

Steeple Talk

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

February 2012

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Pastor's Message



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Upcoming Events

- ◆ Feb. 5th ANNUAL MEETING and Pot-Luck Lunch.
(Communion postponed)
- ◆ Feb. 11th @8:00 am Men's Breakfast Fellowship at Craxtons'
- ◆ Feb. 12th Worship with Communion
- ◆ Feb. 12, 19, 26: Psalms Adult Bible Study continues after church
- ◆ Feb. 18th @5:30 PM Roast Pork Supper-mission benefit
- ◆ Feb. 22 @7PM Ash Wednesday Service LENT BEGINS

She's back. The young mother cuddling her child is back on the wall above my writing table. I brought her to the church during Advent. I liked having her there in worship sharing her tender, loving presence with everyone; and I'm also glad to have her home again.

And Advent turned into Christmas and Christmas became Epiphany. When we pay attention to the seasons of the Christian year, they can sanctify the whole of life. The winter solstice is the darkest part of the physical year, but, if we're celebrating Advent, looking at the darkness with eyes of faith, we may find ourselves embracing the darkness, allowing it to fill us with mystery and awe. Having my picture of Mary and her child at the church during Advent helped me stay in touch with the mystery of the season wherever I was. When I was at the church, I'd see her and I'd remember, "O yes, there you are. How delightful to see you here." When I was home, I'd glance at the spot on the wall where she usually hangs and I'd say, "That's right, you're staying down at the church for a while, but you'll be back home soon." So whether I was noticing her presence at the church or noticing her absence in my living room, she helped me pay attention during Advent. She helped me remember, wherever I was, that something was afoot, something wonderful and holy.

By the end of this month, we'll be in the season of Lent. The word "Lent" comes from the Latin word *lenctus*, which means length. "Lent" is the season of lengthening days. Back in December's darkness, when the world appeared to be dead, we remembered the darkness in which we often walk; we cried out for God to rescue us; we lifted up our heads; we pricked up our ears; then we celebrated the turning of the tide, the coming of the Light in the birth of Mary's child in Bethlehem. Soon, as the days grow longer and world comes back to life, we'll shift our focus to the difficult path Jesus chose; we'll decide once again if we'll follow him or not; if we're willing, we'll take up our cross and walk with him through the terrible mystery of his suffering and death; then we'll celebrate the turning of the tide, the return of the Light in Jesus' astonishing resurrection from the dead.

Having Mary at the church during Advent helped me remember where I was in my story this year. Having the picture in a different place disrupted the normalcy of my days and reminded me that I was preparing for something important. I wonder what I could do during Lent that would have the same kind of impact. I could dust off the olive wood statue of Jesus with his cross my mother brought me from Israel, and move it to my writing table so I see it every time I sit down to write. I could make a decision not to eat pancakes, or make some change in my usual prayer—choose a different time, a different chair, a different pen for my journal. I could get the name of a prisoner or a soldier overseas, and I could write to that person every day, or write to both on alternating days. There are lots of things I could do during Lent that would help me remember the path Jesus walks with me, the disciplined path to God, the difficult path to eternal joy and peace. I wonder what I'll choose.

Editor: Alice Muh
muhfamly@roadrunner.com
Production staff:
Pat Whipple & Anna Jackman

