

THE TIMES NEWSLETTER

A publication of the First Congregational Church

of Scarborough, Maine 04074

JUNE 2023



PASTOR'S MESSAGE:

In the Garden

I have always had a home garden. Digging in the dirt in the springtime and going to the store to buy seeds was a kind of ritual for me. Even in those years when I was serving churches quite a distance away from home, I always found a way to grow things. Home wasn't home unless I had a few vegetable and herb plants growing somewhere!

Sadly, this year my gardening efforts have been quite minimal since I don't seem to be in any one place long enough to take care of a garden. Thank goodness this is only temporary. I did manage to plant a couple of marigold seeds in a small pot a couple of weeks ago, and they are coming up. Soon I will have to transplant them into each their own pots to give them room to grow. I always marvel at how seeds become transformed into plants when given the right conditions for new life to begin, don't you? Those first few shoots of green peeking through the soil are exciting to see.

Even though, this year I am unable to plant and tend a meaningful garden, I look forward to the time when I can do it again. The reason is because it is a spiritual practice for me. Planting a garden connects me with the truth that "*with God all things are possible.*" In those days when my spirit is low, I remember that God is consistently bringing new life from the old, sometimes in an unexpected way.

Strangely enough, I recently became aware that this was happening to me when I was talking with my youngest son Josh on the phone. He was telling me all about **his** garden – the seeds he planted, the new herbs he is growing, and the trellis he built out of old pallets for his pole beans. He told me how much he enjoys planning, planting, and taking care of his garden.

It gives him peace. And it was then I realized that I had passed on my appreciation of God's abundance in nature through gardening, to him. What more could I want?

There are so many ways we experience God's possibilities in the everyday of our lives. It is happening everywhere in nature at this time of year. It is happening in transitional times of families - like when our children hold in their hearts lessons from their childhood. It is even happening in our church as we gain a deeper awareness of the many gifts and blessings we have in each other. There is surely new potential for life when we have the right conditions for God to grow in our hearts and in our souls.



As you get ready for the warm summer days I pray you will find the time (or make the time) to nurture your own seeds of faith. Give them good soil, and warmth and water. Spend time with God and with those you love. And look for unexpected places of new life. Maybe you'll even become aware of God's amazing gifts renewing your hope in what is possible.

I wish you peaceful summer blessings.

Your Servant in Christ,
Reverend Linda C. Hey



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From the Ministry of Worship and Spiritual Care:

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 on the Signup Sheet posted downstairs in the Vestry or call the office for particulars.

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| 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 |

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Scarborough was held in the Sanctuary on Sunday morning, May 7. Forty-three (43) church members attended in person and another twenty-nine (29) submitted written proxies.

Co-Moderators Dick Grotton and Fran Whitten led the meeting. A budget was adopted for the coming year (June 1, 2023-June 30, 2024), which included a new part time position of Website Administrator and contracted services to support the church servers, laptops, audiovisuals and related needs.

Kathleen Meserve was elected to the Ministry of Governing & Finance to replace Rob Willey who stepped down after years of dedicated service. All votes were unanimous to accept Ministry Nominations, Reports and Financial Reports.

After the meeting, Cliff Colville unveiled architectural renderings and plans of a proposed new building to connect the Church and the Parish Hall, prepared by Garwon Turgeon Architects. The plans include an elevator, new bathrooms and accessible features throughout to insure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, making it possible for individuals with physical limitations to enter and move freely between the buildings.

If you are interested in receiving a copy of the Minutes, please contact the office at (207) 883-2342.

CRAFTS AND FELLOWSHIP GROUP TO START MEETING MAY 30

Come, relax and join us for pleasant, fun conversation and fellowship, and possibly learn a new craft or just bring your own. Arts and crafts can be an escape from daily routines. Let's make something together that's creative and beautiful.

Sandra Elder and Norene Tibbetts are putting together this fun group to meet every Tuesday afternoon, starting at 1:30 pm, likely lasting a couple hours each time. (But no meetings when Women's Fellowship has it's monthly get together.

Our next meeting is Tuesday May 30, at 1:30 pm, in the downstairs meeting room of the Annex (161 Black Point Road) Please enter through the breezeway.

Any questions, please contact Sandra Elder: (207) 883-2798

THE LETTER BELOW WAS SENT BY LIANE GIAMBALVO TO THE PORTLAND PRESS HERALD

I'm writing in response to the editorial by Kristen Miale, president of Good Shepherd Food Bank. As a volunteer at the Scarborough Food Pantry, I strongly support LD1584, an act to provide funding for Supplemental Nutrition (SNAP) benefits, which are being cut by the Federal Government. Ms. Miale is absolutely correct - food pantries cannot address all food insecurities. Customers at pantries have a variety of financial stressors- they often have chronic illness, or lack reliable transportation, rising rents or home maintenance problems, and extended family concerns. Some are raising grandchildren. Some have recent surgeries or cancer diagnoses. Many are elderly, living in one or two person households struggling to get by on small pensions and social security. These are people who have worked hard all their lives and are now caregivers for others. Pantries do their best to get to know each one and offer caring, dignity and nutritious food, but we all wish more for these folks: the ability to choose their own foods from the grocery store rather than depend on the choices we make for them. What if someone received food pantry items that don't fit with a medical diagnosis? Or chowder when the recipient really wanted beef stew? Food banks and pantries will always be needed to fill in the gaps, but we must push back against the stigma often prevalent toward those who may be "food insecure." I've heard people say, "Beggars can't be choosers." Well, pantry customers are definitely not beggars, and I think they should have the dignity, compassion and freedom to make their own food choices. Please support LD 1584, and continue to support your local food pantry as well! Liane Giambalvo, 59 Jasper St Scarborough ME 04074, 207-735-7478



HOW TO DONATE FOOD TO THE FOOD PANTRY

- 1) Bring your donation to the Parish Hall while the Food Pantry is open: Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 1:30-4:00 pm. Park next to the Parish Hall.
- 2) Bring your donation to the Church Office, 161 Black Point Road. Office staff can help you between 9:00 am and 1:00 pm; otherwise please leave your donations in the breezeway of the Office/Annex. The door is never locked and there is a motion detector light that turns on after dark.

