



Saying Goodbye....

I think I can safely say that when I started in January 2018, not one of us imagined, or likely could have imagined without a lot of prompting, that my final months here would be riddled with the weirdness that is a pandemic caused by a virus to which humans have no natural immunity. I wish it were not so; there were a few more things we might have been able to do together in my last three months to further strengthen the church for the future. We may even have been able to hire a youth director! That will come in time, I'm sure. In the mean time, we've held together and supported each other in new and strangely fulfilling ways, even if we wouldn't choose those ways in a healthier time.

I certainly never expected to become a videographer and film editor during my ministerial career. I never in a million years would have anticipated the need to move worship entirely online! Online worship is not the same as being together in a sacred space, yet as churches and synagogues and mosques and temples all over the world have discovered, the Holy One, the Creator of all things, is present with us even over the internet. One meme I've seen on Clergy Facebook is a reminder that this time has helped us to reclaim our homes as sacred space, an idea I like very much. Perhaps we will all retain the sacredness of our homes even after we resume full worship together at a time only God yet knows.

I'm grateful beyond words to the entire worship team, staff and volunteers alike, who have made the YouTube services possible since March 22. Speaking of YouTube: **If you are interested in helping with the online worship services on the technical side, please let me know ASAP.** I'm especially in need of a couple of tech folks who have decent video capacity on your phones, would be willing to attend outdoor worship (see below) and would be willing to learn how to upload the resulting movie file(s) to the church's YouTube channel with minimal or no editing required.

The church's online presence is now permanent. I know it will change going forward, both because Pastor John has a different style than I do and because at some point, more of worship if not all of it will be recorded live on Sunday mornings and uploaded later. And perhaps right around the time that it's truly safe to worship together "as usual", live streaming consistently will be possible. The future holds exciting possibilities for that kind of ministry and I'll be watching to see how it unfolds.

For the short term, the Diaconate is looking very carefully at the prospect of worshipping outdoors for a few weeks this summer. This would do two important things for the life of the church: allow us to say goodbye in person (properly socially distanced, of course), even if there's not a cake and punch and then, three weeks later, allow you all to welcome Pastor John and meet him in person, again, from a proper social distance.

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Rev. John's Reflections

Let me go back in time. Not too long, but only six months ago when the virus outbreak hadn't occurred yet. I was complaining about the 422 traffic, and upset that the supermarket next to my house did not have my favorite deodorant.

Soon after, due to the pandemic, America was under lockdown like many others. When I was indoors, I realized how beautiful and blessed I was to have the life which I otherwise assumed was regular and usual. Little did I know that I was taking things for granted and complaining about the most trivial problems.

When I look back now, I notice many special areas of life whose importance I failed to understand earlier.

1. Freedom

I had the choice to go wherever I wished and do whatever I wanted.

I had the freedom to live life like I wanted to. No holds barred, and no questions asked. It was my life and my choice.

Staying indoors has taught me losing control of the fundamental aspects of your life makes you uncomfortable. These are the things we consider usual and expected. We only realize the value of them when they vanish.

2. Comfort

Life and technology have evolved by leaps and bounds over the years. In fact, life today is drastically different from what it was a decade ago. Back then, you needed to carry a digital camera for photos, self-driving cars hadn't hit the road yet, and group messages were not even a thing.

Now, we enjoy so many benefits from the comfort of our couch. You can order food, get your car washed, or send a package to your friend without stepping outside your front door.

3. The fun outside

No matter which city you live in, you have umpteen opportunities to have fun and relax. I had the option to watch any movie I like, go bowling no matter how bad I was at it, or enjoy the adrenaline of a kart race.

Even though I had very many ways to have fun, I compared my city with others. I complained, "My city has no options to enjoy nature. I have to go miles away for a trek." When I was locked in and resorting to board games, I realize how fun-filled my city actually is.

4. The human interaction

Both introverts or extroverts need at least some form of interaction to feel connected with the rest of the world.

