FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF BERLIN
1808 Scott Hill Road, Berlin, VT 05602 ~ 802-229-0338
"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here." ✝ That they may all be one. ~John 17:21

Corner Chronicle for November 2026

An Inclusive, Open & Affirming Church

From the Pastor's Desk

A Season of Thanksgiving and Hope

November invites us to pause and give thanks. As Thanksgiving approaches, I find myself grateful for the many ways God is at work in our church family: through worship and prayer, thoughtful conversations, willing hands, and the quiet acts of kindness that remind us we are loved.

We know that gratitude does not mean everything in life is easy. Some will approach the holidays carrying grief, worry, or uncertainty. As a church, we can make room for both thanksgiving and sorrow, trusting that God meets us in each. Sometimes our most meaningful expression of gratitude is to become a blessing to someone else—through a phone call, a shared meal, a listening ear, or an offer of help.

This November also brings an exciting new beginning: **the official start of Sunday school on November 1!** Welcoming our children and helping them discover God's love is a responsibility and a joy we share as a congregation. Thank you to those who are preparing to teach and support this ministry. May our children always find our church a place where they can ask questions, build friendships, and know they belong.

As the month draws to a close, we turn toward Advent, the season of waiting and preparing for the coming of Christ. **On Sunday, November 29, we will begin Advent with our special Hanging of the Greens service.** As we prepare our worship space for Christmas, we will reflect through readings and music on the meaning of the decorations and traditions that help tell the story of our faith. My hope is that, as we prepare our sanctuary, we will also prepare our hearts to welcome Christ anew.

Our **Advent Bible study** will offer another opportunity to slow down, open Scripture together, and listen for God's word amid the busyness of the season. Whether you regularly attend Bible study or would be joining for the first time, you are welcome. We grow in faith as we bring our questions, share our insights, and learn from one another.

As we move through November, may we give thanks for those who have nurtured our faith, encourage the children beginning their own journey, and look forward with hope to all God is calling us to become.

May God bless you and those you love this Thanksgiving season.

Pastor Doug

Services for November:

November 1: Communion Sunday by Pastor Doug Cameron

November 8: guest service by Rev Sami McRae

November 15: guest service by May Bonhag

November 22: service by Pastor Doug Cameron

November 29: First Sunday in Advent service of Hanging of the Christmas Greens by Pastor Doug Cameron

The FCCB Council is looking for volunteers:

1. to assist with Sunday morning snow shoveling before the service. In the event of snow, this includes the entryways, steps and ramps.

2. We are looking for someone to assist preparing and serving communion the first Sunday of each month while Barb Clark recuperates from her fall and broken hip.

Please contact Ellen Moody if you are interested in assisting. 802-522-7728

We have been given two quilts made by Mary Donnis-Romanson, the sister of Catherine Donnis. We are currently raffling off the "Star Quilt" for Christmas. We will have it available for viewing on Sunday mornings and any events between now and Christmas.

Halloween Concert

On Saturday, October 31 at 6 pm at First Congregational Church of Berlin (1808 Scott Hill Road, Berlin VT), music director Christopher McWilliams nd friends will give a concert encompassing the spirit of Halloween. The program features guest musicians Denise Ricker (flute), Deborah Black (cello) and Lotta Suter (violin). The musical selections include Bach's Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue in D Minor, selections from *Phantom of the Opera*, and Debussy's *Préludes*, along with works by Mozart, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Price, Beeftink, Morlacchi and some of McWilliams' own compositions. Admission is free. Donations to the FCCB Music Fund are welcome. For more information, contact Rob Griffin by phone/text at 802-272-2376 or by email at griffinsuter@hotmail.com.

A Harmoniously Haunting Halloween

Saturday, Oct 31, 6 pm
First Congregational Church of Berlin, FCCB

Christopher McWilliams, piano and organ
Denise Ricker, flute
Deborah Black, cello
Lotta Suter, violin

November 1 - FCCB Annual Meeting - following the worship service. Anyone is welcome to attend the meeting.

