

PARISH NOTES

Newsletter of the
Unitarian Universalist Church
of Concord

APRIL 2024

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Minister's Musings

Grieving Together: Holding our Grief

REV. MICHAEL LEUCHTENBERGER

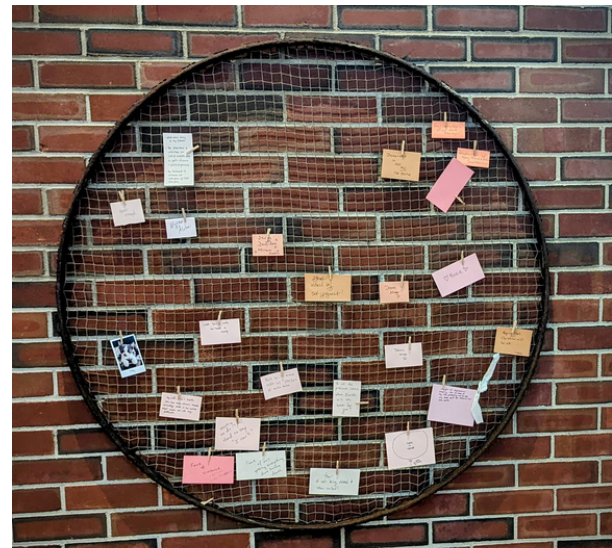
Our ministry and pastoral care team tries to be as systematic and reliable as possible about acknowledging grief in our congregation. No one should feel they have to go through their grieving unsupported and on their own. It truly breaks my heart whenever I learn that I have dropped the ball and have failed to reach out when one of us could have used a caring presence.

And, as our pastoral care team reviewed our offerings, we realized that we typically fail to acknowledge a broad range of losses other than the death of a loved one. Losses that clearly result in grief yet are less socially recognized.

For many of us the death of a pet is comparable to the loss of a family member. The end of a relationship can be traumatic. The termination of a job or a career can feel like a huge loss in identity. Same with changes in our health, both physical and mental. Really any change in identity can trigger waves of grief. Grief is grief, regardless of its cause, regardless of its cultural acceptance and acknowledgment.

In some ways, these non-death losses are even more complicated to navigate because our culture provides so little guidance and support. Hence, we decided to experiment. On our wall behind the Joys & Sorrows table, you see the new "Holding Our Grief" wheel.

(continued on page 3)





Sunday Worship is at 10 am

IN PERSON AND LIVESTREAM AT WWW.CONCORDUU.ORG/LIVE

4/7/2024 “We Are Our Stories” Rev. Michael Leuchtenberger

The stories we tell - about ourselves, our communities, and our culture - can be inspiring and liberating or hold us back and keep us stuck. As we welcome a cohort of new members, what are the stories we choose to share? Michael will recount and reframe some of our old stories and offer some new stories for us to try on. One story that has stood the test of time is that we are a musical, singing congregation and love our choir. Come hear the choir sing “A Jubilant Song” and send musical roses to those joining today. The service this morning aspires to inspire.

4/14/2024 “Feeling Useful, Feeling Used” Rev. Michael Leuchtenberger

The impulse to be helpful when someone is facing or experiencing homelessness is strong in many of us. Nine year old Hewie, who inspired this sermon, talks about a “deep feeling in his gut” that makes him want to be useful when he passes a person on the street asking for support. How do we respond - personally and as a community - with our time and resources? Where and why do we draw a line? How do we open our hearts to stories we can’t easily verify and sometimes change with time? We want to feel useful, not used. Michael will tell a personal story of befriending Curtis and William in Chicago, spanning four years of “answering the door” to a range of powerful experiences and shifting emotions. After the service, learn about kids & families experiencing homelessness in the Concord area during a training with Family Promise Director Steve Croke.

4/21/2024 “Dancing with Trees” Green Sanctuary Steering Committee

We will remember together how deeply we are connected to all living things. What actions - big and little - can we all take to honor that connection? The Green Sanctuary teams will be updating us with the actions they’ve been taking and will be sharing all sorts of actions- big and small - that you can take now.

4/28/2024 “Faith in the Future” Rev. Lyn Marshall

This Sunday, we will be recognizing our long term members - those people who have brought our congregation from the past to the present and deserve our gratitude. If we have faith in the future, how should we live now? What should we build so that five, ten, or twenty five years from now, this congregation will still exist, not as it is today, but as it needs to be to continue to foster love, connection, spiritual growth, and compassionate care for one another as a community and as part of a larger world? Let’s look back with gratitude, and look forward - with faith in ourselves in the present moment.



