Rooted in faith, Growing in love, reaching for justice

A Message from Pastor Linda Hatch

Since I started as your interim pastor just two weeks ago it has been snowy and cold, but it has felt warm and welcoming. Thank you for your friendliness, sharing, and support. We enter together a special time in which we focus, get new perspective, and care for all that is done here in worship, mission, and ministry.

In this time our discernment is to understand more fully and clearly God’s purposes for this congregation. Discernment means sifting through to find the special and most needed ways this church is called to work into the future. We take the time to listen deeply to one another and God in the conversation with us. Discernment will bring greater clarity and purpose to the vision you have for the way into the future, and the defining needs of the next settled pastor. Through ongoing conversations together, this church, as a far reaching congregation into the near community and beyond, will draw closer together in spiritual ways.

We enter this new work with a transition team to help name the way we will do this transition work, reflect, and communicate what is discerned. That team will support all in the process and then, the search committee will have the necessary information to build the church profile and receive ministerial profiles finding the right fit for the called settled pastor.

Our work of discerning the needed conversations and having those in safe and grounded ways that honor all caring views and each voice is deeply spiritual work. Prayer and scripture help focus and always center our conversations.
This congregation has been through much change and there is always needed healing in changes and its losses. Healing is a part of the speaking and listening of God’s people to each other with the Holy Spirit in the midst.

We begin the season of Lent soon. It is a season in which we draw close to Jesus to find new meaning and light coming out of dark and uncertain times. We walk through Lent with special services and prayers to sustain, heal, and move us closer together in faith. It is a good time to begin the work of discernment and we do it in the peace Christ gives. I look forward to the shared walk with all of you.

In the Love of Christ,
Linda

Would you like to meet with Rev. Linda? She is working in town on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays and is available to meet with you. Though she will be in the office when she doesn’t have appointments or meetings, Linda will also keep open office hours on Thursdays from 9:00 am to Noon if you would like to drop by to see her. On Thursday, March 9, Linda’s open office hours will be from Noon-3:00pm due to a morning meeting with the Pastoral Care Team. Please feel free to contact Pastor Linda at 356-7573 or email her at Linda@FarmingtonUCC.org.

Phyllis is in the church office Tuesday through Thursday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm except when she has to run over to the church building or downtown for an errand. Phyllis will be away March 28-April 4, and the church office will be closed.

Executive Council
Interim Minister: Rev. Linda Hatch
Moderator: Chris Magri
Treasurer: Amanda Adams
Clerk: Kim Daellenbach
Financial Secretary & Fundraising: Brenda Scribner
Position Vacant
Director of Children and Youth Ministries: Jodie Gunther
Chair, Christian Ed: Arin Hilton
Chair, Diaconate: Shelley Griffith
Chair, Financial Trustees: Marilyn Hylan
Chair, Outreach, Justice & Witness: Randy Oakley
Chair, Personnel: Joanna Backman
Chair, Property Trustees: Gil Riley
Member at Large: Robin Beck
Member at Large: Wendy Huish
Things are settling down – a bit – at Old South. We’ve carried out the feasibility study for the capital campaign; we’ve prepared and passed an operating budget for 2017; we’ve arranged to bring the Holman Mission House into code compliance; and, most importantly, we’ve found Pastor Linda to guide us through the months ahead. All the same we’ll still be busy with important tasks in those months, with the capital campaign being a particularly big one. Yet rather than writing about logistics and activities, I want to bring up compromise and relationships.

One of the things that our feasibility study told us is that the October 30 vote tally, in which more than five out of six members voted for the Holman Mission House proposal, is somewhat misleading: there’s a significant minority in the congregation that is significantly concerned or unhappy about the outcome. At the same time it’s come to my attention that there’s a different group of members who are unhappy that we attached any "strings" to keeping HMH, that we made moving our offices to the Newman Wing part of that compromise motion. Evidently the lopsided vote tally masked deeper concerns. Maybe I shouldn’t be surprised; after all, "compromise" could be defined as "a technique for ensuring that no one is entirely happy." But, surprising or not, these concerns must be addressed as we move forward.

