

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



MAY 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

Easter continues. The Resurrection is not only about Jesus being raised from the dead, but also about the continuing work that Christ performs with his disciples. Because of it, I especially love preaching during these seven Sundays in Eastertide. The Risen Christ returns to his disheartened disciples, appears to them, reveals himself, and ministers to their doubts. He let Thomas touch him, he appeared to the cowering disciples hiding behind locked doors, he cooked breakfast for them on the beach, he walked with them on the road to Emmaus and broke bread with them. Jesus is seemingly everywhere in these post-Resurrection appearances! Christ returns, coming back first to the ones who had forsaken him the most. Interesting, isn't it? The Risen Christ might have returned to Pontius Pilate or might have returned to the religious leaders, saying, "See, I told you so!" But he did not. Instead, the accounts of Easter reveal that he returned to his disciples, pronounced "Peace be with you!", and forgave them. It is a message of forgiveness, not retribution.

You may be slow to believe in the Resurrection. Many people are. But you can't deny the fact that something amazing happened to these disciples after Jesus got done with them. They were turned upside down, a 180-degree change. How else do you explain the turnaround from despairing, fearful, and timid to confident, bold, and brave? Sometimes our gravest doubts are not that Jesus Christ is Lord but rather that Jesus Christ would call and reach out to stumbling people like us to accomplish his mission in the world. "Go, tell what you have seen and heard, make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching in my name," said Jesus to the very same ones who had betrayed and denied him earlier.

Are you listening, Church of Today?

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Keith".

Rev. Keith Bowie

**At this time,
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.**

**We will determine on a week-to-week
basis if we host coffee hour after
morning worship. Thank you for
your cooperation.**

FRONT ENTRANCE CLOSED

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

MAY CHURCH MEETINGS

- Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:30 a.m.
- Busy Bodies** – Mondays, 10:30 a.m.
- Choir** – Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.
- Music** – TBA
- Deacons** – Sunday, May 8, 11:30 p.m.
- Missions** – Thursday, May 12, TBA
- Finance** – Friday, May 13, 10 a.m., at bank
- Christian Ed** – Sunday, May 15, 1 p.m.
- Trustees** – Thursday, May 19, 7 p.m.
- Council** – Monday, May 23, 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.



Bar Harbor Congregational UCC hosts the **SUNRISE ASSOCIATION SPRING GATHERING**

Saturday, May 14, 2022, 9 a.m.- 1 p.m.

RECONNECT – RENEW – RESTORE

- 9 a.m.** Registration & coffee fellowship
- 9:30 a.m.** Welcome, introductions, & housekeeping (gather in the sanctuary)
- 10 a.m.** Business
- 10:30 a.m.** Program: **Reconnect – Renew – Restore** (facilitated by Rev. Alexis Fuller-Wright)
- 11:30 a.m.** Worship
- Noon** Lunch

THIS WILL BE A HYBRID MEETING

Zoom link: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/258510020>

MAY LECTIONARY READINGS

MAY 1 – 3RD SUNDAY OF EASTER, COMMUNION

Acts 9:1-6, (7-20)
Psalm 30
Revelation 5:11-14
John 21:1-19



MAY 8 – 4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 9:36-43
Psalm 23
Revelation 7:9-17
John 10:22-30

MAY 15 – 5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 11:1-18
Psalm 148
Revelation 21:1-6
John 13:31-35

MAY 22 – 6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 16:9-15
Psalm 67
Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5
John 14:23-29 OR John 5:1-9

MAY 26 – ASCENSION DAY

Acts 1:1-11
Psalm 47 OR Psalm 93
Ephesians 1:15-23
Luke 24:44-53

MAY 29 – 7TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Acts 16:16-34
Psalm 97
Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21
John 17:20-26

**I give you a new commandment:
LOVE EACH OTHER.**
**Just as I have loved you,
so you also must
love each other.**

John 13:34 (Common English Bible)

DEACONS

- May 1 – Communion, Rev. Dr. David Henry
 - May 8 – Rev. Keith Bowie
 - May 15 – TBA
 - May 22 – Rev. Keith Bowie
 - May 29 – Rev. Keith Bowie
- May Deacon: Cindia Sargent

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 entire church family. We hope this will be inspirational and fortifying for everyone.

