

THE TIMES NEWSLETTER

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

FEBRUARY 2022



Below is a poem by Rev. Barrie Shepherd, for the evening of Ash Wednesday
(March 2) It sets the scene for the Lenten season we are entering.

EVENING

Spare they people, O Lord

These ashes that we wear this holy day
Ground us against the earth of from reality;
They impress upon our brows, against our minds,
The strict and severe limitation set on all we are,
All we have, all we do and hope to do.

Remembers you are dust,
And to dust you shall return —

Rich syllables which recall us to our origin,
remind us of our inevitable end,
renew for us the call to make the present count,
to “Work while there is light,”
to heed the word of judgment and of hope
that is the gospel.

They set our days within a stringent context,
At once more narrow and more broad;
The narrow context of the grave,
That one sure fate that awaits all God’s children,
The wide, eternal context of God’s grace
Set before all to choose or to refuse.

This has been a solemn day;
after Good Friday, the most solemn in the year.
I have felt the grit of ash upon my forehead,
the grit of judgment and of death upon my life.
Yet like the sand and grit we scatter
across winter-slippery roads and sidewalks,
these ashes, too, give traction, slow down
the giddy, insane slide across the weeks and months,
provide a grip, firm foothold from which to move
ahead in search of meaning, depth,
a future to hold on to.

In the days and weeks to come, Lord,
guide my footsteps to the steady places,
moments of quiet prayer and contemplation,
hours spent in study, meditation, discussion,
growth in faith and understanding, participation
in the worship of the Christian community,
action in the cause of peace and justice,
deeds of love that build the human family.

Now guard my sleep this night;
may I rest my bones within your promise
that can reach far beyond this dust and ashes
toward the shining vestments of eternity.

Amen.

(From A Pilgrim's Way—Meditations for Lent and Easter, J. Barrie Shepherd, author)



AN UPDATE FROM THE MINISTRY OF GOVERNING AND FINANCE

We hope everyone is managing to stay safe and warm through this latest winter cold spell. The sun is certainly getting higher in the sky each day so we know warmer days are not too far ahead!

As you might remember, in 2011 the church was facing some very serious financial challenges and Governing & Finance (hereinafter “G&F” -“Trustees” at the time) formed a Budget Task Force to examine our situation in more detail and make recommendations to church membership at a special meeting in June on potential solutions. Many of the shorter-term recommendations from that Task Force have been implemented, but a longer term recommendation of reducing the church's property footprint has been outstanding. That recommendation has recently been supported and affirmed in the Long Range Plan.

With Rev. Fred Gagnon's recent retirement, we now have an opportunity to consider divesting the Parsonage to reduce the overall property maintenance burden, as well as reduce expense and provide an opportunity for reinvesting the proceeds. Ultimately, any potential property sale will require approval from the church's membership at a special or annual meeting.

In the meantime, the church Council has requested that G&F proceed with preparing for a potential sale. Kathy Ross volunteered to work with G&F on this activity (thank you so much Kathy!) and has engaged Real Estate brokerage firms to begin the process of developing a market profile and evaluation of the property. Some of you may be aware that the parsonage's sewer system is tied in with the church's. This condition will likely need to be rectified prior to any property transfer. Stay tuned as we work through this process.

Another key project for G&F right now is the replacement of the roof shingles on the Annex. We inspected the roof in late Fall and discovered that in addition to some missing shingles and overall deterioration that we expected, there was a section with no shingles at all! A roofing contractor has been engaged and will be commencing the work this week so that we can avoid potential water damage and additional expense.

Finally we've updated and prioritized our list of outstanding property maintenance, repairs and improvements. We have over 30 items and have shared the list with the church Fellowship groups I hope of their continued support and generosity to help us address some of these items.

Please feel free to contact the church office or a G&F members for any questions or concerns about our church's property or finances. Our next quarterly financial update is scheduled for the Annual Meeting in May.

THANK YOU NELSON HARMON

FCC recently received a generous contribution from the estate of Nelson Harmon through a bequest Nelson included in his will. We are very grateful to Nelson for including FCC in his legacy.

There are several methods available that offer the opportunity to make a financial contribution to the future of FCC through planned giving and bequests. Your financial planner can share information on these methods. One of the recommendations in our Long Range Plan is to make available to members and friends of FCC information regarding planned giving. Our research has begun and will be shared in the coming months.

Stewardship Campaign About to Get Launched!

The Ministry of Outreach and Stewardship has chosen “Bridging to New Beginnings as the theme of this year’s Stewardship Campaign. It seems especially appropriate as our church searches for new ministerial leadership; returns to near normalcy with in house Sunday services; and examines ideas and recommendations outlined in the Long Range Plan.

The Campaign will kick off on Sunday, March 6th when pledge packages will be distributed after the Sunday service. Although we can’t return to the Brunch Buffet we enjoyed pre-pandemic, there will be a special Neighboring. Those unable to attend will receive a pledge packet in the mail.

Sunday, March 20th is designated as Stewardship Sunday. During the service, pledges will be received. Pledges may also be returned via mail.

The Ministry of Christian Outreach & Stewardship extends sincere gratitude for your past and anticipated support as we “Bridge to New Beginnings”.

With grateful thanks for your prayerful consideration.

