

THE TIMES NEWSLETTER

A publication of the First Congregational Church

of Scarborough, Maine 04074

JULY 2023



PASTOR'S MESSAGE:

Of Myths and Legends

I just planted a white flowering Dogwood tree in the front yard of our house in Kennebunk. When I was shopping at a garden center the other day, this little Dogwood tree called out to me to take it home, which I did. I have never owned a Dogwood tree but I have always admired its' beauty. Did you know the Dogwood is considered one of the most beautiful eastern North American trees? Did you know the Flowering Dogwood is the North Carolina state flower? And did you also know that there is a legend about the Dogwood tree?

Maybe you don't give much credence to the stuff of legends, dismissing them as "folktale" grounded in the realm of uncertainty. Nevertheless, some legends have staying power, for their narratives are often based in some actual historical event (unlike myths), and they teach certain values and lessons. This is true with the legend of the Dogwood tree.

This legend is based on the Christian story of Jesus' death and resurrection. The legend holds that the Dogwood tree was once a very large tree, like a Great Oak. Its' wood was strong and sturdy, consequently it provided good building material for a variety of purposes. According to the story, it was the wood of the Dogwood tree that was used to build the cross on which Jesus was crucified. Because of this, it is said that God both cursed and blessed the Dogwood tree. It was cursed to forever be small so that it would never grow large enough again for its' wood to be used as a cross for a crucifixion. Its' branches would be thin and crooked, not good for building at all.

At the same time, the tree was blessed by God so that it would produce beautiful flowers in the Spring around the time of Easter. To remember this blessing upon the tree, God gave it a few traits so that whoever looked upon it would never forget. The petals of the Dogwood are in the shape of a cross - the blooms of the tree always have four petals. The middle of the flower looks like a crown of thorns.

The tips of each of the petals are indented as if they bear a nail dent. And the edges of the petals have colors that bring to mind the drops of Jesus' blood that he shed during the crucifixion.



This is a beautiful legend...which is not based on anything we have read in the bible about Dogwood trees! Though many different religious traditions have emerged concerning the type of wood Jesus' cross was made of, there is no scripture verse that tells us. Nevertheless, this story has the sweet allegorical purpose of reminding us of something so important - Jesus' love and sacrifice on the cross for all who believe in him. Isn't this a wonderful way to reflect on this central story of our faith? I think so. And as a result, I don't think I can ever look upon a Dogwood tree in the same way again. How exciting it is to have one right in my front yard!

I hope you will have a blessed summer. Explore new things. Experience beauty. Venture into "folktale" and uncertainty. And most importantly, enjoy some restful days ahead!

I am Yours in Christ's Service,

Reverend Linda C. Hey

PASTOR'S SUMMER VACATION

Rev. Hey will be away on vacation starting June 19th and returning July 10th. There will be guest preachers on those Sundays when she is away. The service of July 2nd will be a hymn sing.

Rev. Allison Curry will provide pastoral coverage while Rev. Hey is away. If you have a pastoral emergency during this time, please contact the church office (207-883-2342) or Allison directly (207-730-2387)



OFFICE E-MAIL ADDRESS:	fcchurch@fccscarborough.com
Church mailing address	161 Black Point Rd, Scarborough ME 04074
Church Website	www.fccscarborough.com
Church Telephone #	(207) 883-2342
Pastor: Rev. Linda Hey	lindahey@comcast.net



NEWS FROM THE MUSIC COMMITTEE

The Music Director Search Committee, an ad hoc committee to the Ministry of Worship and Spiritual Care, announces that Wendy Northrup has accepted the new position of “Minister of Music”.

The committee worked diligently to change the job description to include the responsibilities of the Organist and the Music Director, making it one position. In the process we realized that music is a Ministry enhancing the spirituality in our church, therefore, the title of the new position is the “Minister of Music”.

Wendy was the unanimous choice by the search committee, the Ministry of Worship and Spiritual Care and the Church Council. Wendy has 40 plus years experience in churches, schools and special presentations. She is open to new ideas. We welcome her as she brings her talents, strong faith and God’s spirit to her work. We all look forward to working with her.

Submitted by Susan Fielding, Committee Chair

Thank you to our Search Committee members: Kathy Ross, Kate Sawdon, Elaine Sederlund, Mary Ellen Bossom, Brenda Birkner, Susan Fielding, and Rev. Linda Hey

News from the Ministry of Christian Outreach and Stewardship

As our activity year draws to a close this ministry has news and information for you. While we won't meet in July, we have some projects we are working on. We look forward to sharing them with you.

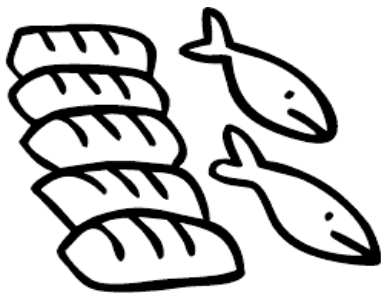
First, an update on the Stewardship Campaign for 2023-24. We have 67 pledges for the coming year, starting July 1. Of those pledges there are 8 from people who have not pledged before. The amount pledged for next year is \$122,811. We are at 89% of our goal of \$138,500. We are very grateful to those who have stepped forward helping us to Grow, Live and Build Together! There is time for you to make a pledge to help meet that goal. We know there are a few folks who have pledged in the past, but have not done so yet. Please consider doing that. If you need a pledge material or have questions, please give Bryce Roberts a call at 799-0228. If you just need the pledge form please call the church office, 883-2342. There is much to look forward to here at First Congregational Church. Please join us!!

