



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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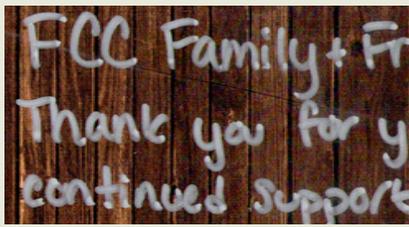
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The Pastoral Perspective

Each year the NCAA does its level best to draw in Americans with the hype around the college basketball tournament season known as March Madness. All across the land, people will fill out brackets, participate in office betting pools, and spend significant amounts of time rooting for their teams to advance to the Sweet Sixteen, the Final Four, or—dare one dream?—the National Championship. The amount of attention given to and emotion invested in collegiate hoops is, well, mad.

Don't get me wrong. I enjoy sports as much as the next guy. But the healthy life involves setting priorities. Imagine, just imagine, if all of the time that people were about to invest in March Madness were invested in going to church. Or, if we want to be a bit more expansive, helping people or praying or studying Scripture or going to art museums or tutoring children. You get the idea. The world would be a far richer, far deeper place. There is so much more we can do, so much we can be.

Maybe this is all idle dreaming. But if ever there was a time to engage in such aspirational thinking, to indulge our yearning to be something more, it is Lent. For it is in this season of the year that, through prayer, reflection, study, and service, we seek to repent and, in doing so, turn away from those things that distract us from God and God's way. In this season we seek to follow the path that God would have us travel.

In these forty days and forty nights, we are called to commit to a new way of being, to fully embrace our calls as disciples. What would doing this look like for you? What do you think it might look like for our church, or for our community? I hope you will join me in asking and pondering and acting upon these questions during this Lent. As Christians, we're called to journey not to the National Championship but into the wilderness. There we won't find a trophy, but, guided by the Holy Spirit, we will find something much better: life renewed and redeemed in and through Jesus Christ.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

SUNDAY SERVICE

One Great Hour of Sharing

SPECIAL MISSION OFFERING—MARCH 15

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is a nationwide offering organized by the UCC to benefit mission purposes throughout the country and the world. This program supports health, education, refugee, agricultural, and emergency-relief initiatives in 138 countries. Funds raised by OGHS are leveraged by working with local, national, and global partners, in order to maximize their impact.

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

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!

Lenten Lunch Bag Offering

To be collected Palm Sunday, March 29

By the end of the month, the children of our Church School hope once again to collect lunch bags full of small contributions for David's House and the children of San Jose Villanueva. Giving up a little change each day during Lent can mean a lot of change for these beneficiaries after Easter!

COMMUNITY DINNER

Sunday, March 22, at 5:00 pm

Leader: JOHN GILLIATT

Please participate in this vital service to our local community! Thanks to John Gilliatt for leading this month's effort; volunteers old and new are welcome to donate ingredients and help with cooking/prep, set-up, serving, and clean-up.

To offer your help, look for sign-ups in the Parish Hall, or contact the church office.

Queued for Coffee Hour

March—Diaconate

April—Mission and Social Action

May—Women of the Church

LILIES FOR EASTER

We will once again adorn the Sanctuary with flowers for Easter morning, and you are invited to contribute in honor or memory of family and friends. You may either order flowers through the church office or supply your own; in either case, please fill out a dedication form and return it to the office.

Dedications will appear in the bulletin on Easter Sunday, April 5.

In addition to lilies (6" @ \$14), we offer tulips (10" @ \$17), daffodils (8" @ \$13), and gardenias (6" @ \$20). (Prices estimated from last year's; may be subject to change.)

Orders through the church office must be placed no later than noon on FRIDAY, MARCH 27.

All dedication information must be received no later than noon on WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1.

If you're donating your own flowers, please deliver them to church either Saturday, April 4, or Easter morning.

