

Steeple Minute

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

April 1, 2023

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Issue 4

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Find us on Facebook @FirstCongregationalChurchOfLittletonNH

Happy Spring and Almost Easter!

Some of us are glad that the snow is retreating to the edges of the trees while some of us are still hankering for one more ski down the slopes. Some of us are feeling the drawing hope of new life while for others of us it's a season that draws us down in sadness.

Spring is a tricky season. An in-between time of messiness and mud, of new life and the cost it takes to find it. Whatever this spring season it is for you, it is a special season for us to come together in all the ways we are and to walk through the passage of Holy Week and Easter. It's a familiar journey that we repeat every year, a walk through broken hope, failed promises, betrayal and desertion that leads to a familiar and all too human story of shame, despair and death. And yet, in that familiar place something else as well, the surprise of new life, forgiveness, a new way of being and meeting each other and God-with-us.

This year we are joining with our neighbor churches to mark this journey together. Here's what's coming up this week:

Palm Sunday, Sunday April 2, 10:00am in the Sanctuary

We celebrate the beginning of Holy Week with the story of the arrival of Jesus into the city of Jerusalem.

Maundy Thursday, Thursday April 6, 6:00pm in the Ladies' Parlor

We'll share soup, bread and communion and remember the Jesus' last supper with his friends.

Good Friday, April 7, 6:30pm in the Sanctuary

We join with the Lisbon, Bath and Franconia Congregations to mark Good Friday as we reflect on the meaning of Jesus's life and death.

Easter Vigil, April 8, 8 – 10pm at United Community Church, St. Johnsbury, VT.

We'll join an Easter Vigil worship service with United Community Church in St. Johnsbury. Let me know if you'd like to ride over with me. We can meet at the church at 7:15pm.

Easter Sunrise, April 9, 7:00am on the Covered Bridge in Littleton.

We join First United Methodist Church to trumpet in and celebrate Easter morning.

Easter Sunday, April 9, 10:00am in the Sanctuary

Join me for Easter Lunch at the Littleton Diner following worship!

Eastertide Worship Series: "On the Road of Life" (Sundays, April 16 – May 21)

Easter Sunday is followed by the Season of Eastertide and this year while we hear the stories of the resurrection appearances of Christ, we'll be sharing and hearing reflections from our own journeys through life and faith. One of my favorite preachers, Frederick Buechner once said, "I wish I didn't have to talk about myself so much, but it is in the intimacy and particularity of my own life and experience that God speaks." Perhaps that is true for you as well and we would all be so gifted by hearing your story of what you have experienced and learned on the "road of life." If you might be interested in offering a story from your life experience, let me know. Thanks to Ross Fairweather who is starting us off on April 16!



Blessings!

Peter 206-484-9814

First Congregational Church

April 2023



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 10:30 AM-2:30 PM – Private event - FH 7:00 PM-AA-FH
2 PALM SUNDAY 9:00 AM – Adult Bible Class – Revelation 10:00 AM-Worship Service 11:15 AM – Cake Walk – FH <i>Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz</i>	3 7:00 PM – AA - FH	4	5 Pam out of office 6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP 7:00 PM-AA-FH	6 MAUNDY THURSDAY Pam out of office 6:00 PM Maundy Thursday Service - LP 7 :00 PM-AA-FH	7 GOOD FRIDAY SLLC CLOSED 6:30 PM – Good Friday service - Sanctuary	8 8PM - Easter Vigil, St. Johnsbury, VT 7:00 PM-AA-FH
9 EASTER 7:00 AM – Easter Sunrise service – Covered Bridge, Littleton 10:00 AM-Worship Service <i>Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz</i> Happy Birthday! Bob Oleary	10 5:30 PM – SLLC BOD - Zoom Pastor Away 7:00 PM – AA - FH	11 6:00PM – Eastern Star – FH Pastor Away	12 6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP Pastor Away 7:00 PM-AA-FH	13 Happy Birthday! Curran Smith 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP Pastor Away 7 :00 PM-AA-FH	14 Pastor Away	15 Pastor Away 7:00 PM-AA-FH
16 SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER 9:00 AM – Adult Bible Class – Revelation 10:00 AM-Worship Service <i>Worship Leader Ross Fairweather</i> 11:30 AM-Diversity Group-Introduction - LP	17 Happy Birthday! Su Schott 7:00 PM – AA - FH	18 Happy Birthday! Ross Fairweather	19 6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP 7:00 PM – AA – FH	20 1:30 PM – Finance - CR 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7 :00 PM-AA-FH	21 Pastor's Sabbath	22 5PM-7PM –Italian Dinner Fundraiser - FH  7:00 PM-AA-LP
23 THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER 9:00 AM – Adult Bible Class – Revelation 10:00 AM-Worship Service <i>Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz</i> <i>Rev. Sara Marean</i> 11:30 AM-Diversity Group-“Made in God’s Image”- LP	24 7:00 PM – AA - FH	25	26 6:00 PM – Choir rehearsal- LP 7:00 PM – AA – FH	27 9:30 AM – Council – CR 6:00 PM-AIAnon-LP 7 :00 PM-AA-FH	28 Pastor's Sabbath	29 7:00 PM-AA-FH
30 FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 9:00 AM – Adult Bible Class – Revelation 10:00 AM-Worship Service , <i>Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz</i> 11:30 AM-Diversity Group-Language of Embodiment- LP 6:00PM – Marching Band Practice – FH	 April 30th Happy Birthday! Chris Sundman				KEY: FH - Fellowship Hall LP - Ladies Parlor CR - Classroom	

