

**Name of Church**

The First Church in Jaffrey UCC

**Address**14 Laban Ainsworth Way  
PO Box 673  
Jaffrey, NH 03452**Conference:**

New Hampshire

**Association:**

Granite State Association

**Title**

Settled

**Start Date**

Jan 8, 2026

**Description**

We are searching for a new pastor who can guide our community as we continue to honor the sacred echoes of our past while remaining open to the unfolding light of the present, striving to be a sanctuary of peace, a source of joy, and a heartbeat of hope for the world.

God is calling First Church in Jaffrey to become the civic heart of our region—a community defined not by the walls of our historic building, but by the depth of our reach. We are being transformed from a Sunday-centered destination into a "Sanctuary Without Walls," a living embodiment of God's extravagant welcome that provides essential care for every stage of life. By centering our identity on the fundamental needs of our neighbors—food security, housing, and intergenerational care—we are becoming sacred stewards of Jaffrey's physical and spiritual well-being. We are answering a call to be community weavers, divine bridge-builders who connect local organizations and neighboring congregations in a tapestry of support. Ultimately, we are becoming a people who ensure that no one in our region walks alone, reflecting a theology where our neighbor's flourishing is our highest holy calling.

**Church Contact Information**

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(603) 532-7979 (Church Primary Phone)

admin@firstchurchinjaffrey.org (Church Email)

**Listing Information**

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**Web Presences**

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<https://www.firstchurchinjaffrey.org/>

Type: Professional

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFUk0I31S18>

Type: Other

**Additional Formal Ecumenical Affiliations**

Conference: NH Conference Association: UCC/Southwest Association of NH Conference

**UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person****Name:**

Rev. Linda Hirst

**Title:**

Transitional Associate Conference Minister

**Phone:**

207-475-8284

**Email:**

lhirst@nhcucc.org

**Summary Ministry Description**

We are searching for a new pastor who can guide our community as we continue to honor the sacred echoes of our past while remaining open to the unfolding light of the present, striving to be a sanctuary of peace, a source of joy, and a heartbeat of hope for the world.

God is calling First Church in Jaffrey to become the civic heart of our region—a community defined not by the walls of our historic building, but by the depth of our reach. We are being transformed from a Sunday-centered destination into a "Sanctuary Without Walls," a living embodiment of God's extravagant welcome that provides essential care for every stage of life. By centering our identity on the fundamental needs of our neighbors—food security, housing, and intergenerational care—we are becoming sacred stewards of Jaffrey's physical and spiritual well-being. We are answering a call to be community weavers, divine bridge-builders who connect local organizations and neighboring congregations in a tapestry of support. Ultimately, we are becoming a people who ensure that no one in our region walks alone, reflecting a theology where our neighbor's flourishing is our highest holy calling.

**Church pictures****What we value about living in our area.**

- Small town setting with a strong sense of community.
- Natural beauty including Mount Monadnock, many scenic trails and back roads, lakes and ponds, and the historic buildings and cemetery on "The Common."
- The variety of arts, entertainment, and educational lecture series available year-round.
- Proximity to several NH, VT, and MA colleges.
- Close proximity to Boston, the ocean, and the White Mountains.
- A melting pot of native New Englanders along with newcomers from across the country contributing to the area's character

**Current size of membership**

106

**Average in person attendance**

65

Does your church hold virtual worship services?

No

Languages used in ministry

English

Position Title

Settled

Position Duration

Settled

Compensation Level

Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines?

Yes

Link to current Conference guidelines

[https://14357287-a0c2-4bc6-9405-a884110dcd30.usfiles.com/ugd/143572\\_a0a8f827dc6f4915b5389ebf724fcd1f.pdf](https://14357287-a0c2-4bc6-9405-a884110dcd30.usfiles.com/ugd/143572_a0a8f827dc6f4915b5389ebf724fcd1f.pdf)

### Scope of Work

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Some fields reference The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ .

The United Church of Christ recognizes *The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers* in the formation of ministers, in the practice of active ministry, and throughout life. For the purposes of completing a denominational Profile, ministers are asked to spend some time with the *Marks*.

The Scope of Work developed by our church using the Call Agreement Workbook.

[Download scope of Work](#)

3 core competencies that we imagine could be foundational in our next minister's relationship with the church.

First:

- Preaching skills that include enthusiasm, humor and respect for theological diversity in worship.
- Skills to help the congregation deal with life's challenges related to aging and health issues, and with concerns about events in our families, our community and our world.
- Ability to lead "Bible study" and other spiritually oriented discussions with emphasis on connecting our faith to ethics in everyday life and how different faiths/world religions approach common issues.
- Musical ability and/or appreciation for incorporating music into First Church worship.

Second:

See above.

Third:

See above.

### Compensation and Support

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The salary basis comes from the Call Agreement Workbook, equal to Cash Salary plus Value of Parsonage/ Housing Allowance. The Conference can assist in determining these amounts or provide a worksheet to be used to calculate these values.

SALARY AND BENEFITS OFFERED: SALARY BASIS: ITEM OFFERED	AMOUNT OR PERCENTAGE(IF DETERMINED)	IS THIS NEGOTIABLE	PASTORAL CANDIDATE DETERMINES
Salary (Cash basis determined from Conference/ Association Guidelines)	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing Allowance	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any Experiential Difference (Related to years of experience)	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Salary Basis: 0			
Pension/Annuity	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Security and Medicare Offset	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical/Dental Insurance	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Life Insurance	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability Insurance	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worker's Compensation	0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If needed, please comment further on your church's salary and benefits for the minister.**

We will provide a highly competitive compensation package to include salary, housing (parsonage preferred but negotiable), pension and insurance. The final package will be dependent upon the individual candidate.

**The expected living situation for our next minister.**

Parsonage strongly preferred but negotiable

If a parsonage is provided, will the church offer a home equity allowance to the pastor? (The recommended guidelines for a home equity allowance is equal to 1.5% of the average home value in the community; this is considered taxable to the minister. The Housing Equity Offset should not be calculated into the Salary Basis upon which other Benefits are determined. Churches should consult a tax advisor prior to establishing any account for an equity allowance to ensure compliance with IRS rules on nonqualified deferred compensation plans.)

No

*No response*

**How our church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister's bi-vocational employment.**

We are flexible scheduling pastoral responsibilities and meetings.

**Additional reimbursements the next Pastor can expect to receive as part of their employment:**

Conference and/or Association meeting registrations

Criminal background checks.

**Peer and professional supports available for ministers in our association/conferences.**

- Both the Southwest Association of NH and the NH UCC Conference offer peer and professional support if needed.
- The NH UCC organizes a yearly Prepare to Serve conference in February for pastors and lay persons that addresses a wide variety of issues.
- First Church has retired clergy among its active participants who have offered professional support to the pastor in the past.

- In addition, we budget money for retreats, seminars, and other educational opportunities that a pastor may want to attend.

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## Who Is God Calling to Minister with Us?

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### The ministry goals we envision our next minister collaborating with the congregation to achieve.

The First Church congregation recently expressed particular interest in the following ministry goals:

- Building upon our success of the past four years regarding member growth, benevolence work, and financial health.
- Offering religious, spiritual, and other educational series and seminars led by our new pastor, guest speakers, and/or members.
- Welcoming and engaging newer attendees in the work of First Church and broadening the sharing of worship and fellowship responsibilities.
- Continuing to expand our outreach to community members and organizations, youth, and area residents beyond Jaffrey.
- Fostering the stewardship of our historic buildings.

### How our vision of the minister we are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls.

- There are many potential avenues by which an engaging, community-minded minister with positive energy may assist our congregation in its desire to continue and expand First Church outreach and ministries.
- First Church is a 5-for-5 congregation, and is generous in its financial giving locally, to the UCC, and to other ministries seeking our support. All of the net proceeds from our 2025 church fair and pie sales support local ministries.
- Many people are involved individually in local outreach, and we are looking for support to become more involved as a congregation. Possibilities include partnering more often with other local churches and organizations, and perhaps including the library and schools to offer summer programs for children and teens.
- Our beautiful building and grounds lend themselves to current and future means of outreach. Our church hosts concerts and supports the Amos Fortune summer lecture series. We have a labyrinth, a Memorial Garden, and space for day retreats and programs (book discussions, Bible study, etc.).
- Our parish house currently hosts weekly AA meetings. Boy Scout Troop 33 meets in the parish house and conducts its various ceremonies during Sunday worship services. We would like to consider additional performances and activities that draw people together and into the church.

### Language requirements or culturally-specific capacities preferred in a next ministerial leader, and why those matter to the congregation's sense of calling.

NA, given the membership and location of our church.

Based on what we have learned about who our church is, who our church's neighbor is, and who God is calling the church to become, these are four areas of excellence from The Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry that our next minister will display to further equip the congregation's ministry in these areas.

- Empowering the Church to be faithful to God's call, reflective of Christ's mission, and open to the surprises of the Holy Spirit.
- Bringing life to sacred stories and traditions in worship, proclamation, and witness.
- Providing hope and healing to a hurting world.
- Experiencing and appreciating a variety of theological perspectives.
- Respecting the dignity of all God's people.

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## Who Is God Calling Us to Become?

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"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37 NRSV)

### Who God is calling us to become as a congregation.

God is calling First Church in Jaffrey to become the civic heart of our region—a community defined not by the walls of our historic building, but by the depth of our reach. We are being transformed from a Sunday-centered destination into a "Sanctuary Without Walls," a living embodiment of God's extravagant welcome that provides essential care for every stage of life. By centering our identity on the fundamental needs of our neighbors—food security, housing, and intergenerational care—we are becoming sacred stewards of Jaffrey's physical and spiritual well-being. We are answering a call to be community weavers, divine bridge-builders who connect local organizations and neighboring congregations in a tapestry of support. Ultimately, we are becoming a people who ensure that no one in our region walks alone, reflecting a theology where our neighbor's flourishing is our highest holy calling.

### How God is calling us to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of our community and congregation.

- We believe the challenges and opportunities of our community and congregation are interrelated. By reaching out to our community and embracing all people "no matter who they are or where they are on their life's journey" we believe we will help both the community and ourselves.
- Our prior pastor and the congregation have reached out beyond First Church to work with Shelter from the Storm, the Rotary, the JCVIS, the Melville Academy Museum, the Jaffrey Historical Society, the Blessing of the Animals <https://ledgertranscript.com/2024/10/21/blessing-of-the-animals-57521037/> Easter Sunrise service at Cathedral of the Pines, and weddings and funerals in the community for non members of First Church. These efforts have led directly to the growth of our membership from 57 to 106 over the past five years.

- We try to be open to ways to engage. Two “experiments” are noted below. Last year our congregation served a community supper out of our sister UCC church in downtown Jaffrey. This was an opportunity for our congregation to connect with community members from different walks of life. We are exploring how to make this a more frequent “moveable feast,” potentially rotating hosting duties or expanding our role in the local food security network.
- Another example is our broad-based religious education program that we offer to the community at large focusing beyond Christianity to explore various methods of prayer and worship in different faiths. This religious and spiritual education is well attended by our congregation and the community.
- We do not currently have a formal multi-year strategic plan or vision statement. That said, our focus on sustainable growth in our membership and financial stewardship has been largely successful. We want to look for innovative ways to reach further into the community – meeting outside of the church and in the “modern world” via technology/social media to expand our presence and to find people “wherever they are on their spiritual journey.”

## Congregation Reflections

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### We would describe our congregation's life of faith as...

- We covenant to unite in Christian fellowship, worship, and service.
- We covenant to communicate openly and respectfully, seeking a vision for our church in the world.
- We depend on the Grace of God and the Holy Spirit to lead, inspire, and empower us to love one another and to seek peace and justice.
- All who wish to be in covenant with us are welcome regardless of age, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual or gender identity or expression, physical or mental ability, education, immigration status, or economic status.
- First Church is a member of the UCC and shares a common goal to be in covenant with the church universal and all of God’s creation.
- New members vow to be Christ’s disciples, to follow in the path Jesus taught us, and to witness to the work and word of Jesus.
- We look to the life and teachings of Jesus to guide us in our life as a community and as individuals.
- We accept that as followers of Jesus, we are called to love as he loved
- The Holy Spirit is guiding our transition process as we seek a new pastor.
- The Holy Spirit is seen through our congregation’s generous offering of time, talent, and treasure to local and global organizations.

### Strengths or positive qualities of our congregation.

After the departure of our pastor, we held a workshop during which we discussed the strengths of our congregation. The following are some specifics that came forth:

- We are a caring congregation that looks out for each other.
- We are generous, outreaching, and community-minded. Each summer a one-day fair and weekly pie sales raise funds to support the needs of the Jaffrey community.
- We are an intelligent, educated congregation that desires to learn and grow. During the tenure of our recently retired pastor, quarterly educational programs (usually a 4-to-6-week series) were frequently attended by 25 or more participants from our congregation and community.
- We enjoy a healthy balance of informality and reverence during our worship services.