Grieving Together: Holding our Grief

(continued from cover page)

All of us are invited to add to the webbing of the wheel as it feels most meaningful, touching on anything you are grieving. Attach a piece of paper or fabric and write a name, a situation, a feeling. Sign and date it, or leave it anonymous. Fold it or keep it open for all to read.

The Pastoral Care Associates will follow up each month with those grief notes linked to a name. Once the wheel fills up, we will take a photo and make space for new additions. We may create a booklet that contains images of the “Holding Our Grief” wheel over time, as a reminder of our history of grieving together.

Please add to the wheel at any time: before the service, after the service, during Joys & Sorrows, or during the week. May we find comfort in the communal holding of our grief.

With love, care, and a wide open heart,

Michael

Celebrating our Long-Term Members Sunday, April 28 at 9am

Thank you, Long Term Members! If you've been a member for 25 years or more, you are invited to our Long Term Member Breakfast on Sunday, April 28 at 9:00 am. You can even join us from afar via Zoom. Our Long Term Members are the strong roots of this congregation and we'll be honoring you during our service.

If you've been a member for 25+ years, you'll receive a personal invitation from us soon. If you don't receive it, please let Lea Smith know so we can add you to our list. lea@concorduu.org or 224-0291 ext 3#.

Thank you to Janet Kelley-Vail for coordinating the breakfast!



FAITH & FUN

Pancakes, Play, & Planting Peace Saturday, April 6, 2024, 9:00-11:00 am

Bring the kids for a pancake breakfast, fun & games, and our second annual planting of seeds for the church gardens!

In addition to the activities for kids, members of the Board of Trustees will be present to talk with parents about your vision for the church your children will inherit. The Board has been asking this question to many groups in many ways, and they would like to add future congregants to that list. The question is this: What could we build with courage, wonder, and deep engagement with self, with each other, with our larger community, and with the earth?" Since we can't know exactly who those future congregants may be, we are inviting parents, who have a stake in the future for their children, to share their hopes and ideas.



UU Friends of Refugees - Fun & Fellowship Potluck Dinner

SUBMITTED BY REV. MICHAEL LEUCHTENBERGER



2023 UUFOR BEACH DAY

Have you ever worked with refugees over the years? If so, we hope you will come to our first annual (?) UUFOR past & present volunteer potluck dinner on Saturday, April 27, 2024 @ 6 pm in Fellowship Hall. We will share stories, celebrate, reminisce, exchange ideas, or simply have some food and fun. And in case you have not yet been involved with refugees but are curious about putting your toe in the water, please also join us. You'll learn about some easy ways to get connected later this summer.



UU Passover Seder Supper | Friday, April 26 | 5:30 pm

Passover is the most commonly celebrated holiday among Jews, and lasts for eight days. This retelling of the "exodus story" (the Hebrews escaping from slavery in Egypt) is often interpreted as a promise of liberation for all who are oppressed. We will honor this tradition by sharing a Seder meal and the Passover story in a family-friendly setting. The meal includes several courses from soup to dessert. This year our long-time Seder chef, CJ Landsman, is handing his chef's hat over to Irene Hanslin. Thank you to CJ and Irene!

IT IS OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER

We are on a journey.
We didn't plan it.
We didn't have time for the bread to rise.
We may find ourselves in the wilderness, hungry, thirsty,
Doubting that we should have ever come.
But look around:
We are not alone.
It is our journey together:
A journey to our better selves,
A journey to a better world,
A journey to a more promised land.

-- REV. DR. DEBRA W. HAFFNER

Please reserve your seat no later than April 21 so we have time to prepare this special meal. Tickets are \$21 for adults, or \$9 for children under 15. Please sign up at uuconcordnh.breezechms.com/form/2024Seder. Our Pastoral Support Fund will cover the ticket price if you are unable to afford it. Just choose "financial aid" in the payment section.



PASSOVER SEDER SUPPER

Friday, April 26 at 5:30pm

A UU-style celebration of a Jewish tradition which tells the ancient story of freedom
Reservations required. All ages welcome!



