



January February 2025 Circuit Rider

First Congregational Church of Lebanon

588 Exeter Road ~ P.O. Box 125

Lebanon, CT 06249

www.lebanonfirstcong.org

“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. Amie McCarthy

Office Phone: 860-642-2557 / Cell Phone: 508-272-6437

Email: pastorlebfirstcong@gmail.com

Nancy Magnuson, Secretary

Office Phone: 860-642-6179

Email: Lebfirstcong@att.net

Teresa Waldron, Digital Minister

Email: fcclebanonwebmaster@gmail.com

Ellen Bauwens, Clerk

Email: swampyankee9@live.com

Cell: 860-884-3255

Brenda Olearnick, Co-Chair Brd. of Deacons

Cell: 860-208-7049

Email: solearnick@snet.net

Linda Wallace, Co-Chair Brd. of Outreach

Email: wallacellw@yahoo.com

Phone: 860-889-8043

Amy Hopkins, Co-Chair of Brd. of CE

Phone: 860-208-2809

Email: hopkinsamy63@gmail.com

Derek Waldron, Director of Music

Email: WaldronsStudio88@gmail.com

Art Wallace, Moderator

Email: wallaceajw@gmail.com

Phone: 860-889-8043 / Cell: 860-884-6385

Tim Fields, Chair of Board of Trustees

Email: timfields089@gmail.com

Phone: 860-334-0933

Phil Johnson, Co-Chair Brd. of Deacons

Phone: 860-885-1431

Email: lynphil4@gmail.com

Dave Stifel, Co-Chair Brd. of Outreach

Email: baddstifel@att.net

Phone: 860-617-2977

Karen Ziel, Co-Chair Brd. of CE

Phone: 860-917-6541

Email: karenziel54@gmail.com

Church Office Hours

Tuesday ~ 1:00-5:00 p.m.

Wednesday-Friday ~ 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

A Note from Rev. Amie



Fellow journeyers on this lifelong faith journey,

It is not a surprise to hear that we live in anxious times. Grappling with concerns about our well-being and the security of our livelihoods. Fear and the urge to prioritize self-preservation dominate the conversation. Yet, the Kin-dom of God calls us to a broader definition of “our own.” Jesus commands us to care for all in need, especially the most vulnerable.

The Gospel readings following Epiphany highlight Jesus' radical vision of an economy where wealth is shared for the common good. This message goes beyond the church calendar and remains relevant today. Jesus' mission was clear: to bring good news to the poor. Who will stand with the vulnerable? This has been the Church's core mission from the beginning.

Over the next few weeks, we will journey together to explore the economy of Jesus, guided by the Worship Design Studio's “Six Stone Jars” series. We'll question what it means to measure true abundance for everyone, not just a select few. We will learn how we can each contribute to building God's Kin-dom by tapping into jars of Hope, Purpose, Healing, Meaning, Vision, and Grace for all people. The Economy of Jesus is one of abundance, in which all thrive collectively. Come, let's build this economy together.

Peace,

Rev. Amie

Message from OUR CHURCH Moderator

This will be my last Circuit Rider message to you as Moderator of the First Congregational Church of Lebanon. In the December Circuit Rider, it was brought to our attention the goals set forth by the church for the new oncoming pastor and the Congregation. I'd like to take this time to give my opinion on how we got here and how we should proceed.

We, the church, voted, and accepted, the idea of hiring a Fulltime-Designated-Term Paster to serve a term of 4 years. In this position that person would agree to work with the congregation to satisfy the given goals. These goals were drawn up by a sub-committee, brought to the church membership to vote on at a Special Meeting. The church body approved these goals and agreed to work with the new pastor to meet these goals. Rev. Amie agreed to these terms with the understanding that the congregation will do their part.

The goals are essentially to grow the church in membership, financially, and outreach to the community. With the status of churches, in general, throughout all denominations, are these goals obtainable? Yes, if we look at them from a realistic point of view. When these goals were written we were in a very optimistic position that made it seem that there are large groups of families in the Lebanon area that are looking for a church such as ours. A realistic look at the data, provided through outside sources, says that this is not necessarily true. But they should still be goals to strive for.

If we are to grow "Our Church", all of us need to do the work. This is not a sub-committee formed out of Church Council working with the Pastor. It is everyone pitching in, in some capacity. We have very active individuals on boards and committees that work very hard to keep the church going, but this is not the same type of work that we need to satisfy the goals.

