



THE MEETINGHOUSE

Nelson Congregational Church
830 Nelson Rd.
Nelson, NH 03457

OCTOBER 2023

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GOD'S PURPOSE FOR US?
By Rev. Eliot Fay

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! This is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation...and he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors... (2 Corinthians 5.17-20)

Some time ago when I was in town, I briefly overheard part of a conversation between two people. One had obviously asked how he might know God's will as it concerned a particular decision he was trying to make. The other had begun to speak of one - of what I assume would be several - suggested ways his friend might try to discern the mind of God for his life. This conversation reminded me of numerous interactions I have had over the years with friends as they wondered such things as whether God was leading them to join a school club; apply for a particular internship; take a different job offer; date or marry a person they liked; or sell their home and buy a different one.

In my experience, much of this anxious wondering tends to circle around an odd handful of ideas that are commonly suggested to try to tease out what God's thoughts on these and other matters happen to be...much like the troubleshooting section in an appliance manual. The problem is that these methods are rarely helpful or effective. Instead, they tend to leave people more frustrated or anxious when they find themselves still no closer to a discernible "answer", or feel retrospectively that a different decision would have been better.

As I think about such conversations, I'd like to believe that behind most of them is a genuine and admirable desire to orient our lives to the desires and commitments of God- to allow the trajectory of our lives to be guided by God's purposes. Fortunately, when it comes to God's will and purposes, we can set aside the lists of spiritual troubleshooting suggestions and turn instead to the simple and straightforward words of the Apostle Paul, who tells us that God's purpose for our lives is that we contribute to the work of reconciliation.

Where fear or prejudice or misunderstanding or blindness have built walls between people, and/or between people and God, we as Christ's ambassadors are called to teach and exemplify understanding, respect, justice, and truth in order to promote a vision of unity by acknowledging our shared humanity and our common identity as children of God. Paul's guidance may not tell us which club to join, but it does tell us how we should treat the people we meet in that club. Paul's wisdom may not help us choose an internship or job, but it helps guide our interactions with others at whichever internship or job we take; Paul's advice won't help us choose a partner, but it reminds us how we should treat our partner; and Paul's instruction will not tell us when to sell our house, but it instructs us to act with integrity and consideration when we do. So as we use the reason and wisdom and common sense God gave us to make the large and small decisions of life, let us keep before our eyes and in our hearts the work and message of reconciliation - God's purpose for all of us.

OPEN & AFFIRMING (ONA)

Everyone is invited to attend the initial discussion of the Open and Affirming (ONA) process, a social justice program of the UCC.

ONA is a way of deepening and opening our understanding of LGBTQIA+ people and their families, and affirming our faith connection with them.

LGBTQIA+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual. It encompasses the whole rainbow spectrum of human gender, plus heterosexual.

The church will be sponsoring a series of discussions leading up to a more formal affirmation of our support for ONA later this fall.

The meeting will begin right after coffee hour, around 10:45 a.m., on Sunday, Oct. 1. The second meeting is set for October 15, same time. Anyone with an attachment to our congregation (not only members) is welcome.



TUESDAY TEA

Our October 3 Tuesday Tea will be hosted by Gretchen Ezell. Directions will be sent out via email soon. If you need directions and don't have email call Hope. See you all on the 3rd!!

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Congregational Life committee held its monthly meeting on September 18. The first item on the agenda was our fall Stewardship campaign. The committee is gathering input from the congregation on why we give and what it means. We talked about what stewardship and pledging do: pledging is an expectation you set for yourself. It helps the church understand cash flow and plan our budget. We should also pledge time and talents – all should pitch in.

We are planning an event for **Veterans Day, November 11** – free pie and coffee in the morning, starting at 10:30, for all veterans, community volunteers, and other “helpers.” This event will be in the fellowship hall. We will be asking for volunteers to bake pies and help with coffee and setup. So limber up the rolling pins and start thinking about apple, pumpkin, lemon meringue, chocolate, blueberry ...

A new Bible Study series, and an estate-planning meeting (the latter a follow-up to the End of Life discussions earlier this year) will happen after the Christmas holidays.

