

# *April 2016 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.”***

*Rev. Dr. Robert J. Wright, Jr., Interim Pastor  
Pastor’s Office Phone: 860-642-2557  
Cell Phone: 860-942-7239  
Email: revrwright@gmail.com*

*Nancy Magnuson, Secretary  
Phone: 860-642-6179  
Email: LebFirstCong@att.net*

*Derek Waldron ~ Organist  
Email: WaldronsStudio88@gmail.com  
Phone: 860-593-6836*

*Teresa Bielecki, Website/Facebook Coordinator  
Email: teresabielecki@yahoo.com*

*Web Site: [www.lebanonfirstcong.org](http://www.lebanonfirstcong.org)*

*Church Kitchen Phone: 860-642-7000*

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*Bev York, Moderator  
Email: bevishistory@yahoo.com  
Phone: 860-423-1878*

*Tracy Kelley, Clerk  
Phone: 860-642-7545*

*Jennifer Blevins, Chair of Board of Deacons  
Email: jgblevins@hotmail.com  
Phone: 860-642-6105*

*Veronica Thomen, Chair of Board of Christian Education  
Email: mama06@gmail.com  
Phone: 860-324-5428*

*Ashley Meseroll, Co-Chair Board of Outreach  
Phone: 860-642-7364*

*Janet Lewis, Co-Chair Board of Outreach  
Phone: 860-237-0432*

*Duke York, Chair of Board of Trustees  
Phone: 860-423-1878*

*Teresa Bielecki, Chair of Music Committee  
Email: teresabielecki@yahoo.com*

*Phil Johnson, Chair of Stewardship Comm.  
Phone: 860-885-1431*

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## *Our Prayer List*

<i>Fay Morehouse</i>	<i>Jan VanWoerkom</i>	<i>Joyce Cady</i>	<i>Norma Peterson</i>
<i>David Fields</i>	<i>Ellen Pelkey</i>	<i>Joan Dutko</i>	<i>Jean Souter</i>
<i>Norma Geer</i>	<i>Michele Barrett</i>	<i>Karen Fuller</i>	
<i>Deanna Kokoszka</i>	<i>Judi Bergeron</i>	<i>Carl Fernald</i>	<i>Dan McGuire</i>
<i>Barbara Rodman</i>	<i>Fred Wright</i>	<i>Neil Whitehead</i>	<i>Lee Schuett</i>
<i>Phyllis Rodgers</i>	<i>John Sellick</i>	<i>Marion Fields</i>	<i>Jim Forrest</i>

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*The Lord is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation. ~ Psalm 118:14*

## Pastor's Corner

Living and working in the geographic area where “March Madness” is about UConn’s men’s and women’s basketball teams, we know how sports can dominate the scene, and sometimes even compete with important matters including our faith and worship life. Our church activities were many and important through March, as well, not the least being Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter this year. In addition, there was a potluck lunch and two wonderful breakfasts, presentations about Islam and the Haiti Happy Houses, the on-going work of the Boards and Committees, Bible Study and Confirmation Classes, three memorial services, two with following receptions and at least one major surgery (happily successful). We had trumpets and a bell choir on Easter, sacred dancers on Palm Sunday, beautiful music offerings from the choir under Derek’s direction, and wonderful introits and preludes, along with the singing of the Lord’s Prayer, with sermons focused on the prayer of our Savior, as well.

Just like March Madness spills over into April, so also will the beat of our church life continue to be active and lively. As creation springs back to life in grand and glorious ways, lifting our spirits and brightening our days, let’s take time to praise and thank the Creator in worship each week. Hoping to see you all in church.

Blessings,  
Bob

### Sermon Titles

April 6th ~ Communion	“In Remembrance”
April 10th ~ One Great Hour of Sharing Sunday	“One Great Hour”
April 17th ~ Sunday Before Earth Day	“On Going Green”
April 24th ~ Fifth Sunday of Easter	“Just Imagine”

### Confirmation Class Schedule ~ April 2016

(All classes are at 6:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted.)



