

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



September 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

Recently I presented a children's message in worship using Hebrews 12:1-2 as a text: "...let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith..." Sounds very basic, simple, and foundational, doesn't it? Keeping our eyes fixed and focused upon Jesus. I mean, come on, who can argue with that as a guiding principle of the church? Don't we arise each Sunday, dress, and travel to church in all kinds of weather to worship Jesus, the Christ? Why else would we go to such lengths to be here? "Consider him who endured such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart (12:3)." Pretty simple stuff to understand, right? It all sounds so, well, Sunday School-ish. However, sometimes the simple eludes us. For whatever reason, we complicate things when we set aside the obvious. But it would be a huge mistake for us to dismiss this spiritual wisdom that says to keep our eyes focused upon Jesus.

I was reading yet another article on the death of the mainline Protestant church (or, as it now prefers to be called, "progressive") by Carl R. Trueman in *First Things* in which he stated that "mainline Protestantism lost interest in the transcendent truths of Christianity and married the spirit of the age generations ago." The problem, he says, is "its failure to grasp the church's vision and mission. That vision must focus on the church's countercultural, supernatural message of redemption through the life, death, and resurrection of the incarnate Christ." It seems to me that Trueman is saying the same thing as the author to the Letter to the Hebrews. Same horse, different jockey. In plain English, we got distracted and took our eyes off the ball, that is, Jesus. We thus became irrelevant to legions of people, particularly young adults upon whom the church has no claim and little if any influence. I mean, if the church's message is no different than that of a political party or local Rotary Club, why bother to come?

There is a lesson here, not just for First Congregational, but for all churches. In times such as these, when the rhetoric of public discourse is so extreme, there is a real temptation to lose sight of the mission of the church. The church's message and vision are distinctive. Resist the urge to conform or capitulate to the latest cultural fad. Push back on a theology diluted by identity politics. Instead, focus, focus, focus. Keep your eyes fixed upon Jesus. Everything else that we fret about—attendance, giving, programming, outreach and mission—will fall into place. May it be so.

That in all things God may be glorified,

Keith

SEPTEMBER CHURCH MEETINGS

CANDIDACY SUNDAY

★ September 14, 2025 ★

- Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:15 a.m.
Busy Bodies – Mondays, 10:30 a.m.
Choir – Thursdays, 6 p.m.
Music – TBA
Search Comm – TBA
Deacons – Sunday, Sept 21, 11:30 a.m.
Christian Ed – Sunday, Sept 21, 11:30 a.m.
Trustees – Thursday, Sept 25, 7 p.m.
Missions – Sunday, Sept 28, 11:30 a.m.
Council – Monday, Sept 29, 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.



CANDIDACY SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 14, 2025

Mark your calendars and plan to attend worship on Sunday, September 14. The congregation will hear the candidacy sermon of Andy Elliott. Immediately following worship, the Moderator will convene a special congregational meeting to vote on the Search Committee's candidate to be our new half-time minister.



Please locate and wear your name tag that day so that Andy can converse more easily with us. If you cannot locate it, or, do not have a name tag, please contact Joyce in the church office ASAP.

A proxy voting form is available for any member who is unable to attend the September 14 meeting in person or by Zoom. Request the form from the church office or from the Clerk, Myrna Vallette, and submit a valid signed form following the requirements listed on the form. Myrna must have your signed form by 10 A.M. on September 14, 2025.



SEPTEMBER LECTIONARY READINGS

SEPT 7 – 13TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Jeremiah 18:1-11 & Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 OR
Deuteronomy 30:15-20 & Psalm 1
Philemon 1:1-21
Luke 25-33

SEPT 14 – 14TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28 & Psalm 14 OR
Exodus 32:7-14 & Psalm 51:1-10
1 Timothy 1:12-17
Luke 15:1-10

SEPT 21 – 15TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Jeremiah 8:18-9:1 & Psalm 79:1-9 OR
Amos 8:4-7 & Psalm 113
1 Timothy 2:1-7
Luke 16:1-13

SEPT 28 – 16TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15 & Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16
OR Amos 6:1a, 4-7 & Psalm 146
1 Timothy 6:6-19
Luke 16:19-31

With Heartfelt
Sympathy

To the family and friends of Nicholas Sawyer
who died August 5, and whose memorial
service took place here on August 16.
Nick was the grandson of Lily Katsiaficas.

