

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



July 2022 - THE STEEPLE NEWSLETTER

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

From the Moderator

Cathy and I, along with three of our sons, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter, recently made the trip to North Carolina to celebrate Cathy's mother's 80th birthday. It was a great time, and it was wonderful to spend time together.

The hotel that we stayed at had photographs of buildings in the area posted around the lobby and one of them was the International Civil Rights Museum located in Greensborough. Something inside of me was insisting that I go there. I asked the gentleman at the desk if it was local and indeed, it was only 20 minutes away.

The museum is located in what was once a J.J. Newberry's store. This is the site of a lunch counter sit-in that took place in the early days of the ongoing civil rights movement in our country.

Like most museums, there are a series of rooms or exhibits that attempt to help visitors understand the context that led to the establishment of the museum. Unlike many museums the premise here is not the display of artifacts or documents, although there are indeed artifacts to view (like the lunch counter in question). Rather it is a place to tell the story of the injustice of the recent past in the hopes of preventing the recurrence in the present or the future. It is also the story of a people whose faith moved them around the deliberate oppression that was part of their daily lives.



One of the rooms in the museum is there to tell the story of Emmett Till. Emmett was a 14-year-old boy who came from Chicago to Mississippi in the summer of 1955 to visit with family. Emmett was kidnapped, brutally murdered and then his body was weighed down with an industrial fan and tossed into the Tallahatchie River. Why? Because he may have whistled at a young, white woman working in a store that she and her husband owned. He was out and about with family members and friends in a hostile environment that he was unfamiliar with guilty of being young, black, and male.

The men who committed his murder were arrested, tried, and acquitted. Two years later they (2 of them) admitted to everything in an interview with Life Magazine. Because they had already been tried and acquitted, they could not be tried again.

As I sat in the darkened room and listened to the tour guide and viewed the picture on the wall of an unrecognizable human being, I lost it. How anybody could be so filled with hate that they murdered this young man was and is beyond my ability to reconcile. The grief that his mother and family felt was very real to me in that time and place.

In the course of my journey, I have come to understand that these moments of personal pain are deeply spiritual prompts to a deeper understanding of what it means to be human, and, what it means to be in relation to our creator, the God who loves us so extravagantly that God sent Jesus to offer a better way.

Yet, in our world today, this hate continues and some among us have found another group of Gods dearly beloved to hate, exclude and singled out for violence and even murder. Recently in Texas a so-called Christian pastor, from the pulpit during worship called for "gay people to be stood face first against the wall and shot in the back of the head". Other so-called pastors of his persuasion have called for members of the LGBTQ community to be rounded up and executed by the government. *(continued page 4)*

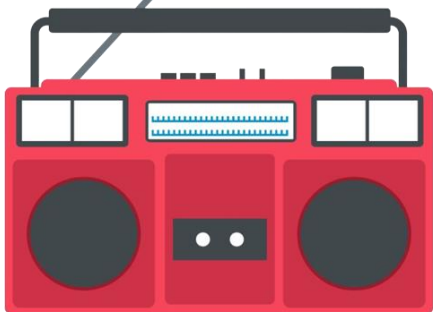
JULY CHURCH MEETINGS

- Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:30 a.m.
Busy Bodies – Mondays, 10:30 a.m.
Deacons – Sunday, July 10, 11:30 p.m.
Missions – Thursday, July 14, TBA
Christian Ed – Sunday, July 17, 11:30 a.m.
Trustees – Thursday, July 21, 7 p.m.
Council – Monday, July 25, 6:30 p.m.
Music – TBA

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.

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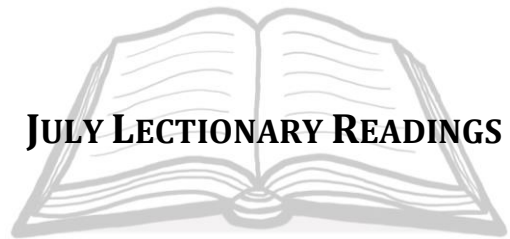


RADIO BLUES...

Efforts to broadcast our Sunday morning worship service over WDEA have stymied us most Sundays the last two months. These technical difficulties have, no doubt, aggravated you as they have us!

We are working diligently with the radio station to identify the cause and realign our internet service for future broadcasts. We hope we are very close to a permanent solution that will have us back on air soon!

Please don't give up hope. You—our radio congregation—are treasured members of the FCC Ellsworth family and we will be back in your homes soon. Thank you for your patience.



