

Steeple Talk

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

Summer 2012

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The Congregational Church,
Littleton - New Hampshire
Original 1850

Pastor's Message

Contents

Pastor's Message	1
August Calendar	2
Features	3
"Classifieds"	4
Church Happenings	5-8



Thursday, July 5: There's a rope pulled across the front yard, tying back a lilac bush so it won't get damaged when they fell the tree. This limbing and cutting is needful. Come a freezing rain and a hard blow, we'll be glad we made the changes. So today there are chainsaws in the yard. Not long ago, there were robins nesting in the woodshed, raising their young. Yesterday there were crows out front, arguing and digging for worms. Behind us, Wilma saw a young woodpecker hammering a tree for its lunch. Last night the thunder came loud and close and the rain came down hard, mixed with hail. This morning, the house is surrounded by the whine of chain saws and the roar of a chipper. And here I sit at my writing table, with the picture of Mary and her baby on the wall, doing what I can to focus on the keyboard, doing my best in this loud, chaotic moment to write. After all, I wasn't called to this ministry just for the days when things are peaceful and poetic. I was called so I could be a part of it all, of life as it is, and that includes—the deep and mysterious silence of snow, the wild sweet fragrance of peonies, the chirping of robins, the quarreling of crows, and the strangeness of chainsaws reshaping my world for the better; at least that's what I hope.

We've been making some changes in the church. We've ordered new equipment for the sanctuary—a new microphone (no more coat-hanger wire), a screen and a built-in projector—all to help us explore new ways of worshiping and learning and being together. We'll also be getting some new resources so we can enjoy a broader range of worship styles. And we're getting a new sign for the front of the building—very tasteful but also versatile. And safe—we can change it from the office in the iciest weather without risking life and limb. It's the way things are. Sometimes we go for a long while and things stay pretty much the same. Then we'll go through a time of reshaping our worship, our programs, our building. Necessary changes; we'll be glad we made them. So. We have moments of stability, serenity, beauty and delight; and then we have moments when we look for creative new ways to share the good news. It can be very challenging, but that's OK. After all, we weren't called to this ministry

just for the days that feel familiar and serene. We were called so we could be part of it all, of life as it is, and that includes—the deep mysterious silence of prayer, the wild sweet fragrance of bread and wine, the bright sound of anthems being sung by a choir, disagreements settled around the council table, and the strangeness of lifts, projectors and screens, reshaping our church for the better, at least that's what we hope.

In the meantime, we're starting to think about vacation, relaxing, riding our bikes and getting in the water. In the meantime, the music, the prayer and the hard decision making goes on, day by day. In the meantime, the tree guys have packed up and gone and the crows are fussing at the robins in the yard. In the meantime, the world is alive with the goodness and promise of God's great love. And it is ours to breathe in. Go ahead. Breathe it in.

blessings,
 david

First Congregational Church

August 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: Thurs 11:00 – 3:00pm, Sun 9:00 – 12:00

Sunday

Monday


Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

<p>Food for the body</p> 	 <p>Food for the soul</p>		<p>1 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 8:00 PM-Weds. Night AA</p>	<p>2 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 1:30 PM-OA Meeting 6:00 PM-Christian Ed Meeting</p>	<p>3 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 7:30 PM - North. Country Chorus Summer Concert</p>	<p>4 7:30 PM-AA - Fellowship Hall</p>
<p>5 10:00 AM- Sunday Worship/Communion AND Special Christian Ed. presentation- Nourishing Acts 7:00 PM-Ballroom Dancing</p>	<p>6 <i>Pastor's Sabbath</i> 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall</p>	<p>7 10:30 am – Clergy Group @Methodist Church 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 7:00 PM-AI Anon/Ladies Parlor</p>	<p>8 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 8:00 PM-Weds. Night AA</p>	<p>9 7:00 AM-Ladies Ecumenical Breakfast 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 1:30 PM-OA Meeting</p>	<p>10 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall</p>	<p>11 8:00 AM-Men's Breakfast at the Muhs' 7:30 PM-AA - Fellowship Hall</p>
<p>12 10:00 AM- Sunday Worship 11:30 am – Music Committee 7:00 PM-Ballroom Dancing</p>	<p>13 <i>Pastor's Sabbath</i> 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 5:00 PM-Finance Meeting 5:30PM SLLC Meeting</p>	<p>14 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 5:00 Property 7:00 PM-AI Anon/Ladies Parlor</p>	<p>15 10:00 AM-Clergy Group/Ladies Parlor 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 7:00 PM Deacons 8:00 PM-Weds. Night AA</p>	<p>16 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 1:30 PM-OA Meeting</p>	<p>17 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall</p>	<p>18 7:30 PM-AA - Fellowship Hall</p>
<p>19 10:00 AM-Sunday Worship 7:00 PM-Ballroom Dancing</p>	<p>20 <i>Pastor's Sabbath</i> 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall</p>	<p>21 10:30 AM-Riverglen Service 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 6:30 PM-Council Meeting 7:00 PM-AI Anon/Ladies Parlor</p>	<p>22 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 8:00 PM-Weds. Night AA</p>	<p>23 07:00 AM-Ladies Ecumenical Breakfast 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 1:30 PM-OA Meeting SEPT. STEEPLE TALK DEADLINE</p>	<p>24 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall</p>	<p>25 7:30 PM-AA - Fellowship Hall</p>
<p>26 10:00 AM-Sunday Worship and Food Offering 7:00 PM-Ballroom Dancing</p>	<p>27 <i>Pastor's Sabbath</i> 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall</p>	<p>28 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 7:00 PM-AI Anon/Ladies Parlor</p>	<p>29 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 8:00 PM-Weds. Night AA</p>	<p>30 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 1:30 PM-OA Meeting</p>	<p>31 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall</p>	

