



The First Congregational Church  
of Lebanon  
United Church of Christ

FEBRUARY 2013

# News and Events

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## The Pastoral Perspective

In mid-January I went to the State House in Concord to testify in favor of House Bill 135, the proposed repeal of New Hampshire's "stand your ground" law. I was the first of three clergy to speak; after my two colleagues testified, one of the legislators present in the audience, when given his turn to speak, took issue with our interpretation of Scripture. In our own ways, each of us had clearly expressed our belief that the Gospel way is one of peace, that to resort to violence to solve our problems and assuage our fears was not what Jesus would want from us or for us. This didn't sit well with the representative, who noted that while he wasn't a pastor, he remembered Jesus saying something about sheep being sent out amongst wolves and how people should be prepared to engage in self-defense. I was surprised by this novel, and inaccurate, presentation of Scripture.

The passage that the man was referencing was from Matthew, Chapter 10. There, Jesus gave his apostles authority to go and perform healings. Knowing that what he was telling them to do would arouse opposition and even overt hostility from members of the community, he offered them words of advice, saying, "See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves." He then proceeded to tell the Twelve of the persecutions they would encounter. Finally, he told them how to respond: "But the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes."

There is nothing in this text about fighting, nothing about using weapons, nothing about standing one's ground. Instead, there's a warning to be on the alert, to be on one's toes, to be savvy—and to be prepared for a rough and rocky trip if one chose to travel as a disciple with Jesus.

*Continued on Page 6*

## SUNDAY SERVICE

### ANNUAL MEETING 2013

**Sunday, February 10**  
Following Worship

### *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.**

### 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 Parish Hall, and we'll distribute them to Headrest, Listen Community Services, and the Upper Valley Haven. (Donations accepted until February 10.)

***Thanks for your generosity!***

### COMMUNITY DINNER

*will be served on*

**February 24 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.**

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

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**February**  
Christian Education

**March**  
Diaconate

**April**  
Mission & Social Action

**May**  
Women's Fellowship

### A Community Dinner Appeal

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*We need team leaders for the New Year!*

We are still looking for Team Leaders for our Community Dinners in 2013. Please consider volunteering for February (2/24), March (3/24), or April (4/28). 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)).**

# FEBRUARY 2013 CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>27</b> <b>10a</b> Worship & Church School <b>5p</b> Community Dinner	<b>28</b> <b>7p</b> Board of Governors	<b>29</b> <b>7p</b> Boy Scouts	<b>30</b> <b>6p</b> UVPRN <b>7p</b> Bel Canto	<b>31</b> <b>7p</b> Choir	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> <b>8a</b> Men's Breakfast <b>9a</b> Bible Study
<b>3</b> <b>10a</b> Worship & Church School (Communion) <b>SOUPer Bowl Collection</b>	<b>4</b> <b>5:30p</b> Cub Scouts	<b>5</b> <b>7p</b> Boy Scouts	<b>6</b> <b>6p</b> UVPRN <b>7p</b> Bel Canto	<b>7</b> <b>7p</b> Choir	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> <b>8:30a-4p</b> Diaconate Retreat (Meriden UCC) <b>9a</b> Bible Study
<b>10</b> <b>10a</b> Worship & Church School <b>FCC ANNUAL MEETING</b> (Following Worship) <b>SOUPer Bowl Collection</b>	<b>11</b> <b>5:30p</b> Cub Scouts <b>7p</b> Diaconate	<b>12</b> <b>7p</b> Boy Scouts	<b>13</b> <b>Ash Wednesday</b> <b>6p</b> UVPRN <b>7p</b> Bel Canto <b>7:30p</b> Ecumenical Service (Leb. UMC)	<b>14</b> <b>9:30a-4p</b> Grafton-Orange Association <b>7p</b> Choir	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> <b>9a</b> Bible Study
<b>17</b> <b>10a</b> Worship & Church School	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> <b>7p</b> Boy Scouts <b>7p</b> Church Council	<b>20</b> <b>6p</b> UVPRN <b>7p</b> Bel Canto <b>7p</b> Christian Education Committee	<b>21</b> <b>7p</b> Choir	<b>22</b> <b>MARCH NEWSLETTER CONTENT DUE</b>	<b>23</b> <b>8-4</b> Prepared to Serve Conf. (Pembroke, NH) <b>9a</b> Bible Study
<b>24</b> <b>10a</b> Worship & Church School <b>5p</b> Community Dinner	<b>25</b> <b>5:30p</b> Cub Scouts <b>7p</b> Board of Governors	<b>26</b> <b>7p</b> Boy Scouts	<b>27</b> <b>6p</b> UVPRN <b>7p</b> Bel Canto	<b>28</b> <b>7p</b> Choir	<b>1</b> <b>7p</b> Cub Scouts Committee	<b>2</b> <b>8a</b> Men's Breakfast <b>9a</b> Bible Study

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

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The repair process continues in the Sanctuary, as Don Collins and his crew are reinforcing and painting the plaster ceiling. The work is moving along efficiently and will be completed by mid-February. The gold stenciling and other details will be done at the end. At that point the Board will return to discussions with Melanson about having new shingles put on the Sanctuary roof in the spring.

