



## 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,  
Wednesday, May 10  
at 4:30pm*

*Men's Breakfast,  
Saturday, May 13  
at 7:30am*

*Camp Scholarship  
Applications due on  
Sunday, May 14*

*Prayer Meeting,  
Wednesday, May 17  
at 7:00pm*

### **A Word from Pastor Rick**

Dear Friends,

Spirituality is all the rage today. Sociologists of religion had predicted that modern societies would eventually lose their faith in God and their spiritual interest. They have come to see that this isn't true, not even in Europe where attendance in Church is mostly below 25%. It seems the people have a deep seated need for spiritual experience. So finding real atheists is still tough. Spirituality has replaced faith. Spirituality is sort of self-made religion. There is no doctrine, no institution like a church that teaches. You may hang out with others in your spiritual quest, but, in spirituality, your spiritual experience is your own.

One could well imagine that this is very liberating, but all the indications are that it isn't very satisfying. One of the outstanding characteristics of those involved in spirituality is drift from one source of spiritual inspiration to another. They are always on a quest, never at home, never at peace. I think the reason for this is obvious: there is no reason to believe that self-made religion has anything to do with a reality outside your own imagination.

You probably remember being infatuated, having a crush on someone. You would be deliriously happy when that special someone was around. The longing itself was a wonderful new experience. But if you didn't get the nerve up to move the relationship from a distant crush by asking her out (or contriving to be asked out), the interest would eventually fade. Imaginary romances are not satisfying. I think this is what a lot of spirituality is about. Just as having a crush is a witness to the need for real love, so spirituality is the witness for our need for the living God.

Jesus said something very powerful that speaks right to this fad in his prayer in John 17: "I made known your name to them (his followers), and I will make it known in order that the love with which you have loved me might be in them and I in them." The name of God stands for what he really is and has made known. It is his well-earned reputation. We would say it is true theology. Notice that Jesus says the reason he made known God's name -- his nature and ways -- is so that we might experience God's love and Jesus' real presence. To put the principle succinctly: the way to experience the love and presence of God is to study what he has revealed about himself. This of course we find in Scripture especially in the Gospels. Theology is not a dry and dusty academic discipline. It is challenging of course. We can think about God without stretching his mind. But it is the key to the experience of the living God we all long for.

I fear many Christians have fallen into the habit of modern spirituality. We look for the experience without the study and thought; but this is impossible. We want spiritual experience without challenge and without doctrine. It can't be done. Jesus made known what God is like so that we may experience him personally. We should avail ourselves of this vast and wonderful opportunity. Your partner in the great work,  
Rick

**MEN'S BREAKFAST**

The next Men's Breakfast will be held on Saturday, May 13 at 7:30am. Please see Jim Newcomb or Chris Scholtz for more information. See you there!

**WOMEN 2 WOMEN**

We will be hosting the Community Dinner for our next Women 2 Women meeting. We will be meeting on Wednesday, May 10 at 4:45pm at the Lebanon Senior Center. Please see Ruth Newcomb or Karen Scholtz for more information.

**PRAYER MEETING**

Please join us on Wednesday, May 17 at 7:00PM for a time of prayer at the Parsonage (16 Kimball Street, Lebanon, NH). This is open to all in our congregation who wish to join us. This is a wonderful time of fellowship and prayer for our church family.

**BABY BOTTLE BENEFIT COMING SOON!**

The annual Baby Bottle Benefit begins on Mother's Day, May 14. Take a baby bottle home with you, fill it with your loose change (or bills!) and return it to church on Father's Day, June 18. Proceeds from this offering support the programs of the Pregnancy Center of the Upper Valley. The Center offers resources and information needed by those facing decisions around unexpected pregnancy and sexual activity. Be on the lookout for the bottles on May 14!

**CE BOARD UPDATE**

Here is an update about everything that is happening with the Christian Education Board this spring/summer. We have a lot of great opportunities and some needs. Please continue to pray for our Children's Ministry, our Youth Ministry, and our Adult Discipleship Committee.