April 6th ~ Class  
April 13th ~ Class  
April 20th ~ No Class  
April 27th ~ No Class

### Confirmation Trip Schedule

April 17th ~ Trip to Mosque.  
April 24th ~ Trip to Boston (Meet at our church at 7:45 a.m.)

**Printed copy of Statement of Faith due to Rev. Wright by Sunday, May 22nd.**

# Lofty Thoughts April 2016

I want to share with you my personal experiences with “empty bowls.”

My birthday comes in January and my daughter Lisa and son-in-law Doug gave me a gift of pottery lessons at a local school. I had mentioned in talking with them that I didn't know what I would do next after perhaps giving up painting because of old age macular degeneration. Then this opportunity came up and Lisa signed us both up for the classes.

The 10-week course began in February. Each class is from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. We arrived at the first class with much trepidation, as we confessed to each other, entered the basement classroom and joined ten young women. Some of them taught pottery and were honing their skills, some were curious, and some came for pure fun.

The teacher, Alyssa, sat at a wheel and we all watched as she made a bowl. It looked so easy. Then it was our turn as we timidly placed the 1 ½ to 2-pound chunk of clay on the wheel, then slapped and pounded it into a wedge resembling a pyramid. Alyssa came over as we sat there, afraid to turn the wheel on. She said to me, ‘I am going to lean on your hands so you can feel how much strength you need to put into the clay.’ While the wheel was turning, we kept dipping our hands in water to keep them wet while working the clay, making sure the bowl-to-be was centered on the wheel at all times. At the same time, your left hand has ‘cupped’ the fingers around the clay to make a round shape, while your right hand is at the top of the pyramid pressing hard to get it flatter. Lisa was on the wheel next to me and when I stopped my wheel to wet my hands, I looked at her. She was standing over the flying wheel giving her whole body to the effort.

The teacher's words rang out, ‘Good! Now put your two thumbs into the center and press down, more speed, good! Now pull up the walls with your thumb on the outside, and middle finger, or two fingers, on the inside. Not too hard or you'll break through the wall.’ Tension followed but somehow, minutes later, we stopped the wheel and looked at our creations. Lisa said, ‘I broke through the wall.’ She got up and took her bowl to a special place for it to be used for ‘another purpose.’ Mine seemed to be ‘a keeper.’ The teacher took a thin wire and carefully pulled it beneath the bowl, watering the area until the bowl became loose enough to remove from the wheel and placed on a special board, then set on a shelf and covered in plastic until it dried, to be trimmed next week. I stood up. My legs had been spread out to fit around the wheel and I needed to stretch.

# Lofty Thoughts Cont.

Alyssa had nothing but praise for our efforts, her face glowing with the passion for her craft. We couldn't fail her! It was a wonderful three hours. If only I was 20 or 30 years younger! Our excitement of seeing, and feeling the shape of the bowls we 'threw' that night gave me a new insight into what a bowl represents. I could hear the old hymn, *'Have Thy own way, Lord, have Thine own way. You are the potter, I am the clay.'* I saw the love of creating in Alyssa's face, in Lisa's, as she did well on the 2nd and 3rd bowls she made. I felt as if I had worked out in gym, but was truly happy to be in such an energetic and positive place.

I thought of how we live, like empty bowls, waiting to be filled with many experiences, molding us into the mature adults we become. Our bowl receives, but also gives as we interact with all we meet, exchanging words of encouragement, reaching out to others, letting our light shine to show our love for God and ourselves and our neighbors.

When we are born, we are empty vessels, or bowls, until we are led into the spirit of our family, who fill our bowl and we learn. This is an abstract thought but I observe so many who are constantly looking at the palm of their hand, at their 'Apple' or other device, where everything, all knowledge can be had at a tap of the finger on a screen. How nice it is to look into the eyes of another, see the warmth, the concern, the empathy that is offered.

