

SECONCH

Second Congregational Church UCC, P.O. Box 164, 205 Main Street, Norway, ME 04268
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FEBRUARY 2021 ~ WORSHIP ~ SUNDAY SCHOOL ~ CHILDCARE **SUNDAYS AT 10 AM**

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



The Pastor's Corner

February is here and we are beginning to see a small glimmer of hope on the horizon as our days begin to lengthen. February is also the month that ushers in our Season of Lent.

Lent is the season in the Christian calendar for preparing for Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday. It is 6 weeks long beginning on Ash Wednesday (this year on Feb 17th), and concluding on Easter Sunday (April 4th). The forty days of Lent (not including Sundays) is a time of *introspection* and *intentionality*, a time of looking more closely at all the ways habit, convenience, and distraction have crept into our spiritual lives and turned us away from our walk with God. Many Christians use the season of Lent to deepen their relationship with God through various spiritual practices. Lenten practices traditionally include fasting, prayer, increased attention to reading scripture, and service to others.

Lenten Study: We will be implementing the practice of reading scripture and reflection. Our Lenten study will focus on a book of devotions written by Walter Brueggemann entitled "A Way Other

Than Our Own." We will meet for six consecutive Wednesday evenings from 7:00-8:00 PM via Zoom. If you are interested in joining us as we consider this wonderful devotional, please let Pam Davison know or send me an email.

Ash Wednesday Service: We will begin this Lenten season with our Ash Wednesday Service on February 17th. The service this year will be online via a Zoom format. The Zoom link will be provided to you through email at a later date. Our service will begin at 7:00 P.M. and will include recorded music, prayer, a short reflection, communion and the opportunity to receive ashes. If you have never attended an Ash Wednesday Service or if it has been a while, since you have, we hope that you will consider joining us as we prepare our hearts and spirits for this year's Lenten journey. Last but certainly not least, I want to thank you for your warm welcome, friendly smiles and emails of support since I began our journey together on January 4th. While I have had the blessed opportunity of meeting many of you, I look forward to meeting others. I am in the office on Friday mornings, arriving around 9:30 a.m. Please feel free to drop by and say hello if you are in the area or email me at SLRankin1974@gmail.com and we can schedule a time for a conversation.

Yours, in Christ service,
Pastor Sharon Rankin

MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR

As I write this I have been thinking about all that our church has been dealing with over the past year. What a challenging year! But as I thought back to where we were last year at this time, I am so pleased with how our church responded to those challenges! What is clear to me (and maybe to you too!), is that the building is not what makes us a church – it is US – we are the church – and even in tough times we continued to Be the Church. We found different ways to continue our vital mission work, to celebrate our Advent season and to continue fundraising. We are AMAZING!

So now we just need to figure out what happens next! Are you enjoying the pictures that Nick is including during our video of our Sunday Services? I have heard from many that they are enjoying the pictures of different things in the church – all things that we used to see each Sunday. The hope is for vaccines to be more available so we can then be back in the building and worshipping together. I hope that we can begin to make actual plans to do that by the next Seconch and perhaps even be able to set a date!

A lot of questions run through my thoughts about “what happens next”. Do we need to review our profile of the church and update information? Discussions needed about duties for a part time minister; our budget and annual meeting in June; do we have another 6 - month budget starting in July until the end of the year and then revert back to annual meeting in January or do something

different? How do we have these discussions if we have to continue being apart? What can we afford to do? Will people come back when we decide to re-open for worship?

I see some tough discussions ahead of us. Will people be willing to be a part of these discussions? Are our team members on the various committees willing to stay on or are they as tired as I am of the work load? Do we just keep our heads down and keep doing what we have been doing and avoid the hard stuff or do we decide to look at everything with eyes wide open and sit down together and work on a plan?

My hope is that next year we will be celebrating all the AMAZING things we have accomplished and that we have a plan that is leading us to a stable future. Let us be able to LISTEN as we do the work ahead of us and be open to checking out all the possibilities that will appear. Stay well, wear your masks, wash your hands, social distance and sign up for the vaccine! Our hospital is ready to dispense the vaccinations – they just need the supply to do it!

God bless you all!

Pam

FREE SUPPER

Our Free Drive-Thru Supper will be on February 19, 2021. We will start serving the meal at 5:00 p.m. until the food is gone. Menu is Homemade Chicken Soup, biscuit and homemade cookies.

FOOD PANTRY

It will soon be February and we will be collecting items for the food pantry. The Mission Committee is collecting soup that will be distributed and we also welcome other food items as well to be distributed to help our neighbors who are struggling to make it through the month with enough food.
Bruce & Pam Davison

Farewell to Cordelia & Bea:

Since we are unable to have a farewell time with Cordelia and Bea in-person, we would like to give everyone the opportunity to participate in getting messages to her. We are gathering comments that will be shared with them. You can send your messages to the church by mail or by email. If you would like to contribute to a monetary gift that will be included with the letter, please write "Cordelia Farewell" in the memo line. Some suggestions to comment on that will be included in the letter:

Cordelia and Bea – I am grateful for

..