### A growing edge for our congregation and what we plan to strengthen as a congregation

- We want to continue to grow our congregation, both within the spirit of our existing congregation and expanding to others beyond our community.
- We believe we have strong internal communication. Although we reach out to the broader community, we believe there are always additional opportunities for improvement in communication and ways to bringing our church to others. We brainstormed some of these ideas in a workshop in January of this year and would like to develop a strategic plan and vision with our new settled pastor.

### What worship is like when our congregation gathers.

- Worship at First Church is traditional without being rigid.
- We use the New Century and Pilgrim hymnals and our choir sings both traditional choral and contemporary music.
- While our worship is flexible, reflecting the style of the pastor or guest preacher, it follows a pattern familiar to most UCC churches; the sermon and music are central to our worship.
- We have been fortunate to have creative and diverse pastors who preach sermons that are theologically strong, include personal stories and examples, relate to concerns before us as a congregation and community, and leave us with questions to ponder.
- We appreciate a preacher weaving poetry and other readings into a sermon, engaging our imagination and encouraging us to think differently about an issue or Biblical story.
- There is a welcoming spirit in our worship; we are quick to laugh, and people readily lift up concerns and celebrations during the welcome and time for prayer.
- We are blessed with our Minister of Music, whose style is collaborative, and who enriches our worship with his own music and with his ability to choose music appropriate for our choir and congregation.

### The educational program/faith formation vision of our church.

- Our recent pastor offered several faith study series, including “The Spirit of Creation,” “From Jesus to Christianity,” “Promises of Hope,” and “The Nature and Practice of Prayer.”
- These series were enthusiastically attended by people from the church and the surrounding community. Such learning opportunities are very important to many members.
- We hope to strengthen our ongoing offerings and incorporate a variety of approaches.

### How our congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

- First Church’s organizational structure effectively carries out its responsibilities and is responsive to the ideas and concerns of staff and congregants. As outlined in our bylaws and in our annual reports (attached), we are guided by our pastor, moderator, treasurer, clerk, trustees,

executive circle, worship circle, pastoral relations circle, and task circles.

- The pastor, officers and circles oversee our Sunday worship planning, fiscal management, record keeping, benevolence, communications, care and prayer, and other endeavors.
- First Church sends two weekly e-blasts to parishioners: *Happenings at First Church*, and the *Bulletin*. These communications contain announcements, circle news, upcoming dates of interest, pastoral care contact information, a First Church calendar of meetings and events, and a volunteer sign-up link for worship set-up, greeters, altar flowers, etc.
- First Church expresses a clear mission in its bylaws (attached) and does not struggle for vision.

When it comes to decision-making, 5 hours are spent in meetings per month.

Is the pastor expected to attend all church meetings?

No

In times when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. These were the key leaders in taking this action and this was accomplished by...

- When our Pastor announced in October 2025 his decision to retire after 40+ years of serving four different churches, the congregation was alarmed and concerned.
- Our Pastor said he knew we would manage and be fine. And we are doing well.
- We formed a "Transition Circle" to address how we would manage the church while searching for a new Interim or Settled Pastor.
- We are pleased and fortunate that several of our retired pastors are assisting in this regard. We have scheduled clergy through late spring to carry on our Sunday services and pastoral care.
- We are in a great place as the Search Circle and Transition Circle work to find the best incoming pastor for the First Church in Jaffrey.

A copy of an organization structure, by laws and/or annual report to further explain the patterns of the church's activity and governance

- [2025 Annual Reports.pdf](#)
- [FCIJ Bylaws Adopted 2020.docx](#)
- [Why I Love First Church.docx](#)

## 11-Year Report

Download a copy of the 11-Year Report developed with the help of our conference staff and UCC Data Hub.

- [Download 11-Year Report](#)

## Congregation Demographics

Describe those who participate in your church.

DEMOGRAPHIC	NUMBER
NUMBER OF ACTIVE MEMBERS:	106
NUMBER OF ACTIVE NON-MEMBERS:	25
TOTAL OF CHURCH PARTICIPANTS (SUM OF THE NUMBERS ABOVE):	131

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

TIME	PERCENTAGE
MORE THAN 10 YEARS:	50%
LESS THAN 10, MORE THAN 5 YEARS:	20%
LESS THAN 5 YEARS:	30%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Number of total participants by age:

AGE	NUMBER
0-11	0
12-17	0
18-24	0
25-34	2
35-44	4
45-54	4
55-64	14
65-74	57
75+	50

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Percentage of adults in various household types:

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	PERCENTAGE
SINGLE ADULTS UNDER 35:	0%
HOUSEHOLDS WITH MINORS:	2%
SINGLE ADULTS AGE 35-65:	15%
JOINT HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO MINORS:	53%
SINGLE ADULTS OVER 65:	30%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

EDUCATION LEVEL	PERCENTAGE
HIGH SCHOOL:	10%
COLLEGE:	55%
GRADUATE SCHOOL:	35%
SPECIALTY TRAINING:	0%
OTHER EDUCATION LEVEL:	0%

ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?

Yes

**Percentage of adults in various employment types:**

EMPLOYMENT TYPE	PERCENTAGE
ADULTS WHO ARE EMPLOYED:	10%
ADULTS WHO ARE RETIRED:	60%
ADULTS WHO ARE NOT FULLY EMPLOYED:	30%

**ARE THESE NUMBERS ESTIMATES?**

Yes

**The range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:**

Teacher, arts organizer, state employee, retail manager, human resources, administrator, accountant, truck driver, musician, investment management professional, actor, information technology, clergy.

**The mix of ethnic heritages in our congregation, and the overall racial make-up.**

First Church is a predominantly white congregation, but in our case this fact is not synonymous with being mono-cultural. Former slave Amos Fortune became a First Church member in the 1780s. In recent decades, guests originally from Korea, Thailand, Nepal, Venezuela, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic have found their way to our Sunday worship and in some cases active First Church participation.

**What diversity means in our context?**

Through its members, friends, and clergy, First Church has represented diversity of age, ethnic heritage, political belief, sexual orientation and socio-economic status. First Church has a proud history of connecting with a wide range of local interests and world affairs. In recent years, First Church clergy have served the Lakota Sioux and Ukrainian refugees and shared their experiences with a supportive congregation. Diverse music genres are woven into First Church services and thoroughly enjoyed by all, something we hope will continue.

**Has our congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do we plan to hold one on the near future**

Yes

DATE COMPLETED: Dec 25 2026

**Comment after the exercise:**

- This past year the Executive Circle authorized the formation of a group to study the specific process that UCC provides to explore the ONA process and to make recommendations to the congregation.
- With the retirement of our pastor, the group has agreed to put this process on hold until a new pastor is called. The group remains willing and ready if called upon to guide the congregation through the "conversation" that is at the heart of the UCC ONA process.

**Participation and Staffing**

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### Participation and Planning of Gatherings

WAYS OF CHURCH GATHERING	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
Adult Groups or Classes (in person or online)	30	pastor
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	120	pastor
Choirs and Music Groups	4	minister of music
Church-based Bible Study	30	pastor
Communion (served how often?)	60	monthly
Community Meals	75	congregation/annual
Funerals (number last year)	10	pastor
Outdoor Worship	750	pastor
Prayer or Meditation Groups	6	pastor, members
Weddings (number last year)	6	pastor
Other	500	annual fair/many!

### Worship Times

WORSHIP (TIME SLOT):	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED IN ATTENDANCE	WHO PLANS EACH OF THE LISTED GATHERINGS
10:30	65	pastor

### Additional comments:

*No response*

### List of all members or regular participants in our congregation who are ordained or commissioned ministers, or who hold Lay Ministerial Standing. Additionally the names of Members in Discernment in our congregation.

NAME	THREE-WAY OR FOUR-WAY COVENANT	MINISTRY SETTING	TYPE OF MINISTRY ROLE	RETIRED
Marvin Caldwell	3	UCC	pastor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ilona Kwiecien	4	Tree of Life	hospice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Robert Kyte	3	UCC	pastor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Daniel Wilfrid	3	Lutheran	minister	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Nancy Elder-Wilfrid	3	UCC	pastor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Anne Webb	3	Episcopal	Episcopal priest	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Cassius Webb	3	Episcopal	Episcopal priest	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### Previous pastors or retired ministers who currently hold membership in the church and their role(s) in the life of the congregation:

All with the exception of Marvin Caldwell are active in the church although only Nancy Elder-Wilfrid, Daniel Wilfrid, and Robert Kyte are members or associate members.

Nancy Elder-Wilfrid is our current clerk.

List of all current staff:

STAFF POSITION	HEAD OF STAFF	COMPENSATION	SUPERVISED BY	LENGTH OF TENURE FOR CURRENT PERSON IN THIS POSITION
Administrative Asst	NA	part	pastor	2 years
Minister of Music	NA	full	pastor	20+ years
bookkeeper	NA	part	trustees	1 year

Reflection: What this information reflect about our congregation's overall ministry:

First Church has experienced significant growth in membership and non-members attending services in the past 3-4 years. Participation in church functions and circles has also grown significantly. There is a powerful energy and excitement in the church community since the arrival of our most recent pastor and his wife.

This energy has spilled over into the community of Jaffrey and beyond.

Church Finances

Current Annual Income

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	191000
Endowment Proceeds (as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return)	18000
Fundraising Events	27000
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	35000
Total	271000

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year):

235000

Attach most recent church budget, spending plan, operating statement, or annual treasurer's report as shared publicly with the congregation, or – if your church does not pass an annual budget–list current budgeted expenses here.

[Download church budget](#)

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage?

32

Has the church ever failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church?

No

Is your church 5-for-5, i.e. does it include each of the following contributions during the church year? (indicate those included during the most recent fiscal year)

- Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM – Basic Support)
- One Great Hour of Sharing
- Strengthen the Church
- Neighbors in Need
- Christmas Fund

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered?

Budgeted at \$3,500.

If calculated as a percentage of operating budget, this is the percentage?

No response

Total amount of loan debt:

*No response*

Reason for debt:

*No response*

Are capital and other payments current?

Yes

### Capital Campaigns

Description of any building programs projected or underway.

*No response*

Pictures

Description of any capital campaigns in the last ten years:

YEAR(S)	PURPOSE	GOAL	RESULT	IMPACT
0		0	0	
0		0	0	

Description of any capital campaigns underway or anticipated:

YEAR(S)	PURPOSE	GOAL	RESULT	IMPACT
0		0	0	
0		0	0	

Description the prominent mission component(s) involved in the most recent (or current) capital campaign.

*No response*

Does your church have an endowment?

Yes

What is the market value of the assets?

487000

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances?

4% of three year average assets ~ \$18,000

What is the percentage rate of draw (last year, compared to 5 years ago)?

4% sustainable rate down from 6% prior to 2025

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years:

NA

At the current rate of draw, how long might the endowment last?

perpetuity

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates:

*No response*

Other Assets

*No response*

**Reserves (savings):**

103000

**Investments (other than endowment):***No response***Does the church have a parsonage?**

Yes

**Fair market rental value of the parsonage:**

2000

**How is the parsonage used?**

residence of pastor and family

**Street**

14 &amp; 16 Laban Ainsworth Way

**City**

Jaffrey

**State**

NH

**Zip**

3452

**Finished square footage:**

2500

**Number of Bedrooms:**

3

**Number of Bathrooms:**

1

**Assessed real estate value:**

1302000

**Available for minister residence?**

Yes

**Expected minister residence?**

Yes

**Condition of structure, systems and appliances**

Good. New boiler and appliances. Floors to be sanded and refinished 3/26. Interior painting done a few years ago.

**Entity in the church responsible for review and needed repairs**

The Church's maintenance and grounds committee (subset of Trustees).

Parsonage pictures



Description of all buildings owned by the church:

The Church, Parish House and Parsonage. Total assessed value \$1,302,000.

Description of non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church:

NA

Accessibility features of our building(s):

Exterior access such as ramps for wheelchair users or people requiring other mobility assistance  
Access to worship spaces, including chancel and pulpit, for wheelchair users and people with other mobility aids  
Wheelchair access in bathrooms

Sound system in sanctuary and other meeting places (fellowship hall, large meeting rooms, etc.)  
Accessible bathroom on each floor  
Wheelchair areas in sanctuary (other than "front or back")

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs:

The Church and Parish House.

Policies regarding financial practices of the church:

- The trustee circle is responsible for financial practices of the church. In addition we have a Treasurer (volunteer) and a part-time bookkeeper (paid position).
- Following negative trends reported through FYE 12/31/24, leadership teams embarked on restoring long term sustainability.
- An annual giving campaign was strongly promoted to the church community and well received.
- As a result, bottom-line operations returned to positive as steps were taken to reduce our endowment withdrawals, add a reserve for capital improvements to our budget and increase charitable contributions from special events.

