



The Spire

February 2026

The Newsletter of the First Congregational Church of Hanover, United Church of Christ

Rev. Peter Johnston
Senior Pastor

Chad Weirick
Minister of Music

Janet Cook
Director of Education

Susan Vetterlein
Office Administrator

Peter Jansky
Sexton

Valerie Fink
Bookkeeper

OUR VISION STATEMENT

We strive to be a church that welcomes all and empowers all in Christ to share their God-given talents.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We are a community of inclusive love that has no walls or barriers, where all who enter are loved, respected, and accepted for who they are, reaching beyond social class, gender, race and sexual orientation, welcoming all into our circle of love. We are a community of growth and transformation that is not content with the status quo but a community filled with the love and compassion of Christ, and an overwhelming desire to share that love. We are a community committed to not only praying together, on Sunday mornings, but putting our faith into action daily.

Next things next...

By the time you receive this edition of the Spire - by February 1, 2026—just before our annual meeting—we find ourselves standing at a unique threshold. We are looking back with gratitude at the year that has passed and looking forward with holy anticipation to where the Spirit is leading us next.

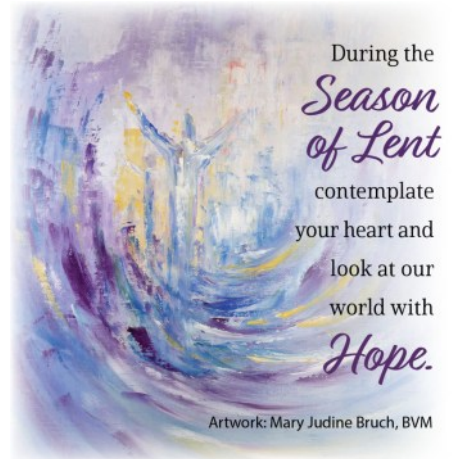
The annual meeting is more than just a presentation of budgets and reports; it is a gathering where we recommit to our shared mission. It is a moment to celebrate the lives touched, the prayers answered, and the beloved community we've built together. As we prepare to meet, I encourage you to reflect on how you have seen God moving in our midst and how you might be called to step into new areas of service in the coming year.

As we move into February, we also begin to look toward the season of Lent. This month offers us a bridge—a time to transition from the celebration of Epiphany into a season of deeper reflection and intentionality. What are the "next things" God is placing on your heart? Perhaps it is a new prayer practice, a commitment to local outreach, or simply a desire to listen more closely to the needs of your neighbors.

Let us enter this month with open hearts and ready hands. I look forward to seeing you all at the annual meeting as we discern our path forward together.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Peter Johnston
Senior Pastor



Artwork: Mary Judine Bruch, BVM



A smaller than usual gathering, but the true party animals showed up at January's Moonlighters meeting! We had great fun and lots of laughs celebrating our birthdays with "You Should Have Known" that trivia. What term is given to a word that spells the same frontwards and backwards?? Why, the word *palindrome* should have been on your RADAR, but we debated whether or not we should have known that! Many thanks to Ruth Hall and her creative edge in planning this meeting, for keeping us entertained, and rewarding our good (???) behavior with cupcakes and goodie bags.

Because Ash Wednesday is on February 18th, there will be NO Moonlighters meeting in February, **Our next scheduled meeting is March 18 at 5:30 PM.** (Notice the time change for this meeting). Sandy Adami and Glenda Larson are the contact hosts for our International Potluck Dinner. Everyone "should know" we are excellent cooks! We always welcome newcomers and invite you to join us for a yummy meal and warm fellowship.



Ash Wednesday Soup Supper and Service on February 18

We will celebrate Ash Wednesday with a soup supper at 6 pm at the church followed by the Ash Wednesday Service at 7 pm. The supper is free to all! To donate a soup or bread, please contact Linda Gilardi (garygilardi@icloud.com).

Steeple Lights & Carillon

Yes! I Would Like to Light the Steeple and Ring the Carillon!

Name _____ Telephone _____

In honor of In memory of _____

For the month of: _____, 2026

Please return this form to the church office with a payment of \$50.00.

Minister's Tea February 11 at 3:00 pm

You are invited to tea with Rev. Peter Johnston on Wednesday, February 11. The event takes place in the vestry (under the sanctuary) from 3:00-4:30 p.m. This is a time when members of the church family can sit and enjoy delicious treats with good company. Please plan on joining in, and feel free to bring a neighbor!



Blanket the World in Love



From February 1 through February 22 you can purchase a blanket for just \$10 in support of the Church

World Service Blanket ministry. For our neighbors who have experienced homelessness or a natural disaster these blankets are used to provide warmth and shelter, to carry items, and so on.

