



First Church in Jaffrey Weathervane November - December 2024

Steve Miller conducted a special service enhanced by early American music at the Jaffrey Meetinghouse on October 20, with Laban Ainsworth, First Church's founding minister, looking down on an enthusiastic congregation.

November Is Stewardship Month

Dear Members and Friends of First Church,

Our ministry is a mutual one, and November is stewardship month at First Church in Jaffrey. The work we do and the vision we offer is always a shared effort – everyone has a part to play, whether you are a long-time member or a new friend. Throughout the year, we explore together ways we can better care for each other and our world, and we dream about who we may become. Each November, our attention focuses on to how we can best support and afford such a vision in the coming year and years thereafter.

A small group of Trustees has been working on creating opportunities for you to learn how we all can be a part of an economically sustainable vision. These include:

- A deeper understanding of who we are as a church family today
- Strategies for building a sustainable future so our church is vital for another 250 years
- A careful look at our 2025 budget so we can discern how this growth is possible
- An exploration of the concept of “first fruits” which offers new perspectives on spiritual sharing and giving
- A continuation of sharing joy and promise about what comes next!

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Stewardship (continued)

You will receive a personal email from us next week. Each Sunday in November will feature moments dedicated to learning about the stewardship process. These moments are a chance to ask questions, to learn more about our church, and to expand your vision of your important contribution to mutual ministry.

Our question is not actually *How can we afford this growth, but rather how can we, as a people of faith, pass up our amazing opportunity?*

Thank you for being a vital part of the growing church family.

Yours in peace,

Dan Isaacs, Marc O'Brien, Jim Rothnie, Steve Miller
2025 Stewardship Circle

Let's Sing Together!

A short time ago we invited you, friends and members of First Church, to join us to enlarge the choir for the worship service at the old Jaffrey Meetinghouse. Some of you stepped up to add your voices to fill the Meetinghouse with beautiful early American music. It was great! I thank you all.

Now I invite you to lend your voices for two other special dates:

Thanksgiving service, Sunday, Nov. 24.

We will rehearse Saturday Nov.23 at 10 am.

and

Christmas Eve service, Tuesday, Dec.24 at 5pm.

Rehearsals will be on Saturdays at 10am Dec.7, 14, 21.

Rehearsals will be no longer than an hour.

I am looking at some Celtic music for Christmas Eve. I hope you can sing with us.

Best,

Gene Faxon, Minister of Music

2024 November December Worship at First Church

Meditation text in bold; Call to Worship text in plain font

November 3, 2024

Guest preacher
Ilona Kwiecien
No communion

December 8, 2024 – Advent II

“Go Up to a High Mountain”
Isaiah 40:1-11
Psalm 85

November 10, 2024

“All in the Family”
Ruth 4:13-17
Psalm 127

December 15, 2024 – Advent III

“The Promise”
Luke 1:39-55
Psalm 126

November 17, 2024

“Listen!”
Deuteronomy 6:1-9
Psalm 146

December 22, 2024 – Advent IV

“Ave Maria”
Luke 1:26-38
Psalm 89

November 24, 2024 – Thanksgiving Sunday

“I Went to Thank Her”
Matthew 6:25-33
Joel 2

December 24, 2024 at 5:00 pm

Christmas Eve Service

December 1, 2024 – Advent I

“A New Way to See”
Luke 21:25-36
Jeremiah 33
Communion

December 29, 2024

Lessons and Carols



Steve blessing Clover the Horse at the Blessing of the Animals at the Cathedral of the Pines on October 20. Photo: courtesy of the Monadnock Ledger Transcript.

Activities at First Church ... Prayer vigil, storytelling, new Circle

Election Eve Prayer Vigil

As we approach the upcoming election for our country's next president, we cannot help but be aware of the tension, fear and anger that has so divided our country. As people of faith, while we are called to work and live for the justice and peace embodied in all Jesus did, we are also called to prayer – coming together to pray for and lift up to God this country and world we all cherish.

In this spirit, we invite you to join us on **Monday evening, November 4th**, from 7-7:30, for an Election Eve prayer vigil. This will be a time of gathered prayer for our country and world, for our leaders and people – and for ourselves. We will gather and leave in silence, putting aside our differences, and at least for this moment, joining in this time of shared community and prayer. We hope you will join us. This service will also be available on Zoom with a link sent out the day before.

Tell Me a Story Group Gathers in November

If your life is long, you have lots of stories to tell. Come join Bob Kyte and Marcia Breckenridge to share yours and learn how to become a good storyteller. The group will gather three times: on **November 4, 11 and 18** from 10:30 to noon in the Parish House. Through this sharing, we are able to reflect and better understand ourselves. And, we also hope to get to know one another in better and deeper ways. Bob will lead with prompts like "Where did you grow up?" and "What was a life changing experience for you?" Marcia will teach the basic skills of memoir writing. All are welcome. To learn more, call Bob at 603-933-1668.

