

THE TIMES NEWSLETTER

A publication of the First Congregational Church

of Scarborough, Maine 04074

NOVEMBER 2024



PASTOR'S MESSAGE

HOPE

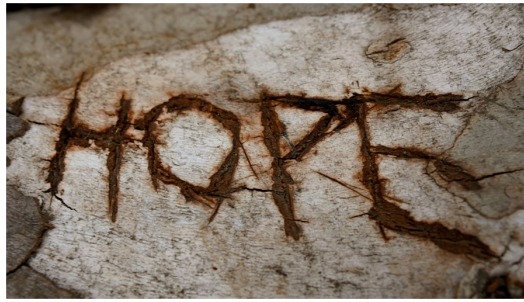
Have you ever heard this statement: “The Christian ethic is essentially an ethic of hope?” There are plenty of scriptures that back this up - 1st Peter 1:3 tells us about hope in Jesus Christ, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”* And Colossians 1:27 speaks of the power of Christ in us, *“To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”*

There is comfort in knowing that God through Christ brought us unending hope. For many Christians, hope is a lifeline in a world that has much suffering and pain. I can't even count how many times people have told me that they couldn't have gotten through a tough time in their life without the hope of their faith.

And while this is true, there are still many people who feel hopeless. Maybe you have felt hopeless at one time or another. Hopelessness is a tough place to be. People who feel hopeless see no remedy for anything in life. People can lose hope when they find themselves in circumstances like poverty, war, a lack of love, or sickness. Hopelessness also thrives when people feel they have nothing to believe in.

Many of us actually know very little about the true Christian hope of faith. Often our hope takes the form of wishing for good things, like a better economy, or a better relationship with someone in our family. But Christian hope is much bigger than this. Jurgen Moltmann, a German reformed theologian and professor of systematic theology, was known for his books on the theology of hope. In “Experiences of God” he wrote this: *“Christianity is completely and entirely and utterly hope – a looking forward and a forward direction; hope is not just an appendix. So Christianity inevitably means a new setting forth and a transformation of the present.”*





Faith affirms the reality of the present. It does not look backwards with regret but strengthens us for our days, with the possibilities of hope. Hope affirms the future reality which God already knows. Dare we trust in the powerful hope our faith offers us? I think we can. In those times when we are feeling hopeless there is help to be found. We can turn to God's Word and find comfort in the words of the prophets who had sustaining hope in God. Here is just one example from the prophet Jeremiah 29:11-12, *"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you."*

Let us wait for the Lord with faith and with great hope in the future.

Yours in Christ' Service,

Rev. Linda Hey



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NEWS FROM THE INTERIM PASTOR

The Transitional Steering team has been working hard over the last year + on the Interim Development Tasks. We have hosted three congregational conversations on a variety of topics as well as an informational meeting about the UCC denomination with the UCC Maine Conference Minister. We are now concluding our work and writing our final report which will be available to all interested members. As we move to the next step of our interim which is selecting the Pastoral Search Committee, this report will serve as a helpful resource for their task of writing our Local Church Profile.

At the Church Council meeting on October 1, a nomination procedure for the Pastoral Search Committee was discussed and accepted. As your interim pastor, I will be helping this committee get started. Everyone is invited to review the information included in this newsletter on the next 2 pages - (Nominations for the Pastoral Search Committee; Nomination Form for the Pastoral Search Committee) and consider who might be good candidates for this important work.

Blessings,

Reverend Linda

What is a Search Committee and what does it do?

“The congregation will nominate and elect a Search Committee to serve on their behalf with wisdom, maturity, and creativity. Typically the Search Committee is comprised of 5-9 people who have relational and detail skills and a willingness to dedicate time to meetings; who are compelled less by a personal agenda and more by a commitment to the future of the church; who represent diverse ages, races and cultures, genders, life experiences and perspectives present in the church...”

The Search Committee’s initial business includes time with conference staff, prayer, reflection on the Local Church Profile, clarification of the Search Committee’s role and work, discussion of agreed-upon criteria for the next minister, clear definition of consensus, and reiterated commitments to confidentiality.” (from “UCC Guide to Pastoral Search and Call).

