

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



July 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

*I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up,
And did not let my foes rejoice over me.
O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me.
O Lord, you brought up my soul from Sheol,
Restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.*

*Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones, and give thanks to his holy name.
For his anger is but for a moment; his favor is for a lifetime.
Weeping may linger for the night, but **joy** comes with the morning. - Psalm 30: 1-5*

In this beautiful Psalm, the psalmist is thankful after recovering from an illness. We are not told what the illness is. However, the choice of words that the psalmist uses seem to indicate that it was a serious and grave illness, one that could have led to an imminent death. The person attributes his healing and restoration to God, and now pauses to give thanks. The psalmist is in a state of utter joy and bliss, probably involving family and friends celebrating his reintegration into the community.



What is it that gives you deep joy? I'm not talking about a superficial happiness, but rather an inner quality nurtured by faith that trusts God acting in the redemption of our world, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary. From where does this kind of joy emanate? It is God-centered joy residing in our hearts! Surely you remember that song we learned as children: *"I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart...Where?...Down in my heart...Where?...Down in my heart..."*

Today as I write this article it is the summer solstice, the longest day of the year and traditionally the first day of summer. This summer may you find joy—or perhaps may joy find you!

That in all things God may be glorified,

Keith

JULY 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, July 14, 11:30 a.m.
- Christian Ed** – Sunday, July 14, 11:30 a.m.
- Trustees** – Thursday, July 18, 7 p.m.
- Missions** – Sunday, July 21, 11:30 a.m.
- Council** – Monday July 22, 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.



JULY LECTIONARY READINGS

JULY 7 – 7TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10 & Psalm 48 OR
Ezekiel 2:1-15 & Psalm 123
2 Corinthians 12:2-10
Mark 6:1-13

JULY 14 – 8TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19 & Psalm 94 OR
Amos 7:7-15 & Psalm 85:8-13
Ephesians 1:3-14
Mark 6:14-29

JULY 21 – 9TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

2 Samuel 7:1-14a & Psalm 89:20-37 OR
Jeremiah 23:1-6 & Psalm 23
Ephesians 2:11-22
Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

JULY 28 – 10TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

2 Samuel 11:1-15 & Psalm 14 OR
2 Kings 4:42-44 & Psalm 145:10-18
Ephesians 3:14-21
John 6:1-21



DEACONS

July 7 – Rev. Keith Bowie, Communion

July 14 – Rev. Keith Bowie

July 21 – Rev. Dr. David Henry

July 28 – Rev. Keith Bowie

July Deacon: Steve Merchant

Deacons continue to reach out to many of you through monthly Prayer cards, Birthday cards, Get Well cards or Just Thinking of You cards. We have begun to reach out through texts, too. If these are not acceptable to you, please let us know. I believe that we will be setting up a picnic during August at the home of one of our new members. Stay tuned for more details about this fun event. If you have any suggestions or needs, please feel free to call the office or one of us and someone will get back to you.

In God's graces,
Katharine Schrader

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 July:

Peter & Sue Bedard
Louise & Sid Emerson
Barry & Marianne Jordan
Brian & Jane Langley
Donna Shea
Mary T. Turner
Martin Vachon
David & Susan Jordan
George Sealy
Abby Morrow
Chris & Gayle Cambridge



(I took this from the newsletter that the Vitality Team receives monthly from our coach, Rev. Paul Nickerson. I want to preface this and say I do not think we have veered, but I put this in to remind us to think of some of the reasons that we attend this church and are part of this wonderful congregation. Let's step forward and invite someone to church. – K. Schrader)

Andy Stanley recently said in a sermon: *"When the church veered, things got weird"*. His point was that when the church strays from its central mission, weird things happen, and people get hurt.

There are far too many examples of this in Christian history with all sorts of horrible things done in the name of Jesus. But what about us today? Are we being good stewards of the faith in our generation?

Jesus was very clear that our primary mission is to love one another as God loves us. If we live this mission out well, we could assume that people would respond to such grace and love and that the Church would have a huge impact on the communities where they are located. But a recent Pew Research Survey indicates that *"80% of Americans feel the church is losing influence"*.

So, there is a disconnect. Too many people either don't know anything about the church, because we have hunkered down inside our buildings, or they have been hurt by churches judging and excluding them. Either way, what should be Good News becomes bad news for much of the population.

How do we change that perception? It changes when we in the church "walk the talk" and people see what Jesus is like through us. So, this means our task is to equip every member to be a walking example of faith with everyone they meet. It means as church leaders, that we plan activities and mission efforts that connect us with people and make a difference in the world. Authenticity is what will change the perception of people who are far from the faith or have been badly bruised by the church.

BUSY BODIES

CHURCH FAIR SATURDAY, AUGUST 3 8:30 A.M. – 1 P.M.

The Busy Bodies invite everyone to our Church Fair. We will offer knitted and crocheted items, other crafts, books, delicious food, fudge, antiques and attic treasures.



