

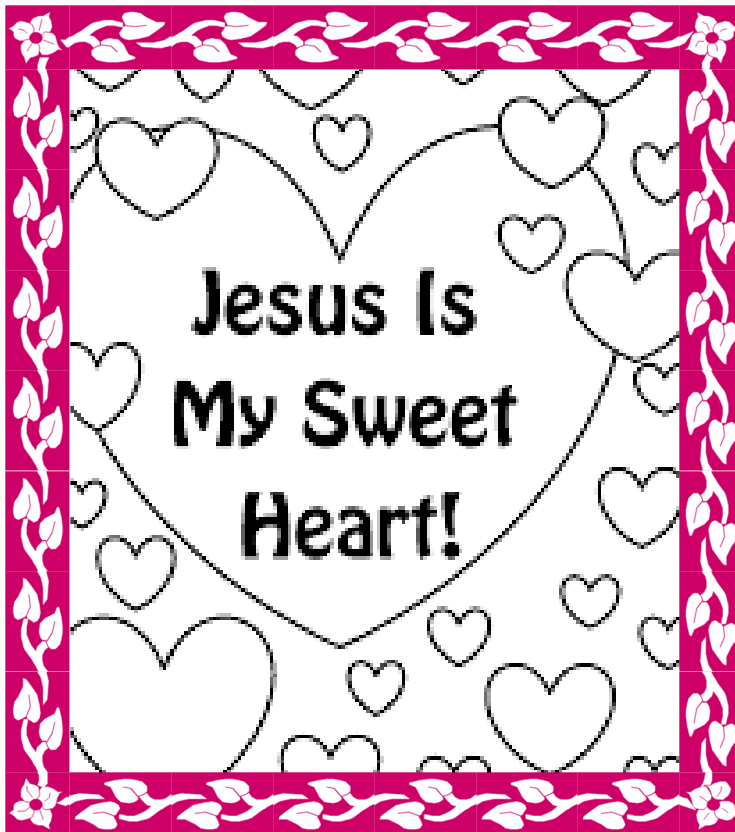


STEEPLENOTES

A Newsletter of

**The Foreside Community Church, UCC
United Church of Christ**

February 2022



*Connecting
to God*

*Nurturing
Community*

*Discovering
how our Lives
Make a
Difference*

THE FORESIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH, UCC
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Notes from Pastor Geoff

God's Time, Here in the Right Now

In summer of 2021, when I wrote to you, I told you of the recent Leadership Retreat we had just held. As the congregation was just testing the waters of worshipping in the sanctuary again, leaders shared in the scripture stories of the people of Israel crossing the River Jordan—*finally*—after what we are told was 40 years of wilderness time. After all that uncertainty, wandering, and questioning, the threshold seemed mercifully short: there was a night when the people were not “at home” ... and the next day, they were.

The past months have disappointed visions we might have clung to of a clean crossing over from pandemic to post-pandemic life. Hospitals continue to be crowded and overwhelmed. Schools and other institutions are struggling to keep a minimum number of staff available to be open. Parents with small children, caregivers, and folks who may be vulnerable because of pre-existing conditions continue to face wrenching decisions as to how to protect themselves or those they care for while also participating in daily life, school, and work. And, of course, we here are worshipping and gathering remotely again... missing so much being in one place, even more missing those who had not yet been able to gather with us in the past months.

The continuing need to adapt and curtail so many parts of our lives weighs heavy on us, I know. I suspect the prevailing feeling may be one of the Israelites somewhere in year 30 or so in the wilderness, rather than at the end of the journey: “Haven’t we been here before?!” Even more, I think we are collectively realizing that we will in some ways be forever changed by the experience of the last few years. The journey through *this* wilderness seems too long.

At first glance, many of our scriptures would seem to elide massive transformations in stories that hinge on almost instant gratification: it seems a migrant people of Israel become a people of a promised land in a day as they cross the river; God’s presence with us becomes known more fully with the first cry of the infant Christ on Christmas; frightened and fractured disciples become a church as quickly as a rush of wind on the day of Pentecost.

