



The Congregate Tidings

Volume 40 Issue 9

September 2026

Rejuvenation

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

Who Are We Becoming as We Follow God's Leading Together?

Living in the shadow of the White Mountains, we know that the seasons do not change all at once. One cool morning hints that summer is beginning to loosen its grip. A maple here and there begins to blush with color while neighboring trees remain green. Before long, the hillsides will be alive with the colors of autumn, but for now the transformation is subtle. It unfolds quietly, almost imperceptibly, until one day we look around and realize the landscape has changed.

The life of a congregation has seasons as well.

Some seasons are filled with energy and new beginnings. Others invite us to slow our pace, listen more deeply, and pay closer attention to where God's Spirit may be leading. While these quieter seasons can sometimes feel uncertain, they are no less holy. They remind us that not all faithful work is immediately visible.

Since adopting our Communication and Behavior Covenant in July, the Rejuvenation Team has continued meeting as we prepare for the next steps in our shared journey. On August 30, **Reverend Paul Nickerson** will lead us in worship and share more about the process ahead. We hope you will join us as we continue seeking God's guidance together with open hearts, thoughtful questions, and a spirit of prayer.

In times of transition, it is natural to wonder what comes next. Yet perhaps the deeper invitation is to notice what God is already doing among us, even now. As we worship, serve, pray, care for one another, and commit ourselves to honest conversation, **we are already becoming the congregation God is calling us to be.**

Who are we becoming as we follow God's leading together?

The Apostle Paul reminds us:

And all of us... are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit."

— **2 Corinthians 3:18**

Transformation is often gentle and gradual. As we continue to worship, pray, listen, and care for one another, we trust that God's Spirit is quietly at work among us, shaping us ever more fully into the Body of Christ in this place.

As the first hints of autumn begin to appear across our mountains and valleys, may we receive this season as a gift. May we have eyes to notice God's quiet work among us, hearts that remain open to one another, and the courage to keep walking together in hope. And may we trust that the One who is transforming us, day by day, will continue to lead us with wisdom, grace, and love.

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Deacon's Corner and more...

By Helen Goss – Diaconate Chair



(Photo by Aaron Burden on Unsplash)

For most of us, our favorite time of the year will happen this month...*fall!* We are blessed to live in a part of this world where spectacular color is the order of each day. I encourage you to take part in this splendor and not let a day pass that you don't spend time outdoors. It doesn't matter if you plan a day of dedicated hiking, walk down your driveway, or walk around your residence. Take time to notice the beauty of each day and be thankful to the One who makes this all possible.

The end of August marked the end of a year without a settled pastor, and I am proud of how this congregation has carried on. August 30th appears to be a date that this church sees continued change, as we bid a fond farewell to Anne Polak and Patrick Speckamp. We bid them Godspeed in their new posts at the First Congregational Church in Bridgton, knowing they have left a lasting mark on our hearts in the time their talents were shared.

But as the saying goes - *when one door closes, another one opens* – and that is so true at First Church! Laurie Turley will be coming to us in September as our new Music Director, and we have much to look forward to with the talent she brings! Laurie has played for us before when a need was presented and is well known for her musical ability in the valley. We will venture down a new path of musical ministry by mid-September and welcome Laurie in due fashion!

On August 30th Rev. Paul Nickerson will have shared in our worship service, and afterwards presented to us the next steps he feels are appropriate for us in our continued healing process. We will have broken bread together and hopefully, benefited from healthy discussion as we gathered to hear this plan.

This month will bring more news about a transitional pilot program we hope to start in October through year-end. It's in the birthing stages now, but in active development with fluid conversations taking place on this part-time role. We are trying very hard to find the proper balance for the needs of the church for Sunday worship continuity, pastoral care, and congregational meetings so the candidate can continue with seminary schooling. If our plan is successful, more good news will be forthcoming this month.

As always, we look forward to seeing you in church!