Ruth Bruns, Gail Dobriko, Vickie Flynn, Sue Hilton, Lynn Roberge, Bryce Roberts and Meghan Wakefield

**Those who sow sparingly will reap sparingly.
Those who sow bountifully will reap bountifully.
Each of you must give as you have decided,
not reluctantly or grudgingly,
for God loves a cheerful giver.**

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 (paraphrased)

NEWS FROM THE MINISTRY OF MEMBERS, FRIENDS & CHURCH LIFE

The Ministry of Members, Friends & Church Life ("MF&CL") met on February 13. Their next meeting will be March 20th after church.

COLOR AND CHAT SESSION THIS SATURDAY, Feb 26, 3:00—5:00 pm

MF&CL invites you to bring a snack and you adult coloring book to a coloring and chat session this Saturday afternoon. All members of the church and their friends are invited. (If you don't have a coloring book we will have some available)

INVITE A FRIEND TO CHURCH ON SUNDAY, MARCH 13th.

We encourage everyone to bring a friend to church on Sunday, March 13th. There will be a surprise neighboring afterwards.

NEIGHBORING AFTER HIGGINS BEACH SUNRISE SERVICE—April 17th

If you plan on attending the traditional Sunrise service at Higgins Beach on Easter morning please come back over to the church immediately afterward for coffee, donuts, muffins and fellowship.

LENTEN STUDY GROUP STARTS MARCH 9 at 3:00 IN THE LADIES PARLOR

Liane Giambalvo and Rev. Barrie Shepherd are collaborating to offer a Lenten Study Group based in Rev. Shepherd's devotional book, *Faces at the Cross—A Lent and Easter Collection of Poetry and Prose*.

The group will meet in the Ladies Parlor of the Parish Hall, starting on Wednesday, March 9 at 3:00 p.m., and Wednesdays thereafter. To order a copy of the book, priced at \$15.00, please contact the church office or reply to barrieshep@aol.com. All proceeds, beyond cost of the publication, are donated to local Food Pantries.

LET US LOVE, NOT IN WORD AND SPEECH, BUT WITH ACTIONS AND IN TRUTH (1 John 3:18)

The Windward Heights Neighborhood off Gorham Road in Scarborough held a luminary night on December 19. The neighborhood came together to place and light over 1,100 luminaries, using white bags, sand and tea candles, along the streets of the neighborhood. A portion of each luminary went to the Scarborough Food Pantry: \$780 was raised and donated.

This weekend, The Lions Club of Scarborough is holding a Food Drive to benefit the Food Pantry. The Club is seeking donations of Soups, Stews and Canned Protein. Bring your donations to the Lions Club at 273 Gorham Road, this weekend, Saturday and Sunday, February 26 and 27, between Noon and 3:00 pm.

CHURCH CONTINUES HYBRID LIVE and ZOOM SERVICES IN MARCH

The Ministry of Worship and Spiritual Care, consulting with our pastor and our Music Director, will continue to offer a hybrid model of Sunday services for the foreseeable future.

You are still welcome to attend live services in the Sanctuary, but we will also offer a ZOOM service if you wish to stay home. Call the church office for the current ZOOM link, if it has not been already sent to you. The ZOOM link is the SAME every week.

The Choir is very happy to have resumed singing as part of the Sunday worship service. Neighboring after church I

FCC SUGGESTION CORNER

My name is Brenda Harrison—one of my positions at the church is Member-at-Large on the Church Council.

The Church Council meets once a month, the first Tuesday of the month. If anyone has a question or a concern about anything at the church and would like it brought to the Church Council, please e-mail me.

If you would like to talk to me in person, please email your phone number and the best time to get in touch with you.

Thank you. Brenda Harrison

Email address: FCCSuggestions@fccscarborough.com

OUR CHURCH'S INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

If there was a significant storm on Saturday night or it is storming on Sunday morning, make sure you check to see if the service has been cancelled. The First Congregational Church of Scarborough is now registered with WCSH and WGME TV, and a cancellation notice will run on both of those stations by 7 a.m. You can also call the office at 883-2342 to find out if the parking lot has been plowed and safe to walk on and the church building is accessible. The Admin Assistant will either be in the office or leave a message on the answering machine by 7:30 a.m. if the service has been cancelled. If the answering machine message hasn't been changed, it means there will be a service of some kind (although it may be an abbreviated one). Please use discretion in deciding whether to come to church in bad weather.

2022 EASTER FLOWERS ORDER FORM

Please help us prepare our sanctuary for the glorious celebration of Easter on April 17th. Flowers may be dedicated “**in memory of**” or “**in honor of**” loved ones. The dedications will be listed in the bulletin on Easter Sunday.

Please fill out the order form, then mail it or bring it to the church office at 161 Black Point Road with your check.

Any questions, please call Elaine at the church office@883-2342. You may also bring in your own Spring plant of any variety to the Vestry or church office by Friday, April 15th.

The deadline for ordering plants is Wednesday, April 6th.

Please indicate quantity of the item you wish to order.

___ Double Lily (8” pot)\$30.00

___ Tulips (6” pot)\$20.00

___ Hyacinths (6” pot)\$20.00

Dedication - *Please circle one* (in memory of / in honor of)

Given by _____

Phone number _____ **E-mail** _____

Bringing my own plant_____

PLEASE take your plants home after the Easter Sunday Service. Thank you.