An example of how you have touched my/my family's life is

My wish and prayer for you

Or any other comments you would like to include.

We hope to send these farewell messages off to Cordelia and Bea within in the next week or so.

MISSION COMMITTEE

As the Mission Committee begins a new year, we are still wrapping up a couple of our December projects. Thanks to generous donations from church members and friends of SCC we received 120 pairs of mittens/gloves, 86 hats, 42 scarves and 12 pairs of socks which are in the process of being delivered to the schools. The mittens, hats and scarves were dropped at Rowe, Paris, and West Paris Schools. In addition food items and toiletries were donated that were given to help the Key Club provide Christmas bags for 10 students at Oxford Hills Comprehensive High School. Additional food items that were donated were given to the Norway Food Pantry and the Harrison Food Bank.

SOUPER SUNDAY: This year we are unable to have our usual collection of canned and dry soups for SOUPER SUNDAY but are inviting church family and friends of SCC to donate to the church and to please write on their check "Souper Sunday". All of the donations received will be used to purchase soups for area Food Pantries. We were late getting this project started so will accept donations until the 17th

of February. We thank you for your support of this project.

UPCOMING: In March we will be celebrating the **ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING** special offering of the United Church of Christ. Our financial support of One Great Hour of Sharing directly helps people and communities directly affected by disaster, violence and poverty. It is an investment into the lives of people and communities who need it most.

Thrift Shop:

No our thrift shop is not open right now but guess what – our barn is full and we continue to receive donations all the time! Some of us are going to begin working on getting the shop re-stocked and getting items ready for another thrift shop/mini yard sale event once warmer weather will allow us to open again when doors and windows can be open. Our hope that as vaccines become more available that we will be able to open up to our community. So watch for updates as we work towards that goal and if you would like to help us get things set up we have the space to socially distance as we pull things together, so let us know and you can join us and have some fun at the same time!

Lenten Book Study

Pastor Sharon will be leading a Lenten book study on the book by Walter Brueggemann, “A Way Other Than Our Own”. This will be a Zoom book study

that will begin on Wednesday, February 17, 2021 from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. The book study will continue for six sessions. So no matter where you are, even snow birding in Florida, you can access the book study via Zoom. If you live locally, and want to participate, let us know and the church will add you to the list and will order the books from the Tribune. The cost is \$11.00 plus tax and we need your notice that you want to order the book through the church by February 3rd. We should have the books by the next week. This book is a daily devotional and at our meetings we all can share what spoke to each of us. Pastor Sharon will end our first session on February 17 (Ash Wednesday) with communion. Please let Pastor Sharon (slrankin1974@gmail.com) or Pam Davison (pdavison1954@gmail.com) know if you would like to participate so that the link for the Zoom meeting can be shared with you.

**PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR
PRAYERS**



Bea and Cordelia, Dorothy Hobbs,
Martha Farrington, Helen Heath,
David Porter, Jane Gibson, John Higgins,
Jane Munn, Hope Millett, Cupe Gross
(Annie Tilsley's mom) and P.J. Allen.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS



- 1st Deb Ladner
- 5th Carol Bailey Leigh
- 13th Foster Shibles
- 14th Deb Fickett
- 21st Kieran Luff
- 26th Bernie Gatchell

Happy Valentine's Day!

Church Council

Moderator, Pam Davison
Collector, Carolyn Baker
Treasurer, Jane Munn
Shirli Allen Heald, Deb Ladner, Mary-Jane
Robichaud, Foster Shibles, Deb Fickett,
Linda Porter (member at large)

Trustees

Deb Ladner, Keith Ladner, Foster Shibles,
Buck Gouin, Melissa Wood, John Ellis,
Randy Butters.

Spiritual Life & Leadership

Shirli-Allen Heald, Mary-Jane Robichaud,
Mickie Shibles, Melissa Wood

Deacons

Jody Deegan, Robert & Debbie Fickett,
Laura Gouin, Chad Pendexter, Mary-Jane
Robichaud, Mary Gatchell, Christina
Bigelow, Michelle Johnson, John Ladd.

Mission Committee

Mickie Shibles, Linda Porter, Jane Munn,
Bruce Davison, Trudy Brown.

Youth and Family Team

Melissa Wood, Annie Tilsley

Stewardship

Deb Ladner, Jean Saunders, Dave Porter,
John Ellis

Church Staff

Designated Term Minister: Sharon Rankin
Director of Music: Shirli Allen Heald
Organist/Pianist: Elaine Emery, Ed
Baldrige

Office Hours

Tuesday – Friday 9 a.m. to noon
or by appointment.