

# Steeple Talk

First Congregational Church of Littleton  
189 Main Street, Littleton, NH 03561

April 2011

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## Pastor's Message

e.e. cummings wrote,

in Just—  
spring                    when the world  
is mud-luscious and puddle-wonderful

Here it is March 28, five days into (Just) spring, and I'm wondering if I really do dare to trust my eyes. And it is my eyes that tell me spring is coming. Even though it's 29° outside and it looks like it could snow again any time, the light is growing. (Incidentally, that's why we call this season "Lent." The word comes from the Latin *lenctus*, the root from which we derive our word length, as in, the "lengthening of days.") So my eyes declare that it really is (Just) spring, even if my mud-luscious yard is frozen solid and the puddle-wonderful lowlands behind me are covered with ice.

Lent is going quickly. Our Wednesday evening prayer meetings, moving around to one another's churches, have been a great blessing for everyone who came. On Palm Sunday, we will welcome Jesus into the Holy City for Passover. On Thursday, we'll share the dark mystery of Jesus' last evening with his friends. Then, as the sad and wonderful story unfolds, we'll meet on Friday—again with friends in Christ from all over our community—to walk with one another through the story of Jesus' crucifixion—his pain, his thirst, his passionate hope, his grief, his final breath. Friday night, we will stay awake by the mouth of the tomb and watch and pray until we're sure the painful story is true. And then comes Resurrection Day, the day . . .

But not too fast. We aren't there, yet. We still have to pass through the journey of Lent, the Passion, the Death, the Great Grief. It's too soon for Easter. So far, it's (Just) spring, when we sense new life swelling down under the ground and deep in our bodies. We long to rush forward but we need to wait. We have things to do before we're quite ready to welcome the day when the mud-luscious, puddle-wonderful world comes alive with birdsong and warming breezes, crab-apple trees pink as cotton candy, yellow and purple crocuses, and Easter—life coming back from the dead to assure us that this bare suggestion, (Just) spring, has grown into spring (Indeed), into spring (Alive), into spring (Triumphant) one more time.

blessings,  
*David*



### Contents

Pastor's Message	1
April Calendar	2
Special Announcements	3
"Classifieds"	4
Church Council Report	5
Church Happenings	6-8

### Upcoming Events

- ◆ April 9th @8:00 am  
Men's Breakfast
- ◆ April 17<sup>th</sup> 10:00 am  
Palm Sunday service  
and Food Collection  
for Food Pantry
- ◆ April 21<sup>st</sup> -6:00 pm  
Pot Luck followed by  
Maundy Thursday  
Service
- ◆ April 22<sup>nd</sup> 6:30 pm  
Good Friday service  
and vigil
- ◆ April 24<sup>th</sup> - 10:00 am  
Easter Sunday Service  
followed by coffee  
fellowship and  
Children's egg hunt

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Production staff: Pat Whipple & Anna Jackman

# First Congregational Church

## April 2011

Office Hours: Mon. – Fri. 8:30 am – 12:30 pm

Pastor's Office Hours: Tues. – Fri. 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

