



The Congregate Tidings

Volume 40 Issue 8

August 2026

Rejuvenation!

Team Members: Dan Jones, Eryn Morency, Don Ekberg, Karen Umberger and Denise Leighton

On Sunday, July 12th, following worship, members of the Church met to go over and provide any changes to the Communication and Behavior Covenant distributed to the congregation on June 20, 2026.

Helen Goss suggested a change to the email portion. She suggested it should now read: “We promise to use email, texting, and social media for information purposes only; **not to express opinions or discuss issues.**”

A motion was made by Don Ekberg to accept the change and seconded by Eryn Morency. All approved the change.

A motion was made by Jim Umberger and seconded by Don Ekberg to accept the Communication and Behavior Covenant as amended. All approved. See below:

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, CONGREGATIONAL, UCC

COMMUNICATION AND BEHAVIOR COVENANT

We agree to communicate in the following manner, with God’s help, through healthy and faithful conversations. We understand a covenant to be a sacred promise.

- We promise to listen to understand without interruption, seek clarification when necessary, and respect differing opinions.
- We promise to use email, texting, and social media for information purposes only; not to express opinions or discuss issues.
- We promise to identify merit in another person’s idea or suggestion before we identify any deficiency.
- We promise to communicate directly and calmly, talking with someone, rather than about them.
- We promise to acknowledge that others, who may have differing opinions, have good intentions.

WE WILL SPEAK IN LOVE, asking for God’s grace in our conversations.

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HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW THE NEW CENTURY HYMNAL - #485

By Muriel Magg - Music Team Chair

Jesus' words provided the background for this hymn. He said: "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows." (*Matthew 10:29-31*)

Marriages and relationships tend to work especially well when couples have shared interests, and even more so if their shared interests have a creative inclination. That was the case for Walter Martin and his wife, Civilla. They had been drawn to each other, in large part, because of their special shared interest in music and their shared faith. That turned out to be a blessing for the church and ultimately to the world, because together they wrote a number of gospel hymns, some of which became quite well known. "His Eye Is on the Sparrow" is one.

Civilla Martin (1866-1948) was born in Nova Scotia, Canada. She was educated in the schools of Nova Scotia and became a schoolteacher who taught music and enjoyed writing poetry. Before long she met and married Dr. Walter Martin an evangelist/teacher/pastor. Together they had one child. Civilla wrote the words for many of the tunes Walker composed. It was the success of Civilla's poem "God Will Take Care of You," that encouraged her to keep writing.

Walter Martin (1862-1935) was born in Rowley, Massachusetts. He attended Harvard University and was ordained a Baptist minister, who later switched to the Discipleship of Christ denomination. In 1916, he became a professor of Bible studies in North Carolina, and three years later moved to Atlanta, Georgia. It was from there he went all over America to run Bible conferences and evangelistic meetings.

The inspiration for "HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW" came in 1905, when Civilla and her husband visited friends, the Doolittle's of Elmira, New York, who by all accounts had every reason to be discouraged. Mrs. Doolittle had been confined to bed as an invalid, and her husband, a partial invalid, managed his business from a wheelchair for over twenty years. Civilla and Walter attempted to cheer their friends anyway they knew how. They read the Bible, prayed and talked openly about their debilitating conditions. In the end though, it was Civilla and Walter who were the ones encouraged, humbled, and deeply impressed by the JOYFUL SPIRIT that the Doolittle's maintained in spite of their severe adversity. When asked the secret to their unstoppable optimism, Mrs. Doolittle simply replied, "His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me." When the Martins returned home, Civilla immediately sat down and wrote the poem that became one of the most beloved and famous of all gospel songs in history "His Eye Is on the Sparrow." Walter tried his hand at writing a musical score, but neither of them were satisfied with it. A short time later, Walter mailed the poem off to a composer friend in England, Charles Gabriel, who wrote the music and melody that we still sing today.

It is interesting that our God chose the most common of all birds, sparrows of little value, to teach us that He will carry us through whatever trials, loneliness, or anxiety we face, and that we are never forgotten. No one is insignificant!

Sing because you are happy. Sing because you are free. His eye is on the sparrow, and He is watching over you.

**HIS
EYE IS
ON THE
SPARROW.
I KNOW
HE
WATCHES
ME.**

MATTHEW 6:26



Deacon's Corner and more...

By Helen Goss – Diaconate Chair



(NH Thistle photo by Dr. Joel Duff)

In the past several weeks of July, I have had the privilege of serving as the faith leader on Sunday. Although it's always a challenge as an untrained professional to try and develop a weekly worship service, it also provides the opportunity to give dedicated time to reading the Bible (or translations thereof) to determine what my message will be based on the passage presented. What is on my mind and the gospel that week do not always align. However, the Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds gave me pause as I could so strongly identify with the message.