The last item was coffee hour – we need more volunteers to provide a little something to go with the coffee! It doesn't need to be anything complicated, and not necessarily homemade. The signup sheet is on the bulletin board in the narthex.

Next meeting is Monday, October 16, 7 pm



CALENDAR

OCT 1 Worship 9:30
Informational Meeting
Open & Affirming.

Oct 8 Worship 9:30
Council Meeting

OCT 10 Tuesday Tea 10am
Gretchen Ezell's

OCT 12 Operations Meeting
zoom 7pm

OCT 14 Community
Kitchen Mobil Food Pantry
1-3 pm @ Nelson School

OCT 15 Worship 9:30
Open & Affirming Meeting

OCT 21 NH UCC Annual
Meeting

OCT 22 Worship 9:30

OCT 29 Worship 9:30

LOOKING AHEAD

NOV 11 10 AM PIE &
COFFEE COMMUNITY
HELPER THANK YOU.

NOV 12 Worship 9:30
ANNUAL MEETING
11 AM



ICE CREAM SOCIAL RESULTS

The one and only Ice Cream Social held this summer was our September 3 gathering. The Nelson Town Band was fantastic per usual and we estimate we served 98 people and raised \$647. All of that is profit as all of the ice cream and toppings were donated. Thank you to one and all for donating items and especially your time to make this social such a success!!

COUNCIL NOTES

Minister: Kate has officially left. Hope said she would help out in the office until a new person is hired. Eliot has been able to get out and do visits most weeks.

Treasurer: We are about \$5,000 over estimated income for this point in the year. However, we are about \$13,000 over on expenses. Joy will deposit the money from Old Home Day and the Sept. Ice Cream Social soon. We also received \$800 in donations on Old Home Day. The ICS had no expenses; everything donated.

Operations: Sandri Stone completed the walkway and patio in front of the church. Once it settles, we can sweep some stone dust into the seams. We still owe Sandri \$13,000. We are still working on a source for the additional hand rail.

Solar panel update – due to having a more efficient furnace we will need 8 less panels, saving 9-10K. Eversource has our application. We will be getting 38 panels.

The 2024 budget should be in draft form by September 28,

Congregational Life: Meeting

September 18. Discuss pledge cards and effectiveness of campaigns. Will sponsor a Pie and Coffee “thank-you to helpers and volunteers” the morning of Veterans Day, Nov. 11, in the fellowship hall. Will be sending out info about making pies, invitations, and other details. This is not a fundraiser, more of a “friend-raiser.”

Community Care: The summer events (OHD, ICS) did well. Missions giving and decide about Christmas offering recipient soon., including updates on the fuel fund.

The Community Kitchen mobile food pantry will be at the Nelson School on Saturday, October 14. Community Care will need a little help with set-up, parking, and publicity.

UCC Conference Rep: Judi asked about the Social Justice Fund – the steering committee will meet soon.

The annual meeting of the NHCUC is October 21 – we can send up to four delegates. See Judi.

Old Business: The ONA (Open and Affirming) group hopes to hold three meetings this fall. The first meeting, to introduce the ONA process, is October 1. Resource table will be available in the Narthex.

New Business:

Eliot is trying for a vacation week the third week in October and the week after Thanksgiving. He will work out the logistics with Congregational Life.

Clerk position: Betsy made a thorough list of her clerk duties. Susan will do most of it (minutes of all council, annual, and all-church meetings), and the rest will be shared with the administrative assistant and the pastor. We need a calendar of annual duties and deadlines.



Oct 8 Beth Holden Smith
Oct 9 Gavin Beeker
Oct 11 Ranae Beeker
Oct 13 Eli Fay
Oct 25 Steve Cady
Oct 29 Edie Putnam



Oct 13 Tim & Brenda McEachern



OPERATIONS HIGHLIGHTS

Work on the stone walkway is finished now continuing to work on the railings.

In financial management matters, we agreed on a credit card approach, and the benefits of putting many bills on electronic auto payments. We are also moving in general to electronic account statements.

Preparing work on the 2024 budget for draft presentation at October Council meeting.

We have hired a new Administrative Assistant. Brooke Godfrey.

Continuing discussion of updating Kitchen and work on cleaning/decluttering Melville Hall. Huge thanks to Brian for all his work on the cleanup project!!



