

The Congregate Tidings

Volume 37 Issue 11

November 2023

The Pastor's Piece

By Pastor Sue Davidson

I don't know about you, but the changing of the trees from their brilliant greens of this summer to the reds, yellows, and oranges bring a smile to my face. There are other changes that are a little more difficult. Like turning the clocks back as the sunset is earlier with accompanying darkness which occurs on the first weekend in November.

First Church has experienced much change over these last months for sure. It has been my pleasure to be with you as worship leader many Sundays this year. As my agreement with First Church was coming to a close at the end of October I was approached to consider continuing through Advent and Christmas. I have taken time to prayerfully discern the call of God and have agreed to remain through the last Sunday in December.

The church year changes as well. Oh yes, the church year or the liturgical year has its seasons. There are six seasons within the liturgical year: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Pentecost, and Ordinary Time. The current season is known as Ordinary Time and stretches from Pentecost to Christ the King Sunday, which this year is on November 26th. The new liturgical year begins with the first Sunday of Advent, December 3.

Whether changes are related to the seasons, from fall to winter or Ordinary Time to Advent, they are a permanent part of our lives. The month of November is filled with special events. The first is All Saints Day, to be observed on the first Sunday of the month. Then Thanksgiving Sunday and day, followed by Christ the King Sunday. This is a month of opportunity to be among this community of faith, your own families, and friends both for your personal times and also for activities at First Church.

With the close of Ordinary Time, there is the opportunity to recognize our own gratitude and thankfulness. The Thanksgiving holiday is an autumnal feast of which there have been many over the centuries and grew out of these traditions. These feasts celebrated the harvest of crops after a season of bountiful growth. The Pilgrims in Plymouth, Massachusetts, had their infamous Thanksgiving feast in 1621 with the Wampanoag Native Americans. A three-day feast that is considered to be the "first" Thanksgiving. Of course, the idea of "thanksgiving" for the harvest is as old as time, with records from the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. Native American cultures, too, have a rich tradition of giving thanks at harvesttime feasts, which began long before Europeans appeared on their soil. And well after the Pilgrims, for more than two centuries, individual colonies and states celebrated days of thanksgiving.

As I was preparing this piece for *The Congregate Tidings*, I found that I was using "gratitude" and "thankful" as having the same meaning. Then I got to wondering, are they? With a little research I have discovered that it is common to use gratitude and thankfulness interchangeably and they really are not. One article that I reviewed offered this; "Gratitude is the appreciation and awareness of the blessings that exist in our lives that we often overlook. It is the practice of focusing on what is good already instead of what is missing. When one is grateful it has the power to change one's perspective and sometimes even lifestyle."

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SING TO THE LORD OF HARVEST A HYMN OF THANKSGIVING

By Muriel Magg - Music Team Chair

Goodbye October - Hello November

Once again it is autumn and harvest time here in our beautiful Mt. Washington Valley. Thanksgiving is approaching, and along with family gatherings, people express thanks to God for the many blessings we enjoy - particularly for our bounty of food, but also for nature's beauty, for caring friends and for spiritual nourishment. The harvest time, no matter how good or bad, is always a time for thanksgiving.

John Monsell (1811-1875) was born in Londonderry, Ireland, the son of an Irish clergyman. He was educated at Trinity College in Dublin. John served several churches in Ireland after his ordination in 1835 as a deacon and later as a rector. In 1835, John married Anne Waller, and together they had three children. John Monsell transferred to England and became the rector of St. Nicholas Church in Guilford until his death (caused by a construction accident at his church).

Although John Monsell lived only sixty-four years, he left behind over three hundred poems and hymns including "Sing to the Lord of Harvest" showing his exuberant gratitude for all God had given. That was in spite of the fact he lived through the "Irish Potato Famine." Perhaps that is why, once life had improved again, he felt so thankful for the abundance he described.

The hymn "Sing to the Lord of Harvest" suggests that we give our hearts and lives to the Lord in return for His gifts to us, including His own life. We are also reminded to share our plenty with those who are in need.

In simple, vivid language derived from biblical images in the second half of Psalm 65, this text thanks the Lord for the harvest in (stanzas 1-2) and offers to God the harvest of our lives in (stanza 3). In Monsell's list of things, we give thanks for, are the clouds that drop fatness on the land, for us a strange image, but it is true. Rain feeds the land so that it becomes fat - - something back then that was prized because it meant richness of life. At the end of the hymn, the Holy Spirit is said to pour over us what we need to live and flourish. So weather - the sun, rain, snow, and their cycles all must combine to give us life.

