



March 2021

Ripples &

Reflections
Reflections

By
Senior Pastor
Rev. Kevin
Pleas

Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.

—Jeremiah 33:3 (NRSV)

Dear Friends,

Having told you we would soon be doing a survey of the congregation, I'm sure some of you have been wondering when that was going to happen. The answer is, it's not. After weeks of stumbling around trying to fashion a meaningful survey, it's become clear to me that asking you to answer a few simple, forced-choice questions really isn't going to help us much. Do you like what we've been doing for online worship these last few months? Do you see us continuing to offer online worship even when we are able to gather again in our sanctuary for live worship? Would you prefer us to "live stream" our live worship services, or should we continue doing our pre-recorded version? Would you be alright with installing permanent cameras in our sanctuary for live streaming purposes? Would you support budgeting for a staff technology person to produce online services? ... I'd love to hear your thoughts on any or all of these issues, but they are not yes or no questions, and that's been the problem with trying to do a survey.

Since we began our lockdown last March, we have learned a lot about how to do online services. Huge credit goes to Adam for jumping in, learning how, and continually improving the quality of these broadcasts. The costs to the church have been minimal, since we are all mostly using our own cell phones. Adam's time has been the biggest investment, and thus far, he has generously been gifting his time, and his family, to the church. The other day he called the process a "rolling epiphany," which is a beautiful way of saying that there has been a steep learning curve. That learning continues, but by now we have a process in place that serves

us well, at least for the duration of our lockdown period.

Looking ahead, however, we've been wondering what changes will be needed when we begin to transition back to live worship, whenever that might be. For some unknown period of time, beginning we still don't know when, we will be offering both in person and online worship services. This is certainly going to be a challenge, but in much the same way that we figured out how to do online services, we will figure out how to do this as well. We will gradually come to an understanding of what the needs of the church are and how to effectively and efficiently meet those needs. And when it comes to getting beyond that transition period, we'll have a better understanding of what works and what doesn't, and what might best serve our congregation going forward. Through it all, we will continue to welcome your input on how you think we are doing.

So, bottom line, no survey at this time, but lots of opportunities to love and serve the Lord through creative worship and ministry. As we look forward to a gradual reopening of our church in the coming months, we can trust that God will continue to reveal to us "great and hidden things that [we] have not known."

Yours in Grace,
Rev. Kevin



FCC ANNUAL MEETING!

Sunday, March 7th at 11:30 AM on Zoom

The Annual Meeting will be virtual this year!

On Sunday, March 7th, the meeting will open at 11:15 am and officially begin at 11:30 am. The Zoom invitation link will be emailed to you on March 1st. You will need to cut and past the link into your browser.

If you do not know how to do that, please email Linda at LBonetti@fccmanchesternh.org or call the office, 625-5093!

Written Committee Reports are available on our website:
www.FCCManchesterNH.org

Financials were mailed to your homes on February 22nd

Senior Moments

With Barbara Papagian

First of all, I want to update something I wrote in last month's article. I wrote that my Ordination would take place in April, but after the article was submitted, the Church Council voted to hold the Ordination on May 16th, 2021, so save the date.

I am very excited that my son, Ted and his wife, Autumn will be moving back to New Hampshire in March. They have been living in Arkansas for almost three years and are ready to come back to New England. Autumn's father lives in Arkansas and they spent time with him, but they found it difficult to make friends there. They live in a rural area, and although they have a lovely home and Ted likes his job, they miss New England and their friends and family here.

The plan is for them to stay with me until they find a house. OK!?!?!? The good news is that they will be staying with me for a short while. The bad news is that they have seven cats, a snake, a lizard, and numerous exotic spiders. Well my first rule was NO SNAKE! So they did sell the snake and the lizard and all the spiders except one.

Normally I wouldn't mind seven cats, but my cat, Gracie, who is queen of the house, is not going to be happy at all. I'm not sure how I am going to handle that yet.

Autumn asked me if I wanted them to pay rent. I said no, but you can do some housework for me. She said ok and that she would do some cooking. This might work out well after all.