Of course, the complexity of human life and the journey of faith far surpass clean boundaries of time. Arriving at a place and feeling “at home” there can be a dawning that takes years; the Christmas of God’s presence in our lives

often ebbs and flows and changes as we live; and the process and Pentecost of becoming church together is never finished!

As much as it challenges us, this time in our life may be inviting us to learn to see how the work of the Spirit just as often moves in small, slow, and gentle ways... like earth and water finding the path of a river. Some of the most lasting learning and change is that which comes in increments almost too small for us to perceive. It is true that Jesus urged his disciples to have a faith that could move mountains. It is also true that the best way to move a mountain is still to have faith, and bring water, wind, and *time*.

We are tempted to think that God is most especially with us when we cross an arbitrary finish line, but when we tell the story of Israel in the wilderness clearly, we find a story of God’s continual formation and liberation of God’s people through an exodus that spanned decades. The Gospel of Matthew begins by telling us of God’s care for generations of ancestors who kindled love and hope through countless years, sustaining one another until their descendant could be born in Bethlehem under a star whose light might have been traveling towards him for millennia. The disciples might have felt empowered with new language to proclaim Christ on Pentecost, but I hope they also realized that they had been “learning the words” for years as they learned, questioned, loved, walked—and often stumbled on, yes—the paths of life with Jesus.

When we take these stories to heart, we are invited to scan our lives for the slow workings of God that are shaping us here and now.

We will not forget the tenderness we have found... God willing, as we hold close all those who have lost loved ones, those who have died, those who are grieving losses that cannot be expressed.

We will not forget the mission we have found... as the pandemic and its disruptions have laid bare injustices and inequities in our common life that call out for God’s people to respond.

We will not forget the creativity that we have found... adapting, revising, improvising, innovating so our ministries might continue to bear witness in and out of this community to God’s love for all.

We will not forget the grace that we have found... finding that our schedules and our busy-ness never actually

God's Time (cont.)

needed to be set in stone, and now, we learn each new day how to flow and flex with one another... offering compassion when we need to attend to others or ourselves.

We will not forget the love we have found... how our community found resolve to reach out, connect, and care for one another even in the most isolating of times.

For you? What is slowly being revealed in you in this time? Where is God shaping the contours of your life over time? What will you carry with you from this time?

I trust, and I hope you can kindle that trust as well, that the Spirit is working on, and in, and through this community—and your life—still, in this time that is longer than our wishes, and maybe our understanding. I know that we

are all tired, and long to cross a finish line on these sad times... but I also know that we are discovering new gifts of God's of strength, nurture, and mission on a journey of the Holy Spirit that has no end, no destination, but the fullness of God's love and peace. It is a gift to be on this journey with you, you saints...

Blessings to you, right now, and in the days to come.



I am fully vaccinated and am available for times to visit, sit, or pray together as you would like. If you would like to schedule a meeting, [you can do so here](#), or by contacting me [by email](#).

An Updated Message from the Governing Board Moderator

Covid continues to present challenges to gathering for in-person activities. Rev. Geoff and your Governing Board are monitoring the evolving situation, and weighing the need for caution with our desire to worship together. At our January 17th meeting, we agreed to extend virtual worship through February 13th. We hope to be able to return to in-person worship, with precautions, on February 20th, but will be closely watching conditions in our area and will make any necessary adjustments as guidelines indicate.

Thank you for your patience as we navigate these unsettling times. And a BIG thank you to Rev. Geoff, Trevor, David and the Ministers of Worship for pivoting once again to keep us connected through worship.

Deborah

Sunday Worship at 9:30 a.m.

February 6th and 13th, join us online for worship on Facebook or through our [YouTube Channel](#). You may find worship bulletins to follow along with each service [available here](#). We hope you can join us!

After worship, all are invited to online coffee hour via Zoom at [this link](#). (If you are asked for a passcode, use 484109)

**Please stay tuned for further announcements
for plans for worship
on February 20th and beyond.**

An Update from Christian Education and Youth Ministry

As some of you may have heard, **Laura Rodas** recently began a new job with the State of Maine Department of Corrections where she is Director of Adult Education, Staff and Development Training. We congratulate her on this new position, and celebrate the ways her gifts are called into service in the world.

