

A Newsletter of

# The Foreside Community Church United Church of Christ

Connecting to God ~ Nurturing Community ~ Discovering how our Lives Make a Difference



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December 2023

# **Pastoral Notes**

# Stars and Signposts

#### Dear Foreside Friends,

Welcome to this new church year, to this holy time of Advent, and to the joy of Christmas to come! In a season of gifts, I need to start with saying thank you for the many gifts all of you bring to our community, especially the gift of showing up and showing God's care and presence... You are present to one another and this church in great joy and collaboration: the sound of Christmas Elves working to bring the fair to life is under my feet as I write this! And you show up in times of tenderness and challenge: the way you care for each other in the midst of loss, or illness, and care for our community with the generosity and good news of Christmas Angels. Thank you.

Advent has long been a quiet season of preparation and I cannot know for certain where it will end. holy waiting for the joy of Christmas, reflection on God's nor do I really know myself, coming to dwell in and among us in Jesus, and anticipation and the fact that I think I am following your will of God's final reconciliation of all creation to come. In this does not mean that I am actually doing so. season, we read scriptures in which our ancestors shared But I believe that the desire to please you deep grief and laments and the powerful hope and images does in fact please you. of what a world transformed by God's indwelling love And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. would be.

In this season, we also tell the stories of those who have And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, gone looking for good news of Emmanuel, God With Us: though I may know nothing about it. stories of literal journeys to find the Christ child in a man- Therefore will I trust you always though ger, and stories of all of us who are on a journey to know I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. more fully the gift of God's presence in our lives.

Seeking Jesus in one another, in the world, and in our- and you will never leave me to face my perils alone. selves is always an adventure... we live, like our ancestors did, in times when many things we thought were fixedstars to navigate by-may feel like they are shifting in the heavens. On a personal level, we know that many among us encounter this holiday season tenderly, grieving past years of joy, missing loved ones, wondering if hope and healing can still be kindled in us. In the world, the news confronts and perplexes us, and we can despair for the future.

To find our way to hope in the dim light of these kinds of times, we need to look with a vision beyond the everyday... following stars and shepherds where GPS goes silent!

So our series for this Advent is called Stars and Signposts, exploring how we continue to "navigate" our way towards a deeper connection with God-with-Us in unsteady times. I

tradition, sing of joy to world, and know great peace. But I especially hope that you will come and know that God is with us just as much when we feel unmoored from what has been, uncertain of what new song we are being called to sing, and feel like peace is a far-off possibility. Advent is a time to hold both these things, the lights that do not go out, and the quiet darkness in which new things begin.

There is a prayer of encouragement that I keep for these days of Advent, written by my favorite old spiritual guide, Br. Louis, or, Thomas Merton:

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

I will not fear, for you are ever with me,

In this Advent season, in cherished traditions, in sacred song and story, and in the gift of God's presence and community, I wish you many blessings on the journey, and Christmas joy beyond!

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"The Merton Prayer" from /Thoughts in Solitude](https://s.macmillan.com/ hope that you will come and wander these paths of deep books/9780374513252) Copyright © 1956, 1958 by The Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani.

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Stars and Signposts Advent at

