

**THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
OF ELLSWORTH, MAINE  
FOUNDED 1812**



**NOVEMBER 2023 - THE STEEPLE NEWSLETTER**

First Congregational Church, PO Box 12, 2 Church Street, Ellsworth, Maine 04605 207-667-8321 [ellsworthucc.org](http://ellsworthucc.org)

From Rev. Keith Bowie, Transitional Minister

From the Book of Acts that some of us are studying on Wednesday evenings, there appears this description of the early church offering a snapshot of those bucolic days when Christianity and the Church were just beginning. At this stage, the “Christian Way” was a movement; it had not yet transformed into the institution known as “the Church.” From Acts 2:43-47: “Everyone around was in awe—all those wonders and signs done through the apostles! And all the believers lived in wonderful harmony, holding everything in common. They sold whatever they owned and pooled their resources so that each person’s need was met. They followed a daily discipline of worship in the Temple followed by meals at home, every meal a celebration, exuberant and joyful, as they praised God. People in general liked what they saw. Every day their number grew as God added those who were saved” (from *The Message*, Eugene Peterson).

Ah yes, movements are more fun, aren’t they? They are exciting, engaging, enlivening. No Committee/Board meetings. No budget to meet. Everyone on the same page and a feeling of unanimity. Did I mention no committee meetings?

Institutions, however, can be a pain. They take lots of care and feeding. They take lots of work and maintenance. If one is not careful, they can suck the life out of you, fast.

Well, can you guess what happened? Somebody in the Jesus movement figured out that they needed to set up a system whereby the faith could be passed on to future generations. Movements, you see, are short-lived and tend not to last. So they poured themselves into building the resulting institution, otherwise known as the Church. They did it not for themselves, but so that their children and grandchildren would find the same peace and joy that had originally been experienced in earlier days.

These “saints” are all those dear people who loved us, who told us stories of Jesus, who lived the faith before us and exemplified the path of discipleship. As we remember them and their efforts on All Saints Day, November 1, there comes the realization that we are not here by our own efforts. Rather, we are here in church by their gifts and grace.

It’s our turn now. As the hymn says, “*Pass It On.*” Pass on the faithfulness, love, acts of service and the amazing good unfolding week by week in our congregation. Stay positive, optimistic, and enthusiastic! And just remember this: the good work that you are doing is at least as much for future generations as it is for you.

God bless,

*Keith*

## NOVEMBER CHURCH MEETINGS

- Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:30 a.m.  
**Choir** – Thursdays, 6 p.m.  
**Music** – TBA  
**Search Comm** – TBA  
**Busy Bodies** – Mondays, 10:30 a.m.  
**QUARTERLY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**  
– Sunday, Nov 5 after worship  
**Deacons** – Sunday, Nov 12, 11:30 a.m.  
**Christian Ed** – Sunday, Nov 12, 11:30 a.m.  
**Trustees** – Thursday, Nov 16, 7 p.m.  
**Finance** – Friday, Nov 17, 7 p.m.  
**Missions** – Sunday, Nov 26, 11:30 a.m.  
**Council** – Monday Nov 27, 6 :30 p.m.

Our meetings are hybrid, in person AND Zoom, so that you may participate in the way you are comfortable. All FCC Zoom events (meetings and worship) use the same meeting number and password. Please contact the secretary in the church office (T-W-Th) for Zoom instructions.

### QUARTERLY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

After worship at  
11 a.m. on November 5, 2023.  
An hors d'oeuvres and  
dessert luncheon will follow.



**MASKING is OPTIONAL**  
in the church building.

Please maintain physical distance and  
respect the space of those who wish to  
continue to wear a mask.

