



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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The Pastoral Perspective

This year the arrival of Easter seems especially sweet. The winter that has passed has been harsh. Here in the Upper Valley we endured bitterly cold temperatures, while to our south, family and friends in Boston and other parts of New England endured record snowfall. From the shores of Narragansett Bay to the farthest reaches of the Northeast Kingdom, from the hills and dales of the Berkshires to the rockbound coast of Maine, the sentiment is unanimous: We are done with winter. We are ready.

Without doubt, we *are* ready for spring. But what about Easter? Are we ready for that?

Easter, of course, is not about spring. Yes, there are the shared motifs: new life, rebirth after a period of loss, a season of possibility. But the season of spring is all about the natural world, the rhythms of life. Easter is a wholly different matter. Easter is not about the natural world or, to be more accurate, the natural world alone. It is about all of Creation. Easter is not about awaking from the slumber of hibernation or shaking off of a carapace of ice and Arctic cold. Rather, Easter is about the triumph of God's love and the conquest of death.

That is quite a claim. And in the face of so much suffering in the world, whether in the cities of war-torn Syria or in the ICU at Dartmouth-Hitchcock, a seemingly empty one. If God did indeed vanquish death on the cross why is humanity—why are you, why am I—still in the grip of pain and loss?

An answer, perhaps, is to be found not on Easter but a week earlier, on Palm Sunday. When Jesus entered into Jerusalem, spectators thought they were witnessing the arrival of a new king. They were—but not the kind of king they expected. They believed a conquering heir to David had finally come to free them from Rome. What the Son of God had actually come to free them from was sin. This should not have been a surprise. That Jesus was somehow doing something new and different

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SUNDAY SERVICE

HOLY WEEK AT FCC

April 2—Maundy Thursday

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

April 3—Good Friday

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

3 pm: Ecumenical Stations of the Cross Walk (meet at
Sacred Heart Church)

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

April 5—EASTER SUNDAY

6 am: Ecumenical Sunrise Service (Colburn Park)

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

10 am: Festival Service, Holy Communion (Sanctuary)

New Members Welcome!

Have you worshiped with us a few times? Have you returned because you found a welcoming, spiritually nourishing church home here? We warmly invite you to consider joining our community of faith as a covenant member.

If you would like to learn more about this invitation, please speak with Rev. Steve Silver or contact the church office.

COMMUNITY DINNER

Sunday, April 26, at 5:00 pm

Leaders: CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Please participate in this vital service to our local community! The Church School children and CE Committee will prepare and serve the meal, but they do need some help providing ingredients.

**Please sign up in the Parish Hall,
or contact the church office.**

Participate in Worship!

Serve as a Liturgist or Greeter/Usher

Have you ever dreamed of handing out bulletins on Sunday? Or delivering the call to worship and reading scripture from the lectern? Or walking gracefully from pew to pew collecting the offering?

We can make that dream a reality.

No experience or training is required. **If you'd like to serve as either a liturgist or a greeter/usher, please contact the church office.**

Your congregation will thank you!

Queued for Coffee Hour

April—Mission and Social Action

May—Women of the Church

June—Board of Governors

July—Church Council

APRIL 2015 CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 PALM SUNDAY 10a Worship (Liturgy of the Palms) /Church School 1-7p UVMC Suzuki Soloists	30 6:15p Cub Scouts (Wolf)	31 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bear) 7p Boy Scouts 7p Quicksilver Rehearsal	1 6p UVPRN	2 MAUNDY THURSDAY 5p Headrest Support Group 7p Service of Tenebrae	3 GOOD FRIDAY 12-3p Seven Last Words 3p Stations of the Cross Walk 7p Service of Word and Prayer	4 HOLY SATURDAY No Men's Breakfast 9a Bible Study 10:15a Juneberry Music
H O L Y W E E K						
5 EASTER SUNDAY 6a Sunrise Service 6:30-8a Easter Breakfast 10a Festival Worship, with Communion	6 3p WCBH After-school 6:15p Cub Scouts (Wolf)	7 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bear) 7p Boy Scouts	8 8a-4p NH-WIC 6p UVPRN 7p Christian Ed Committee 7p VT Oneness Meditation	9 9:30a-4p Grafton-Orange 5p Headrest Support Group 6p Choir	10 6-9p Leb Rec Dept Quilters	11 9a Bible Study 10a-5p Leb Rec Dept Quilters 10:15a Juneberry Music 6p Quicksilver/ WISE Benefit
12 10a Worship/ Church School 11:15a MSA 1p Classicopia: Four-hand Fun	13 7p Diaconate	14 7p Boy Scouts	15 6p UVPRN 7p Board of Trustees	16 5p Headrest Support Group 6p Choir	17	18 9a Bible Study 10:15a Juneberry Music
19 10a Worship/ Church School	20 3p WCBH After-school	21 7p Church Council 7p Boy Scouts	22 6p UVPRN	23 10a-7p NH-WIC 5p Headrest Support Group 6p Choir	24 MAY NEWSLETTER CONTENT DUE	25 9a Bible Study 10:15a Juneberry Music 1p Cushing Memorial Service
26 10a Worship/ Church School 11:15a Board of Governors 5p Community Dinner	27 6:15p Cub Scouts (Wolf)	28 11a Senior Luncheon 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bear) 7p Boy Scouts	29 APRIL NEWSLETTER CONTENT DUE 6p UVPRN	30 5p Headrest Support Group 6p Choir	1	2 8a Men's Breakfast 9a Bible Study 10:15a Juneberry Music

