

THE TIMES NEWSLETTER

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

NOVEMBER 2019



MINISTER'S CORNER



Dear Friends,

Can something good come out of suffering and pain? What do you think?

When Robert Greene was 37-years old, he was driving home late one night and was hit head-on by a car that careened off the road and collided into his car. As a result he spent the next 54 weeks in the hospital, and now for the rest of his life he will have to deal with significant pain. But in spite of his suffering, he wrote this in a letter to his mother.

"I would like to express what I have been thankful about . . . First, I am thankful for my ability to express myself . . .

"Second, I can see. True, I see double, but some will say that is twice as good as before, and it is a lot better than half as good. I could be blind. But even if I were blind, at least I could feel.

"Third, I have good strength in my arms. This helps me move in my wheelchair and helps me walk with crutches.

"Fourth, I can bear weight on my legs . . . I am lucky to still have them, and it is nothing short of a miracle that I can walk at all

"Fifth, I am alive at a time and in a society where a sizable investment in health care has been made...

"Sixth, nearly everything I have experienced since the accident has been of value and support to me, and has helped me become a better person

"Seventh, I give thanks to my brother for his friendship.

"Eighth, I give thanks to my wife for all the happiness and tears we have known together.

"Ninth, I am grateful to my children, Rebecca and Kiersten, for the joy and richness they have brought to my life.

"Tenth, I am thankful for the future, for it holds not a promise, but a challenge and an opportunity.

"I have not lost sight of the fact that I have had a serious misfortune. I would not wish it on anyone. But starting from ground zero, and assuming that like everyone else I am entitled to nothing, the fact that I am experiencing anything positive is a plus. And I have enjoyed more pluses than minuses, thanks be to God."

My friends, I believe thankfulness isn't just a feeling that is generated in us when we experience something positive, but it is also (and perhaps it is mostly) a choice we make to find something positive to be grateful for, especially when we have a negative experience.

(continued on next page)

Perhaps this Thanksgiving, even if we have had a difficult year, we can do what Robert Greene did and make a list of ten things we are thankful about. If we can't come up with ten things, how about five? And if not five, perhaps we can think of at least one thing we are grateful for. Because having even one thing we are thankful about gives us reason to exclaim, "Thanks be to God!"

May Thanksgiving Day be a blessed and joyous occasion for you and your loved ones, and an opportunity to give thanks for the blessings God has bestowed on you.

Speaking of which

Fred

WHAT I AM PERSONALLY THANKFUL FOR

I have much to be grateful for in my life, but at this time I want to give thanks to God and to the First Congregational Church of Scarborough for the following things I am especially thankful for:

1. The wonderful Pastor's Appreciation Day celebration, with a beautiful cake and delicious goodies, the generous gift cards, and the well-wishes of many church members and friends. This is, by far, the best church I have ever been the pastor of in my years of ministry, and I appreciate all of you, too!

2. Holly Buonaiuto for her years of dedicated service as our administrative assistant and her willingness to stay on past the time of her resignation notice until we could find a replacement. Holly, it has been a pleasure to work with you and get to know you better. We shared a lot of laughs and helped and supported each other when it was needed. Thanks for making my job easier and less stressful. You will always have my undying gratitude.

3. Elaine Sederlund, who is stepping into the administrative assistant position and has been shadowing Holly to learn the ropes of the job. Elaine, thanks so much for taking on this duty. I look forward to working with you in the years to come as we navigate the slings and arrows of church administration together. Just to let you know, the job has kind of a steep learning curve, but I will be around to answer any questions you have. Of course, you may want to have Holly's phone number on speed dial, just in case!

4. Brenda Harrison, for all the time and effort she put into being our church treasurer. You helped to organize our books and modernize our way of doing business, and the church is a lot better off because of it. Thank you so much.

5. Carl Ross, for being our recording treasurer and quietly but effectively working with our treasurer to keep tabs on our pledges, income, payroll and bill paying. Thank you for your time and effort "behind the scenes" as you help us keep our finances in order.

