

THE TIMES NEWSLETTER

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

SEPTEMBER 2021



MINISTER'S CORNER

What is the church?

It's a place we congregate to on Sunday mornings so we can worship together.

It's where we go, as I have heard said so many times, to recharge our spiritual batteries and help us make it through another week.

It's a place to meet friends and catch up on what has been going on in their lives.

I could go on, of course. And the church is all of those things. But let me suggest to you another, rather intriguing definition.

The church is where we come to be inspired to look like God.

In 33rd chapter of the book of Genesis, Esau encountered his brother Jacob after many years of separation and animosity, and said to him, "I saw your face and you looked like God."

A pastor named Charles E. Poole, was inspired by those words of Esau, and in a sermon he wrote:

"Have you ever known anyone who looked like God? Is there anyone in your life who looks like God to you? The people who look like God are the people who understand us, believe in us, bless us but don't curse us, hug us like Esau, love us like God, and make us want to be better persons. . . . They are present with us on God's behalf, and they keep us on our feet. Who is it that looks like God in your life? Who believes in you on behalf of God and makes you want to be a better person?

"And what about you? To whom does your face look like God?

"Don't blush and deny the resemblance. If you have ever gotten your eyes off yourself, gotten yourself off your hands, and put your life in God's hands, then you have probably looked like God to somebody, somewhere, sometime. If you are spending your life, investing your life by giving yourself away, then to somebody out there, you look like God.

"They just got back from the funeral home, picking out the casket and setting the time for the service. You had cleaned their house and cut the grass before all the out-of-town family started arriving. For a minute there, you looked like God.

"They had just gotten her home from the hospital after undergoing surgery and got her into bed when they heard the doorbell. You were standing at the screen door with a casserole, some biscuits, and a pie When they got to the door and saw you, for a

minute there, you looked like God, juggling your Tupperware and your Pyrex dishes on the front step.

“Oh, don’t worry. They know God doesn’t look like you. They aren’t going to worship you or confuse you with the real thing. They know that God isn’t like you. It’s just that sometimes, you are so much like God. When you are with people for God, when you greet a person with the embrace of unexpected acceptance and unearned affection, when you listen, listen to them and hold them and befriend them, then when they see your face, it looks like God.”

There are people in the world who look like famous celebrities. In fact, I’ve heard of companies where you can pay money to have someone who looks like your favorite movie or TV star or resembles an important figure out of history come to your party or the grand opening of a business and mingle with guests. People are amazed at the resemblance and say, “Wow, that person looks like Abraham Lincoln, or the Queen of England, or Michael Jackson, or the Pope.

The church exists, and one of its most important missions, is to help us grow in faith and Christian love, to the point that someone can look at us and say, “Wow, that person looks like God.”

THIS IS THE CHURCH

“This is the church, this is the steeple; open the door and see all the people.”

That may be a simple childhood poem (with finger motions to go along with it, of course!), but there is an awful lot of truth in it.

A church had completed a massive renovation. The architecture was inspiring, the furnishings exquisite. A celebration was planned for the grand reopening. Postcards were sent out and newsletter articles were written about the project. There were even people waving signs on busy streets announcing the festivities. Great enthusiasm was generated. Even the local newspaper became interested.

One evening the newspaper sent a reporter and photographer to the church to write a story about all the excitement at Trinity Church. One of the activities they visited was a group for fathers that met weekly for study, nurture and prayer.

The next week when the article was printed, there were pictures of the men experiencing Christian community, but not one photo of the newly renovated building. The story didn’t mention the cost or the scope of the church’s physical plant, but it did speak enthusiastically about changed lives, community leaders investing time in their faith, and men committed to their families.

A newly renovated church building is nice, but the community of faith in it is a lot more remarkable.

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

William Arthur Ward wrote:

My hobby is giving something away every day—something tangible, so that I will be reminded to give away the much more important tangible: a smile, a word of encouragement, a healing touch, an intercessory prayer, a telephone call or written note to a lonely person.

Every day I give something away. It may be a book, a poster, a flower, a poem, a plaque with an inspirational message—something that might enrich, if only a little, the life of the person receiving the gift.

I may not be a person of great wisdom, but this I know: the more I give to others, the more I have. Among the rich rewards are friends who love me. I experience the daily satisfaction that I have made life happier for at least one person. I have an inner peace that comes from my faith in the words, “It is better to give than to receive.”

The truth—the Gospel truth—is that a person cannot give without receiving in abundance, to overflowing.

TIME OUT FOR PRAYER

Jesus my Lord,
Come to me,
Comfort me, console me.
Visit the hearts
In strange lands
Yearning for you.
Visit the dying and those
Who have died without you.
Jesus, my Lord,
Visit also those
Who persecute you
That they may come to love you.
Lord Jesus, you are my light
In the darkness.
You are my warmth
In the cold.
You are my happiness
In sorrow.
Give me the inward vision
To behold you wherever I am
And wherever I will be.

