

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



**August 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*

Americans have a love affair with camps and camping. It rises to the level of a spiritual, sacred rite. According to the American Camp Association, more than 20 million children attend each summer. It's a ritual of personal growth, community building, and of communing with nature. Those camps that are Christian in orientation, like Pilgrim Lodge of the Maine Conference UCC, offer added value - an opportunity to worship, pray, and commune with God, our Creator.

Camping has been a big part of my life. I attended a church camp for boys as a youngster in the 1950s (girls had their own camp). I fondly remember one of the requirements was having to write a postcard to your parents after a day or two at camp letting them know how camp was going. This had the dual purpose of letting one's parents know that you were safe (and good public relations for the camp!), as well as helping one to conquer any homesickness from being away from home for the very first time.

I enjoyed camp so much that I served for three summers on the staff of a Baptist boys camp in South Carolina during my high school and college years. I was a counselor-in-training the first summer, a lifeguard/cabin counselor the second, and the third summer I was the waterfront director on a beautiful lake, supervising two other lifeguards. I also taught swimming lessons to those who wished to learn how to swim. All of us had our Senior Lifesaving certification through the American Red Cross. It was at Camp McCall (the name of the camp) that I first felt the stirring and nudging of the Holy Spirit to become a minister.

After becoming an ordained minister in Penn Southeast Conference of the UCC, the Conference camping staff was looking for some volunteers to take a group of 25 -30 middle and senior highs to—you guessed it!—Maine to pilot a new mode of camping experience. This



happened in July of 1974. My wife Pam and I volunteered, along with six others, two of whom served as bus drivers/counselors. The first week was spent at Pilgrim Lodge on beautiful Lake Cobbosseecontee. For the second week we traveled to coastal Maine, splitting our time between Camden Hills State Park and the Blackwoods Campground in Acadia National Park. Of course, Pam and I were smitten by the natural beauty of this state. Do you think that this camping experience played a role in our move to Maine years later? God, it seems, does work in mysterious ways!

(Pastor's Column continued on page 4, top of column 2)

## AUGUST CHURCH MEETINGS

### QUARTERLY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

★ Sunday, August 3 ★

<b>Adult Forum</b>	- Sundays, 8:15 a.m.
<b>Busy Bodies</b>	- Mondays, 10:30 a.m.
<b>Music</b>	- TBA
<b>Search Comm</b>	- TBA
<b>Finance</b>	- Friday, August 8, 10 a.m.
<b>Deacons</b>	- Sunday, August 10, 11:30 a.m.
<b>Christian Ed</b>	- Sunday, August 10, 11:30 a.m.
<b>Trustees</b>	- Thursday, August 21, 7 p.m.
<b>Missions</b>	- Sunday, August 24, 11:30 a.m.
<b>Council</b>	- Monday, August 25, 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.



## AUGUST LECTIONARY READINGS

### AUG 3 – 8<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Hosea 11:1-11 & Psalm 107:1-9, 43 OR  
Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14, 2:18-23 &  
Psalm 49:1-12  
Colossians 3:1-11  
Luke 12:13-21

### AUG 10 – 9<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Isaiah 1:1, 10-29 & Psalm 50:1-8, 22-23  
Genesis 15:1-6 & Psalm 33:12-22  
Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16  
Luke 12:32-40

### AUG 17 – 10<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Isaiah 5:1-7 & Psalm 80:1-2, 8-19  
Jeremiah 23:23-29 & Psalm 82  
Hebrews 11:29-12:2  
Luke 12:49-56

### AUG 24 – 11<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Jeremiah 1:4-10 & Psalm 71:1-6 OR  
Isaiah 58:9b-14 & Psalm 103:1-8  
Hebrews 12:18-29  
Luke 13:10-17

### AUG 31 – 12<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Jeremiah 2:413 & Psalm 81:1, 10-16 OR  
Proverbs 25:6-7 & Psalm 112  
Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16  
Luke 14:1, 7-14



## QUARTERLY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, August 3

Contact Moderator Sue Fuller if you have questions.  
The meeting will convene at 11:30 a.m. in Fellowship  
Hall.



