

NORTH STAR
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
January 2021

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UCC

January 2021

Gathered Since 1730

**Serving, Welcoming, Growing in
Christ**

PO Box 4255

Concord, NH 03302

Phone: 603-225-5491

Emergency Phone: 857-231-2430

Email:

secretary@concordsfirstchurch.org

Website:

www.concordsfirstchurch.org

Office Hours: Mon-Thursday: 9am 1pm

Senior Minister

Rev. Emilia Halstead

Pastor Emeritus

Rev. Dr. Donald F. Jennings

Interim Musician

Adele Elle-Gelernter

Church Secretary

Kathleen Akerman

Treasurer

Everett Sims

Financial Secretary

Carolyn Andrews

Council Chair

Susan Lauze

Council Vice Chair

Sheila Swenson

Council Recorder

Sara Nichols

North Star Editor

Linda Sims

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From The Pastor

Beloved in Christ,

"At my lowest...God is my Hope. At my darkest...God is my Light. At my weakest...God is my strength. At my saddest...God is my Comforter." – Anonymous

"Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in the Lord." Jeremiah 17:7

"For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord. 'Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" Jeremiah 29:11

"Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God, my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long." Psalm 25:5

In thinking about January 2021, I am pondering ALL of the posts on social media that are asking people to put their hope and trust in the turn of a calendar page. "Trust that 2021 will be better. It has to be." Thank you for the invitation, but no thank you. I would like to offer an alternative, one that all of the prophets of the Lord have said (and continue to say), "Always put your hope in God." (Hosea 12:6)

Not to be a downer, but 2021 could easily be as tumultuous as 2020, if only for different reasons. If we decide to place our hope in our human construct of "time" and "calendar," we might end up exactly in the same heart-broken place on the eve of 2022. However, if we put our trust in God – the Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit – then, with faith and hope, no matter WHAT

happens in 2021, our spirits will find rest in whatever storms come our way.

"Why, my soul, are you so downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God." (Psalm 42:5) If there's one thing that the experience of living through 2021 has taught me, it's to intentionally rest in each and every moment in the loving arms of God. From that place of peace, no matter what violence, fear, hatred, or deceit happens it will not take away my courage-of-heart and trust that God is on the move to bend the arch of history towards love and justice, (Thank you, Martin Luther King, Jr.).

And so, "Be strong and take heart, all who hope in the Lord." (Psalm 31:25) As a congregation we have some dreaming to do, asking God for all of the things our hearts yearn for in a new building, in a new flow to our ministry, and in the ways that our hands and feet can share God's love in Concord. And then – and this is the hard part – we have some surrendering to do. Once we let God know our deepest hopes and dreams for First Church, now and in the future, our only job is to surrender those dreams to God. We then, like the watchman, are asked by God to watch and wait for the Holy Spirit to send the Divine signals and to receive with open arms the gifts that God will literally bring to our feet.

And those gifts will be FAR more than we could ever imagine or dream, for they will have been manifested by God, who is eager to surprise us with unlimited delight. "Therefore, once you have your minds ready for action and you are thinking

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clearly, place your hope completely on the grace that will be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed." (1 Peter 1:13)

Finally, remember that even with our hearts full of hope, dreams, trust, and courage, in and from God, there will still be moments when sorrow will fill our hearts. Don't run from it. Float in that sorrow and acknowledge it, trusting that God knows your sorrow doesn't take the place of your hope – but rather that they flow together. We need to be willing to let each member of our congregation feel what they are feeling and NOT try to "make them feel better" or "curb their enthusiasm." We need EVERYONE, with the exact feelings they are carrying at any given moment. We need those who are grieving. We need those who are excited. We need those who are doubting. We need those who have faith.

Because of who you are, and where you are on your journey, on OUR journey as a congregation, you are welcome here – and we need you. The plans that God has for First Church, and for each of us, are far more splendid than we can imagine, we need only to place our hope and trust in God alone.

Blessings,
Pastor Emilia



Spiritual Life Ministry

"This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine..."

It is time to turn the page on the calendar – a new calendar since 2020 is past and we begin a new year. Advent and Christmas have been celebrated and Epiphany is upon us! (It always seems surprising to me that the Season of Epiphany lasts until Ash Wednesday!) During this time we are charged with acknowledging the Light and bringing it out into the world.

During this time, Pastor Emilia is going to continue the theme of sharing our sacred stories as she carries the Light into rooms of our beloved church building and throughout the world. In pictures and words we will be reminded to share the gift of Light.

One of my favorite passages from the Bible is from I Corinthians, Chapter 12 in which we learn that we are all parts of the body of Christ and we all have specific gifts to contribute to God's work. Together we can accomplish great things but alone we struggle to just put one foot in front of the other. Each of our gifts represents your own special light – members of the Spiritual Life Ministry Team encourage you to bring your light into the world, let it shine as you share your gifts.