blessings,
david



First Congregational Church





February 2012

Office Hours: Mon – Fri 8:30 am – 1:30 pm

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

Music Director's Office Hours: Weds 4:00 – 8:00 pm, Sun. 9:00am – 12:00 pm

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 6:30 PM-Choir Rehearsal 8:00 PM-Weds. Night AA	2 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall	3 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall	4 7:30 PM-AA - Fellowship Hall
5 9:00 AM-Adult Bible study/Choir Rehearsal 10:00 AM- Worship Sunday School & ANNUAL MEETING & POT LUCK LUNCH 7:00 PM-Ballroom Dancing	6 <i>Pastor's Sabbath</i> 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 7:00 PM-NCSC Meeting	7 10:30 AM-Clergy Group Meeting – Methodist Church 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 5:00 PM-Property Committee 7:00 PM-AI Anon/Ladies Parlor	8 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 1:30 PM-Ladies Society 5:00 PM-Finance Meeting 6:30 PM-Choir Rehearsal 8:00 PM-Weds. Night AA	9 7:00 AM-Ladies Ecum. Breakfast at Methodist Parish House 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 6:30 PM-Christian Ed Meeting 7:00 PM-Deacon's Meeting	10 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall	11 8:00 AM-Men's Breakfast @ Craxton's 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM – Eastern Star Basket Class 7:30 PM-AA - Fellowship Hall
12 9:00 AM-Adult Bible study/Choir Rehearsal 10:00 AM- Worship/ Communion & Sunday School 11:15 AM-Coffee Fellowship followed by Psalms Bible Study 7:00 PM-Ballroom Dancing	13 <i>Pastor's Sabbath</i> 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 5:30 PM-SLLC Meeting	14 10:30 AM-Riverglen Service 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 4:30 PM-WE HOST Dinner Bell/All Saints 7:00 PM-AI Anon/Ladies Parlor	15 10:00 AM-Clergy Group/Ladies Parlor 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 8:00 PM-Weds. Night AA	16 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall	17 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall	18 ROAST PORK SUPPER Mission benefit 5:30 PM 7:30 PM-AA – Ladies Parlor
19 9:00 AM-Adult Bible study/Choir Rehearsal 10:00 AM- Worship /Sunday School 11:15 AM-Coffee Fellowship followed by Psalms Bible Study 3:00 Ecumenical Choir concert @ Durrell Methodist Church, Bethlehem 7:00 PM-Ballroom Dancing	20 <i>Pastor's Sabbath</i> 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 7:00 PM-NCSC Meeting	21 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 6:30 PM-Council Meeting 7:00 PM-AI Anon/Ladies Parlor	22 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall ASH WEDNESDAY 7:00 PM Service in the sanctuary Choir Rehearsal TBA 8:00 PM-Weds. Night AA	23 8:00 AM-Ladies Ecum. Breakfast At Methodist Parish House 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall	24 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall	25 NH UCC Conference Annual PREPARED TO SERVE All day educational event Pembroke, NH 7:30 PM-AA - Fellowship Hall
26 9:00 AM-Adult Bible study/Choir Rehearsal 10:00 AM- Worship/ Sunday School & Food Collection 11:15 AM-Coffee Fellowship followed by Psalms Bible Study 7:00 PM-Ballroom Dancing	27 <i>Pastor's Sabbath</i> 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall	28 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 7:00 PM-AI Anon/Ladies Parlor	29 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 6:30 PM-Choir Rehearsal 7:00PM Ecumenical Lent Service @ All Saints Episcopal Church 8:00 PM-Weds. Night AA			

Mission Page



EPIC CENTER UPDATE

Praise God and thank you for your prayers!

Epic is scheduled to close on a new home at the end of February. God's provision for us has been amazing. The building is already being used as a restaurant and event space. Revenue from this will cover most of our operating expenses. We are very excited to see how we can create a space that will be a blessing to this community.

In order to close on the property and make some required improvements we need to have \$175,000 by the end of February. By God's provision we have already raised over \$84,000.00. We are now praying and actively fundraising for the remaining \$91,000.00.

Included in this amount is funding to allow me to serve Epic Church in a full time capacity which is what I feel God calling me to do.

Thank you all for your continued prayers and support,

Brian Muh, Teaching Pastor
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Lehigh Valley PA 18002-2221
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Church: 610.691.4275
Cell: 484.893.0104

THANK YOU!:

Pastor David and I would like to express our sincere appreciation to Carol Mason, Mary Hodgdon and Cynthia Nielson for their dedication and hard work as they depart the mission committee, and especially thank Lars Nielson, who is also stepping down, for his leadership as chair of the mission committee for a number of years. We look forward to working with Doug Menzies and Ajilla Pospesil, who are both coming on to the committee. Additional volunteers for the committee, and input and suggestions for new mission activities and initiatives, will be enthusiastically received.

