

Steeple Talk

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

March 2012

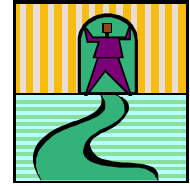
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volume 40, Issue 3



The Congregational Church of Littleton, New Hampshire, Organized 1845

Pastor's Message



I've been pondering our vision statements, the ones we just ratified at our annual meeting in January. I've been looking for creative ways to help us connect with these five commitments we made, to get them down out of our heads and into our bones, so that, whatever we're working on in the church, whatever we're planning, or thinking of planning, however simple or mundane the task, the visions we've agreed on are always present, guiding and nourishing our work.

I wonder, just as an example, if someone in the church might design a set of banners each with an image that represents a facet of our vision. What image might we use to symbolize our first commitment, "to offer worship that celebrates God's love and inspires us to bring that love into our daily lives?" Would we want to use something familiar, like a pulpit and a cross, or something innovative like a dancer with a drum? How would we represent our commitment "to engage people of all ages and at all stages of their spiritual journeys in Christian faith formation"? A book and a pencil, perhaps; or an image of people learning about their faith by acting out a play about Moses? What kind of picture would you use to capture our commitment "to serve the community with compassionate hearts in the name of God?" An image from one of the missions we support, a picture from a Habitat build, or an image of people standing up for some important cause? How could we show our intention "to be intentional and consistent in our support and care for each other?" Maybe by showing two people visiting, reading their Bible and praying together, or maybe by showing somebody bringing a meal to somebody else's door. The last one might be the hardest. How do you show a congregation living out its commitment "to be living examples of God's love as we have come to know it through Jesus Christ," when that's a commitment we get to enact in every single thing we do? Maybe you could show some ordinary people, going about their ordinary day with Jesus right there beside them, walking with them every step of the way.

I don't know if this is a good idea or not. It's just an example, one way we could start to move our vision statements deeper into our imaginations, one way to help us focus on the things we've committed to do. We need to develop creative, exciting strategies for reminding ourselves what we're about. It's important. After all, we arrived at these visions by opening the ears of our hearts to the voice of Jesus, saying, "Do you love me? Feed my sheep." Once we had heard that call, we set about to discern what these words of Jesus might mean for us right here, right now. And that's our vision statements came to be. What an exciting place to start, with the voice of Jesus speaking in our hearts, calling us, out of our love for him, to care for those he loves. We have heard the call. We have seen the vision. I wonder what we'll do with it now.

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Upcoming Events

- ◆ March 4, 11, 18, 24: Psalms Adult Bible Study continues after church
- ◆ March 7, 14, 21, 28 @ 7 PM Wednesday Lenten Series Continues
- ◆ March 10th @8:00 AM Men's Breakfast Fellowship at Krill's
- ◆ March 14th @1:30 PM Memorial Service for Natalie Carbonaro, Ladies Society

Editor: Alice Muh
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Production staff:
Pat Whipple & Anna Jackman

