



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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The Pastoral Perspective

Is there anything new to say about Lent? We observe the season, year in and year out, taking up disciplines, forgoing vices or pleasures. We read the stories of Jesus heading into the desert, where he was tempted by Satan; we dive into his trial before Pilate; then we cap it all off with the Passion and finally move into Easter. Why not just take a pass on it all, and get to the good stuff of the Resurrection?

Well, we could do that. In fact, it would be a very modern way of managing the situation. Focus on the good, take the way we find affirming, and if we can do it in a 140-character tweet, all the better. But it's not the Christian way. Our tradition recognizes that with lightness there is darkness, and with good there is evil. Rather than simply dismiss what is wrong with the world or our own lives, we are called to confront it. Lent is traditionally a season of repentance and of preparation. We ready ourselves not only for the miracle of Easter, but for a fuller, more meaningful living of our lives.

Lent is not just the warm-up for Easter. It's a time to recognize there are things we need to do, things that we might well leave undone given our druthers. It's a time to reflect, a time to set things right, a time to, yes, repent.

You need to repent. So do I. We have sinned, on our own and as a society. Sadly, we will continue to sin. But Lent isn't a time to wallow in our fallen state. It is something more hopeful. Lent is a way of saying we want to do better, that we know God wants us to do better, to be better. It may take some work, but we can do it. We may get lost or distracted, but we will find our way. Like exercising, it will take time and commitment. We will need to dedicate ourselves to a program and a schedule. We will need to pray, to reflect, to read Scripture, to consider what we value—and what we ought to value.

There is no resurrection without crucifixion. It's a cliché, but we Christians know that it is true. Fortunately, Jesus has gone to the

SUNDAY SERVICE

IT'S Still SOUPER BOWL TIME!

This year's SOUPER Bowl is off to a blazing start, so let's finish strong and surpass 200 cans! Our total collection goes to Headrest, Listen, and the Haven.

Donations accepted through February 11

THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Lenten Lunch Bag Offering

Beginning FEBRUARY 18, our Church School children will again distribute their decorated collection bags for two important organizations—

**David's House (davidshouse.org) and
Epilogos Charities (epilogos.org).**

David's House offers lodging, meals, and home-away-from-home care for families whose children are in treatment next door at DHMC. Our Lenten collection will purchase basic supplies for David's House. Epilogos seeks to improve lives of people in San Jose Villanueva, El Salvador, a model for focused global outreach and a town dear to many at FCC. Our offering supports SJV's school.

In both cases, this Lenten offering allows FCC's children to help other children in challenging circumstances, encouraging them to consider stewardship as a way to share God's love.

You are asked to use the decorated bags to collect savings from the sacrifice of a regular treat during Lent. Suggestions include skipping a daily coffee or latte; foregoing munchies when watching TV; or having dinner at home and contributing the cost of eating out. **Whatever your sacrifices, please plan to return your donations on**

PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 25.

Queued for Coffee Hour

February—Christian Education

March—Diaconate

April—Mission and Social Action

2018 Annual Meeting and Potluck

Sunday, February 11—Following Worship



**Ash Wednesday
Ecumenical Service**

February 14, 6:30 pm

West Lebanon
Congregational Church

*Please join our friends across town
for this annual service to initiate
the holy season of Lent.*

COMMUNITY DINNER

Sunday, February 25, at 5:00 pm

Leaders: ALYSON AND TERRY ELLISON

Many thanks to Alyson and Terry for leading this month's dinner effort! All are invited to lend a hand as we provide this vital service to our neighbors.

Please look for sign-ups in the Parish Hall.

Never helped before but interested in trying?

Make THIS your month!

Musical Guests in Worship This Month

February 4—Benjamin Kulp, *Cello*

February 11—Ian Gollub, *Tenor Saxophone*

Feb. 18—Leslie Stroud and Martin Hanft, *Flutes*

Feb. 25—Judy Wild, *Violin*; Martin Hanft, *Traverso*

New Members Welcome!

Have you worshiped with us a few times? Have you found a welcoming, spiritually nourishing church home here? If so, we warmly invite you to join 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.

