



The Congregate Tidings

Volume 38 Issue 8

August 2024

The Pastor's Piece Avoid the Rabbit Holes

By Pastor Walt Hampton, J.D., CFC

There's a place that is very dear to me—a wild, windswept beach in the southwest of Ireland called Barley Cove. Picture vast tidal flats where the North Atlantic rolls in with majestic waves, and the sand scattered with beautiful rocks and shells. Encircling this natural wonder are acres of sand dunes, peppered with hundreds of rabbit holes. But when I remember watching the rabbits scurry to and fro, it's easy to imagine the darkness that lies within those tunnels, a stark contrast to the openness of this grand beach.

This image often comes to mind when I think about the ways we cope with fear. The world seems brimming with situations that can lead us down dark, narrow tunnels of fear: global conflicts, such as the ongoing tensions between Russia and Ukraine and the strife in the Middle East; the sharp divides in our own country brought on by polarized politics and recent alarming events, including the attempted assassination of a presidential candidate; and the perennial concerns like economic instability, racial injustice, and debates over immigration.

In these challenging times, it's easy to find ourselves like those rabbits, darting into dark holes—especially with the constant bombardment of news, the relentless cycle of commentary, and the echo chambers of social media that reinforce our deepest anxieties. This non-stop exposure can send us spiraling down paths of despair and helplessness.

I want to encourage you to step back from the brink of these rabbit holes. Instead of allowing fear to dictate our lives, I want to invite you to consider some actionable steps to remain grounded in hope and positivity.

Limiting Exposure: Start by moderating your consumption of news. Stay informed, but avoid the incessant stream of updates that can lead to anxiety. This includes stepping away from the cycle of doom scrolling on social media and seeking out news sources that are known for their balanced and factual reporting.

Community and Connection: Surround yourself with people who inspire optimism. Engage in conversations that uplift rather than those that pull you into the vortex of pessimism. Our faith community is a good place to find support and perspective, to remind ourselves of the goodness and resilience in people.

Gratitude and Focus on the Good: Make it a daily practice to reflect on what you are grateful for. This can be as simple as acknowledging something beautiful you saw, a kind gesture from a neighbor, or an achievement at work. By focusing on these positives, we build a buffer against the corrosive effects of fear.

Inside this Issue:

Pastor's Page	1 & 2
Bach Festival Deacons's Corner	3
Music	4
Lectionaries Strawberry Festival	5
Pastor at Large	6
Installation Emergency Preparedness	7
Calendar	8
Prayers Birthdays, Anniversaries	9
Fryeburg Fair Staff	10

Continued on page 2....

Pastor's Piece continued...

Spiritual Wisdom and Assurance: Deepening our connection with our recklessly loving God can significantly buffer us against the angst and uncertainty of our times. The Scriptures offer numerous reassurances of God's unwavering love and protection. Beyond the calming words of Isaiah 43, we also find comfort in Psalm 23, which teaches us, "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." These passages remind us of the protective and guiding presence of God through all trials. Reflecting on such promises can strengthen our faith and diminish our fears, grounding us in a reality upheld by divine assurance.

When fear looms large, let's remember that we are not alone. God walks with us, offering a light that guides us back to the open, sunlit expanses of hope. By choosing to step away from the rabbit holes of fear and into the embrace of community, gratitude, and faith, we can navigate even the most turbulent waters.

In this journey, our church stands as a beacon of hope, a community where you can find peace and strength. Together, let us pledge to look beyond the immediate shadows and recognize the enduring light that promises renewal and resilience.

As we continue to face the complexities of our world, let us hold fast to these practices. They are our lifeline, pulling us back from the brink of fear and guiding us toward a path marked by peace and presence. Let us walk this path together, supporting one another and strengthening our community as we move forward, always forward, into the light.

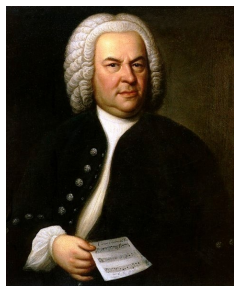
Peace to you.

+Walt



FIRST CHURCH TO HOST THE 33RD MOSTLY BACH FESTIVAL

By Floyd Corson, Organist



On August 24th and 25th White Mountain Musical Arts will present the 33rd Mostly Bach weekend. Great appreciation is extended to The First Church of Christ, Congregational for, not only hosting this major cultural event, but supporting this wonderful musical Festival in the Mount Washington Valley. We are fortunate to have a venue with a fine pipe organ, grand piano, harpsichord and space to accommodate a Baroque orchestra and chorus. That weekend our sanctuary will resound with a full Baroque Orchestra and Chorus. Two totally different programs are Saturday evening at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday afternoon at 4:30 p.m. The musical forces, once again, will be conducted by Dr. Robert Lehmann from the University of Southern Maine.

