

NORTH STAR
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
September 2020

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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UCC

September 2020

Gathered Since 1730

**Serving, Welcoming, Growing in
Christ**

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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

Greetings Beloved in Christ,

"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)

"[T]hose who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." (Isaiah 40:31)

Hope is the name of the season, with Trust coming in a close second. It's a twostep dance of faith, really. Place your Hope in what God is doing and Trust God completely. Place your Trust in God and live in the Hope that God is present always.

When folks ask me, "What's next?" or "What are we going to do now?" the only honest answer that I have is "I don't know – and I am placing my Hope and Trust in God." It's important for us all to live into the uncomfortable reality that we cannot see the future. Truly, we can barely plan for tomorrow, (as in 24 hours from right now) let alone plan for what will be happening in a month. If we choose to make plans farther out than a month, we need to be ready for the invitation from God to change those plans.

The scripture passage from Matthew 6:34 has taken on a whole new meaning for me: "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." And so, I am asking all of us to try and do as Jesus invited his followers to do--

The invitation is to focus only on today, the present moment. To focus on what you are grateful for today, releasing the illusion of any control over what will happen tomorrow. One of the anti-anxiety practices I use, when I

cannot get my heart to stop racing from panic, is to place my hands over my heart and to focus ONLY on what is true in that singular moment. It often sounds something like this: "My heart is beating, my lungs are breathing, and I am safe."

Those three phrases have become a mantra for me that pull me back into the Present. Sometimes I have to say that mantra 10 times before my heart rate and breathing finally slow down, but it works eventually. Another one that might work: "God loves me. I am worthy of God's love. Nothing can separate me from God's love." Those phrases are completely true – for EVERYONE, even if you have a hard time believing it in a given moment.

As we continue on this uncertain road, having to do things that we NEVER would have imagined we have to do – like holding an ONLINE Annual Meeting – Trust in God. Place your Hope in all that God will do for our community if we hold on to the Truth that God will never leave us. Yes, God will transform us, so that we are ready to face the current challenges; yet God will never leave us. Breathe into that Hope, Beloved, and Trust in God.

God's Peace,

Pastor Emilia



(Crossroads)

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Spiritual Life Ministry

Summer is more than half over and we are heading back to our regular fall service schedule. Through the wonders (and curses) of technology we have been able to continue to worship on a regular basis. We have been able to experience varied and meaningful services with guest preachers, each with their own touch, and the talents of Pastor Emilia. We are grateful for contributions to our services from Rev. Jason Wells, Rev. Eric Jackson, the staff of Horton Center and the First Church Jazz Sanctuary team.

In September we will return to following the scriptures as scheduled in the lectionary focusing on the Gospel of Luke and worship will begin to feel more familiar. In the plans for September are outside services. In looking for ways to be able to safely include more of our members we will be worshipping at the sites our church once worshipped:

*On September 13th we will gather at Sugar Ball Bluff, off East Side Drive, the site of the first Christian worship service in this area.

*September 20th our worship will be held in front of Cleary Cleaners, the site of the first building, a log cabin, of First Church.

*September 27th on the lawn of Binnie Media, formerly the Walker School, the site of our second building.

*On October 4th we will meet on the side lawn of 177 N. Main Street, the site of our 4th and 5th buildings.

It has been a difficult time for all – especially for our Pastor who not only has to plan and carry out

Sunday morning services but has to deal with the stressful technology necessary to bring worship to each of us in our homes. And those who do not have the capability of personal computers are left without the opportunity to join in. The term “regular” doesn’t seem to fit in with the way our church life has been playing out over the past six months and there are no concrete plans for that to happen – so much of it depending on the COVID 19 virus! The safety of all is of utmost importance and this is reassessed regularly. We continue to struggle to be in touch with members, particularly our older members and shut-ins and try to keep everyone informed of what is going on. We urge everyone to reach out to fellow church friends – with a phone call, an email, or a note – so no one will feel forgotten or left behind.

Linda Sims, Spiritual Life Ministry

Ministry of Operations

The insides and outside of the church building are being maintained and kept clean, even as the utilization has been mostly limited to the Food Pantry. Bela continues to do the cleaning and mowing, but at a reduced rate because of the reduced usage. A neighbor, Rick Fink, has cut down the vines that were attempting to strangle the Shed and Dumpster.

The furnaces have received their annual servicing. The water back-flow prevention system has been inspected and has passed muster. A short in the alarm system that caused it to sound off periodically has been repaired.