During the summer we will be working on information about planned giving. We'd like to offer you the opportunity to add First Congregational Church to your will. We will also be re-introducing an idea of several years ago, helping to work toward our financial goal. It is an important goal to try to reach. You may hear coins going into the offering plate each Sunday, and wonder what that was about. Stay tuned.

The Food Pantry continues to operate through out the entire year. Summer brings it's own challenges to families in need of supplemental food. Kids are eating more at home. You can bring in non perishable items to the church office, or to breezeway if the office isn't open. You may also bring items on either Tuesday or Thursday during the hours the Pantry is open, 1:30 to 4 PM.

If you have your own garden and find you have lots of one thing or another, please consider contributing your surplus to the food pantry. Your help is always appreciated.

Please look at their web site at <https://scarboroughfoodpantry.weebly.com>. It has Pantry information, and can tell you what is needed now.



Speaking of appreciation, the Food Pantry has received donations this spring from the following: The Kiwanis, gave ham steaks at Easter; Lion's Club and Saco, Biddeford Savings sponsored a shredding event resulting in food and funds; The Audubon Center, Lion's Club and Project Grace sponsored a food drive and marsh clean up day; Eight Corners Elementary School sponsored a food drive; The Maine Bagel, at 172 US Rte 1 in Scarborough, has donated bagels and bread products. Perhaps you can stop by there and get some of their tasty products, and let them know they are appreciated. Lastly a Cub Scout, Liam, conducted his own food drive in his neighborhood and with his Mom delivered food to the pantry. And then there are the donors, many donors who give generously. We are thankful for all of them. So you can see that there are many people supporting the Food Pantry and getting to know that this Church is here and active.

This is all part of Christian Stewardship. We welcome you joining us by pledging, donating food or volunteering to continue Growing, Living, and Building Together our church and civic community.
Thank you to all of you, most sincerely!

SAVE THE DATES

June 24 Annual Yard Sale (8:30 am til 1:00 pm)

Please leave donations in the Parish Hall (preferred) or in the breezeway of the Annex/Office. . Contact Elaine in the Office with questions or to volunteer to setup and sort prior the sale or to work the day of the sale

August 15 Deadline for next Newsletter is August 15th

This is the only Newsletter of the Summer. There will be a September Newsletter. The deadline for submitting items and announcements is August 15th.

August 19 Spaghetti Dinner sponsored by Men's Fellowship

The Interim Time

Perhaps you have been wondering what the Interim time is all about? Well, for the church, it is the time in-between settled pastors. This time is not an empty space where we impatiently wait for what's next, but it can be a very full and fruitful time of self-discovery and growth for the church.

Interim ministry is a specialized ministry focus with its own set of special training, skills, and objectives. And churches can make the most of this, by allowing time for the congregation to process the complex emotions that are a part of every church community. Church members are usually glad to have some time to look closely at the church's history and identity and to outline real and obtainable new directions for ministry in the future.

At the Church Council meeting in June, I presented information on the Interim Development tasks (focus points) and also recommended that we form a "Transitional Steering Team" who will meet with me on a regular basis - to learn, and to discern a plan for bringing important conversation topics to the congregation, over the next several months. My goal is to have this group formed by the end of the summer so that we can begin in September. The work that results from the Transitional Steering Team's efforts will be enormously helpful in the writing of our local church profile, which is the document required for the search and call process in the UCC.

We are in this together and we are counting on everyone's support through prayer and participation. We look forward to a blessed and productive time with all of our congregation as we journey through this Interim time together.

Stay tuned for more information, and feel free to come and talk with me about this work in progress.

May God bless us all in this season of fresh beginnings!

Yours in Christ's Service,

Reverend Linda C. Hey

NEWS FROM WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

We had our last meeting on May 23rd at the Olive Garden. Great food! Great attendance! Women's Fellowship will be having a special neighboring for Father's Day on June 18th. We will resume our meetings on September 26, 2023 and meet the fourth Tuesday of each month thereafter unless otherwise stated. All women are welcome to attend.



MEMBERS, FRIENDS & CHURCH LIFE will be having our last neighboring on June 25th. Please come down to the Vestry to enjoy! Our summer neighboring will be July 9th, also in the church Vestry. The Men's Group will be hosting neighboring on August 20th. Neighboring will resume weekly on September 10th. Volunteers are needed and sign up will be on the bulletin board in the Vestry.

Submitted by Joanne Brown, Secretary, WF and Chairwoman. MF&CL



CRAFTS & FELLOWSHIP

This congenial group will continue to meet Tuesday afternoons, starting at 1:30, in the Annex (July 4th excepted). Please bring knitting, needlework, or other project..... or just show for company and crafts as we get to know each other better.

NEWS FROM THE MINISTRY OF GOVERNING AND FINANCE

We have installed a new secure mailbox outside the front door of the Office

Please use this mailbox if you need to drop off pledges, letters or other items for the office. The mailbox is locked and is checked daily..

(See photo below)