Reflection: After reviewing the church's finances and assets described above, what this information reflects about our congregation's mission and ministry:

- Our budgeting is a transparent and covenantal process ensuring that the congregation remains partners in our fiscal stewardship.
- Our financial health reflects our mission to be "Community Weavers." We recognize that our buildings are an opportunity for "extravagant welcome," a resource for AA meetings, the Boy Scouts, and the Amos Fortune Summer Lecture Series. By upkeeping our grounds, we ensure our "Sanctuary Without Walls" remains open for all.
- We are a 5-for-5 church. Even when tightening our own belts, we remain a congregation that prioritizes UCC wider missions and our local community.

## Historical Information

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### Significant happenings in the history of our church that have shaped the identity of our congregation.

- During Covid, First Church rose to the occasion with determination and creativity. We adapted to allow First Church not merely to survive but to thrive under the eventual leadership of our recent pastor.
- Covid's threat of social alienation resulted in members' renewed appreciation for First Church and its caring community.
- A buddy system was implemented with members checking in with each other.
- Enterprising members established a First Church YouTube page featuring our minister's weekly messages.
- In addition, three socially distanced choir members, accompanied by our Minister of Music, rehearsed weekly in our spacious sanctuary and posted their recordings to our YouTube page.
- These and other initiatives ensured that the First Church community remained connected and purposeful. When our pastor arrived in early 2021, the stage was set to hit the ground running and capitalize on his many ideas and talents.

### A specific change our church has managed in the recent past.

- First Church adopted new bylaws and an updated covenant in January 2020 to create a more streamlined and inclusive form of governance. The effort was partly born of necessity given a decline in members in the 2010s.
- Committees became circles and all individuals active in the life of the church are encouraged to volunteer to serve.
- Under the new bylaws, the diaconate was removed. This has occasionally been a drawback. With membership growing again, it may be time to revisit the possibility of having deacons once again.

### Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. "Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement....". These are our congregation's values and practices when it comes to conflict.

#### Our Values

- **Transparent Communication:** We believe that informing the broader leadership is critical to maintaining trust.
- **Deep Listening:** We strive to hear the "heart" behind the disagreement, ensuring that all voices feel valued.
- **Respect and Compassion:** We treat conflict not as a battle to be won, but as an opportunity for communal growth and mutual understanding.

#### Our Practices

- **Communal Dialogue:** We provide structured opportunities for all to listen and talk, moving away from isolated "one-on-one" fixes toward inclusive conversation.
- **The Pastoral Relations Circle:** We maintain this dedicated space to explore and support the needs and concerns of our clergy.
- **External Wisdom:** When internal tensions require broader perspective, we connect with the NH Conference and utilize skilled facilitators.
- **Spiritual Grounding:** We center our resolution process in prayer, seeking a peace that transcends individual preferences to serve the higher mission of our shared community.

### The most recent major conflict through which our church has navigated.

- In 2016 First Church called two married co-pastors for a three-year Designated Term Pastorate. A conflict arose when in the second year of this three-year term the couple's marriage dissolved. One minister left after 2 ½ years. Her wife completed the contract.
- The divorce and resignation of one of the pastors were unexpected and unsettling to the congregation and to the interim process. Consequently, there was reluctance to make major changes suggested by a pastor who would only be with us for the short-term.
- Despite the turmoil, members worked together and significant changes were made such as the holacratic (circles) governance structure, a new financial system, website redesign, sanctuary reorganization (removal of some pews), and expanded use of our building for concerts and other community programs.
- First Church made numerous adjustments in order to serve its members with positive changes that continue to this day.

Ministerial History:

Name: Daniel B. Leavitt	Years of service: 4	UCC Standing
Name: Richard Hough-Ross	Years of service: 2	UCC Standing
Name: Robert K Nace,	Years of service: 1	UCC Standing
Name: Hugh H. Knapp	Years of service: 2	UCC Standing
Name: Kathy Merrick	Years of service: 1	UCC Standing
Name: Deborah A. Hill	Years of service: 8	UCC Standing
Name: Marvin J. Caldwell	Years of service: 1	UCC Standing
Name: Robert R. Kyte	Years of service: 3	UCC Standing
Name: Lynda Lee Snyder	Years of service: 1	
Name: Susan L. Tarolli	Years of service: 1	UCC Standing
Name: Shayna Appel	Years of service: 3	UCC Standing
Name: Robin R. Lunn	Years of service: 3	
Name: David Felton	Years of service: 2	UCC Standing
Name: Steve Miller	Years of service: 4	UCC Standing

What our church has learned about itself and its relationship with people who provided ministerial leadership.

Our history of ministry reveals resiliency and strong lay leadership. The congregation highly values good sermons and accepts and welcomes changes in worship ritual.

Humor and reason smooth the process. A collaborative relationship with the pastor works best for all.

Has any past leader left under pressure or by involuntary termination?

No

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation?

No

Has a past pastor been the subject of a Fitness Review while at your church?

No

Has a previous minister been a contributor to conflict following their tenure as pastor?

No

## Community Vision

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**How the relationships and activities of our congregation extend outward in service and advocacy.**

- Our outward mission is fueled by our Sunday worship, which gathers our members and the broader community in a spirit of shared purpose.
- Our primary benevolence fundraising vehicles are summer pie sales and an annual fair, with net proceeds donated to local non-profit organizations and continuing education scholarships. Donations have also provided support to Ukraine.
- The church administers the Woods International Outreach Fund established by family members to honor their parents who were longtime members of First Church. Scholarships are awarded annually for students who wish to study and travel abroad. Woods scholarships have helped local youth to build houses in Central America, join a youth orchestra trip to Europe, participate in a Rotary student exchange in France, and join high school trips to Europe and China.

**Our congregation's participation in meetings, relationships and activities connecting the wider United Church of Christ.**

- Our pastor normally attends at least one meeting of the Southwest NH Association.
- Two to five members attend the annual NH UCC Prepare to Serve event and report back to the congregation.
- Our pastor and other church members have participated as chaplain and counselors at the Horton Center, the NH UCC's "Faith-Based Camp and Retreat Center."

**How our church engages with the community organizing movements in our community.**

See response to questions two items above.

**Many local churches love to tell the story of what they are doing in the community to transform lives. Some have identified certain aspects of their witness into the wider community using language shared with other UCC congregations, through Just World Covenants or affiliations with other groups. Check any of the following partnerships which your congregation has formally adopted, or movements which otherwise apply to your congregation.**

None.

**What the above statement(s) mean(s) to our community. How our congregation plans to work toward the above statements of witness in the future.**

- While we have not yet sought certain official UCC designations, we deeply embody the spirit of the denominational witness: "No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here." To our community, this means that hospitality is not a passive act, but an active commitment to ensuring every person feels the warmth and light of our sanctuary.
- Our ONA process is on hold until a new pastor is called.

**Our congregation's participation in ecumenical and interfaith activities (with other denominations and religious groups, local and regional).**

- Every year First Church holds joint Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday services with the United Church of Jaffrey, the other UCC Church in Jaffrey.
- On Memorial Day, Veterans organizations hold observances in the town's five cemeteries that include a rifle salute, the playing of taps, and a prayer. First Church's pastor offers the prayer at the Old Burying Ground and often at other cemetery(ies).
- Our recently retired pastor served as a "community pastor" by providing services and ceremonies for people without a regular church. He also led Easter sunrise services and conducted the Annual Blessing of the Animals at the Cathedral of the Pines in nearby Rindge.

**How our mission statement compares to the actual time spent engaging in different activities.**

Please refer to our bylaws in file elsewhere in this document.

**The scope of work assigned to our pastor(s). How their community ministry and their ministry in and on behalf of the wider church accounted for in the congregation's expectations on their time.**

- Our previous pastor reached out to the wider community in many ways. This work is valued by First Church and we allowed him freedom and flexibility in allocating his time to serve the wider church and interfaith community.
- We supported his involvement in the Shem Center, a national interfaith organization located in Chicago, and his service on NH Conference UCC committees and in leading counselors and campers at the NH UCC summer camp at the Horton Center.
- Our congregation recognizes that a pastor's work extends far beyond the sanctuary walls. We build our expectations and pastoral contracts with the understanding that these external commitments are a shared mission by which we are strengthened and more deeply connected to the world around us.

## The ARDA or MissionInsite Reflection

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ARDA/MI File

No response

From looking at our congregation's The ARDA or MissionInsite report, these trends and opportunities are what stood out to us.

### Demographics:

- The area's (Monadnock Region of New Hampshire) population is predicted to grow by 2.5% in the coming decade.
- The area overall has a high level of educational attainment.
- The population is primarily white.
- The average population age is 43, projected to rise to 45 by 2035.

### Income:

- The area is split between blue-collar (36.5%) and white-collar (63.5%) occupations.
- Average household income is below the state average.
- The poverty rate (5.0%) is below the state average (6.2%).
- A projected slight overall population increase and positive income growth bode well for area economic stability.

How our congregation's internal demographics compare or contrast to a) the neighborhoods adjacent to our church, and b) other neighborhoods with which our church connects.

Our congregation's demographics largely mirror the broader trends of the Monadnock Region: an aging population with a high degree of education and racial homogeneity.

Comparisons with our immediate neighbors reveal a tapestry of distinct personalities. Unlike some nearby towns that are dominated by summer residents or those with a purely blue-collar employment base, First Church draws from a mix of local residents and those attracted to the region's natural beauty and arts focus. We continue to bridge these different "neighborhoods" by offering a space where reason, humor, and tradition meet.

How the demographics of the community are currently shaping ministry, or not.

Our ministry emphasizes high-quality preaching and intellectually stimulating programs. Our "Faith Seminars" are a direct response to a congregation that values reason and deep theological exploration.

At present, our congregation does not have children or active youth programming, but we are open to bringing young families into our church community. We are evaluating how to remain a welcoming space for younger generations while focusing our current energy on the deep spiritual and social needs of the adults and retirees who make up our community.

What we hear when we talk to community leaders and ask them what our church is known for.

Gratitude for the support and stability that First Church provides and how it serves as a model for young people. Your recent pastor was a personable and dynamic leader in Church and Community. Other feedback suggests two areas of concern that we need to navigagate with help from our new pastor:

- There is a lingering external sentiment that the church can feel exclusive or "elitist."
- Historically, some community members have felt that the church environment was not fully optimized for families with children.

We are committed to becoming a more visible and inclusive presence in Jaffrey.

What new people in the church say when asked what got them involved.

- "The community of many wonderful people who care."
- "First Church is extremely welcoming."
- "I have been searching for a church family and found (our recent pastor) and this church! It was perfect and I am happy and looking forward to the next phase of our church and where the road will take us."
- "The first thing that struck me when I first entered the church was the beauty and warmth of the sanctuary. The second was the even greater warmth of the congregation."
- "Openness to all; no discriminating."
- "Peaceful and reflective weekly services."

## References

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Richard Stein

Completed: Wednesday, Mar 4, 2026

Please let me know if there is an email address ucc to which I can forward letter, I have prepared, or mail by way US post

Primary Email Address: rhs.nhjaff@gmail.com

Business: 6035328701

#### Reference Response

Please refer to my letter regarding first church in Jeffery if and when you are ever able to receive it from me by US post or by a direct email.

My phone number is 603-593-8249

*(For full reference letter, please see Appendix A)*

Richard Deufresne

Completed: Monday, Feb 23, 2026

Reference for First Church

Rich Dufresne, Retired Clinical Social Worker

I am very pleased to have been asked to submit this reference.

Primary Email Address: rdufresne@springhilltop.com

Personal Cell: 6035625277

#### Reference Response

Community: A very open and welcoming spirit exists among the people. This spirit is evident in the way people show interest in others, are willing to volunteer and help in the running of the church. This spirit is a lifeline that nurtures this community.

This is a faith community that believes action in service to others is critical. Ministries of individual community members have been encouraged and supported by the congregation. First Church also responds to the needs in the local community in partnering with organizations that help those who need food and housing, for example.

Worship: The services at First Church consistently provide the congregation time for meaningful prayer and meditation. The reflections, readings and music demonstrate great care in the planning of each service. They blend in such a way that growth and renewal in one's faith is ever present. *(For full reference letter, please see Appendix A)*

Miki Osgood

Completed: Wednesday, Mar 18, 2026

Miki Osgood

miki\_osgood@hotmail.com

Retired Interior Designer and Caterer

Primary Email Address: k.s.pingree@gmail.com

Personal: 941-223-7356

#### Reference Response

First church has a congregation of faithful and committed members who love to share their enthusiasm for their church with others. The annual Summer "First Church Fair" brings the entire Jaffrey community together in an effort to raise money for local, national as well as international missions. It has been the highlight of the summer for many people in the Monadnock region and beyond. We are blessed with dedicated volunteers.

*(For full reference letter, please see Appendix A)*

## Closing Prayer

From the Bible -

**Jeremiah 3:15** "Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding."

**Jeremiah 23:4:** "I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing,"

From the Tao Te Ching -

**Chapter 49**

"The Sage has no fixed heart; He makes the heart of the people his own. He is good to those who are good; He is also good to those who are not good. This is true goodness."

## Statement of Consent

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### 1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile?

