



Grace Notes

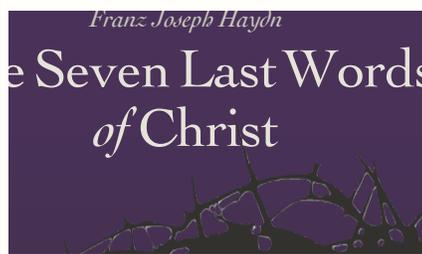
The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

What's Inside

Holy Week Services.....4



Music at the Meetinghouse.....6



Our Local Mission7



Sunday Service2

Community Dinners2

Lenten Lunch Bag Offering.....2

One Great Hour2

Lily Fund2

April Calendar3

News and Notes.....45

Fill the Cart!.....7

The Pastoral Perspective

This year, we will celebrate Easter, the Feast of the Resurrection, on April 20. Our faith teaches us that some two thousand years ago, Jesus, who had been executed by the Romans, was raised from the dead and thus conquered death itself.

And yet we still die.

What gives?

I'd like to take this opportunity to go back with you in time. Specifically, five years. You may recall that it was five years ago March that pandemic shutdowns began. I remember this clearly. Why? Because Salt Hill, which traditionally opens early on the morning of St. Patrick's Day, was closed. The crowds that usually gathered for the first pint were absent, as the pub's biggest sales day of the year had been canceled. But they stayed in business, as did many other eateries in Lebanon. They adapted to the new rhythms of life. We all did.

And now, here we are. In many ways, we experienced resurrection. We were brought back to life. We resumed in-person gatherings like worship. We resumed hosting community dinners. Musical performances continue to delight audiences. And all of this is good. Frustratingly, though, we still live in a world where stupidity is all too often the order of the day.

Is this what new life is supposed to feel like?

Who knows?

But "resurrection" or "new life" is something we experience as a community, and we experience it as individuals. It may be as simple as getting another chance, the opportunity of enjoying a fresh start.

Don't get me wrong. I am not claiming the physical resurrection of Jesus did not happen. I believe that the resurrection of Christ is central to our faith, is part of what makes it so important. But.

Yes, you knew there was a "but" coming.

But.

We will, in all likelihood, never experience a physical resurrection, but we can experience real resurrection, an opportunity to start over. We don't

Continued on Page 7

HOLY WEEK IS APRIL 13-20
Full schedule of worship services on Page 4.

Lenten Lunch Bag Offering

Every year the CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY CORNER asks for your generous participation in our Lenten Lunch Bag Offering for two great organizations:

**WISE (wiseuv.org) and
Epilogos Charities (epilogos.org)**

WISE seeks to end gender-based violence through survivor-centered advocacy and education. Our Lenten collection will fund welcome bags given to the children and women at WISE's Safe Home. Epilogos seeks to improve the lives of those in San Jose Villanueva, El Salvador, a model for focused global outreach and a town dear to many at FCC. Our offering funds scholarships at SJV's school.

The Lenten offering enables FCC's kids to help other children in tough circumstances and see stewardship as a way to share God's love.

Decorated lunch bags may be used to collect your savings from sacrificing a regular treat during Lent. **Whatever you sacrifice, please return donations on**

PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 13.



The Easter Lily Fund for the Open Door Ministry

As in past years, we invite you to honor beloved family and friends on Easter morning with a modest contribution to our **Open Door Ministry for community assistance** (\$5 minimum, payable to FCC, memo "Lily Open Door").

Please submit your dedication information by **THURSDAY, APRIL 17** (contributions gratefully accepted after that date). Dedications will appear in the bulletin on **EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 20.**

Many thanks for supporting our local mission while commemorating your loved ones.



**One Great
HOUR
OF SHARING**

OGHS is a vital, national offering for mission initiatives around the world. Supporting healthcare, education, agriculture, emergency relief, and refugee assistance in over 130 countries, OGHS funds work with service partners to maximize impact.

We gratefully accept OGHS donations until Easter, April 20. Please give as generously as you can, thanks! (Payable FCC, memo "OGHS")

Community Dinners Are Back!

Sunday, April 27, at 5:00 pm

Leaders: THE CALLAHANS & CO.

Many thanks to the Callahan family and a team of volunteers for leading this month! Signups to come.

