

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



**August 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*

**O**ur heartfelt thanks go out to the family of Eleanor Jones for their gift of \$10,000 presented to the church by Michelle Mahon during a recent worship service. As Michelle stated in her remarks, Eleanor loved the First Congregational Church, and wanted to provide a gift to the church through her estate. Eleanor died last November, and a Celebration of Life service was held at her church a couple of weeks later. Eleanor volunteered countless hours in the community and has now found one more way to be a blessing to others. Well done, good and faithful servant!

The Pastoral Search Committee has not been convened for the past couple of months due to a lack of candidate profiles. The last candidate notified the committee at the end of May that she had to withdraw her candidacy due to extenuating family circumstances. I know this has been very discouraging for the committee and the congregation alike. But I say to you, KEEP THE FAITH and continue moving forward. Something good will come out of this. It is a slow process. It requires patience and, for better or worse, waiting on God's timetable. Use this time to ask yourself: What is God nudging me to do in the life of the church? Listen to that still, small voice! Don't be negative but stay positive and stay focused. God is creative and resourceful, listens to our prayers, and brings new life.

The Choir is getting some needed rest and renewal time during the summer hiatus, and Choir Director Nancy Sargent is recuperating from knee surgery. We look forward to having the choir back among us when they reconvene in September. In the meantime, many thanks to some of our own musically gifted folks who have provided music during the summer. In July we enjoyed performances by the Monteux School musicians. David & Laura McIntyre may return in August! We also rejoice to see Anne Bancroft back in church. Anne continues her ministry of sending cards to members who are ill, shut-in, or grieving. Anne is a member of the Deacons, and we are thankful for her and the work she does. We are happy that she seems to be recovering well after her fall.

In church on Sunday, July 14, during the Pastoral Prayer, I thanked God for sparing the life of former President Donald Trump. A bullet came within an inch of ending his life. We also prayed for the family of Corey Comperatore, who was killed in the line of fire. Corey was a firefighter, family man, and church-goer. He had been given front row seats by someone else so that he could see things better. It was 43 years ago, a generation or two ago, that an assassination attempt was also made on the life of President Ronald Reagan. Many naively thought this could never happen again. Yet, tragically, it has happened again. I also prayed for a reduction of negative, divisive, campaign rhetoric. It has come down a notch but, will it last? I doubt it. Come September, this will all be forgotten. As a nation, we have a lot of soul-searching to do. Churches ought to be packed with faithful people. Don't count on that happening either. I hate to end things pessimistically, so I'll just lift up one of my favorite verses of scripture on a more hopeful note: *"Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteousness their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."* - Isaiah 55:6-7

# AUGUST CHURCH MEETINGS

## QUARTERLY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING:

★ Sunday, August 4 ★

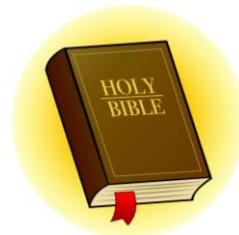
- Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:15 a.m.
- Busy Bodies** – Mondays, 10:30 a.m.
- Choir** – Thurs, 6 p.m., beginning Aug 22
- Music** – TBA
- Search Comm** – TBA
- Finance** – Friday, Aug 9, 10 a.m.
- Deacons** – Sunday, Aug 11, 11:30 a.m.
- Christian Ed** – Sunday, Aug 11, 11:30 a.m.
- Trustees** – Thursday, Aug 15, 7 p.m.
- Missions** – Sunday, Aug 25, 11:30 a.m.
- ONA** – Sunday, Aug 25, 11:30 a.m.  
Presentation to congregation
- Council** – Monday, Aug 26, 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.