*For example, church council or consistory, transition team, etc.*

The congregation and members of the Search Circle:

Lee DeBell  
Karen Shea Dufresne  
Annie Gordon  
Dan Isaacs - chair  
Susan Peterson  
Cynthia Rouvalis  
Ben Wheeler

### 2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

*No response*

# APPENDIX A

## Page 1

Miki Osgood

941-223-7356

miki\_osgood@hotmail.com

Retired Interior Designer and Caterer

I attended First Church from the age of 8 until 11. During that time, I attended Sunday School under the guidance of Dr. Pease, received my first Bible and sang in the choir. I returned to the church in 1965 to be married by Dr. Lyman and went on my life's journey not to return to Jaffrey permanently until 2005. It took me a while to walk back into the First Church. At that time the Search Committee was looking for a new minister. They were fortunate in having several bright interim ministers until they called Steve Miller who accepted their call.

First church has a congregation of faithful and committed members who love to share their enthusiasm for their church with others. The annual Summer "First Church Fair" brings the entire Jaffrey community together in an effort to raise money for local, national as well as international missions . It has been the highlight of the summer for many people in the Monadnock region and beyond. We are blessed with dedicated volunteers.

The ministry of music led by Gene Faxon, organist and choir master, has never wavered from his respect for a mix of music, be it traditional or more contemporary, which fits the clergy's sermon. He has been a tower of intellect and strength through rain or shine.

This is a church community which accepts one and all with open hearts and minds, there is no judgement, and it is always available when and if needed. I believe that we are at a crossroads of growing and if done with purposeful grace the church will blossom.

I would be delighted to exchange thoughts with anyone.

Miki

# APPENDIX A

## Page 2

Dr. Richard Stein, Retired Psychiatrist, 603-593-8249, [rhs.nhjaff@gmail.com](mailto:rhs.nhjaff@gmail.com)

I offer my views of the First Church in Jaffrey (FCiJ), as a non-member friend of the church, a 35-year resident in the village community, and an engaged member of civic organizations in the area.

Situated in historic Jaffrey Center, within (yet somewhat distinct from) the larger town of [East] Jaffrey, the handsome FCiJ, along with the neighboring 1775 Meeting House, serves as a community focal point. It physically “anchors” the ‘Common’ or village center, and it is equally a locus of various social activities in addition to church services. The FCiJ and its congregation are welcoming, charitable, and service-oriented. In my estimation, church members are generally agreeable, interesting, comfortable, educated...and understated, or “Yankee” modest. Our pastor of recent years has engaged a more diverse and much expanded membership.

The attached Parish Hall has been host to a range of open fellowship meetings (luncheons, yoga, bridge club, A.A., Christmas parties) which serve the community. The sanctuary itself has hosted weddings, funerals, musical events, lectures, celebrations, etc., which also serve the populace.

I appreciate that the ministry at FCiJ has always seemed to me to be progressive, collaborative, relevant, and apolitical. The decline in America of non-evangelical churches/religions is concerning, ministries like the FCiJ are at risk unless there are cultural/structural shifts, or ways of appealing to youth (which in recent years is occurring at FCiJ).

The FCiJ is annual the prime mover of this community’s largest public event. The annual (for more than 100 years) Church Fair, engages virtually all of its members, and a great many non-members in planning, donating, collecting, sorting, setting up and taking down everything needed to create the event. It’s one big day, (backed by months of effort and hundreds of volunteer hours) for a sale of antiques, art, baked goods, luncheon, plants, furniture, electronics, dry goods, and children’s toys and games, etc. The proceeds are divided between Church missions, and several local charities. Though a tremendous effort, the Fair brings the community together in a happy (and nostalgic) event, and draws people in from many other towns and backgrounds. This FCiJ project and ‘celebration’, serves the church and several worthy community causes which share the income therefrom.

Respectfully,

Richard Stein

# APPENDIX A

## Page 3

### Reference for First Church Search Circle

February 13, 2026

Rich Dufresne, Retired Clinical Social Worker and Human Resource Consultant.

[rdufresne@springhilltop.com](mailto:rdufresne@springhilltop.com)

I am very pleased to have been asked to submit this reference. My spiritual formation has been influenced by growing up in a Catholic home where prayer, liturgy and giving to others were highly stressed. This development continued during my undergrad studies at the College of the Holy Cross (Worcester, MA) and beyond.

Given that background, participating in a faith community has been central in my life. Three years ago my wife, Karen and I decided to attend the First Church for Advent and Christmas Services. Allow me to highlight what it is about First Church that makes it a very special and meaningful place for me.

**Community:** From my first visit I experienced a very open and genuine welcoming spirit among the people. This spirit is evident in the way people show interest in others, are willing to volunteer and help in the running of the church. This spirit is a life line that nurtures this community.

This is a faith community that believes action in service to others is critical. Ministries of individual community members have been encouraged and supported by the congregation. Examples of these ministries are work with immigrants and helping organizations in Ukraine. First Church also responds to the needs in the local community in partnering with organizations that help those who need food and housing, for example.

The members of the community are eager to learn and grow. In many ways you could describe the culture of First Church as a learning community. Workshop series are always well attended and appreciated.

Finally, this is a community that believes in celebrating with one another.

**Worship:** Worship, of course, is a major cornerstone for a faith based community. The services at First Church consistently provide the congregation time for meaningful prayer and meditation. The reflections, readings and music demonstrate great care in the planning of each service. They blend in such a way that growth and renewal in one's faith is ever present.

The integration of prayers and music from other traditions is also welcomed and appreciated.

Special services during Lent and Advent and the monthly prayer and care gatherings are additional opportunities to gather and pray.

# APPENDIX A

## Page 4

With the risk of going beyond the boundaries of a reference, I would like to conclude in providing my recommendations as to the attributes and gifts in the next pastor that I believe would best serve the needs of First Church. I hope this is helpful.

Please feel free to contact me if additional discussion would be helpful.

### **Recommended Gifts and Attributes for the next Pastor**

- A pastor who can relate scripture to today's world in a way to help individuals to discern what is God's call for him or her at this time
- A leader who is spirit filled and inspires a deep faith in the teachings of Jesus
- A leader who is enthusiastic and welcoming
- A leader who is ready to engage in the life of the greater community as well as the community of First Church
- A leader who loves to teach
- A leader who has the experience to work with a mature community and to help it grow into new possibilities

Respectfully,

Rich Dufresne

#### Reference for First Church

Rich Dufresne, Retired Clinical Social Worker

I am very pleased to have been asked to submit this reference

Community: A very open and welcoming spirit exists among the people. This spirit is evident in the way people show interest in others, are willing to volunteer and help in the running of the church. This spirit is a lifeline that nurtures this community.

This is a faith community that believes action in service to others is critical. Ministries of individual community members have been encouraged and supported by the congregation.

First Church also responds to the needs in the local community in partnering with organizations that help those who need food and housing, for example.

Worship: The services at First Church consistently provide the congregation time for meaningful prayer and meditation. The reflections, readings and music demonstrate great care in the planning of each service. They blend in such a way that growth and renewal in one's faith is ever present.

# APPENDIX B

## Page 1

We asked all members and friends to answer the question - Why I love First Church?

- “The community of many wonderful people who care. “
- “The music and leadership of (Minister of Music) and the participation of voices.”
- “First Church is extremely welcoming!”
- “I love the music; I love singing with the choir.”
- “I love First Church of Jaffrey because of the warm and faithful congregation.”
- “Where my brother and his wife were married.”
- “Where my wife taught Sunday School.”
- “Where we enjoy friendship each week.”
- “The first thing that struck me when I first entered the church was the beauty and warmth of the sanctuary. The second was the even greater warmth of the congregation.”
- “The sense of community and family.”
- “I have been searching for a church family and found (our recent pastor) and this church! It was perfect and I am happy and looking forward to the next phase of our church and where the road will take us.”
- “I love the church because of the open warm welcome to all. I also love the sense of community the church provides for my husband and me. And finally, the weekly music is outstanding.”
- “The people!”
- “My mother-in-law also loved the First Church, so it brings us close to her.”
- “I look forward to singing inspiring music and listening to meaningful reflections every Sunday.”
- “The friendship and love that exists among members and their desire to participate in doing whatever is needed to keep our church moving forward in God’s service.”
- “Openness to all; no discriminating.”
- “Peaceful and reflective weekly services.”
- “Music emphasis.”
- “The congregation/community.”
- “The church is a sanctuary for the community reflecting our values and hope for the world.”
- “The church offers hope in these trying times.”
- “The church is a positive caring voice and community in a harsh world.”
- “It has a warm feeling.”
- “Friendly.”
- “Inside beauty.”
- “I came because I heard the pastor was good. I stayed because that was true. But I am staying now because I love being on this new adventure with the community.”
- “I love the music and opportunity to participate.”

# APPENDIX B

## Page 2

- “I love the curiosity in this congregation.”
- “A lot of family memories here – my mom was a long-time member; my children were baptized here.”
- “Wonderful long-time friends in this community.”
- “The people are welcoming and for the most part open minded.”
- “The wonderful community and sense of both reverence and humor in worship.”
- “I love the sense of community I felt when I first came in the door!”
- “The sanctuary is calming, inviting and warm”
- “Services are always opportunities to reflect, and I always leave with a new change to consider and hope for our world.”
- “The music is electric, beautiful and inspires faith. I love the Celtic House Band!”
- “Instant community.”
- “I love the community of the church.”
- “First Church is a sanctuary where I always feel close to God.”
- “The sanctuary exudes peace and the folks in the pews extend love to everyone.”
- “When you enter the sanctuary of First Church you will feel a sense of peace.”
- “The services provide moments of meaningful prayer and meditation.”
- “The reflections, readings and music all blend to provide an opportunity for growth and renewal in one’s faith.”
- “At the core of the church are the people; warm, welcoming and faithful.”
- “Over the years I have seen what it has meant for many people – despite all of the ‘ups and downs.’”
- “Friends, people that can be counted on.”
- “Very caring community.”
- “Spiritual home is very important to me.”
- “For its history.”
- “Church’s outreach to the community.”
- “Communing with the congregation and sharing the spiritual paths that bring us together.”
- “The intent of my very first visit to first church was to meet some people since we were new to the area. Everyone was friendly, kind, helpful, and I felt an immediate sense of family. For the past 10 years that has been a constant.”
- “I love First Church in Jaffrey because as long as I can remember, and according to historical accounts, it always has been the heart and vital hub of this community.”

# APPENDIX C

Page 1

## **BYLAWS of The First Church in Jaffrey (adopted February 2020 at annual meeting)**

### **Article I. NAME**

The name of the Church is **The First Church in Jaffrey**. The organization is variously referred to as FCiJ and First Church. It is located in Jaffrey, NH and incorporated under the laws of the State of New Hampshire. The words “Congregational,” “United Church of Christ” and/or “UCC” may be inserted under the name of the Church when appropriate to indicate the historical and current denomination affiliation.

### **Article II. COVENANT**

*We covenant with one another and with God, as members and friends of The First Church in Jaffrey, to unite in Christian fellowship, worship and service, exemplifying the teachings of Jesus Christ.*

*We covenant to communicate openly and respectfully, seeking a vision for our church in the world. Like our forebears, we depend on the Grace of God and the Holy Spirit to lead, inspire, and empower us to love one another and to seek peace and justice.*

*All who wish to be in covenant with us are welcome regardless of age, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual or gender identity or expression, physical or mental ability, education, immigration status or economic status.*

*The First Church in Jaffrey is a member of the United Church of Christ and as such, shares a common goal to be in covenant with the church universal and all of God’s creation.*

### **Article III. MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Section 1: Definition of Membership**

Membership is defined by a desire to be in covenant with FCiJ and to share our gifts, talents, time and resources, each according to our ability and life circumstances. Members and Associate Members have the same rights and responsibilities as stipulated in Section 2 below.

- **Regular Membership** - Those who are solely in covenant with FCiJ and hold no membership in another faith community.
- **Associate Membership** - Those who wish to maintain their covenantal relationships with other faith communities in addition to FCiJ.

As stated in our covenant we welcome all who wish to participate in the life and ministry of FCiJ regardless of membership/non-membership status, worship participation, or financial contribution. Persons wishing to become members or associate members of this church should speak with both the Pastor and the Moderator, who will bring forward the names to the Executive Circle for acceptance.

#### **Section 2: Rights and Responsibilities**

Members and Associate Members:

# APPENDIX C

## Page 2

- May vote on all legal matters coming before the FCiJ,
- Hold elected office,
- Serve on the Executive Circle, and
- Serve as Delegates to United Church of Christ meetings.

Responsibilities to the organization: Members, Associate Members and others who participate in the life and activities of FCiJ are encouraged to support the church with their time, talent, and treasure according to their means. An annual stewardship pledge is encouraged so that sound fiscal management of the FCiJ can be maintained.

