

# Reeds Mill Church

*"The Church in the Wildwood"*

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Dear Friends of Reeds Mill Church

June 2020

Let's start with a recap of 2019. It was another good year for Reeds Mill Church!

We experienced some improvements: The outhouse had screening installed by Pete Plog to help keep out nosey bugs and sand paint was applied to the floor by Steve Mitchell, a church trustee and head of The Maine School of Masonry. This will help keep us from slipping on rainy days! Steve and his students also created a beautiful and safe step-walkway from the parking area to the church's wooden steps. Matt Ransom, who has spent many hours cleaning and repairing the original organ, continued his work. He also graced us with his organ playing talents at one of the services. Not only his talent but his cool when a pedal strap broke at the end of a hymn he was playing. He calmly got up and carried his hymnal to the other organ and carried on. Old Home Sunday was observed with the traditional potluck and John Gensel's sermon. We celebrated the life of three women who passed away in 2019. Marylyn Bachelder, Myrtie Abbott and Betty Bredeau were all lovers of our beloved church. We sang their favorite hymns and shared about how they touched our lives. We enjoyed the annual Hymn Sing in September, greeting a spectacularly starry sky as we left the building, and the Sandy River Ramblers put on another one of their excellent benefit concerts. We enjoyed many of their original songs as well as a few hymns. The weather for Thanksgiving, however, was pretty bad, but 16 braved the treacherous roads to make it to the service. This service typically sees about 80 worshippers. The Candlelight Christmas Service had a packed house with over 100 people celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. Reeds Mill Church was alive and well last year!

Fast forward a few months into 2020....as the church slept something sinister was afoot. Covid what? Casual conversations touched on what we were hearing about China. Then, what do you mean I have to stop working???

The reality of how our lives swiftly and necessarily changed sunk in. Face masks and other PPE; limited numbers of people in our grocery stores that held so many empty shelves (TP, disinfecting wipes, flour, decaf coffee!!). Wipe down your groceries and your snail mail. Wash your hands, wash your hands and don't forget to wash your hands. We realized there'd be no more dining out or working out for a while; no more large weddings in venues betrothed couples were planning on. No more being with loved ones while they were in the hospital or nursing homes, and unable to hold a loved one's hand as they went home to our Lord. Watching the numbers climb and not being able to do a darn thing about it...but pray. And pray we did. We couldn't pray in our houses of worship, but we sure could in our own homes. Our spiritual leaders came up with creative ways to still be 'with' us, to lead us...Email, Facebook, Zoom, YouTube, and links to services lead by worship teams and preachers in empty sanctuaries. But we were all connected through the One. And we took comfort in that as much as we are humanly able.

In early April, when we (I) were still uneducated and in denial, I started reaching out to people who might lead services at Reeds Mill Church this summer. No one, NOT ONE, asked if we were sure we were going to be open for services. We were all preparing as if there was no question about opening. But I knew there was a distinct possibility that when I reached out to these service leaders again it might not be to get their information for their upcoming bulletin....

We have seen what happens when citizens do not honor the guidelines established for our safety by the CDC. Perhaps people got tired of "playing the game". It was time to get back to "normal" regardless of concerns. Within 2 weeks of large gatherings around the country the rise in coronavirus cases exploded. And so, at our annual meeting on June 14, the trustees present, after considerable discussion, measuring pros and cons, unanimously voted to not open the doors in July. It would be too risky for the health and wellbeing of the folks who want to worship at Reeds Mill Church.

Based on the guidelines given our church is too small to safely seat worshipers. Last year our average summer attendance was up; this year we'd seat many fewer. Our pews are not long enough or far apart enough to accommodate more. This may be the first time in the history of the church the doors will not be open for regularly scheduled services for a reason other than weather. The trustees will reevaluate the situation in mid-July to see if we might feel absolutely certain it would be safe to open up for services in August. And although we may feel more comfortable holding services in August than we do in July, we feel holding the annual Hymn Sing is out of the question. We've tabled making decisions about the Sandy River Ramblers Concert, the Thanksgiving Service and the Candlelight Christmas Service – all of these gatherings ordinarily see well over 50 in attendance.

The work of and in the church must continue whether or not there are services there. There is still maintenance and upkeep. For example, there's a window that needs repairing if it's ever going to stay open again. And that very L-O-N-G stove pipe from the woodstove to the chimney needs attention. The work goes on. *We appreciate your consideration of that fact.*

Here are three ways to keep yourself informed about the church schedule:

Call me, Ginni, at 207-639-2713

Email me at [vrobie@live.com](mailto:vrobie@live.com)

Go to [www.reedsmillchurch.org](http://www.reedsmillchurch.org)

We know that this shall pass. We also recognize that the future may feel very different. But we are adamant about keeping our recorded history up to date. Binders have been utilized to organize some of our paper history, i.e. newspaper articles and photographs. There are photos starting in 1955 and articles dating back to 1957. But there are not many of either and we suspect there may be more and even some predating these years in scrap books or boxes. One set of perplexing articles reports the church's centennial celebration in 1981 – a full 10 years before the church was 100 years old! Can you share any information about that? Do you have photos of weddings or baptisms or other special services? We welcome the opportunity to scan your photos/articles and return the originals to you.

Marie Bubier, a stalwart enthusiast for the church, suffered devastating injury last year. She hosted the Reeds Mill Ladies Sewing Circle in her home for many, many years. Prayers for Marie's continued recovery are appreciated. Between that and the coronavirus, the sewing circle has been on hiatus but is anxious to resume their activity. They were very active last year, selling 13 quilts from baby size to king size. If you would like to join or want to order a quilt, call Terri Plog, 207-639-3276. The circle also has notecards for sale which can be ordered by contacting me. The website picture is on the notecards which are sold in packets of 10 for \$7.50.

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This year's trustees are Nicole Norton, Claudia Boucher, Mike Malesky, Carl Beu, Naomi Henderson and Steve Mitchell. We also welcome Pam Searles as a new trustee. Just like you, these folks love Reeds Mill Church and want to see it remain an active house of worship. We will need to be patient and cautious and not forget about our Church in the Wildwood.

May you be blessed with good health, safety, and uplifted spirits.

Ginni Robie

Reeds Mill Church

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[vrobie@live.com](mailto:vrobie@live.com).

Church information is all you will receive via email.

Let me know if you would prefer to be taken off the mailing list.