Reminder – after the annual meeting we'll have a potluck meal. Please bring a dish to share and let's enjoy our good cooks!

Don't forget to turn your clocks back one hour Saturday night!

Quilt Show at FCCB

Though we have just put up an exhibition of Autumn photos by Lotta Suter in the FCCB Gallery, we are already thinking about our next exhibition. In the second half of November, we would like to put up an exhibition of handmade quilts, table runners or any other decorative textile are welcome. We would especially like to have quilts with winter holiday themes. But other themes are welcome too! If you have a quilt, table runner or other decorative textile that you would like to see hung in the FCCB parish hall, please contact Karen Foote by phone/text at 802-223-7286 or by email at kbf789@aol.com.

Lectionary Readings

Sun Nov 1: Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost
Joshua 3:7-17, Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37, 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13, Matthew 23:1-12

Sun Nov 8: Twenty-Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25, Psalm 78:1-7, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Matthew 25:1-13

Sun Nov 15: Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
Judges 4:1-7, Psalm 123, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, Matthew 25:14-30

Sun Nov 22: Twenty-Sixth Sun after Pentecost
Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24, Psalm 100, Ephesians 1:15-23, Matthew 25:31-46

Sun Nov 29: First Sunday of Advent
Isaiah 64:1-9, Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19, 1 Corinthians 1:3-9, Mark 13:24-37

Worship Lay Readers and Ushers

Nov 01 – Reader – Gordon Clow
Usher – Aileen Peake

Nov 08 – Reader – Thanna Adams
Usher – Sue Day

Nov 15 – Reader – Karen Foote
Usher – Joan Garcia

Nov 22 – Reader – Heather Mensah
Usher – Blair Austin-Bradley

Nov 29 – Reader – Ginger Anderson
Usher – Cheryl Poor

Birthday

11/01 – Michael Clark

11/01 – Abigail Staab

11/08 – Debi Arleth

11/11 – Rich Hinchliffe

11/13 – Dan Verchereau

11/13 – Curtis Gauthier

11/15 – Michaela Clark

11/17 – Suzanne Verchereau

11/19 – Isaac John

11/20 – Evan Launderville

11/23 – Ricky Richardson

Anniversaries

None

Joys: Rick T. had successful heart valve surgery, Dylan H. turned 22 and Evan H. turned 25

For FCCB family & friends: Paul, Thanna A. with recent health issues, Kathleen (hospitalized for Covid), Stewart C. (pneumonia), travelling mercies for many, including Ginger's daughters in countries with difficult situations, Joni V. (shoulder surgery), Steve (friend of Maggie), Cathy (brain injury), Maureen (awaiting diagnosis), Barbara C. (recuperating from hip surgery), Barb C., Jack, Pastor Doug & Donna's daughter-in-law Jess & husband Scott, Michael B., Donna T. (has entered hospice) & Peter H., Cheryl P.'s aunt, Rob G., Serena W., the Richardson family, Lexi C.'s grandfathers, Don F. in hospice, Xavier T, David in his last days, Beth C.'s mother-in-law, Andy L., Gary I. (and Linda), Eldora (nearing end of life), Pastor Doug's brother Michael, Sue D., Dot F., Mara in San

Antonio Grande, Paul, Bonnie B. and her daughter Melissa, Lorna's brother-in-law, Sarah, Heather M.'s friend Jody (who lost her husband), Caroline, Mary G., Kelsey, Sue R., Ian L., Larry M., Pastor Doug's sister Lori, Vicky, Stephanie J., Paul and Jeff (Pastor Doug's golf buddies), Matthew A-B, Marilyn, Lesley, Eli, Logan C., Ray and Cindy C., Jordan's son, Jeanine K.

