

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



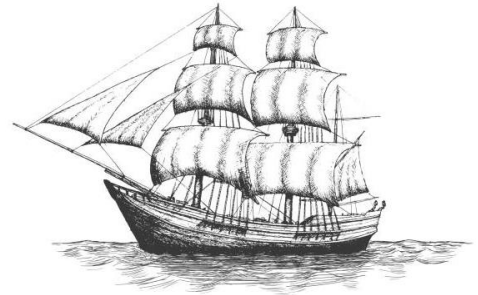
**APRIL 2022 - THE STEEPLE NEWSLETTER**

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

*From Rev. Keith Bowie, Transitional Minister*

**D**oes the Spanish schooner by the name of La Amistad ring any bells? It should. The Amistad story is a part of our United Church of Christ heritage and reveals that we serve a God of great mercy. Here is a quick summary of the story:

In June of 1839, a Spanish schooner named La Amistad set sail from Havana, Cuba. On board were 53 captive Africans. The Spanish intended to sell the Africans into slavery, but the Africans revolted and seized control of the ship. Observed for the ship's erratic behavior, ragged sails and African crew, the schooner is stopped and seized by the U.S. Navy. The Africans are arrested, jailed, and charged with murder and mutiny. Enter a courageous band of Congregational, Baptist, and Presbyterian abolitionists who wrestle with their Bibles long into the night and who decide to help fight the charges. They raise funds for the legal defense of the captives. These Christian abolitionists even learn their language, teach them to read and write, listen to their stories, befriend them, and supply them with food and clothing.



The Amistad captives lived under arrest for two years as the complicated and momentous case made its way toward the Supreme Court. In March of 1841, in the season of Lent, the Supreme Court justices rendered their verdict: they decided in favor of the Africans. This represented one of the first civil rights cases of the U.S. Supreme Court. It represented a turning point in the cause of abolition. Not least, it is a story about the triumph of mercy and justice.

If you recall, the Amistad story was made into a 1997 historical drama film directed by Steven Spielberg. If your travels ever take you to Cleveland, Ohio, stop and see the Amistad Chapel of the UCC Church House in downtown Cleveland. Gracious hosts will gladly tell you more about the Amistad. If you let them know in advance that you are coming, they will also give you a tour of the building. God continues to call each of us to act to make a difference in our world today.

*Keith*

## APRIL CHURCH MEETINGS

- Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:30 a.m.  
**Choir** – Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.  
**Music** – TBA  
**Missions** – TBA  
**Deacons** – Sunday, April 10, 11:30 p.m.  
**Trustees** – Thursday, April 21, 7 p.m.  
**Christian Ed** – TBA  
**Council** – Monday, April 25, 6:30 p.m.

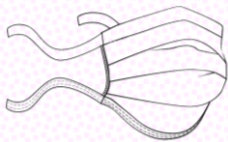
Except for Choir, our meetings are hybrid, in-person AND Zoom, so that you may participate in the way you are comfortable.

**All FCC Zoom events (meetings and worship) use the same meeting number and password.** Please call the church office (T-W-Th) for Zoom instructions.

### FRONT ENTRANCE CLOSED

Please continue to use the State Street and education wing entrances.

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



The Re-Opening Committee asks that you continue to wear masks to keep us safe and enable us to remain open for worship. We decide on a week-to-week basis if we host a coffee hour after morning worship.

We thank you for your cooperation. Covid has been hard on all of us, and everyone is tired.

## APRIL LECTIONARY READINGS

### APRIL 3 – 5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN LENT, COMMUNION

Isaiah 43:16-21  
Psalm 126  
Philippians 3:4b-14  
John 12:1-8



### APRIL 10 – PALM SUNDAY

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29  
Luke 19:28-40



### APRIL 14 – MAUNDY THURSDAY

Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14  
Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19  
1 Corinthians 11:23-26  
John 13:1-17, 31b-35



### APRIL 15 – GOOD FRIDAY

Isaiah 52:13-53:12  
Psalm 22  
Hebrews 10:16-25 OR  
Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9  
John 18:1-19:42



### APRIL 16 – HOLY SATURDAY

Job 14:1-14 OR  
Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24  
Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16  
1 Peter 4:1-8  
Matthew 27:57-66 OR  
John 19:38-42



### APRIL 17 – EASTER

Acts 10:34-43 OR  
Isaiah 65:17-25  
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24  
1 Corinthians 15:19-26 OR  
Acts 10:34-43  
John 20:1-8 OR  
Luke 24:1-12



### APRIL 24 – 2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 5:27-32  
Psalm 118:14-29 OR Psalm 150  
Revelation 1:4-8  
John 20:19-31

**Daily readings for Holy Week appear on page 5.**



# HOLY WEEK SERVICES

**April 10 - Palm Sunday, 10 a.m.** Celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. In-person, WDEA, Facebook & Zoom.

**April 14 - Maundy Thursday, Ellsworth Falls 6:30 p.m.** The Union Congregational Church of Ellsworth Falls UCC hosts this Tenebrae Service commemorating the closing in of darkness on Jesus' last hours. Service is in-person only. Please bring your mask.

**April 17 - Easter, 10 a.m.** Chris is risen! The service will be in-person, on WDEA, Zoom, and Facebook.

## AN EASTER PRAYER

Draw us forth, God of all creation.

Draw us forward and away from limited certainty into the immense world of your love.

Give us the capacity to even for a moment taste the richness of the feast you give us.