It is expected that the Search Committee will work closely together for a period of 6 to 12 months. During this time they will develop the Local Church Profile (LCP) which is structured around three primary questions: 1. Who are we?; 2. Who is our neighbor?; 3. Who is God calling us to become? The LCP includes renewed discovery of the church’s purpose as well as compensation guidelines/housing expectations/scope of work. It also includes references on behalf of the church. Once the LCP is validated for circulation by the UCC Maine Conference minister, the LCP will be posted online at UCC Ministry Opportunities.

The Search Committee will begin receiving Ministerial Profiles from interested candidates. A review process is established, which is followed by an interview process. Once a top candidate is found, a neutral pulpit interview is scheduled. Once the Search Committee has clarity on its final candidate, terms of call are negotiated. The candidate is invited to a candidating Sunday at the church to lead worship and preach, and for a vote by the congregation.

First Congregational Church Scarborough
Nominations for the Pastoral Search Committee
October 2024

“The search for a new pastor is one of the most spiritual ministries in the church. The selection of the Search Committee members is to be approached with prayer, wisdom, sensitivity, and awareness that God may be calling certain church members to serve in this particular capacity.” (from UCC search and call process)

From October 20th through November 17th all members of the congregation are invited to consider nominations for the Pastoral Search Committee. There are a number of personal qualities and attributes individuals should have:

A passionate commitment to Christ’s church

A positive attitude (no grudges)

A capacity to approach the task with openness rather than a pre-determined agenda

A sense of integrity and respect for others

An ability to be absolutely confidential

A capacity to listen, to participate in a group, and to come to consensus.

An active, supportive member of the church as demonstrated by worship attendance, financial support, and participation

Trusted and respected by the congregation

Willing and able to be present for the meetings and to make this responsibility a very high priority.

All persons who are nominated should be asked in advance by those who wish to nominate them.

The Search Committee will be composed of 5 to 7 members. Two persons from the same family will not be asked to serve. The committee selection will strive for equal representation of gender, age, length of membership, etc. The members on this committee should reflect as much as possible, the diversity of the congregation. All persons serving on the Search Committee should be members of the church.

Once the nomination period is over, an appointed group from the church governing board (Council) will review the nominations and recommend the slate. Not all who are nominated will be selected.

Nomination Form for the Pastoral Search Committee

(Note: You may place this completed form in a sealed envelope and mail it/leave it with our office administrator Elaine Sederlund, First Congregational Church, 161 Black Point Rd. Scarborough ME 04074. *Be sure to indicate on the envelope that it is a Pastoral Search Committee nomination.* Elaine will keep all nominations confidential until they are given to the appropriate members of the Church Council for discernment and selection in late November.)

Today's date: _____

Name of person being nominated: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Name of person making the nomination: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

How long has this person been a church member? _____

What committees has this person served on, and for how long? (use back if needed)

List the reasons why you think this person would be an asset to the committee? (use back if needed)

Additional comments (use back if needed):

NEWS FROM THE CHURCH COUNCIL

On Tuesday October 1, 2024 the Church Council voted unanimously to support a recommendation of the Transitional Steering Team that The First Congregational Church of Scarborough begin the discernment process to obtain standing in the UCC as a covenanted church.

The Council's decision to begin a discernment was based upon the following reasons:

1. Expanding our resources as part of a larger church community
2. Increasing the potential for new members and more opportunities
3. Feeling more connected to other churches with Congregational roots
4. Growing in fellowship and sharing information and strategies with more churches
5. Getting on-board with the changing church/world culture, which makes it hard for us to keep "going it" alone. There is strength in numbers
6. To anchor us, which helps us when searching for a new pastor
7. We are, and have been for many years, theologically aligned with the UCC Statement of Faith

On Sunday November 10, 2024, the Rev. Marcia Charles and a delegation from the UCC Cumberland Association Committee on Church and Ministry, will be joining us for worship and then holding a discussion forum in the vestry after the service on this topic. The objective will be to answer the question: **Is it likely that a covenanted relationship will result from further exploration?**

The answer to this question will decide the next steps. If it is a yes, then our church and the Association will enter into a covenant development period. At the end of this period of relationship building and discernment, there are two possible outcomes:

Making a formal request for standing; or 2. Determining not to seek standing

It is important to make note that the Transitional Steering Team put a tremendous amount of time, energy and effort into researching the history of our church before coming to this conclusion, including arranging a time for learning for the congregation, which included informational booklets and a discussion hosted by the UCC Maine Conference Minister Rev. Marisa Laviola in July. In addition, there was a lengthy discussion at the Church Council meeting before the decision was made to begin the discernment process.