JULY LECTIONARY READINGS

JULY 3 – 4TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

2 Kings 5:1-14 & Psalm 30
Isaiah 66:10-14 & Psalm 66:1-9
Galatians 6:(1-6), 7-16
Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

JULY 10 – 5TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Amos 7:7-17 & Psalm 82
Deuteronomy 30:9-14 & Psalm 25:1-10
Colossians 1:1-14
Luke 10:25-37

JULY 17 – 6TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Amos 8:1-12 & Psalm 52
Genesis 18:1-10a & Psalm 15
Colossians 1:15-28
Luke 10:38-42

JULY 24 – 7TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Hosea 1:2-10 & Psalm 85
Genesis 18:20-32 & Psalm 138
Colossians 2:6-15, (16-19)
Luke 11:1-13

JULY 31 – 8TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Hosea 11:1-11 & Psalm 107:1-9, 43
Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23 & Psalm 49:1-12
Colossians 3:1-11
Luke 12:13-21



DEACONS

July 3 – Communion with Rev. Keith Bowie

July 10 – Rev. Keith Bowie

July 17 – TBA

July 24 – Rev. Keith Bowie

July 31 – Rev. Keith Bowie

July Deacon: Steve Merchant

The sanctuary vestments are **green**. Green is the standard color for “Ordinary Time,” the part of the liturgical year that stretches between Easter and Christmas. It is meant to represent the anticipation and hope in the resurrection of Christ. Green symbolizes the hope and life of each new day.

Prayer Calendar names

For July:

- Peter & Sue Bedard
- Louise & Sid Emerson
- Barry & Marianne Jordan
- Brian & Jane Langley
- Donna Shea
- Mary T. Turner
- Martin Vachon
- David & Susan Jordan
- George Sealy
- Abby Morrow
- Chris & Gayle Cambridge



At their June meeting, the Deacons read a poem written by a Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting survivor. The young woman wrote the piece after the tragic events at the Uvalde school.

Please read the poem on pages 5 & 6 in this newsletter.

OUR CHURCH'S CARE TEAM

A message from our Deacon Chairperson

What is a Care Team, and could I contribute to something of this kind of mission and service to our congregation?

I have thought a lot about this and in my experience, this was a group of individuals that met together and reached out to congregation members and friends when they needed help, prayer, or just a check-in to know someone cares. We have all been in this situation and I'm sure you know someone who could use this kind of care. I think we could do this ministry well.

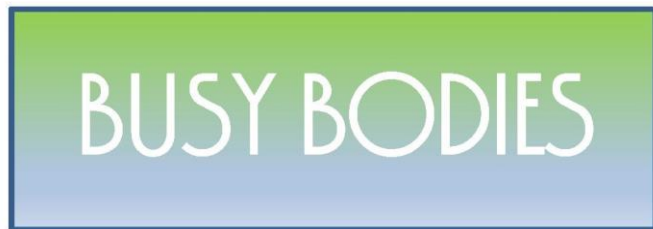
If you are interested in participating or just want to know more, please contact the office or contact Katharine S.

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



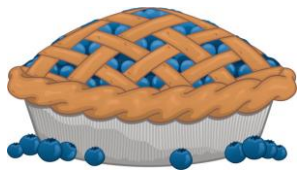
Choir finished the season and we are lining up special music acts for Sunday worship.

We have contacted some Maine organists about our September 11 recital. Peter Haynes has already responded "Yes!" Peter's mother Hazel was organist at FCC years ago.



Planning ahead:

BLUEBERRY INDOOR YARD SALE
Saturday, August 6, 8 a.m.-noon



We will also have books and puzzles. There will be a Bake Sale and we would appreciate donations brought to the church on Friday afternoon August 5, or early Saturday morning. As always, we thank our church family for all your support. You help make our Fairs a success. Speak with Sue Fuller for more information.



Moderator (continued from the front page)

There is nothing in this thinking that is loving and it is not possible to understand this thinking as being consistent with the teachings of Jesus.

What has happened to us? Could this happen here in Ellsworth? Could this kind of thinking slither into our lives together as a called and gathered community of Disciples of Jesus?

Lots of us, probably most of us would say no, it cannot happen here. The simple truth is that, yes, it can. Only by immersing ourselves more fully in the challenge of being loving in the way that Jesus lived and loved will be able to stand apart from the powers that are gathering around us.

We have danced for quite a while now around the conversation of what it might mean to engage in covenant to affirm all of Gods dearly beloved. To affirm is not only to be welcoming. To affirm means to lift up any and everyone as being fully human and dearly beloved of God. To covenant together to affirm all of those folks around us is to engage in a sacred promise to each other and to God that, we will, with Gods help, and our mutual support, endeavor to fully live up to our own highest ideals.