The tune "How lovely is May," was a love song at first celebrating the joys of springtime. A gifted German poet, cantor and organist Johann Steurlein, turned the entire Bible into rhymed verse and this tune is the one that has remained the most popular of the many he wrote.

Although this hymn is not found in our New Century hymnal, it is found in many other Christian hymnals and is enjoyed by congregations throughout the world.

Even in these dark days of November, look with pleasure and joy at the bright orange pumpkins and full cupboards in your kitchen and give thanks for that, and for the abundance of God's grace.

WISHING EVERYONE A BLESSED THANKSGIVING



OUR FUTURE WITH HOPE

As everyone is aware, we have been extremely fortunate to have Pastor Sue Davidson in our pulpit for most of this year. She will be leaving us to enjoy her retirement at year end. I know we will all miss her. However, this is not about Pastor Sue leaving. It is about what our next steps will entail.

The Search Committee has been formed and our Profile submitted to the NH Conference; however, the Search Committee is not getting an abundance of candidates to consider. This leaves us in an awkward situation come January and we need your help in guiding us as to where we go from here.

We plan to have an open discussion during the Church service on November 12th and would ask that you be prepared to comment on the following questions. If you are not able to attend church on November 12th, you can email your comments to: karenumberger@gmail.com

1. What direction do you think our Church should go until a settled Pastor is found?
2. Should we continue to have Church every Sunday?
3. Should lay people lead every service?
4. Should we try to find a minister to preach every Sunday? (This may not be possible.)
5. Are you willing to share your Christian journey on a given Sunday?
6. Should we simply close our church doors until we find a settled pastor?
7. Would you support a hymn sing once a month with only an opening and closing prayer?
8. Should we ask the choir to sing more than one anthem each Sunday?
9. Why do you OR why don't you attend Sunday services?
10. What do you envision our church will be like in a year; five years; and/or ten years?

I sincerely hope you will give these questions some prayerful consideration. **WE** welcome any and all additional suggestions you might have. We need your input so we can move forward as a faith community.

Thank You,
Karen Umberger, Moderator



Courtesy photo by Mark Schiller

Youth & Family

By Helen Goss

The children have been busy upstairs and downstairs this past month. We continue to enjoy Pastor Sue's Children's Message and Pastor Walt was a nice treat as well. I am most proud of the children being so participatory with our pastors. The interaction is evidence of their growing comfort in the life of our church. It's also heartwarming to see the unconditional hugs that are given out each week!

We have been reading the Bible with great enthusiasm! There are some weeks I feel Jenni and I learn more than we teach. The will of God at work!

We celebrated **Rory's 5th Birthday** this past month. He was a gracious host when we surprised him during Fellowship. He is a special little man to the entire congregation, especially when we get to experience his wisdom when he shares with Pastor Sue. These are the moments we treasure.

We are planning now how we will share with others during this month of **Thanksgiving** and what opportunities **Advent** will present for us. Stay tuned for some excitement!

I continue to be most grateful to **Jenni Terry** for "driving the bus" from Berlin with a full load of youth! The Spirit is alive and well on each journey as their Sunday School discussions continue.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO ONE AND ALL!



Spooktacular Cookie Decorating!

Madi, Zoey, Jenni, Alexis, Lilly
(Missing – Rory)

DEACON'S CORNER ...

By Helen Goss

We are fast approaching year end and plans are already percolating for **Advent**. But before we get there, **November** brings us that time of year to be thankful for all God's blessings we have received. This is not to say that we shouldn't be thankful daily for all of God's grace, but **Thanksgiving** is a holiday most of us cherish for time spent with family and being grateful all we have received as we take time to reflect on the year.

We enjoyed a beautiful **World Communion Sunday** on October 1st with **Pastor Walt Hampton** while Pastor Sue was away. Although I am just getting to know him, it is evident to me the depth of his soul and his call to ministry. We are talking with him now about his availability in the New Year as our search for a settled pastor continues. He will be back with us on November 5th to share in Communion while Pastor Sue is on another adventure.

Jesse Red Horse was unable to give his message on October 8th due to family illness. However, he has assured me that in the near future he hopes that opportunity will present itself again. I have no doubt that the New Year will provide a special Sunday for Jesse to share with us!

November 12th is not only Stewardship Sunday, but we will also be having a time of discussion within the service about the future of our church. (Please see Karen Umberger's article for more details.) Many of us have been pondering this for some time and this is an opportunity to share our thoughts with one another. I hope you will plan to attend that Sunday to participate or share your thoughts with Karen via email or snail mail to the church office. There is much hanging in the balance.

