



# The Landmark

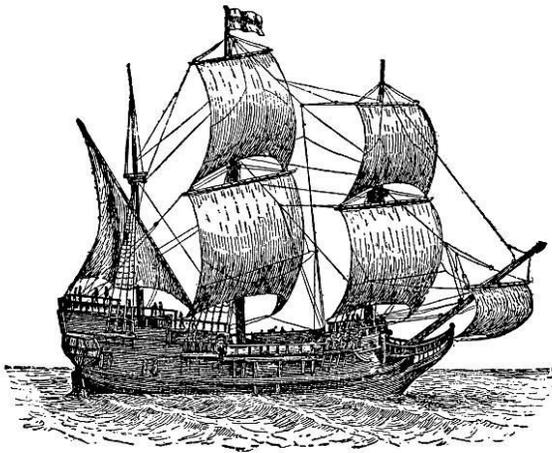
Volume 22, Issue 2 | February, 2023

## A Letter From The Pastor

Dear Congregation,

For my February letter, I'd like to briefly mention a few things about our church. Many of you will already know these things, but for some, it may be useful information. First, we are a Congregational church. And second, we are a member church in the NACCC, the National Association of Congregational Churches. So, I want to talk about these two things. What it means to be a Congregational church, and what it means to be a member church of the NACCC.

Of course, all churches have congregations, and so it may seem redundant and obvious to say that we are a Congregational church. But there is a specific meaning here, and for anyone interested in joining our church--First Congregational Church of Searsport—it would be good to understand what this specific meaning is. It is a meaning rich in history.



The roots of Congregationalism in America go way back to 1620 when the Mayflower dropped anchor off Cape Cod. While still on board the ship, the Mayflower's passengers, English Separatists seeking religious freedom, decided to reaffirm their commitment to each other and to the rule of law. And so, they wrote and signed The Mayflower Compact, the document which established their rules for self-government and later became an important foundation for both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. These Separatists, whom we now call "The Pilgrims," established a church based on the democratic principle of government by majority rule, in other words, government by the congregation. There was no bishop or pope telling them what to do or believe. In the history of the church, this was revolutionary.

The first churches in colonial America were all "congregational," that is, the first churches that sprang up in 17th century New England following in the tradition of the Pilgrims were all independent and autonomous. Each church governed itself. Other types of churches, for example, Catholic, Presbyterian, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, etc., would be seen later. But in the early years of the colonies, the only church in town was congregational. That was just church, the way it was. So as a church tradition, the Congregational Church was the first church in America.

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## FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

1-Feb	Jane Snowdale
4-Feb	Peter King
6-Feb	Andrew Nichols
8-Feb	Rebecca Mohr
9-Feb	Rodney Farris
12-Feb	Robin Kelley
16-Feb	Don Maunz
19-Feb	Katrina Butler
20-Feb	Mary Alden
20-Feb	David Alling
21-Feb	Tara Harvey
25-Feb	Russell Arnold
25-Feb	George Kennedy
27-Feb	Sandra Otis-Anderson
27-Feb	Elmore (Al) Andrews

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## MISSION NEWS

By Nancy Hamilton, Chair

The Missions Committee met on January 4 to evaluate December's events and plan for the coming few months. The committee voted to not only sell more pysanky Easter eggs during Lent to raise funds for Ukrainian relief efforts, but also to have a Ukrainian dinner, featuring Chicken Kiev and a Ukrainian apple cake on Saturday, February 25. It is hard to believe, but the day before, February 24, will mark the one-year anniversary of Russia's invasion of that war-torn country. Please see the poster elsewhere in the Landmark for details.

Our next meeting will be in the Murphy Room at 10:00 on February 1. We'll be discussing how we can spread Valentine joy, and ways we can help "the least among us." If you are interested in helping others locally, nationally, or around the world, please join us!

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*Dear children, let us not love with words  
or tongue but with actions and truth.  
1 John 3:18*



## WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP NEWS

By Karen Kelley, President

The Women's Fellowship met for the first 2023 meeting on Tuesday, January 2nd. We have begun to plan and schedule activities and fun-raisers for this calendar year. We had more discussion about the Chocolate Fest and voted to have the virtual fund-raiser asking other area churches to help as well. There is more specific information about this event in this Landmark.

