



First Christian Church of Freedom
THE CHURCH IN THE VILLAGE ESTABLISHED IN 1858

Freedom Rings September - October 2022

PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

By the time you receive this newsletter, my husband Stephen and I will likely be out on Star Island for our annual, Labor Day week retreat, where I have served as Minister of the Week almost every summer since 2002. Our time on the island has special meaning for us, not only because we have a chance to reconnect with friends, stretching back twenty years, but also because we were married there during evening chapel in 2004. It's a 'busman's holiday' for me, but it is never the less restorative to be there on the rocks by the ocean and among so many people we love.



It's been a full summer at the church. Sunday mornings are returning to something like 'normal' as more of us are feeling comfortable gathering in person. We participated in Freedom Old Home Week again this year (a first for me) with a Blessing of the Animals, the Guild quilt and bake sale, a Sock Hop and probably more that I am forgetting. Thank you to everyone who took part in the festivities.

If you haven't purchased your t-shirt or hoodie yet, I highly recommend it, as the featured picture on the front, created by a local elementary school student, is our very own church steeple!



i thank You God for most this amazing
day:for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(i who have died am alive again today,
and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth
day of life and of love and wings:and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any—lifted from the no
of all nothing—human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

e e cummings

There was a time some twenty-plus years ago when I began the daily practice of greeting each morning with one of two lines, either Psalm 118:24, most commonly heard as, "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it...", or the first line from E.E. Cummings, "i thank You God for most this amazing day..."

Rain or shine, full day (usually) or empty calendar (seldom), foul mood or bounding out of bed with a glad heart (a toss-up), I reminded myself to stop and give thanks for This. One. More. Day. Whatever it presented and like it or not, "This is the day YHWH has made..." none other guaranteed.

In those days, my life was in turmoil. I was recently divorced, raising two teen-aged daughters, commuting six hundred miles a week up to central Maine and back, to be

with my aging parents in Dexter and attending seminary in Bangor. My mother was living with Alzheimer's, and her care fell to my father and brother, so I tried to be with them as often as I could.

All this to say, life was complicated. But isn't it? Isn't it always so? Not only the day to day-ness of it all: what needs to be done to keep the household in tact, the kiddos fed, the dog walked, the bills paid or the workplace running, but also the world events over which we feel or fear we have absolutely no control.

It was a time when I had to learn how to let go of those things that actually were beyond my control and to absolutely do the things that had to be done, while accepting that the result wouldn't always be shiny. More important - I had to learn that relationships come before work and that rest is essential. Sabbath exists for a reason. Needless to say, I'm still learning.

Today the whole world is in turmoil. Perhaps it has been so in every age, but just now the stakes seem higher. I needn't recite a litany of woes, for you understand as well as I the perils we face, as a nation, a planet, a species - one among many.

It is said that we should "Let go and let God..." and there is truth to the notion. It is wise to let some worries go, to realize, for instance, that the world will spin without our pushing it, the sun will rise and the seasons will change without our help.

So, yes, let go and let God, but in the letting go, let us remember to participate in the creative process of promoting the common

good wherever and however we can. There is work to be done if we are to flourish together as God intends - even as we accept that the ultimate outcome is not ours to control.

However you name the One who set the Cosmos in motion, YHWH, Creator, Father/Mother, God in three Persons, or the Lord is One, Holy Mystery, Providence, or Love - give yourself over to that Presence, trusting that you are not alone. Your burdens will not magically disappear, but you may rest awhile in something like welcoming arms of compassion and peace.

Work and Rest. Both are necessary for physical, mental, spiritual health and well-being. Both are commanded by God.

So as the summer winds down and autumn is fast upon us, take time for Sabbath rest. Reconnect with friends and family you've not seen in some time - even a card or a call, just to say hello. Life is short and unpredictable and we are here for each other through it all. See you in church!

With love,
Rev. Mary



PASTORAL VISITS

Should anyone wish to have a pastoral visit or communion, please speak to Pastor Mary, a deacon, or Susan in the church office.

