

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



July 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

July 4th is just around the corner. I hope that it will be a grand celebration, and even grander next year—2026—the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Already, we have had the reenactment of the Battles of Lexington and Concord on April 19, as well as the recent 250th Army Military Parade in commemoration of the founding of the Continental Army under George Washington. There will be lots more to come of these patriotic observances.

As we celebrate these important milestones with pride, let us also celebrate that religion—Christianity in particular—has been an integral component of our nation's Founding. Yes, the Founders read Greek and Roman historians like Cicero and Xenophon. Some were influenced by Enlightenment philosophers like John Locke. But the Bible has been the main source of our national ideals. From the age of the New England Puritans to the Great Awakening that prepared the ground for revolution, Scripture has molded our common life from the very beginning. In fact, every great culture in the history of mankind has depended on a common moral and religious order or ideal as the glue that holds everything else together. America's ideal has been the religion of Adam and Eve, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, the prophets, Jesus, and saints Peter and Paul. That is changing now, obviously, and not for the better. American culture increasingly has no memory of the religious customs and traditions that made it a "city upon a hill," a "light to all the world," a community committed to God's rule of law, compassion, love and justice.

Look around at the consequences. Our politics are bitter. Our culture wars are stubborn and not easy to negotiate. We can no longer agree even on the definition of "man" and "woman." American students protest and parade around on campus quads, chanting vulgarities and diatribes, usually against Israel and/or the U.S., ironically biting the hand that feeds them. Meanwhile, many of our young people struggle with alcohol abuse, drug overdoses, mental illness, and suicide. Decent housing remains out of reach for many while earning a decent living (the American Dream) is problematic, too.

Surely there is blame to go around. But might our predicament stem from something more basic and fundamental? Perhaps we should look in the mirror. Isn't the real culprit the demise of that moral, Christian anchor that somehow grounded us and held us all together? We need to recover that common ground today. And we can, with God's help. Why, you ask, should we do this? Because this country you and I love will not survive without the influence of our Judeo-Christian values and traditions. Christianity is like an electrical current. Turn it off and the light will fade. Recovering and renewing our biblical faith is a smart way to honor and celebrate the 4th of July.

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
Deacons	– no July meeting
Christian Ed	– Sunday, July 13, 11:30 a.m.
Trustees	– Thursday, July 17, 7 p.m.
Missions	– Sunday, July 27, 11:30 a.m.
Council	– Monday, July 28, 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.

JULY LECTIONARY READINGS

JULY 6 – 4TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

2 Kings 5:1-14 & Psalm 30 OR
Isaiah 66:10-14 & Psalm 66:1-9
Galatians 6:(1-6), 7-16
Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

JULY 13 – 5TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Amos 7:7-17 & Psalm 82 OR
Deuteronomy 30:9-14 & Psalm 25:1-10
Colossians 1:1-14
Luke 10:25-37

JULY 20 – 6TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Amos 8:1-12 & Psalm 52 OR
Genesis 18:1-10a & Psalm 15
Colossians 1:15-28
Luke 10:38-42

JULY 27 – 7TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Hosea 1:2-10 & Psalm 85 OR
Genesis 18:20-32 & Psalm 138
Colossians 2:6-15, (16-19)
Luke 11:1-13



LOOKING AHEAD



CHURCH FAIR SATURDAY, AUGUST 2 8:30 AM – 1:00 PM

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

We would appreciate donations of baked goods: pies, cookies, bread and more. Crafts sell well and your hand-worked donations can be left at the church. Books and puzzles are welcomed. 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 1, from 12-2 p.m. Or bring them in Saturday morning as soon as you can.

Do you need more information? Contact Sue Fuller or Louise Emerson.

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

DEACONS

July 6 - Communion, Rev. Keith Bowie

July 13 - Rev. Keith Bowie

July 20 - Rev. Keith Bowie

July 27 - Rev. Dr. David Henry

July Deacon: Steve Merchant

We want to thank everyone for considering moving to the first seven rows in the sanctuary. We did not want to force anyone to move. We asked people to move so that when we are recording and showing on Facebook, that there are people in the sanctuary. We understand that some individuals have specific areas of the sanctuary that they are comfortable in, and we do not want to disrupt church for anyone. Thanks so much and we hope to continue to enable the outside community, our community, to look at our church and all our activities that make them want to come and check us out. Please consider inviting a neighbor or friend to come to church. We are an exciting group of individuals that have a ton of things to offer.

