

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



**JANUARY 2022 - THE STEEPLE NEWSLETTER**

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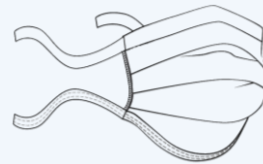
***A message from Rev. Keith Bowie, who has been one of our supply preachers***

**A** very Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year to you all! We are still within the “twelve days of Christmas” as I write this article. I am praying that each of you is feeling God’s presence stir in your hearts and your lives this Christmas. I cherish the joys of Christmas and the delight of coming to know many of you during the latter half of 2021 as I supplied the pulpit at First Congregational UCC. A few weeks ago, the Council asked me to consider on-site office hours one or two days a week to provide more of a pastoral presence in addition to Sunday mornings. I agreed to expand my hours. So far, I have been making myself available on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m. Thus, you have a definite time when you know that I will be there for you. If this time isn’t a good time for someone, please call me and we can set up an appointment that is convenient for you. I want us to get to know each other better. I want to hear your hopes, dreams, and vision for the life and mission of this church. I want to know about your family, where you came from, and what attracted you to this church. And, yes, it is permissible for you to also share what you perceive to be the shortcomings and weaknesses of FCC. What can we do better? What can we discard that isn’t working effectively and efficiently anymore? How can we pursue God’s call to serve our neighbors? What kind of pastoral leadership going forward?

I am happy to report that Council has also seen a need for your input. Council is currently planning for some small group, cottage style meetings to take place early in the New Year. These are “listening sessions,” designed to hear what you have to say. Look for more information about these constructive meetings soon. Also, I will be providing some pastoral care as needed and representing you at meetings of the Ellsworth Area Ministers’ Association.

*(Article continued the bottom of page 4)*

**A mask is necessary for all who gather in the church building.**



The Re-Opening Committee hopes this will serve to mitigate the spread of Covid and enable us to remain open for worship.

We will decide on a week-to-week basis if we host a coffee hour after morning worship.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in these difficult times. This is hard on all of us.

## JANUARY CHURCH MEETINGS

- Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:30 a.m.  
**Choir** – Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.  
**Music** – TBA  
**Deacons** – Sunday, Jan 9, 11:30 p.m.  
**Council** – Monday, Jan 10, 6:30 p.m.  
**Missions** – Thursday, Jan 13, time TBA  
**Christian Ed** – TBA  
**Trustees** – Thursday, Jan 20, 7 p.m.  
**ANNUAL MEETING – Sunday, January 23**

Except for Choir, 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.** Call the church office (T-W-Th) for updated Zoom instructions.

### COLD WEATHER HICCOUGHS & THE FRONT ENTRANCE



Cold weather and wet concrete don't play nicely together. Ergo, the retaining wall we need at the front entrance for the stairs cannot be poured until Spring. So, we ask you to continue to use the State Street and education wing entrances.

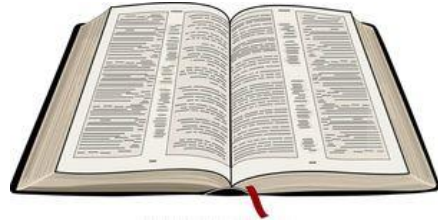
*Just* ♥ *married*

**Katy Schrader & Travis Blackmer**

*Our deepest sympathies...*

**to the family & friends of  
Henry Jones, Eleanor's brother**

**to the family & friends of  
Ellen Andrews**



## JANUARY LECTIONARY READINGS

### JANUARY 1 – NEW YEAR'S DAY

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13  
Psalm 8  
Revelation 21:1-6a  
Matthew 25:31-46

### JANUARY 2 – 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Jeremiah 31:7-14  
Psalm 147:12-20  
Ephesians 1:3-14  
John 1:(1-9), 10-18

### JANUARY 6 - EPIPHANY

Isaiah 60:1-6  
Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14  
Ephesians 3:1-12  
Matthew 2:1-12

### JANUARY 9 – 1<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Isaiah 43:1-7  
Psalm 29  
Acts 8:14-17  
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

### JANUARY 16 – 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Isaiah 62:1-5  
Psalm 36:5-10  
1 Corinthians 12:1-11  
John 2:1-11

### JANUARY 23 – 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10  
Psalm 19  
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a  
Luke 4:14-21

### JANUARY 30 – 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Jeremiah 1:4-10  
Psalm 71:1-6  
1 Corinthians 13:1-13  
Luke 4:21-30

## MINISTER'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Our congregation generously supports The Minister's Discretionary Fund (MDF). Historically, this fund allowed the minister to help those in need as requested. When strangers outside the church family seek assistance from the pastor, it has been difficult to determine if the needs were legitimate. All the pastors comprising the Ellsworth Area Ministers Association (EAMA) have experienced strangers seeking aid.