# DEACONS

**Aug 3 - Communion, Rev. Keith Bowie**

**Aug 10 - Rev. Keith Bowie**

**Aug 17 - Rev. Keith Bowie**

**Aug 24 - Rev. Dr. David Henry**

**Aug 31 - Rev. Keith Bowie**

**August Deacon: Katharine Schrader**

**The Deacons are considering a celebration of our church with a Rally Sunday in mid-September. More information to come.**

From Rev. Paul Nickerson's weekly newsletter:

## **The Importance of What We Measure**

When we look at how we are doing as a church, we usually turn to some common measurements: worship attendance, budget, number of people in small groups, etc. And while this information can be somewhat important in understanding our church health, there are some more vital metrics that we should consider.

When I ask a church how important it is to grow disciples, everyone says that is central to ministry. Yet when I ask, "*Well, how are you doing with discipleship*?" I get little or very vague responses. Wouldn't measuring our central purpose, discipleship, be important?

Rather than just looking at worship numbers and dollars, could we begin to measure how many people in our congregation are living like Christ during the week?

What might that look like? Church Consultant, Will Mancini, suggests that each church develop a measurable list of Christlikeness for their congregation. This could include:

- Faith, hope and love from I Cor 13:13
- Fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5: 22-23)
- The Beatitudes of Matthew 5: 3-10

We could begin to ask members about their living out of the faith and tell stories of how people are offering help, compassion and prayer to those

around them. We could begin to catalogue what percentage of our members leave worship on Sunday and do something in their neighborhood, workplace or school that reflects the Spirit of Christ. The results would help us understand what needs to happen in worship, programs and mission efforts to help every member become a deeper follower of Jesus.

Numbers in worship and dollars in budget will indicate participation (which every church needs to know) but analyzing how we are actually making disciples who go out into the world and live like Christ is by far the more important measure of our central purpose. ♦

## 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:**

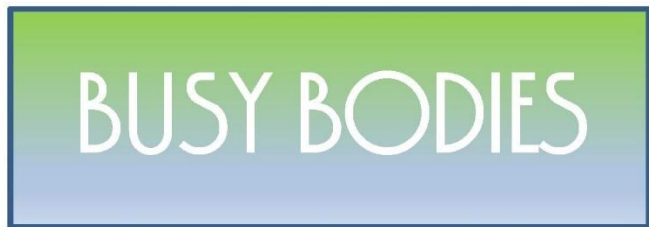
Lorraine & Jon Foss  
Becky Leamon & Andy Stephenson  
Amy Zenke, Hope & Joy  
David & Brenda Keep  
Lisa & Steven Salsbury  
Daniel Lacey  
Emily Cambridge  
Myrna & Bob Vallette

# THANKYOU!

Jim Kimbrell and Ken Farkas gutted, restored and updated the church's two downstairs public restrooms. Jim and Ken, your hard work paid off. The rooms look terrific! Please let these gentlemen know how much you appreciate what they did for us.

# THANKYOU! THANKYOU! THANKYOU!





## 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.

For more information, please contact Sue Fuller or Louise Emerson.

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



**On Communion Sundays (the first Sunday of each month), we ask for donations to the Loaves & Fishes Food pantry.** Your donation may be non-perishable food items or monetary gifts. There are donation and collection boxes at the State Street entrance.

(Pastor's Column continued)

Summer camp molds young people into the adults they will become. For many, it is their first taste of sustained independence. Tragically, 27 young campers and counselors from Camp Mystic, Texas, will not have the opportunity to grow and profit from their camp experiences, having been swept away in the deadly flash flooding over the 4th of July weekend. It is still hard to comprehend. I don't pretend to understand it, only God knows. Please continue to pray for those mired in grief and pain. It is one of those times one wishes to shake their fist at God and ask "Why?"

Rest in peace, dear children of God.

That in all things God may be glorified,

*Keith*



## CHURCH PICNIC & GET TOGETHER SATURDAY AFTERNOON, AUGUST 16

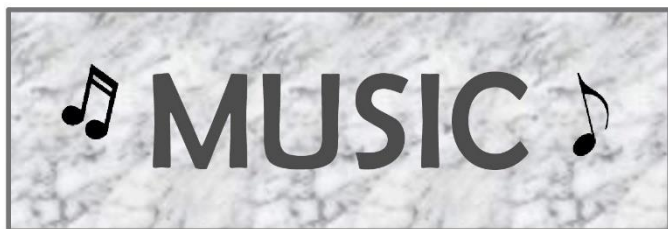
Once again, Chris Wilson has graciously offered to host a church picnic at his place in Steuben. Meats will be provided—hamburgers, hotdogs, bratwurst—all grilled by Chris. (If you cannot eat beef or pork, please bring your own meat to grill.)