> Home Heart of God

Sunday Dec. 3rd 1 st Advent Communion Worship

Sunday Dec. 10th 2nd Advent Kids Sing Sunday

Sunday Dec. 17th 3rd Advent Music Sunday

Sunday Dec. 24th 4th Advent 1m or ∞

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*4:00pm* Family Service

7:00pm Lessons and Carols

11:00pm Candlelight Communion

340 Foreside Rd. Falmouth, ME 04105 www.foresidechurch.org

This season we are happy to announce that the *Hyperion Trumpet Ensemble* will be performing the first of their Christmas series concerts at Foreside Community Church on Sunday, December 3 (a) 2:30 p.m. The ensemble will be performing music from the fiery composers of Bizet and Britten to the stunning and introspective work of Biebl. Christmas carols and songs of old and far, and fan favorites of today. The Hyperion Trumpet Ensemble features some of the best trumpeters in Maine. Members are graduates of music schools across the country and United Kingdom. In addition to frequent solo performances, they have performed with the Portland, Bangor, and Midcoast Symphony Orchestras, and many other musical organizations throughout Maine and the Northeast. The Hyperion Trumpet Ensemble includes players from a variety of professions who come together with three goals: to play great music, to have fun while performing, and to entertain their audiences. Please plan to join us as we welcome Hyperion and Ensemble for an amazing afternoon of talented music. A free will offering will be accepted at the door, a portion of which will be shared with the church.



Hyperion is a collaboration between some of Maine's best, including FCC's Choir Director Trevor Lavenbein (pictured left). Members are graduates of music schools across the country. In addition to frequent solo performances, they have performed with the Portland, Bangor, Cambridge, and Midcoast Symphony Orchestras, Symphony New Hampshire, the Apollo Ensemble of Boston, the Philadelphia Brass Quintet, the Mainstreet Brass Quintet, Classical Uprising, and many other musical organizations throughout Maine and the Northeast. (Portland Press Herald June 2023).



On the road and missing a sermon? Want to go back and revisit any one sermon? Want to share a sermon with a friend or family member? Pastor Geoff's sermons in both written and audio form from May 2019 to the present (minus "Prayers on the Patio" can be viewed and/ or heard on FCC's website at:

http://www.foresidechurch.org/index.php/category/sermons/

# FCC Music Updates

As we ready ourselves for the coming Christmas season, we often do so by turning the radio on and tuning to that special channel, or playlist, nowadays, and blasting our favorite seasonal hits. Music is an integral part of our memories of Christmases past and present from songs and carols like *Silver Bells* to *Away in a Manger* to ensembles like The Choir of King's College to Mariah Carey. Each song and sound has it's purpose and place to make our season that little bit brighter. Here's a little insight on the inner machinations of a choir director at FCC trying to get ready to make an impression on your Christmas season with a little help from his friends.

At Foreside Community Church, your music team has been hard at work since September planning and preparing for this special season. It seems like every season works the same:

- Talking it out. We have preliminary discussions about Christmas in September about themes and dates.
- Complain a bit. I complain that I haven't come up with any good ideas yet, we table discussion for a week or two.
- Intrusion. Then like a bolt of lightning, I have an epiphany, struck with the idea for the season. That great idea usually comes from sitting, scrolling through countless pieces of music on a publishers website, listening to examples, and liking songs that eventually, unbeknownst to me at the time, have a connecting theme. One year we have Songs from Home, another Songs of a Star.
- Friends. With a little help from friends, your choir, bell choir, pastor, organist, and a trumpeter or two, come together to whip up something grand

Though this is the usual process, this year was a little different. I was arranging Christmas music in early September for my trumpet ensemble, Hyperion Trumpet Ensemble, and took note of some spectacular melodies. I noticed that there weren't really any composers, but arrangers, of "Old German" or "Old English" tunes. I decided to dig a little deeper and came across a treasure trove of familiar and unfamiliar tunes from a collection called the *Piae Cantiones*. Ever hear of it? I bet you have!

Familiar with the tunes In Dulci Jubilo, Tempus Adest Floridum, or Corde Natus Ex Parentis? Respectively they are Good Christian Men, Rejoice, Good King Wenceslas, and Of The Father's Love Begotten. Your music Sunday will have a collection of these familiar and sacred texts.

Many of these are new arrangements of familiar tunes and some will be performed the way they were years past. Believe it or not, this collection of tunes was first compiled by a clergyman at a cathedral school in Turku, Finland and first published in 1582. These songs were hundreds of years old by this time. Another 300 years later, an English ambassador to Sweden returned to Britain with a copy of the 1582 publication and gave it to several friends who were fond of early music. Soon, these songs were translated and arranged and transformed into the songs you know today. For any of you choristers out there, you probably know one of the most famous collections of many of the pieces found in the *Carols for Choirs* books.