blessings,
david



First Congregational Church

March 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 pm – 8:00 pm, Sun 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 7:00 PM-Deacons Meeting	2 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall	3 7:30 PM-AA - Fellowship Hall
4 9:00 AM-Adult Bible study/Choir Rehearsal 10:00 AM- Worship/Sunday School/Communion 11:15 AM-Coffee Fellowship/Psalm Study group 7:00 PM-Ballroom Dancing	5 Pastor's Sabbath 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 7:00 PM-NCSC Meeting	6 10:30 AM-Clergy Group Meeting 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 5:00 PM-Property Committee 7:00 PM-AI Anon/Ladies Parlor	7 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 6:00 PM-Choir Rehearsal <i>7:00 PM-Ecumenical Lenten Service @ FST CONG.</i> 8:00 PM-Weds. Night AA	8 7:00 AM-Ladies Ecum. Breakfast Methodist Parish House 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 6:30 PM-Christian Ed Meeting	9 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall	10 8:00 AM-Men's Breakfast/Krill's 7:30 PM-AA - Fellowship Hall
11 9:00 AM-Adult Bible study/Choir Rehearsal 10:00 AM- Worship/Sunday School 11:15 AM-Coffee Fellowship/Psalm Study Group 7:00 PM-Ballroom Dancing	12 Pastor's Sabbath 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 5:00 PM-Finance Meeting 5:30 PM-SLLC Meeting	13 10:30 AM-Riverglen Service 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 7:00 PM-AI Anon/Ladies Parlor	14 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 1:30 PM-Ladies Society- service for Natalie Carbonaro 6:00 PM-Choir Rehearsal <i>7:00 PM-Ecumenical Lenten Service/ Methodist</i> 8:00 PM-Weds. Night AA	15 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall	16 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall	17  7:30 PM-AA - Fellowship Hall
18 9:00 AM-Adult Bible study/Choir Rehearsal 10:00 AM- Worship/Sunday School 11:15 AM Coffee Fellowship/Psalm Study Group 7:00 PM-Ballroom Dancing	19 Pastor's Sabbath 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 7:00 PM-NCSC Meeting	20 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 6:30 PM-Council Meeting 7:00 PM-AI Anon/Ladies Parlor	21 10:00 AM-Clergy Group/Ladies Parlor 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 6:00 PM-Choir Rehearsal <i>7:00 PM-Ecumenical Lenten Service/ Baptist</i> 8:00 PM-Weds. Night AA	22 8:00 AM-Ladies Ecum. Breakfast Methodist Parish House 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 7:00 PM Mission Committee	23 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall	24 7:30 PM-AA - Fellowship Hall
25 9:00 AM-Adult Bible study/Choir Rehearsal 10:00 AM- Worship/Sunday School/ Food Collection 11:15 Coffee Fellowship/Psalm Study Group 7:00 PM-Ballroom Dancing	26 Pastor's Sabbath 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall	27 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 7:00 PM-AI Anon/Ladies Parlor	28 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 6:00 PM-Choir Rehearsal <i>7:00 PM-Ecumenical Lenten Service/New Life Assembly</i> 8:00 PM-Weds. Night AA	29 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall 7:00 PM-Deacon's Meeting	30 11:30 AM-AA - Fellowship Hall	31 7:30 PM-AA - Fellowship Hall



Mission Spotlight

LITTLETON AREA SENIOR CENTER,

Connecting seniors to programs and services that support their health, dignity and independence.

The Littleton Area Senior Center, one of eight senior centers overseen by the Grafton County Senior Citizens' Council, is located at 77 Riverglen Lane in Littleton. The center serves nearly 1100 senior citizens in Littleton, Lisbon, Lyman, Landaff, Bethlehem, Franconia, Sugar Hill, Easton and North Monroe. Kate Vaughan, center director for the past 9 years, oversees a small professional staff and a volunteer force of 130, and manages a budget of nearly half a million dollars. The senior center relies upon individual, corporate, and organizational donations to supply about 50% of its operating costs.

The senior center offers congregate meals at noon, Monday through Friday, and home-delivered meals on weekdays with frozen meals available for the weekend. Other services include long-distance transportation to medical services and in-home care (housekeeping, meal preparation and transportation). A full-time social worker addresses needs such as identifying and accessing available resources; assisting with tax preparation; assisting with Medicare Part D issues; and helping seniors with housing and transportation needs. Among the activities offered are a wide array of health and educational forums, support groups, activity clubs, entertainment activities and organized trips.

Key volunteer needs at the center at the present time include kitchen staff, home-delivered meals drivers, and drivers for long-distance medical transportation. Some volunteer clerical positions, such as receptionist or data entry, are also available. The center is also seeking 3 or 4 more volunteers to serve on its advisory/site council, which meets monthly.

Of particular concern to the center and its clients at this time of year is the fact that the Board of Selectmen, in a departure from their support of long standing, have recommended a "no" vote on town warrant article 31, calling for the appropriation of \$30,000 to support the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council/Littleton Area Senior Center. If the warrant article passes, the tax impact for the average homeowner would be approximately \$6.00 - about the cost of two lattes at Dunkin' Donuts. Please vote "yes" on Article 31!

You may visit the senior center website at www.gcsc.org/littleton.asp. For further information or to volunteer, call 444-6050.

Pork Supper

The mission committee extends its sincere appreciation to all those who donated pies, cakes, applesauce and rolls, volunteered for one of a multitude of jobs, or simply purchased tickets and enjoyed good food and good fellowship in support of the February 18 pork supper. A total of \$1834.00 was raised, with the proceeds to be divided equally between the church, for support of the mission budget, and this year's partner organization, the Friends of the Grafton County Drug Court.

Nine members of the "Friends" group, some of whom traveled from as far away as Hartland, Vermont, pitched in with the members of our church family to make this event a success. The "Friends" group expresses their heartfelt gratitude for the church's efforts.

