

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



**NOVEMBER 2020 - THE STEEPLE NEWSLETTER**

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

November 1, we will share Holy Communion during the hour of worship. Those who receive the sacrament at home may prepare some bread and a cup of grape juice or wine. Because it is All Saints Day you may want to set your Communion on a special cloth that reminds you of a saint in your life, use photos to honor beloveds or those people you admire, and place small precious objects that remind you of other influential people beside the sacrament. Feel free to tell me about it.

\*~\*~\*~\*~\*

Rosalie Sugrue of Paraparaumu, Aotearoa New Zealand wrote this about her decisions:  
“Thinking about how to dress my table took longer than the service. Wondering whom I would like to invite to this special meal I decided on Jack and my parents (serious believers who believed different things and thus gave me a broad faith). I honoured my paternal Grandmother by using one of her sherry glasses and a plate I’d inherited. Greenery was represented by ‘the tree of life’ emblem worn by members of the World Federation of Methodist Women, and my Accredited Lay Preachers badge. The candle was a Christmas present from grandson Scott that sat on top of the piano with Jack’s ashes for a year. The church was a present from son Troy at Christmas in Auckland where all three offspring were present, thus representing the kids. The cloth along with embroidery threads, were given to me by my maternal grandmother when I left Hokitika to go to Teacher’s College. I began doing the embroidery but made slow progress. My room-mate was keen to finish it for me, a nice reminder of student life ...”

<https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/>

**From our Pastor**



Dear saints of God,

**On November 1, we will celebrate two sacraments.** Don't miss it! Belva will receive Holy Baptism and join our congregation. Then we will celebrate Holy Communion.

**November 8** is Stewardship Sunday (page 3).

**November 15** will probably focus on experiences of Pilgrim Lodge and a chance to hear favorite Pilgrim Lodge songs sung by our soloist.

**November 22** will be our Thanksgiving Service.

**November 29** we will begin lighting the candles of our advent wreath. If you want to light it, please let me know by November 15.

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 6]

**The Re-Opening Committee has met and wishes to share the following:**

We are aware of local Covid-19 outbreaks. We have decided to continue with open worship services with a maximum of 50 people present following the guidelines we are currently using.

We will continue to monitor the situation and, if anything changes, we will notify you immediately.

Thank you,  
Lois S.

Re-Opening Committee Secretary

## NOVEMBER CHURCH MEETINGS (ZOOM)

- Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:30 a.m.
- Kids Church** – Sundays, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- Re-Opening** – Thursday, Nov 5 at 6:45 p.m.
- Deacons** – Sunday, Nov 8, 12:30 p.m.
- Trustees** – Thursday, Nov 12, 6:45 p.m.
- Christian Ed** – Sunday, Nov 15, 12:30 p.m.
- Missions Council** – Thursday, Nov 19, 6:45 p.m.
- no November meeting

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

## CHERISHING EACH OTHER

*We truly are blessed to have a church family who really cares about those of us who tend to mostly stay at home! Truly, I don't know what I'd do without Lois, and all the rest of our very dedicated folks. I am not sure you are all getting the love and recognition you should be getting caring for those of us who are staying home. I know we are truly blessed to have the ability to watch or just listen to our Sunday Service.*

*Sunday, October 18, was truly amazing to have the children share time with us.*

*Bravo to Ruth and Cathy and all who worked with them! We are very fortunate that someone invented this "Zoom," program as it enables us to feel we are in a pew and a part of our church, not home!*

*Thank you to all who are keeping us together!*

- MJ S.

# WE ARE BLESSED!

## NOVEMBER 2020 LECTIONARY READINGS

### NOVEMBER 1 – 22ND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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

### NOVEMBER 1 – ALL SAINTS DAY

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

### NOVEMBER 8 – 23RD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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

### NOVEMBER 15 – 24TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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

### NOVEMBER 22 – REIGN OF CHRIST

Ezekiel 34:11-16  
Psalm 100 & Psalm 95:1-7a  
Ephesians 1:15-23  
Matthew 25:31-46

### NOVEMBER 26 – THANKSGIVING DAY

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



### NOVEMBER 29 – 1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 64:1-9  
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19  
1 Corinthians 1:3-9  
Mark 13:24-37



We pray for the family and friends of  
Edith Leland (Tom M.'s mother)  
who died 10/25/20.

## WHAT CHURCH MEANS TO ME

Words from Peggy Simpson  
as read at her memorial service

Why do I go to church? Or rather, "what does church mean to me". It seems to be part of my everyday living—to be part of a small fellowship that worships God. We bring our joys, our sadness, our differences and our faults with us to church. And from this comes friendship, compassion, and understanding of each other. To hear the word of God, to pray and to have fellowship with my neighbors is what I look forward to each week. For me, the inner peace, faith and love are values which renew the spirit of our church.