# AUGUST LECTIONARY READINGS

## AUGUST 4 – 11<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

2 Samuel 11:26-12:13a & Psalm 51:1-12 OR  
Exodus 16:2-4, 9-15 & Psalm 78:23-29  
Ephesians 4:1-16  
John 6:24-35

## AUGUST 11 – 12<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 31-33 & Psalm 130 OR  
1 Kings 19:4-8 & Psalm 34:1-8  
Ephesians 4:25-5:2  
John 6:35, 41-51

## AUGUST 18 – 13<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14 & Psalm 111 OR  
Proverbs 9:1-6 & Psalm 34:9-14  
Ephesians 5:15-20  
John 6:51-58

## AUGUST 25 – 14<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

1 Kings 8:(1,6,10-11), 22-30, 41-43 & Psalm 84 OR  
Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18 & Psalm 34:15-22  
Ephesians 6:10-20  
John 6:56-69



# 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.



# DEACONS

**Aug 4 – Rev. Keith Bowie, Communion**

**Aug 11 – Rev. Keith Bowie**

**Aug 18 – Rev. Dr. David Henry**

**Aug 25 – Rev. Keith Bowie**

**August Deacon: Katharine Schrader**

(This is from an email that Paul Nickerson sent to the Vitality Team. But it sure feels like a Deacons' column to me!)

How are you doing with that To Do list? Is your email box full? How many social media apps are you looking at? Is your mind whirling even when you try to relax?

The pace of life we keep can often be exhausting and can lead to a constant, hurried state. John Ortberg, in his book, **Soul Keeping**, talks about how when we are hurried all the time, we cannot be fully present to others, and we become unavailable to God. Summer is a great time to slow the "hurry" of life and reconnect with God. Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

- If you have been neglecting your devotional life, try carving out even 5 minutes to just breathe and be with God.
- Take a walk and get in touch with nature again.
- Make a list of ways you are blessed and give thanks to God.
- Have a "fast" from social media or email for a day (or even a couple of hours) and see how much time you gain back to renew.
- Call up that friend or relative you have been meaning to talk to and just listen to them.
- Do a craft, sport, or hobby; something you can lose yourself in, letting go of the To Do list for a while.

Whether you are a pastor or a lay person, the most important gift you can give your church is a centered you. Your gift of being present for God and for others is critical to the health of your church.

## 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 August:

Lorraine & Jon Foss  
Becky Leamon & Andy Stephenson  
Anna & Ken Hopper  
Amy Zenke, Hope & Joy  
David & Brenda Keep  
Lisa & Steven Salisbury  
Daniel Lacey  
Emily Cambridge  
Myrna & Bob Vallette



## CHURCH PICNIC & GET TOGETHER BY THE OCEAN!

**SATURDAY AFTERNOON  
AUGUST 17**

Chris Wilson has graciously offered to host a church picnic at his place. Drinks and meats will be provided—hamburgers, hotdogs, bratwurst—all grilled by Chris. (If you cannot eat beef or pork, please bring your own meat to grill.)

This is a potluck picnic. Please bring salads, desserts, or any other dish to share. We'll carpool to Chris' home in Steuben, arriving at 3 p.m. and eating dinner around 4:30-5 p.m. Chris' place is by the ocean, and he has plenty of seating and tables. Come and enjoy time together.

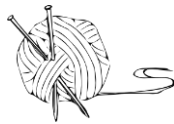


# BUSY BODIES



## 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.



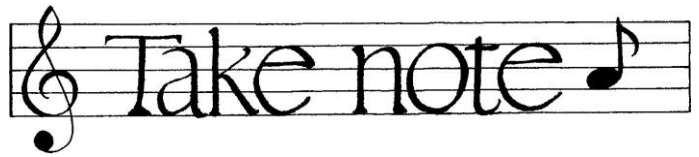
We would appreciate your donations of baked goods: cookies, pies, breads, and more. If you have your own crafts or something from your attic that you would like to donate, we would love to have those, too. Things that usually sell well are gently used, clean household items, books, puzzles and other 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!



The Choir begins regular rehearsals on Thursday, August 22 at 6 p.m. We always welcome new members (see director Nancy Sargent for more information).