Your music team: me, David, your choirs, and guest musicians, are pleased to bring this music and many other special musical moments to you during this special season. As always, thanks for listening!

7revor

# Join us for some FUN at our first Game Day for all Ages with Childcare for our Busy Parents

After the Church Service on December 10th, the Fellowship Ministry is hosting a kid centric coffee hour (there will be coffee for the adults!) and then tables will be set up so we can play some board and card games with the younger set in our community until around noon. We are offering the time from service end to noon for our busy parents to have a little time to shop or wrap or just go out to breakfast without your little ones, to make your holiday season just a little easier. We also think it will make our other members days a little brighter getting to spend some time with the youth in our church.



Fellowship will provide the snacks and the games, unless any of you have a at Southern Maine favorite you would Agency on Aging, like to share and teach others. We always say, the more the merrier!

Please note

that this is the date that the children will be singing in the service (with costumes!), and we hope there will be lots of children there to participate. We also know that there will the final program in our "Spirituality in the Second Half of be many members who will not want to miss their performance, so mark your calendars now for a full morning with our kids!

Parents, please RSVP to Liz Ventre at Coburn, Esq. eventrel@maine.rr.com so she knows the number and names of any children coming. Other adults, please let her know if you plan to attend so there are enough tables and chairs set up. Then plan to join us for what promises to be lots of FUN!

# Travelogues are returning in January!!!

we hope will be a series of four monthly travelogues. Here is a sneak preview of what looks like a most interesting and close to home January travelogue.

summer days down the Penobscot River with Penobscot www.smaaa.org/

guides. Canoes, paddles, and lean-tos on Sugar Island are provided, along with meals, talks, and demonstrations by Penobscot cultural leaders. We made this trip last July with James



Francis, Penobscot linguist and cultural historian, and his friends. Come join us for fiddleheads, marinated moose meat, and blueberry pie. Mark your calendars now so you don't miss it!

# **Understanding Cognitive Loss**

Carolyn Pruiksma (pictured right), Resource Specialist in the Family Caregiver Support Program shared information on cognitive loss with several members of our congregation on November 8<sup>th</sup>. This was

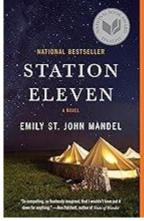


Life" series which included weekly discussions of Richard Rohr's book Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life and presentations by Dr. Mark Wrona and Sarah

Carolyn described the signs of cognitive change in an older person, noting that many are simply part of the normal aging process. Others are cause for concern and warrant a full medical work-up. A diagnosis of dementia may range from mild cognitive loss to a progressive and irreversible disorder such as Alzheimer's disease. Carolyn offered strategies for supporting those struggling with dementia, On January 11th at 7:00 p.m. we will be starting what as well as pointers for caregiver self-care. Click on this link for her full presentation.

More information about Southern Maine Agency on Ag-Join us, Susan and Clifford Gilpin, as we paddle for 3 ing's resources and services may be found at https://

ing discussion of The Silent Patient by Alex Michaelides. It Tuesday, December 5 @ 9:00 a.m. at which time our was certainly a page-turning, psychological thriller with an next book will be The First Christmas by Marcus J. unexpected turn at the end that led to lots of good discus- Borg & John Dominic Crossan. The following content sion questions. If you are looking for a good read for the description from Amazon shares: "In The First Christmas holidays, we highly recommend it!