5. The power of teams

Before, whenever we had to solve a problem at work, we would gather in a room and exchange ideas. Many complex issues found a solution because human beings can improve on each other's thoughts to reach the desired outcome.

Today, facilitating such a conversation is a nightmare. Video conferencing tools provide a viable workaround for one on one discussions and team meetings where everyone shares updates. But they cannot replace a bunch of smart people sitting in a real room discussing ideas at tandem.

Moreover, teams who see each other every day, gel along better. The physical presence creates a bond beyond just work relationships. It is the strength of such bonds that facilitates organizations to achieve massive goals.

I realize the power of teams, even more today when they cannot operate like they used to.

6. The giant web of economy

The economy is like a huge castle constructed of many individual Lego blocks. When you take one out, you feel no difference. Take another out, still not too big of a pinch. Take a few more out, and the entire structure collapses into mayhem.

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Different parts of the economy are interdependent, even if they do not seem apparent. Shutting down public transport left many people unemployed and unable to earn their daily wages. A lack of transportation implied goods couldn't flow freely. As a result, we did not have all the supplies in your supermarket.

Every contributor to the economy helps it remain steady. When everything runs well, you do not notice their contribution. When a few portions break, you understand their role in keeping the whole structure stable together.

So what have been the spiritual insights I have learned from lockdown?

The past weeks of the lockdown have taught me some invaluable lessons I will remember for the rest of my life.

1. Enjoy the present.

I will continue pursuing goals like before, and so should you. But while you are on this journey, don't forget to pause and experience the happiness around you.

Do not lose the sense of the present by solely focusing on the future.

2. You feel the pain only when something is missing.

Some of the things of your day to day life seem normal and expected. For example:

You expect to find all you need in a supermarket. You expect the pizza to arrive within thirty minutes.

Over time, such expectations make you lose the value of little things in life. Don't take such things for granted. You never know why and how they can be snatched away from you. You only feel the pain when you lose the privilege altogether.

3. Your emotions are defined by what you choose to see.

No matter who you are, what you do, and which part of the world you belong to, you always see what you want to see. If you want to complain, you will find a ton of things around you which aren't right. If you seek happiness, you will notice so many parts of your life which are a reason to rejoice.

Everyone shows a common reaction when things go well. Someone gives a toast, people clink their glasses, and everyone dances to the music. But you cannot always control the world around you to work in your favor. The market can collapse, a natural calamity can occur, or a virus outbreak can happen. What you can control is how you respond to such calamities to stay strong. Your reaction to such events is what defines you.

The global pandemic due to COVID -19 made our lives harder. But, on the positive side, it has made us stronger.

Grace and Peace, Pastor John

Special request from Pastor John:

Please introduce yourself to me repeatedly! The Congregation has one name to learn and I have many. It would be very helpful if you wear nametags, even if the name tags are not a tradition, wearing them for a few weeks will be very helpful!

Thank You!



Schedule of July Events

Weekly Events

Food Pantry Hours
 Women's AA Step Group
 Scouts
 Chancel Choir
 Bell Choir
 New Sunlight Group (AA)
 DaCapo

Tuesdays Noon. to 1:45 p.m. AND Thursday 1:00 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.
 Mondays 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.—**CANCELLED**
 Wednesdays 6:30 p.m.—**CANCELLED**
 Thursday 5:30 p.m. - **PENDING**
 Thursday 6:45 p.m. - **PENDING**
 Wednesday & Friday 12:00 Noon—**CANCELLED**
 Tuesdays 6:30 p.m.—**CANCELLED**

Monthly Events

Revolving Closet

Sunday, July 5th 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. for teen shopping
 Sunday, July 19th 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. for teen shopping
 Thursday July 16th 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. for adult shopping

Due to the coronavirus, the Revolving Closet hours are by appointment only

WIC
 ONA
 Survivors of Suicide
 Men's Breakfast
 Trustees Meeting
 Diaconate
 Music Committee Meeting
 Missions Meeting
 Youth & Family Night

Thursday, July 2nd 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. - **CANCELLED**
NO MEETING IN JULY
 Thursday, July 9th 6:30 p.m.—**In the Vestry**
 Friday, July 17th 8:00 a.m. at the Gibson Center—**PENDING**
 Tuesday, July 21st 2:00 p.m.—**PENDING**
 Tuesday, July 21st 5:00 p.m.—**PENDING**
TO BE DETERMINED
TO BE DETERMINED
 Including Potluck Supper—**NONE SCHEDULED**

July Special Events

Pastor Ruth's Last Worship Service

Sunday, July 26th

STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH

The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and Innovation in existing congregations. This offering embodies the wisdom "together we grow stronger".