### **Article IV: MEETINGS**

#### **Worship:**

Weekly and special worship services shall be held at such a time and location that best serves the Church. Observance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed on the first Sunday of each month or as deemed appropriate by the pastor(s) and Executive Circle.

#### **Annual Meeting:**

The annual business meeting of the FCiJ shall be held following worship on the last Sunday in January, weather and circumstances permitting. The purpose of the meeting is to review and accept the reports as published in the Annual Report, elect Officers (Moderator, Treasurer and Clerk) and Trustees, adopt the annual budget, and transact any other business that may come before the membership of the church.

#### **Quarterly Meetings:**

Quarterly Congregational Meetings shall be held on the last Sunday of March, June, and September following worship, weather permitting. The purpose of these meetings is to share information, hold work or listening circles, get updates on the life of the church, and engage in any such business or activity that supports the life and ministry of FCiJ.

#### **Special Meetings:**

A Special Meeting of the Church can be called by the Clerk at the request of the Pastor, the Moderator, the Executive Circle or five or more members or associate members of the church. All requests shall be made in writing with the requested nature and business to be enacted clearly stated. Only the stated business shall be transacted at a Special Meeting. All notice requirements shall apply for Special Meetings as for the Annual Meeting.

#### **Notice, Quorum, Proxies and Votes:**

- **Notice:** Notice of any congregational meeting shall be posted in two places and read during worship for two Sundays prior to the date of the meeting.
- **Proxies:** For the Annual Meeting or Special Meetings, the Clerk will send proxies via USPS to all Members and Associate Members. Proxies must describe the items being voted upon. No assignment of voting rights can be given to another Member or Associate Member.
- **Quorums:** For the purpose of obtaining a quorum for a congregational meeting, 30% of the eligible voting membership (including returned/signed Proxies) shall constitute a quorum. Executive Circle meetings shall have a quorum of seven members including officers.
- **Votes:** All Members and Associate Members share the same voting privileges. Each Member or Associate Member has a single vote on any matter legally brought before the congregation.

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**Fiscal Year:** The fiscal year of the church shall be from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **Article V: PASTOR**

**Duties:** The Pastor shall have charge of the spiritual welfare of the Church, preaching and leading worship, administering the sacraments, leading Bible study, and offering counsel and encouragement to lay leaders as needed. The Pastor shall visit members and friends of the Church and participate in wider church activities as time permits. The Pastor shall serve as the Head of Staff. The Pastor shall be an ex-officio member (voice without vote) of the Executive Circle, but may be a regular voting member at congregational meetings (see descriptions below).

**Settled Pastor:** The Settled Pastor shall be called for an indefinite period of time by a super (90%) majority of the members and associate members present at a legally noticed congregational meeting called for this purpose. Termination of the call may be arranged by mutual consent of the Pastor and congregation. The Church may, by a super majority (90%) of the members and associate members present at a legally noticed congregational meeting, request a Pastor's resignation within 60 days. A Pastor shall give 60-day notice when she/he wishes to leave her/his call as pastor of FCiJ.

### **Interim and Designated Pastors:**

- Interim Pastors assume the duties of a settled pastor on a temporary basis according to scope of work detailed by the search group. He or she does not typically move church membership to this congregation or move standing to its related UCC Association. The Executive Circle oversees the search for an Interim Pastor.
- A Designated Term Pastor is a called position for a designated time period. The scope of work often includes revitalization or turnaround, mergers, or healing in a crisis. The Designated Term Pastor may move church membership to the congregation served and may move standing to the related association. Calls to Designated Term Pastors are voted upon by a super-majority (90%) of the members, as outlined in the paragraph above related to "Settled Pastors".

### **Article VI: OFFICERS AND OTHER ELECTED CIRCLES**

**Moderator:** The Moderator shall be elected at the annual meeting for a two-year term. The moderator shall preside at all regular and special meetings of the Church, chair the Executive Circle and, in cooperation with the pastor, develop the agenda for its meetings.

At Executive Circle meetings the Moderator shall solicit reports from each of the active circles and ad hoc Task Forces (if any are at work) helping to ensure that open and respectful communication is shared among all members of the Executive Circle, staff, and pastor.

**Treasurer:** The Treasurer shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for a two-year term. The Treasurer must be bonded. The Treasurer shall be responsible for:

- Safeguarding church assets
- Signing checks
- Counting the offering collection, assisted by other collectors as authorized by the Trustees.
- Overseeing financial operations of the church,
- Reviewing bank reconciliations and monthly financial reports, and

# APPENDIX C

## Page 4

- Regularly communicating financial matters to the Trustee, the Executive Circle and the congregation at quarterly and annual meetings.
- Preparing the church's annual budget under the guidance of the Trustees Circle for approval by the Executive Circle prior to a vote of acceptance by the congregation.
- The Treasurer may recommend an assistant treasurer for appointment by the Executive Circle.

**Clerk:** The Clerk shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for a two-year term.

The Clerk shall keep in permanent archival form, all records of the Church:

- Financial reports
- Minutes of regular and special meetings
- Minutes of the Executive Circle
- Records of Church membership, baptisms, marriages, and deaths in the congregation

The Clerk also:

- Issues all notices and Letters of Transfer
- Posts and files legal notices of meetings

**Trustees:** In addition to the above three officers, there will be a total of five Trustees elected by church members at the Annual Meeting. Each Trustee will serve a 3-year term. The Trustees should name two alternates each year; these individuals will be encouraged to attend meetings and will have a vote if there are insufficient Trustees present to attain a quorum of three.

Each Trustee shall serve a maximum of two consecutive terms and is eligible to return to the Trustees after a year off the circle. To initiate the cycle process described above the current Trustees are to decide among themselves who wishes to continue for the coming term, and which rotation cycle (A:1, B:2, C:2) they will accept.

Only one member of a household should serve on the Trustees at the same time. In the event of a sudden vacancy, the Executive Circle will appoint a temporary Trustee to complete the term of the party leaving. The Trustees may appoint a Director of Buildings and Grounds and a Recorder to take minutes.

The Trustees are responsible for:

- The Church's physical property, buildings, furnishings and financial assets;
- The maintenance of buildings and grounds;
- Oversight of the annual stewardship campaign;
- Development of the church's budget as prepared by the Treasurer, subject to approval by the Executive Circle and church members;
- The signing of financial contracts with vendors, consultants, and employees;

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- Appointment of at least three persons (in addition to the Treasurer) to the Investment Advisory Task Force to oversee the professional managers of the Endowment Fund and other investments, and to make recommendations to the Trustees in accordance with the “Prudent Man Rule” and the church investment policy.

**The Pastoral Relations Circle**, sometimes referred to as the PRC, consists of the Minister and three individuals from the congregation who are mutually acceptable to the Minister and Executive Circle.

The PRC:

- Provides a confidential setting for sharing and mutual guidance in order to promote a healthy relationship between the pastor and the congregation;
- Offers recommendations on the pastor’s contract to the Trustees and Executive Circle;
- Is responsible for periodic mutual ministry reviews.

### **Article VII: THE EXECUTIVE CIRCLE, TASK CIRCLES and Ad Hoc Groups**

#### **Executive Circle:**

The Executive Circle serves the Church between congregational meetings as its executive body, providing guidance, counsel and, at its discretion, direction to all officers and circles, from whom it shall require periodic reports.

The Executive Circle is chaired by the moderator and includes the pastor ex officio (without vote), chairpersons of all circles and a member of the Pastoral Relations Circle. These shall be the voting members of the Executive Circle. In the event the chairperson of any given circle is unable to attend a monthly Executive Circle meeting, he/she is asked to designate someone from that circle to attend as its voting representative.

The Executive Circle shall:

- Meet monthly to review, coordinate and enact the plans and programs of the church.
- Serve as a point of communication sharing information among the various circles and seeking recommendations and/or obtaining votes on matters related to day-to-day management of the church;
- Oversee the ongoing life of the Church, including filling vacancies in elected positions pending the annual meeting;
- Develop plans and programs with the pastor and other interested members and friends to recommend to the Church body;
- Receive and consider, before each annual meeting, the entire budget submitted by the Trustees, which reflects the proposed budgets of all activities;
- Make recommendations to the annual meeting of the Church upon expenditures and income, and
- Review requests for special events or new initiatives to be held under the auspices of the Church.

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All gifts and bequests to the Church shall be reported to the Trustee and then to the Executive Council for their approval. Restricted gifts, if approved, shall be applied in accordance with the conveying instrument.

**Open-to-all Circles:** First Church's Circles are task-oriented with specific areas of responsibilities. Participation is voluntary; however, all individuals active in the life of the church are encouraged to participate on at least one circle. In any of the following circles, individuals are not required to be church members. Each circle selects a chair who also serves as its representative to the Executive Circle. All Circles submit proposed budgets to the Trustee Circle.

The Worship Circle partners with our Pastor, Minister of Music and the Church Community to help create meaningful worship and other resources and opportunities that deepen faith and enrich lives.

Additional responsibilities of the Worship Circle include:

- Recruiting and training volunteers for the tasks that support the Sunday worship service (greeters, ushers, communion prep, readers, flowers, service prep);
- Seeing that someone is responsible for flowers and special decorations of the sanctuary for special services;
- Helping arrange for supply pastors as needed; and
- Ensuring that pastoral care is being provided as needed.

The Benevolences/Social Justice Circle selects and funds worthy programs/services that benefit the local, regional, or global community. Specific tasks are to:

- Select recipients for scholarships
- Oversee 5-for-5 UCC offerings. Funding comes from budgeted items, Church Fair funds, and special offerings
- Search for hands-on ways to build ties with local service agencies

The Communications Circle coordinates information flow to the church community and the Monadnock region through our FCiJ website, *The Weathervane* newsletter, advertisements/articles in local newspapers, and social media. Specifically, it:

- Generates e-blasts about upcoming events
- Handles posters and press releases
- Is responsible for bulletins boards and directory
- Develops outreach tools and activities

The Fair Circle organizes the Annual Summer Fair, the primary fundraising/mission program of First Church. It may develop and undertake additional fundraising events with the approval of the EC.

The Fellowship Circle coordinates opportunities to share food and conversation at weekly Coffee Hour, post-Memorial Service receptions, pot-luck luncheons and other celebrations.

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## Page 7

### ***Other Circles and designated parties not participating as members of the Executive Circle:***

The Prayer Circle offers daily prayers as needed for members of The First Church or their families and for friends and neighbors of First Church. Meets once a year and then maintains contact via phone or email. Requests for prayers should be made through the Pastor or a Prayer Circle member.

Ad hoc circles may be appointed at any time by the Executive Circle for a specific purpose. Examples include Bylaw Task Force (currently active), Nominating, and Search. When these are active, each shall report at the monthly meetings of the Executive Circle.

A Church Historian is appointed by The Executive Circle to maintain and update the archives and to work with the Administrative Assistant and the treasurer on record management policies.

### **Article VIII: CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Any possible conflict of interest on the part of any member of the Executive Circle, officer, or employees of First Church in Jaffrey shall be disclosed in writing to the Executive Circle and made a matter of record through an annual procedure and also when the interest involves a specific issue before the Executive Circle. Where the transaction involving an Executive Circle member or officer exceeds five hundred dollars (\$500.00) but is less than five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) in a fiscal year, a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of the disinterested Executive Circle members is required. Where the transaction involved exceeds five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00) in a fiscal year, then a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of the disinterested Executive Circle members and the publication in a newspaper of general circulation is required. The minutes of the meeting shall reflect that a disclosure was made, the abstention from voting, and the actual vote itself. Every new member of the Executive Circle shall be advised of this policy upon entering the duties of his/her office, and shall sign a statement acknowledging, understanding of, and agreement to this policy. The Executive Circle shall comply with all requirements of New Hampshire law in this area and the New Hampshire requirements are incorporated into and made part of this policy statement. ***(This Article is included upon the advice of the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ.)***

### **Article IX: DISSOLUTION (tabled, not adopted)**

In case this church ceases to exist or becomes depleted so that it does not function as an active church in the maintenance of its services of worship and general activities for a period of three years, the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ shall be successor to all rights and titles of the church property and funds with the right to dispose of its real estate and to preserve the proceeds thereof together with the endowments of the church, and to administer them as nearly as possible according to the intent of the donors for the support of the Kingdom of God in Jaffrey, New Hampshire, if practicable. This must be done in accordance with the laws of the State of New Hampshire and regulations of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. ***(Tabled at the Feb. 2020 annual meeting)***

### **Article X: AMENDMENTS**

**Section 1:** These Bylaws may be amended at any annual meeting by a two-thirds vote of Church members present and voting; provided, however, that such amendment has been presented to the Church membership in writing at a special meeting not less than a month before the vote, and been inserted in the call for the meeting mailed to all Church members.

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**Section 2:** Any Bylaw article, except Articles I, II, VI and VII may be amended at a special meeting of the Church, subject to the same provisions of notice.

