



# Cross and Spire

Newsletter of the First Baptist Church

11 School St., Lebanon, NH 03766

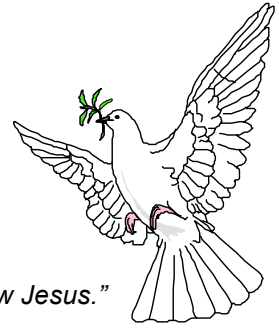
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*"Not a perfect church, not a perfect people, just a simple desire to follow Jesus."*



## THE TROUBLE WITH SPRING

By Laurie Edwards

The snow is finally gone from the Edwards' front yard – that's supposed to be good news, isn't it? Then why my groan of despair on this lovely 60° spring day? The problem with snow melting is the ugly truth it exposes in its wake. That would be the unkempt yard and flower beds from last fall. All those leaves I never got around to raking – they miraculously reappear. That old Christmas tree which was once mercifully buried beside the house now lies there - an ugly shadow of its former beauty in open view of everyone. My excuse for not taking down the Christmas lights – the extension cord has long lay buried under a mound of ice and snow – is an excuse no longer. At least there's no tossed aside wreath exposed by this year's melting – that never made it off the front door!

I'm supposed to welcome spring, I know. And in many ways I do. It's the coming clean part that bothers me. It's like my darkest secrets being disclosed for all the world to see. Heck, there's stuff I even forgot was out there. I was quite sure that old broken tire swing had at least made it to the back yard and out of view. All the "stuff" I've managed to hide for the past four months is suddenly laid bare. And it can be downright embarrassing. Could almost make me wish for a late spring snowstorm!

Bite my tongue – may it never be! I **need** to come clean. The Christmas tree needs to go to the landfill. The leaves need to be raked and bagged – soggy and moldy as they might be. The salt and sand from a hundred snow plows needs to be swept from the sidewalk and driveway. That tangled up mess of Christmas lights needs to come down. And the old tire swing – I think it's a safe bet

our college-age kids aren't going to be using it anytime soon.

Spring and Easter. They're both about coming clean. Coming face to face with the Risen Christ, all our stuff is laid bare, our deepest, darkest secrets exposed by the Light of the World. In the presence of a holy God, as the song goes, "You reveal the secrets of my heart, and I'm shaken to the core." The apostle Paul wrote that "If we confess our sins, He who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." But the confession is the hard part. It makes us feel so vulnerable.

But it makes us vulnerable to Someone who we can trust with our innermost stuff. God already knows all our secrets anyway – there's no sin too terrible or too dark for Him to handle, no sin for which He hasn't already died. And what a relief to have it finally out in the open where it can be dealt with.

The greatest difference between the mess in my front yard and the mess in my soul is that I don't have to do the clean up by myself. In fact, I couldn't do it by myself if I tried. There's an old saying, "God asks us to catch the fish, He doesn't ask us to clean them." He doesn't ask us to clean up ourselves either. I'm powerless on my own. But if I confess my sins to Him, it's He who cleanses me from all unrighteousness. And it's His Holy Spirit at work in me that can change my heart.

And then I realize that just as I wasn't the one who melted the snow off my front lawn, I didn't draw myself to the foot of the cross either. It is God who through His infinite mercy and love brought me here, and *He who began a good work in you (and me) will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.* (Phil. 1:6). Amen!

### **96-HOUR PRAYER BEFORE EASTER!**

Celebrate Easter – Prepare for Easter – Pray Before Easter! Sign up for a two hour prayer slot in our 96-Hour Prayer Vigil! The 96-Hour Prayer event begins on Wednesday, March 31 at 6:00 AM and continues to 6:00 AM on Easter Sunday, April 4<sup>th</sup>. See the poster at the back of the sanctuary. Questions, contact Chris or Cathy Clark (603-643-5793).

Guidelines:

- 1) Please respect those in time slots before you, be punctual or a few minutes early (a no-show requires someone to stay until next pray-er arrives).
- 2) Please call in advance if you are unable to attend (643-5793 or 646-0187).
- 3) Prayer partners are welcome (split 2-hour shifts or pray together for 2 hours).
- 4) Remember, confidentiality is a must. Prayer concerns/cards should be left in the prayer closet.

### **IRON SHARPENS IRON FOR MEN!**

Saturday, April 24 in Portsmouth. We hope to get a large group of men to attend. Sign up on sanctuary bulletin board. Cost is \$39 if we have a group of 10 or more (\$48 if not). Questions, contact Tom Clifford (448-4174).

### **EASTER MEMORIALS**

If you'd like to purchase memorial Easter lilies or tulips for the altar Easter Sunday, please use the green slip in your Sunday bulletin. Cost is \$7 per plant, deadline is March 28.

### **EASTER OFFERING ENVELOPES**

If you would like to make a special gift to First Baptist this Easter season, a special Easter offering envelope is included in this issue for your convenience.

### **FOOD COLLECTION AT OPERA HOUSE**

The Lebanon Opera House will be collecting canned goods for our Raven Box Food Pantry at the *Bjorn Again Concert* on May 14<sup>th</sup>. *Bjorn Again* is a world-renowned ABBA parody band. Contact the Opera House for tickets.

### **WOMEN'S DINNER APRIL 20<sup>TH</sup>!**

There will be a Women's Fellowship Dinner on Tuesday, April 20 at 6:00 PM at Marge Olson's, 30 Dorset Lane, Lebanon. The dinner will be Potluck – bring a dish to share, and join in a time of fellowship & prayer! Sign up and directions on sanctuary bulletin board.