All are warmly invited to come, eat, and share fellowship, regardless of need or affiliation.

Consider Leading a Dinner in 2025

If you're interested, menu resources are available, FCC can reimburse costs, and you'll *always* have help! **Questions? Contact the church office.**

*Anyone can collaborate on leading a dinner—
friends, coworkers, neighbors, ANYONE!*

All Are Welcome to Worship at FCC *Sundays at 10:00 AM (In-Person/Zoom)*

Ushers, Zoom Greeters, Liturgists Needed!

All are invited to serve in these essential worship roles, and no prior experience is required.

Would You Like to Serve Coffee Hour?

Coffee hour is a beloved time for fellowship after worship. Please consider hosting a Sunday or two!

If you're interested in these opportunities to serve, please contact the church office.

APRIL 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 10a Worship/CCC 1-5p UVMC Suzuki Solo Days	31 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program	1 1p Cameo Baroque 3:30p FCC Choir	2 3-6:30p UVMC 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	3 11a Classicopia 3:45p UVMC Children's Choir 7p NA Group	4 5:30p UVMC Tour Group 7:30p Classicopia: Blowin' in the Winds	5 9a-4p UVMC/ Apple Hill 4p Apple Hill String Quartet
6 10a Worship/CCC (Communion) 2p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	7 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program	8 1p Cameo Baroque 3:30p FCC Choir 7p Council	9 8a-3:30p WIC 3-6:30p UVMC 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	10 3:45p UVMC Children's Choir 7p NA Group	11 7:30p Anon Coffeehouse	12
13 PALM SUNDAY 10a Worship/CCC (Liturgy of Palms) 4p FJ Haydn: Seven Last Words	14 <i>Lebanon School Vacation Week</i> No UVMC 7p Diaconate	15 1p Cameo Baroque 3:30p FCC Choir	16 No UVMC 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	17 MAUNDY THURSDAY No UVMC No NA Group 7p Communion and Tenebrae	18 GOOD FRIDAY 12-3p Seven Last Words 7p Service of the Word and Prayer	19
	H O	L Y	W	E E	K	
20 EASTER SUNDAY 6a Sunrise Service (Colburn Park) 10a Festival Worship/CCC	21 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program	22 1p Cameo Baroque 3:30p FCC Choir	23 3-6:30p UVMC 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	24 11a-6p WIC 3:45p UVMC Children's Choir 7p NA Group	25 7:30p Anon Coffeehouse	26 2-6p UVMC/ CelloFest 6p CelloFest
27 10a Worship/CCC 2p VT Traditions Touring Group 5p Community Dinner	28 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program 7p MSA	29 1p Cameo Baroque 3:30p FCC Choir	30 3-6:30p UVMC 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	1 3:45p UVMC Children's Choir 7p NA Group	2 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers (dress rehearsal)	3 7p Bel Canto: On Beauty
4 10a Worship/CCC (Communion) 4p Bel Canto: On Beauty	5 4-9p UVMC Suzuki Program	6 1p Cameo Baroque 3:30p FCC Choir	7 3-6:30p UVMC 7p Bel Canto CS Annual Mtg	8 3:45p UVMC Children's Choir 7p NA Group	9 7:30p Anon Coffeehouse	10 12:30p Student Recital (Borowsky) 7p Cameo Baroque Benefit

If you have questions or corrections regarding any event, please notify us at church@fccleb.org or 603-448-4281.

HOLY WEEK AT FCC

Zoom links will be emailed prior to each service.

April 13—PALM SUNDAY

10 am: Liturgy of the Palms (*Sanctuary/Zoom*)

4 pm: F. J. Haydn, *The Seven Last Words* (*Sanctuary*)

April 17—MAUNDY THURSDAY

7 pm: Service of Communion and Tenebrae,
Stripping of the Altar (*Sanctuary/Zoom*)

April 18—GOOD FRIDAY

12-3 pm: Quiet Meditation on the Seven Last Words (*Sanctuary*)

7 pm: Service of the Word and Prayer (*Sanctuary/Zoom*)

April 20—EASTER SUNDAY

6 am: Ecumenical Sunrise Service (*Colburn Park*)

10 am: Festival Worship Service (*Sanctuary/Zoom*)

CHURCH COUNCIL

With several members unable to attend, Council's March meeting was briefer than usual. Rev. Steve Silver opened his **pastor's report** with a focus on his recent health episode. He expressed great thanks to the congregation for its support and prayers, and he commended Bob Gerlach in particular for ably assisting Pastor Mark Zimmerman to lead the Ash Wednesday service at the Methodist Church.

