



The Landmark

Volume 22, Issue 3 | March, 2023

A Letter From The Pastor

Dear Congregation,

Here are a few thoughts and reflections on time, and our experience of it. As March arrives in Maine, with the new month arrives the season of Lent. We observed Ash Wednesday together on February 22, and now we will be in Lent all the way until Easter Sunday on April 9th. Each day is a new day, the one day we have, the one day to live, and it is good to be alive this March, in the spring of 2023, here on the coast of Maine. We continue to remember our blessings.

I wanted to tell you about a dear friend, Judy Carman. Judy was my first voice teacher. I first met Judy when I was 16 and she was just opening her voice studio in Houston. That was 1979. Judy walked into our high school choir room during a rehearsal, and our choir director introduced her to the class. “This is Dr. Carman. She’s a voice teacher. If you want to take voice lessons, talk to her after class.” I had just started to sing in the choir, and voice lessons sounded like a good idea. So, I studied with Judy for about 8 years, until I met my principal teacher, Walter Foster. Judy and I were friends for 44 years, until her death last October. She started me on the singer’s path, a path which shaped the course of my life, and which I still follow.

Time is a mysterious thing, isn’t it? When we think about the past, it seems impossible that 40 years could go by so quickly. And even more mysterious, as we get older, our memories of past events can seem so vivid, as if no time at all had gone by. Close your eyes, and you can recall a day, 40 years ago, recall exactly where you were, recall the feelings and sensations, the colors, temperature, conversations, the clothes someone wore, the expression in their eyes and face. There can be such vivid detail in a memory, even of a particular moment in time.

And yet, what is a memory? Does a memory occur in the past? No. Our direct experience of a memory only occurs in the present moment. A memory is a present experience. In fact, every experience can only occur in this present moment: This present moment is the only possible time for us to experience anything. The past cannot contain experience. The same is true of the future. If we think about this clearly, we will see that the past and the future are simply thoughts. They do not exist anywhere else in time, other than as thoughts occurring in the present moment. This present moment, then, is the only possible place—so to speak—where experience happens, including our thoughts of the past and the future.

As we get older, and as we begin to think more about death, a sense of urgency may arise. We may have a sense that we are “running out of time.” Perhaps there are things you want to do or experiences you would like to repeat. But the problem with this sense of urgency is that it steals from us. It is like a thief that robs us of our most valuable possession. It deprives us of our sense of peace.

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In addition to these urgent thoughts about the future, we can get stuck in regretful thoughts about parts of our past we would like to change. Imagine you are a pianist, and you go to a concert and watch a world-class musician playing the piano at a level you know you will never come close to achieving. You can think, "Oh, I wish I could play like that. I wish I had practiced more! Now it's too late. I'll never be that good." Isn't it clear how that thought robs you of the present moment? Instead of craving, longing, suffering, wishing for things to be otherwise, you could simply watch, listen, and enjoy the performance. You could receive the gift of the present moment.

When we are able to let go of the thoughts about the past and future that torment us, when we see that they are illusions, we can return to a sense of peace in our direct experience of the present. We can see that the present moment is the only thing we experience directly, and this is the truth about what we have, the truth about what we possess.

One of the joys of being part of a church community is sharing our memories with each other as we reflect on time and the events of our lives. We journey through Lent together now, and enjoy each day as it comes to us, a gift from God, a blessing from God.

Grace and peace,
—*Pastor Ed*

"There are three elements that are almost always part of Lent: prayer, giving something up, and giving something back."