MARCH 2015 CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10a Worship/ Church School (Communion) 11:15a M&SA	2 6:15p Cub Scouts (Wolf)	3 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bear) 7p Boy Scouts 7p Quicksilver Rehearsal	4 6p UVPRN	5 5p Headrest Support Group 7p Choir	6	7 8a Men's Breakfast 9a Bible Study 10:15a Juneberry Music <i>(last winter class)</i>
8 DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS 9a Adult Ed: Who Do You Say I Am? 10a Worship/ Church School 11:15a Music Committee	9 3p WCBH After-school 6:15p Cub Scouts (Wolf) 7p Diaconate	10 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bear) 7p Boy Scouts	11 8a-4p NH-WIC 6p UVPRN 7p Christian Ed Committee	12 9:30a-4p Grafton-Orange 5p Headrest Support Group 7p Choir	13	14 9a-12p Lenten Mini-Retreat
15 9a Adult Ed: Who Do You Say I Am? 10a Worship/ Church School (Scout Sunday)	16 6:15p Cub Scouts (Wolf)	17 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bear) 7p Church Council 7p Boy Scouts 7p Quicksilver Rehearsal	18 6p UVPRN	19 5p Headrest Support Group 7p Choir	20	21 9a Bible Study 10:15a Juneberry Music <i>(first spring class)</i>
22 9a Adult Ed: Who Do You Say I Am? 10a Worship/ Church School 11:15a Board of Governors 5p Community Dinner	23 10a-7p NH-WIC 3p WCBH After-school 6:15p Cub Scouts (Wolf)	24 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bear) 7p Boy Scouts	25 APRIL NEWSLETTER CONTENT DUE 6p UVPRN	26 5p Headrest Support Group 7p Choir	27	28 9a Bible Study 10:15a Juneberry Music 1-7p UVMC Suzuki Soloists
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 No Men's Breakfast 9a Bible Study 10:15a Juneberry Music
H O L Y W E E K						

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

THE SEASON OF LENT AT FCC

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.

REFLECTION AND STUDY

“Who Do You Say I Am?”

A series on Jesus Christ, the center of our faith. (See next page.)

Sunday, March 8—Jesus: The Man of History

Sunday, March 15—Christ: The Figure of Faith

Sunday, March 22—Jesus Christ: Priest, King, Redeemer

Saturday, March 14, 9 am-12 pm—Lenten Mini-Retreat at FCC

A morning of fellowship, reflection, and meditation. (See next page.)

SERVICE AND STEWARDSHIP

Sunday, March 15—One Great Hour of Sharing (See page 2.)

Sunday, March 22, 5:00 pm—Community Dinner at FCC (See page 2.)

Sunday, March 29—Church School Lenten Lunch Bag Collection (See page 2.)

HOLY WEEK

March 29—Palm Sunday

10 am: Liturgy of the Palms

April 2—Maundy Thursday

7 pm: Service of Tenebrae, Stripping of the Altar

April 3—Good Friday

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

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

7 pm: Service of the Word and Prayer

April 5—EASTER

6 am: Ecumenical Sunrise Service, Colburn Park

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

10 am: Festival Service, Holy Communion

Lenten Mini-Retreat

Saturday, March 14, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm—Parlor

Lent is often described as a journey. If this is so, where are we going? Where have we been? And what do we hope to find when we arrive at our destination? All are invited to join this mini-retreat, as we consider and explore these and other questions in a morning of Scripture readings, study and reflection, song and prayer.

“Who Do You Say I Am?”

Adult Education Series

Sundays, March 8, 15, and 22, at 9:00 am—Downstairs Classroom

All are welcome to share in this exploration and discussion of Jesus Christ, who the Church has said he is, who it says he is today—and who we say he is. Over three weeks we'll look at Jesus, the man of Nazareth; Christ, the messiah described in the New Testament; and Jesus Christ, the living redeemer who is the center of our faith today. (Please note: Each session is a stand-alone discussion.)



From last year's palms come this year's ashes...

After burning palms in preparation for our hosting the community ecumenical service on Ash Wednesday, Steve Silver reflected on Isaiah 58 and Psalm 51. Fasting, sacrifice, and showy rituals mean nothing without our genuine, everyday devotion to creating the Kingdom of God. *“The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit (Ps 51:17).”*

Below, the Church School children gather during worship on the first Sunday of Lent, before distributing colorfully decorated lunch bags for their Lenten collection.



COMMITTEE NOTES

2015 ANNUAL MEETING

Despite snow and cold, enough congregation members attended this year's Annual Meeting to constitute a quorum. Warren Belding presided as moderator.

Rev. Steve Silver offered his great thanks on behalf of the congregation to all who offer time and leadership in ministry here, particularly those whose terms as chairs were ending—Jennifer Grant (Diaconate), Bob Moses (Trustees), Gordon Sargent (Board of Govs), and most of all Todd and Trish Heatherton, who have worked together as Treasurers for many years.

Steve noted that the congregation is at a kind of transitional moment, with a lot of energy and enthusiasm to move forward with new ideas. He lifted up ministry for families with younger children, asking the entire church to share in this effort (more men, for example, could lead Church School). He also stressed the need to provide ministry and services for older members.

Lastly, Steve observed that this year's meeting marked five years since the church had welcomed him into its community. He and his family have felt blessed to be a part of this congregation, to be graciously invited into our lives, and to share our Christian pilgrimage. Truly, God's will has been at work here!

Adding to his **Treasurer's report**, Todd Heatherton noted expenses were on target for 2014. Although

pledges had decreased for a variety of reasons, other areas had shown positive growth—heating expenses decreased, special offering totals increased, and generous mission contributions were received. The Treasury still owes itself roughly \$6,000, but that represents a vast improvement over the prior year.