Steve also noted that he expects to discuss his **sabbatical plans** with the Personnel Committee soon, as he considers making arrangements. The committee will meet to address several topics in the first week of April and then discuss sabbatical details directly with Steve.

Appealing again for improvement of the **Sanctuary sound system**, Steve specified his hope that individual

mics could be muted on Zoom. The pulpit mic tends to amplify his own hymn singing, which he would prefer not be audible. Jon suggested that a workgroup assess needs, preferences, and questions regarding the system, to have something in place for the fall if not sooner. If the expense is significant, we may need to budget it next year. Jon noted we haven't yet selected a contractor for this project. Speaking as a frequent Zoom viewer, Valerie Nevel shared appreciation for Steve's clarity and repetition of remarks from the congregation, as those aren't usually audible on the stream. An improved system would include the capacity for extending mics to those in the congregation. Jon affirmed the urgency to move forward on this issue, perhaps with advice from UVMC next door.

Jon asked Corrine to lay out her plans for the revived **bylaws review committee**, and she noted that it

would meet March 30 after worship. She anticipates going through the current bylaws to identify what can be retained and what needs revision. Crediting the previous committee's work, Corrine believes that many issues have already been resolved, and she doesn't expect the current committee's work to require more than a few hours in all.

Reporting on Walter Scott's behalf for the **Board of Governors**, Jon explained that we're awaiting more favorable weather and a clear stretch in the church calendar to complete

Committee Meetings

The following regular meetings will happen remotely via Zoom:

Diaconate	4/14 and 5/12, 7:00
Council	4/8 and 5/13, 7:00
MSA	4/28, 7:00

For information on other groups' plans to meet, contact the church office.

our renovation of the front steps. Walter has secured the westernmost exterior door to the Sanctuary and plans to improve its weather seal. We also intend to address the side access ramp, determining whether it is optimally designed and making necessary upgrades. Valerie asked about improving drainage on that side of the building, which poses a winter safety issue, and asked about the cost of the steps renovation. She also recommended contacting the City regarding its insufficient snow clearance along the sidewalk in front of the church on Park Street.

Valerie reported that the **Mission and Social Action Committee** would now meet every other month (rather than monthly), given a relative lack of business to cover. She recently attended a housing group meeting and noted the passage of a recovery housing article in the latest round of city elections. Lamenting the rise of food insecurity locally, Valerie also suggested that Steve discuss with UVMC the possibility of their leading a community dinner. Jon added that he plans to work with Walter to repair the wind-damaged banner frame over the front door, with the intention then to display the original banner that welcomes immigrants and refugees.

Valerie continued with a report that the **Personnel Committee**, partly in response to recommendations in our 2024 audit, is developing guidelines for debit-card expenses along with an employee handbook, in order to create consistency in holidays, vacation time, and other areas. She noted that she had some questions on the monthly income-

expense report, to be addressed later by the **Finance Committee**.

DIACONATE

Dawn Troutman opened the March Diaconate meeting with a devotion about keeping faith during a time of underlying worries. Our church offers a safe, welcoming environment. Rev. Silver also recognized how his recent health issue coincides with Lent's emphasis on mortality.

The Deacons also discussed some preparations for **Holy Week** services on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday, with a familiar

sunrise service and light breakfast at FCC before the main service at 10:00. The group considered the need for ushers and readers, as well as how to promote the services.

Steve plans to begin his **sabbatical** in June with an educational program in Texas. Accordingly, **Children's Sunday** is likely to be scheduled in May. The Deacons reiterated our need to draw more kids to FCC.

A **training session**, to be offered on a Sunday after worship, will cover topics like the calendar for liturgical paraments. Regarding our **bylaws** review, the Deacons agreed their current number (8) is sufficient.

