

# THE TIMES NEWSLETTER

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

**JANUARY 2024**



## PASTOR'S MESSAGE:

### I Love My Church

Is there a church in your past, or present, that you can honestly say you love? In my career as a pastor, I have had many churches that I loved. They are churches where I felt I left a piece of my heart when it was time for me go.

When I was a young parent, I chose to raise my children in a large UCC church in New Hampshire. I was a member there for many, many years. It was there I learned what it meant to be a part of a church family. It was there I learned about the deep and abiding love of God through Christ Jesus, and how that love bound our community together in ways that defied explanation. It was there I learned about the commitment and call to serve the church, as it is described in my UCC Statement of Faith – *“the cost and joy of discipleship.”*



I loved my home church. They trusted and believed in me. When I was on the path to ordination, they gave me opportunities to learn, to lead and to grow with Christ. One of the many lessons I learned was that I would not always get my way, and that was okay (I eventually came around!). After all, I was there to be changed and molded into a person of spiritual depth and faith.

Through the years, I have met many people who “like” their church, but don’t “love it.” The evidence of such love includes devotion, involvement, and commitment - and this can be in scarce supply. It is a sad reality that some people prefer to stay on the outside looking in, and even treat the church with suspicion.

I believe it is both our right and responsibility to leave those sidelines and work to make the church a strong presence for Jesus and a welcoming home for future disciples. Jesus didn’t call disciples so that they would do nothing. It is through them that the church has continued through the generations; and it is through them that Jesus’ message of hope and salvation has found resonance in the human heart.

As we stand on the precipice of yet another new year, we have the chance to make a new beginning with God. We have the chance to make a fresh start and to experience “*the cost and joy of discipleship*” as devoted members of the church. We have the chance to open our hearts and allow ourselves to be molded into people of spiritual depth and faith.

My New Year’s prayer is that we will do this. I pray we will strive to make our church strong, so that we can honestly say we “love our church” here in Scarborough. We do this not because we must but because we may. Always. Let us find joy through our commitment and service together as members of our wonderful congregation.

New Year’s Blessings to you!

Your Servant in Christ,

Reverend Linda C. Hey



### **Advent and Christmas Worship Services**

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

December 24 9:30 A.M.

Christmas Eve Candlelight

Service of Lessons and Carols

December 24 4:30 P.M.

Christmas Day (no service)

December 25

December 14th, 2023

Music Notes



December brings with it such a beautiful season of expectation and then realization of the greatest miracle ever, with the arrival of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hallelujah! If you attended the Cantata, thanks for the incredible night of community. Choir members and I are still basking in the joy of singing to such receptive audiences in Brunswick and here in our own sanctuary. With over eighty five congregation attendees here in Scarborough the energy was magical and palpable. Keep an eye out for a digital copy of the joyous night via email, if we have your email address. We are not able to publish the Youtube link on social media, of course, with copyright in place, but members can enjoy it on their own computers. Thank you to ushers and welcomers, you were appreciated very much!

*Looking ahead, and very soon, during our Christmas Eve service we will have a welcome reunion with the Director of the Cantata, John Sustersic, who leads the music for the Worship and Praise service at the Brunswick United Methodist Church. He and his daughter, Charlotte, will return to us, with other string players, and share selections by a string quartet as well as vocal selections for our 4:30 service. They will bring with them Joel Gratwick, a cellist, who was inspired by the Cantata and offered to join them this season. And, if you love the traditional iconic Christmas selection O Holy Night, come out and hear our own Choir Members sing this classic Christmas favorite from their hearts and so beautifully. We are blessed!*

If you are inspired and would like to be included in all of the fun in the choir loft and would like to add your own musical offerings, come visit for a rehearsal in the New Year. We will be rehearsing Sunday mornings for two months while we wait for the light to come back, and will return to Thursday evenings when the weather looks a little brighter in March. Maybe this change works for your busy schedule. You can still enjoy coffee time and neighboring Sunday mornings, and then pop back upstairs and try out your voice in one of our wonderful sections. We will find the right spot for you. And, if you are feeling rather busy, maybe you will choose to join for a season, such as Lent and Easter, or the tail end of our year from after Easter to June. You are most certainly welcome anytime!

Come make a "Joyful Noise Unto the Lord!"

Yours in music,

Wendy



## **THE GIVING TREE IS BARE!!!**

Thank you to all who took Gift Bags from the Giving Tree and returned them this past Sunday, December 17th. We'd like to report to you that 44 Gift Bags were returned, and the total of gift card donations reached \$715. There were 9 different businesses represented. The cards were delivered on Monday, December 18th to Stephanie Netto at Long Creek.

Thank you so much for your generosity in purchasing these card. This is the same kind of generosity shown to the youth at and associated with Long Creek Youth Development Center as in years passed when we were purchasing actual items that had been requested by the young people themselves. You are a wonderful congregation!!!

Thank you for all the cards and for reaching out in this way to let these young folks know that someone is thinking about them and wishing them well. We hope that you all had a wonderful Christmas!!!