We've addressed several small housekeeping issues around the church, including replacing batteries in all thermostats, cleaning the chimney, and having our fire extinguishers inspected. We're pleased with how well Ben Cole takes care of shoveling church walkways, and Kevin Charbono does a great job of plowing the parking lot.

Pete Mason is rotating off the Board in February, and we offer him our sincere thanks and appreciation for all he has done.

I also want to thank everyone who contributes in one way or another to maintaining our building. So many people take the time to turn off lights, check for locked doors, clean dusty spaces, and generally take care of the place. These small gestures add up and, in turn, support the real work of our church community.

### CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee would like to thank the adults who helped prepare the children for their pageant on Christmas Eve. An especially big thank-you goes to the children who participated in the pageant. You were awesome!

If you haven't already done so, please check out the Children's Temple and Tabernacle in the Church School area. It's very special to the children—ask one of them to give you a tour!

The children will be preparing snacks for our coffee hour on Sunday, February 10.

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### CHURCH COUNCIL

At its meeting in December, Council heard from Bob Moses that the Sanctuary ceiling and roof need to be repaired at a cost of \$45,000 and \$50,000, respectively. In January, Trish Heatherton added more details about the ceiling project, which includes the restoration of the stenciled gold-leaf border. While Council approved both of these vital projects, such expenses occasioned discussion about funding capital improvements more generally. Bob Moses has recommended a pause on major projects, excluding emergencies.

The Personnel Committee is considering the need to budget

increased hours (up to 18/week) for the part-time administrator position.

Pete Mason reported that the Safety Committee has added a coordinator and altered some of its procedures. Council also has discussed a recommendation to purchase a defibrillator for the church, in memory of Gordon Place. Several funding options were considered but the issue was tabled until next month.

Steve Silver reported on Advent and Christmas events, including the Blue Christmas service at Lebanon United Methodist Church and the three services on Christmas Eve at FCC. In January, he noted that planning for Lent and Easter has begun. Steve also discussed our ongoing work with WISE and Second Growth. He further reported on a recent forum on gun violence held in Hanover, for which he was quoted in a related *Valley News* article.

Steve also noted that many of the recommendations from the discernment report have been acted on. To continue this work, the church will need to begin considering a campaign.

In January, Jon Scott shared the Diaconate's consideration of what it means for our church to become an open and affirming congregation. How should we communicate this, and how do

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

we respond to outside groups? How have other congregations addressed this issue?

Todd Miller reports that the Nominating Committee has worked toward a full slate of committee participants in preparation for the February annual meeting. In a related matter, it was noted that not all committees are consistently represented at Council each month, a concern that Ian Smith will follow up.

Lastly, Council has approved a request from Cub Scout Pack 279 to use FCC for its meetings.

### DIACONATE

The Deacons' January meeting was diminished by illness, and we are aware of needs within and beyond our congregation for healing and comfort. Jon Scott's prayers and readings (Psalm 121 and Isaiah 60:1-3) focused on the light and enlightenment that Epiphany season brings.

The Diaconate is planning its all-day retreat on February 9, for all retiring, continuing, and new deacons. We are especially aware of turnover in our membership this year, and it is hoped that

new members can learn from those who are leaving. To be held at the Meriden Church from 9 am to 4 pm, the retreat will be a full day for spiritual reflection, planning our roles for the year ahead, and prayerful consideration of what it means to be a deacon. We will consider our vital calling to support the church's spiritual direction.

We also rejoiced in the way the Communion Offering allowed us to respond faithfully and generously to our neighbors in need, and to the WISE families at Christmas.

### 2013 ANNUAL MEETING

#### Sunday, February 10

The Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Lebanon, NH, will be held in the church sanctuary on Sunday, February 10, 2013, immediately following the worship service, 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.