We are taking December off for the holidays and will resume on at 4:00 p.m. on January 17th when we will be talking about Station Eleven by Emily St. John Mandel. A full summary will appear in the January Steeplenotes. We are considering returning to Zoom during the winter months to allow more people to participate. If this would make it possible for you to join us, please m e e t k n o w (mimihinkel@gmail.com) as we

would love to have new readers. Until then, may you all have a happy and safe holiday season! ~ *Mimi* 

## Thanksgiving Pie Sale a Big Success!

Thanks to the generosity of our pie bakers (Marian Albee, Jackie Bates, Debra Coyman, Jill Fox, Susan Gilpin, Margaret Perkins, Sue Priest, Liz & Pete Ventre, and Carol Ward )and our pie buyers (Janet Clough, John Goodrich, John Kipp, Pastor Geoff, Charlie Bernacchio,



John Bischof, Burke, Polly Peter Cinelli, Bruce Kaake, and Julie \$325.00 off with bang. done!

The Foreside Book Club ended the year with a rous- The Tuesday Book Group will start up again on Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan - top Jesus' scholars and authors of The Last Week - help us see the real Christmas story buried in the familiar Bible accounts. Basing their interpretations on the two nativity narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, Borg and Crossan focus on the literal story - the inner truth rather than the historical facts- to offer a clear and uplifting message of hope and peace. With The First Christmas readers get a fresh, deep, and new understanding of the nativity story, enabling us to better appreciate the powerful message of the Gospels. Hope all will consider joining us on December 5. FMI Liz Ventre eventre1@maine.rr.com.

# Sunday School/Christian Ed Updates (T. Curtis)

We had a wonderful and well attended Family Church event on Sunday, November 12th. John Adams, a former board member of OUTMaine joined us to speak about the organization's mission to provide

LGBTQ+ programs for teens which aim to support mental health and build welcoming communities. Over a dozen community members joined us in learning more about OUTMAine and exploring creative ways to make our family table more inclusive and welcoming for all during the holiday season.





On All Saints Day, November 5th, FCC Sunday Rand) we were school children embarked on a nature walk to find items able to raise symbolizing saints in their lives-both living and departed. to With these collected treasures, the young attendees crafted start the 2023 "memory jars" for families to take home. These jars are Christmas Fair meant to hold memories of individuals considered saints a and other significant moments throughout the year. The Nicely goal is to provide comfort and reflection for children and families.

# **December Birthday Greetings**

Sagittarius ~ Represented by the archer, Sagittarians are always on a quest for knowledge. The last fire sign of the zodiac, Sagittarius launches its many pursuits like blazing arrows, chasing after geographical, intellectual, and spiritual adventures.

> Eric Lacombe ~ 1 Priscilla Simm ~ 4 Lucas Rodas ~ 5 William Rodas ~ 5 Colleen Hutchinson ~ 7 Stanley Reed ~ 14 John Bischof ~ 17 John Goodrich ~ 17

**Capricorn** ~ Climbing the mountain straight to the top and knowing that patience, perseverance, and dedication is the only way to scale, Capricorn is the last earth sign of the zodiac. Capricorn is represented by the sea-goat, a mythological creature with the body of a goat and the tail of a fish. Accordingly, Capricorns are skilled at navigating both the material and emotional realms

> Robin Wulff ~ 22 Mary Ryder ~ 27 Carol Ward ~ 29 Marian Albee ~ 30 Mark Munson ~ 30

**Breakfast Ladies!** Women of the church, members and friends are invited to breakfast on Wednesday, December 20 @ 8:30 a.m. in the FCC coffee area, we'll provide the food, you bring your appetite.  $\sim$  good food, good conversation  $\sim$ it's a great way to start your day! Please **RSVP** to deborah.gray48@gmail.com or 952-4041 by December 18, so we can plan accordingly. See you there!

Let's do (a continental)

The Men's Breakfast...

will be gathering on

Saturday, December 9 @ 8:30 a.m.

at the church

An enjoyable repast and

lively discussions are always on the menu!

# **FMI John Bischof**

jegbischof@gmail.com or 781-2391

The January edition of *Steeplenotes* material submittal deadline is Friday December 15, 2023

Submitted articles should be final and print ready, pictures complete with captions. Thank you.