**Article XI: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES -- These are addressed in a separate document.**

# APPENDIX D

## First Church in Jaffrey 2026 Budget Draft

	<u>2026 Budget</u>
<b>Revenue</b>	
40000 OFFERINGS	
40100 Pledges	\$180,000.00
40150 Capital Reserve Transfers	\$15,000.00
40200 Cash/Plate	\$14,000.00
40300 Special Offerings	\$7,500.00
40400 Woods Fund Offerings	\$1,000.00
Total 40000 OFFERINGS	<u>\$217,500.00</u>
41000 EVENTS	
41100 Concerts	\$1,500.00
41200 Fair	\$20,000.00
41300 Receptions/Misc Events	\$9,000.00
Total 41000 EVENTS	<u>\$30,500.00</u>
42000 RENTAL INCOME	\$0.00
43000 INTEREST INCOME	\$10.00
44000 INVESTMENT INCOME	\$18,000.00
Total Revenue	<u>\$266,010.00</u>
Gross Profit	<u>\$266,010.00</u>
<b>Expenditures</b>	
60000 SALARIES AND BENEFITS	
60100 Pastors Compensation	
60120 Pastors Salary/Housing/SSI	\$39,363.17
60140 Pastors Health/Life/Disability	\$6,666.67
60160 Pastor Retirement	\$7,705.36
60180 Continuing Education/Mileage	\$3,333.33
Total 60100 Pastors Compensation	<u>\$57,068.53</u>
60200 Supply Preacher	\$4,800.00
60400 Music Director Compensation	
60420 Music Director Salary	\$37,785.55
60440 Music Director FICA	\$2,890.59
Total 60400 Music Director Compensation	<u>\$40,676.14</u>
60500 Guest Musicians	\$1,000.00
60520 Supply Musicians	\$1,000.00
60600 Administrator Compensation	
60620 Administrator Salary	\$12,870.00
60640 Adminstrator FICA	\$984.56
Total 60600 Administrator Compensation	<u>\$13,854.56</u>
Total 60000 SALARIES AND BENEFITS	<u>\$118,399.23</u>
61000 OPERATIONS	
61100 Maintenance	
61110 Capital Improvements	\$15,000.00
61115 Capital Reserve Fund (NEW)	\$24,000.00
61120 Custodial - Grounds	\$7,000.00
61130 Custodial - Interior	\$6,000.00
61140 Instrument Maintenance	\$2,000.00
61150 Repairs	\$5,000.00
Total 61100 Maintenance	<u>\$59,000.00</u>

# APPENDIX D

## First Church in Jaffrey 2026 Budget Draft

	<u>2026 Budget</u>
61200 Supplies-Office/Cleaning/Paper	
61210 Cleaning Supplies/Paper	\$250.00
61220 Copier Lease	\$2,500.00
61230 Kitchen Supplies	\$750.00
61240 Paper & miscellaneous	\$750.00
61250 Postage	\$400.00
61260 Supplies - other	\$1,000.00
Total 61200 Supplies-Office/Cleaning/Paper	<u>\$5,650.00</u>
61300 Utilities	
61310 Electricity	\$5,000.00
61320 Oil	\$12,000.00
61330 Phone/Internet	\$3,500.00
61340 Water/Sewer	\$2,000.00
Total 61300 Utilities	<u>\$22,500.00</u>
61400 Administrative Support Fees	\$2,500.00
61450 Bookkeeping & Accounting	\$16,900.00
61500 Insurance	\$14,000.00
61600 Music	\$500.00
61700 Processing fees	\$200.00
61800 Software/IT	\$3,000.00
Total 61000 OPERATIONS	<u>\$107,350.00</u>
62000 PROGRAMS	
62100 Communications Circle	\$500.00
62120 Executive Circle	\$250.00
62140 Fair Circle	\$5,000.00
62160 Fellowship Circle	\$1,000.00
62240 Summer Pies	\$500.00
62260 Trustees Circle	\$0.00
62280 Worship Circle	\$1,000.00
Total 62000 PROGRAMS	<u>\$8,250.00</u>
63000 BENEVOLENCES	
63100 Association Dues	\$1,600.00
63120 Jaffrey Christmas Offering	\$2,000.00
63140 Local Benevolences	\$15,000.00
63160 UCC-Benevolences	\$2,000.00
63180 UCC-OCWM	\$3,600.00
63200 Wider Church Benevolence	\$0.00
63220 Woods Int'l. Fund	\$5,000.00
Total 63000 BENEVOLENCES	<u>\$29,200.00</u>
80000 Uncategorized Expenditure	\$0.00
Total Expenditures	<u>\$263,199.23</u>
Net Operating Revenue	<u>\$2,810.77</u>
Net Revenue	<u>\$2,810.77</u>

# 2025 ANNUAL REPORTS

of

The First Church in Jaffrey

prepared for the

2026 Annual Meeting



January 25, 2026

# APPENDIX E

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## The First Church in Jaffrey (UCC)

### ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

January 25, 2026

Call to Order- Sam Greene, Moderator

Prayer – Rev. Nancy Elder-Wilfrid

Hymn (R21) *We Gather Together* – Gene Faxon, Minister of Music

Moment of Remembrance- Sam Greene, Moderator

Approval of Minutes from 2025 Annual Meeting – Sam Greene, Moderator

Approval of Annual Reports of 2025- Sam Greene, Moderator

Approval of the Budget for 2026- Ben Wheeler, Jim Rothnie

Report from Bar Harbor Wealth Management – Marc O’Brien or Dan Isaacs

Election of officers and new trustee circle members- Sam Greene, Moderator

Moderator: Sam Greene (2028)

Clerk: Lisa Giragosian (2028)

Trustee: Roy Lake (2027)

Lisa Giragosian (2029)

Other New Business- Sam Greene, Moderator

Hymn (R29) *Now Thank We All Our God* - Gene Faxon, Minister of Music

Benediction, Rev. Nancy Elder-Wilfrid

Adjournment

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## Page 4 Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the First Church in Jaffrey January 26, 2025

**Members and Associate members present: 37**

**Members present on zoom: 5** (*Bobbie Gilbert, Pam and Bruce Hill, Lisa Bostnar and Steve Jackson*)

**Proxy votes: 6**

**Total: 48**

**Meeting called to order by Sam Greene at 11:45 with quorum.**

**Opening prayer** by Steve and two verses of “*Our God, Our Help in Ages Past*”

**Approval of minutes from 2024 Annual Meeting:**

Roy Lake moved to approve; second by Marcia Breckenridge; voted, approved.

**Approval of 2025 Annual Report:**

Sam lifted up all the ways this congregation is active and involved in the life of the church. He wants to be in touch with all members about interests and concerns ~ ideas for the life of the church as well as support. Great appreciation is expressed for all the people serving on Circles and the faithful work done this past year; great appreciation for the work done in the stewardship drive, which resulted in pledges not just meeting the stewardship goal ~ but with a surplus!

Roy Lake moved to approve; second by Pat Harmon; voted, approved.

**Approval of 2025 Budget:**

Special thanks to the trustees for putting the budget together.

Dan Isaacs and Jim Rothnie presented the budget:

There was a 62% increase in pledges.

4 things to deal with: 2024 had a deficit. We were drawing too much from our endowment. We now have a \$25,000 capital improvement line in budget. Re: the church fair – 100% of the church fair will go into the community – possible only because of the response to the stewardship drive. Gratitude to everyone for their support of budget!

Roy Lake moved to approve; David Bliss seconded; voted, approved.

**Investment Report:**

Marc O’Brien presented the investment report\* as follows:

*The investment committee includes: Steve Miller, Janet Grant, Dan Isaacs and Marc O’Brien. We were advised by Bar Harbor Wealth Management in Concord and Peterborough, NH.*

*The committee is guided by a formal, written investment policy approved by the Executive Circle: “The purpose of the First Church Endowment is to ensure the Church’s long-term financial stability. A portion of the endowment income*

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*(capital gains and income distributions) are to be used to supplement the church's revenues that fund on-going operations."*

*In late 2024, to bring long-term stability to the approximately \$450,000 currently available as endowment, the committee has recommended reducing our withdrawals for annual operating purposes from 6% to 4%, a rate we believe to be sustainable.*

*The fund itself has been created by your generosity and the generosity of many decades of our forebearers. Our investment policy states that our investment philosophy shall be the "Prudent Investor Rule". In interpreting this rule, we maintain a balanced portfolio presently consisting of 58% stock, 34% fixed income, and 8% short-term cash securities. We began 2024 with a balance of approximately \$439,000 and ended the year with a balance of \$457,000, a return rate for the year of %10.*

## **Election of Officers and Trustee Circle Members:**

Moderator: Sam Greene (2026)

Clerk: Nancy Elder-Wilfrid (2026)

Treasurer: Ben Wheeler (2026)

Trustees: Pam Hill (2028), Dan Wilfrid (2028), Dan Isaacs (2027), Marc O'Brien (2027), Roy Lake (2026), Janet Grant (2026), Jim Rothnie (2028), \*Dave Davis (2028), \*Joyce Petkovich (2028), \*Susan Peterson (2028)

Bylaws state: 6 members in trustees; trustees have requested adding more people to trustees because of the amount of work in that circle. This is a departure from our bylaws ~ but we are fortunate to have people wanting to be on this circle. Executive circle voted unanimously to add 3 people to trustees for this year and take this year to discern how it works. *\*(Val Petkovich, Dave Davis, Susan Peterson)*

Discussion of the issue was invited but none was forthcoming.

Move to approve slate of officers and trustees: Jill Tyler moved; Carol Hess seconded; voted, approved.

**New business:** None!

**Closing prayer and hymn**

**Adjourned at 12:20; Roy Lake moved; Marcia Breckenridge seconded.**

### Membership

Regular members:	74
Associate members:	30
<b>Total:</b>	<b>104</b>

### New Members

#### March 23, 2025

Emerson Colby (associate)  
Kathy Colby (regular)  
Scott Doremus (regular)  
Trisch Doremus (regular)  
Karen Shae Dufresne (regular)  
Christopher Gallagher (regular)  
Margaret Hawthorne (associate)  
Eunice Jadlocki (associate)  
Charlie Palmer (regular)  
Lisa Record (regular)  
Kerry Yaceshyn (regular)

**Total:** **11**

### In Memoriam:

David Trimble  
Harold (Dave) Davis  
William (Bill) Coleman

### Additional Services:

First Church is a community that reaches beyond our doors, and members of the larger community often turn to the church and pastor for pastoral care and support. In addition to four memorials and services for members and friends of First Church in the past year, Rev. Steve Miller officiated at six funerals or memorials and six weddings for members of the larger community.

**Clerk Responsibilities** include taking minutes at meetings of the Executive Circle and Annual Meetings, keeping records and updating membership, baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and deaths of members, and of pastoral changes. The clerk also prepares the report to the NH Conference.

Respectfully submitted,

*Nancy Elder-Wilfrid*

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, that God may teach us holy ways,  
so that we may walk on sacred paths.” ~ *Isaiah 2:3*

On most Sundays over the last few years, I have reminded you of the privilege of living in the shadow of our marvelous mountain. I do so not only to remind you of the beauty and bounty of God’s creation, but to inspire you to consider the ancient and profound invitation of the prophet Isaiah. Come, walk in the light!

As I consider the past year, I am gratified to remember with you all the ways that our church lives our faith in each moment (think music, food, service and love). I will reflect on the bounty of this year through the lens of four specific gatherings that offer a glimpse into our collective growth and prosperity in 2025:

### *February 2, 2025 – A Celebration of Music*

After an abundant start to 2025, we gathered for a wonderful Sunday morning worship celebration to honor the 20-year anniversary of our amazing Minister of Music, Gene Faxon. We invited several guest musicians, gathered a terrific choir of members and friends and created a day of gratitude and honor using Gene’s favorite music. We invited Gene to sing, play, direct, speak and even just sit and listen as we celebrated his gifts and faithfulness to our church family over the last 20 years. It has been a deep privilege to serve with him. Music and the arts are a foundational energy in our church which brings us together and inspires our faith.

### *April 17, 2025 – Table Fellowship*

For many years, our church has joined together with our friends at the United Church of Jaffrey for special worship during the Lenten season. This past year during Holy Week, on Maundy Thursday 2025, we hosted a unique worship experience around tables in our Parish Hall. Bringing together simple elements from the traditional Jewish Seder Meal and the gospel story of the Last Supper, we shared a simple meal of soup and bread (thank you Tim and Annie). Scripture, poetry and storytelling allowed us to enter more deeply into the spirit of this holy season. Food and fellowship remain a central point of growth for our church family. It is an opportunity for great community building.

### *August 6, 2025 – Welcome and Service*

I am sure that every year after our Annual Church Fair, we say, “This was the best fair ever!” Well, this year this was true! The spirit of generosity and community was evident everywhere you turned in Jaffrey Center. A perfect fair day (not too hot) led to wonderful crowds. The food, music, games, items for sale, were great but the kindness and welcome of each and every worker shone even brighter! And beyond the richness of the day itself, for the first time in a while we were able to share 100% of the fair proceeds towards the deep needs of our wider community. Service and sharing are a constant vision of how we love our neighbors at First Church.