FEBRUARY 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 10a Worship and Church School 11:15a Bd of Govs 3p Open Sing V: Vaughan Williams 5p Community Dinner	29 5:45p Cub Scouts (Bears/Wolves)	30 7p Boy Scouts	31 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	1 7p Choir	2	3 8a Men's Breakfast 9a UVIP
4 SCOUT SUNDAY 10a Worship (w/ Communion) and Church School	5 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bears/Wolves)	6 7p Boy Scouts	7 9:30a-3p UVIP 5:30p Cub Scout Pack Committee 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	8 12:30-4p G-O-S Assn CoCM 7p Choir	9	10 10a E. Borowsky Student Workshop 7p Kindness & Cruelty
11 ANNUAL MEETING SUNDAY 10a Worship and Church School 11:15a Annual Meeting and Family Potluck	12 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bears/Wolves) 7p Diaconate (at Woodlands)	13 7p Boy Scouts/ Troop Committee	14 ASH WEDNESDAY 8a-4p NH-WIC 6p UVPRN 6:30p Ecumenical Service at WLCC 7p Bel Canto No Christian Ed Committee	15 7p Choir	16	17
18 10a Worship and Church School 2p Classicopia: Songs of Love	19	20 7p Church Council 7p Valley Improv No Boy Scouts	21 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	22 7p Choir	23	24 NHC Prepared to Serve (Pembroke, NH)
25 10a Worship and Church School 11:15a Bd of Govs 5p Community Dinner	26 10a-6p NH-WIC 5:30p Cub Scouts (Bears/Wolves)	27 7p Boy Scouts 7p Valley Improv	28 5:30p Cub Scout Pack Committee 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	1 7p Choir	2 6-9p Leb Rec Dept Quilters	3 8a Men's Breakfast 10a-5p Leb Rec Dept Quilters

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

COMMITTEE NOTES

COUNCIL

At Council in January, John Gilliatt reviewed the **Board of Governors'** budget priorities for the year and explained plans for several projects. A comprehensive upgrade of the church's insulation can be divided into three portions: areas between the Sanctuary and Parish Hall, the area above the Sanctuary ceiling, and the cellar underneath. The Board continues to consider Sanctuary floor refinishing, carpeting, and new pew cushions. Kitchen improvements are also a priority, although opinions are split between full renovation and a more modest "face-lift" approach. There are a few significant projects at the Parsonage, including chimney re-lining and possible sewer-line renovations. Accepting that these projects would need to be spread over multiple years, Council agreed that the Board should determine their order of priority.

John also reviewed smaller pending projects that the Board had hoped to complete in 2017, including the sealing of cracks in the front walk and the installation of railings on the chancel steps. He reported that a recent malfunction of one of our AED units had been resolved, and that an inquiry about outdoor lighting in our rear parking lot had been addressed.

Council also discussed arrangements for **winter-weather maintenance**, in light of dangerous conditions from recent storms and harsh cold. While Kevin Charbono has been dependable in plowing our lot and Nathaniel Cole in clearing our

sidewalks, it remains a challenge to keep our grounds safe on a daily, consistent basis, raising concerns for personal injury and church liability at worship or other events during the week. Congregation members and staff have voluntarily helped on an ad-hoc basis, but Council might perhaps consider hiring a property management service for more comprehensive maintenance.

Treasurer Terry Ellison revisited the question of opening a church credit card, reiterating that we need a longer established audit history to arrange one. (Valerie Nevel reported for the **Trustees** that an audit of the church's 2017 financial activity was ongoing, with reports expected soon.) In the meantime, it would suffice to set up a debit card, assuming such a card would carry spending limits and other controls. Council agreed that a debit card would work with those conditions in place, and it unanimously voted to authorize a card for the Pastor, Church Administrator, and Board of Governors chair. The Finance Committee will determine monthly and transactional limits.

For **Stewardship**, Jon Scott again asked that committee chairs seek 2018 pledges from their fellow members. We are a bit behind in the number of pledges compared to recent years, having received just under 30 to date. Jon also reported that plans for online giving had stalled because we lack official IRS recognition of our tax-exemption. Finance and Stewardship will consult on this matter prior to the next meeting of Council.

