



The Landmark

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A Letter From The Pastor

Dear Congregation of God,

Well, the apple blossoms are out in abundance now, and this week I saw many, many beautiful trees in full flower as I was out and about. It was delightful. On Tuesday, I was headed to the monthly meeting of the clergy group, the Greater Bay Area Ministerium, at First Church in Belfast. Now, I don't know my way around Belfast very well yet. I am more familiar with Western Maine and the Portland area. But I always enjoy exploring. And even after living in Maine for twenty-two years, I still find new places to explore. Shari knows the mid-coast area quite well, much better than I do, and so she is often my tour guide. When we have time, we enjoy daytrips and picnic outings in good weather. But on Tuesday, I had a few minutes before my meeting, so I drove around a bit in Belfast, exploring the town and the neighborhood surrounding First Church, learning where all the one-way streets are, and enjoying the day and the apple blossoms.

You know, one of the foundations of our faith is that God loves us. God loves us unconditionally. And this is a very good place to start. If we start with this thought, this belief, this attitude—"God loves me unconditionally. I am a beloved child of God. God loves me today. God has always loved me. God will love me in the future."—if we begin here, taking this step on faith, believing this in faith, the consequences can be powerful. The belief that God loves us unconditionally can be a source of strength and courage when we meet life's challenges. And we never know where we will find encouragement as evidence of God's love. Sometimes it comes out of nowhere to surprise us.

In Belfast, parking the Jeep, a stunning tree on Church Street took my breath away. I had to stop what I was doing, stop my rushing to a meeting, and stand there on the sidewalk. I paused, stood still, and looked at the tree. I allowed the flowering apple tree to completely fill my attention, and I drank it in. The blossoming apple tree on Church Street was a lyric poem, a moment of heightened awareness, a highlight of the week, now a memory, already fading into the past.

There will come other moments, more new things to explore, more moments of beauty to experience in the future, more lyric poetry. We will watch the apple blossoms fall to the ground. And this will be another poem, too. The prolific poet and translator David Young begins the introduction to his 2004 volume, *The Poetry of Petrarch*, with the line, "Time is our delight and our prison. It binds all human beings together, since we all share the pleasures and burdens of memory, and we all know the anticipations of cherished goals and the dark prospect of personal mortality."



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JUNE BIRTHDAYS

4-June	Jennifer McKeon
5-June	Joan Andrews
8-June	Ted Luebbers
8-June	Robert Kenney
10-June	Maggie Harvey
11-June	David Estes
12-June	Robert Crone
12-June	Priscilla King
13-June	Sylvia Bray
16-June	Zoe Perkins
16-June	Larry Philbrick
26-June	Mildred Rainey
28-June	Tina Gould



Bell Choir

Our Bell Choir made its debut on Easter Sunday and is rehearsing on Thursdays at 1:30 and Sundays at 11:30. We plan to play on May 22nd at Pastor Ed's Installation, Memorial Sunday, and Children's Sunday. We are beginning to rehearse our fall pieces as well.

Summer Special Music

I will be away Sunday July 24th and Sunday September 4th. Tracy Bigney will be substituting for me and may provide some special music with her husband Tim Rogers. On other Sundays, we will be fortunate to hear solos, ensembles and instrumentals from our own musical talent, as well as from Don and Judy Mayberry on July 24th, and Pastor Ed at other times.

The Postlude

The Postlude debate continues. Some people have mentioned that they want to leave but feel uncomfortable walking out as others stay and listen. The Postlude was originally added to worship in the 1850's as an "afterward piece" played to accompany people leaving after the service. Then, I believe it was the Dutch that felt all church music should be a 'performance' rather than an accompaniment to worship.

In the early days, we were told we must play the Postlude until the last person had left the church; and I am of the old school, where the Postlude is played after the service is over, and while people are leaving. I appreciate those who like to listen, but also others to know that its fine to leave and get on with their day! It is really the Benediction that ends our worship. Amen.