Our church secretary Joyce Cornwell is **FINALLY TAKING A VACATION** after 5 years! The church office will be closed September 16, 17, & 18. If you need to contact the church, please leave a message on the machine at 207-667-8321. Someone will check the machine each day.

DEACONS

Sept 7 - Communion, Rev. Keith Bowie
Sept 14 - Andy Elliott, Candidacy Sunday
& Congregational Meeting
Sept 21 - Rev. Dr. David Henry
Sept 28 - Rev. Keith Bowie

September Deacon: Anne Bancroft

I hope that you have been enjoying your summer. School is underway and Fall begins in three weeks. So many events and changes that it can make our heads spin!

Paul Nickerson has provided many ideas that we can use to help build our community. Please read and consider if there may be a way you can support new programs or ideas. Can you add something to the list?

A SEPTEMBER CHALLENGE

This September, I would like you to make one connection with a person/family.

Here are some suggestions of how to get started.

- Is there someone in the church who has drifted away from regular attendance? Perhaps there has been a family crisis, or life just got busy and they lost the sabbath rhythm. Call or text that person and invite them back.
- Do you have a neighbor with whom you have built a relationship? What do they like to do? Could you invite them to a church activity, program or worship service?
- If you don't know any of your neighbors (more common than you might think), invite someone over for a cup of coffee.
- Do you work on a hands-on mission project for your church? Might there be a friend, neighbor, or co-worker who might work alongside you?

- Do you have a hobby, interest or sport? Invite one person to do that activity with you and get to know them better.
- If you participate in a community group (Rotary, Friends of the Library, etc.) could you invite one person you know?

This is not an exhaustive list, but I hope it will get you thinking and praying about that one person/family.

Every church says it wants to grow. It all starts with each member making a connection, building a relationship, and inviting.

So, are you willing to take up **The September Challenge**? There is someone who will be thankful you did, for it gave them the opportunity to start/renew a faith journey. ♦

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 September:

Greg & Jenn Berry
Jeanne Fernald
Jane & Tom MacDonald
Jason Sargent
Linda Walton
Brenda Jordan
Lyle Stephenson
Aaron Lacey
Tucker Cambridge



Deacons continued

CANDIDACY SUNDAY WEEKEND

Saturday & Sunday, September 13 & 14

We have invited a minister to Candidate for us on Sunday, September 14, 2025, at morning worship. Read a letter from Andy Elliott in the next column.

There is a **Meet & Greet Dinner** the evening before on Saturday, September 13, 2025. Social Time begins at 4:15 p.m., and we will serve dinner at 5 p.m. Entrees will be Baked Haddock or Pot Roast. Sides include potatoes, vegetables, salad, rolls, and desserts. The desserts will be our famous pies that are prepared by you. We hope that many of you will use these opportunities to return to our wonderful family and to start the new era in our church.

We know when the COVID pandemic closed the building, and the subsequent staffing turmoil took place, that it was easy to replace the time you were involved in church with other things. We miss you! We continue to reach out to you because you are part of our church family. This is an opportunity to come back to us. We will greet you with open arms. Be a part of us as we grow spiritually and serve our larger community.

Andrew Elliott will preach a candidacy sermon on Sunday, September 14 at the 10 a.m. service. Immediately following worship, the Moderator will convene a Congregational Meeting to determine the will of the membership to hire Andy as our new minister and spiritual leader. Please make the effort to join us during one of both of these events to help us move forward in our church life. This church matters in our community. YOU matter in this church. Take the step to reignite your spiritual life by joining us again as we face the future together faithfully.

