

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



APRIL 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

I once preached an Easter Sunday sermon in which I used St. Paul's words to the Corinthians as a text: "If Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:14). In the presentation of the sermon, I was quite forthright and unequivocal that Christianity is founded upon an astounding, unexpected, but nevertheless real event: the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Christians are those who see all human history in the light of this event. This is the foundational, irreducible event upon which our faith rests. We believe in the resurrection of the body. Afterwards, during coffee time, a gentleman came up to me, a little upset. He said, "You really didn't leave much room for us skeptics, did you?"

Of course, skepticism is nothing new. When the apostle Paul, on Mars Hill, preached Jesus' resurrection from the dead (Acts 17) he was greeted with hoots and jeers of derision. Even in scripture we find Jesus' own disciples having doubts. Remember Thomas? Many times, skepticism precedes belief. In C.S. Lewis' early life, accounts of Christ's death had always seemed to Lewis to be "silly or shocking." Yet a late-night conversation with a couple of his friends, one being J.R.R. Tolkien, on the grounds of Magdalen College, Oxford, helped him accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Tolkien encouraged Lewis to relax into Christianity as a story and accept it on its own terms. Easter is all about resurrection of the body.

Easter is not about springtime, though spring is a pretty good metaphor for what happened. It's not about Easter eggs or chocolate, even though I love chocolate! It's important to remember that neither logic, nor metaphor, nor explanation will suffice. In the end, all you have are testimonial words like these: "He is alive! I have met him. Come and see!" Those words are at the heart of the Christian faith. Do you know what my favorite part of the Easter liturgy is? It's when we say, in loud acclamation, on Easter morning:

"CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED!"

Keith

Rev. Keith Bowie



APRIL CHURCH MEETINGS

- Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:30 a.m.
Busy Bodies – Mondays, 10:30 a.m.
beginning February 13
Choir – Thursdays, 6 p.m.
(except Holy Week, Choir meets Tuesday the 4th)
Music – TBA
Missions – Thursday, April 13, TBA
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
– **Sunday, April 16, 11:30 a.m.**
Deacons – Sunday, April 23, 11:30 a.m.
Trustees – Thursday, April 20, 7 p.m.
Christian Ed – TBA
Council – Monday, April 24, 6 :30 p.m.

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 contact the secretary in 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.

WITH DEEPEST
Sympathy

to the family & friends of
MJ Smith

A service of remembrance will take place
Saturday, June 3, 2023, at 10 a.m.

APRIL LECTIONARY READINGS

APRIL 2 – PALM SUNDAY

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
Matthew 21:1-11

APRIL 6 – 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 7 – 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 8 – HOLY SATURDAY

Job 14:1-14 OR Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24
Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16
1 Peter 4:108
Matthew 27:57-66 OR John 19:38-42

APRIL 9 – EASTER

Acts 10:34-43 OR Jeremiah 31:1-6
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
Colossians 3:1-4 OR Acts 10:34-43
John 20:1-18 OR Matthew 28:1-10

APRIL 16 – 2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 2:14a, 22-32
Psalm 16
1 Peter 1:3-9
John 20:19-31

APRIL 23 – 3RD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 2:14a, 36-41
Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19
1 Peter 1:17-23
Luke 24:13-35

APRIL 30 – 4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 2:42-47
Psalm 23
1 Peter 2:19-25
John 10:1-10



DEACONS

- April 2 - Palm Sunday & Communion,
Rev. Keith Bowie**
- April 7 - Maundy Thursday,
Rev. Cassandra McDonald**
- April 9 - Easter, Rev. Keith Bowie**
- April 16 - Rev. Matt McDonald**
- April 23 - Rev. Keith Bowie**
- April 30 - Rev. Keith Bowie**
- April Deacon: Rev. John Lacey**

MUSINGS FROM THE DIACONATE CHAIR

Well, Spring has arrived! When spring arrives, I always remember getting ready for the secular part of Easter—the eggs, candy, bunny rabbits, baskets, hiding things and so forth. We always got a special outfit for church, and we learned special verses for Sunday School.

