

The Messenger

First Congregational Church of Fryeburg January 2022

PASTOR'S MESSAGE: Being Present

"The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." Psalms 118:14, 24

Peter and I spent a day in heaven the other day. I got to hug, listen to, play with, and make chocolate brittle with my great grandson, Andy. He is my precious bundle of love. I simply cannot put into words the incredible bounty of joy, laughter, and love I experience when in his presence.

Andy is four years old. He is still mostly brand new to this world of wonders and is fascinated by all the new things he experiences every time he comes to visit us. He has a million questions, which is good. It means he wants to understand this world he has been born into and all that he experiences.

He loves to share stories with me about his life at home, his dog, Skylar, Lane and Fiona, my grandson, Patrick's snakes, and their eight goldfish. And stories about his friends, his favorite television show, *Paw Patrol*, and all the things in his daily life that enrich it and give it meaning.

And when he gives me a hug, or looks into my eyes and smiles, and touches my face tenderly, or the braids of my hair, my heart aches from the intensity of love that I feel for this precious little boy.

Andy is the son of Patrick's girlfriend, Alli, but he is very much my great grandson, too. It doesn't matter that he came to be our great grandson in a less than traditional way. What is traditional now adays? What matters is that we are all family. We care about each other. We have fun with each other. And we love each other.

Our family tree, beginning with Peter and me, is non-traditional in so many ways. But it is our family tree and everyone on it is loved deeply and completely, including Margo Rita, our grand dog, Vera and Binx, our grand cats, and our great-grand cats, Fievel, Sherlock, Barnaby, and Walter, great grand dog, Skylar, great grand snakes, Fiona and Lane, eight great grand fish, and our dog, Belle.

I am telling you all this because of an experience Peter and I had last month. We were seated at a table with a variety of people we had just met. As with most new social situations, there were lots of introductions and brief biographies of who we were and what our lives were like as we got to know each other over the course of the afternoon.

One woman in her early forties who had been complaining about how stressful Christmas had become and how hard it was for her to enjoy family get togethers when her young grandchildren ran wild through her home touching everything, or her children were constantly asking her for money, and her husband, who didn't come to this event, preferred to watch sports on TV than spend time with her, then she leaned over to the teen age daughter of one of the couples seated with us and said, "Enjoy your time in high school. It's the best years of your life." Peter and I both turned to each other with a knowing look.

On our ride home, we began to talk about this woman's remark. If she truly felt that way, then all her life experiences after high school were to be a disappointment and let down. If the best had come and gone, what was there left to celebrate?

If someone were to ask me, "What were the best days of your life?" I would have to say, "The ones that I am living right now." And my answer would never change. Not two years from now. Not ten years from now. Not twenty or thirty or forty years from now.

And at each and every moment of my life, even at times of great challenge, sorrow, or disappointment, the "now" has been and will continue to be the best moments of my life.

Peter and I are in our 60's now. I will be turning 63 next month. He will be turning 65 in the spring. And even in this pandemic, even with all the added precautions we take every time we step outside our door, and less opportunities to spend time with family and friends, this is an awesome time in my life and I can say with no regrets, "I like who I am, and I am what I have become because of all that I have experienced and all those who have loved me along the way."

If we are forever looking back with envy or looking forward with longing, how can we possibly enjoy the times we are living in right now?

Enjoy this time. Spend quality time with the ones you love, even if it is across a computer or smart phone screen and say "I love you," at every opportunity, in a text, in a note card, during a phone conversation or zoom visit, or email, to those that you do not want to a day to go by when they won't realize how much you love them.

Life is fragile and fleeting, but oh so worth it, and precious and wonderful and amazing. Even in moments of disappointment and sorrow, there is great joy to be found. Don't allow yourself to miss out on all the joys of ordinary everyday life that brings so much richness, so much vitality to each moment of your life.

I remember when my son, Jeb, was four and the world was still brand new to him, and to our grandchildren, Patrick, Daegan, Kyla, and Delyla. Our son, Jeb, is in his forties. Our grandsons, Patrick and Daegan, grown men in their twenties, are in relationships with two young ladies I love as my granddaughters too. Our granddaughters, Kyla and Delyla are teen-agers. Time goes by in the blink of an eye. I have loved every moment of my life with my family. And I have loved every moment with our son, grandchildren, and great grandson.