Respectfully Submitted.

Fran Whitten

Co-Moderator



Hello to music lovers in the choir and congregation. Thank you for your support of our worship through song. Choir members, as always, are already singing with spirit this season, and those of you in the pews sound great, too! We are up one in the choir loft – a returning member, thank you Polly Kenniston – who participated in the Cantata last year, which is wonderful, and we have plans to revisit providing music worship through the bells during this church year, too. Stay posted, you might just want to join us to ring a bell or two!

Speaking of bells, I was reminded of the Christmas Season this past Sunday, when Brenda rang out the sleigh bells in anticipation of the Christmas Craft Fair. We are also hoping some of you will consider joining a seasonal choir for an upcoming Community Carol Sing mid-December – and/or join us for a trip out to neighboring communities such as Scarborough Terrace, the Enclave, Piper Shores, and a home or two to sing carols this December – wow, what a motivated group of musicians from our choir loft leading the way. Don't miss out on the fun! We will keep you in the loop with announcements in church, and again, in the December Newsletter!

TRUNK OR TREAT

Please save the date!! On **Saturday, October 26th, starting at 3:30 pm** we will be holding our 3rd Annual Trunk or Treat in the church parking lot. We are hoping to have at least 20 cars participate in this very fun event.

There will be food, a fire pit and photo op. We always have a great time and enjoy some wonderful Fellowship with the rest of the participants. If you have any questions about participating please contact Terri Brown at terri-brown1959@yahoo.com. or 883-6093.



NEWS FROM THE MINISTRY OF CHRISTIAN OUTREACH & STEWARDSHIP

On October 9, 2024 the Ministry of Outreach and Stewardship offered a workshop on Estate Planning. There were 15 people in attendance, 8 from the church family and 7 from the general public. There were 4 presenters who answered questions about Social Security, Medicare Advantage Plans (open enrollment going on now), Funeral planning (put it in writing), Wills and Trusts. There were lots of questions and persons who attended felt they did learn something. We very much appreciated the various business who were involved. The organizations represented at our workshop were the following: Elizabeth Meader and Kathleen Chicoine from Gateway Retirement Solutions; Robert Boudreau, Esq. from Desmond, Rand & Guerand, P.A. and Allissa Dodds from Conroy-Tully Walker Funeral Home. Contact information for these groups is available from members of Outreach and Stewardship.

Judging from comments about the workshop, we decided to try it again next year with a start time a bit later in the day. We would like to thank two people for their help with the program, with each ministry member doing their part. Thank you, Elaine for helping with the set up of the room and keeping our custodian updated on our plans and communicating our need for a microphone. And to Cliff Colville for his gift of a microphone and cord to be used in the Parish House. That equipment will live in the Church office. Thank you both very much.

This month, the Ministry met on October 13th. Our primary business this month was the disbursement of money to areas of need. The two hurricanes prompted us to make a donation of \$1500 to World Central Kitchen for their work in hurricane relief efforts - they are feeding people in the hard hit areas of North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia and Florida. We also made a gift of \$700 to the Social Service Division of the Scarborough Police Department. The intent is to have the money used to provide emergency assistance, basic toiletries, small Hannaford gift cards, gas, while the Social Service Division helps connect these folks with whichever organization in the larger Portland community can provide a continuity of care for them. These people identify as residents of Scarborough.

SPECIAL OFFERING FOR EMERGENCY RELIEF

As our discussion about the Hurricane Emergency Relief continued, we decided to undertake a Special Offering for this Emergency Relief. All of us feel helpless in the face of the devastation we see in North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia and Florida. We offer our thoughts and prayers for those losing everything. But there is a great need for essentials such as bedding, blankets, help with rebuilding, places to stay, clothing, and so much more. The Red Cross is one organization on the ground doing this work. So on the following Sundays, October 20 and 27, we will collect a special offering to go to the Red Cross for Hurricane Disaster Relief in the states mentioned. Please consider a donation if you can. We ask that you put Hurricane Relief on your checks, and either on a plain envelope or one of the envelopes in the pews. That way we'll know exactly where the money is to go. This is going to the Red Cross. Thank you for your prayerful consideration of this special gift.

