

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



**MARCH 2021 - THE STEEPLE NEWSLETTER**

First Congregational Church, PO Box 12, 2 Church Street, Ellsworth, Maine 04605 207-667-8321 ellsworthucc.org

**From our Pastor**



Lent is an opportunity to focus on growing closer to God. The **midweek evening services** are held on Zoom at 7 p.m. each Wednesday in March, and are posted on Facebook shortly thereafter. See page 2 for details. I was encouraged to see four

members of FCC in the Zoom windows this past Wednesday. We will host the first Wednesday in March using Zoom and Facebook Live. I hope we occupy more windows than our guests do. Note that Wednesday services use the EAMA Zoom Meeting ID, not FCC's ID and password. Watch for details and bulletins in the weekly emails.

I will host the 2nd monthly **Church Game Night**, Sunday, March 7, 4-5 p.m. on Zoom. We will work together on solving cryptic messages.

Our **Sunday worship services** will be designed around biblical passages that reference stones and rocks. I'm sure we will miss the displays that Cindy and Lois designed last year, but what can you do with stones except pile them up? Well, maybe put a cross on one with a permanent marker to remind you of the season.

**HOLY WEEK** will have more opportunities for half-hour reflection or worship with all evening events scheduled for 7 p.m.

**Monday, March 29** - Group Zoom Reading of Gospel of Mark chapters 1-7

**Tuesday, March 30** - Group Zoom Reading of Gospel of Mark chapters 8-13

**Maundy Thursday, April 1** - Communion Service remembering Jesus' last Supper in the Upper Room and the desertion by the disciples.

**Good Friday, April 2** - Candlelight Tenebrae Service of Jesus' Passion, Death & Burial

And then a most important stone gets rolled away . . . but that is next month.

Stay in touch,  
Pastor Cynthia

**In this season of Lent, we're reminded of our own difficulties and struggles.** Sometimes the way has seemed too dark. Sometimes we feel like our lives have been marked by such grief and pain, we don't see how our circumstance can ever change. But in the midst of our weakness, we ask that you would be strong on our behalf. Lord, rise up within us, let your Spirit shine out of every broken place we've walked through. Allow your power to be manifest through our own weakness, so that others will recognize it is You who is at work on our behalf. We ask that you would trade the ashes of our lives for the beauty of your Presence. Trade our mourning and grief for the oil of joy and gladness from your Spirit. Trade our despair for hope and praise. We choose to give you thanks today and believe that this season of darkness will fade away. Thank you that you are with us in whatever we face and that you are greater than this trial. We know and recognize that you are Sovereign, we thank you for the victory that is ours because of Christ Jesus, and we are confident that you have good still in store for our future. We thank you that you are at work right now, trading our ashes for greater beauty. We praise you, for you make all things new. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Source: Martin Luther, the German Litany

## MARCH CHURCH MEETINGS (ZOOM)

**Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:30 a.m.  
**Kids Church** – Sundays, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
**Re-Opening** – Thursday, March 4, 6:45 p.m.  
**Trustees** – Thursday, March 11, 7 p.m.  
**Deacons** – Sunday, March 14, 12:30 p.m.  
**Missions** – Thursday, March 18, 6:45 p.m.  
**Re-Opening** – Thursday, March 18, 7:15 p.m.  
**Christian Ed** – Sunday, March 21, 12:30 p.m.  
**Council** – Thursday, March 25, 7 p.m.

**FCC Zoom events use the same meeting number and password. Call the church office (T-W-Th) for Zoom instructions if you need them.**

## MARCH 2021 LECTIONARY READINGS

### MARCH 7 – 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY IN LENT

Exodus 20:1-17  
Psalm 19  
1 Corinthians 1:18-25  
John 2:13-22

### MARCH 14 – 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN LENT (Daylight Saving Time begins)

Numbers 21:4-9  
Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22  
Ephesians 2:1-10  
John 3:14-21

### MARCH 21 – 5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN LENT

Jeremiah 31:31-34  
Psalm 51:1-12 OR Psalm 119:9-16  
Hebrews 5:5-10  
John 12:20-33

### MARCH 28 – PALM SUNDAY

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29  
Mark 11:1-11 OR  
John 12:12-16



**Until further notice, the church sanctuary is closed to in-person worship.**



We hope you will join the faith community for these worship opportunities in 2021. These services take place on Zoom this year.

## ECUMENICAL LENTEN SERVICES *Created for Community*

These cherished EAMA\* ecumenical worship services will take place via Zoom this year on **Wednesdays at 7 p.m.** Joyce will email you the specific Zoom links for each service the day before.

