



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

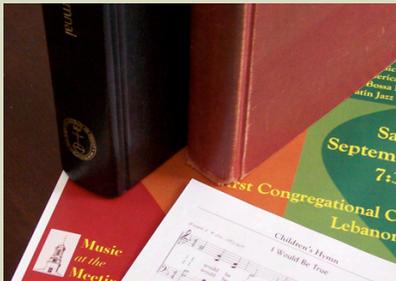
United Church of Christ

FEBRUARY 2014

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The Pastoral Perspective

Many, many years ago I was in Los Angeles for a weeklong business trip, which meant I'd be in town through the weekend. I was staying in Santa Monica, and I decided to attend worship at the local Presbyterian church, a short walk from my hotel. As I approached the church, I was expecting a familiar service with a liturgy I knew and appreciated; what I encountered was something altogether different. That day, there was no sermon. And, instead of familiar music sung from a hymnal I loved, I was treated to an hour of Dixieland Jazz. It wasn't what I'd anticipated, but was I ever glad I was there. The church—well, the church rocked! It was great, and it says something that I still remember that service fondly all these years later.

Music in church can have that affect on us. It might be a hymn or an anthem, maybe a postlude, or possibly the entire experience of a Sunday morning—but sometimes things musical in worship just come together in a way that is transcendent, that offers us an experience of the divine and lingers with us for days, weeks, months, even years. This can happen in a big downtown church, a small island chapel, or in the sanctuary of First Congregational Church of Lebanon. Where and when these moments of wonder will happen cannot be predicted. That seems wholly appropriate—for who are we to presume that we can forecast when and how the Holy Spirit will move among us?

Ah, the Holy Spirit. What does this have to do with church music, some might wonder? My answer is simple: Everything. Music in worship differs from that in a concert or recital because the former is part of a time intentionally set aside for the worship of God. Music, whether choral, instrumental, or in the form of sung hymns, is a form of prayer, a way of communicating with God. When we sing a beloved hymn, or find ourselves moved by an

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SUNDAY SERVICE

ANNUAL MEETING 2014

Sunday, February 9—Following Worship

New Members Welcome!

Have you just worshiped with us for the first time? Have you returned because you have found a welcoming, spiritually nourishing church home here? We warmly invite you to consider formally 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.

Participate in Worship!

**Serve as a Liturgist or
as a Greeter/Usher**

Ever wonder how your friends ended up handing out bulletins at the door on Sunday morning? Or delivering the call to worship and reading scripture from the lectern? Or walking gracefully from pew to pew collecting the offering?

It's easy—we asked, and they said yes.

No experience or training is required for any of these important roles in worship!

If you're interested in serving as a liturgist, please contact the church office.

If you're interested in greeting/ushering, please contact Carolyn Crocker (603-448-9410/carolyn.crocker@gmail.com).

Your congregation will thank you!

SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY!!

No, that's not a typo, and we're not talking about football. We're "tackling" hunger in our community with a soup collection this month.

Please leave your cans of soup in one of the collection boxes in the Narthex and Parish Hall, and we'll distribute them to Headrest, Listen Community Services, and the Upper Valley Haven. (Donations accepted until February 9.)

Thanks for your generosity!

COMMUNITY DINNER

Sunday, February 23, at 5:00

**Thank you MARCY CHONG for leading
this month's dinner!**

Please help Marcy out by donating ingredients or volunteering with set-up, serving, or clean-up. In this most wintry of months, our service is all the more vital to those in our local community who look forward to this meal every month.

To offer your help, sign up in the Parish Hall, contact the church office, or contact Marcy directly at chonghall@gmail.com.

Never helped before but interested in trying? Make THIS your month!

