



Volume 39 Issue 6

June 2025

The Pastor's Piece

The Big Problem With the Gospels

By Pastor Walt Hampton, J.D., CFC

The big problem with the Gospels is that we've turned them into bedtime stories. Nice little tales to soothe us. To comfort us. To help us sleep.

But they were never meant to put us to sleep. They were meant to wake us up.

The Gospels are not sentimental recollections of a gentle man with kind eyes. They are not Hallmark cards. They are not ancient self-help manuals. They are calls to action. Radical. Urgent. Disruptive.

Jesus never said, "Worship me." He said, "Follow me." Do what I do. Go where I go. Heal the sick. Feed the hungry. Lift up the lowly. Turn over tables when justice demands it.

The church—let's be honest—has largely failed at this. We've built monuments instead of movements. Cathedrals instead of communities of compassion. Doctrines instead of discipleship.

We've made it all about believing the right things, rather than doing the right things. We've made Jesus into a mascot for power, wealth, and empire. We've sanitized his message until it threatens no one. So we can keep sleeping.

But if we actually read the Gospels, we'll see something far more electric. Jesus doesn't float above the fray. He wades right into it. Into the mess. Into the injustice. Into the pain.

Obery Hendricks, in *The Politics of Jesus*, makes this point with unflinching clarity: Jesus wasn't a passive spiritual guru. He was a revolutionary. He challenged systems of exploitation. He stood with the poor. He called out corrupt leaders—religious and political alike. He treated people's needs as holy. He gave voice to the voiceless. He practiced a bold, nonviolent resistance to empire.

This is the Jesus we claim to follow.

But here in America, in this season of history, how are we doing? We cage the refugee. We shame the poor. We criminalize the protester. We shrug as housing becomes unaffordable, schools crumble, and wealth concentrates in the hands of a few.

We wrap the cross in a flag and dare to call it faith.

But Jesus said, "Whatever you do to the least of these, you do to me." And—let's not miss this—whatever we fail to do, we fail him.

That's not metaphor. That's not poetry. That's Gospel.

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This is not about party or platform. It's not about red or blue. It's about whether or not we're willing to live the way of love. The way of justice. The way of the cross.

Jesus' life wasn't just a prelude to a crucifixion. It was a roadmap. A manifesto. A demonstration of how to live in opposition to every system that devours the vulnerable.

And yet, we've tamed it. Softened it. Domesticated it. We treat the Sermon on the Mount like it's a nice suggestion. We spiritualize the Beatitudes until they float above the street-level suffering they were meant to address.

But Jesus didn't say, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," so we could feel good about our morning devotions. He meant the poor. The actual poor. The ones crushed under empire.

The ones crushed under our empire.

And this matters. It matters because the world is crying out. Because the stakes are high. Because people are suffering. And because the Gospels—if we let them—can still wake us up.

They can call us out of numbness. Out of apathy. Out of abstraction.

They can call us back to what matters.

This is what it means to follow Jesus. To move our feet. To get our hands dirty. To open our mouths when silence would be easier. To risk our comfort for someone else's dignity.

Hendricks says the early Jesus movement was never meant to be aligned with the powers that be. It was meant to confront them. To expose the rot. To reimagine community.

Jesus was crucified by the state. By the empire. Let that sink in.

He wasn't killed because he was nice. He was killed because he was dangerous. Because he exposed injustice. Because he refused to be silent.

We call him Lord. We sing our hymns. But do we follow him?

Following Jesus means rejecting the siren song of empire. It means seeing the image of God in the unhoused veteran. In the terrified young woman at the border. In the Black child gunned down without cause. In the trans kid bullied at school.

It means living as though the Kingdom of God is not a theory, but a promise we're meant to help fulfill.

It means showing up. Speaking out. Loving hard. And refusing to look away.

This isn't new. The Hebrew prophets said the same thing. Micah: "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God?" Isaiah: "Cease to do evil. Learn to do good. Seek justice. Defend the oppressed."

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Jesus stands in that lineage. And he calls us to stand there too.

This isn't about guilt. It's not about shame. It's about invitation.

An invitation to wake up. To come alive. To make faith matter again.

We don't need more monuments. We need more movement.

Not more performance. More participation.

Not more admiration. More incarnation.

The Gospels are not bedtime stories. They're marching orders.

So let's stop sleeping through them.

Let's follow the one who called us. Into the streets. Into the struggle. Into the heart of the world God so loves.

May we be bold enough to go. May we be brave enough to follow. May we be faithful enough to act.

May it be so.

Peace to you.

+Walt



Deacon's Corner and more...