REMEMBERING 9/11: TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF GRACE, HOPE, AND COMMUNITY

By Muriel Magg - Music Team Chair

This September marks a profound milestone in our nation's history: the 25th anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks.

A quarter-century has passed since the tragedy of September 11, 2001, but the memories of that bright Tuesday morning still remain permanently etched in our nation's history and in our minds.

Twenty-five is a generation, and as time moves forward, children born after 2001 are now adults, learning about that day from history books, and for many of us, the memories still vividly remain. We remember where we were, the anxiety we felt, and the heartbreak as we watched the news unfold. We remember the thousands of innocent lives cut short, the ultimate bravery and sacrifices made by first responders, and the grief cast over so many families that changed our world forever.

For the Christian community, 9/11 will forever be a testament to the fleeting nature of this world and the enduring power of FAITH. In the days and weeks that followed the attacks, churches across America became sanctuaries of HOPE, providing counseling, material relief, and spaces for collective sorrow. We watched ordinary citizens become heroes, reflecting the call to "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR" by caring more about the needs, wants, and wellbeing of others without expecting any reward or personal gain.

It is our shared promise made 25 years ago, to never forget so those born after 9/11 learn its significance and enduring legacy. As we commemorate this anniversary, a new generation will learn about the unimaginable loss we experienced and the inspiring stories of bravery, compassion, unity, and service that we witnessed, and have spread in small ways through the decades.

We now need to share, teach, and inspire a new generation with the idea that, even in the darkest of times we saw the light of Christ shining through human hands responding with unprecedented outpourings of LOVE, CHARITY, and PRAYER.

At a time when our country feels so divided and that unity can feel so far away, I hope that we'll take a minute out of our busy lives, step back, and share our memories. We are still that country, we're just having a difficult moment in our history, but I refuse to believe that we will be like this forever.

As Christians, we are called to hold onto HOPE. The tragedy of 9/11 tested our strength, but it did not break our faith. Let us approach this anniversary with hearts full of gratitude for the enduring LOVE of Christ.

The majestic Twin Towers were built on solid granite foundations. When damaged, those buildings plummeted to the ground, imploding in upon themselves. Yet, underneath the debris was a firm foundation that was not destroyed. In the hymn "How Firm a Foundation," (page #407 in The New Century Hymnal) the words say:



2001

"Fear not, I am with you; O be not
dismayed,
for I am your God, and will still give
you aid.

I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause
you to stand,
Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent
hand."



2026

“The View from My Window”

By Jennifer Perkins, Vaughan Administrator

It's another, where did the summer go?! moment. That said, we are beginning to plan for the holiday season which is quickly approaching. Again, the need is great this year and growing as we are seeing new people and families signing up for our Food Pantry.

Just as the Food Pantry is growing, so too is the Senior Non-Food Pantry Program. We are providing necessary health and hygiene products to well over 24 people throughout the month. The Senior Non-Food Pantry Program is open the second Wednesday of the month from 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM at the Vaughan Community Service building for people 60 years of age and older.

The Safe Haven Baby Program is underway with the prayer it is never utilized, but if needed, we are able to assist those in need of this service. Signs for the program will be placed on the church, the Reverence for Life building and the Vaughan Community Service building.

The Vaughan Learning Center received over \$30,000 from Revo Casino's "Rebels with a Cause" Charitable Giving event during the month of July. Again, the money raised goes to support the efforts of the Vaughan Learning Center which provides quality child care for our hard-working parents and guardians raising children in the Mount Washington Valley area.

School is back in session; our leaves are turning fall colors and football marks the season! Enjoy!



The 29th Jen's Friends Climb Against Cancer will be Saturday, September 19th 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/>

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 \$5,500,000. has been raised and used to defray the non-medical expenses of more than 750 local cancer patients. Currently, Jen's Friends is assisting over 95 cancer patients at a cost of more than \$46,000 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!