Music Director's Office Hours: Sun. 8:30 – 11:30 am Weds. 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<b>1</b> 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall	<b>2</b>  7:30 PM-AA - Fellowship Hall
<b>3</b> 9:00 AM-Adult Bible Study Choir Rehearsal  10:00 AM-Sunday Worship with Communion/ <b>OGHS OFFERING/</b> Sunday School 11:15 AM-Fellowship Time  7:00 PM-Ballroom Dancing	<b>4</b> Pastor's Sabbath  11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall  7:00 PM NC Recovery Center Board	<b>5</b> 10:30 AM-Clergy Meeting Methodist  11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall  <b>5:00 PM-Dinner Bell/we host</b>  5:00 PM- <b>Property Meeting</b> 7:00 PM Al-Anon Ladies Parlor	<b>6</b> 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall  12:00 PM-Store to Door  6:30 PM- <b>Ecumenical Midweek Lenten Service @New Life AOG</b> 6:30 PM- Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM <b>Mission Mtg.</b> 8:00 PM-Weds Night AA Meeting	<b>7</b> 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall  7:00 PM- <b>Deacons Meeting</b>	<b>8</b> 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall	<b>9</b> 8:00 AM-Men's Breakfast Group   7:30 PM-AA - Fellowship Hall
<b>10</b> 9:00 AM-Adult Bible Study Choir Rehearsal  10:00 AM-Sunday Worship/Sunday School 11:15 AM-Fellowship Time 11:30 AM Music Committee  7:00 PM-Ballroom Dancing	<b>11</b> Pastor's Sabbath  11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall  5:30 PM- <b>SLLC Board</b>  7:00 PM NC Recovery Center Board	<b>12</b> 10:30 AM-Service @ Riverglen House  11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall  7:00 PM Al-Anon Ladies Parlor	<b>13</b> 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 12:00 PM-Store to Door 1:30 PM-Ladies Society 6:30 PM- Choir Rehearsal 6:30 PM <b>Ecumenical Midweek Lenten Service @ White Mountain Church</b> 8:00 PM-Weds Night AA Meeting	<b>14</b> 7:00 AM-Ladies Ecum. Breakfast  11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall	<b>15</b> 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall	<b>16</b>   7:30 PM-AA - Fellowship Hall
<b>17 PALM SUNDAY</b> 9:00 AM-Adult Bible Study Choir Rehearsal  10:00 AM-Sunday Worship & Sunday School <b>&amp; Food Collection</b>  11:15 AM-Fellowship Time  7:00 PM-Ballroom Dancing	<b>18</b> Pastor's Sabbath  11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall  7:00 PM NC Recovery Center Board	<b>19</b> 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall   7:00 PM Al-Anon Ladies Parlor	<b>20</b> 10:00 AM-Clergy Group 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 12:00 PM-Store to Door  6:30 PM Choir Rehearsal  8:00 PM-Weds Night AA Meeting	<b>21 MAUNDY THURSDAY</b>  11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall  6:00 pm Pot Luck Supper 7:00 PM <b>Maundy Thursday Service- Fellowship Hall</b>	<b>22 GOOD FRIDAY</b> 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall  6:30 PM Ecumenical <b>Good Friday Service</b>  8:00 PM through Sat AM- Good Friday <b>Prayer Vigil</b>	<b>23</b> Good <b>Friday Prayer Vigil</b> through 8:00AM   7:30 PM-AA - Fellowship Hall
<b>24 EASTER SUNDAY</b> 9:00 AM-Adult Bible Study Choir Rehearsal  10:00 AM- Intergenerational Easter Sunday Worship Service  11:15 AM-Coffee Fellowship <b>and Egg Hunt for Children</b>	<b>25</b> Pastor's Sabbath  11:30 AM-AA – Fellowship Hall  7:00 PM NC Recovery Center Board	<b>26</b> 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall  7:00 PM Al-Anon Ladies Parlor  <b>7:00 PM-Council Meeting</b>	<b>27</b> 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall  12:00 PM-Store to Door  6:30 PM Choir Rehearsal  7:00 PM North Country Chorus Rehearsal  8:00 PM-Weds Night AA Meeting	<b>28</b> 7:00 AM-Ladies Ecum. Breakfast Methodist Parish House  11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall	<b>29</b> 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall  7:00 PM – North Country Chorus Concert	<b>30</b>   7:30 PM-AA - Fellowship Hall

## THANK YOU NOTES

Special thank you from Boy Scout Troop 6 leader Marc Millsbaugh from Barrington, RI:

*"I wanted to drop you a line to say a big 'Thank you'! The troop had a great weekend and got a lot of time on the slopes. We really do appreciate the church's hospitality and generosity. Take care."*

*From the North Country Home Health and Hospice Agency of Littleton:*

Dear First Congregational Church,  
Thank you for your contribution to the North Country Home Health and Hospice Agency of Littleton. Your support is greatly appreciated.

