

# THE TIMES NEWSLETTER

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

**SEPTEMBER 2019**



## MINISTER'S CORNER

Dear Friends:

I once read a story about two college students, a man and woman, who were just starting college and were attending a student orientation at the university they were attending. During a break they introduced themselves and started chatting and telling each other a little something about themselves. The discussion eventually touched on the subject of religion.

The man was a devout Christian, and the woman was an agnostic who talked condescendingly about the Christian faith. It was obvious that she was more than a little hostile toward Christianity. The young man tried to find out the reason for her hostility. "Is there something in Jesus' teaching that turns you off?" he asked.

"No," the woman answered. "It's nothing like that. The thing I resent most about Christianity is the people who claim to follow it. Too many of them are hypocrites. From what I've seen, most Christians are basically Unchristian." She went on to share some of the not very loving, judgmental, dishonest behavior she had witnessed and experienced firsthand at the hands of "Christian" people.

Sad, isn't it?

Of course, Christianity doesn't have a monopoly on such contrarian behavior. But I think the young woman touched on an aspect of Christian discipleship that is at the heart of our faith and gets to the question of whether or not we are being faithful to Christ. And that is, has it made a difference for the better in the way we live our lives and treat our neighbors? When we have an authentic relationship with Jesus, shouldn't it transform our hearts, our attitudes, and the way we interact with others? I don't think we can say we have truly experienced the love of God in Christ if we aren't living a more caring, sharing, compassionate and loving life.

We all know that many individuals (in particular, teens and young, college-age people) are not attending church or associating themselves with an organized religion like Christianity these days. As I'm sure you realize, our own church has been adversely affected by that reality. For the rapidly growing number of unchurched individuals in the world, the only "contact" with Jesus they may have is through Christians like us who claim to follow him. We are Christ's representatives in the world. How tragic it would be if our behavior and attitudes reflected badly on Jesus and the Christian faith. I pray that we won't ever let that happen.

Fred

**FROM  
THE  
PASTOR**



## CREATIVE CHRISTIANITY

A man in Indiana who raised sheep was upset and angry because his neighbor's dogs were killing and injuring some of the animals in his flock. The dog's owners didn't respond to his pleas to keep their canines from roaming free by confining them in the yard with a rope or keeping them on a leash. People often try to solve such problems with threats, lawsuits, and even violence. But this man, a devout Christian, had a better idea. He gave a lamb as pets to every neighbor's child, and in due time, when all the neighbors had their own small flocks, they began to tie up their dogs.

The Bible says, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." The sheep man in Indiana did that in a very creative and generous way.

## THE WONDERFUL, MYSTERIOUS WAYS OF GOD

The biography of Nathaniel Hawthorne gives an example of how the challenging circumstances of life can produce new growth.

Hawthorne lost his job, a mundane, bureaucratic position at the custom house, through the trickery of politics. His whole world came tumbling down on him. Even so, one night he wrote these words to a friend: “Under God’s guidance I shall arrive at something better.”

When Hawthorne told his wife about his apparent disaster, she looked at him and said, “Why don’t you write a book? You always wanted to write.” Her word of encouragement fell on his parched soul like a fresh drop of rain. He had been waiting for that word from her. So he did write a book: his classic, timeless novel *The Scarlet Letter*.

If Nathaniel Hawthorne had remained employed at the custom house, he probably never would have written his remarkable stories that explored the deep places of human sorrow, love and sin. Hawthorne’s experience can encourage us to never give up hope in the wonderful, mysterious ways of God, and how God can shine light into even the darkest circumstances.



### LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

In a distant country a cathedral blazed with light, day and night. Its beauty was overwhelming. The joy and brilliance of the music that was played there for the community enchanted all who visited. Yet few people worshiped there.

A violent war broke out and destroyed much of the country, including the beautiful cathedral. As the nation rebuilt, its wise ruler guided the rebuilding of the cathedral. Unknown to the people, she did not restore the lighting system.