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

COMMITTEE NOTES

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The Board of Governors plans to schedule an **energy audit later this spring or in the fall**. The Board has met with one potential firm and is in the process of obtaining more information from a second. Ideally, the parsonage would be included in the audit as well.

Our annual **Spring Clean-Up** will be scheduled whenever Old Man Winter decides to leave the area. The lawns will be raked and shrubs trimmed. A survey and possible reorganization of the basement storage areas will be included, too.

The Board also plans to review the church's **snow-removal practices**, as discussed at Council. With this winter's frequent storms and icing, the walkways around the church property were often treacherous, and more outside groups are using the church. We need to supplement our usual snow-removal coverage.

Finally, the Board is pleased to welcome two **new members** this year, Walter Scott and Don Rowell.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Church School children wish to thank their church family for the **Lenten Lunch Bag contributions** to benefit David's House and students in El Salvador. It means a lot to our kids to know they helping other kids!

We are also planning a **trip to the Heifer Farm in Rutland, MA**, on May 16. More information to come.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Barry Schuster reported that the church's **By-laws** have been revised to incorporate the amendments passed at the 2015 Annual Meeting. Printed copies are available from the church office for any member of the Council or congregation at-large who would like one.

Jon Scott reported that **three new Deacons will be commissioned** in worship on April 12. He also brought forward a recommendation that Steve Teeter be approved as a new Deacon, which Council approved unanimously.

The Deacons will plan a retreat for later in the spring, though the date is not yet certain. Jon invited input from the congregation regarding anything the Diaconate might consider or do better or differently.

Reporting for **Nominating**, Amy Driscoll said that two other spots had recently been filled—Corrine Erskine will continue on Mission and Social Action, and Don Rowell will join the Board of Governors. Council unanimously approved both nominations. Also, Gordon Sargent has graciously agreed to stay on for six months as temporary chair of the Board of Governors. Council expressed its collective gratitude to Gordon.

Treasurer Nan Parsons offered her report of 2015 activity to date, which showed typical figures for this time of the year (according to former Treasurer Todd Heatherton, whom Nan thanked for being a valuable

resource). Nan reported difficulty with Liberty Utilities and the need for a short-term transfer, but she expressed no other concerns.

Jon Scott added that he'd tried to research our service with Comcast to try to negotiate better rates, but Comcast will only deal with those authorized to manage accounts. In light of this difficulty, more people will be authorized.

With recent changes in both the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer positions, Council also discussed the **recording and acknowledgment of gifts** to the church. Most of our contributions are collected from the offering each week and deposited by the Assistant Treasurer. However, some larger, one-time gifts (often at year's end) have gone through the Treasurer and thus haven't appeared consistently on quarterly statements, which are generated by the Assistant Treasurer. Barry Schuster suggested that those statements should bear a disclaimer regarding this issue.

Church Administrator Brian Clancy requested that all **church-wide correspondence** should come from the church office, in order to ensure the most current contact information for church members. It's important to maintain consistency in all church communications. Council members generally agreed with this rationale, and suggested that the congregation should be made aware of it as well.