Now, I confess that I’m not terribly good at stopping to mull over decisions already reached, that I much prefer to plow ahead at full speed. Nose to grindstone: check. Grimly determined expression: check. Copious sources of caffeine: check. Feelings aren’t usually on my radar. Yet even I can see that we need to take care of our relationships – a recommendation that our feasibility study consultants made as well. We can hope that as we raise funds and begin the capital campaign projects, as the office relocation and building repurposing become realities rather than plans, everyone will pull together and feel at least reasonably happy about those realities. But that’s not the only possible outcome, so we need to talk this through.

I don’t yet know the venue(s) and format(s) for this "talking through" business. I only know that, having done the hard work of reaching a pragmatic decision on a tough topic, we now have to do the further hard work of listening to each other and taking care of each other in the aftermath of that decision. May God’s blessings be on that undertaking and on us.

Chris Magri
Happy March! Hopefully, we can all get out and enjoy the winter outdoor activities this month while we still can, whether it be skiing or snow shoeing or sledding.

Our Annual Financial Meeting took place on February 5. It was my first as Treasurer and thank you for making it painless! Also, thank you to everyone who asked questions and voiced your concerns. It is very much appreciated and very helpful.

At the meeting, we voted to pass the 2017 Budget with a projected deficit of approximately $17,000. While that may not sound very hopeful, I'm optimistic that, as we usually do, we will somehow end up on the plus side of things. Thank you for your continued pledging and giving. We could not do it without each and every one of you. We even had a pledge come in after the meeting which brought our pledging total to $122,000!

Also on February 5, we had the pleasure of welcoming Rev. Linda Hatch to our family. I'm excited to see what new insight and ideas she will bring to our congregation!

Lastly, as I said in the meeting, if you have any questions about our budget, please stop me at church one Sunday or email me. Sometimes big group meetings may not be a comfortable setting for you to stand up and ask questions or maybe you are not able to attend. It doesn't mean I don't want to hear from you. I am usually around during Coffee Hour and, as was suggested in our meeting, I'll do my best to wear my name tag! My email is amandaadams0101@gmail.com.

Blessings,
Amanda Adams

Deacons’ Corner

WALK ON, OLD SOUTH!

In the opening paragraph of our Call Agreement with Pastor Linda, we invite her to "become a minister of this church...for the purpose of transitional leadership during a season of change."

Transitions are rarely comfortable. We perceive them to be brought on by unexpected and often unwelcomed changes. They require us to shift our priorities and set aside our agendas to cope with the new issues that arise in their wakes. We feel the need to push through them as quickly as possible so that we can return to business as usual.

And yet, there are times when transitions can be rich and life-giving. Perhaps it is all in how we look at them.
If we feel that it is solely up to us to decide the outcomes of our life as a church, we might miss the opportunity for new life and growth that is waiting for us during a season of change. If we can take a deep breath, collectively, set aside our agendas and listen for God's voice, we might be surprised and enriched by what we hear.

Because we've been through the interim transitional work before, we may be thinking, "Didn't we just do this? Why do we need to go through it again so soon?" And yet, a lot has happened in our church since our last interim time. We have a younger, more diverse congregation; we have a deeper sense of the complexity of our church's financial situation; we've been through a long, emotional and divisive conversation about the future; we've lost a pastor and we have many unanswered questions ahead of us regarding how we prioritize the role of the next settled pastor in our church.

The work of this interim time offers us an opportunity to reflect on our experiences of the last five years. With the guidance of a skilled and unbiased facilitator, perhaps we will come to new understandings of where we have been, how God has been with us and how we, as a church, have been changed.

The work of this interim time also offers us an opportunity to heal. For many of us and, for each of us in different ways, the last five years have held great love, joy, sadness, frustration and disappointment. Perhaps, as we walk into our future with Pastor Linda, we will become able to talk about these things with one another with transparency and trust. Perhaps we will be able to let down our guards so that we can truly see and hear one another with compassion and kindness. When we can do this, we will be in a better place to answer the difficult questions that face us.

Every Sunday, in the church bulletin, we, the People of Old South are listed as the Ministers of Old South Church. May we, then, listen to God's voice behind us, saying "This is the way; walk in it," and may we all walk together!

