



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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The Pastoral Perspective

“No cross, no resurrection,” is one of the great truisms of Christianity. We simply can’t have Easter without the all too dark and troubling events that lead up to it. Jesus cannot triumph over the forces of darkness and sin unless everything has already gone completely wrong in the most spectacular fashion possible.

We need to be ready for all of this; we need to prepare. We, the fallen followers of Jesus, need to take the time to do the hard but rewarding work of self-introspection if we are to be prepared for the miracle of the Resurrection.

And so we have Lent.

The possibilities for this season are astounding. Through the adoption of spiritual disciplines that involve sacrifice or commitment, we have the chance to grow deeper in faith, to gain a richer understanding of what it means to be children of God in relationship with our Maker and his other creatures, and to honestly confront those things that separate us from God and God’s people.

Our Puritan forebears are sometimes dismissed for being too focused on our fallen nature. But the truth is that sin is real and each and every one of us, no matter how faithful, no matter how pure, no matter how steeped in virtue, sins. During these weeks of Lent we are called to consider our sins, not so we can despise ourselves or wallow in self-loathing, but so we can focus on those things that create obstacles to our being in communion with the One who has made himself known to us in Jesus and felt through the power of the Holy Spirit, and then find ways to try to set them aside.

Lent is a solemn season. But I have come to see it as a time filled with joy, too. Knowing the church has set aside a time for recognizing that we have messed up but belong to a God who believes we can work to set things right is cause for prayer, for contemplation, and yes, for celebration.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

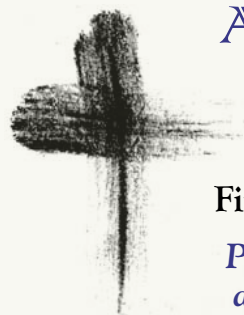
SUNDAY SERVICE

One Great Hour of Sharing SPECIAL MISSION OFFERING—MARCH 26

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is a nationwide UCC offering for mission purposes around the world.

It supports health, education, refugee, agriculture, and emergency-relief initiatives in 138 countries. OGHS funds are leveraged with local, national, and global partners to maximize their impact.

Please consider giving as generously as you can to this important offering. Thank you!



Ash Wednesday Ecumenical Service

March 1, 7:00 pm
First Congregational Church

Please join us as we host this annual service to initiate the holy season of Lent.

Lenten Lunch Bag Offering

Beginning MARCH 5, our Church School children will again be decorating and distributing collection bags for two important organizations—
David's House (davids-house.org) and
Epilogos Charities (epilogos.org).

David's House offers lodging, meals, and home-away-from-home support for families whose children are in treatment next door at DHMC. Our offering will purchase basic, essential supplies for David's House.

The mission of Epilogos is to improve the lives of people in San Jose Villanueva, El Salvador, a model for focused global outreach and a town dear to many at FCC. Our offering will support SJV's school.

In both cases, this Lenten offering allows FCC's children to help other children in challenging circumstances, encouraging them to consider stewardship as a way to share God's love.

You are asked to use the decorated bags to collect savings from the sacrifice of a regular treat during Lent. Suggestions include skipping your daily coffee or latte; foregoing munchies when watching TV; or having dinner at home and contributing the cost of eating out. **Whatever your sacrifices, please plan to return your donations on PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 9.**

Lenten Bible Study

The Book of Ruth: Four Chapters, Four Weeks

Sundays in March at 9:00 am—Parlor

Enrich your Lenten experience with this study of the Book of Ruth, rich with themes about family, Jesus' ancestry, hospitality, and the stranger among us—all of which still resonate today. Each session will explore one chapter of Ruth and stand alone, so you may come to as many or as few as you'd like.

COMMUNITY DINNER

Sunday, March 26, 5:00 pm

Leader: JOHN GILLIATT

Many thanks to John Gilliat for leading this month's dinner! Please consider helping with this vital service to our neighbors.

Sign-ups will be posted on the Missions board in the Parish Hall.

SERVICE OF REDEDICATION

Sunday, April 2—Sanctuary

Join us for this festive service with special music to rededicate our Sanctuary after the winter, now newly painted and refurbished. This will be an opportunity to celebrate in word, song, and sacrament the beautiful space in which we are blessed to worship!