To the members of the First Congregational Church:

*Thank you for your generous donation of \$933.54 to our local affiliate of Habitat for Humanity. With our matching funds and incentive grants, your donation allows us to qualify for an additional \$933.54 plus \$20.00 for building in 2011. So we thank you again!*

*The continuing support from the First Congregational Church is greatly appreciated by our affiliate. Each and every member of the board sends their thanks!*

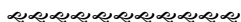
*With our second home completed and the partner family settled in, our focus is now on finding an affordable building lot in one of our towns and making plans for building in 2011. Your generous donation will help us to meet this goal. With appreciation,*

*Pat McLure, volunteer*

## "5 FOR 5" CHURCHES- 2010

To the members of our church:

We keep talking about ways to go outside our walls. Well, here's an example of how we are already doing it. We are one of the 25 most faithful givers in our NH Conference! This announcement is from the UCC New Hampshire Conference:



First Congregational Church of Littleton was one of twenty-five churches in New Hampshire who contributed to each of the five special offerings of the United Church of Christ in 2010. In addition to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) Basic Support, special gifts were received for One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, and The Christmas Fund. Such giving supports our covenantal connections in every way. Every gift matters and becomes a blessing in the lives of others.

Thank you!

## ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

April 3, 2011 is One Great Hour of Sharing Sunday. The United Church of Christ partners with seven other Christian denominations to carry on a tradition of over 60 years' duration to conduct a special offering for those in need around the world.

In the United States, OGHS funds have been used for purposes such as aiding victims of Gulf hurricanes and other natural and man-made disasters. Worldwide, funds collected have been dedicated to disaster relief, refugee aid, and development assistance in over 100 countries. For more information on how these funds are used, please visit the national UCC website at <http://www.ucc.org/oghs/>. Offering envelopes will be in the Sunday church bulletin or are available in the church office.

As the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." (2 Corinthians 9:8 (NIV)).

Please give generously as you are able toward this important endeavor.

Contributed by Bob Muh for Missions

## “Classifieds and Notices”

The next **Dinner Bell** that we host is **April 5 at 5:00 pm** at the All Saints Church.



Please sign up NOW to bring a casserole, side dish, rolls or dessert.

Your help is also needed to help set up, serve, or clean up.

Call Bob Muh or the church office for more information or to volunteer



It is time to place your Easter Lily orders. \$14 each. Orders must be received by April 10<sup>th</sup>. Call Glenda Iles 444-5336.

**JAPAN EARTHQUAKE RELIEF:**

If you want to contribute to the relief efforts in Japan, you can make a donation through FCUCC by marking your check or envelope "Japan Relief."

Or, you can make a secure on-line donation through the UCC at: <http://www.ucc.org/disaster/japan-earthquake-2011/>

"Inasmuch as you have done it for one of the least of these . . ."

**Wanted**

- *Sunday Ushers and Greeters*
- *Coffee Fellowship hosts*

**Please sign up on board in front of church or call Ginger Miller @ 444-5565. Coffee Fellowship and Greeters are an important ministry and create a more welcoming atmosphere for members and visitors!**

***Love  
is an  
action  
verb!***

**Food Collection Sunday – April 17<sup>th</sup>**

**NOTE: Different Sunday**

The Food Cupboard suggests the following items: shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, toothbrushes, hand/bath soap, toilet tissue, baby diapers, coffee, teabags, hot chocolate mix, canned milk. Dry milk, Jell-O puddings & gelatins, soups, canned meat (turkey, chicken, ham, tuna corned beef, Spam). Dry cereals, instant oatmeal, rice mixes, pasta, canned beans, canned vegetables, cake mixes, frostings, crackers. Dog and cat food- canned and dry

**Angels:  
Explained by Children:**

*It's not easy to become an angel! First, you die. Then you go to Heaven, and then there's still the flight training to go through. And then you got to agree to wear those angel clothes.*

-- Matthew, age 9

**Notice from the Financial Secretary**

Anyone who wishes a first quarter report on their giving as of the end of March may call Joyce Krill at 823-5404 or Pat Whipple in the church office. This will save the church mailing costs for the first quarter.