By Helen Goss – Diaconate Chair

It's PRIDE Month! Time to celebrate with loud shouting that everyone is welcome at First Church of Christ! We are going to be doing just that on **June 28th at the White Mountains Pride Festival** in the park of the North Conway Community Center from 10am-4pm. Yes, this is the same day as **Vaughan's Strawberry Festival**, but it is possible to volunteer to serve at both events. It can be a full day of discipleship to let our community know of our radical welcome and devotion to the local mission of this church. We will be promoting the open and affirming culture of our church where you are loved and supported just as you are. There will be fun swag to give away and temporary tattoos galore! If you can help us under our tent, please let **Helen Goss** know. There will be a sign-up sheet to cover the **Pride Festival** hours in the Fellowship Hall.

Sunday, June 15th, is Father's Day. We will recognize all fathers and father figures on this day. It will also be the wrap-up of another Sunday School year, with the children taking part in worship. Although we are small in number, the children do enjoy the community they form, and hopefully, learn a little about the awesomeness of our God through the teachings of Jesus. We certainly know how they look forward to snacks! Next year the children's faith program looks to be a bit different, so stay tuned!

The Bell Choir will be playing on June 15th as well. This will mark the end of their season till September, so you won't want to miss the musical ministry they have to share. Watch closely, as it might just be a group you want to join in the fall. We "ring-a-lings" do have quite the time at our rehearsal gatherings, thanks to the never ending patience of **Anne Polak** who puts up with us.

June 22nd promises to be another intriguing worship, as **Jennifer Terry** will be providing the message while Pastor Walt is away on retreat. It is always appreciated on lay leadership Sunday's that if you are asked to participate, you do so willingly. Sometimes we can surprise ourselves with the hidden talents we have to share. Remember, we never walk alone!

Then on **June 29th, the Chancel Choir** ends for their summer break AND it's the **All Church Picnic!** Once again **Ken Schiller** will be at the grill for our delicious enjoyment of hamburgers, cheese burgers, hot dogs and more! **You all have the opportunity to bring salads, sides, and desserts.** (Sign-up will be provided.) There is always an array of choices for any palate and dietary restrictions with an abundance of food. **So come, and bring a friend to church on this Sunday!** This day of worship, music, and food provides no better opportunity to share what our faith community is all about.



HOLY SPIRIT, TRUTH DIVINE

A HYMN FOR PENTECOST

By Muriel Magg - Music Team Chair

On Sunday, June 8th, fifty days after Easter, Christians will celebrate Pentecost. In the Christian liturgical year, the day of Pentecost is known as the day God sent His Holy Spirit to His Church, providing Christ's disciples with the power, love, and understanding to carry out the work of the church's mission in the world, and on which, under Peter's preaching, thousands realized the truth of his words and became followers of Jesus in Jerusalem. Pentecost is the day on which the church was started and is described by some Christians today as the "Birthday of the Church." The symbols of Pentecost are those of the Holy Spirit and include flames, wind, the breath of God, and a dove. The hymn, "Holy Spirit, Truth Divine" (# 63 in The New Century Hymnal) is typically sung in many churches on Pentecost, a day of celebration, joy, and hope.

Samuel Longfellow (1819 -1892) was born in Portland, Maine and was the younger brother of the more famous poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. He was educated at Harvard Divinity School and served as a Unitarian pastor for many years, preaching and writing fearlessly against slavery. As he struggled against that evil in society, he became more convinced of the need all people have for the Spirit of God.

Samuel Longfellow wrote "Holy Spirit, Truth Divine" to help people invite the Spirit into all parts of their lives. Each stanza addresses a different attribute of the Spirit and requests it's influence on our lives: TRUTH DIVINE- for the voice of God to speak through us; LOVE DIVINE - for God's love to be reflected through our lives; POWER DIVINE - for God to give us the strength to do what we need to do; LAW DIVINE - for God's law to rule our lives; JOY DIVINE - for our hearts to be gladdened through the Holy Spirit's work and presence. At the end, the hymn holds the promise of being "forever free."

The tune, SONG 13, by Orland Gibbons (1583-1625), comes from an earlier time and another country. SONG 13 is probably the oldest English tune written in what now is a familiar meter that describes the number of beats in a measure of music and how the beats are normally divided was the thirteenth (hence its name) song in Hymns and Songs of the Church, published in 1623. Gibbons, born in Oxford, England, became the organist at the Chapel Royal in 1604 and remained there the rest of his life.

Longfellow either wrote or collaborated in the publication of three books of hymnody. He wrote more than two dozen hymns, but "Holy Spirit, Truth Divine" is the only one that is in general use today.

