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The Pastoral Perspective

During Lent it has long been customary for people to give up something—in my case, coffee. I adopted this discipline a number of years ago when I decided I wanted to do something that would offer me the chance to reflect on Lent on a regular basis. Given the number of cups of coffee I drink daily, I enjoy many opportunities to do just this all throughout the weeks between Ash Wednesday and Easter. True, there are those instances when my abstention from java consumption elicits mild peevishness on my part rather than spiritual reflection. For the most part, though, I find this long-standing discipline an effective way to enter deeper into the Lenten season—to better have Jesus, as in the hymn “Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days” (*Pilgrim Hymnal* #153), “Teach us with thee to mourn our sins, and close by thee to stay.” This, though, prompts a question: shouldn’t we be doing this all the time, throughout the year?

The short answer is, “Yes, but.”

The “yes” is, of course, that we should always seek to turn from sin, from those actions and inactions that separate us from God and one another; that we should always recognize that we can’t do this alone; that we need the strength and comfort of God if we are to have any hope of succeeding.

The “but,” that dreaded but expected qualifier, is acknowledgment of our need for focus, both as we do challenging things and as we try to reflect upon what God is doing in Jesus. By having a special season of Lent, we can set aside time to begin the work of repentance and renewal, often hard work that will not be over for us when we sing that first Easter hymn; these forty days and forty nights are a time to start something, not contain it. We can use these coming weeks to begin to clear the spiritual decks for the gift of the Resurrection, which is both a moment in time that we

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SUNDAY SERVICE

Why Aren't We Worshiping in the Sanctuary Anymore?

Some may wonder why we've held worship in the Parish Hall for the past few Sundays. Well, the choice isn't liturgical or aesthetic. It's not even to make sure we all look at each other.

It's simply a matter of conserving our resources.

As the Finance Committee reviewed our 2013 expenses, we noticed a significant increase in oil consumption—independent of the ever-rising price per gallon, which of course is beyond our control. While much of our building must be kept heated to a minimum level through the winter, heating our Sanctuary uses far more oil than any other space, and it requires no heat when not in use. (It's estimated that heating the Sanctuary for any single event can cost as much as \$300-400.)

The Board of Governors, with the support of Diaconate and Council leadership, determined that we could easily save both oil and money by leaving the Sanctuary dormant for a while.

Yet another reason to think Spring!

Participate in Worship!

Serve as a Liturgist or Greeter/Usher

Ever wonder how your friends ended up handing out bulletins 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'd like to serve either as a liturgist or as a greeter/usher, please contact the church office.

Your congregation will thank you!

New Members Welcome!

Have you just worshiped with us for the first time? 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, March 23, at 5:00

Thank you JON SCOTT for leading this month's dinner!

Please help Jon out by donating ingredients or volunteering to help with set-up, serving, or clean-up. Our service is vital to those in our local community who look forward to this meal every month.

Please sign up in the Parish Hall, contact the church office, or contact Jon directly (jscottnh@comcast.net or 603-298-8644).