With God's love,
The Deacons

Greetings

My name is Andy Elliott, and I am truly looking forward to being with you—whether for the first time or reconnecting again—on Saturday, September 13, 2025, for a special meet and greet. We'll gather around tables in fellowship and community, sharing stories and deepening our connection with one another.

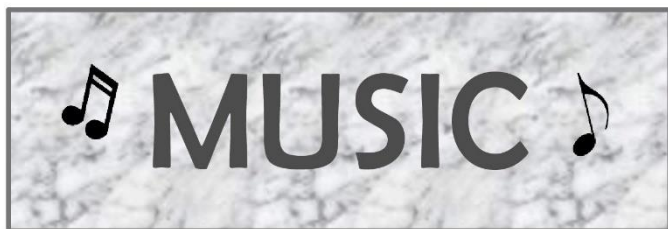
Then, on Sunday, September 14, I will have the honor and privilege of serving during the morning worship service. It is a joy to be welcomed into your sacred space and to share in that time of worship together.

Much of my ministry has taken place out in the community—gathered around tables, in coffee shops, in homes, or out in nature and, yes, even in a brewery. These are the places where I feel most connected to people but most importantly the divine: in the beauty of creation and in the honest conversations shared in everyday settings. I bring that same spirit with me as I join you, and I am honored to be presented to the church as the candidate for the role of pastor.

I am excited for this potential opportunity to do ministry together—to walk alongside one another in faith, service, and community. I'm also looking forward to breaking bread with each of you, sharing in both the sacred and simple moments that make up our life together.

If you haven't yet met my family, my wife Amber—my partner of 19 years—and our two youngest daughters will be joining me for the weekend. I look forward to introducing them to you, or seeing you reconnect if you've met before.

With anticipation and gratitude,
Andy Elliott



The first choir rehearsal is Thursday, September 4, at 6 p.m. Choir will begin singing regularly in Sunday worship on September 14. Come and make a joyful noise with us. 🎵

Did you miss pianist Ben Cosgrove's concert, but are interested in his music? Speak with Bonnie Carter. She bought 2 of his CDs.



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.



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.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



ADULT FORUM
Sundays at 8:15 a.m. in the Parlor

We will watch Season 2 of **The Chosen** beginning Wednesday, October 1. Stay tuned for more info as we get closer to that date.

Book review by Bonnie Carter
How to Respond: Latter-Day Saints
Revised edition by Edgar P. Kaiser

The author of this short book (61 pages) was a Lutheran minister who spent a lot of time studying Mormon religion. Along with a brief history of the denomination, Kaiser wants the reader to understand how they differ from other Christians.

Kaiser cites Mormon writings and the Holy Bible. He states facts about Mormonism and then compares and contrasts them to the Christian point of view of the Holy Bible.

This booklet is a good starting point if you want to understand Mormon doctrine compared to Christianity. This book is in our church library.

(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.)

There is a Psalm 2 Word Search puzzle on page 7.



**DEDHAM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
BAKED BEAN SUPPERS**

These popular suppers take place on the 3rd Saturday of each month, 5-6:30 p.m. Cost is \$12 per person. Menu: beans, hot dogs, brown bread, rolls, potato salad, coleslaw, and desserts.

The Dedham UCC church is located at the corner of Rt. 46 & Mill Road. From Ellsworth, head north on 1A. At the large intersection after Dorsey Furniture, turn left at the light onto Rt. 46 and go 3½ miles.

Note: \$1 from each meal is donated to the Beth C. Wright Cancer Center's programs.