We would appreciate your donations of baked goods: cookies, pies, breads, and more. If you have your own crafts or something from your attic that you would like to donate, we would love to have those, too. Things that usually sell well are gently used, clean household items, books, puzzles and other appropriate items. No clothing or electronics. We really appreciate all the congregation does each year to help us out with our fairs.



Please bring baked goods to the church on Friday afternoon, August 2, from 12-3 p.m. Or bring them in Saturday morning as soon as you can.

For more information, contact Sue Fuller (610-1626), or Louise Emerson (667-4414).

We can't wait to see you at the fair!



MEMBER HIGHLIGHT



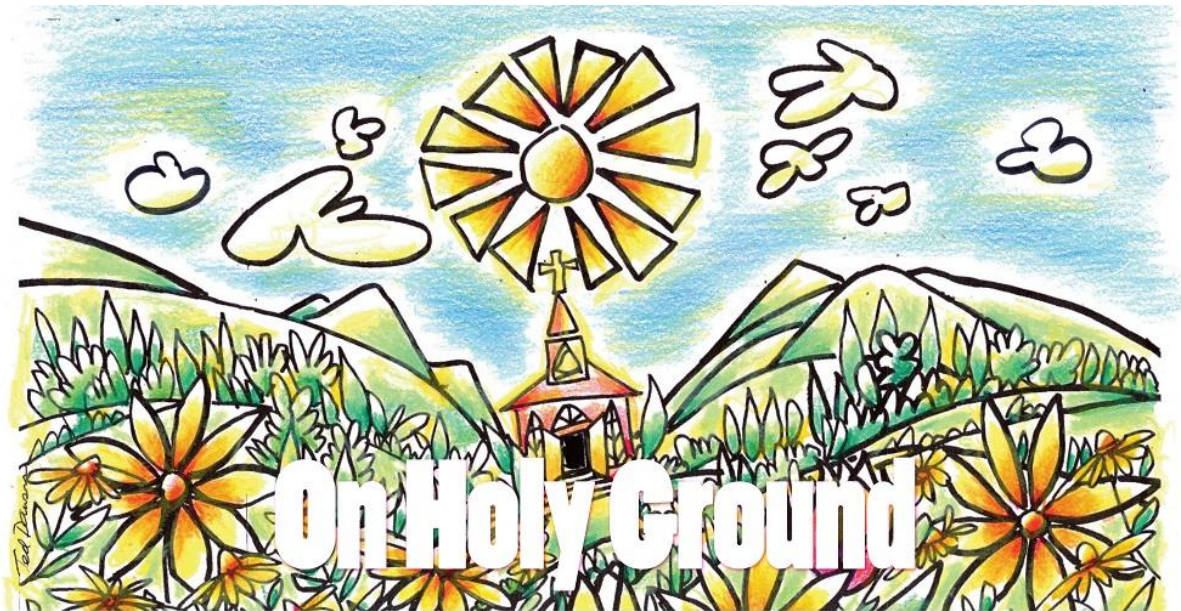
Joyce Johnston

Joyce Johnston is one of those members that everyone knows, and she feels that she has been around forever. She remembers the Ellsworth Fire that destroyed most of the community. Her family lost their home and her father's business. (Her 94th birthday was Sunday, June 23rd.)

She said that she has been going to this church since age 3, attending weekly as a child. Her whole family went every week, saying that they were not forced but that was just what you did on Sunday. There were not as many churches in Ellsworth at that time, maybe 4-6, and they were all good-sized. She started Sunday School when she was 5 years old and joined the church around age 14 or 15. She fondly remembers the many church picnics at the Haynes' summer cottage down on the saltwater beach.

She has always attended this church except for the six years that she lived in Massachusetts to follow her husband's teaching job. She married in 1949 and had four children baptized in this church. She was a stay-at-home mother, but when her children were all in school, she started working for the family businesses, Merrill's Orchards and Merrill's Blueberries, in the offices. She has always been in church choirs throughout her life, singing for an incredible seventy years! She has been a member of almost every board or committee over the years and loved it all. Joyce and Becky Houston started the Evening Circle group for women who worked day jobs.

When asked about why she kept coming, she said "It always felt right, I feel close to God, and I feel at home."



“If not us, then who? If not now, then when?”

The questions of John Lewis—activist, legislator, and justice advocate—echoed in the art of Dr. Deborah Rundlett.

She knew the heartfelt hopes and challenges of youth in her community. Youth wonder about what their world will look like. Despite these challenges, teens and young adults demonstrated a commitment to social change, contributing energy and passion. Rev. Rundlett sought ways to help "unleash the potential and intrinsic power of area high school students to fulfill their capacity as current and future leaders and world citizens."

With funding from the Strengthen the Church Offering and the State of Connecticut, Dr. Rundlett and The Meetinghouse are gathering high school students to “meet with leading social entrepreneurs, environmental designers, and social justice advocates to learn how to draw from respected leadership models and learn how to move intentional change in their contexts.” Students decide on a pivotal social issue and then create initiatives to address change.