Programming for the weekend will include J. S. Bach's well-loved Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D Major, Cantata BWV 110, *Unser Mund sei voll Lachens* (May Our Mouths be Full of Laughter) with Orchestra, Chorus and four outstanding vocal soloists. The solo Cantata BWV 54, *Widerstehe doch der Sunde* (Just Resist Sin) will be sung by Emily Marvosh, White Mountain Musical Arts favorite alto. Kimberly Lehmann will play G. B. Telemann's Concerti for Viola in G Major, and the Concerto for Flute in G major by G. Pergolesi will be performed by Chase Whelan, our 2024 young artist. Duncan Cumming and Floyd Corson will perform W. A. Mozart's Sonata KV 358 in Bb for Four Hands as a tribute to four deceased members of our Bach family. G. F. Handel's rousing Coronation Anthem No. 1, *Zadock the Priest* will open the Sunday afternoon concert.

For more information visit our website: www.whitemountainmusicalarts.org.



Deacon's Corner

By Helen Goss – Diaconate Chair



July was a busy month at church with the Strawberry Festival and Church Picnic. Although the weather was pretty sticky and too many of us waded through COVID woes, I am most grateful we have made it to the other side!



We have experienced some wonderful musical talent to fill the void while Choir is on their summer break, and **Pastor Walt** never fails to bring a "seatbelt" worthy message each week. We are so looking forward to his installation as our next settled pastor on **September 8th**. It truly feels like it should have happened before now, but I am certain the patience to bring this all together in September will be a celebration more than worth the wait! Stay tuned for more details to come.



You should all be aware by now that we lost a treasured member of our faith community in July, **Gerry Tilton**. Gerry was a dedicated disciple and our Lay Minister for many years. We will gather to celebrate her "dash" on August 10th at 10am here at First Church of Christ. What follows is just a small tribute to Gerry in the words of Mother Teresa for the pastoral care Gerry gave so willingly and how she lived her life.



"The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway. Give the world the best you have and it may never be enough. Give your best anyway. For you see, in the end, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway." ~ Mother Teresa



ONLY FROM THE CHOIR LOFT

By Muriel Magg – Music Team Chair

When the choir is on summer hiatus, I enjoy worship from a different-than-usual perspective...from a pew. While I still appreciate worship there, I do miss my usual seat...in the middle of the second row in the choir loft. It is when I lose that seat that I appreciate it the most. You see, from my summer pew I can see Pastor Walt's face, the welcomer, liturgist, soloist or guest musicians. Unlike anyone else in the congregation, I can see everyone's face...from the choir loft.

Only from the choir loft can I be immersed in the spectacular inspirations that are the stained-glass windows that welcome me at the rear of the sanctuary, as I take my seat in the choir loft.

Only from the choir loft can I see Mae Shea's seat in the pew halfway back on the left side...the first seat, and wonder if the person sitting there while Mae is in Florida for the winter knows whose seat he or she is in. I wonder if that person knows about Mae's passion for music, especially organ music.

Only from the choir loft can I see all the different ways our congregation members sing hymns. Some bury their noses in the hymnals and never come up for air. Some who don't sing read along and some just stand or sit, waiting for the singing to be over. Some sing with their heads held high, seeming to feel every glorious word passing their lips and some, the very few, simply can't stand still while they're singing and just sway from the first note to the last.

Only from the choir loft can I see the smile of satisfaction, of pride, of devotion on Anne Polak's face and a hidden thumbs-up or a silent "thank you" at the end of a well performed anthem.



Only from the choir loft can I informally take attendance each Sunday morning. The empty spots are just as telling as the full ones. Some are vacant for just this week, and I wonder where life has taken them today. Other spots are eternally empty, even if someone's temporarily sitting in them. As my glance passes from face to face, I'm reminded that there will be so many more that we will miss.

Only from the choir loft can I see the faces bursting with joy and good news...the ones that can barely stand to wait for Joys and Concerns, but I also see the faces of those who carry a heavy burden or someone whose usual smile is buried under concern or sadness...someone who needs a hug after church.

Only from the choir loft can I get an up-close view of our organist's face. The awe I feel of Floyd being able to tell ten fingers and two feet to perform in different directions and rhythms at the same time is confirmed by the concentration on his face. Passion and devotion are surely the source of this gift he gives us every Sunday.