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

Queued for Coffee Hour

March—Diaconate

April—Music Committee

May—Women's Fellowship

June—Board of Governors

**One Great Hour of Sharing
Special Mission Offering—March 30**

MARCH 2014 CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
23 10a Worship/ Church School 4p Leb Choir Festival 5p Community Dinner	24 3p WCBH After-school 5:30p Wolf Cubs 6p Tiger Cubs	25 7p Boy Scouts	26 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto	27 7p Choir	28 6p Bear Cubs 7p Cub Scouts Committee	1 8a Men's Breakfast No Bible Study
2 10a Worship/ Church School (Communion) 12:30p FCC Outing Club: Fire and Ice!	3 5:30p Wolf Cubs 6p Tiger Cubs	4 7p Boy Scouts	5 ASH WEDNESDAY 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto 7p Ecumenical Service (at First Baptist)	6 7p Choir	7 6p Bear Cubs	8 No Bible Study
9 10a Worship/ Church School	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 12p WCBH Girls' Group 6p Bear Cubs	15 9a-3p Grafton- Orange Assn Spg Training 2014 No Bible Study
16 10a Worship/ Church School 11:15a M&SA / Stewardship	17 5:30p Wolf Cubs	18 7p Church Council 7p Boy Scouts	19 6p UVPRN 7p Christian Ed Committee 7p Bel Canto	20 7p Choir	21 6p Bear Cubs	22 No Bible Study
23 9a Adult Ed: Jonah 10a Worship/ Church School 11a Bd of Govs 5p Community Dinner	24 3p WCBH After-school 5:30p Wolf Cubs 6p Tiger Cubs	25 APRIL NEWSLETTER CONTENT DUE 7p Boy Scouts	26 6p UVPRN 6p Quicksilver Rehearsal 7p Bel Canto	27 7p Choir	28 6p Bear Cubs	29 No Bible Study 1-6p BHAM Rehearsal
30 9a Adult Ed: Jonah 10a Worship/ Church School (<i>One Great Hr of Sharing</i>) 3p BHAM IV!	31 5:30p Wolf Cubs	1 7p Boy Scouts	2 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto	3 7p Choir	4 6p Bear Cubs 7p Cub Scouts Committee	5 No Men's Breakfast 9a Bible Study 6/7p WISE- Quicksilver Benefit

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

LENT AND EASTER 2014

JOINING IN WORSHIP

March 5—Ash Wednesday

7:00 pm: Ecumenical Service with the Imposition of Ashes
(at First Baptist Church of Lebanon, corner of School and Green Sts.)

April 13—Palm Sunday

10:00 am: Liturgy of the Psalms (“House of Cards,” *Matthew 21:1-11*)

April 17—Maundy Thursday

7:00 pm: Service of Communion and Tenebrae with Stripping of the Altar
(“The Church’s Original Sin,” *John 19:13-16*)

April 18—Good Friday

Noon-3:00 pm: Quiet Meditation in the Sanctuary on the Seven Last Words

3:00 pm: Ecumenical Stations of the Cross Walk (meet at Sacred Heart Church)

7:00 pm: Service of the Word and Prayer (“Midnight,” *Psalms 22*)

April 20—Easter Sunday

6:00 am: Ecumenical Sunrise Service (in Colburn Park)

6:30 am: Community Breakfast at FCC to benefit WISE and Second Growth

10:00 am: Festival Worship Service (“Good Morning!” *Matthew 28:1-10*)

The Pastoral Perspective, *continued from Page 1*

celebrate and an ongoing event that continues to unfold in our own day and age.

There have been times in years past when I have forgotten the season and have absent-mindedly drunk some coffee. Sometimes, and this is my pride at work, I rue blowing my “perfect” Lent. When this happens, I have yet another opportunity to reflect anew on just why I need this season. Yes, I remember, I should be turning to God all the time, in every way. But before I can do that, I need to start somewhere, and Lent offers that point of departure and contemplation. Further, as I do this, I need to be open to the Holy Spirit, to God guiding me along to where I need to be.

Once again, come Ash Wednesday, I’ll take my annual break from drinking coffee. And once again, come Ash Wednesday, I’ll do so knowing that I may inadvertently enjoy a cup of Joe—but that even if I do, God will still be present with me, still encouraging me, still sustaining me during this Lenten season and, thankfully, in the time that follows.

With my hope and prayer that you enjoy a blessed Lenten journey,

Yours faithfully, *Steve*

ENGAGING THE WORD

“Where Are You?”—A Lenten Sermon Series

On Good Friday we recall the poignant, disturbing plea of Jesus from the cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Yet as we do this, we hold fast to the belief that God is steadfast and true. Over four weeks we will consider and explore the stories of four of our biblical forebears and what they have to tell us as we contemplate one of the most challenging parts of the life of faith: those times when God seems absent.