— Elizabeth Hyndman

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

7-Mar	Sharon Larson
10-Mar	Shayla Marie Kimball
12-Mar	Debra-Jo Middleswart
14-Mar	Gavin Adams
14-Mar	Jiffy Kelley-Young
16-Mar	Daniel McKeon
18-Mar	Arthur Curtis
18-Mar	CJ Harvey
23-Mar	Barbara Burns
26-Mar	Linda Payson
31-Mar	Sue Nichols

FROM THE MEMORIAL BOOK COMMITTEE

By Karen Kelley

The Committee (myself, Wayne Hamilton, Linda Payson, Sandra Otis-Anderson, and Ralph Harvey) have been very busy and committed to making this project a reality and now have the forms available. Each page will feature details of past members. There will be a separate book that will memorialize church friends. If you would like to have someone who has passed included in the book, I will have the forms available on Sundays at Coffee Hour, or you can call me at 207-548-2947 and I will send a form to you, or you may pick one up at the Church Office during the week.

"Lent is a time for discipline, for confession, for honesty, not because God is mean or fault-finding or finger-pointing but because he wants us to know the joy of being cleaned out, ready for all the good things he now has in store.

— N.T. Wright

FLAGPOLE UPDATE

By Karen Murphy Kelley

As many of you know, this project is very near and dear to me, and I want to thank all who have already made donations to help make this project a reality. Nearly \$2000 has been collected, but another \$1500 will ensure that the materials and groundwork can be completed this spring. Thanks to a member of the church who wants to see this happen, we have been given a flagpole. This generous gift lessens the original amount that was originally estimated.

The money will be used to prepare the area, installation of the pole, purchase of the flag, mounted lights to illuminate the flag at night, a granite bench, and a plaque that dedicates the pole to the past, present, and future veterans who have attended our church.

You may donate by writing a check and sending it to the church, P.O. Box 261, with “flagpole” written in the memo line, or placing the check in the offering plate on a Sunday.

To help defray the remaining amount needed a Chowder Supper has been scheduled for Friday, March 10th, at 5 pm in Curtis Hall. Sandra Otis-Anderson will be making her award-winning fish chowder, and will include rolls, crackers, pickles, dessert, and beverage for \$12. There will soon be a sign-up sheet in Curtis Hall. I do hope that you will sign up to help with this event and be part of this project.

Chowder Supper

Friday, March 10th
5 PM

*In Curtis Hall
At the First Congregational Church
Searsport*

Meal Includes:
Chowder, rolls, crackers, pickles,
dessert, & Beverage

\$12 per person

To Benefit the Flagpole Project

MARCH CALENDAR

- March 1 and 15**, 8:00 AM, Men’s Breakfast, Methodist Church
March 7, 10:00 AM, Women’s’ Fellowship, Curtis Hall
March 8, 10:00 AM, Missions Committee, Murphy Room
March 10, 5:00 PM, Chowder Supper to benefit flagpole project, Curtis Hall
March 19, Deadline for Landmark articles
March 19, 11:30 AM, Church Council Meeting, Murphy Room
March 28, 3:30 PM, Deacons’ Meeting
March 29, 7:00 PM, Trustees Meeting

HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING

By Karen Kelley, President

The Historical Society will be holding its first meeting of 2023 on Tuesday, March 14th at 7 pm in Curtis Hall. The program will be “Show & Tell.” We ask that those attending bring an item or items and be prepared to talk about the history or significance of the item. This is always a very special event where everyone participates and shares some of their personal history. As always, the meeting will be followed with refreshments and fellowship. Hope to see you there.

MISSION COMMITTEE UPDATE

By Nancy Hamilton, Chair

Our church was able to donate \$2,305 to the NACCC’s One Great Hour of Sharing for earthquake relief efforts in Turkey and Syria. That sum represents \$1000 each from the Missions Committee and Women’s Fellowship, and donations from church members.

Our Ukrainian Dinner was a great success, grossing over \$1,500 for World Central Kitchen’s work providing hot meals for Ukrainians impacted by the war. A final figure
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will be provided next month, once we deduct expenses. Thank you to the many folks who helped make the evening so special, and a special thanks to Carolyn Maunz, our head chef!

We'll be continuing to sell pysanky wooden eggs after church throughout Lent. We raised over \$600 at our dinner, and hope to raise even more funds for Ukrainian relief, so please consider purchasing some as Easter gifts, or to decorate your home.