This is a potluck picnic, so your assignments are beverages, salads, desserts, or any other dish to share.

We'll carpool to Chris' home by the ocean, arriving at 3 p.m. and eating around 4:30-5 p.m.

Chris invited the lovely singer/songwriter [Bliss Matthews](#) to perform for us. Outdoor lawn chairs and camp chairs would be useful, too, if you can bring some.

Come and enjoy time together. Questions? Call Chris.



## AUGUST MUSICAL GUESTS

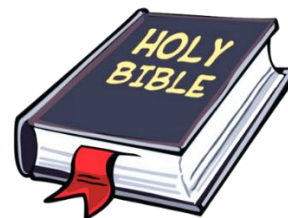
- ♪ The McIntyres will sing during morning worship on August 3.
- ♪ Ben Cosgrove in concert, Saturday, August 9
- ♪ Bliss Matthews at the church picnic on Saturday, August 16



starts up in September. Come and make a joyful noise with us.

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

- Our Adult Forum continues Sunday mornings at 8:30 in the Parlor.
- We plan to watch Season 2 of **The Chosen** this fall. Stay tuned for more information.
- If you have borrowed a religious book from the church library, or are reading something similar at home, would you consider writing and submitting a short book review for the Steeple? Please speak with Bonnie Carter if you have questions about this.
- Bonnie Carter prepared a Word Search based on Psalm 1. See page 8. (To print that page only, open this document in Word, place your computer cursor on page 8, click Print, and type 8 in the Pages box.)



The 1989 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible in our church pew racks is no longer in print. It has been replaced by the New Revised Standard Version: Updated Edition (NRSVue). The NRSVue is a result of rigorous biblical scholarship, aiming to provide readers with the most inclusive, informed, and reliable text available, incorporating new manuscript discoveries since the 1989 introduction of the original NRSV.

Since June 30, 2025, the NRSV is no longer available online for the church secretary to easily cut and paste scripture readings for the liturgists' ease. With long passages, our secretary, Joyce, worries about introducing errors if she types them out from the pew Bible. In recent weeks you may have noticed that the readings from the pulpit don't quite match what you are reading. Perhaps this bothers you, perhaps it does not.

Joyce needs to know if it is okay for our liturgists to read scripture from the NRSVue which does not exactly match what you read in the pew Bible.

## MISSIONS



The Missions Committee seeks devotional booklets and publications (things like Upper Room, Guideposts, pamphlets) to distribute to shut-ins. The materials do not need to be current issues. Questions? Please contact Ginny Davis.

## RESULTS OF OPEN AND AFFIRMING (ONA) SURVEY

The Open and Affirming (ONA) Committee is sharing the following results of the ONA survey that was taken in May 2025. Based on the responses, we have determined that our congregation is not ready to bring the subject to a vote at this time. The committee intends to continue serving as a resource in helping our members explore and learn about ONA, although in a less structured way. We urge everyone to keep the conversation going with each other and with members of the committee: John Lacey, Steve Merchant, Mary Turner, Myrna Vallette and Chris Wilson.



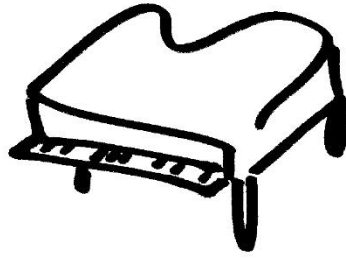
### Highlights

- Forty (40) percent of the membership responded to the survey (28 out of 70 members); two non-members also submitted surveys)
- Items #2 and #3 of the survey were similar, but were worded differently. For #2, 16 said they “need to know more about why some people think an ONA designation matters...” and 14 said no. Yet for #3, 27 said they “have learned enough about what Open and Affirming is...”
- The response to #4, “I feel it is important for our congregation to be formally and publicly designated as ONA,” was evenly split with 13 yes and 13 no (four people left it blank).
- 17 marked that, yes, the congregation is already welcoming, and we don’t need to be designated ONA; eight said no, and five did not answer.
- 13 feel we are ready to put the ONA question to a vote, six said no, and 11 did not answer or are unsure.
- Asked if there was a vote today, 16 said they would vote to be ONA, 12 said no, and two did not answer.

