

THE TIMES NEWSLETTER

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

OCTOBER 2021



MINISTER'S CORNER

Now that we have entered the autumn season, I have mixed emotions. This is a time when the beauty of nature is at its greatest, but it's also a time when signs of life's end can be seen. The colorful leaves that take our breath away eventually turn brown and fall off their branches. Warm temperatures that are conducive to growing flowers and vegetables turn cooler, and eventually the soil frosts over and then freezes, making it nearly impossible for plants to live. And the long, sunlit days that are so enjoyable in the summer grow shorter and ultimately give way to lengthy dark evenings.

If the autumn season causes you to feel a bit melancholy like it does to me, I invite you to read the reflection below that was written by an unknown author.

In the fall, many see the death and dying of all beautiful things around them. For some it is the beginning of a seasonal depression because of the shortened period of daylight. If it weren't for the magnificent colors of autumn, it would surely be a sad time of year. This fall, like all the others before it, kept its promise. The colors were glorious and the chill in the air brought happy thoughts of hot cocoa and steaming bowls of soup. But still, I miss the flowers.

I have to rake the leaves in my yard several times to keep up with the ankle deep carnage of the season. The winds blow the leaves around like drifting snow. Even now, as I write this, I know that there are several more bags to be filled and placed curbside for the township collection of leaves, which ends this Friday. Now the leaves are brown and no longer beautiful, and the crisp, damp air sends a cold reminder of winter ahead. The daunting task of raking is one that I have come to dislike more and more each year. It's physical and mental challenges sometimes give me a sense of dread. But not today.

I began raking the leaves along the driveway. With little effort I already had a huge pile that would fill at least four bags to capacity. Looking around, I

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realized that I had accomplished very little in comparison to the rest of the property that remained to be raked. Standing there in that great sea of dead leaves, I saw my life. I thought about the many times I faced challenges that were much greater than myself, but I took them on anyway.

Even in moments of despair when the task seemed impossible, I kept going. By doing that I had found within me gifts and talents I didn't even know I possessed. Holding on to that thought, I grabbed the rake with more enthusiasm and determination.

"These trees have always been here and I have always managed to get them raked up," I thought.

Just then, with the next sweep of the rake, I discovered life. Underneath all that seemed so lifeless and useless, I uncovered two beautiful plants growing full force. When my wife trims her houseplants, she never throws the clippings in the garbage. Instead, she takes them from outside to this very same spot and dumps them.

Although we have had a few killing frosts which put an end to the growing season of almost every flower planted around the house, these two plants took root. The leaves that had piled up on top of them created a protective barrier that permitted these indoor plants to grow outside.

How many parts of your life have you given up on because you see them as dead and useless?

With God's help, scrape and dig a little; and discover with joyous surprise that, like the tree that sheds its leaves, there is still life within you that promises hope for the future.

Things that appear useless and dead are not. Dig a little and, underneath it all, you will find LIFE!

"[God] is not God of the dead, but of the living." *Mark 12:27*

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

It is said that our most beloved President, Abraham Lincoln, cared very little about money. He defined wealth as a surplus of what one doesn't need. Lincoln charged modest attorney fees, even when larger ones were warranted. And he couldn't bring himself to take a legal case if the ethics were suspect.

When Mr. Lincoln ran for Congress in 1846, his friends presented him with an expense fund of \$200.00. After the election, he returned \$199.25 to the donors, explaining that he had spent 75 cents for cider, with which he treated a group of harvest hands at work in a field during a campaign stop.

One extremely important lesson we would do well to learn and take to heart is the lesson of common stewardship and honesty that was so bedrock in the life of our 16th President.



TIME OUT FOR PRAYER

I place into your hands, Lord, the choices I face every day that challenge my mind and body and tempt my heart. Guard me from choosing the perilous way, the end of which is heart-pain and the secret tear.

May your presence and your will be the foundation of my decisions, Lord, so I can know that what I choose is your desire for me. Thus shall I prosper, thus shall I see that my purpose comes from you, and thus will I receive power great enough to do the good you want accomplished, which will endure forever. Amen.