WELCOME OUR NEW ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT



Brooke Godfrey is a dedicated professional known for her passion and expertise in human relations, and animal caregiving. She is thrilled to be a part of this vibrant community serving the Nelson Congregational Church, UCC, as their Ad-

ministrative Assistant. Growing up in a tight-knit community, Brooke developed a strong sense of core values and a love for connecting with people.

She was born and raised in West Swanzey, NH, and resides in Hillsborough, NH, with her husband, Nathan, and their four-legged fur babies. She pursued her education, work ethic, and passions, laying the foundation for her diverse career-oriented background. Over the years, she gained valuable experience in project management, team leadership, animal/wildlife advocacy, and hospitality while excelling in various roles. Her dedication to helping others has made her a positive outlet for her mentorship in community outreach and adolescent recreational programs, aiming to improve transparency and equality with a purpose. Through her various engagements and volunteering, she hopes to inspire others to embrace the beauty of coexisting, fostering a love for literature, language, and all forms of artistic expression.

Beyond her professional life, she has a love for reading, writing, photography, pet care, and gaming. Her hobbies cultivate growth and nostalgic value, bringing her joy and allowing her to express her creativity. She's a nature and outdoor enthusiast by heart. In her free time, Brooke enjoys activities like kayaking and urban exploration. She believes in the importance of work-life balance and cherishes moments spent with family and friends. Hiking, camping, and gardening are some of her favorite ways to unwind and find inspiration.

Brooke is committed to personal growth and strives to make a positive impact in her community. She believes that kindness and perseverance can go a long way in creating a better world.





**KEENE COMMUNITY
KITCHEN MOBILE
FOOD PANTRY**

Keene Community Kitchen will be hosting a mobile food pantry on October 14th from 1-3pm in the Nelson elementary school parking lot. The mobile pantry will provide local produce, frozen meats, dairy, dry goods, and bread I think. All is free and the only "proof" needed is proof of NH residency. There are also other organizations that try to come with info - southwest community services, feeding tiny tummies, humane society with pet food, SNAP. Spread the word and come check it out.



PIE & COFFEE

We want to celebrate and thank all Veteran's and all those who serve out community in one way or another and as volunteers as well. Please join us on Saturday, Veteran's Day, November 11 at 10 AM. When we will have various pies and coffee for all to share in.

**INVITATION TO:
"THE CHOSEN"**

The Community Church of Harrisville & Chesham invites members of the wider community to join them for a weekly screening of the TV series "The Chosen" in the Church Hall at the Brick Church in the center of Harrisville. We will meet every Tuesday evening from 6 to 7:30 starting on October 17 and continuing through December 12 (Halloween excepted). Each session will allow time for viewing and a brief discussion following. You are encouraged to bring a bag supper.




**222nd ANNUAL
CONFERENCE MEETING**
222nd Annual Meeting
Saturday October 21, 2023
Grappone Convention Center,
Concord NH
Register Sept 5 - Oct 5
**https://
nhcucc.regfox.com/222nd-
annual-meeting**



PRAYER REQUESTS

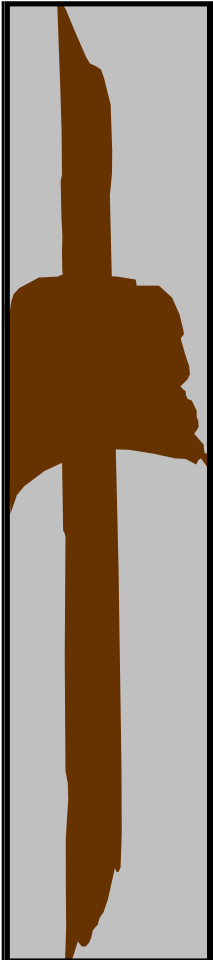
We hold in our prayers: Hope and Rick and Pat Steeves

We also pray for families and friends seeking to heal divisions, those in our community struggling with addiction and mental health, our service men and women, and front-line workers.

(All requests will remain on the prayer list for 2 months. Please email or call the Church Office to be added to or removed from or remain on our Prayer List.)

Meetinghouse

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