**If you need to reach Pastor Mary, her phone numbers are
603-367-9420 (H) or 603-515-6220 (C).**

Prayer List

Kathy Avery	Jeff & Kathy MacLeod
Fran Babcock	Bill McIntire, Jr.
Charlie & Pat Bojus	Carol Melvidas
Sandy Boyle	Gay Mocerri
Sue Brown	Cindy Nason
Christine Campbell	Peg Nichols
Rebecca Davis	Pat Olson
Connie Dockham	Dan and Alice Spear
Janet Gallagher	Debbie Trail
David Hummel	Jim Tracey
Dale Johnson	Audra Wilson
Elmer Killam	Larry Wogman



and all our country's military personnel and their families

If you have a prayer request, please send it to Susan at fccf1858@gmail.com, call 603-539-6484 or drop it off at the office. Thank you.

President's Message



The summer sure has flown by or at least that is what it seems to me. It has been nice to meet new people at church on Sundays and to welcome back some of the members who stayed away due to the pandemic. I hope to see more of our members this fall. Pastor Mary has a very inspiring message each week and our choir is back in full force. After service we have a great coffee hour with goodies.

This is always a good time to catch up with friends and meet some new ones.

The Council will be meeting on the third Wednesday of the month as usual, after taking the summer off. The Deacons continue to meet the first Thursday of each month. If anyone needs to have something brought up, we are here to meet your needs. Also, the church office is open Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9 am to 1pm.

I look forward to seeing you in church.

Dean Robertson, President

Treasurer's Report

Happy Summer! I hope everyone is getting out and enjoying life in the lovely world the Lord has provided for us all. The Church is open and providing all the services as it was prior to the pandemic. Worship attendance is improving, thanks to Pastor Mary and Carolyn, but is still not at pre-pandemic levels. Ladies Guild, Food Pantry and Church Committees are low on personnel and would benefit from any time you may be able to offer. Financially, giving continues to be weak. Reserves are available to help in the short term but if the Church is to thrive over the long run, income needs to increase from Giving or other sources.

Inflation hits the Church as it does each of us and while savings interest rates may go up and social security rise from COLA adjustments, grocery bills and the cost of energy is much higher than the increases. The Church is here for you if you need help. Please reach out to Pastor Mary if you are feeling overwhelmed.

For me, the summer has been busy. I have been working on next year's budget trying to manage large increases in Church insurance and energy costs. Church staff salaries will be reviewed in light of increased living costs.

The Church building is in good repair but Council is addressing needed repairs at the Parsonage. There are financial reserves available for these capital improvements.

Investments

Church and Food Pantry investments have fallen in value this year as all investment portfolios have been hit by inflation concerns. Both the Church and the Food Pantry investment portfolios are diversified. The Church has a strong cash position and the Food Pantry continues to bring in much more contributions than are needed to run the Pantry. So both the Church and the Food Pantry can ride out this dip in the stock and bond markets. The Church pooled investment account is held by discount brokerage custodians Vanguard and TD Ameritrade. The Food Pantry investment account is held by Fidelity with Thrivent as their investment advisor.

If you have any questions about any financial matters of the Church, please do not hesitate to speak with me.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul J. Olzerowicz
Treasurer, First Christian Church of Freedom

Deacons

Thank you everyone for keeping in touch with the folks on the prayer list and all the shut-ins. We all make calls and send cards to folks on the prayer list and call those who we may not have seen in a while.

We did have a meeting on August 11, 2020, for all the members who could come in the summer. Thank you for coming and trying to help where we all could.

We thought that Henry and Mark might need to have a break from being ushers for a bit. We worked out a schedule that we thought might work until more return to church. Since there really hasn't been an usher schedule for a while we thought we might ask some people if they would mind helping out when they can. The deacons thought we might ask two people to volunteer to usher once per month. We made a schedule for just that. Dana & Gayle Lee did help on the 2nd Sunday in August and for that we say "thank you". Then in August we had Carol M and Mark, which worked out fine also. This past Sunday Lucy & Paul stepped up, so looks like all are willing to help. Coming up for Sept 11th I will have to get back to the schedule. What I want to say is if there is anyone in the congregation that would like to volunteer to help out by being an usher, that would be great. Just be in touch we Gail and I can make sure we can fit you in. All are welcome. We will be doing things like this until we have our annual meeting and see if we can have some new volunteers to sign up to be on some committees 😊. Thank you to all so far.