Bob Muh, Chair, Mission Committee

DINNER BELL – FEBRUARY 14:

Our church will be hosting the February 14 (Tuesday) Dinner Bell meal at All Saints Episcopal Church. In addition to several people to help set up, serve and clean up, we need 10 casseroles, 2-3 salads or other vegetable items, 7 desserts, six dozen rolls, milk and juice.

A sign-up sheet will be available on Sundays in the sanctuary and Fellowship Hall, and outside Pat Whipple's office during the week. Lars and Cynthia Nielson will be heading up the February 14 Dinner Bell. As a reminder, casseroles should either be delivered hot shortly before the 5:00 p.m. serving time or they may be delivered earlier (any time after 3:00 p.m.), allowing enough time to re-heat.

PORK SUPPER – FEBRUARY 18:

The Mission Committee, in partnership with the Friends of the Grafton County Drug Court, will host a fundraising roast pork supper on Saturday, February 18, 2012 in the church fellowship hall. There will be one seating, at 5:30 p.m. The menu will feature herb-roasted pork loin, garlic mashed potatoes, peas, homemade applesauce, coleslaw, rolls, beverages and an assortment of cakes and pies for dessert. The cost is \$10.00 for teens and adults and \$5.00 for children 5-12. Children under 5 are free. Take-out and delivery within Littleton will be available. Tickets may be purchased and seats may be reserved by contacting the church office at 444-3376.


Fifty percent of the net proceeds of the supper will be donated to the Friends of the Grafton County Drug Court, and the remaining fifty percent will be used to support the mission work of the church.

The Friends of the Grafton County Drug Court is a 501 (c)(3) charitable foundation established to provide supplemental financial support for the Grafton County Drug Court Sentencing Program.

Volunteers are needed for set up, food preparation, serving and clean-up after the supper. Donations of pies, cakes and rolls are also requested. A sign-up sheet will be available in the sanctuary prior to Sunday worship services, in the church hall during coffee fellowship, and outside Pat Whipple's office during the week.

For additional information about the pork supper, the "Friends" organization or the Grafton County Drug Court, contact Bob Muh at 444-5228.

“Classifieds and Notices”

<p style="text-align: center;">The Roast Pork Supper is February 18th</p> <p>Please sign up to help or to bake pies or cakes. The sign-up sheet is outside the church office week days and in the front of the church on Sundays. Call Bob Muh at 444-5228 for more information *****</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>NEEDED!</u> HOSTS FOR COFFEE FELLOWSHIP & USHERS AND GREETERS.</p> <p>Providing hospitality is an important way we make people feel welcome in our church. <i>You can call the church office or find the sign-up sheet in the sanctuary or at coffee fellowship.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Free Daily Devotional Available!</p> <p>Are you aware that a team of United Church of Christ pastors and writers collaborates to prepare a daily e-devotional? It's a great way to begin the day. For more information please go to the UCC.org web site below: http://www.ucc.org/feed-your-spirit/daily-devotional/</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT</p> <p>THE CHURCH ANNUAL REPORT WILL BE READY FOR YOU ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 29TH.</p> <p>IT CAN BE PICKED UP UNDER THE MADONNA WINDOW IN THE SANCTUARY ON SUNDAY OR IN THE OFFICE.</p>	<p>The next Dinner Bell that we host is February 14th at 4:30 pm at the All Saints Church.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♥♥♥♥</p> <p>Please sign up NOW to bring a casserole, side dish, rolls or dessert.</p> <p>Your help is also needed to help set up, serve, or clean up. <i>Call the Nielsons (444-1339) or Bob Muh (444-5228) for more information or to volunteer.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Annual Ecumenical Choir Festival February 19th, at 3:00 PM</i></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Features combined choir as well as individual choirs from area churches. Guaranteed to warm your heart and soul on a cold winter afternoon!</i></p>

“Wednesdays of Lent”