Focus on Stewardship

Whether dropped in the plate on a Sunday or mailed into the office, your offering contributions continue to be vital to our ministry. We realize that not everyone can give to the same degree, particularly as economic conditions have remained challenging. But **FCC is grateful to receive contributions of ANY AMOUNT to these purposes:**

Regular Offering—Collected anytime as unrestricted support for the church's general operations, ministries, and programs. This includes all pledges and payments in our annual stewardship effort.

Communion/Open Door Offering—Collected on first (communion) Sundays, directly funding our Open Door Ministry for community assistance (gas/food cards, rent, utilities, lodging, etc.). Any donation in a communion envelope goes to this fund, but you may contribute to the Open Door Ministry at any other time, too.

Special Offerings (e.g., the Lenten Lunch Bag Offering, Blanket and Shelter Sundays, and UCC offerings such as Neighbors in Need or One Great Hour of Sharing)—Collected once a year, in conjunction with an event or national campaign for a mission or service cause.

THANKS TO ALL for so generously supporting all these diverse purposes—at FCC, around the Upper Valley, and beyond!

All contributions should be made payable to FCC, with any specific purpose (as applicable) written in the memo line, and either dropped in the collection plate or mailed to FCC-Lebanon, PO Box 230, Lebanon, NH 03766.

MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

Spring Concerts

All in the Sanctuary at First Congregational Church

Classicopia: Blowin' in the Winds—Friday, April 4, at 7:30 pm

In an uncommon but expressive combination of instruments, pianist Dan Weiser joins oboist Margaret Herlehy and bassoonist Janet Polk for a selection of trios. Dan will also remember his Classicopia co-founder Marcia Colligan (1931-2025). *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; more at classicopia.org.*

The Apple Hill String Quartet—Saturday, April 5, at 4:00 pm

The Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music in Nelson, NH, is one of our state's musical treasures. Its renowned resident quartet offers eclectic programs, ranging from canonical works to new compositions and globally inspired pieces. *Adults \$25, under-18 free; more at uvmusic.org/event/apple-hill-string-quartet.*

The Anonymous Coffeehouse—Fridays, April 11, April 25, and May 9, all 7:30 pm

Our comfy community venue for live music wraps up its fifth season as an informal "listening room" for the finest folk musicians in New England. *Free admission, donations welcome. For more, visit anoncoffee.org.*

Franz Joseph Haydn: The Seven Last Words of Christ—Palm Sunday, April 13, at 4:00 pm

FCC welcomes a performance that has been a Holy Week tradition across Vermont for over three decades.

Four singers join a string quartet for Haydn's bracingly dramatic and sublimely poignant portrayal of Christ's final hours on the cross. *Free-will donation (\$15-20 suggested) benefiting the Open Door Ministry.*

Upper Valley Music Center CelloFest—Saturday, April 26, at 6:00 pm

Upper Valley Music Center again brings Sara Bennett Wolfe's advanced Cello Choir from Connecticut for a collaborative concert with Ben Kulp and other UVMC faculty and students. *More details at uvmusic.org.*

Young Traditions Vermont Touring Group—Sunday, April 27, at 2:00 pm

UVMC hosts this ensemble of talented teenage musicians and singers for a concert and jam session, as they enjoy their New England tour. A program of Vermont Folklife, the group nurtures youth involvement in traditional music and dance. *Suggested \$10-20 donation, under-18 free; more at uvmusic.org.*

Bel Canto Chamber Singers: On Beauty—Saturday, May 3, at 7:00 / Sunday, May 4, at 4:00

In music for choir, piano, strings, and percussion, Bel Canto responds to cruelty with humanity, compassion, and the beauty of nature and spirit. The program ranges from classical to contemporary, spirituals to folk and shape-note, with an array of poetic texts. *Admission by donation (\$15 suggested); more at www.belcantosingers.org.*

Cameo Baroque Benefit Concert: Handel and His Rivals—Saturday, May 10, at 7:00 pm

This superb ensemble explores the world of G. F. Handel, offering his music alongside pieces by John Frederick Lampe, Thomas Augustus Arne, and Giovanni Battista Bonocini, as well as selections from *The Beggar's Opera*. *Free-will donation to benefit Vermont Foodbank; more at vtfoodbank.org and cameoarts.org.*

Upper Valley Music Center Sing & Play Festival: 30 for 30—Saturday-Sunday, May 17-18

Classicopia: Alive and Kicking (Music of Living Composers)—Sunday, May 25, at 2:00 pm