Now I am not that self-centered to think you all listened to or watched the service on July 19th, and as attendance was sparse that Sunday, I will share a bit of my musings while weeding my garden.

Have you ever noticed how weeds grow? There are some that have roots going deep into the ground that can become thick as a carrot or a parsnip, but also have long thin stringy legs as well, just in case the main root is not strong enough. They are secure in sandy soil, rocks, cracks, or areas so barren you would expect nothing could grow. They may require moisture but little else to thrive. Then there are weeds that have long thins roots that seemingly go on forever as they spread just below the surface of the ground popping up above ground in undesirable places. No matter their style, they push to claim more territory and be in control of the landscape they inhabit. A crop that is not tended can easily be overrun by them, as they steal the nutrients from the soil, growing faster than the sown crop and overshadowing its growth.

However, the farmer in this story does not have the workers pull them up. The wheat has not matured, so the farmer's concern is that the wheat will be pulled up with the weed. So both the wheat and the weed are left to grow together with the separation to be addressed at harvest. The farmer appears confident that the weeds will not have such a negative effect as to cause the wheat crop to be insufficient, so both plants are allowed to coexist.

As I believe there is a bit of weed in all of us, I ask again, what type of weed do you think you are? Perky...Persistent...Prickly...or a bit of all three? I encourage you to take a good long look at yourself as we move forward with our plans and vision for First Church. My hope is we can see ourselves in the weeds I describe and work to be less aggressive, controlling, and dominating in our concern for the church. We need to leave the weeding up to the Holy Spirit and concentrate on supporting each other as we continue through this healing process.



See pictures above from the Vaughan 12th Strawberry Festival. It was a great success! We made \$18,000. Many thanks to all who volunteered and helped with this great fundraiser.



UNITED IN FAITH AND HOPE

Muriel Magg - Music Team Chair



Music is a beautiful gift that helps us express the inexpressible, but it is merely a vessel - not the source of our praise. When music leaders suddenly transition away from a congregation, we might feel anxious about the future, nostalgic for the past, or simply be in shock. Losing core musical leadership is a heavy blow for a small church. It impacts both the weekly worship experience and the emotional morale of the church community.

With gratitude in our hearts for Anne Polak, our choral and handbell director who recently transitioned to the First Congregational Church, UCC, in Bridgton, Maine and to Patrick Speckamp, our pianist/organist who will be joining Anne at the end of August; know that your leadership, Helen Goss, representing the Diaconate, Muriel Magg, Music Team Chair, and Chris Russian, Music Team member, have started actively working on interim solutions and the search process moving forward. God rarely leaves a space empty without a purpose and moving forward means letting go of “the way it used to be” so we can receive the new gifts, new talents, and new directions that He is preparing for us here at First Church of Christ.

We ask for your prayers and patience as we begin to navigate this transition and for the occasional bumps that may occur along the way. We face tomorrow with **FAITH** and **HOPE**, knowing that our God will guide us.

Be assured communication will be updated verbally, in the Sunday bulletin and in the Congregate Tidings, even if the update is just “the search continues.”



Those Leading Worship in the Month of August



August 2nd - Faith Leader: Eryn Morency

August 9th - Rev. Robert Moore

August 16th - Faith Leader: Dan Jones

August 23rd - Faith Leader: Karen Umberger

August 30th - Rev. Paul Nickerson

MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR

Richard P. Goss, III

This is a friendly reminder to all board, committee, and team chairs that our next Church Council Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, August 23rd following worship and a brief time of fellowship. If you cannot attend, please appoint one or two representatives from your group to attend in your place so your team stays informed.

Additionally, please submit your committee reports to Jennifer Perkins at: Jennifer@vaughannh.com by Monday, August 17th. Sending these in advance allows council members to review them beforehand, so we can focus our meeting time on questions and discussion rather than reading reports.

Thank you and I look forward to seeing you there.

Vaughan Learning Center

By Heather Ouellette, Director

Vaughan Learning Center has been busy with fundraising; we were chosen for **Rebel for a Cause** at Revo Casino. A few committee members showed up in support and to get a photo.

We also had a **Community Bake** fundraiser at Flatbread, where they donated a portion of their proceeds to the Center.

We rely heavily on these events to help offset tuition costs, as many families fall just above the guidelines for state assistance.

Our next event is **Mud Bowl**, so come out and support us there. Friday, September 11- Sunday, the 13th.



Pictured above, Dan Jones, Board member, Heather Ouellette, Director and Natalie Gammon, Co-Director at Revo Casino.



VLC display and raffle at Flatbreads.

Helen Goss will be attending this gathering. Is there anyone from the church that would like to go with her? Please let Denise know in the church office (603)356-2324. Thank you!