"Wherever I may go, I'm gonna let it shine...."

Linda Sims, Spiritual Life Ministry

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Church Council

There have been a myriad of decisions and activity over the past couple of months to prepare for and complete the sale of our FCC church building, which took place on December 11th. A letter from Tim Wildman (council member at large) was sent out on Dec 16, informing all members of our congregation of the closing on the church property and highlighted the Terms of Agreement negotiated with the Concord Coalition to End Homelessness.

FCC computers have been reinstalled in our three office spaces to be leased, which also allow for remote access from home during the winter with continued pandemic concerns. Comcast allows only one account per an address so we have arranged for a PO Box with the following address - **First Congregational Church, P.O. Box 4255, Concord, NH 03302** and an adaptive letterhead obtained. Our new lease includes the use of sanctuary, chapel, sacristy, financial secretary's office and adjacent hallways and shared use of the handicapped bathroom and the Washington Street entryway. We will be responsible for our internet/phone services with our lease but all utilities and building/property maintenance is now the responsibility of CCEH.

Church Council expresses our gratitude to Pastor Emilia for her spiritual leadership during this time of monumental congregational change throughout the Advent and Christmas season, to Everett Sims (church historian/archivist) for his commitment to preserving/storing our church history and time researching

needed information on old deeds, to Phil Kimball and Carroll Blake from Operations, for their hours of oversight in preparing/implementation of this move, to Jon Huntington for providing a capable crew to assist with the heavy lifting of property to storage areas in the narthex and back section of the sanctuary. We appreciate the many volunteers who also assisted with the sorting, packing, and storing of items from the various church ministries, all which made it all possible for CCEH to obtain our building to meet their project deadlines for funding.

The congregation participated in the December Circle "Dream Big" meeting on Sunday, Dec. 27th via Zoom and given the opportunity to explore and dream about who we might become as a church community. **On January 3rd at 11 am via Zoom, an informative meeting with a Question and Answer Session with the Council is being offered to the congregation to address questions re: the sale of the church building and the Terms of Agreement.** We hope you will join us and participate in the session.

Council continues to have scheduled, bi-weekly virtual meetings with our realtor, Brenda Litchfield, to review her spreadsheet, discuss upcoming properties for sale and identify potential sites to have our realtor initiate a contact. A small subgroup from council will be arranging a tour of 2 current churches, similar in size to our needs, to view the architectural design and layout to assist in our envisioning.

Sheila Swenson, Council

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Ministry of Outreach

School Kits and Clean Up Buckets:

Don't put your sewing machines away now that Christmas is over! Are you wondering what to do on these cold days? Take the time to sew a school kit. The directions and the items needed are listed at CWSschoolkits. Add them to your shopping list or send in money to the church and Sara Nichols will do the shopping for you. This is also true for the cleanup buckets. Let's make a new year's resolution to fill a bucket.

Super Bowl:

The Super Bowl is Feb 7, 2021. It has been a tradition of First Church to raise money for the Friendly Kitchen on Super Bowl Sunday. There will be no fans in the stands and the Patriot fans will be disappointed this year but we can still raise money for the only soup kitchen in Concord. Please plan to write a check with Friendly Kitchen on the memo line and send it to the church. No one should have to go hungry!

Zimbabwe:

Please keep Zimbabwe in your prayers. A total of 2.61 million people or 27% of the population in rural Zimbabwe are facing severe food shortages, the Integrated Food Security phase Classification (IPC) has said. This is due to drought and restrictions linked to the pandemic. Thank you to all who contributed to our plea for help.

Christmas Fund (Veterans of the

Cross): The retired ministers thank you for your contributions to the Christmas Fund. These funds help provide financial assistance to UCC clergy and lay employees. The total amount received will be published next month.

Salvation Army Angel Tree:

Thank you to all who contributed to the Salvation Army Angel Tree. Your gifts will make a child happy and believe in the magic of Christmas.

Sara Nichols, Outreach

Ministry of Operations

By the time the ownership of our building at 177 North Main Street was transferred to Concord Coalition to End Homelessness in December, all of our belongings on the first floor that we wished to keep had been moved to the Sanctuary, Narthex or Chapel. We also filled our dumpster, paid to have some things taken away, placed some items in a consignment shop, sold a few things and had given away other things. The "we" was a large crew of First Church volunteers augmented by several friends of First Church.

It was an incredible task performed in a very short time! I hope that you all were able to take a short breather before Christmas activities kicked into high gear.

More work remains to sort out our belongings on the second floor and in the downstairs Dining Room. We don't have the same tight timetable, but it will feel good to have that task behind us.

Phil Kimball, Operations



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FCC History of Music – The First One Hundred and Fifty Years

Part 2 – The Instruments and Choir

The history moment article this month is a continuation from the December article taken from “Historical Addresses” celebrating FCC’s 150th anniversary presented on November 18, 1880. This address was presented by Dr. W. G. Carter, the organist at this time.