Respectfully submitted, Gail Bizer.

Book Group

The Book Group is about to begin reading **“Grounded - Finding God in the World, A Spiritual Revolution”** by Diana Butler Bass.



Food Pantry

Food Pantry

(January 2022 through August 2022)

The pantry continues to be busy. Statistics for 2022 are shown below.

Date	# of People Served	# of meals provided for clients to cook
January	48	1,008
February	74	1,554
March	65	1,365
April	107	2,247
May	74	1,554
June	98	2,058
July	105	2,205
August	106	2,226
Totals	677	14,217

Note:

January - closed 2 Saturdays, 1/1 (New Years Day) and 1/29 (Nor'easter)

March - closed 1 Saturday, 3/12 (Town Meeting)

July - closed 1 Saturday, 7/30 (Old Home Week Parade)

In addition, we pick up meat donations on a weekly basis.

Date	Hannaford, No. Conway	Walmart, No. Conway
January	370 #	44 #
February	479 #	40 #
March	549 #	69 #
April	241 #	104 #
May	638 #	105 #
June	292 #	76 #
July	436 #	38 #
August	461 #	133 #
Totals	3,466 #	609 #

Submitted by Doris Sirois

Fundraising

This is a very early heads-up: The committee will be hosting the luncheon for Freedom Rings in the Holidays on **Saturday, November 19th** at the Town Hall.

We will be asking for assistance with this event. There will be a sign-up sheet posted later in the church. Some areas where help is needed are the following:

- **Soup Makers** - recipes provided. Offerings will be minestrone and corn chowder.
- **Dessert Donations**
- **Set up Crew** - set up tables and chairs; put out placemats and cutlery;
- **Kitchen Crew** -heat up soups and dish them out; cut up and plate desserts; clean up;
- **Servers** - attend to table; replenish sandwich platters, plates, cutlery, etc. as needed;
- **Clean up Crew** - take down tables and chairs; return any items to kitchen;
- **Coffee Station** - make large urn of coffee; replenish cream, sugar, cups, etc.
- We have cashiers.

We are also looking to have a small raffle available. We would appreciate donations of items to include new or gently used crafts, art, jewelry, antiques, and holiday items. You may have something that is taking up space in your home that you would love to see find a **NEW** home, (family members excluded). Please consider donating it to the raffle. Stay tuned for further info as we get closer to the date!

Submitted by Jane Hartnett

Ladies Guild

The Ladies' Guild is happy to report we had 2 sales recently - Parade Day and also the Craft Fair. Now we are busy preparing things for the Ring in the Holidays Fair.



Sadly, Bonnie McCue, who has been a member of the guild for many years, will be moving to Florida the end of September. Terri Conover has sold her unit in the Bluffs and has returned to her home in southern NH. Nancy Bossi will be going to North Carolina. PLEASE! If you yourself or anyone you know is interested in quilting, know we are at the church on Wednesdays from 9-2 and need help.

We are continuing to make baby quilts for the Birthing Center at Memorial Hospital. They are fun and easy to make. Come try us out.

Tickets for our annual raffle quilt are available from any member and are \$1 each or 6 for \$5. The drawing will be the Sunday before Thanksgiving (11/20/22).

Respectfully submitted,
Peg Nichols, President

Choir Notes

When I thought about getting the choir back together for Summer Sunday morning rehearsals I never imagined that there would be such a robust response from our singers. It's been so much fun. The choir has added so much spirit to our Sunday worship. Thank you, all! You sound great!

Summer is nearly over and it's time for "back to school". I'm looking forward to having enough rehearsal time to learn some more challenging music. Tuesday evening rehearsals will start again on September 13th at 7 PM. All are welcome.