Sadly, Laura has let us know that as she transitions into this new role that **she will need to finish her time as Sunday school Administrator at FCC by the end of the school year**. We are thankful that she, and her family, will still be part of our church family. Over the next few months, CE will work with Laura and Beth around CE programming and next steps for CE and Youth ministry. In addition, we will plan to celebrate Laura and all the blessings she has brought to FCC and the lives of our children and families this spring!

Stay tuned for more in the coming months as we prepare for these transitions.

Wendy Tracy, Chair

End of Life Issues Panel Invites Important Conversations

In the fall, FCC and Pastor Geoff were pleased to gather with members and friends Dr. Mark Wrona, Attorney Sarah Coburn, and Deborah Gray, who volunteers with Southern Maine Agency on Aging for a community conversation on important decisions around end of life and its medical, legal, ethical, and religious concerns. [The video from that evening can be seen here.](#)

Sharing from their own experiences working with individuals and families, panelists invited attendees to talk with loved ones, medical and legal professionals, and the church early on in life. Speaking *before* times of crisis allows families and friends to talk about matters of deepest meaning in our lives and what constitutes “life abundant” for us, and how that may shape our decisions around medical care and procedures we wish to receive as our abilities change, or if we are incapacitated. The importance of clearly recorded wishes for power of attorney, our remains, memorial services and interment, and beneficiaries was also discussed. The thoughtful gifts of care from all of our panelists for those they work with were apparent, and there was agreement we all need to support one another in having—sometimes uncomfortable—but vital conversations with those we love so that we can share the richness and blessing of this life with them through even through life’s changes and challenges.

Some important medical resources discussed include the [Maine Health Care Advance Directive Form](#) and [The National POLST Form](#).

[An emergency contact form for use by FCC was also distributed.](#) Please consider completing one and returning to the church office so we are able to connect with loved ones if ever an emergency arises!

General questions can be directed to Pastor Geoff at gparker@foresidechurch.org, or by accessing Southern Maine Agency on Aging site: <https://www.smaaa.org>.

UPDATES, REPORT OUTS, AND UPCOMING EVENTS

~ My Sister's Keeper

MSK is the action-based, prayerful response of our faith-based communities to the immediate needs of women who struggle for a safe and successful transition from jail or prison to home, family and community. The organization was founded in 1999 by Myrna Cook of the Cape Elizabeth United Methodist Church. In just a few short years, as it grew, mentor Kelly Dell'Aquila assumed the role of Director of Services and continues to lead MSK today. MSK offers positive, healthy support on the outside of the jail. There are no comparable services available for the Cumberland County Jail population.* (*Elizabeth Zimmer ☒ Maine CCHD Committee August 2012)

In the month of February, FCC's Justice and Outreach Ministry are coordinating the collection of much needed items as follows:

- Adult-sized backpacks
- Bath towels
- Women's socks
- Writing journals
- Hannaford and Walmart gift cards of a \$25.00 value. A manila envelope will be located in the bin in order that any cards gifted will not be "lost" within and among the larger donations.

Please note that gift cards and items from the above list can also be dropped off at the church office. FMI Lois Myers loisjmyers@hotmail.com or 228-4350. Thank you.

~ Travelogue Presentations Continue

January's travelogue presented by Pete Ventre who regaled attendees with his telling of his rafting trip to northern Alaska was a well-attended success, with 14 participants including the Ladd's currently in Florida.

We now travel from the Arctic to crossing the equator, and encourage you to join us for **February's travelogue** which is scheduled for **Wednesday February 16 at 7:30 p.m.** John Kipp will host as he shares pictures and describes his 1974 trip of three months to Africa. He started out in Egypt, where he spent about a week, then by air to Nairobi, Kenya. From there overland in a large truck with about a dozen others to Cape Town, South Africa.