March 16—Naomi: Abandonment (*Ruth 1:19-22*)

March 23—Jonah: Resentment (*Jonah 3:10-4:3*)

March 30—Job: Suffering (*Job 31:35-40*)

April 6—Mary: Loss (*John 19:25b-30*)

Jonah: Unlikely Prophet, Unlikely Penitent— An Adult Education Series

Though included among the Bible’s Book of the Twelve Prophets, Jonah’s central figure is never called a prophet and the book contains no oracles, as are found in other prophetic books. What’s going on here? Why is this seemingly familiar but exceedingly strange book included in Scripture, and what does it have to teach us about the life of faith, especially during this Lenten season?

Join us for a three-week adult education series before worship at

9:00 am on March 23, March 30, and April 6.

Daily Lenten Reflections

Every day from Ash Wednesday through Easter morning, receive a reflection on a psalm, delivered to your email inbox.

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

SHARING GOD’S BOUNTY WITH OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Sunday, March 30—One Great Hour of Sharing

A nationwide special mission offering for health, education, refugee, agricultural, and emergency relief initiatives around the world.

Sunday, April 13—Church School Lenten Lunch Bag Collection

A special offering supporting student scholarships in El Salvador and supplies for David’s House at DHMC.

COMMITTEE NOTES

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The members of the Christian Education Committee would like the congregation to mark several important dates for the spring:

On **March 9**, the children will be distributing colorfully decorated lunch bags for their annual **Lenten fund-raiser**. Proceeds collected during Lent will again benefit students in El Salvador and, closer to home, provide supplies for David's House. The bags will be collected on Palm Sunday, April 13.

On **April 27**, the committee, children, and other volunteers will prepare and serve our monthly **Community Dinner**.

Our annual **Children's Day** this year is **June 8**. Children will once again lead worship that morning, and there will be refreshments and an exhibit in the Parish Hall showing all that the children have learned during the year in church school. Kids will wear costumes and share projects exploring the theme of "Life in Biblical Times." Please plan to have your children participate in some way—and prepare to celebrate!

CHURCH COUNCIL

The February meeting of Church Council was canceled because of inclement weather. Council will next meet on March 18.

MISSION & SOCIAL ACTION AND STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEES

Our committees met jointly after worship on February 16. We agreed to continue holding joint meetings during 2014. Jon Scott and Corrine Erskine were elected to chair Stewardship and Mission & Social Action, respectively.

At the request of the Diaconate and the Mission & Social Action Committee, Steve Silver has been investigating cold-weather shelter needs in the Upper Valley and how our church might help. Steve Teeter has also looked into this issue. We learned that the Haven has recently expanded its capacity for providing overnight shelter during the winter, and that their facility in White River Junction has yet to run out of space this year. All agreed it would be helpful to learn more about homelessness and shelter needs in the Upper Valley and roles our congregation might play in making sure those needs are met. Members also expressed interest in deepening our relationship with the Haven.

Ron Bailey reported on the status of gun safety legislation in Concord, explaining that lawmakers failed to complete work on proposed background-check requirements that could have closed the "gun-show loophole." Until state law is changed, gun purchases made at

these shows do not require the standard background checks that happen for store purchases from federally-licensed dealers. Ron and the committee have updated the congregation with periodic e-mails and will continue to let us know when and how our involvement could be important.

As part of its mission the Stewardship committee will continue to focus on reducing the church's environmental footprint, starting with ways we might use energy more efficiently while also saving money. The committee strongly supports the move to worship in the Parish Hall more often during the winter, a choice which allows us significant savings immediately. The committee will coordinate its work closely with the Board of Governors and Church Council and expects to develop a series of low-cost, low-effort savings options in the coming weeks.

The committees will meet on the 2nd Sunday of each month after worship, except in March, when we will meet on the 16th.