# **COMMUNITY EVENTS**

Town of Falmouth, Falmouth Memorial Library & Falmouth-Cumberland Community Chamber of Commerce present



www.VeryMerryFalmouth.com

# Join us for our annual community celebration!



### **Thursday, November 30**

**5:30pm** - Annual Falmouth Community Tree Lighting at Village Park (off Hat Trick Drive)! Hosted by Falmouth Parks and Community Programs. FREE!

## Friday, December 1

**6:00-8:00pm** - The Merry Mix & Mingle family-friendly, open air, community party. Music, cookies, hot chocolate, FCCC Scholarship Gift Basket Raffle, kids activities (including fun with CenterPoint Martial



Arts!), photo booth, Touch-A-Truck, good cheer with your neighbors, and more. FREE!

**7:00pm** - Fireworks! Launched from the Legion Fields on Depot Road and best viewed from the Merry Mix & Mingle in the American Legion parking lot or along Route 1. FREE!

# Saturday, December 2

**9:00am** - Ugly Sweater 5K and Merry Mile Fun Run, Route 1. Throw on your festive holiday sweater and race down Route 1! Proceeds will benefit the Falmouth Memorial Library! Race begins at the American Legion.

#### Register at www.verymerryfalmouth.com



8:30am-12:30pm - Annual Christmas Fair at Foreside Community Church, 340 Foreside Road.

**9:00am-1:00pm** - Saint Mary's Sparkles Church Fair at the Episcopal Church of Saint Mary at Route 88/Foreside Road.

10:00am-2:00pm - Ice skating on Twombly Pond (weather permitting) courtesy of Family Ice FREE!

#### Volunteer!

Join the fun and lend a hand as a Very Merry Volunteer! Community service hours available for high school students. Sign up at www.verymerryfalmouth.com

More info at www.verymerryfalmouth.com



Thank you to our race sponsors:

| Sun   |                                     |  |   |  |  |  |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|
|   | Mon                                 | Tue  | Wed   | Thu  | Fri  | Sat  |
|   |                                     |  |   |  | 1<br>5 -7 pm<br>Champagne & Cider<br>Fair Preview            | 2<br>8:30 am-1:00 pm<br><i>Christmas Fair!</i><br><i>(See cover)</i> |
| 4   |                                     | 2  | 9   | ٢  | 8  | 6  |
| 9:30 am Worship-<br>hybrid & Communion<br>2:30 pm <i>Hyperion</i><br><i>Trumpet Ensemble</i><br>(see pg. 4)   |                                     | 9 am Book Grp (zoom)<br>12 pm Knitting<br>6:15 pm Choir<br>6:45 pm AA<br>7:15 pm Bells | 6:00 pm Evening<br>Prayer   | <ul><li>9 am Bells of Casco</li><li>Bay</li><li>6 pm Women's AA</li></ul>                          |  | <b>8:30 am</b> Men's<br>Monthly Breakfast                            |
| 11  |                                     | 12   | 13  | 14   | 15   | 16   |
| 9:30 am Worship-<br>hybrid w/ Kids Anthem<br>Sing & Game Day<br>downstairs afterwards<br>(see pg. 5)  |                                     | 9 am Book Grp (zoom)<br>12 pm Knitting<br>6:15 pm Choir<br>6:45 pm AA<br>7:15 pm Bells | 6:00 pm Evening<br>Prayer   | <ul><li>9 am Bells of Casco<br/>Bay</li><li>6 pm Women's AA</li><li>7 pm Stewardship Mtg</li></ul> | Deadline for<br>January<br><i>Steeplenotes</i><br>submittals |  |
| 18  |                                     | 19   | 20  | 21   | 22   | 23   |
| 9:30 am Worship-<br>hybrid<br>4 pm Caroling @<br>OceanView w/   | <b>7 pm</b> Governing<br>Board Mtg. | 9 am Book Grp (zoom)<br>12 pm Knitting<br>6:15 pm Choir<br>6:45 pm AA<br>7:15 pm Bells | 8:30 am Women's<br>Monthly Breakfast<br>6:00 pm Evening<br>Prayer |  |  |  |
| <ul> <li>24</li> <li>9:30 am Worship-</li> <li>hybrid</li> <li>See page 3 for</li> <li>See page 3 for</li> <li>Christmas Eve wor-</li> <li>ship times/programs</li> <li>31</li> <li>9:30 am Worship-</li> <li>hybrid</li> </ul> | New Y                               | nstmas   | 27  | 28   | 29   | 30   |