EXCITING MUSIC NEWS - HALLELUJAH! PRAISE THE LORD

On behalf of the Music Team and the Diaconate, I am pleased and excited to announce that Laurie Turley has been officially hired as our new Music Director, effective September 17th.

We are grateful to God for leading us to this wonderful, new and exciting chapter in the musical life of First Church of Christ, Congregational here in North Conway. This hiring is the answer to many prayers, and we thank you all for your patience and support during this time of transition. More specific details will be shared soon including rehearsal schedules.

Laurie will serve as our church Pianist/Organist, Choral Director and Handbell Director. She is a highly versatile musician who performs original music and compositions across classical, contemporary, jazz, and gospel genres. In addition to keyboard instruments, Laurie plays guitar, violin, viola, recorder, and currently directs the Mount Washington Valley community orchestra.

We believe Laurie's vision will bring a vibrant, inclusive, spiritually uplifting energy, along with a heart for worship that will beautifully enrich both our vocal choir and handbell ensembles.

Please join us in celebrating this exciting new chapter in the musical life of First Church of Christ.

An official welcome with a meet and greet will take place on Sunday, September 20th.

GOD IS GOOD!

Muriel Magg - Music Team Chair

Helen Goss - Diaconate Chair



Elizabeth George-Hussey
Mineral Springs
1251 White Mountain Highway
North Conway, NH 03860

NEIGHBORS IN NEED OFFERING

By Chris DeVries, Mission Chair



Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a Special Mission Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion in the United States.

The Neighbors in Need offering supports ministries of justice and compassion, with one-third of the offering given to the Council for American Indian Ministries and the remaining two-thirds supporting UCC justice ministries. In 2025 the

Neighbors in Need Offering supported 26 grant recipients across the UCC who were engaged in projects of direct service and advocacy.

Please keep October 4th on your calendar, as this will be the day that First Church of Christ will collect the Neighbors in Need offering.

Thank you,
Peace and God Bless

During this period without a settled pastor, please note the following:

- ⇒ Any pastoral concerns should be directed to Denise at the Church Office and she will contact the appropriate party.
- ⇒ The Diaconate is responsible for seeing that the pulpit is covered for each service. If you have questions or helpful suggestions concerning this, please contact Helen Goss (603-520-6891).
- ⇒ All copies of meeting minutes are to be sent to Denise at the Church Office. This is a reminder of our standard operating procedure. Additionally, if you need to schedule use of the church or the Howard Room in the RFL Building, Denise is in charge of the Church Calendar so we have coordination of events.

*Friendly
Reminders*

Those Leading Worship in the Month of September



September 6th - Faith Leader: Helen Goss

September 13th - Faith Leader: Steve Woodcock

September 20th - Pastor Sue Davidson

September 27th - Faith Leader: Eryn Morency

YouTube Live Streaming

By Peter Magg

Hello Everyone!

I want to share a much needed update about how we'll be sharing our live worship services. Over the past few weeks, we've experienced some technical challenges with our Facebook live stream, and we've been working to improve the quality and reliability of our broadcasts. This change will also allow us to store an unlimited amount of services where we have been limited to only four services with Facebook for about a year now.

Going forward, we will be streaming our services live on **YouTube**. This change will give us a more stable platform, better audio and video quality, and a wider reach for our online audience. You can find our live stream on our church's official YouTube channel, which you can access by selecting the following web page. <https://www.youtube.com/@firstchurchnc/streams> or by visiting our church's website's streaming page <https://firstchurchnc.com/service-videos/> and selecting YouTube.

We encourage you to join us online, whether you're watching from home, on the go, or from another location. If you have any questions or suggestions for improving our streaming experience, please feel free to reach out to the tech team or the church office.

Thank you for your patience and continued support as we work to make our worship experience even better for everyone.