Queued for Coffee Hour

March—Diaconate

April—Mission and Social Action

May—Women of the Church

MARCH 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 10a Worship and Church School (New Members) 5p Community Dinner	27 10a-6p NH-WIC 3p WCBH After-school Group 5:45p Cub Scouts (Wolves)	28 5:45p Cub Scouts (Webelos) 7p Boy Scouts	1 ASH WEDNESDAY (Lent Begins) 6p UVPRN 7p Ecumenical Service	2 7p Choir	3	4 8a Men's Breakfast 10a Juneberry Music Class
5 9a Lenten Bible Study: Ruth 1 10a Worship (Communion) and Church School 11:15a MSA 2p Juneberry Chorus 7p Recital, Students of Kathy Andrew	6 5:45p Cub Scouts (Wolves)	7 5:45p Cub Scouts (Webelos) 7p Boy Scouts	8 8a-4p NH-WIC 6p UVPRN 6:30p Christian Ed Committee	9 9:30a-4p Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Assn 7p Choir	10	11 10a Juneberry Music Class
12 9a Lenten Bible Study: Ruth 2 10a Worship and Church School 3p Open Sing: Vivaldi Gloria	13 3p WCBH After-school Group 5:45p Cub Scouts (Wolves) No Diaconate (moved to 3/20)	14 5:45p Cub Scouts (Webelos) 7p Boy Scouts	15 6p UVPRN	16 7p Choir	17 4:30p Concert: St Patrick's Day	18 10a Juneberry Music Class
19 9a Lenten Bible Study: Ruth 3 10a Worship and Church School 4p UVMC Faculty Showcase	20 7p Diaconate	21 7p Church Council 7p Boy Scouts/Troop Committee	22 9a UVIP 6p UVPRN	23 10a-6p NH-WIC 7p Choir	24 7p Concert: The Borowsky Trio	25 No Juneberry Music Class
26 9a Lenten Bible Study: Ruth 4 10a Worship and Church School 11:15a Bd of Govs 5p Community Dinner 7p Recital, Students of Kathy Andrew	27 APRIL NEWSLETTER CONTENT DUE 3p WCBH After-school Group 5:45p Cub Scouts (Wolves)	28 5:45p Cub Scouts (Webelos) 7p Boy Scouts	29 6p UVPRN	30 7p Choir	31	1 8a Men's Breakfast 10a Juneberry Music Class 2:30p UVMC Suzuki Recitals

If your event is missing or incorrect, please notify us at church@fccleb.org or 603-448-4281.

LENT AND HOLY WEEK 2017

LENT IS A TIME FOR US TO REFLECT upon our relationship with God, to examine our walk with Jesus, and to take stock of our lives as we prepare for the great miracle and gift of Easter.

LENT IS A TIME TO LOOK WITHIN our souls and hearts, to set aside those things that separate us from God and God's people.

LENT IS A TIME TO JOURNEY into the wilderness, so that we may fully enter into the New Creation.

Journey with us during Lent this year in worship, study, reflection, and service.

JOINING IN WORSHIP

March 1—Ash Wednesday

6:30 pm: Ecumenical Service, Imposition of Ashes, Sanctuary

April 9—Palm Sunday

10 am: Liturgy of the Palms, Sanctuary

April 13—Maundy Thursday

7 pm: Service of Communion and Tenebrae, Stripping of the Altar

April 14—Good Friday

12-3 pm: Quiet Meditation on the Seven Last Words, Sanctuary

3 pm: Ecumenical Stations of the Cross Walk (details TBA)

7 pm: Service of the Word and Prayer, Sanctuary

April 16—EASTER SUNDAY

6 am: Ecumenical Sunrise Service, Colburn Park

6:30 am: Community Breakfast to benefit Second Growth, Parish Hall

10 am: Festival Service, Sanctuary

ENGAGING THE WORD, SERVING OUR SISTERS AND BROTHERS

Sundays in March, 9:00 am—The Book of Ruth: Four Chapters, Four Weeks

Enrich your Lenten experience with this study of the Book of Ruth, rich with themes about family, Jesus' ancestry, hospitality, and the stranger among us—all of which resonate today. (See Page 2.)

March 5–April 9—Church School Lenten Lunch Bag Collection

A special annual offering supporting David's House and the children of San Jose Villanueva, El Salvador. (See Page 2.)

Sunday, March 26—One Great Hour of Sharing

A nationwide UCC mission offering for worldwide initiatives. (See Page 2.)

Sundays, March 26 and April 23, 5:00 pm—Community Dinner at FCC

Daily Lenten Reflections

Every day from Ash Wednesday through Easter Sunday, receive a devotional reflection by email.

Sign up by sending a message to silver@fccleb.org.

COMMITTEE NOTES

2017 ANNUAL MEETING

In the absence of a Moderator, the 2017 Annual Meeting was called to order by Council Chair Corrine Erskine. She explained that Amy Driscoll, as incoming Moderator, had agreed to lead the meeting. It was noted that approximately thirty people were in attendance, enough for a quorum according to church By-laws. Steve Silver then offered the invocation, and Amy read the annual meeting warrant in full.