One Great Hour of Sharing



Our offering for One Great Hour of Sharing, one of four special offerings within the United Church of Christ, will be taken on Palm Sunday, April 1. The UCC partners with seven other Christian denominations to carry on a tradition of over 65 years' duration to raise funds for those in need throughout the world. In the United States, OGHs funds have been used for purposes such as aiding victims of hurricanes, floods and tornadoes. Worldwide, funds collected have been dedicated to disaster relief, refugee aid, and development assistance in 138 countries. In 2010, the UCC received \$2,822,878 for OGHs; members and friends of our church contributed \$1,040 in 2011.

Offering envelopes will be placed in church bulletins on March 25 and April 1. On behalf of the mission committee, Ajilla Pospesil will be coordinating a children's program in support of One Great Hour of Sharing.

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)).

“Classifieds and Notices”

HELPED WANTED:

A GRAPHIC DESIGNER TO WORK WITH THE DEACONS

The deacons are in need of some stationary and calling cards to help them with their outreach ministry. The project is called the “Caring Tree.” If you think you could be of assistance, please call Barbara Holland, 444-1104.



*Would you like to donate~
Flowers for the Altar?
or
Palm trees for Palm Sunday &
Easter? (Need 6)
You can dedicate these to a
loved one
Please call Glenda Iles
@ 444-5336*



Special Thank you from Boy Scout Troop leader Marc Millspaugh from Barrington, RI:
For the use of the church hall for their annual ski weekend in January. *“Thanks so much for your hospitality. The troop had a great weekend and the skiing was better than expected. We always enjoy the movies and pizza at the church on Saturday night.”*

FINANCIAL REPORT

AS OF JAN 31, 2012	YTD
Member support:	\$12,346.80
Other income:	\$ 2361.41
Total Income:	\$14,708.21
Total Expenses:	\$12,493.27
Net:	\$ 2214.94

All Saints Lenten Music Series:

Thursdays @ 12:10 PM

Mar. 1: Sue Openhowski, violin and Elena Gott, piano

Mar. 8: Anita Bonnevie, piano and Russ Bonnevie, clarinet

Mar. 15: The Pine Hill Singers, Judy Abbott, director

Mar. 22: Amy Mitz, mezzo-soprano, accompanied by Anita Bonnevie

Mar. 29: Barbara Serafini and Joyce Roy, piano and organ.

Lenten Chowder lunches at the United Methodist Church

Fridays

Feb.24-March 30

11:30-1:00 (eat in)

7:30am to 10 am (call in

orders- 444-5567

Or email

chowdah@anotchabove.com

Fish chowder

Corn chowder

Sandwiches

Homemade pies

Lent and Easter Week Schedule

“Wednesdays of Lent” ecumenical worship series continues:

- Mar. 7 @ 7:00 pm- First Congregational Church with Northminster Church
- Mar. 14 @ 7:00 pm- Littleton United Methodist Church
- Mar. 21 @ 7:00 pm- Littleton Baptist Church
- Mar. 28 @ 7:00 pm- New Life Assembly of God

Easter Week Schedule

- Apr. 1 @10:00 am Palm Sunday Service
- Apr. 5 @ 6:00 am Maundy Thursday potluck dinner followed by 7:00 pm Tenebrae service
- Apr. 6 @ 7:00 pm Good Friday Ecumenical Service followed by prayer vigil
- Apr. 8 @10:00 am Easter Sunday Intergenerational Service

209th Annual Meeting

The 209th Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Littleton started with the worship service in the sanctuary and continued in Fellowship Hall, where a quorum was declared. There were at least 40 in attendance.

Trust Funds: Ken Kinder of Stifel Nicolaus reported to the congregation that, although the stock market is very volatile, he was optimistic for the future. Our portfolio is well balanced and should recover as long as we reduce our withdrawals. Our current rate is 7.3%. His recommendation is to keep withdrawals less than 6% to avoid depleting the principal. Ken recommends that we maintain the course, stay well diversified, and keep our investments well balanced. The trust fund accounts are tracked and adjusted monthly to maintain the integrity of each sub-account.

The 2011 annual report, except the nominating and budget reports, was accepted.

Vision Statements: The vision statements were reviewed and discussed then approved as written in the agenda portion of the annual report (see also Page 8). The next step is to figure out how we use our mission and vision to do what God is calling us to do, helping us to discern God's call.