Brian also brought forward a request from the *a cappella* group Harmony Nights, who will perform at the

COMMITTEE NOTES

church in June. The group would like to collect donations for a summer music scholarship for students, which Council approved. Brian suggested, though, that since this wasn't the first instance of **outside groups raising funds for a specific purpose**, Council should consider how such purposes should be evaluated. Members present felt that these questions should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Reporting for **Stewardship**, Jon Scott distributed an update on 2015 pledge totals, which reflect positive responses from more who regularly attend worship. Jon stressed his belief, however, that some of our current mechanisms for stewardship are inadequate. He observed that our stewardship effort lacks real-time information about who is pledging and how much. He recommended that he meet

with the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer to discuss how to improve this real-time reporting. Pete Mason supported this communication, and Amy Driscoll suggested that it would be beneficial to educate the congregation and raise its collective financial awareness.

Jon also asked for Council's input on whether pledge information could or should be discussed with the pastor, since there are instances in which pledge information might affect the nature of pastoral care. Pete Mason added that members have historically had a broad variety of preferences regarding who knows how much about contributions; some have wished to deal directly with the Treasurer, others only with the Stewardship Committee, etc. Steve Silver noted that current, best-practice standards across many denominations are for the Treasurer,

Stewardship Committee, and pastor to have access to the same information. Council members unanimously agreed that **an open exchange of information would be appropriate and useful**; all trust the discretion of the pastor, the Stewardship chair and other church officers in such matters.

On behalf of **Mission and Social Action**, Jon reported that early planning had begun for a return trip to San Jose Villanueva, perhaps in April 2016. The priority would be to raise significant additional funds, both for this next trip and for the replenishment of funds spent on last fall's trip. Wendell Smith is again the primary contact.

The MSA Committee also reminds everyone that leaders are still needed for **Community Dinners** in 2015; church committees in particular are encouraged to volunteer as

Updated Constitution and By-Laws Now Available Upon Request

Because our congregation has approved a number of amendments in the past two years, FCC's Constitution and By-Laws are now significantly revised from the last version that was widely printed (in February 2012). Rather than print and distribute the current version to the entire congregation, Council has determined that making an electronic version available is sufficient, with printed copies available at any time to any member of the congregation who requests one.

If you would like a printed copy of the current Constitution and By-Laws (February 2015), please contact the church office.

April Meetings

Christian Education	4/8, 7:00
Mission/Social Action and Stewardship	4/12(?), 11:15
Diaconate	4/13, 7:00
Board of Trustees	4/15, 7:00
Church Council	4/21, 7:00
Board of Governors	4/26, 11:15

May Meetings

Mission/Social Action and Stewardship	5/3, 11:15
Diaconate	5/11, 7:00
Christian Education	5/13, 7:00
Church Council	5/19, 7:00
Board of Governors	5/24, 11:15

COMMITTEE NOTES

From Christian Education

Come Visit Heifer Farm

Rutland, MA



Saturday, May 16

More details coming next month!

A Few Words About...

CONGREGATIONAL CONTACT

The Church Administrator reminds everyone to ensure that your contact information and preferences are current in our records.

Please pass on to the church office any changes to your mailing or email addresses or phone numbers. If you have particular requests regarding how we contact you, we will try to accommodate them.

Along the same lines, if you wish to contact a particular group of church members about items of church-wide interest or business, we strongly recommend doing so through the church office.

Committee chairs specifically are urged to obtain current contact information for their members from the office. Primarily, this is to ensure that all church communications reach our congregation in a consistent, coordinated manner. We never give our "lists" to anyone outside the church, and we also try to minimize and regulate the communications that we do send within our congregation.

Your assistance in this effort is greatly appreciated!

groups. Jon Scott has again agreed to organize dinner for the WISE/Quicksilver benefit, but he asked that WISE be asked for volunteers.

In his **pastoral report**, Steve Silver focused on Lenten study and Easter preparations, as Holy Week offers a full range of events and services. He pointed out that he happens now to be the "senior" clergy member in town in the length of his tenure. He is gratified by his work on ecumenical events, just as he is by his work within our congregation.

DIACONATE

In March the Diaconate established various individual assignments for the coming year and welcomed three new members, Steve Teeter,

Susan Montmagny, and Biff Simpson. Formal commissioning will occur in worship on April 12.

In a discussion of **communion serving practices**, Barb Teeter reviewed procedures, Hilary Ryder offered to supply juice, and Deb Scott offered to continue supplying gluten-free bread.