## NOVEMBER LECTIONARY READINGS

### NOV 1 – ALL SAINTS DAY

Revelation 7:9-17  
Psalm 34:1-10, 22  
1 John 3:1-3  
Matthew 5:1-12

### NOV 5 – 23<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Joshua 3:7-17 & Psalm 107:1-7, 33-37 OR  
Micah 4:5-12 & Psalm 43  
1 Thessalonians 2:9-13  
Matthew 23:1-12

### NOV 12 – 24<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25 & Psalm 78:1-7 OR  
Amos 5:18-24 OR Psalm 70  
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18  
Matthew 25:1-13

### NOV 18 – 25<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Judges 4:1-7 & Psalm 123 OR  
Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18 & Psalm 90:1-8, (9-11), 12  
1 Thessalonians 5:1-11  
Matthew 25:14-30

### NOV 23 – THANKSGIVING DAY

Deuteronomy 8:7-18 & Psalm 65  
2 Corinthians 9:6-15  
Luke 17:11-19

### NOV 26 – 26<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 & Psalm 100 OR  
Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 & Psalm 95:1-7a  
Ephesians 1:15-23  
Matthew 25:31-36

give  
thanks  
with a  
grateful  
heart

# DEACONS

**Nov 5 – Communion, Rev. Keith Bowie**

**Nov 12 – Rev. Keith Bowie**

**Nov 19 – Rev. Dr. David Henry**

**Nov 26 – Rev. Keith Bowie**

**November Deacons:**

**John Lacey & Katharine Schrader**

How can it be November already?! This is a friendly reminder that, **Sunday, November 5, is our Quarterly Congregational Meeting.** That is also Communion Sunday. We hope to see you that day.

I appreciate change is hard and I want to let everyone know that my suggestion of any change is not a final statement of what will happen. All ideas must be reviewed by the Council and be brought to the congregation. We are only bringing these options forward to, perhaps, help the church.

Events happening this fall at FCC:

- ☛ Cider & Donuts on Halloween, 6 p.m. (10/31)
- ☛ Making the greens for the front entrance pillars on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Potluck lunch at noon, bring a dish to share. (11/25)

We have some events coming up in December—stay tuned and read the bulletins and newsletters for more information!!

I hope this finds everyone in good spirits and ready for the special end-of-year seasons we enjoy so much!

If you think the Deacons could help you in any way, please don't hesitate to contact one of us.

## Prayer Calendar names

As we attempt to pray for our entire church family over the course of a year, the Deacons ask that you please include these names in your daily prayers during November:

Julie & Bill Bromley  
Cathi Goebel  
Roberta Keep  
Stephen Merchant  
Margaret Smith  
Julianna Wood  
Christina Allen  
Kassidy Robidoux  
Robert Wullen, Jr.  
Evan Lacey  
David & Linda Ballard

## From the Moderator

There are those in the Christian community who are seeing in the chaos around us, both here, and particularly in the mid-east signs of the “end times”, the coming of the apocalypse. There are even those who seem to be almost wishing for that to happen. I can't help but wonder if that line of thinking isn't prompted by a sort of “chaos fatigue”.

We have all been challenged, even at times, disheartened by all the upheaval of the recent past. Through that lens of discouragement, it becomes difficult to be open to new and good things that may well be trying to happen in the world around us.

Imagine, if you will, what might be possible if all, or even most of humanity, might accomplish together if we could just put away the division and, instead, focus on loving each other rather than identifying those whose perspectives are not ours are somehow less than. *(continued next page →)*

There is a growth industry in our world that expends considerable time, money, and effort on the effort to divide. That industry has enjoyed no small amount of success. The impact of that "success" is evident whenever we check up on the news, and from time to time, when we together try to discern a way ahead.

We need to start by loving each other as fully as we are able. In that effort there is no place for selfishness or self-aggrandizement. None of us are perfect and all of us have gifts of the spirit to share.

As we, together, discern who and how we are going to be, we need to be mindful of our own place in things. Do we listen well to others? When we listen are we looking first to advance an agenda or are we listening to understand? Are we truly trying to be loving or is there something else going on? Have we failed to see the change in the one to whom we are listening? Is there worry there?