Many thoughts come and go as I take on my new task. It is meditation, at least for me. I only know that the feel of my oatmeal bowl, which I bought at a 'Feed the Hungry' soup night several years ago, feels so good in my hand. It was made especially for that night but I use it every day. I enjoy holding it now more than ever as I come to understand the importance of the bowl.

*"Mold me, and make me after Thy will, while I am waiting yielded and still."*

Just a note,

Jean Souter

## New Member's Sunday - May 1st

If you are interested in becoming a member of our church, please contact Rev. Wright or any Deacon. New members will meet with the Pastor and the Board of Deacons on Sunday, April 10th, at 11:30 a.m. in the Memorial Room, and then will be received into the congregation during a special part of the May 1st worship service.

The Church Council is seeking some energetic people to form the leadership team for the church hamburger booth at the Lebanon Country Fair August 12th, 13th, 14th and the Church Harvest Fair Bazaar, Saturday, November 19th. Both major fund and fun raising events need some new blood and many hands make light work!!! Please contact Bev York.



## Bible Study

Bible Study will restart in April with President Jimmy Carter's book, *The Blood of Abraham*, as the focus. Copies of the book can be borrowed from the library or purchased on-line. We meet Wednesday mornings at 9:30 and always welcome new participants. This is a great time to join us.

## Women's Prayer Shawl Ministry

*WANTED: Handmade knitted or crocheted prayer shawls for those that need their spirits lifted. Let us gather in the Memorial Room following worship on Sunday, April 10th, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for valuable women's fellowship time and prayer shawl making. Please bring your own supplies. Patterns will be made available. For further information, please contact Carla Dias at 860-642-7112 or farrisdias@outlook.com.*

## HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS!!

This is a great time to start gathering information for the Scholarship Application. Think about your activities in the Church - this spring and previously.

Application forms are on line and there are copies on the table in the foyer. If you have any questions, please, contact a Deacon.

## 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,  
Tracy Kelley, Nancy Magnuson &  
Jody & Gary Waldron

## 2016 Silver Lake Summer Calendar

Brochures detailing what is available at the CT UCC Summer Conference for children and young people in grades 4-12 are available on the table outside the office. The New London Association is making financial assistance available for those who could use the help. Parents: encourage your children to consider being a "Lakee." It is "a place to connect, make deep friendships, feel accepted for who you really are, embrace the outdoors, play, pray,...." and grow closer to God. Just look at the brochure and see all the smiles on everyone's faces! Kids: you'll have one of the happiest, best weeks of your summer, perhaps of your life!



## Website Pictures

As we search for our new pastor, Teresa Bielecki has been doing a lot of work to keep our website updated for those ministers that are considering our church as their new home. Part of this process is to include pictures of our church family at work and worship. We do understand that some people do not like to have their picture posted on any website. If you would not like to have your picture or your child's picture on the church's website please contact Teresa (teresabielecki@yahoo.com) and she will take a picture to have on file that she can check pictures against before she posts any on the website.



## Rock-2-Recovery

*What is it?* The Olearnick family and the First Congregational Church Youth will hold a 24 hour fund-raiser in memory of Sean Turner - with all proceeds donated to The Crossroads Recovery Program

*When is it?*

- First Congregational Church Youth will be rocking for 24 hours - May 7-8 9:00am start
- Afternoon Coffee House with local bands, performers, and open mic - May 7 1:00-5:00 pm
- Evening performance by Looking in Theater (pizza included) - May 7 5:30-8:00 pm

*Where is it?* All events held at First Congregational Church, Lebanon CT

*How Can You Help?*

- Support the youth with your pledges and donations
- Help provide pastries, desserts, and fruit for the Coffee House
- Attend and/or participate in the events

For more information, contact Sarah Olearnick, Audra Holmes, or Vanessa Coutu



*Wanna Know More?*

*Sean Turner's Story:* 17 year old Sean Turner loved to play the guitar, skateboard, and care for others. He truly lived his motto to "Spread as much love as you possibly can", even though he faced all the challenges that teens face. Unfortunately, his life was taken from him in a gang violence incident because he was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Even though he is not here, he will live on by his family encouraging youth to make wise choices and live by his motto.