At her command, the worship service to dedicate the cathedral was set for midnight on a warm spring night when there would be no moonlight. She ordered each person to bring a small lantern of a certain size and shape, lighted, to the worship service.

On the night of the dedication a strange and wonderful thing happened. At first only a few lights dotted the street outside the cathedral. As worshipers entered the building, they cast small spots of light in the darkness. But as the crowd gathered, the light grew brighter.

As each small lantern was set in the space provided for it by each seat, the cathedral gradually began to glow again. When it was filled with worshipers, the radiance of the hundreds of lanterns was so powerful that the sanctuary glowed the way it had long before.

The ruler said to the people, “The light of your lanterns has restored the beauty and light of this cathedral, just as your faith offers the beautiful light of God’s presence for others in the world to see. Without your light this place would be in darkness. Never again will there be any light in this cathedral except the light you bring into it with your presence at worship. That will remind you day by day how important the light of your faith is to God’s world.”

**STEWARDSHIP MOMENT**

"Love is our essence. It is . . . a force we can learn to direct. How true is the line from the movie *Angie*: "Everyone's got something broken. The less broken got to take care of the more broken."

Ideally, we could care so abundantly that if we had a hundred friends or a hundred pets, each one would feel nourished.

"Think of a time someone cared for you well in ways you could feel. It is likely you knew something priceless was happening, no matter how long the loving lasted. My daughter's postman, Howard, delivers radiance along his route as surely as he delivers packages and mail. Just as a crumb contains all the properties of the cake, so Howard's smile contains all the properties of love.

"It's not how much we do, but how much love we put into doing it," said Mother Teresa. "It's not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving."

—Maggie Steincrohn Davis, *Caring in Remembered Ways: The Fruit of Seeing Deeply*

**S'MORES NIGHT**

A fantastically fun evening was had by all at the Karaoke and S'mores event! We had about 15 people singing and enjoying the fire with no shyness whatsoever! We belted it all out, and ask Fred...he really had a fun time!!

**TIME OUT FOR PRAYER**

Autumn.

We give thanks for the harvest of the heart's work;

Seeds of faith, planted with faith;

Love nurtured by love;

Courage strengthened by courage.

We give thanks for the fruits of the struggling soul,

The bitter and the sweet;

For that which has grown in adversity

And for that which has flourished in warmth and grace;

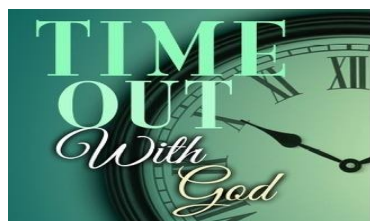
For the radiance of the spirit in autumn

And for that which must now fade and die.

We are blessed and give thanks.

Amen

Leunig: *The Prayer Tree*

**RIDE MINISTRY**

Did you know our church has a "ride ministry" to assist members who are unable to drive? You can find a list with the names of volunteers and their phone numbers hanging on the bulletin board down in the vestry. And if you are interested in becoming a volunteer driver for our ministry, you can contact Pastor Gagnon at 883-2342 or Elaine Sederlund, the chairperson of the Ministry of Worship and Spiritual Care, at 883-1195, for more information.

**Do Not Worry**

..."And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

*Matthew 6:28-34*

**Food Pantry Update**

The months of **June, July and August** have been very busy at the Food Pantry! A special thank you to all the volunteers that have been picking, washing and sorting the wonderful fresh local produce, herbs, and beautiful flowers. We are so thankful for all types of donations that are brought in to the pantry and for everyone's faithful commitment to making it run smoothly!

Please consider a weekly or monthly donation to the Food pantry. Checks are always appreciated too!

***Thank you!***



## FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR

Welcome back FCC Musicians! I hope everyone has had a wonderful, relaxing summer and is ready to begin our music-filled church year! Choir rehearsals begin Thursday, September 5<sup>th</sup> at 7PM in the church sanctuary. We are looking forward to a fun year of musical fellowship!