For the loss of a loved one, the families of: Pastor Kevin, Jim Barrett, Joel Fielder, Cassie Major, Tim Sargent, Gloria Askew, Steve Dodson, Lou (Maggie S.'s brother), Brenda Clark, Carol Day

For our members and friends in residential and independent care facilities: Chuck, Jamin, Elaine, Anita, Sandy, Ann, Renata, Marvie, Toni, Sue

For our World: those affected by the September nor'easter storm, homeless communities as colder weather approaches, those affected by wildfires, and those fighting those fires, those serving our country, farm workers with no employment rights, families under economic stress, innocent victims, prayers for PEACE: in the Middle East, for our leaders, our country and Constitution, those who fought/still fight for racial justice, victims of mass shootings, food shelves & support services, storms that surround our country and world, Gaza, Ukraine, all those battling cancer, mental illness, domestic violence and substance abuse.

FCCB Annual Meeting Warning - October 17, 2026

The members of the First Congregational Church of Berlin are hereby warned to convene for our Annual Meeting on Sunday, November 1, 2026 after the morning worship service to hear and act on the annual reports of the Church Council, the Budget for 2027, and the Council members slate.

The members may also hear and act on any other items as may properly come before the congregation.

Respectfully submitted - Karen Foote - Clerk

First Congregational Church of Berlin (FCCB)
Congregational Meeting Minutes
October 4, 2026

Moderator Ellen Moody called the meeting to order at 10:45 am. 27 members were present in the sanctuary and 2 were present on Zoom; a quorum was declared.

Treasurer Rob Griffin moved to "take from the table" the motion related to "install an ADA-required handrail on the new ramp to the upstairs parish hall" that was laid on the table in the congregational meeting held Sunday, September 13, 2026. Ellen seconded the motion.

Rob reported that Tim Busby reviewed the estimate from Hudson Woodworks and found it to be acceptable. However, a handrail to match what was used on the walkway of the north side of the sanctuary will actually cost less. The motion was amended to reflect a cost of $2,350.00, which Ellen then seconded. Hudson Woodworks can begin the work on October 5.

Stewart Clark requested we withhold payment until the fire safety official reviews the handrail installation. The amended motion was approved.

Rob shared that he is still working on grants/funding for a lift to access the Parish Hall, and announced that we have been awarded a $60,000 grant from the Vermont Dept. of Historic Preservation (which must be spent within three years).

Gary Isham asked for volunteers to help shovel the entrances to the building (the sanctuary and the two doors of the Parish Hall). The Council is also reviewing cost options to hire someone to help with this effort.

Hearing no further business, Rob motioned and Cheryl Poor seconded for adjournment. Moderator Ellen closed the meeting at 10:55 am.

Respectfully submitted - Karen Foote - Clerk

Finance, Stewardship & Trustees

A Note from the Music Director

Worship & Church Life

Deacon's Fund - Deacons Fund donations will be collected on Communion Sundays. There are special envelopes in the Pew holders. If you are writing a check make it out to the First Congregational Church

of Berlin and indicate on the memo line Deacons Fund. Donations can be made anytime by putting it into the Sunday collection basket or mailing check to the church at PO Box 1157, Montpelier, VT 05601.

Deacons Fund Committee
Gordon Clow, Andy Lacasse and Thanna Adams

Pastoral Relations Committee
Ellen Moody, Andy Lacasse, Blair Austin-Bradley, Thanna Adams

Faith Formation

Missions & Outreach

Holiday Gift Drive

Our Advent mission drive again this year is to partner with The Green Mountain United Way (GMUW) and Tatum's Totes to provide gifts for 28 children in Vermont's foster care program to receive at Christmas.