Donate today to support innovative projects like The Meetinghouse

Together, through the Strengthen the Church Offering, we support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations as we work to become a multicultural/multi-racial, accessible to all Christian movement.



FCC will collect gifts for the Strengthen the Church Offering during the month of July. Please use an offering envelope in the pew rack and write *STC* in the memo line.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS WORKSHOPS

ST ANDREW LUTHERAN CHURCH

If your congregation IS seeking to connect with those in your community who ARE people of faith but have NO faith community for support, please sign up for one or more of these workshops. They are each independent, not building on one another, so no one has to attend all of them (although that would be welcome). Call the St. Andrew church office to register: 207-667-7641.

The workshops are on Saturdays from **9:00 AM to 2:00 PM**. Lunch will be provided. Thanks to a NE Synod grant there is no cost for participation! (Free will offering for lunch will be welcome.) The dates are:

Ms. Kim Bergstrand - July 13

Kim Bergstrand is an Associate to the Bishop for the New England Synod with a focus on evangelism and outreach.

Rev. Jake Jacobson - August 24

Jake Jacobson will discuss his work as Director for Evangelical Mission in the ELCA and his books *Rockin' the Front Porch: Sharing the Faith in the New Normal* and *Holy Talk: An Introduction to Scripture for the Occasionally Biblically Embarrassed*. Great reads whether attending the workshop or not.

Revs. Michael & Susan Thomas - September 7

Michael and Susan Thomas will discuss their strategies for community outreach both as campus ministers for Dartmouth College and as pastors at Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in East Jerusalem, Israel

Rev. Stephen Bouman - September 28

Stephen Bouman will discuss his work as the former Executive Director for Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission in New York Synod, as well as his books *Baptized for the Moment* and *The Mission Table: Renewing Congregation and Community*. Again, great reads for any faith leader.

St. Andrew is located at 175 Douglas Highway in Ellsworth.

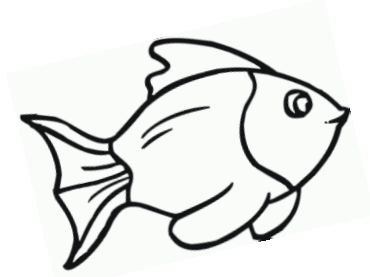


Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America



Baked Haddock Supper

Saturday, July 27, 2024
Serving 5:00 to 6:30 pm



Baked haddock, mashed potatoes, carrots, green beans, salad, rolls, homemade pies and beverages (coffee, tea, lemonade)

\$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.



A NOTE AND WARNING FROM PASTOR KEITH

Recently the *Ellsworth American* reported in its "Cops and Courts" section about a Hancock man being scammed out of a sizable amount of money. Yesterday I received an email from Pastor Jon Vogel at St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Ellsworth. He had been notified by one of his members that the member had received a text message in Pastor Jon's name asking to "return my text when you get it. I have a favor to ask of you." It closed with "Grace and peace, Pastor Jonathan Vogel." Fortunately, the member did not respond and instead alerted the church office.

This is to remind everyone that scammers are alive and well and their diabolical work continues. Church members are often targets. Please be vigilant! Please know that Pastor Keith would never send out an email, text, phone call, or letter asking for "a favor," or money or securities or anything of that nature. Of course, the Stewardship Committee has a Fall Campaign in which we seek to raise funds for the upcoming year. But that is something legitimate and entirely different from the scam artist. So, please stay alert and if anything looks suspicious to you, check it out thoroughly first.

Keith

July 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	2	3 9 am Bulletin Deadline 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	4  OFFICE CLOSED	5 OFFICE CLOSED	6
7 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Deacons 11:30 am Christian Ed	8 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	9	10 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	11 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club	12 OFFICE CLOSED 6:30 pm Concert	13
14 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	15 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	16	17 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	18 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 7 pm Trustees	19 OFFICE CLOSED	20
21 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Missions	22 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities 6:30 pm Council	23	24 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	25 9 am Bulletin & Steeple deadlines 4 pm Chess Club	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27 5:30 pm Haddock supper
28 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	29 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	30	31 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	1 AUGUST → 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club	2 OFFICE CLOSED	3 Church Fair 8:30 am – 1 pm



Mark your August calendars now:



QUARTERLY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, August 4

Please submit any items for discussion to the church office by Tuesday, July 30. Contact Moderator Sue Fuller if you have questions. The meeting will convene at 11:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.



BREATH OF SUMMER

Creator God
who breathed this world into being,
who is discernible within the harmony of nature,
the perfection of a butterfly's wing,
the grandeur of a mountain range,
the soaring eagle and hummingbird,
thank you for this world which you have created.
Thank you for summer sun, which reminds us
that your creative breath is still alive and active.
Thank you for the warmth of your love,
sustaining this world, your garden. Amen.

Sunday Worship Service 10 a.m.

Church office hours:

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

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

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.