



The Congregate Tidings

Volume 38 Issue 9

September 2024

The Pastor's Piece **Attention! Attention!** By Pastor Walt Hampton, J.D., CFC

As we move into September, a month often associated with fresh starts and new beginnings, it's a fitting time to reflect on where we direct our attention. Philosopher and mystic Simone Weil once observed, "Our attention is our fate." She also said, "Absolutely unmixed attention is prayer." These words carry a profound truth: the way we focus our attention shapes our lives.

Annie Dillard echoed a similar sentiment when she wrote, "How we spend our days is how we spend our lives." These insights remind us that our attention is not just a passive act; it's an active investment, a currency we "pay" every moment of every day.

In our modern world, there is an unrelenting demand for our attention. Everywhere we turn, something or someone is vying for it. Notifications, emails, social media, advertisements, and even the endless stream of news updates all compete for our mental space. The result? We often feel scattered, distracted, and overwhelmed. Our ability to focus and maintain sustained attention becomes weakened, like a muscle that hasn't been exercised properly. This constant fragmentation can leave us feeling fatigued and stressed, and it ultimately pulls us away from what truly matters.

But September offers us a unique opportunity to hit the reset button. As summer winds down and the rhythm of life begins to shift with the start of a new season, we can take a moment to reassess how we're spending our days—and by extension, how we're spending our lives. This month can be a time to become more mindful of where we direct our attention, to strengthen the muscles of focus and intention.

Imagine attention as a form of currency. Every time we give our attention to something, we are making a payment. The question we need to ask ourselves is: What are we buying with our attention? Are we investing it in things that nourish our souls, deepen our relationships, and bring us closer to God? Or are we spending it on distractions that drain our energy and leave us feeling empty?

One way to become more mindful of our attention is to create intentional pauses throughout the day. These pauses can be as simple as taking a few deep breaths, stepping away from a screen, or spending a moment in silence. During these moments, ask yourself: Where has my attention been? Is it where I want it to be? These small check-ins can help you redirect your focus toward what truly matters.

Another practice that can help is setting clear boundaries for your attention. In the same way that you wouldn't give your money away without considering its value, you shouldn't give your attention away without discernment. This might mean turning off notifications during certain hours, setting aside specific times for prayer or meditation, or even unplugging from digital devices altogether for a portion of the day. By protecting your attention, you create space for deeper connection with yourself, with others, and with the Divine.

Pastor's Piece continued on page 2...

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Pastor's Piece continued....

It's also important to remember that where we place our attention is a reflection of our values. If we say that relationships are important to us, but we're constantly distracted when spending time with loved ones, we're not truly honoring those relationships. If we value spiritual growth, but our attention is scattered across countless distractions, we may struggle to deepen our connection with God. By aligning our attention with our values, we bring more integrity and purpose into our lives.

As we embrace the new beginnings that September offers, let's commit to becoming more mindful of our attention. Let's practice paying attention to what really matters, investing our mental and emotional energy in ways that bring us closer to our true selves and to God. The demands on our attention aren't going away, but we can choose how we respond to them. We can choose to focus on what enriches our lives, strengthens our relationships, and nurtures our spiritual growth.

In this season of new beginnings, may we find the courage to reclaim our attention, to spend it wisely, and to live with greater intention and purpose. Let this September be a time of renewal—not just of our schedules and routines, but of our very lives, shaped by the sacred act of paying attention.

Peace to you.

+Walt



MAKE ME A CHANNEL OF YOUR PEACE

By Muriel Magg, Music Team Chairperson

Sometimes it feels like it was just yesterday; sometimes it feels like it was forever ago. It doesn't matter who you are. It doesn't make a difference where you were. It doesn't matter what you were doing. If you were alive on September 11, 2001, you remember this day that changed America forever.

What happened to our country twenty-three years ago was a horrific tragedy, and it should never be forgotten. I can remember exactly where I was twenty-three years ago. It seems like we all can. Sometimes we need to just sit and remember. Sit and pray for the innocent victims whose lives were tragically shortened, their families, friends, and loved ones and to pay homage to the heroes who responded.

"Make Me a Channel of Your Peace," by Sebastian Temple (1928-1997) is a musical setting of the well-known Prayer of Saint Francis. The prayer is widely attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi, but these words never appear in any of his writings.

The first appearance of the prayer occurred in France in 1912 in a small spiritual magazine called *La Clochette* (The Little Bell), published in Paris by "The Holy Mass League," an association founded by a French priest, Father Esther Bouquerel. The prayer entitled "A Beautiful Prayer to Say During the Mass" was published anonymously. The author could possibly have been Father Bouquerel himself, but the identity of the author remains a mystery.