I have lived alone now for about twelve years, so I'm sure there will be some uncomfortable moments, but we will make it work. Autumn already has a job lined up and Ted can always go back to his old job until he finds something he likes better. I'm not home a lot, so it will work.

My boys are both in their forties, but they are still my babies, so I am happy they will both be close by again. I can't wait to have our first family barbeque of the season.

I sign off this "Senior Moments" with much joy in my heart now but ask me about this after two weeks with eight cats in the house.

Barbara Papagian
Director of Parish Care



The Current Book Club Session meets on Friday mornings at 9:30 am on Zoom

This session is led by John Rowe and it's focus is *Isaiah, Part 2*. If you want to join or for more info., please reach out to John Rowe at johnmwr@hotmail.com and he will send you the meeting link!

CHURCH REOPENING UPDATE

February 19, 2021

Dear Church Family,

The First Congregational Church Reopening Committee met again on Tuesday, February 16th. We are continuing to follow the progress of the pandemic with an eye toward beginning to reopen our church as soon as it is safe and sensible to do so. We are encouraged by the numbers of people who are receiving their vaccine shots, and the fact that the most recent spike in infections seems like it may be leveling off. We certainly hope and pray that these positive trends continue so that all our lives may begin returning to normal as soon as possible.

As we look at the immediate future, we will remain closed at least through the end of this church year. The current projection of the committee is that we will be open as the new church year begins in September, but our hope is that it will be safe to begin conducting some trial services over the summer. The committee will continue to meet monthly, and if the circumstances change more quickly than we imagine they will, we certainly have the option of revisiting these projected dates.

Thank you for your support, patience, and understanding as we continue to navigate these uncharted waters.

Yours in Christ,

Reopening Task Force

March Committee Meetings Announced

- Mon., March 1st 9:30AM—Senior Fellowship Board
 - Mon., March 1st 6:30PM—Deacons' Meeting
 - Tues., March 2nd 6:30PM—Membership Committee
 - Sun., March 7th 11:30AM—Annual Meeting
 - Mon., March 8th 6PM—Stewardship Committee
 - Tues., March 9th 1PM—Connecting the Congregation
 - Tues., March 9th 6PM—Church Council Meeting
 - Weds., Mar. 10th 7PM—Outreach Committee Meeting
 - Mon., March 15th 6:30PM—Church Trustees' Meeting
 - Sun., March 28th 1PM—Open & Affirming Committee
 - TBA: CYM & Teachers' Meetings
- Church Reopening Taskforce will meet in April

- Meetings are held remotely on "Zoom" and are **TENTATIVE until confirmed by committee leaders.**
- Zoom invitations will be emailed to you prior to the start of the meeting.



News from FCC Outreach March 2021



FCC Sets New Record for Souper Bowl Food Drive!

The FCC congregation donated a total of \$1462 for Souper Bowl VIII. This sets a new record! Last year approximately 1100 food items were donated and the previous record set for Souper Bowl VI was just under 1400 items. Due to the church closure we asked for monetary donations this year and counted each dollar as one item. The money will be sent to New Horizons which operates a food kitchen and a food pantry. This has been a hard winter in Manchester and your gifts will provide food for some of those feeling the greatest hardships.



One Great Hour OF SHARING

Sunday, March 14th

One Great Hour of Sharing is the Lenten Offering of the United Church of Christ which supports disaster, refugee and development actions and so carries God's message of love and hope to people in 138 countries. The UCC works with international partners to provide sources of clean water and food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, emergency relief, and advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons. OGHS also supports domestic and international ministries for disaster preparedness and response.

Please give your gifts generously on Sunday, March 14th. Please mail or bring your donations to the church office on or before Sunday, March 14th. Thank you for your support!



Food Pantry Donations Needed

If you would like to donate non perishable items to the pantry, please call the church office before you stop by!
(625-5093)

Items we always need:
boxed milk, peanut butter, canned meats, dry pasta and pasta sauce, canned pasta, canned vegetables, soup, cereal bars, boxed cereal,

pudding cups, fruit cups or canned fruit.

Food closet now provides toiletries

The FCC food closet has been providing food for those in need for many years now. Recently, we began providing toiletries as well - Being clean can be as important as being fed and is essential for good interactions with others. We are grateful to all those who donate to the closet; you help to keep it full. If you would like to contribute toiletries the items that are most needed include toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, toilet paper and bath soap.

