

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

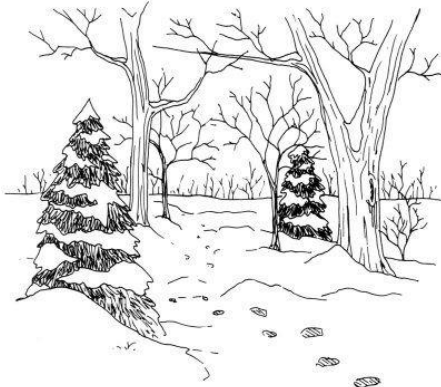


February 2024 THE STEEPLE NEWSLETTER

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

From Rev. Keith Bowie, Transitional Minister

This is the time of year when many folks feel, frankly, “bummed out.” January is a long, cold tunnel of a month with no Christmas or Valentine’s Day to soften the harshness. People can be tired and cranky. Winter, with its accompanying snow, ice, and cold, seems relentless. In the UCC we love to say, “God is still speaking...” This time of year, though, we often are doubtful of that. My hope and prayer for you, the congregation, is that you see these winter months, January and February in particular, as a time of rest and renewal. Please do what your Mama always said to do: eat your vegetables, go out and play (i.e. have fun), stay



out of trouble, visit the library/read a good book, get enough sleep, and go to church. Give someone a hug today, or hug yourself, or have someone you love hug you, and imagine that those arms are the arms of God loving you. Avoid political rancor. Political campaigning is underway for the 2024 elections. No matter what side of the political aisle you are on, both sides feel the other side is “going to hell in a hand basket,” to use an old expression. Keep informed, study the issues, but if you find yourself feeling embittered or having animosity toward someone, back away.

Allow the Spirit to knit us together as one body. This brings me to church, and I have a couple of suggestions. One: greeting one another in worship and sharing coffee fellowship are great starters but volunteering your time and energy on a board or committee, choir, Welcome Table, helping out at a church supper, etc. are great ways to come to know your brothers and sisters in our church. Two: extend an invitation. Sometimes people are shy and simply want to be asked. When was the last time you invited someone to church? Three: I’m excited to announce that an updated church directory is in the works. We simply want to update the contact information (name, address, e-mail, and phone number) for every member and friend of the church. This information changes over time, and there is nothing more frustrating than trying to get in contact with someone and not having the right number or address. Details have to be worked out, but it should not be too hard to do and hopefully we can have this ready sometime in the spring. All of this is effort and time well-spent to be able to know and love one another well. Peace be with you!

That in all things God may be glorified,

Keith

FEBRUARY CHURCH MEETINGS

- Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:15 a.m.
Choir – Thursdays, 6 p.m.
Busy Bodies – reconvenes Feb 26, 10:30 a.m.
Music – TBA
Search Comm Council – TBA
– Monday Feb 5, 6:30 p.m. and
Monday Feb 26, 6:30 p.m.
Finance – Friday, Feb 9, 10 a.m.
Deacons – Sunday, Feb 11, 11:30 a.m.
Christian Ed – Sunday, Feb 11, 11:30 a.m.
Trustees – Thursday, Feb 15, 7 p.m.
Missions – Sunday, Feb 25, 11:30 a.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.



ASH WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 14, 7 P.M. SERVICE

Everyone is invited to an Ash Wednesday service on Wednesday, February 14, at 7 p.m. Friends from the Ellsworth Falls congregation will join us. The imposition of ashes will be offered to those who wish to observe this ancient tradition. This is a day of new beginnings as we start our 40 days of Lent.

FEBRUARY LECTIONARY READINGS

FEBRUARY 4 – 5TH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Isaiah 40:21-31
Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
1 Corinthians 9:16-23
Mark 1:29-39

FEBRUARY 11 - TRANSFIGURATION

2 Kings 2:1-12
Psalm 50:1-6
2 Corinthians 4:3-6
Mark 9:2-9

FEBRUARY 14 – ASH WEDNESDAY

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 OR Isaiah 58:1-12
Psalm 51:1-17
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
Matthew 6:1-6:16-21



FEBRUARY 18 – 1ST SUNDAY IN LENT

1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20)
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
1 Corinthians 6:12-20
John 1:43-51

FEBRUARY 25 – 2ND SUNDAY IN LENT

Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16
Psalm 22:23-31
Romans 4:13-25
Mark 8:31-38 OR Mark 9:2-9



ADULT FORUM

The Adult Forum meets Sunday mornings at **8:15** in the Parlor. Please note the new time. Everyone is welcome.