- Please visit the Advent Owl wall hanging located in the Narthex to select a child. Please feel free to take more than one child if you wish. ***I should have the tags and Advent Owl ready for Nov 15***.
- Write your name next to the child(ren) you choose on the Master List spreadsheet hanging near the Advent Owl. **The tag # is the second printed line on the tag (example GMUW#: B1)**
- The pocket numbers on the Advent Owl don't necessarily match the number assigned by GMUW. I have used a blue and pink highlighter in the upper left corner of the tags to designate if the tag is for a boy or girl.
- **Please don't lose the child's tag, you will need to attach it to the bag that you place the items in in order for GMUW to identify each child's bag of gifts.**
- **Please also attach a separate piece of paper with the value of the gifts so we can accurately give a total gifts value to GMUW.**
- In order to sponsor a child, we are asking that donors provide age-appropriate gifts from the child's interest and needs list on the tag. The Tag we provide will include details about the child's age, gender, interests and needs. Some include favorite color and preferred clothing style.
- **PLEASE don't wrap the gifts**, instead place in gift bags with the Tatum's Totes Gift Tag stapled to the outside of the bag. If you don't have access to a gift bag you may use a different type of bag as long as the items are not wrapped and the tag is on the bag.
- All items will need to be dropped off at the church by Sunday December 6, 2026.
- Please contact Joni Verchereau (javo968@ymail.com) with questions.

Thank you to all who donated goods or money toward the October collection of winter accessories.

*****Per Green Mountain United Way - all items donated must be new / unused items. They cannot accept used items*****

When donating by cash or check please clearly mark that it is for Tatum's Totes and who it is from. You may give your monetary donation to Rob or place in the collection basket or mail to FCCB so that the donation can be accounted for.

When donating goods please include a total dollar value. The GMUW gives us a monthly statement with the estimated cash value of all goods received that month.

Please contact Joan Verchereau if you have questions about this mission.

Admin and Communication

********Check it out - the FCCB web page**

http://www.fccbvt.org

From the Treasurer

FCCB continues to be in a strong financial position. As of the date of this report, we have greater ordinary income than ordinary expense. This enabled us to restore to the Building Fund the $4,000 transferred in May to Primary Checking.

We had greater total income (excluding Vanguard) than total expense as of the date of this report (surplus of **$5,660**). This is despite the large expense of $10,732 for building the new ramp and installing the handrail. This was possible because of the $6,420 we have received in donations for this

specific purpose, complemented by a portion of the $9,844 we have received for the Building Fund in general.

Ordinary income for 2026 year-to-date is **$75,725**, consisting of $91,989 in total income (excluding Vanguard), minus $9,844 in donations to the Building Fund and $6,420 in donations for the ramp project. The $72,725 in ordinary income compared favorably to the $58,221 in ordinary income at this time in 2025 ($53,407 minus $5,186 in donations to the Building Fund). The higher ordinary income in 2026 is largely due to increased donations in pledges, general fund, music fund and organist fund. In addition to the other fundraisers (Easter Bake Sale & Raffle, Ice Cream Social & Raffle, Pielooza & Café), the Chicken Pie Supper and Raffle was a very important contribution to our income, with total tickets and donations of $3,063.

Ordinary expense for 2026 year-to-date is **$74,153**, consisting of $86,329 in total expense minus $10,723 in building improvement and $1,444 in one-time maintenance. In 2026, the building improvement is the new ramp ($8,134) and handrail ($2,598); the one-time maintenance is painting the sanctuary steps ($1,020) and replacing the circulator pump on the boiler ($424). In 2025, the building improvements were putting in the new walkway on the north side of the church ($4,435), re-roofing the chancel ($625), and building new storage in the downstairs parish hall ($1,142); the one-time maintenance was tree-cutting ($600) and cleaning sanctuary and parish hall rugs ($400).

The ordinary expense of $74.153 year-to-date is significantly more than the $51,129 in ordinary expense at this time in 2025 ($538,638 minus $307 in interest, $6,202 in building improvements and $1,000 in one-time maintenance in donations to the Building Fund). The higher ordinary income in 2026 is largely due to increased donations in pledges, general fund, music at this time in 2025 was $51,129. The higher ordinary expense in 2026 at this time compared to 2025 (a difference of $23,024 year-over-year) largely reflects our higher ministry expense this year, a difference of $21,063.

Our total assets (excluding building, land, etc) at this time in 2026 are **$43,090**, consisting of $2,977 in Primary Checking, $6,856 in the Building Fund checking account and $33,257 in Vanguard. This compares to $35,103 in total assets at the end of 2025, consisting of $1,817in Primary Checking, $2,106 in the Building Fund checking account and $31,180 in Vanguard

This is a gain of $7,997 in our total assets in 2026 year-to-date compared to the end of 2025.