Do you have extra paper grocery bags at home?

We could use them in the pantry to bag the food for our visitors. Please call the office at 625-5093 to arrange a time to drop them off.

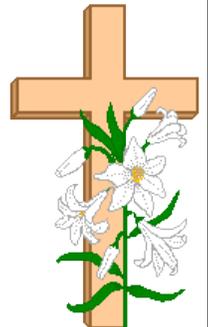


Children & Youth Ministries News



We're continuing through the winter with our weekly online Sunday school lessons for children and teens!

In addition to our lessons being sent out weekly, the children and teens have weekly devotionals and children's messages in our FCC Families Facebook group. If you would like to be added into our Facebook group or would like to receive the weekly Sunday school lessons, just email me at kyork@fccmanchesternh.org and I will be sure to add you to the list! You can also find all of our Sunday school lesson videos on the FCC Vimeo page! There's a showcase entitled Sunday School Lessons which have all of our past videos from lessons! During this season of Lent, families will receive Lenten activities each week! Each week, I will be emailing families activities and prayers that children can do on their own or families can do together. If you would like to be added to this email list, just let me know and I will be happy to include you!



- Kelda York, Children's Ministry Coordinator -



Daylight Savings Time begins on
Sunday, March 14th!

Remember to "Spring Ahead" by setting your clock ahead an hour before bedtime on Saturday night, March 13th.



SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 20TH!
THE HOLLY BERRY CHRISTMAS FAIR AT FCC



Open & Affirming Committee News March 2021

The church...welcomed my story and invited me in to experience the fullness of life together.” Rev. Carlos Jauhola-Straight

Participants at the 2021 NH UCC Open and Affirming Conference on Zoom were inspired by presentations and discussions about faith, reconciliation, healing, and community. We were reminded that our covenants knit the church together and bind us to God. **Rev. Carlos Jauhola-Straight** led the worship service and was joined by pianist Abigail Charbeneau. Carlos shared his powerful personal story and faith journey and talked about Open and Affirming congregations that are willing to mutually reach out and trust each other with their stories, “knowing that the touch of God will change our lives.” Carlos and Abby challenged us to continue efforts to be welcoming, but also to go deeper - to be *accepting*.



Rev. Carlos has preached and spoken at FCC several times. He graciously shared the worship service video with us. His sermon echoes the Lenten theme this year, of how lives are changed through the ministry of Jesus. You’ll notice that Carlos and Abigail recorded the service at FCC. Look for the service on the FCC website.

To view the service, see this Vimeo link – <https://vimeo.com/515454463>. The link will also be posted on the church’s Facebook page. We appreciate Carlos’ friendship and support of the FCC faith community.

Thanks to Selma Naccach-Hoff, Ruth Knowles, and Bruce Felmlly for sharing their thoughts about the *Be A Bridge* podcast we recommended. We hope their reflections on *FCC Friday Links*

spur you to listen. If you’d like to share in a discussion about the podcast, please reach out to one of the Open and Affirming committee members, and we’ll plan a Zoom gathering for that purpose. [Be A Bridge Episode 34](#)

Congratulations to Elizabeth Blood for the wonderful concert she and St. Anselm College musicologist Sean Parr presented on Feb. 18. The program, "**Celebrating Piano Music of Black Composers**," was offered by the Manchester Community Music School. The program included works by Florence Price, H. Leslie Adams and Margaret Bonds.



Save the Date! . . . Thanks to Adam Peithmann for connecting with his former professor and renowned colleague, Mark Miller. Adam and the Open and Affirming Committee are planning a Zoom lecture with Mark on Sunday, May 23 at 7pm. *Mark Miller believes passionately that music can change the world. He also believes in Cornell West’s quote that ‘Justice is what love looks like in public.’ His dream is that the music he composes, performs, teaches and leads will inspire and empower people to create the beloved community.*

Learn more about Mark Miller and his music on his website, <http://www.markamillermusic.com/about/>

Our committee typically meets on the fourth Sunday of the month, at **1pm via Zoom**. The March meeting is tentatively scheduled for **Sunday, March 28th**. If you would like to join us, please contact Carol Soucy for a Zoom invitation: carolsoucy@comcast.net or (603) 591-6387

Open and Affirming Committee

Elizabeth Blood, Jeanine Finefrock, Jeffrey Frye, Karen Hawver, John Rowe, Kathy Rowe, Bridget Thornton, and Carol Soucy, Chair.



