# THE TIMES NEWSLETTER

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

**APRIL 2025** 



# **PASTOR'S MESSAGE**

# Humility

There is wisdom in humility. Some see it as weakness, but others see it as strength. We know how Jesus taught that God values those who have achieved humility. Yes, I said "achieved." Humility takes work. Remember how Jesus once said, "For it is the one who is least among you all who is the greatest." (Lk 9:48) Jesus' very life was a model of humility, for he always put the needs of others before his own. Jesus spent time listening to others and he sought to empower them. He spent time listening to God and he learned how to make his life glorify God. As a result he was at peace with himself.



Humility is the opposite of pridefulness. In fact, reviewing our actions against the language of excessive pridefulness is a good way to get clear on whether or not we are living according to God's values, or someone else's. Humility opens us up to learn the heart of the other. Excessive pridefulness prevents this. It demeans other people. Instead of nurturing self-growth, such pridefulness keeps us stuck in the place of needing to constantly prove ones' superiority by competing and only wanting to defeat others. It can even become stagnating to any further personal development of better virtues.

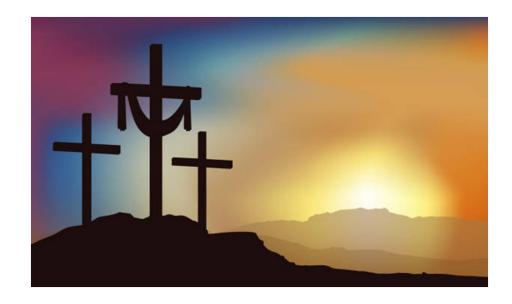
There are those who claim they are righteous people who are confidently doing what God wants, and that may be so. But such claims are empty unless they are examined through the lens of humility - lest one falls into the trap of self-righteousness or acting like God ourselves. When does humility enter into our equation? When do we take the time to consider how best to use the power we have from God?

Sorting through our emotions as we watch the parade of human depravity on the national and world news, day in and day out, can be difficult and exhausting. And worse, when we, as a society, become confused about truth and the basics of right and wrong, we are left floundering. This can even make us inadvertently complicit in the work of evil. So where do we turn? We turn to the firm foundation of God's truth which is a powerful stabilizing force in a world that sometimes seems to have gone mad. We remind ourselves of what God values, and we find a way to include the humility of Jesus Christ as part of our answer.

"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you," may seem like a strange way to think about success, but it is the only way we will begin to heal the wounds of our society and the wounds of our souls. As you celebrate Easter this year, I invite you to stay the course of your Christian faith. Build up your confidence in Christ and humble yourselves enough to allow the sufferings and concerns of another person into your heart. Listen to your brothers and sisters, your neighbors, and even those who don't agree with you. When we do this, we all grow together as God's loving family!

Easter Blessings,

# Reverend Linda C. Hey





April 13	Palm Sunday	9:30 A.M. (Church Sanctuary)
April 17	Maundy Thursday	
	Last Supper Service &	
	Service of Tenebrae	6:30 P.M. (Vestry and Sanctuary)

Worship Services and Events for Holy Week at First Congregational Church

April 18 Good Friday 12:00 P.M. Movie and Lunch (Parish Hall -

Ladies Parlor)

April 20 Easter Sunday 5:40 A.M. Sunrise Service (on Higgins Beach)

9:30 A.M. Easter Service (Church Sanctuary)

# **Maundy Thursday Last Supper Service and Service of Tenebrae**

This year, as part of Holy Week, we will once again be hosting a Last Supper Service and Service of Tenebrae on Maundy Thursday, April 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM. The evening begins in the Vestry, where we honor Jesus' last Passover meal by reading scripture (Exodus, Psalms of Praise, and Luke's gospel), singing hymns, and eating a simple meal together. The meal culminates in the sharing of Holy Communion elements.