6. Terri Brown, for taking on the positions of church moderator, chair of the Ministry of Worship and Spiritual Care, Scripture reader, worship leader, and supportive parishioner and friend. Thank you, Terri. Your support and friendship mean a lot to me. I clearly see God working in your life and calling you to some kind of leadership role in our church, and I couldn't be more proud or happy about that. I truly admire your willingness to step outside your comfort zone and see where the Holy Spirit is leading you. May God guide and support you as you move forward spiritually. And know that I'm always available if you think I can be of help.

7. Members of the Ministry of Governing and Finances, for the tremendous amount of work you had to do in the past few months. In addition to all the usual significant responsibilities of budgets and building/property maintenance, you have been laboring during a whirlwind time, seeking to fill two major positions in our church: administrative assistant and treasurer, and oversee our transition to a new phone system.

Thank you for all the extra hours you put in and the additional energy you had to expend so those tasks could get done. Your dedication is deeply and sincerely appreciated.

8. To the Men's Group and Women's Fellowship for blessing our church with your talents and abilities. You have done much to fix up the parsonage, helped purchase needed church items that we really couldn't afford otherwise, financially supported my daughter Alisha so she could achieve her dream of going to Africa to help others with her speech and language skills, and so many other things. I can't thank you enough for all the good works you do for our faith community.

9. Finally, to all the other people, ministries and church organizations I didn't mention due to lack of time, space and the mental capacity to remember, please know that I did not intentionally leave you out. I know what you have done and what a tremendous blessing you are to our church, and I am very thankful for each and every one of you. God bless you all!

Fred

THE HOLY ALPHABET

Although things are not perfect
Because of trial or pain
Continue in thanksgiving
Do not begin to blame
Even when times are hard
Fierce winds are bound to blow
God is forever able
Hold on to what you know
Imagine life without God's love
Joy would cease to be
Keep thanking God for all things
Love imparts to thee
Move out of "Camp Complaining"
No weapon that is known
On earth can yield the power
Praise can do alone
Quit looking at the future
Redeem the time at hand
Start every day with worship
To "thank" is a command
Until we see God coming
Victorious in the sky
We'll run the race with gratitude
Exalting God most high
Yes, there'll be good times and some will be
but...
Zion waits in Glory...where none are ever sad.



A PERSPECTIVE OF GRATITUDE

There was a time when faith began to slip,
When I had lost all that I had to lose—
Or so it seemed to me. I lost home,
My job—I had no house, no food, no shoes.
Then suddenly I felt ashamed,
For I, who talked of shoes
Then chanced to meet
Upon the busy highway of my life
A man who had no feet.

Unknown author

TIME OUT FOR PRAYER

I thank Thee, O God
for each new morning with its light,
for rest and shelter of the night
for health and food, for love and friends,
for everything Thy goodness sends.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

bad,

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

If we are truly thankful, we will not just give what we have,
we will also give what we are.



SINGERS & STRINGERS

Singers and Stringers will be providing the "Special Music" at the December 29th Church Service. In preparation for that, we will be practicing in the church sanctuary on: Wednesday, November 13 – 6:30 pm
Wednesday, December 11 – 6:30 pm

It is not too late to join us with your voice and/or your stringed instrument. You don't need a lot of singing experience. Our goal is to have fun with the music!

Hope to see you at practice! Call, email, or see us at church with any ????'s. Brenda and Ray Birkner
Grabirk94@gmail.com 207-650-4514 Brenda
207-650-5180 Ray



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP ANNUAL CHRISTMAS FAIR December 7, 2019 9am - 1pm



Much preparation is going into having a joyous and successful Christmas fair. Offerings will include baked goods, candy, holiday decorations, crafts and jewelry. The Men's Fellowship will offer a lunch of hot dogs, chips and drinks upstairs in the Parish Hall and coffee downstairs to accompany the popular Cookie Walk. Chicken pot pies will be available to take out.

We need lots of helpers to set-up, cover tables, put items out, man the tables, serve the public and then clean-up! All hands on deck help our fair to be a success. We need baked goods, fudge, needhams, greens, crafts, knits, vintage articles, jewelry, and cookies for the cookie walk. General questions call Joanne Brown, 883-2057 or Sheryl Rhodes, 636-399-7239. There will be Volunteer Sign-Up Sheets posted in the Vestry during Neighboring or contact: Penny Van Duyne, 510-1742



CHRISTMAS CANDY WORKSHOP

Calling all who are interested in helping to make and package candy for our Christmas Fair. We will meet Saturday, November 16th between 8:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. in the church kitchen. It has been a tradition to make peanut brittle in large quantities for our fair. We are appreciative of the candy maker's materials supplied by Len Libby's Candy Shop. If you are planning to come please let Susan Fielding or Vickie Flynn know; you are still welcome to just show up. We have fun getting together to do this. Susan's number is 883-6239.