Financial Report

February 28, 2023	YTD
Member support:	\$23,061
Scheduled w/d from trust funds	\$ 1,917
Other Income:	\$ 2,219
Total Income:	\$27,197
Total Expenses:	\$20,025
Net:	\$ 7,172

Wider Church Connections and Learning:

Alive and Thrive

Grateful to Dan Kiefer, Alice Muh and Phil Krill who are taking part in a conversation on April 22 with other UCC Congregations on what we are learning about practices of thriving congregations today.

Sunday, April 23, Sara Marean to join us for **Worship and Conversation on the Wider Church**. Sara Marean, the new Associate Conference Minister for the New Hampshire Conference will be with us for worship and conversation. Sara will be joining our conversation on “Loving our Neighbor” at 11:30. Peter hopes you can come and meet her!

North Country Association Annual Meeting and Installation

Sunday April 23 at 2:30 we are invited to attend the North Country Association Annual Meeting followed by the installation service of Pam Spain at the Lancaster Congregational Church at 3:30. Choir members are invited to call the church office to be part of the choir for the installation. There will be a light supper following the service. Let me know if you'd like to go over with Peter – we'll leave from the church at 1:45.

Cultivating Generous Congregations

Grateful to Dudley Bailey, Phil Krill and Lars Nielson who are taking part with me in a Stewardship Seminar series with other UCC churches this month. We look forward to sharing with you what we've learned.

Mark Your Calendars!

Saturday, May 20, 9-2, “A New Thing Gathering”

Hope you might join us for a conversation and workshop of imagination with Elizabeth Mae Magill sponsored by the New Hampshire Conference New Thing Task Force. “Reuse and recycle what you've got to improvise a new church – to bring new insights, energy and the Holy Spirit into our churches.

What if the goal isn't to throw away old forms of church, but rather to figure out how to reduce, reuse, and recycle our resources? The next form of church will be different, but will be based on our eternal foundation of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. How do we build creative strength for discerning God's New Thing for the next generation? We'll use quilt making as a model for how to select from our stash of habits and practices, how to cut off what we don't need, and then how to put it back together to create a beautiful new vision for God's work in the world.

Let Peter know if you'd like to come!

Hosted by First Congregational Church of Littleton!

An Invitation from the Diversity Task Force of the Church Council

For the past three months, we have been meeting as a small task group formed by the Church Council to learn more about what the Bible has to say about diversity and welcoming all as beloved children of God. While our conversations initially focused on sexual orientation, we have also read materials on gender identity, marriage and what it might mean to be a community that welcomes all of us in our diverse experiences.

Through our study and conversations these past months we are all better informed and want to learn more with you. We have learned about the experiences of others that are different than our own. We have grown in our empathy and care. We have learned about making a safe and brave space for conversation about topics that we disagree on.

We believe that we are called to love our neighbor as ourselves. We believe we are called to do unto others as we would have others do unto us. We believe that we all are welcome to Christ's table and that in our baptisms that we are reminded that we are all God's beloved. We believe in engaging in these conversations together we can grow as a people and a church. We know that we want to have a conversation about topics we might not agree on and that we learn to listen and speak as a community of love to and with one another.

A short pamphlet "Homosexuality and the Bible" by Biblical scholar Walter Wink will be a resource for our conversations.

While we will be meeting in a hybrid format (on zoom and in person) after church on these days. We want to include you but if you can't attend – let us know a day and time that might work for you and we will hope to gather another mid-week group together.

Title: Loving Our Neighbor: A Conversation on the Church, Bible and Diversity.

Goal of the conversations: To promote a conversation on diversity for the sake of being a more welcoming community for all. To learn more about the role of the Bible in shaping our lives and decisions. To learn about the experience of others and so challenge ourselves and grow in our understanding and faith in order to see all people as beloved children of God.

Timeline: 45 minute sessions after church from 11:30-12:15: April 16, 23, 30, May 7, 14 and 21. We are open to having an alternate time to meet as well. Let us know if that would be more convenient for you.

April 16: Introduction: Why are we offering this series of conversations? Why do we think this is important? What are our goals for this conversation? Sharing our stories.

April 23: "Made in God's Image" – Bodies and the Bible.