Our group then proceeds upstairs to the Sanctuary where we participate in a Service of Tenebrae. In this service we extinguish candles and Sanctuary lights as we read the story of Jesus' night of betrayal and arrest. It is a solemn service, different from others we share together, as it is not a time for fellowship, but contemplation and silence. Many who have been a part of Maundy Thursday services attest to the fact that it is a very powerful experience. We hope you will join us in remembering the holy sacrifice Jesus made for our salvation.



### FROM THE MINISTRY OF OUTREACH AND STEWARDSHIP

We celebrated our inspirational stewardship campaign with a delicious brunch this past Sunday. We want to thank Vickie Flynn for her delicious egg casseroles again this year. They were so yummy. We also want to thank our members who pledged this year. We are grateful for your commitment to support the important programs and services that our church offers. When we Imagine Together, we dream about what this church could and will do in the future. Our church relies on your gifts to bring the Good News to our members and the community. We are a growing, visioning, giving community, and we are so glad you are here. If you have not pledged yet you can drop it off or mail it to the church office. You can also put it in the offering plate when you attend church. We are grateful for any amount that you can afford. Thank you for helping us to move forward into the future.

# FROM MEMBERS, FRIENDS & CHURCH LIFE

In March we enjoyed two special neighborings: the Boy Scouts Pancake Breakfast on March 2 and the Stewardship Brunch on March 16. Our Hospitality Committee cannot compete with that, but will continue to offer snacks, sweets, beverages and fellowship each Sunday after church through the end of June. Sue Whitten is leading Neighboring during the month of April. If you have enjoyed neighboring but haven't yet helped to host, please step forward and volunteer. Sign-up sheets are in the Vestry.

# NEWS FROM THE COVENANT DEVELOPMENT TEAM

The Covenant Development Team would like to thank the congregation for their trust, support, and encouragement as we worked through the process of discerning our path forward with the United Church of Christ. From trusting us to research the pros and cons of moving to full covenant, to supporting us as we shared our work with you for your feedback and commentary, to encouraging us with the challenges of our work, you stood with us through the entire process.

We thank you for attending and participating in the Special Meeting on March 9<sup>th</sup> and voting to move our process forward to the Cumberland Association. Our letter of request and the supporting documents were emailed to Diane Bennekamper, Association Moderator, on Monday, March 10<sup>th</sup> for their review. We now await their decision to accept us as fully covenanted members at their Annual Meeting in May of this year.

Many thanks,

The Reverend Allison Curry Gail Dobriko

Liane Giambalvo The Reverend Linda Hey (Advisor)

Lorraine Ann Taylor Susan Whitten

### REPORT OF SPECIAL MEETING

A Special Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Scarborough, Maine was held at 11:00 AM on Sunday, March 9, 2025 in the Church Sanctuary. The meeting was attended by 77 of our 120 active members. Thirty-seven (37) of those members were present in the Sanctuary at the meeting and another forty (40) members voted by Proxy.

Fran Whitten, Co-Moderator of the Church Council, led the meeting.

The vote was taken to authorize the Covenant Development Team of the FCC:

To send a letter of request for full standing in the United Church of Christ, to the Church and Ministry Committee of the Maine Conference Cumberland Association of the United Church of Christ; and we agree to accept fully covenanted status as a church in the United Church of Christ, should it be accepted by them.

Seventy (70) members voted in favor of the Motion; six (6) members voted against the Motion and one (1) member abstained. The Motion passed.

Elaine H. Sederlund

Church Clerk

#### FROM OUR MINISTER OF MUSIC

Happy April! It's been good to be back in the office these last couple of weeks and at the computer to share music news and fellowship with you. Thank you for patience while I have been tending to family needs and responsibilities.

Wow and welcome, April! With the Lent and Easter Season later this year, may the waking up of this good Earth and the warmth of Spring and nature's annual rebirth help to remind us to open our hearts and feel the quiet and spectacular rebirth and steadfastness of our Lord. Hallelujah!