February Meetings

Mission/Social Action	2/4, 11:15
2018 ANNUAL MTG	2/11, 11:15
Diaconate	2/12, 7:00
Christian Education	(no mtg)
Church Council	2/20, 7:00
Board of Governors	2/25, 11:15

March Meetings

Mission/Social Action	3/4, 11:15
Diaconate	3/12, 7:00
Christian Education	3/14, 7:15
Church Council	3/20, 7:00
Board of Governors	3/25, 11:15

From the Nominating Committee

Volunteer Opportunities *Still Available!*

As we begin the new year and a new term for our volunteer committees, Council and the Nominating Committee ask you to think about how you might best contribute your skills, interests, and energy to our mission and ministry.

If you're interested in learning more about a committee or available opportunities for service and ministry, **please contact the church office.**

The **Mission and Social Action** Committee has been discussing immigration issues and ways FCC might helpfully get involved. Steve Silver reported that Tom Smith (Wendell's nephew) would speak to the congregation about his advocacy organization, Justice at Work, which

FCC Annual Meeting 2018—Sunday, February 11, at 11:15 am

The Annual Meeting of First Congregational Church of Lebanon, NH, will be held in the Parish Hall on Sunday, February 11, 2018, 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, including but not limited to the following:

A. The Mission and Social Action Committee moves that First Congregational Church of Lebanon endorse and participate in the work of the New Hampshire Immigrant Solidarity Network. A full statement from the NHISN describing its work and commitment to solidarity is posted in the Parish Hall and online at www.fcclb.org; it may also be found in the Appendix of the Annual Report.

employs immigrants to assist other immigrants' efforts to find legal and economic stability. Valerie Nevel mentioned a woman who has done similar work locally through WISE. The NH Conference also supports the Immigration Solidarity Network, by which Meriden Congregational Church has designated itself as a "sanctuary church." While FCC wouldn't necessarily seek the same status, Steve has spoken with Rev. John Gregory-Davis about how we might support their efforts. Steve noted that MSA will present a broad resolution about immigration to the congregation at Annual Meeting.

It was also reported from MSA that FCC would not be able to offer the necessary support for a grant to stop fracking expansion in Pennsylvania.

Jon Scott reported on two issues for the **Diaconate**. First was the question of how the church should manage the role of charter representative for the Scouting program. Individual church members have done this in the past, but some wonder whether Council or another committee should

assume this oversight. Steve Silver will ascertain what responsibilities are involved with Biff Simpson, our current Scouting liaison.

Second, the Deacons have been considering how to engage our congregation in a discussion of race, in a spirit similar to our conversations about immigration. Such a discussion need not be divisive or politicized, but it must be framed in a sensitive way, in order to cultivate learning and the potential for action.

In his **pastor's report**, Steve Silver strongly encouraged Council to consider how we will observe our congregation's 250th anniversary this year. While he noted modest gestures such as guest preachers and musical events, he again raised the idea of a capital campaign, for which an ad-hoc committee would have to be formed very soon. Steve emphasized that this must be driven by the congregation (not by him as pastor), which needs to determine funding priorities for a campaign.

Steve reported that a draft budget would be forthcoming, following ongoing consultations with the Treasurer and Trustees. The 2018 budget will be largely similar to last year's, though obviously without sabbatical expenses. Steve noted that the Nominating Committee has been making good progress on this year's committee roster.

Amid his regular pastoral duties, Steve has joined APD's Life Care Board and will travel to Cleveland this month for a meeting of the UCC's Historical Council.

DIACONATE

The Deacons in January recognized the passing of Reuben Cole and expressed sympathy and support for the entire Cole family. They reviewed a number of **pastoral care** concerns, including the continuing gratitude for prayer shawls, the provision of worship transportation, and the recognition of birthdays and

COMMITTEE NOTES

prayer requests through Deacons' individual member contacts.

All expressed appreciation for Steve Silver's presentation during Advent on **prayer**. Suggestions for future presentations include community prayer, praying with scripture, and meditative prayer. An email address dedicated to prayer requests has now been set up; because prayer concerns can be sensitive, Steve will review them with the assistance of a deacon.

Jon Scott shared his thoughts on the congregation's discussion of the sensitive issues of **race and racism**. He encouraged deacons to listen to an NPR program, "The Invention of Race," as a starting point.