This travelogue will offer something for everyone - lots of pictures of animals including some rather close up, explorations of cities and their architecture with a

focus on John's interest in ancient and medieval architecture and a glimpse of Africa in 1974. Please join us on the 16th for what should be a fascinating trip!



~ It's a party!
Come Celebrate
Mardi Gras
together in person
at FCC!



Mask up! Join us from 2 to 4 p.m. (or any period of time between 2 and 4 p.m.) on February 26th outside at FCC for a Mardi Gras Celebration.

In addition to your everyday safety mask, wear a fun Mardi Gras mask, a feather boa, some beads, a silly hat, or anything else you like for the festivities. Get creative and have some fun. There will be warm drinks, a fire pit, festive music, beads of course, **and our own version of the King Cake!** Who will find the baby Jesus and be crowned King of FCC for the Day?

There will also be a second winner that day – the winner of the best Mardi Gras themed cupcakes (mini King Cakes). We want to invite any of you who like to bake or more importantly like to create colorful Mardi Gras themed cupcakes to make one dozen for the gathering. You pick your favorite of the dozen to be set aside for our judges (the children and young adults in our church) to decide which is their favorite. The winner gets bragging rights and a small prize. **Please let Liz Ventre (eventrel@maine.rr.com) know if you plan to create some cupcake masterpieces so she knows if she has enough goodies for all those who attend.**



UPDATES, REPORT OUTS, AND UPCOMING EVENTS (cont.)

~ **The Foreside Book Club** began the new year by Zoom with an enjoyable but thorough psychological discussion of whether or not Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine.

On February 16 at 4:00 p.m. we will switch gears to the classic East of Eden by John Steinbeck. I find the classics are so much more meaningful when read as an adult. Start reading now because this is a long one!

Published in September 1952, the work is regarded by many to be Steinbeck's most ambitious novel and by Steinbeck himself to be his *magnum opus*.

"Set in the rich farmland of California's Salinas Valley, this sprawling and often brutal novel follows the intertwined destinies of two families—the Trasks and the Hamiltons—whose generations helplessly reenact the fall of Adam and Eve and the poisonous rivalry of Cain and Abel. Adam Trask came to California from the East to farm and raise his family on the new rich land. But the birth of his twins, Cal and Aaron, brings his wife to the brink of madness, and Adam is left alone to raise his boys to manhood. One boy thrives nurtured by the love of all those around him; the other grows up in loneliness enveloped by a mysterious darkness. East of Eden is the work in which Steinbeck created his most mesmerizing characters and explored his most enduring themes: the mystery of identity, the inexplicability of love, and the murderous consequences of love's absence. A masterpiece of Steinbeck's later years, East of Eden is a powerful and vastly ambitious novel that is at once a family saga and a modern retelling of the Book of Genesis." (quoted from Goodreads)

All are welcome to join in this discussion by Zoom at 4:00 on February 16. A link will appear in the weekly updates. FMI: mimihinkel@gmail.com

~ Stewardship Ministry Updates

Your stewards are breathing a sigh of relief about the very successful pledge campaign, and celebrating the \$13,000 contribution that the Christmas Fair made to our budget for the upcoming year. Covid made a strong effort to derail us, but our congregation proved stronger! We should give ourselves a big pat on the back.

The fair faithful – and whoever else wants to join us – are putting on a **yard sale May 14th** to move along donations that have been lingering in corners as we clean out the stage, basement, and furnace room. Rain date is the 15th after church. We would like a couple of volunteers to put together a coffee and nibbles table for that day as well. We also think a **"trunk sale"** in the parking lot would be great – For example, you have a few family treasures you want to sell, so you bring them to the church that day, and sell them out of your trunk, and then give a portion of the proceeds to the church. What remains unsold, you take home in your trunk! Very tidy.

The very vigorous hardwood trees that have dumped boatloads of leaves onto our church roof, clogging up the gutters so that our basement leaks, have been dispatched. We should each go out and plant a tree where it will do nothing but good.

Bleak midwinter wishes
to all!

Carol Ward



The Men's Breakfast

Meets every other Saturday.