Care and Prayer at First Church

The Care and Prayer Circle is a small group of members and friends who have been meeting recently to organize and support our ministries of compassion and care to others and the world. Recently, we started a monthly service of meditation and prayer, designed specifically to offer silence and space for us to pray for others and the world. These simple services will be held at 9:30 am on **last Saturday of the month** in the sanctuary. Please talk with Lisa Bostnar Jackson or Steve Miller if you have questions about the circle or the service. All are welcome to join us.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

This month, the Care and Prayer Circle will be reviving our Prayer Shawl ministry at First Church. Under the gentle guidance of Roberta Bergquist, we will re-establish a circle of creative souls who will pray and craft beautiful shawls to be shared with others as a symbol of our care and compassion. No experience is necessary to be a part of this sacred work. An organizational meeting will be held on Saturday, November 23rd at 11:00 am in the Parish Hall. Please talk to Roberta or Steve if you are interested or have questions.

We're Ready for Winter – a Report from the Trustees

- Removed air conditioners and window screens in the church, parish house and parsonage, lowered all storm windows. Closed valves to outdoor water spigots.
- In late September, Pinney Plumbing replaced a drive belt and a switch on the church furnace.
- Installed new water heater under the narthex restroom.
- Dan Wilfrid sanded and repainted the bottom panel of the parsonage front storm door.

Capital Campaign Update

Thanks to the 2023 Capital Campaign, the following projects have been completed:

Sanctuary and Narthex Carpet Replacement
Exterior Painting
Gutter repair and leaf covers for parsonage
Electrical work/Internet hardwire in sanctuary
Removal of two old pianos
Tree Removal in Memorial Garden

Projects for 2025 and Beyond

Complete painting all buildings
Continue redesign and rejuvenation of Memorial Garden
Repairing church tower - a complex and expensive project requiring roof repair, carpentry, and painting that is challenging from both an engineering and a financing perspective.

When you add up all that our campaign accomplished, and then add the lead paint abatement and entire repainting of the parsonage interior, our property is in much better shape than it was five years ago. It looks well cared for. Building funding for future capital improvements/repairs into our budget can help us keep it that way as we approach the 200th anniversary of the church buildings in 2031.

Dan Wilfrid, Trustee

The discrete “command center” for our newly installed sound and video system. We’re finetuning the audio system and awaiting training so we can video Steve’s sermons (and other events) with the new camera, microphones, speakers, and mixing system.



Our Church Library Has New Books!

Below is a list of new titles that have been recently ordered for our church library. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* is from Steve's recent sermon on the Sunday of Indigenous Day Weekend. Two other new titles are by Thich Nhat Hanh, who Steve has also referenced.

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee by Dee Brown

The classic *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* is Dee Brown's eloquent, fully documented account of the systematic destruction of the American Indian during the second half of the nineteenth century.

No Mud, No Lotus: The Art of Transforming Suffering by Thich Nhat Hanh

No Mud, No Lotus introduces ways to be in touch with suffering without being overwhelmed by it. "When we know how to suffer," Nhat Hanh says, "we suffer much, much less." With his signature clarity and sense of joy, Thich Nhat Hanh helps us recognize the wonders inside us and around us that we tend to take for granted and teaches us the art of happiness.

The Sun My Heart: The Companion to the Miracle of Mindfulness by Thich Nhat

The Sun My Heart is a true spiritual classic with wisdom for any situation.

Honest Aging: An Insider's Guide to the Second Half of Life

Bobbie Gilbert shares: "This book is published by Johns Hopkins Press and written by acclaimed gerontologist Dr. Rosanne M. Leipzig. It's an excellent source of information for all of us over 65 or people who are caring for people in their older years. I'm listening to it on Audible and finding it to be excellent."

Serviceberry by Robin Wall Kimmerer (publication date Nov 2024)

From the author of *Braiding Sweetgrass*, a bold and inspiring vision for how to orient our lives around gratitude, reciprocity, and community, based on the lessons of the natural world.

Charlotte DeBell
Church Librarian



First Church said farewell to honored longtime members Ed and Dee Poole, who are returning to live year-round in Austin, Texas at a special coffee hour to say goodbye to a south for those traveling south for the winter.



For over one hundred years, **The Christmas Fund** has provided direct financial assistance to the healers in all our lives: retired and active UCC ministers, church workers, and their families. You are part of the community of **The Christmas Fund**, whether you donate at Christmastime, benefit directly from our grant or leadership programs, or simply believe in our mission to help secure the financial foundation of those engaged in the life of the church.

First Church will take a special offering for The Christmas Fund on December 8, 2024. Please donate to ensure that more healers receive the loving support of the Church in their moment of deepest need. Your gift is more than just a testament to your belief in the values of the United Church of Christ, it is a critical lifeline for those who depend on our grant programs for care and support.

Donations in any amount are appreciated, using the special envelopes found in the Sunday bulletin. If you write a check, please note UCC Christmas Fund in the memo line.

First Church's Christmas Gift to the Community

At the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on Sunday December 24, the offering will be dedicated to local social service organizations. The Benevolence Circle selects recipients based on recommendations from the congregation and community needs. Past recipients have included the Jaffrey Food Pantry, the Town Welfare Fund, and the ambulance service. If you have any suggestions, please contact Benevolence Circle Chair Marcia Breckenridge at marciabreck@gmail.com or 603-899-6973.



Thank you to our contributors:

Steve Miller, Mary Jo Marvin, Dan Wilfrid,
Charlotte DeBell, Carol Hess, Linda Grant