

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

**OCTOBER 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*

In these coming weeks of fall, we will be frequently hearing the word “stewardship”, thanks to our dedicated stewardship committee. I don’t want to steal their thunder, but I do want to offer a definition of the word “steward” and give you a concrete story about it. *Steward* comes from a Greek word meaning “manager of a household.” We all know that we have to take care of our homes, or they will fall into a state of disrepair. If you happen to be a homeowner, you are (a) always cleaning something, and (b) always having to make repairs, from clogged drains to painting to installing a new water heater, etc. If you do those things, you are, by definition, a good steward. Stewards are responsible people.

Our church is no exception. We are the household of God (1 Tim. 3:15). Many of you have seen the lift out beside the church recently. The Trustees have authorized work on the steeple to repair damage in which water somehow got into the steeple and seeped down to part of the sanctuary ceiling. The steeple is in the process of being repaired now, and then the ceiling can be tackled. It all adds up to a frightful price, especially since additional damage was found, but ours is an aging building and things happen. What I want to do now is publicly commend the Trustees for their decisive and timely action. As far as I know, there was no dissent on this matter. All agreed that the work had to be done, insuring a safe environment for worship. Sometimes, in the church, we are called to make hard choices. Sure, had we our druthers, we would have preferred to sink that money into other areas (e.g. new pastor compensation, kitchen remodeling, and a host of other things). Fixing a steeple is kind of an unglamorous project. But again, it had to be done. Thank you, Trustees and Troy, for your faithfulness, acting in a responsible, forthright manner, and being good stewards of our church property!

*Keith*



**QUARTERLY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

**Our next meeting takes place after worship on  
Sunday, November 5, 2023**

## OCTOBER 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, Oct 8, 11:30 a.m.
- Christian Ed** – Sunday, Oct 8, 11:30 a.m.
- Trustees** – Thursday, Oct 19, 7 p.m.
- Missions** – Sunday, Oct 22, 11:30 a.m.
- Council** – Monday, Oct 23, 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.



## OCTOBER LECTIONARY READINGS

### OCT 1 – 18<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Exodus 17:1-7 & Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16 OR  
Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32 & Psalm 25:1-9  
Philippians 2:1-3  
Matthew 21:23-32

### OCT 8 – 19<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20 & Psalm 19 OR  
Isaiah 5:1-7 & Psalm 80:7-15  
Philippians 3:4b-14  
Matthew 21:33-46

### OCT 15 – 20<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Exodus 32:1-14 & Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23 OR  
Isaiah 25:1-9 & Psalm 23  
Philippians 4:1-9  
Matthew 22:1-14

### OCT 22 – 21<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Exodus 33:12-23 & Psalm 99 OR  
Isaiah 45:1-7 & Psalm 96:1-9 (10-13)  
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10  
Matthew 22:15-22

### OCT 29 – 22<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Deuteronomy 34:1-12 & Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17 OR  
Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18 & Psalm 1  
1 Thessalonians 2:1-8  
Matthew 22:34-46



WITH DEEPEST  
*Sympathy*

To the family and friends of  
**Nancy Tilden King**  
who died September 18, 2023.  
Her memorial service is October 14.

# DEACONS

- Oct 1 - Communion, Rev. Keith Bowie
- Oct 8 - Rev. Keith Bowie
- Oct 15 - Rev. Dr. David Henry
- Oct 22 - Rev. Keith Bowie
- Oct 29 - Rev. Keith Bowie

**October Deacon: John Lacey**

I am on an email list called "Nice News." One of the recent articles discussed the fires in Hawaii. One of these fires seemingly destroyed one of Maui's banyan trees. The island's 150-year-old banyan tree became a symbol of hope in Lahaina's historic district—burnt and blackened but still standing tall. Recently the tree has shown new growth. How amazing this is in such a severe situation. The people of Hawaii have regained a hope that all will return to the previous state and their history will survive.

Last month, I wrote about this season being one of change and anticipation. I also challenged each of us to reach out and invite someone to come and gain the wonderful gifts that we have in our church. Well, with all this lead in, there have been some of us in the church wanting to look to the future and how we can do some things differently to allow more access across the entire church. From participating through Zoom, WDEA radio, Facebook, and print, there is a contingent of members that are very interested in moving towards projection of music, scriptures, and announcements during the services. This would be like looking at the new growth of the banyan tree in Hawaii. These are some of the ideas that are being discussed to help bring the church into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I truly BELIEVE that God is With Us and continues to Speak to Us through many different ways. Please consider some of these ideas and let people on the different boards know your thoughts about how we can make our church more available to our wider community.

# 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 October:

- Karen Blaisdell & John Van Pelt
- Mike & Sue Fuller
- Lillian Katsiaficas
- Gil McLaughlin
- Mary Smith
- John Whitcomb
- Jane Alley
- Lynne Hundhammer
- Nate Stephenson
- John Lacey III
- Erik Tainter

# TRUSTEES

There are more than 20 large windows in the education wing. While enjoyable in the summer, they are a large heat loss in the colder months. The Trustees will install hardware, and if volunteers could put together quilted drapes to hang, it would be a significant savings going forward. *Please talk to a Trustee ASAP if you would like to help.* Heating season is upon us. Thanks everyone for helping us be mindful of our fuel expense.



The forum meets on Sunday mornings at 8:30 in the parlor. Everyone is welcome. Speak with Tom MacDonald if you have any questions.



