

# THE TIMES NEWSLETTER

*A publication of the First Congregational Church*

*of Scarborough, Maine 04074*

**NOVEMBER 2024**



## PASTOR'S MESSAGE

### The Test of Time

Dennis and I took a trip to France this past August. It was a river cruise on the Seine, and every day we went on shore excursions that were just amazing. Our guides had so much knowledge about the places we toured. It was actually impossible to remember everything they were teaching us.

One of the things we were quickly reminded of, was how young we are as the United State of America in comparison to a place like France. Since we are less than 300 years old, we are actually pretty naïve as a nation. The reach of time in France is much longer and it has a much larger story to tell.



I recently found a picture on my phone that I took of the Cathedral de'Notre Dame in Rouen France (not to be confused with the one in Paris). Construction of a church began on its site as early as 395 CE. Think about that! The construction of the existing Cathedral began in the late 1020's, which makes it over 1000 years old.

This Cathedral has seen a lot in the course of human history. Built as an extraordinary, extravagant (albeit imperfect) symbol of Christian faith and worship, this “church” of God was a focal point of life in Rouen. Its caretakers, spiritual leaders, and parishioners gathered there for more generations than have ever even existed in the United States of America.

Those generations saw life's joys and sorrows and the rise and fall of kings and tyrants. The church endured destruction by fires and storms. The faith community was harmed by religious corruption. And after the French revolution in 1796, the Cathedral even experienced hostile takeover when Christian worship was temporarily replaced by a new belief system called “the cult of reason.” At the beginning of WWII in 1939, the Cathedral authorities did what they could to protect the building before the bombings began. They placed sandbags in front of many of the sculptures and removed as many stained-glass windows as they could and stored them far from the city.



On our tour we were brought to the gate of one of the chapels that was built during the Middle Ages on the east side of the Cathedral. It was the chapel of the Virgin Mary. At the front of the chapel stood statues of Mary and Joseph, and there was a beautiful painting of the Holy Family – like the one we see on many Christmas cards this time of year. Regardless of one’s theology about the Virgin Mary today, this place was very important to the people who lived during the time of the Black Plague when they sought the protection of Mary. As I looked upon this chapel, I reflected on the story of God’s salvation through Jesus, and how it has been preserved there for more than 700 years. It seemed to me to be an incredible witness to God’s gift of enduring hope for humanity.

The Cathedral in Rouen is beautiful. But what is most beautiful to me is the fact that it has survived for more than a thousand years and counting. The generations who helped its survival, have not been perfect. Some of them were faithful. Some of them were not. They experienced the destructive forces that threatened its very existence, and they rebuilt. And somehow the Cathedral ultimately prevailed as a place of Christian worship and as a focal point of the city of Rouen.

I hope we can “take heart” this Christmas in such stories of endurance - especially on those days we find ourselves feeling stressed in many different ways. The story of God’s salvation in the birth of Jesus is a story that has found continued resonance in the human heart for a very long time. It is a story for which cathedrals and chapels have been built and have stood as sentinels of its proclamation for thousands of years. And it is this longer story that we are a part of - which is reassuring. Our God has chosen to come and live among us. Yes God is with us and love will prevail!

I wish you a blessed and holy Advent and Christmas.

Yours in Christ’s Service,

Reverend Linda C. Hey



## Advent and Christmas Worship Services

1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent	December 1 9:30 A.M.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent	December 8 9:30 A.M.
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent	December 15 9:30 A.M.
4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent	December 22 9:30 A.M.
Christmas Eve - Service of Lessons and Carols	December 24 4:30 P.M.
Christmas Day (no service)	December 25



### Sing We Joyous All Together!

What an exciting time of year! Many packed weeks of gratitude are upon us, with Thanksgiving and the upcoming Advent Season so near; we have SO MUCH for which to be grateful. Thank you, God!

Here are highlights in our December Church Calendar, for music lovers, so read closely and see which events speak to you!



- Seasonal songs on Advent Sundays
- Seasonal Handbells and a Christmas Choir, with rehearsals beginning November 25th - 6pm for Handbells, 7 pm for choir, performing Christmas Eve
- A “*Celebrate Christmas with Music*” Community Gathering, at our church, December 15th, at 3pm, with featured soloists, and an ensemble or two, and then singing and listening to our favorite Christmas Carols, before enjoying Christmas cookies and punch downstairs - speaking of cookies, would you be willing to bake or buy and bring cookies for this gathering? Thanks in advance!
- December 21st, 3pm-5pm, caroling in various spots in Scarborough. We will begin at the Enclave after meeting at the church to pile into vans, or, just join us at the Enclave
- Christmas Eve with Strings, a Handbell Choir, and our loyal Church Choir spreading God’s Christmas joy!

