

# THE TIMES NEWSLETTER

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

**DECEMBER 2022**



## **PASTOR'S MESSAGE:**

### **“...Maybe Christmas Means a Little Bit More”**

Have you noticed how the Christmas season seems to start earlier and earlier every year? I confess (don't tell anybody) that I have been listening to Christmas music in my car since the beginning of November. I'm not sure why this is so... And surely you have noticed how Jesus' birthing event to a poor Jewish couple over 2,000 years ago has turned into a holiday of retail buying traditions that begin even before Thanksgiving. I'm also not sure why this is so...

Nevertheless, there are so many extra things to do at Christmas time, and we don't want to miss out on even a minute of Christmas joy! Yet, we may wonder every so often, as Mr. Grinch once did, “if Maybe Christmas...means a little bit more?” As people of faith, it is helpful for us to take a moment out of this busy season to consider this. A moment to reflect more deeply on the “little bit more” of Mary and Joseph's experience. We love the Nativity. Our Creche scenes of the Holy Family are set up in our houses already. But there is another side to this sweetness of a newborn baby surrounded by animals in a stable. Rarely do we think about how hard it must have been for them, and the fact that soon after Jesus' birth the Holy Family became refugees. Yes, it's true.

Having refugee status is nothing new for our Jewish sisters and brothers. Theirs is a long history of social rejection. They know what it means to be forced to leave their homeland. The refugee life is fraught with danger. While Jesus was still very young, Joseph was told in a dream that he and his new family were to flee to Egypt to protect Jesus' life. So he packed up his family and they went. Mary and Joseph were probably not received very kindly when they arrived in Egypt. We know how people look upon refugees. We see it, and hear it, in our own time, *“Who are these people? What do they expect of us? Were they given permission to come here and use our public resources and take jobs away from us? They'd best get help from their own kind. They should go back to where they came from.”*

If we dare to think about such things as we look upon the Nativity, our innocence gives way to astonishment. Yes, the very idea of incarnation is astonishing! It is powerful and a little crazy.

God's saving love for us has come, not in some secular or supernatural image of power, but into the real world in which you and I live - full of human vulnerability and human cruelty. A world full of war, violence, prejudice, and unequal access to life's opportunities. Yes, God chose to depend upon a poor Jewish (soon to become) refugee family to bring hope and salvation to all the world. That is the crazy part.

It was an awesome responsibility for Mary and Joseph. The world did not receive them with open arms and open hearts. There were only a few people there on that holy night - Mary and Joseph and the poor shepherds working in the fields. They were the unlikely witnesses to this event that had the power to change the very heart of humanity. *“And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the Inn.” (Luke 2:7)* It was a not-so-simple birth far from home and far removed from all human hospitality and caring, but it was a birth that changed the world.

So this is the “little bit more” I have for you to ponder this Christmas. And one more thing. If you find yourself feeling like a refugee this year in some way, take heart for God favors you.

I wish you the presence of God’s Spirit in these days of Advent and Christmas. May your heart be touched by God’s astonishing gift of love.

Yours in Christ’s Service,  
Rev. Linda



## **CHRISTMAS SERVICES**

**December 24th, Saturday, 7:00 P.M.—Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

**December 25th, Sunday, 9:30 A.M. Christmas Day Service**

**January 1, Epiphany Sunday, 9:30 A.M.**

### **NEWS FROM THE WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

The Women's Fellowship would like to thank everyone who donated to our fair! Thank you, thank you!! You made our 2022 fair a success! Thanks to all the helpers before, during and after the fair ! Even our official door greeter for greeting customers at the door plus all the other things he did for the fair! But most of all thank you to our first ever co chairs , Roberta and Terri Brown for a wonderful job ! Well done!! Merry Christmas to all and a Happy New Year! Joanne Brown , President of Women's Fellowship

The December meeting of the Women's Fellowship will be on December 27 at 2:00 PM in the ladies parlor OR Vestry, (Look for a sign!). We will be discussing the Yuletide Fair and all suggestions and recommendations will be received!! It was a great Fair and Terri and Roberta did a wonderful job!! **See Photos Taken by Dan Davidson on the next page.** Joanne asks that you come ready to share, if you want, your Christmas traditions, favorite songs, stories or memories of Christmas past!! I'm sure you all have some stories to tell!! We will have refreshments. Be careful in parking as the Food Pantry will be operating that day!!