### 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, 7:00
<i>Board of Governors</i>	2/25, 7:00

### March Meetings

<i>Diaconate</i>	3/11, 7:00
<i>Church Council</i>	3/19, 7:00
<i>Christian Education</i>	3/20, 7:00
<i>Board of Governors</i>	3/25, 7:00

### A Request from Our Treasurers

To ensure that weekly contributions are properly credited, those who collect and record them kindly ask that you be sure to write your name legibly on your envelopes. Thank you!



# LENT AND EASTER 2013

## *Schedule of Worship Services*

Information about additional adult education programming is forthcoming.



### **February 13—Ash Wednesday**

7:30 pm: Ecumenical Service, Lebanon United Methodist Church

### **March 24—Palm Sunday**

10:00 am: Liturgy of the Palms

### **March 28—Maundy Thursday**

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

### **March 29—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

7:30 pm: Service of the Word and Prayer

### **March 31—Easter**

6:00 am: Sunrise Service, Colburn Park

6:30-8:30 am: Community Breakfast, Parish Hall

10:00 am: Festival Service

### **\* *Daily Lenten Reflections* \***

If you would like to receive daily devotional messages from Steve Silver from Ash Wednesday through Easter, please e-mail him at [revsrs@live.com](mailto:revsrs@live.com).

## **The Pastoral Perspective**, *cont. from Page 1*

I won't presume to say how Jesus would have testified on the matter of this legislation. And as your pastor, I made sure when speaking to do so on my own behalf, not on the part of the congregation. But as a Christian, I can't help but think of the events related in Matthew 26 concerning the night Jesus was arrested. Hoping to defend his teacher, one of his followers drew a weapon. This well-intentioned action prompted a powerful response from Jesus: "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword."

I share these thoughts with you as we prepare to enter into the season of Lent. During the forty days and forty nights that begin on Ash Wednesday (February 13) we will be called upon to search our hearts and our souls, to take stock of what we have done and left undone, to repent our sins and to commit ourselves to a new way of living. And we will do all of this knowing that our prayers and actions will be pointed towards Holy Week and its culmination—towards Good Friday, in which the world used awful violence against Jesus, and Easter, in which God responded not with violence of his own but with an unequivocal, unconditional declaration of life and love.

Yours faithfully,

*Steve*



## Prepared to Serve 2013

NH Conference, UCC

Saturday, February 23

8:00 am to 4:00 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 a variety of topics from stewardship, leadership, and finances to global missions and Christian education. All are invited to this informative and enriching day of classes, workshops, exhibits, and worship.

For more information and registration materials, visit [www.nhcucc.org](http://www.nhcucc.org).

Fee: \$35 before February 15 (\$40 after), which includes resources, breakfast, and lunch.

Register online at [www.nhcucc.org](http://www.nhcucc.org) or call Donna Follensbee at 888-643-8229 x100.

*If you're interested in attending, please contact Shelly Moses (603-448-6886 or [shellymoses@aol.com](mailto:shellymoses@aol.com)); she is going and would like to carpool if possible.*

### *An appeal from* **Tri-County Community Action Program (CAP)**

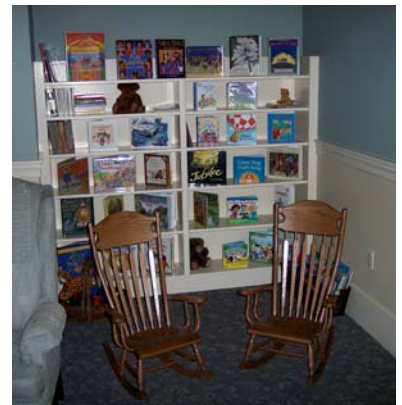
Nan Parsons has informed us of a project in Grantham, coordinated in part by Tri-County CAP, to create emergency bags for the homeless in the Upper Valley.

**Donations would be gratefully appreciated!**

Items needed include hand warmers, mittens, foot warmers, socks, neck warmers, hats, thermal underwear, space blankets, insulated mats for sleeping bags, lighters, flash lights, sardines, Vienna sausages, SPAM, snack packs of pudding and fruit, juice boxes, and nuts. The items would be placed in duffel bags and given to individuals as needed.

For more information, please visit the Tri-County CAP website ([www.tccap.org](http://www.tccap.org)) or contact Nan Parsons ([nparsons@sau88.net](mailto:nparsons@sau88.net) or 603-863-8354).

# THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



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## **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](mailto:church@fccleb.org) • [www.fccleb.org](http://www.fccleb.org)

Rev. Stephen R. Silver — [silver@fccleb.org](mailto:silver@fccleb.org) • Newsletter Submissions — [church@fccleb.org](mailto:church@fccleb.org)