As Christians, we continually need to ask the Holy Spirit to lead us, to guide us, and to help us do the things God wants us to do. As a result, then, "the fruits of the Spirit, Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self Control," will be evident in our lives.

———HOLY SPIRIT COME AND FILL THIS PLACE———



Vaughan Learning Center

By Heather Ouellette, Director

The school year is coming to an end. We will be celebrating our Pre-K graduates on Friday, June 13th. We are so excited for what is next for these kiddos, but are so sad as some have been with us since they were 6 weeks old!

Summer is on the way, and the children will be outside more playing in the water tables and sprinklers.

We have a dine to donate on July 10th at Flatbread. As many of you know, we rely on fundraising efforts so we can keep our costs for families low.

We are always in need of materials such as baby wipes, paper towels, 409 cleaner, and other supplies like that, as well as craft items and new toys. We are currently looking for outdoor play items. If you are interested in donating an item or a monetary donation, please call Heather at 603-356-5213 or stop by the Center.

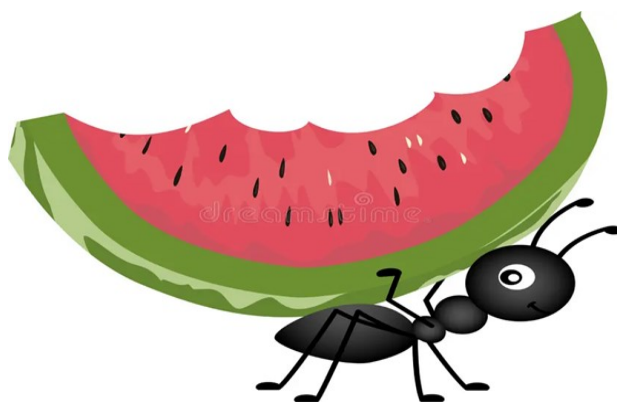


**SUNDAY, JUNE 29TH
FOLLOWING
WORSHIP
UNDER THE TENT AT
FIRST CHURCH**

RAIN OR SHINE

**BRING A FRIEND – GROW
THE CHURCH!**

**Please bring a salad, side or
dessert to share!
(Sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall)**



Lectionaries

JUNE 1, 2025

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Communion Sunday

Hebrew Bible: Psalm 97

New Testament: Acts 16:16-34

Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21

Gospel: John 17:20-26

JUNE 8, 2025

Pentecost Sunday

Hebrew Bible: Genesis 11:1-9 or

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

New Testament: Acts 2:1-21 or Romans 8:14-17

Gospel: John 14:8-17 [25-27]

JUNE 15, 2025

Trinity Sunday

Father's Day-Children's Sunday

Hebrew Bible: Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31 or Psalm 8

New Testament: Romans 5:1-5

Gospel: John 16:12-15

JUNE 22, 2025

Second Sunday after Pentecost

Laity Sunday

Hebrew Bible: 1 Kings 19:1-4 [5-7] 8-15a or

Psalm 42 and 43

New Testament: Galatians 3:23-29

Gospel: Luke 8:26-39

JUNE 29, 2025

Third Sunday after Pentecost

Church Picnic

Hebrew Bible: 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14 or

Psalm 77:1-2, 11-20

New Testament: Galatians 5:1, 13-25

Gospel: Luke 9:51-62

NINE DAYS OF FRYEBURG FAIR! **HELP WANTED!!!**

We are making our appeal now for you to have time to share with your friends that we are going to need many hands to pull off our Blueberry Crisp sales event this year. The Fair is celebrating its 175th year with an *additional day* added to the fair running from September 27th (Saturday) to October 5th (Sunday).

In addition to the many volunteers to bake at church and sell in the booth, we are looking for trustworthy, dependable individuals to oversee the opening and closing operations of the booth. These can be full or half-day shifts, broken down by days or for the full week (preferred). Training will be provided and these **booth managers will be compensated.**

If you have any suggestions of people we might interview for this short-term employment opportunity, please contact Dick or Helen Goss at 603-520-6891 or speak to them at church. This year, more than ever, it's going to take a village!



Pictured above l-r: Christine Perk, Helen Goss, and Stacey Verrill at Fair Booth.