When the temperatures change and the leaves fall, our hearts are reminded of those that will face a difficult winter in need of food and shelter. **Vaughan's Holiday Food Drive** that the radio station sponsors is this month, November 15th. It is a time we can each share monetarily to benefit all in our community. May you participate with an unconditional, heartfelt donation.

Faith Fellowship with Pastor Sue continues in her office on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays when she is with us. For those that are enjoying this gathering, the time has come to consider who will lead these conversations in 2024. A possibility would be to consider a rotation of individuals to share the responsibility. I know Pastor Sue will give words of guidance to help transition this leadership before she takes her leave.

We look forward to seeing more of you in church. We are blessed to have the live streaming of services, but nothing can compare to gathering with your faith community. Come and be a part of the good work of this church!

May your Spirit be nourished this Thanksgiving!



“The View from my Window”

By Jennifer Perkins, Vaughan Administrator

October was a busy month for the Vaughan Food Pantry with donations of shelf-stable foods, hygiene products, and money from our friends, **The Knights of Columbus**. **Northeast Credit Union** also provided us with over 200 pounds of donated food items collected in the month of August.

The Vaughan Food Pantry is in need of clean, empty egg cartons.

November is quickly approaching which means the **Mount Washington Radio Group** will be presenting its live **Holiday Giving** broadcast event on **Wednesday November 15, 2023**. This year, as in the past few years, it will be held at the Vaughan Community Service Building located at 2493 White Mountain Highway beginning at 6:00 am and ending at 6:00 pm. Once again, this event will help support 5 local food pantries in the Mount Washington Valley area. The food pantries include; Conway Village Church, Bartlett/Jackson Food Pantry, Madison Food Pantry, Freedom Food Pantry and Vaughan Food Pantry.

What once began years ago as a simple raffle to win a turkey at a few local businesses, grew into a larger turkey and food drive bringing in hundreds of frozen birds and thousands of pounds of canned and shelf-stable food items. Due to the sheer size of the event and the amount of food donated, the First Church of Christ Congregational agreed to hold the event in the vestry of the church with radio announcers setting up in both the Narthex and the Vestry.

The Pandemic forever altered this event. In 2019, no one was able to congregate and fear of the illness spreading led to cash only with people driving up and placing their donation in a basket held in the hands of the radio announcers and a Vaughan Board member or two.

Fortunately, times have ushered in change yet the model of cash donations remains. Money allows these local food pantries to purchase items they need to fill their shelves.

In 2023, COVID-19 is here to stay and we have adjusted. We are encouraging people to consider a financial contribution over frozen turkeys and food items. That said, no frozen turkeys or food will be turned away. We are truly blessed to live in such a generous community!

Warmly, Jennifer



Bold Riley Band Concert Saturday, November 18th @ 7:00PM Here at First Church of Christ, Congregational

This event is sponsored by the *White Mountain Musical Arts*, and is a free will offering concert, donations gratefully accepted.

Bold Riley is a folk quintet hailing from western Maine, known for full vocal harmonies and uplifting originals. Fiddle, guitar, banjo, accordion, bass, and percussion provide a wide range for listeners. Members take turns singing lead, and a strong sense of community drives the energy of their music.

Dennis Boyd, Jr. plays bass and sings for Bold Riley. Dennis is the director of Choirs for the Oxford Hills School District for grades 7-12. He also serves as the Choral Vice President for Maine Music Educators Association and President-Elect for the American Choral Directors Association of Maine. Dennis came from a musical family and grew up watching his dad play guitar for many years. It is only fitting that he joins Bold Riley in sharing that passion.

Julia Edwards offers vocals, guitar, accordion, and joyful tambourine to Bold Riley's mix. During the day, Julia teaches choral music at RSU #16 in Poland, Maine, but her other loves include playing the oboe, spending time with family, learning about science, and spreading enthusiasm for learning. Her musical influences are an eclectic mix. At any given moment she could be listening to Peter, Paul, & Mary, the Indigo Girls, Radiohead, Bach, Brahms, or Copland to fuel her love for music and the myriad ways it comes into existence.

John Gunn's musical heroes include Pete Seeger and the Kingston Trio. His clawhammer-style banjo playing draws from the folk revival period and Appalachian traditional music. John sometimes rounds out the Bold Riley sound with percussion on the Irish bodhran and a box drum called a cajon. When not making music with Bold Riley, John is a research ecologist studying forests and climate change.

Michael Hayashida sings and plays guitar & fiddle in Bold Riley. The first time he ever heard two people singing in harmony he got goosebumps which have pretty much never gone away. He grew up playing viola in a public school orchestra program (a good life move), he majored in engineering (a bad life move), he learned guitar after college (good move), and when he was thirty he left engineering to go to a Unitarian-Universalist seminary (kind of good). After a year he dropped out and married a minister instead (definitely good). He now teaches math to high school students in Poland, Maine and is much happier for it.