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*November 10, 2025 – A Loving Farewell*

News of my retirement from pastoral ministry was not easy to hear, but the beloved community rallied to create an incredible going away party for Jill and me. Over 150 people from our church, the community and the surrounding towns came out to sing and dance, eat and drink, tell stories and laugh. The Park Theatre held us beautifully as we celebrated all that we have shared over these years. Jill and I are so very grateful for how you have cared for us. In the end, it is love that will hold us through all times and seasons, comings and goings. And let us not forget what Ember has taught us: “we haven’t had our favorite yet!”

O people of God, come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord!

Respectfully submitted,  
Steve Miller, retired pastor

I've said many times that I had the easiest job as a moderator at First Church. Steve Miller unlocked the door and Steve turned on the lights, Steve met with this circle and Steve reported for that circle, Steve did this and Steve did that. Of course, Steve did not do everything, but Steve was our talented coach. Since September when Steve announced his retirement, I've been asked "How's it going?" I reply "It's going great!" Oh, it's harder, maybe payback for my 44-month cakewalk with Steve as a mentor, but it's also more rewarding to be called on to do more. The best thing? I know I am not the only one happily taking on more.

Let me say now exactly what I said last year. This call to work for First Church occurs in the form of labor, time, money, prayer and will. Thanks to each of you who have stepped forward to give spiritually, financially, and personally this past year.

To recap the last quarter of 2025 and deal with Steve's departure, we have created two vibrant new circles. The Transition Circle will get us to the point where we function on a daily and weekly basis without our pastor. This has and will continue to require working with all the existing circles to get the job done. The Transition Circle has also been teeing up pulpit supply for the coming months and has given a short-form profile and job description to the NH UCC Conference to post our listing for an interim minister. Moving ahead to the next step, a Search Circle has been formed and has organized a "Who We Are" workshop on January 4. This session will start gathering ideas that will be part of a comprehensive "Local Church Profile," stage one in searching for our next settled minister.

This is the exciting and challenging story of 2025, seeing what we've been through together, both with and without Steve Miller and Jill Tyler in the parsonage. Fortunately, I have been in contact with most of you during the year, so I am confident that "we the people" can work together to support, communicate, coordinate, and nurture our church community in 2026.

Peace and Fond Wishes – *Sam Greene, Moderator*

Since much of this has been covered in other reports, I've tried here to provide a bullet list of goals and accomplishments since our formation by the Executive Circle at the end of October. The Transition Circle met five times between November 12 and December 22 with the purpose of assuring daily and weekly functioning of the church in cooperation with other circles. The circle has also made sure that we have pulpit supply for the foreseeable future and has submitted a Transitional Request document to the NHCUCC. It should be noted that a Search Circle has also been formed that will conduct the search for a pastor.

We have:

- Posted and promulgated 2026 officer openings.
- Reached out to potential new members.
- Communicated with Gordon Rankin, Linda Hirst and Kyla Pingree of the NH Conference regarding transitional documents, guest ministering and the path forward.
- Solicited supply ministry from the New Hampshire Conference list and other sources. We have pulpit supply lined up to June, if needed.
- Suggested that the Executive Circle form and name the Search Committee. We vetted seven church members from 20 potential candidates.
- Created expanded Set-up and Shut-down checklists for Sunday worship. A member of the trustees will now work with existing Set-up volunteers to make sure that things run smoothly on Sundays.
- Established a pastoral care schedule.
- Met with Karen Brown, church administrator, at least weekly to communicate about eblasts, bulletins, insert materials and general procedures.
- Endeavored to provide regular eblasts and insert communications to inform the congregation of our progress and future events.
- Worked to establish smoother use of Zoom and explore alternative platforms for meetings.
- Scheduled a visioning meeting to help the Search Circle develop a Church Profile.

*Sam Greene, Transition Circle Chair*

Over 20 congregation members either expressed interest or were suggested by others to serve on the Search Circle to lead the church's efforts in finding a settled pastor. In the end the Executive Committee approved a team of seven members: Karen Shea Dufresne, Annie Gordon, Susan Peterson, Cynthia Rouvalis, Ben Wheeler, Lee DeBell and Dan Isaacs (chair).

The Circle met twice prior to Christmas and plans to meet weekly in the early months of 2026. The initial Church wide event was held on January 4, 2006 with a workshop addressing the question of "Who are we at First Church" led by Linda Hirst from the UCC NH Conference.

The Search Circle has targeted the end of February to complete our "Local Church Profile" which is the official UCC document that will be posted nationally for potential settled pastors to view as they consider the call to work with First Church.

Soon after this, God willing, we hope to begin meeting with potential candidates.

Dan Isaacs

2025 was a full year for the Worship Circle, and I am grateful to the following people who have been part of this ministry: Weltha Barker, Suze Campbell, Gene Faxon, Annie Gordon, Pat Harmon and Margaret Hawthorn, along with Steve Miller.

We began the year honoring Martin Luther King with special music and hearing one of his timeless sermons. A special fellowship hour welcomed our friends from Venezuela ~ a time to meet them and enjoy Venezuelan treats.

We celebrated St Patrick's Day on March 16<sup>th</sup> with Celtic worship and music by our "house band." Irish treats and coffee (unfortunately, not "Irish coffee") were available on our way into church so we could "nosh" while we worshipped and enjoyed Irish music and Celtic prayers and poetry.

March 9, the first Sunday in Lent, we celebrated Scout Sunday, an opportunity to meet the scouts who call our church their home. The following week, we received 12 new members.

During Lent, we joined with United Congregational Church for Ash Wednesday at their church; on Maundy Thursday, we worshipped together here with a simple supper and communion shared around tables. 130 people were at our 10:30 Easter service, and 457 at the sunrise service Steve led at the Cathedral in the Pines.

In June, we joined with the rest of Jaffrey to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Meetinghouse. We worshipped in the Meetinghouse on June 15<sup>th</sup>.

November worship took on a different tone as we prepared for Steve's retirement. November 9 was a festive celebration of his ministry, featuring our house band. On the 16<sup>th</sup>, Steve's final service, our worship included a blessing for Steve and Jill, led by the Rev. Shayna Appel who represented the NH UCC Conference.

November 16, the Rev. Gordon Rankin, our Conference minister, preached as part of our transition from Steve's ministry; he led a Q&A afterwards, helping us begin to look ahead.

The first Sunday in Advent was November 30; the Sunday before we held our traditional "Hanging of the Greens" with guidance from Annie Gordon and other veteran greens-hangers. We began our Advent series with worship focusing on the Advent themes of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love; the "Dream Isaiah Saw" was woven through our music and worship. We were fortunate to have our "in house" clergy preaching during Advent (Ilona Kwiecien, Nancy Elder-Wilfrid, Dan Wilfrid and Bob Kyte). Each week we were greeted with new banners made in the color of the day (green, blue, red and gold) by Roberta Berquist; we wrote prayers each week on ornaments ~ gradually decorating our tree with green, blue, red and yellow ornaments. Weekly fellowship was also wonderfully color coordinated ~ who knew how many green, blue, red and yellow foods there are?! Many thanks to Suze Campbell for organizing all the varied foods, and to her and Margaret Hawthorne for preparing each week's ornaments! Christmas Eve was celebrated at 5:00 with our traditional candlelight service of Lessons and Carols.

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As always, we are grateful to those who have served as lay readers, ushers and greeters each week, and to those to set up and clean up our worship space ~ truly, we are blessed to have so many volunteers! And of course, we are always grateful to Gene Faxon for the wonderful music he offers each week, the “trio” whose voices add so much to our worship, and to the many guest musicians Gene arranges for and invites to join us. We are also grateful for Karen Brown ~ who each week creates our beautiful worship bulletins, managing to make sense of all the notes and information we give her!

Respectfully submitted,

*Nancy Elder-Wilfrid, Chair of Worship Circle*

### Annual Report of the Care and Prayer Circle

In May 2024, First Church revived a longstanding tradition, that of a Care and Prayer Circle. This circle is a small group of members and friends who set aside regular time to pray for others and offer compassionate care to any who need a little extra support.

We met regularly throughout 2024 and 2025, inviting any interested members or friends to join us. We have considered a wide variety of possibilities including: a formalized prayer list, hand-written notes of support, praying through a list of our entire community, a prayer box, prayer shawls, organized visits and meals, specialized training and a regular prayer service.

In September 2024, we began a regular monthly Saturday morning meditation. In November 2024 the prayer shawl ministry began. The prayer shawl group met in March, June and November 2025 to create prayer shawls and share a meal together.

We look forward to more growth in caring and prayer for our entire community in the year ahead. We plan to start meeting again on January 9, 2026 at 9 am. All are welcome to participate.

Respectfully submitted,

Care and Prayer Circle

*Lisa Bostnar, Carol Hess, Karen Shea Dufresne, Weltha Barker, Roberta Berquist,  
Marcia Breckenridge, Lisa Muilenberg, Dan Isaacs, Ilona Kwiecien*

### **The Trustees**

For 2025 we had ten Trustees: Dave Davis, Janet Grant (co-chair), Pam Hill, Dan Isaacs, Roy Lake, Marc O'Brien, Susan Peterson, Joyce Petkovich, Jim Rothnie (co-chair), Dan Wilfrid. In addition, our treasurer, Ben Wheeler, and Pastor, Steve Miller, regularly attended meetings.

Meetings were held on the third Thursday of each month at 4pm in the Parish House and on Zoom (for those unable to attend in person). Every meeting dealt with financial management and buildings and grounds. Other topics were handled as they arose.

Sadly, Dave Davis died in October. Dave was a longtime faithful and generous member of our congregation. He made important contributions to our Trustee Circle during his time with us.

Janet Grant has served as a Trustee for many years including a long period as Chair. She will not be able to run for reelection in 2026 due to term limits, but the Trustees wished to recognize her exceptional service by appointing her a Trustee Emerita. This is a nonvoting position meant to serve as an honor and token of appreciation. Janet is encouraged to attend meetings and engage actively in discussion.

### **Financial Management**

The addition of Shana Thompson as bookkeeper and Karen Brown as administrator has greatly improved the accuracy, timeliness and clarity of our financial management. At every meeting in 2025 Trustees could see complete results from the prior month and look for any unfavorable trends.

Our investment committee, Dan Isaacs and Marc O'Brien, meet regularly with financial advisors at Bar Harbor Wealth Management to discuss the performance of the endowment portfolio. For the most part 2025 was a good year in the financial markets and our results profited accordingly.

Stewardship Committee Members are Dan Isaacs, Marc O'Brien, Steve Miller, Jim Rothnie. The role of the Stewardship Committee is to solicit donations from the members and friends of First Church to fund operations through the year, provide for the financial sustainability of the Church, and support charitable organizations in our region and throughout the world. This mission is executed with a campaign conducted in fall of each year aimed at securing pledges of financial support for the coming year. The campaign for 2025 (conducted in fall of 2024) had four aspirational goals.

1. Eliminate the operating deficit. It was \$30,000 in 2024.
2. Reduce the withdrawal rate from our endowment from 6% to 4%.
3. Put aside \$2000/month in a capital reserve fund for long term maintenance of our buildings.
4. Contribute 100% of the net proceeds from our two summer fundraisers (the Fair and pie sales) to local benevolences.

The committee calculated that \$225,000 was enough to achieve these goals. Pledges in that amount were secured. The campaign for 2026 aimed at securing sufficient pledges

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to achieve the same four goals. The amount of pledges needed is about \$240,000. At the end of 2025 three-quarters of that amount had been pledged.

### **Buildings and Grounds**

Dan Wilfrid continued to provide excellent leadership for our work on maintaining and improving our physical property. A new computer and related electronics were acquired and installed early in the year. Gordon Services installed new railings at the front of the church. The granite steps were reset to improve accessibility.

Our sign on Mountain Road (Route 124) was destroyed in a traffic accident. A new one was built and installed. We engaged an engineering firm to generate a certified report on the condition of the Church tower/steeple.

The four-year project to paint the exterior of our buildings was completed. Susan Peterson repainted the interior of the parish office. Two windows in the parish house were replaced with new ones by Dan Wilfrid and Scott Doremus. The church organ in the sanctuary has been thoroughly restored and sounds great!

### **Other matters**

Twelve new members were installed in March, bringing our church membership to over 100. "Volunteer Sunday" promoted the activities of our various circles and yielded 25 people taking on new roles. The Annual Church Fair and Pie Sales yielded \$17,000 in net proceeds.

### Annual Report of the Benevolence Circle

#### **Scholarships**

We received 17 applications for our two \$1,000 scholarships given to Conant seniors. The quality was outstanding, and decision making was difficult. From the 2025 Fair and Pie Sale funds, we awarded scholarships to Logan Hector (attending University of West Virginia) and Izabelle Rollins (University of Rhode Island). We asked the trustees to tap the Woods Fund which is now under their control for two outstanding students who expressed interest in international travel and education. Jessica Yap (University of NH) and Hannah Manley (Rochester Institute of Technology) received \$1,000 scholarships from this source. Marcia Breckenridge presented the scholarships at Conant HS's awards night in early June.