Blessings and Peace to All!

Shelley Griffith

(Your Deacons: Rina Bardo, Roger Condit, Linda Fournier, Thad Gunther, Gretchen Legler, Wendy Oakley, Betsy Riley, Michelle Scribner, Mary Sinclair, Fred O. Smith, Carole Trickett, Ryan Westbrook-Vigue, Shelley Griffith, chair)
2017 New Year Property Trustees Report

As an integral part of 2017 Operating Budget planning, and Capital Campaign planning, we had done considerable project planning for this coming year. Now that the 2017 Operating Budget has been approved at the February 5th Congregational meeting we will arrange to schedule the final phase of Fire & Safety Code compliance activity for the Church building complex. This will consist of our Fire alarm company, Protection1, coming in to install hard wired detectors throughout the lower level of the Newman Wing and to install a few more “alert” devices throughout the main level of the church building.

Also as a result of the approval vote at the Feb. 5th Congregational meeting we will immediately begin to implement the execution of code compliance items, as presented, for the Holman Mission House. We will attempt to schedule these projects as best we can to create the least amount of disruption to the activities and occupants of the HMH.

As you may have heard Chris Magri report at the Feb. 5th meeting the consultants, Full Harvest, reported from their recent survey regarding the planned Capital Campaign that there has not yet been enough explanation of campaign’s targeted projects for people to fully understand the details of these projects and why they are needed. We will be generating that information for the Capital Campaign to disseminate as they move forward.

Gil Riley, Chair
Interim Update

We hope by now that you have all had the opportunity to meet and welcome our Interim Minister, Rev. Linda Hatch. Work has already begun on the next step of this interim period. The Deacons have been working to identify a Transition Team comprised of five or six people representative of Old South. These folks will work with Rev. Hatch to initiate the process leading to the establishment of a Search Committee. The first task is to gather information regarding our congregation, to hear our hopes for the future of Old South, and to witness our concerns. We will learn more about where we are as a congregation and where we want to go so that we will have information in place for the Pastoral Search Committee to use to build the Church Profile. The Church Profile is released to ministerial candidates searching for a Call and helps to identify and provide information about a church to these candidates.

Once we have made progress with this information gathering work, the process to identify a Search Committee will begin. According to the bylaws, the Search Committee will be comprised of up to twelve members who are nominated by the Diaconate and voted on by the Church membership.

Stay tuned to Telstar to stay informed. In the meantime, if you would like to learn more, please feel free to contact a Deacon or Rev. Hatch at any time.
News & Upcoming Events

DON'T FORGET...

March Committee Meetings

- **Pastoral Care Team**  Thursday, March 9, HMH at 10:00 am
- **Deacons’ Meeting**  Sunday, March 12, Matthew Room following worship
- **Staff Meeting**  Tuesday, March 14, HMH at 10:00 am
- **Outreach, Justice, Witness**  Sunday, March 19, Matthew Room following worship
- **Property Trustees**  Tuesday, March 21, HMH at 6:30 pm
- **Christian Ed**  Thursday, March 23, Matthew Room at 3:30 pm

Daylight Savings begins on Sunday, March 12. Don’t forget to move your clocks ahead one hour on Saturday night before you go to sleep!

Retirees Lunch March Potluck

Calling all retirees! Join us for the monthly Community Lunch on Monday, March 6, at Noon in the Vestry of Old South. The March meal will be a true potluck. Please bring a dish to share and join in the fellowship of the meal.

The deadline to submit articles for the April issue of Telstar is March 10.
Bread for Benefit Sales Dates
The Youth will be selling bread in the Vestry after worship services on March 26. Thank you for your ongoing support for this youth project!

Women’s Retreat
A women’s retreat will be held at the Marie Joseph Spiritual Center in Biddeford, Maine, May 26 – May 28, 2017. The $210 cost of the retreat includes accommodations, 6 meals, program expenses and more. You may begin making payments this month to reserve space today. Confidential partial scholarships are available. Please contact the church office if you would like to attend.