March Meetings

<i>Diaconate</i>	3/10, 7:00
<i>Mission & Social and Stewardship</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>	3/23, 11:15

COMMITTEE NOTES

Diaconate Prepares for Coming Year With New Membership

At its February meeting the Diaconate elected the following officers for the coming year—Jennifer Grant, chair; John Gillatt, vice-chair; Barb Teeter, clerk; and Ginger Smith, treasurer. Jennifer Grant and Barb Jones will represent the Diaconate on the Pastoral Relations Committee. The group also determined that Deb Scott and Barb Jones will lead the coordination of communion servers and supplies.

Resuming discussions initiated prior to the Annual Meeting, the deacons also considered a proposed amendment to Article V, Section 2 of the church by-laws that would mitigate the need to elect equal numbers of women and men to the Diaconate each year. The nominating process has suggested that it isn't always possible to identify enough candidates of each gender who are willing and able to serve in a given year. (Similarly, the amendment would alter the requirement to elect two youth deacons every year, since there often aren't enough younger candidates among the church's membership.) Indeed, as was evident at the Annual Meeting, the required balance between men and women could prevent an interested, capable church member from joining the Diaconate even when there are vacancies, simply because of that member's gender.

The current deacons (along with a couple of former deacons attending the meeting) generally agreed that the amendment makes sense, and in the course of discussion arrived at a commonly acceptable revision of the language that was proposed at the Annual Meeting. The revised amendment—which now goes to Church Council and ultimately a special business meeting for approval—recommends simply that gender balance be sought without actually requiring it:

Proposed Amendment to Article V, Section 2, of FCC By-Laws: “The Diaconate shall consist of twelve deacons, all covenant members and, when possible, equally balanced between men and women. 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.”

Community Dinner Fund Available

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

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



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).

2014 LEBANON CHOIR FESTIVAL



Music at (Another) Meetinghouse:

Singing and LISTENing at the 2014 Choir Festival

The 9th Biennial Lebanon Area Choir Festival on February 23 brought five choirs to West Lebanon Congregational Church for a wonderful and rewarding afternoon of singing, ringing, and fellowship. This year's event was in fact an *interfaith* festival, with a small but excellent group from the Roth Center for Jewish Life at Dartmouth, directed by talented undergrad Evan Griffith '15. (One of the Roth Center's pieces was composed by Evan himself.)

Those who attended were invited to contribute to a special offering for Listen Community Service's crisis intervention program. The concert raised a total of \$315 for this vital resource in the midst of a cold winter.

FCC was admirably represented by Ruth Friend, Carolin Bassett, Kim Rheinlander, Brian Clancy, Ron Bailey, Steve Teeter, and John Gilliatt—and by Kathy Schuster, who rings handbells with WLCC's Jubilant Bells.

Special thanks to Molly Bonhag at WLCC, who directed operations at the host church (including a sumptuous post-concert reception!) and to Bel Canto's Hal Sheeler, who directed the combined choirs in the final set of music.

THE
QUICKSILVER
COMEDY PLAYERS

Improv Comedy at Its Best!

DINNER THEATER BENEFIT

for

end violence

wise

share hope ♦ change lives

Saturday, April 5, at FCC—Dinner 6:00, Show 7:00

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

All proceeds support WISE of the Upper Valley

end violence
wise
share hope ♦ change lives

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

Grafton-Orange Association Spring Training 2014

A Workshop for Pastors and Church Leaders

Saturday, March 15, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm
First Congregational Church of Lebanon



This annual study conference offers a day of worship and group discussion with clergy and lay leaders from UCC churches across the region. Following morning worship and a keynote talk (“Worship Renewal: In with the Old”) by Mary Luti, Professor of Worship and Preaching at Andover Newton Theological Seminary, this year’s workshops explore a range of topics:

Morning Sessions—The Ethical Edges of Baptism, Faith Practices and Faith Formation, Boundary Awareness Training, Growing Momentum in Social Justice Work, and Outdoor Ministry

Afternoon Sessions—The Ethical Edges of Communion, Aging in Place, Confirmation and After, How to Keep and Preserve Church Records, and The Future of the Church

All are invited to share this enriching day of study and faith!