We are grateful for the familiarity of Easter, especially when our church and church community is experiencing lots of change, including the Minister of Music Position, which is now open. I am sad to have resigned; this, our beloved 1st Congregational Church of Scarborough is a unique spiritual and musical environment – the most dedicated Choir members, ever, and wonderful welcoming and appreciative members of the congregation listening and responding – thank you for sixteen meaningful and fulfilling years that have truly flown. I sure hope we can expand time between now and June 8th and just enjoy our music fellowship more than ever. As you can imagine, the Music Committee is busy planning and advertising. May the goodness and guidance of our Lord bring the right person to this wonderful and integral position of the church.



Speaking of change, we are pleased and excited to introduce a new student musician internship into our ministry, the weeks leading up to and following Easter, when Logan Peters, from the University of Southern Maine, will be working with me to learn the "ropes" of being a church musician. I thank Pastor Linda for this timely creative idea, and the immediate support of the members of the Music Committee. It will be exciting to watch Logan grow with us for six to eight weeks, which might afford him the opportunity to do some subbing and special music this summer, and even ongoing.

Also, I hope I am not jinxing anything, but as of now we have a trumpet lined up for Easter, also from the University of Southern Maine. Fingers crossed!

Be well and keep the faith,

Lovingly, yours in music,

### UPDATE FROM THE MUSIC COMMITTEE

It was with great sadness that we accepted Wendy Northrup's resignation in January. She has brought us some very special musical experiences to enhance our worship of God and we thank her for that.

We have been meeting every one to two weeks since February to begin our search for her replacement.

We have advertised online through organizations associated with churches and music professionals. Our goal is to find a Minister of Music by early summer.

In the meantime a wonderful opportunity was presented to us through Wendy's association with the University of Southern Maine. We will provide a music internship for a student for eight weeks. The student will have the chance to learn about church music and he will be monitored by Wendy. This is an opportunity to help young people to learn about how churches can incorporate their skills in a special way.. It also gives the church some potential to help enlarge our substitution list for organists.

The choir remains ready to support the church with music as needed. Wendy has planned the Easter Music.

Our committee is meeting to review resumes that we received. It is quite encouraging that we have some people interested.

Our next meeting is March 18.

We are grateful for the leadership of our Minister, Rev. Linda Hey and to Wendy Northrup.

Brenda Birkner and Elaine Sederlund have been handling communications through the computer and Kate Sawdon is keeping records. We will keep you informed.

If anyone has any suggestions please be in touch.

Submitted by Susan Fielding (Chair)

Committee Members: Brenda Birkner, Kate Sawdon, Mary Ellen Bossom

Advisors: Rev. Linda Hey, Wendy Northrup

#### WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP NEWS

Please join us on April 22, 2025 at 2:00 in the Ladies Parlor for the Women's Fellowship meeting. Our program will be: I "ran" from Iran by Parivash and Nasser Rohani. Our hostesses are Allison Curry and Susan Hilton. If you are able, the food pantry donation is condiments. We hope to see you there!

And a reminder that our March meeting is March 25, 2025 at 2:00 in the Ladies Parlor. Our program will be: Like Father, Like Sons - A Scarborough Family in the Revolutionary War by Linda McLoon. Our hostesses are Susan Fielding and Deb Gerry.

Our next two coffee hours are March 20, 2025 and April 17, 2025 at 9:30 at Stacks on Route 1 in Scarborough.

Our Annual Banquet is fast approaching on May 28, 2025. It will be discussed at our March meeting (time, place, etc.), so mark your calendars if you plan on attending!



### WE ARE TAKING NOMINATIONS TO THE MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH

As part of our Annual Meeting which will take place on May 4, 2025 we elect Officers and Members to the five Ministries of the Church:

Governing & Finance;

Worship & Spiritual Care;

Christian Education;

Christian Outreach & Stewardship; and

Members Friends and Church Life.

Our church is healthy when its members are actively involved in church life, besides attending Sunday worship services. Please consider serving on one of these Ministries. Contact Joanne Brown or Elaine in the office with questions or for more information.