MUSIC NOTES

By Carolyn Maunz

Concert Series 2022

The 2022 concert series at our church has been cancelled for this year. Due to the increasing covid cases, the projection for summer and fall surges, and the concern of some of our performers, it seemed the best thing to do. We have invited all to work with us next year if circumstances allow. We want to be able to attract a crowd and do our fundraising, and hope that 2023 will be better all around.

Adult Choir

I have heard so many comments about how nice it is to have our choir back with us after the pandemic. Even with singers' masks, their sound is just beautiful this year. I am so glad you are enjoying their offerings, and while they will be finished for the summer after June 5th, we will look forward to their return in the fall.

Children's Choir

We plan to have the Children's Choir sing on June 5th, Children's Sunday, if we have enough who are interested. Rehearsals are Sunday right after the service in the sanctuary for about 10 minutes. Hope to see you there!

MISSION NEWS

By Nancy Hamilton, Chair

Ukraine – Project HOPE

The \$2,000 proceeds from the Easter Dinner take-out fundraiser, an additional \$500 voted by the Missions Committee, and generous donations from the church family has resulted in a donation of \$4,650 to Project HOPE, an international health care organization working in Ukraine and throughout Eastern Europe to address the medical needs of those affected by the war. It is perfect timing for that gift, as all donations received before May 31 qualify for a matching grant. So, thanks to all of you, we will be enabling a total of \$9,300 to go toward helping those affected by the war! Hallelujah!!!

Here is more information about Project HOPE's work. They are coordinating with other non-profits, hospitals, and governments in Poland, Romania, Moldova and Ukraine, and to date have:

- Helped provide medicines and medical supplies to Ukrainian civilian hospital.
- Provided key supplies, including insulin, to Moldova's Ministry of Health.
- Acquired medical supplies for a neonatal hospital in Kyiv.
- Obtained warehouse space in Poland, and a supply corridor from there to Ukraine.
- Sourced hygiene kits, medical supplies, and medicines in Romania for transport to Ukraine and to refugees.
- Provided support for refugee mental health needs.

For more information about Project Hope, please go to www.projecthope.org

Ukraine – International Ministries

The \$3003 we raised in March was sent to the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society. We have received information from that

organization detailing their work in Ukraine and Eastern Europe. The entire article is at <https://www.internationalministries.org/ukraine-response-a-christ-led-grass-roots-baptist-movement> but here are some of the highlights:

- “Baptists in Ukraine and the neighboring countries set up shelters and hospitality centers—large and small—within days/weeks... Within days, in six countries more than 1,000 places were made ready—600 within Ukraine—for all that are migrating to sleep, eat, shower, and receive a word of hope.”
- “Now the challenge is that there is a large cost to providing these services... What our partners are requesting is funding primarily for the “hard goods” needed—the food, beds, sheets, blankets, towels, etc.”
- “Our funds are following our relationships—foundations of trust, support and mutual accountability that were established in times of stability... We turned immediately to the European Baptist Federation (EBF) ... [Helle Liht, Assistant General Secretary of the EBF] knows Baptists leaders across Europe.... Since 2014 she has been working with Ukrainian Baptists to understand their needs and to assist them with building capacity in the event of invasion. While I don't know that anyone could be prepared..., Helle and the Baptist leaders have worked together pretty much seamlessly since the escalation of the crisis.”

The bottom line: Since the war began, our small church and community have (with the help of the Project HOPE matching grant) been able to help provide \$12,303 in aid!

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CourageLIVES

The Missions Committee voted at their May meeting to donate two \$100 gas cards to CourageLIVES for two recent “graduates” of their home. These trafficking survivors, who are starting new lives, are finding it especially hard to pay for gas to get to and from work.

Food prices are also a challenge for all the survivors living independently. Kindness Programs volunteers met director Carey Nason when she was in the Searsport area in May and shared some of Kindness’ non-perishable groceries, filling her van with food for the CourageLIVES’ “Empowerment Pantry.”

Our church’s invitation to Carey—and our warm reception to her presentation a few months ago—has resulted in Carey also speaking to the Searsport Lions Club, and the Waldo County Retired Teachers Association. Carey has had many kind words about how involved the Searsport/Waldo County community is.

