

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



DECEMBER 2021 - THE STEEPLE NEWSLETTER

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

From the Moderator

The season of Advent is upon us again and, in some ways, maybe we are feeling like things are stuck where they have been for the last little while. All of us, to one extent or another, perhaps recognize the contrast between some, or even most, of the core tenets of our faith, and the way that we live our lives, and the expectations that we have of how our society will or should work.

Have you ever wondered what God might think as God watches what goes on and how we treat each other?

God stands ready all the time to be there to help us to do what is right and loving, what is just and compassionate if only we would just make the choice to move in that direction.

We all see the world around us, and we all know that how things are is not what God intends.

If Advent is a time of new beginnings and we want to honor that, if our journeys into the future are to include a deepening of our faith in, and love for God, then we need to make that choice, that decision. The decision to let go and trust in God, the God who made us to be, the God who loves us.

Let's make this Advent a turning point in our lives together, in our journey together. Let's dream together of our own understandings of what Advent can mean for our lives, our church and our community. Let's get high on God follow where God leads. Let's be bold and innovative as we seek to answer Gods call to all of us. ♦

Jack



ATTENTION

**CHURCH'S MAIN
ENTRANCE CLOSED**

The Church Street entrance to the sanctuary remains closed. Please use the doors at State Street or the education wing. We expect this inconvenience to last through the middle of December.

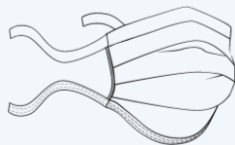
DECEMBER CHURCH MEETINGS

- Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:30 a.m.
Choir – Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m.
Music – Sunday, Dec 5, 11:30 a.m.
Missions – Thursday, Dec 9, time TBA
Deacons – Sunday, Dec 12, 11:30 p.m.
Trustees – Thursday, Dec 16, 7 p.m.
Christian Ed – Sunday, Dec 19, 1 p.m.
Council – Monday, Dec 20, 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. Call the church office (T-W-Th) for updated Zoom instructions.

GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING USE



A mask is necessary for all who gather in the church building. The Re-Opening Committee hopes this will serve to mitigate the spread of Covid and enable us to remain open for worship.

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

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in these difficult times. This is hard on all of us.

DECEMBER LECTIONARY READINGS

DECEMBER 5 – 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Malachi 3:1-4
Luke 1:68-79
Philippians 1:3-11
Luke 3:1-6



DECEMBER 12 – 3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Zephaniah 3:14-20
Isaiah 12:2-6
Philippians 4:4-7
Luke 3:7-18



DECEMBER 19 – 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Micah 5:2-5a
Luke 1:46b-55 OR Psalm 80:1-7
Hebrews 10:5-10
Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)



DECEMBER 24 – CHRISTMAS EVE

Isaiah 62:6-12
Psalm 97
Titus 3:4-7
Luke 2:(1-7), 8-20



DECEMBER 25 – CHRISTMAS DAY

Joel 2:21-27
Psalm 126
1 Timothy 2:1-7
Matthew 6:25-33



DECEMBER 26 – 1ST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Jeremiah 33:14-16
Psalm 25:1-10
1 Thessalonians 3:9-13
Luke 21:25-36

DECEMBER 31 – NEW YEAR'S EVE

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
Psalm 8
Revelation 21:1-6a
Matthew 31-46

When he comes, he will rule his people with the strength that comes from the Lord and with the majesty of the Lord God himself.

His people will live in safety because people all over the earth will acknowledge his greatness, AND HE WILL BRING PEACE.

Micah 5:4-5a Good News Translation



THE CHRISTMAS FUND cares for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gift checks every December to our lower-income retirees.

In December, we collect gifts for this fund. Use the designated pew enveloped or write *Christmas Fund* in your check memo.

The Christmas Fund

For the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund



CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2021 8:30 A.M. – 1 P.M.

Our holiday fair will feature our popular Berry Bowls, knitted and crocheted items, crafts, jewelry, baked goods, fudge, attic treasures, books, puzzles and more. No clothing, please.

Donations for the fair will be appreciated and can be left at the church. Please leave baked goods at the church on Friday, December 3, from 12-3 p.m., or early Saturday morning.

We appreciate your support. If you have questions, contact Louise E. or Sue F.

MINISTER'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

Our congregation generously supports The Minister's Discretionary Fund (MDF). Historically, this fund allowed the minister to help those in need as requested. When strangers outside the church family seek assistance from the pastor, it has been difficult to determine if the needs were legitimate. All the pastors comprising the Ellsworth Area Ministers Association (EAMA) have experienced strangers seeking aid.