Queued for Coffee Hour

February—Christian Education

March—Diaconate

April—Music Committee

May—Women's Fellowship

FEBRUARY 2014 CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 10a Worship/ Church School 11:15a Will Ögmundson Farewell 5p Community Dinner	27 3p WCBH After-school 5:30p Wolf Cubs 6p Tiger Cubs 7p Board of Governors	28 7p Boy Scouts	29 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto	30 7p Choir	31 6p Bear Cubs 7p Cub Scouts Committee	1 8a Men's Breakfast No Bible Study
2 10a Worship/ Church School (Communion) SOUPer Bowl Collection 1p Recital, Students of Sarah Slater	3 5:30p Wolf Cubs 6p Tiger Cubs	4 7p Boy Scouts	5 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto	6 7p Choir	7 6p Bear Cubs	8 No Bible Study
9 10a Worship/ Church School SOUPer Bowl Collection 11:15a 2014 FCC Annual Meeting	10 3p WCBH After-school 5:30p Wolf Cubs 7p Diaconate	11 7p Boy Scouts	12 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto	13 9:30a-4p Grafton- Orange Assn 7p Choir	14 6p Bear Cubs	15 No Bible Study
16 10a Worship/ Church School 11:15a Mission and Social Action	17 5:30p Wolf Cubs	18 7p Church Council 7p Boy Scouts	19 6p UVPRN 7p Christian Ed Committee 7p Bel Canto	20 MARCH NEWSLETTER CONTENT DUE 7p Choir	21 12p WCBH After-school 6p Bear Cubs	22 No Bible Study 8a-3:30p Prepared to Serve Conf. (Pembroke, NH)
23 10a Worship/ Church School 4p Leb Choir Festival (at West Leb UCC) 5p Community Dinner	24 3p WCBH After-school 5:30p Wolf Cubs 6p Tiger Cubs 7p Board of Governors	25 7p Boy Scouts	26 6p UVPRN 6p Quicksilver Rehearsal 7p Bel Canto	27 7p Choir	28 6p Bear Cubs 7p Cub Scouts Committee	1 8a Men's Breakfast No Bible Study

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

COMMITTEE NOTES

CHURCH COUNCIL

At the January Council meeting, Corrine Erskine reported that **Women's Fellowship** organized the January Community Dinner. Bread was baked the previous day during Amy Driscoll's baking workshop. Women's Fellowship also held a productive meeting to discuss the group's future.

Corrine reported for **Mission & Social Action** that there was a discussion of expanding our Community Dinner to twice per month. Consensus, though, is that we're better off focusing on sustaining and improving what we already do. Our dinners tend to be more creative and healthier than the dinners typically served by Listen and other churches, using better-quality ingredients and recipes. Steve Silver and Todd Heatherton hope monthly leaders will become more aware of the resources available in the Community Dinner fund.

Ron Bailey has also reported to the committee on recent gun-safety issues and suggested that FCC should consider drafting an explicit policy around this issue. Also on behalf of Mission & Social Action, Jon Scott asked for an allocation of \$1,000 for our Back-Door Ministry. It was suggested that this allocation come from the Dole Fund, and Council members unanimously voted accordingly.

2014 ANNUAL MEETING—SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9

The Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Lebanon will be held in the sanctuary on Sunday, February 9, 2014, immediately following worship, for the purpose of:

1. The election of all officers provided for under the CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS of the church.
2. To hear the reports of all officers, committees, and organizations, as required under the CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS of the church.
3. To consider and act upon any other matters relating to the general church welfare that may properly come before this meeting, including but not limited to the following:
 - A. It is proposed to amend Article V, Section 2 of the CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS as follows:

Current: "The Diaconate shall consist of six deacons, six deaconesses, and two junior members, all covenant members. Two deacons and two deaconesses shall be elected at each annual meeting for a term of three years. Two junior deacons or deaconesses (preferably one of each) shall be elected at each annual meeting for a term of one year."

Proposed: "The Diaconate shall consist of twelve deacons, all covenant members and representative of the congregation. Four deacons shall be elected at each annual meeting for a term of three years. The Diaconate may also include as many as two youth deacons, preferably covenant members, who shall be elected at the annual meeting for a term of one year."

Jon reported for **Stewardship** that his committee has been collaborating with Mission & Social Action, which makes sense because of connections between generating funds and volunteer hours and our church's mission efforts. The committee has also received a handful of new pledges so far in the new year, reasonably helpful to the budget process.