Quarterly Mission Collections for 2020

Quarter 1	Jen's Friends
Quarter 2	White Horse Addiction Center
Quarter 3	Veterans
Quarter 4	Giving Ladder

Harriet Goodwin was interred in the Memorial Garden privately by request of the family due to COVID-19 restrictions. They plan to have a public celebration of her life in the future, possibly when her name plaque is added to the sign if it is safe that soon or perhaps next summer around her birthday.

"We gain strength, and courage, and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face...we must do that which we think we cannot."

-Eleanor Roosevelt

Please remember to send your pledges to the attention of Dan Jones, First Church of Christ Congregational, PO Box 401, North Conway, NH 03860-0401

CELEBRATING AMERICA IN SONG AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

By Muriel Magg

Here in North Conway and surrounding areas, the celebration of Independence Day will be markedly different this year. Most local events planned for the Fourth of July have been cancelled due to the coronavirus and the resulting restrictions placed on public gatherings. There won't be parades, fireworks, concerts, and most likely no large picnics or barbecues. However, one thing is certain, we will still celebrate with patriotic music and we'll probably hear "America the Beautiful" played at some point. I encourage you to sing along and reflect on what you find most beautiful about America.

Katherine Bates (1859–1929) was born in Falmouth, Massachusetts. Her father, a pastor of the First Congregational Church, was too sick to officiate or attend her baptism and died just six days afterward. This prompted her mother to take on odd jobs to support her four children. Despite their financial situation, Katherine's mother made education a priority. Katherine attended Wellesley College, one of the few institutions of higher learning open to women at the time. There she studied English and Greek, and explored her interest in poetry. After graduation in 1880, Katherine spent several years working as a teacher and in 1888, Katherine joined the faculty of Wellesley and eventually became head of the English department.

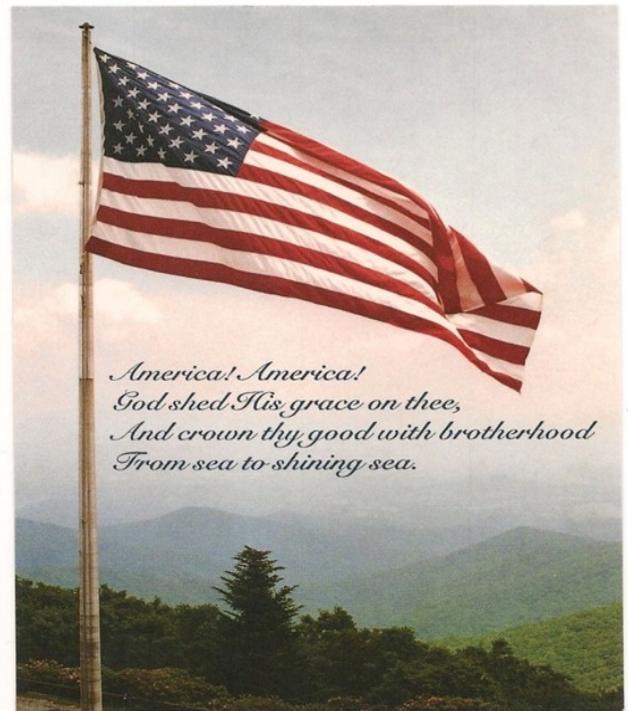
During the summer of 1893, Katherine journeyed across country by train to Colorado Springs to teach a summer school session at Colorado College. Several of the sights on her trip included the World's Fair in Chicago, the "White City" with its promise of the future contained within its alabaster buildings; through the miles of wheat fields, those "Amber waves of grain" in America's heartland, Kansas; and the majestic panoramic view of the Great Plains spreading out under spacious skies from the 14,000 foot vantage point atop Pikes Peak, inspired Katherine to write the opening lines of what would years later be known as "America the Beautiful." By the time Katherine left Colorado, all four stanzas were pencilled in her notebook.

