

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



June 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

Thanks to your generosity, the Minister's Discretionary Fund of FCC continues to bring comfort and hope to people in the larger community as well as to members of the church family. Since the beginning of the year, approximately \$1,900 has been given out. Rent assistance, gas, and heating assistance are the top requests. While I receive their thanks and joy on behalf of all of us, please know YOU make a huge difference in many lives. Please remember, the MDF is not a part of the church budget. Should you be willing and able, donations made specifically to the Fund are always welcomed.

On this topic, it got me to thinking about the harsh winter we have all experienced and the extraordinary needs of a vast number of people, both locally and nationwide. In 2022, the Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry outgrew its modest building at the Unitarian Universalist Church and moved into a larger structure on the Downeast Highway Route 1. Now the Bar Harbor Food Pantry has recently announced an upcoming move from its current location at the YWCA in Bar Harbor to a larger building. Its executive director, Tom Reeve, cited a 20% surge in demand in the past month alone for the food pantry's services. "The week of April 8, we had 205 customers come to the pantry, and that matches our busiest week of 2023," said Reeve. "This past week, we ended with 256 customers. We've never seen these numbers in a week. These are numbers that we used to get in a month" (*Mount Desert Islander*, May 2). Our own Welcome Table, now 12 years old (yay!), served 110 meals on May 8. I recently received a spring appeal letter from Rosalani Moore, executive director of H.O.M.E. Inc. of Orland, in which she stated, "Homelessness is increasing in our area."

You don't have to be Euclid to figure out the whys of all this increased demand for services. The main culprit, of course, is inflation. Despite all the happy talk to the contrary, food prices increased by more than 15% over 2022 and 2023. Costs are expected to continue rising throughout 2024. One year ago, COVID relief funds got cut off. I'm also sensing a growing dependency culture and a broken "open borders" immigration system as reasons for the surge.

In light of this, what is the church to do? Throw up our hands and surrender in despair? In a word, No! Let us continue practicing "mercy." Did you know "mercy" appears 457 times in the Old and New Testament? In order to obtain mercy, we are called to be merciful. Mercy is one of the Beatitudes: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." But what exactly does it mean to be merciful, to show mercy? *Misericordia* is the Latin word for mercy, meaning "to feel pity in our hearts." So seeing someone suffer should cause a feeling of pity or pain in our hearts.

In his book *Heaven in Our Hands*, Father Benedict J. Groeschel writes: "*I suspect that a great many people would like to be merciful but are unsure of how to begin and are afraid of being cheated. My advice is: take stock of your limited resources—time, money, mercy—and decide what to do with them. Then just try it! And if you're afraid of being cheated, cheer up. You've already been cheated by lots of people besides the poor. Mercy calls us to a better life, to a way of living which is more real, more generous, more gentle, and more spiritual than we have ever known.*"

(column continued page 3, middle of column 2)

JUNE CHURCH MEETINGS

- Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:15 a.m.
- Busy Bodies** – Mondays, 10:30 a.m.
- Music** – TBA
- Search Comm** – TBA
- ONA** – TBA
- Deacons** – Sunday, June 9, 11:30 a.m.
- Christian Ed** – Sunday, June 9, 11:30 a.m.
- Missions** – Sunday, June 16, 11:30 a.m.
- Trustees** – Thursday, June 20, 7 p.m.
- Council** – Monday, June 24

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.



The Welcome Table has been feeding the community since May 15, 2012!

JUNE LECTIONARY READINGS

JUNE 2 – 2ND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20)
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 OR
Deuteronomy 5:12-15 & Psalm 81:1-10
2 Corinthians 4:5-12
Mark 2:23-3:6

JUNE 9 – 3RD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

1 Samuel 8:4-11, (12-15) 16-20, (11:14-15)
Psalm 138 OR
Genesis 3:8-15 & Psalm 130
2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1
Mark 3:20-35

JUNE 16 – 4TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

1 Samuel 15:34-16:13 & Psalm 20 OR
Ezekiel 17:22-24 & Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15
2 Corinthians 5:6-10, (11-13), 14-17
Mark 4:26-34

JUNE 23 – 5TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

1 Samuel 17:(1a, 4-11, 19-23), 32-49
Psalm 9:9-20 OR
1 Samuel 17:57-18:5, 18:10-16 & Psalm 133
OR Job 38:1-11 & Psalm 107:1-3, 23-32
2 Corinthians 6:1-13
Mark 4:35-41