[Families First](#), located at 41 North Street in Ellsworth, will aid local pastors and churches by administering discretionary funds. Individuals seeking aid that are not part of a congregation will be directed to Families First. Our church has chosen to participate in this program. A portion of our MDF gifts will go to Families First, and we will retain a portion of MDF gifts to support the needs in our congregation.

Please contact any of our church leadership with questions you have about MDF and how we are directing funds. We are blessed that our generosity spreads Christ's love in the Ellsworth community.



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**“The king will answer them,  
‘I can guarantee this truth:  
Whatever you did for one of my  
brothers or sisters, no matter  
how unimportant they seemed,  
you did for me.’”**

Matthew 25:40



We are looking for more choir members. Can you carry a tune? We'll teach you how to read the music.

The next Music Committee meeting will be scheduled as needed.

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

We are seeking new members to serve on Christian Ed. We haven't determined a January meeting date yet. Stay tuned!

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## PRAYER FOR A NEW YEAR

Thank you, Lord,  
for giving me the new year.  
Help me live the way I should  
as I face each new day.  
Let me release any  
grudges, anger, or pain.  
Give me strength and courage  
so that I might lend a shoulder  
to a friend or stranger who needs it.  
The year ahead is empty—  
help me fill it with good things.  
Amen.



## OUR JANUARY MINISTERS

January 2 - Rev. Matthew McDonald  
January 9 - Rev. Keith Bowie  
January 16 - Rev. Keith Bowie  
January 23 - Rev. Keith Bowie  
January 30 - Rev. Keith Bowie

Well, January is here, and we continue to try and support everyone in their yearnings for normalcy in our lives. We are looking for new ideas to tackle for our next year. If there is something that would help you increase your understanding of how God is working in our lives, please reach out to any of the Deacons with your ideas. We will discuss them and see how we can support the whole church. We have been trying to “think outside of the box” and we need everyone’s help. We want to build the recognition of our Lord and to let our community know that we are here for them.

Unfortunately, we must continue to be thoughtful about how to support everything we want to do at church and maintain the safety of all during the changing pandemic. The Deacons support the different ways people can attend services whether in person, radio, Facebook, and Zoom. If anyone needs help accessing one of these options, please reach out to the Deacons so we can help.

If there are any prayer need, please reach out to any Deacon.

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*(continued from the front page)*

Finally, as we move into the New Year, I wish to leave you with some practical suggestions for daily living, in no particular order. From time to time, I need to remind myself of all of them, and I hope you will also find them of interest:



1. **BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO STAY CONNECTED TO OTHERS.** Have you ever thought about a movie ticket stub that says, “Void if detached”? There is a world of meaning wrapped up in that phrase!
2. **BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO REJECT PERFECTIONISM.** Perfectionism is a dangerous trait and a subtle form of atheism.
3. **BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO CAN LAUGH WITH AND AT LIFE.** Laughter is God’s compensating gift against all the pressures of life.
4. **BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO TAKE THE TIME TO MAKE AND KEEP A FRIEND.** Friendship, like life and love, must be nourished and taken care of. If it is ignored, it atrophies and disappears.
5. **BLESSED ARE THOSE WITH AN EDUCATED HEART, i.e. COMMON SENSE.** To have an educated heart means you know something wonderful to say about someone else’s life, and you say it; it means you know something cruel or malicious, and you don’t say it.

Blessings and peace,  
Rev. Keith Bowie

# JANUARY 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 White 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service & Communion	3 OFFICE CLOSED	4 6 pm Choir	5 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	6 Epiphany 9 am Bulletin deadline	7 OFFICE CLOSED	1 New Year's Day 8
9 White 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Deacons	10 OFFICE CLOSED 6:30 pm Council	11 6 pm Choir	12 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	13 9 am Bulletin & Steeple deadlines TBA Missions	14 OFFICE CLOSED	15
16 Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	17 OFFICE CLOSED	18 6 pm Choir	19 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	20 9 am Bulletin deadline 7 pm Trustees	21 OFFICE CLOSED	22
23 Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11 am ANNUAL MEETING	24 OFFICE CLOSED	25 6 pm Choir	26 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	27 9 am Bulletin deadline	28 OFFICE CLOSED	29
30 Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	31 OFFICE CLOSED	<i><b>A blessed New Year!</b></i>				



## ANNUAL MEETING SUNDAY, JANUARY 23, 2022



According to Article 13 of the church By-Laws, Annual Meeting takes place after morning worship on the fourth Sunday of January. We will hear reports from Officers and Committees, elect Officers, consider a 2022 Budget, and transact any other necessary business. Following the meeting there will be a light lunch provided. **This will be a hybrid meeting, in-person and on Zoom.**

If you chair a committee, please submit your year-end report on 2021 activities to Joyce in the church office before January 12, 2022. (Gold stars always awarded to early birds!)