



The Hammond Streeter

Hammond Street Congregational Church, UCC, Bangor, ME

An Open and Affirming Community January 24, 2024

Website: www.hammondstreetchurch.org

Phone: 207-942-4381



FROM THE PASTOR'S OFFICE

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 12: 1-3

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

WORDS OF HOPE

Today's reading is often quoted or referenced by our fundamentalist brothers and sisters as God's curse for all time against any criticism of God's chosen ones, the children of Abraham. (Here called Abram, before God changed his name) Any such actions, even today, would result in the visitation on the critic of this approximately 3,800-year-old Divine Curse.

This means to them that any opinions, no matter how casual they might be, of the current devastating war in the middle east must divide the participants into heroes and villains, with the descendants of Abraham always being in the right. Otherwise, the Curse on the criticizing individual or nation will automatically go into effect. The real dilemma in this theological presumption is that both sides are descendants of Abraham, one side through his son, Isaac, and the other side through his son, Ishmael. It's always a wise idea to read ahead in the Genesis narratives to identify all the players.

As for myself, I do not feel moved to bless or curse either side, but rather to despise the curse of war. Most of the Hebrew Scriptures are about Abraham's children being constantly at war with one another as well as with numerous other tribes in that small region and regardless of the victor, there is always one more war to follow. Nothing has changed since those ancient days, except an increased misunderstanding of what God spoke in the first place. The core of the declaration to his faithful servant was that through him, all the families of the world would be blessed. I say this as I read the words of the ancient Hebrew text and count back to their origin in Arabic numerals.

As far as taking sides, I choose to take Jesus' side, as he is quoted saying in Luke 6.28: "...bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." In Jesus' point of view, the world was not divided into heroes and villains, but united as children of one Creator. Today, as it was in the days of Abraham, the only "villain" is the state of war and the only "hero" is the pursuit of peace. Each of us can be an element of that collective hero, and we can be assured that we will do it with God's blessing.

PRAYER

Thank you for the words of Jesus that always direct us to your reality. Help us to see the futility of cursing one another that we may know the blessings of your grace to all. Amen

ANNUAL LEADERSHIP RETREAT 2024

Annual Leadership Retreat is in the Fellowship Hall on Saturday, January 27th from 9 to 12. **We need all of our church leaders there as well as our committees.** We will review 2023 and then go into calendaring sessions for 2024 and then each committee will put their meetings and events on the big calendar. We look forward to seeing everyone there. Feel free to bring any snacks to share if you would like. Blessings, Pastor Gary



FREE BEAN LUNCH

Please join us on **Saturday, February 3, 2024** for our next Free Bean Lunch from 12-1, we provide a **FREE** meal for the community. We serve homemade beans, hot dogs, casseroles, cole slaw and a dessert. We also provide a bag lunch to take out consisting of a Peanut Butter & Jelly sandwich, an apple, and a cookie. There are lots of volunteer opportunities to include set-up, serving and cleanup as well as making casseroles, cookies or dessert.

Please contact Ruey Yehle at ryehle2@gmail.com for more information.

LENTEN BIBLE STUDY

Beginning on Monday, February 19th, Pastor Gary will be hosting a Lenten Bible Study at 1:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. The study will continue every Monday through Lent and will conclude on Monday, March 25th. Sign up sheets are on the table on the High Street entrance to the Sanctuary. The Study is, "Remember: God's Covenants and the Cross", By Susan Robb.

God's covenants throughout the Old Testament show the character of God's promises to the people of Israel. In this book, Susan Robb leads readers through the covenants with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David, followed by the new covenant established on Maundy Thursday. The Lenten story culminates with an examination of the cross as another example of God's promise for a new world.

Susan Robb teaches readers the basic lessons of the covenants through a mixture of biblical history and personal stories. Her pastoral character and warm tone provide a basis for understanding God's promises through history and the role of Jesus's passion and crucifixion in the history of the covenants. **Each student's book cost \$14.00**



FOOD NEEDED IN THE FOOD PANTRY

We are in need of Pasta, Sauce, Cereal, Canned Beans, Canned Fruit, non-refrigerated Milk and Re-useable Shopping Bags (**NO PAPER**). Thank You



WINTER WARMTH TREE

The **Winter Warmth Tree** is a program that will run until the end of January. The tree is in the Narthex. Your Outreach Committee is looking for **Hats, Gloves/Mittens and Winter Socks ONLY**. These items will be distributed to folks in our community needing a winter upgrade. They will be offered to guests at our Free Bean Lunch, Food Pantry or anyone who comes to the office. These accessories will also be provided to area shelters for distribution to their clients. **Thanks – Your Outreach Committee**

FREE BEAN LUNCH FOOD NEEDED

The Free Bean Lunch team needs Peanut Butter and Strawberry or Raspberry Jam for the bag lunches they hand out every month. Please leave in the kitchen in the Fellowship Hall. Thank You

COVID GUIDELINES

Covid levels in wastewater in Penobscot County are as high now as they were in the Omicron era (Jan-Feb 2022). Fortunately, people can reduce the risk of getting or spreading Covid by wearing a mask. Getting the latest Covid vaccination will also reduce the risk of serious illness.

HSCC has free N-95 masks at the greeter's table in the narthex. Please help yourself if you need a mask.



WINTER OUTERWEAR

Your Outreach Committee is looking for gently worn winter outerwear. During the winter months, HSCC offers gently used winter outerwear to guests at our Free Bean Lunch. We offer the clothing through March. Any winter outerwear in good condition is appreciated. Donations can be placed in the box in the Narthex or given to any outreach committee member.

Contact Andy Wood (207-745-3428) with questions. Thanks for helping our neighbors in need.



PFAFF ROOM MAKEOVER

One of our Sunday School rooms aka PFAFF Room is getting a long overdue makeover. Volunteers are cleaning, sanding and putting on a fresh coat of paint to brighten it up. It is true, many hands make light work. Stay tuned for the finished project.



HSCC COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2024

NO COMMITTEE MEETINGS THIS WEEK

PLEASE REMEMBER

Hammond Streeters at Home:

Sandy Farver, Eda & Hugh Morrison

Sylvia Ross Home-Bangor

Ronnie & Helga Kittredge

Brewer Rehab

74 Parkway S.—Room 109, Brewer, ME 04412
Ansley Throckmorton

Westgate Manor

750 Union St.—Room 111, Bangor, ME 04401
Susan Davies

DEADLINES FOR PUBLICATIONS

HAMMOND STREETER-TUESDAYS at NOON

SUNDAY BULLETIN-THURSDAYS at NOON

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday—Friday 9 to 3. Please knock or call the office at 207-942-4381 for assistance.

EMAIL ADDRESS:

admin@hammondstreetchurch.net

Please sign up to read scripture and dedicate flowers in the notebooks in the back of the sanctuary on the table.

SECURITY REMINDER

Please make sure the backdoor is locked when you leave. Lock it and give it a tug to make sure it is secure and make sure your vehicle is locked.

VIDEO TAPING SUNDAY SERVICES

We need volunteers to video tape the services on Sunday so that anyone can watch it on our Hammond Street Congregational Church Facebook page.

hammondstreetcongregationalchurch@hscucc

Please contact the office if you can help.

**Hammond Street
Congregational Church, UCC
P.O. Box 1106
Bangor, ME 04402-1106**

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

In Person Sunday Service

Pastor Gary Bagley

January 28, 2024 at 10 AM

ALL ARE WELCOME !!!!

**The Hammond Streeter
is a weekly publication of the
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