— Unknown

PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE FORMED

At the Special Meeting of the Church members held on October 3, 2021, nine individuals stepped forward to serve on the Pastoral Search Committee authorized by the Congregation. They are

Terri Brown

Liane Giambalvo

Brenda Harrison

Susan Hilton

Wendy Northrup

Sheryl Rhodes

Bryce Roberts

Elaine Sederlund

Susan Whitten

LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE RELEASES "THE PLAN"

At its meeting of October 16, the Church Council voted unanimously to accept the Long Range Plan as a working document and to release it to the Congregation. The Long Range Plan will be available around November 1st (following some small edits) and will be available electronically and in hard copies.

Members of the Long Range Planning Committee will be available after church and as requested to answer questions from the Church members throughout the month of November.

A Special Meeting of the Members is planned for December 5, 2021 to formally adopt the plan in concept .

QUARTERLY FINANCIAL UPDATE FROM GOVERNING & FINANCE

The Ministry of Governing & Finance will provide a Quarterly Financial Update reflecting on the recently completed fiscal quarter to members of the congregation immediately following the October 31st church service in the church sanctuary.

For members that are unable to attend that meeting, please contact the church office to pick-up a copy of the presentation or request one be sent to you via email or mail.

OUTREACH AND STEWARDSHIP

The Thanksgiving Special Offering will be to benefit the Hospice of Southern Maine. Special collection envelopes will be in the pews in November.

NOTE FROM THE FOOD PANTRY

Each year we put together and distribute gift bags to everyone who visits the Pantry. While we distribute items we feel will be useful, we also try and include a fun item. This year we are hoping to distribute a sauce pan, muffin tin or mixing bowl; utensil; dish towels; pot holders; and a puzzle, game or cardgame. We try to keep the value of the bag to approximately \$10 each. For many individuals, this is the only gift they will receive during the Christmas season,

If you would like to donate any of these items or make a monetary donation, please contact Terri Brown at terribrown1959@yahoo.com, Liane Giambalvo at liane.giam@icloud.com or Ellen Parenteau at 883-1672.

MESSAGES TO THE CONGREGATION

From Diane Brown:

I want to thank everyone who sent me cards, notes and prayers during my health challenges and hospital visits. They meant so much and helped me to recuperate.

From Elizabeth Deal:

I want to thank all of you for your prayers for me when I was battling depression and then Covid 19. Praise the Lord, he delivered me from the first trial before the second one began! Many of you sent cards, notes, or showed kindness to me in other ways. Thank you all for being to me an example of what it means to be part of a loving church family.

THE TAP ON THE SHOULDER

The Ministry of Worship & Spiritual Care needs more members to volunteer as Greeters and Ushers during Sunday services. Two of us are in the Choir, one teaches Sunday School, another preaches at other churches, so we are sometime short on ushers. If you are willing to usher one Sunday, please let us know. Otherwise, you may get "The Tap" which means: "We see you in the pew and we need your help to take the Offering or serve Communion. Please will you help?"

NEIGHBORING AFTER CHURCH IS BACK!

The Ministry of Members, Friends and Church Life is offering Neighboring after church. The only difference from pre-Pandemic neighborings is that food items will be bagged in small snack sized bags. Coffee, tea and juice will be available. Please join us downstairs after church services to catch up with old friends and meet newcomers who are visiting our church. There is a signup sheet downstairs on the bulleting board if you wish to sponsor a Neighboring.

On November 14th, there will be a special neighboring to honor and celebrate Rev. Fred Gagnon. There will be a cake and a basket for cards you may bring.

SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN AND FORBID THEM NOT TO COME UNTO ME

If a family with children should come to our Sunday services, we want to be able to offer nursery or Christian Education to the children. At present, Liane Giambalvo is spending time with the children, and having a good time of it, by all reports.

Please look in your heart and decide if you might do the same one Sunday. Liane says the time passes easily with a combination of reading Bible stories, question and answer and talking with the children.

If you are interested, please call the office or let a member of Worship and Spiritual Care know. Thank you.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP AND CHURCH FAIR NEWS

The Women's Fellowship will meet this Tuesday, October 26th at 3:00 pm in the Vestry. and take a formal vote on holding the Christmas Fair on December 4. All women are welcome to attend.

TO CONTACT US

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