Thank you for all your donations during this period.  
Joyce Krill, Financial Secretary

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

AS OF Feb. 28, 2011	YTD
<b>Member support:</b>	<b>\$21,693.29</b>
<b>Other income:</b> <i>(includes transfer from trust funds)</i>	<b>\$ 4,917.68</b>
<b>Total Income:</b>	<b>\$ 26,601.74</b>
<b>Total Expenses:</b>	<b>\$23,171.17</b>
<b>Net:</b>	<b>\$ 3,430.57</b>

“Faith is taking the first step even when  
you don’t see the whole staircase.”  
Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Church Council Meeting Summary

The church council met on March 15<sup>th</sup> and opened with devotions and prayer by Alice Muh. Minutes were accepted.

**Pastor’s Moment:** David spoke about the earthquake disaster in Japan and how we as a church and individuals might respond to the needs there, which could go on for a long time. Monetary response would be the best as each day the needs change. David will insure that Steeple Talk and bulletins reflect websites for Japan disaster relief. The book study has ended and email went out with all the final meeting notes to all the participants. The council should have input in the process and further conversation regarding the same. He also encouraged attendance to the Wednesday Lenten Services as noted in *Steeple Talk*. All services will take place at 6:30pm in each participating church. Addresses will be in Sunday bulletins

**Missions:** A group is looking for a place to meet on Tuesday as a planning space only. Motion approved to offer space as it is available. One Great Hour of Sharing: Bob Muh will coordinate two notices on March 27<sup>th</sup> and April 3<sup>rd</sup> with envelopes available for donations on March 27<sup>th</sup>, April 3, and April 10th

**Finance:** will meet on the second Tuesday at 5:30 pm but not in April.

**Property:** Phil Krill and members of the Property Committee will meet with Lawton Construction regarding the Phase II universal access plans. Various subcontractors will be asked to bid. Art Hunt and Eric Pospesil will present Phase II architectural drawings to council at the next meeting for approval for presentation to the congregation. Council recommends that the signage in front of the church and Shining Lights Learning Center be incorporated in the architectural rendering. Alice Muh requested that, on the present sign, there be included the time for church school as well as the time for worship.

**Christian Ed:** No Palm Sunday brunch this year as Palm Sunday falls during school vacation.

**Music:** Tina Peabody announced the committee will meet in April to begin discussions of summer music. Will put request for suggestions/ideas in the bulletin and newsletter.

**Other Business:** “I Refuse to Lead a Dying Church” by Paul Nixon book study: Alice Muh asked the council to consider the role of the council in the process of discerning how the church moves forward with the information and discussions that came from the book study. (Notes have been emailed to participants and are available from Ann Craxton.) It was agreed by the council that, in order to thrive, our church does need to make some changes and that the council should be the body to facilitate the discernment process. Pastor David clarified by saying it was too cumbersome to have this addressed by the whole congregation. Ann Craxton recommended, based on her past experiences, that the council have a retreat day outside the church to study the information and make recommendations. Pastor David suggested that we could get a facilitator from Paul Nixon’s group and he will check on that. Possible venues were discussed. It was also proposed that the group leader(s) and facilitator meet prior to retreat to plan the focus. It was also proposed that the council members consider visiting different churches and bring back their experiences to share. Council will prepare for next meeting by reading the notes and being prepared to move forward on planning.

