

THE TIMES NEWSLETTER

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

MAY 2023



PASTOR'S MESSAGE:

Grateful Praise

While we attach many characterizations to God, the one I think about in the springtime is God as the Creator. It is hard not to as the season changes from winter to spring and the earth warms, and buds on the trees begin to open, and daffodils in our gardens begin to bloom. Warm days invite us to open our windows and they call us out of our houses to look at the land and the sky. God does some beautiful work! It is inspiring. We might even want to sing about the beauty of the earth, as poet Folliott S. Pierpoint did in the 1864, when he composed the hymn of thanksgiving, "For the Beauty of the Earth." We still sing it today.

*For the Beauty of the Earth, for the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth over and around us lies
Lord of all to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise!*

*For the beauty of each hour, of the day and of the night,
hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon and stars of light,
Lord of all to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise!*



The earth is beautiful, and it belongs to God. We sometimes forget this. But Psalm 24 reminds us, "*The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.*"(1) And it is our job to take care of it, which the book of Genesis tells us: "*The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it.*" (2:15)

God has charged us to practice good stewardship of the earth's environment and natural resources. What this means is that we must treat all of nature as sacred and manage it for the sake of making God's good creation better. When God created the earth, he said that we are to replenish it (Gen 1:28), not deplete it. We are called to honor God by the choices we make, and to not neglect or abuse the earth.

Many years ago my church's missions committee wanted to do something to honor Earth Day, so we obtained some seedlings from the Arbor Day Foundation and handed them out to

church members one Sunday, asking them to plant them. I planted a few seedlings in my yard - most of them did not make it. But one survived, and now it is a large tree. I would like to take credit for this, but I know that the tree's flourishing is the work of the Creator - the Divine, mysterious Source of life - the One who makes hearts beat and causes seeds to germinate.

God's healing and resurrecting love is at work in all of God's good creation. And it is glorious and beautiful! This springtime, I pray we will renew our appreciation of the gift of our earth, and that we will not turn our backs on God's trust in us to care for it.

And I hope that maybe, just maybe the next time you feel a beautiful warm day calling you to enjoy the miracles of creation happening just outside your door, your heart will be filled with humility at the wonder of it. You might even sing a song of grateful praise to our Creator God, who is Lord of it all.

Yours in Service of the Resurrected Christ,

Reverend Linda C. Hey

SAVE THE DATE: MAY 7

The Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Scarborough will take place on Sunday, May 7, after Neighboring. We will meet upstairs in the Sanctuary. Members will receive an Annual Report and Notice in the mail at least 7 days prior to the meeting. If you cannot attend, you can still vote by Proxy. We hope you will join us for the Meeting.

Part of the Annual Meeting is devoted to re-electing the Members of our Ministries and Committees. If you would like to sign up and become more active in the life of the church, please contact speak to Joanne Brown and/or contact the Church Office.



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NEWS FROM GOVERNING AND FINANCE

The Ministry of Governing and Finance has scheduled our Spring Clean-up at the church and Annex for Saturday May 13, 8:30AM – 12:00PM. We rake, trim bushes, sweep or whatever needs to be done to clean up the properties. Every hour we contribute saves the church from having to hire someone to do it. Come join us.

The projects we have completed this month include, the vestry windows in the church and interior painting of the new door frame in the Annex. We are very pleased that Dick Groton was able to sell the old vestry windows contributing \$550.00 toward the many projects. Thank you, Dick and Rob.

We are asking for proposals from companies to mow our lawns this summer and hope to finalize that soon. Thank You, Fran for your dedication in finding the best company for us.

We are expecting some preliminary plans from Gawron and Turgeon soon. Our Lent Devotional was taken from the Booklet: “Running from Empty” a publication produced by United Church of Christ. The reading for April 4 was titled ‘They Wish to See Jesus’. The last paragraph states: “In communities that yearn to welcome everyone, we sometimes lose sight of the many processes and barriers that keep the curious from accessing Jesus. Take a close look at your community. “ All I could think of was the difficulty, anyone with walking limitations, has getting into and out of our church and parish hall. I am excited we are moving forward with our long-range plan recommendation of improving access to our buildings. Stay tuned for more information as it is available.

