

# THE TIMES NEWSLETTER

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

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## MINISTER'S CORNER

Dear Friends,

Thanksgiving Day is just around the corner.

Some would say that there is very little to be thankful for this year. It's hard to argue with that sentiment. 2020 has been a very rough year for most people. We have had to deal with (and are still dealing with) the COVID pandemic, which has infected millions and caused the deaths of almost 250,000 Americans. There are out of control wildfires raging on the West Coast and people in the Southeast are still recovering from five major hurricanes. Financial uncertainty and unemployment have disrupted the lives of many people, Racial, political and economic division is stoking anger and resentment and tearing our nation apart, And on and on I could go.

So, is there anything to be thankful for this year? Are things so terrible that we can't think of anything to give thanks to God for?

There was a little girl who discovered that stretching out her prayers was the only way to get around her parents' demand to "Go to sleep now." She became something of an expert at this by developing an ever-growing list of "Thank-you-God" prayers.

"Thank you, God, for Alice; thank you, God, for Karen; thank you, God, for Ryan." And she was just getting warmed up. She would take a deep breath and run through a list of the adults she encountered at school. "Thank you, God, for our principal, Mr. Baker; thank you, God, for my teacher, Miss Novak; thank you, God, for Mrs. Welch, the school librarian." And on and on.

She also had a catch-all list that included such items as, "Thank you, God, for the cashiers in the supermarket, and the people who put our groceries in bags; thank you, God, for my birthday in eleven weeks and three days.: And of course there was a "Thank you, God, for Mommy and Daddy; and thank you, God, for Alice's and Karen's and Ryan's mommy and daddy.

There were nights, however, when this prayerful little girl was so tired she could hardly keep her eyes open as she climbed into her bed. On those occasions her desire to go to sleep moved her prayers to the opposite extreme. She would dispense with her long list of "Thank-you-Gods" and say, simply, "Thank you, God, for God. Amen."

Maybe that could be our default prayer when the world seems so threatening and we struggle to find things to be grateful for. Along with our usual prayers of appreciation for such things as our family and friends and the fact that we're relatively healthy, we can add this little girl's prayers of gratitude. When anxiety about the coronavirus fills our minds, "Thank you, God, for God." When we worry about our financial security or job security, "Thank you, God, for God." When anger and division cause us to worry about the future of our nation, "Thank you, God, for God." It's an all-encompassing prayer that's in keeping with the Apostle Paul's encouragement to "Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

And if rejoicing always and giving thanks in everything seem too difficult, I invite you to simply say after me: "Thank you, God, for God!"

### TASTING GRATITUDE

Author Fulton Oursler wrote about his childhood nurse who was born a slave. It was she, said Oursler, who taught him this valuable lesson about gratitude:

I remember her as she sat at the kitchen table in our house...her calloused, wrinkled hands folded across her starched apron, the glistening eyes, the husky old whispering voice saying, "Much obliged, Lord, for my vittles."

"Anna," I asked, "what's a vittle?"

It's what I got to eat and drink. That's vittles."

But you'd get you vittles whether you thanked the Lord or not."

"Sure," she replied, "but it makes everything taste better to be thankful."

### STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

A pig and a chicken were walking past a church one Sunday morning. As they paused to listen to the beautiful music and singing coming from inside the building, the chicken said to the pig, "You know, over the years those people in there have been pretty nice to us. We should do something for them."

"Good idea," said the pig. "What do you have in mind?"

"I think we ought to put on a huge banquet in their honor," said the chicken.

"I'm all for that," said the pig; "but what will we serve them to eat?"

"Bacon and eggs," said the chicken.

"Not on your life!" said the pig. For you that's just a contribution. For me, it's a total commitment!"

## TIME OUT FOR PRAYER (For Thanksgiving Day)

For my family, my health, a nice soft bed; my friends, my freedom, a rock over my head.

I'm thankful right now to be surrounded by those, whose lives touch me more than they'll ever know.

Thankful, Lord, that you've blessed me beyond measure; thankful that in my heart lives life's greatest treasure.

That you, dear Jesus, reside in that place, and I'm ever so grateful for your precious grace.

So please, Heavenly Father, bless this food you've provided, and bless each and every person invited. Amen.



## CORRESPONDENCE FROM OUR MEMBERS

Dear Friends,

I want to thank you for your thoughtful notes, caring calls and sympathy cards sent to me during my husband's illness and death on October 2nd. The many cards are just beautiful and mean so much.