Winter is here! Church Service Cancellation Information
We make every effort to hold worship and other scheduled events in inclement weather, but we may cancel in the event of dangerous road conditions. Should this happen, we will update the church voicemail (778-0424) and Facebook page, and announce it on WKTJ-FM 99.3. If Sunday school is cancelled, but worship is not, we will update our answering machine and Facebook.

The church office will close if RSU 9 cancels school due to weather.
BALANCING THE BUDGET??

At the Annual Financial Meeting on Sunday, February 5, we approved a deficit budget of a little over $17,000. With the new pledges received, we are at a deficit of a little under $16,000 now, which is a 13% deficit.

How does this look per pledging member for the rest of 2017?

- We would need each pledging member to contribute an additional $372.30 or an additional $5.10 per week for the rest of 2017 (starting the 1st week of March)

How does look in terms of pledge amounts for the rest of 2017?

- A $500 pledge would need to increase to $565, a $1.51 increase per week
- A $1,000 pledge would need to increase to $1,130, a $3.02 increase per week.
- A $1,500 pledge would need to increase to $1,695, a $4.53 increase per week
- A $2,000 pledge would need to increase to $2,260, a $5.81 increase per week
- A $5,000 pledge would need to increase to $5,650, a $15.12 increase per week

Many of you have already increased your 2017 pledge over 2016, and for that we are extremely grateful. Extremely. However, if you haven’t, maybe this summary will help visualize that. My intention is not to pressure you. If you are not sure you could increase your pledge, perhaps you could just think about making a few extra donations throughout the year. No matter the amount, it is all useful and appreciated.

Again, I can’t thank you enough for you continued support of Old South and the ministries here. We all are what makes Old South the ministry that it is and we are all vital to the future.

Thank you,
Amanda Adams
You are invited to remember your loved ones by providing lilies for the altar on Easter Sunday. You may place this order form with your payment in the offering basket, drop off or mail to Phyllis in the church office or give it to Carolyn Parr. Plants are $16.50 this year.

The deadline for orders is Sunday, March 26. Checks are made out to: Old South and marked for Easter Lilies.

Number of Lilies_______________

Ordered by ______________________

Given in memory/celebration/honor of:_____________________________
The Irish Decendants in Concert at Old South

The award winning Irish Descendants from Newfoundland will perform at Old South on Thursday, March 23 beginning at 7pm with a pre-concert jam session at 6:15 pm. Admission: adults $20, discounted Student rates (including UMF w/id) $10/$5. Local students who attend and perform at the jam session get free admission to the concert. All proceeds benefit the Handicap Accessibility Fund.

Can you help with any of the following concert night needs?
Move sanctuary/choir loft furniture prior to 11 am on concert date
Set up meal/serve meal/clean up (set up 4:30 /meal is served around 5 pm)
Prepare evening meal for band, sound tech and early volunteers (any dietary restrictions will be noted)
Cashier/Greeter (doors open at 6 pm)
Provide baked goods/fruit/snacks or beverages for jam session/intermission (to arrive by 5 pm)
Set up refreshment table/host/serve (5:30)
Clean up kitchen/vestry after intermission (after 8pm)
Move sanctuary/choir loft furniture back (after sound/light equipment removed)
Close up church
Co-sponsor(s) with Franklin Savings Bank for sound and lights. FSB will cover half of the $250 cost for Andy LeBlanc.

Please call Debbie at 491-5919, Hallie at 778-0111 or Brenda at 299-2686 to let them know how you can help. A large audience is expected so reservations are highly recommended. Call Debbie to reserve tickets.

To learn more about the Irish Descendants, please check their website:
https://www.last.fm/music/The+Irish+Descendants
Canned Vegetables

Please bring your donations to church, and we will deliver everything to Care and Share. Thank you!

In addition to this month’s special need, don’t forget to bring your Care and Share food closet contributions of non-perishable food on Communion Sunday. You may also make financial contributions to Care and Share by marking your donation for Care and Share and submitting it along with your regular offering on Sunday mornings. Care and Share will also recycle your plastic grocery shopping bags to distribute food items to our neighbors in need. Bags may be brought to the church anytime and placed in the collection receptacle in the narthex. Thank you for your continuing support of this ecumenical ministry.

