

THE TIMES NEWSLETTER

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

JUNE 2021



MINISTER'S CORNER

Dear Friends:

I'm delighted to say that on May 9th our church resumed holding worship services in our church sanctuary. It is wonderful to be worshipping together in person once again!

Because the number of COVID 19 cases has dropped and many people in our church have been vaccinated, the Ministry of Worship and Spiritual Care and I agreed that it would be okay to relax some of the safety guidelines we had set up. The updated guidelines are:

The attendance limits have been increased. We believe 50 to 60 people can safely worship in the sanctuary.

You no longer need to call in advance to reserve a pew seat. We will gladly welcome you to join us for worship without an RSVP.

Although social distancing practices are encouraged, we will no longer be assigning pew seats so you can sit next to friends if you so desire.

Wearing masks is optional. If you have NOT been vaccinated, we request you please wear one. We will no longer be taking people's temperatures at the door.

We may still ask for contact information (unless we already have that information on file) so we can notify attendees if we learn that someone who was COVID positive attended the service.

You are encouraged to use hand sanitizer when entering and exiting the church.

The rest room down in the vestry will be available. People will be asked to use sanitary wipes and sanitizing spray (which will be provided) on the areas they come in contact with.

There will be no Neighboring for the time being, but the hope is that we can resume having it by September at the latest.

Bethany and Wendy hope to resurrect the Bell Choir sometime this fall and then the Senior Choir. Until then, Bethany and Wendy will provide the music for the worship services. They also plan to have some special musicians and/or soloists come and provide music.

Bibles and hymnals are back in the pews, but people are welcome to bring their own Bibles if they wish.

We will continue to live-stream the worship service from the sanctuary via Zoom so people can view it at home. Bethany and Wendy are using the camera in their phones to do this, so the audio and video quality is not as great as we would like it to be; but we are looking into purchasing some video and audio equipment to improve that.

If you have any questions about these guidelines, feel free to contact me or the church office.

A WAY OF LIVING FOR CHRISTIANS

As Christians, how do we live with power and purpose?

There is only one Christian calling, and that is to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. Our job, no matter where we are and what we do, is to be faithful to our Lord and Savior. John Wesley, who established the Methodist Church, had this rule for followers of Christ.

Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.

It is possible to follow Wesley's rule, although we can't succeed in doing that on our own. We must ask for God's help. It is only by the power of the Holy Spirit that we are strengthened and encouraged to live such a life.

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

As stewards of God's creation and the planet we inhabit, we must take care of the natural resources God has blessed us with. Like trees. A report from the Maryland Forest Service gives us these important facts. "One tree has the cooling effect of five air conditioners. Noise levels are reduced by six to eight decibels by greenbelts (land that surrounds or is next to an urban area and is designated to be kept largely undeveloped, wild, or agricultural) 100 feet in width. One acre of growing trees will scrub clean the air polluted by eight automobiles operated for twelve hours. The same acre of trees will absorb the carbon dioxide produced by fifty cars in the same twelve hour period. A 129-acre woodland will absorb one million gallons of sewage runoff per day, with no harm to the trees, soil or water." When you look at a beautiful tree this summer, THANK GOD FOR TREES!

TIME OUT FOR PRAYER

I know not by what methods rare,
But this I know, God answers prayer.
I know not when God sends the word
To say our fervent prayer is heard;
I know it comes, soon or late,
Therefore we need to pray and wait.
I know not if the blessings sought
Will come in just the guise I thought;
I leave my prayer to God alone
Whose will is wiser than my own.

—Unknown author

SOME THOUGHTS FROM A MEMBER OF OUR CHURCH

Walking on a recent windy day, we were drawn to Patrick's garden, last Fall's planting of garlic beckoning, nearly a foot high already. He welcomed us neighbors after such a long year of isolation, and quickly brought us up on the happenings of the "hood". He has his mother, now on Hospice, living with him and his wife.