September
2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 10:00am Worship Celebration 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
6 10:00am Communion Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 2:00pm - 5:00pm Revolving Closet-Teens <i>Communion</i> SUNDAY	7 Labor Day Offices Closed 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting 	8 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open	9 9:00am - 11:00am Senior Non-Food Pantry	10 12:00pm - 2:15pm Food Pantry Open	11 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting 9/11 Patriot Day Never Forget	12
13 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship	14 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting 6:30pm - 8:00pm Scouts of America Troop 150 and Pack 150	15 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open 4:00pm Trustees meeting	16	17 12:00pm - 2:15pm Food Pantry Open 3:00pm - 4:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	18 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	19 Jen's Friends Hill Climb
20 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 2:00pm - 5:00pm Revolving Closet-Teens WELCOME BACK, CHORUS	21 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting 6:30pm - 8:00pm Scouts of America Troop 150 and Pack 150	22 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open 5:00pm Diaconate meeting	23	24 12:00pm - 2:15pm Food Pantry Open 3:00pm - 4:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	25 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	26
27 10:00am Worship Celebration 11:00am Coffee Hour After Worship 	28 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting 6:30pm - 8:00pm Scouts of America Troop 150 and Pack 150	29 11:30am - 1:45pm Food Pantry Open	30	1 9:30am - 2:30pm WIC Program 12:00pm - 2:15pm Food Pantry Open 3:00pm - 4:00pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	2 12:00pm - 1:00pm AA meeting	3

LECTIONARIES

SEPTEMBER 6, 2026*Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost**Communion Sunday*

Exodus 12:1-14 and Psalm 149

Ezekiel 33:7-1 and Psalm 119:33-40

Romans 13:8-14

Matthew 18:15-20

SEPTEMBER 13, 2026*Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

Exodus 14:19-31 and Psalm 114 or

Exodus 15:1b-11, 20-21

Genesis 50:15-21 and Psalm 103:(1-7), 8-13

Romans 14:1-12

Matthew 18:21-35

SEPTEMBER 20, 2026*Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost*

Exodus 16:2-15 and Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45

Jonah 3:10-4:11 and Psalm 145:1-8

Philippians 1:21-30

Matthew 20:1-16

SEPTEMBER 27, 2026*Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

Exodus 17:1-7 and Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16

Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32 and Psalm 25:1-9

Philippians 2:1-13

Matthew 21:23-32

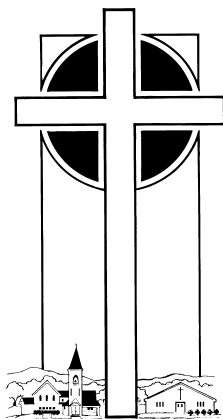
**09-07 Penny Robinson****09-10 Sandra George****09-13 Eryn Morency****09-15 Betty Newton****09-16 Lisa Gibson****09-27 Tavon Porter****09-30 Anne Polak****09-30 Karen Umberger****09-30 Margaret Moulton****09-06 Joe and Denise Leighton****09-17 Richard and Helen Goss****09-17 Brian and Megan Croce****09-18 Robert and Marcia Smith****09-30 Adrian Doran and Elizabeth Howland**

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

Evelyn Porter, Deb Smith, Mike James, Frances Richardson, Barbara Starkey, and Tom Davidson's sister.**Remember those who mourn, especially the family of Fred 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:



**We're Updating
Our Church Directory**

UPDATED CHURCH DIRECTORY

These are available for pick-up in the church entry or in the Church Office. If there are any changes, please call Denise in the Church Office. Any updates will be published in the next month's *Congregate Tidings*.

CHURCH & VAUGHAN STAFF

Church Administrator/Editor:

Denise Leighton

Music Director: Laurie Turley

Vaughan Administrator: Jennifer Perkins

Vaughan Learning Center Director:

Heather Ouellette

Church Sexton: Mark Schiller

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Fax Number (603)356-2106

Vaughan Food Pantry (603)602-1801

Vaughan Learning Center (603)356-5213

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YouTube: <https://firstchurchnc.com/service-videos/>