Prayer Calendar names:

- Barb A.
- Ginny D.
- Joyce J.
- Cathy & Jack L.
- Katharine S.
- Betty T.
- June S.
- Deborah H.
- Tiffany R.
- Daryl & Jean W.
- Abigail K.
- Don K. & Vivian W.



WHY DO WE CHANGE THE COLORS IN THE SANCTUARY?



One of the Deacons responsibilities is to assist in weekly worship, including changing the paraments on the pulpit in accordance with the liturgical year.

The season from Easter to Pentecost is also called the Great Fifty Days, a tradition inspired by the Jewish season of fifty days between Passover and Shavuot—the feast celebrating the giving of the Torah to Moses.

Instead of finding a sealed tomb, the women who had come at dawn on Sunday are surprised by an angel who announces astonishing news: “Jesus has been raised from the dead” (Matt. 28:7). The heavenly messenger invites the mourners to see the empty tomb and then go and tell the disciples that the Crucified One is alive!

The liturgical color for this season is celebratory White or Gold. When the season ends on Pentecost Sunday, White is replaced with Red. This color reminds the congregation of fire—the symbol of the Holy Spirit. On Pentecost the Holy Spirit overpowered the barriers of culture and race. The first Sunday after Pentecost celebrates the Trinity, and the color again is White or Gold.

The Deacons hope this explanation helps us understand why we use the paraments throughout the year and the meaning behind the colors. (Source: ucc.org)

Your Deacons want you to know that they are always available to listen to you, and to help you in any way they can.

SMALL GROUP Meetings

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

As shared previously, the Council is holding small group meetings to seek your thoughts about First Congregational Church of Ellsworth. The desire is to meet with you **in person** in small groups. While our Council members will be telephoning members to ask you to join us, we are extending the invitation here also. The Council has scheduled the following meeting times and hopes that you will plan to attend one of these meetings to share your thoughts. An RSVP for a specific time is not required. All meetings will be an hour long and the questions are included here in the Steeple.

Saturday,	April 30	10 a.m.	Church Parlor
Sunday,	May 1	11:30 a.m.	Church Parlor
Saturday,	May 7	10 a.m.	Church Parlor
Tuesday,	May 10	7 p.m.	Zoom/Church Parlor
Sunday,	May 15	10 a.m.	Church Parlor

We look forward to seeing you and hearing your thoughts. Thank you to those who have already replied to our questions.

Questions *(please do not deviate from or skip questions)*

1. **What are the top 3 things that make you proud to be part of the FCC of Ellsworth family?**
2. **How do you attend church (in person, radio, zoom, FB)?**
3. **Briefly share your vision for the future the church in the following three areas:**
 - a. **Fellowship**
 - b. **Pastoral Care (Minister / Lay Leadership)**
 - c. **Community Outreach / Missions**
4. **What are your most prominent concerns?**
5. **As we seek new pastoral leadership, describe your vision or top priorities**
6. **Do you feel like a valued member of the church?**
 - a. **Why or why not?**
 - b. **What can we do to make you feel valued?**
7. **Do you have ideas about how to grow the Church?**
8. **Transparency / communication – grade the existing processes and propose preferred processes**
9. **What additional topics require leadership's attention?**



All Together!

STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH

Strengthen the Church is a special mission offering to reimagine and build the future of the UCC. Shared at the conference and national levels, STC largely supports youth ministries and full-time leaders for new churches in part of the country where the UCC does not have a strong presence. It also provides support for existing churches' new initiatives.

The STC Offering will be officially observed on Sunday, June 5. We will collect gifts for STC the month of June. Look for special bulletin inserts beginning May 15.