So the church is like an extension of my personal life, and means a great deal to me. I feel it is an obligation each week not to sit at home watching a religious service on television. That is too easy! I like to feel that I am a part of one of the greatest organizations on earth that will outlast all the rest of them, and that is why I like attending and being loyal to our church.

---

## UPDATE ON THE MISSION HOUSE PROJECT

In mid-October, the Mission House Committee made a list of everything needed to complete the renovations of the Mission House that the church has been working on for over two years. Ruth T. took this Wish List to the Ellsworth Home Depot and asked what they might be willing to donate. You can imagine the shock and excitement when a manager of the store called a few days later to say that Home Depot would donate EVERY ITEM ON THE LIST!

Contact Troy T. about how you can help work on this project.

# GOD IS GOOD



## STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT SUNDAY NOVEMBER 8

It will be a little different this year, as indeed, almost everything is because of the Pandemic. The expected letter including your Promised Giving declaration card will come to you as always. We ask that everyone prayerfully consider what you can promise to enable the life and work of your church and fill out your card.

The first thing that is different is that we are asking everyone to **mail in the Promise Giving card in instead of bringing it and filling it out in worship on the 8<sup>th</sup>**. During worship, the cards and the promises to God they represent will be dedicated in a special moment of prayer. That service of dedication will be different because filling out our Promised Giving cards will have already happened, but making our promises of stewardship will still be an act of worship, this time, at home.

In the meantime, testimonies of faith and what their church means in their lives will still be offered by fellow church family members during worship on Sunday mornings. Stewardship Committee members have been sharing heartfelt words of encouragement for you by e-mail from Church.





A lot of this Annual Meeting was about the Transitional Conference Minister, Jonna Jensen, who asks us to "wear her out listening"—she is very interested in our concerns and realities now, and would love to attend meetings or worship via Zoom just to listen.

We discussed and celebrated the ways we have learned to be together through social media (there are grants from Resourcing the Local Church available to help support churches with that!) We talked about possibilities for work/mission trips.

We were reminded that we need to listen and be aware of fellow members who are interested in becoming leaders/ministers in our congregation. There was a discussion of how we can support those folks at the association and conference levels.

Overall, I felt there was a strong sense that we need not reinvent the wheel and figure out what works for us in the new times AND going forward!

- Becky L., delegate

---

## ADULT EDUCATIONAL FORUM UPDATE

Copies of the book, **The Meaning of Jesus**, have arrived and discussion begins Sunday, November 8. Tom M. is planning to have a hybrid setup with some people in the Parlor and others participating via Zoom.

## FROM OUR MODERATOR, JACK

All of us are wondering what the world is going to look like going forward. We long for the day when things will return to normal. When we will be able to gather safely and sing hymns, have fellowship and hug and shake hands again.

Then there is the election that is coming. I think that we can all agree on two things. First, in our lifetime there has never been an election quite like this one. Second, no matter who wins, many are bound to be disappointed even angry.

What are people of faith to do? We must raise ourselves up and be who we are called to be: God's body in the world. We will get better at loving our neighbors. We will practice hospitality, we will pursue justice, and we will find a way to walk humbly and faithfully with the God who created us, who loves and provides for us.

Perhaps we might consider that all the chaos around us is a direct reflection of humanity's failure to live together as God intends. Maybe our temptation to follow leaders whose priorities are to control rather than empower others, and who achieve their agenda through force and division has caught up with us.

Paul writes in Galatians 6:2—*Bear one another's burden and in this way, you fulfill the law of Christ.*

God created us to live in community with each other, with God and with all of God's good creation. If we are to be a faithful people, we must recognize that living our faith is more important today than ever.

400 years ago, the theologian John Calvin wrote "No responsible Christian can be without a concern for civil government. Political indifference on the part of Christians is not a mark of superior piety but of defective ethics."

The days ahead may be daunting, even frightening for some of us. We may face challenges that are difficult to conceive of now. The one thing that is sure and certain is that God will be there. God will make a way just as God made a way for the Israelites. Let our faith be a light unto the world.

## BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4



---

### LETTER TO THE CONGREGATION FROM YOUR VICE-MODERATOR, MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, AND REGULAR ATTENDER OF THE ADULT FORUM

I feel provoked by the Holy Spirit, I hope, to say a few things. My spirit is concerned about what it perceives as a lack of interest in the scriptures by the congregation. I hear things like "I read the Bible in my youth, it has nothing NEW to say to me. I want to deal with current events." Or "I wish the pastor would talk about current problems, not talk so much about the Bible."