Amy Driscoll reported that while the **Nominating Committee** process has gone well, some spots will not likely be filled prior to Annual Meeting. She thanked many for helping her, and she welcomes any feedback.

Amy proposed an amendment to the church By-Laws regarding the **membership of the Diaconate**, for which Diaconate chair Valerie

COMMITTEE NOTES

Nevel added her support. The revised language would eliminate the requirement to keep equal numbers of women and men on the Diaconate, a requirement which, while ideal, is not always possible in practice. Similarly, the inclusion of two youth deacons would be optional, to account for the fluctuating availability of candidates. Council discussion was generally very supportive. Some noted that it was important to present it in an open manner with an accompanying rationale; otherwise, it might be seen as (for example) undermining gender equity on the Diaconate. (Several noted that the current challenge was finding enough men to serve, not women.) Those present voted unanimously to bring the amendment to a vote at the Annual Meeting.

Brian Clancy reported for the **Music Committee** that music survey results are now compiled, and a summary will appear in the newsletter. Brian also reported on the search for both interim and permanent successors for Will Ögmundson. Tim Hansen, a talented and mature senior at LHS, will serve us during the interim; no solid leads have yet arisen for a permanent organist.

Treasurer Todd Heatherton distributed final 2013 expense and income figures and the 2014 budget from Finance Committee. One particular concern is heating

costs, as it's clear that our usage increased significantly in 2013. Discussion considered the impact of opening the church to more community events, suggesting that such costs may perhaps be considered mission expenses. Jon Scott added that conserving oil use also falls within our church's pledge to be good stewards of our environment, not just finances.

Todd noted other expense and budget issues, including the Finance Committee's decision to set our NHC-UCC pledge as a tithe of 10% of contributions/pledge income. Council members agreed that this was reasonable. Todd added that the coming year, fortunately, should not involve significant facility costs, as we've just finished many large projects.

Related to the Treasurer's report, Bob Moses reported that final 2013 figures, now available in the **Trustees'** annual report, were generally favorable for all the church's invested funds.

Marcia Corkins reported for **Christian Education** that the children were studying a range of occupations in the ancient world that would have been familiar in Biblical contexts.

Steve Silver noted that Christmas Eve Services were well attended, especially encouraging because the Methodist Church had added a service that evening. In fact, he said, there were Christmas Eve services somewhere in town at

least once an hour from 4:00 to 11:00. Steve also reported that we are already planning on another fall retreat at the Horton Center.

Community Dinner Fund Available

The Mission & Social Action Committee and the Treasurer remind the congregation that a fund has been established to help subsidize Community Dinner preparation. The fund is intended to encourage the provision of more nutritional and (when possible) locally-sourced food for these vital, monthly dinners.

To request reimbursement from the Community Dinner Fund, Team Leaders should submit receipts, along with an explanatory note, to Treasurer Todd Heatherton.

February Meetings

ANNUAL MEETING	2/9, 11:15
<i>Diaconate</i>	2/10, 7:00
<i>Mission & Social</i>	2/16, 11:15
<i>Church Council</i>	2/18, 7:00
<i>Christian Education</i>	2/19, 7:00
<i>Board of Governors</i>	2/24, 7:00

March Meetings

<i>Diaconate</i>	3/10, 7:00
<i>Mission & Social</i>	3/16, 11:15
<i>Church Council</i>	3/18, 7:00
<i>Christian Education</i>	3/19, 7:00
<i>Board of Governors</i>	3/24, 7:00