**The next virtual gatherings
are scheduled for
February 5 & 19
@ 8:30 a.m.**

Join the gents here ([Zoom](#))

March Steeplenotes

Deadline Is Friday,

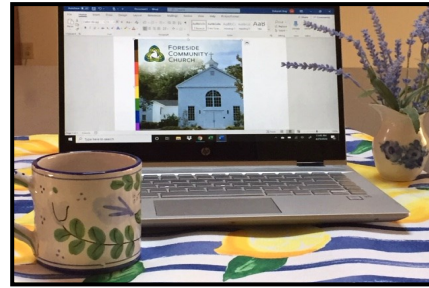
February 18, 2022

UPDATES, REPORT OUTS, AND UPCOMING EVENTS (cont.)



~ Girl Scout Cookies Are Here Again...

...and in addition to your favorites **Lemonades, Shortbread, Thin Mints, Peanut Butter Patties, Carmel deLites, Peanut Butter Sandwich,** and the vegan's choice **Toast-yay**, this year welcomes **Adventurefuls**, an indulgent brownie-inspired cookie with caramel flavored crème and a hint of sea salt. Please remember Girl Scout Cookie proceeds stay local to power unique and amazing year-round adventures for girls in **our** community. This year your purchases will be supporting Adey Wrona's, as well as Julia and Caroline Tracy's troops. For a more detailed description on each of these delicious baked confections, [please look here!](#) The price per package is \$5.00 and orders can be either called or emailed into the office, and picked up there as well, at 781-5880 or csklarz@foresidechurch.org **no later than Friday, February 25.** *Let's hear from you!*



~ The Women's Weekly Breakfast Continues

Deborah Gray is back hosting this gathering **on Wednesdays at 9:00 a.m.** If you can stay for just one cup, or your schedule allows the full meal, please **"Zoom"** in and join the female members and friends of FCC. **Fill up and catch up!**

You may also link up by going to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85920636293?pwd=c0xxblhzdkRmbjNRcjRBakNjZW4vQT09>
Meeting ID: 859 2063 6293 and Passcode: 913726.

FYI contact

Deborah at 443-0427.

Place Your Order for Free At-Home COVID-19 Tests

Residential households in the U.S. can order one set of #4 free at-home tests from USPS.com.

Here's what you need to know about your order. [Fill in the form located at this link](#), which is located on the USPS.com website, with your contact and shipping information to order your FREE tests.

That's it!

February BIRTHDAY GREETINGS!

Aquarius

Aquarians tend to be free-spirited & rebellious. They have a unique perspective on life and the world and question everything & everyone around them.



Theo Demetriou - 3

Christian Rodas - 7

Julia Tracy - 9

Sandy Cushman - 10

Pisces

Pisces are incredibly empathetic & can read a room like no other zodiac sign. They pick up on other people's moods easily and are affected by them.

Liz Ventre - 26



February 2022

Be sure to check the calendar at [Foreside Community Church's website](http://ForesideCommunityChurch.org)
www.foresidechurch.org for any updates or changes.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 9:15 a.m. Tues Morn Study Group 1 p.m. Knitting Group via Zoom 6:45 to 9 p.m. Large AA Group	2 9:00 a.m. Women's Breakfast (see pg. 7 for details) Office closed @ 12 noon.	3	4 Office closed Staff on PTO	5 Men's Breakfast (see pg. 6 for details)
6 Worship Service online, see page 3 for links and details.	7 Office closed Staff on PTO	8 9:15 a.m. Tues Morn Study Group 1 p.m. Knitting Group via Zoom 6:45 to 9 p.m. Large AA Group	9 9:00 a.m. Women's Breakfast (see pg. 7 for details) Office closed @ 12 noon.	10	11 Office closed @ 12 noon.	12
13 Worship Service online, see page 3 for links and details.	14 7:00 p.m. Stewardship Mnthly Mtg. via Zoom, link to follow	15 9:15 a.m. Tues Morn Study Group 1 p.m. Knitting Group via Zoom 6:45 to 9 p.m. Large AA Group	16 9:00 a.m. Women's Breakfast (see pg. 7 for details) 4:00 p.m. Foreside Book Club (see pg. 6 for details) Office closed @ 12 noon.	17 All ministry/committee reports, minutes, etc. due in office.	18 March Steeplenotes Deadline Office closed @ 12 noon.	19 Men's Breakfast (see pg. 6 for details)
20 Worship Service Schedule TBD	21 7:00 p.m. Governing Board Mnthly Mtg. via Zoom, link to follow	22 9:15 a.m. Tues Morn Study Group 1 p.m. Knitting Group via Zoom 6:45 to 9 p.m. Large AA Group	23 9:00 a.m. Women's Breakfast (see pg. 7 for details) Office closed @ 12 noon.	24	25 Deadline for Girl Scout Cookie Orders! (see pg. 7 for details) Office closed @ 12 noon.	26
27 Worship Service Schedule TBD	28					