Ladies Society Salad Luncheon

Twenty five women of the church attended the Annual Ladies' Society Salad Supper and Yankee Swap on June 4th. There were at least as many salads of all different kinds and they were delicious! The Yankee Swap provided fun and laughs with most everyone going home with a special treasure, one of which will most certainly make it back for next year's event.



Consult not your fears,
but your hopes and
dreams.

Think not
about your
frustrations, but about
your unfulfilled
potential.

Concern yourself not
with what you tried
and failed in, but with
what is still possible
for you to do.

Pope John XXIII

Always

Have you ever become fixated on a song that moves into your head and refuses to leave?

Recently such an event occurred to me at 3:08 am when the song "Always", an oldie of the forties, moved in and remained planted.

How fondly I remember singing and dancing to the words, "I'll be loving you, always, with a love that's true, always". The lyrics ended "not just for an hour, not just for a day, not for just a year, but always".

After about 20 renditions of my now not so favorite tune, blessed sleep came; but not before a prayerful, "Thank you God, for loving me not for just an hour, not for just a day, not for just a year, but always."



Poppy Clark 1-9-12

Ladies Society supports American Cancer Society

The Ladies Society held a special meeting on Sunday, July 8. A donation to the American Cancer Society was approved. Three members: Emily Laflam, Carol Mason, and Margaret Wilson were involved with the recent Relay of Life. This donation will be given in appreciation for their work on this project and for the community efforts on behalf of cancer research.

The Ladies Society is open to all women of the church and usually meets the second Wednesday of the month at 1:30 PM in the Ladies Parlor. Regular meetings will resume in September. Please watch for more information.

“Classifieds and Notices”

<h3 style="text-align: center;">Financial Report</h3> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">AS OF JUNE 30, 2012</th> <th style="text-align: right;">YTD</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Member support:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$67,906.42</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Scheduled w/d from trust funds</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$7,516.86</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Transfer from Missions Capital Camp. fund</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$3,200</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other income:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$8,294.21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Income:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$86,917.49</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Expenses:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$85,271.27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Net:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 1,646.22</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	AS OF JUNE 30, 2012	YTD	Member support:	\$67,906.42	Scheduled w/d from trust funds	\$7,516.86	Transfer from Missions Capital Camp. fund	\$3,200	Other income:	\$8,294.21	Total Income:	\$86,917.49	Total Expenses:	\$85,271.27	Net:	\$ 1,646.22	<h3 style="text-align: center;"><u>Shining Lights Learning Center</u></h3> <p>We have openings in the Toddler and Pre-School programs for the upcoming school year. If you know of anyone interested in a Christian Day Care and Pre-school, please let them know.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Contact Dianah Hale at the center for more information 444-7379</p>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Explore the possibilities!</h3> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>An invitation to join in worship planning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Do you have special music you enjoy in worship? ✓ Do you have creative ideas on how to present God’s holy word? ✓ Do you love traditional worship services? <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Call or email Pastor David if you would like to join him in planning one, two or more worship services.</i></p>
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<h3 style="text-align: center;">Summer Special Music Schedule</h3> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;">  </div> <p>July 8 Chris Cote-Trumpet 15 Kathy Girouard 22 Mary Sturtevant 29 David Saikin</p> <p>Aug. 5 Dale & Marilyn Child 12 Chris Cote-Trumpet 19 Methodist Ladies 28 Marge Tasse-clarinet</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em;">Take the first step in faith. You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.</p>	<h3 style="text-align: center; color: blue;">Food Collection Sunday - July 29th and August 26th</h3> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Food Cupboard suggests the following items:</i></p> <p>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.</p>																

To my church family and choir:

I want to thank you for the extremely generous gift you gave me on June 3rd. It will surely come in handy when I head off to Plymouth State in the fall. In my 14 years going to this church, I have met some amazing people that I will cherish for the rest of my life. The First Congregational Church is my second home and I wouldn't have it any other way.