Singers & Stringers News

Come join us!

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

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 or change the Saturday.

Masks are not required, but if you feel more comfortable wearing one, please do – also – bring yourself some water.

2023

PRACTICE

SINGING

Saturday June 10 – Practice (10am)

Singing: June 18 (8:30am)

Saturday July 8 – Practice (10am)

Singing: July 30 (8:30am)

Saturday August 12 – Practice (10am)

Singing: August 27 (8:30am)

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"

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 - 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 Gray (Birkner) & Ray Birkner 207-650-4514

(Brenda) – 207-650-5180

(Ray) Grabirk94@gmail

FROM THE MINISTRY OF GOVERNING & FINANCE

The last Sunday in April neighboring program featured Scarborough Police Social Services Navigator, Lauren Dembski-Martin, LCSW, and Community Resource Officer, Eric Greenleaf, a 30 year veteran of the Scarborough Police Department, speaking on Homeless Issues in Scarborough as well as general church security, community and congregation safety issues.

The event was very well attended and participants enjoyed the program and were very eager to get involved during the question and answer session.

We learned that homeless people often avoid shelters in favor of the autonomy of more natural settings, Ms. Dembski instructed the group to ask specific questions when dealing with the homeless to determine what they need or want, rather than assuming we know what they need as we often really don't.

Officer Greenleaf pointed out that all church doors should really be locked as the service starts. Churches, schools and many businesses are considered unprotected "Soft Targets" for mentally disturbed or angry individuals bent on harming people they perceive as the cause of their life situation or mental state. Securing the church during worship services "hardens" our building against many threats. Other issues involving nighttime security, and the status of crime in Scarborough were also addressed.

Church Fire Safety and Evacuation Plan

Several Points should be remembered regarding your safety while at church.

Smoke / Carbon Monoxide Detectors are located on each level and the stairwell. They will sound an audible alarm and also visual strobe signal to warn of a smoke condition.

Fire Extinguishers are located under the Pulpit, In the main Church entrance, (Narthex) On the wall in the basement lower level (Vestry)

Emergency, Battery powered lighting is located on each floor to provide temporary night visibility in the event of a power failure.

Lighted EXIT signs are located at each entry / exit.

A First Aid Kit is available in the lower basement level (Vestry) in the kitchen.

An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is located in the Basement Lower level (Vestry) on the West wall, just outside the restroom.

EXITING THE CHURCH BUILDING:

Two, direct-to-outside exits are available on each floor of the church:

From the main Sanctuary level: Use the double front doors facing Black Point Road, or the front-side door leading to the accessibility ramp.

From the basement level: side door to and from the parking lot, and a rear exit door from the Vestry kitchen.

Indirect exits to staircases are located toward the front and rear parking lot side of the church marked with EXIT above the doors.

Circumstances may require a different exit than the closest one. Occupants should be prepared to exercise critical judgement to best ensure your and others safety.

SAVE THE DATES

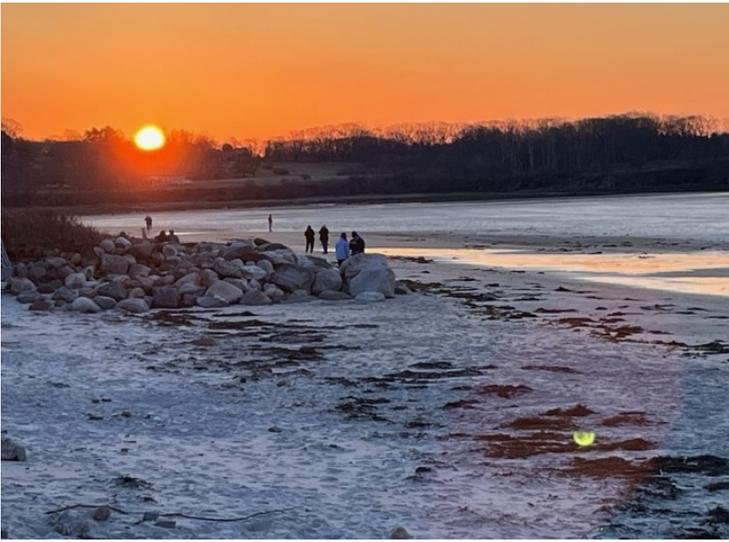
June 18 Father's Day. Neighboring by the Women's Fellowship.

June 24 Annual Rummage Sale

Donations will be accepted starting June 11 and can be left on the stage of the Parish Hall (preferred) or in cartons upstairs inside the doors to the Parish Hall or in the breezeway of the Annex/Office. . Please contact Elaine in the Office with questions or to volunteer to setup and sort in the week preceding the sale or to work the day of the sale (8:30 am til 1:00 pm)

August 19 Spaghetti Dinner sponsored by Men's Fellowship

This is a fundraising event and will be open to the General Public.



Top Row: Easter Sunrise Service at Higgins Beach

Middle Row: Sanctuary decorated for Easter; Rev. Hey with Abby

Bottom Row: Governing & Finance Members on the job.



