

Steeple Minute

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

May 1, 2026

PHONE 603-444-3376 FAX 603-444-6589

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EMAIL: fstcong189@gmail.com WEBSITE: www.1stconglittleton.org

Find us on Facebook @FirstCongregationalChurchOfLittletonNh

Moderator's Message

Alice Muh

You may ask, after Easter Sunday and Jesus' resurrection, what's next? We have had some busy and intense seasons of the church starting with Advent, Christmas, Lent, then Easter, with our annual meeting thrown in for good measure. At the annual meeting we approved new bylaws that enable our church to adopt a new, more flexible structure - it is almost a rebirth, as it were. We are also anticipating the move to a half-time pastor in September. I wonder if we are feeling some of the same feelings the disciples, now called to be apostles, were feeling in those weeks and months after the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus - anxiety, wonderment, confusion, determination, sense of community?

As we mark this time between now and Pentecost, the Worship Team will be helping us focus on spiritual gifts and how we can use them to strengthen the church and bless the world. We will be looking at St. Paul's letters to the Corinthians, Timothy, the Ephesians, and St. Peter's first letter to churches in what is now Turkey. The Epistles of the New Testament were written to help these new communities of Christ figure out what it means to be the Body of Christ. These letters also help us to understand this concept and why it is important to us in this time and this place.

May 24th is Pentecost Sunday when we celebrate birthday of the church, a new beginning empowered by the Holy Spirit and the expansion of the Gospel beyond Jerusalem throughout the eastern Roman empire. It started within Jewish communities, but quickly included Gentile converts, embracing a wide range of people who would have been excluded before - people 'not like us' and 'people not from here'. This naturally caused some friction and divisions amongst the churches.

Hoping to bridge the divide and ease tensions between Jewish and Gentile believers, Paul started a collection for the famine-stricken churches in Jerusalem. This is arguably the first 'Strengthen the Church' offering. We will have our 'Strengthen the Church' offering where we can embrace Paul's teachings that God's grace is for all, even those who are not like us and/or who live far from us. As God calls our congregations to be the church in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches, and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults.

In participating in this way we are a part of the bigger picture; we are not alone; there is unity in the Holy Spirit, and there are resources available to us through our NH UCC conference. From my favorite website, The Bible Project <https://bibleproject.com/>, the authors explain "...God's dwelling place is in people who bear witness to the risen Jesus by choosing to live in his way of love. And the whole world is eventually going to meet God through this community of people who love God and others like Jesus does."

The Church Council will be having a retreat on May 16 to explore how to be council in this time of change, keeping our "why" in mind. Our Ministry Teams are working on practical applications of how to accomplish the work of the church, and exploring what happens when we all chip in with our individual spiritual gifts. I wonder if we have an opportunity to look less at what the church can do for us, and more at how we can be instrumental in God's call for our church and the wider church community?

First Congregational Church

May 2026



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
KEY: FH - Fellowship Hall LP - Ladies Parlor CR - Classroom					1 Pastor's Sabbath	2 7:00 PM-AA-FH
3 FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 9:00 AM – Adult Bible Class - Classroom 10:00 AM-Worship Service <i>Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz</i> Happy Birthday! Karen Lord	4 11:00 AM – Aging discussion grp. – LP 6:00 PM – White Mtn. Voices rehearsal - Sanctuary 7:00 PM – AA - FH	5 5:00 PM – Dinner Bell Host – All Saints Church	6 (* see below!) 8:30 AM – Bible Study & Prayer - Zoom Noon – Digital Ministry – CR & Zoom 6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP 6:00 PM – White Mtn. Voices dress rehearsal -Sanctuary 7:00 PM-AA-FH	7 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7 :00 PM-AA-FH	8 Happy Birthday! Linda Warden Pastor's Sabbath	9 Happy Birthday! Cynthia Nielson 7:00 PM-AA-FH
10 SIXTH 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	11 7:00 PM – AA - FH	12 6:00 PM – SLLC BOD - Zoom 6:00PM – Eastern Star – FH	13 8:30 AM – Bible Study & Prayer - Zoom 10:00 AM – Ecumenical Summer Worship Meeting – LP 6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP 7:00 PM – AA – FH	14 Ascension Day 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7 :00 PM-AA-FH	15 Pastor's Sabbath	16 8:30 AM – Noon - Council Retreat – All Saints Church 7:00 PM-AA-FH
17 SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 9:00 AM – Adult Bible Class – Classroom 10:00 AM-Worship Service <i>Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz</i> 6:00 PM – Community Band Practice - FH	18 Peter Away 11:00 AM – Aging discussion grp. - LP Pam out 7:00 PM – AA - FH	19 Peter Away Pam out	20 Peter Away 8:30 AM – Bible Study & Prayer - Zoom 6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP 7:00 PM – AA – FH	21 Peter Away 9:30 AM – Council Mtng – FH/Zoom 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7 :00 PM-AA-FH	22 Peter Away	23 Peter Away 7:00 PM-AA-FH
24 PENTECOST SUNDAY 10:00 AM-Worship Service <i>Mary Menzies</i> Strengthen the Church Special Offering	25 OFFICE CLOSED SLLC CLOSED 7:00 PM – AA - FH	26 Happy Anniversary! Mary & Doug Menzies	27 8:30 AM – Bible Study & Prayer - Zoom 6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP 7:00 PM – AA – FH	28 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7 :00 PM-AA-FH	29 Pastor's Sabbath	30 7:00 PM-AA-FH
31 TRINITY SUNDAY 10:30 AM-Ecumenical Worship Service at Franconia Community Church & Picnic to follow		* MAY 6TH Happy Birthday! Elaine Pollak	** MAY 20TH Happy Anniversary! Ali & Brian Muh			