# Loaves & Fishes

of Ellsworth

## FOOD PANTRY

Serving Hancock County

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 of the Missions Committee. Loaves & Fishes is at its new location on Route 1: 137 US-1, Ellsworth, ME 04605

### LOAVES & FISHES DONATION WISH LIST

#### Cooking & Baking Items

Condiments  
Cooking oil  
Salad dressing  
Salt, pepper, & spices

#### Canned Goods

Beans  
Chili  
Pasta & pasta sauces

#### Packaged Goods

Cereal  
Crackers  
Meal kits  
Macaroni & cheese  
Stuffing mix  
White pasta

#### Beverages

Coffee/ tea  
Juice

#### Health & Beauty

Deodorant  
Feminine hygiene products  
Shampoo & conditioner  
Soap  
Toothbrushes & toothpaste

#### Household Items

Cleaning items  
Laundry detergent  
Pet food

*“All we have are five loaves of bread and two fish,” they said. Jesus said, “Bring them here.” Then he had the people sit on the grass. He took the five loaves and two fish, lifted his face to heaven in prayer, blessed, broke, and gave the bread to the disciples. The disciples then gave the food to the congregation. They all ate their fill. They gathered twelve baskets of leftovers. About five thousand were fed.* Matthew 14:17-19 (MSG)



# MAINE CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## THE 92<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL MEETING October 20 & 21, 2023 at Pilgrim Lodge!

Everyone is invited to attend AM92 in person.  
You may also attend via Zoom.

### SCHEDULE

#### *Friday, October 20*

8 AM	Registration
9-10:30	Workshop
11-12:30	Workshop
12:30	Lunch
1:30-3	Workshop
3:30-5	Fellowship & Optional Events
5:30-7	Dinner
7:30-9	Campfire & S'mores

#### *Saturday, October 21*

7-8 AM	Breakfast & Registration
8-12	Business Meeting
Noon	Lunch
1 - 2:30	Installation of new Conference Minister
2:30	Reception

### **REGISTER NOW!**

(Highlight the above text, then use  
Control-Enter to go to  
the AM92 webpage)

### ***Lodging***

at Pilgrim Lodge or at two area hotels

## Please welcome our Part-time Bridge ACM for Search and Call **REV. SAMANTHA HOUSER**

Rev. Houser has joined our staff as a temporary part-time ACM for Search and Call to fill the needs of pastors and churches until a new Full-time ACM is hired, hopefully by the end of March 2024.

Rev. Houser has served as ACM in the Tri-Conference (Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota) of the United Church of Christ, and because of family and personal reasons is now working remotely as a bridge ACM for the Maine Conference.

She has extensive experience with search of call with churches of all sizes, particularly smaller churches in the rural areas of Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota. She also has experience working as a remote bridge ACM. With her start date of September 5, Rev. Houser will be in conversation with CM Marisa and outgoing ACM Alexis over the next week to fully acquaint her with search and call in Maine, and to connect her with churches in search. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Marisa.



May we join our hearts and prayers as we venture onto this road of our journey together. Please pray especially for our churches and our pastors in search, and for Rev. Houser.

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***Outgoing ACM Alexis Fuller-Wright's  
farewell letter is on the next page.***

Beloved Maine Conference,

As I prepare to conclude my ministry with this conference tomorrow, I feel such deep gratitude for the ways that you have welcomed me, partnered with me, challenged me, and inspired me. All over Maine I have met incredible churches, small and large, that are wrestling with how to be faithful and adaptive in a world that looks so very different than it used to. I've met congregations engaging in deeply impactful missions in their communities – from outreach to new immigrants to teen drop-in centers to food pantries and community meals. I see how hard many of you working to be the hands and feet of Christ in your community—and it matters.

It's pretty vogue these days to talk about how the days of church are done, but what I see is how very vital your offerings are to building healthy communities. It's true that the container for how we offer the gifts of God to the people of God might be shifting, but the essentials of what you are offering could not be more relevant:



- ***Community amidst an epidemic of loneliness***
- ***Good News in the midst of seemingly endless bad news***
- ***Belovedness in a culture that predicates worth on productivity and conformity***
- ***Complexity in a world of false binaries***

**This is no small offering; it is life-saving stuff.**

If I could offer any deep hopes for this conference, it's that you'd trust the transformative power of the Gospel so much that you would be willing to risk it all to live it out. Risk changing the traditions. Risk funding the bold vision. Risk being wrong or looking foolish or being uncomfortable.

As Jesus says in the Gospel of John, "Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." There may be an expiration date on how we've always done things, but there is no limit on what God might resurrect once we let the old die away.

And other than God, the very thing you will need most along the way, is one another. So I pray you reach out beyond your walls to other churches and conference staff to help magnify your impact. There is a reason why we are connected by covenant to the other churches and settings in the United Church of Christ. The work is too vast to do alone; we need one another. This conference is full of wise, generous, gifted people; there's no telling what might be possible when you partner together.

So reach out to our Conference Minister, Marisa, for support and guidance. Get to know the other churches in your association and find out what kind of holy mischief you might engage in together. Explore some of the wider ministries of the United Church of Christ to see what kinds of programs or funding or initiatives might be exactly what you are hoping to tap into. The well is deep, friends. There is no need to stay parched.

Even though I will no longer be serving among you, I will continue to pray for you and root for you from afar. I believe in you—and I believe in what God is doing through you. I hope you believe, too.

Deep peace,  
Alexis

# Roast Turkey Supper

Saturday, October 28, serving 5:00 to 6:30 pm



*Roast turkey, gravy, mashed potatoes, glazed carrots, green beans, salad, rolls, beverages (coffee, tea, lemonade) and homemade pies*

***\$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.**

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**First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ**

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Ellsworth, Maine 04605

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