### March 3, 7 p.m.

*In Community with All the Saints*  
Host: First Congregational UCC

### March 10, 7 p.m.

*In Community with Our Neighbors*  
Host: Ellsworth Unitarian Universalist

### March 17, 7 p.m.

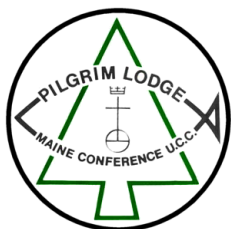
*In Community with Those on the Margins*  
Host: Prospect Harbor United Methodist

### March 24, 7 p.m.

*In Community with Christ*  
Host: Corea Baptist

Video recordings will be available on First Congregational Church's Facebook page after each service. Visit [www.facebook.com/fccEllsworth](http://www.facebook.com/fccEllsworth)

\*Ellsworth Area Ministry Association



**The Rev. Jennifer Paty**, Director of Pilgrim Lodge, has submitted her resignation, effective February 28, 2021. Jen began her ministry among us on January 2, 2020, just a short time before

we began to experience the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This past year has been extraordinarily challenging for outdoor ministry programs everywhere. The burdens of stress on staff and volunteers have been great.

The people of the Maine Conference and those we welcome as our guests at PL join in thanking Jen for her passion, her creativity, and her wide vision of the forward edges of outdoor ministry. We celebrate Jen's love for PL and for every soul welcomed there. We celebrate her persistent imagination in making grant applications and discovering new sources of support for the ministries of Pilgrim Lodge.

**Everyone is invited to attend her farewell party (Zoom) Sunday, February 28, 2 p.m.**

Get Zoom links at

<https://www.maineucc.org/blog-post/shalom-until-we-meet-again-jpaty/>

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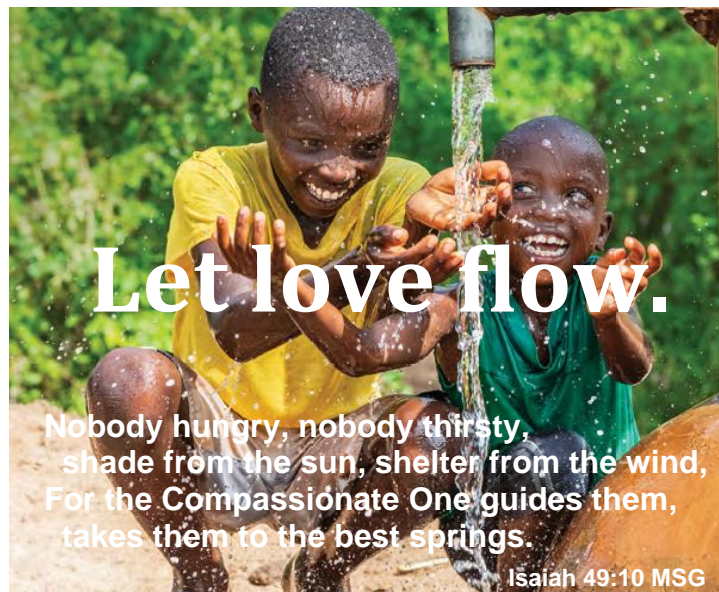
## **SAYING NO TO SAY YES? Discernment around a return to in-person worship**

**Monday, March 24, 4:30–6 p.m.**

Using the popular resource **Saying No to Say Yes** (written by David C. Olson and Nancy G. Devor), this conversation will focus on pastoral and congregational leadership in beginning the discernment process towards a return to in-person worship.

This seminar with Rev. Tara Barber is designed for Committees on Ministry, Pastoral Relations and Re-Opening committees. Ministers and congregations need sustained support as they continue to make difficult decisions related to the pandemic. To register:

<https://ucc.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUrc-msqj4uE9fqA4QgC4k9GCms5O92l-Ur>



The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare structural inequities that contribute to increased poverty and injustice. On full display is the plight of the working poor who have lost jobs, are on the brink of homelessness, and are waiting for hours in long lines at food pantries.

Deadly wildfires, hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, and wars have left people homeless, families grieving loss of loved ones and entire communities awaiting assistance for long term disaster recovery.

Refugees and asylum seekers are left in limbo, languishing at borders waiting for welcome. Many have been displaced by economic conditions, war and climate change. Among the millions of refugees are families looking for safe places that they can call home.

In the midst of these despairing moments, the United Church of Christ offers hope as we stand in solidarity and mutuality with communities suffering and in need. Through Wider Church Ministries, the UCC fulfills its commitment to respond to a variety of global and local concerns by providing advocacy, sustainable development resources, long term disaster recovery support, and assistance for refugee and asylum seekers, working in collaboration with our partners locally and globally.