The People Have Spoken... *About Music!*

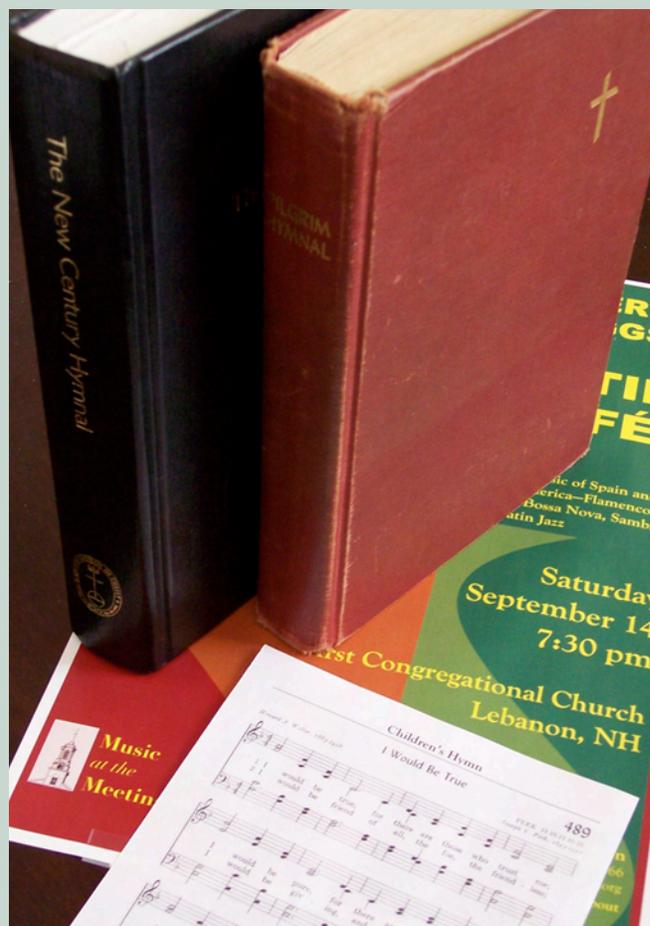
Last October the Music Committee distributed a comprehensive survey of the music ministry at FCC, asking for the congregation's opinions on everything from hymnals and choir to the organ and guest concerts. By Christmas we were grateful to have received 33 completed surveys, which tell us much about what we're currently doing in our music ministry, and what we might do differently. The survey's results proved all the more valuable in their timeliness, coming just as Will Ögmundson left us after seven years at FCC.

Overall, the survey conveyed a clear impression that music remains crucial to all aspects of our worship. All the musical elements of worship—preludes, postludes; a choral introit, anthem, and offertory; hymns and children's hymn—rated as either important or very important to the worship experience for anywhere from 23 to 31 of the 33 respondents. Of those, the offertory (31), anthem (30), and hymns (29) are important to the most respondents. Only the introit (2) and children's hymn (3), conversely, rated as either somewhat unimportant or not important at all.

Speaking of the children's hymn, 22 of the respondents agreed (12 of them strongly) that it effectively engages our kids in worship, while only two disagreed. Some, however, lamented that children can't always understand enough to participate, and many commented that the hymn could be improved in practice. Parents could more actively teach the hymn at home, for example, and singing more than one verse would increase opportunities for children to familiarize themselves with at least the tunes, if not the words as well.

Regarding hymns more generally, 27 of the 33 respondents felt that four hymns was the right number for a typical service. While a consensus was rather clear on how many hymns to sing, preferences for which hymnal to sing them from were much less so. About a third (13) of the respondents prefer the red *Pilgrim Hymnal*, compared to eight for the black *New Century Hymnal*, while twelve have no preference. (Only six respondents think we should consider looking for a new hymnal.) Interestingly, while no one expressed very strong comments on behalf of either hymnal, only the black NCH provoked sharp criticism. "Just get rid of the black one," said one respondent. "[It] is really horrible. I don't like how it changes the words to traditional and beloved songs."

Opinions regarding the church's choir largely concerned vocal balance and the need for more



voices. Thirty respondents agreed (23 strongly) that the choir is essential to worship and congregational life, but only half as many (and just 4 strongly) would like the choir to participate more extensively in worship—a reluctance which, considering comments received, may derive from inconsistencies in participation and sectional strength.

Respondents were somewhat ambivalent about using the organ in worship. A solid third (11) expressed a strong preference for hearing more organ, but just as many were neutral on this point. Similarly, only a few added specific comments about the organ, but those few included some of the strongest sentiments expressed in the entire survey. One respondent eloquently described the powerful associations the organ evokes, adding that its diminished presence in worship at FCC was disheartening “almost to the point of [my] finding another church.”