In love and friendship,  
Diane Brown and Family

Dear Church Friends,

This note of thanks and gratitude is to everyone who has sent cards, cooked meals, prayed a prayer, thought a thought, made phone calls, emailed, gifted flowers and plants, and, in any way, showed me support during my weeks of healing. I've been blessed with your care and concern as well as my husband and family's attentive support throughout this process. My condition continues to improve. Physical therapy will begin soon and the hope is that the movement that has been lost will be regained. Thanks to all for your kindness and thoughtfulness. It is sincerely appreciated. Blessings to all of you,

Penny Gagnon

From Kathy Griffiths:

"Our son Alden, a Junior at Scarborough High School, was accepted into the Nation Honor Society. He was also re-elected as the Vice President of his graduating class."

Congratulations, Alden. Your Church family is proud of you.

## REPORT FROM MINISTRY OF CHRISTIAN OUTREACH AND STEWARDSHIP

The Ministry has gone back to work after the pandemic-induced break from meetings back in March. WE are meeting via Zoom and that seems to be working well. To bring you up-to-date, please note the following recent contributions:

In September: to Child Fund International. We continue to support five children in various parts of the works as well as providing an amount per child for Christmas gifts.

In October: To the FCC—a contribution to supplement lost collection plate donations  
To Preble Street Resource Center;  
To 2020 Wildfire Response through the UCC; and  
To Milestone Recovery, an organization that helps addicts and the homeless.

### CHRISTMAS OFFERING

This year the Christmas Offering will be dedicated to Project G.R.A.C.E. The following is a message from Steffi Cox, Director.

**“The holidays are right around the corner, and while it is a season of joy, it can also be a very stressful time for families struggling to cover the basics. Worried parents look to Project GRACE for help in providing warm clothes and a toy or game or special wish for their children.**

**In a typical holiday season, Project GRACE matches community givers with 100 kids and teens, and helps agencies like the Morrison Center, CASA and the Food Pantry. But the pandemic has turned all our lives upside down, and instead of usual appeals and giving trees, collecting toys, coats and warm boots, pajamas and bedtime stories, Project GRACE can still help kids have a bright and merry holiday!. We can still ease the worries of parents who have a temporary hardship or have difficulties making ends meet...A financial contribution in any amount will help Project GRACE give every family help with meals and fuel assistance as well as presents for kids.”**

Please make checks payable to FCC and reference the Christmas Offering for Project GRACE. Please call the Church Office at 883-2342 with any questions.

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The Ministry thanks you so much for your continued support of Outreach and Stewardship.

Ruth Bruns, Mary Ellen Bossom, Gail Dobriko, Vickie Flynn, Sue Hilton, Bryce Roberts and Meghan Wakefield

## **GIVING TREE FOR LONG CREEK YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

Greetings to all of the church family. It has been quite a year for all of us. And it is now that time of year when we search for the right gifts for our families. This year the Giving Tree is not up in the Vestry covered with tags for items to go to the Youth Center. I miss standing up in front of you all to make this ask in person. The tree and the tags may not be here, but we are. In last Sunday's sermon, Rev, Curry mention that we can and should be taking our faith outside of the building we call the church. This is an opportunity to do just that.

We ask that you remember the young people who must spend time at Long Creek, or in the judicial system housing, and are away from their families. Somehow we may understand that bit, "away from their families", much better now. As in past years we are sending them some gifts to let them know that there are people who do care about them and that we want them to succeed and to be well.

This year we are asking you to consider purchasing gift cards. I fully understand the difficulties of shopping for many of us these days. I', right there with you in being as careful as I can be. That's the main reason for asking for the gift cards, so you don't have to go searching in the stores for a list of different items.

Please consider a purchase in the amounts ranging from \$10 to \$25 from any of the following fast food or department stores: Subway, McDonald's, Burger King, Amato's, Target, Wal-Mart, Marshalls, TJ Maxx and Burlington, as well as Hannaford and Shaw's supermarkets. These were business listed by Stephanie Netto of Long Creek as being most useful to the youth. The cards may be purchased at the checkout in any of these stores and many can be found at your favorite grocery store. Please be sure to include on the card or gift receipt the value of the gift card.

If you are not able to shop for cards and wish to make a donation, you may submit a check, made out to LCYDC Benefit Fund with a notation for residents' canteen accounts. This will insure that the monies stay at Long Creek for the canteen accounts for the young people.

Please place the check, or gift card(s) in a sealed envelope, mark it for The Giving Tree 2020, and mail or deliver to the church office by December 14th. We will collect the cards and deliver them to Long Creek on December 15th. The church office address is: First Congregational Church of Scarborough, 161 Black Point Road, Scarborough ME 04074.

