

# May 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.”***

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## Our Prayer List

Phyllis Rodgers

Lee Schuett

Marion Fields

Deanna Kokoszka

Carl Fernald

Dan McGuire

Barbara Rodman

Fred Wright

Neil Whitehead

Norma Geer

Michele Barrett

Karen Fuller

Jim Forrest

Fay Morehouse

Jan VanWoerkom

Joyce Cady

Norma Peterson

David Fields

Ellen Pelkey

Joan Dutko

Jean Souter

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...when I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust;  
I am not afraid what can flesh do to me? ~ Psalm 56:3-4

## Pastor's Corner

I loved seeing the Barbie dolls of color in the collection box to be sent to the Happy Houses of Haiti mission along with other donated items. Having two mixed-raced daughters myself, I know that dolls of color are not always easy to find in the stores, so some of you went to lengths to get them. The Outreach Board's table of "Fair Trade" coffees and chocolates and nuts has been busy each Sunday at Coffee Hour. And, Church World Service "Blanket Sunday" will coincide with Mother's Day again this year; what better way to remember and honor mothers than by "blanketing the world in love," as CWS says? The day prior to Mother's Day, the youth are centered on a mission project, as well, with their rock-a-thon; how impressive and deserving of support is that?!

As I write this, the devastating earthquake and aftershocks in Ecuador is very much in the news, made more devastating because of the poverty of the people impacted. Can we help and how? If it's true that "the church is for mission," the outreaches of this congregation certainly attest to it. We are blessed to be able to be generous toward our "neighbors" whose needs can be great; and so also are we blessed by our giving, knowing others are being helped. Be it a little girl in Haiti who gets her first Barbie or a mother's cooperative in South America who benefits from the sales of their coffee, it's all good, and of God.

Blessings,

Bob

### Confirmation Class Schedule ~ May-June 2016

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



May 4th ~ Class

May 11th ~ Class (Test)

May 18th ~ No Class

**May 22nd ~ Printed copy of Statement of Faith due to Rev. Wright.**

May 25th ~ Confirmation Celebration with Mentors and Deacons & Rehearsal for Confirmation Sunday

June 5th ~ Confirmation Sunday

# Lofty Thoughts May 2016

I decided to write a third and final ‘Thoughts’ about the end of the pottery class. The tenth Thursday was spent glazing all of the bowls, plates, vases, etc., that we had made. It required dunking our wares in various vats of glaze arranged on the floor of the classroom. We picked out colors according to samples posted on the wall, and the scurrying was on! Lisa and I were the last ones to leave that night because she was helping me dunk.

Last week we arrived at 5:00 p.m. to see the results! Wow!! The colors were enticing and we all ‘oohed’ and ‘ahhed’ at our beautiful masterpieces. Then we wrapped them in newspaper, placed them carefully in a carton for the trip home. Now it is a memory - of great trepidation the first few Thursdays; of joy at a successful object; of pride, when others commented on our work; of talking about going back in September (we’ll see!).

I had shared my thoughts on the first Thursday, of the hymn ‘Have Thine Own Way, Lord,’ which some remembered. And I still think of God, and His magnificent world of color, of how blessed we are to be one of His creations!

I was telling Berti Hawkins about my experience ‘throwing’ pots and she told me about when her husband David took a similar course and made bowls. When he finished, and she saw the bowls, it inspired her to write a poem. I have permission to share it with you. It seems the perfect ending to all my ‘Thoughts.’”

