

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



February 2025 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

Maybe it's because I've been sorting through family photo albums and pictures over the past few weeks, but I've been thinking about faces lately. When we remember someone, either living or deceased, we usually picture their face. In our minds we conjure up memories and emotions associated with that particular person. We recognize a person by looking at his or her face. Many times, we see the inward emotions of a person expressed outwardly on the face. Other times a face can appear quite stoic or serene, and we are not sure what's going on behind the face. I picture both Washington and Lincoln, two former Presidents whose birthdays we celebrate in February, looking calm and unflappable but also visibly showing the strain of war and division on their faces. The face is also home to four of the five senses—sight, smell, taste, and hearing.

A face draws our attention when we are attending to another person, whether it is listening, asking a question, or seeking to understand. When I gaze into another's face, it is essential that this person in front of me is turned toward me as well. It is an encounter that is almost sacramental in nature. So, when the psalmist urges us to "Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always" (Psalm 105:4), this verse points to something beautifully intimate in the way God invites us to relationship with Him. The Hebrew word for "face" in the Old Testament is often translated "presence." When we seek the face of God, we are seeking God's presence. And the mystery of that presence only deepens when we think that God took on our humanity - bringing His face to us in the human face of Christ—so that we could gaze upon and come close to a face not unlike ours.

We seek the face of God in various ways. The true nature of worship is to seek God's face. When we approach God in prayer, we are seeking His face. Having God's face smile on us is an expression of blessing, love, and favor. We seek the face of God each day in the faces of our brothers and sisters, our loved ones and friends. God meets our gaze and does not turn away. As we go forward into this new year, let's ask for the grace to seek and love God's face anew in our neighbor, our community, and in all the circumstances of our lives. May God fill our vision with the truth of His loving presence.

That in all things God may be glorified,

Keith

ANNUAL MEETING IS ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2025
See bottom of page 5

FEBRUARY CHURCH MEETINGS

- Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:15 a.m.
Busy Bodies – Mondays, 10:30 a.m.
Choir – Thursdays, 6 p.m.
Music – TBA

ANNUAL MEETING

- Sunday, Feb 2, 11 a.m.

- Deacons** – Sunday, Feb 9, 11:30 a.m.
Christian Ed – Sunday, Feb 9, 11:30 a.m.
Missions – Sunday, Feb 16, 11:30 a.m.
Trustees – Thursday, Feb 20, 7 p.m.
ONA – Sunday, Feb 23, 11:30 a.m.
Council – Monday, Feb 24, 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.

FEBRUARY LECTIONARY READINGS

FEB 2 – 4TH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Jeremiah 1:4-10
Psalm 71:1-6
1 Corinthians 13:1-13
Luke 4:21-30

FEB 9 – 5TH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Isaiah 6:1-8, (9-13)
Psalm 138
1 Corinthians 15:1-11
Luke 5:1-11

FEB 16 – 6TH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Jeremiah 17:5-10
Psalm 1
1 Corinthians 15:12-20
Luke 6:17-26

FEB 23 – 7TH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Genesis 45:3-11
Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40
1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50
Luke 6:27-38



A note from Irv Hodgkins

Thank you for your kind and thoughtful Christmas card.

And thanks for the lovely memorial service for Helen and the nice reception following. It was nice to see all the church friends I have missed since my move to Brunswick. I'm glad all our boys were able to be there to meet them as well.

I wish all FCC members a lovely New Year!

*Love,
Irv*

DEACONS

- Feb 2 - Communion, Rev. Keith Bowie
- Feb 9 - Rev. Keith Bowie
- Feb 16 - Andy Elliot
- Feb 23 - MESOM Sunday, Rev. Keith Bowie

February Deacon: Rev. John A. Lacey

A few weeks ago, Rev. Bowie opened his sermon with a startling statement that made all who were listening blink with disbelief. Keith said that God was telling us to do five things to do as we thought our resolutions for the New Year. He said that we were to Lie, Cheat, Drink, Swear, and Steal. You can imagine the congregation's reaction! Everyone took a deep breath, and then we listened to his explanation.