The prayer itself was sent in French to Pope Benedict XV in 1915. This was soon followed by its appearance, in Italian, in the daily newspaper of Vatican City. Around 1920 the prayer was printed by a French Franciscan priest on the back of an image of St. Francis with the title "Priere pour la paix" ("Prayer for Peace"), but without being attributed to the saint.

Between the two world wars, the prayer was circulated in Europe and was translated into English. The text of this well-known prayer is about transformation - the movement away from darkness to light, from despair to hope. The words of this prayer also have similarities to the writings of the prophet Isaiah in Chapter 61. During the Second World War and immediately after, this prayer for peace began circulating widely, and over the years, because of its broadly inclusive language, gained worldwide popularity with people of all faiths.

Sebastian Temple is considered one of the most influential folk mass composers. He was born in South Africa and later moved to London, where he worked for the BBC News Service. In 1958, he moved to America, converted to Catholicism, and joined the Franciscan Third Order.

"Make Me a Channel of Your Peace" written in 1967, has become one of Temple's most loved compositions. This hymn was used in the funeral service of Princess Diana and as part of the wedding ceremony of Prince Albert II of Monaco. This hymn was also sung numerous times at memorials following the September 11th tragedy.

Continued on page 4...

Music continued...

“Make Me a Channel of Your Peace” was composed in the ballad and guitar style typical of 1960’s folk music, but accompaniment on piano or organ is also popular. It can be sung by a solo voice, a full choir, or by a congregation. The hymn centers on world peace or service to others and makes it appropriate for both contemporary and traditional worship. The familiarity of the text and the folk-like feel of the melody make it a great and long-lasting contribution to the hymnody of the church.

Twenty-three years ago on September 11th, America was forever changed. That tragic day served as a true test of the American spirit and will forever be remembered. It is a stark reminder of the fragility of human existence and the importance of faith, hope, and unity. Let us be reminded we must never lose that strength of unity and all that it represents by renewing our faith in one another. May the memory of 9/11 continue to unify and strengthen us.

The Peace Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Make me a channel of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love,
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord,
And where there’s doubt, true faith in you.

Make me a channel of your peace,
Where there’s despair in life, let me bring hope,
Where there is darkness, only light,
And where there’s sadness, ever joy.

O Master, grant that I may never seek,
So much to be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
In giving of ourselves that we receive.
And in dying that we’re born to eternal life.

Translation by Sebastian Temple

Prayer: An Evening of Reflection and Practice



Join us on Wednesday, September 4th, at 7:00 PM for a special evening program titled **"Prayers of the Heart: Exploring the Depths of Connection and Contemplation."** This event is designed to deepen your understanding of prayer and enrich your spiritual journey.

We’ll explore the essence of prayer—what it truly is, how to pray in meaningful ways, where and when to pray, and the different forms prayer can take. We’ll also delve into the transformative practice of contemplative prayer, offering insights and guidance on how to cultivate a deeper, more reflective connection with the Divine.

Whether you’re just “prayer curious” or looking to deepen your prayer practice, this is an opportunity to engage in thoughtful discussion, practical learning, and spiritual reflection.

Mark your calendar and join us—everyone is welcome!



The 27th Jen's Friends Climb Against Cancer will be Saturday, September 14th at Cranmore Mountain. If you haven't registered to climb, you can do so online. If you cannot do the climb, your donations are always welcome. Donations are easily made via their website, <https://www.jensfriends.org/> or **Lee Coffield** will be happy to collect your donation at church.

This foundation was established in memory of **Jennifer Hill**, the daughter of Arthur and Leona Hill, who were loyal members of our church. Jennifer lost her battle with brain cancer at age 26 with no health insurance as a part-time student and part-time employee of the U.S. Forest Service. As a result, her friends, family, and local community members gathered and Jen's Friends was born to help others in need.

"To date, almost \$4,500,000 has been raised and used to defray the non-medical expenses of more than 400 local cancer patients. Currently Jen's Friends is assisting over 90 cancer patients at a cost of more than \$40,000 per month. "

The financial need is a steep climb for so many. Jen's Friends helps to cover what insurances won't and **every dollar raised here, stays here** with 100% of funds going to help patients and families battling cancer. *Please consider making a gift that will help so many!*

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

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

Deacon's Corner & more...

By Helen Goss – Diaconate Chair

September has arrived and now church really begins to thrive! The month ahead is full of church gatherings and a wonderful celebration that I trust our regular attendees and those viewing online will plan to attend. Life moves quickly, and unfortunately we age! Gathering as a faith community becomes so important as we celebrate and support one another. So mark those calendars and make your plans now to come and participate with us!