DEACONS

- February 4 – Rev. Keith Bowie**
 - February 11 – Rev. Matthew McDonald**
 - February 14 – Rev. Keith Bowie, Ash Wed.**
 - February 18 – Rev. Dr. David Henry**
 - February 25 – Rev. Keith Bowie**
- February Deacon: John A. Lacey**

I can't believe it's February already! It seems like we just finished with the birth of Christ and Epiphany. Very soon Lent begins with the Ash Wednesday Service on February 14 at 7 p.m. We will share the service with the Ellsworth Falls Congregation. We hope that you will consider beginning your Lenten season with us that evening. The thought of Lent is that we are to give something up as we prepare for the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord on Easter morning. Let us all prepare for this upcoming season.

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 February:

- Kristen Cartier
- Irv & Helen Hodgkin
- Susan King
- Rhyne Robidoux
- Carole Spencer
- Tom & Sharon Minogue
- Jordan Berry
- Marjory Peronto
- Joyce Cornwell
- Megan Remick

PANCAKE SUPPER

We are excited to bring back an old FCC favorite: Pancake Tuesday, also known as Fat Tuesday or Shrove Tuesday. It will take place February 13 at 5:30 p.m. with friends that have helped in the past, Chef Greg Berry and his wife Jenn Berry. Come for dinner—Pancakes, Bacon, Sausage, and don't forget King Cake! There will be games, prizes, and food. Please bring a non-perishable food item that will be donated to our local food pantry, Loaves & Fishes.

Shrove Tuesday is the final day of Mardi Gras. Mardi Gras literally means "Tuesday Fat". Historically, people ate a large extravagant meal on Fat Tuesday. Pancakes were considered extravagant owing to the ingredients. During Lent, people had to give up so many things that Fat Tuesday was a culturally important celebration.

We hope everyone will come and enjoy the meal and prepare for the season of LENT.



GriefShare is a Christian-based support group. A [GriefShare](#) experience is a safe, welcoming place where people understand the difficult emotions of grief. Through this 13-week group, you'll discover what to expect in the days ahead and what's "normal" in grief. Since there are no neat, orderly stages of grief, you'll learn helpful ways of coping with grief, in all its unpredictability—and gain solid support each step of the way.

**Wednesdays 1-3 p.m.
February 7 – May 1, 2024**

at United Baptist Church
28 Hancock Street, Ellsworth

Questions? Contact Betsy Beardsley at 610-1302 or bbeardsley70@gmail.com.

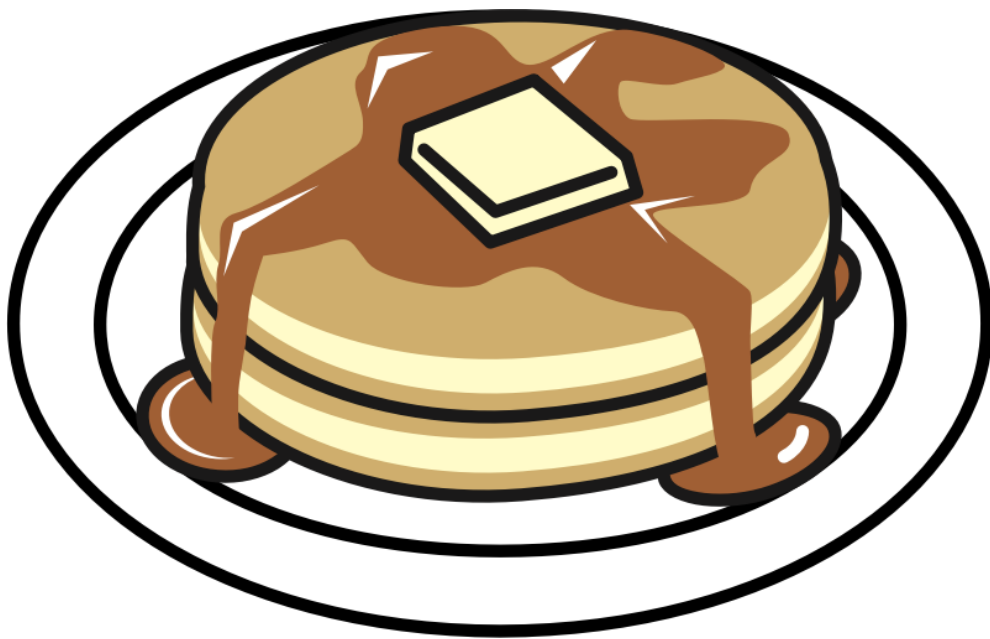


Fat Tuesday Pancake Supper

February 13 at 5:30 PM


Free to All

Celebrate the end of Mardi Gras
by JOINING us for the final party!


