

# THE TIMES NEWSLETTER

*A publication of the First Congregational Church  
of Scarborough, Maine 04074*

**MAY 2019**



## MINISTER'S CORNER



Dear Friends:

It's May, and one of the busiest times of the church year for pastors is now over. As much as I enjoy the Lenten season, Holy Week and Easter, when it's over and the pace begins to slow down a bit I take a deep breath and ponder how all the activities went and how I might improve things and do a better job next year. Thank you for your support, understanding and empathy during that very hectic time.

As I think about the various seasons of the Church year and how they allow us to journey along with and experience the life of Jesus, I also thought about the seasons and stages of life that we go through as human beings. And I rediscovered a humorous story that offers a smile-inducing "explanation" of why human beings go through the phases of life they go through. Enjoy!

God created the mule, and told it, "You are mule. You will work constantly from dusk to dawn, carrying heavy loads on your back. You will eat grass and lack intelligence. You will live for fifty years."

The mule answered, "Lord, to live like that for fifty years is too much. Please, give me no more than twenty-five years of life."

And it was so.

Then God created the dog and told it, "You are dog. You will watch over the homestead of your master and serve with dedication, doing everything you are told to do. You will lick your master's feet and eat table scraps. You will live for thirty-five years."

The dog responded, "Lord, to live that way for thirty-five years is too much. Please, give me no more than twenty years of life."

And it was so.

God then created the monkey and told him, "You are monkey. You will swing from tree to tree, acting like an idiot. You will be funny, and you shall live for fifty years."

The monkey responded, "Lord, to live for fifty years as the clown of the world is too much. Please, give me no more than thirty years of life."

And it was so.

Finally, God created the human being and said, "You are human, the only rational creature that walks the earth. You will use your intelligence and have mastery over the other creatures of the world. You will dominate the earth and live for twenty-five years."

*(continued on page 2)*

The human responded, “Lord, to be human for only twenty-five years is too little. Please, give me the twenty-five years the mule refused, the fifteen years the dog didn’t want, and the twenty years the monkey rejected.”

And it was so.

And God made human beings to live twenty-five years as humans; then marry and live twenty years like a mule working and carrying heavy loads; and humans were to have children and live fifteen years as a dog, guarding their house and eating the leftover scraps from the pantry after the children have been fed; then, in old age, human beings would live twenty years as a monkey, acting like an idiot to amuse the grandchildren.

And it was so.

### **ANNUAL MEETING ON SUNDAY, MAY 5th AFTER WORSHIP**

The annual meeting of the First Congregational Church of Scarborough will be held in the church sanctuary on Sunday, May 5th, following the worship service. We hope you will plan on attending this important gathering of our faith community so the membership can approve the 2019-20 budget, elect a new slate of officers and committee members, vote on some proposed bylaw changes, and carry out any other business that might come before the church members. See you there!

### **HOW GOD WANTS US TO LIVE OUR LIVES**

Ronald B. Corn shares the following experience.

“In our church, at the end of each Sunday service, the congregation sings and applauds as the children file into the sanctuary to take their place up front. There are children from different ethnic groups gathered together, laughing and enjoying one another. When I see this activity it reminds me of an incident from many years ago.

Walt Augustine was an African-American co-worker from Chicago who often visited our office in Kansas City. One day a group of us was discussing some of life’s challenges. Walt shared with us that his six-year-old son, James, had talked many times about Michael, his playmate at school. One day Walt asked James if Michael was black. His son looked at him in a very puzzled way and replied, “I don’t know. I’ll have to look.”

This story always reminds me of how God wants us to live our lives—void of prejudices and accepting of one another with our differences, just as Walt’s son James did.

### **PLEASE BE SAFE**

Here is an important Public Service Announcement from the First Congregational Church of Scarborough.

Safety Tips:

1. Do not ride in an automobile. They cause 20% of all fatal accidents.
2. Do not stay at home. 17% of all accidents happen there.
3. Do not walk in the street. 15% of all accidents happen to pedestrians.
4. Do not travel by air, rail or water. 16% of all accidents result from these activities.  
Come to church. Only .001% of all accidents happen in church!



## STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT

Money has purchasing power. Have you ever thought about what that “purchasing power” brings you through your church offering? Here’s how Byron H. Hatfield put it:

My church empowers me:

To keep a sky in my life, and look up.  
To keep my hand in God’s, and hold on to Him.  
To see eternal values above the material.  
To put service before self, and to follow Christ.  
To see the good in others and praise it.  
To keep my spirit sweet and allow it to grow.  
To have a seeing eye, a feeling heart, and a helping hand.  
To test the motives of my life and choose the best ones.  
To do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

## TIME OUT FOR PRAYER

“Prayer transforms any space into holy space; or perhaps better said, prayer reveals and recognizes the intrinsic holiness that awaits us in each and every place. But it is crucial that such holiness be both perceived and acknowledged. . . . G. K. Chesterton writes thus of his own sense of acknowledging that holiness:

‘You say grace before meals.  
All right.  
But I say grace before the plays

and opera,  
and grace before the concert  
and pantomime,  
And grace before I open a book,  
And grace before sketching,  
painting,  
Swimming, fencing, boxing,  
walking, playing, dancing,  
And grace before I dip the pen in ink.’”

From  
*Preaching the Gospel in Poetry  
and Parables (2006)*

## STEWARDSHIP NEWS

From the Stewardship Committee - “76 Pledges have been received as of April 20<sup>th</sup> for a total of \$130,248. If all people who pledged last year and haven’t yet pledged this year did so, we would have an increase of \$18,336! Thank you to all and thanks in advance to those who still may do so.”

## NEW BIBLE STUDY Beginning May 15th

The topic is *Choose Joy, Because Happiness Isn’t Enough*. In this DVD study which includes a participant’s guide, “Kay Warren shares the path to experiencing soul-satisfying joy no matter what you are going through.” There are 4 weekly sessions beginning May 15th and ending June 5th, 3:30pm to 4:45pm, Wednesdays, in the Ladies’ Parlor. For more info or to sign up, contact Elizabeth Deal by phone (799-4599) or email ([elizabethgdeal@aol.com](mailto:elizabethgdeal@aol.com)) by May 1st.

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## **Scripture Reading**

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God”

**John 3:16-21**

## Food Pantry Update

During the month of **March 2019** we served **133** people with **7** new families coming in for help. We provided **353** individuals with food from our pantry.

A special thank you to those who have purchased Hannaford Food Boxes that are given to everyone who comes to the Food Pantry.

Please consider a weekly or monthly donation to the Food pantry. Checks are always appreciated too!

**Thank you!**



**SINGERS AND**

**STRINGERS**

Singers and Stringers are back!

We began practicing in April and will continue to practice 2 more times so we can be ready to sing this summer for “special music” while the choir takes a break.

We only practice once a month for about an hour. If you can’t make all the practices, that’s OK – but we ask that you try to make as many as possible.

Here is our practice schedule:

Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup> – 6:30 pm @ church

Wednesday, June 12<sup>th</sup> – 6:30 pm @ church

Our plan is to sing once in June after choir is done, once in July, and once in August. The dates will be determined at our practice in April.

Please think about joining us! You don’t need a lot of singing experience. We don’t do complex songs – our goal is to have fun with the music! – but the more we sing together, the better we become.

Our mantra is: “Feel the Music!”

If you happen to play guitar, ukulele, banjo, etc – we would LOVE to have you in the group.

Hope to see you in May!

Brenda and Ray Birkner

[Grabirk94@gmail.com](mailto:Grabirk94@gmail.com)

207-650-4514 Brenda

207-650-5180 Ray

Call, email, or see us at church with any ?????’s.

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**FCC Long Range Planning Update**

The Long Range Planning Team has been meeting since November, gathering information and gaining perspective that will help them as they work with the congregation to identify FCC’s priorities for the future. Team members include Bob Barton, Ann Blanchard, Diane Brown, Ruth Bruns, Ellen Byrne, Sue Hilton, Pam Joy, Sheryl Rhodes, Bryce Roberts, John Veltri and Rob Willey. Please feel free to approach any team member with questions or comments (*their name tags have purple ribbons*).