FCC will offer **services at Genesis** again in March. Kathy Beckett and Steve Teeter offered to lead them; additional future participation will be determined.

In his **pastor's report** Steve Silver noted the resolution to join the NH Immigrant Solidarity Network, to be brought to Annual Meeting. Scripture is clear, he observed, about how to treat the stranger, and we as a congregation have a responsibility to speak up. He also encouraged a congregational conversation on race, asking the Deacons to lead such an effort. He stressed that this issue, like immigration, is a matter of how we live our faith, and this conversation

shouldn't be reduced to a political or partisan argument.

Biff Simpson asked if the **Scouting program** should fall under the Diaconate, Church Council, or Mission and Social Action. Jon will approach Council with a request that they take lead responsibility, with support from Diaconate. A deacon could act as liaison, or we would recruit someone from the congregation. Deacons will also help with Scout Sunday planning.

The **next meeting** of the Diaconate will occur at the Woodlands on February 12. Barb Teeter will lead February and March meetings while Barb Jones is away.

Prepared to Serve 2018

God's various gifts are handed out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit.
God's various ministries are carried out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit.
1 Corinthians 12:4-5 (MSG)

February 24, 2018
Pembroke Academy
Pembroke, NH



PREPARED TO SERVE 2018

Saturday, February 24, 8:00 to 3:30
Pembroke Academy, Pembroke, NH

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

FEE: \$40 ONLINE THROUGH 2/14, \$50 AT THE DOOR
(Includes resources, breakfast, and lunch.)

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

The **Pastoral Perspective**, *continued from Page 1*

cross for us. We may have to suffer, but it is Christ who loved us so much that he willingly went to Calvary. One way we can show our thanks to the Lord is by spending some time with him this Lent. I guarantee it will be worth the effort.

So, back to my original question: is there anything new to say about Lent? Perhaps not, but we need not worry, for the old words—of invitation to repentance and renewal—are worth hearing again.

Yours faithfully,

Steve

THE SEASON OF LENT 2018

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
in worship, reflection, and service.***

JOINING IN WORSHIP

February 14—Ash Wednesday

6:30 pm: Ecumenical Service, Imposition of Ashes,
West Lebanon Congregational Church

March 25—Palm Sunday

10 am: Liturgy of the Palms, Sanctuary

March 29—Maundy Thursday

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

March 30—Good Friday

12-3 pm: Quiet Meditation on the Seven Last Words, Sanctuary
3 pm: Ecumenical Stations of the Cross Walk (tentative, details TBA)
7 pm: Service of the Word and Prayer, Sanctuary

April 1—EASTER SUNDAY

6 am: Ecumenical Sunrise Service, Colburn Park
6:30 am: Community Breakfast (beneficiary TBA), Parish Hall
10 am: Festival Service, Sanctuary

SERVING OUR SISTERS AND BROTHERS

February 18—March 25—Church School Lenten Lunch Bag Collection

A special annual offering supporting David's House and the children of San Jose Villanueva, El Salvador. (See Page 2.)

Sunday, March 11—One Great Hour of Sharing

A nationwide UCC mission offering for worldwide initiatives.

Sundays, February 25 and March 25, 5:00 pm—Community Dinner at FCC

Daily Lenten Reflections

Every day from Ash Wednesday through Easter Sunday, receive a devotional reflection by email.
Sign up by sending a message to silver@fccleb.org.

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION

Our Growing Church Family!

The FCC-Lebanon congregation extends its warmest, most joyful congratulations on these recent births—all firsts in each family:

Thea Ruth Ward

January 3, 2018

Proud parents—Kirsten and Marshall Ward

Elias Jackson Belding

January 6, 2018

Proud parents—Nicole and Rob Belding

Proud grandparents—Kathy and Warren Belding

Kenzie Blair Duvall

February 6, 2018

Proud parents—Elizabeth and Jim Duvall

Proud grandma—Susan Montmagny



Clockwise from top left—Kenzie Duvall; Jim and Elizabeth Duvall (at their baby shower at FCC in January); Kathy Belding with baby Elias; and Elias' cousins Ariana and Noah last Halloween.