Our meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month at 10 AM in the Murphy Room. Everyone who is interested in missions is welcome!

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP NEWS

By Karen Kelley, President

The Fellowship met on Tuesday, February 7th. By the time this edition of the Landmark comes out we will have cleaned out the old storage room and moved items into the big storage room. We will have also cleaned out the upstairs coat closet to make room for coats!

We were very excited to find out that the Mildred Rainey family has given the Fellowship the contents of her house, so the decision was made to make our April 29th auction an Estate Auction. Please note the change of time and place of the auction: Saturday, April 29th at 10 am with viewing from 8 to 10 am. The event will be at the Mermaid Plaza on Main Street. We will also be selling lunch - sandwiches, chips, desserts and beverages.

Because the house has to be cleaned out by the end of March, we have been given permission to store all the items there so we won't have to move it twice.

We have decided to have a yard sale on May 13th at 8 am at the Historical Society's Colman House on the Sears Island Road, since we will be storing items that are more appropriate for a yard sale in the Society's barn. More information about both of these events will be forthcoming.

In other business, the Fellowship voted to donate \$1000 to the earthquake relief fund. Our next meeting will be Tuesday March 7th at 10 am at Phyllis Gaul's home on West Main Street and she has invited all women who are interested to come, and to stay for lunch and socializing. Please let Phyllis or me know if you are planning to attend.

NEWS FROM THE TRUSTEES

By Dan Nichols, Co- Chair

Thanks to tremendous help from Women's Fellowship and others, the clean out, dumping, sorting, and moving of much of our accumulating "stuff" is well underway. There is now room to hang coats in the Curtis Hall closet. Shelving is now being moved to the larger storeroom from the smaller room at the end of the hall to take advantage of the larger space. To help in maintaining some kind of control of our storage spaces, please contact Phyllis, Karen, or Dan before moving "stuff" in.

With the completed repair of the dishwasher, the missions committee and others have been giving a fresh cleaning to all our dishware in preparation for dinners to come. Even though that offending valve appears to be fixed, our standard operating procedure is to close the main water supply valve found in the cabinet to the left when finished with the dishwasher.

Although we may not be done with winter yet and it's been mild compared to Maine

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standards, we should give a hearty thank you to Norm Otis and Jeff Card for keeping our campus clear of ice and snow throughout each week. In many respects the ice has been much more challenging than inches of snow – like when there was a massive iceberg in front of the fuel oil fill pipes when the sanctuary tank was very close to empty.

How many can remember back to when they first heard that Route One through Searsport was going to be refurbished? The second attempt to find bidders for the \$15M project closes on February 22. Construction won't reach up to our church but the current project plan indicates that we'll likely see RT-1 disruptions 2023 and 2024.

It should make for a nice upgrade to our town Main Street when it's done. It could be a trying time for both our old and new town businesses and we should support them.

Trustee of the month for March: Bill Vail
Next Trustees meeting: March 29

MUSIC NOTES

By Carolyn Maunz and Dionne Haase

"Our life is March weather, savage and serene in one hour" – Ralph Waldo Emerson

In March, we are amidst cold days, spring sunshine, potholes and mud season. In addition, we observe Lent with its time of prayer and self-reflection. Our music takes on a more somber and prayerful tone. Our minds look back over the cold and snow of winter, to the warmth of the spring sun and the budding of trees. When those first daffodil leaves appear, we know there is always hope for a new life focus.

Dionne and I were pleased to be asked to play the Ukrainian National Anthem at the Ukrainian Dinner sponsored by our Missions Committee. We managed to adapt a Piano/Organ Duet to a piano piece, as a tribute to the ongoing struggles of the Ukrainian people.

Community Outreach:

We are singing at Bayview Manor the 2nd Monday of each month at 10:30. In January, we sang old songs; in February we sang Love Songs of the 50's as a nod to Valentines' Day; and in March we will sing Irish Songs for St Patrick's Day.