JUNE 30 – 6TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27 & Psalm 130 OR
Lamentations 3:22-33 & Psalm 30
2 Corinthians 8:7-15
Mark 5:21-43

Please notify the church office immediately of high school or college graduates in our congregation, that we may recognize them in worship on **Sunday, June 9, 2024.**



DEACONS

- June 2 - Rev. Keith Bowie
- June 9 - Rev. Bowie, Graduates Recognition
- June 16 - Guest
- June 23 - Rev. Keith Bowie
- June 30 - Rev. Keith Bowie, New Members

June Deacon: Rev. John Lacey

Beginning in June, we enter the liturgical season of Ordinary Time. The sanctuary vestments are green. When I think of green, I envision new life, hope of things new and springing from the earth. It is a time to renew our love of life and of those around us. After my initial Google search of what Ordinary Time means, I found I was going down the right path! Green, the color of Ordinary Time symbolizes life, hope, and anticipation. It is a time for growth and maturation, a time in which the mystery of Christ is called to penetrate ever more deeply into history until all things are finally caught up in Christ. During this season, the church witnesses to the world to help bring about God's kingdom.

What are ways that we can work on our own growth in Ordinary Time? Focus on Christ's life in our studies. Learn about the lives of different individuals that have been recognized as saints. Try new family prayers or devotions. Design a place in your home that will help you to study your Bible. Make a special place for praying. These are all ways that we can build up our church and our personal experience with our Lord.

Finally, the official symbol of Ordinary Time consists of two fish and a basket of bread—symbolizing Jesus' miracle in Matthew 14:17-21. May it inspire each of us to reach out.



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 June:

Anne Bancroft
Victor Eastman
Chris Wilson
Rev. John Lacey
Scotty & Polly Scott
Ernie Tracy
Christopher Turner
Jeff & Jeannie Jones
Nancy & George Scott
Mary Morrow
Nancy Sargent

(Pastor's column continued here)

Those are wise words and thus I'm passing them on to you. If you want to act like a child of God, if you want to imitate Christ, you must practice this quality of mercy in your life and accept the grace to be merciful. And let me tell you, the older you get the more clearly you recognize that you are totally dependent on the mercy of God. May we be led to a deeper understanding of God's love for each of us and may we be shown how we can show mercy to others in our lives.

That in all things God may be glorified. ♦

Keith



ADULT FORUM

**Sundays at 8:15 a.m.
Parlor & Zoom**



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

Your support of CWS equips families worldwide with the tools that they need to build stronger futures. If you wish to contribute to **CWS Tools** ministry during the month of June, please use an offering envelope in the pew rack and write *Tools* in the memo line. For more information about **CWS Tools**, Ctrl+click on the CWS logo above.



VITALITY DREAMS

Vitality Team is committed to offering options which encourage and excite our current members and helps us reach new people. When you are asked for the cell phone number and your email, please share this information with us. We want to let everyone know about events and just to reach out and welcome folks.

If you think of something that you would like to have us try, notify the Vitality Team and we will respond.

Just WAITING for ALL Those TEXTS!

Katharine Schrader 207-266-2541
Bonnie Carter
Sue Fuller
Keith Bowie

MEMBER HIGHLIGHT



Bob Clement

Resident of Seal Cove Healthcare
(formerly Seaport Village)

Bob grew up a country boy from Penobscot living on a dairy farm. He met his lovely wife, Ernestine, in the 50's and she was from Ellsworth and had grown up in First Congregational Church. When they were married, Bob joined the church. His recollection was this was in the late 50's, so he thinks he may have been a member for over 70 years! He purchased his home in Hancock prior to being married. Bob & Ernestine raised their only child, Sandra there. He worked as a carpenter and in construction throughout the area.

When Bob was asked about what made the church special for him, he said that the church itself is a Special Place and he has accumulated many friends over the years. The thing he really loves about the church is the pipe organ. When the music starts, he is taken away and he is in his special place, and it makes him feel good. He loves music.

We are so LUCKY to have members like BOB to remind us of who we are and what we can be!



THANK YOU

Dear FCC family,

Thank you for all your care and concern as I recovered from spine surgery. I received cards, calls, and emails from you checking in with me throughout my medical leave. The day I returned to work, I had THREE floral deliveries from folks at FCC. The office looked and smelled like a florist. What an incredibly lovely and warm welcome back!