Plant & Yard Sale | Saturday, May 18

SUBMITTED BY JIM DOWNIE AND RENEE WEST, COORDINATORS

Well, as of 3/19/24 at 11:06 pm EDT spring is officially upon us! Which means it's time to talk about our yearly Plant & Yard Sale to be held Saturday May 18th. Once again we'll offer a wide array of annuals in pots and packs, hanging baskets, perennials and organic vegetable starts -- all from NH growers.

And, please, please, please consider donating any perennial clumps, extra seedlings you started or house plants you want to re-home. These are the plants that come with a story. Tell us about it.

This year there will be an information table discussing the value of using native species and advice on planting them, by Dana Sansom and Janet Kelley-Vail.

When you're doing some spring cleaning, please set aside your goodies for donation to the Yard Sale. We will begin collecting items approximately two weeks before the event, although if you need to donate items prior to then we will work to accommodate you.

We are looking for volunteers to help with setting up on Friday (the 17th) and/or helping on Saturday with transactions during the event and breakdowns afterwards. For any questions or to volunteer, email Jim for the Plant Sale at jdownie@tds.net or Renee for the Yard Sale at yolandor@icloud.com. Or look for sign up sheets in Fellowship Hall after the worship services.

Whether you're a grower, a giver, or a getter, we look forward to seeing you then!



PLANT & YARD SALE

SATURDAY MAY 18 9 AM TO 1PM

- ✓ locally grown annual and vegetable seedlings
- ✓ expert advice on gardening with native plants
- ✓ home-grown perennials at bargain prices
- ✓ attic treasures

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
CHURCH OF CONCORD
274 PLEASANT STREET**



www.concorduu.org



Ecological Land Management (ELM) Group and Grounds Team Events

SUBMITTED BY FRAN PHILIPPE, GROUNDS CO-CHAIR

The ELM Group brings you two more events for your learning pleasure. On Saturday, April 13, UNH Extension representatives will be here for a free workshop on how to properly prune various ornamental shrubs found on our church property. This is a rain or shine event.

On Thursday, April 18 at 6:30 at the Audi, the Concord Garden Club is sponsoring a free video presentation by entomologist, ecologist and conservationist, Dr. Doug Tallamy, co-founder of Home Grown National Park. ELM highly recommends this. To RSVP, please go to the Concord Garden Club website.

On Sunday, April 28, our annual spring all-church grounds clean up, followed by a light lunch, will be held after the church service. Please RSVP to franphilippe38@gmail.com so that we can plan on numbers for lunch.

And on May 5, another ELM event: at 11:45am, Dana Sansom will do a perennial-splitting demonstration just in time for the Plant and Yard Sale on the 18th.



Transformation and Transition

SUBMITTED BY KAREN MAYO, TREASURER

One of my priorities when becoming the Treasurer was to be able to paint a more complete picture of our financial assets and activities for the congregation. With the help of MANY congregants and staff, we now see all of what we own, what we are spending, and how we want to spend our funds - using a complete balance sheet, the typical operating budget, and the new capital budget.

It is now time for the Treasurer position to transfer to another congregant. As a new member comes in, and the position itself is transformed, it will be very important to support the folks taking the reigns. If you are detail oriented, love spreadsheets, and are passionate about supporting our staff in our shared missions, PLEASE think about joining our Finance Committee. The commitment involves a monthly meeting, and a willingness to ask lots of questions! For more info, talk to me (Karen Mayo, treasurer@concorduu.org) or Lea Smith in the office, lea@concorduu.org.

JUSTICE NOTES

The Value of Being Proximate

Bryan Stevenson of the [Equal Justice Initiative](#) said:

- *It's actually in proximity to the poor that we hear things that we won't otherwise hear, that we'll see things we won't otherwise see.*
- *The things we hear and see are critical to our knowledge, and our capacity to problem solve.*
- *To change the world, we are each going to have to find ways to get closer to people who...are living on the margins of society.*

In 2016 our church decided to join a dozen other churches as a host site for Family Promise of Greater Concord. Families experiencing homelessness move from church to church for one week at a time, while they receive assistance from Family Promise to transition into their own homes. The families all have children, and are carefully vetted by Family Promise.

