

# THE TIMES NEWSLETTER

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

**OCTOBER 2019**



## MINISTER'S CORNER

Dear Friends:

Why should I go to church?

That's the attitude of many individuals, as you probably know. And perhaps that is especially the case here in our beautiful state of Maine, which I read has the highest number of unchurched people in the United States.

Whether they like it or not and whether they want to or not, churches like ours are in competition with other organizations, events and activities for people's time and attention on Sunday mornings. And because that's the case, a person has a reason to ask, "Why should I go to church instead of doing or going [Fill in the blank]?"

By the way, our faith community might benefit if we all asked ourselves that question in a little different way: "Why should someone go to this church, to our church?" Because if we can come up with good reasons why people should come here, we could get the word out about those reasons and possibly draw in some of the people who are asking themselves why they should go to church.

In response to the question, "Why should I go to church?" I'd like to share the following story with you:

A little girl feared the dark, and her parents always reassured her at bedtime that God was with her. One night the girl protested that she needed someone to stay with her while she fell asleep. Her parents reminded her that God was there. "I know that," she said, "but right now I need someone with skin on."

The author of the story went on to write, "In our lives, darkness sometimes comes. Pain, loneliness and loss are experienced by all of us at some point. In fact, Scripture teaches that the road believers have to travel to get to their "Promised Land" is paved with challenges and difficulties. In those hard times, God certainly walks with us; but that doesn't always satisfy the longing for an arm around our burdened shoulder, or a hand to hold our trembling hand. Sometimes we just need someone "with skin on" to be there with us when we are struggling. When Christians face suffering and despair, who will be there?"

"The family of believers, for one. And that's you and me.

"Each believer has the light of God within, dim though it may be at times. When we come together as a church, our small light joins with others. After all, a city is lit up not by one huge light but by a multitude of individual lights. We can help one another make it through the darkness."

To me, that sounds like a great reason to go to church.

Fred



## **DON'T MISS THE BEAUTY AROUND YOU**

One of the few men to walk on the moon told of how he had to suppress his artistic instincts when he got there.

He remembered being on the lunar surface, looking back at the earth and being enraptured by the sight of it. For a while he stood there gazing at it, and thinking, "That is so beautiful, so breathtaking."

Then he quickly shook the mood off and said to himself, "Stop wasting your time and go collect rocks."

Fortunately, we don't have a quota of "rocks" we're expected to collect that prevents us from pausing for a time to simply take in the beauty of the world around us. Seeing God's breathtaking creation isn't a waste of time. Rather, it inspires us, rejuvenates us, and reminds us of our Creator's presence and glory.

Are you missing the beauty of God's creation all around you? If you are, you might be missing God's presence and activity around you, as well.

## **FAITH AND COMMON SENSE**

One Sunday a church-goer drove his brand new, very expensive Mercedes convertible to church and walked into the sanctuary. He went up to the minister and said, "Hey, pastor. I have such great faith in God, when I parked my car I left the keys in the ignition and the doors unlocked."

The minister shook his head. "I'd go back to get your keys and lock the door," he said. "God might not want to be bothered doing for you what you're perfectly capable of doing yourself."

## **SERVICE**

There's a clever young guy named Somebody Else,  
There's nothing this man cannot do.  
He is busy from morning till way late at night,  
Just substituting for you.

You're asked to do this or you're asked to do that,  
And what is your ready reply?  
Get Somebody Else to do that job,  
He'll do it much better than I.

So much to do in this weary old world—  
So much and the workers so few,  
And Somebody Else, all weary and worn,  
Is still substituting for you.

The next time you're asked to do something worthwhile,  
Just give this ready reply:  
If Somebody Else can give time and support,  
My goodness, then so can I!



## RIDE MINISTRY

### STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

An 85-year-old woman was being interviewed on her birthday.

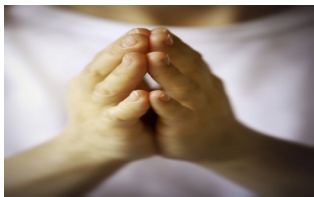
“What advice would you have for people your age?” the reporter asked.

“Well,” the woman said, “at our age it’s very important to keep using all of our potential or it dries up. It’s important to be with people and, if it’s at all possible, to earn one’s living through service to others. That’s what keeps us alive and well.”

“May I ask what you do to earn your living at your age?”

“I look after the old lady in my neighborhood,” she replied.

A delightful reminder that we’re never too old in life to be good stewards and guardians to one another.



### TIME OUT FOR PRAYER

O God, this morning I looked across a field and saw a perfect dewdrop on each blade of grass, each shimmering sphere no less than a miracle. I saw the autumn leaves colored in infinite shades of red, yellow and orange. Such perfection no painter could ever reproduce. I noticed how the grains of earth were agitated by the mere flutter of a sparrow’s wings. You control even this. Your creation is awe-inspiring, infinite and beautiful. I thank you for allowing me to be a part of it, now and always. Amen.