Two years after writing "America the Beautiful," Katherine Bates published it in *The Congregationalist*, calling it: "America: A Poem for July 4." The poem's popularity spread throughout the country, and people clamored to marry the words with appropriate music. Transformation to becoming a song was a gradual process, with many revisions along the way.

Although many tunes, including "Auld Lang Syne," were matched to the poem's words and meter, the one that stuck was "MATERNA," written by American organist, choirmaster and composer Samuel A. Ward (1847-1903) in 1882. Ward's soaring tune, combined with Bates' poem were first published together in 1910 and titled, "America the Beautiful." Ward and Bates never met and neither profited from the joining of their creativity. Unfortunately, Ward died in 1903 and never got to hear his melody used.

Shortly after the death of Katherine Bates, there was an effort made to establish "America the Beautiful" as the nation's national anthem. The song lost out when in 1931, an act of Congress officially chose "The Star Spangled Banner."

We should be so happy to live in this nation of ours. For all its problems, for all its challenges, it's still America, home of the free and the brave. It's still America, sweet land of liberty. It's still America, the beautiful.



AND CROWN THY GOOD WITH BROTHERHOOD, FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA!

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There are many, many factors that have to be considered in the decision making process, not the least of which is any potential uptick in diagnosed cases of COVID-19 in Carroll County generally, Conway/Bartlett/Jackson, and Fryeburg specifically. The last thing anyone wants is for the church to become known for spreading the virus, however unintentionally. Other things to consider include shade for those who attend, a PA system that allows everything to be heard and recorded for online viewing, rules (we will require masks and a minimum of six feet between family groups all around), and how to allow the most options for both seating and participation. If you have ideas for any of these practical concerns, please send them to me or to Ken Schiller.

Even the structure of the service has to be carefully considered. Although it's *safer* to sing and read in unison outside than inside, it's not 100% *safe*. Do we sing one verse of three hymns throughout the service? Say only The Lord's Prayer together? What if the wind changes direction, do we ask everyone to turn and sing upwind? (Yes, that sounds funny. It is, alas, a deadly serious question.)

The earliest we might have an outdoor service is July 12. Watch e-mail and the Communion service on July 5 for additional details about the decision and what you can expect if we are going forward with outdoor worship services. If we do start outdoor worship, the service will be recorded and uploaded to YouTube later that day.

I will always be thankful for the clarity of discernment that prompted me to say yes to coming here. As I've said on camera and as I'm sure I will say many more times in person and on camera, each of you individually and all y'all as a congregation will remain a part of my heart for as long as I live. You will be in my daily prayers as you work to fulfill God's call for this church in this community with a new pastor.

Grace and peace,

-Pastor Ruth



Exciting news from Pastor John!

Greetings Friends and members of First Congregational Church!

As your forthcoming Pastor and Teacher, I wanted to keep you in the loop with recent events. We have some exciting news to share with you! Due to the ongoing COVID pandemic, which continues to alter human lives, but the Hogue family responds with grace and opportunity. Because of COVID, and recent Spring Ford school decisions where our son Nethanel attends, Nethanel wants to live his senior year in North Conway and be an Eagle! This was his decision. He wants to be with his entire family vs Dad being alone. Personally, I am grateful and feel this is a wise decision based on all the recent upheaval in our country. Veronica is also moving with us! The process of transferring to Starbucks is in the works and she will have a spot waiting for her! Our middle son Isaac will need to remain in PA for the next 6 months to complete his hotel management and culinary training. Isaac will join us in January for his internship and see where life takes him after his internship. Meanwhile we are frantically trying to figure out where he will live and someone who will accept a short term lease for him.