It wasn't, and still isn't, an easy commitment for us to make. It means our Fellowship Hall and Kent/Thomas rooms become living quarters for the week, so church events are curtailed or gather in smaller rooms. There's food to cook, cleaning to do, and renters to negotiate with. Most importantly our church members and friends give their time to interact with and support the families, and some forgo their comfy beds at home to be at the church for a night or two. In doing so we are providing families with **life-sustaining support**, but just as importantly **we are seeing and hearing their stories, so we can learn about the systemic problems of poverty and equity in our society.**

The 2nd Principle of UUism affirms "justice, equity and compassion in human relations." Rev. Emily Gage writes, "Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations points us toward something beyond inherent worth and dignity. It points us to the larger community. It gets at collective responsibility. It reminds us that treating people as human beings is not simply something we do one-on-one, but something that has systemic implications and can inform our entire cultural way of being."

Many of our church leaders who made the commitment to Family Promise in 2016 have passed away, moved away, or are of the age that others need to step in to carry on their legacy.

On April 14 at 11:30 during Second Hour, Steve Croke, the Executive Director of Family Promise of Greater Concord, will share how our volunteers play a vital role in improving the lives of families experiencing homelessness. All are welcome, whether you're a current volunteer, considering volunteering, or just want to know more about our church's role with Family Promise.



PHOTOS FROM 2016

JUSTICE NOTES

Penny Sale Raffle for Family Promise

Family Promise will host a fundraiser Penny Sale on Saturday, April 6. This will be a traditional raffle "Penny Sale" where folks purchase tickets and place them in bins alongside a variety of gift baskets being raffled off. We invite you to attend the Penny Sale and/or make a donation to a FUN THEME basket our UU church will donate to the Penny Sale (FUN is open to interpretation: e.g. gift card for pizza, puzzle, game). Donations can be placed in the marked bin under the coat rack at church. THANK YOU!

Family Promise Evening Hosts, Overnight Hosts, and Meals are Needed

Our final week to host Family Promise this church year is April 28 to May 5. If you can spend a few hours during the early evening, or sleep over at the church, or provide a meal, please contact Pam Mosca, moscapam4@gmail.com. Even if you can't help this time but want to be put on the list to help in the future, we'd loved to hear from you.



Family Promise invites you to our community:

Penny Sale!

Saturday, April 6th
12:00pm - 4:00pm
Grace Capital Church @ 542 Pembroke Street, Pembroke, NH 03275

Help fill the FUN THEME basket our UU Church will donate to the Penny Sale (FUN is open to interpretation: gift card for pizza, puzzle, game). Donations can be placed in the marked bin under the coat rack at church.

All proceeds will directly benefit Family Promise of Greater Concord!

For More Information:
Alison Cooper
(603) 856-4890
acooper@familypromisegcnh.org

The poster features a purple background with a white path leading upwards. On the path are a teddy bear, a stack of colorful blocks, a gift basket, and a gift card. The Family Promise logo is in the top right corner.



UUA General Assembly 2024 Delegates Needed

General Assembly (GA) is the annual gathering of Unitarian Universalists, at which business of the Association is conducted and our mission and principles are explored. The 63rd General Assembly will take place virtually (only) Thursday, June 20 through Sunday, June 23, 2024. Delegates from our church are needed to represent our congregation at the General Sessions portions of the GA to vote on any agenda business. Congregational delegates can attend the business-only sessions of GA at no cost (or by a voluntary donation) through a delegate registration process. More detailed information can be obtained by going to www.UUA.org and searching for General Assembly 2024.

Selected delegates must have been a Voting Member of our church for at least two years and make it a priority to attend the voting business meetings (General Sessions) during GA. This year a major decision will be on the proposed changes to UUA Article II bylaws (see illustration upper right of this page), along with four proposed amendments. As a delegate, you should be willing to review UUA agenda materials in advance; vote your conscience, but be willing to get input from the congregation and other church delegates; and finally be willing to report back to our congregation in a format of your choice (Parish Notes, a segment at worship, 2nd hour discussions, informal conversations, etc.).

Thank you for considering this opportunity to represent our church in the important business of the UUA. We hope to identify delegates by early April. Hoping to hear from you!

-- Rev. Suzanne Rude, Member UU Church of Concord;
GA 2024 Delegate Coordinator

Shared Unitarian Universalist Values



Community Plates for January

Thank you for your generosity that enabled us to send funds to these worthy organizations that are doing work in keeping with our values and goals as a congregation.