***LIE** back and relax just a little more this year, without worrying so much.*

***CHEAT** failure. Don't be afraid to try something because you think it may fail.*

***DRINK** from the fountain of knowledge and learn from others' mistakes.*

***SWEAR** to do your best.*

***STEAL** a little time for God and develop your relationship with God.*

As you can see there is a very good lesson in these five words. We do not think of the meaning of the words when these are presented alone but with a little instruction, it totally makes sense. I hope we remember these guiding thoughts as we look at our church and think about our goals.

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 Hodgkin
Susan King
Rhyne Robidoux
Carole Spencer
Tom & Sharon Minogue
Jordan Berry
Marjory Peronto
Joyce Cornwell
Megan Remick
Nicole Bedard

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

CE & the Vitality Team are working together with Rev. Bowie to offer a viewing of the series that has been on TV. We will be offering the first season of **The Chosen** beginning Wednesday, February 19, at 5:30 p.m. Bring a bag lunch (supper?). We will watch the show while we eat. **The Chosen** is the first-ever multi-season TV show about the life of Jesus. **The Chosen** allows us to see Him through the eyes of those who knew Him.

We hope that all will come and join us for the viewing and discussions. This will run for 9 weeks with a break on March 5 for Ash Wednesday.



**PANCAKE SUPPER ON
SHROVE TUESDAY
MARCH 4, 2025**



Shrove Tuesday (also Mardi Gras) is the night before Ash Wednesday. We will have a family dinner of pancakes, sausage, and bacon. Please come and enjoy the evening fellowship and fun and games.



**MESOM SUNDAY
FEBRUARY 23, 2025**

[The Maine School of Ministry](#) offers learning formation for adult students and leaders of all backgrounds and callings, and in many cases empowers Members in Discernment and Committee on Ministry to find meaningful and accessible training for pastoral leadership in congregations.

A FEBRUARY PRAYER

Lord God,

In these February days, when daylight lengthens, we pray for the light of your new life to enter into the dark places of this world.

We pray for those who still suffer from discrimination and prejudice...in the workplace, in society, in social situations. We pray for those who struggle because of difficulties which cannot be seen. We pray for those who feel excluded and marginalized. Lord Jesus, you spent most of your time with those whom the world valued little. Be with those who cry out to you in loneliness, hurt and rejection. May they know themselves to be loved unconditionally by you.

We pray for those who are in the world's limelight: celebrities, sports personalities, government officials, councilors, media influencers. We ask that all who have worldly power use it for the good of all, and not for their own personal agendas. Give them wisdom to recognize truth and to lead others with integrity. Help us, who do not have such power and wealth, to discern the good from that which is self-seeking.

We pray for your church as it moves towards Lent and the cross. Give us humble hearts and a will to see ourselves in your light. Help us to use the weeks of Lent to learn more of you, and to learn more of about ourselves and each other, that in sharing we may listen and in turn deepen our relationship with you.

We pray for the places where we live, giving thanks for the beauty which is there to be seen. Help us to be grateful every day for all the blessings given to us.



We give thanks for those who love us, care for us and bring us joy. May we know that in all our smiles and laughter. You are there between us and within us. As many celebrate St. Valentine's Day this year, may we bring to mind and hold close to us those whom we have loved and lost. And we pray for those who feel unloved and unnoticed. Open our eyes to see them and bring light into their lives.

We offer ourselves to you, Lord God, this month and this day. Even if we forget you, may you never forget us.

We ask these prayers in Jesus' name, **Amen.**

- From the website of Holy Trinity Church, Haddington UK
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February 2025

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


THE ANNUAL MEETING


will take place on Sunday, February 2, 2025.

A heat issue (specifically, a lack thereof!) caused morning worship and the Annual Meeting to be cancelled on January 26.
 So, **Annual Meeting, Take Two.** We will see you there!

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



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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.