From Your Ministry of Outreach and Stewardship



The **Thanksgiving Offering** this year will be dedicated to Hospice of Southern Maine, more specifically to the Hospice Center Campaign. You will likely have noticed the much-needed new facility under construction on Route 1 here in Scarborough. Every donation to the Center from Oct. 1 to Dec. 31 will be matched dollar for dollar by the Elmina B. Sewall Foundation. This organization provides hospice services throughout southern Maine with in-home care as well as in-patient care at Gosnell House. More to come on this. **Please make checks payable to First Congregational Church of Scarborough.**

News from Preble Street: The folks at Preble Street extend their gratitude for the many donations of socks throughout the years and tell us that FCC has been one of their largest contributors. The need for socks has spread throughout the community and resulted in a local retailer pledging a donation of 900 pairs for the coming year.

Therefore, we are being asked to consider changing “Sock Sunday” to “Underwear Sunday”. The gentleman at the center stressed that they realize these are more expensive items and suggest you tailor any donations to what you would previously have budgeted for socks. Since their population is 75% men, that is the greater need; however, women and children are clients as well. On behalf of the committee, thanks for all your support!



PARKING LOT FUND

A news release will be going out to the press of our local publications, as well as signs that you will now see posted in our parking lot regarding the campaign to raise money for repaving the aging parking lot. The current estimated cost of the regrading and repaving is about \$100,000. In addition to the campaign within the congregation to raise money, the church is looking for outside organization and corporate donors to support the repaving initiative. The church has set up a GoFundMe web site (see below) for those who may wish to contribute, and more information may also be obtained on the church web site (see below):

GoFundMe: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/3ak9ym-parking-lot-replacement>

Church Website: https://www.fccscarborough.com/church_activities1

Or a check can be made out to: **First Congregational Church of Scarborough**

(with a designation for the “parking lot fund”)

Your thoughtful donation will be much appreciated!

The church’s finance ministry is coordinating the church’s fund raising campaign and announces, “We plan to promote a 3-year giving pledge that would help larger donors – both private and corporate who might wish to support the church.”, adding that “\$10,000 seed funding has been raised.”

NEED A LIFT?

Our church has a “ride ministry” to help members who are unable to drive to the grocery store, medical appointments and such. If you need a ride or are interested in becoming a volunteer driver for this ministry, please contact Pastor Gagnon or Elaine Sederlund, our Administrative Assistant, at the Church Office: 883-2342 for more information.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP COFFEETIME November 6th, Wednesday, 9:00 am, at First Light, (formerly the Egg & I Restaurant)

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.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP MONTHLY MEETING November 19, 2019 at 7:00pm in the Ladies' Parlor

Program: "Prayer: How, When and Where" - Andrea Yates, Presenter

Invitation to all women of FCC: Come join us at Women's Fellowship on the 4th Tuesday of every month, Enjoy our programs, fellowship and yes, our refreshments too! Bring a friend! This month we are accepting donations of PAPER GOODS for the Food Pantry, i.e. napkins, paper towels, paper plates, toilet paper, etc.



MEN'S FELLOWSHIP November 9th, Saturday at 8:30a.m. at Blast From the Past Diner

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 767-4682

FCC Long Range Planning Update

The Long Range Planning Team has been meeting since November 2018, 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)*

MINISTRY MEETINGS

Church Council: **November 5th, Tues., 6:30 pm**
meet in the Ladies' Parlor.

Ministry of Christian Outreach & Stewardship:
November 10th, Sun., 11:00 meet in the Annex.

Ministry of Members, Friends & Church Life:
November 17th, Sun., 11:00 am meet in the Ladies' Parlor.

Min. of Governing & Finance:
November 18th, Mon., 7:00 pm meet in the Annex.

Ministry of Worship & Spiritual Care:
November 24th, Sun., 11:00 am meet in the Ladies' Parlor.