#### **Support for Local Nonprofits/Service groups**

The Benevolence Circle held two meetings in the fall to discuss the distribution of funds from the Summer Fair and Pie Sales. The net revenue was \$17,000. The trustees had pledged earlier in the year that all monies raised by the Fair would be given away and nothing reserved for the church's operating budget. However, the trustees asked the Circle to distribute only \$10,000 in 2025 and reserve the remaining \$7,000 for 2026.

We decided that the \$2,000 for scholarships for Conant graduates (given in 2026) would be taken from the \$7,000. We left camp scholarships unchanged but might increase amounts in 2026.

In sum, we had \$10,000, \$3,000 more than last year. We increased amounts to almost all current beneficiaries and added one new organization. These decisions were based on research, site visits, and conversations with Steve Miller and Steve Brackett. Checks were mailed in late November.

#### **Camp Scholarships**

Horton Center Summer Camp \$600

Scouts, Troup 33 Jaffrey \$600

#### **Others**

Home Health Care Hospice and Community Services \$700

Meals on Wheels \$700

Monadnock Area Psychotherapy and Spiritual Services (MAPS) \$500

Monadnock Center for Violence Prevention \$600

Monadnock Community Early Learning Center \$600

Monadnock Family Services \$800

Monadnock Adult Day Care Center \$800

Shelter from the Storm \$800

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Reality Check \$700

Got Lunch \$600

JR Memorial Ambulance Service \$300

Jaffrey Food Pantry \$700

Southwest Community Services: \$700 (heating/fuel assistance, and other services)

Community Volunteer Transportation Company \$300 (new)

### **First Church Special Offering on December 24, Christmas Eve service**

The Circle again dedicated this to the Welfare Office of the Town of Jaffrey. Staffed by Carrie Traffie, this office handles all applications for help with rent, shelter, and other assistance. It has been a beneficiary of fair funds and/or offerings for at least two decades at First Church. The 2025 offering totaled \$871.50 which was sent to Carrie in January 2025.

### **From a Wider Perspective...**

First Church is a 5 for 5 UCC church. This means that our generous congregation contributes to four special offerings throughout the year as well as budgeting financial support for the NH Conference and national UCC through Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM)

OCWM \$3,600

One Great Hour of Sharing \$582

Strengthen the Church \$576

Neighbors in Need \$1120

The Christmas Fund (retired clergy/staff) \$490

***Benevolence Circle:*** Weltha Barker, Marcia Breckenridge, Steffie Kyte, Mary Jo Marvin, and Kathy McCloy-Raleigh

The 108th Summer Fair was successfully held on August 6, 2025 under a beautiful blue sky with a large crowd of volunteers and fairgoers. The success of the fair is only possible when more than 100 community and church-goer volunteers start preparations months before and work until the Meetinghouse is locked and the grounds are cleared after it ends.

This year the fair felt particularly festive with delicious food choices, the wonderful tradition of the children's games, the multitude of items for sale in the venues and the joyous sounds coming from the music tent. The fair is a stellar example of the community and the church coming together to strengthen our ties and raise funds for our communities. We look forward to the 109th Summer Fair on August 5, 2026.

### ***Pies***

What a pie year! Pie Friday started in late June and continued through August with a short recess the week of the fair. As with the fair, Pie Friday depends on the generosity of volunteers and donors who give time and money, showing dedication to this event. From the bakers to the sellers, the box makers and gatekeepers we aim to supply our neighbors with fresh, homemade pies each week. Even with new and enthusiastic bakers this year, we sold out early every week.

We welcome any new help. It is a fun and heartwarming time.

Together the Summer Fair and Pie Friday raised \$19,128.00. After expenses these events netted \$17,000.

A very sincere thank you to all who support and help make these activities fun, safe, and successful.

Pauline Brackett (Chair), Janet Grant, Pam Hill

The Communications Circle addressed its tasks and implemented the changes with the e-newsletter via emails and meetings when needed.

### **Launching the E-Newsletter**

In January of 2025, with the encouragement and support of Steve Miller, we tested Icontact, an email marketing platform. Each week an email was sent to friends and members of FCiJ who were already receiving a printed copy of the *Weathervane* newsletter and other mailings from the church. By sending regular email newsletters we were able to share current information on upcoming worship services, bible studies and events and to highlight some of the activities of local organizations that FCiJ supports. We are also able to share documents that can be downloaded.

Having received very positive feedback, we decided to send two weekly emails. The Tuesday edition highlights upcoming activities and events as well as reflections and reports on past events. The primary focus of the Friday email is the upcoming Sunday Worship. One example of the effectiveness of this new email program was evident this summer when both Church Fair and Pie sales information could be shared in a timely manner.

With the weekly email newsletters in place, the last issue of the traditional *Weathervane* newsletter was the May-June issue. A special thank you to Mary Jo Marvin for editing and producing the bi-monthly *Weathervane* for many years.

### **Communication through Print Media**

In an effort to engage community participation, we purchased ads in the in the Monadnock Ledger-Transcript (special section that included digital) to advertise the Church Fair and the Christmas Eve Candlelight service.

### **Church Website**

Mary Jo Marvin continues to send current information on a regular basis to George Colburn from Keene Webworks who is responsible for posting website updates. Until Steve Miller's retirement audio recordings of Steve's sermons were posted to the website. This practice was not continued upon Steve's departure. The website is due for an evaluation and redesign during the pastoral search transition period.

### **Audio/Video Recording System**

In 2025, upgrades were made to the audio system, especially the microphones. Trainings were conducted on how to record and edit, but Steve's original plan to recruit volunteers from local colleges or even high schools did not work out. It was decided to follow the example of other churches and recruit a team of volunteers from the congregation. Some have taken the training (we now have a video), and the trustees have stepped in to help. Using this high-quality equipment so we can post worship services, memorial services and other events will be one of the Communication Circle's priorities in 2026.

During this time of transition good communication is imperative. Our moderator, Sam Green, has been posting a "Moderator's Message in the e-newsletter that informs the

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church community of the transition process and progress. In addition to having them available through the e-newsletter, printed copies are available in the Parish Hall.

As we enter 2026, this circle will be meeting regularly and examining additional ways in which effective communication can support the ministry of the church and how tools such as the website and social media can be improved to share our messages with the community. A Communication and Media Policy was approved by the Communications Circle in 2023. It awaits approval by the Executive Circle.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sam Greene, Eunice Jadlocki (chair), Mary Jo Marvin (retiring chair), and Karen Brown  
Communications Circle members

The archives are housed in the lower-level large office of the Parish House; archival boxes containing documents from 1780 to 2000 are located on shelves along the adjacent interior wall next to the file cabinets that hold records from 2020 to the present. Current guidelines suggest that archives are well protected in a file cabinet. We will not need more boxes and shelves but will need high quality nonacid paper and folders.

Thanks to our administrator, Karen Brown, the lower-level office space received a major clean-up. Steve Miller strongly supported this effort and helped with many decisions.

In March, I attended a three-session workshop on archiving conducted by a new staff member of the Peterborough library who had considerable education and experience in archiving. Among the topics addressed were what to keep and what to discard, preservation storage, and digitization of records.

In the spring and summer, I worked with Karen to identify records, photos, scrapbooks, and notebooks that deserved archiving and discarding (recycling when possible) everything else. Bookcases and file drawers were cleaned out, and useless furniture removed. The space no longer looks like a dumping ground for everything that people over many years couldn't bear to throw out!

Remaining tasks: several years' worth of papers (mainly annual reports) must be labeled and filed in archival folders. High quality, nonacid paper (easily available now) is standard practice for all documents. Updating the guide to the archives is the final step. I have this on my home computer; once updated it should be moved to the church and stored on a thumb drive. Based on what I learned at the library classes, I recommend that we send the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> documents and record books out to be professionally scanned.

*Mary Jo Marvin, Historian*

Our current bylaws provide for a Pastoral Relations Circle consisting of the pastor and three individuals from the congregation with a charge to:

- provide a confidential setting for sharing and mutual guidance in order to promote a healthy relationship between the pastor and the congregation;
- offer recommendations on the pastor's contract to the Trustees and Executive Circle;
- be responsible for periodic mutual ministry reviews.

For the past two years, with Executive Circle approval the first year and congregational approval last year we have operated with two additional members. This has been beneficial in providing more listening ears to a growing church family and being able to provide insights to our pastor from multiple perspectives. Having five members has been beneficial to the circle and the pastor.

Meeting monthly, we developed a strong working relationship as a circle and provided our pastor with feedback received from the congregation and our own input concerning thoughts and ideas he had for our community

With the retirement of our pastor in November, we are currently inactive. However, we will be available to provide support to an interim pastor.

Pastoral Relations Circle: Lisa Bostnar, Lee DeBell (chair), Bobbie Gilbert,  
Carol Hess, Sally O'Brien,

The year 2025 with pastor Steve Miller, was a time which lifted all our spirits through music, reflections, and poetry.

Our vocal quartet continues to raise the spirits of the First Church community and enhance the worship experience. The members of this group are Janet Grant, Betsy Feiker, Joan Epro and myself, Gene Faxon. We rehearse each week.

The music for the weekly Sunday worship service usually includes a prelude, introit, three hymns, a choral anthem, an offertory, and a postlude. The music mirrors the sermon and scripture topics as much as possible. I play organ, piano, harpsichord, recorder, and direct the choir.

Our Easter service included a larger choir of singers from the congregation and the community. We were blessed that more singers joined in to fill out our choir. The choir sang music by Bach, Handel, Stainer, and others. We were joined by a trumpeter playing the prelude and postlude. The trumpeter also accompanied the hymns sung by the congregation.

For Steve's last worship service at First Church, we again enlisted more singers to enhance the choir and perform extra music.

The Christmas Eve service was a more traditional service. Again, we were blessed with additional singers from our congregation and community. The service was enriched by beautiful music from a violinist, cellist, and recorder player. Jim Reiman performed a song on guitar joined by Linda and Janet Grant singing.

Thanks to the donation by the late Dave Davis, repair work was done on our Pipe Organ. This has revitalized the instrument, for which we are quite grateful.

I hope to continue to offer more times for our larger choir to sing in 2026. And I continue to be grateful to Janet, Betsy, and Joan for all their singing this past year.

Gene Faxon, Minister of Music

### Interest Group

During the summer, church member Nancy Elder-Wilfrid asked the Executive Circle to consider the possibility of First Church becoming an “Open and Affirming” congregation of the United Church of Christ. The UCC has a specific process for a congregation considering this decision. Nancy was authorized by the EC to form a group to study the UCC process and make recommendations. An invitation for volunteers was sent through church communications. The following responded: Carol Hess, Pauline Brackett, Karen Shea Dufresne and Bob Kyte.

We met three times during the summer to discuss experiences of other churches who went through the UCC ONA process, the challenges and rewards. We shared stories of people who felt excluded or included by how churches word their welcome message.

We discussed the risks and benefits for the congregation including the possible loss of members who disagree and the possibility of drawing others to our church who agree. We ordered copies of the UCC ONA guidebook and began to study them.

When Pastor Steve Miller announced his retirement, the Group met to decide whether to recommend that the church begin the ONA process or wait until a new Pastor is called or disband. The decision was to pause and wait until the church calls a new pastor. We remain willing and ready, if called upon, to guide the congregation through the conversation that is at the heart of the UCC ONA process. Every voice will be heard and opinions respected.

*Submitted by Bob Kyte for the Interest Group*

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## Summary Budget for 2026

		2025 Projections	2026 Budget	
<b>Operating Income</b>				
	Donations	\$242,000	\$205,000	Pledges & Plate
	Fair and Pies	\$17,000	\$17,000	
	Miscellaneous	\$12,000	\$12,000	Inc. Flower Fund, Concerts, Receptions, Woods Fund
	Endowment Withdrawals	\$18,000	\$18,000	Sustainable rate of 4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$289,000</b>	<b>\$252,000</b>	
<b>Operating Expenses</b>				
	Compensation	\$160,000	\$120,000	Pastor (July 1 start), music director, admin, accounting
	Programs	\$7,000	\$8,000	Exec., Worship, Communications, Fellowship, Fair
	UCC Costs & Benevolences	\$27,000	\$27,000	UCC Fees, local benevolences, Woods Int'l Fund
	Insurance	\$10,000	\$11,000	
	Utilities	\$21,000	\$22,000	Oil, water/sewer, phone/internet, electricity
	Maintenance	\$17,000	\$18,000	Interior & grounds, repairs, musical instruments
	Miscellaneous	\$21,000	\$22,000	Office expenses, music fees, IT services
	<b>Contribution to Capital Reserve</b>	<b>\$24,000</b>	<b>\$24,000</b>	Long term sustainability of buildings & grounds
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$287,000</b>	<b>\$252,000</b>	
<b>Net Operating Income</b>		<b>\$2,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	