

# September 2015 Circuit Rider

First Congregational Church of Lebanon, UCC  
588 Exeter Road ~ P. O. Box 125, Lebanon, CT 06249

**"We seek to demonstrate God's Spirit through worship, witness, and ministry  
to the needs of the people in the church and the community."**

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## Our Prayer List

Lucy Todd

Ellen Pelkey

Ellen Lathrop

Joan Dutko

Joyce Cady

Fay Morehouse

Jean Souter

Michele Barrett

Norma & Harold Geer

Stan & Karen Fuller

Barbara Rodman

Fred Wright

Neil Whitehead

Mary Horan

Deanna Kokoszka

Judi Bergeron

Carl Fernald

Dan McGuire

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Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.  
I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. ~ Isaiah 43:18-19

## **Pastor's Letter**

By the time you receive the newsletter, I will have been your interim pastor for two months, albeit the quieter summer months. Let me first say that I am glad God has led me to you and grateful for your making me (and my wife, Mary) feel so very welcome. While I've met quite a number of you on Sundays and at various meetings I've attended, I look very much forward to continuing to meet, greet, and getting to know more and more of you as we approach a new Church year. September Sundays are always special to me as church life ramps up again and activities like Church School and Bible Study resume after the summer hiatus.

One of the usual tasks of an interim minister, and one of the initial ones, is to quietly assess the strengths and qualities of the congregation, looking with new eyes, as it were. Let me affirm right away that First Congregation Church is well blest with lots of dedicated and faithful members who possess many gifts, abilities, and interests you freely share. From Nancy in the church office to Derek and Chet and Rev. Mary and Rich and Lay Leaders like Jennifer and Bev and Duke, Treasurer Jim and Assistant Steve, I am most impressed with them all. Likewise, even though it has been summertime, there have been good congregations each week for worship together. You have been kind enough to wear nametags as my learning of names grows and, with special thanks to Deacon Ellen Bauwens, we have continued having coffee hour after worship, so we can connect. Connecting and being connected to one another and to the Lord God is what being the church is all about really, isn't it? Then, strengthened and sustained by our connections, we can go forth into the world to love and serve others.

It's clear that you know that you've been well blest and well served these past 25 years with Pastor Sharon; my deepest hope and prayer is that you'll feel the same when my interim concludes at the calling of your new permanent pastor.

In Christian love, blessings,

Bob

### **Confirmation Class 2016**

It is time to register for the 2015-2016 Confirmation Class. All youth currently in grades 8 through 12 are invited to join Reverend Wright to begin this important journey in Faith. Classes will begin Sunday, September 27th. Please contact the Church office to register by September 13th. Church office number is 860-642-6179. Email: [LebFirstCong@ATT.net](mailto:LebFirstCong@ATT.net)

# Lofty Thoughts September 2015

The teacher stood at the front of the classroom and said, "Write about what you did on your summer vacation!" It's the beginning of a new school year and the ending of summer.

In July, during the first week, a small group of ladies of our church met at Harkness State Park for a few hours of knitting, mostly 'prayer shawls,' which is a ministry we began about 15 years or more ago. These shawls are knitted for family and friends, or given to the pastor to deliver to someone who needs one. There are so many bright and beautiful colors of yarn to choose from, an inspiration to those who do the art of creating the shawls. Carpooling at the church made the trip easier and each one brought their own 'eats' - whatever made them happy. Food was spread out on the picnic table and sharing was the best part.

Knitting needles were clicking, some were sitting in sunshine and some preferred the shade of the big maple trees. Our table and chairs were positioned so we could look toward the shore where the morning haze was just lifting from the water. The Long Island ferry was making its scheduled trip to Long Island, fog horns could be heard in the distance, some families with young children walked by our chairs on the way to the beach, the kids excitedly skipping toward the boardwalk over the dunes. At times there was silence, and we were once again alone. Voices seemed hushed, though we were talking to each other about books, food, our lives (so busy!), and of what a privilege it was to set aside this time to be together in the simple act of showing love for others. There is serenity in being together in silence. The sky became blue, a few afternoon clouds drifted by on their way out to sea, birds were calling to each other, and the ferry was on its way back to New London.