Live with no regrets. Live with no resentment or bitterness for what life has dealt you. Find things to be grateful for every day. Laugh as much as possible. Love and be loved often and always. You can always shuffle the deck and make choices, what to keep and what to discard.

And always let love be your guide. See with new eyes. Live life with a perspective on the here and now. Then take this moment and run with it.

May this new year bring Comfort and Hope to all who believe in the Grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and moments of Great Joy with all those that you love.

Here's to a happy, healthy, new year full of love, laughter, and life.

Blessings,



A.K.A. Grammie



Me with my sister, Rose



Me, Peter, and Jeb



Patrick, Me, and Daegan



Kyla and Delyla



Andy

Blink of an eye, folks...

Covid-19 Statistics – Active Cases (as of December 23rd)

Positive Cases

Maine	The United States	Around the World
139,000	51.5 million	278 million

Deaths

Maine	The United States	Around the World
1468	810,000	5.5 million

On December 15th the Memorial Hospital in North Conway, NH, (which is part of the Maine Health System), held a zoom Q and A about Covid-19 to help area church communities. This is some of what was discussed...

Because of Covid-19, for the first time in the history of the Memorial Hospital it is beyond full capacity. Ambulances can no longer send patients to be admitted to this hospital. They are now sent to Hartford, CT or Buffalo, NY, the nearest hospitals still accepting patients. Memorial Hospital is not an isolated case. All the hospitals in the Maine Health System are experiencing surges in Covid-19.

Covid-19 is at its highest level of infection since the pandemic.

NH ranks among the highest rates of positivity in the country, even though less than 10% of its population is unvaccinated. Even with full vaccination, (two shots and a booster), you can still catch Covid-19. We are all tired of dealing with Covid-19 but we must not become complacent.

The Delta variant has proved to be a deadly variant and the Omicron variant is the most infectious. If the two merge together, there is a strong possibility even vaccinations may not be effective in fighting it.

Churches stand as an example to our communities.

The next best step to lockdown, is to be overly cautious in this highly infectious time of Covid-19.

Children need to be in school. People need to work and to be able to practice their faith.

We recommend churches require everyone to mask, even those who are vaccinated. Singing is no exception. Everyone must be masked at all times. Socially distance members and visitors from one another. Close off some of your chairs, pews. Provide anti-bacterial hand wash and Masks to ensure everyone is protected. This may not be popular with your members but it is the best way to keep everyone safe from transmission.

The CDC fears the Christmas and New Year holiday will bring a surge of unprecedented proportions because of travel, holiday celebrating, more time spent in stores shopping, and in home visits with family and friends. However, we can work to lower those rates by following CDC recommendations. Mask. Socially distance. Wash our hands repeatedly.

We are not at the worst of what is coming to New England. We watched the hospitalization rate and death rate skyrocket as hospitals and healthcare workers were pushed beyond the breaking point in the south when the Delta variant hit. It is now moving up the Eastern Seaboard as is the Omicron variant, both at an alarming rate. We do not want these two variants to merge. It could have devastating consequences. NE states are among the most vulnerable at this time of year because of cold weather and the need to be indoors.

Many of our churches have a large percentage of elderly members who are at great risk. And many have preschools. Children under five cannot be vaccinated at this time. Consider going back to virtual services

if it is too difficult to get members and visitors to wear masks and socially distance. Especially for Christmas Eve Services which tend to have larger numbers.

We all know what we need to do, even if we do not like it. Mask indoors. Wash your hands repeatedly. Socially distance from one another. And when offering Communion, it must be individually packaged. We can get through this if we use common sense and behave in an overly cautious manner.

Maine CDC

Maine still has a high rate of transmission in all of its counties and recommends masking whenever indoors in a public setting. Wednesdays at 2pm live briefings from the Maine CDC with most recent information for Mainers. <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/cdc-livestream>

Do you still need to get vaccinated? <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines>

Vaccination is the most effective way to protect you and your family from Covid-19. Vaccines are free and are available without needing an appointment. Visit this web site to learn where you can get a Covid-19 vaccination. <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines/vaccination-sites#pharmacies>.