You have received multiple invitations to **Pastor's Installation on September 8th at 3pm with a reception to follow at The Red Fox at 6pm**. It is going to be a magnificent day in the life of First Church of Christ! You should have all the information on this, but you can always call the Church Office if you missed an email, announcement, or mailing. **It is going to be a celebration you won't want to miss!**

Other opportunities to gather in the coming month are:

September 4th – Pastor Walt is offering a faith group on **Prayer**. You will hear more details from him on this.

September 8th – Choir is back! Newbies are welcome! The rafters will be swaying all day!

September 8th – Pastor Walt's Installation & Reception.

September 18th – Emergency Preparedness Seminar is being hosted at church and open to the community at large, as advised in last month's edition.

September 15th – Church School Rally Day! We are working on the plan for this coming school year to provide something for a spectrum of ages as we anticipate growth.

September 23rd – Blueberry Crisp Baking begins the two week marathon!

September 24th – Fryeburg Fair Booth to the fair grounds. All capable bodies on deck!

September 25th – Pastor Sue's Faith Fellowship - Wednesday

September 29th – Fryeburg Fair Begins! PLEASE VOLUNTEER to help in the booth!

We had a *super* Lay Service on **August 18th where Jennifer Terry** led worship. It appeared that many of you could not make it that day, so I would hope if you weren't watching online, you will! It's an awesome feeling to lead worship and you never know when you will be called upon to give the pastor a much needed break.

We have **openings on the Trustees and the Diaconate**. If you want to know more about serving, please ask anyone of us that you see every week. We could sure use refreshed energy! I, personally, am happy to discuss with you the many ways in which you can serve the church. Your interest may start out small, but you'd be amazed at how quickly that commitment can grow!

The **Memorial Garden** has had a few haircuts along with some aggressive weeding! The heat has caused much to flower early, but we have enjoyed some lush green regrowth with all the rain and humidity. I am most grateful to my helpers (Lucy, Penny & Jenny).

We will be producing an updated **Congregational Directory**, so be on the look-out for that. If you need one mailed, please contact Denise in the Church Office to make that happen. A warm "Special Thanks" to **Evelyn Porter** for her continued Ministry of Greetings she provides for the church. She does an amazing job remembering people in just the right way. It truly is her passion!

October promises to be as busy, so we hope to see more of you returning to church. **Pastor Walt is someone who is best experienced in person!**



IT'S TIME FOR THE FRYEBURG FAIR!!!

Once again we are gearing up for the fair and have many opportunities for you to help with the church's largest fundraising event of the year! The work begins Saturday, September 23rd, and continues until the trailer is back at the church on Tuesday, October 8th.

If you like to bake, we are starting to make our famous blueberry crisp on **Monday, Sept. 23rd**, and will be baking Monday right through **Friday, Oct. 4th**. The church kitchen starts warming up at 8AM and we kick it into gear at 9AM. The sign-up sheet is in the church vestry or you can call **Helen Goss at 603-520-6891** to volunteer.

If you and/or your friends can help with sales in the church booth starting **Sunday, September 29th thru Sunday, Oct. 6th**, please call the church office at **603-356-2324** and speak to **Denise** who is helping to fill in the (4) hour daily shifts. It can be a lot of fun and a way to get to know people better from our church and community. You will be given a ticket and parking pass for the day you work at the fair, so you have time to enjoy the fair before or after your shift.

The booth and all necessary equipment will be rolling out from the church on **Tuesday, September 24th** for set-up at the fair. We need able bodies for the move. If you can help, please call **Dick Goss at 603-520-6890** or you can call **Denise** in the church office. **Please be AT THE CHURCH at 9AM on Tuesday, 9/24, ready to load-up and roll!**

With your help, it's going to be another AWESOME year for the church at the FAYAH! Hope to see you there!

Your Fundraising Team: Dick & Helen Goss, Mark Schiller, Barbara & Fred Starkey, and Jennifer Terry.



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., Linda Small.

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.