SPECIAL THANKSGIVING OFFERING WILL BE TAKEN MID-NOVEMBER THRU THANKSGIVING

Coming up in November, we will continue our traditional special Thanksgiving offering which this year will be dedicated to the Scarborough Food Pantry housed in our Parish House and staffed by members of our church and the community. We'd like to encourage anyone with questions or just wondering what goes on to stop by on a Tuesday or Thursday from 1:00-4:00 to see it in operation. This pantry has been in operation formally since about 1992. The activity has grown from food donations from church members to donations from the community, and our participation in the USDA surplus foods programs and a fairly steady stream of food donations. Each month the pantry serves as many as 150-230 people. The pantry is staffed by unpaid volunteers from the church and community. It is a wonderful outreach that we all can participate in, one way or another. Monetary donations help supply some of the basics that do not come directly from donations, or the USDA food. Fresh fruit and vegetables are the first things that this helps purchase. The special Thanksgiving Offering will be received from mid-November through Thanksgiving. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this special Thanksgiving Offering!!



INFORMATION ON SPECIAL OFFERINGS

With the special offering mentioned in these articles, comes an opportunity to remind you about the Special Offering Envelopes that are in the pew racks at Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. Those envelopes indicate that whatever is inside will go to whatever organization we, your ministry of outreach and stewardship, have chosen. If you don't find a special envelope, please write on the notation line of your check or mark a separate envelope for whichever offering it is. This is the same as we asked for the Emergency Relief offering. If you do not do this, the money will go into the general fund as a loose plate offering, or as part of your pledge. We want to be sure to put your donations in the right account. Thank you for your care and help with this. The money will go where it is suppose to and the counters will thank you!!!



From your Ministry of Outreach and Stewardship,
Gail D., Sandy E., Pam J., Liane G., Lynn R. 9

NEWS FROM GOVERNING & FINANCE

FINANCIAL UPDATE: FCC Treasurer Lynne Hermann and member of the Ministry of Governing & Finance will host a session after neighboring on October 27th to update the congregation on the church's financial picture. The report will cover Fiscal Year 2023/2024 and the current Year to Date from July 2024 through September 30.



FALL CLEANUP is scheduled outdoors for **November 2, starting at 8:30 am** and wrapping up by noon. Bring your gloves, a rake or clippers and pitch in to help keep our grounds looking neat.

BIBLE STUDY ON THE LECTIONARY

The Lectionary is a three year cycle of scripture readings, designated A, B, or C. Each yearly cycle begins on the first Sunday of Advent. We are currently in year B, which has a focus on the Gospel of Mark. The Gospel of Mark is known as the Gospel of Mercy. There are usually three or four lectionary readings for each Sunday. The pastor, if following the lectionary on any particular Sunday, decides which reading to offer to the congregation.

In our Bible study group, which meets on a Wednesday, we will use the reading that Reverend Linda has chosen for the following Sunday. Liane does some research to find commentary relating to the reading. The group then has opportunity to review the materials and discuss.

There is no homework, no tests, no requirement to share your thoughts, so no obligation to make a commitment to the group! Please do come if you are able.

Our next meetings will be October 30th and November 13th.

Meet us at **3:00 PM in the Annex parlor (church office 161 Black Point Rd)**

Everyone is welcome! There will be cookies!

Your faithful leader, Liane Giambalvo

THANKS FOR THE WARM THOUGHTS!

Sharon Haskell would like to thank everyone for all the cards, thoughts and prayers while undergoing her tests. She is doing much better.

ALL YULE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE YULETIDE FAIR

It's hard to believe, but **The Yuletide Fair** is fast approaching. It will be held on **December 7, 2024 from 8:30-noon**. In the past few months we have asked that those who make pickles, relish, jams and jellies make a few extra jars for the fair. Since gardening season is almost done, we are changing our requests. It's time to start crafting, knitting and thinking about baking! The following items will be needed for the fair:

JEWELRY - do you have some jewelry you no longer wear and would like to get rid of? Consider giving it to either Ruth Bruns or Mary Ellen Bossom at any time for the Jewelry Table.