## **SPECIAL THANKSGIVING OFFERING**

This is the last week of our traditional special Thanksgiving offering which this year is dedicated to the Scarborough Food Pantry, housed in our Parish House and staffed by members of our church and the community. This pantry has been in operation formally since about 1992. The activity has grown from food donations from church members to donations from the community, and our participation in the USDA surplus foods programs and a fairly steady stream of food donations. Each month the pantry serves as many as 150-230 people. The pantry is staffed by unpaid volunteers from the church and community. It is a wonderful outreach that we all can participate in, one way or another. Monetary donations help supply some of the basics such as fresh fruit and vegetables that do not come directly from donations, or the USDA food. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this special Thanksgiving Offering!!



## **CHRISTMAS SPECIAL OFFERING**

The Ministry of Outreach and Stewardship has chosen the Maine Veterans' Home as the recipient of this year's Christmas special offering. Maine Veterans' Home is a non-profit, award-winning senior services healthcare provider, offering care and comfort to approximately 600 of Maine's veterans, their spouses, and Gold star parents throughout the state. The organization is independent of the Department of Veterans Affairs however works closely with the department to access federal funding. They rely on the generous donations of individuals and organizations to help enhance the quality of life for residents by providing funds for activities, equipment, and facility projects.

Please consider a gift to support our veterans during this Christmas season using the special offering envelopes found in your pew or by simply designating Maine Veterans' Home on your check.

## **A REMINDER ABOUT SPECIAL OFFERING ENVELOPES**

Special Offering Envelopes are in the pew racks at Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. Those envelopes indicate that whatever is inside will go to whatever organization we, your ministry of outreach and stewardship, have chosen. If you don't find a special envelope, please write on the notation line of your check or mark a separate envelope for whichever offering it is. The money will go where it is supposed to and the counters will thank you!!!

From your Ministry of Outreach and Stewardship,  
Gail D., Sandy E., Pam J., Liane G., Lynn R.

## OUR GIVING TREE GOES UP SOON

At the end of November, members of the Ministry of Outreach and Stewardship will put up the Giving Tree. It will be decorated with little bags for putting gift cards for the Long Creek Youth Development Center. Currently there are fewer youth living at the Center but that number changes day to day. Many youths in the Justice System are now living in outlying facilities and out on parole or bond. The gift cards we donate will also go to these youths as part of their holiday celebrations. The gift cards are also used as incentives and rewards.

We will label the small gift bags on the tree with names of fast food restaurants and businesses that these children can use for their own supplies or needs. Please do not add any candy or other items in the bags. Also write on the gift card or add a slip of paper in the bag with the amount of the gift card.

Join us downstairs for Neighboring and pick up one or two gift bags from the tree. Please help to let these young people know that someone is thinking of them at this special time of year. We ask you to return them to the tree by Dec 15. We will be delivering them to Long Creek on Dec 18.

Thank you from the Ministry of Outreach and Stewardship

## NOVEMBER MISSION DONATIONS

During this Thanksgiving time the members of the Outreach and Stewardship Ministry want to give thanks to our church members for their support in helping those in need from our communities. This month our Ministry will be donating to three organizations that need our support for helping deliver domestic violence services. Those organizations are:

Through These Doors serving Cumberland County,

Caring Unlimited supporting York County and Maine

Coalition to End Domestic Violence across Maine.

These organizations work tirelessly to provide access to critical resources and immediate relief for domestic abuse survivors that will help increase their safety and financial stability. These organizations help survivors in Maine as they work toward establishing lives free from violence.

Outreach and Stewardship Ministry



## **CHURCH COUNCIL NEWS**

### **I. Becoming a UCC Covenanted Church**

In the Fall of 2022, we were blessed by being able to hire Rev Linda Hey as our interim pastor. She came to us with an abundance of skills, love and dedication to help us move forward as a church and hire a permanent pastor. I can't give justice to the many things she has brought to us including participating in all our ministries, leading the Transitional Steering Committee and most important guiding us in our spiritual and church needs. It is time for us to accept the responsibility of moving forward on results of this work. The Transitional Steering Committee recommends that our church begin a discernment process to obtain standing in the United Church of Christ (UCC). The Church Council made up of church leaders voted to accept this recommendation on October 1, 2024.

What does this mean? What has to happen? Where do I get answers to my questions?

We have had two congregational meetings to answer questions here is a summary of what we learned:

#### **Q: Why join the UCC and What are the benefits?**

A: Membership in UCC

- Expands our resources as a part of a larger church community
- Grows our fellowship, sharing information and strategies with more churches
- Guides us in understanding the changing church/world culture which is difficult if we are "going it alone". There is strength in numbers.
- Increases the potential for new members and more opportunities for learning
- Anchors us, helps us in the search process for a new pastor

#### **Q. What are the benefits of joining the UCC**

A: Ability to access wide range of resources available, including but not limited to:

- Guidance and resources for our pastoral search
- Financial guidance and resources for building needs
- Guidelines for missions and stewardship
- A chance to hear what other churches are doing
- A chance to be a part of something larger than ourselves.
- Support and educational opportunities for our pastor
- Mediation support for churches and their pastors

#### **Q: What is the financial impact of joining the UCC?**

A: There is a Per member per year assessment of approximately \$21 per member. This can be accounted for in a number of different ways and should not be a deterrent. We already pay part of it to the Cumberland Association.