1/7/2024 Conservation Law Foundation \$376.25

1/14/2024 American Friends Service Committee \$771.62

1/21/2024 Merrimack River Greenway Trail \$721.65

1/28/2024 Flaming Chalice International \$2905.14

JUSTICE NOTES

UU Action NH Annual Meeting | May 11 at our church

The Annual Meeting of UU Action NH will be held at our church on May 11. UU Action Network of New Hampshire is a social justice advocacy network, committed to strengthening justice work within congregations and building links with interfaith partners and progressive organizations in order to effectively witness and advocate for Unitarian Universalist values in the public arena. When more info is ready about UU Action NH's Annual Meeting, it will be posted at uactionnh.org.



UU Action NH Monthly Climate Series

Unitarian Universalist Action NH has a great monthly climate action series on making our homes, churches, and community buildings more energy efficient and sustainable.

Next up is "What's New in Solar? Plus Tax Credits & Rebates" on April 18 at 6:30 pm.

Presentations are via Zoom, and registration is required to get the Zoom link.

Other upcoming topics include: Community Power; Energy Policy; Sustainable Lawn Care; and Composting.

For more info or to register, go to UUACTIONNH.org.



Stewardship Pledge Campaign 2024-2025

SUBMITTED BY JIM CURLEY FOR THE STEWARDSHIP TEAM

Your Stewardship team is happy to report that this year's campaign is in full swing. Following the kick-off and post office mailings that we did in early March, we have heard from many of you about what you plan to pledge for 2024-25. We still have a long way to go to reach the goal, and hope to hear from you soon if you haven't yet responded.

Our initial goal was a \$31,000 dollar increase in pledging, to increase the overall pledge portion of our budget by 10%. We've been doing a lot of number crunching and come up with a creative new fundraising service and learning trip for next year - which allows us to change that increase to about \$14,000. We're within striking distance! Thank you to the 43 pledgers who have increased their pledge. Unfortunately attrition due to folks moving away or passing away is always a challenge to overcome. **If you haven't yet increased your pledge, or could increase it a little more, could you stretch to help us meet that goal of \$14,000?**

We are grateful for whatever your giving will be. Know that every gift, regardless of size, makes a meaningful difference. I appreciate that this congregation's stewardship efforts and generosity align with the broader UU goal of sustaining a caring community rooted in spiritual and personal growth, peace, liberty, justice, and equality.

It is important that we hear from everyone by April 6, please. That timeframe will help us to give the budget builders the input that they need. **Please let us know your pledge at uuconcordnh.breezechms.com/form/pledgeform**

May the spirit of generosity and love guide us as we navigate this year's stewardship journey together.

Annual Meeting: June 2 after the Worship Service

The Annual Meeting of Concord UU will be held in Fellowship Hall. If you are familiar with NH town meetings, our format will be familiar to you, though usually less adversarial than many town meetings! The Board of Trustees will share what they're up to, as they provide spiritual and strategic leadership to guide the church forward. We'll vote on operating and capital budgets for 2024-25, elect Board members and officers, and conduct other important business. All are welcome to attend and speak, though only people who have been Voting Members for 30 days or more will be eligible to vote. The Board of Trustees will provide a light lunch, and childcare will be available. This is democracy in action right here at Concord UU, so come exercise your right and privilege to be part of the church's future direction.



Board of Trustees Highlights from March Meeting

SUBMITTED BY JIM SCHLOSSER, BOARD SECRETARY

- Reviewed the excellent financial performance relative to budget, year to date.
- Discussed Treasure role, difficulty recruiting a candidate, and options to insure appropriate internal controls
- Identified Board members interested in attending UUA General Assembly (virtually)
- Reviewed Operations Report. Notable activities include:
 - The monthly Aging Together daytime circle and lunch have provided a meaningful connection for over 35 people ages 60 and older.
 - The Mud Season Dance Party was a rousing success. After a potluck meal, Fellowship Hall was transformed into a dance hall complete with lights, glowing decor, and a playlist that had people on the dance floor from start to finish.
 - The Stewardship Team is actively engaged in executing this year's pledge campaign. Jim Curley kicked it off with a worship service on stewardship, and an appeal letter has been mailed to members and friends.
 - The Youth Group traveled to Costa Rica over February break and got to experience many new things, from a very different social/cultural perspective.

