



The Rev. Dr. Martha R. Jacobs
Senior Minister

Keith Robellard
Minister of Music

210 Orchard Ridge Road
Chappaqua, NY 10514
914-238-4411

office@fcc-chappaqua.org
www.fcc-chappaqua.org

November 2, 2021

Dear FCC Family and Friends,

With a hope-filled heart I come to you this year to tell you two stories that will hopefully also fill your heart with hope.

On Homecoming Sunday, a woman walked into the church in need of assistance. We were in the back parking lot for worship and she could not find us. During the service, I had to return to my office to grab my communion folder and met her there. I told her that she could come back later to which she said she would and declined an offer to join us for worship.

After worship, she came outside and talked with several members of our church who were very welcoming to her and invited her (and her family that was in her car) to come and join us for lunch. When I spoke with her, she mentioned needing gas. Keith accompanied her to the local gas station to fill up her tank. Because it was Homecoming, I didn't feel that I could leave, and was very grateful to Keith for his willingness to help out. As she was leaving, she said that she had been embarrassed to have to ask for help, but that everyone had been so welcoming to her and made her feel comfortable, so if she could convince her family to come back to join us for lunch, they would.

Then, a few weeks ago, I received an email from the daughter of long-time members, Richard and Louise Severance, who had moved to Vermont many years ago. Her father was dying and her mother, when given the choice as to where she wanted his remains interred, said FCC. Even though they had moved away, Louise felt that FCC meant so much to she and Dick, that she wanted him interred here.

When I met Louise, she told me that walking into our Sanctuary brought back wonderful memories of her life with Dick and their raising their children at our church and how much they valued FCC. She mentioned that their children were married here and grandchildren were baptized here. She said she was relieved we had space for Dick because it felt like coming home to see extended family and good friends, and that the church had a wonderful spirit about it. Even after being away for so many years, Louise said she felt so welcomed here and felt this was really her home even though they had attended a church in Vermont.

I was so deeply moved by Louise and her family. The children told me stories about attending FCC Sunday School and Scouts. As they walked the building before the service, they shared wonderful memories of their time at FCC.

These two stories speak volumes about the amazing spirit of this Congregation and one of the reasons why we are here. This Church is not only for us today and for those who are struggling financially, and those who will come into our Church in the future. It is also here for those who had been with us for years and years and left for whatever reason, but now want to return, so that their ashes can be forever in our Columbarium.

I was so very grateful to God for the Severance family and their sharing wonderful memories of FCC. I am thankful to God for the woman who showed up on Homecoming Sunday and that we could help her. I am also thankful for everyone who has walked through the doors of this church and have felt welcomed by us.

Stewardship is about ensuring that the gift of this Church that has been here for 109 years, continues for generations to come. Pat and I will be interred in our Columbarium and I can imagine one of us returning to inter the other's ashes here and feeling welcome, like we are coming home to the place that has nurtured our spirits for so many years. It is up to all of us to keep this Church going and growing. In order to do that, we will need to pledge our financial support, perhaps increasing our pledge if we are able, so that our Church can continue to be here.

Similar to the Severance's finding solace and peace in knowing that their loved one could return to the place that brought them joy and peace and brought them closer to God, it is *With a Hope-Filled Heart* that I ask you to help us ensure that we remain with open doors and open hearts for years to come. Please pledge as generously as you can so we can also ensure that people like the woman who showed up that Sunday in September will also find us here to help without judgement and with a welcome that will make her feel like FCC could be her Church home, too.

Blessings and love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martha". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.