Drop by the Outreach & Service table in the church vestry. Your \$10 goes a long way in providing much-needed comfort to families facing difficult circumstances.





**Five Wishes
Advance
Directive
Workshop
Sunday,
March 15
10:45-11:45**

Advance care planning is an ongoing process of exploring and discussing goals, values, and experiences related to the end of life, as well as understanding one's health to guide future treatment considerations and choices. An advanced directive is a tool which puts those considerations and choices into writing so that loved ones and health care providers know your wishes.

The Five Wishes advance directive is an easy-to-understand document that lets you state your medical, personal, emotional, and spiritual wishes for end-of-life care, covering who makes decisions (health care proxy), desired treatments, comfort, how you're treated, and what loved ones should know. Five Wishes helps families avoid guesswork and ensure that dignity is honored.

A user-friendly advanced directive, Five Wishes has been used by over 40 million people. It's valid in almost all states and addresses all aspects of care in one place, making difficult conversations simpler. Come to learn more about the advanced care planning process, and to understand more about the Five Wishes Advanced Directive.

Blessings on the next chapter of your ministry!
~ Rev. Dev Spratley and
Rev. Dr. Laura Delaplain



Christian Education News

We are nearly half way through our church school year. Many, many thanks to the volunteers who have given their time and energy to help with Sunday School and child care in the Nursery/Toddler room. There are 2 new sign-up sheets in the vestry and volunteers are needed for the months of February - April.

For Sunday School, please consider volunteering for 2 consecutive Sundays. In that way, the children have consistency and get to better know our adult members. We've had many female helpers and would love to have help from the guys in the congregation, too!

Thank you for supporting the CE program in this way. If you have any questions, just reach out to Janet in church or via email at jcookie4@hotmail.com.



**Church Yard Sale,
Saturday, April 11**

Let your family and friends know that we are planning for a yard sale on the second Saturday in April. We accept gently used household items and clothing.

**** No electronics or
heavy/stuffed furniture.****

Contact Adrienne Rafferty for more information at adrraf@verizon.net.

Life Saving Lessons

During the Church Fair this past November, Glenda Larson had a conversation with other volunteers and the topic of potential medical emergencies came up. Glenda mentioned the AED in Riley Hall and the others were not aware of its use or location. This was an eye opener! So, we planned for a class to get us up to speed. As I announced the class in Church one Sunday, "The life you save may be mine!"

On January 18th, after coffee hour, a group of 14 members of our congregation participated in a 2-hour education session with Firefighter Eric Johnson and Captain Chris Azzizian, both Hanover Fire Department EMS team members. We learned about changes in CPR, and the use of the lifesaving device called an AED, and all forms of the Heimlich Maneuver were learned and practiced, and much more. We also were beneficiaries of these men's real-life experiences and ways to act and communicate in the event a person is in need of rapid medical intervention!

As an example, one of the first things a person responding to a potential heart attack should do is have someone call 911 and bring an AED device if one is available. Our trainers stressed that when delivering this order, you need to point to a person, make eye contact and give the order. When there are a group present and the request is perhaps yelled out, people may be on their phones, or merely leaving the scene and when people look around, they may assume others are responding to the order and take no action at all!

Everyone practiced CPR, which involves chest compressions only. We learned that depending on the age of the person needing CPR, the procedures are different. We used an AED training unit to become familiar how it is used, what modifications might be needed due to the location of the patient and space present. Did you know an AED kit includes a razor and a pair of scissors?

I think everyone agreed this training session provided many valuable sessions and the trainers were wonderful! In the spring, if there is interest in repeating this class, a new sign up sheet will be put out and we'll invite the Hanover EMS team to do an encore presentation!

~ Dean Larson

Learning How to Use an AED and Perform CPR



** One AED in the entrance to the Vestry where our name tags hang and another in Riley Hall as you pass through the double doors from the stairway at the top of the stairs to the left under the thermostat!*



Free Winter Coats Available at the Thrift Shop

The Silver Street Thrift Shop has winter outerwear for those in need. There is a limit of two items per person. Please let your friends and neighbors know.!

FCC HANOVER
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

NEWSLETTER



FEBRUARY NEWS

After the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, **January** can often feel like a hum-drum month. But not so in Sunday School here at FCC Hanover! We had meaningful conversations about the many ways God is present in our lives and wrote about our blessings for our blessing jars. We enthusiastically learned about the Holy Family's escape to Egypt and eventual return to Nazareth and plotted this course on a map. We ended the month with a surprise visit from John the Baptist! He told us all about his love for Jesus and his commitment to finding followers of Jesus through baptism. Wow! January flew by and was an exciting month!