We have decided to hold an auction on April 29th in Curtis Hall. There will be preview time from 4 to 6 pm and the Auction will begin at 6 pm with Linda Payson as our auctioneer. We will be selling refreshments throughout the event.



We are requesting donations of items: furniture, art, collectibles, theme baskets, gift certificates, etc. If you have items you would like to donate, please contact Karen Kelley or Sue Nichols. We discussed hosting a Cabin Fever Reliever this spring and decided to take it to the Council since other committees have considered the same. Hopefully we can make this an all-church event.

And we talked about meeting together to make items, crafts & ornaments, for our Christmas Fair next Fall. And finally, we decided to get back to our pre-Covid schedule and re-institute having lunch together following our regular monthly meetings. We will plan to cater our own meal or go out to a local restaurant. It was decided to begin in April.

The Fellowship meets the first Tuesday morning of each month at 10 am in the Murphy Room. We would love to have you join us as a member or a guest. Our next meeting will be Tuesday February 7th. I hope to see you then.

## FLAGPOLE UPDATE

By Karen Kelley

To my church family, members and friends, I proposed the idea of installing a flagpole on church grounds to the Trustees last month and received their wholehearted support. It is my goal to install a flagpole to honor all the veterans - past, present and future - who have attended our church. I intend to raise the money needed to complete this project through donations and, if needed, fund-raisers. It is my sincerest hope that this project will be completed before Memorial Day.

If you would like to support the project, please send your check to the 1st Congregational Church with "flagpole" written in the memo line. You may place it in the collection plate during the offering or send it to the Church at P.O. Box 261, Searsport. Sandra has created an account for the project and will deposit any donations into it. I thank you in advance for your consideration and support and will keep you updated on the progress of this project.

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## FEBRUARY CALENDAR

**February 1 and 15**, 8:00 AM, Men's Breakfast, Methodist Church

**February 1**, 10:00 AM, Missions Committee, Murphy Room

**February 7**, 10:00 AM, Women's Fellowship, Curtis Hall

**February 7**, 7:00 PM, Sanctuary, Taize Service with Rev. Steve Alspach

**February 15**, 7:00 PM, Trustees Meeting

**February 14**, Valentine's Day!

**February 19**, Deadline for Landmark articles

**February 19**, 11:30 AM, Church Council Meeting, Murphy Room

**February 22**, 4:00 PM, Ash Wednesday Service, Sanctuary

**February 25**, 5:00-6:30 PM, Curtis Hall, Ukrainian Dinner

**February 28**, 3:30 PM, Deacons' Meeting

## UKRAINIAN SUPPER

### TO RAISE FUNDS FOR UKRAINIAN RELIEF EFFORTS

Saturday, February 25, 5:00 – 6:30  
Searsport First Congregational Church, Church Street

<p><b><u>MENU</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chicken Kiev</li><li>• Cheesy mashed potatoes</li><li>• Roasted carrots</li><li>• Pickled beets</li><li>• Dinner roll</li><li>• Ukrainian apple cake</li><li>• Tea and coffee</li></ul>	<p>Also available at the dinner: Pysanky (Ukrainian wooden Easter eggs)</p> 
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Dinners are by donation  
(Suggested donation \$15)

Small eggs \$3  
Large eggs \$5

Sponsored by the Missions Committee

## SEAFARER'S FRIEND: IT'S A WRAP FOR 2022!

By Sue Nichols

Seafarer's Friend Ship's Visitor George Rogers delivered our ditty bags to the crew of the Swedish vessel "Roerborg" on January 31, 2022. Thanks goes out to all those who sewed, packed, knit, underwrote costs, and donated items for this year's ditty bags: Dorothy Alling, Wayne Hamilton, Priscilla King, Lee Nahme, Sandra Otis-Anderson, and Women's Fellowship!

Below is a photo of three of the happy crew:



## SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

By Sue Nichols

After a two week break from class, Sunday School has begun again. Last Sunday, we learned a little more about Epiphany, and the Three Kings (Were there really three? No one really knows for sure.)

I'm making a special request for photos of our kids: in an effort to update the photo wall in the classroom, we'd like parents to send in one 4" x 6" or 5" x 7" school (type) photo that will be put in a frame and hung on the wall. Thank you.



"God is love; whoever abides in love abides in God, and God in him."