Here I ask you to follow the thread of the Spirit that brought all of us to this quiet neighborly moment:

Of course, the thread began eons ago, lost to the mists of time, but here we are -

Some ten years ago I planted a bazillion daffodils along one edge of our property. They continue to bloom abundantly each Spring, for the new owners of the property to enjoy. (We have since moved to a different house on the same street). Across the street from the said daffodils are other neighbors, who also moved from one house to another along the same street. So, Patrick and this neighbor's husband were chatting, and Patrick mentioned the daffodils, wondering if the young couple would mind if he picked a few, but too shy to ask them. Neighbors being neighbors, of course the neighbor asked the young couple on Patrick's behalf, and, Presto-Chang-o, a bouquet of flowers was delivered to his door! But that is the back-story, not the whole thread.

As Patrick is filling us in on the details of the story, it becomes clear that this story has deep meaning for him and for us the listeners. How much he appreciates his neighbors, and how much he loves his mother. We do not know him well. Just neighbors who chat while out and about.

The could be the end of the story, but it is not. It is not the end, because there is the food pantry. And one of the donors to the pantry is a woman with a huge flower garden. I don't know her name—she brings flowers in season, each small bouquet tied with a simple rubber band, and we hand them out with the groceries to each of our customers. Well the first spring lowers started to arrive this week on a Thursday, and we had some left over. They would not keep until the next Tuesday so Ellen insisted everyone take some home. So I knew right away where they needed to go—to our neighbor Patrick for his mother.

It was raining as we drove home, not the best time for a flower delivery. But that's ok, flowers don't mind a little wet. I rang the bell, hoping not to disturb anyone too much. Patrick answered the door. And seemed quite surprised to see me there with my little bundle of flowers—we chatted briefly, he admiring the daffodils, and saying how much his mother loves flowers. His eyes were glistening as he spoke, and I knew how much it meant to him to have his neighbors remember flowers for his Mom.

So the Spirit who orchestrated this Thread, through each of us, moved to go for a walk, or give care to a loved one, to be in the yard at the right time, to plant garlic or flowers at one time or another, or to bring flowers tied up in little bundles to the pantry, on and on and on, we move as the Spirit leads us and we don't know where we will go. I leave you with a Haiku from my meditation buddy Judi:

"Small stone hits small pond, brings ripple to distant shores. Kind acts in a troubled world."

Many blessings and peace and peace and peace everywhere, Liane Giambalvo

YARD SALE SCHEDULED FOR SATURDAY, JUNE 19

The Yard Sale fundraiser will take place on June 19, 2021, from 9:00 AM—1:00 PM inside the Parish Hall, We will start accepting donations on Friday, June 11th. If you wish to volunteer to sort and arrange in advance of the Sale, or work on the day of the Sale, or to drop off donations, please contact Elaine at the Church Office. As in the past we are accepting household goods, sporting goods, office supplies, craft materials, decorative items, tools and garden items, and small furniture. We hope you will help publicize this event and/or donate reusable “stuff” from your home or garage .

ICE CREAM SOCIAL ON FATHER’S DAY

The Ministry of Members, Friends and Church Life will be offering an Ice Cream Social following the Sunday worship service on Sunday, June 20th, in the parking lot. WE hope you will join us for fellowship and sweets.

SAVE THE DATE: MOE’S BARBECUE DINNER

The Men’s Fellowship will be hosting a Barbecue Dinner fundraiser catered by Moe’s Barbecue on Wednesday evening, September 22. We expect to return to a sit-down buffet-style dinner in the Vestry.

NEWS FROM THE FLOWER COMMITTEE

The Flower Committee is using Fleur de Lis in Cape Elizabeth to provide flowers for the altar on Sundays at a cost of \$35.00. If you would like to order Flowers for a particular date, please contact the Church office with the date and a dedication. You are always welcome to provide your own floral decoration, especially during the summer months.

Kate Sawdon (Phone: 730-7101) is heading the Flower Committee until September.

A Reminder from the Church Council: Member-at-Large

Hi, my name is Brenda Harrison, for those of you who do not know me. I have lived in Scarborough my whole life and I have gone to this church since I was in Sunday School. I am the Member-at-Large on the Church Council. My position is for any member or visitor that has a question, a concern or any issue that involves the church, please reach out to me and I will do my best to get you an answer.

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