REGISTRATION IS FREE FOR FCC MEMBERS (thanks to a subsidy from the Diaconate).

To obtain a brochure or register, please contact the church office as soon as possible.

For other questions, please contact Heidi Hoskin at heidi@schoolhousefarm.net.

Remembering Boston 2013: Old South’s Marathon Scarf Project

Marathoners from around the world come to the Church of the Finish Line—Old South Church in Boston—for our annual Blessing of the Athletes. In this year of remembrance and hope, our vision is to wrap each runner in the love poured into stitches of handmade blue and yellow scarves. We promise to wrap runners in your love until all your scarves are distributed.

Suggested Guidelines

Scarves should be interwoven with love and courage, measuring approximately 4-6” wide and 60” long, any pattern. Colors should be blue and yellow (use the official Boston Athletic Association colors Pantone 109C and Pantone 294C as guides). Artists (knitters, crocheters, weavers) must bring or send finished scarves to **Old South Church, 645 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116**; please include your contact information. We are accepting scarves immediately, and **all scarves must arrive by April 5, 2014**. Please call the church (617-536-1970) with any questions about the project.

We encourage you to share your scarves and scarves-in-progress with us! Post photos on Old South Church’s [Facebook](#) page, and tweet photos at @OSCboston. Use #marathonscarves and #oneyearlater on Twitter and Instagram.

The Science of the Mind for Religious People

A Course for Lent with Prof. G. Christian Jernstedt

Sundays in March (2, 9, 16, 23, 30), 4:00 to 6:00 pm

Church of Christ at Dartmouth College, Hanover

All are invited to join Chris Jernstedt, Professor Emeritus of Psychological and Brain Studies at Dartmouth, for an exploration of what science offers us to help think about who we are. Prof.

Jernstedt's research has integrated recent insights into the human brain with the practical implications of our everyday learning. This five-week course will examine the connections between our religious beliefs and our knowledge of brain function, as well as the ways in which our core beliefs are represented in the brain.

In the context of our spiritual heritage, we will explore the question of what science has to offer in helping us think about who we are. We will explore how our religious beliefs connect with what we know about how our brain functions, and how our core beliefs are represented in our brain.

Over the five weeks, we will ask some of the big questions about who we are.

- I. What is the relationship between reality and our stories about it?
- II. What is our place in the universe?
- III. How is our brain built?
- IV. How do we learn?
- V. How can we support our actions and the actions of others?
- VI. The life cycle: How do we develop, grow, mature, and age?
- VII. Can we ever know what is going on inside ourselves and others?

This course is free; no registration is required.

You may attend all or just some of the sessions, as you are able.

Questions? Please contact Rob Grabill at CCD at robert.grabill@valley.net.

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



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

Mark Your Calendars...
Spring Concerts Coming Soon!

All in the FCC Sanctuary

BHAM IV!—Sunday, March 30, at 3:00 pm

BHAM! is an annual series of concerts, quasi-serious and quasi-not, presented by a small ensemble of members of the Bel Canto Chamber Singers and others. These informal and highly entertaining performances promote and support Bel Canto's regular concert season. This year's program offers Mendelssohn, Gershwin, and Sondheim alongside W. C. Handy and Irish pipe tunes. Please join us!

For more, visit www.belcantosingers.org.

Classicopia—April 11, May 23, and June 14

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.

This spring we are delighted to welcome them back for three programs:

“Let's Dance”—Friday, April 11, at 7:30, with Dan Weiser and fellow pianist Philip Liston-Kraft

“An American Affair”—Friday, May 23, at 7:30, with Dan and violinist Tim Schwarz

“The American Songbook”—Saturday, June 14, at 7:30 with Dan and mezzo-soprano Erma Mellinger

For more details and information, call 603-643-3337 or visit www.classicopia.org.