Much love and thankfulness,
Joseph “Joey” Kratman



"Nourishing Acts"

Don't miss this exciting, fun opportunity to learn about our **brand new Sunday School Program**
What's the date? Come to church on **Sunday, August 5th**

Who's invited? Members, Parents, Children and friends of the First Congregational Church of Littleton

What time do we want to be there? **10:00 AM**

What if we're out of town? No problem, we'll do this again on **September 9th, RALLY SUNDAY!!!**



Excerpt from 2 Corinthians 11:16-33

"Five times I have received the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from bandits, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers and sisters; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and naked. And, besides other things, I am under daily pressure because of my anxiety for all the churches."

"Chicken"

Reflection by Quinn G. Caldwell
UCC Daily Devotional ~ July 9, 2012

Much ink has been spilled over the decline of formerly mainline churches (that's us). A zillion reasons are given: the loss of Protestant Christianity's primacy in American culture, a loss of trust in institutions, crises of leadership, children's sports on Sundays, and on and on. Many of which are true.

Here's the real reason your church is in decline: you're not doing evangelism.

When was the last time you told somebody, somebody who didn't already know, about your commitment to God, or about the strength you've gotten from your church, or about the goodness you've found in the Christian life? How many people have you invited to join you for church in the last year? When was the last time your Facebook status had to do with God? (If your answer is sometime in the last month, please disregard this devotional. If not, read on.)

We're worried we'll be inappropriate. We're worried we'll sound like our weird cousin, or like the neatly-dressed young man that knocked on our door last week. We're worried we'll offend someone. Mostly, we're just worried people will think we're uncool.

To all of which concerns, Paul, who lived through the stuff in the passage above, replies with a long, cool stare followed by three carefully enunciated words: "Suck. It. Up."

Nobody's going to whip you for inviting them to church - especially if you offer to pay for brunch afterwards. If you're worried about being inappropriate, you almost certainly won't be. And for the love of God, why do you assume your friends will think you're less cool for going to church, instead of assuming that they'll think church is more cool because *you* go there?

Prayer

God, I love this church too much to let it die because I'm chicken. I love you and my friends too much to not introduce you to each other. So make me brave, and don't let me lose my cool. Amen.



Mission Corner

Strengthen the Church Offering: Thanks to all who contributed so generously to this year's Strengthen the Church offering. Receipts this year were \$440.00, \$30.00 above last year's total.

Life Bridge Golf Tournament: The annual Life Bridge Golf Tournament, one of two major fundraisers for the local teen mentoring program, will be held on Monday, August 13 at the Maplewood Golf Club in Bethlehem. Hall of Fame sponsorships, which include greens fees, cart and luncheon for four players are \$600.00; the fee for individual players is \$85.00. Registration is at 8:30 a.m. with a shotgun start at 9:00 a.m. and awards luncheon at 1:30 p.m. For additional information, contact Dave Coronato at 387-3472 or mrc@lifebridgementoring.org.

"Hand in Hand" Program: Under the auspices of New Hampshire Catholic Charities, the inaugural "Hand in Hand" work week, patterned after last year's highly successful Profile Work Camp, was held from June 25 to June 29. In partnership with a group of adult mentors, 55 students performed a variety of construction, renovation, painting, landscaping and gardening tasks at five area homes and the Mt. Sacred Heart Convent, with one additional project to be completed later this summer. The student volunteers came from Littleton Regional High School, White Mountain Regional High School, the Davenport School, North Country Shelter, Easter Seals, Life Bridge, and Mount Prospect Academy. Area contractors providing technical expertise included John Starr of Starr Construction, Greg Winn of G.H. Winn Building Contractor, Dan Plante of The Wooden Thumb, and Carl Dunn of Whitcomb Construction. Numerous other businesses donated funds or provided food for three social events during the week. Special thanks go to Judy O'Leary, who gave 110% while mentoring a week-long project on Washington Street in Littleton as a representative of the First Congregational Church. Our church also supported a kick-off luncheon at St. Rose of Lima Church on June 24, and is contributing \$1,000.00 from capital campaign mission funds toward the cost of construction materials, paint and other supplies.

What is Overeaters Anonymous (OA)?