*The Crossroads Recovery Program:* Sean's family continues to carry-on his motto through this program that works to help teens struggling with life's challenges and the choices that youth are faced with.



## The Path to Zion

Many peoples will come and say,  
"Come, let us go up to the mountain  
of the LORD, to the temple of the  
God of Jacob. He will teach us his  
ways, so that we may walk in his  
paths." The law will go out from  
Zion, the word of the LORD from  
Jerusalem. Isaiah 2:3

*Crazy world today. So much violence, so much fear, so much uncertainty. Doesn't seem like there is much time or energy for a faith journey to Zion, does it?*

*We often forget that trying to make sense of the world we live in is in itself a faith journey. As we try to understand the path of others, we evaluate our own trails and the directions we choose to follow.*

*Is there something you would like to share about your faith journey with the church family? **The Path to Zion will be a monthly guest writing forum about how we, as followers of Jesus, perceive the world and its creator.** It is unlike witnessing, which describes a personal relationship with God.*

*It could simply be a poem that keeps you on a certain path (but tell us why). It could be a life event that changed the way you see God, or perhaps, just strengthened it. Whatever you want to share, it should be positive steps, which lead you into the direction of Zion.*

*If you would like to be a guest writer for a future Circuit Rider, please see Rev. Bob.*

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### Logos

Submitted by Kristen Marquardt

God calls,  
    and the ebony sky sparkles  
        in the reflected light of the new day,  
        then steals away silently,  
            trailing behind her the dusky hues  
                of the breaking dawn.

God yawns,  
    and the earth awakens  
        in the breath of a morning glory  
        unfolding her white silken arms  
        to embrace the rising sun.

God sighs,  
    and the great blue heron  
        wings silently from his hiding place.  
        leaving small rippled prints,  
        in the mirrored surface  
        of the sleeping lake.

God laughs,  
    and the burnished coat of the otter  
        gleams in the winter sun  
        as he slides merrily down  
        the snowy hillside  
        tracking behind him the imprint of innocence  
        and joy.

God breaths,  
and the noble stallion lifts his head,  
and with nostrils flared  
suddenly releases his power,  
and thunders across the landscape,  
leaving behind a cloud of dust  
and a revelation.

God searches,  
and the field mouse turns his head,  
scanning the horizon for unseen dangers,  
ever vigilant and keen  
to a world of beauty  
within a life of chance.

God watches,  
and the grey wolf blinks,  
as he waits patiently behind the thicket  
for a better opportunity,  
and another day's meal  
scurries across the meadow,  
into the dirt,  
and safety.

God moves  
and the young, untried river  
enthusiastically cuts her path  
through granite,  
carving landscapes  
and bringing life.

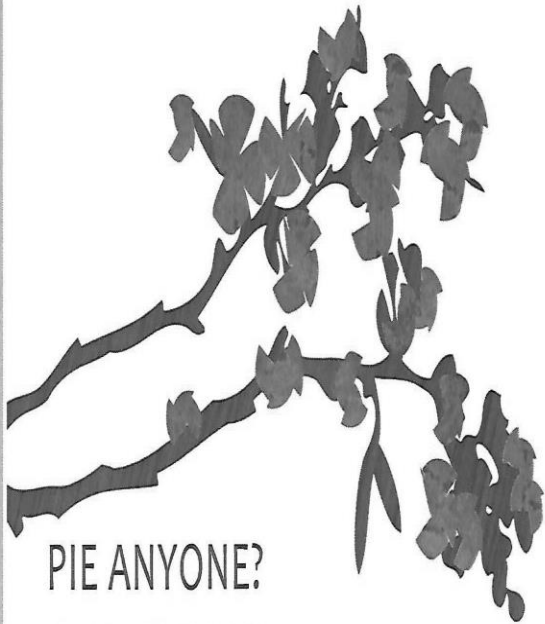
God works,  
and the multitude of salmon,  
of one mind,  
and one thought,  
begin their journey  
of sacrifice and salvation,  
that yet one more generation  
will be.