Coat Closet

The Coat Closet Ministry will be open on Sunday, March 5, from 9:00-11:00 am at the Holman Mission House. We are accepting donation of coats, snow pants, ski jackets and blankets for the coat closet ministry. **Please do not drop off shoes and other clothing items.** We are not accepting t-shirts, pants, socks, shirts, etc. When you drop these things off at the church or HMH, we have to pack them up and take them to other donation sites. Please help us by donating only the requested items. Thank you for your help and for your ongoing support! Thank you.

**Outreach, Justice and Witness** will be meeting in the Matthew Room at 11:00 on Sunday, March 19. This is an open ministry with no fixed membership, and we encourage you to stop in, see what plans are in action and help us to serve God’s people both locally and globally.
Words cannot capture the anguish of people when they lose everything in a disaster or have to leave it behind while fleeing war or conflict. Through One Great Hour of Sharing, lives are literally changed daily. Your support provides clean water, food, medicines, shelter, healthcare, education and so much more.

1. **What is One Great Hour of Sharing®?**
   One Great Hour of Sharing, as part of Our Churches Wider Mission, is the special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that carries God’s message of love and hope to people in crisis. The UCC works with international partners to provide sources of clean water, food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons, and emergency relief and rehabilitation. OGHS also supports domestic and international ministries for disaster preparedness and response.

2. **Who participates in One Great Hour of Sharing?**
   Seven Christian denominations - American Baptist Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Church of the Brethren, Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Church of Christ, and Church World Service work together to develop common promotional materials thereby sharing ideas, costs, and a commitment to faithful service. Each denomination receives and manages its respective OGHS offerings, and together raise over $10 million annually.

3. **How is the United Church of Christ’s offering used?**
   Almost 60 percent of the UCC’s offering supports international development initiatives, including annual support for missionaries. Currently there are 4 OGHS supported missionaries and 2 Global Mission Interns working in disaster relief, health care, education, sustainable agricultural development, and refugee support. The offering also funds disaster preparedness and response, and disaster related volunteer initiatives in the U.S.

The One Great Hour of Sharing Special Offering will be received at Old South on Sunday, March 26. Thank you for your support.
Fair Trade Coffee Ordering
Old South members and friends may join the group ordering of fair-trade certified, wholesale coffee, tea, chocolate and food items from Equal Exchange. The next order deadline is by 6 pm Tuesday, March 21. Contact the coordinator, Myrna Vallette, at 778-4387 or by email at myrna.vallette@gmail.com, to order, get more information, or to be added to her email notification list.

Ordering information:
View the many different products online at http://shop.equalexchange.coop/ to decide what you want (or look at a catalog, which is available in the narthex). The prices that are visible on the website are retail; ask Myrna to look up the wholesale (your actual) price. Please note: The wholesale price is available only when buying by the case (e.g., 6 12-oz. bags of coffee, 10 pounds of coffee beans, etc.). If you want anything less than a full case, you will have to pay the retail price.

The ordered items will be available for pick up at the Holman Mission House the following week when the office is open (usually Tuesday through Thursday).

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Old South’s Prayer Shawl Ministry

Many of those who have received a prayer shawl from Old South Church have felt love, comfort and the healing presence of the Holy, and truly appreciate the gift. Please consider knitting or crocheting a prayer shawl, throw or lap blanket for this wonderful ministry. Contact the coordinator, Myrna Vallette (778-4387 or myrna.vallette@gmail.com) for guidelines and patterns. If you know of someone who is in need of a prayer shawl, please speak to Myrna Vallette or Phyllis Pederson and we’ll help you pick one out.
A Special Note of Thanks

This week, as I looked around our church, I realized that we have once again provided a wonderful gift to our wider community and to ourselves: the Warming Center. Old South volunteers and members of the Farmington area community gathered each Thursday in January and February from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm for fellowship, snacks, and a simple meal.

We made the decision to participate in this ecumenical ministry because we wanted to help others. In winters when the economy can dip low, we welcome members of our wider community who needed a warm place to be and a hot meal. But I think we sometimes underestimate the gift that this is to our church community. Around thirty volunteers from Old South, several of us in our late seventies and eighties, have participated in this outreach and recognize the gifts we can give and receive in our friendships with the families who come. Others of us have supported this ministry with prayer and with donations of food. It is a privilege to see the boundaries blur, as our church offers The Warming Center to the community. The volunteers and guests have become good friends with love and laughter and that atmosphere is present each Thursday.

