



# News and Events

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## The Pastoral Perspective

Did you get what you wanted for Christmas? More to the point, did you get what you needed for Christmas? Answering this question might seem easy: just survey the presents you received. Did you get the widget you had to have, the gizmo to replace the old one that had worn out, or the whatzit that will surely make your life more manageable? Mind you, if you've been paying attention during Advent and Christmas (or at the very least listening to those lessons about contentment we try to impart to our children), you know that widgets, gizmos, and whatzits, as desirable, useful, and helpful as they may be, are not what you or I need, at least not in the deepest, most fundamental sense.

So, what do we need?

The temptation at this moment to turn to our trusty store of religious clichés is strong: “We need more prayer, more spirituality, more Jesus” (what exactly does “more Jesus” mean?). We should resist such urges. Instead, we should take some time to ponder what we've experienced of God during this Christmastide and then consider our hopes for how we might know God in the coming year. Doing so will help bring into focus that which we most need: the ability to love and be loved by God.

There are many different ways to do this: prayer, service, study, and fellowship are just a few of the things we can do to develop our ability to love and be loved by our Creator. (And I suspect you can think of other ways, too!) Happily, blessedly, we need not do this alone, for each of us is graced with and by our church. As we enter into 2013, I invite you to enter more deeply and fully into the life of this community of faith. By doing so, you will have a chance to experience anew the kind of life God has in mind for us, and indeed for all his people. This new creation can be surprising at times, even maddening and frustrating. (It is, after all, filled with fallible, fallen men and women!) But it will also fill your life with grace and hope.

*Continued on Page 2*

# SUNDAY SERVICE

Pastoral Perspective, cont. from Page 1

So, did you, did I, get what we needed for Christmas? The first weeks of a new year are a good time to ponder this question. As we do so, I pray that each of us may experience the presence of the living, loving God.

Yours faithfully,

*Steve*

## *What's a liturgist?*

Ever wonder how your friends in the congregation end up reading from the lectern on Sunday morning? It's easy—we asked, and they said yes!

No experience or training is required, and we'll gladly help you with the pronunciation of even the most challenging Old Testament names.

**If you're interested in serving the church by participating in worship in this important way, please contact the Church Administrator.**

## *Queued for* **Coffee Hour**

**January**  
Stewardship

**February**  
Christian Education

**March**  
Diaconate

## COMMUNITY DINNER

*will be served on*

**January 27 at 5:00 pm**

**We still need a team leader for this month's dinner!** Whether leading or not, though, please plan to participate in this vital service to our local community. Volunteers are always needed to donate ingredients and help with cooking/prep, set-up, serving, and clean-up.

**To offer help, please sign up in the Parish Hall, or contact the Church Administrator.**

## A Community Dinner Appeal

*We need team leaders for the New Year!*

We currently have no Team Leaders for our Community Dinners in 2013. In particular, we ask you to please consider volunteering for January (1/27), February (2/24), or March (3/24). If you are interested, please sign up in the Parish Hall or contact the church office.

**Please consider leading this effort! If you have questions about what being a team leader involves, please contact the church office or Barb Laro (603-448-0151 / [blaro47@gmail.com](mailto:blaro47@gmail.com)).**

## ANNUAL MEETING 2013

**Sunday, February 10**

**Following Worship**

Please submit material to be included in the Annual Report to the Church Administrator **no later than Friday, January 25.**

# JANUARY 2013 CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>30</b> 10a Worship & Church School	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b> <b>NEW YEAR'S DAY</b> (FCC office closed)	<b>2</b> 6p UVPRN	<b>3</b> 7p Choir	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 8a Men's Breakfast 9a Bible Study
P A R L O R R E N O V A T I O N						
<b>6</b> <b>Epiphany</b> 10a Worship & Church School (Communion)	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 7p Boy Scouts	<b>9</b> 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto	<b>10</b> 9:30a-4p Grafton-Orange Association 7p Choir	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 9a Bible Study
P A R L O R R E N O V A T I O N						
<b>13</b> 10a Worship & Church School	<b>14</b> 7p Diaconate	<b>15</b> 7p Boy Scouts 7p Church Council	<b>16</b> 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto 7p Christian Education Committee	<b>17</b> 7p Choir	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 9a Bible Study 12-5p Bel Canto Board Retreat
<b>20</b> 10a Worship & Church School	<b>21</b> <b>FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER CONTENT DUE</b>	<b>22</b> 9-10:30a Hannah House Community Forum 7p Boy Scouts	<b>23</b> 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto	<b>24</b> 6:30-8p Hannah House Community Forum 7p Choir	<b>25</b> <b>2012 ANNUAL REPORT CONTENT DUE</b> 6-9p Quilters' Retreat (Leb Rec Dept)	<b>26</b> 9a Bible Study 10-5 Quilters' Retreat (Leb Rec Dept)
<b>27</b> 10a Worship & Church School 5p Community Dinner	<b>28</b> 7p Board of Governors	<b>29</b> 7p Boy Scouts	<b>30</b> 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto	<b>31</b> 7p Choir	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 8a Men's Breakfast 9a Bible Study

If your event is missing or incorrect, please notify us at [church@fccleb.org](mailto:church@fccleb.org) or 603-448-4281.

# COMMITTEE REPORTS

## DIACONATE

As the clock turns to 2013 and the New Year is celebrated, we in the church are aware of the overlapping circles of new beginnings: the Christian New Year begins in Advent, marked by repentance as well as rejoicing.