Just a note,  
Jean Souter

## *Not Just a Bowl*

*A mound of clay;  
raw, gray, inanimate, formless, resting.*

*A strong hand reaching for the wheel –  
with sightless eyes; touching a damp sphere of dormant art, invitational.*

*A foot on the pedal,  
the wheel spins – slowly; fingers centering, shaping, sculpting, creating.*

*A vessel taking form and shape,  
beauty ascending; design and color...to the kiln  
spirit-filled.*

*A finished piece,  
singing to the eye and heart, soft sounds of love and living;  
colors – calling out the sunrise gold of life’s first day;  
the rosy lure of its youth and fulfillment;  
the deep purple of its sunset, velvet hues painting promises.  
Can this treasure, touched by caring progeny, etched with  
the thumbprint of a brave artist be  
just a bowl?*

## To Our Church Family:

When we wrote to you in March, we said that we expected we'd be receiving ministerial profiles by the time you were reading that letter. And, we have been receiving profiles! As of the middle of April we have received 31 profiles. The profiles are anywhere from 15-20 pages each. Copies are made for everyone, (*yes, we know – so much paper! But it's doubled-sided copying, and we shred them when we've finished. We will just have to be ok with that, and hope shredded paper is useful in some way*). We read each profile very carefully and discuss them as a group. All decisions are group decisions. We have also read, listened to, and viewed many sermons. We did a mock interview in March and met again with our conference minister, Rev. Dr. Tom Clough to discuss our progress and the next steps in the process. We have identified candidates in whom we have particular interest and have sent them our profile. We have extended invitations for interviews and expect to be meeting with candidates soon.

We meet weekly and greatly appreciate the cooperation of the boards and committees who have given up their meeting space in the Memorial Room so that we can meet and discuss profiles in a place where we have privacy and can maintain the confidentiality of the candidates. When we interview, we will be asking for 'the whole place' – meaning, not just the Memorial Room, but the sanctuary, fellowship hall, and the classrooms as well, so that we can provide our candidates with a total picture of our church.

Some of you have asked if we have a deadline, a goal of when we will call a new pastor. We do not. We have been moving steadily along, preparing our profile, reviewing and making decisions on the ministerial profiles we receive, and soon we will be interviewing. We expect to continue receiving profiles as well. The only goal we have is to call the right person to be our next settled pastor.

And in that regard, we've come to know that some of our church family is not attending Sunday worship 'until we get the new pastor.' This is troubling to us because whether you are serving on this committee, on one of standing boards and committees, or are a member or friend of this church - you're an important part of the process. We miss you. Just being here is important. We know 'what we had,' we don't yet know 'what we'll get;' but we do know that the more people we have helping to shape who we want to be going forward, the better it will be. So we hope that you will reconsider and remember what brought you here in the first place, and join us again during this interim time. If, at any time, you would like to share your thoughts with us, please do not hesitate to do so. There are ten of us. We represent all of you. It's an honor, a very important mission, and we take very seriously our responsibility to call the 28th pastor of this church.

Yours in faith,

The Pastoral Search Committee

*Janet Barton, Ken Beaudoin, Vanessa Coutu, Jim Gillespie, Audra Holmes, Sarah Olearnick, Chet Ryan, Hailey Tompkins, Phil Ziel, and Linda Wagner, Chairperson.*

*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.*



## 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



## Bible Study

Bible Study has resumed 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.

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**The side door, closest to the kitchen, will be locked during church school to comply with our Safe Church Policy.**

## Women's Prayer Shawl Ministry

Do you enjoy knitting or crocheting? Or would like to learn? We would like to invite you to join our group! You don't have to knit a prayer shawl, just bring whatever you are working on, or just join us for conversation and fellowship. **We will gather in the Memorial Room following worship on Sunday, May 15th, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** for valuable women's fellowship time. Please bring your own supplies. Patterns are available for prayer shawls and prayer squares. For further information, please contact Carla Dias at (860) 642-7112 or [farrisdias@outlook.com](mailto:farrisdias@outlook.com).



## 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](mailto: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 9:00 am 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.