**Q: Are we associated with UCC currently?**

A: We are associated with the Cumberland Association part of UCC. We are not in full covenant with the UCC. We have been fortunate to use some of their resources but we are not supporting them as full members.

**Q: Does joining the UCC mean that we have to adopt their programs like Open and Affirming, One Great Hour of Sharing etc.?**

NO! We are a Congregational Church. We make our own decisions and would research and vote on anything like this.

**Q: Will our pastoral search benefit if we join the UCC?**

A: Absolutely! We will be attractive to a larger pool of candidates, and be provided with guidance to assist in the process of a pastoral search. In addition, our pastor will benefit greatly from our being a member of the UCC in terms of professional development opportunities, resources, guidance and belonging to an association.

**Q: What if we join the UCC then decide it is not the right fit?**

A: We as a Congregation always have the authority to withdraw from the UCC.

**Q: Who will decide if we join the UCC?**

A: YOU, the Congregation will assemble to take a formal vote on whether or not to join the UCC. This is the same procedure we use in making any large decisions for the church.

Please consider being part of the committee for discernment.

## **II. Pastoral Search Committee**

Probably the most important action for our church is to form a Pastoral Search Committee. Some of you have probably been a part of this in the past. This is vital to the continuation and growth of our church. Yes, it will involve some time and work. Yes, we are all busy and tired. I feel strongly that God is working with us and will guide us through this process. Please pray about this and look into your heart to consider being a part of this committee. Don't let the nomination process deter you. If you feel you can help our church, just fill out the nomination form to the best of your ability and submit it to Elaine in the office. If you have questions or concerns; feel free to call Fran, Linda, anyone who was on the transitional steering committee or me. Get answers to any questions and consider offering your help. Our church needs you. Sincerely,

Kathy Ross

Member of Church Council

207-245-4173

# First Congregational Church Scarborough

## Nominations for the Pastoral Search Committee

**October 2024**

*“The search for a new pastor is one of the most spiritual ministries in the church. The selection of the Search Committee members is to be approached with prayer, wisdom, sensitivity, and awareness that God may be calling certain church members to serve in this particular capacity.”* (from UCC search and call process)

During the months of October and November, all members of the congregation are invited to consider nominations for the Pastoral Search Committee. There are a number of personal qualities and attributes individuals should have:

A passionate commitment to Christ’s church

A positive attitude (no grudges)

A capacity to approach the task with openness rather than a pre-determined agenda

A sense of integrity and respect for others

An ability to be absolutely confidential

A capacity to listen, to participate in a group, and to come to consensus.

An active, supportive member of the church as demonstrated by worship attendance, financial support, and participation

Trusted and respected by the congregation

Willing and able to be present for the meetings and to make this responsibility a very high priority.

All persons who are nominated should be asked in advance by those who wish to nominate them.

The Search Committee will be composed of 5 to 7 members. Two persons from the same family will not be asked to serve. The committee selection will strive for equal representation of gender, age, length of membership, etc. The members on this committee should reflect as much as possible, the diversity of the congregation. All persons serving on the Search Committee should be members of the church.

Once the nomination period is over, an appointed group from the church governing board (Council) will review the nominations and recommend the slate. Not all who are nominated will be selected.



## Nomination Form for the Pastoral Search Committee

(Note: You may place this completed form in a sealed envelope and mail it/leave it with our office administrator Elaine Sederlund, First Congregational Church, 161 Black Point Rd. Scarborough ME 04074. \*Be sure to indicate on the envelope that it is a Pastoral Search Committee nomination.\* Elaine will keep all nominations confidential until they are given to the appropriate members of the Church Council for discernment and selection in late November.)

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person being nominated: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person making the nomination: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

How long has this person been a church member? \_\_\_\_\_

What committees has this person served on, and for how long? (use back if needed)

---

---

---

List the reasons why you think this person would be an asset to the committee? (use back if needed)

---

---

---

Additional comments (use back if needed):

---

---

---

## HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR ADVENT SERVICES

There are four Sundays in Advent, beginning December 1st and we hope the pews will fill with worshippers.. Each Sunday we light an Advent candle in the front of the church, read Scripture from the Bible, and welcome neighbors and visitors to our church.

If you would like to light a candle, read Scripture or usher at one of the services, please let Rev. Hey know, or sign up downstairs and call the office.