The Music at the Meetinghouse concert series produced a somewhat divided profile of opinions. Fourteen survey respondents had not attended any events in the series during the past year. Almost a third (10) of the respondents feel strongly that FCC should support the series, but, as with organ music, the same number were neutral. Only three respondents, however, disagreed that it was important to support Music at the Meetinghouse. Many feel that the series could be more effectively promoted and publicized, perhaps if more resources were devoted to it. And a few respondents noted that the cost of concerts was also an issue, although it should be noted that only a free-will offering is collected at many events.

One particularly compelling comment may serve not only to conclude this analysis of our music survey, but also to suggest the vital relationship of our music ministry to everything else we do as a community of faith here at FCC. “Music, prayers, and silence,” reflected one congregant, “are most important to me in worship.” Whether participating in music or simply appreciating it as listeners, we deepen our spiritual life by valuing the richness of our musical life.

Complete survey results are available from the church office, or online via this website link: <http://www.fcclb.org/assets/MusicCommSurvey-SUMMARY.pdf>.

DIACONATE

At the first Diaconate meeting of the New Year, Deb Scott led us in thinking about “our” time and God’s time.

We looked backward, reflecting on Advent and Christmas celebrations and services just past, and forward, planning for the rest of winter, Lent, and spring.

The January all-church forum and potluck, which attracted a great turnout, focused on El Salvador and considered our mission concerns around the world. Alternatively, at our own meeting, the Deacons considered the local plight of the homeless in severe weather and the possibility of sharing a hospitality ministry with other churches to meet emergency shelter needs.

The forum discussions and potluck lunches after worship are a great way for our wider church family to come together for conversation about topics of interest to our community. Future topics may include outdoor ministry (such as Horton Center opportunities and our own spiritual walks), the alternative-sentencing program known as Halls of Hope, and home funerals.

What concerns, ideas, or projects would you like to gather our church community to discuss? Your ideas are welcome! Please speak to a deacon, and perhaps your favorite cause or community need will soon serve as food for thought, alongside lunch.

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION

Coming in March and April... LENT AND EASTER 2014

March 5—Ash Wednesday

7:00 pm: Ecumenical Service, FCC

April 13—Palm Sunday

10:00 am: Liturgy of the Palms

April 17—Maundy Thursday

7:00 pm: Service of Communion,
Tenebrae, and Stripping of the Altar

April 18—Good Friday

12:00-3:00 pm: The Seven Last
Words, Quiet Meditation in the Sanctuary
3:00 pm: Ecumenical Stations of the Cross Walk
7:00 pm: Service of the Word and Prayer

April 20—EASTER

6:00 am: Sunrise Service, Colburn Park
6:30-8:30 am: Community Breakfast, Parish Hall
10:00 am: Festival Service

Thank You, Will Ögmundson!

Scenes from Will's farewell reception after worship on January 26, and from a choir dinner for him the following week.



The Pastoral Perspective, *continued from Page 1*

anthem or transfixed by a prelude, we are not only experiencing great music, we're also that much more intimate with the One who created us.

Our church community is moving into a new era musically. We now have an interim musician with us and, in the fullness of time, will hire someone to be with us permanently. We don't know now whether this person will be a he or she, young or old. But given this church's past experience with music, it's fair to say that our new musician will "get" what church is all about and will so help us all to enjoy and employ one of the greatest gifts we have been given by God: music. And for this we will do what we are called to do by the Psalmist: make a joyful noise unto the Lord!

