

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



FEBRUARY 2023 - 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

For this month's reflection, I thought I might give a very brief overview of the search and call process in the United Church of Christ, to benefit those of you who are not familiar with it, and to refresh those of you who may have served on a search committee in the past. The process has three distinct seasons: a time of internal preparation before the search, a time of seeking and selecting new pastoral leadership, and a time of affirming and welcoming the newly-called minister. We use the word *call* to reflect that distinct blend of the practical and the sacred. As opposed to the secular world, a congregation does not *hire* a new pastor but *calls* a pastor, following a careful business-like search that is also prayerful and seeks God's guidance and direction.

Where are we in the process? Since the beginning of November, a committee has been engaged in the time consuming, and sometimes tedious, work of completing the Church Profile, a necessary document to assist in a search. The Church Profile is structured to ask three primary questions: Who are we? Who is our neighbor? And Who is God calling us to become? The committee was able to use many of the responses that came from congregational members last spring in the small group meetings that were held then. As of this writing, the Church Profile is almost complete and will then be forwarded to the Maine Conference for their suggestions,



and then to the Search Committee for their review. Upon approval, the Profile will be advertised on the UCC website where any UCC pastor can see it and consider applying for the position.

Following this phase, the attention shifts to the Search Committee. This committee will initially engage in some team building, prepare interview questions, and plan and rehearse an interview before receiving candidate profiles. From that point on, because of confidentiality issues, please understand that the Search Committee can keep us informed of their progress in general but cannot reveal information about individual candidates.

It is highly appropriate and important that we pray for God's holy presence as we affirm the active presence of God's Spirit in the search process. Pray for all members of the Search Committee as well as for the candidates considering a pastorate in Ellsworth. Blessed be the Holy Spirit that brings us together in mutual love, prayer, service, and mission through the One who indeed makes all things new!

Keith

FEBRUARY CHURCH MEETINGS

- Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:30 a.m.
- Busy Bodies** – Mondays, 10:30 a.m.
beginning February 13
- Choir** – Tuesdays, 6 p.m.
- Profile Comm** – Tuesdays, 6 p.m. on Zoom
- Music** – TBA
- Missions** – Thursday, Feb 9, TBA
- ANNUAL MEETING on Sunday, February 12**
- Trustees** – Thursday, Feb 16, 7 p.m.
- Christian Ed** – Sunday, Feb 19, 11:30 a.m.
- Council** – Monday, Feb 27, 6 :30 p.m.
- Deacons** – NO FEBRUARY MEETING

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.



MASKING is OPTIONAL
in the church building.

The Re-Opening Committee suggests you maintain physical distance and respect the space of those who wish to continue to wear a mask.



FEBRUARY LECTIONARY READINGS

FEBRUARY 5 – 5TH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Isaiah 58:1-9a (9b-12)
Psalm 112:1-9 (10)
1 Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16)
Matthew 5:13-20

FEBRUARY 12 – 6TH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Deuteronomy 30:15-20
Psalm 119:1-8
1 Corinthians 3:1-9
Matthew 5:21-37

FEBRUARY 19 – TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY

Exodus 24:12-18
Psalm 2 OR Psalm 99
2 Peter 1:16-21
Matthew 17:1-9

FEBRUARY 22 – ASH WEDNESDAY

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 OR Isaiah 58:1-12
Psalm 51:1-7
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21



FEBRUARY 26 – 1ST SUNDAY IN LENT

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:17
Psalm 32
Romans 5:12-19
Matthew 4:1-11



DEACONS

- Feb 5 - Communion, Rev. Keith Bowie
 - Feb 12 - Rev. Keith Bowie
 - Feb 19 - Maine Conference Minister
Rev. Dr. Marisa Laviola
 - Feb 26 - Rev. Keith Bowie
- February Deacon: Katharine Schrader**

February is the month of LOVE. This is good since we are in the middle of winter and need something to remind us that the chill of winter is not a forever thing. We are in what the church calls Ordinary Time—between Christmastide and the beginning of Lent. What a good alliance to be in the month of LOVE as we spiritually prepare to begin Lent on Ash Wednesday, February 22.