The handbell choir is scheduled to begin rehearsals September 19<sup>th</sup> at 6PM in the church sanctuary, but we are short 2 ringers. As you know, it is important to have enough ringers to cover all the notes to make rehearsals and performances more complete, beautiful, and frankly; less stressful on the performers. Please, if you know anyone interested in joining handbells, please send them my way. Without 2 more ringers, we will not be starting on time this year.

Lastly, I would LOVE to have the Children's Choir (whom we call the "Bubblers") singing during our services again. This is a call to all families with young children, or grandchildren, in the 4 to 9 year old age range, please encourage them to sing in the Bubblers. We will rehearse after church for 5 or 10 minutes once or twice a month, if we have enough interest.

See you soon, Bethany Kirkpatrick, Director of Music

## SINGERS AND STRINGERS

Singers and Stringers are back!  
This is an open invitation to join Singers & Stringers for the fall of 2019.

We only practice once a month for about an hour. If you can't make all the practices, that's OK – but we ask that you try to make as many as possible – because it's fun - and we might get asked to provide music for a Sunday when the choir has a break.

Here is our practice schedule until December 2019:

Wednesday, September 11 – 6:30 pm @ church  
Wednesday, October 9 – 6:30 pm @ church  
Wednesday, November 13 – 6:30 pm @ church  
Wednesday, December 11 – 6:30 pm @ church



Please think about joining us! You don't need a lot of singing experience. We don't do complex songs – our goal is to have fun with the music! – but the more we sing together, the better we become.  
Our mantra is: "Feel the Music!"

If you happen to play guitar, ukulele, banjo, etc – we would LOVE to have you in the group.

Hope to see you in the fall!

Brenda and Ray Birkner  
[Grabirk94@gmail.com](mailto:Grabirk94@gmail.com)  
207-650-4514 Brenda  
207-650-5180 Ray

## MINISTRY MEETINGS

**Church Council: September 3rd, Tues., 6:30 pm** meet in the Ladies' Parlor.

Ministry of Christian Outreach & Stewardship:

**September 8th, Sun., 11:00** meet in the Annex.

Ministry of Members, Friends & Church Life:

**September 15th, Sun., 11:00 am** meet in the Ladies' Parlor.

Min. of Governing & Finance:

**September 16th, Mon., 7:00 pm** meet in the Annex.

Ministry of Worship & Spiritual Care:

**September 22nd, Sun., 11:00 am** meet in the Ladies' Parlor.

Ministry of Christian Education - TBD



## PARKING LOT FUND

A news release will be going out to the press of our local publications, as well as signs that you will now see posted in our parking lot regarding the campaign to raise money for repaving the aging parking lot. The current estimated cost of the regrading and repaving is about \$100,000. In addition to the campaign within the congregation to raise money, the church is looking for outside organization and corporate donors to support the repaving initiative. The church has set up a GoFundMe web site (see below) for those who may wish to contribute, and more information may also be obtained on the church web site (see below):

**GoFundMe:** <https://www.gofundme.com/f/3ak9ym-parking-lot-replacement>

**Church Website:** [https://www.fccscarborough.com/church\\_activities1](https://www.fccscarborough.com/church_activities1)

Or a check can be made out to: **First Congregational Church of Scarborough**  
(with a designation for the "parking lot fund")

*Your thoughtful donation will be much appreciated!*

The church's finance ministry is coordinating the church's fund raising campaign and announces, "We plan to promote a 3-year giving pledge that would help larger donors – both private and corporate who might wish to support the church.", adding that "\$10,000 seed funding has been raised.

## ASPIRE WOMEN'S EVENT

Eastpoint Christian Church is hosting an "Aspire Women's Event" on **Friday, October 4th** and they have reached out and invited other women's groups to attend. The Aspire event is 1 night, 3 hours - just for women. An evening full of laughter, learning, stories, and music. Speakers include:

Author & Speaker, Melissa Spoelstra

Comedy by Kristin Weber

Worship with Mia Koehne

**Doors open at 6:30, event begins at 7:00pm.** A group of us ladies from First Congregational Church, Scarborough will be attending. Group ticket prices are \$20, and if interested, sign-up downstairs in the Vestry, and pay Joanne Browne by September 1st. You can buy tickets yourself at any time (provided the event is not sold out) for \$25, so the group rate is a savings of \$5 each. We will carpool from FCC at 6:00 on Friday, October 4th.

