

THE TIMES NEWSLETTER

A publication of the First Congregational Church

of Scarborough, Maine 04074

MAY 2025



PASTOR'S MESSAGE:

Signs of Spring

Spring has Sprung! The snow has melted, and the days are getting warmer. Isn't it wonderful to hear these words? It has been a long, cold and snowy winter, but it is behind us now.

When the weather warms up I love taking walks outside. It may sound strange to you, but I think it's even better if it's raining. There is a special stillness in the air when raindrops gently fall on the trees and rooftops. When it's raining, I notice things differently than on a good weather day.



A walk in the rain inspires me to think deeply. When I look around at God's good creation, I begin to think about my life's joys and concerns. But I am often interrupted by the inspiration of nature around me being watered by God. It demands my attention. I notice things I had previously just walked past – like the tall old oak tree that has seen many more years of life than me. I notice the damage to evergreens that have been gnawed at over the winter by local deer. I notice the fresh buds on trees that were knocked down prematurely by the Spring rain.

I enjoy getting outside in the Springtime to do yard clean-up. I pick up last year's dead plants and leaves, and branches broken by the winter storms, and burn them in the fire pit. I walk around the house and look for new sprouts coming out of the ground where I planted perennials last year. My irises and day-lilies and primrose are all showing signs of life. It is beautiful to see this resilient display of new life springing forth despite the presence of dead leaves still hanging on from last' year's growth. This new life seems quite oblivious to winter's destruction, and it doesn't even seem to care that the day is chilly and rainy.

New life is all around us this time of year. Sometimes we can see it plainly, like the new sprouts of plants, and sometimes we have to wait a little longer for the ground to get warmer to see it. We know it is there and that it will come in abundance. It is persistent, no matter what obstacles from past days it may have had to overcome. It is also very adaptable, which makes it well equipped for the days ahead. God provides the conditions it needs – rain and warmth. God provides the necessary healing, and the dying, preparing it for yet another season of life to carry on.

We gain much wisdom about God and our own life when we observe the ways of nature. As Paul said in his letter to the Romans (1:20): *“Ever since the creation of the world, God’s eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things God has made.”* Surely we understand the experiences of death and new life in our daily living. There are times lives when we go through the struggles of loss, death, and fear. But we know those times are always followed by new days that are warmed by God's grace - days which bring hope and optimism to us once again. This is God's promise to us.

The changing of the seasons blesses us with the gift of new life. I hope you will get outside and spend some time with the miracles of creation happening just beyond your door. God's love is calling out to you from the sprouts and rainy days, to come and see. May your hearts be filled with joy through the signs of new life you will find!

Yours in Christ' Service,

Reverend Linda C. Hey



PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Pastoral Search Committee has been meeting weekly and diligently working on our church profile. We are nearing the end and expect to submit it to the UCC for review in the next couple weeks. We are so thankful for the work done previously by the Transitional Steering team and for the words of encouragement from the congregation. We expect to go live with the profile the beginning of May. This has been an interesting and sacred journey for us. We ask for your continued prayers for our work.

Matthew 7:7-8 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find: Knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; the one who seeks, finds; and the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”



OUTREACH & STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY

Our annual pledge campaign is concluding at the end of April. The theme this year was Imagine Together and we shared ideas that we might Imagine for our church, community and even the world.

The Stewardship Ministry “Imagined Together” an increase of 6% over last years’ pledge donations to \$170,000. With the generosity of our wonderful church community this goal of \$170,000 has been exceeded by 14% to \$194,000!

We are so thrilled and blessed for this commitment from our congregation. Your generosity will help to meet the church operation’s expenses and support the current and new programs. We are still following up with some of our former pledges and do want to remind our members that it is never too late to make or increase a pledge amount. There will be pledge materials in the office that you can pick up or have mailed to you.

We want to make a special thank you to Vicki Flynn who prepared her delicious breakfast casseroles for our Commitment Brunch. We also want to thank Sharon Haskell for allowing us to move her sign IMAGINE from the Parish Hall to the Vestry for our campaign. We also want to thank Elaine Sederlund and Dick Grotton who moved and attached the IMAGINE sign in the vestry (which was no small project).

We are a small but mighty piece of God’s world. Our God is a generous God, who has displayed through Jesus as the one who deeply loves us. Like God, our congregation is a generous congregation who shares their love for our church community through their annual pledge commitments. Thank you, Thank you!

Notice of Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the First Congregational Church of Scarborough, Maine will be held at **10:45 AM on Sunday, May 4, 2025** in the Sanctuary. All members will receive an Annual Meeting packet in the mail unless you choose to pick it up at the church office. A member who cannot attend the meeting in person may vote by Proxy. The gathering is to act on the following items:

Call to Order.

Article I: To receive and act upon the nominations of the Ministry of Members, Friends & Church Life.

Article II: To receive and act upon the report of the Church Clerk and the minutes from the previous Annual Meeting.

Article III: To receive and act upon the report of the Treasurer (including Missions).

Article IV: To approve the Operating Budget for the Fiscal Year 7/1/2025 – 6/30/2026.

Article V: To receive and act upon the reports of the Minister, Moderator, and Recording Treasurer.

Article VI: To receive and act upon the reports of the Ministries of Worship & Spiritual Care, Governing & Finance, Audit, Christian Education, Christian Outreach & Stewardship, and Members, Friends & Church Life.