# *A Gift for the Family*

**Tuesday, May 17th  
Lebanon Senior Center  
12:45 p.m. (after lunch)**

*Join us in a discussion lead by the local Clergy on how to prepare your final arrangements.*

- *How to start the conversation with your family*
- *Wills*
- *Advanced Directives*
- *Service Planning*

*Invited guests include the Town of Lebanon Sexton, Cremation Society of Connecticut, Attorneys Renee & Tim Wentworth and local Clergy members.*

*Join us for lunch (12 p.m., \$4) or just stop by.  
Please call 860.642.3040 to save a spot for lunch.*

## **Blankets & Tools**

The Board of Christian Outreach has Mother's and Father's Day cards available for a \$5.00 or more contribution to the Church World Service Blanket and Tool program. Through this program CWS is prepared to help families at home and around the world recover from disasters and displacement. Also, to aid and empower people struggling through times of crisis or adversity. Cards will be available at the Coffee Table after church on Sundays through June.

## **Holy Joe's Café**

Holy Joe's Café is a Coffee House Ministry for UCC military chaplains and troops in the Middle East. Chaplains invite U.S. Service Members into a safe and informal place, a coffee house, where they can receive spiritual care and good coffee. Congregations can support the ministry project by sending Equal Exchange coffee to the military chaplains through the Wallingford Congregational Church. A donation jar and more information will be on the coffee table on Sundays.

## May Birthdays

2nd ~ Bill Alleman

3rd ~ Grace Preli

6th ~ Jim Donnelly

8th ~ Melony Lehoux

11th ~ David Preli

12th ~ Art Wallace

17th ~ Sarah Olearnick

19th ~ Evan Osga

19th ~ Derek Waldron

19th ~ Henry Wilcosz

20th ~ James Gillespie

28th ~ Linda Wallace

31st ~ Georgia Senechal

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 on Sunday, May 29th.

*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.*



## **38th Annual Strawberry Festival Featuring Room to Move June 18th ~ 7:00 p.m.**

### **Donation:**

**\$10.00 Adults**

**\$3.00 Child**

*In you can help, please contact Dawn Drum, 860-228-9558.*

**Our success depends on everyone!  
Please join us!**





Mark your calendars this summer for the

## "PAY WHAT YOU WILL" BREAKFAST CAFE

Serving breakfast from 7:00 am-10:30 am.

Breakfast, good coffee or tea, a cold drink, or pie, stop in for a quick breakfast before or after you shop at the Farmer's Market. Bring a friend and just sit and visit over a Cup.

The Breakfast Café will be open starting the second Saturday in June, and continuing the first Saturday of each month until fall.

The purposes of these breakfasts are to open our doors to the community and invite them in for something good to eat, perhaps some good conversation or to look around our lovely sanctuary.

Pay What You Will, Pay What You Can, the emphasis is not on the value of the meal but the value of the fellowship. (*Our hope is to at least make enough money to support the next month's breakfast.*)



This can be an open forum for artists, crafters, musicians, knitters, setup a table along the perimeter.

*Ideas, help and support are welcomed and encouraged. There will be a sign-up sheet for any month you like. Any job is never too small. More info will follow.*

Please call Janet Lewis or Tracy Kelley.

Right Now!!!! We would also LIKE HELP baking pies, Fridays, April 29th 7:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m. and May 20th and 27th 7:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. this is for our first pie sales April 30th and May 1st. There will also be a Bake Sale May 28th. These funds will be the seed money to start. If anyone is interested in helping see Janet or Tracy. Thank you.

## Bake & Pie Sale

Saturday May 28th, 9:00-11:30

Before and after the parade.

To support the Breakfast Café.

Baked goods and Bakers needed.



See Janet or Tracy

## PIE ORDER FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**ALL PIES ARE \$12.00. PAY WHEN YOU PICK UP.**  
**LEAVE FORMS IN PIE BOX IN FELLOWSHIP HALL.**

### **ORDER DEADLINE MAY 23rd.**

Pickup pie on  
Saturday, May 28th  
9:00-11:30 a.m.



### **Please circle your pie selection.**



Strawberry/Rhubarb

Blueberry

Mix Berry

Cherry

Pineapple

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

## *The Path to Zion*

*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.*