1 John 4:16

## MUSIC NOTES

By Carolyn Maunz and Dionne Haase

*"And like an epiphany just landed on my shoulder, everything feels right. A calming acceptance settles over me, and I know, that even through the twists and uncertainty of time, it's okay if my heart sometimes leads me." Hrezo*

### From the Minister of Music

We find ourselves past Christmas and in Epiphany, moving toward Lent. Epiphany has us joyfully acknowledging the revelation of Jesus with us, and the next season, Lent, has us in penitential preparation for Easter. Musically, we move from the joyful songs of Epiphany with their hopeful lyrics, to the more somber tunes of Lent, as we remember Jesus praying for forty days, and our own need for reflection of our life and our choices.

Our Concert Series is continuing to shape up, and we will offer events from May through December in 2023. We will list the performers closer to the time, and hope you will be able to attend all those that you find interesting. It looks like a great and varied line-up this year. Anyone who is interested in providing funding to sponsor one or more of these concerts, please see me any time after church.

On February 7th at 7:00 PM, there will be a special Taize service in our Sanctuary, Dionne, Pastor Ed and I plan to participate, and we hope that many of you will attend as well. Brother Roger Schütz was a Reformed Protestant who established the Taize community in France in 1940. The music of Taize is contemplative and moving, and will be sung throughout the service on 2/7/23.

The Bell Choir has enthusiastically moved from Christmas Carols to new music, and had their first post-Christmas rehearsal this month. Each

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member has grown so much over the past year, and we are able to do more difficult music. We appreciate the reception we received from all of you through our December performances.

As the quote above says, sometime we need to find acceptance of where we are, and be led through prayer and the stirrings of our hearts, to a place of peace. Both Dionne and I hope that our selections during this time will help us all find a place of peace.

### **From the Associate Minister of Music**

Greetings from the choir room! The choir momentum hasn't stopped with the arrival of 2023. Already some members of the choir sang at Bayview nursing home on Monday, January 9th, and a great time was had by all. Anyone is welcome to join us the second Monday of the month. We meet in the lower-level church parking lot at 10:15 and carpool over to Bayview. We sing for about 30 minutes.

The choir will be focusing on the upcoming Lenten/Easter season. The choir will sing at the Ash Wednesday service, February 22, Maundy Thursday, Palm Sunday and on Easter Sunday.

This year the choir will be presenting an Easter cantata, "Lift High the Cross." The 25-minute presentation will feature narrations, musicians, and a chance for the congregations to join the choir singing a familiar Easter hymn. If anyone is interested in just joining the choir to sing the cantata, rehearsals begin the first Thursday in February. Rehearsals begin at 3 PM, and those interested would only have to stay for the cantata portion of the rehearsal, not the upcoming Sundays' rehearsal. Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this special service.

The children's choir could always use more singers; we have a wonderful core group so far. Instrumentalists are always welcome to enhance the church service.

Make a joyful noise,

Dionne Haase

[lotofnoise@msn.com](mailto:lotofnoise@msn.com)

303-842-7804

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## **FROM THE MEMORIAL BOOK COMMITTEE**

By Karen Kelley

The Memorial Book Committee (Karen Kelley, Linda Payson, Ralph Harvey, Sandra Otis Anderson, and Wayne Hamilton) is finalizing the plans for the Memorial Book that will be located in the Sanctuary. This Book will serve to hold information about members and friends of The First Congregational Church of Searsport who have passed.

The Committee is in the process of finalizing a template and an informational sheet that will be filled out by the families. As soon as we have the form completed, we will let you know so that you can begin the process for memorializing your loved ones.

Thanks to Dan Nichols, the lectern that will hold the Books has been assembled and placed in the back of the Sanctuary. We have purchased the leather-bound books that will keep the memorial pages available for all to enjoy.



"Where there is love, there is life."

Mahatma Gandhi

## DIRECT FROM THE DEACONS

By Jill Perkins, Deacon of the Month

The Board of Deacons has had a very busy few weeks. We participated in the Christmas Eve service and led a lay service in which Bart Haase gave a very inspiring sermon in Pastor Ed's absence due to a trip to visit his month.

We helped several people in the church and community with special needs. If you have any cares or concerns on your mind, please do not hesitate to speak to one of us--we may be able to help. Everything is kept confidential.