Steve next added to his **Pastor's Report** by highlighting three areas of opportunity in the coming year. The first is a chance to consider the church's organizational structure and ensure that volunteers are being spiritually fed, rather than burdened. The second is the approaching 250th anniversary of our congregation in 2018, an exciting moment for reflection and planning; it may well be an opportune time for a capital campaign to renovate our kitchen, on which we rely so heavily for both congregational and community programs. The third is a focus on faith formation for both children and adults; Steve invited and encouraged input regarding what our congregational needs are in this area. He concluded his remarks by sharing his pride in our congregation and his gratitude for our service.

Noting that the position of **Auditor** is currently vacant, Amy invited interest from the congregation and emphasized the need for stronger financial supervision and oversight in church governance.

Reporting on behalf of outgoing **Treasurer** Barry Schuster, Steve

noted that our finances remain in healthy shape heading into 2017. Reiterating Amy's comments, Valerie Nevel added that the Trustees would discuss the Auditor role, expressing her firm belief that we should engage a professional for this. It was noted that this is simply a question of financial best practices and security for volunteers who are charged with financial management. Wendell Smith moved to accept the "unaudited" Treasurer's Report, with Valerie's amendment that a professional audit be conducted within the fiscal year.

For the **Board of Governors**, John Gilliatt invited questions and feedback from all present. Wendell commended John's leadership through the year, noting the structure and systematic approach he brought to the Board's work.

Valerie Nevel next reported for the **Board of Trustees** that all our investments are in good order, offering a few remarks about FCC's investment strategies. Valerie read the list of names of those who had arranged for ongoing funding from memorial gifts and bequests. She encouraged everyone to consider providing some legacy for the church in their estate planning.

Speaking for the **Diaconate**, Biff Simpson noted that the Annual Report document represents only a portion of the Deacons' work this year. Steve Silver added clarification that FCC has already been an Open and Affirming congregation for several years; the Diaconate's work on this issue consists only in living into this mission more fully.

Linda Jacobs asked what was now planned for the Called to Care program. Steve responded that the Diaconate is carefully considering how to transition from Called to Care into a broader program of lay pastoral care, inviting the whole congregation to participate as they are most comfortable.

Pete Mason clarified the current membership of the **Memorial Gardens Committee** and solicited help in planting the gardens this spring, now that Nora Miller has finished serving on the committee.

All committee reports for 2016 were unanimously accepted by the congregation.

Referring to the **Nominating Committee's** roster, Amy Driscoll noted a few additions since the Annual Report's printing—Linda Jacobs would serve as Vice Chair of Council, Ike Jacobs would continue on Memorial Gardens, and both Jacobs would share a position on Christian Education. Barb Teeter volunteered from the floor to fill the vacant at-large position on Council, which was gratefully accepted. The congregation voted unanimously to accept the full slate of nominations as presented at the meeting.

Biff Simpson, observing that there is no clear oversight of the church's role as charter organization for the Scouting program, recommended that this be addressed. Linda Jacobs affirmed our decades-long history of sponsoring the Scouts, and Wendell Smith suggested that the program might fall under the purview of Mission and Social Action. While acknowledging the importance of

COMMITTEE NOTES

the issue, Rachel Silver suggested that it would be better decided in Church Council, outside of Annual Meeting, and all agreed.

Introducing the **proposed 2017 budget**, Steve Silver thanked the Trustees, Finance Committee, and various program-area committees for help in preparing it. He also stated his preference that the pastor be less directly involved in budget preparations than he has been. Steve pointed out a few specific items, such as raises for the Music Director and Church Administrator and a budget increase for Christian Education to accommodate summer musical camp. He also noted that unlike in previous years, all income and expenses were now represented in the same budget, including items such as the Diaconate and MSA accounts and programs such as the Open Door Ministry. Wendell added that the Pastoral Relations Committee had, after due diligence, submitted recommendations for changes in the Pastor's compensation package. And Valerie Nevel noted our endowment spending practices, stressing that any draw from principal is done responsibly. The congregation unanimously approved the proposed budget for 2017.

Amy Driscoll then read aloud the **proposal to amend the FCC By-laws** by removing the responsibility for securing childcare from the Diaconate's scope of work. John Gilliatt asked for clarification about whether this duty would be assigned to the Personnel Subcommittee or Council itself, recalling discussion in Council that Personnel wouldn't

necessarily take this on. It was noted that the amendment proposed only to remove this duty from the Deacons, not to assign it explicitly to anyone else. Without the Diaconate clause, childcare supervision would default to Personnel. (Church Council plans to resume this discussion at its next meeting.) The congregation unanimously approved the proposed amendment.

At the suggestion of Linda Jacobs, the meeting next recognized and applauded Brian Clancy and Henry Danaher for their hard work in sustaining the life of the congregation and the church's programs.

Steve Silver reminded everyone that he would be taking his sabbatical for four months over the summer, beginning sometime between mid-May and mid-June. He has been discussing plans with the Diaconate, and he assured everyone that consistent pastoral leadership would be arranged during his absence. He expressed his deep gratitude to the congregation for this wonderful opportunity, noting how much support he's received during his preparations.