Together we'll create a safe and brave space for conversation.

What does it mean that we are "made in God's image?"

How do we read and understand scripture?

How might we talk about the gifts we have received and our own struggles of being embodied persons and being "made in God's image"?

What questions do you bring?

Why might we talk about our experience as embodied persons at church?

(continued next page)

(Continued from page 4) **An Invitation from the Diversity Task Force of the Church Council**

April 30: The Language of Embodiment (our various experience as people with bodies)

How have the terms for our experiences changed over time?

A great time to bring your questions about the expressions and representations of who we are and how they change.

An orientation to the words we will be using and discussing.

May 7: Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and the Bible

What is sexual orientation?

Why might it be helpful to talk about?

What does the Bible say about sexual orientation and being beloved children of God?

What does the Bible say about marriage?

May 14: Gender Identity and the Bible

What is gender identity?

Why talk about it?

What does the Bible say about gender identity?

May 21: Where do I stand? Where do we stand?

Tolerance, Respect, Open, Affirming, Advocate, Ally?

How do we individually and as a community relate to each other in our diversity and difference?

What might it mean to be a welcoming congregation?

Why might we want to be?

Where do we hear God's call?

Where then do we go from here? What are our next steps?

We have other conversations we want to have as well about our embodied experience including reproductive rights, neurodivergence (including autism and Asperger Syndrome), race and class. We hope you will join us as we continue to learn and explore what it means to be the body of Christ and beloved children of God.

Let us know if you have questions!

Tina Peabody
Su Schott
Linda Warden
Pastor Peter



MISSIONS SPOTLIGHT



One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering of the United Church of Christ involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.

Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women's empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response & recovery networks, your contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put you in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable. You meet immediate needs and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place.

Thank you! \$925 Raised!

Dinner Bell

Thank you to Judy Oleary for heading up Dinner Bell for many, many years! Cynthia Nielson has offered to be the new chair going forward.

The next dinner bell is May 2nd. Please contact Cynthia at cnielson37@gmail to let her know how you would like to help.



CAKE WALK

April 2nd after the service

Please join us downstairs in the fellowship hall for the cake walk!

A cake walk is a fun event for all ages. Donate \$1 each round to walk around a circle on numbers while music is playing (or watch!). Once the music stops, everyone stops on a number and someone picks a number from a basket. Whoever's number is picked gets to choose a cake to bring home! Several rounds are played.

Benefitting Shining Lights Learning Center!





Saturday, April 22nd

An Italian Community Dinner

We welcome everyone to the table
for a **Homemade Meal!**

Chicken parmesan, meatballs, sweet sausage, homemade sauce,
penne pasta, Caesar salad, garlic bread, lemon cake and drinks

Suggested Donations:

Adults/Teens: \$ 16.00 Children 4-12: \$6.00
3 & under: Free



5 PM – 7:00 PM

First Congregational Church
189 Main Street, Littleton



Fundraising Dinner!

This will be the first big fundraising dinner in several years!

Lots of help and resources are needed to make this a success.

Judy Oleary is heading up the kitchen crew. She can be contacted at 603-860-5235 if you would like to know how you can help.

Pam Nute is heading up the “front of house” (cashiers, dining area) and if this is something you are interested in helping with or knowing more about, please contact Pam at fstcong189@gmail.com or call the office at 444-3376.

This is also a fun fellowship opportunity and we hope you will join us by helping or bringing family and friends for a great homemade meal!

How can You help?

Please contact Pam if you would like to help set up the hall on Friday afternoon at 4pm.

By signing up on the “Help Wanted” poster at the back of the sanctuary (or emailing/calling Pam in the office). Needed: cashiers, host/hostess, coffee/beverage host/hostess, dish washers, dessert server and CLEAN UP!

By signing up on the Food donations section of the same poster! Needed: parmesan cheese, mozzarella cheese, lots of Romaine lettuce, croutons, Caesar dressing, Penne pasta.

Let everyone you know about this fun event! Posters are available to hang wherever you find a bulletin board!

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Return Service Requested

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APRIL 2023



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A brief newsletter of the
First Congregational Church
of Littleton

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www.1stconglittleton.org

Church Staff

Rev. Peter Ilgenfritz, Pastor
Administrative Assistant: Pam Nute
Organist & Choir Director: Dottie Morton
Sexton: Reg LaFlam

Officers

Moderator: Alice Muh
Vice Moderator: Dan Kiefer
Treasurer: Joyce Krill
Assistant Treasurer: Rachel Clark

Committee Chairs

Christian Education: Kim Smith
Deacons: Mary Menzies
Finance: Phil Krill
Mission: Linda Warden
Music: Tina Peabody
Personnel Relations: Tina Peabody
Property Management: Laurie Boswell

Shining Lights Learning Center

Board Chair: Suzanne Schott
Director: Melissa Kam