Only from the choir loft can I see the faces of those sharing Communion...no matter what their position or status in the church, everyone - pastor, deacons, congregants and guests - eat and drink at the same time.

Only from the choir loft can I see Pastor Walt preaching in the pulpit...not just from the chest up, but all of Pastor Walt, and when he delivers a message that nudges us out of our comfortableness, I allow my eyes to leave Pastor Walt and check the reaction of the congregation. Only from the choir loft can I see and determine that Pastor Walt's messages connect God's word to the lives of God's people.

Our Chancel Choir returns from their summer hiatus on Sunday, September 8. Welcome them back and hear their beautiful voices "only from the choir loft."

Lectionaries

AUGUST 4, 2024

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

Communion Sunday

Hebrew Bible: 2 Samuel 11:26-12:13

New Testament: Ephesians 4:1-16

Gospel: John 6:24-35

AUGUST 11, 2024

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

Hebrew Bible: 2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 31-33

New Testament: Ephesians 4:25-5:2

Gospel: John 6:35, 41-51

AUGUST 18, 2024

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Hebrew Bible: 1 Kings 2:10-12, 3:3-14

New Testament: Ephesians 5:15-20

Gospel: John 6:51-58

AUGUST 25, 2024

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Hebrew Bible: 1 Kings 8:6-11

New Testament: Ephesians 6:10-20

Gospel: John 6:56-69

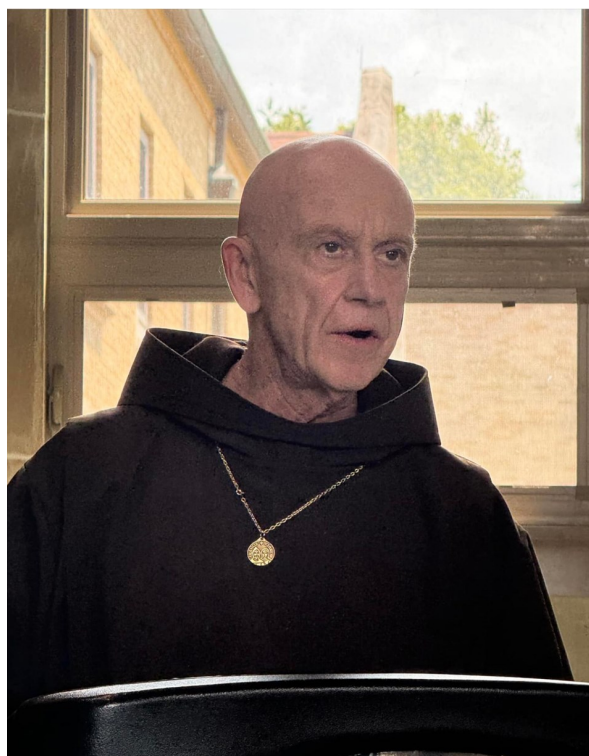


See pictures above from the Vaughan Strawberry Festival. It was a great success! We made over \$12,000. Many thanks to all who volunteered and helped with this great Fundraiser.

The Pastor At Large



Pastor Walt presiding at a wedding on the Rock Pile.



Pastor Walt attended the Annual Chapter of the Franciscan Community of Francis and Clare where he delivered a keynote on rebuilding God's church.



Come Celebrate With Us!

The Installation of

The Reverend Walt Hampton, J.D., CFC

As Our Settled Pastor

Sunday, September 8, 2024

3:00 pm ET

First Church of Christ, Congregational, UCC

2521 White Mountain Highway

North Conway, NH 03860

Reception To Follow

Houses of Worship & Faith Communities Emergency Preparedness Seminar

**Sponsored by NH Homeland Security and Emergency Management and Cybersecurity
and Infrastructure Security Agency**

On Wednesday, September 18, 2024 9:00am - 12:00pm here at First Church of Christ

Registration begins at 8:30am

Suggested Attendees: All Faith leaders, administrators, board members, individuals responsible for emergency preparedness at Houses of Worship, First Responders and Municipal officials

Topics: Emergency Preparedness and Whole Community Approach, Emergency and Safety Planning Fundamentals, Active Threat Preparation and Response.