**SAVE THE DATES:**     **January 3, 6:30 P.M.     Church Council (in the Ladies Parlor)**  
                                 **January 12, 3:30 P.M.     Men's Fellowship (in the Annex)**

### **NEW OFFICE HOURS: 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM**

I am writing with the news that starting January 2, I will be working an hour later on week-days, I will be the office from 9 –1. I anticipate more activity in support of Pastoral Search and implementation of the Long Range Plan initiatives. Also this gives our members and the public an extra hour in the middle of the day to drop in or schedule appointments. Rev. Hey will continue to be in the office all day on Monday thru Wednesday, working from home on Thursday.

I am so grateful for Rev. Hey having answered our call to be our Interim Pastor for the next couple years. Already I am benefitting from her guidance and direction. It is so nice to have a second person in the office to share ideas and developments. I do want to thank all those members of the congregation who were “the wind beneath my wings”, offering advice and correction as we navigated through the three years of the pandemic and this last year with a changing roster of bridge minister and supply pastors.

Merry Christmas!

Elaine Sederlund





# YULETIDE FAIR

2022



Co-Chairs:

Terri Brown &  
Roberta Brown



Shown:

Edie Davidson  
Gail Dobriko  
The Parish Hall  
Joanne Brown  
Allison Curry



## **USE FACEBOOK FOR REMOTE SERVICES**

If you cannot attend church in person or prefer to participate from home, you may now see the services live or retrieve them afterwards on the church's FACEBOOK page. We will not be using ZOOM, as in the past, for Sunday services.

The Facebook access is simple. There are two options:

Use this link (<https://www.facebook.com/fccscarborough/>) in a web browser to access the church's Facebook page and then look for the Worship Service Livestream on that page. Older services can be found under the menu 'More' and 'Videos'.

OR

If someone is already on their Facebook page they can enter 'FCCSCARBOROUGH' in the 'Search Facebook' box to the right of the blue 'f' icon and click on the magnifying glass icon or using the Enter key.

We can't thank Cliff Colville enough for his expertise and time spent on bringing our church into the 21st century. There are still some tweaks and items to be resolved, but this is a step forward for our church.

## **QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT**

A Financial Report covering the First Quarter ending Sept. 30, 2022, was made by representatives of the Ministry of Governing and Finance, following the worship service on December 11. Lynne Herrman, Rob Willey and Cliff Colville were present to answer questions. Please call the church office if you would like the report mailed or e-mail to you. Later in January, Governing & Finance will schedule and deliver a Financial Report for the first 6 months of 2022-2023

## **MUSIC DIRECTOR SEARCH IS UNDERWAY**

Bethany Kirkpatrick's last Sunday with us will be February 26. A Search Committee has been formed to advertise, interview and select of new Music Director. The group met on December 18 after church and agreed on the wording of the job announcement and where it would be advertised.

The Search Committee consists of: Susan Fielding (Chair), Wendy Northrup, Rev. Linda Hey, Kate Sawdon, Mary Ellen Bossom, Elaine Sederlund, and a representative (TBD) from Governing & Finance.



## **Christmas Offering**

### **Project Grace Keep Me Warm Fund**

The Christmas Offering this year is being dedicated to Project Grace's Keep Me Warm Fund. Project Grace provides emergency heating assistance for residents in Scarborough who own or rent their homes or have children in the Scarborough Public Schools. Fuel includes heating oil, propane, K-1, firewood and utilities for electric heat. **Please look for the Special Christmas Offering Envelopes in the pew racks.**

They also refer applicants to HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program) which assists low income qualified Mainers. However, this application process can take from 6 – 8 weeks to complete. Project Grace helps to bridge the gap between the time of HEAP application to approval. For example, typically 100 gallons of heating oil or the equivalent of another heat source would be delivered. They have a relationship with local vendors so delivery can be made within 1 -2 days with payment being made directly to the provider.