CRAFTS - knit items like hats, mittens and scarves. We can use more items for babies and men/boys, also items for women/girls in bright, contemporary colors. And how about items in Scarborough's school colors of red and white! Aprons are always appreciated and gnomes are popular every year.

COOKIE WALK - get your cookie sheets ready to bake lots of cookies! Think about some different, delicious cookies to make. We tend to get lots of chocolate chip, so other flavors are very much appreciated. This table sells out almost every year, so lots of cookies will be needed!

CANDY - are you known for a special kind of candy - needhams, fudge, peanut clusters or caramels? We hope you will consider making some for the fair!

GENTLY USED CHRISTMAS - this is a very popular table for people to find bargains! If you have gently used Christmas items you no longer want, now is the time to gather them together to be sold at the fair.

BAKED GOODS - people love to get treats to eat or gift during the holiday season and this table fills that need. This year we will be looking for the following homemade items: salsa, jam/jelly, pickles/relish, cornbread, whoopie pies, pies, baked beans, soup, cupcakes, hot fudge sauce, applesauce, cranberry relish, cinnamon buns, coffee cakes, bread, Chex Mix. We tend to get a lot of pumpkin and zucchini items, so different flavors would be much appreciated.

As the fair gets closer, we will give you drop-off dates/times, how food items are to be packaged, etc. We know we can always count on the people of our church to help out. And we thank you for that! If you have any questions, please contact Roberta Brown at rmbrown128@yahoo.com.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP NEWS: The Women's Fellowship October meeting will be **October 22, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.** in the Ladies Parlor of the Parish Hall. Our program will be by Scarborough Police Chief Mark Holmquist regarding his time as an Honor Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. It should be an interesting program. We will also have our business meeting with conversation about the Yuletide Fair as we get ready for it. Our hostesses for the meeting are Diane Brown and Sharon Haskell. If you are able, the Food Pantry donation for October is canned cranberry sauce. We hope to see you there!

The Women's Fellowship November meeting will be **November 19, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.** in the Vestry of the church. Our program will be Seated Exercise by Barbara Bathe, so come dressed in comfy clothes. We will also have our business meeting with conversation about the Yuletide Fair final plans. Our hostesses for the meeting are Sandy Elder and Mary Ellen Bossom. If you are able, the Food Pantry donation for November is paper goods (napkins, tissues, toilet paper, paper towels). We hope you can join us as we put the final touches on the fair that is quickly approaching. (PLEASE NOTE: Date change due to Thanksgiving holiday, location change due to the program needing extra space.)



The **Crafts & Fellowship** group meets every Tuesday (except Women's Fellowship meeting days) at 1:30 p.m. in the Annex. Come and do a craft, play a game or just enjoy the conversation. Everyone (men and women) are welcome!

The **Women's Fellowship Coffee Hour** will be on **November 20th**. This is always a good time for conversation and fellowship. So come, have breakfast or just a cup of coffee and have some great conversation!

NEIGHBORING IS IN FULL SWING! On October 6 we welcomed our five new members with a cake. The following Sunday we showed our appreciation to Pastor Linda Hey. Photographs of those events appear on the next 2 pages.

October 20 neighboring will be hosted by Women's Fellowship and October 27 will be a special Halloween neighboring! Our Thanksgiving Neighboring on November 24 will feature home made pies. Please volunteer and sign up for neighboring in vestry in November and December. Thank you! Ministry of Members, Friends & Church Life!

PASTOR APPRECIATION DAY was celebrated on **October 13, 2024.** Terri Brown, who heads the Ministry of Worship & Spiritual Care, made the announcement and conveyed all our appreciation with words, a gift and a big hug!





The First Congregational Church of Scarborough welcomed five new members on October 6, 2024.. Shown clockwise from top left:

Patricia Knittel, with Brenda Birkner; **Carl Jakowenko**, with wife, Susan; **Jack Watson**;
Glenda Earle and **Ralph Earle**.