The few hours we shared were almost over. Knitting bags packed up, lawn chairs folded, food that was left put back on ice and we slowly walked to the parking lot. It was sad to leave the warm summer day in such a beautiful surrounding. Exclaiming how lucky we are to live so near, and praising those who made it possible for us and others to enjoy the park. Hugs and kisses and then we were back on the road to where other loved ones were waiting for us. This is just one of the things I did on my summer vacation, which will serve me well in the middle of January (I hope!)

Just a note,  
Jean Souter

## Bible Study

Bible Study resumes on Wednesday, September 23rd, at 9:30 a.m. in the Memorial Room and everyone is invited to attend. I love leading Bible Study; it's one of my favorite responsibilities/opportunities of ministry. Whether you've studied at seminaries or never ever before engaged in Bible Study, perhaps fearful about how little background you have; I promise to never make anyone feel uncomfortable or embarrassed. We will begin this fall with a study entitled "Parables: Stories for Life in God's World." As the guide says, "Jesus was the master of the parable. Deceptively simple, these timeless stories were used by Jesus to bring new life to old ways." The student resource book is \$16, checks may be made out to the church and I will order them; you are welcome to attend without purchasing the guide. Please plan to participate.

## Flower Committee

The Flower Committee would like to remind the congregation that if you would like to place an arrangement in the sanctuary for Sunday service there is a sign-up calendar in the foyer or call the church office. If it is a last minute thought just call a flower committee member by Saturday morning. We also invite everyone to please consider sharing flowers, grasses, branches of beauty, from your gardens or yards for any Sunday morning.

Thank you,  
Sylvia Ryan  
Nancy Magnuson  
Tracy Kelley

*"Bread feeds the body  
indeed. But flowers feed  
also the soul."  
~ The Koran*

## Hospitality Committee

The Hospitality Committee is looking for a few people to help each month with hosting coffee hour (September through December). At the moment we only have three people who host coffee hour each Sunday. We are looking for someone that would be available the third Sunday of each month to setup and cleanup the coffee and tea. Normally a group within the church supplies the milk, coffee and snacks. We are also looking for someone that could be a backup if one is needed on any Sunday. If you are interested and would like to find out what is included in the responsibilities, please contact Ruth Tilley at 860-228-4085 or [rtilley53@yahoo.com](mailto:rtilley53@yahoo.com).

## Church Council Update

### SELECTING A SEARCH COMMITTEE

The search for our new pastor is one of the most spiritual ministries of our church. The selection of the Search Committee members is a task that is approached with prayer, wisdom, sensitivity and awareness. The Church Council invites persons of the congregation to submit nominations to the moderator. Those who submit nominations may include a brief description of why that person would be an asset to the committee. (You may nominate yourself.) Not all nominees can be selected. A committee of nine members will be selected by the council and will be presented for approval to the church at an all church meeting, (the process according to our by-laws). The congregation should submit their written nominations to the church moderator, Bev York. As much as possible, the committee will be selected to include an equal representation of men and women, young and old, new and longtime members, as well as persons with involvement in varied aspects of church life. The members should reflect the diversity of the congregation. An accurate description of the responsibilities of members of the search committee will be mailed to each member in early September.

### PROGRAM & POTLUCK LUNCHEON

On October 4th following our church service there will be a presentation by Rev. Tom Clough of the Connecticut UCC who will discuss the results of Holy Cow which is the on-line survey that many people filled out last May/June. Members of the congregation answered questions regarding the health and future vision of our church. This meeting is open to the church family and will be preceded by a pot luck luncheon.