# **Daily Lectionary Readings for December 2023**

**Fri., Dec. 1** Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 Zechariah 14:1-9 1 Thessalonians 4:1-18

**Sat., Dec. 2** Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 Micah 2:1-13 Matthew 24:15-31

Sun., Dec. 3 First Sunday of Advent Isaiah 64:1-9 Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 Mark 13:24-37

Mon., Dec. 4 Psalm 79 Micah 4:1-5 Revelation 15:1-8

**Tues., Dec. 5** Psalm 79 Micah 4:6-13 Revelation 18:1-10

**Wed., Dec. 6** Psalm 79 Micah 5:1-5a Luke 21:34-38

**Thurs., Dec. 7** Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 Hosea 6:1-6 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10

**Fri., Dec. 8** Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 Jeremiah 1:4-10 Acts 11:19-26

**Sat., Dec. 9** Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 Ezekiel 36:24-28 Mark 11:27-33 **Sun., Dec. 10** *Second Sunday of Advent* Isaiah 40:1-11 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 2 Peter 3:8-15a Mark 1:1-8

**Mon., Dec. 11** Psalm 27 Isaiah 26:7-15 Acts 2:37-42

**Tues., Dec. 12** Psalm 27 Isaiah 4:2-6 Acts 11:1-18

Wed., Dec. 13 Psalm 27 Malachi 2:10—3:1 Luke 1:5-17

**Thurs., Dec. 14** Psalm 126 Habakkuk 2:1-5 Philippians 3:7-11

Fri., Dec. 15 Psalm 126 Habakkuk 3:2-6 Philippians 3:12-16

**Sat., Dec. 16** Psalm 126 Habakkuk 3:13-19 Matthew 21:28-32

**Sun., Dec. 17** Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 Psalm 126 or Luke 1:46b-55 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 John 1:6-8, 19-28 Mon., Dec. 18 Psalm 125 1 Kings 18:1-18 Ephesians 6:10-17

**Tues., Dec. 19** Psalm 125 2 Kings 2:9-22 Acts 3:17—4:4

Wed., Dec. 20 Psalm 125 Malachi 3:16—4:6 Mark 9:9-13

Thurs., Dec. 21 Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 2 Samuel 6:1-11 Hebrews 1:1-4

**Fri., Dec. 22** Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 2 Samuel 6:12-19 Hebrews 1:5-14

**Sat., Dec. 23** Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 Judges 13:2-24 John 7:40-52

# Sun., Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 Luke 1:46b-55 or Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 Romans 16:25-27 Luke 1:26-38

## Mon., Dec. 25 Christmas Day

Isaiah 62:6-12 Psalm 97 Titus 3:4-7 Luke 2:[1-7] 8-20 **Tues., Dec. 26** Psalm 148 Jeremiah 26:1-9, 12-15 Acts 6:8-15; 7:51-60

Wed., Dec. 27 Psalm 148 Exodus 33:18-23 1 John 1:1-9

**Thurs., Dec. 28** Psalm 148 Jeremiah 31:15-17 Matthew 2:13-18

**Fri., Dec. 29** Psalm 148 Isaiah 49:5-15 Matthew 12:46-50

**Sat., Dec. 30** Psalm 148 Proverbs 9:1-12 2 Peter 3:8-13

**Sun., Dec. 31** Isaiah 61:10—62:3 Psalm 148 Galatians 4:4-7 Luke 2:22-40



A Newsletter of

# The Foreside Community Church, UCC

<u>General Office Hours:</u> Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

or unless otherwise posted

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