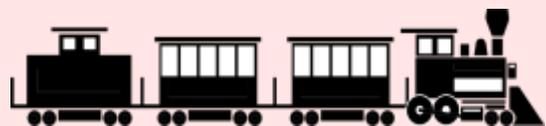
News from the FCC Meal Train March 2021—Liz Verity

What is a Prayer?

Prayer doesn’t just happen when we kneel or put our hands together, and talk to God. Thinking positive and wishing good for others is a prayer. When you send a friend a hug... that’s a prayer! When you make something to nourish family and friends, that’s a prayer. When we send off our near and dear ones with a “drive safely or be safe”, that’s a prayer. When you are helping someone in time of need by giving time and energy to their needs, you are praying.

When you forgive someone with your heart, that is a prayer. Prayer is a vibration, a feeling, and a thought. Prayer is the voice of love, friendship, and genuine relationships.

Prayer is an expression of your silent being.
Those FCC members and friends who volunteer to write notes, bake cookies & muffins, make meals & soups, with TLC & a smile — and give of themselves, do a lot of praying!



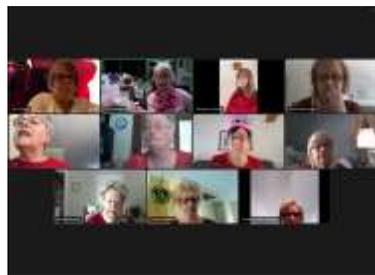
The picture above is the Meal Train notice board located at the top of the stairs as you enter through the church office doors. It showcases some of the many THANK YOU’s we have received.

Women's Connection News



The February Valentine's Day Zoom Gathering was very successful!

Our Gathering included friends from three time zones in the United States. We had a special guest from the Pacific Time Zone in CA., Barbara Smith-Delahunt! It was great seeing her and catching up. We had Terri Pattee who is enjoying the warmer weather in FL in the Central Time Zone, and the rest of us are all in the frozen tundra in the Eastern Time Zone. We were eleven ladies total. Doing Zoom does have



some advantages and seeing people from other areas is one of the perks ...amazing! We had a short business meeting where we discussed donating \$75.00 from the WC funds to the Memory Garden in memory of Deana Dubois, Eldena Lard and Pam Pleas. If anyone would like to donate a few dollars, it would be greatly appreciated. We would like to make it \$100 or more. A check can be sent to church with "WC donation to Memory Garden" in the memo. We were also looking for some ideas for activities to do in the next few months. One idea that came up was Seated Yoga and



Terri's candy jar prize

Meditation class. Watch the FCC Friday Link for the date and details. If you are interested, send an email to either Denise Beurivage (beau.de@comcast.net) or Pam LeBlanc (blanclp@comcast.net) and they can add you to the list. The last thing that was announced was the *Mystery Ride*. It will be in June this year. The exact date will be announced at a later date. If anyone has any ideas for this, please contact Pam or Denise.

One of the activities for the February gathering was a Valentine's Day Scavenger Hunt. The ladies were told six items and had a few minutes to find as many as they could. The last

item on the list was to have their purse. For each item they found they received a point. When it got to the purse they had to count up their loose change, find register receipts and coupons. The more they had the better. They gained points for each. The lady with the most points won, and that was Liz Verity! Congratulations, Liz! Her prize was the cute jar we painted for our craft. But before we got to the craft we had to guess how many candies were in a jar. Terri Patti was the winner of that. She will



Jeanine's finished craft!



Liz's prize!

have that jar to look forward to when she comes back from Florida. Congrats, Terri!