We all know that the world around us is changing and we all sense that there is danger in that change. We must remember that in change there is also great hope. We can be agents of change for the better. All that is necessary is to open our hearts to the love that is God in us and to pour that love back out to the world around us. That process starts by affirming all of our neighbors as the dearly beloved of God.

When we become able to do that there will be no more Emmett Tills in our world. Unless we do that there can and may well be others among us who will be persecuted and even violated because they are different than us. To love and to affirm each other is perhaps the most real and sincere offering of gratitude that we are able to live for the many blessings that our creator has surrounded us with. ♦

Jack



Maria Azeez was in first grade in 2002 when 20 first graders and six educators were killed at Sandy Hook Elementary in her hometown. After seeing a photo of Robb Elementary School student's backpacks lined up in a row in Uvalde, Texas, the 15-year-old penned a heartbreaking poem, "When will we let them grow up?"

When I Grow Up

When a stinger stings / Their last sting / You hear your phone ring

We are Bees

Seeds of the earth / Perfection at birth / Pollinators / Immortal / Flying high

But / We are dying off

And we don't know why

All we do is study in a sanctuary / A home / And draw a little / Maybe even sing / And take care of our hive

We have parents / And dreams / And hopes / We carry the burden of the world / Because we have time

WE will relax later

But when is later / There is no more time / Scientists and politicians say they don't know why we are dying / When flying / We want to be alive!!

But we DO know why

And the thought of our stingers have always kept us safe / we must never

Use pepper spray / Always keep your phone on / Look both ways when you cross the street / Turn off the lights / This the door we exit from / This the room we hide in / This is the desk we barricade the door with / This the window we wait for rescue from / This is the hand you cover your mouth with / This the pencil you will use as a weapon / This is the last text you send your mother: "I love you mom."

This is the guard bee who needs to protect the / Children at Play /

Because who will

(continued next page →)

We do know why.

Inside this hive / We let inside / A bee killer

He waited / For his resentment to turn into hatred / He has no fuzz / No clear motive / He puts a yellow jacket / He uses his stinger / His vile wish for a cleansing of the weak / He can use a stinger multiple times / An apex predator / A monster / A Human

When the stinger stings / Their last sting / The hive will ring your phone / To let you know they'll bring / A mini body bag to your door / They'll bring cookies / And thoughts and prayers

But since when did such meaningless words a mother comfort / Did you think your thoughts will bring that bee back?

"He was listening to rap music / He was playing video games / He was having a bad day." / All these things we will soon say / What about our promise? / To protect the earth? / To protect our kids? / But has anyone ever questioned his ability to sting? / Or the way he boasted about his weapon?

I don't know much / I'm just a little bee in a big world

But what I do know is we let him in

We saw all his sinful colors / I can't say I watched him grow / I can't say I knew his motive / But I can while growing up I wanted to be a police officer because witnessing 20 my age in my town come home in body bags

At 6 years old I felt the burden of being one who had to do something

At 4 years old I said "When I grow up I will become a unicorn"

At 6 years old I said "When I grow up I will become a police officer"

At 8 years old I said "When I grow up I will become a lawyer"

When I grow up I will become a doctor / When I grow up I will become a firefighter / When I grow up I will become a ninja / When I grow up I will become a teacher / When I grow up I will become a veterinarian / When I grow up I will become an actor / When I grow I will become a detective / When I grow up I will become a baseball player / When I grow I will become a lighthouse guard

When I grow up I will be a...

I don't know all too much the world and its complexities / I don't know all too much our functions in society

But I do Know this / Every baby bee in this hive / Has said these words

When I Grow up

When will we let them grow up? ♦



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <h1 style="color: green;">JULY 2022</h1>					1 OFFICE CLOSED	2
3 Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service & Communion	4 OFFICE CLOSED 	5	6 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	7 9 am Bulletin deadline	8 OFFICE CLOSED	9
10 Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Deacons	11 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies	12	13 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	14 9 am Bulletin Deadline TBA Missions	15 OFFICE CLOSED	16
17 Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Christian Ed	18 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies	19	20 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	21 9 am Bulletin deadline 7 pm Trustees	22 OFFICE CLOSED	23
24 Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	25 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies 6:30 pm Council	26	27 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	28 9 am Bulletin deadline	29 OFFICE CLOSED	30
31 Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service						

FRONT ENTRANCE UPDATE:

We're getting there!
Concrete takes time to set and dry,
and that can't be rushed.

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

Questions?
Speak with Jack or Troy.

**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 appreciate everyone's cooperation.

We will determine on a week-to-week basis if we host coffee hour after morning worship.