Financial Report

March 31, 2026	YTD
Member support:	\$39,265
Scheduled w/d from trust funds	\$ 0
Other Income:	\$ 3,292
Total Income:	\$42,557
Total Expenses:	\$53,259
Net:	\$ -10,702

Wireless Guest Account

SSID: FCC Guests

Password: fcc189main

An Eastertide Worship Series: You Have Something Holy to Offer

I am grateful to my friend and colleague, Rev. Philomena Hare, Pastor of First Congregational Church of Wareham, Massachusetts for the gift of sharing her Eastertide Worship Series with us. Philomena writes, Over these seven weeks, this series invites us to reflect on the spiritual gifts the Holy Spirit gives for strengthening of the church and the blessing of the world. Together, we will consider what it means to name, claim, and share those gifts with humility, courage, and love. At a time when many quietly wonder whether they still matter and have something to offer, we will remember this good news: the Spirit still gives gifts, the church still needs every member, and the world is still waiting to be blessed.

May 3 - The Church Discerns (Romans 12:3-8)

May 10 - Stir Up the Gift (2 Timothy 1:3-7)

May 17 - For the Common Good (1 Peter 4:10-11)

May 24 - Pentecost Sunday: The World is Blessed (Acts 2:1-4; Ephesians 4:1-16)

Grateful for Mary preaching today!

May 31 - Ecumenical Worship Service at the Community Church of Christ in Franconia at 10:30 - with a church picnic to follow!

Peter will be away May 18-25

**Come gather in Nature's Calling community on Saturday, May 16 at 2pm
at Ski Hearth Farm in Sugar Hill!**

MISSIONS SPOTLIGHT



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 5th, 5:00pm - All Saint's Episcopal Church.
Thank you to Cynthia Nielson for coordinating! Cynthia is seeking a partner for the 2026-2027 year to help with planning and executing. Please contact her if you are interested in helping her 3 times a year.

Also, a suggestion box will be at the back of the sanctuary for suggestions for upcoming meals.

Thank you to the Caring Tree! As always, let Elaine Pollak from the Caring Tree (802-633-3669) and Peter know of pastoral and prayer concerns, if you would like to have a visit or conversation, and other ways we can support you as your community of faith!

Growing Old Gracefully: May 4 and 18 - Join us for a fun and lively conversations on the challenges and opportunities of getting older!

Wednesday Morning 8:30-9:15 Zoom Bible Study: Join us each week for a chance to learn and talk together about the upcoming scripture in our Sunday morning worship service. Here's a new Zoom Meeting link to join the Bible Study on Wednesday mornings:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85167459117?pwd=On3atUkvaEb8iaizLkIYYyOa3bsjbi.1>

Dear First Congregational Church of Littleton, NH,

I hope this letter finds you enjoying the new beginnings of this Easter season. In CT, the trees are beginning to bloom with all of their vibrant beautiful colors and the daffodils are waving good morning in the morning breeze. Emma, her grandfather (Opa), and I have enjoyed taking a few easy hikes already this year. The trails have been a great way to connect with God’s beautiful creation. We love listening to the birds and figuring out which birds are singing using an application called Merlin Bird ID. For those technology savvy folks who enjoy listening to the birds I highly recommend it.