OA is a fellowship of men and women who, through shared experience, strength and hope, are recovering from compulsive overeating. We welcome everyone who wants to stop eating compulsively. Founded in 1960, OA has no dues or fees for membership, but we do pay our own way for meeting rooms and literature. We are self-supporting through our own contributions, neither soliciting nor accepting outside donations. OA is not affiliated with any public or private organization, political movement, ideology, or religious doctrine; we take no position on outside issues. Our primary purpose is to abstain from compulsive overeating and to carry this message of recovery to those who still suffer. Abstinence in OA is the action of refraining from compulsive eating and compulsive food behaviors. Spiritual, emotional and physical recovery is the result of living the Overeaters Anonymous Twelve Step program. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our program.

Meetings are held Monday from 5 - 6 pm at the All Saints' Episcopal Church, 35 School St., Littleton, NH, and on Thursday afternoons from 1:30 - 2:30 at the First Congregational Church, 189 Main St., Littleton, NH.

For further information, please feel free to call Pat at 603-991-5385 and Susie 603-823-5292.

You cannot do a kindness too soon for you never know how soon will be too late.

Ralph Waldo Emerson



Sign of the Times

On Sunday, *June 24th*, twenty eight members of the congregation attended the informational meeting presented by Ed and Ann Craxton on the condition of our current church sign and the new digital sign that was chosen by council to replace it. The Craxtons have spent countless hours researching signs and companies, taking pictures everywhere they went, then got a focus group together to fine tune what it was we needed. We extend our thanks and gratitude to them for their dedication and hard work.

The old sign is not only falling apart, it is falling down with 2x4s holding it up after it was blown over in a storm last September. It is also becoming increasingly dangerous to change the message on it. We were fortunate Pastor David did not hurt himself more seriously when he fell changing it this past winter.

The new digital sign will look very similar in size and shape to the old sign and be in the same location. The church name and UCC logo will be at the top with the lettering white and the background green to coordinate with the roof and doors and back lit so you will be able to see it at night. The message part of the sign, which will be changed using a computer, will have three lines. The background and letters can be any color and the message can change as frequently as desired or not at all. With this flexibility, we can use the space not only for a message or sermon titles, but also to put up church events such as the Harvest Supper and Silent Auction, the Ladies Society Rummage Sale, special worship services, Shining Lights events, or other things happening at our church.

After listening to the Craxtons' presentation, the church members present authorized the council to move forward with the purchase of a new digital sign for the church. The order has been placed with Stewart Signs and our sign will soon be in their production queue. From that point it will probably be 10 - 12 weeks before it is ready for delivery- so we are looking at September or October for that.

The cost of the sign is \$10,819 less the \$500 deposit. This price does not include the excavation and preparation of the site and sign installation, which we are estimating to cost \$4000-5000, and it is the responsibility of the church to have this done before the sign is delivered. We will have between \$2,000 and \$3,000 left from the audio-visual project so we need to raise about \$12,000. We will be looking to the congregation for donations to cover this cost so that we do not have to keep dipping into our trust funds. Praise God that we have had an anonymous donor come forward to match 100% any donations received up to the cost of the project.

There is still much work to be done in preparation for the sign. The site work needs to be done this summer so there may be a time that we have no sign. It is important to make sure everyone knows we are still open for business - God's business - all summer long! Spread the word!

Alice Muh, Moderator

First Congregational Church of Littleton: A LOVING COMMUNITY IN CHRIST

Our Mission:

As followers of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, we are called to provide a loving invitation and welcome to all, to inspire and uplift through the worship of God, to reach out to heal and enrich lives through the Holy Spirit, and to nurture people at various stages of their spiritual growth.

Our Vision is:

- 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.

First Congregational Church, UCC
189 Main Street
Littleton, New Hampshire 03561-4020
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www.1stconglittleton.org

STEEPLE TALK SUMMER 2012



Steeple Talk

A newsletter of the
First Congregational
Church of Littleton

Save the Date!

Page 8

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:

Committee Chairs

Christian Education: Kim Smith
Deacons: Ann Craxton
Finance: Dudley Bailey
Mission: Bob Muh
Music: Tina Peabody
Personnel Relations: Eric Pospesil
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

COMING SOON: SAVE THE DATE!

Come, Sign up, Join in!

- ✚ Sunday worship continues at 10:00 AM every Sunday
- ✚ Special Preview for Sunday School Program August 5th
- ✚ Rally Day- Sunday School for adults and children resumes Sept. 9th
- ✚ Choir resumes in September- Join us for rehearsals Wed. evenings at 6:30 pm beginning Sept. 5th
- ✚ Men's Breakfast Group August 13th and Sept. 10th
- ✚ Fall Bible study- topic to be announced
- ✚ Fall Foyers Dinner groups- call Dottie Bailey for information
- ✚ Harvest Supper and Silent Auction - October 6st
- ✚ Annual Ladies Society Rummage Sale- Nov. 2-3

For more information on any of these activities, call the church office at 444-3376.
Don't forget to check our website: www.1stconglittleton.org