The choir will return to morning worship on Sunday, September 8.



The Vitality Team continues to dream up ways to reach out to folks in our community. And to those in our church family. If you have an idea for an activity or program, please contact one of us: Sue Fuller, Bonnie Carter, Katharine Schrader, or Rev. Keith Bowie.

## ONA CONVERSATIONS

*From the purpose statement of First Congregational Church of Ellsworth: we "...strive to build on commonalities while seeking to understand, accept, and celebrate our differences."*

During the annual meeting last January, the congregation gave its approval to explore and learn more about what Open and Affirming (ONA) means. A committee was formed and has been working on this charge.

As part of our deliberations, we have felt that most people seem to be comfortable with the definitions of discrimination based on age, race, national origin, mental and physical ability, to name a few. However, some may have difficulty with what it means to discriminate based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, especially as it relates to our faith community.

The ONA Committee is now ready to share what we have learned, and to gather input from the congregation. We will give the same presentation at the church on three separate dates and hope you will be able to attend one of them:

- **Sunday, August 25, 11:30 a.m.** (*a light lunch will be served*)
- **Wednesday, September 11, 6:30 p.m.**
- **Sunday, September 22, 11:30 a.m.**

In the meantime, we encourage you to share your questions and comments with any of the ONA Committee members.

Prayerfully,  
John Lacey  
Stephen Merchant  
Mary T. Turner  
Myrna Vallette  
Chris Wilson

## MEMBER HIGHLIGHT



### Juanita Higgins

Every time you talk with Nita, you learn something new about her, or the area, or the church. She radiates happiness and is always gracious. Nita started school in Surry, but her father was involved in road construction all over the state, necessitating many moves. The family lived in Portland during WWII when her father worked in the shipyards. She attended eleven elementaries and three high schools before finally returning to the Ellsworth area and graduating from EHS. During all her moves she always went to church with her school friends, visiting many denominations. After high school she went to Washington State Normal School in Machias. While there she went to the Congregational Church, and she felt that she had found a home. She received a teaching certificate and taught school for five years. During this time, she met Lewis Higgins to whom she was married for 70 years! They wed at First Church in 1952 with the Rev. McDuffie presiding. Nita was a substitute teacher for 9 years for Ellsworth and surrounding schools. Lew and Nita adopted their daughter Sherylin and, two years later, they had their son Chris. Nita maintains that she could not have made it through her life without her belief that God and the support she found in her church home. She joined the church in 1951 and was involved in all activities and committees for years. Nita continues to help the Deacons each month by sending all the birthday cards that each of our members receive. She loves phone calls and visits to her beautiful home at Carrying Place Lane in Hancock. How blessed we are to have such a wonderful lady in our church family.



## FAREWELL LEITA ZEUGNER & BILL HODGES!

Leita and Bill, as you leave our congregation, we wish to bid you farewell. In holy baptism our Lord Jesus Christ received you and made you members of his church. When you came to this congregation, we rejoiced to welcome you into the mission we share as the people of God. We are thankful for your ministry of time and talent while here. God has blessed you in this community, and God has blessed us through you.

And now we rejoice with you as you relocate to your new home. Safe travels! Live in hope for all that is yet to be, ready to be faithful as new joys and challenges appear. May God, who gives us new beginnings, be with us all, how and always. Let us pray:

*Eternal God, we thank you for Leita and Bill and for the time we have shared with them. As they have been a blessing to us, so now send them forth to be a blessing to others; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.*

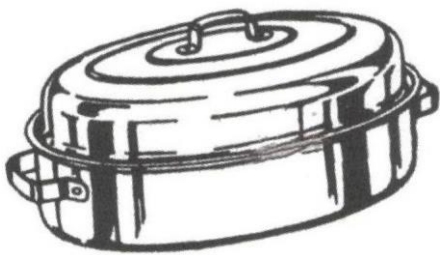
May God bless you today and always!