Daily Lectionary Readings for February 2022

Tues., Feb. 1

Psalm 56
2 Kings 5:1-14
Corinthians 14:13-25

Wed., Feb. 2

Psalm 56
Jeremiah 1:11-19
Luke 19:41-44

Thurs., Feb. 3

Psalm 138
Numbers 20:22-29
Acts 9:19b-25

Fri., Feb. 4

Psalm 138
Numbers 27:12-23
Acts 9:26-31

Sat., Feb. 5

Psalm 138
Judges 3:7-11
Luke 4:42-44

Sun., Feb. 6

Isaiah 6:1-8 [9-13]
Psalm 138
1 Corinthians 15:1-11
Luke 5:1-11

Mon., Feb. 7

Psalm 115
Judges 5:1-11
1 Corinthians 14:26-40

Tues., Feb. 8

Psalm 115
1 Samuel 9:15—10:1b
1 Timothy 3:1-9

Wed., Feb. 9

Psalm 115
Isaiah 8:1-15
Luke 5:27-32

Thurs., Feb. 10

Psalm 1
Jeremiah 13:12-19
Acts 13:26-34

Fri., Feb. 11

Psalm 1
Jeremiah 13:20-27
1 Peter 1:17—2:1

Sat., Feb. 12

Psalm 1
Jeremiah 17:1-4
Luke 11:24-28

Sun. Feb. 13

Jeremiah 17:5-10
Psalm 1
1 Corinthians 15:12-20
Luke 6:17-26

Mon., Feb. 14

Psalm 120
2 Kings 24:18—25:21
1 Corinthians 15:20-34

Tues., Feb. 15

Psalm 120
Ezra 1:1-11
2 Corinthians 1:12-19

Wed., Feb. 16

Psalm 120
Jeremiah 22:11-17
Luke 11:37-52

Thurs., Feb. 17

Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40
Genesis 43:16-34
Romans 8:1-11

Fri., Feb. 18

Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40
Genesis 44:1-17
1 John 2:12-17

Sat., Feb. 19

Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40
Genesis 44:18-349
Luke 12:57-59

Sun., Feb. 20

Genesis 45:3-11, 15
Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40
1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50
Luke 6:27-38

Mon., Feb. 21

Psalm 38
Genesis 33:1-17
1 Corinthians 11:2-16

Tues., Feb. 22

Psalm 38
1 Samuel 24:1-22
1 Corinthians 11:17-22, 27-33

Wed., Feb. 23

Psalm 38
Leviticus 5:1-13
Luke 17:1-4

Thurs., Feb. 24

Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15
Proverbs 13:1-12
Romans 5:12—6:2

Fri., Feb. 25

Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15
Proverbs 15:1-9
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Sat., Feb. 26

Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15
Isaiah 30:8-17
John 16:1-4a

Sun., Feb. 27

Sirach 27:4-7 or
Isaiah 55:10-13
Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15
1 Corinthians 15:51-58
Luke 6:39-49

Mon., Feb. 28

Psalm 1
Jeremiah 24:1-10
1 Corinthians 16:1-12



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The Foreside Community Church, UCC

General Office Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday and Friday

9:00 a.m. to Noon

or unless otherwise posted

Office: 207-781-5880

E-mail: info@foresidechurch.org Web: www.foresidechurch.org

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