

THE TIMES NEWSLETTER

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

APRIL 2023



PASTOR'S MESSAGE:

Before Resurrection

Before Resurrection we must go through Holy Week...

It begins with a parade on Palm Sunday. Jesus' parade was on a donkey with people lining the street waving palm branches and laying down their cloaks to honor him as he entered Jerusalem for the last time. They called after him words of praise, saying "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." They said that he was the King of Israel and declared him to be the Messiah.

It makes me smile to remember Sunday School re-enactments of this parade from Palm Sundays past. The whole congregation always enjoys seeing the children march up and down the aisles in first century townspeople garb (usually made from old sheets and rope) waving palm branches behind a costumed Jesus with his donkey (the best was a six year old with a "donkey ears" headband and a braided-yarn tail pinned to her pants!) Ah those were the days! It was such a celebration!



Holy Week

But as with most things in life, we do not, we cannot stay there for long. Jesus' Passion comes soon after Palm Sunday. Some of us would rather not go there. There are those who prefer to go from the celebration of Palm Sunday to the celebration of Easter. Yet the Holy Week in-between is so important. On Thursday Jesus speaks of a new covenant of loving service and shares in a sacrificial meal of bread and wine with his disciples. Things heat up quickly after this. We watch the betrayal, the abandonment, the confusion, the fear, the violence, the suffering, and the death. We cannot skip this part, just as we cannot skip these parts of life. In fact, I believe Holy Week could even be considered an apt metaphor for life. Good Friday and Holy Saturday are dark and painful days. We all have such days...days when it is hard to stay faithful because God seems to be out of sight. But the good news is that the story does not end there.

On Sunday there will be Resurrection. After the darkest days comes a new dawn. A seed is broken open, a body is risen. You can see how significant this Holy Week is, can't you? In Jesus we are shown something we cannot grasp or understand, yet it is so. We can surely understand what happened to him before Resurrection. We understand violence, betrayal, fear, suffering and death. We live it every day. But Resurrection...now there's something that requires a different kind of breaking open. The breaking open of our hearts to allow wonder and mystery in – to allow God in. When this happens, we are transformed and amazed (again!) by God's resurrection power. Sorrow was in the night, but joy is in the morning.

So I'm wondering if this will be the year we'll decide to enter into, not just the celebrations of Palm Sunday and Easter, but all of Holy Week. After all, it is the testament of our faith that the One who came in the name of the Lord went to a great deal of trouble to conquer sin and death and bring us reconciliation with God. He is the One we call Jesus - the Resurrected One of God - and I look forward to joining with you on Easter Sunday and in the days before, to celebrate this amazing gift together.

I wish you a Blessed Easter!

Yours in Christ's service,

Rev. Linda C. Hey



April 2	PALM SUNDAY		
	9:30 am	Palm Sunday Service	Church
April 6	MAUNDY THURSDAY		
	6:30 pm	Last Supper Service & Service of Tenebrae	Church
April 7	GOOD FRIDAY		
	1:00 pm	Inspirational Movie	Parlor
April 9	EASTER SUNDAY		
	5:45 am	Sunrise Service	Higgins Beach
	9:30 am	Easter Service	Church

Maundy Thursday Last Supper Service and Service of Tenebrae

This year, as part of Holy Week, we will be hosting a Last Supper Service and Service of Tenebrae on Maundy Thursday, April 6TH at 6:30 PM. The evening begins in the Vestry, where we honor Jesus' last Passover meal by reading scripture (Exodus, Psalms of Praise, and Luke's gospel), singing hymns, and eating a simple meal together. The meal culminates in the sharing of Holy Communion elements.

Our group then proceeds upstairs to the Sanctuary where we participate in a Service of Tenebrae. In this service we extinguish candles and Sanctuary lights as we read the story of Jesus' night of betrayal and arrest. It is a solemn service, different from others we share together, as it is not a time for fellowship, but contemplation and silence. Many who have been a part of Maundy Thursday services attest to the fact that it is a very powerful experience. We hope you will join us in remembering the holy sacrifice Jesus made for our salvation.

Working Toward Our Pledge Campaign Goal

During this pledge campaign, we hope that you have had time to reflect on the gifts that this church and its ministries offer us. This is the time of year that our ministries consider the needs of our church and work together to build a budget to support our church for offering these invaluable gifts.

Our pledge amount has declined over the last few years potentially from the impact of COVID and the loss of members. Pre-Covid 87 members pledged \$157,292 towards the church budget. Last year we were down to \$125,938 from 66 members.

The Outreach and Stewardship Ministry hopes that you reflect on the wonderful services we receive from our church and help to increase your pledge donation this year. The Stewardship goal this year is to increase our pledge amount by 10% with 6 additional members making a pledge. It will be terrific to have our pledges begin to increase as our theme says to Grow, Live and Build Together.

Please do not forget to sign up for the easy payment process of automatic deductions from your bank account. The Stewardship Committee can help explain this process and get you signed up for this very easy way of donating.

Thank you for your serious consideration on this important step in the life of this church.

Ministry of Outreach and Stewardship

Easter Offering Will Go to Homeless Veterans

Our Ministry of Outreach and Stewardship has selected the Maine Homeless Veterans Alliance to receive the Easter Offering this year. Their “mission is to provide assistance and resources to homeless and otherwise needy veterans” in Southern Maine. One of the organization’s other goals is to educate the public about the needs of the veterans.

You can take a look at their web site at <https://www.maineuva.org/> or on their Face Book page under MaineHomelessVeteransAlliance. The web site itself is being rebuilt, but there is information there. That is where most of what is written here came from. There are wish lists there of items they need and can accept.