None of this comes easily to any of us but all of it is essential to a healthy and vibrant Church community. So too is rest, Sabbath if you will. There is danger in overdoing, perhaps more danger than in not doing enough. How so? It can be pretty easy to both take up too much space and, inadvertently, find oneself in the position of being controlling rather than empowering. It is difficult for love to grow when we get wrapped up in asserting control rather than in becoming vulnerable. Being vulnerable runs contrary to our nature for many, likely even all of us. Absent vulnerability, compassion and growth becomes problematic.

Even a quick glance at the world around us clearly demonstrates the absolute necessity of change. We are supposed to be a community embedded in the way of Jesus. The way of Jesus sets aside division and replaces it with love. Love for God and love for each other. ♦

In Christian love,  
Jack Lacey



## NOVEMBER 12 IS STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

Have you ever wondered why the church calls our giving Stewardship? Stewardship suggests that everything we have is like a trust from God that we care for, and being stewards we want to make the best use of all that God has entrusted to us. We are the stewards of our church, of its faith and life and mission and building. So, our financial support is stewardship as it makes possible all that this church is and does.

As we think about our giving as stewards of our church and its mission, there are some questions we need to ask ourselves. What does my faith have to do with my giving, or have I thought of it this way? What does my giving to my church mean for me? Is my giving a part of how I worship God? How have I adjusted my giving as things have changed in my life? How do I decide how much to give? What do I want to accomplish or make possible with my giving? The Bible talks about tithing but that's not the guide most of us use. What guide have I used, or do I use one? Is my giving part of my household budget? Why do I feel as I do about pledging my giving? Thinking about these questions and our answers can make our giving more meaningful.

***Plan to attend worship on November 12.*** Our stewardship represented in our financial support of our Church and its mission will be celebrated with the dedication of our promised giving cards and their meaning in a special ritual. We know that you will want to be present to share in this prayerful affirmation of faith and of the future our First Congregational Church. ***Your presence in worship testifies to the meaningful importance of faith in your life as part of this worshiping congregation.***

Your Stewardship Committee  
John Lacey  
Cindia Sargent  
Andy Stephenson



## THANKSGIVING SUNDAY NOVEMBER 19

We will count our blessings and stretch them forward in worship on Thanksgiving Sunday.



**The Harvest Table** will be decorated and set up in the front of the sanctuary with food we bring to share. Bring nonperishable food items, or perhaps a squash or pie pumpkin, and all donations will be taken to Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry. If you have questions about the Harvest Table, please contact Katharine Schrader.

Worship will feature Testimonies of Thanksgiving, when we all will have an opportunity to share our stories of gratitude with each other. You may post your Testimony of Thanksgiving on the church's Facebook page, to be read during worship as time allows.

**Sharing food gives everyone energy. Sharing gratitude gives everyone encouragement. Sharing makes love grow and gives glory to God.** It will be a fantastic Sunday morning!



**DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME** ends in the wee hours of November 5. When you go to bed on Saturday the 4th, set your clock backward one hour. Enjoy an extra hour of sleep or linger over coffee and breakfast. See you in church!



## GARLAND MAKING SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25

We need folks to create the garlands that will adorn our front porch pillars during Advent and Christmas. Come to work at 9 a.m., There will be a Potluck Lunch at noon (please bring a dish to share) and we'll finish things as needed after the meal. Speak with Ruth Tainter for more details.



## ADULT FORUM

The forum meets on Sunday mornings at 8:30 in the Parlor. Everyone is welcome. Speak with Tom MacDonald if you have any questions.

## SCRIPTURES ABOUT THANKS GIVING

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:18
2. Philippians 4:6
3. Psalm 107:1
4. Psalm 7:17
5. Ephesians 5:20
6. James 1:17
7. Psalm 50:14
8. Colossians 3:15
9. Hebrews 13:15
10. Psalm 100:4
11. 2 Corinthians 2:14
12. Psalm 116:12
13. Lamentations 3:23
14. Colossians 4:2
15. Colossians 3:17
16. Psalm 31:19
17. Psalm 103:2
18. 2 Corinthians 4:15
19. Psalm 28:7
20. 1 Corinthians 15:57
21. Psalm 95:2
22. 1 Chronicles 16:34
23. Luke 6:38
24. Psalm 69:30
25. 1 Timothy 2:1
26. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
27. 1 Timothy 4:4-5
28. 2 Corinthians 4:15
29. 1 Chronicles 16:8