Our son Daniel and his beloved wife Megan will be visiting us the 2nd week in August. Hopefully the items will be mostly in place before he arrives and we can explore the area before I begin ministry among you. I am looking forward to working alongside you however it may look in the near future.

Thank you, Pastor John



7/1 Charlotte Boucher
 7/2 Amelia Edwards
 7/5 Barbara Wilkins
 7/5 Isaac Smith
 7/10 Sarah Racicot -Psaedakis
 7/10 Sonya Porter
 7/11 Sam Mullins
 7/13 Lisa Cote
 7/14 Stephanie Mullins
 7/19 Gregory George
 7/19 Jay Donabedian
 7/20 Atticus Edwards
 7/20 Rebecca Mallar
 7/21 Daniel Edwards
 7/23 Benjamin Croce
 7/27 Gavin Boucher
 7/30 Bilo Bell



7/6 Minnie & Cheryl Furtado
 7/14 Bill Aughton & Jeanne Twehos
 7/20 Charles & Rebecca Mallar
 7/24 Mike & Julie James

*"If you carry your childhood with you, you never
 become older."*
 -Abraham Sutzkever

Church Directory Update

Bilo Bell's updated contact info:
 PO Box 694
 Jackson, NH 03846

 * A note from Pastor John *
 * As many of you know I am *
 * an avid gardener. If you are *
 * working on thinning out any *
 * perennials in your flower *
 * garden, I would love to *
 * share them at the parson- *
 * age and tend to them! I will *
 * be bringing Heather and *
 * Spiderworts. Thanks *



**Let us remember those who are not able to be out
 and about due to physical limitations or fragile
 immune systems.**

Those with ongoing health concerns include **Dudley Hall and family, Janet Earnshaw, Audrey Vorperian, Arthur DeRosa, Don Waite, Linda Derse and Joan Santos.**

Agnes Birch, Liz George-Hussey, Cynthia Briggs, and Marilyn Elliot are at Merriman House, 3073 White Mountain Hwy, North Conway, 03860. **Peg Chisholm** is at the Mountain View Nursing Home, 93 Water Village Rd., Ossipee, 03864. You can send cards to **Lynn Runne** at Bella Point, 70 Fairview Dr., Fryeburg, ME 04037.

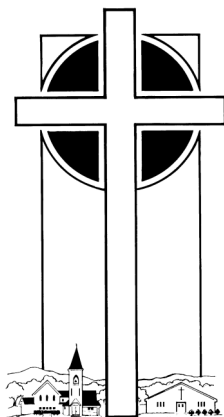
Please contact **Bonnie Tryder** or **Pastor Ruth** in the church office with prayer concerns for Sunday or for next month's issue of The Congregate Tidings. You are welcome to ask for church greeting cards to be sent for celebrations, illness/recovery, grief, and general "thinking of you"/"pick me up" notes by contacting **Evelyn Porter**, the Coordinator of the Diaconate's Ministry of Greeting. Call her at home, (603) 496-2314, or by e-mail at hambro35@yahoo.com.

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

WE'RE ON THE WEB
firstchurchnc.com



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



TO:



FIRST CHURCH AND **VAUGHAN STAFF**

Interim Senior Pastor: Rev. Dr. Ruth E. Shaver

Licensed Pastor: Gerry Tilton

Organist: Floyd W. Corson

Associate Organist: Muriel Magg

Chancel Choir and Handbell Choir Director:

Anne W. Polak

Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper: Bonnie Tryder

Vaughan Administrator: Jennifer Perkins

Vaughan Learning Center Director:

Heather Ouellette

Vaughan Bookkeeper: Denise Leighton

Grounds Keeper: Ryan Tuttle

Sunday Worship Service/Sunday School
10 A.M.

Church Office and Vaughan Office (603)356-2324

E-mail address:

churchoffice@firstchurchnc.com

FAX Line number is: 356-7104 (24 hrs. a day)

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/firstchurchncnh