JUNE 2025



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10:00am Communion Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 2:00pm - 5:00pm REVOLVING CLOSET-TEENS 3:00pm DaPonte String Quartet Concert, \$35/ Children Free	2 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting 6:30pm - 8:00pm Scouts of America Troop 150 and Pack 150	3 9:30am - 10:30am Faith Fellowship 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open	4	5 7:00am - 9:00am Rotary meeting 9:30am - 2:30pm WIC Program 12:30pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open 3:00pm - 4:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 4:00pm - 5:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	6 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	7
8 10:00am Pentecost Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship	9 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting 6:30pm - 8:00pm Scouts of America Troop 150 and Pack 150	10 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open	11 9:00am - 11:00am Senior Non-Food Pantry	12 12:30pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open 3:00pm - 4:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 4:00pm - 5:00pm Bell Choir Rehearsal	13 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting 5:00pm - 6:00pm Vaughan Learning Center Graduation	14
15 Father's Day & Children's Day Celebration 10:00am Worship Celebration & Bell Choir Playing 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 2:00pm - 5:00pm REVOLVING CLOSET-TEENS	16 July Congregate Tidings Deadline 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting 6:30pm - 8:00pm Scouts of America Troop 150 and Pack 150	17 Pastor Away on Retreat 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open 4:00pm Trustees meeting	18 Pastor Away on Retreat	19 Pastor Away on Retreat 7:00am - 9:00am Rotary meeting 12:30pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open 3:00pm - 4:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	20 Pastor Away on Retreat 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	21 Pastor Away on Retreat
22 Pastor Away on Retreat 10:00am Lay Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship	23 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting 6:30pm - 8:00pm Scouts of America Troop 150 and Pack 150	24 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open 12:30pm - 2:00pm Clergy of the Eastern Slope Luncheon 5:00pm Diaconate meeting	25	26 12:30pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open 3:00pm - 4:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	27 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	28 10:00am - 4:00pm White Mountain Pride Festival 11:00am - 4:00pm Vaughan Strawberry Festival
29 All-Church Picnic 10:00am Worship Celebration & Choir leaves for Summer Break 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship	30 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 7:00am - 9:00am Rotary meeting 9:30am - 2:30pm WIC Program 12:30pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open	4 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	5



06-01 Peter Magg
 06-01 Trina Jones
 06-03 Madilynn Putnam
 06-04 Roger Babcock
 06-05 Dana Russian
 06-06 Ron Kratt
 06-06 Ann Hampton
 06-10 Brett Russell
 06-11 Jennifer Terry
 06-15 Peggy Light
 06-27 Frank Polak



06-06 Ken and Maryann Schiller
 06-17 Robert and Sharon Seaman
 06-18 Steve and Karen Cameron
 06-24 Bob and Sara Bechtold

Crafty Hands Workshop

This workshop is coming to an end. The Crafters wish to thank the church for the support received over the last three years.

We are working to finish a few special orders to benefit the Mission Community Scholarship Fund. Then we will be in the process of finding new homes for our leftover equipment and supplies.

In faith, hope & love,
 Mary Lou Waite, Co-Lead & Mission Devotees



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

Evelyn Porter; Linda Hyde and Deb Smith.

Remember those who mourn especially:

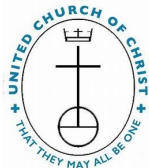
Mary Lou Waite on the death of her great grandchild.

Remember those in our extended care facilities.

At Merriman House: **Liz George-Hussey and Cynthia Briggs.**

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



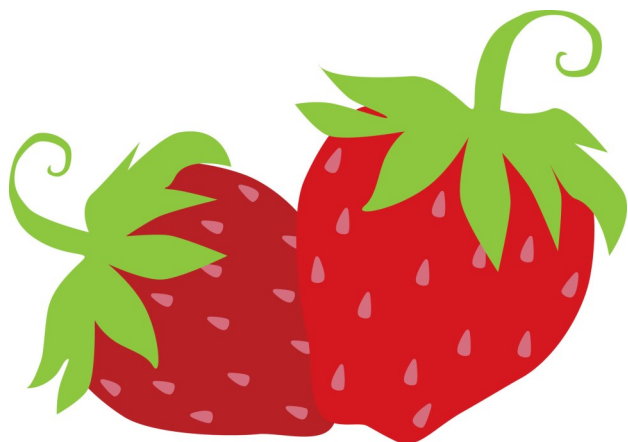
TO:

Vaughan Community Service, Inc.

By Denise Leighton, Chairperson Strawberry Festival

We are in the process of getting ready for our
Strawberry Festival on June 28th.

I will need more volunteers for trash removal and to clean tables during the event. Then at 4pm, I will need many able bodies to clean-up at the close of the festival. If you are able to help, please give me a call at (603)356-2324.



CHURCH & VAUGHAN STAFF

Pastor: Rev. Walt Hampton, J.D., CFC

Church Administrator/Editor: Denise Leighton

Pianist/Organist: Patrick Speckamp

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

Pastor Ext. #2, Denise Ext. #1

Fax Number (603)356-2106

Vaughan Food Pantry (603)602-1801

Vaughan Learning Center (603)356-5213

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