Since being an adult, I think of what I did to help my daughter understand the holiday. We read the Bible stories that went along with the season, and we talked about how Jesus helped many people during his life. We also participated in the One Great Hour of Sharing during Lent, we celebrated the triumphant entrance on Palm Sunday and the resurrection on Easter. I love looking back on that. I believe that this was how my parents handled our upbringing and my religious instruction, too.

I wish that we as followers of Christ, could remember to look for the positive and make sure to smile at everyone you meet. Smiles are the first impression we provide to others. We are LOVED by God and by that sheer coincidence, we should remember to smile all the time. It is Spring and my SMILES are from ear to ear. I hope that you will join me!

God bless you in this Wonderful Season!

Prayer Calendar names

As we attempt to pray for our entire church family over the course of a year, the Deacons ask that you please include these names in your daily prayers during April:

- Bruce Becque
- Bob Clement
- Kara Ibarguen & Brendan Minear
- Charlie & Cindy Sargent
- Ruth & Troy Tainter
- Belva Scott, Caleb & Cameron
- Jacqueline Goebel
- Catherine Engel
- Barbara Rolleston
- Kristin Kimball

Joyous Time of Year

*May the glory
and the promise
of this season
bring peace
and happiness to you
and those you hold most dear.*

*And may Christ,
our risen Savior,
always be beside you,
to bless you most abundantly,
and be your loving guide.*

- Author Unknown

SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Committee has met several times and has begun its work. John Lacey has been made Chairman, Troy Tainter is Co-chairman, and Michael Hall is Secretary. We have completed work on the church profile and will be submitting it to our Conference office for use in suggesting candidates. We will keep the Church updated on our progress.



The choir is back in its lovely rehearsal space along with their choir robes. (Thus, the pastor's office is no longer a liturgical closet!)

BOOK STUDY BEGINS IN APRIL

Moderator Jack Lacey will facilitate conversation around Rev. Dr. Walter Winks' book **Homosexuality and the Bible**. The group will meet the first Tuesday after Easter at 6:30 in the Parlor or the new room (behind the lift). Stay tuned. Keith has several copies of the book to share. Questions? Contact Jack.

Walter Wink was Professor of Biblical Interpretation at Auburn Theological Seminary in NYC. He taught at numerous seminaries, and was a United Methodist minister, worked for a Presbyterian seminary, and attended Quaker meetings.

12TH ANNUAL HANCOCK COUNTY FOOD DRIVE



The Annual Hancock County Food Drive kicks off with a county-wide food collection and fund-raising event, on Saturday, April 1, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Keep an eye out for Food Drive volunteers, dressed in fruit and vegetable costumes (really!), who will be stationed outside 12 grocery stores across the county to collect food donations, raise funds and rally excitement for the Food Drive which runs through April 30.

Other Food Drive events include a Read-a-Thon fundraising challenge for K-8 readers, a Miles for Meals challenge for walkers, runners, hikers, swimmers and bicyclists of all ages for each mile covered from April 15-23, and a pancake breakfast. For more information about these events and how to contribute, visit hcfooddrive.org.

This annual food drive stocks the shelves of food pantries and free meal sites like our own Welcome Table.

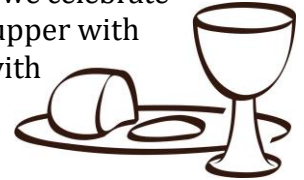


HOLY WEEK SERVICES 2023 AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



PALM SUNDAY, April 2, 10 a.m. – Palm Sunday is considered the Gateway to Holy Week. As we remember Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, we will bless and distribute palm leaves to everyone. We will sing our hosannas and wave palms in praise of the One who came that we might have life and have it abundantly.

MAUNDY THURSDAY, April 6, 6:30 p.m. – Every first Sunday of the month when we celebrate Holy Communion, we remember this night—the night that Jesus shared his last supper with his closest friends. Following the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, we will close with a Tenebrae Service consisting of hymns and scripture readings pertaining to the last hours of Jesus’ earthly life. Friends from the Ellsworth Falls UCC will share this service with us.