[Families First](#), located at 41 North Street in Ellsworth, will aid local pastors and churches by administering discretionary funds. Individuals seeking aid that are not part of a congregation will be directed to Families First. Our church has chosen to participate in this program. A portion of our MDF gifts will go to Families First, and we will retain a portion of MDF gifts to support the needs in our congregation.

Please contact any of our church leadership with questions you have about MDF and how we are directing funds. We are blessed that our generosity spreads Christ's love in the Ellsworth community.



FAMILIES FIRST COMMUNITY CENTER

A Family Center with residential and outreach programs
serving homeless families with children
in Hancock County, Maine.

**"The king will answer them,
'I can guarantee this truth:
Whatever you did for one of my
brothers or sisters, no matter
how unimportant they seemed,
you did for me.'"**

Matthew 25:40

DEACONS

OUR DECEMBER MINISTERS

- December 5 - Advent II with Rev. Keith Bowie
- December 12 - Advent III with Rev. Matthew McDonald
- December 19 - Advent IV with Rev. Matthew McDonald
- December 24 - Christmas Eve with Rev. Keith Bowie
- December 26 - 2nd Day of Christmas with Rev. Keith Bowie

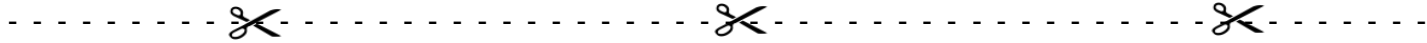
What a wonderful time of the year! As we start our time of Advent and expectation of the birth of our Savior, please remember all our members that are not able to be with us, or are away from us, for the season. We look forward to seeing everyone again during 2022. The Deacons continue to be here to support you in any way that we can. Please reach out if you have any needs and we will try to help. Rev. Bowie will continue to grace our pulpit when he is not filling pulpits at other churches. As you may have heard, Rev. Matt McDonald is willing to support us as needed and will be stepping in at various times.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

If you would like to designate a poinsettia to be placed in memory or honor of a loved one, please fill out the form below and mail it to

First Congregational Church, PO Box 12, Ellsworth, ME 04605,

or email the info to fccellsworth@myfairpoint.net. The Flower Committee has decided to use the beautiful artificial poinsettias again this year. If you would like to make a donation to the Flower Committee to take care of flowers throughout the year, that would be wonderful but not necessary in order to list your loved one in the bulletin on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, December 19, 2021. If you decide you would like to donate to the Flower Committee, please write *Flower Comm.* in the check memo line. **Memorial and honorary information needs to be into the church office by Tuesday, December 14.**



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA DESIGNATIONS 2021

Your name (please print) _____

In Honor of (please print) _____

In Memory of (please print) _____



DECEMBER 2021



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	2 9 am Bulletin deadline	3 OFFICE CLOSED 12-3 pm Fair setup	4 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Christmas Fair
5 Advent II Violet 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service & Communion 11:30 am Music Comm	6 OFFICE CLOSED	7 6 pm Choir	8 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	9 9 am Bulletin deadline TBA Missions	10 OFFICE CLOSED	11
12 Advent III Rose 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Deacons	13 OFFICE CLOSED	14 6 pm Choir	15 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	16 9 am Bulletin & Steeple deadlines 7 pm Trustees	17 OFFICE CLOSED	18
19 Advent IV Violet 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 1 pm Christian Ed	20 OFFICE CLOSED 6:30 pm Council	21 6 pm Choir	22 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	23 9 am Bulletin deadline	24 Christmas Eve OFFICE CLOSED 7:30 pm Service	25 Christmas
26 White 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	27 OFFICE CLOSED	28 Jungbluth memorial service 6 pm Choir	29 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	30 9 am Bulletin deadline	31 OFFICE CLOSED	



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE 7:30 P.M.

Everyone is invited to attend the traditional Service of Lessons & Carols, where we hear familiar passages from Scripture and beloved carols. We will conclude with candle-lighting throughout the congregation as we sing "Silent night".

The service will broadcast live through [WDEA](#) AM 1370, [Facebook](#), and [Zoom](#) to worship at home.

At this time the Reopening Committee intends for the service to be in person. If local Covid cases spike, the committee may decide to have remote worship only. We will notify you of any changes. We appreciate your flexibility and understanding during the pandemic.