Steve Silver reviewed a successful Fire and Ice event at Ron Bailey's house, the Ash Wednesday service hosted by FCC, and Lenten and Holy Week programming. He is also working on organizing a day trip to Boston.

On behalf of Administrator Brian Clancy, Steve also reported that Lifetouch (formerly Olin Mills) had contacted us about publishing a **new**

church directory. He explained that it would be produced at no cost to the church; Lifetouch would hope to generate individual purchases of photos. Jon Scott offered to work on this project.

Each Deacon received an individual **member list**, and all were reviewed and updated as needed. It was proposed that each Deacon make an effort to contact the members on his/her list before Easter. Jon Scott suggested that Stewardship records be reviewed to ensure that no one who made a 2015 pledge would be removed from a list or designated inactive.

Susan Montmagny distributed an **Open-and-Affirming** committee survey. Deacons can anonymously complete and return them to her.

COMMITTEE NOTES

MUSIC COMMITTEE

Meeting on March 8, the Music Committee welcomed Denise Moriearty as a new member. We also reviewed the **spring concert schedule**, which is evolving. There was some concern over conflicts with other Upper Valley concerts—Classicopia's concert on May 3, for example. In that and other cases, though, we don't usually have flexibility to schedule our concerts around external events.

The committee discussed the recent purchase of the electronic version of the revised **Presbyterian Hymnal**, not as a replacement of our current pew hymnals but as a supplement for particular hymns

and for its ease of reproduction. We also shared opinions about the possibility of incorporating a **sung Lord's Prayer** in worship on occasion, either by the choir or the entire congregation. All agreed that it was worth trying, as long as there was some congregational feedback. Along the same lines, committee members expressed interest in revisiting the fall 2013 survey of our music ministry.

Henry Danaher brought a request to the committee for **professional development support**, as he would like to pursue further instruction in both choral conducting and organ, probably during the summer. Committee members agreed that providing such support was entirely

reasonable, and Henry will work with chair Brian Clancy to bring a proposal to Council.

MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

At its March meeting the MSA Committee reviewed a variety of established initiatives but focused on planning a return to **San Jose Villanueva**, possibly as soon as April 2016. The first concern for such a trip would be funding, in part to continue replenishing the funds used last fall. Wendell Smith will seek a full accounting of that trip, with help from the Church Administrator, and will solicit ideas for further fundraising.

The Pastoral Perspective, *continued from Page 1*

was clear to anyone paying attention. He rode into the city on a colt, not a warhorse, coming as a king in peace. He was accompanied by just a few of his disciples, which is not exactly the way to overthrow the mightiest empire on earth. And after entering the city, Mark tells us that Jesus looked around, then left. This was not exactly a forceful occupation.

We all know what came next. The trial. The cross. And, our faith tells us, the resurrection.

If Jesus came as a different kind of king, perhaps his conquest of death needs to be understood in a new way, too. The victory on the cross shouldn't be understood as the elimination of death. That remains an ineluctable, integral part of life. Instead, what God did was throw in his lot with us, so boldly, so clearly, so powerfully that we can never, ever feel that we are alone again. Even in the face of death, we are supported, succored, surrounded by the most powerful force in the universe.

On an Easter morn long ago, Jesus rose, and in doing so, lifted up all creation with him. In defeating death, Jesus affirmed life—not life to come, but life lived now. Jesus offered, as he continues to offer, life renewed, life remade, life reimagined, to you, to me, to all. Are we ready for Easter? Are we ready for new life? Maybe we are, maybe we are not. Happily, blessedly, gracefully, it matters not. God's already freely made the gift. Jesus Christ is risen today. Alleluia!

Yours faithfully,

Steve

OUR LOCAL MISSION

THE QUICKSILVER COMEDY PLAYERS

Improv Comedy at Its Best!

DINNER THEATER BENEFIT

for

end violence

wise

share hope ♦ change lives

Saturday, April 11, at FCC—Dinner 6:00, Show 7:00

Tickets: \$15 (Dinner/Show) and \$7 (Show Only)

All proceeds support WISE of the Upper Valley

Serving the entire Upper Valley from its facility in Lebanon, WISE provides advocacy, crisis services, and community education to those affected by domestic and sexual violence and stalking.

For more information, please visit www.wiseftheuppervalley.org.

Support this vital community resource... And have some laughs too!