Many thanks to all of you who have participated. It has been another successful joint effort shared by Old South Church, Henderson Memorial Church and St. Joe’s Church. The Warming Center continues for the month of March on Tuesdays at St. Joe’s from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Betsy Riley
Community Lunch

As we approached the day of the February Community Lunch, the forecast was for "light snow" with possibly 1 – 3 inches accumulation. I agonized over whether to cancel or not, knowing that there would be fewer people out while it was snowing. But, we made the decision to go ahead. And it turns out that we served 153 meals that day, in spite of the fact that the forecast was REALLY wrong and we had about 8 inches of snow. In the end, we delivered OVER 100 meals! And yes, the turnout at the church was very low, but we made the right decision and people got fed.

Hopefully the weather will improve for our March meal, which will be held on March 11th. We will be serving ham, mashed potatoes and peas for that meal, and as always, we will have cakes made by God’s Kitchen Crew.

In February we were also very glad to welcome a couple of new volunteers who had never been with us before. Please know that we are always in need of folks to come help with the serving and clean-up. And, we also need just plain old regular church members to come eat with us to share in the fellowship around the table with our guests.

Stan Wheeler
Rocell Marcellino, Co-chairs

The Lenten Labyrinth

In the coming weeks, our Sunday School youth will be collecting donations of nonperishable items for the Lenten Labyrinth. They’ll be building it in the upstairs Luke Room (next door to the Nursery) and collecting canned and boxed food, as well as basic household and toiletry supplies (shampoo, deodorant, etc.) to "build" the labyrinth "walls". Your donations to the Labyrinth will be donated to the local food closet after Lent. Thank you for your support!
Annual Yard and Plant Sale volunteers needed: If you would like to help organize this annual fundraising event, please contact Brenda Scribner at 299-3686 today! The yard and plant sale date will be June 2-3. In addition to volunteers, we need your donations of books, household goods, and decorations. Start gathering those unwanted lamps, platters, pottery, crystal, exercise equipment, books, decorations, and more now! Donations will be accepted beginning Tuesday, April 11. Please help us: no clothing, electronic items, or broken items. Thank you!

Ongoing Fundraising Programs

Merchant Gift Cards
New merchant gift cards are in stock! Check out the selection of ready to use cards of local, regional and on-line merchants at the Fundraising Table or in the church office. A complete selection of merchant gift cards can be viewed at www.unitedscrip.com.

Do you shop at Amazon?
Be sure to do your shopping through Amazon Smile and Amazon will donate .5% of your total to Old South. There's no cost to you and once you choose Old South as your charity, there's nothing else you need to do. You can go to smile.amazon.com and click select on First Congregational of Farmington. Thank you to those of you who have been utilizing this giving method already!
Sunday School
Our Lenten Labyrinth returns! We’ll begin “constructing” our labyrinth with packages of food and household supplies, which we will then donate to the Care and Share Food Pantry at Easter. You can watch our progress—we’ll be creating the labyrinth in the Luke Room (the pink classroom near the Nursery). Donations of food are gratefully accepted!
This month, our lessons will include:
March 5: Water into wine (John 2)
March 12: Healing the man on the mat (Mark 2)
March 19: Jesus teaches about prayer (Matthew 6)
March 26: The story about the lamp, and the lilies of the field (Matthew 5,6)
Together, we’ll also explore a new tradition---Lenten Prayer Chains. In addition, we’ll be sharing a special “Easter butterfly” craft with the congregation...more details coming soon!
For children ages pre-K through grade 5
March 5, 12, 19 and 26
9:45 am to 10:30 am

BBC (Middle and High School)
Just two more Coat & Cupboard days—March 5 and April 2. We’ll also skip our BBC lessons on March 12, as we will be returning late Saturday evening from our Preble Street mission trip. Lessons finally resume March 19 and 26—we’ll get back into the Book of Acts, Chapter 10 and beyond!
For students in grades 6 – 12
March 19 and 26
9:45 am to 10:30 am