### Other Business:

- Summer Fest is the first weekend in June and we again will give out water bottles. Bob Muh will chair.
- Strawberry Festival in June (either 3rd or 4th weekend) Need a chair for this event. It is a pot luck dinner with strawberry desserts. Determination to be made at next council meeting. Harvest Supper and Silent Action (October 1, 2011) Bob and Alice Muh will chair supper. Will need to check with Emily LaFlam and Marlene Baker if they will be the chairs for the Auction.
- Proposed by Alice Muh and accepted by council to designate proceeds of fundraising dinners (Strawberry Festival and Harvest Supper) to go toward mission budget. Suppers will be advertised as mission suppers with the purpose of raising up our missions for support. It was clarified that the Pork Supper in January was a special project of the Mission Committee to raise money for a specific mission with a 50-50 split. Missions committee has agreed to facilitate choice of mission and make contact with said mission for any participation they would like to engage in. Another idea for the first one is to set up a Missions Fair with visual displays for attendees to be informed regarding what missions we serve.

Next meeting- Tuesday, April 26th at 6:30pm (note this is the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday to avoid Holy Week)

## Christian Education News



*Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."*

**Matthew 19:14**

Sunday school continues every Sunday after the *children's time* in church. We are in the season of Lent and are learning about Jesus' ministry. Come join us and hear the "Good News" about Jesus. Bring a friend! Ms. Ajilla, Ms. Mary, and Ms. Linda will be waiting for you.

Our adult Sunday Bible Study continues each Sunday at 9:00 am as well and all are welcome to attend.

First Communion classes will be held April 3rd and April 10<sup>th</sup> in the Ladies Parlor after following worship service, lead by Pastor David. All children in grades 3 through 6 are welcomed and encouraged to attend. Students who complete their instruction will receive "First Communion" on during the Maundy Thursday Service in Fellowship Hall on April 21<sup>st</sup> starting at 6:00 PM with the pot luck dinner followed by the service.

Please plan to join us on Easter Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup> as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. This will be an intergenerational service and will be followed immediately by our annual Children's Easter Egg hunt during the coffee fellowship.

*Come learn with us!*

Faithfully yours,  
Christian Education Committee  
Wilma Weddington  
Kim Smith  
Su Schott  
Cheryl Kerr  
Linda Warden

## Good Temptation

Excerpt from [Matthew 4:1-11](#)

"Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil."

**Reflection by William C. Green, UCC Daily Devotional for March 13, 2011**

We usually think of being tempted by something bad. But what about being tempted by something good? That's what Jesus faced, and so do we. The devil wears a halo. Jesus was reminded that God's power works wonders, reminded as well that there's divine support amid daunting challenge. Then he was given a chance to use his influence for what's loving and right. What's wrong with this?

Nothing—unless we forget that trusting God's power can mean looking for what we want, just as Jesus, famished in the wilderness, could have been presumed to want bread. But he knew that what God wanted was attention to something else: divine provision even when it wasn't clear where the bread would come from.

So with divine strength and protection. Why do we want that? To get on with busy schedules that wore us out in the first place? Often we ask of ourselves feats of accomplishment that invite trouble—just as Jesus was told he could safely jump off the temple top if he really wanted to. He said don't put God to this crazy test.

And what of the loving influence we want to have on others, the same influence Jesus could have had over everyone? But how often is love a disguise for our own control?

This Lent may we see that often the temptation we need to resist is not something we already know is wrong but something we think is right.

**Prayer**

O God, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory. Amen.



## Music to stir your soul

It was the first time I'd ever been to Chautauqua, the historic conference center in western New York. As the congregation gathered in the open auditorium singing "Day is Dying in the West," I seemed to step back into an earlier era of revival fervor.

Much to my delight, the vespers service was to be a *Messiah* sing along. I looked forward to singing to my heart's content. Who cared if it was the middle of July?

My first dilemma was where to sit. I can't sing quite high enough to be a decent tenor, yet my shovel isn't big enough to dig out the deepest bass notes. So I sat exactly in the middle and sang which ever way the wind seemed to be blowing.

To my surprise, there were several others like me. There were even some who sang parts Handel never dreamed of. But we were all there to sing great music regardless.

No doubt many people around the world who have sung the *Messiah* have little, if any, saving faith in the One about whom they have sung. But the words proclaim his truth regardless of the condition of the singer (should I say sinner?) One such man was sitting next to me that night at Chautauqua. He made it clear before we started that he was an agnostic, but he loved to sing the *Messiah*. "Great music," he said, "speaks to everybody, regardless of belief."