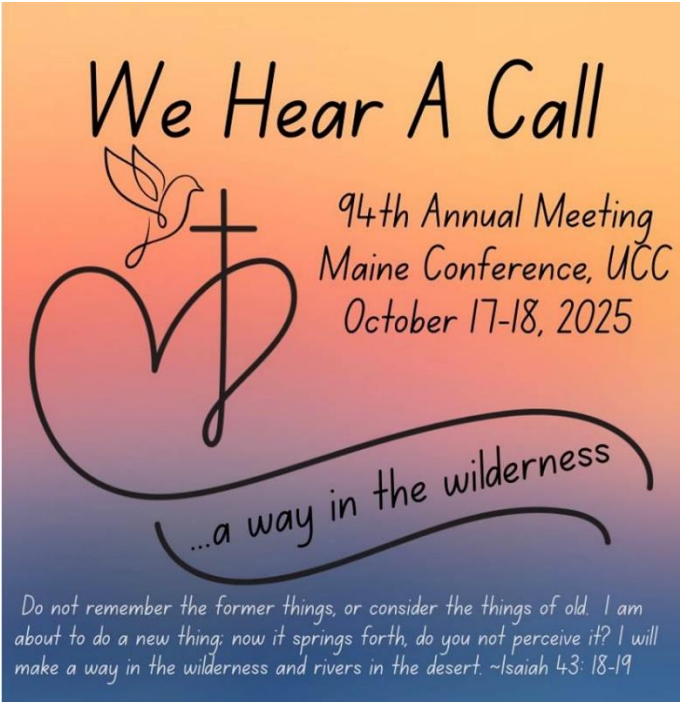
UPCOMING EVENT FOR US TO CONSIDER

Ellsworth City Hall has decided to combine the tree lighting ceremony with the holiday parade this year on Saturday, December 6. The parade theme is "Whoville". Organizers are looking for booths with free food, drink, games, activities, and merchandise for people to do while waiting for the tree lighting.

This is an opportunity for the community to see us. The Vitality Committee, Christian Ed, and Deacons have supplies to help with a make-and-take booth, if needed.

NOTE: This is the same day as the Busy Bodies' Christmas Fair.

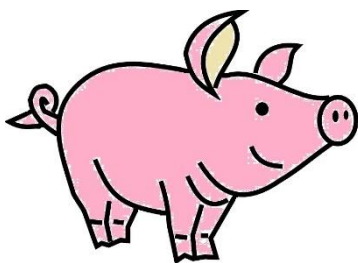
LOOKING AHEAD



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Roast Pork Supper

Saturday, September 27, 2025
5:00 to 6:30 pm






Roast pork, mashed potatoes, glazed 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.**

September 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 OFFICE CLOSED 	2 6 pm Boy Scouts	3 1-4 pm Bowie office 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	4 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	5 OFFICE CLOSED	6
7 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	8 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	9 6 pm Boy Scouts	10 1-4 pm Bowie office 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	11 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	12 OFFICE CLOSED	13 4:30 pm Meet & Greet Dinner
14 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service & Candidacy 11 am Cong Mtg & Vote 11:30 am Christian Ed & Deacons	15 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	16 6 pm Boy Scouts	17 1-4 pm Bowie office 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	18 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	19 OFFICE CLOSED 10 am Humphries service	20
<div>JOYCE ON VACATION - OFFICE CLOSED</div>						
21 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	22 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	23 9 am Steeple deadline 6 pm Boy Scouts	24 1-4 pm Bowie office 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	25 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir 7 pm Trustees	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27 5 pm Roast pork supper
28 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Missions	29 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities 6:30 pm Council	30 6 pm Boy Scouts				

going ONCE, going TWICE...

These items in the Parlor need to be removed.

We would prefer to re-home them with someone associated with FCC.

If there are no takers, they will be donated.

- Television (tube style ?x?)
- The bureau on which the TV sits
- Wooden table beneath the window
- The small phone table
- The rocker/recliner
- Wicker chair
- Couch
- The buffet situated beneath the mirror

Please contact Lois Stevens ASAP if you want any of these things.

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 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.

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