Anonymous

ICE CREAM SOCIAL OUTDOORS AFTER CHURCH ON SEPT. 19th

Please linger and join us after church this Sunday, September 19th, as the Ministry of Members, Friends and Church Life offers ice cream sandwiches to all outdoors

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2021: MOE'S FAMOUS BBQ FUNDRAISER

Men's Fellowship, in cooperation with Women's Fellowship, will again conduct this annual fundraiser.

It will again be ALL TAKE-OUT. There will not be tickets or reservations. Food will be provided to people in vehicles on a FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVED basis as they arrive at the church ... until the food runs out. All boxed meals will be the same: pulled pork and BBQ sauce, baked beans, potato salad, and cornbread. Cost is \$12 per meal ... CASH ONLY on the day of the event. Meals will be delivered to vehicles starting at 5:00 p.m. Vehicles will be directed to enter and depart via Woodside Drive. There will be a station for paying and one for receiving the food packages. Please share this information with friends, family, co-workers, etc. and help us to make this another beneficial ... and fun ... fundraiser. Stay tuned for more information!

A THANK YOU FROM THE MINISTRY OF GOVERNING AND FINANCE

We are truly blessed to have church members that are able to gifts beyond their regular stewardship support. The computers used by the Pastor, Treasurer and Recording Treasurer will be replaced within the next few weeks. IN addition to having devices that are fully functioning, these staff members will benefit from higher productivity with faster computer speeds and improved reliability. Thank you for answering our prayers!

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEERING FAMILY

Thank you for all the prayers, thoughts and remembrances of my sister, Jane Moses.
-From Joan Deering and the Deering Family

SINGERS AND STRINGERS STARTING UP IN JANUARY

Brenda and Ray Birkner are postponing the resumption of Singers and Stringers until January, in light of the uptick in coronavirus cases in Maine. The new start up date will be Saturday, January 8th, 2022, at 10:00 AM either in the Parish Hall or the Vestry.

NEWS FROM THE FOOD PANTRY

Happy Fall and welcome cooler weather! It has been a hot summer at the Parish Hall, but we have been happy to serve our customers at the pantry. Because of the generosity of the congregation and the community, we have been able to offer little “extras” each month.

In April, we gave paper goods of toilet paper and paper towels, and laundry soap. For May, we gave a dinner kit of Mexican foods, including hamburger, seasonings, tacos and beans. In June we did pizza with sauce, pre-baked crusts and cheese and herbs, July was a cook-out meal with hotdogs, buns and condiments. Last month we gave kitchen basics: aluminum foil, plastic wrap and food storage bags.

Looking ahead, we are planning Tamale Pie with Cornbread Topping. You can make the recipe that appears on the next page. We are always scratching our heads to come up with easy inexpensive recipes to offer our customers. For this recipe, we looked on line and in the cookbooks on hand. We chose three different recipes, tweaked them a little and invited some willing church members over for an “experimental cooking” dinner. This tamale pie was the winner, and so easy! Who knew you could use sloppy Joe sauce to make dinner?

If you have a favorite quick and easy, inexpensive dinner recipe, please send it to me, Liane Giambalvo, liane.giam@icloud.com. I love experimenting and giving our friends new ways to use our pantry staples! Blessings to you all, Liane

HOW DO I DONATE TO THE FOOD PANTRY?

Nearly 1/3 of the calls to the Church Office are from people seeking to use the food pantry or others looking to donate. There are 3 ways to bring donations to the food pantry:

- 1) Deliver the items directly to the food pantry when it is open. The hours are 1:30—4:00 PM, although there is generally at least one volunteer there at 1:00 PM. Please park alongside the Parish Hall rather than queueing up in the drive-thru distribution line.
- 2) Bring your donations to the Church Office at 161 Black Point Road when it is open, generally 9:00 AM til Noon on Monday thru Friday.
- 3) Leave your donations inside the breezeway at the Church Office. The breezeway door is to the left of the main front door. The breezeway is never locked so you can drop off donations anytime. There are motion-detector lights that will come on automatically after dark. If you leave something that is perishable or must be refrigerated, please call the Church Office so we can bring it inside or put it in a refrigerator.

Tamale Pie with Cornbread Topping

Preheat oven to 425. Lightly grease or spray a 2 quart casserole dish.

Ingredients:

1 pound hamburger or ground turkey
1 medium size onion, chopped
1/8 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 Tablespoon chili powder (optional)
1 can sloppy Joe sauce (15 oz)
1 can whole kernel corn, drained
1 can black beans, pinto beans or kidney beans, rinsed and drained

1 box Jiffy corn muffin mix
1 egg
1/3 cup milk
1 tablespoon vegetable oil

Directions:

Brown the meat in a fry pan with a little oil or margarine, along with the chopped onion. Add the sloppy Joe sauce, seasonings, and the corn and beans. Simmer this mixture while you prepare the cornbread.

Beat the egg, milk and oil in a medium size mixing bowl. Stir in the cornbread mix, just until moistened. Batter will be lumpy.

Place the meat in the greased baking dish and top with the corn muffin mix. Bake 20-25 minutes until cornbread is lightly browned. Serves 4.

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