Carolyn Olzerowicz

For All the Years: A hymn for the 150th Anniversary

For all the years our congregation stood,
Shoulder to shoulder for the common good.
Our trust in God shall be forever shared:
Alleluia, alleluia!

In times of need the village served as one,
Vowing to love by this teaching of the Son,
To love the Word, revere the Holy Name;
Alleluia, alleluia!

As we move toward the days of life ahead,
Let us be faithful, by the Spirit led,
With Freedom's voice proclaim the Grace of God:
Alleluia, alleluia!

We are Christ's Church, the Body and the Soul,
Now here to worship that we may be whole.
We thank Thee, Lord, for blessed family;
Alleluia, alleluia!

Words by Gale M. Morris
To be sung to SINE NOMINE

Member News

Bonnie McCue, who has been a member of the guild for many years, will be moving to Florida the end of September. She'll continue to receive mail addressed to PO Box 475, Freedom NH 03836.

Mark and Nancy Bossi will be going to North Carolina, however they'll continue to receive mail addressed to PO Box 461, Freedom NH 03836.

Pastor Mary reported with deep sadness that **Neal Boyle** died on August 14th. "He was a well-loved member and active participant in the life of the church for many years and he will be sorely missed. Please hold Sandy and family in your prayers as we release Neal back into the ever-loving arms of God. May he rest in peace..."

A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date - likely in October.



September, 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
						10 AM Food Pantry
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10 AM Worship, Coffee & Conversation			9 AM Ladies Guild	9:30 AM Book Group		10 AM Food Pantry
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
10 AM Worship, Coffee & Conversation		7 PM Choir Rehearsal	9 AM Ladies Guild	9:30 AM Book Group		10 AM Food Pantry
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9 AM Choir Rehearsal 10 AM Worship, Coffee & Conversation		7 PM Choir Rehearsal	9 AM Ladies Guild 7 PM Church Council	9:30 AM Book Group		10 AM Food Pantry
25	26	27	28	29	30	
9 AM Choir Rehearsal 10 AM Worship, Coffee & Conversation		7 PM Choir Rehearsal	9 AM Ladies Guild	9:30 AM Book Group		

October, 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
						10 AM Food Pantry
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 AM Choir Rehearsal 10 AM Worship, Coffee & Conversation		7 PM Choir Rehearsal	9 AM Ladies Guild	9:30 AM Book Group		10 AM Food Pantry
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
9 AM Choir Rehearsal 10 AM Worship, Coffee & Conversation		7 PM Choir Rehearsal	9 AM Ladies Guild	9:30 AM Book Group		10 AM Food Pantry
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
9 AM Choir Rehearsal 10 AM Worship, Coffee & Conversation		7 PM Choir Rehearsal	9 AM Ladies Guild 7 PM Church Council	9:30 AM Book Group		10 AM Food Pantry
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
9 AM Choir Rehearsal 10 AM Worship, Coffee & Conversation		7 PM Choir Rehearsal	9 AM Ladies Guild	9:30 AM Book Group		10 AM Food Pantry
30	31					
9 AM Choir Rehearsal 10 AM Worship, Coffee & Conversation						



Next Newsletter Deadline is **October 15th!**

Let us know if you have news or pictures you think should we should include.

The First Christian Church of Freedom

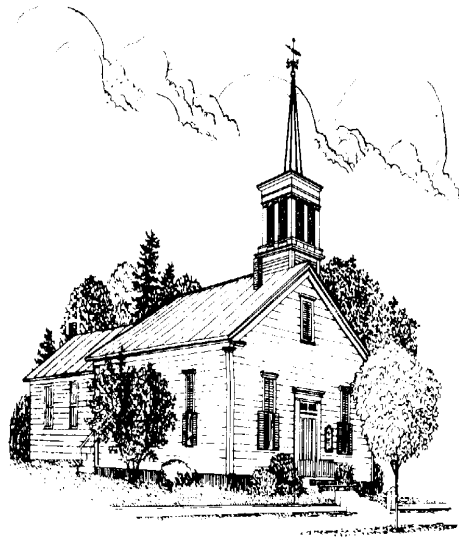
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Combining Traditional & Contemporary Faith Communities