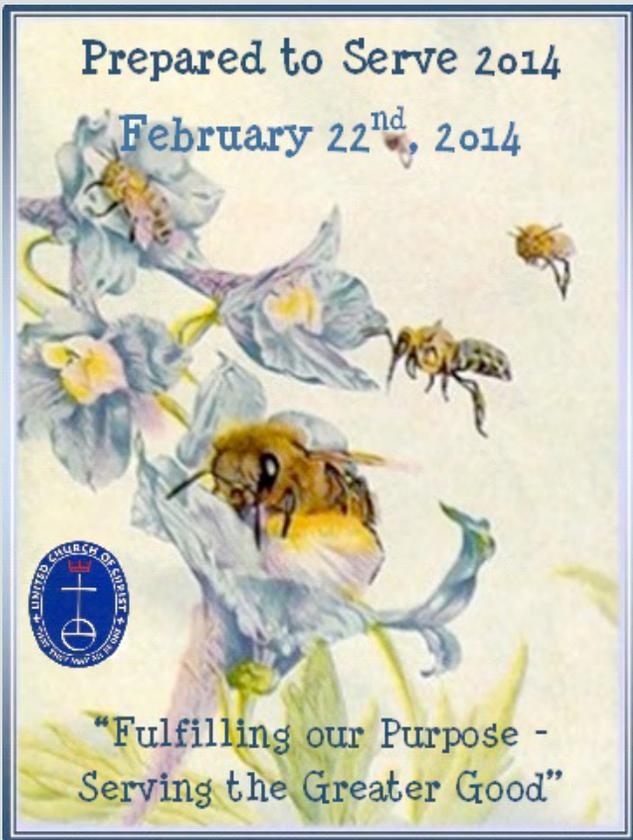
Yours faithfully,

Steve

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



MISSION AND SERVICE



Prepared to Serve 2014

NH Conference, UCC

Saturday, February 22

8:00 am to 3:30 pm

Pembroke Academy, Pembroke, NH

Prepared to Serve is a training event designed for all members of the NH Conference of the UCC, offering workshops on topics from stewardship, leadership, and finances to global missions and Christian education. All are invited to an enriching, informative day of classes, exhibits, and worship.

For more details and registration materials, visit www.nhcucc.org.

Fee: \$40 until 2/14, \$50 until 2/20, \$60 day-of (includes resources, breakfast, and lunch).

Register online or call Donna Follensbee at 888-643-8229 x100.

From Rob Grabill...

The 2013 Lebanon-area CROP Walk raised \$15,070, compared to the 2012 total of \$11,482. Our total this year was our best in five years. FCC raised \$1,539, compared to \$1,280 a year ago. We had 169 participants, an increase of four from the previous year.

A highlight for me was the large number of youngsters, including the new contingent from Kimball Union Academy.

We are grateful for the wonderful job by the members of the FCC community in hosting the meal afterwards. On a cold, rainy afternoon, the church was a beacon of light, warmth, hospitality, and fellowship.

See you next year for an even bigger, better CROP Walk.

Blessings and Peace, —**Rob**



www.cropwalk.org

Called to Care

Called to Care offers great opportunities for stewardship within our congregation.

If you would like to learn more or join the group, please contact Linda Jacobs (mrands.mrs.j@comcast.net or 802-296-8251).

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



Let's Bake! Amy Driscoll (with two small assistants) leads a bread-baking class on January 25 for an attentive, enthusiastic group of bakers. The workshop supplied several loaves for the next day's Community Dinner, but Amy's "students" also produced some delicious scones—who knew homework could be so tasty?



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

Weekly Worship and Church School: Sunday, 10:00 am • Office Hours: Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 9-12
10 South Park St., 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

9TH BIENNIAL LEBANON AREA CHOIR FESTIVAL

Sunday, February 23, at 4:00 pm

West Lebanon Congregational Church, 18 Maple Street

Combined Choirs Rehearsal 2:00, Individual Choir Rehearsals 3:00, Full Concert 4:00

All are cordially invited to this biennial celebration of church choral music! Six area choirs will each sing their own pieces before joining together—around 60 voices in all—for a memorable program directed by Bel Canto's Hal Sheeler. Music of Thomas Tallis, Felix Mendelssohn, Harry Burleigh, Mark Hayes, and many, many others!

Participating churches include First Congregational Church of Lebanon, the Church of Christ at Dartmouth, Lebanon United Methodist Church, Canaan United Methodist Church, Meriden Congregational Church, and West Lebanon Congregational Church.

A free-will offering will be received in support of Listen and the Upper Valley Haven.

Please join us—all are welcome!