I believe Cynthia has done a good job bringing to our remembrance the book of Exodus and showing the spiritual truths of that day, and how they transcend to the relevant issues of today. I wonder if we grasp the spiritual truths that transcend time in the scriptures. Do we hear what Jesus is teaching about the purpose of humanity in the creation? Do we hear the promises of Jesus? Do we want to follow him as the light and way to the Promised Land for humanity? Do we just view the scriptures as an irrelevant history book full of mythical stories? Do we believe Jesus is still speaking today through the Holy Spirit of truth? Do we have faith that Jesus the Messiah of the world?

Where do we fit concerning the spiritual state of the seven churches in John's book of Revelation? Do we have spiritual issues like the church of Laodicea? Do we want Jesus to come in and eat with us? Do we eat of his body and blood that he will abide in us and we in him? Do we want to be disciples of Jesus who spread the Good News about him being the Messiah of the world?

As a church, we do a lot of good works in our community—The Welcome Table, supporting the Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry and the Emmaus Center, and the Minister's Discretionary Fund are just a few. We have a core of people who do a lot just to keep the doors open and present a message on Sunday to the broader community. We have been blessed with monetary wealth in the endowments and pledges. The question is: Is Jesus the center of it all and the reason for it all?

We are discussing the Gospel of John in the Adult Forum until we get the book **The Meaning of Jesus** by Marcus Borg and N.T. Wright. One presents a liberal view of scripture and the other a moderate view. We have room for other voices in the group.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus the Christ be with you all.

-Tom M.

# THE STORY OF MOSES IN PICTURES

Rev. Priem's concluded her Moses sermon series on October 25.

Cindy S. (with help from Lois) did a great job depicting the stories for us.

You can see all the displays she made on our website: [EllsworthUCC.org](http://EllsworthUCC.org)



**The Ten Commandments**  
Exodus 20:1-4,7-9,12-20



**Golden calf**  
Exodus 32:1-26



**God's presence**  
Exodus 33:12-23



**Moses' resting place**  
Deuteronomy 34:1-12



[Pastor's Column continued]

Here is a challenge for all of us. The next two to three months are filled with expectations based on what has happened in the past. I haven't been here, however, to observe or be part of all those traditions. *Everyone* is responsible for telling me what needs to happen.

And yet, we are in a pandemic with many restrictions that call us to be more flexible and to graciously accept that some (but not all, thankfully) cherished traditions may have to take slightly different forms.

*Cynthia*

# NOVEMBER 2020 EVENTS AT FIRST CONGO UCC

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> White  8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Kids Church	<b>2</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 3-5 pm Welcome Table take-out	<b>5</b> 9 am Bulletin Deadline 6:45 pm ROC*	<b>6</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>7</b>
M-W-F VOLUNTEER AT LOAVES & FISHES FOOD PANTRY						
<b>8</b> Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Kids Church 12:30 pm Deacons	<b>9</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 3-5 pm Welcome Table take-out	<b>12</b> 9 am Bulletin deadline 6:45 pm Trustees	<b>13</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>14</b>
M-W-F VOLUNTEER AT LOAVES & FISHES FOOD PANTRY						
<b>15</b> Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Kids Church 12:30 pm Christian Ed	<b>16</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 3-5 pm Welcome Table take-out 9 am December Steeple deadline	<b>19</b> 9 am Bulletin deadline 6:45 pm Missions	<b>20</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Kids Church	<b>23</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> OFFICE CLOSED THANKSGIVING 	<b>27</b> OFFICE CLOSED	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> Advent I Violet 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Kids Church	<b>30</b> OFFICE CLOSED	*ROC = Re-Opening Committee				



Our church will staff the food pantry the first two weeks in November on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (Nov 2,4,6,9,11 & 13.) We need

- 1 Driver** who can lift things  
 Mondays 7:45-9:30 a.m.  
 Wednesdays 7:45-10 a.m.  
 Fridays 7:45-10 a.m.

- 2 Pantry workers**  
 Wednesdays 8 a.m.-1 p.m.  
 Wednesdays 3:30-7 p.m.  
 Fridays 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

Pantry workers will stock shelves, help clients shop and package items as necessary, OR answer the phone and take orders.

Only five people can be in the building at a time. Everyone must wear a mask and observe 6-ft physical distancing.

**Following regulations set by the State of Maine, a volunteer over age 70 must have a Medical Release Form from a physician saying that the volunteer has no underlying health conditions that put them at risk.**

Contact Ginny D. by October 28 to sign up or ask questions.