Speaking on behalf of the **Trustees**, Valerie Nevel added that our relatively high spending from trust funds, while not harmful in any single year, is unsustainable in the long term. As a reminder of how previous generations had generously provided for our congregation, Amy Driscoll read aloud the names of those whose memorial funds have benefited FCC.

Jon Scott supplemented the report of **Mission and Social Action** by noting the need for help with dishwashing and other tasks at our Community Dinners, to relieve the burden on “regulars.” Jon also reiterated the committee's ongoing responsibility for leading CROP Walk efforts.

Although **Women of the Church** elected not to organize fund-raising events this year, the group still engaged in fellowship. It also invited Carmen Tarleton to speak at FCC, an event that many would like to repeat annually in some form. Speaking informally for the **Men's Fellowship**, Wendell Smith called for a more formal budget structure for that group, so as to facilitate projects like the new bathroom water heaters.

Prior to discussing nominations and electing officers, Warren Belding suggested moving to the **proposed By-law amendments**, which impact the membership of committees. Amy Driscoll then explained the rationale behind the proposed changes—there are simply too many positions to fill each year relative to our church membership, a reality that has been noted in previous years. The amendments propose ranges of membership for committees, allowing the flexibility to elect fewer members but still to accommodate more when willing and available. The ad-hoc study group deemed the Vice-Moderator and Memorials Committee to be underutilized positions and thus suggested their elimination. **The proposed amendments passed unanimously**, with no further discussion.

To introduce the new committee **nominations** themselves, Amy thanked everyone who volunteered for positions, along with those whose terms were ending. She also pointed out that even with the new By-law ranges, some committees still lack the minimum number of members. The Diaconate, too, has voted to remain a body of 12, in part for symbolic reasons; only 10 deacons will serve this year. **Those present voted unanimously to accept all nominations.**

The last item of business was the **proposed 2015 budget**, which Todd Heatherton presented with some explanation—pledges are

COMMITTEE NOTES

never a precise guide to actual contribution totals, and we hope to draw less from trust funds this year. (Valerie Nevel advised that a 4% trust-spending rate would be a safe goal.) Todd noted that the budget is balanced, and our operations are already fairly lean, leaving little room for further cuts. He also proposed using this year's Waldo Trust funds to restore our escrow accounts. Regarding our trust funds and their role in the budget, Jon Scott proposed that the Stewardship Committee might offer an informational session to anyone interested, an offer that appealed to many. **The 2015 budget passed unanimously.**

CHURCH COUNCIL

Council did not meet in February but plans to meet as scheduled on March 17. All are invited to attend.

DIACONATE

John Gilliatt led the Diaconate's February meeting, its first since the election of new deacons.

A report on Called to Care noted the passing of Carolin Bassett's sister, the imminent surgery for Rachel Silver's father Alan Smith, and continuing prayers for Mo Bergeron. The Diaconate will also fund another \$500 worth of gas and grocery cards, supporting the church's vital "back-door ministry."

The Deacons will gather for their biennial retreat day at Meriden Congregational Church on Saturday, April 25. Ron Bailey noted that the Meriden space was well suited to the last retreat.

Steve Silver noted preparations for the Ash Wednesday ecumenical service at FCC and discussed the Lenten programming coming in March. He also reported on a very

productive conversation among families with young children. There was great enthusiasm and consensus about what we might do going forward, from events such as Fire and Ice to new ideas such as communion bread baking and a trip to the Heifer Farm in MA. Steve further proposed that the Diaconate consider purchasing the electronic version of *Glory to God*, a new edition of the Presbyterian hymnal, to enhance our music ministry. This well-received hymnal offers new music, pdf's designed for bulletin inclusion, and larger font sizes. The deacons voted unanimously to fund the \$300 cost of obtaining it.

Finally, the deacons elected officers as follows: Barbara Jones, chair; Barbara Teeter, vice-chair; John Gilliatt, clerk; Ginger Smith, treasurer; and Susan Montmagny, Pastoral Relations representative.

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 think about how you might best contribute your own skills, interests, and energy to our mission and ministry.

In particular, there are still vacancies on the Stewardship, Nominating, and Mission and Social Action Committees.

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

March Meetings

Mission/Social Action and Stewardship	3/1, 11:15
Music Committee	3/8, 11:15
Diaconate	3/9, 7:00
Christian Education	3/11, 7:00
Church Council	3/17, 7:00
Board of Governors	3/22, 11:15

April Meetings

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

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



FIRE and **ICE**
Sunday, February 22



OUR LOCAL MISSION

Community Dinner Leaders Needed!