## READINGS FOR ADVENT

Come enjoy a quiet time of spiritual renewal amid the hubbub of Christmas festivities - take a few minutes to meet with your neighbors for a cookie and a reading for Advent. Nothing to “do”, just be yourself at rest.

Dates: Mondays December 2, 9, and 16

Time: 3PM

Place: church annex parlor (161 Black Point Rd)

Leader: Liane Giambalvo 207-735-7478 (leave a voice mail) or text, or email

liane.giam@icloud.com

**THE CRAFTS AND FELLOWSHIP GROUP** will continue to meet on Tuesday afternoons in November and December, Christmas Eve excepted. We meet at 1:30 in the Annex/Office downstairs. Come bring your favorite craft or help with a project in progress. Please contact Sandra Elder with any questions.

## TRUNK OR TREAT

On Saturday afternoon, October 26, 2024, the church parking lot filled with costumed trick-or-treaters and their families. Twenty-two members and friends of our church parked their cars with the trunks open, decorated along a Halloween theme and filled with candy.

We estimate that about 175 souls attended. Besides the trunk or treating, there were hot dogs and s'mores to be consumed, photo-ops and games on the grass. Everyone was very grateful for the chance to be together outdoors and having fun.

10

At the end of this Newsletter are 2 pages of photos from the event. See you again next year!

## YULETIDE FAIR

The Yuletide Fair is fast approaching! Saturday, December 7, 2024 from 8:30 to noon is the big day. We have been asking for help over the past few months, so this will be our last plea for your assistance. Below are the things we are requesting of you if you are able:



**CANDY/BAKED GOODS** – we are always looking for homemade candies, jam, jelly, pickles, relishes, breads, Whoopie Pies, cupcakes, etc. There have been sign up sheets in the Vestry during Neighboring, so we hope you were able to sign up. If you have any questions, please contact Susan Fielding about Candy or Gail Dobriko about baked goods. All candy and baked goods need to be wrapped in clear wrap so people can see what they are buying.

**JEWELRY** – The Jewelry table is always looking for gently used jewelry that you no longer want or need. There is a box for drop-offs in the Narthex or you can contact Barbara Grotton or Ruth Bruns.



**CRAFTS** - If you have made crafts, please drop them off at the Parish Hall after November 24th. If you have questions, contact Nancy Hall or Sue Hilton.

**CHRISTMAS** - We are always looking for items for the gently used Christmas table. If you have Christmas items that are no longer wanted, clean, in working order and not broken, you can drop them off at the Parish Hall after November 24th. For any questions, please contact Merry Roberts.

**COOKIE WALK** - This is a very popular table and they sell out almost every year! We usually receive lots of chocolate chip, so try a fun new recipe! People love a variety. All cookies should be approximately 2 inches in diameter. They should be packaged 2 cookies to a zip lock bag for sanitary purposes. If you have any questions, please contact Joanne Brown or Sharon Haskell.



**PLEASE NOTE:** All perishable food items **MUST** be delivered by noon on Friday, December 6th. This will allow time for pricing and display. Candies and baked goods are requesting that items be delivered between 10:00 - 1:00 on Thursday, December 5th. All non-perishable items can be delivered to the Parish Hall after November 24th. If you have any questions, please contact Roberta Brown at [rmbrown128@yahoo.com](mailto:rmbrown128@yahoo.com).



**ORDER A POINSETTIA PLANT FOR CHRISTMAS  
TO HELP US TO ADORN OUR CHURCH**

This is a long-standing tradition here as a way to remember and honor our loved ones as well as celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. We are offering, from Fleur de Lis in South Portland, a medium size red plant in a 7 ½ inch pot for \$30.00. To order a plant, please fill out the form below and **bring it or mail it to the Church Office** (161 Black Point Rd.) with your payment enclosed.

Checks payable to: **First Congregational. Church of Scarborough**

**Please do not place it in the offering plate.**

Orders will be taken until **Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup>**.

If you prefer, you may purchase your own plant. Please be sure to put your name on it and fill out the form below as well, indicating that you will be providing your own plant. Please leave your plant in the Church Office or the Vestry, with your name on it by Tuesday, December 10th.

A list of dedications will be in the bulletins on Sunday, Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> and Dec. 22 and on Christmas Eve.

**# of plants** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dedication: Circle one** - in memory of / in honor of

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Providing your own plant: \_\_\_\_ **Deadline: Tuesday, December 10th, 2024**

**DEADLINE TO ORDER: Friday, December 6**

**Spotted at our Trunk or Treat last month:**

A pineapple,

A construction worker, and

A piñata, to name a few.



**Also spotted at the Trunk or Treat event**

(clockwise from upper right):

Joanne Brown and Diane Brown

Mary Ellen Bossom

Ruth Bruns and friend

Dennis Bailey

And a parking lot abuzz with activity.