(This is how Rev. Bowie concluded the farewell celebration for Leita & Bill on Sunday, July 7.)

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# Pot Roast Supper

**Saturday, August 24, 2024**  
**Serving 5:00 to 6:30 pm**



*Beef pot roast, 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.**





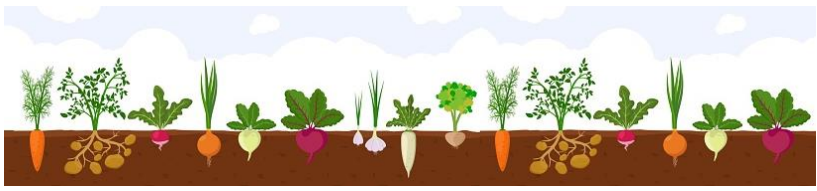


## **WELCOME OUR NEW ASSOCIATE CONFERENCE MINISTER THE REV. JOHN FISCUS**

Joining us August 15, 2024, the Rev. John Fiscus (he/him/his) comes to the Maine Conference after serving nearly ten years as Pastor and Teacher at Peace United Church of Christ in St. Cloud Minnesota. Prior to being clergy, John served the churches he attended in multiple ways. He has served on boards of churches with 600 members and offered the good news to four beautiful souls in a Colorado farm community. During his tenure in St. Cloud, he served the community on several volunteer Boards and as a community member on the Ethics Committee of Saint Cloud Hospital. In addition to his work at the church, John served the Conference as Chair of the Open and Affirming ministry team and has just finished a six-year term on the Committee on Ministry that serves the entire conference.



John is a second career clergy person. Prior to full time ministry John served over twenty years in management roles in several companies. His experience there was multifaceted and included financial analysis, Human Resources, and training responsibilities. His educational background is varied as well. John has a BS in Anthropology and a BA in History both from Colorado State University, Pueblo. His MDiv was completed at Iliff School of Theology in Denver. He has completed the course work for his Doctor of Ministry in Prophetic Leadership from Iliff and is still working to complete his final project. John has lived in Colorado, Texas and Minnesota. He and his husband, Rick are celebrating 28 years as a couple in October of 2024. They are looking forward to a new adventure in Maine. John has made it his goal to discover the best lobster roll in Maine while Rick will seek out the best blueberry pie, muffin, or ale. John looks forward to being a part of the vision and hope that the churches of the Maine Conference bring to our world.

# August 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club	2 <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b> 12-3 pm Fair setup	3  <b>CHURCH FAIR</b> 8:30 am – 1 pm
4 <b>Green</b> 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship & Communion 11:30 am Qtr Cong Mtg	5 <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b> 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	6	7 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	8 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club	9 <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b> 10 am Finance	10
11 <b>Green</b> 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Deacons 11:30 am Christian Ed	12 <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b> 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	13	14 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	15 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 7 pm Trustees	16 <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	17  <b>CHURCH PICNIC</b> 3 pm
18 <b>Green</b> 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	19 <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b> 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	20	21 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	22 9 am Bulletin & Steeple deadlines 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir begins	23 <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	24 5:30 pm Pot roast supper
25 <b>Green</b> 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Missions 11:30 am ONA presentation	26 <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b> 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities 6:30 pm Council	27	28 1-4 pm Bowie office 2:30-4 pm Welcome Table take-out	29 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	30 <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b>	31

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS WORKSHOP at ST ANDREW LUTHERAN CHURCH Saturday, August 24, 9 AM - 2 PM

Lunch will be provided. Thanks to a New England Synod grant there is no cost for participation! (Free will offering for lunch will be welcome.) To register, please call the St. Andrew church office: 207-667-7641.



**Rev. Jake Jacobson leads the workshop.** He 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.

St. Andrew is located at 175 Douglas Highway in Ellsworth, just off Route 1.



## 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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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.