The painted Mason jar was a simple project. All that was needed was a jar, acrylic paint, color of choice, a paper doily either round or a heart and some yarn, cord or jute. Once the jar was painted the doily and cord was wrapped around the middle and tied in a knot. Once finished it could be filled with a few hearts on picks and a few artificial greens. Look at the pictures for a visual. Each lady that made one had a different take on it and used what they had on hand. Others watched and enjoyed learning.



Barbara's finished craft

We all had a good time laughing, talking, and catching up on what we have all been doing. Fun was had by all.

Next Zoom is Wed, March 10th at 6:30pm

The Women's Connection Mission Statement:

The Women's Connection offers opportunities for the women and friends of First Congregational Church to experience social time together, to build connections, and to strengthen friendships. We seek to encourage and support one another as we journey through life together at every season of our lives. All adult women are welcome to join us for whatever event interests them. Our activities are varied and have included outings, crafts, spiritual reflections, hiking and volunteering in the local community...something for everyone.

Join Rev. Kevin for the "9:10 Morning Watch"
Monday through Thursday Mornings
On Facebook Live [www.Facebook.com/
FCCManchester](http://www.Facebook.com/FCCManchester)

Bulletins for the "9:10 Morning Watch" are available
on our website under *News & Events* and then,
Sunday Bulletins

Online Giving via Our Website!

We have access to online giving on the front page of our website! www.FCCManchesterNH.org
For questions or assistance...Call Linda at 625-5093

Checks or direct banking can be sent payable to
First Congregational Church, 508 Union St, Manchester NH
03104

Offering Envelopes are still available for pickup!



THIS MONTH AT FCC

ACTIVITIES, DATES AND TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. PLEASE REFER TO THE PRINTED CALENDARS BY THE OFFICE OR GO TO
WWW.FCCMANCHESTERNH.ORG

MARCH

Monday, March 1st

9:10 AM "9:10 Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook
9:30 AM Senior Fellowship Board Meeting
6:30 PM Deacons' Board Meeting

Tuesday, March 2nd

9:10 AM "9:10 Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook
6:30 PM Membership Committee Zoom Meeting

Wednesday, March 3rd

9:10 AM "9:10 Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

Thursday, March 4th

9:10 AM "9:10 Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

Friday, March 5th

No Church Activities Scheduled

Saturday, March 6th

No Church Activities Scheduled

Sunday, March 7th

10:00 AM Worship Service on Facebook
11:30 AM Annual Meeting on Zoom (meeting opens at 11:15)

Monday, March 8th

9:10 AM "9:10 Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook
6:00 PM Stewardship Committee Zoom Meeting

Tuesday, March 9th

9:10 AM "9:10 Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook
1:00 PM Connecting the Congregation Team Zoom Meeting
6:00 PM Church Council Zoom Meeting

Wednesday, March 10th

9:10 AM "9:10 Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook
6:30 PM Women's Connection Zoom Gathering
7:00 PM Outreach Committee Zoom Meeting

Thursday, March 11th

9:10 AM "9:10 Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

Friday, March 12th

No Church Activities Scheduled

Saturday, March 13th

No Church Activities Scheduled

Sunday, March 14th

10:00 AM Worship Service on Facebook

Monday, March 15th

6:30 PM Church Trustees' Zoom Meeting

Tuesday, March 16th

9:10 AM "9:10 Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

Wednesday, March 17th

9:10 AM "9:10 Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

Thursday, March 18th

9:10 AM "9:10 Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

Friday, March 19th

No Church Activities Scheduled
(Deadline to order Easter Flowers)

Saturday, March 20th

No Church Activities Scheduled

Sunday, March 21st

10:00 AM Worship Service on Facebook

Monday, March 22nd

9:10 AM "9:10 Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook
6:45 PM Interfaith Women of NH Event on Zoom

Tuesday, March 23rd

9:10 AM "9:10 Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

Wednesday, March 24th

9:10 AM "9:10 Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

Thursday, March 25th

9:10 AM "9:10 Morning Watch Prayers" on Facebook

Friday, March 26th

6:00 PM Friday Night Piano w/ Adam Peithmann on Facebook

Saturday, March 27th

No Church Activities Scheduled

Sunday, March 28th

10:00 AM Worship Service on Facebook
1:00 PM Open & Affirming Committee Zoom Meeting
(tentative)