Erin Sampson sings harmony and the occasional lead for Bold Riley. She grew up singing along with The Beatles, Ella Fitzgerald, and Sarah Vaughan and pulled her early music education from a variety of genres including folk, jazz, and 60s/70s rock. Her childhood love affair with the jazz divas led to a job at Verve Records in New York where she spent countless nights soaking up the city's rich musical history. She moved back to Casco, Maine fourteen years ago where she now works as a Creative Director in the textile industry.








Pictured left to right are:

**Julia Edwards,
John Gunn,
Dennis Boyd, Jr.,
Michael Hayashida,
and Erin Sampson**



November 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>29 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship</p>	<p>30 Pastor's Sue away 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting</p>	<p>31 Pastor's Sue away 12:00pm - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open</p>	<p>1 Pastor's Sue away</p>	<p>2 Pastor's Sue away 9:30am - 2:30pm WIC 1:00pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open 4:00pm - 5:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 4:45pm - 5:45pm Bell Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>3 Pastor's Sue away 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting</p>	<p>4 Pastor's Sue away</p>
<p>5 Daylight Saving Time Begins Pastor's Sue away 10:00am Communion Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 2:00pm - 5:00pm REVOLVING CLOSET-TEENS</p> 	<p>6 Pastor's Sue away 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting 6:30pm - 8:00pm Crafty Hands Workshop</p> 	<p>7 Pastor's Sue away 12:00pm - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open</p>	<p>8 Pastor's Sue away</p>	<p>9 Deadline for Budget requests Pastor's Sue away 1:00pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open 4:00pm - 5:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 4:45pm - 5:45pm Bell Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>10 Pastor's Sue away 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting</p>	<p>11 Pastor's Sue away</p>
<p>12 Pastor's Sue away Stewardship Sunday 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship</p> 	<p>13 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting 6:30pm - 8:00pm Crafty Hands Workshop</p>	<p>14 12:00pm - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open</p>	<p>15 6:00pm - 6:00pm Mt. Washington Radio Group Holiday Giving DRIVE IN SERVICE</p>	<p>16 1:00pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open 4:00pm - 5:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 4:45pm - 5:45pm Bell Choir Rehearsal 5:00pm - 5:00pm REVOLVING CLOSET-ADULTS</p>	<p>17 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting</p>	<p>18 5:00pm Bold Riley Concert </p>
<p>19 Thanksgiving Sunday 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 2:00pm - 5:00pm REVOLVING CLOSET-TEENS</p> 	<p>20 December Newsletter deadline 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting 6:30pm - 8:00pm Crafty Hands Workshop</p>	<p>21 12:00pm - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open 4:00pm Trustees meeting 5:00pm Deacons meeting</p>	<p>22 9:30am - 10:30am Faith Fellowship Faith & Fellowship</p>	<p>23 Offices closed Thanksgiving Day GRATEFUL Thankful & BLESSED</p>	<p>24 Offices closed 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting</p>	<p>25</p>
<p>26 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship</p>	<p>27 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting 6:30pm - 8:00pm Crafty Hands Workshop</p>	<p>28 12:00pm - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30 1:00pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open 4:00pm - 5:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal 4:45pm - 5:45pm Bell Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>1 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting</p>	<p>2</p>

Pastor's page continued from page 1...

So where does being “thankful” come in? My best understanding is that being thankful could be considered as a component of having gratitude. This does not make being thankful unimportant as we should be thankful for all things that we receive. When we are thankful it is an expression of something that has been done for us and we offer thanks for it. So, is being thankful a response and being grateful a choice? I am not sure it really makes a difference which word we are using when expressing thanks or gratitude. What matters is how you feel, not our vocabulary. So, whether it be thankful or grateful, focus on how these words are a part of your life.

As the Thanksgiving holiday approaches, I invite us all to pay careful attention to the attitudes that we bring to the table. The preparations for the holiday can easily overshadow the joy of being together and the idea of giving thanks and being grateful. May we all be blessed in the gatherings, in the coming together of friends and family, and certainly in the bounty which God provides.

It is important to be aware of the needs of those in the valley who may be alone, or without a home, or separated from families during the coming seasons. Remember, God is providing all that we need to make a difference in the lives of the people that we meet on a daily basis.

May you find rich blessings of gratitude and thankfulness wherever you may be!!

Vaughan Learning Center

By Heather Ouellette, Director

Vaughan Learning Center is full! We are now operating with a waiting list.

We have Trunk or Treat coming up October 30th from 5-6:30pm. As the holidays approach, the children are getting excited!