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## FCC ANNUAL MEETING ON SUNDAY MAY 5th

The annual meeting of the First Congregational Church of Scarborough will be held in the church sanctuary on Sunday, May 5th after the worship service. We hope you will plan on attending this important gathering of our faith community so we can approve the 2019-2020 budget, elect a new slate of board and committee members, and carry out any other business that might come before the congregation.

### **Annual Meeting Notice – Absentee/Proxy Voting**

Do you have a schedule conflict with the May 5 Annual Meeting of Church membership this year? There is good news — you can still vote when not physically present at the meeting! Another church member can be designated as your delegate to vote on your behalf at the meeting, or you can choose to assign your vote to the Moderator and/or ministries that are sponsoring an Article, meeting minutes, or an annual meeting proposal.



All you need to do is complete the PROXY form that can be obtained by visiting or contacting the Church office. The completed form must be physically delivered, faxed, or postal mailed (e-mail's cannot be accepted) no later than Thursday, May 2. Please contact the Church office with questions.



This is an all out plea to the congregation. We need people to PLEASE sign up for a one year only commitment to one of our ministries. Some of these ministries meet right after the church service and meet once a month, and you are not required to make every meeting! The Members, Friends & Church Life Ministry is tasked each year with nominating people for each ministry. This year we are finding ourselves short of 22 open positions.

Please consider, even if you have served before or are on another committee, to join one of the following:

**Ministry of Worship & Spiritual Care** - Manages everything to do with all worship services, recruiting ushers, pastor relations, flowers, music, etc. - need 8 more people.

**Ministry of Governing & Finances** - Manages all finances, buildings, technology oversight, church by-laws, etc. - need 2 more people.

**Ministry of Members, Friends & Church Life** - Organize neighboring after worshipping, community building events and fun activities, visitor registry tracking, sending welcome cards, etc. - We are all set with 9 people and will always welcome more help.

**Ministry of Christian Outreach & Stewardship** - Plan and run the annual stewardship campaign, directs financial support of missions and special offerings, etc. - in need of one more person.

**Ministry of Christian Education** - Organize and run Sunday School Program, recruit teachers and volunteers for the nursery, Youth group programs, adult education & Bible study, etc. - need at least 4 more people.

We are also looking for: 2 - Council At-Large, 1 Moderator, and 3 needed for the Ministry of Audit and a Sunday School Superintendent.

Please give this some prayerful thought to help as a volunteer for one or more positions. This truly is doing God's work and is very rewarding.



**WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP** May 1st , Wednesday at 9:00 am, at Simple Simon's, Rt. 1 in So. Portland,  
The women of FCC meet for Coffeetime the first Wednesday of the month. All women of the church are invited and so please come and join us! Contact Edie Davidson with questions: 767-4682/edavidson@gwi.net.

**CRAFTS WORKSHOP** May 2nd, Thursday from 1-3pm in the Parish Hall  
All are welcome to join us to work on crafts for our Christmas Fair in December. We meet on the first and third Thursday of the month downstairs in the Parish Hall.  
Come and create, have fun and enjoy the fellowship! Questions, speak to Susan Fielding @ 883-6239.

**E-WASTE EVENT** May 4th, Saturday, 9am -1pm  
The annual FCC E-Waste recycling event will be held in the church parking lot, drive in and drop off! For a donation to our church you can dispose of your old electronic devices. Let your friends know too! Some accepted items are TV's, VCR's, DVD players, printers, laptops, monitors, cell phones, digital cameras and tape players. A complete list of acceptable items will be posted on the bulletin board in the vestry and the church office. Monetary donations are gratefully accepted! Thank you!

**MEN'S FELLOWSHIP** May 11th, Saturday from 8:30-10:30a.m. in the Ladies' Parlor  
All men of the church are welcome to join us for our monthly get together. We meet the second Saturday of the month for fellowship, coffee and munchies. Contact Dan Davidson with any questions at: danprpro@gwi.net or Phone: 767-4682

**PITCH THE STITCH** May 15th, Wednesday, 1-3pm  
Join our sewing group in the Annex (church office), weather permitting. We meet on the third Wednesday of the month to either sew, quilt, knit or come to just visit. Questions, speak to Liane Giambalvo, 735-7478, or Randie Bowden, 749-8696.

**WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**  
Invitation to all women of FCC: Come join us at **Women's Fellowship** for the **Annual Banquet**:  
**When: May 21, 2019, Tuesday Time: 12:00pm Where: Fireside Inn, Westbrook**  
**Program: "Twenty Questions" with Sheryl Rhodes**  
The cost is \$22 (please prepay by May 14th) and you have a choice of either fish or chicken. Please contact Sheryl Rhodes at 636-399-7239 with questions and your order. We will meet at the church parking lot at 11:30 a.m. to car-pool. This will be our last program until September.

## **MINISTRY MEETINGS**

**Church Council: May 7th, Tues., 6:30 pm** meet in the Ladies' Parlor.

**Ministry of Christian Outreach & Stewardship:**  
**May 12th, Sun., 11:00** meet in the Annex.

**Ministry of Members, Friends & Church Life:**  
**May 19th, Sun., 11:00 am** meet in the Church Vestry.

**Min. of Governing & Finance:**  
**May 20th, Mon., 7:00 pm** meet in the Annex.

**Ministry of Worship & Spiritual Care:**  
**May 26th, Sun., 11:00 am** meet in the Ladies' Parlor.

**Ministry of Christian Education - TBD**



**Reminder: Deadline for the June Newsletter is May 15th. So please have all information to the church office on or before May 15th if you'd like to see something in the June issue. Thank you!**



**Office Hours**  
Monday-Friday  
9:00am -3:00pm  
Telephone: 883-2342  
Fax: 883-9875  
Church email:  
fcchurch@maine.rr.com  
Website address:  
fccscarborough.com

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**\*\*VOLUNTEERS NEEDED \*\***

We are always looking for Ushers & Greeters, Neighboring hosts, Nursery helpers, and people to sign up to help supply the flowers for the Altar for each Sunday's worship service. **Please sign up soon, thank you!!**

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**Staff Information**

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| The Rev. Alfred Gagnon III, Minister<br>Email: RevFredGagnon@maine.rr.com | Penny Gagnon, Church Clerk     |
| Holly Buonaiuto, Administrative Assistant<br>Email: fcchurch@maine.rr.com | Brenda Harrison, Treasurer     |
| Don Darling, Custodian<br>Email: fcchurch@maine.rr.com                    | Carl Ross, Recording Treasurer |
| Bethany Kirkpatrick, Director of Music<br>Email: fccmusic@maine.rr.com    | Kevin Crowley, moderator       |
| Wendy Northrup, Organist  |                                |

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**Ministry Chairpersons**

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|---|---|
| <b>At-Large Council Members:</b> Trish Iaconeta, Janet Peters       | <b>Ministry of Christian Outreach &amp; Stewardship:</b> Ruth Bruns |
| <b>Ministry of Audit:</b> TBD                                       | <b>Ministry of Christian Education:</b> Karen Jackson               |
| <b>Ministry of Worship &amp; Spiritual Care:</b> Elaine Sederlund   | <b>Women's Fellowship President:</b> Joanne Brown                   |
| <b>Ministry of Governing &amp; Finance:</b> Kathy Ross              | <b>Men's Fellowship:</b> Dan Davidson                               |
| <b>Ministry of Members, Friends &amp; Church Life:</b> Joanne Brown | <b>Youth Group:</b> TBD   |

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*A Publication of First Congregational  
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Wishing you the  
very best this  
Mother's Day!

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**Note:** If you no longer wish to  
receive this monthly newsletter,  
**PLEASE** call, 883-2342 or e-mail  
the church office at  
fcchurch@maine.rr.com  
*Thank you!*

Mailing Label



## **CROCKPOT SUPPER!**



**Where:** First Congrega-  
tional Church of Scarborough  
**When:** Saturday, May 18th  
**Time:** 5:00 - 6:30pm

Everyone is welcomed to join us for this fun social event!  
Pay at the door - \$7 for adults, children 12 and under - \$5.  
Take out will be available.

We'll have all types of crockpots full of baked beans, mac & cheese, chili, stews, soups, caserroles and salads - Beverages and dessert too! Contact the office or Joanne Brown, 883-2057 if you would like to volunteer to help. Hosted by the Ministry of Members, Friends & Church Life.  
Thank you!