Lodge, our UCC Church Camp in Maine in June as well.

Flourishing Together: A Community Approach to Mental Health Grateful for community leaders who are coming together to support Mental Health Awareness Month in May. Our prayers are with all who live with mental illness and challenges. If you'd like to get involved in this community outreach and learn more, contact Peter.

Mondays May 5 and 19 at 11am: Conversations on Aging – Come join us every other week for what's been a lively and fun conversation on the joys and challenges of aging!

Join us in person in the Ladies Parlor or on zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85086700243?pwd=kseCP6MmbmnitwOJbaQwiUxhTGyuyw.1>

Bible Study and Prayer: Wednesday Mornings – 8:30-9:15am— on Zoom: Join us each week for a chance to learn and discuss together an upcoming scripture in our Sunday morning worship service.

Join Zoom Meeting: Bible Study Wednesday Mornings:

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

A visit with Ed O'Brien! Ed has made arrangements for an aide from the Taylor Community to drive him north so he can come to church here with us on Sunday, May 18. He'd like to invite any who can to join him for lunch after church.

Helping Hands Needed

The property committee decided to make a change to the church Clean-up Day typically held in May. Instead of selecting one day, a more flexible approach is planned to give more people the opportunity to help with annual spring cleaning tasks. Below is a list of tasks that need to be done during the month of May. Please bring your own cleaning supplies or tools. When the task has been completed, please indicate so on the list posted on Pam's door. Some tasks are more fun when done with others so team up!

Fellowship hall kitchen – *list on kitchen cabinet for guidance*

Ladies parlor kitchen

Oiling pews

Vacuum pew cushions

Wash bathroom (3) walls

Wash fellowship hall walls

De-clutter/organize/clean classroom (2)

Wash clear windows

In June a bigger project is planned to finish insulating the furnace room and complete work in the basement below Shining Lights. This work will help to lower our heating expense. Please let Dave or Reg know if you are able to help.

Church Peeps supporting Shining Lights at the Cake Walk!

Thank You to EVERYONE who participated!



Easter Fun at Shining Lights!



Thank you to Pam for coloring all kinds of pasta shapes and making construction paper eggs for the children to learn glue skills and have fun creating!



Thank you to Kim for the annual Easter Egg hunt in the sanctuary!!



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Return Service Requested

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MAY 2025



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: Vanessa Neuroth