EASTER SUNRISE, April 9, 7 a.m. – We will gather on the front steps of our building. Be among the first in our congregation to rejoice and share the Easter greeting: *Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!* Then we’ll have breakfast in Fellowship Hall.

RESURRECTION WORSHIP, April 9, 10 a.m. – Join us as we continue our celebration of the Easter good news! The choir is preparing special music, we’ll sing Easter hymns, and the sanctuary will be decorated with lilies and tulips. Rejoice with us and be glad!



2023 EASTER FLOWERS ORDER FORM

Easter is April 9. Take care of your Easter flowers now and order with this form!
Or see Katharine Schrader after church at coffee hour on Sundays through Palm Sunday, April 2.

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



So **GRATEFUL** for your kindness.

From Pat Jordan's family:

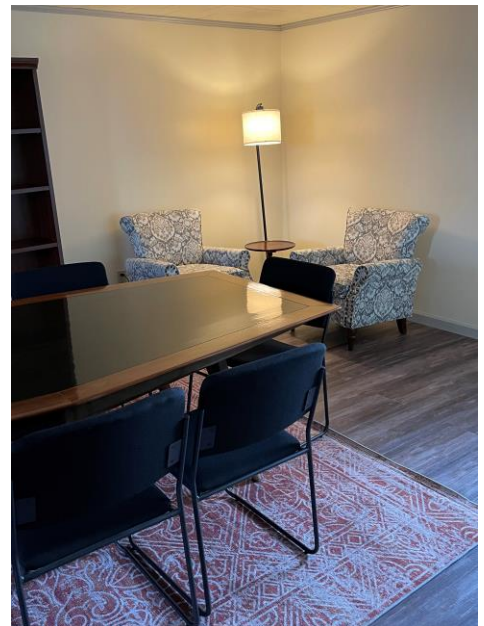
Thank you all so very much for the wonderful service and putting together the reception following. Mom would have loved it. She thought the world of you all and was sad she couldn't attend church in person anymore. She made sure to watch the service online every Sunday. She was a wonderful mom and will be missed. Thank you again.


Stacy & family

Have you seen the room behind the lift? It's the old choir room and it has been transformed into a meeting space, quiet area, and library—although we're still working on shelves and relocating books. There is new paint, new flooring, new trim, new closets, new furniture, a new door, and other lovely things. Nothing has been placed on the walls, yet, because folks want to be certain of placement before inserting nails into the fresh restoration!

The extra stained-glass panel from the pastor's office has been given new life as a door to this room. What a lovely and special appointment for this space. The panels were a gift from Bill Caddoo many years ago.

Many folks have labored long on this project: Cindy Sargent, Leita Zeugner, Bonnie Carter, Andy Stephenson, Ken Farkas, Jack Lacey, and Troy Tainter. (If any names were omitted here, it is entirely the fault of the church secretary. Let me know.)





PILGRIM LODGE Summer 2023

April 28-29
JUMP START WEEKEND
Grades 6 and up

May 5-6
CONFIRMATION RETREAT
Currently in grades 8-12 w/ Sponsors

June 2 - June 4
WOMEN'S SPRING WKND
Ages 19 and older

June 3 - June 4
CIT TRAINING
Ages 16-18

June 5 - June 7
CLERGY PRAYCATION
Adults

June 21 - June 24
FAITH FOUNDATIONS - HALF WEEK
Grades 3 - 5

June 25 - July 1
ARTS ALIVE / ELEM. ADVENTURES!
Grades 7 - Post Grad Grades 4 - 6

July 2 - July 5
GRANDPARENTS I / EXPEDITION EVERYONE
All Ages

July 9 - July 15
CAMP PRIDE / MIDDLE ISLAND CAMP
Grades 7 - Post Grad Grades 7 - 9