Deacons always want to know what our church can do for you. Please reach out with a suggestion or need. **Cindy Sargent, Anne Bancroft, John Lacey, and Katharine Schrader** are available for you. We also have many helpers that take care of some of our projects. Have an idea about a project? Let us know!

Prayer Calendar names

In February, please include these names in your daily prayers, as we attempt to pray for our entire church family over the course of a year:

- Kristen Cartier
- Irv & Helen Hodgkin
- Susan King
- Rhyne Robidoux
- Carole Spencer
- Tom & Sharon Minogue
- Jordan Berry
- Marjory Peronto
- Joyce Cornwell & John Holt
- Megan Remick
- Nicole Bedard

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

We are about ready to begin recording Bible stories for children and adults on our Facebook page. We have been working with Troy and Ruth Tainter to get our audio and visual equipment updated so that we can gather our readers and record several stories in one sitting. Those who have expressed interest for adult readings are Tom MacDonald, Rev. Lacey, and Rev. Bowie; and those who wish to read for children are Ruth Tainter, Kathy Schrader, and Bonnie Carter. If you love reading aloud, please consider joining us for an hour or so per month.



All are welcome to attend the Adult Forum. The group meets Sunday mornings at 8:30 in the Parlor.

MUSIC COMMITTEE

Looking to lift your spirits in the winter? How about making music with the choir? In addition to learning anthems for worship, the fellowship during rehearsal is good for the soul. We rehearse Tuesdays at 6 p.m.

You may have heard that a group was learning the *Gaudete*, a 16th century Christmas hymn in Latin. Pronouncing the Latin and nailing the tricky rhythms required a little more time than anticipated. They want to do it right, so they decided to practice for Christmas 2023 instead!

ANNUAL MEETING

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2023

We will hear reports from Officers and Committees, elect Officers, consider a 2023 Budget, and transact other necessary business. This will be a hybrid meeting—in person and on Zoom. Following the meeting there will be a light lunch.

Paper copies of the Annual Report are available at the church. If you haven't received one by email and wish to have it in that form, contact Joyce in the church office.

Ash
Wednesday

SERVICE AT ELLSWORTH FALLS FEBRUARY 22, 6 P.M.

We will join our friends at the Ellsworth Falls church who will host an Ash Wednesday service on February 22 at 6 p.m. The imposition of ashes will be offered to those who wish to observe this ancient tradition, but you may decline if you wish.

The Falls Church is offering a drive-thru imposition of ashes in the morning and afternoon in their church parking lot if you are unable to attend the evening service. For more information, please call the Rev. Matt McDonald at the Falls Church, 207-667-3691



The Rev. Dr. Marisa Laviola

OUR NEW CONFERENCE MINISTER, WILL PREACH SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19

Marisa came to Maine via Penn Central, where she served as Associate Conference Minister, and from Vermont and Massachusetts where she served as a local church pastor. As ACM in Penn Central, Marisa helped many small churches to realize their God-given mission to be vital beacons to their greater community. She has a passion for helping small churches discover and celebrate their vital role in God's 21st century. During her time in Vermont, she chaired the Conference's Committee on Ministry, as a speaker for church vitality, and as a vitality coach for churches who wish to grow their ministry.

Marisa holds Bachelor and Master's degrees in Piano Performance and Music History from Bowling Green State University in Ohio, a PhD in Clinical Psychology from University of Kentucky, and a Master of Divinity from Boston University School of Theology. She taught music at Asbury College in the 1980s before transitioning to a career in clinical psychology. Prior to ordination in 2009, she was a licensed psychologist in clinical practice for over 20 years.

Marisa is thrilled to partner with clergy and lay folk in the Maine UCC, as we discern as faith partners, the vision and mission of our ministry into the 21st century. She brings a wealth of experience and love for the United Church of Christ. She and her spouse Carol live in Augusta. They have two grown children, Kristyn and Kathryn.