Once again area churches are coming together to offer a wonderful opportunity to walk through Lent with our brothers and sisters in Christ. These services are offered in different area churches on the five Wednesdays of Lent following Ash Wednesday. You have a wonderful opportunity to enrich your Lent observances in preparation for Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

“Wednesdays of Lent” ecumenical worship series schedule:

- Feb. 22 @7PM Ash Wednesday Service led by Pastor David in the sanctuary
- Feb. 29 @ 7PM All Saints Episcopal Church
- Mar. 7 @ 7PM First Congregational Church with Northminster Church
- Mar. 14 @ 7PM Littleton United Methodist Church
- Mar. 21 @ 7PM Littleton Baptist Church
- Mar. 28 @ 7PM New Life Assembly of God

Serving the Lord with smiling faces
And praising him, all ye children.

Christian Education



See our light shine as we share our
"Christmas around the World" pageant
with the congregation.

Jesus's birth is a wonderful beginning to the lessons we will study these next few weeks. We will learn about Jesus's life and his teachings and the most wonderful gift God gave to us in His only son during this Lenten season. Come be with us and hear the good news as we follow Jesus.

FIRST COMMUNION CLASS

Pastor David will have a "First Communion Class" for all students in grade three or above. It will be one class for one hour during Lent at a time that best fits the schedule of the students. If your child would like to take this class please contact Linda Warden or Pastor David. Students will receive "First Communion" at the Maundy Thursday service.

CHILDREN AND MISSION

We will have our annual "Mission" bake sale but will hold it at a date yet to be determined. Between the annual meeting on February 5th and our Mission Committee pork dinner on February 18th to benefit the Friends of the Grafton County Drug Court, our bakers and workers are going to be very busy. We do not want to "overload" our angels. Instead, our students will give you the gift of "coffee hour" on February 12th in appreciation for all you do for us.

Sincerely, Christian Education Committee

There are three vacancies on the Christian Education Committee and a need for more teachers. We have a dedicated core group and **YOU CAN HELP!**

It is a privilege to teach our children about the love of Jesus and to give them a foundation that will make them eager to grow in Christ!

SPECIAL NOTE OF THANKS

I would like to thank everyone who participated in our 7 p.m. service on Christmas Eve. Every year most of my family comes "home for Christmas" and we all participate in coming to this service. This year everyone commented on how wonderful our service was; the length of the service was perfect for anyone that was there with children. The music was beautiful; thank you, Dottie. David's homily at the end of the service was outstanding. I realize how many people it takes to participate in telling the story of Christ's birth, our thanks to all of you too.

In great appreciation,
Judy and Ed Warden and family members.

From the Moderator

The church annual meeting is an important event in the life of this church. In a congregational church, each member promises to be a part of the life of the church. The covenant we enter into gives us certain rights as well as responsibilities. The annual meeting is held so that the congregation has the opportunity to have a voice in what we feel God is calling us to do and how we will then respond as a Body of Christ.

This year, our annual meeting is on February 5th. We start the meeting with at our worship service because God called this church into being and is the reason we exist. Following worship, the meeting will continue in Fellowship Hall. This year the agenda includes accepting reports from the various committees, voting to ratify the vision statements including a look ahead to where do we go from here, welcoming new committee members and thanking those who have served, and financial reports.

One new item on the agenda will be the proposed lease of our steeples to US Cellular to locate their antennae. This new opportunity has just been brought before the council and still requires some work before any agreements are signed, but looks like a promising way to increase church revenue that in turn will help us further our mission and vision. We will be asking the congregation allow the council to follow through with the proposal, negotiating on behalf of their behalf. Come to the annual meeting to hear more about this exciting development!

After the business portion of the meeting, we will share a pot luck lunch, breaking bread together as a community in Christ. We have a mission, our vision is coming, now let's get going! What is God calling us to do? Imagine the possibilities!

For some inspiration, go to <http://www.nhcucc.org/NHCUCC> under Imagine What's Possible to see what some of our sister churches in New Hampshire are doing!