We are still trying to get outside as much as possible while it is not too cold.

Many of the staff helped at the Blueberry Crisp booth during the fair and had a wonderful time.

The North Conway Fire Department visited as we learned about Fire Safety.



Lectionaries

FAIR FUNDRAISING

By Dick and Helen Goss

The Fryeburg Fair is over for 2023, but our bodies are still recovering from the task! We are grateful to the many volunteers who helped make this another year for the books. We baked 349 pans of our world famous [blueberry crisp](#) and grossed over \$28K to help with the funding of our church budget. A special ad was run to thank all who helped us, as there were many individuals that gave of their time who, as yet, have had no other connection to our church. Just maybe we have sparked an interest!

THANK YOU TO THE ENTIRE VILLAGE OF VOLUNTEERS!

Crafy Hands Workshop

**Join us for Crafts!
Creating items to support those
in need
Mondays: 6:30 to 8:00pm**

**Reverence for Life Building
2503 White Mountain Highway
North Conway, NH**

**Led by:
Deb Smith and Mary Lou Waite**

**Call Mary Lou for inquiries
508-272-0734
(message or text)**

NOVEMBER 5, 2023

Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost
Celebration of Holy Communion
Children's Story

Old Testament Lesson: Joshua 3:7-17
Psalter Reading: Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37
Epistle Lesson: 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13
Gospel Lesson: Matthew 23:1-12

NOVEMBER 12, 2023

Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
Stewardship Sunday
Children's Story

Old Testament Lesson: Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25
Psalter Reading: Psalm 78:1-7
Epistle Lesson: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
Gospel Lesson: Matthew 25:1-13

NOVEMBER 19, 2023

THANKSGIVING SUNDAY
Children's Story

Psalter Reading: Psalm 67
Epistle Lesson: Phillippians 4:4-13

NOVEMBER 26, 2023

Reign of Christ
Children's Story

Psalter Reading: Psalm 100
Gospel Lesson: John 6:5-23



Set your clocks back one hour on Saturday, November 4th before retiring for the night. So, you will not be late for Church!



11-08 Ken and Hope Nusbaum
11-15 Jay and Lisa Donabedian



11-02 Denise Woodcock
11-02 Charles Mallar
11-04 James Jones
11-14 Garrick Porter
11-14 Taylor Nusbaum
11-15 Eliza Juliano
11-25 June Waltz
11-26 Bill Aughton
11-29 Amanda Nusbaum



Please pray for those dealing with illness, surgery or recovery, especially:
Bob Borchers; Evelyn Porter; Sandy and Greg George; Linda Hyde; Audrey Vorperian; Laura Jean Beeler and Angie Terry, Jennifer Terry's sister-in-law.

Please remember those who mourn, especially the families of Sally Davis, and Peter Woodcock, Stephen Woodcock's brother.

Remember those in our extended care facilities.

At Merriman House:

Liz George-Hussey; Cynthia and Conrad (Connie) Briggs and Marilyn Elliott

At Mineral Springs:

David Tilton

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



MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!

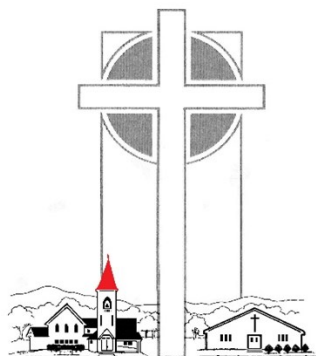
**CHRISTMAS FAMILY NIGHT
DECEMBER 3RD - 4PM**

Crafting, Potluck supper,
Tree Decorating and singing.

Reminder to all Boards and Committees, your 2024 proposed Budgets need to be sent to Denise at the Church office no later than Thursday, November 9, 2023.

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



TO:

NOVEMBER 12TH
YOUR ATTENDANCE IS
REQUESTED!!!

This is an important Sunday in the life of our church. We will be having an open discussion during worship about our vision for the future. We want every caring friend and member to have a voice and give their input on where you feel we are headed. We are open to thoughtful suggestions or broadening our thinking to strengthen our church.

It just so happens to coincide with **Stewardship Sunday** when we will be dedicating our pledges. As good stewards, there is much to consider.

We hope you will plan to attend.



CHURCH & VAUGHAN STAFF

Pastor: Sue Davidson
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 10 A.M.
Church Office (603)356-2324
Fax Number (603)356-2106
E-mail address:
churchoffice@firstchurchnc.com
***Website: www.firstchurchnc.com**
Facebook: www.facebook.com/firstchurchncnh

***Please note our newly refreshed website!**
Thank You Barbara Sisson!!!