## HOLIDAY HARVEST FAIR

As the school buses are once again picking up and delivering the children to and from school, and we are all getting 'back in the routine,' we are looking ahead to our 2015 Holiday Harvest Fair. This year's fair will be a one-day fair, Saturday, November 21st. We expect to have our usual 'church family' tables – general store, Round Robin Crafters, ISA, the bake sale, gift baskets; and also outside vendors. We will ask boards and committees to provide items for the gift baskets as we did last year, and we will ask the congregation to donate items for the baskets as we did last year as well, and the committee will put the baskets together. *(If you have baskets to donate or wrap or ribbon, we can certainly use these things!)*

As we mentioned last spring, the one big difference this year will be in how we gather goods and services for the Silent Auction. This is always a popular feature, but it is also the one that is the most challenging to do. This year we have decided to step away from the past practice of having committee member(s) solicit from area businesses and individuals, which are also approached by numerous other entities and organizations. Instead we will be asking our entire church family to participate, as you are able. We will be looking for (1) items that are new, handmade or purchased, something you would like to receive or that you would give as a gift; (2) goods and services – share a talent that you have or a service you could provide – a 'spring/fall clean-up-the-yard' day; sew a hem; replace a zipper; mend a garment; repair furniture; a lesson; help someone put up their holiday decorations (or take them down!); transportation; shopping assistance; prepare a dinner; host a tea party; or donate a professional service you could provide. We ask that you think of what you would like or wish someone would offer or provide or help you accomplish.

We will have more information in the church bulletins as we go along, but for now please save the date, start thinking about items for the auction and the gift baskets, and any thoughts or ideas you have we welcome them.

Kim Alleman and Linda Wagner  
kalleman@charter.net lindawagner827@gmail.com  
Co-Chairs Holiday Harvest Fair

**Board of  
Outreach News**

### It's a Joy to Give

Neighbors Helping Neighbors Lebanon Food Bank Wish List 2015

**SEPTEMBER** – Canned Ravioli

**OCTOBER** – Canned Fruit

**NOV.** – Stuffing & Canned Ham

**DEC.** – Stuffing, Baked Beans (no pork) & Kids' Snacks

### Rally Sunday is September 13th

We will again have a church-wide expo. You will be able to:

- Sign up for Sunday School
- Learn about all of the programs for the upcoming year
- Find out about all of the church Boards & Committees
- Learn more about how our church functions.

**Mark your calendar  
and plan to attend!**

# **NEWS FROM ISA & ROUND ROBIN CRAFTERS**

Inspired by South Africa is a non-profit group helping to support the Bridgman Development Centre in South Africa. It is one of our Church's mission groups. Necklaces, earrings and bracelets are created all with an African flavor, hand-sewn mudcloth bags, tea bag pouches containing a tea bag from South Africa, and of course, beaded spoons are also offered. There is a patchwork bag made from African Batik fabric, our Mission Statement is sewn inside the bag. We do have a few bracelets made by the Krobo tribe of Western Africa made from crushed, fired and then painted recycled glass. They are both beautiful and colorful. Our baskets are made by groups of women throughout Africa who are working their way out of poverty; you will find the baskets to be works of art and of the highest quality. We have items to sell and stories to tell. The calendar of events is listed below:

October 4th - Willimantic Food Coop Marketplace

October 17th - Super Saturday Keefe Regional Tech High School, Framingham, MA

November 21st - Holiday Harvest Bazaar

December 5th - Lebanon Senior Center Christmas Bazaar

Sandy Rose, For Inspired by South Africa



When someone asks why I do what I do, I answer with following explanation: "UBUNTU" with origins in the Bantu language of South Africa and is an African philosophy and is focused on People-to-people relationships. "I am because you are" most simply and beautifully describes Ubuntu. Desmond Tutu further defined the term when he said: "One of the sayings in our country is Ubuntu - the essence of being human. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. You can't be human all by yourself and when you have this quality - Ubuntu - you are known for your generosity. We think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another; whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole world". The word and its meaning keeps me interested, curious and with wanting to do something positive. I know we can serve both locally and the rest of the world, rather it be Africa, Haiti or elsewhere.

Sandy Rose, For Inspired by South Africa



## **Round Robin Crafters**

We are a small group of women who meet once a week on Friday afternoons 2:00 to 4:00 pm in the basement of our church. We are busy creating items to be sold at the Bazaar in November. There are table runners, throws, pot holders and our very popular aprons and a few other items. Even if you do not sew, we need your help cutting, ironing and putting on the finishing touch. We can guarantee a pleasant time spent creating and enjoying our fellowship. Round Robin is an old-fashioned term, which means something is passed to you to work on, then you pass it to another, and finally it is completed. And that is just what we do.

Sandy Rose, For Round Robin Crafters