It was also noted that printed copies of the current version of the **FCC By-laws** were available to anyone, upon request to the church office.

The congregation sang the closing hymn, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds," and Steve offered the benediction, again sharing gratitude and joy for the many strengths and gifts of our church. The meeting adjourned at 12:15, and many remained for a delicious potluck lunch.

Save the Date!

2017 Senior Luncheon
Thursday, April 27, 11:00 am

March Meetings

Mission/Social Action	3/5, 11:15
Christian Education	(no mtg)
Diaconate	3/20, 7:00
Church Council	3/21, 7:00
Board of Governors	3/26, 11:15

April Meetings

Mission/Social Action	4/2, 11:15
Diaconate	4/10, 7:00
Christian Education	4/12, 6:30
Church Council	4/18, 7:00
Board of Governors	4/23, 11:15

From the Nominating Committee

Volunteer Opportunities Still Available!

As we begin a new term for our volunteer committees, Church Council and the Nominating Committee ask you to consider how you might best contribute your own skills, interests, and energies to our church's mission and ministry.

If you're interested in learning about a particular committee or available opportunities for service and ministry, **contact Amy Driscoll (603-448-0976/ amykdriscoll@gmail.com) or Barry Schuster (603-448-5937/ ivylegal@gmail.com).**

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



FIRE
and
ICE

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



Welcome, New Members! On February 26 we welcomed six new covenant members to FCC: Harriet Oman, Bob and Linda Gerlach, and (not pictured) Sue Pratt, Nancy Ryder, and Nancy Ulf. **We're so glad you've all joined our church family!**



FROM ANNUAL MEETING TO ASH WEDNESDAY. Henry Danaher leads a jazzy instrumental ensemble during worship before Annual Meeting; afterward, congregation members enjoy fellowship and delicious potluck food. Steve Silver initiated Lent by offering "Ashes to Go" on the front sidewalk, and Jo Shelnutt stopped by to chat.

MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

Spring Concerts

All in the Sanctuary, First Congregational Church

Open Sing: Vivaldi's Gloria—Sunday, March 12, at 3:00 pm

All are invited—either to join the chorus or just to listen!—to share in a performance of this exuberant piece. Hal Sheeler will direct, and our own Henry Danaher will accompany on piano.

St. Patrick's Day Concert—Friday, March 17, at 4:30 pm

Please join us, regardless of your ethnic background, for this performance of traditional Irish music by Anthony Santoro on the uilleann pipes and Roger Burrige on fiddle.

UVMC Faculty Showcase—Sunday, March 19, at 4:00 pm

We are proud to offer this special exhibition of the broad range of talents possessed by the faculty of the Upper Valley Music Center, our excellent local music school. All are welcome; proceeds support UVMC.

The Borowsky Trio—Friday, March 24, at 7:00 pm

Pianist Elizabeth Borowsky welcomes her sister Frances on cello and brother Emmanuel on violin for a virtuosic program of familiar and original compositions. All are invited to enjoy this trio of siblings, who have delighted and dazzled international audiences with their music.

UVMC Suzuki Violin Recitals—Saturday, April 1, at 2:30 pm / Sunday, April 2, at 12:30 pm

The vigorous Suzuki program at UVMC presents young violinists in two afternoons of solo recitals.

Piano Master Class with Dr. Chad Bowles—Friday, April 7, at 6:30 pm

Dr. Bowles, director of the piano program at the Peabody Conservatory, works with young pianists.

Classicopia: Cello Charm—Saturday, April 22, at 7:30 pm

Pianist Dan Weiser and cellist Eric Kutz perform music of Mendelssohn, Balakirev, Barber, and Casadó.

Classicopia: Violin Voyage—Saturday, May 20, at 7:30 pm

Dan Weiser welcomes back violinist Omar Chen Guey for a program featuring Strauss and more.

Cantabile: Music for Women's Voices—Saturday, June 3, at 4:00 pm

Now in its 17th year, this excellent women's choral ensemble sings at FCC for the first time. (*Program TBA.*)

A Cappella Showcase with Harmony Night—Saturday, June 10, at 7:00 pm

Dan Signor brings his community *a cappella* group Harmony Night back for this popular concert.

Benjamin Kulp, Cello, and Victoria Nooe, Piano—Saturday, June 24, at 7:00 pm

We are delighted to host this concert as part of the Upper Valley Music Center's Hanover Street Chamber Music Festival, which concludes that weekend.

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@fccleb.org • www.fccleb.org
Rev. Stephen R. Silver — silver@fccleb.org • Newsletter Submissions — church@fccleb.org



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

10 South Park Street

PO Box 230

Lebanon, NH 03766

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Music
at the
Meetinghouse

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