Eastpoint Christian Church: 345 Clarks Pond Pkwy, South Portland, ME 04106, #480-812-1100

**WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP** September 4th, Wednesday at 9:00 am, at the Egg & I Restaurant,  
The women of FCC meet for Coffeetime the first Wednesday of the month. All women of the church are invited and so please come and join us! Contact Edie Davidson with questions: 767-4682/  
edavidson@gwi.net.

Invitation to all women of FCC: Come join us at Women's Fellowship!

**This month we'll hear from Alisha Gagnon, Speech Pathologist  
(Rev. Fred and Penny Gagnon's daughter)  
on her trip to Uganda!**

**When: Sept. 24, 2019** at 7:00pm in the Ladies' Parlor

On the 4th Tuesday of every month, bring a friend! Enjoy our programs, fellowship and yes, our refreshments too!



**CRAFTS WORKSHOP** September 5th, Thursday from 1-3pm in the Parish Hall

All are welcome to join us to work on crafts for our Christmas Fair in December. We meet on the first and third Thursday of the month downstairs in the Parish Hall. Come and create, have fun and enjoy the fellowship! Questions, speak to Susan Fielding @ 883-6239.

**MEN'S FELLOWSHIP** September 14th, Saturday at 8:30a.m.  
in the Ladies' Parlor

All men of the church are welcome to join us for our monthly get together. We meet the second Saturday of the month for fellowship, coffee and munchies.

Contact Dan Davidson with any questions at: danprpro@gwi.net or 767-4682



Thanks to Dick Grotton and his contacts, along with funding from both Men's and Women's Fellowships, a new dishwasher has been installed in the kitchen. In addition, Dick did some great cosmetic work on the dishwasher cabinetry area. The new machine will do a load of dishes in just two minutes! Thanks to Dick Grotton's initiative and talents, a new privacy fence has been purchased and installed for the Parsonage. Work was done by Dick, Rev. Fred, Bob Barton, and Dan Davidson. Thanks to Dick Grotton for his research on purchasing a defibrillator for the church. He is also working on funding possibilities. Several church members have been working on this effort. If you wish to contribute to this life-saving device, contact Dick. Thanks to Dick Grotton for coordinating the details of the Men's Fellowship BBQ fundraising dinner for September 25 at the church. Please put this on your calendars and support Men's Fellowship and the church.

**PITCH THE STITCH** September 18th, Wednesday, 1-3pm

Join our sewing group in the Annex (church office), weather permitting. We meet on the third Wednesday of the month to either sew, quilt, knit or come to just visit. Questions, speak to Liane Giambalvo, 735-7478, or Randie Bowden, 749-8696.

**HELP NEEDED** Need help picking Summer produce in September, Tuesdays at 8:00-9:30am for the Food Pantry. Meet at St. Nicholas Episcopal Church, Rt. 1 Scarborough. If interested, call Penny Van Duyne at 512-1742. We will have sign up sheets at neighboring on Sundays.

**FALL CLEAN UP** October 19th, 9am-Noon

Grab your rakes, gloves, clippers and strong backs to help us with Fall clean up this year. The weather is going to get cooler and we'll be at it again! Would love to see some new faces join us as many hands make happy work and happy workers! Please join us, thank you!

**IMPORTANT MEETING—SAVE THE DATE** - Sunday, September 22nd following the church service there will be a First Quarter Financial Review. It will include final report of fiscal year 2018/19 and year to date fiscal year 2019/20. It will also include final figures from our annual pledge for this year.