### Detailed Survey Results

Total number of surveys submitted: 30

1. I am a member of FCC: **Yes:** 28 **No:** 2
2. I need to know more about why some people think an ONA designation matters, and how ONA affects our church: **Yes:** 16 **No:** 14
3. I have learned enough about what Open and Affirming is, and what it would mean for our church: **Yes:** 27 **No:** 2 **Blank:** 1
4. I feel it is important for our congregation to be formally and publicly designated as ONA: **Yes:** 13 **No:** 13 **No answer:** 4
5. I think our congregation is already welcoming, and we don’t need to be designated ONA: **Yes:** 17 **No:** 8 **No answer:** 5
6. A vote by a majority of members would be required to designate FCC as ONA. Do you feel that we are ready to put this to a vote? **Yes:** 13 **No:** 6 **No answer/blank:** 11
7. If we were to put the ONA designation to a vote today, how would you vote? **Yes, become ONA:** 16 **No, do not become ONA:** 12 **Blank:** 2



# BEN COSGROVE

**IN CONCERT HERE at FCC  
August 9, 2025 2 p.m.**

Ben Cosgrove is a nationally known Maine pianist who has contributed music to the Ken Burns documentary *The American Buffalo*. He creates music that explores themes of landscapes, place, and environment.

A \$5 donation is requested.

For information about the concert, please contact Chris Wilson at 202-538-4606

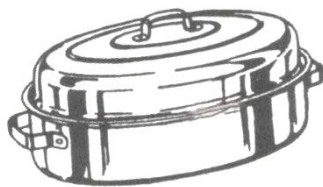
[bencosgrove.com](http://bencosgrove.com)

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## Pot Roast Supper

**Saturday, August 23, 2025**

**Serving 5:00 to 6:30 pm**



*Beef pot roast, mashed potatoes, carrots,  
green beans, salad, rolls, homemade pies,  
and beverages (coffee, tea, lemonade)*

**\$12 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 Lois Stevens immediately about the ways you can help.**

# Psalm 1 Word Search

X Z A M S R T Y U I P A D G J H K M N B V X L A W E R A Q D  
 D W D E S S E L B L O W S E S L F F G H J I H G I L E D S W  
 A S A D I F G O H J K K L C H A F F L I O Y R D C F A S F R  
 V X Y E N V O R W H S C W E T W I N D R U W I C K E D D G T  
 Q U E F N B E D A E N L H U T O J N B V G A Y T E L A F H Y  
 M W C R E R S C B N J O K J H F G F D S A Y T R D F B G J U  
 N M H I R J I A C L Y R E U I T R E E B Y W A T E R I H K I  
 B Y A G S N T X H A R E X D B H D D S K L A E E F U B J L O  
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 H M D E E H O O Y T O F B F P O Y G X G I F T K A Y K N V K  
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 P P K Z A P V S B O Z J U M R R V W I T H E R L M E A C P F  
 Y H E D X B N O G T O W K C S G B A S E R J U S B T Y X X G  
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 R J S Y U M E S C I S M L S E A X K C P H Y O Y Y X H B G C

ASSEMBLY

BLESSED

BLOWS

CHAFF

DELIGHT

DAY

FRUITS

JUDGMENT

LAW OF THE LORD

LEAF

LORD

MEDITATES

MOCKERS

NIGHT

NOT SO

PERISH

PLANTED

PROSPERS

RIGHTEOUS

SEASON

SEAT

SINNERS

STAND

STREAMS

TREE BY WATER

WATCHES

WAY 2X

WICKED 2X




WIND

WITHER

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# August 2025

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

## THANKSGIVING PRAYER FOR SUMMER

Thank you, Lord, for the summertime. Thank you for the way plants flourish in the sunshine. Thank you for the joy of swimming in a lake, ocean, or pool on a hot day. Thank you for shade and wind and cool evenings. You created seasons of rain, seasons of sun, seasons of cold, seasons of heat, and everything in between. In seasons of plenty, I will praise you. In seasons of drought, I will praise you still. Lord, you are good and your love endures forever. Thank you for giving me this moment to pray and remember your goodness in my life. I praise you for these summer days. Amen.

[www.susannahjudd.com](http://www.susannahjudd.com)

## **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**

PO Box 12, Ellsworth, Maine 04605

207-667-8321 [office@ellsworthucc.org](mailto:office@ellsworthucc.org) [ellsworthucc.org](http://ellsworthucc.org)

[facebook.com/fccellsworth/](https://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.