July 16 - July 22
MIDDLE SPIRIT / SENIOR HIGH
Grades 7 - 9 Grades 10 - Post Grad

July 23 - July 29
DESTINATION HOGWARTS
Grades 4 - 10

July 29 - July 31
GRANDPARENTS II
Ages 5 and older

Aug 4 - Aug 6
PRIDE ACROSS THE AGES
All Ages

Aug 7 - Aug 11
ADULT LIGHTEN UP, LOOSEN UP
Ages 19 and older

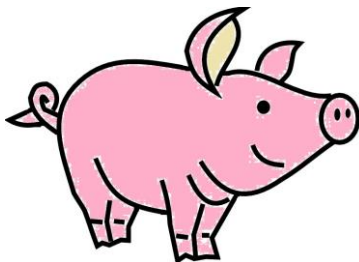
Sept 1 - Sept 4
FAMILY CAMP
All Ages

Sept 15 - Sept 17
WOMEN'S FALL WEEKEND
Ages 19 and older

Camping for all ages at Pilgrim Lodge! [Ctrl-Click for more information.](#)

Ham Supper

Saturday, April 22, serving 5:00 to 6:30 pm




Baked ham, mashed potatoes, glazed carrots, green beans, salad, rolls, homemade pies, and beverages (coffee, tea, lemonade)

\$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.

APRIL 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Palm Sunday Violet 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service, Communion & luncheon	3 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	4 6 pm Choir 6:30 pm Wink study	5 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out 6:30 pm Book study	6 Maundy Thursday 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6:30 pm SERVICE	7 Good Friday OFFICE CLOSED	8
H O L Y W E E K						
9 Easter White 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Congregational meeting	10 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	11 6:30 pm Wink study	12 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out 6:30 pm Book study	13 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club TBA Missions 6 pm Choir	14 OFFICE CLOSED	15
16 White 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	17 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	18 6:30 pm Wink study	19 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out 6:30 pm Book study	20 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir 7 pm Trustees	21 OFFICE CLOSED	22 5:30 pm Church supper
23 White 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Deacons	24 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities 6:30 pm Council	25 6:30 pm Wink study	26 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out 6:30 pm Book study	27 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	28 OFFICE CLOSED	29
30 White 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	<i>We are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song!</i>					



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING



Sunday April 16 at 11:30 a.m.

It will be a hybrid meeting & luncheon, in-person and on Zoom, pertaining to restructuring. Questions? Contact the Moderator.

Sunday Worship Service 10 a.m.

Church office hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Rev. Keith Bowie, Transitional Minister
Joyce B. Cornwell, Secretary
Lynn Hall, Organist
Nancy Sargent, Choir Director
Jack Lacey, Moderator 745-1348
Tom MacDonald, Vice Moderator
Sue Fuller, Clerk 610-1626
Troy Tainter, Building Maintenance Director
Leita Zeugner, Treasurer

Sidney Emerson & Lynn Hall,
Financial Secretaries
Katharine Schrader, Deacons 266-2541
Ginny Davis, Missions
Bonnie Carter, Music & Christian Education
Council Members at Large:
Joyce Johnston
Rhyne Robidoux

Our purpose,

First Congregational Church, UCC, Ellsworth, Maine:

To embrace the life, ministry and teachings of Jesus Christ

In meaningful and dynamic ways through

creative worship,

supportive fellowship,

compassionate outreach, and

stimulating Christian education for all ages;

To be a faithful community which, led by the Holy Spirit,

expresses hospitality,

nurtures spiritual growth, and

promotes a deep sense of belonging;

To strive to build on commonalities while seeking to

understand, accept, and

celebrate our differences;

To stand as a beacon of hope in a hurting and troubled world by

sharing the Good News of the Gospel, and

practicing God's love as embodied by Jesus Christ.

We welcome all to walk with us on the journey of faith.

As adopted by the Congregation at its Annual Meeting – January 22, 2012



First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

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Ellsworth, Maine 04605

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ellsworthucc.org facebook.com/fccellsworth/