

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



SEPTEMBER 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

September will mark my fiftieth anniversary of ordination. It is hard to believe how quickly those years have flown by. I was newly married, had just graduated from Duke Divinity School with a Master's in Theology (one year beyond the Master of Divinity), and both Pam and I were looking for jobs. Our first "big decision" was to move to Pennsylvania to enable Pam to find a job in elementary school guidance counseling, a career field which was just in its infancy. She did find a position! This was Pam's home state and it was there that I was first introduced, luckily as it turned out, to the United Church of Christ. I did supply preaching that summer of 1973 and got to know the history and traditions of the UCC while we lived with Pam's parents.

There were far-reaching societal and cultural issues in the news that year. I remember watching with much interest the Watergate Hearings, exposing the dark side of politics on TV for all to see, leading to the resignation of President Richard Nixon ("I'm not a crook," Nixon famously said). U.S. participation in the Vietnam War came to an end. Also coming to an end, unfortunately, was the post-World War II economic boom and the beginning of the first of a series of recessions that continued over the next decade. The first oil crisis took place in 1973. Abortion was made legal (Roe v. Wade) and the first handheld cellular phone call was made. "The Godfather" won an Oscar for Best Picture and Secretariat won the Kentucky Derby. Meanwhile, Elvis Presley's concert in Hawaii was watched by more people than the Apollo Moon landings.

All those event were in the background while I was busily searching for a "call" to a church. Finally, a four-point charge opened up. Four churches—one minister! Now who in their right mind would accept such a position? Me, that's who. So I would preach at two of the churches on a given Sunday and the other two churches the next Sunday. One of the nice things about that arrangement was that I could use the same sermon for both weeks, meaning I only had to write a sermon every other week. This was fortunate for me because my sermons were terrible since I still needed to master the art and craft of preaching. I hope that I have improved since then, but you will have to be the judge of that. Unfortunately for Pam, who came to all of the services (God bless her), she had to listen (or endure?) each sermon four times! The other nice thing was we were able to live in a sizable parsonage. At that point, we had not been able to save any money for a down payment on a home, so the parsonage was a godsend. Our few belongings were able to be packed in a small U-Haul-It trailer towed behind our car. A group of men from the church were awaiting us when we arrived, a welcoming sight, to help us unload, but we were done in about 15 minutes.

(continued on page 2, bottom of column 2)

SEPTEMBER CHURCH MEETINGS

- Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:30 a.m.
Choir – Thursdays, 6 p.m.
Music – TBA
Search Comm – TBA
Busy Bodies – Mondays, 10:30 a.m.
Deacons – Sunday, Sept 10, 11:30 a.m.
Christian Ed – Sunday, Sept 17, 11:30 a.m.
Trustees – Thursday, Sept 21, 7 p.m.
Missions – Sunday, Sept 24, 11:30 a.m.
Council – Monday, Sept 25, 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.

Please maintain physical distance and respect the space of those who wish to continue to wear a mask.



SEPTEMBER LECTIONARY READINGS

SEPT 3 – 14TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Exodus 3:1-15 & Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b OR
Jeremiah 15:15-21 & Psalm 26:1-8
Romans 12:9-21
Matthew 16:21-28

SEPT 10 – 15TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Eodus 12:1-14 & Psalm 149 OR
Ezekiel 33:7-11 & Psalm 119:33-40
Romans 13:8-14
Matthew 18:15-20

SEPT 17 – 16TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Exodus 14:19-31 & Psalm 114 OR
Exodus 15:1b-11 OR
Genesis 50:15-21 & Psalm 103:(1-7), 8-13
Romans 14:1-12
Matthew 18:21-35

SEPT 24 – 17TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
Exodus 16:2-15 & Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45 OR
Jonah 3:10-4:11 & Psalm 145:1-8
Philippians 1:21-20
Matthew 20:1-16

(continued from the front page)

Ordination was dependent on accepting a call to a church (that is still the practice today), so I quickly scheduled a service of ordination with the local UCC officials. I had previously been examined and declared “fit” for ordination. That was in September 1973—50 years ago—and such was life back then.

Thank you for allowing me to share this little trip down memory lane. I mentioned to Pam what I was going to write about for this article and she said “What’s the point of this?” My answer was “There is no point.” For once, I’m not trying to moralize, sermonize, or make any kind of “point,” other than thanking God for 50 years of blessed ministry! Amen. ♦

Keith

DEACONS

Sept 3 - Communion, Rev. Keith Bowie
Sept 10 - Rev. Keith Bowie
Sept 17 - Rev. Dr. David Henry
Sept 24 - Rev. Keith Bowie

September Deacon: Anne Bancroft

It's been a very busy summer and we are about to begin another school year which means changes in our communities, weather, expectations, and all-around general attitude towards everything! We are coming off a relaxed season and beginning to anticipate many things and changes that lead to some big events—fairs, fall holidays, and, of course, the build up to the Christmas season.

What and why does all this matter to us as a church that is part of the spiritual leadership in our community? There are many reasons it should matter to us. We are constantly discussing that we need more new people, more things that help promote our church. What can we do to present ourselves to the community to encourage people to consider FCC as their home church? It is proven that if you invite and re-invite and do it again, that if people eventually visit and have a good experience, maybe they'll keep coming. This is not a minister's job; it is the congregation's job as people excited about our Lord, and our need to share God's love. We must step out of our comfort zone or pew and bring or invite some of those friends that you think may want to know the glory and love of the Lord. We can do this! We are a special place and why should we not grow? This is an exciting time of the year in all churches because we are looking forward to the Advent of our Lord. Our love, warmth, and compassion can grow our church family and enrich greater Ellsworth.