April Special Events

Wed Apr. 3: Exploring Membership Class #4 @ 6 pm

Sun Apr. 7: New Member Covenanting

Sun April 13: UNH Cooperative Extension Ornamental Pruning Demo @ 10 am

Sun Apr. 21: Stewardship Campaign Finale

Fri Apr. 26: Passover Seder Supper @ 5:30 pm

Sat Apr. 27: UU Friends of Refugees Fun & Fellowship Potluck Dinner @ 6 pm

Sun Apr. 28: Long-term Member Breakfast @ 9 am

Sun Apr. 28: All Ages Spring Grounds Cleanup @ 11:30 am

Apr. 28 to May 5: Family Promise Week

RECURRING EVENTS

Special Worship Services

Taize at Concord UU - 1st Sundays @ 7pm, October through April

UU Worship at Havenwood - 4th Thursdays @ 1pm

Earth Centered Spirituality Rituals - on or near solstices, equinoxes, and cross-quarter days

Faith Development Events

Sermon Dialogue - 1st Sundays @ 11:45am

Children's Playtime - 1st Sundays 11:15am to 12:45pm

Second Hour Adult Programs - 2nd and 3rd Sundays @ 11:30am

Kids' Wonder Workshop for ages 4-13 - 2nd and 3rd Sundays @ 11:30am

Aging Together: Blessings and Challenges Along the Journey - 2nd Fridays @ 11 am

Social, Family, & Fellowship Events

Youth Group - most Fridays @ 7pm

Community Lunch - 2nd and 3rd Sundays @ 12:30pm

Tuesday's Welcome Table - Tuesdays @ 6pm

Games and Chocolate - 1st Fridays @ 6:30pm

Art & Appetizers - 2nd Fridays @ 6pm

Pancakes, Play & Planting Peace - 1st Saturdays @ 9am

Family Covenant Group - 3rd Fridays @ 6pm (contact organizers before attending)

Parents of Emerging Adults Covenant Group - 3rd Saturdays @ 6pm

Wild and Precious UU Book Group - 4th Tuesdays @ 5pm

Musical Events

Choir Rehearsal - Thursdays, 7pm to 8:30pm

Choir Warm Up - Sundays when choir is singing @ 9am

Drum Circle - 3rd Sundays @ 7pm, October through April

Contemplative Events

Daily Silent Morning Meditation - Daily @ 7am, Zoom Only

Thursday Morning Meditation Group - Thursdays @ 7am, Zoom Only non-church link

Mindfulness Practice Group - 2nd and 4th Mondays @ 6pm

Mindful Yoga - 1st and 3rd Mondays @ 6pm

Contemplative Knitting Circle - 2nd Saturdays @ 10am

Walking the Labyrinth - 1st Sundays 6-9pm, October through April (before and after Taize Service)

Outreach Events

Friendly Kitchen prep and serve day - 1st Wednesdays @ 3pm

Healing & Helping Events

Caregivers Support Group - 4th Sundays @ 7pm

*Renaissance Transgender Group - 2nd Sat @ 4pm, Nov, Jan, Mar & May (contact before attending)

*PFLAG Support Group - 3rd Sundays @ 3pm

*not a church group but open to all



Parish Notes Deadline

May issue: April 21
Submit to parishnotes@concorduu.org by 2pm
on the day of the deadline.

Officers

Treasurer | Karen Mayo
Custodian of Investments | Jack Wakelin
Assistant Treasurers | Lorraine Ellis, Ann West
Moderator | Barbara Keshen
Clerk | Sara McNeil

Board of Trustees

Chair | Kelly Mahony
Vice-Chair | Craig Whitson
Secretary | Jim Schlosser
Roger Ballou
Jim Curley
one vacancy

Staff

Senior Minister
Rev. Michael Leuchtenberger
603-715-7557 (cell) | michael@concorduu.org

Associate Minister
Rev. Lyn Marshall
603-568-8084 (cell) | lyn@concorduu.org

Dir. of Membership & Administration
Lea Smith
603-224-0291 ext 4# | lea@concorduu.org

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Accompanist | Calvin Herst
calvin@concorduu.org

Sexton | Justin Small
justin@concorduu.org

Custodian | Agnes Sesay

Childcare Provider | Patrick Yehle

Audiovisual Assistant | Clay Donachie

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Spring is here!

COME SEE WHAT'S GROWING AT CONCORD UU!