Phil Kimball, Operations

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Church Council

Pastor Emilia and the Council are discerning a way forward in faithfulness, during this time of continued uncertainty for our elder-rich church community. First Church will remain closed until the end of September (with the exception of the Food Pantry) and the council will reevaluate this decision each month. We are appreciative of Pastor Emilia and the Worship/Spiritual Life Ministry Teams for providing us with creative online-worship services and opportunities to stay connected. Presently, two task groups are being created to assist and support Pastor Emilia during the pandemic:

1. Technical Task Group- to assist with the numerous details of providing virtual connections and to have more people knowledgeable of the setup of Zoom meetings and virtual participation.
2. Safe Reopening Task Group- to be alert to and provide an ongoing review of the CDC Guidelines, the NH Governor's Taskforce for Reopening Places of Worship, and the NH Conference UUC recommendations and resource booklet, "Things to Be Considered for Returning to In-Person Worship" as well as providing modification recommendations for opening the building for church meetings and activities as well as for additional community and 12 step groups.

Persons interested in serving on either task group, please contact our church administrator, Kathy Akerman, at secretary@concordfirstchurch.org

The church approved purchases of new office computers with the remaining installations to be completed on August 26.

We are back in contact with our selected real estate agent, Brenda Litchfield, and will provide an update on this process at our virtual Circle Meeting this coming Sunday, August 30, following our worship service. At our Annual meeting on Sept. 27, we will continue our discussion on the selling process and ways to say goodbye to our beloved church building.

Sheila Swenson, Council

Food Pantry

Our Food Pantry has stayed open during these strange and unsettled times providing food to those who come in. We will continue to distribute food on our usual schedule, asking those who come in to wear face masks in the building. We have received generous donations from many individuals which have allowed us to keep our shelves full of nutritious food as well as some occasional goodies- chocolate covered donut holes, anyone? Rise Again Ministry has donated some laundry detergent, soap, toothpaste and brushes, deodorant, shampoo, etc. which has been eagerly received. East Congregational Church continues to bring in a variety of food stuffs. We have been fortunate that our Concord community is aware of our pantry and willing to contribute.

All contributions -big or small- are very much appreciated. We always need plastic and paper bags, personal hygiene products, laundry products, coffee, tea, cocoa, baking supplies and cash donations to allow us to continue our Food Bank purchases. Thank you all for your continuing support!

Louise Parenteau, Food Pantry

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Ministry of Outreach

School Kits and Clean Up Buckets:

Will it be possible to have 100 school kits ready by Sept. 23rd? We have 80 bags ready to go but could actually have 100 with your help. The sales are on now! Please help by purchasing the needed items (list is at cwskits.org). Whatever items aren't used this year can be saved until next year.

The list of items is as follows:

- 1 pair of blunt scissors
- 70 count bound notebooks or notebooks totaling 200-210 pages
- 30 centimeter/ 12" ruler
- 1 hand held pencil sharpener
- 1 large eraser
- Unsharpened pencils with erasers
- 1 box of 24 crayons
- 12" x 14" to 14" x 17" finished bag with handles (pattern available at cwskits.org)

We have one completed Clean up Bucket! It would be wonderful to start another! Please add the needed items to your grocery list. Go to cwskits.org

Zimbabwe:

Our 20th anniversary with Zimbabwe will be in October. With Zimbabwe suffering from drought, food shortages and Covid virus, our help and prayers would be appreciated. Perhaps we can come up with an anniversary gift but we certainly should do something to let them know we are thinking of them. Does anyone have any suggestions?

Neighbors in Need: One of our five for five offerings is Neighbors in Need. This offering is collected on the first Sunday in October as part of World Communion Sunday. The money collected goes toward supporting ministries of

justice and compassion, including the Council for American Indian Ministries. Please give generously. A basket with the envelopes will be available at the outdoor services to be held.

Crop Walk: Crop Walk will be different this year with the pandemic but we can still walk with family or in small groups socially distancing. This year's Crop Walk is scheduled to be Sept. 26. Please plan to walk or sponsor a walker. The Crop Project was organized in 1947 when farmers were asked to donate food and seed crops to our hungry neighbors in post-World War II Europe and Asia, a program that soon became known as the Christian Rural Overseas Program - CROP. Since then, CROP Hunger Walk events have been held in hundreds of communities large and small raising millions of dollars to eradicate hunger and poverty. Even though Covid has cancelled many events, hunger still exists. Let's continue to raise money to end hunger!

Sara Nichols, Ministry of Outreach

Stewardship

Since March, the Counting Committee has been meeting the first and third Monday of the month. Only six people signed up for envelopes and they are available at the church. I have more envelopes if anyone wants them. Last year when it came to reorder envelopes, I did not do so. I do have envelopes from two years ago so the date is wrong but they can be used this year.

Carolyn Andrews, Stewardship

Nancy – a forgotten member of our church

In the last issue of the North Star I wrote about the ten firsts in UCC's history regarding the acceptance of all people regardless of race, gender and sexual preferences. As a result of that article, my interest was aroused on the subject of slavery during the early settlement of Concord. It certainly is a subject that is never talked about – either in our community or church. Being a life member of the Congregational church, not once have I ever heard slavery mentioned. My first exposure about slavery in early Concord was when I did the history presentation for Concord's 250th anniversary and learned about Rev. Timothy Walker owning slaves. Until recently I subconsciously dismissed any thoughts of that being reality. As racism became a more serious matter in our society today, I became more aware and involved about racism.