First Congregational Church of Lebanon
10 South Park Street, PO Box 230
Lebanon, NH 03766
www.fccleb.org / church@fccleb.org

TICKETS:

603-448-4281 or church@fccleb.org

Volunteer at DAVID'S HOUSE!



David's House is the dream of a boy named David Cyr, who passed away in 1984 after struggling with leukemia. During his treatments, David and his father Dick met others who were determined not to leave their sick children but had nowhere to stay locally. In the past 30 years David's House has welcomed over 12,500 families from around the world, while their kids get the specialized treatment they need at DHMC next door.

David's House is supported by a variety of sources—including our own Church School children!—but volunteers are essential to its operations. If you're interested in volunteering, contact Katie Nolen (603-643-2298/katie.nolen@davids-house.org).

COMMUNITY DINNER Leaders Needed!

5/24	Jon Scott/M&SA
6/28	Erin Slayton
7/26	(open)
8/23	(open)
9/27	Women of the Church
10/25	Christian Education
11/22	Nan Parsons
12/27	Nan Parsons

Please consider joining this group!

Women of the Church
invites

All Seniors in the Church Family
to be our guests for

Luncheon
served in your honor

TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2015

Coffee, tea, and fellowship starting at 11:00 am

Performance by the Superlatives of Lebanon High School at 12:00 noon

Luncheon served at 12:30 pm



An Irish Community Dinner

On March 22 **John Gilliatt** prepared a delicious dinner of corned beef, cabbage, carrots, and bread pudding in a festive observance of St. Patrick's Day. John had plenty of help in the kitchen that afternoon—

Chip Silver, Katie Clancy, and Kailyn Rappaport helped **Barbara Sargent** break up bread for the pudding, while **Susan Montmagny, Denise Moriearty, Barb Teeter, and Martha Larrabee** peeled vegetables.

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



From the Parish Hall to Palm Sunday

In addition to preparing us all for Holy Week, our Lenten worship services this year set up a welcome return to the Sanctuary. (The Christmas tree, which had survived quite well in the cold of the Sanctuary, was removed for recycling just in time!) We happily remembered Christ's festive entry into Jerusalem—with palms waving and lunch bags jingling with change, Church School children collected their Lenten offering for David's House and schools in San Jose Villanueva.



MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music at the Meetinghouse

Spring Concerts!

All in the Sanctuary, First Congregational Church

FOUR CONCERTS WITH *Classicopia*

For thirteen years Marcia Colligan, pianist Daniel Weiser, and Classicopia have offered an engaging combination of brilliant musicianship and informative discussion in a relaxed atmosphere.

Suggested admission for all concerts \$20, FCC members \$10, children 12 and under free.

Sunday, April 12, at 1:00 pm—More Four-hand Fun!

Pianists Dan Weiser and Philip Liston-Kraft entertain as always, with a delightful program of Rossini, Schubert, Moszkowski, and Bernstein.

Sunday, May 3, at 1:00 pm—The Art of Music

Violinist Tim Schwarz and pianist Dan Weiser explore connections between music and the other arts in a program of Beethoven, Still, de Falla, and Bernstein.

Saturday, June 20, at 7:30 pm—Broadway Melodies

Dan Weiser accompanies the wonderful mezzo-soprano Erma Mellinger for a stroll through the years along the Great White Way.

Friday, June 26, at 7:30 pm—A-Cello-Rondo

Cellist Patrick Owen once again joins Dan for a lively program of folk-influenced music by Grieg, Schumann, Piazzolla, and more.

AN EVENING WITH WILL ÖGMUNDSON—Friday, May 15, at 7:30 pm

Former FCC music director Will Ögmundson returns to share his piano virtuosity and diverse repertoire from classical to ragtime—topped off by one of his signature audience-request medleys!

UPPER VALLEY MUSIC CENTER SPRING CHILDREN'S CONCERT—Sunday, May 31, at 1:00 pm

Support our local music school and enjoy the achievements of its young students.

AN A CAPPELLA SHOWCASE WITH HARMONY NIGHTS—Friday, June 6, at 7:00 pm

Dan Signor brings his community *a cappella* group Harmony Nights to our Sanctuary for a program of dancing rhythms and tight chords. *Free-will donation to benefit summer music scholarships.*

STUDENT PIANO RECITALS

Students of Lisa Amundsen—Thursday, May 7, 6:00 pm

Students of Carol Hartman—Saturday, May 30, 4:00 pm

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