Please remember that there are many things you can do to participate in services and special events: ushering or greeting, reading scripture, joining a coffee hour group, or helping with committee special events by baking or fund-raising, for instance.

We are already looking forward to upcoming events in our church--Valentine's Day, possibly a winter get-together, an auction, Lent and East, and more concerts. Your suggestions and help are always welcome.

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## NEWS FROM THE TRUSTEES

By Dan Nichols, Co- Chair

A big thank you to everyone for all the help decorating the church for Christmas and then packing everything away for next year. Everything really lit up our beautiful church through that festive season and lent a nice glow to our services, special concerts, open house tour, and the museum's YouTube video.

The Christmas trees and decorations have settled into their new off-season home in the storeroom and furnace room in the lower level of the vestry. Norm Otis has completed the painting of the storeroom and the floor has been cleaned and waxed. We'll be setting up more shelving and moving much of the "stuff" now

in the corner room into the storeroom. We envision that smaller room will be reconfigured as a small meeting room with desk space for temporary use that would be handy for those working on special projects. The room will first need painting and the rug replaced.

The trustees met with Paul Biddle, the director of Searsport's Emergency Management Agency, to understand in particular what role we might have as a warming center should such an emergency need arise. Following up on the agreement we had with the town five years ago, Paul envisions us as a back up to the town's facilities such as the community center. We will be developing the specifics of such an arrangement with Paul.

Sandra sent out the statements of your individual contribution records for 2022 the week of January 16. Call her if you have any questions. The 2023 offering envelopes are in the back of the sanctuary. Please sign the receipt sheet and use them for your offerings. Their use really helps with our record keeping.

Trustee of the Month, February: Dan Nichols  
Next Trustees meeting, Wednesday, February 15 @ 7:00

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*Perfect love means putting up  
with other people's  
shortcomings, feeling no  
surprise at their weaknesses,  
finding encouragement even  
in the slightest evidence of  
good qualities in them.*



*- St. Therese of Lisieux*

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I think it's fair to say that here at First Congregation Church of Searsport, we are an independent and autonomous church in the purest sense of American Congregationalism. And yet, we are not isolated. We maintain as association with other like-minded churches, that is, Congregational churches who want to remain, in this purest sense dating back to the Pilgrim founders, Congregational.

And this is where the NACCC comes in. The National Association of Congregational Christian Churches (affectionately called "The NA") formed in 1955. There is a lot of history there, a lot of water under the bridge, and the story of its formation is fascinating, but suffice it to say that over time, the original Congregational movement which began with the Pilgrims divided (and merged and divided and merged and divided some more) eventually becoming what is now four distinguishable groups: the UUA, the UCC, the CCCC, and the NACCC. Nationwide, there are about 350 churches in the NA, and the main office is in Oak Creek, Wisconsin. While I was in seminary studying for my MDiv, I also did a one-year course of study with the NA, and then later, was ordained as a Congregational minister within the NA.

So, that is more than you wanted to know! But I wanted to briefly sketch an outline placing our church within the historical and social context that is congregationalism. It is a fascinating place to be! We are a unique church of Jesus Christ, connected to history and the network of people joined in the Holy Spirit. Please enjoy our newsletter, take a look at all our current activities, and consider where you might want to get involved.

*Grace and peace,  
--Pastor Ed*

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Church

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/fccsearsport/>  
Email: [fccsearsport@gmail.com](mailto:fccsearsport@gmail.com)  
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### Pastor Ed Gabrielsen

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Cell phone: 207-595-9173

### Bill Zito, Administrative Assistant

Office (and home) hours: Tues., Thurs. 11AM-3PM  
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### Carolyn Maunz, Minister of Music

Office/prep hours: Tues. 8:30-10:30AM, Thurs. 1:00-2:00PM  
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### Dionne Haase, Associate Minister of Music

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Cell phone: 303-842-7804

## Taize Service

7:00 PM, February 7

Searsport First Congregational Church  
8 Church Street, Searsport

Rev. Steve Alspach, pastor of Sandy Point Congregational Church will be leading this ecumenical meditative service, which combines prayer with silence, short Scripture readings, and simple, contemporary chants based on Scripture.

All are welcome!



See what great love the Father has  
lavished on us, that we should be  
called children of God!"

(1 John 3:1)