JOIN THE NEWLY BUILT PRAYER CHAIN

If you feel and believe in the power of prayer, *we need you!* We want to re-institute the Prayer Chain. This group is called upon if there is person or situation that urgently needs prayer. Each person choosing to do this would be contacted with the name of an individual that has requested prayer for a concern. This team then prays for the specific situation. If this sounds like something that you want to be part of, please call Katharine Schrader, 207-266-2541, or contact Joyce in the office. We would like to get this launched as soon as possible, so please consider your schedule and availability.

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 September:

- Greg & Jenn Berry
- Jeanne Fernald
- Jane & Tom MacDonald
- Ruth Silsby
- Linda Walton
- Brenda Jordan
- Lyle Stephenson
- Aaron Lacey
- Tucker Cambridge



THE 2023-2024 CHORAL SEASON begins with regular Thursday rehearsals on August 31, from 6-7 p.m. The Choir will begin singing in worship on September 17.

First Church has a great choir, with talented members, and we enjoy playing and singing for you. However, we could use some help, especially with bass or tenor voices. If you think you might like to contribute to worship through singing, please give us a try. We only ask that you can carry a tune. It is helpful if you have some experience with music and recognizing notes.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



Sundays at 8:30 a.m., Zoom & Parlor

This discussion group welcomes all people to join via computer, phone or in-person in the Parlor. Tom MacDonald leads this class. Contact the office for Zoom information.



*“God saw everything God made
and behold, it was very good.”*

Genesis 1:31

The Neighbors in Need (NIN) offering supports the UCC’s ministries of justice and compassion throughout the US. Two-thirds of the offering is used by the Justice & Witness Ministries to fund local and national justice initiatives and direct service projects. Justice & Witness has strong policy advocacy on issues such as the federal budget, immigration, health care, voting rights, hate crimes, civil liberties, and environmental justice.

NIN also supports our native American neighbors. One-third of the offering supports the UCC’s council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM). Historically, forebears of the UCC established churches and worked with Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arickara, and Hockak in North & South Dakota, Wisconsin, and northern Nebraska. Today there are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis. CAIM supports these churches and is an invaluable resource for more than 1,000 individuals from dozens of other tribes and nations who are members of the UCC in the US.

We will receive gifts to NIN throughout September and recognize NIN in the liturgy on October 1.



Loaves & Fishes
of Ellsworth
FOOD PANTRY
Serving Hancock County

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your generous donation of 42 pounds of food, which we received on July 19, 2023. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

Loaves & Fishes is committed to helping anyone who needs assistance—food or personal items. Some of our clients need support in the short term as they navigate a change in their situation while others seek assistance for a longer period. We do not want people to have to choose between paying for rent, food, heat, or other critical needs. We support our neighbors with assistance year-round.

The need is not seasonal. We feed and serve our neighbors with dignity and respect.

To learn more about us, please subscribe to our new quarterly newsletter. Sign up on our website:

loavesandfishesellsworth.com

With deep appreciation,
Andy Matthews, President

On Communion Sundays, we are asking folks to bring donations for the Loaves & Fishes Food pantry. Donations may be non-perishable food items or monetary gifts. Look for the donations and collection boxes in the front of the sanctuary.

You may also bring your donations to the church during regular office hours, Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

If you have questions, please contact Ginny Davis or Lois Stevens.

Loaves & Fishes is at its new location on Route 1: 137 US-1, Ellsworth, ME 04605

IN APPRECIATION



Many thanks for your generous offering of time and effort in hosting the Maryland State Boychoir's Concert Choir on Monday, July 17, 2023.

Our inaugural visit to First Congregational Church of Ellsworth was an absolute pleasure. Your helpfulness and the generosity of your volunteers was deeply appreciated. Our choristers greatly enjoyed singing in your beautiful space and visiting with the audience following the concert. It was a truly memorable and special occasion.

Finally, we thank you for the generous meal that you provided for our boys—they *absolutely loved it!* Kindly pass along our hearty thanks to those who worked to prepare and serve the boys their meal.


Thanks again for all the hard work you put into this visit. You were a gracious and accommodating host. We look forward to returning to Maine again soon!

Stephen Holmes
Artistic Director

Keith Tobin
Program Director

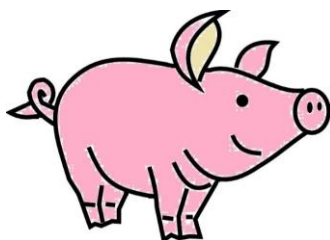
marylandstateboychoir.org

SEPTEMBER 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 OFFICE CLOSED	2
3 Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service & Communion 11 am Luncheon	4 OFFICE CLOSED	5	6 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	7 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	8 OFFICE CLOSED 10 am Finance	9
10 Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Deacons	11 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	12	13 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	14 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	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 activities	19	20 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	21 9 am Bulletin & Steeple deadlines 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir 7 pm Trustees	22 OFFICE CLOSED	23 5:30 pm Church Supper
24 Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Missions	25 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities 6:30 pm Council	26	27 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	28 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	29 OFFICE CLOSED	30

Roast Pork Supper

Saturday, September 23, serving 5:00 to 6:30 pm



Roast pork, gravy, 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.

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
PO Box 12, 2 Church Street
Ellsworth, Maine 04605
207-667-8321 office@ellsworthucc.org
ellsworthucc.org facebook.com/fccellsworth/