US Cellular Proposal: US Cellular has sent a proposal requesting to lease a portion of our facility for their transmission towers and equipment for which they will pay us approximately \$21,000 per year. The proposal is that they will put transmission towers in our steeples, using the existing structure, replacing the wooden louvers for fiberglass, but not changing the look of the steeples, as this is a historic building. They would also use the back half of the stage for their equipment for which they would need access to the church 24/7 in case there is a problem. Their access to the building will be secure via a lock box, much like the fire department. Noise and interference will not be a problem because the walls will be sound and fire proofed. There will be no interference with the bells and there is not an issue with radiation. Our insurance company assures us that our coverage meets the requirements. The proposed lease has been reviewed by attorney Mark Russell we are waiting for his

recommendations. The motion to have the church council continue with the negotiations with US Cellular for their proposed leasing our steeples and stage for their transmission towers and equipment was voted in unanimously.

Nominating Committee: The nominating committee report was accepted with the addition of Emily LaFlam to the Music Committee and Laurie Boswell to the Mission Committee. Members stepping down were thanked. Others lifted up were Joyce Krill who served as financial secretary for 6 years, Phil Krill for being the project manager for the lift and access construction, and Mary Hodgdon for her help with the acolytes and prayer time in the worship service.

Budget: The income budget was corrected to reflect taking only \$3200 from the Capital Campaign Mission funds, with \$1000 being donated by Christian Ed. from money raised for mission that had not been spent. We still are taking too much from our trust funds to balance the budget, but have been able to replace about \$5000 as the end of the last 2 fiscal years. Some voiced objection to taking Capital Campaign mission funds to put toward the mission budget. The mission budget was decreased this year as a response to what was pledged and the hope is, with education and exposure to community needs, that people who are able will feel called to give extra support the missions of the church. The Mission Committee sponsored a fund raising supper last year and will again this year with the income being split 50-50 with a mission partner. Last year it was Habitat for Humanity, and this year it is the Friends of Grafton County Drug court. Rachel Clark and Karen Morneau volunteered to chair the Silent Auction October 6, 2012 as Emily LaFlam and Marlene Baker will be stepping down. Thanks Emily and Marlene for your wonderful service to the church in this capacity. Su Schott volunteered to help Bob and Alice Muh with the Harvest Supper which will also be October 6. The budget passed with the addition that, should there be extra funds at the end of 2012, we replace the \$3,200 taken from the Capital Campaign Mission money.

Pastor David Weddington closed the Annual Meeting with prayer and grace before everyone enjoyed a pot luck luncheon.

THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these.

Matthew 22:37-40 (NIV)

Church Council

The church council met on Feb. 21 with opening devotions offered by Tina Peabody. The annual meeting was discussed with positive feedback from the council. (See also annual meeting summary) The Lent and Easter schedule was also discussed and can be found in this issue of Steeple Talk.

Audio-Visuals: Ann Craxton updated the council on the progress of the audio-visual project that she and Ed have been leading. Ed Craxton will be meeting with three possible companies to discuss options.

Pastor David was attending training to be a LifeBridge mentor and submitted a written report that included plans for a First Communion Class, extension of the Psalms class through all the Sundays in March, and Lent and Easter services.

Missions: Bob Muh reported on the Pork Supper that raised more than \$1800 for the church and for the Friends of Grafton County Drug Court which will be split 50-50. It was a lot of fun and the Friends of Grafton County Drug Court appreciated the effort the church made on their behalf. Also watch for a special mission page in Steeple Talk highlighting our different mission partners. Special offerings are coming up soon- One Great Hour of Sharing, and a special offering for gift cards for the food pantry to help folks buy perishable items.

Finance: Dudley Bailey reported that the 2009 and 2010 audits were repeated and the 2011 audit was completed. Allyn Clarke did a fabulous job and her work is much appreciated. The audits showed no irregularities and she has some great suggestions on how to better organize and report our finances. The January income and expense report can be found also in this issue. Dudley reports that, in the absence of a financial secretary (no volunteers for the job), he, as assistant treasurer and Marti Faulkner, as treasurer will absorb the duties for now.

Music: Tina Peabody reports that they are still in the process of discussing options with our organ company for the organ for heat and dehumidifier to keep the organ working well.

Property: Art Hunt reported that the Property Committee have fixed the flooring in the men's bathroom, removing the old carpeting and laying down special bathroom laminate flooring. It looks great- Thank you! They are also discussion possible storage options in the upper lift hallway.