The Alliance’s primary focus begins after a veteran is approved for an apartment. They then supply the veteran with furniture for the apartment for free, including a new bed. Most of the rest of the furniture is donated. As they put it, “no more sleeping on the hard floor or on the ground.” The Alliance also provides a new set of dishes and utensils for their kitchen. They have “moved in over 200 veterans since the inception of MHVA as a 501(c)(3)”, the designation for a charitable organization.

Since the beginning of this year, they have supplied items for apartments for approximately 22 veterans. And there is a need for more. They have a storage unit, packed with donated items which are shared with the homeless in Portland. We thought that providing some funds towards the new beds, or dish/utensil supplies or towards a van that they need to pick up and deliver donations might be the best way to help. Such a gift would be very much appreciated!!

So we ask you to prayerfully consider what you might give to help the men and women who have served this country become settled in their own apartments. Thank you for considering helping.

Please use the Easter Offering Envelopes in the pews, and/or mark any other envelope and your checks in the notation line with Easter Offering 2023.

NEWS FROM GOVERNING & FINANCE

Don't miss the work projects completed since our last newsletter. We have a new door installed on the Annex. The old one was in sorry condition and desperately needed to be replaced. Here is how it looks now:



We now have sensors in all our buildings that will notify us if the temperature falls below a safe level. And we are expecting new vestry windows to be installed this week. Our old historic buildings are in need of many improvements and we are excited to check a few things off the list.

We met with our financial counselor to review our investment accounts, fees etc. We are pleased with the service provided by Wells Fargo.

We are moving forward toward the goals of our Long-Range plan by contracting with Gawron – Turgeon Architects for a feasibility determination and plan to connect the Church and Parish Hall. We want this to include an elevator making both buildings and bathrooms accessible. Accessibility of our buildings and the bathrooms is of the utmost importance for our church to move into the future. The bathrooms in the Parish Hall were constructed when the building was built in the early 1950s for children. They do not meet the requirements needed today.

We are beginning a search for a company to do our mowing for the summer. We would like to find a company that would do both mowing and winter snow clearing of our properties. It has been a challenge to find companies to do this work. If you know of any please let us know.

Please direct questions, concerns and suggestions to Kathy Ross, Current Chair of the Ministry of Governing and Finance, 207 510-1264 or Kross29@me.com

IT's TIME FOR POTLUCK

Our Ministry of Members, Friends and Church Life is hosting a Potluck “luncheon” on Saturday, **March 25**, from 3:00—6:00 pm in the Vestry. We hope to bring our members and friends together for a sociable and sustaining afternoon. As the date approaches we will post a sign up sheet in the Vestry and release details. In the meantime, if you would like to participate, please notify Elaine in the office and let her know if you will be bringing a menu item.

ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS IS SUNDAY, MAY 7

This is a reminder to our congregation and the Heads of our Ministries that our Annual Meeting takes place on May 7, following the Sunday service. Ministry Heads are asked to submit their Annual Reports no later than April 14. Any proposed Amendments to the Bylaws should be brought to the April 4th Council meeting, and be submitted by April 14 also.

CALL FOR USHERS AND FLOWERS

We need you!! We are in need of individuals to help usher. Would you be willing to usher during a Sunday service? You would receive on the “job” training, as well as work closely with a seasoned usher. Please consider signing up today.

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 concerning anything at the church and you would like it brought to the Church Council, please email 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. Email address: FCCSuggestions@gmail.com

MOTHER'S DAY IS MAY 14

The Men's Fellowship is taking responsibility for ushering and neighboring on May 14.

If you can help in any way, please contact Dan Davidson or a member of the Men's Fellowship.

2023 EASTER FLOWERS ORDER FORM

Please help us prepare our sanctuary for the glorious celebration of Easter on April 9th. 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 with your check to the church office: 161 Black Point Road. 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 church office or Vestry by Friday, April 7th.

The deadline for ordering plants is Tuesday, March 28th.

Please indicate quantity of the item you wish to order.

___ Single Lily (6" pot) \$20.00

___ 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.



REPLACEMENT OF VESTRY WINDOWS

3/14/2023

UNLOADING BAGS OF POTATOES DONATED TO THE FOOD PANTRY

2/13/2023



BETHANY KIRKPATRICK WORKING UP TO THE END

2/26/2023



Thank you.

What is Ash Wednesday?

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent. It is always exactly 40 days (excluding Sundays) before Easter. Many Christians observe Ash Wednesday with prayers of repentance and fasting. The rubbing of a cross with ashes on a person's forehead or back of the hand, connects with our origin and symbolizes our desire to be penitential and reflective about our actions during this Lenten time of waiting for Christ's resurrection.

This year on Ash Wednesday, which is February 22nd, you are invited to come to the church any time between 12:00 and 2:00 PM to receive ashes from Reverend Linda. We would love to have you join us. All are welcome.

Lenten Devotionals

"We are simultaneously running from empty while running on empty. Jesus might ask us: "Beloved, is empty the worst thing that can happen to you? Is stillness and doing nothing so awful? Perhaps the thing you are running from is the very thing you most need." Enter Lent, which is all about surrender, emptying, and letting go of everything that leads away from the cross. Running from Empty is a daily invitation to embrace the empty places we might prefer to avoid; to breathe deeply, love fully, act justly; and to find Jesus in the stillness and the storm. (Running from Empty 2023. The Stillspeaking Writer's Group.)

Beginning on Ash Wednesday, Rev. Linda will be holding a series of 1 hour Lenten Devotionals, utilizing the collection of brief daily devotionals for Lent, "Running from Empty." If you want to share in a Lenten practice of reflection and prayer to help refill your spiritual "tank," this may be just what you are looking for.