Covid-19 testing is free and widely available in Maine without an appointment. Visit this web site to learn where you can get tested. <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/testing> Questions about the Covid-19 vaccinations/boosters? Visit this website <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines/public-faq>

Maine Covid-19 Resources

- **StrengthenME:** The Maine Dept of Health and Human Services created **Strengthenme.com** to help Mainers cope with the stress and uncertainty of the pandemic. The program offers a hotline that is open 7 days a week, 8am – 8pm. Anyone in need of assistance can call 207-221-8198.
- **Maine Helps:** The Maine Helps website, <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/maine-helps> offers ways Mainers can directly help nonprofits, health care and businesses during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- **FrontLine WarmLine:** Maine Department of Health and Human Services phone line to help Mainers who are working on the frontlines of the coronavirus outbreak. The phone line will be staffed from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. each day by calling 207-221-8196 or 866-367-4440. The service will eventually include a text option, officials said.
- **211 Maine:** The state's 211 system can answer general questions about coronavirus from callers. Mainers can also text 898-211 to have their questions answered.
- **NAMI Maine Resources:** is offering several programs to help people with mental health concerns due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Supporting Maine People and Families–

Manage unemployment benefits <https://reemploy.me.maine.gov/accessme/faces/login/login.xhtml>

Workforce training and resources. <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/workforce-resources>

Help paying for childcare <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/support-for-families/child-care/paying-for-child-care>

General Assistance for Mainers harmed by Covid-19 – food insecurity, health care, emergency benefits and more <https://apps1.web.maine.gov/benefits/account/login.html>

Supporting Maine Students and Their Families

K-12 Response. Maine Dept of Education in collaboration with public health experts, created this framework for safely reopening and maintaining in class schools. Visit this website <https://www.maine.gov/doe/framework>.

The Department has also launched a dashboard for tracking Covid-19 cases in Maine schools. <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/maine.cdc.covid.19.response/viz/COVID-19casesbyschool/maine-covid-19-cases-by-school?publish=yes>

The University of Maine System is updating its operations, policies, and resources for students, faculty, staff, and families affected by COVID-19. Visit this website to learn more. <https://www.maine.edu/together/>

The Department of Education is compiling important advice and resources about talking with children about Covid-19, and coping with family stress and anxiety. Visit this website to learn more. <https://www.maine.gov/doe/continuityoflearning/parent>.

Support for Maine Employers

Supporting Maine Businesses <https://apps1.web.maine.gov/benefits/account/login.html>
University of Maine is updating policies, operations, resources. <https://www.maine.edu/together/>
Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan t <https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/news/governor-mills-unveils-transformative-plan-spur-economic-recovery-achieve-long-term-economic>.

Maine's job and recovery plan.

<https://www.maine.gov/covid19/maine-jobs-and-recovery-plan>

Governor Mills recognized Governor Award for Business Excellence Recipients for 2021. Presented in three categories: The Heritage Industry Award recognizes and celebrates business excellence in the forest industry, manufacturing sector, or marine economy. The Rural Revitalization Award recognizes contributions to the revitalization and growth of Maine's rural and distressed economic regions. The Innovation Award celebrates and recognizes business excellence through entrepreneurship and innovation. Winners are Acme Monaco Corp., located in Presque Isle, which is a world class manufacturer of orthodontic products and catheter guidewires for cardiovascular, urology, and neurology procedures. Ware-Butler Building Supply, founded in 1925, with 13 retail locations, providing building supplies and solutions for close to a century. And Revision Energy, started in 2003 in Liberty, Maine, seeking to solve environmental problems caused by fossil fuels and to alleviate economic and social injustice. It has become the #1 clean energy company in NNE and is 100% employee owned.

Federal Covid-19 Ambulance Teams coming to Eight Maine Hospitals. The Federal teams will assist Maine emergency medical services (EMS) crews with non-emergency transportation of patients among facilities to match patients with open beds and ensure they are treated in the facility that best meets their health care needs. The following hospitals will host the Federal teams, which can be deployed to additional facilities throughout the state as needed: Maine Medical Ctr, Portland, Southern ME Healthcare, Biddeford, Franklin-Memorial, Farmington, Midcoast, Brunswick, Central Maine Medical, Lewiston, Maine General, Augusta, Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical, Bangor, St Joseph, Bangor. The ambulance teams are among a slate of initiatives President Biden announced to help states confront the COVID-19 Omicron variant. While the Delta variant continues to drive the current sustained surge of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in Maine and the rest of New England, the more transmissible Omicron variant is now the dominant variant in new infections across the U.S., according to the U.S. CDC.