According to Stephanie Cox at Project Grace: "On average we provide 70 "helps" of fuel assistance during the heating season – it varies from a couple cords of firewood, K1 or propane and 100 gallons to a full tank of oil depending on the circumstances. Many of our callers are on a fixed income or going through a temporary tough patch. Because Maine has some of the oldest, draftiest homes, Project Grace recently held a workshop to help neighbors save fuel and funds. More than 75 people stopped by to pick up samples including weatherizing supplies like window film, outlet gaskets, and weathering tape. Our friendly, knowledgeable volunteers often answer callers' questions when they call for assistance and refer them to other sources of help with their energy and fuel needs."

Thanks for your generosity and support.

The Ministry of Outreach and Stewardship

## **Singers & Stringers News**

Singers & Stringers are coming back! We have updated our binders and set the following dates (the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month) to gather and sing, to have fun and fellowship!

**January 14**

**February 11**

**March 11**

**April 8**

**May 13**

**June 10**

Most of the time we will gather in the sanctuary, but if there is a funeral or a wedding or anything else that needs the sanctuary, we'll relocate for that day – probably in the big room of the Parish Hall (the building in back of the church).

Masks are not required, but if you feel more comfortable wearing one, please do.

### **The gathering times are all at 10 am for about an hour.**

Ray & I are excited to welcome “old timers” back and to welcome “new timers”. You only have to love to sing and have a good time! It's not required that you know how to read music because our mantra is: FEEL THE MUSIC.

We will sing at a church service occasionally – I'll give you plenty of notice. Our next “date” is **January 8, 2023**

We also put ourselves on the summer music schedule that Wendy organizes – if you're available to sing once a month for the months of June, July, and August. Also, in the past, we've gone to Assisted Living facilities and Nursing Homes in Scarborough to either sing carols or at other times to do “generic” sing-a-longs. We can talk about that when we get together on those Saturday mornings. It's a very moving and rewarding experience to go to those settings and sing!

We look forward to seeing you in the New Year to make beautiful music! Please contact either Brenda or Ray with any questions or to just let us know that you'll be joining us.

Brenda & Ray Birkner 207-650-4514 (Brenda) – 207-650-5180 (Ray)

Grabirk94@gmail.com

**The poinsettia plants on the altar this Christmas are given  
by church members and friends in memory of loved ones.**

**Dedicated to/ In Memory of:**

**Given by:**

Betty and Lloyd Hart

The Baird and Hart Families

Our family members who have passed away

Bob and Liz Barton

Earle and Ruth Bennett

Mark Bennett

Sue and Mavis, my two dear friends

Mary Ellen Bossom

Jim Brown

Diane Brown

Gary N. Brown, Elwood & Gertrude Mitchell

Joanne Brown

Norman Brown, Clarence & Bessie Beckwith

Shirley Brown

John Veltri

Ruth Bruns

Loved Ones

Gordon and Allison Curry

Ellery Ewald

Jon Ewald

Our parents, Alice & Nilsen Fielding

Susan Fielding and siblings:

John, Elizabeth, Karen, Joan & families

Our Mom, Lillian Worcester

Rev. Linda Hey and Rev. Dennis Bailey

Wallace and Virginia Camp

Susan Hilton

Mr. & Mrs. Gray Best & Mrs. Jane A. Horstkotte

Mr. & Mrs. Don A. Horstkotte

My Brothers, Dick & Jack

J. Barrie Shepherd

Donna Lorfano

Ralph (Sonny) Lorfano and Family

Loved Ones

Lynn and Guy Roberge Family

Loved Ones

Kate Sawdon & Jerry LaVigne

My Grandmother, Marie LaBonte

Gail and Laurier St. Onge

Jacqueline & Francis Whitten,

Fran & Sue Whitten

Loved Ones

Joyce Woodruff











