DIRECT FROM THE DEACONS

By Barb Burns, Deacon of the Month

The Deacons have been working with Pastor Ed to plan his service of Installation. This is an important event in the life of our church and will take place on Sunday, May 22 at 3 pm. It will be a happy day for our church family and we hope as many as possible will attend. The Women’s Fellowship will provide refreshments following the service. In keeping with Covid guidelines the refreshments will be served outdoors and will consist of a cold drink and cookies and bars which will be served in individual bags.

As the “new kid on the block” on the Deacons’ committee I want to tell you how impressed I have been at the varied and wonderful work this

committee does. I think their outreach far exceeds most churches. One of the very good things the committee does is send cards and make phone calls to shut ins and anyone else we know of that might need a kind thought or word. If you know of anyone that would benefit from a call or card, please let one of the deacons know.

COFFEE HOUR OUTSIDE!

By Priscilla King

Another decision has been made to allow us to have Fellowship after church services. On Sundays where the weather is pleasant, we will conduct a coffee fellowship outside on the lawn and the deck in front of the church. We will have the availability of this announced each week from the pulpit.

A sign-up sheet for people who will set up, serve, and clean up is located on a bulletin board in Curtis Hall. If you were on an old team, we’d love to have you get together this time, too!



TAKE A SEAT!!! (FUNDRAISER FOR THE MUSIC MINISTRY)

The chairs in the choir loft are no longer being used and need a good home. If you would like to take one home with you, we are asking for a donation to the Music Ministry - consider \$50/per chair and the chair is yours!

We will be keeping 4 chairs in the choir loft but there are 10 more that could be yours. Contact Jennifer McKeon or Bob Snowdale if you are interested.

FROM YOUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

By Bob Snowdale, Chair

Greetings and welcome to spring in Maine!

WIFI!

Internet access and WIFI are now available in the sanctuary. (It also means you can get e-mail, and play games on your phone if you get bored in church.) [Editor's Note: I think that is a joke. However...please be sure that phones are silenced in the sanctuary!] The WIFI SSID is SFCC1, the password is sfcc2014.

We are looking into video equipment to all the pastor to live-stream Sunday services.

TOURS

After the last two years of Covid closures, our sanctuary will open to museum visitors when the museum opens for the season Friday May 27. Like they've done in years past, their current plans have the interpreters opening the sanctuary for about 20 minutes at 11, 1, and 3 o'clock each day. Sunday openings will be at 1 & 3.

The visitors will be accompanied by museum personnel at all times and will lock the door when they leave. Times can be adjusted to accommodate any conflicts. Dan Nichols is the primary point of contact for coordinating with the museum.

If you see them, give them a hello and welcome. The interpreters have much of our history info but they and the visitors always enjoy the additional insights.

The museum is looking forward to being fully opened this summer. They have taken advantage of the past years' down time to add and renew exhibits and develop new programming.

SPRING CLEANING

The Murphy Room will soon be straightened out. Boxes of unwanted books will be removed, the old couch from the pastor's office will be offered for sale in the next bulletin and Landmark. Ed's couch will be moved to a storage locker.

COVID

On the Covid-19 front, we have discussed Covid protocols, and agree with the positions of our diaconate. Curtis Hall is available once again, but events held there can't serve food or beverages due to our mask requirement.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

By Sue Nichols, Sunday School Chair

Although the spring season of the Sunday School is a short one, it's been a gratifying one. Mary A., Nicole and I, along with our newest team members, Sheri Judkins and Sue Vail, have enjoyed getting to know the children who have returned to class. They are thoughtful, inquisitive, eager to participate in activities, helpful, and a joy to have in class!

The children are preparing a song to sing for the congregation on Children's Sunday, June 5th, under Carolyn's direction.

Sunday School classes will resume in September. Have a great summer!

"There shall be eternal
summer in the grateful
heart."

- *Celia Thaxter*

PASTOR'S LETTER

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I think we generally find what we are looking for. May you have moments of heightened awareness. May you experience beauty during this coming month. And in these moments, may you be reminded of God's unconditional love. If we look for it, we may find it.