ANNUAL
CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING

It's that time of the year to gather as a body of Christ to hear the reports of 2021 and make plans for 2022. We will be meeting after our church service on Sunday, February 6th.

Your input is very much valued and we want to hear from you. If you are unable to attend but would like to be part of the process, please be in touch with our clerk, Mary DiNucci, mawdinucci@gmail.com. Thank you for your love and support of this church, our missions, and our surrounding communities.



Thrift Store News

The Community Christmas Event on Saturday, December 18th was a huge success! The community made over \$200 in donations!!!

Thank you to everyone who donated clothing, toys, money, gift wrap, etc., so everyone in our surrounding communities could have a warm and happy Christmas!!!

And thank you to our manager, Ingrid, for all she does for our patrons, volunteers, and the communities we serve.



This is a picture of the beautiful mirror Ingrid donated. Our volunteers are helping revamp the kids' sections for the front and back of the store to get ready for January.



We are celebrating Christmas in January!!! And learning about problem solving and all things winter as well as continuing with our ABC's, numbers, and shapes.



Thank you to everyone who has dropped off or mailed their 2022 pledges in.

Our church could not participate in all the wonderful missions we do if it were not for the love and generosity of our members and friends who give their time, talent, and monetary donations to make these things happen. Thank you and bless you!!!

Prayer
Requests

Susan Stevens, Eve's daughter, Kitty, Patty Hibbert, Paul Chaplin, Ruth Fisher, Ada Beebe, Laura Smith, Shelly Hibbert, Barbara Lawrence's granddaughter, Ellie, John Waldie's brother-in-law, Wayne, Cynthia Thebault, Norene Hastings, Carlene, Henry & Barbara in the nursing home, Arlin Bigelow, Jean Hubbard, Carlton & Karen Pipe, brother, Chris, his wife, Ginny, wisdom and discernment for Kitty & Missie. And all those who have suffered loss during the recent series of devastating tornadoes.



Thank you to everyone who participated in this wonderful celebration. It is available to watch on our Facebook page. Fryeburg Congregational Church – little church with a big heart.

<https://www.facebook.com/pastorvi.oleteastman>

Pastor Vi continues to record all our public worship services and downloads them onto our church Facebook page each Sunday afternoon.

If you cannot be with us in person, you have an opportunity to participate in the life of our church virtually.

What Our Church is All About



Our Mission

We encourage all to live and grow as disciples of Christ in service to God and the World.

Our Minister

Rev. Dr. Violet Eastman
(Pastor Vi)

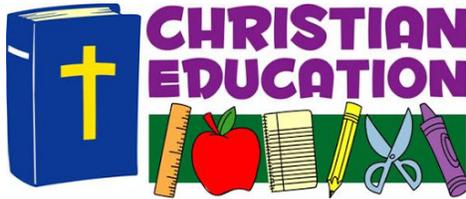
Email: ourpastorvi@gmail.com

Phone or Text:
239-595-4569

Pastor Vi's home address
93 Harding Rd
Brunswick, Maine
04011



Music Director, John Waldie
Pianojaw2@gmail.com



Christian Ed Director,
Linda Russell.
Lindarussell2972@gmail.com



Church Office
Office Phone: 207-935-3227
Please be advised our office phone number is are not monitored daily.

Church website:
www.fryeburgucc.org

Our Physical Address:
655 Main Street
Fryeburg, Maine 04037



Kerri McCormack, Head Teacher
Hours: Monday - Friday
7:30 am - 5:30 pm
Phone: 207-935-3276

We are still asking members and friends NOT to come to the church building during this time of Covid-19 unless it is absolutely necessary.

We are working to keep our learning center children and teachers healthy and safe.



679 Main Street
(Just down the street from our beautiful church)
Store Hours
Wed. 9 am – 12 noon and Sat. 10 am–2 pm or by appointment.
Ingrid Kellas, Manager
gardener@smallfryfarm.com
www.fryeburgthrift.com
Phone: 207-935-2329

Our church is on Facebook!



You can find us at
Fryeburg Congregational Church
The Little Church with a Big Heart
<https://www.facebook.com/pastorvioleteastman>

Pastor Vi will continue to make worship services available on our FB page even though we are now open for public worship.

Have a great month everyone!