Emma is doing well in school, dancing, and ice skating. She loves playing and learning with her friends everyday. Her favorite school activities are drawing, writing, dancing, and playing outside. She is even drawing mini stories (Emma and Mommy eating cookies in the rain). Seeing her face light up when she is ice skating is one of my favorite times of the week.

She is filled with so much joy and pride as she learns new skills and improves. As for dancing we are getting close to recital time and Emma and her class are doing so well practicing their moves. I love getting to watch her grow into her personality.

As a pastoral intern I am continuing to grow and learn every day. This past Sunday I got to attend an ordination service for someone I look forward to someday calling a colleague. He is and will continue to be a great pastor and has been such an inspiration to my own ministerial growth. Looking toward the future I am looking forward to opening a summer worship series with a sermon on 1 Kings 19: 11-12 and Simon and Garfunkel’s The Sound of Silence.



God works in such wonderful, yet unexpected ways. Sometimes the best places to listen for the heartbeat of God is in those quiet moments. The world around us can be very loud. But, what would happen if we embrace the quiet as sacred? Maybe the bird’s song creates more than just a beautiful sound but a feeling of deep innerconnectedness.

Blessing and Peace to You All, Amy and Emma

Sunday, May 31 will be the beginning of our Ecumenical Summer Series with the Methodist and Franconia churches with a picnic to follow the service. Please plan to come as we worship and sharing a meal with our siblings in Christ. More information to follow.

June 7 – Mark your calendars for a special congregational meeting following worship to vote on the call agreement with Peter moving to half-time beginning in September.

Celebrating the 20th year anniversary of Shining Lights Learning Center!

Mark your calendar for **Sunday, September 13th**. There will be a special worship service (including “Blessing of the Backpacks” [or lunch box, blanket or stuffy!]) and following there will be a brunch and activities for the children in the Fellowship Hall. A third planning meeting has already taken place for this joyous event and we hope you will help celebrate with us. Karen Lord and Pam will be heading up the kitchen so look for upcoming ways you can help like donating syrup, making pancakes or cleaning up!

Here is installment number three of the SLLC history that all began in 2006. This month, we begin with the final year of transition in 2009. At the 2009 Annual Church Meeting, a question was posed as to why the church was continuing to financially support SLLC. One response was that the Center is a mission of the church and part of that support is free rent and utilities. This was only year three and it typically takes five years for a new business to become self-sufficient. Another comment was that this mission sometimes brings unchurched families to Christ. One Board member said the school is enjoying a good reputation – students are moving into local schools and getting positive remarks.

In December, SLLC requested their line item be reduced to zero in the church’s budget. The Center also planned to continue to contribute to the snow maintenance of the walks and plowing of the parking lot (and does to this day). Enrollment was at or near capacity with some families put on waiting lists necessitating an increase in staff to stay in compliance. State and local educational professionals remarked on the calm and supportive learning environment – our “graduates” are entering kindergarten well prepared.

STABILIZATION - 2010 to 2015

At the Annual meeting in February 2010, it was announced that SLLC was operating beautifully and is now self-sufficient, albeit they get free rent, utilities, use of the bathrooms and other sections of the church. The entryway to the Toddler Classroom was remodeled to increase light, space and movement. All rooms had improvements in painting and rugs. A pledge was made to the Church this year along with contributing to winter maintenance. Audio-visual devices were added, and a security system installed.

In 2011, windows were replaced in all but the bathroom, bringing much needed natural light and fresh air. Alterations were made to the Toddler Room to improve student safety. A small shed was built and placed in the lower parking areas to store equipment and trash receptacles. The monthly pledge to the Church was increased and a contingency fund was established for unanticipated expenses.

An air filtration was installed in 2012 to improve air quality, movement, and health. SLLC continued to make a monthly pledge and bathroom cleaning, as well as winter plowing and sidewalk maintenance. The Center now had a webpage on the church’s website. Enrollment remained at capacity (28) and a waiting list was established. Improvements were made to the Center that year and next (2013) including the sidewalk widened slightly and repaired, the cast iron sewer line was replaced between the toilet and the outside, new signage was added and old signage refurbished, the swing set was reinforced to improve safety and minor remodeling inside to insure safety and line of sight.

Stay tuned next month for the final two years of stabilization (2014 & 2015) and into 2016, yet another year of change!

Fun at Shining Lights!



The Preschool visited Riverglen to meet the Easter Bunny.

Everyone is so happy and relieved that the weather is warming up and we're soaking up the time outdoors!



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MAY 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: JoBeth 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