REGISTRATION LINK: https://prd.blogs.nh.gov/dos/hsem/?page_id=561&ee=1547



AUGUST 2024



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship	29 12:00am - 1:00pm AA meeting	30 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open	31 9:30am - 10:30am Faith Fellowship	1 7:00am - 9:30am Rotary meeting 9:30am - 2:30pm WIC Program 12:30pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open	2 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	3
4 Communion Sunday 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 11:30am Mission Committee meeting 2:00pm - 5:00pm REVOLVING CLOSET-TEENS 	5 12:00am - 1:00pm AA meeting Denise out of office	6 Denise out of office 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open	7 Denise out of office	8 Denise out of office 12:30pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open	9 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	10 10:00am Celebrating of Life Service for Gerry Tilton 
11 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship	12 12:00am - 1:00pm AA meeting	13 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open	14 9:00am - 11:00am Essential Non-Food Pantry 9:00am - 11:00am Essential Non-Food Pantry 9:30am - 10:30am Faith Fellowship	15 7:00am - 9:30am Rotary meeting 12:30pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open	16 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting 4:00pm - 7:00pm Revolving Closet Backpack Giveaway	17
18 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 2:00pm - 5:00pm REVOLVING CLOSET-TEENS	19 12:00am - 1:00pm AA meeting	20 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open 4:00pm Music Team meeting 4:00pm Trustees meeting 5:00pm Diaconate meeting 	21	22 12:30pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open	23 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting 7:00pm - 10:00pm Bach Festival Instrumental Rehearsal	24 3:00pm - 4:00pm Bach Festival Rehearsal 7:30pm Bach Festival Concert 
25 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 12:30pm - 3:30pm Bach Festival Rehearsal 4:30pm Bach Festival Concert 	26 12:00am - 1:00pm AA meeting 4:00pm Vaughan Board meeting	27 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open	28 9:30am - 10:30am Faith Fellowship 	29 12:30pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open	30 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	31



August

BIRTHDAYS

AUGUST

08-02 Laura Jean Beeler
 08-03 Patricia Johnston
 08-08 Gilman Healy
 08-19 Nichole Smith
 08-20 Julie James
 08-24 Mike Davenport
 08-29 Stephen Woodcock



August

ANNIVERSARIES

08-04 Fred & Nichole Smith
 08-06 Sean & Patricia McGrath
 08-16 Dan & Trina Jones
 08-17 Harvey & Eve Walker
 08-26 Andy & Laura Jean Beeler
 08-27 Dana & Christine Russian



Please pray for those dealing with illness, surgery or recovery, especially:

Bob Borchers; Evelyn Porter; Linda Hyde; Mary Ellen Shea; Jesse and Linda Red Horse; Laura Jean Beeler; and Angie Terry, Jennifer Terry's sister-in-law; Jeff and Lois Ward.

Remember those who mourn, especially the family of **Gerry Tilton.**

Remember those in our extended care facilities:

At Merriman House: **Liz George-Hussey; Cynthia and Conrad Briggs and Marilyn Elliott**

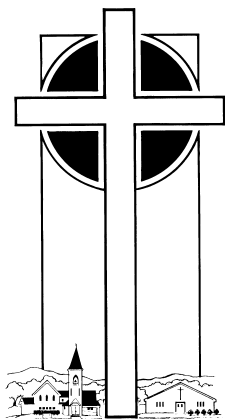
Please call the church office with prayer concerns if you wish names to be listed in the next *Congregate Tidings*.



If you need use of the church building, please contact the church office. Also, if you are willing to be Liturgist, Greeter, Usher or give flowers for the altar on Sunday, please call Denise at the church office at 603-356-2324.

The Congregate Tidings
First Church of Christ, Congregational
United Church of Christ
PO Box 401
N Conway, NH 03860-0401

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



TO:



September is fast approaching! It's time to start thinking about Blueberry Crisp. The Fryeburg Fair runs from September 29th thru October 6th. Baking begins September 23rd.

The sign-up sheets to volunteer to help will be up by August 4th. You can sign-up early or by calling the church office.

There will be more structure and training sessions before the fair. Check your schedules now and let's make this another banner year!

CHURCH & VAUGHAN STAFF

Pastor: Walt Hampton

Church Administrator/Editor: Denise Leighton

Organist: Floyd W. Corson

Associate Organist: Muriel Magg

Chancel Choir and Handbell Choir Director:

Anne W. Polak

Vaughan Administrator: Jennifer Perkins

Vaughan Learning Center Director:

Heather Ouellette

Church Sexton: Mark Schiller

Worship Service at 10am

Church Office (603)356-2324

Fax Number (603)356-2106

Vaughan Food Pantry (603)602-1801

Vaughan Learning Center (603)356-5213

E-mail addresses:

pastor@firstchurchnc.com

churchoffice@firstchurchnc.com