Article VII: To receive and act upon the reports of all other Church groups and organizations customarily reporting at this time.

Article VIII: To transact any other business as may legally come before this meeting.

Dated at said Scarborough, Maine on April 21, 2025.

Elaine H. Sederlund

Church Clerk

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP NEWS:

Just a reminder that our April Women's Fellowship Meeting will be April 22, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. in the Ladies Parlor. Our program will be I "ran" from Iran by Parivash and Nasser Rohani. Our hostesses will be Susan Hilton and Allison Curry. If you are able, our Food Pantry donations are condiments (mustard, relish, ketchup, mayo, etc.).

There will be no April Women's Coffee Hour as it falls during Holy Week and more specifically on Maundy Thursday this year. Our next Coffee Hour will be May 15th at 9:30 a.m. at Stacks Pancake Co. on Route 1 in Scarborough

Our May Women's Fellowship Meeting will be May 28, 2025 at Noon. This is our Annual Banquet and will be held at Stacks Pancake Co. on 139 Riverside Street, Portland ME. Please notify Gail Dobriko if you plan to attend.

The Women's Fellowship Officers for the 2025/2026 year have been nominated and voted on. Please join us in welcoming the following officers:

President: Roberta Brown

Vice President: Lorraine Taylor

Secretary: Pat Knittel

Treasurer: Deb Gerry

- Roberta Brown

President, Women's Fellowship

CRAFTS & FELLOWSHIP

Crafts and Fellowship continues to meet every Tuesday afternoon, except on the days that Women's Fellowship meets. Drop in at 1:30 or after to work on your own craft project, join in creating whatever we are making for the Church Fair, or for a bit of fellowship. We also have a game of Rummy-Kub on hand, if that sparks your interest.

YES, VIRGINIA, THERE WILL BE A YARD SALE THIS SUMMER

Our Annual Yard Sale will take place on **Saturday, June 28th from 8:30—1:00 pm.** in the Parish Hall. We will start accepting donations of merchandise at the Parish Hall the 2nd week of June. If you have something to donate that you absolutely need out of the house before then, please contact Elaine in the church office and we can store it at the Annex. As always we invite you to volunteer in advance of or on the day of the sale.

Merri Roberts and Brenda Birkner have stepped forward to help organize this year's event. Stay tuned for details.

MUSICAL NOTES

He lives! Once again our Lord Jesus Christ's liberation from death brings our own new found life through him! Hallelujah! I hope your Easter was profound and joyful.

Big news! You might have heard by now, or have read Sue Fielding's notes that we are blessed to have a new Minister of Music already. Positive energy and anticipation is certainly abundant right now, as we welcome him and as the search committee for the Pastor is in high gear.

Goodbyes are hard, so I will not say it, I will just say see you later. I hope you heard in my letter last month how much the church and all of you have meant to me these past sixteen years. There was a huge circle of love that enveloped me from the very start, back in 2009, when I was hired as your permanent organist, and has only grown deeper both ways. Thank you.

And, thank you for entrusting the new Minister of Music position to me, including directing the choir these past two years. There have been many supporters, beginning with the hard work of the Music Committee and Pastor Linda, and then from whole committees voting for it, along with Elaine always being willing to do whatever might be best to ease the clerical work and communications with tuners. It has been a pleasure from the get go and is hard to leave, even through many personal struggles. It's not often someone can say they get to work with a group whose members are so very incredibly dedicated AND they are volunteers. Did you know Sue Fielding has been in the choir since she was barely a teenager? Now that's dedication!



Thank you, Choir Members, for all of your time, energy, laughs, beautiful music, and most of all – patience! – you have been willing to try new things, change a tune on a minute's notice, travel to perform a Cantata, and “wow” your own congregation week after week, inspiring them with God's love through song. You are the very best. I love each of you dearly and will miss you very much.

Thank you Pastor Linda for all of your help, support, and expertise guiding the Music Committee and me. You have brought many positive attributes to us, most of all your beautiful and loving spirit. I am so grateful to have gotten to know you.

Congregation members, keep up the great singing. I have enjoyed it very much these years. You know how to fill the hall!

Lovingly and yours in song,

Wendy

UPDATE FROM THE MUSIC COMMITTEE

On behalf of the Ministry of Worship and Spiritual Care, the Music Committee is pleased to announce the hiring of a new Minister of Music. We are excited to welcome Salvatore Capaccio. He prefers to be called Sonny.

We are fortunate to have him join us. He is a multi-talented young man with a passion for sharing and teaching music. He believes music in the church is about enhancing the spiritual experience of worship and that music has the power to heal.



Sonny has vast experience in voice, music directing, arrangement and composition. He has a B.A. in Music. He has played and sung in multiple music ensembles. He is skilled in several musical instruments to include: piano, organ, oboe, French horn, harpsichord, percussion and electric bass. He has been involved in theatrical and choral performances. He has taught Math and Music and has been a cantorial soloist at St. George Church in Connecticut. Recently he has directed choral performance at Poland Regional High School and Casco Bay High School.

We believe that Sonny will bring our church not only fresh ideas and experience but will work hard to bring God's message in music to all.

Sonny officially starts as our Music Minister on May 12, 2025. We are truly blessed to have him join us!

Submitted by Susan Fielding (Chair)