Update from Rev. Jonathan Vogel at St. Andrew Lutheran Church about helping a Ukrainian family to re-settle in Hancock County

Art Wooster from the Hancock County *Neighborhood Support Team* (NST) has notified us that a family has been approved to leave Ukraine:


1. The family that will be relocating is a family of 5: mother, father, son (17), and two daughters (15 and 5).
2. The housing that we have been able to arrange is in Town Hill.
3. We anticipate that they will be in Hancock County before the end of January.
4. We know at this point that we will be looking for:
 - a. Employment for the mother and father.
 - b. Language training for the parents and 5-year-old. The 17 and 15-year-olds are fluent in English, fortunately, and can help with that process. If you feel that you can help with teaching English, please contact Art Wooster. Zoom may be a good option for training support.
 - c. The family will arrive with Social Security cards and work permits which will allow them to register for social services that are available including medical.
 - d. Transportation will be a necessity. Thoughts on vehicles either temporarily or longer-term would be welcome.
 - e. We are looking for good quality furniture and furnishings, or other donated items for setting up a home. Contact Art for a list.
 - f. One of the items that would be particularly useful are gift cards. Those will allow the family to purchase the things that they will need to return to a more normal life. Please keep in mind that this family has lost their home and business in Kherson, lived without electricity for most of the day, without heat much of the time and with water intermittently. What they can bring with them is extremely limited and it is going to take a while and a lot of help to rebuild their lives. Art Wooster has suggestions for store cards.



After President Zelensky reported that Ukraine anticipates a spring offensive by Russia and perhaps their allies, in one day WelcomeNST received more than 100 applications for families trying to flee what is coming. We are trying to accelerate the number of families that we can relocate and will continue to look for help of all kinds. We are looking for housing, vehicles, and all the other necessities for these families relocating and trying to restart their lives. Hancock County NST is currently operating as part of WelcomeNST, a 501(c)3 corporation to which donations are tax deductible. Here is the URL for Hancock County NST donation site. None of donated funds go to WelcomeNST (although you can also donate to that organization if you would like to). All funds, less transaction fees, go to Hancock's organization. Our "peer-to-peer" site is: <https://www.classy.org/campaign/team-hancock-county/c443269>.

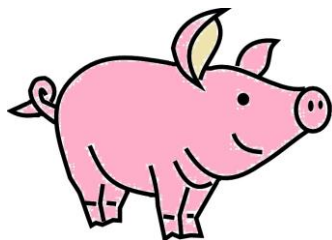
Art Worster
President of Hancock County NST
e-mail: artworster@gmail.com
mobile: 908-619-3317

FEBRUARY 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><i>We love because God first loved us.</i> 1 John 4:19</p>			<p>1 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out 6:30 pm Book study</p>	<p>2 9 am Bulletin deadline</p>	<p>3 OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>5 Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service, Communion & luncheon</p>	<p>6 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities</p>	<p>7 6 pm Choir 6:30 pm Profile Comm</p>	<p>8 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out 6:30 pm Book study</p>	<p>9 9 am Bulletin Deadline TBA Missions</p>	<p>10 OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>11</p>
<p>12 Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service ANNUAL MEETING</p>	<p>13 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities</p>	<p>14 6 pm Choir 6:30 pm Profile Comm</p> 	<p>15 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out 6:30 pm Book study</p>	<p>16 9 am Bulletin Deadline 7 pm Trustees</p>	<p>17 OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>19 Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 Christian Ed</p>	<p>20 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities</p>	<p>21 9 am Steeple deadline 6 pm Choir 6:30 pm Profile Comm</p>	<p>22 ASH WED. Violet 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out 6 pm Ash Wednesday service</p>	<p>23 9 am Bulletin deadline</p>	<p>24 OFFICE CLOSED</p>	<p>25 Church supper</p>
<p>26 Lent I Violet 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service</p>	<p>27 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities 6:30 pm Council</p>	<p>28 6 pm Choir 6:30 pm Profile Comm</p>	<p><i>If we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is made complete in us.</i> 1 John 4:12</p>			

Roast Pork Supper

Saturday, February 25, serving 5:00 to 6:30 pm



*Roast pork, gravy, mashed potatoes, glazed carrots,
green beans, salad, rolls, beverages (coffee, tea,
lemonade) and homemade pies*

\$10 per person ~ \$25 per family

**We need volunteers to set up, cook, serve, wash dishes, and bake pies.
Please contact Ruth Tainter immediately about the ways you can help.**