Reminder: The Deadline for the October Newsletter is September 15th. We will no longer be mailing the newsletter out to everyone. They will be available at church for pick up and will be mailed to shut-ins and to some members that live out-of-state.

~~~~~**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**~~~~~

We are always looking for Ushers & Greeters, Neighboring hosts, Nursery helpers, and people to sign up to help supply the flowers for the Altar for each Sunday's worship service. **Please sign up soon, thank you!!**

**FCC Long Range Planning Update**

The Long Range Planning Team has been meeting since November, gathering information and gaining perspective that will help them as they work with the congregation to identify FCC's priorities for the future. Team members include Bob Barton, Ann Blanchard, Diane Brown, Ruth Bruns, Ellen Byrne, Sue Hilton, Pam Joy, Sheryl Rhodes, Bryce Roberts, John Veltri and Rob Willey. Please feel free to approach any team member with questions or comments (*their name tags have purple ribbons*)

**FROM THE MIN. OF GOV. & FIN.**

Dear Members and Friends of First Congregational Church,

Our Administrative Assistant, Holly Buonaiuto, has notified us of her intent to resign effective, September 20, 2019. She has served us very well, ably keeping us organized and functioning smoothly. She will be sorely missed.

We are currently advertising and accepting applications for her position. We would like to hire someone so that they would have some time with Holly to be oriented to the job and learn equipment, computer programs, etc. before she leaves.

Please share this information with anyone you think might be interested. A copy of the job description can be obtained in the office. The position of Administrative Assistant is 30 hours per week, 9:00AM – 3:00PM. If you have interest or questions, please call the church office at 207-883-2342, and someone from Governing & Finance will contact you.

We thank Holly for her service to First Congregational Church as well as her friendship and commitment to the Administrative Assistant role. May God bless her richly in her future endeavors.

Sincerely,  
Ministry of Governing & Finance

**Staff Information & Ministry Chairs**

The Rev. Alfred Gagnon III, Minister  
Email: RevFredGagnon@maine.rr.com

Holly Buonaiuto, Administrative Assistant  
Email: fcchurch@maine.rr.com

Don Darling, Custodian  
Email: fcchurch@maine.rr.com

Bethany Kirkpatrick, Director of Music  
Email: fccmusic@maine.rr.com

Wendy Northrup, Organist  
At-Large Council Members:  
Janet Peters

Ministry of Audit: TBD  
Ministry of Worship & Spiritual Care:  
Terri Brown

Ministry of Governing & Finance:  
Kathy Ross  
Ministry of Members, Friends &  
Church Life: Joanne Brown

Penny Gagnon, Church Clerk

Brenda Harrison, Treasurer

Carl Ross, Recording Treasurer

Terri Brown, Moderator

Ministry of Christian Outreach &  
Stewardship: Ruth Bruns

Ministry of Christian Education:  
Karen Jackson

Women's Fellowship President:

Joanne Brown  
Men's Fellowship: Dan Davidson

Youth Group: TBD



**Office Hours**  
Monday-Friday  
9:00am -3:00pm  
Telephone: 883-2342  
Fax: 883-9875  
Church email:  
fcchurch@maine.rr.com  
Website address:  
fccscarborough.com



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**Note:** If you no longer wish to  
receive this monthly newsletter,  
**PLEASE** call, 883-2342 or e-mail  
the church office at  
[fcchurch@maine.rr.com](mailto:fcchurch@maine.rr.com)  
***Thank you!***

Mailing Label



### **MOE'S BBQ TO CATER CHURCH FUNDRAISER DINNER SEPTEMBER 25th**

The First Congregational Church of Scarborough will offer a public dinner catered by Moe's Famous Bar-B-Q on **Wednesday, Sept. 25, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

The meal will include pulled pork, chicken, baked beans, cornbread, potato salad, cucumber/tomato salad, dessert, and coffee. For those who wish, food can be boxed "to go" and picked up.

The dinner is a fundraiser sponsored by the Men's Fellowship.

**Cost will be \$13 for adults; \$10 for children under 13.**

Tickets will be available at the church office and can be held for you and paid at the event if a reservation has been made in advance by calling the church office, 883-2342. Limited tickets may also be available at the event if food supply permits.

**\*\*BRING FRIENDS, COLLEAGUES, NEIGHBORS and introduce them to our church!\*\***