*Leslie Hoffman*

Did you know our church has a “ride ministry” to assist members who are unable to drive? You can find a list with the names of volunteers and their phone numbers hanging on the bulletin board down in the vestry. And if you are interested in becoming a volunteer driver for our ministry, you can contact Pastor Gagnon at 883-2342 or Elaine Sederlund, the chairperson of the Ministry of Worship and Spiritual Care, at 883-1195, for more information.

### LEARNING BY DOING

When Mother Teresa visited Australia, a young Australian Franciscan friar was asked to accompany her during her stay.

Thrilled and excited at the prospect of being so close to this great woman, he dreamed of how much he would learn from her and what they would talk about. But during her visit, he became frustrated. Although he was constantly near her, the friar never had the opportunity to say one word to Mother Teresa. There were always other people for her to meet.

Finally her tour was over and she was scheduled to fly to New Guinea. In desperation the Franciscan friar spoke to Mother Teresa. “If I pay my own airfare to New Guinea, can I sit next to you on the plane and talk to you and learn from you?”

Mother Teresa looked at him.

“You have enough money to pay air fare to New Guinea?” she asked.

“Yes,” he replied eagerly. “Then give that money to the poor,” she said. “You’ll learn more from that than anything I can tell you.”

### Scripture Reading:

#### The River of Life

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down to the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

The angel said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.”

Revelation 22:1-6

### 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. Checks are always appreciated too!

*Thank you!*

## **SINGERS AND STRINGERS**

Singers and Stringers are back!  
This is an open invitation to join Singers & Stringers for the fall of 2019.

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 – because it's fun - and we might get asked to provide music for a Sunday when the choir has a break.

Here is our practice schedule until December 2019:

Wednesday, September 11 – 6:30 pm @ church  
Wednesday, October 9 – 6:30 pm @ church  
Wednesday, November 13 – 6:30 pm @ church  
Wednesday, December 11 – 6:30 pm @ church



singing  
have fun

Please think about joining us! You don't need a lot of experience. We don't do complex songs – our goal is to 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 the fall!

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.



An-

**nual Christmas Fair**

**December 7, 2019  
9am - 1pm**

We need lots of helpers for 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. Needs: baked goods, fudge, needhams, greens, crafts, vintage articles, knits, jewelry, and cookies for the cookie walk. Questions call Joanne Brown, 883-2057 or Sheryl Rhodes, 636-399-7239.

## MINISTRY MEETINGS

Church Council: **October 3rd, Tues., 6:30 pm** meet in the Ladies' Parlor.

Ministry of Christian Outreach & Stewardship:  
**October 13th, Sun., 11:00** meet in the Annex.

Ministry of Members, Friends & Church Life:  
**October 20th, Sun., 11:00 am** meet in the Ladies' Parlor.

Min. of Governing & Finance:  
**October 21st, Mon., 7:00 pm** meet in the Annex.

Ministry of Worship & Spiritual Care:  
**October 27th, Sun., 11:00 am** meet in the Ladies' Parlor.

Ministry of Christian Education - TBD



## 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](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.

## ASPIRE WOMEN'S EVENT

Eastpoint Christian Church is hosting an "[Aspire Women's Event](#)" on **Friday, October 4th** and they have reached out and invited other women's groups to attend. The Aspire event is 1 night, 3 hours - just for women. An evening full of laughter, learning, stories, and music. Speakers include:

Author & Speaker, Melissa Spoelstra

Comedy by Kristin Weber

Worship with Mia Koehne

**Doors open at 6:30, event begins at 7:00pm.** A group of us ladies from First Congregational Church, Scarborough will be attending. Group ticket prices are \$20, and if interested, sign-up downstairs in the Vestry, and pay Joanne Browne by September 1st. You can buy tickets yourself at any time (provided the event is not sold out) for \$25, so the group rate is a savings of \$5 each. We will carpool from FCC at 6:00 on Friday, October 4th.

Eastpoint Christian Church: 345 Clarks Pond Pkwy, South Portland, ME 04106, #480-812-1100



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.

## Your Long Range Planning Team

Reminder: The Deadline for the November Newsletter is October 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.

### ~~~~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!!**



### MEMBERS, FRIENDS & CHURCH LIFE MINISTRY

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.

### 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)**

### **Staff Information & Ministry Chairs**

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

Holly Buonaiuto, Administrative Assistant  
Email: fcchurch@maine.rr.com

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

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

Wendy Northrup, Organist  
At-Large Council Members:  
Janet Peters

Ministry of Audit: TBD  
Ministry of Worship & Spiritual Care:  
Terri Brown  
Ministry of Governing & Finance:  
Kathy Ross  
Ministry of Members, Friends &  
Church Life: Sheryl Rhodes

Penny Gagnon, Church Clerk

Brenda Harrison, Treasurer

Carl Ross, Recording Treasurer

Terri Brown, Moderator

Ministry of Christian Outreach &  
Stewardship: Ruth Bruns

Ministry of Christian Education:

Karen Jackson

Women's Fellowship President:

Joanne Brown

Men's Fellowship: Dan Davidson

Youth Group: TBD



#### **Office Hours**

Monday-Friday

9:00am -3:00pm

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