God’s Kitchen Crew
In observance of Lent, we’ll be creating fabulous new artwork for the Newman Wing entrance. And, because the color of Lent is purple, we’ll be baking up “purple” cakes for the Community Luncheon!
For children in grades 2 – 5
Wednesday, March 8, 3:00 - 4:45 pm
Soup Group
Perhaps we should rename ourselves to “Cookie Group”--this month, we’ll be making dozens of delicious iced cookies, which we’ll tuck into the freezer, then bring out for Easter Sunday. Get ready to show off your artistic skills---we’ll have piles of cookie-decorating supplies to create colorful, edible art!

For students in grades 5 – 8

Youth Group

Coat & Cupboard AND Preble St. Mission Trip
It’s a “big” month for us---Coat & Cupboard opens on March 5. Then, it’s time for the Preble Street mission trip---beginning with a Friday night “kick off” at church. Bring a sleeping bag and sense of humor---we’ll be playing games, watching a movie, and more. Early Saturday morning, we head down to Preble Street to serve lunch and dinner. We’ll return late Saturday evening.

“Regular” Youth Group returns March 19 and 26, with special guest speakers and more.

For teens in grades 6 – 12
Youth Group meetings: March 19 and 26; 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

Jodie’s house (164 Russell’s Mill Road)
Bread for Benefit
We sell bread once this month---March 26. Who’s scheduled to work?
8:30 am bread prep shift: Henry and Emmett
10:30 bread sellers: Clay and Thad
10:30 pot scrubbers: Zack and Ethan

Want more information about Youth Programs at Old South? Join our e-mail list!
Every week we send updates and detailed information about what’s happening with kids and teens at Old South. To join the e-mail list, send a note to: Jodie@FarmingtonUC.org.
Revised Common Lectionary
The Revised Common Lectionary is a list of Bible passages followed by the majority of mainline Christian churches, including the United Church of Christ. Pastor Linda will be following the Revised Common Lectionary each week. You will find the lectionary readings below for March.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ash Wednesday</th>
<th>Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12</th>
<th>Psalm 51:1-17</th>
<th>2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10</th>
<th>Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 1, 2017</td>
<td>March 5, 2017</td>
<td>March 12, 2017</td>
<td>March 19, 2017</td>
<td>March 25, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 5, 2017</td>
<td>Psalm 121</td>
<td>Romans 4:1-5, 13-17</td>
<td>John 3:1-17 or Matthew 17:1-9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Sunday in Lent</td>
<td>Genesis 12:1-4a</td>
<td>Psalm 121</td>
<td>Romans 5:1-11</td>
<td>John 4:5-42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Literally, the “turning around” or reorientation of our lives towards God—is the theme of Lent. Both as individuals and as a community, we look inward and reflect on our readiness to follow Jesus in his journey towards the cross. The forty days of Lent correspond to the forty-day temptation of Jesus in the wilderness and the forty-year journey of Israel from slavery to a new community.

On Ash Wednesday, ashes are placed on the foreheads of the congregation as a symbol that we have come from dust and one day will return to dust. It is one of many Lenten and Easter customs that remind us of our historical connection with Jewish tradition. With this sobering reminder of life’s fragility, we begin a spiritual quest that continues until the Easter Vigil, when new members of the church are often baptized and the entire congregation joins in a reaffirmation of baptismal vows. Most of this time of preparation is symbolized by the color Violet, though the season is bracketed by the mourning Black of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. As an alternative to Violet, some churches have begun to use brown, beige or gray (the colors of rough unbleached cloth like burlap) to reflect the season’s mood of penitence and simplicity. The somber colors are a reminder of the unbleached “sackcloth” worn by mourners and penitents in the Jewish tradition.

Ash Wednesday Service
Join us to mark the beginning of Lent for an Ash Wednesday Service in the Matthew Room at 5:15 pm on Wednesday, March 1. All are welcome.