God reaches,  
and the ancient pine  
firm in foundation,  
stretches tall into the clouds  
breathing in the last rays of the setting sun  
and touching the heavens  
with the tips of its fingers.

God sleeps  
and the silent snow falls,  
in crystalline perfection,  
dancing down from the stars  
to blanket the earth  
with cool nourishment  
and a time to rest.

God dreams,  
and the world turns,  
once more.





PIE ANYONE?  
**PIE SALE**

TO SUPPORT A "PAY WHAT YOU WILL" BREAKFAST  
ONCE A MONTH DURING THE SUMMER.

**APRIL 30TH 10:00AM TO 12:00PM &  
MAY 1ST SUNDAY AFTER CHURCH UNTIL 12:00PM**

ORDER AHEAD (SEE ORDER FORM) OR TAKE A CHANCE AND  
SEE WHAT'S AVAILABLE SATURDAY OR SUNDAY.

THERE WILL BE ORDER FORMS AND A BOX TO PLACE ORDERS  
IN FELLOWSHIP HALL. **(ORDER DEADLINE APRIL 24TH.)**

ANY QUESTIONS OR WOULD LIKE TO HELP PLEASE CALL, TRACY  
KELLEY 860-642-7545 OR JANET LEWIS 860-237-0432.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT.

**PIE ORDER FORM**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Please circle your date and  
your pie selection.**

Saturday April 30th

Sunday May 1st

**(ORDER DEADLINE APRIL 24th)**

**ALL PIES ARE \$12.00.**

**PAY WHEN YOU PICK UP.**

**LEAVE FORMS IN PIE BOX IN  
FELLOWSHIP HALL.**



Strawberry

Blueberry

Mix Berry

Cherry

Pineapple



Any questions please call  
Janet 860-237-0432 or  
Tracy 860-642-7545.

## March Birthdays

1st ~ Evan Dias  
7th ~ Elmer Fischer  
26th ~ Teddy Wilkosz  
29th ~ Ginger McGuire  
31st ~ Hailey Tompkins

4th ~ Janet Lewis  
12th ~ Josh Soileau  
28th ~ Ellen Bauwens  
30th ~ Ethan Magnuson

5th ~ Jim Randall  
26th ~ Teresa Bielecki  
29th ~ Bev York  
30th ~ Chandler Magnuson



## April Birthdays

4th ~ Jesse Soileau  
10th ~ Kayla Osga  
21st ~ Marilu Randall

5th ~ Tim Fields  
11th ~ Izabella Garceau  
29th ~ Amy Hopkins

9th ~ Neil Whitehead  
18th ~ Cecilia Wilkosz  
29th ~ Peggy McCarthy

If you haven't already, please add your name to our NEW Church Family BIRTHDAY CALENDAR!!! It is on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. EVERYONE IS WELCOME. We would like to keep track of this very important date. If you know the birth date of someone in our church and it is not on the calendar please add them. ~ Thank you & Happy Birthday!

Please join us for cake for March and April birthdays on  
Sunday, April 10th.

*If you would like to bake a cake for a birthday Sunday please see schedule on the Birthday Calendar and signup. Any questions please call Tracy.*



We have recently installed a system in the sanctuary called the "Hearing Loop System". This system works with hearing aids that have a "T-Coil" installed and sends sound directly to the hearing aid from the present sound system.

If you have a "T-Coil" in your hearing device, and you have the ability to turn it on (if it is not already turned on), turn it on so that you can hear the service better.

If you do not know if you have the "T-Coil" in your hearing device, or you do not know how to turn it on, contact your hearing device provider and ask what you need to do to make this work for you.

For others in the congregation with hearing problems, we also have headphone devices that work with this system that will allow you to hear the service better. See one of the deacons for assistance.

If you have any questions, see me after the service and I will try to answer any questions you may have.

Art Wallace - Trustee