Ron Bailey reminded the Deacons in December that only two Gospels, Mark and Luke, begin with Jesus's birth and end with his death and resurrection. Throughout the changing seasons, we need to keep our focus on his whole life and teachings. We continually celebrate the new beginnings offered to us through his love and forgiveness.

As winter deepens, we are more acutely aware of neighbors in need in a variety of ways. We are thankful for the generosity of Jake's Fuel and Convenience for providing gas cards at a discount. The Backdoor Ministry meets many needs in the cold season, made possible by the congregation's gifts through each month's Communion offering. If you use a Communion Offering envelope on a Sunday when Communion is not being served, please specify the purpose of your gift on your check's memo line.

The Deacons will prepare for the upcoming year's work in an

all-day retreat on February 9 at the Meriden Congregational Church.

Please continue to hold our church community in your prayers, so that we may deepen our love and commitment with open hearts and minds.

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## MISSION & SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

After postponing our November meeting due to members' travel plans and family commitments, we also had to postpone our December meeting due to the many conflicts of this busy season. In the meantime, however, here are some issues and programs needing the committee's focus in the near and more distant future.

**CROP WALK:** This year's Crop Walk showed reduced numbers of walkers and pledgers. This could be partially due to the unfortunate timing of the Walk on the long Columbus Day weekend. Many of our regular participants were traveling, and numbers from other churches were significantly lower as well. The lunch following the Walk, though, was quite well attended, with a good deal of energy and enthusiasm evident. We anticipate continuing our present role of helping with this worthy event by hosting the meal.

**WISE:** Looking to our partnership with WISE, Steve met with director Peggy O'Neil and received a list their needs (and our volunteer opportunities). We as a committee need to explore and contemplate this list, in order to choose one or two "shovel ready" tasks requiring little advanced organization on our part. This choice(s) would then be presented to the congregation as a part of our partnership with WISE. The members of our congregation would be invited to lend a hand with these tasks when possible.

**SECOND GROWTH:** We hope to receive a list of needs from this organization soon, to help us "step up to the plate" with this partnership as well.

**EL SALVADOR:** The stewardship presentation in November by our own Wendell Smith and Ron Bailey on the Epilogos home building project was well attended and enthusiastically received. Committee member Marcy Chong has expressed a strong commitment to be involved with our ongoing partnership in this area. Thanks, Marcy!

(Marcy also expressed strong interest in our pursuing the sustainable energy initiatives presented by Kim Quirk.)

Looking to the future, there has been some conversation

# COMMITTEE REPORTS

considering the current overall membership of our church relative to the large number of members asked to serve on our committees. (Making this ratio more realistic and manageable might perhaps avoid member burn-out, as many tasks seem to fall to the same core crew, again and again.) We might think about what this means for what projects M&SA takes on, and about how this could be an opportunity for wider, but more flexible, congregational participation in our work. Finally, we wish to express a special thank-you to Barb Teeter, the Angel of the Giving Tree. Once again, she coordinated the list of needs, distributed gift

tags, and collected the items to be given to the designated recipients. And Barb did it all with her ever-gracious spirit.

## ANNUAL MEETING 2013

**Sunday, February 10  
Following Worship**

Please submit material  
for the 2012 Annual  
Report to the Church  
Administrator  
**no later than Friday,  
January 25.**

### January Meetings

<i>Diaconate</i>	1/14, 7:00
<i>Church Council</i>	1/15, 7:00
<i>Christian Education</i>	1/16, 7:00
<i>Mission &amp; Soc. Action</i>	1/20, 11:00
<i>Board of Governors</i>	1/28, 7:00

### February Meetings

<b>FCC Annual Mtg</b>	<b>2/10, 11:15</b>
<i>Diaconate</i>	2/11, 7:00
<i>Church Council</i>	2/19, 7:00
<i>Christian Education</i>	2/20, 6:30
<i>Board of Governors</i>	2/25, 7:00

## Parlor Renovations Scheduled for January 2-11, 2013

Members of the Decorating Committee have spent considerable time and energy planning and designing renovations in the Parlor, and their plans have been approved by Church Council. We are grateful to the committee for their thorough work on this task.

**Parlor renovations will be undertaken by Don Collins from Wednesday, January 2, through Friday, January 11. Due to anticipations of dust, debris, lead paint, and general disarray, please do not plan to use the Parlor for any reason during this period.**

## STEWARDSHIP 2013

We continue to welcome your pledge forms for the new year. If you haven't yet made your stewardship commitment for 2013, please join your fellow members and friends in supporting the mission and ministry of our church. You may leave your pledge information in the stewardship mail slot in the church office.

**Thanks to all for your faithful response to God's call of service, in and through  
First Congregational Church!**

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

### Hannah House Community Forum

Tuesday, January 22, 9:00-10:30 am OR Thursday, January 24, 6:30-8:00 pm  
*Both in the Parish Hall. Please choose whichever time best suits your schedule.*

Hannah House teaches pregnant and parenting teens and young adults skills for healthy parenting and self-reliance, to ensure the well-being of themselves, their children, and their communities. On December 31 Hannah House discontinued its residential and daycare programs, due to decreases in the funding available to sustain these programs. The agency is using the winter months to restructure in a way that best serves the needs of pregnant and parenting teens.

We invite the entire Upper Valley community to this public forum at FCC, in order to discuss how Hannah House can best serve the community in the future. For more information, please contact Hilde Ojibway at [h\\_ojibway@hotmail.com](mailto:h_ojibway@hotmail.com) or 802-296-2669.

## The Night of Las Posadas



# THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



## ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS 2012



### The 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 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