If you have any questions, please give me a call: Gail Dobriko, 207-883-3039.

For the entire Ministry of Stewardship and Outreach, thank you for your consideration of this outreach.

Gail Dobriko

## UPDATE FROM MINISTRY OF GOVERNING AND FINANCE

Thanks to all that made our November 7th Fall Clean-Up Day a success! We focused on the Annex building and cleaned out gutters, raked up leaves and pine needles, trimmed shrubs, removed invasive plants from fenced areas, and power washed, scraped and painted the rear deck. As usual it was hard work, but fun too with a great opportunity for fellowship. Some other projects recently completed included painting the trim of the stained window at the rear of the church, the trim on the six windows of the church vestry, and repair of the bathroom sink in the Annex.

Stay tuned for more specific timing on plans for a church membership financial quarterly update in early January.

## REPORT FROM MINISTRY OF WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL CARE

Our Ministry has continued meeting monthly by ZOOM. The following activities are being planned or discussed:

- 1) The Flower Committee will be decorating the exterior of the Church building on the Saturday after Thanksgiving (Nov. 28). Please swing by to see the festive decorations after that.
- 2) A December 24th Christmas Eve service to be held outside the church. We will discuss this more at our next meeting of November 22nd.
- 3) Christmas Caroling outside the homes of "shut-ins", those church members whom we miss and do not see any more. We would meet in the church parking lot and caravan to Kailer Vail and private homes (all with proper notice and permission). Carolers will need to dress warmly, wear masks and socially distance. You are not required to sing on key. Please let Terri Brown or Elaine Sederlund know if you want to join us.

## NEWS FROM THE WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

WE met in the church parking lot on November 6, 2020. There were 10 who attended. Edie Davidson told us that the Men's Group were giving toward their group individually to help their bank account so she wondered if we would want to do the same in case some emergencies came up ??? No pressure, just a thought and we voted to ask the women and put it in the Newsletter!

Thank you in advance if you choose to do so. Dues are due also. You may mail either or both to the church office, 161 Black Point Rd., Scarborough ME 04074, or to Brenda Birkner, 526 Desfosses Ave., Scarborough ME 04074

Any questions please call Joanne Brown: 883-2059 or Edie Davidson - 767-4682

## NEWS FROM THE FOOD PANTRY

This year the Food Pantry will offer household cleaning items to each family coming to the food pantry in December, in addition to groceries.

If you care to make an in-kind donation, we are soliciting:

- 2 hand towels
- 1 shampoo
- 2 bars of soap
- 4 pack of toilet paper
- 2 pack of paper towels
- 1 laundry detergent liquid or pods
- 1 dish detergent (for sinks, not dishwashers)
- 1 hand sap pump
- 1 Happy Holiday card (non-religious, please)

Donations may be dropped off at the Food Pantry any Tuesday or Thursday afternoon, from 3-4 pm. Outside of those hours, donations may be left with the Church Office mornings between 9-Noon, Monday—Friday, or left in the breezeway of the Annex/Office building.

## THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE

The Scarborough Food Pantry partnered with Project GRACE to collect food items to supplement Thanksgiving dinners. On November 5 and 10, the parking lot was filled with neighbors dropping off cranberry sauce, stuffing, instant mashed potatoes, and other vegetables, to supplement the turkeys that are being distributed this and next week.

Daily the Church Office continues to receive inquiries from people seeking assistance, people wishing to donate, and financial contributions. Thank you all.

**CHURCH CONTACTS:**

TELEPHONE Office 883-2342

Pastor 510-1328

EMAIL Office [fcchurch@fccscarborough.com](mailto:fcchurch@fccscarborough.com)

Pastor [RevFredGagnon@fccscarborough.com](mailto:RevFredGagnon@fccscarborough.com)

WEBSITE [Fccscarborough.com](http://Fccscarborough.com)

## CAREFULLY CURATED YARD SALES ITEMS AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION AND SALE

As most of you know, our Yard Sale scheduled for last June of 2020 was postponed. We have not selected a new date, but will keep you posted. Prior to moving from Scarborough, Margaret Watson donated some exceptional pieces of small furniture, along with household items, kitchen appliances, tools and such. They are currently stored in the basement of the Annex, to be moved to the (former) garage of the Annex. If you are desirous of a bargain and don't want to travel to Marden's or Wal-Mart, please stop into the

Annex Office while Elaine is there (9-Noon, Monday through Friday) and she will show you the stored items. We have already raised \$65.00 in this fashion. Thank you, Elaine



