Lenten Vespers
Please join us Wednesday evenings (March 8, 15, 22, 29, and April 5) during Lent in the Matthew Room at 5:30 pm for a service of song and prayer.
February 15, 2017

Dear Old South Friends,

You have been in my thoughts and prayers this winter. I was so glad to hear that you welcomed Rev. Hatch among you. This promises to be a rich interim time.

Many of you already know that my father died in January. His death was a blessing, truly – he was 89, suffered for only a short time, and was alert and loving until the end. He and my mother were happily married for 65 years, and since his death my sister and I have been spending time with her in Florida.

Between making family my priority and living in Portland during the winter, I have found it impossible to carry out my duties as your Conference Deacon. You know that I love Old South, but I will have to find ways of loving the church that don’t require my regular physical presence. I have let Rev. Blood know that I am resigning, and will ask our Association to help in appointing a new Conference Deacon.

I look forward to being in church during the summer months, when we are at Clearwater more of the time. Until then, you are all in my prayers.

Blessings,
Rev. Cathie Wallace
MEUCC ALIVE! is periodically published in our weekly All-Conference E-mail (ACE) about the many vital and vibrant ministries of the churches of the Maine Conference, UCC. We welcome submissions and suggestions of articles (send us your pictures too). Our focus will be on those churches that are doing a new thing! Let’s share our stories, good ideas, and talk about experiments that have succeeded (and those that have failed!). Send your articles or ideas to Anne Hodgman at conference@maineucc.org. We can’t wait to see how your congregation is alive! Click to read featured articles.

The United Church of Christ has been a leader among churches on issues of justice related to women. We were the first Christian denomination to ordain a woman when Antoinette Brown was ordained in 1853. But even before then, women who were members of our congregations lived their faith through advocacy to end the practice of slavery in the United States, to establish homes for poor women, and support educational opportunities for women. Later, they were active in securing women’s right to vote and to work for fair wages. From the mid-1900’s to the present day, the UCC has continued this legacy through its advocacy for reproductive justice for all women, its call to end violence against women, its critical work on gender inclusive language as an issue of justice for all humankind, and its insistence on connecting the realities of sexism and racism. This work is local and global, personal and community-wide. It comes from a faith which affirms the full personhood of women as created in the image of God and included in the ministry of Jesus as partners, disciples and bearers of the Good News.

The United Church of Christ will celebrate Women’s Week this year during the first week of March. This coincides with other denominational and secular observances of Women’s Week including International Women’s Day on March 8. **Join us on Sunday, March 5, at Old South to observe Women’s Week during our morning worship service.**

Would you like to learn more about the United Church of Christ? Please check the United Church of Christ website for more information about our denomination: [http://www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org). On this site, you may sign up for “Weekly Seeds” a reflection based on the Revised Common Lectionary readings for each Sunday of the year. There is also a link to an electronic daily devotional called, “The StillSpeaking Daily Devotional.”
OLD SOUTH CHURCH
First Congregational Church of Farmington
235 MAIN ST. (Church) ~ 227 MAIN ST. (Office)
FARMINGTON, ME 04938
TEL: (207) 778-0424

WORSHIP: 9:30 AM SUNDAYS
OFFICE HOURS: 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, Tuesday through Thursday

http://www.farmingtonuucc.org/

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Old South Statement of Identity
“In Christ there is no longer Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for all are one…” (Galatians 3:28)
Walking toward God, we, the members of (Old South) First Congregational Church United Church of Christ, Farmington, Maine, seek through God’s Grace to be a congregation that includes all persons who desire to live God’s Love, as shown to us through the teachings and example of Jesus Christ. We respect and embrace differences of gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identification, mental and physical ability, as well as racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic background. We welcome all to share fully in the life and leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, and blessings of participation in our congregation. We are an open and affirming church: open to all, and affirming of all God’s beloved children. No matter who you are, or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.
Would you like to meet with Rev. Linda? She will be available in the office on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays unless she has appointments or meetings and will keep open office hours on Thursdays from 9:00 am to Noon if you would like to drop by to see her. Please feel free to contact Pastor Linda at 356-7573 or Linda@FarmingtonUCC.org.

The church office will not be open March 28 through April 4. Phyllis will be in the office on Monday, March 27, and return on Wednesday, April 5.