FCC CELEBRATES SCOUTING

For years our church has proudly served as the host and charter organization for Boy Scout Troop 279 and Cub Scout Pack 279, offering them meeting space throughout the year. On **Scout Sunday** (February 4) we recognized this faithful relationship by once again inviting the scouts and their families to help lead worship.

Cub Scout Packs and Boy Scout Troops provide a positive place to enjoy safe and wholesome activities, learn practical skills, improve fitness, build character, and develop a lifelong spirit of community service. Traditionally open only to boys from kindergarten through high school, the Scouting program is in the process of opening its membership to girls as well.

For more information or questions, contact **Biff Simpson** (biff.simpson@gmail.com) or **Lyndsey Boulton** (cubpack279@gmail.com).

MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

UPCOMING CONCERTS

All in the Sanctuary, FCC

***Kindness & Cruelty: Willa Cather in Jaffrey*—Saturday, February 10, 7:00 pm**

Former FCC music director Will Ögmundson and Tom Dunn present this new musical, a three-woman show about author Willa Cather that will have its off-Broadway premiere ten days later! *Suggested donation \$10.*

***Classicopia: Songs of Love*—Sunday, February 18, at 2:00 pm**

Pianist Dan Weiser and mezzo-soprano Erma Mellinger warm up our February with German lieder, operatic arias, and songs from musical theater. *Admission \$20, FCC members \$10; more at www.classicopia.org.*

***Trois Trios with UVMC Faculty*—Sunday, March 4, at 3:00 pm**

Pianist Victoria Nooe, cellist Benjamin Kulp, and our in-house clarinetist Meghan Davis offer trios by Johannes Brahms, Robert Muczynski, and American composer Rick Sowash. *Adults \$15, under 18 free.*

***A Cappella with Aged to Perfection*—Sunday, March 11, at 1:00 pm**

This superb women's *a cappella* quartet returns to the Upper Valley for a special performance in a variety of genres, including jazz and Broadway standards, doo-wop, ballads, and more.

***LOH ON LOCATION!* *Night Tree*—Friday, March 16, at 7:30 pm**

Our exciting collaboration with Lebanon Opera House continues! This inventive ensemble of classically trained musicians offers a distinctive, eclectic blend of Celtic, Jewish, Swedish, Afro-Cuban, and American folk traditions. *Adults \$20, youth \$10; tickets available at <https://lebanonoperahouse.org/events/night-tree/>.*

***UVMC Faculty Showcase*—Saturday, March 17, at 4:00 pm**

All are welcome to enjoy this diverse performance featuring the vocal and instrumental excellence of the faculty next door at the Upper Valley Music Center.

***Headrest Benefit Concert with Acacia Music Ensemble*—Saturday, April 7, at 7:00 pm**

Clarinetist Meghan Davis, flautist Leslie Stroud, and pianist Matthew Odell present a wonderful program of music by Arvo Pärt, Miguel del Águila, and others. Proceeds will support the vital addiction rehabilitation work of our neighbors at Headrest. *Suggested donation \$20.*

***Classicopia: Four-hand Festival*—Sunday, April 15, at 2:00 pm**

Dan Weiser welcomes back good friend Philip Liston-Kraft for another delightful afternoon of four-hand piano music. This duo never fails to entertain! *Admission \$20, FCC members \$10; more at www.classicopia.org.*

***Classicopia: Music from the Underground*—Friday, May 4, at 7:30 pm**

Violinist Tim Schwarz joins Dan Weiser for a program of rare gems from minority and neglected composers, such as Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, William Grant Still, and Paul Schoenfield, as well as blues and spiritual arrangements. *Admission \$20, FCC members \$10; more at www.classicopia.org.*

First Congregational Church of Lebanon

Weekly Worship and Church School: Sundays, 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



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

10 South Park Street

PO Box 230

Lebanon, NH 03766

DATED MATERIAL
PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

UPCOMING CONCERTS

All in the Sanctuary, FCC

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FCC-Lebanon
Annual Meeting 2018
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Family Potluck Following



Ash Wednesday
Ecumenical Service
February 14, 6:30 pm
West Lebanon
Congregational Church