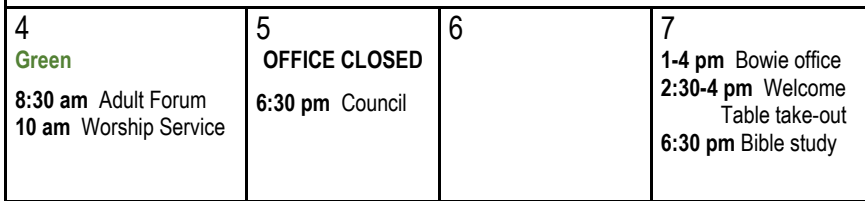
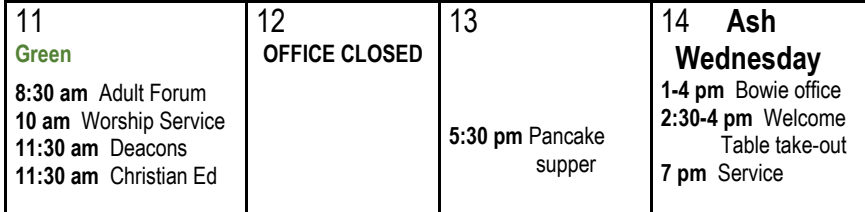



Family Event

Free games, prizes, food!
First Congregational Church
State and Church Streets



February 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday				
				1 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	2 OFFICE CLOSED	3				
				4 Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	5 OFFICE CLOSED 6:30 pm Council	6	7 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out 6:30 pm Bible study	8 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	9 OFFICE CLOSED 10 am Finance	10
				11 Green 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Deacons 11:30 am Christian Ed	12 OFFICE CLOSED	13	14 Ash Wednesday 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out 7 pm Service	15 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir 7 pm Trustees	16 OFFICE CLOSED	17
				18 Violet 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	19 OFFICE CLOSED	20	21 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out 6:30 pm Bible study	22 9 am Steeple & Bulletin deadlines 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	23 OFFICE CLOSED	24
				25 Violet 8:30 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Missions	26 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies 6:30 pm Council	27	28 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out 6:30 pm Bible study	29		

Here are some easy prayers you can say to feel connected to God during Lent this year:

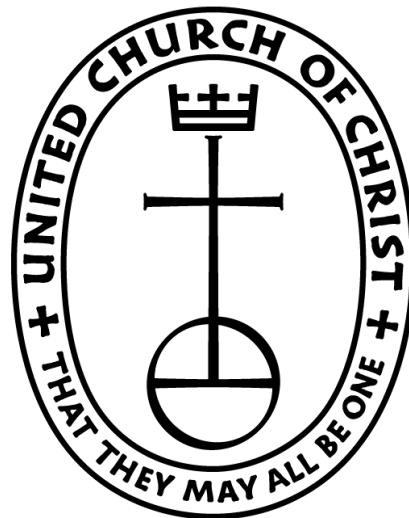
- God, may your light guide my day, and your spirit bring me peace. Amen.
- May I stand in solidarity today with all my brothers and sisters around the world who are suffering. May we be united in your love, and may I work to build your kingdom here on earth. Amen.
- Lord, I'm truly sorry for the moments today where I missed the mark. I ask for your forgiveness and the strength to better follow your call tomorrow. Amen.
- God, I lift up (name of the person you'd like to pray for) today. I ask that you bless them abundantly today and throughout Lent. Amen.
- God, help me to think of others today more than I think of myself. Amen.

Sunday Worship Service 10 a.m.

Church office hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Rev. Keith Bowie, Transitional Minister
Joyce B. Cornwell, Secretary
Lynn Hall, Organist
Nancy Sargent, Choir Director
Sue Fuller, Moderator 610-1626
Tom MacDonald, Vice Moderator
Myrna Vallette, Clerk
Ken Farkas, Treasurer
Jennifer Ashmore, Bookkeeper

Sidney Emerson & Lynn Hall,
Financial Secretaries
Troy Tainter, Building Maintenance Director
Katharine Schrader, Deacons 266-2541
Ginny Davis, Missions
Bonnie Carter, Music & Christian Education
Council Members at Large:
Joyce Johnston
Rhyne Robidoux



First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

PO Box 12

Ellsworth, Maine 04605

207-667-8321 office@ellsworthucc.org ellsworthucc.org

facebook.com/fccellsworth/

Our street address is 2 Church Street, but that is not our mailing address.
The Post Office no longer automatically gives us our mail with the street address.
You must use the Post Office Box number.