



## Cross & Spire

Newsletter of First Baptist Church

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*"Not a perfect church, not a perfect people, just a simple desire to follow Jesus."*

### **Upcoming Events:**

*Women 2 Women  
Saturday, April 1 at  
2:00pm*

*Business & Town Hall  
Meeting, Sunday, April  
2 at 11:30am*

*Food Pantry  
Wednesday, April 5 at  
5:00pm & Saturday,  
April 29 at 10:00am*

*Men's Breakfast  
Saturday, April 8 at  
7:30am*

*Palm Sunday Service  
Sunday, April 9 at  
10:00am*

*Maundy Thursday  
Service Thursday,  
April 13 at 6:30pm*

*Good Friday Service  
Friday, April 14 at  
7:00pm*

*Easter Sunday  
Breakfast Sunday,  
April 16 at 9:00am*

*Easter Sunday Service  
Sunday, April 16 at  
10:00am*

*Prayer Meeting  
Wednesday, April 19  
at 7:00pm*

### A Word from Pastor Rick

Dear Friends,

The book of Acts is an amazing book in many ways. To understand it you need to see that it is a two part book. Luke tells us the purpose of the two volumes in the beginning of his Gospel: "in order that you might know with certainty the things you were taught." Luke's aim is to assure us that the things about Jesus we were taught and invested our lives in are really true. So he lays out the life of Jesus based on eyewitness testimony. We can see he is really the Son of God, who died for our sins and rose again and so on. In the second volume we are told that the first volume was all about what, "Jesus **began** to do and to teach." This of course implies that Acts is about all that Jesus continues to do and to teach. Luke's aim is to assure us that Jesus is still active acting and teaching through his people.

In reading the book we learn how Jesus expands his saving work through ordinary people. It is easy to get our heads turned by the main characters like Peter and Paul and then to idolize them as heroes. A closer read will show you that they are pretty ordinary and that the story is about Jesus moving them around and working through them. But we miss a huge part of the story if we don't notice the details. The historians art is what to include out of all the countless things that happened. Luke's selection is very instructive. For instance he mentions people from all over the Roman Empire who were gathered to hear Peter's first sermon of the era of the Holy Spirit (2:7-11). We don't have their names we just know where they were from. In this way we learn that Christianity spread to these places through these "nameless" people who went home some time after they came to Christ. For instance there was a thriving church in Rome before any apostle got there.

We also learn about and Ethiopian Eunuch in chapter eight and we know that the Gospel got to Ethiopia within years of Jesus death brought by this nameless convert of Philip.

We do know Ananias' name. He was told by Jesus to go and heal Paul, whom he knew was there to arrest and imprison Christians. He did it and the church there welcomed Paul the new convert. Think of the impact of that little act of obedience and love. The same people lowered Paul out a window in the wall of Damascus so he could escape. Where would we be without their faith and love?

Then there those nameless people who left the city of Jerusalem because of persecution and witnessed to Gentiles. They just did what Jesus told them to do and "the hand of the Lord was with them." The church that was planted eventually sent the first intentional missionaries to the Gentile world, Paul and Barnabas.

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We could add Dorcas who made garments for widows and took care of the poor, so the Gospel spread through those regions buttressed by her compassion (9:36ff); or the people that showed hospitality to Paul in his travels and prayed for him before he left.

Acts and the rest of the New Testament is full of these little vignettes that show God at work through people who are otherwise obscure. The point is that Jesus finishes his work through ordinary people. We can see this very well today, if we would stop to look. The country with the most Christians is China. In 1948 the Gospel barely had a foothold in the country when the communists threw out the missionaries and began to persecute Christians. Since then the Gospel has spread through nameless believers who just take Jesus seriously and witness to those who will hear. The Gospel continues to spread rapidly in South America and Africa and we don't know the names of the people doing it. There are obscure missionaries in central Asia doing pioneer work in places where there has never been a church.

All of this is to say that Jesus does his work through obscure people. Do you know the names of the people who decided to plant First Baptist Church in Lebanon? I don't. Jesus does. I'll bet we can find the name of the first pastor, but what about the people with him? I have friends and acquaintances today who remind me of Dorcas and the people who witnessed to Gentiles in Antioch. I have met them in different parts of the world. They just do what they can for Jesus and his kingdom marches on.

One of the very telling literary features of the book of Acts is that it doesn't end. Luke is a very careful and skilled writer. The fact that there is no real ending or conclusion is obviously intentional. His point is that Jesus is still at work through the sorts of people he featured in his book. The story won't end till Jesus returns. You can write a part of the story, by doing what you can. story by doing what you're good at.

#### **MEN'S BREAKFAST**

Our next Men's Breakfast will be held on Saturday, April 8 at 7:30am. If you would like to know more about this, please see Jim Newcomb or Chris Scholtz.