Give us the peace to live with uncertainty, with questions, with doubts.

Help us to experience the resurrection anew with open wonder and an increasing ability to see you in the people of Easter. Amen.

- Author Unknown

# DEACONS

- April 3 - Communion, Rev. Keith Bowie
- April 10 - Palm Sunday, Rev. Keith Bowie
- April 17 - Easter, Rev. Keith Bowie
- April 24 - TBA

April Deacon: Rev. John Lacey

The Deacons have developed a Prayer Calendar that includes all members and friends of FCC. Each month there will be a list of some of our members and friends that will allow you the opportunity to hold them up in prayer for the month. By the end of the year, we will have prayed for our church family. We hope this will be inspirational and fortifying for everyone.

## Prayer Calendar names:

- Bruce B.
- Bob C.
- Kara I. & Brendan M.
- Charlie & Cindy S.
- Ruth & Troy T.
- Belva, Caleb & Cameron
- Jacqueline G.
- Catherine E.
- Barbara R.
- Kristin K.





**In 2021, Loaves & Fishes was able to provide**

- 2,850 family visits, feeding 7,115 individuals
- 150 first-time family visits
- \$415 average retail value of food provided per visit
- Average of \$4,000 spent purchasing food each month
- More than 250,000 pounds of food distributed

When everyone has enough to eat, our whole community benefits! Thank you, friends, at FCC for helping Loaves & Fishes with their ministry.



**2022 EASTER FLOWERS ORDER FORM**

Easter is April 17. Take care of your Easter flowers now and order with this form! Or see Katharine Schrader after church at coffee hour on Sundays until April 10.

**Flowers are \$7 per plant. Indicate preference and dedication. Please print.**

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

**OR**

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_




TULIPS




LILIES

Other options: contact the church office, 667-8321, or, send a check and this form to:  
Katharine Schrader, 149 Oak Street, Ellsworth ME 04605



## **ACCOMPANY JESUS ON HIS HOLY WEEK JOURNEY.**

**Take time to read the scripture  
and pray each day of this sacred time.**

### ***Sunday, April 10 - Jesus enters the city of Jerusalem during the festival of Passover.***

Read Luke 19:28-40. Jesus asked the disciples to go and find a colt for him to ride. That must have seemed like a strange request, but they did it anyway. What strange thing is Jesus asking of you? How might you respond?

### ***Monday, April 11 - Jesus enters the temple and clears out the signs of commerce.***

Read Luke 19:45-46. Jesus drove the people who were exploiting the poor out of the temple. Who is being exploited today? How might Jesus respond? How might we?

### ***Tuesday, April 12 - Jesus teaches that “the stone the builder rejected will be the cornerstone.”***

Read Luke 19:47-20:19. This passage is imbued with menace, as the political and religious leaders of Jesus’ days seek a way to punish him. Why was his message so threatening to those in power in Jesus’ day? Why is it so threatening today?

### ***Wednesday, April 13 - Jesus continues to teach those gathered in Jerusalem.***

Read Luke 21. This teaching begins when Jesus observes the difference between the wealthy and the impoverished. What differences do you think Jesus would notice now? What differences do you notice? What stories will grow from noticing these differences?

### ***Thursday, April 14 - The celebration of the Passover is followed by arrest and betrayal.***

Read Luke 22:1-62. You hear these words when we celebrate communion together. Read them now and listen for what is new or challenging in this message. What does communion mean to you? How do you acknowledge or celebrate that meaning?


### ***Friday, April 15 Good Friday - Jesus is crucified.***

Read Luke 23. Jesus is executed in a state-sanctioned act of violence. Even in his final moments of suffering, Jesus promises forgiveness and eternal life to those crucified near him. What places of suffering need to hear Christ’s voice? In your own life? In your region? In the world?

### ***Saturday, April 16 Holy Saturday - Jesus lies in the tomb.***

Scripture says nothing about what Jesus did on this day and there is no scripture reading for this day. In your prayer time, light a single candle, and meditate on the illumination cast by even one small flame. How has God been steadfast, even in times of seeming absence?

# APRIL 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 OFFICE CLOSED	2
					3 <b>Violet</b> 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service & Communion	4 OFFICE CLOSED
10 <b>Palm Sunday</b> <b>Violet</b> 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Deacons	11 OFFICE CLOSED	12 6 pm Choir	13 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	14 <b>Maundy Thursday</b> 9 am Bulletin deadline 6:30 pm Service at Ellsworth Falls	15 <b>Good Friday</b> OFFICE CLOSED	16
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <b>H O L Y W E E K</b> </div>						
17 <b>Easter</b> <b>White</b> 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	18 OFFICE CLOSED	19 6 pm Choir	20 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	21 9 am Bulletin deadline 7 pm Trustees	22 OFFICE CLOSED	23
24 <b>White</b> 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	25 OFFICE CLOSED 6:30 pm Council	26 6 pm Choir	27 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	28 9 am Bulletin deadline	29 OFFICE CLOSED	30

The **Maine School of Ministry (MESOM)** offers affordable fall and spring courses and June intensives taught by qualified faculty designed for

- Adult learners seeking spiritual formation
- All persons exploring a call to ministry through alternative pathways
- Developing church leadership
- Ordained clergy seeking quality continuing education
- All persons seeking spiritual and educational enrichment



As the vision and reach of MESOM expands, workshops are being offered in collaboration with local churches here in Maine and beyond. **Any gift made to MESOM through FCC by April 30 will be matched!**