

ABOUT THE PASTOR

My journey toward parish ministry began in 1983 when my wife, Penny, and I moved from South Portland to Bangor so I could attend the Bangor Theological Seminary. In 1988 I graduated from BTS with a Master of Divinity degree, and soon after I was called as the pastor of the First Congregational Church in East Millinocket. I was ordained a minister in the United Church of Christ on June 12th, 1988. I

Although living up in Aroostook Country sometimes made me feel like a fish out of water, I remained at the East Millinocket church for almost six years. Then Penny, our 3-year old daughter Alisha and I moved to Conway, New Hampshire, where I became the pastor of the Conway Village Congregational Church. I was there for fifteen years, and became the longest serving minister in that church's history.

In November of 2008, I was overjoyed to be able to return to the Southern Maine area where I was born and grew up to become the pastor of the First Congregational Church of Scarborough. This faith community is the "jewel" in my minister's crown, and I don't plan on seeking a call to another church anytime soon! Parish ministry is a challenging profession, but I get a lot of satisfaction from writing meaningful sermons and leading worship on Sunday mornings. I especially enjoy giving a Children's Message, and I'm always delighted by the unexpected things the young people I interact with say and do.

I believe one of the most important responsibilities I have as a minister is to walk with my parishioners as they go through the different phases and experiences of their lives. I am humbled and know what a privilege it is to share sacred moments with my congregants such as baptisms, weddings, hospital stays, funerals, and painful or difficult experiences where spiritual counseling and advice might help.

When I'm not busy doing pastoral work, I enjoy writing. I have been published seven times in various magazines and publications (mostly children's stories), and I harbor dreams of writing a best-selling novel one day. I also draw and paint a little for fun and relaxation, but I'm the first to admit that I'm no Pablo Picasso or Vincent van Gough. I'm a big reader and usually have two or three books going simultaneously. Penny and I go to the gym together on a regular basis to keep in shape and work off stress. When the weather is nice we enjoy taking walks around the neighborhood. And when life seems especially challenging, I'm not averse to taking a nap!

Whether you are looking for a permanent spiritual home, you're a tourist in the area doing some sightseeing and want to find a church to attend while you're here, or you are just plain curious, I hope you will stop in and see us some Sunday. We would love to have you be our guest!

Fred Gagnon, pastor
First Congregational Church of Scarborough