*Grace and peace,
Pastor Ed*

HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING

The Searsport Historical Society will meet Tuesday, June 14th, at 7 pm in the Methodist Vestry. Our speaker will be Northport Maritime Historian, Charles Lagerbom.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP NEWS

By Sue Nichols

As you read this, our first yard sale in almost three years will have taken place! Based on the amount of donations that were in storage, and the number of people who promised to drop by on Friday before the sale with more items, there should be a great quantity of "treasures" available for sale. Thanks to all of you who made the sale a success: those of you who brought donations, sorted the donations, set up tables and put out the items for sale early on Saturday morning; thanks to all who were available to sell during the morning, take in money, pick up cash for change, apply for the yard sale permit, advertise the sale, clean up at noon, and buy a treasure or two!

Members of the Women's Fellowship also participated in Pastor Ed's Installation Reception, by baking bars and supporting the Deacons in whatever ways they were able.

Our next meeting will be held on the first Tuesday of the month, June 7, 2022 at 10 AM in Curtis Hall. I hope you will join us!

KINDNESS NEWS

By Jayne Snowdale, Director

[Editor's Note: At the last Council meeting, Arthur Curtis asked that the Landmark include news about the Kindness Programs, so the entire church can know more about all they do, and the Council unanimously agreed. This is the first of the Kindness Programs' monthly columns.]

I cannot believe how long it has been since we have shared updates from The Kindness Programs. It's been 4 years since we began as a part of our church's Missions Committee, with the majority of that time during COVID, and have we changed!!

We started Kindness with 38 children, and distribution was at the Police Station. We now deliver weekly food boxes that contain enough food to get them through the week to 100+ children and their families. We also serve 54 seniors with 5 home cooked meals each week – that means we cook over 250 meals per week. And if that didn't keep us busy enough, we took over the HUSH program and provide Searsport Elementary/Middle School with "backpack" lunches and breakfasts for 56 children each weekend. All of this is done at the facilities of this church!

How do we do it all? VOLUNTEERS! We have a tremendous volunteer network – 12 drivers who deliver all of our food boxes and senior meals throughout the area; 6 packers who fill those boxes each week; 2 who handle all our refrigeration and senior needs; 3 who cook the meals, 3 who set up our tables, make and label each box, and straighten the pantry; 1 who prints labels, posters and takes care of all the PR. And then there is me...

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The food we distribute comes from a number of sources. Good Shepherd Food Bank delivers about 2 TONS (or more!) of non-perishable food every two weeks, and the Belfast Soup Kitchen shares many hundreds of pounds of meat, vegetables, and non-perishables with us almost weekly. Come harvest time, the County Re-Entry garden-entry garden provides us with fresh vegetables. And there are things, such as ingredients for our senior meals, that we often purchase locally.

This program is what I consider to be one of the most significant programs to come to our area in a very long time. When we listen to the news about the food insecurity problem in America, it's unfathomable that this could include us. Yes, that is part of the problem within every community – it is too hard to believe that this problem is right here in our own backyards!

Well, it is here, and it seems to be here to stay for a very long time. Because of you, we are able to do what we do to help our neighbors and friends. Please let me thank you all for continuing to give us the opportunity to run our program from the church. It is an immeasurable gift, and you need to know just what that means –the opportunity to help our community in a very big way. It is a wonderful outreach program that you are supporting financially and spiritually, and we could not do it without you!

Thank you on behalf of all of us at Kindness.

“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?” – Matthew 6: 28-30

JUNE CALENDAR

June 1, 8:00 AM, Men’s Breakfast, Methodist Church
June 1, 10:00, Missions Committee, Curtis Hall
June 5, Children’s Sunday!
June 7, 14, 21, 28, 1:00 PM, Bible Study, Curtis Hall (Note new time.)
June 15, 8:00 AM, Men’s Breakfast, Methodist Church
June 15, 7:00 PM, Trustees’ Meeting
June 19, Father’s Day!
June 19, after Coffee Hour, Council Meeting, Curtis Hall
June 19, Deadline for Landmark articles
June 28, 3:30, Deacons’ Meeting, Curtis Hall

CONTACT INFORMATION

Church

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*Spring being a tough act to follow,
God created June.*

Al Bernstein