**"A THREESTRAND CORD IS
NOT QUICKLY BROKEN."**
- Ecclesiastes 4:12

The NHCUCC Local Church Initiative and the Granite State Committee for Connection and Covenant will be holding a series of **LUNCH & LISTEN** events around the state to help build connections between churches and support other ways we might help one another. Our first event will be held on:

Sunday, September 27th

1 - 3pm

**at First Congregational Church Wolfeboro UCC
115 S Main St., Wolfeboro, NH**

Lunch included

Please **RSVP** with number of people and any dietary restrictions by **Sept 15th**

to pastordawn@wolfeboroucc.org.

Event open to both clergy & laity. Multiple people from each church welcome.



AUGUST 2026

August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 Denise on Vacation 10:00am Worship Celebration - Faith Led 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship	27 Denise on Vacation 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	28 Denise on Vacation 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open	29	30 12:00pm - 2:15pm Food Pantry Open	31 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	1
2 10:00am Worship Celebration - Faith Led 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 2:00pm - 5:00pm Revolving Closet-Teens	3 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	4 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open	5	6 Hiroshima Day of Remembrance 9:30am - 2:30pm WIC Program 12:00pm - 2:15pm Food Pantry Open	7 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	8
9 10:00am Communion Worship Celebration Rev. Robert Moore 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 	10 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	11 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open	12 9:00am - 11:00am Senior Non-Food Pantry	13 12:00pm - 2:15pm Food Pantry Open	14 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	15
16 10:00am Worship Celebration - Faith Led 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 2:00pm - 5:00pm Revolving Closet-Teens	17 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	18 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open 4:00pm Trustees meeting 	19	20 12:00pm - 2:15pm Food Pantry Open 	21 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	22
23 10:00am Worship Celebration - Faith Led 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 11:15am Church Council meeting 	24 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	25 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open 5:00pm Diaconate meeting 	26	27 12:00pm - 2:15pm Food Pantry Open	28 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	29
30 10:00am Worship Celebration Rev. Paul Nickerson 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 	31 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting 6:30pm - 8:00pm Scouts of America Troop 150 and Pack 150	1 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open	2	3 9:30am - 2:30pm WIC Program 12:00pm - 2:15pm Food Pantry Open	4 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	5

Lectionaries

AUGUST 2, 2026

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 32:22-31 and Psalm 17:1-7,15
Isaiah 55:1-5 and Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21
Romans 9:1-5
Matthew 14:13-21

AUGUST 9, 2026

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

Communion Sunday

Genesis 37:1-4, 12-18 and
Psalm 105:1-6, 16-22, 45b
1 Kings 19:9-18 and Psalm 85:8-13
Romans 10:5-15
Matthew 14:22-33

AUGUST 16, 2026

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 45:1-15 and Psalm 133
Isaiah 56:1, 6-8 and Psalm 67
Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32
Matthew 15: (10-20), 21-28

AUGUST 23, 2026

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 1:8-2:10 and Psalm 124
Isaiah 51:1-6, and Psalm 138
Romans 12:1-8
Matthew 16:13-20

AUGUST 30, 2026

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 3:1-15 and Psalm 105:1-6,
23-26, 45b
Jeremiah 15:15-21 and Psalm 26:1-8
Romans 12:9-21
Matthew 16:21-28



08-02 Laura Jean Beeler

08-03 Patricia Johnston

08-08 Gilman Healy

08-19 Nichole Smith

08-20 Julie James

08-29 Stephen Woodcock

08-30 Chris DeVries



08-04 Fred & Nichole Smith

08-16 Dan & Trina Jones

08-17 Harvey & Eve Walker

08-26 Andy & Laura Jean Beeler

08-27 Dana & Christine Russian

Prayer List

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

Evelyn Porter, Deb Smith, Mike James, Frances Richardson, Jennifer Cluff and Fred & Barbara Starkey.

Remember those in our extended care facilities:

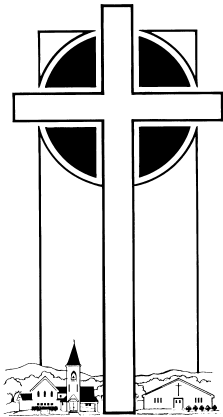
Mineral Springs: **Liz George-Hussey**

Mountain View: **Jean Smykla**

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

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



TO:



Your help is needed! If you are willing to be a Faith Leader, Liturgist, Greeter, Usher or give flowers for the altar on Sunday, please call Denise in the church office at 603-356-2324.

CHURCH & VAUGHAN STAFF

Church Administrator/Editor:

Denise Leighton

Pianist/Organist: Patrick Speckamp

Vaughan Administrator: Jennifer Perkins

Vaughan Learning Center Director:

Heather Ouellette

Church Sexton: Mark Schiller

Worship Service at 10am

Church Office (603)356-2324

Denise Ext. #1

Fax Number (603)356-2106

Vaughan Food Pantry (603)602-1801

Vaughan Learning Center (603)356-5213

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/firstchurchncnh