#### **WOMEN 2 WOMEN**

Our next Women 2 Women will be held on Saturday, April 1 2-4pm. We will be meeting at the Parsonage; 16 Kimball Street, Lebanon, NH. Please see Karen Scholtz or Anne Pinilla for more information.

#### **FOOD PANTRY**

The Food Pantry will be open Wednesday, April 5 from 5-6pm and Saturday, April 22 from 10-11am. Both dates it will be open at the Senior Center. Please see Chris Clark for more information.

#### **HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE**

##### **April 9 Palm Sunday**

Service at Lebanon Middle School at 10:00am

##### **April 13 Maundy Thursday**

Service at Parsonage: 16 Kimball Street at 6:30pm

##### **April 14 Good Friday**

Service at Claremont Opera House, Claremont, NH at 7:00pm

##### **April 16 Easter Sunday**

Held at Lebanon Middle School Free Continental Breakfast at 9:00am Easter Sunday Service 10:00am

#### **DAYSRING PREGNANCY CARE CENTER BANQUET**

Come help us celebrate our 35 years of service to the Greater Upper Valley region at our Fund-Raising Dinner Banquet: Abundant Life

I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10b

This will be held on Wednesday, April 5th, 2017 Fireside Inn, West Lebanon, New Hampshire, Dinner will be served at 6:30 pm

Featuring an Encore Performance by Mike G. Williams

#### **BUSINESS AND TOWN HALL MEETING**

Following the service on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, we will hold a brief Business meeting for the purpose of voting in our delegates for the ABC/VNH Annual Gathering. This is the only anticipated agenda item.

Once complete, we will transition into the Town Hall mode. Pastor Rick and the Deacons will outline the results of the Church Vision discussions as it pertains to our ministry and the physical church building.

Then we will pray over the Building Committee as they take this information and begin the process of leading our efforts in the building design.

Please pray over these topics that God may lead us in all we do.

### **ABCVNH REGIONAL GATHERING**

This year's Regional Annual Gathering is being hosted locally at the Fireside Inn in West Lebanon on May 5-6<sup>th</sup>. Attached you can find the invitation letter and registration forms. If you wish to attend, you may do so by independently sending in your registration form directly to the Region office, preferably by April 11<sup>th</sup>. Unless you are a delegate of our church, you will register as "non-voting participant".

Detailed schedule and online options can be found here: <http://abcvnh.org/event-registration/>

If you plan on going anyway and are a member of First Baptist Church, you may consider going as a "voting delegate" representing FBC. Delegates have voting rights at the Business Meeting on that Friday May 5<sup>th</sup> at 2:45p. As our delegate, FBC will pay the registration fees for you to attend.

### **SUMMER CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS**

It is that time of year again; time to start thinking about summer camps for your children. Before you know it, summer will be here! You will find (attached with the email or printed as an insert) a camp scholarship application with this newsletter. If you are interested in sending your child to summer camp, please fill this out and send it back to the church by Sunday, May 14. You can drop it in the offering plate, email it: [office@lebfirstbaptist.com](mailto:office@lebfirstbaptist.com), or mail it:

First Baptist Church  
Attn: CE Board  
P. O. Box 331  
Lebanon, NH 03766.

### **PRAYER MEETING**

Our next prayer meeting is going to be on Wednesday, April 19 at 7:00pm. We will be meeting at the Parsonage at 16 Kimball Street, Lebanon. We hope to see you there.

### **NURSERY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

We are in need of a few more volunteers for the Nursery. If you would like to help with this fun ministry in our church, please contact Rachel Lawrence or Carol Rataj.

### **March Update Board of Deacons**

Greetings from the Board of Deacons. In spite of some recent frigid temperatures, I pray your hearts are all on fire for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and what he is doing amongst us here at First Baptist Church.

The end of February was busy with setting up and attending vision clarification meetings which continued into the month of March. The purpose of the vision clarification meetings is to establish a congregation wide consensus of our ministry priorities that will drive our building design.... what are we good at and what are our dreams. We met with each of the other boards as well as members of the congregation on two separate occasions. The meetings were well attended and as a result much data was collected. Dave Cole graciously volunteered to collate all the responses so we could more efficiently go over all the data in our March meeting. Pastor Rick plans to come up with a document that best represents our understanding of our ministry identity and vision based on all of the data collected. This document will be presented to the congregation in a town hall meeting on April 2nd following our church service at the Middle School.

In addition to the vision clarification meetings and gathering of information, the deacons also worked through their regularly scheduled business including the planning of our services during the Holy Season. Also in discussing the book of I Timothy, Pastor Rick encouraged us to be very intentional with our words, with our relationships and most importantly with our service to the Lord.

Please continue to keep our congregation, the building committee and all church leadership in prayer as we continue to work through the important process of identifying our ministry and our vision for the future of First Baptist Church.

Respectfully and prayerfully submitted by  
Marjorie Olson