Your Ministry of Outreach and Stewardship

## **WOMENS' FELLOWSHIP REPORT:**

Our next meeting will be December 19th at 2:00 in the Ladies Parlor. We will discuss the fair - how we did, is there anything we could have done better, etc. Come with your thoughts! Our hostesses will be Sandy Elder and Mary Ellen Bossom. If you are able, the food pantry donation is small toiletries (toothpaste, soap, deodorant, etc.). Hope to see you there!

Our monthly Ladies Coffee at IHOP is on hold until early spring. We will restart again in March.

Roberta Brown

President, Women's Fellowship

**SPECIAL CHRISTMAS OFFERING**  
**PROJECT G.R.A.C.E. FUEL FUND**

**Keeping Our Neighbors Warm - It's All About a Caring  
and Generous Community**

Keeping warm. That's the challenge of a Maine winter. For some of our neighbors, the choices can be stark: eat or heat. Fill a prescription or fill the oil tank. Even lowering the thermostat to near 60 and putting on extra layers still leaves some in the cold. The worry of how to make ends meet, which bills to pay first, how to stretch a thin paycheck, weighs heavy on our seniors on fixed incomes and families with little ones to care for. It's why Project GRACE, a community group that relies on community support, turns to friends like you as the temperatures begin to drop to help us give our fuel fund a much needed boost before we hold our annual "Rally to Keep Our Neighbors Warm" community fundraiser in February.

At today's prices, \$2,500 is just about enough for seven or eight 'helps' of 100 gallons of oil, k1, propane, or firewood to keep the furnace going for seniors and families who are having trouble making ends meet. In a typical winter heating season, it's not uncommon for us to answer more than seventy calls for assistance. As the temperatures fall, Project GRACE also helps Scarborough residents with the cost of small home repairs to stop costly drafts or give a furnace cleaning or tune up to improve efficiency and lower energy consumption. Project GRACE volunteers visit senior lunches, host programs at the library, and participate in public events like Sustainable Scarborough to share tips on saving energy and give out inexpensive but highly effective do-it-yourself supplies like window films, caulking, and weatherization tape to stop the drafts and keep the cold at bay.

Whether you can share a little or a lot, each and every gift is precious, and helps us keep our promise that we won't leave our Scarborough neighbors in the cold.

Your Ministry of Christian Outreach and Stewardship thanks you for your consideration and any support you may be able to give.

**Ministry of Members, Friends, and Church Life!**

Just to remind church people that we need volunteers to help out at Neighboring! The sign up sheet is on the bulletin board downstairs! There will be a special Christmas neighboring on Dec. 24 after church! Thank you ! Joanne Brown

**TAKE A LOOK AT OUR CHURCH'S FACEBOOK PAGE:**

Roberta Brown, a church member since her youth, maintains our Facebook Page. (This is in addition to presiding over Women's Fellowship and the Yuletide Fair!

Below is an example of one of her postings. Roberta posts photos and videos from Sunday worship services, the Sunday School the Food Pantry and special events. You will find previews of the coming week's Sunday message and Scripture, and so much more. So even if you do make it to church on Sundays, there is content on our Facebook page that you won't want to miss.



**First Congregational Church of  
Scarborough ME**



Posted by Roberta Brown

Dec 3 • 

Saturday, December 2nd dawned and the ladies and gentlemen of our church were at the Parish Hall bright and early. All the final primping was done and we were ready. After Rev. Linda Hey blessed our fair, the doors opened and the early shoppers descended! It was a very busy morning and many shopping bags were filled with sweet treats, jewelry, crafts, quilts, Christmas arrangements and so much more. We hope everyone had a good time working on the fair. And we hope the shoppers found that perfect gift. So many thanks go out to those that helped make the fair a success!!!!





## **MEMORIAL BENCH PROJECT**

The Ministry of Governing and Finances is pleased to report that a memorial bench has been delivered and installed in front of the church as planned and previously communicated. The bench is a wonderful enhancement to church property that can be enjoyed by all thanks to the idea and generosity of the Lerline Santos Estate. Lerline envisioned a small sanctuary outside the church to sit, rest, and reflect upon God, the church and life. The location is also ideal to enjoy the landscaping improvements initiated and funded by the Giambalvo family. Thanks also to Sue Hilton for her sample drawings of the bench and church front during the design and selection process.







# YULETIDE FAIR

## December 3, 2023







## CHRISTMAS CANTATA

December 10, 2023



<b>OFFICE E-MAIL ADDRESS:</b>	<b>fcchurch@fccscarborough.com</b>
Church mailing address	161 Black Point Rd, Scarborough ME 04074
Church Website	www.fccscarborough.com
Church Telephone #	(207) 883-2342
Pastor: Rev. Linda Hey	rlindahey2@gmail.com

## **OFFICE PROCEDURES DURING THE WEEK OF JAN 8-12**

A note from Elaine, our Administrative Assistant:

I will be out of the office on vacation during the second week of January. Kathy Ross of Governing & Finance will be covering for me and handling essential tasks. If anyone needs specific information or messages transmitted to our Members, please try to get it to the office no later than January 4th. Your patience and understanding is appreciated if there are any “glitches” during that week.