US Cellular proposal: Council discussed the comments on the proposed lease we received back from attorney Mark Russell. There are only minor adjustments we would like to see made. Bob Muh was appointed point person for the project and we expect to be moving forward with that quickly.

Mission and Vision: Council discussed next steps with the vision statements. Ann Craxton and Bob Muh said that they will be using them as bench marks in their decision making for Deacons and Missions, respectively. Alice Muh and Pastor David will be meeting to discuss how to engage more of the congregation in the discussion around what's next.

Next council meeting will be March 20, 2012 at 6:30 in Fellowship Hall. These meetings are open and you are invited to attend if which to see what happens at council or wish to address the council about anything.

LADIES SOCIETY - March 14

A tribute to Natalie Carbonaro will be held at the beginning of the meeting which starts at 1:30 pm in the Ladies Parlor. ALL OF YOU ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND. Natalie was a member of Ladies Society, the choir, and a deacon. We wish to take time to remember her. A few moments will be set aside for those who wish to speak and share thoughts of our friend. We will be singing her favorite hymn, " Help Us Accept Each Other" sung to the tune of "The Church's One Foundation."

A business meeting will follow this tribute.

ALL ARE WELCOME

*..'Freely
you have
received;
freely
give.'*

*Matthew
10:8b
(2011
NIV)*

What is happening at Shining Lights ?



The children celebrated their friendship on Valentine's Day. The kids and teachers really enjoyed all of the heart-felt cards that they exchanged. Lots of yummy snacks were a treat, too! 😊

The staff and children would like to thank the church members for the continued use of the church hall. It has been a saving grace this winter. Spring is almost here!

Director Dianah Hale reported back to the board on her observations in the Littleton School system. She was proud and delighted to see how well our students are prepared for the kindergarten class. There is room for more children in our Toddler program. Spread the word!

The SLLC board reports that the financial records were audited as part of church audit. No irregularities were found. We also would like to thank their dedicated teachers who show wonderful team spirit devotion to the children. We extend our welcome to anyone who would like to join the board of this wonderful ministry of the church.



Christian Education

The Christian Education Committee met in January. This meeting was Linda Warden's last as chair of the Christian Education committee. She has faithfully led this group for several years. She will continue to bring her wisdom and strength to the children of the church in Sunday School. We are grateful for all she has done and especially thankful that she will continue to support this vital ministry of the church. Thank you Linda for all you do. We appreciate you and all of your efforts. Kim Smith volunteered to become the new chair. Thank you, Kim, for taking on this responsibility.

Pastor David will lead a class for first communion in March to teach our third grade children about this sacrament. The children will take their first communion at the Maundy Thursday Service during Easter Week.

The committee is looking at more ways to include the children in worship for the time they are there and have looked at how to integrate more 'kid-friendly' music during that time. Your feedback is always welcome.

The adult Psalms class will be continuing through March after church.

NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFERENCE OUTDOOR MINISTRIES

The Outdoor Ministries programs, as part of the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ, helps to fulfill the mission of the Conference by offering programs for youth, adults and families where people can experience the love of God, through our work, worship, praying and playing with other members of the United Church of Christ Congregations and those of other denominations and groups

The Outdoor Ministries programs occur at three locations:

Horton Center is fully owned and operated by the New Hampshire Conference of the United Church of Christ. Located outside of Gorham, NH, on 100 acres, covering the top of 2400 foot tall Pine Mountain lays this site. As a more rustic site, we offer programs that may include hiking, canoeing, rock climbing, all intermixed with reminders of God's presence and activity in our lives.

Geneva Point is located on 200 acres on Lake Winnepesaukee in Moultonborough. This site is surrounded on three sides by over one mile of shoreline. As a less rustic site, at this site we offer an Elementary camp called Footloose and two sessions of our popular Big Feet/ Little Feet for parents and their children (or grandchildren).

Star Island is one of the rocky, wind-swept Isles of Shoals, located off the coast of Rye, New Hampshire. Two weeks of family camps are offered by the UCC on Star Island. Registration for these events can be made directly through www.starisland.org.

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STEEPLE TALK

MARCH 2012



Steeple Talk

A newsletter of the
First Congregational
Church of Littleton

Imaging the Possibilities! 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 & Stewardship: Dudley Bailey
Mission: Bob Muh
Music: Tina Peabody
Personnel Relations: _____
Property Management: Art Hunt
Trustee of the Trust Funds: Dick Holland

Shining Lights Learning Center

Board Chairperson: Suzanne Schott
Director: Dianah Hale

OUR VISION

- 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..