We have added Harbor Hill to our venues, where we will sing the 3rd Monday of the month at 2:00 PM, beginning this month, with Irish Songs.

Dionne has reached out to the school and local library to make a connection with our younger people, and we hope to have something going through the spring and summer very soon.

The Music Committee met this past week, to discuss all the projects we are attempting through our music program:

We have organ lessons with Carlton Russell for three students on Tuesdays, as well as piano lessons for two students, also on Tuesdays.

We have a Concert Series, which we are about ready to announce from May through-December, with a variety of genres to attract people with all different musical tastes.

Dionne has added a lot to our music programs with fresh energy and talent and a love for perfecting vocal music. We are very lucky we were able to grab her for our choir and church.

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Greetings from the choir room!

The choir room is the place to be if you enjoy the sounds of a dedicated choir rehearsing for the upcoming Lenten season. The Faithful 12 (as I think of the choir) not only rehearse on Thursdays at 3 PM, but also provide meaningful introits, anthems and solos every Sunday, September through early June. All of this couldn't be accomplished without the talents of Carolyn Maunz, organist/accompanist/mentor extraordinaire.

I am privileged to work with a caring, eclectic, humorous group of singers, each contributing their own individual talents and abilities. There is always room in the choir for additional singers, no experience required. The choir takes a well-deserved break from early June through mid-September, but the music opportunities are still encouraged through the summer months.

I will be looking for solos, duets, trios, quartets, small ensembles, instrumentalists, the sky is the limit, for the upcoming summer Sundays.

The children continue to provide music once a month during Children's Time. Although the number of singers can vary, those who do participate do so with joy and conviction. The music staff and music committee continue to brainstorm to find possible ways to increase the children's presence in church.

Make a joyful noise!

Dionne

DIRECT FROM THE DEACONS

By Mary Alden, Deacon of the Month

Greetings from your Deacons! As usual the Deacons meet at least once a month to talk over Church family business, sanctuary events and generally anything that is brought to us from

one of you. We try to work out schedules and issues and help the church family in any way possible. So, if one of you knows of someone needing help with a ride, a call or card or in any other way, please speak to one of the Deacons and we will do what we can to arrange for help.

I was reminded in one of the Sunday school lessons from Luke 10:25-27 of the Good Samaritan parable that has a terrific message about compassion for our fellowman/woman no matter what. We would all do well to take that advice to heart.

Have a wonderful rest of this crazy weather winter. Be sure to call if you need something and rest assured that God is great!

CONTACT INFORMATION

Church

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Carolyn Maunz, Minister of Music

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Dionne Haase, Associate Minister of Music

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Everything in life has its own time. There is time to celebrate and there is time to mourn. This is the time for reflection and transformation. Let us look within and change into what we ought to be. --- Aaron Saul

GBAM LENTEN LUNCHEON SERIES

Our church is a member of GBAM, the Greater Bay Area Ministerium. GBAM is offering a brown bag Lenten Luncheon Series from 12-1 each Wednesday, March 1 – March 29 in the parish hall of St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, 95 Court Street, in Belfast. Bring your own lunch; coffee and tea are provided.

Topics and speakers are:

- **March 1:** The Rev. Barbara Briggs, Rector of St. Margaret's Episcopal Church and the Rev. Vicki Sirota, "Encountering God through Music"
- **March 8:** Julie Daley, retired UMC Deacon and Roman Catholic Communicant, St. Francis Church, "Encountering God through Practices of Silence"
- **March 15:** The Rev. Amy Fiorilli, Minister, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Belfast, "Encountering the Spirit through Poetry"
- **March 22:** The Rev. Jean Ashland, Chaplain, Waldo County General Hospital, "Encountering the Sacred while Holding Love and Loss"
- **March 29:** The Rev. Ted Chaffee, Pastor, First Baptist Church of Belfast, "Encountering the Divine through Art"