FEBRUARY reminds us of Valentine's Day and love and caring. In and around our Bible lessons (listed to right), we'll be joining the mission work of Outreach and Service to collect donations of winter hats, mittens, and scarves to give to a homeless shelter. In service to our church, children will host and serve **Warm Up Coffee Hour** on February 8. In spite of February being a short month, our weekly calendar is jam packed with fun and engaging activities!



ACTIVITIES

- Feb.1 - Lesson: *Lamb of God*
Service- Making Cookies
- Feb. 8- Lesson: *Jesus Heals*
Serve Warm Up Coffee Hour
- Feb. 15- Lesson: *The Disciples*
Magnetic Fishing Trivia
- Feb 22- Lesson- *Jesus in the Wilderness*
Play Dough activity

YOUTH GROUP

During Youth Groups's combined January/February meeting, lovely Valentine cards were made for congregation members, family, and friends. Of course, lots of chocolate was consumed as well! Look for plans for our March meeting in upcoming weekly bulletins. Youth Group is open to grade 5 and beyond, We love new members and encourage you to join us any time! Bring a friend!

ANNOUNCING

Mark your calendars now! You won't want to miss our next FREE community event!

Featuring...

LINDSAY & HER PUPPET PALS

March 8. 2 PM. Riley Hall
Bring family and friends!

Hello From Your Field Ed Student

*I'm so glad we had this time together
Just to have a laugh or sing a song
Seems we just get started and before you
know it
Comes the time we have to say, "So long."*



I cannot believe my time with you has come to an end. The service on Sunday, December 28th will be one that stays with me deep in my heart. For not only did I have the opportunity to share my final thoughts with you all, but I felt all of your love in return.

As I sit in the quiet of my living room gazing at the fireplace, I cannot help but be reflective of the many, many blessings God has set in my life. The list is incredibly long and you most definitely are on it.

Many of you have asked what the next step in my journey will be. Of course that's not up to me alone but with God's guidance. During my time with you I have had clarity in my call: God most definitely feels I should be in a church setting helping people establish and grow in their ministries. So, I will be on the lookout as to where that might be.

Before finding that settled church home, I have one more requirement which is called CPE. (Clinical Pastoral Education). That means I will spend time in a crisis setting such as a hospital, hospice house, or nursing home combining hands-on ministry with deep theological reflection and supervision to develop effective spiritual care skills.

Once I have completed CPE and once the Committee on Ministry reviews and accepts my portfolio and deems me ready for ordination, a date will be set. I will most definitely let you know

when that is as I would love to see you on that special day.

Until then you just might see me around. I The Minister's Teas were a favorite of mine so I hope to drop by on occasion. And of course, you can see me on Tuesdays up at Shugah Hill.

Finally, I thoroughly thank you for the beautiful home communion set . Not only was it so very appropriate as a gift, but it is something I will use often in my ministry and always think of you.

While I will be sad to leave, I know I am better prepared to go out and follow where God leads me; today, tomorrow, and always 'til we meet again, my friends.

Peace and Blessing to you all,

"Student Pastor Patti"

FREE

Free Family Event

PUPPET SHOW

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

RILEY HALL

17 SILVER ST

HANOVER MA

Featuring Lindsay & Her Puppet Pals

SUNDAY, MARCH 8 2:00 PM

REFRESHMENTS SERVED

FCC Hanover Cares about Kids!

February

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Annual Meeting 8:30am Choir Rehearsal 9:30am Worship	2	3 6:00pm Tai Chi	4 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop 6:30pm - 7:30pm Prayer Shawl 7:00pm Big Book AA	5 6:00pm AA	6	7 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop
8 Scuout Sunday 8:30am Choir Rehearsal 9:30am Worship	9	10 6:00pm Tai Chi 6:30pm Trustees	11 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop 3:00pm Minister's Tea 7:00pm Big Book AA	12 6:00pm AA 6:30pm - 8:00pm CE	13	14 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop
15 8:30am Choir Rehearsal 9:30am Worship	16	17 6:00pm Tai Chi 7:00pm - 8:00pm Diaconate	18 No Moonlighters This Month 8:00am - 9:00am Ash Wednesday 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop 7:00pm Big Book AA	19 6:00pm AA	20	21 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop
22 8:30am Choir Rehearsal 9:30am Worship	23	24 6:00pm Tai Chi	25 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop 7:00pm Big Book AA	26 6:00pm AA	27 7:00am - 9:00am All Pro Dad	28 10:00am - 2:00pm Thrift Shop



To submit items for the church calendar, bulletin or the Spire, please email fully composed articles (and pictures!) to Office@FCCHanover.org



The Spire

First Congregational Church of Hanover
United Church of Christ
17 Silver St., Suite 201
Hanover, MA 02339