Regards - Rob Griffin Suter

Income Summary

In the period from September 21 through Oct. 15, 2026 (4 weeks), FCCB received the following income:

Pledge payments: $4,377
Loose offering: $191.25
Donations to general fund: $240
Donations to Tatum's Totes: $45
Donations to Deacons Fund: $66.25
Donations to Music Fund: $25
Donations to Neighbors in Need mission: $50
Donations to per capita dues: $15
Donations to Ramp Project: $150
Other donations to Building Fund: $650
Income from Chicken Pie Supper: $3,058
Income from Chicken Pie Supper Raffle: $57
Income from rentals: $475

Total income during this period was $9,399.50

FCCB Pastor Contact information

Pastor Doug Cameron
Email: dougc9927@gmail.com
Home: 802-276-3404
Cell: 802-356-0578
Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:00a - 2:00p

Council Members 2026

COUNCIL CHAIR & MODERATOR ~ Ellen Moody, ellenmoody777@gmail.com, 802-522-7728

VICE CHAIR ~ Ginger Anderson, quedaV06@gmail.com, 802-229-1665

TREASURER ~ Rob Griffin, griffinsuter@hotmail.com, 802-272-2376

ADMINISTRATION & COMMUNICATION and CLERK ~ Karen Foote, kbf789@aol.com, 802-223-7286

MISSIONS & OUTREACH ~ Heather Mensah, withheather@yahoo.com, 617-780-2458

FINANCE, STEWARDSHIP & TRUSTEES ~ Rob Griffin, griffinsuter@hotmail.com, 802-272-2376 and Gary Isham, glisham@yahoo.com, 802-917-8027

WORSHIP & CHURCH LIFE ~ Carole Lacasse, calacasse@netscape.com, 802-229-9504

FAITH FORMATION ~ Beth Cody, codyscastle@gmail.com, 802-279-5921

MEMBER-AT-LARGE – Mary Ellen Hill, meqhill@yahoo.com, 802-279-8704

MEMBER-AT-LARGE – Nancy Fowler, fowler5vt@gmail.com, 802-477-2715

FCCB email address:
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FCCB Mailing Address:
PO Box 1157, Montpelier, VT 05601

The Vision of First Congregational Church of Berlin is to be a friendly, inviting spiritual home that practices the deep caring of Jesus within the congregation and in the wider community

Faithful Witnesses

Many churches observe All Saints' Day on November 1, a time to remember believers who have died in the faith and give thanks for their faithful witness.

The story of Christianity is filled with ordinary people who held fast to Christ in both joyful and difficult seasons. Across the centuries, countless believers have followed Jesus with courage, and many have even given their lives while bearing witness to God's love and the saving grace of Christ. Even today, Christians in some parts of the world continue to face persecution for their faith.

On this day, take time to remember our Christian heritage with gratitude. Give thanks for those who remained faithful before us, and ask God to help us follow Christ with the same courage, hope and steadfast faith.

Honoring Faithful Service

Each year on Veterans Day, we pause to give thanks for the men and women who have served our country with courage, sacrifice and devotion. Their willingness to defend freedom reminds us that service often comes with great cost.

As Christians, we are called to honor those who serve and to pray for veterans, active-duty military members and their families. We also remember that true peace comes from God, who is our refuge and strength.

May this day lead us to gratitude, prayer and renewed commitment to serve others with humility, courage and love.

Don't Let It Get Under Your Skin

Holidays are meant to bring joy, yet they can easily become stressful. A careless comment, an unmet expectation or a simple misunderstanding may lead to hurt feelings and family tension. Before long, a small disagreement can grow into an argument that overshadows the celebration.

In moments like these, remember the wise teacher who chose to let slights and insults pass. He explained, "I have only one skin, and it covers me very well. I don't let anyone else get under it."

This holiday season, choose patience, extend grace and protect the peace around your table.