Cantabile Women's Voices: Oh Canada!—Sunday, June 1, at 4:00 pm

Register Now! Classicopia Summer Music Camp at FCC/UVMC—August 4-9, 9a-3p Daily

This immersive but seriously fun program offers instrumental and vocal instruction to students aged 8-17, with outstanding faculty and guest artists. *Details and registration at classicopia.org/summer-camp/.*

OUR LOCAL MISSION

MOMENTS FOR
MISSION



Dismas of Vermont

HARTFORD DISMAS HOUSE is part of a network that assists recently incarcerated women and men as they return and readjust to life outside of prison. Located on Maple Street in Hartford, the house offers residents a safe environment while they develop skills, daily habits, and relationships to facilitate their transition—“reconciling prisoners to society, and society to prisoners.”



For more about Hartford Dismas House and the Dismas of Vermont organization generally, call 802-698-8661 or visit www.dismasoft.org.

DAVID'S HOUSE is the dream of a boy named David Cyr, who died in 1984 after a struggle with leukemia. During hospital treatments in Hanover, David and his father Dick met families who were determined not to leave their sick children but had nowhere to stay locally and could not afford a hotel. Soon after David's passing, his parents and friends established David's House, which in 38 years has welcomed over 16,000 families from around the world, while their kids get the care they need at DHMC next door.

David's House relies on support from a range of sources. If you'd like to donate, provide meals, or volunteer, please visit dauids-house.org/about/.



Do Your Part to Fill the Cart!
for

The Upper Valley Haven

Please consider a donation, and thanks!

Join the fight against local poverty and food insecurity by leaving contributions in our shopping cart in the Parish Hall, to benefit area service organizations. We're now collecting non-perishable food and personal-care items on behalf of the Haven. **For a list of their current and ongoing needs, visit uppervalleyhaven.org.**

The Pastoral Perspective, *continued from Page 1*

get just one chance, either. We make choices throughout our lives, each and every day. If you don't like things the way they are, why sit back and accept them? Instead, do something.

If you don't like your weight, exercise or change your diet.

If you don't like the world we've been building since the end of the pandemic, work to fashion a new one.

It may not be easy (I'm sure it won't be!), but it will be worth the effort. Really.

In closing, and this may be early, allow me to wish you a blessed and joyous Easter!

Yours faithfully,

Steve

First Congregational Church of Lebanon

Weekly Worship and Church School: Sundays, 10:00 am • Office Hours: Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 9-12
10 South Park Street, P.O. Box 230, Lebanon, NH 03766 • 603-448-4281 • church@fcclieb.org • www.fcclieb.org
Rev. Stephen R. Silver: silver@fcclieb.org • Music: music@fcclieb.org • Newsletter Submissions: church@fcclieb.org



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

10 South Park Street
PO Box 230
Lebanon, NH 03766

DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

HOLY WEEK IS APRIL 13-20, 2025

Worship Services on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday,
Good Friday, and Easter Sunday—All Are Welcome! (See Page 4)

One Great Hour of Sharing

Lenten Lunch Bag Offering

Thanks for your support!



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

Spring Concerts

All in the Sanctuary at First Congregational Church

Classicopia: Blowin' in the Winds—Friday, April 4, at 7:30 pm

The Apple Hill String Quartet—Saturday, April 5, at 4:00 pm

The Anonymous Coffeehouse—Fridays, April 11, April 25, and May 9, all 7:30 pm

Franz Joseph Haydn: The Seven Last Words of Christ—Palm Sunday, April 13, at 4:00 pm

Upper Valley Music Center CelloFest—Saturday, April 26, at 6:00 pm

Young Traditions Vermont Touring Group—Sunday, April 27, at 2:00 pm

Bel Canto Chamber Singers: On Beauty—Saturday, May 3, at 7:00 / Sunday, May 4, at 4:00

First Congregational Church of Lebanon

The Rev. Stephen R. Silver, Pastor

Ernie Drown, Organist and Choir Director • Brian Clancy, Church Administrator

Jon Scott, Chair of Church Council • Linda Gerlach, Chair of Deacons • Barbara Jones, Moderator

603-448-4281 • church@fccleb.org • prayer@fccleb.org • music@fccleb.org • www.fccleb.org