“The first instrument in use was the pitch-pipe, which was made of wood, “an inch or more wide, somewhat in the form of a boy’s whistle, but so constructed as to admit of different keys.” This was simply used to give the correct key, and was not played during the singing. Under the ministry of Rev. Mr. Evans, who was himself very fond of music, some instruments were introduced, which innovation was attended with so much opposition that, according to tradition, some persons left the meeting house rather than hear the profane sound of the “fiddle and flute.” We find then, at the beginning of the second century of the existence of the church, the service of praise was sustained by a large choir, accompanied by wind and string instruments usually a violin, flute, clarinet, bass viol*, and double bass, the two latter being the property of the society. As

illustration of this, the second style of music then in vogue, was then presented. The stirring old tunes of “Strike the Cymbal,” “Northfield,” and “Complaint,” were rendered with orchestral accompaniment.

The choir consisted of thirty persons of both sexes, under the direction of a chorister, who was usually a tenor singer. This leader was the only individual who received compensation, and it was stipulated in his engagement that he should teach a singing-school, which in the society could attend for improvement in singing. The singing-school was usually held in the court-house, sometimes in the bank building, was promptly attended, and its weekly meeting an occasion which was eagerly looked forward to by the young people, especially for its social as well as musical advantages. Frequently the rehearsals of the choir were held at the various houses of the singers, and were most enjoyable occasions. Concerts, or musical entertainments, were of rare occurrence, consequently, the weekly rehearsal, combining so much of recreation with musical instruction, was attended with an interest and promptness unknown to the “volunteer choir” of the present day. On the Sabbath, they promptly appeared, bringing with them their music-books, many of them their luncheon, and in cold weather, their foot-stoves, making

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themselves as comfortable as possible under the circumstances. Doubtless the singers and players here to-night can appreciate the difficulty of keeping the pitch, and handling the bow, and fingering the strings and keys, at a temperature below freezing.

The interest in church music continued unabated during the later years of 1842, the choir filled the greater part of the gallery, which was finished for their accommodation. To this church then came the choir, bringing with them the ancient viols, soon to be sacrificed at the shrine of the new organ, for we find upon the first subscription paper for the organ, the following item; "Proceeds of the sale of viols, \$35." There are some within the sound of my voice to-night, who remember the sad leave-taking of the ancient edifice and the first Sabbath, November 27, 1842, on which they lifted their voices in the new and commodious house of worship (the Third Meeting-house). Although, by the formation of the various societies which went out from this parent, many leading singers and players withdrew, still the interest in the choir was kept up by recruits from the young and rising generation, so that upon the occupancy of the new church, the society rejoiced in the possession of a choir in no wise inferior in point of numbers and efficiency to those preceding.

*A musical instrument of the Renaissance and Baroque periods similar to the cello. Typically, six-stringed, held vertically and played with a bow. Smaller viols were held in the lap, and the larger ones were held between the knees. Interesting to note, as soon as the organ came into use in the church, the ancient instruments were sold for \$35".

Everett Sims

Preserving the history of our church through its significant historic resources provides the community its unique character. Historic preservation provides a link to the roots of our church and its people. Overall, historic preservation adds to the quality of life making for a more livable community

"Where there are not common memories, there cannot be common hopes"





Thank you to my Church Family for the cards, the thoughts and prayers during this time. It has eased my sadness and made the days brighter. Thank you for caring.

Shelley Huntoon

Happy Birthday

Douglas King – 1/8

Margaret Sellar – 1/16

Judith Fillion – 1/26

Susanne Driscoll – 1/28

Roger Tasker – 1/30

Cedric Dustin III – 1/31



PRAYER CONCERNS

If you would like your name included in the weekly bulletin prayer list, please contact our church administrator, Kathy.

(secretary@concordfirstchurch.org)

The Prayer Circle asks you to keep in prayer for the following members and friends:

Elizabeth Hardy - Hope
Roger Lyon – Hope and Health
Deborah Goodwin - Healing
Lori Streeter- Hope
Eleanor Stokes - Hope
Margaret Sellar - Healing
Clem Lyon - Hope
Faith Clark - Healing
Family of Ruth Jordan - Peace
Kellie Heath - Healing
Nancy Sanborn – Healing
Family of Dot Riley - Peace
Dot Cassady - Hope
Family of Rodney Huntoon - Peace
Family of Elli Wells - Peace
Family of Harold “Mac” McComas - Peace
Family of John - Peace

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January

1. OSWN _____
2. LDSE _____
3. ANMSNOW _____
4. IEC IGTNSKA _____
5. ATNVOCIA _____
6. EWN ARYE _____
7. CPEEA _____
8. ARAYJUN _____
9. LASGO _____
10. RFSAC _____
11. NEISMTT _____
12. NURTOIEOLS _____
13. RNEWTI _____



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