FCC will receive gifts to OGHS throughout March. We will dedicate the gifts on Sunday, March 14.



# IMPACT REPORT 2020

The CWS Kit and Blanket Programs are two of the many ways Church World Service shares in a hope-filled tomorrow. Your support truly makes a difference in the lives of children and families all over the world. Here's how CWS has provided kits & blankets through your support of this program.

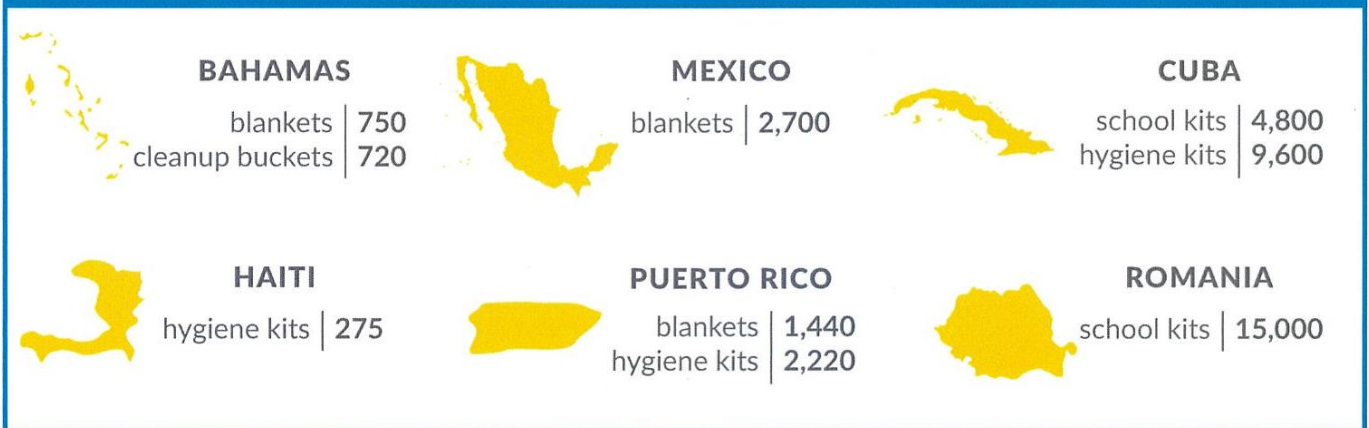
Since January, we've distributed **63,967 CWS Blankets and Kits in the United States.**

"We are very appreciative of those who spend time to fill those hygiene kits. It must take a long time! I wish I could be there to thank them in person! If you knew the value they are to our people, you would know how much they are appreciated. And the time to put them together, they are so valuable and a gift from God."

-DOTTIE VILLESVIK, FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, EVERETTE, WA



Since January, we've distributed **37,505 CWS Blankets and Kits internationally.**



TOTAL KITS AND BLANKETS DISTRIBUTED GLOBALLY: **101,472**



**CWS**

cwskits.org  
cwsblankets.org

# MARCH 2021 EVENTS AT FIRST CONGO UCC

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 OFFICE CLOSED	2	3 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out 7 pm Ecumenical Lenten service host	4 9 am Bulletin deadline 6:45 pm Re-opening Committee	5 OFFICE CLOSED	6
7 <b>Lent III</b> Violet 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service & Holy Communion 11:30 am Kids Church 4 pm Game Night	8 OFFICE CLOSED	9	10 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	11 9 am Bulletin deadline 7 pm Trustees	12 OFFICE CLOSED	13
14 <b>Lent IV</b> Violet <u>DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS</u> 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Kids Church 12:30 pm Deacons	15 OFFICE CLOSED	16	17 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	18 9 am Bulletin deadline 9 am Steeple deadline 6:45 pm Missions 7:15 pm Re-Opening	19 OFFICE CLOSED	20
21 <b>Lent V</b> Violet 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Kids Church 12:30 pm Christian Ed	22 OFFICE CLOSED	23 9 am Steeple deadline	24 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	25 9 am Bulletin deadline 7 pm Council	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27
28 <b>Palm Sunday</b> Violet 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Kids Church	29 OFFICE CLOSED 7 pm Group Zoom reading	30 7 pm Group Zoom reading	31 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	<b>Holy Week begins Palm Sunday.</b>		



We ask that you respectfully comply with our request to **wear a mask** whenever you enter the church building. Thank you.