We are blessed and grateful to have a consistent group of church members who generously commit time and resources to our Community Dinners. We would love to expand that group!

Please consider helping however you can, whether it's just pitching in a bag of potatoes, serving and cleaning up, or actually organizing an entire meal.

Below is a list of those leading our monthly dinners in 2015, and as you can see, we still need volunteers! If you're interested in this important role or have questions about it, please contact the church office.

3/22	John Gilliatt
4/26	Christian Education
5/24	(open)
6/28	(open)
7/26	(open)
8/23	(open)
9/27	Women of the Church
10/25	Christian Education
11/22	(open)
12/27	Nan Parsons

Volunteer at David's House!



David's House is the dream of a little boy named David Cyr, who passed away in 1984 after struggling with acute leukemia.

During his treatments at the children's hospital in Hanover, David and his father Dick met families who were determined not to leave their sick children but had nowhere to stay locally and couldn't afford a hotel. Soon after David's passing, his parents and friends began raising funds to establish David's House, which in 29 years has welcomed and served over 12,500 families from around the world, while their children get the specialized treatment they need at DHMC next door.

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

020 CALLED TO CARE

Called to Care offers assistance to those in our congregation who need it, for whatever reason—

illness, loss of a loved one, loneliness, depression, aging issues, and divorce, to name a few. We offer support with cards, phone calls, visits, meals, and transportation.

This ministry needs your help! If the Spirit moves you to join this rewarding group, please contact Linda Jacobs (mrandsmrs.j@comcast.net / 802-296-8251) or Steve Silver.



RETURNING TO FCC IN APRIL

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.

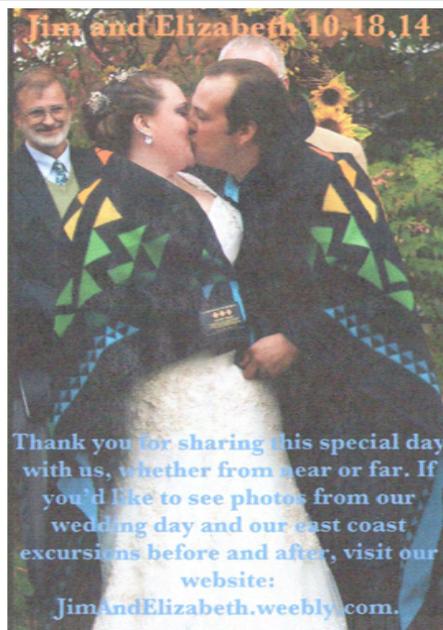
Support this vital community resource... And have some laughs too!



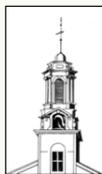
First Congregational Church of Lebanon
10 South Park Street, PO Box 230
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www.fccleb.org / church@fccleb.org

TICKETS:

603-448-4281 or church@fccleb.org



MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music at the Meetinghouse

Spring Concerts Coming Soon!

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.

Sunday, April 12, at 1:00 pm—Four-hand Piano (*Program TBA*)

Sunday, May 3, at 1:00 pm—Violin and Piano (*Program TBA*)

Saturday, June 20, at 7:30 pm—Erma Mellinger, mezzo-soprano, and Piano

Friday, June 26, at 7:30 pm—Cello and Piano (*Program TBA*)

An Evening with Will Ögmundson—Friday, May 15, at 7:30 pm

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

Upper Valley Music Center Spring Children's Concert—Sunday, May 31, at 1:00 pm

An A Cappella Showcase with Harmony Nights—Friday, June 6, at 7:00 pm

*Do you like to sing? Do you want to improve vocal skills and sing in a choir without performance pressure?
Would you like to connect with others and even improve your health in a choral setting?*

Get out of the shower and into the choir!



JUNEBERRY MUSIC

Choral Singing School

Founded in 2012, Juneberry Music's Choral Singing School helps people of all ages and backgrounds develop choral singing skills in a fun, affordable way. We welcome you wherever you are, whether completely inexperienced and untrained or more comfortable and ready to challenge yourself.

We'll help you reach your choral singing goals—or simply discover what those goals are!

Participants in this 10-week choral class encounter music from across centuries and cultures, while gaining the skills and confidence to sing in church choirs, community choruses, and other groups.

Saturday Mornings, March 21 through May 16, 10:15-12:30 (Final Class in Thetford, VT)

Cost—\$90 for 10-week Session

For more information or to register, please contact

Patricia Norton, Director (juneberrymusic@gmail.com/802-785-4740) or visit www.juneberrymusic.com.

First Congregational Church of Lebanon

Weekly Worship and Church School: Sundays, 10:00 am • Office Hours: Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 9-12
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Rev. Stephen R. Silver — silver@fccleb.org • Newsletter Submissions — church@fccleb.org