September



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1 10:00am Communion Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 11:30am Missions Committee Meeting 2:00pm - 5:00pm REVOLVING CLOSEIT-TEENS</p>	<p>2 12:00am - 1:00pm AA meeting Open</p>	<p>3 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open</p>	<p>4 7:00pm Prayers of the Heart: "Exploring the Depths of Connection and Contemplation" </p>	<p>5 7:00am - 9:30am Rotary meeting 9:30am - 2:30pm WIC Program 12:30pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open</p>	<p>6 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>8 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 3:00pm Pastor Installation 6:00pm Pastor's Reception</p> 	<p>9 12:00am - 1:00pm AA meeting</p>	<p>10 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open</p>	<p>11 9:00am - 11:00am Essential Non-Food Pantry</p>	<p>12 12:30pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open</p>	<p>13 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting</p>	<p>14 Jen's Friends Climb </p>
<p>15 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 2:00pm - 5:00pm REVOLVING CLOSEIT-TEENS</p> 	<p>16 12:00am - 1:00pm AA meeting</p>	<p>17 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open 4:00pm Trustees meeting 5:00pm Diaconate meeting</p>	<p>18 8:30am - 12:00pm Emergency Preparedness Seminar </p>	<p>19 7:00am - 9:30am Rotary meeting 12:30pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open</p>	<p>20 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship</p>	<p>23 12:00am - 1:00pm AA meeting 9:00am Fryeburg Fair baking </p>	<p>24 9:00am Fryeburg Fair baking 9:00am Fryeburg Fair Booth Move 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open</p>	<p>25 9:00am Fryeburg Fair baking 9:30am - 10:30am Faith Fellowship</p>	<p>26 9:00am Fryeburg Fair baking 12:30pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open</p>	<p>27 9:00am Fryeburg Fair baking 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29 Fryeburg Fair 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship</p> 	<p>30 12:00am - 1:00pm AA meeting Fryeburg Fair 7:00am Fair Pan Cleaning 9:00am Fryeburg Fair baking 11:30am Fryeburg Fair baking</p>	<p>1 Fryeburg Fair 7:00am Fair Pan Cleaning 9:00am Fryeburg Fair baking 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open</p>	<p>2 Fryeburg Fair 7:00am Fair Pan Cleaning 9:00am Fryeburg Fair baking</p>	<p>3 Fryeburg Fair 7:00am Fair Pan Cleaning 9:00am Fryeburg Fair baking 12:30pm - 2:45pm Food Pantry Open</p>	<p>4 Fryeburg Fair 7:00am Fair Pan Cleaning 9:00am Fryeburg Fair baking 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting</p>	<p>5 Fryeburg Fair 7:00am Fair Pan Cleaning</p>

LECTIONARIES

SEPTEMBER 1, 2024

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Communion Sunday

Hebrew Bible: Song of Solomon 2:8-13
New Testament: James 1:17-27
Gospel: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

SEPTEMBER 8, 2024

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Hebrew Bible: Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23
New Testament: James 2:1-17
Gospel: Mark 7:24-37

SEPTEMBER 15, 2024

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Hebrew Bible: Proverbs 1:20-33
New Testament: James 3:1-12
Gospel: Mark 8:27-38

SEPTEMBER 22, 2024

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Hebrew Bible: Psalms 1
New Testament: James 3:13-4:3, 7-8
Gospel: Mark 9:30-37

SEPTEMBER 29, 2024

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Hebrew Bible: Esther 7:1-6, 9-10, 9:20-22
New Testament: James 5:13-20
Gospel: Mark 9:38-50



- 09-07 Penny Robinson
- 09-10 Sandra George
- 09-15 Betty Newton
- 09-16 Lisa Gibson
- 09-21 Floyd Corson
- 09-27 Tavon Porter
- 09-30 Anne Polak
- 09-30 Karen Umberger
- 09-30 Margaret Moulton

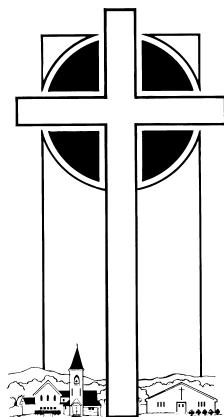


- 09-01 Pastor Walt and Ann Hampton
- 09-06 Joe and Denise Leighton
- 09-17 Richard and Helen Goss
- 09-17 Brian and Megan Croce
- 09-18 Robert and Marcia Smith
- 09-30 Adrian Doran and Elizabeth Howland

UPDATED CHURCH DIRECTORY
is available for pick-up at church or in the
church office. If any changes, please call the
the church office.

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



TO:

CRAFTY HANDS WORKSHOP

**Benefits Community Scholarships
and Mission Outreach**

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

**Summer Hiatus Ends!
Gearing up for
Christmas Craft Fair**

**Put on your thinking caps
Bring YOUR ideas**

**Mondays October thru November
(No Monday Holidays)
In the Reverence for Life Bldg.
Howard Room
6:30pm to 8pm**

CHURCH & VAUGHAN STAFF

Pastor: Rev. Walt Hampton, J.D., CFC
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
Pastor Ext. #2, Denise Ext. #1**

**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**