Prepared to Serve

The NH UCC Conference Prepared to Serve Committee is pleased to announce

Prepared to Serve 2012

will be held

Saturday, February 25, 2012
at Pembroke Academy in
Pembroke, NH.

This year's event offers a well-balanced workshop track, including Christian Education, Church Leadership, Caring Ministries and Service and Global Missions. With over 80 workshops to choose from, there's sure to be something for all church members in the New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ.

For more information or a brochure call our church office, or follow the link below

<http://www.nhcucc.org/NHCUCC/>

Sign up dead line is February 10th

Imaging the Possibilities!

- To offer worship that celebrates God's love and inspires us to bring that love into our daily lives
- To engage people of all ages and at all stages of their spiritual journeys in Christian faith formation
- To serve the community with compassionate hearts in the name of God
- To be intentional and consistent in our support and care for each other
- To be living examples of God's love as we have come to know it through Jesus Christ

'For I know the plans I have for you', declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

What is happening at Shining Lights ?



Shining Lights Learning Center (SLLC) director and lead teacher, Dianah Hale is taking a class that will allow her to observe the kindergarten class at Lakeway Elementary School. Part of the mission of the SLLC, as well as nurturing spiritual and emotional growth, is to help children develop cognitive skills that will get them ready for the challenges of elementary school education. Our curriculum keeps in mind the skills they will need for success in kindergarten and beyond. This class will give Miss Dianah wonderful feedback as well as some great ideas on how to better align our curriculum. The children who were at SLLC last year are very excited to have her visit.

The children have really enjoyed their outside play in the snow. When it's too icy or cold the church hall provides a great space for inside play! Thank you church members! Your support of this ministry of the church allows SLLC to be otherwise self-sufficient, providing the only Christian childcare and preschool in this community.



Mission statement of the Shining Lights Learning Center

As a ministry of the First Congregational Church of Littleton, Shining Lights Learning Center is dedicated to nurturing the spiritual growth of each child enrolled, while providing opportunities for optimal social and emotional growth, as well as development of physical and cognitive skills. In a nurturing, safe and healthy environment children will have the opportunity to understand and see their world, life, and education through a Christian perspective. We seek to enable each child together with his/her family to develop a Christ-centered world view.

Music Ministry

The choir is getting ready to participate in the annual Ecumenical Choir Concert to be held on February 19th at 3PM in the Durrell Methodist Church.

We are working hard to prepare music for the Lent and Easter season. Two of the pieces we are practicing are choruses from the Easter portion of the Messiah.

We will sing at the Ash Wednesday service at our church on February 22nd at 7 PM and also on Wednesday March 7th at 7 PM at our church as part of the ecumenical services being held during Lent. In addition we will be working on music for Holy Week.

We are happy to have a new member of the choir. Ed Tomashek has joined the bass section and we are so glad to have him with us. If you would like to join us during this special time we welcome you. You can reach me at 1-802-684-1174 (home), 444-3376 Ext. 13 (church), and momssuzuki@gmail.com with comments or questions. It is my hope that music will be an important part of your spiritual journey through Lent and Easter.

Submitted by Dottie Morton



Quotable Quotes

*God doesn't
call the
qualified,
He qualifies
the called.*

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STEEPLE TALK

FEBRUARY 2012



Steeple Talk

A newsletter of the
First Congregational
Church of Littleton

Annual Meeting Reminder

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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
Deacons: Ann Craxton
Finance & Stewardship: Dudley Bailey
Mission: Bob Muh
Music: Tina Peabody
Personnel Relations: Judy Warden
Property Management: Art Hunt
Trustee of the Trust Funds: Dick Holland

Shining Lights Learning Center

Board Chairperson: Suzanne Schott
Director: Dianah Hale

Your presence is requested!

*Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of
Littleton*

February 5th, 2012

We begin with worship service in the sanctuary at 10:00 am
Meeting agenda in Fellowship Hall will commence after
church with a **pot luck lunch** to follow
(You may bring your pot luck dish to Fellowship Hall
before worship service)

*-Bring your ideas-
-Bring your enthusiasm-
-Bring your faith-*