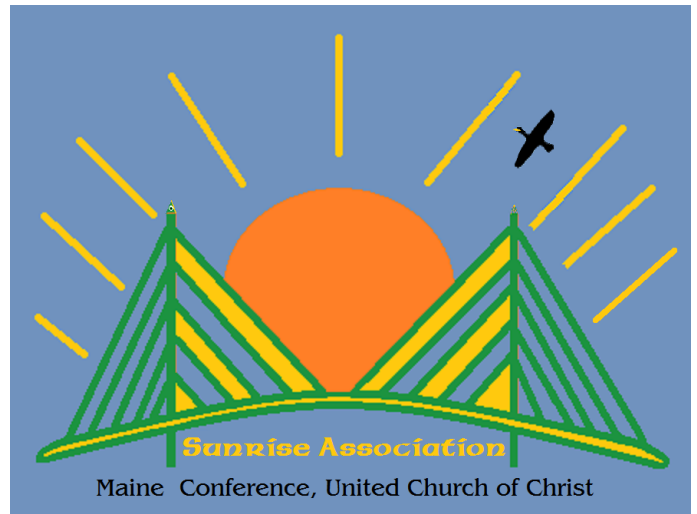


## PLANNING AHEAD FOR DECEMBER EVENTS

We are planning to have a church float in the **43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Downtown Ellsworth Light Parade: Christmas in Ellsworth**, Saturday, December 2. We have 6 adult t-shirts with our church picture on them if anyone wishes to walk with float. Please speak with Ruth Tainter or Bonnie Carter for more information about participating in the Christmas parade.

There will be a **Live Nativity** on our church lawn on Saturday, December 9. The Tainters have the stable animals lined up. We need a Mary and Joseph. Please contact Bonnie Carter if you would like to participate.



**Our 2023 candlelight Christmas Eve Service will take place at 5 p.m.** Christmas Eve is on Sunday this year. We are offering this early service so that you will not be driving late in the dark and can then attend your holiday gatherings with family and friends.



## SUNRISE ASSOCIATION FALL MEETING Saturday, November 4 9 a.m.-noon

The meeting will take place at the  
Union Congregational Church of  
Hancock on Route 1.

# NOVEMBER 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<b>1 ALL SAINTS DAY</b> 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	<b>2</b> 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	<b>3</b> <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	<b>4</b> 9 am Sunrise Assoc. Fall Mtg
<b>5 DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS</b> <b>Green</b> 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service & Communion <b>Qtrly Cong. Mtg</b> Luncheon	<b>6</b> <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	<b>9</b> 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	<b>10</b> <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12 STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY</b> <b>Green</b> 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Deacons 11:30 am Christian Ed	<b>13</b> <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b> 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	<b>16</b> 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir 7 pm Trustees	<b>17</b> <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b> 10 am Finance	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> <b>Green</b> 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	<b>20</b> <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b> 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> 9 am Bulletin & Steeple deadlines 1-4 pm Bowie office	<b>23 THANKSGIVING</b> 	<b>24</b> <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	<b>25</b> 9 am Garland making & lunch
<b>26</b> <b>Green</b> 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Missions	<b>27</b> <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b> 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities 6:30 pm Council	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	<b>30</b> 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	<b>Give thanks with a grateful heart.</b>	

## WHY WERE THE SAINTS, SAINTS?

Why were the saints, saints?

Because they were cheerful when it was difficult to be cheerful,  
 patient when it was difficult to be patient;  
 and because they pushed on when they wanted to stand still,  
 and kept silent when they wanted to talk,  
 and were agreeable when they wanted to be disagreeable.

That was all.

It was quite simple and always will be.

Author Unknown



# **Sunday Worship Service 10 a.m.**

**Church office hours:**

**Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.**

***Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,  
since as members of one body  
you were called to peace. And be thankful.***

Colossians 3:15



**First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ**

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