### **REMEMBER THE FOOD PANTRY**

Food & cash donations always needed!

### **SHAVE A HEAD & HELP STOP HUNGER!**

The youth group will be doing a 30-Hour Famine April 9-10. Here's the challenge: If we raise \$750, we get to shave Jim's beard; if we raise another \$750 we get to shave his mustache; if we raise another \$1500 (for a total of \$3000) we get to shave his whole head. So how can you help raise money for world hunger and have some fun at the same time? Pledge to support youth group members who will be going 30 hours without food to raise hunger awareness and have fun with Jim! Thanks for your support!

### **MEN GOING OUT FOR BREAKFAST!**

Due to the 30-Hour Famine on April 10<sup>th</sup>, the usual Men's Breakfast will be held at a local restaurant instead of at the church. Place to be announced – please watch your bulletin!

### **BETH MOORE SIMULCAST EVENT**

*So Long, Insecurity* Simulcast Event with Beth Moore on Saturday, April 24 at First Baptist Church of Claremont, NH. Registration begins 9:00 AM, simulcast begins at 10:00 AM. \$20 registration includes coffee, goodies, & lunch. Located at corner of Central & Main Streets in Claremont. Call 542-2344 to pre-register.

### **CHRISTIANITY & THE ARTS CONFERENCE**

April 30-May 2 at Gove Hill Retreat in Thetford, VT. Workshop leaders include photographer Paul Rogers, musician Jason Harrod, and artist/illustrator Reed Prescott. Participants are encouraged to bring their own works in progress to share with their workshop groups. The event will conclude with a concert on Saturday afternoon. Cost is \$200 for full time, \$130 for day participants, \$40 Saturday afternoon (includes session, dinner & concert). Brochures are available in literature racks near church entryways. For more info., contact Bill or Bernice at [govehill@abcvnh.org](mailto:govehill@abcvnh.org) or 802-785-4000.

### **EASTER BRUNCH – FREE!**

Plan on staying after the early service, or come early to the second service for our annual Easter brunch at 9:00 AM! A continental style breakfast with breads, pastries, fruit & more! If you can donate items for the breakfast, please sign up on the sanctuary board or see Bernice Clark (802-785-2026).

### **INTERESTED IN BEING BAPTIZED?**

A service of baptism is being planned for Palm Sunday, March 28. If you'd like to be baptized or have questions regarding baptism, please speak to the pastor.

### **PALM SUNDAY FOOTWASHING SERVICE**

A service of footwashing will be held on Palm Sunday, March 28 at 6:30 PM. This is a unique and moving service of Christian love and servanthood, as we sit in a circle and wash one another's feet and then serve communion to each other. Please come prepared to participate (no panty hose please!). *"Then (Jesus) poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet . . . he said to them . . . 'So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.'"* Join us!

### **MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE**

Please join us on Thursday, April 1 at 6:30 PM for a facsimile Passover Meal in remembrance of the Last Supper. Sign-up on the bulletin board at the back of the sanctuary.

### **GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE**

Friday, April 2 at 6:30 PM – a service of music and meditation on the Cross and Christ's sacrifice for us.

### **ECUMENICAL GOOD FRIDAY WALK**

A walk in the footsteps of Jesus to the cross – meet at Sacred Heart Church at 3:00 PM to walk with fellow Christians around downtown Lebanon with readings remembering the stations of the cross.

### **COMMUNITY EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE**

Celebrate the empty tomb at 6:00 AM in Colburn Park in downtown Lebanon! Join with those from other churches in this early morning celebration of Jesus' resurrection!

### **TWO SERVICES ON EASTER SUNDAY!**

There will be two services at First Baptist on Easter Sunday morning. The first service will be at 8:00 AM and will be a service of reflection and communion. The second service will be at 10:00 AM and will include the worship team. Come to one service or both as we celebrate Easter together!

### **WHAT IS WHITE CROSS & HOW CAN YOU HELP???**

White Cross is an American Baptist Ministry - we have been asked to complete 3 simple projects which have to be completed and sent out by April 30<sup>th</sup>:

- 1) One project is to sew baby blankets, baby gowns, roller bandages, operating caps and an envelope for sterile goods. There's a handout available at church so you can understand better what's needed in the Congo.
- 2) Another project is the Friendship House of Peoria, A lot of these items can be purchased at the Dollar Store, there is also a handout at the church you can take shopping with you and know what is needed.
- 3) Our last project is a cash donation to Liberia in the amount of \$250.00. It only takes 50 people giving \$5.00 each and we will have it! \*Some of you may remember in your younger days your mother or grandmother doing projects to support the church and they were called the Women's Club – White Cross is another word for it. After we have these projects done we will be doing projects for the church. There are plans being made to have a Yard Sale on the back lawn of the church in April. Watch your bulletins for the date you can bring items in. No computers allowed. I do need ladies to help with the sale. Thanks to all of those are a part of the group and working on projects, we welcome all ladies who want to help out. Lorraine Bickford

### **EASTER WEEK EVENTS**

#### Palm Sunday – March 28

10:00 AM Service of Baptism

6:00 PM Footwashing Service

#### 96-Hour Prayer- Begins Wed., March 31@6AM

#### Maundy Thursday – April 1

6:30 PM – Supper Service

#### Good Friday – April 2

3:00 PM Ecumenical Good Friday Walk

6:30 PM Good Friday Service

#### Easter Sunday – April 4

6:00 AM – Ecumenical Sunrise Service

8:00 & 10:00 AM – Easter Worship

9:00 AM – Easter Brunch

10:00 AM – Easter Worship Service