*CYM & Teachers' Meetings—TBA—reach out to Kelda York Church Reopening Taskforce will meet again in April



Holy Week Schedule

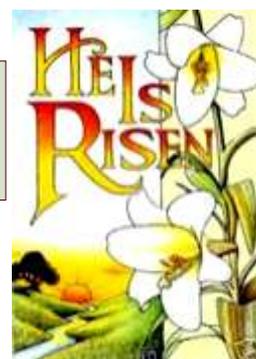
Palm Sunday Worship Service
March 28th at 10AM



Maundy Thursday Worship Service with Communion
April 1st at 7PM

Easter Sunday Worship
April 4th at 10AM

All services are held online
from the FCC Facebook page
[www.Facebook.com/
FCCManchester](http://www.Facebook.com/FCCManchester)





Easter Flowers Order Form



Please fill out this form and return it to the church office

Donor: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

In memory of: _____

OR:

In honor of: _____

Preferred flower: _____ lily

- Payment of \$17.00 per lily must accompany this order. (Tulips are not available)
- Plant pick up will be announced.

Deadline for ordering plants is Friday, March 19th!



Girl Scouts Cookie Season is here!



Girl Scout cookies will be for sale through the church office until March 5th, 2021. Please call or come by to place your order. 603-625-5093

The cost is \$5 per box.

The usual types are available but call us for a list of flavors.

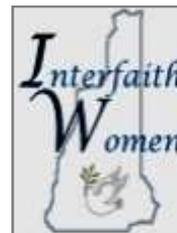
Friday Night Mini Concerts with Adam Peithmann on Facebook

Now scheduled for the last Friday of each month with the next on **March 26th at 6PM!** Tune into Facebook to be delighted and inspired. Go to:

www.facebook.com/FCCManchester



**Interfaith Women of New Hampshire
Spring Event Announced!
"Lets Talk: Faith and Race"
Monday, March 22nd, 2021
6:45 pm on Zoom**



All are invited to hear local faith leaders address the ways in which our diverse faith communities teach and advise about the issue of race. The presentations will be followed by a guided opportunity to discuss our thoughts and the content of the presentations.

The featured speakers are as follows:

- Rabbi Beth Davidson * - Temple Adath Yeshurun, Manchester
 - Robert Dunn, Esq * - Roman Catholic Diocese of Manchester
 - James McKim * - Episcopal Church of Manchester
 - Beyza Sariaydin—Turkish Cultural Center of Connecticut
- *NOTE: from video prerecorded by NH Council of Churches

Please REGISTER via email : interfaithwomennh@gmail.com (if needed, call Liz Verity 603-233-7760 for additional information) Once you register, you will be emailed Zoom program.

Our Mission: To share religious beliefs, cultures, and traditions among women of diverse faiths in order to develop understanding and friendship among us and within our community.



First Congregational Church
508 Union Street
Manchester, NH 03104-4890

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*Time Dated Material -
Please Deliver Immediately!*

Rev. Kevin Pleas
Senior Pastor

The March 2021 Church Window

Our monthly newsletter
(603) 625-5093 (with voice mail)
(603) 622-1511
www.fccmanchesternh.org



Please join us for
worship each Sunday
morning at 10AM on
Facebook Live.
Log onto Facebook:
[www.Facebook.com/
FCCManchester](http://www.Facebook.com/FCCManchester)

**PLEASE NOTE THAT WORSHIP SERVICES ARE ON
FACEBOOK & CHURCH MEETINGS ARE ON ZOOM
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.**

**ANY OF THE UPCOMING EVENT DATES LISTED IN
THIS NEWSLETTER ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.
THE CHURCH OFFICE & FOOD CLOSET ARE OPEN, BUT
PLEASE CALL AHEAD.**

**PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR THE MOST UPDATED
INFORMATION: WWW.FCCManchesterNH.ORG**



*The Church Office is open M-F
from 9AM to 2PM. If you are
planning to stop by please give
us a call to be sure we are here
to welcome you. We sometimes
close for winter weather and will
be closed on major holidays.
The office number is 625-5093.*



www.facebook.com/FCCManchester
Stay current by visiting FCC online at www.fccmanchesternh.org