Summer Camp Scholarships

If you are interested in sending your child to summer camp, please make sure you have your scholarship application back to the church by Sunday, May 14. You can 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.

Nursery Volunteers Needed

We are in need of volunteers for the Nursery, if you are interesting in helping serve in the nursery; please see Carol Rataj or Deb Girdwood.

Children's Church Volunteers Needed

We are in need of leaders or helpers for Children's Church. If you are interested in helping with this vital ministry in our church, please see Carol Rataj or Shelby Hawks.

Adult Sunday School**"Names of God" by Douglas Connelly**

YHWH, Elohim. El Elyon, Adonai, El Shaddai, El Roi....

For most of us, our names simply identify us. This is not the case, however, with the names given to God in the Bible. In the Old Testament, we learn that God revealed himself to Moses as YHWH (which means I AM in Hebrew). But God is also given a number of descriptive titles in Scripture which are windows into his character, helping us to see more deeply into his nature, work and power.

Join us Sunday mornings at 9am as we learn about who God is and what he is ready to do in our lives by coming to understand his names.

**UPPER VALLEY CLOTHING SWAP**

Saturday & Sunday, May 20 & 21, 10am-2pm. This will be happening at the Bugbee Senior Center in White River Junction, VT. Saturday is the clothing drop off day - please donate good, pre-worn clothing on Saturday. Drop off at Bugbee Senior Center on Saturday, May 20 from 10am - 2pm. Please, no stains or rips. The volunteers will sort and organize all the donations, and then: You are free to choose clothing for your whole family on Sunday. Donations are not necessary - Come one, come all! Sunday, May 21.

**SAVE THE DATE**

Sunday, June 25. First Baptist Church THANK YOU to the Community, Fire Fighters, Police, Emergency Workers, and Everyone who supported us during and after

the fire. This is the opportunity to Thank the Lord, to thank our neighbors, and to celebrate our church family. It is going to be an awesome BBQ lunch and other activities.

More details to follow soon!

### **April Update Board of Deacons**

Greetings fellow congregants, I pray you all enjoyed the Easter Season that was recently upon us and had a wonderful worship experience whether you were with us or worshipping afar with family and friends during travels.

We had several wonderful services that took place this past Holy Season. A wonderful Palm Sunday service was followed by a very intimate and reverent Maundy Thursday service at the parsonage on Thursday evening; Pastor Rick delivered a powerful message. Easter Sunday started off with a prayer vigil on the site of our former church building. This was led by Steve Girdwood and was a powerful and emotional experience. We could not help but connect our Lord's empty tomb with the empty hole that stood before us on Easter morning. The vigil was well attended and powerful. It is always a privilege to go to the Lord and pray for our church family, for the future FBC and the entire building process that is upon us. We then had an Easter breakfast at the Middle School followed by a most joyous and celebratory Easter service. It was wonderful to see and welcome many new faces as together we celebrated the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He has risen, indeed!

Below are two photos I took on site following the prayer vigil. The cross with the carnations is the same cross from Easter's past. It was in the basement of our church at the time of the fire and yet survived. The second photo is what remains of our former church. I think you will agree that both are powerful images and reminders that our Lord is in control and has His hands upon us.



In addition to the planning of Holy week, the deacons also worked through their regularly scheduled business at our meeting on April 11<sup>th</sup>. Upon completion of our regular duties, Dave Cole gave the deacon board an update from the building committee. There will be a congregation wide meeting with the architect on April 29<sup>th</sup> to work on our building design. There will be different stations set up for congregants to give their input in the design of the building; each station will be facilitated by a member of the building committee. The architect will then use all the gathered information from the various stations to deem what he feels is most important to FBC in the design of our building. I pray you can all make it on April 29<sup>th</sup> to work with the architect and be an integral part of the design process.

We are also scheduled to meet on April 25<sup>th</sup> as we continue to work on FBC's mission/vision statement.

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 rebuilding.

Respectfully and prayerfully submitted by  
Marjorie Olson