I had a TLIF: *transforaminal lumbar interbody fusion*. Fancy syllables for "new hardware in my back." To pass the time, I watched old black and white movies on Roku, did wicked hard crosswords, and read Erik Larson's **The Splendid and the Vile**, an account of Churchill's first days as prime minister during the Blitz, as recorded in the letters and diaries of his family, friends, and associates. It's incredibly well-written. And long.

I am blessed with the constant love and care you shower over me. Love to you all,

Joyce, your church secretary

**GORDON THOMAS WARD
CONCERT AT FCC
FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 6:30 P.M.**



We are pleased to host singer-songwriter Gordon Thomas Ward in concert in the FCC sanctuary on Friday, June 14, at 6:30 pm. A resident of Winter Harbor, Gordon is a Grammy-balloted, award-winning singer-songwriter-storyteller who paints musical portraits that plumb the depths of our emotions and bring the past to life while pointing to a hope-filled future. His solo presentation features contemporary folk music, designed to entertain, inspire, and educate audiences. He has collaborated and played with many nationally recognized recording artists and has produced several # 1 charted songs. He loves to perform in houses of worship.

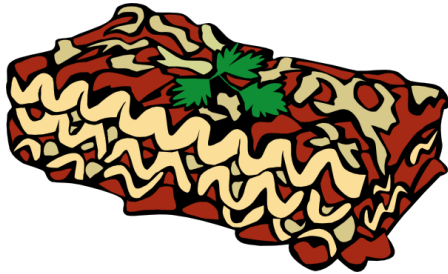
Pay as you are able. Suggested donation at the door is \$15-20. Everyone is welcome. We will advertise locally for this event. Invite your friends!

**You are invited to Hannah Mondrach's
Service of Ordination & Installation
Sunday, June 23, 4 p.m.
Seaside United Church of Christ
21 Summit Road, Northeast Harbor**

Lasagna Supper

Saturday, June 22, 2024

Serving 5:00 to 6:30 pm

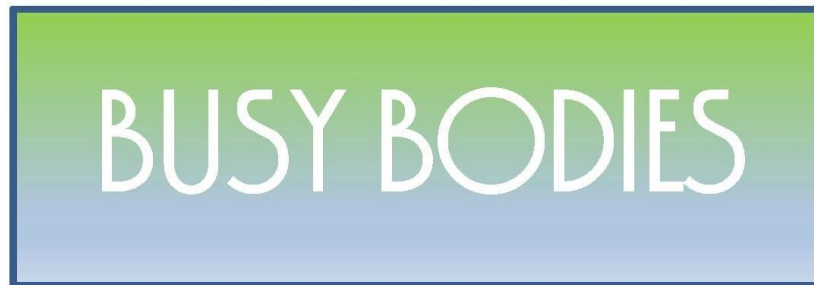


Red or white lasagna, Caesar salad, rolls,
beverages (coffee, tea, lemonade),
and homemade pies

\$10 per person
\$25 per family (2 adults, 2 children)


Great food ~ Great company ~ Great fun

**We need volunteers to set up, cook, serve, wash dishes, and bake pies.
Please contact Ruth Tainter immediately about the ways you can help.**



**As the Busy Bodies prepare for their August Fair,
they ask you to consider donating
a handmade craft or knitted/crocheted object.
Questions? Contact Sue Fuller.**

June 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11 am Communion luncheon	3 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	4	5 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	6 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club	7 OFFICE CLOSED	8
9 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Deacons 11:30 am Christian Ed	10 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	11	12 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	13 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club	14 OFFICE CLOSED 6:30 pm Concert	15
16 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	17 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	18	19 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	20 9 am Steeple & Bulletin deadlines 4 pm Chess Club 7 pm Trustees	21 OFFICE CLOSED	22 5:30 pm Lasagna supper
23 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Missions	24 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	25	26 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	27 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club	28 OFFICE CLOSED	29
30 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	<p><i>How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! Psalm 133.1 (NIV)</i></p>					



OUR CHANCEL CHOIR

sings during the morning service on June 2 before taking a summer hiatus. Thank you to the singers who have rehearsed diligently and faithfully to enrich our corporate worship with song.

There will be a schedule of diverse special music on summer Sundays.

Please note (ooh, pun intended!): church member and Choir Director Nancy Sargent is having knee replacement surgery in June, so if you don't see her around for a while, do not worry.

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
Mike Fuller, Asst 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

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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.