From time to time I pick up "The History of Concord" by Rev Bouton just for the enjoyment of reading about Concord's history. This month's history article happens to come from Rev Bouton's history. It has stirred up many feelings reading a chapter in his book titled "slaves". The chapter covers the time from 1765 to 1775.

A brief summary of the early settlers in Concord owning slaves: Ephraim Farnum owned a black boy named Caesar, Abraham Bradley had a slave named Pompey, Col. Benjamin Rolfe owned a slave, William Coffin owned a slave woman named Lucy, and Rev Timothy Walker had three slaves, a man call Prince, and two women – Luce and Violet. These were just a few of the slave owners mentioned in Bouton's history, except for one more – the account of a slave named Nancy.

"Lieut. Richard Herbert had a slave named Nancy, who was said to have been born in Boston about 1766, and when nine days old was given to a man resident in Bow, who, wishing to remove from the vicinity, brought her to Rumford, and in 1768, sold her to Lieut. Herbert for about five dollars. As Nancy is very well remembered by many now living, and was much esteemed, the following notice of her will be interesting:

When bought by Mr. Herbert, she was about eighteen months old, and grew up with the children of his family – attended school a little – learned to read and to recite the catechism. She used to say she was treated just the same as the other children, but she supposed she did not expect so much; and, also, that she was never conscious of a wish that she had been born white. The adoption of the State Constitution, in 1783, was regarded as abolishing slavery within the State. She was about fifteen years of age, and often spoke of the fears she felt lest the Constitution should be adopted. She had been told that she came from Boston, and had a notion that she must return there,

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and she was constantly inquiring about the city and the road thither. One day she engaged in washing dishes, when some came in and told her she was free! She burst into tears, exclaiming, what will become of me! She supposed she must start for Boston. The family gathered round, and she said never was so rejoiced as when it was decided that she should remain in her old and only home. An arrangement was immediately effected (sic) as to compensation, which continued till the death of Mrs. Herbert, senior, who made provision for Nancy in her son's family through life.

In 1816 she became a member of the church under Dr. McFarland's ministry, and honored her profession. She was faithful, affectionate and cheerful. The anecdotes and incidents of early times, stored in her retentive memory, were a source of infinite pleasure to the children, each of whom had been in turn her favorite. She read much, usually the Bible – was sensible and dignified in manners – none knew but to esteem her. Both Charles and Jonathan Herbert left her bequests by will. In her charities she felt a particular interest in the Education Society, in the cause of Missions, and in all efforts for the elevation of her race. The last two years of her life she was unable to walk much, or attend church often; but death came suddenly and without terror. She died of paralysis, after an illness of two days, October 9, 1845, aged seventy-nine. The following epitaph, written by the late Benjamin Gleason, Esq., of Charlestown, Massachusetts, was received too late for inscription on her tomb-stone:"

*"At first unknown- then sold a slave;
Then free, and loved from early youth;
In Christian hope, ripe for the grave:
This tablet but records her worth."*

This is an historical account of a forgotten member of our church, an account of a special black woman. Does it raise questions in your mind?

Everett Sims, History



Happy Birthday

Linda Sims – 9/3

Sheila Swenson – 9/6

Everett Sims – 9/8

Jonathan Huntington – 9/12

David May – 9/18

Rebecca Clar – 9/21

Sara Slawski – 9/26

Eleanor Wells – 9/27



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
- Rodney Huntoon – Hope and Healing
- Ellie Wells - Hope
- Deborah Goodwin - Healing
- Lori Streeter- Hope
- Eleanor Stokes - Hope
- Margaret Sellar - Healing
- Clem Lyon - Hope
- Family of Alice Coleman - Peace
- Family of Peg Daniel – Peace
- Family of Margaret F Morrill – Peace
- Faith Clark - Healing
- Bob and Sara Nichols - Joy
- Family of Ann Hoar - Peace
- Family of Ruth Jordan - Peace
- Kellie Heath - Healing

Name: _____ Date: _____



Labor Day

Word Scramble

Labor Day is celebrated in the United States on the first Monday of September. The jumbles here include both historically significant words and ways people celebrate today.

MVNEMEOT _____

MANPLUL _____

AYPTR _____

EBESRMTEP _____

EWEKEDN _____

SWEAG _____

TSRGIH _____

AYONDM _____

DRAET _____

TKEIRS _____

ABUEERCB _____

TFAFIRC _____

IOTAVACN _____

ILOYAHD _____

IRZEAOGN _____

CUYTISRE _____

LRAYL _____

CPCIIN _____

RCEGMIU _____

BARLO _____

ARDPEA _____

NNUIO _____

RTPI _____

OJB _____