WOMEN's FELLOWSHIP NEWS

The Women's Fellowship will meet April 25th at 2:00 pm in the Vestry of the Church (downstairs from the Sanctuary). The program will be “Safety in Our Changing World” from the Scarborough Police Department. We will also elect our new Officers for 2023-2024..

We will be having our Annual Banquet on May 23 at Noon, please TBD.

SCARBOROUGH POLICE SPECIALISTS TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY ISSUES AT APRIL 30th NEIGHBORING

Scarborough Social Services Navigator, Lauren Dembski-Martin and Community Resource Officer, Eric Greenleaf of the Scarborough Police Department will speak to the congregation present at neighboring on Sunday April 30th. Ms. Dembski-Martin will speak about the homeless in Scarborough and how she works with this group to provide important care and services. And, how we should interface with homeless individuals who come to our church, beyond making them feel welcome, as we do all who come through our doors, and how best to react and respond to behavior different from the norm for our church should this occur.

Veteran Police Officer Eric Greenleaf will speak to the important issues of Church Security amid the multiple episodes of violence at so-called “Soft Targets” such as schools and churches. He has an important message for our congregation to hear and understand the reality of our town and the era in which we live. How prepared is our church today? What steps might we take to better secure the church and our congregation for the future?

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

April 25 (Tuesday) 2:00 Women’s Fellowship will meet in the Parlor.

April 27 (Thursday) 3:30 Men’s Fellowship will meet in the Annex

May 5 (Friday) 1:30 Crafters Group—Initial Meeting (See Below)

May 7 (Sunday) 11:00 Annual Meeting in the Sanctuary

May 23 (Tuesday) Noon Women ‘s Fellowship Banquet (Location TBD)

CALLING KNITTERS AND CRAFTERS!

Interest has been expressed in having some sort of group where we would gather for projects. What needs to be decided is: would we be working on sweaters for ourselves; making some items for the Church yuletide Fair, or creating something that you have been wondering about? OR , it could be a combination of all. Time, place and frequency of meetings also needs to be decided. Let’s gather, bring all our ideas and see what develops. The brainstorming session will be held on **Friday, May 5 starting at 1:30 pm** in the Office Annex downstairs. (161 Black Point Road, Scarborough)

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 May 13 – Practice (10am)

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

Updated Information on Maine Homeless Veterans Alliance

Some of you got to speak with Kevin Nicholson, the chairperson for the Maine Homeless Veterans Alliance, on Palm Sunday. Since a few of you are in the process of downsizing and/or are preparing to move to smaller houses, you were asking how to get in touch with the organization in order to donate some pieces of furniture. Here are some ways to get in touch with them.

First there are links on their new website: <https://mainehomelessveteransalliance.org/>

Second, there is a phone number from a brochure, one of which I'll put on the Mission's Bulletin Board in the Vestry. That number is 207-228-4936. This will put you in touch with Kevin Nicholson.

Third, check for links on their Face Book page if you use that: Simply type in the name of the organization in to the Search Facebook bar.

Fourth, here is the email address for Kevin Nicholson: Knicholson@mainehva.org.

The address for the group is MHVA, PO Box 1895, Portland, ME 04101

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave Kevin when he spoke. Clearly, he is passionate about what he does. Whatever you can donate will be greatly appreciated. Here's a short reminder of the things that are most helpful to the organization:

Furniture: small kitchen tables and chairs, end tables, coffee tables, bedside tables, chests of drawers.

Camping supplies: tents, sleeping bags (singles and doubles), ground clothes, blankets.

For those who get out to dinner, the MHVA is going to be the recipient of the value of the meals purchased at Nonesuch Brewing here in Scarborough. If you are able to attend please consider it. The date for the Nonesuch River Brewing Company LLC fund-raising night is: May 24, from 4-9 PM and you MUST make sure you tell your server you're there to support MHVA in order for MHVA to receive proceeds from your meal (dine in or take out).

And last, but certainly not least, thank you for your monetary gifts to the Special Easter Offering which will go to the MHVA. You very generously gave \$1177.00 as of 4/16/2023. Many thanks for your interest and for your gifts.

Ministry of Christian Outreach and Stewardship