(From Paul Nickerson's weekly emails)

For churches in the colder part of the country, better and warmer weather is appearing and it offers some opportunities to connect with new people (note: if you are in a part of the country with unbearable summer heat, use the practices below, but in a cooler season). With people outside more, and engaging in a variety of activities, here are some things churches are doing to meet people and begin to get to know them.

- Move a worship service or other activity to a public place where people naturally gather. We church folk often underestimate how challenging it is for new people to walk into our buildings.

- Check your community calendar for upcoming town events and go join in: Memorial Day parades, 4th of July, school graduations and beginning of new school years, town celebrations, etc.
- Many families and children are involved in sports. Pick out a team and go support it. You will meet lots of parents and grandparents.
- Do something in your neighborhood. Start by simply walking around and talking with neighbors who are outside. Then invite a person or group over for a cook-out or fire pit.
- Your own hobbies and sports. If you play golf, put together a couple of foursomes and then have some food together. If you walk, sew, woodwork, whatever, invite others to join you or look at Meetup.com for a group near you.
- If your church has VBS, do a follow-up cook-out later in the summer and gather all the kids and parents again.
- Have your group or committee meet where people gather at restaurants, bars, parks, etc.

Summer is a great time to get out of the building and meet people who are enjoying a variety of activities. The more people you meet, the more relationships you build and the more opportunities you get to hear people's stories, and share yours. ♦

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:

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



We have reached the end of another choir season here and I am very grateful for our choir members who come every week and enrich our worship. They do their best even if they might struggle with one of my anthem selections. Sometimes it might even require them to be brave! But they are solid in their commitment, as I am, to providing music to help in the worship of our God.

However, as you can tell if you come to our service, our choir numbers are dwindling. If one choir member is sick or has a sick family member and another member makes a trip to visit family, we are pretty much down to having no functional choir in the traditional sense, although the ones who are left continue to be willing to make a musical offering. To me, that is very distressing, because a major portion of my worship, at least, is through music.

Will you consider joining the choir next year? This goes out to those who don't attend anymore as well. If anyone knows someone who enjoys singing and would like to contribute, especially if they have choral experience, (although that is not necessary) consider asking them to join us. To me, this feels critical to our continuation as a church.

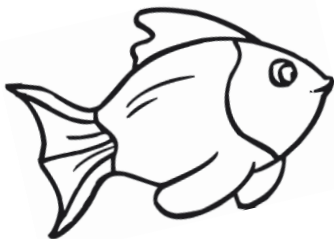
The "requirements" are minimal: enjoy singing! Be able to carry a tune and follow the music. If you can read music, that's a plus! There is a 45-minute rehearsal once a week and the 10 a.m. service every week from September to June. Sometimes there are special services during the holiday season. I am not a trained choir director; I play the piano and help people learn their parts. I am not mean! (At least I don't think I am!) I believe in encouraging, not intimidating!

In choir, we support each other and stand ready to help each other. We have fun! I hope some people will give us a try. The next choir season begins Sunday, September 14, with our first rehearsal on Thursday, September 4. Thank you for thinking and praying for us. ♪

Baked Haddock Supper

Saturday, July 26, 2025

Serving 5:00 to 6:30 pm






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

\$12 per person

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

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

July 2025

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

Giving Thanks for Summer

Creator God, thank you for summer!

Thank you for the warmth of the sun and the increased daylight.

Thank you for the beauty I see all around me and for the opportunity to be outside and enjoy your creation.

Thank you for time with my friends and family, and for all the pleasures of the summer season.

Draw me closer to you this summer.

Teach me how I can pray no matter where I am or what I am doing.

Warm my soul with the awareness of your presence and light my path with your Word and Counsel.

As I enjoy your creation, create in me a pure heart and a hunger and a thirst for you.

- Author Unknown



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
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
Ginny Davis, Missions
Bonnie Carter, Music & Christian Education
Council Members at Large:
Susan Bedard
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.