Ministry of Christian Education - TBD



**Church
Committees**

AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR

The church has acquired an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) that is mounted on the Vestry wall near the restroom. The AED is an easy-to-use medical device that helps those experiencing sudden cardiac arrest. It analyzes the heart's rhythm and, if necessary, delivers an electric shock to help the heart re-establish an effective rhythm. Let's recognize and thank those members who were trained in CPR and use of the new AED last month. Any of the people listed below may open the cabinet and take the AED to the person needing assistance.



Liz Barton
Brenda Birkner
Edie Davidson
Mary Rose Buonaiuto
Penny Van Duyne
Allison Curry

Bob Barton
Ray Birkner
Dan Davidson
Andy Buonaiuto
Rob Willey
Marsha Evans

Donald Barker
Vickie Flynn
Dick Grotton
Terri Brown
John Veltri

THANK YOU, HOLLY. WELCOME ELAINE.

The Ministry of Governing and Finance is very pleased to announce that Elaine Sederlund has accepted the Administrative position for the church. She is excited to have the opportunity to serve the church in another capacity. She brings talents and professional experience that will certainly be helpful to the church.



We also cannot thank Holly Buonaiuto enough for the love, enthusiasm, patience and talent she has shared with the church during her time as Adminis-

trative Assistant. We will miss your smile as we walk in the door but know that you are off on a new life adventure. We wish you the best and may God bestow many blessings on you and your family.



Happy Thanksgiving!

Thanksgiving Harvest Basket Collection

This month the Food Pantry is seeking donations of fruits and seasonal vegetables that would supplement Thanksgiving and cold weather meals. There will be a harvest basket in front of the altar for donations starting Sunday, Nov. 3rd. Everyone can help with contributing fresh veggies and fruit, please. Thank you!



Cleaning Supplies Drive

Len and Liane Giambalvo have organized a cleaning supplies drive to provide Christmas gift bags for our food pantry recipients. Any donations of laundry, dish soap, scrubbies and such are very welcome. We hope to make 150-180 gift bags. Thank you!

Food Pantry Update

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. We do not accept donations when the "use by" date has expired. Checks are always appreciated too!
Thank you!

MEMBERS, FRIENDS & CHURCH LIFE MINISTRY REQUEST

One of our services of this committee is to supply neighboring each Sunday. Please consider signing up down in the vestry on the wall chart. Directions are listed - all very easy and should not be intimidating. You supply the "goodies", we supply cream, sugar, cups, plates, coffee, juice and crackers. Have a friend help you! If we all take turns everyone will benefit from the fellowship. Contact Joanne Brown @ 883-2057.



~~~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!!**

NEW PHONE LINE & NUMBER IN PARISH HALL **207-303-0198** is the new phone number to reach the Food Pantry and Pied Piper Nursery in the Parish Hall. The phone is in the kitchen of the Food Pantry. There is an answering machine as well.

Staff Information

The Rev. Alfred Gagnon III, Minister
Email: RevFredGagnon@maine.rr.com

Elaine Sederlund, Administrative Assistant
Email: fcchurch@maine.rr.com

Don Darling, Custodian
Email: fcchurch@maine.rr.com

Bethany Kirkpatrick, Director of Music
Email: fcmusic@maine.rr.com

Wendy Northrup, Organist

Fellowship Groups

Women's Fellowship: Joanne Brown

Men's Fellowship: Dan Davidson

Church Officers

Penny Gagnon, Church Clerk

Brenda Harrison, Treasurer

Carl Ross, Recording Treasurer

Terri Brown, Moderator

Ministry Chairs

Worship & Spiritual Care:

Governing & Finance:

Members, Friends &

Church Life:

Christian Outreach &

Stewardship:

Christian Education:

At Large Council Member:

Youth Group:

Audit:

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Office Hours
Monday-Friday
9:00am - 3:00pm

Terri Brown
Kathy Ross
Sheryl Rhodes

Ruth Bruns

Karen Jackson
Janet Peters
TBD
TBD

Reminder: The Deadline for the December Newsletter is November 15th. We will no longer be mailing the newsletter out to everyone. They will be available at church for pick up and will be mailed to shut-ins and to some members that live out-of-state. Sorry for any confusion and thank you for your patience during this transition.