*Indeed, I thought, that's a perceptive statement. It'll even preach.* My reverie was broken by the grand overture of the Chautauqua pipe organ. As we began to sing, my companion really entered in. His entire body sang. Several times I thought the spring would break. After we sang the "Hallelujah Chorus", he said, with the veins on his reddened neck still pulsating and a transparent glow on his face, "That's enough to roll anybody's socks up and down!"

Though I'd never heard it put quite that way, he had it right. Music reaches the depths of human personality in ways mere words never can. William Cowper said,

"Sometimes a light surprises  
the Christian while he sings;..."

*Taken from: What Every Pastor Needs to Know About Music, Youth, and Education, written by Bolinder, McKee, and Cionca. Publisher: Christianity Today Inc., U.S. (December 1986)*

Contributed by Dottie Morton

## Sometimes a Light Surprises

*Sometimes a light surprises  
the Christian while he sings;  
it is the Lord who rises  
with healing in his wings:  
when comforts are declining,  
he grants the soul again  
a season of clear shining,  
to cheer it after rain.*

*In holy contemplation  
we sweetly then pursue  
the theme of God's salvation,  
and find it ever new;  
set free from present sorrow,  
we cheerfully can say,  
let the unknown tomorrow  
bring with it what it may,*

*It can bring with it nothing  
but he will bear us through:  
who gives the lilies clothing  
will clothe his people, too:  
beneath the spreading heavens  
no creature but is fed;  
and he who feeds the ravens  
will give his children bread.*

*Though vine nor fig tree neither  
their wonted fruit should bear,  
though all the fields should wither,  
nor flocks nor herds be there;  
yet, God the same abiding,  
his praise shall tune my voice;  
for, while in him confiding,  
I cannot but rejoice.*

*By William Cowper-1779*

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## **STEEPLE TALK**

**APRIL 2011**



### **Steeple Talk**

A newsletter of the  
First Congregational  
Church of Littleton

#### **Church Staff**

Pastor: Rev. W. David Weddington  
Administrative Assistant: Pat Whipple  
Organist & Choir Director: Dottie Morton

#### **Officers**

Moderator: Alice Muh  
Vice Moderator: Tina Peabody  
Treasurer: Marti Faulkner  
Assistant Treasurer: Dudley Bailey  
Financial Secretary: Joyce Krill

#### **Committee Chairs**

Christian Education: Linda Warden & Cheryl Kerr  
Deacons: Ann Craxton & Emily Laflam  
Finance & Stewardship: Dudley Bailey  
Mission: Lars Nielson  
Music: Tina Peabody  
Personnel Relations: Judy Warden  
Property Management: Art Hunt  
Trustee of the Trust Funds: Dick Holland

#### **Shining Lights Learning Center**

Board Chair: Suzanne Schott  
Director: Dianah Hale  
Treasurer: Bob Iles

## **Holy Week and Easter**

**Page 8**

### Calendar for Lent and Holy Week

Wednesday, April 6 @ 6:30 pm

~Midweek Ecumenical Lenten  
Service @New Life AOG

Wednesday, April 13 @ 6:30 pm

~Midweek Ecumenical Lenten  
Service @ White Mountain Church

Sunday, April 17 @ 10:00 a.m.

~Palm Sunday Service

Thursday, April 21 @ 6:00 pm.

~Maundy Thursday Pot Luck dinner

Thursday, April 21 @ 7 pm

~Maundy Thursday Service-  
Fellowship Hall

Friday, April 22 @ 6:30 pm

~Ecumenical Good Friday Service@  
First Congregational Church

Friday-Saturday, April 22-23

~Easter Vigil @ First Congregational  
Church in the sanctuary

Sunday, April 24 @ 10:00 a.m.

~Easter Sunday Service and Egg  
Hunt for children