PILGRIM LODGE Summer 2022



 <div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px;"> <p>June 3 - June 5 WOMEN'S SPRING WEEKEND Campers Age 19 & Older</p> </div>	<div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px;"> <p>June 26 - July 2 OUTDOOR ART ROOM /ARTS FOR ALL Grades 4 - 6 7 - 9 10 - Post Grad</p> </div>	
 <div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px;"> <p>July 3 - July 5 GRANDPARENTS CAMP I</p> </div>	<div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px;"> <p>July 3 - July 6 "EXPEDITION EVERYONE"</p> </div>	
 <div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px;"> <p>July 10 - July 16 CAMP PRIDE & ISLAND CAMP Grades 9 - Post Grad Grades 7 - 9</p> </div>	<div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px;"> <p>July 13 - July 16 FIRST TIME CAMPERS - HALF WEEK Grades 3 - 5</p> </div>	
 <div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px;"> <p>July 17 - July 23 MIDLERS & SENIOR HIGH Grades 7 - 9 Grades 10 - Post Grad</p> </div>	<div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px;"> <p>July 24 - July 30 HOGWARTS & COBBECON Grades 4 - 10</p> </div>	
 <div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px;"> <p>Aug 3 - Aug 6 ADULT CHILL</p> </div>	<div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px;"> <p>Sept 2 - Sept 5 FAMILY CAMP</p> </div>	
<div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px;"> <p>Aug 21 - Aug 23 GRANDPARENTS CAMP II</p> </div>	<div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; border-radius: 10px;"> <p>Sept 16 - Sept 18 WOMEN'S FALL WEEKEND</p> </div>	

Register for camp today! To sign up, visit <https://pilgrimlodge.org>

The deadline to apply for scholarships is May 15.
207-724-3200, info@pilgrimlodge.org



**MEMORIAL
SERVICE**
for Jane Jungbluth
Saturday, May 14, 11 a.m.

In appreciation

Dear FCC friends,

Thank you for your cards, phone calls, flowers, prayers, drop-in office visits and words of comfort you have given to me in the wake of my mother's unexpected death. It has been a sad and stressful time. You have made it much easier to bear. You are all very dear to me.

*Joyce C.
Church Secretary*

I found this humorous article when cleaning out my mother's things. – jbc

WHAT IF GOD HAD VOICEMAIL?



We have all learned to live with voicemail as a necessary part of modern life. But have you ever wondered, *what if God decided to install voicemail?*

Imagine praying and hearing this:

“Thank you for calling My Father’s House.
Please select one of the following options:

Press 1 for requests,
Press 2 for thanksgiving,
Press 3 for complaints,
Press 4 for all other inquiries.”

What if God used this familiar excuse? “I’m sorry, all our angels are busy helping other sinners right now. However, your prayer is important to us, and we will answer it in the order it was received. Please stay on the line.”

Can you imagine getting these responses as you call God in prayer?

“If you would like to speak to:

God, press 1.

Jesus, press 2.

The Holy Spirit, press 3.

If you would like to hear King David sing a Psalm while you hold, press 4.

To find a loved one who has been assigned to Heaven, press 5, then enter his or her social security number followed by the pound key. (If you get a negative response, please hang up and try area code 666.)

For reservations at “My Father’s House”, please enter J-O-H-N-3-1-6.

For answers to nagging questions about dinosaurs, the age of the earth, life on other planets, and where Noah's Ark is, please wait until you arrive.

Our computers show that you have already prayed once today. Please hang up and try again tomorrow.

This office is closed for the weekend to observe a religious holiday. Please pray again Monday after 9:30 a.m. If you need emergency assistance when this office is closed, please contact your local pastor.”

MAY 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 White 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service & Communion	2 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies	3 6 pm Choir	4 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	5 9 am Bulletin deadline	6 OFFICE CLOSED	7
8 White 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Deacons	9 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies	10 6 pm Choir	11 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	12 9 am Bulletin deadline TBA Missions	13 OFFICE CLOSED 10 am Finance	14 9 a.m. Sunrise Assoc. Spring Gathering in BH 11 am Jungbluth memorial service
15 White 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 1 pm Christian Ed	16 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies	17 6 pm Choir	18 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	19 9 am Bulletin deadline 7 pm Trustees	20 OFFICE CLOSED	21
22 White 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	23 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies 6:30 pm Council	24 9 am Steeple deadline 6 pm Choir	25 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	26 9 am Bulletin deadline	27 OFFICE CLOSED	28
29 White 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	30 OFFICE CLOSED	31 6 pm Choir				



BEST OF ELLSWORTH AWARD

First Congregational Church has been selected as the Winner for the 2022 Best of Ellsworth Awards in the category of United Church of Christ.

The Ellsworth Award Program purpose is to support and offer public recognition of the contributions of businesses and organizations in and around Ellsworth. FCC's Welcome Table has been feeding the people of this area since June 2012.