My personal opinion is to allow Rev. Amie, through her first 4 months, to evaluate our church to see who we are, look at how she fits in, and then we as a church should re-evaluate our goals to determine what is realistic in today's society.

With that said, as I stand at the podium on Sunday morning, I can see more and more parishioners returning to the pews. I believe this is a starting point. Can we reach out and bring in more present members and new members? Is this an outcome because of our new Pastor?

In essence we are a Traditional church. The question is:

Do we need to move into the 21st century and make changes to attract others, or do we need to stay the course (traditional), but allow changes in other areas that make us more appealing in today's world?

See you in church.

Art Wallace – Moderator

"Be Active, Join In!"

Severe Weather Cancellations

In the event of severe weather, please check for cancellations of Sunday morning worship services and church activities on WFSB TV Channel 3, church website, or you may contact any deacon.

January Birthdays

1st ~ Edwina Rechlin

1st ~ Brigitte Boyce

10th ~ Barbara McDermott

11th ~ Ruth Turner-Jones

17th ~ Dale Dubina

26th ~ Asa Preli

1st ~ Marge Page

7th ~ Justine Battcher

10th ~ Wolf Rechlin

14th ~ Duke York

23rd ~ Diana Vickers

28th ~ Margaret Gillespie

February Birthdays

4th ~ Lukas Hazzard

8th ~ Tom Boisvert

12th ~ Don Lavoie

23rd ~ Jim McCaw

26th ~ Karen Ziel

7th ~ Jim Gillespie

9th ~ Brody Raymond

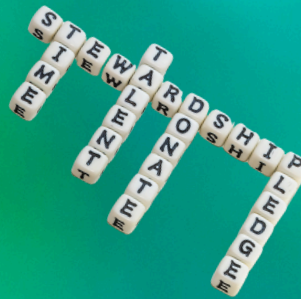
20th ~ Evan Hopkins

25th ~ Cindy Hall

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Nominations for Senior and Junior Steward

Special forms for nominations are available at the back of the sanctuary, on our website, or by contacting the church office. Forms may be dropped in the box located in the church foyer or mailed to the church (please put Attn: Stewardship Comm. on envelope). Nominations will close on January 12, 2025.



What is the Outstanding Stewardship Award?

Each year the congregation is asked to nominate an Outstanding Junior and Senior Steward. At the Annual Meeting the awards are presented. Consideration is given to how SIGNIFICANTLY they have helped our church, its family members, and missions. You are asked to give examples of the qualities, efforts, and dedication they have shown in the mission and life of our Church.



Deacon's Fund Offering

There will be another Deacon's Fund offering on January 26, 2025. Our fund was depleted last winter when we had two extensive needs that arose. The Deacon's Fund was established to be used, at the discretion of the Minister, to meet the needs of people who come to our church for financial help during dire times. We had an offering in October, and although people were generous, we are looking to increase the fund for 2025. Thank you in advance for your understanding. ~The Deacons

Annual Meeting & Potluck Luncheon

The Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, February 2nd.

A potluck luncheon will precede the meeting.

Snow date is the following Sunday, February 9th.





Thank you all that helped make a child's Christmas happier by purchasing gifts for the Lebanon Social Services Christmas project. Shelley at Social Services was very appreciative.

We'll be providing another meal for the Community Meal in Willimantic on Wednesday, January 29th. As usual we would appreciate any donations of bar cookies, bananas & tangerines. Please have them to the church by noon on the 29th. We will be putting the lunch bags together at 1pm. We can always use help - as they say many hands make light work.

David Stifle delivered four boxes of goods to the Windham No Freeze Zone before Christmas. Your generosity is without bounds. We'll continue to collect items through March. A box is in the foyer for your donations. A list of needed items follows.

Winter Needs

- | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Disinfectant Wipes | Disinfectant Spray | Hand Soap | Lotion |
| 55 Gallon Trash Bags | Tissues | Paper Towels | Soap |
| Toilet Paper | Deodorant | Shampoo | Conditioner |
| Razors | First Aid Supplies | Nail Clippers | Brushes |
| Tweezers | Combs | | |

Clothing (men's & women's, med-xxl)

- | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------|------------|
| Hand/Foot Warmers | Sweatshirts | T-Shirts | Thermals |
| Underwear | Waterproof Gloves | Rain Ponchos | Sweatpants |
| Ear Buds/Headphones | | | |