

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



February 2026 THE STEEPLE NEWSLETTER

First Congregational Church, PO Box 12, 2 Church Street, Ellsworth, Maine 04605 207-667-8321 ellsworthucc.org

From our Pastor



When I crafted my submission for the church's Annual Report, secretary Joyce Cornwell reminded me that the report is a collection of what occurred in 2025. So, my final "Hopes & Dream" portion wasn't necessary. Then she suggested that we use it for my next Steeple column. Works for me!

Several ministry priorities are already being shaped for 2026.

Congregational Visioning / Shared Ministry Direction

- **January & February focus:** "What should our church's New Year's resolution be—as a congregation?"
- **Intent:** what if we create a collaborative committee to shape this work (not top-down, but shared leadership)?

Potential topics for congregational reflection include:

- **Individual faith journeys.** Our stories are varied. Why don't we share them with one another if you are comfortable doing that?
- **Worship and music styles.** You know, we can shape worship in any way that best suits us. We can maintain tradition. We can step outside the box, outside our comfort zones. Whatever we do in worship together, it is in a right spirit.
- **What do people feel is missing or needed in church?** We have just completed the first quarter of the 21st century! It is a new time. But it's okay to miss old familiar things. As we begin the *next* quarter century, what does our church need?
- **Who is missing? How do we create belonging?** Feeling an integral part of a community and contributing to something bigger makes us all feel better.
- **New activities & ministries.** Let's try new things. What's on your mind? Talk to the Deacons. Talk to me.
- **Leadership participation and ways to serve.** Serve our church. Serve our community. We already have great visibility every week with our Welcome Table feeding ministry. How else might the community see us in action?

Ecumenical Partnerships

- What if we explore collaboration with local churches and potentially launch "Theology on Tap"? Working together creates more community and relationships.

I hope I have given you some ideas that spark your interest. Let's talk!

Peace and love,
Pastor Andy E.

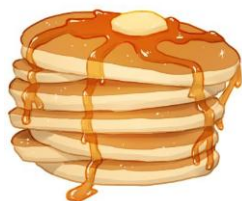
FEBRUARY CHURCH MEETINGS

Adult Forum	- Sundays, 8:15 a.m.
Choir	- Thursdays, 6 p.m.
Music	- TBA
Deacons	- Sunday, Feb 8, 11:30 a.m.
Christian Ed	- Sunday, Feb 8, 11:30 a.m.
Finance	- Friday, Feb 13, 10 a.m.
Trustees	- Thursday, Feb 19, 7 p.m.
Missions	- Sunday, Feb 22, 11:30 a.m.
Council	- Monday, Feb 23, 6:30 p.m.

Our meetings are hybrid, in person AND Zoom. All FCC Zoom events (meetings and worship) use the same meeting number and password. Contact the secretary in the church office (T-W-Th) for Zoom instructions.



PANCAKE SUPPER ON SHROVE TUESDAY AT 5:30 PM ON FEBRUARY 17, 2026



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

fellowship and fun and games.

***We are living our faith and beliefs.
Invite a friend to a
church event or services.***

FEBRUARY LECTIONARY READINGS

Feb 1 - 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Micah 6:1-8
Psalm 15
1 Corinthians 1:18-31
Matthew 5:1-12

Feb 8 - 5th Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 58:1-9a (9b-12)
Psalm 112:1-9 (10)
1 Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16)
Matthew 5:13-20

Feb 15 - Transfiguration

Exodus 24:12-18
Psalm 2 or Psalm 99
2 Peter 1:16-21
Matthew 17:1-9

Feb 18 - Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12
Psalm 51:1-17
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21



Feb 22 - 1st Sunday in Lent

Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7
Psalm 32
Romans 5:12-19
Matthew 4:1-11



A S H WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 18, 6 P.M. SERVICE AT ELLSWORTH FALLS UCC

Everyone is invited to an Ash Wednesday service at the Ellsworth Falls church. The imposition of ashes will be offered to those who wish to observe this ancient tradition. This is a day of new beginnings as we start our 40 days of Lent.

DEACONS

Feb 1 - Holy Communion, Andy Elliott
Feb 8 - Rev. John A. Lacey
Feb 15 - Rev. Dr. David Henry
Feb 22 - MESOM Sunday, Andy Elliott

February Deacon: Anne Bancroft

MUSINGS FROM DEACON CHAIR KATHRYN SCHRADER



Lent begins on February 18. We will observe Ash Wednesday at the Ellsworth Falls church with their congregation at 6 p.m. The evening before, Tuesday the 17th, we will hold the Fat Tuesday (or Shrove Tuesday) Pancake Dinner beginning at 5:30 p.m. We hope to see many of you for dinner, pancakes, sausage, bacon, salad, drinks and King Cake. There will also be games for children and adults. Come and join the fun.

There are seven weeks of Lent. This is our preparation time for the Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. Some decide this is a time to choose to give up something like a particular food or a habit they want to change. Others decide this is a time to build a new habit or skill they want to improve. I try to choose a book of the Bible to study or incorporate a new habit that will help with my daily time with God. Whatever you choose to do, I hope it enriches your faith journey.

Finally, please remember the Deacons are here for not only the ministerial support but congregational support. If you need prayer, transportation, or just someone to talk to, please feel free to call any of the Deacons. Most of the time we can support in some way or know who to call to further assist you.

Have a blessed February. ♦

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
Shauna Lynch
Megan Remick
Nicole Bedard

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Anyone interested in preparing to help with children in nursery or Sunday school please see Bonnie Carter.

MUSIC

The Choir is seeking new members. Even if you can only sing part-time, please speak with Choral Director Nancy Sargent.





SEATS OPEN: MEET & EAT A NEW WAY TO GATHER

We're excited to introduce a new monthly gathering we're calling *Seats Open: Meet & Eat*. Once a month, we'll meet for dinner at a different restaurant. **This month it takes place at Helen's in Ellsworth, on Friday evening, February 20, 2026, from 5:30-7:30 p.m.** We will share a meal, conversation, and the simple joy of being together. No agenda. No program. Just open seats, good food, and meaningful connection.



GriefShare is a Christian-based support group. A [GriefShare](#) experience is a safe, welcoming place where people understand the difficult emotions of grief. Through this 13-week group, you'll discover what to expect in the days ahead and what's "normal" in grief. Since there are no neat, orderly stages of grief, you'll learn helpful ways of coping with grief, in all its unpredictability—and gain solid support each step of the way.

**Wednesdays 1 - 3 p.m.
February 4 – April 29, 2026**

OR/AND

**Tuesdays 5:30 - 7 p.m.
February 3 – April 28, 2026**

at United Baptist Church
28 Hancock Street, Ellsworth

Contact Betsy Beardsley at 207.667.8051 or counselor@ubcellsworth.org regarding the time that works best for you.



MESOM SUNDAY FEBRUARY 22, 2026

[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.



Wednesdays at 5:30 PM* Watch THE CHOSEN

Beginning February 4, we will begin watching Season 3 of **The Chosen** in the Parlor. Bring your own supper and we will eat and watch together. Season 1 has 8 episodes which will run through April 1 (Holy Week).

***Except Ash Wednesday, February 18**



February 2026



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service, Communion & Luncheon	2 OFFICE CLOSED	3 6 pm Boy Scouts	4 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out 5:30 pm The Chosen	5 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	6 OFFICE CLOSED	7
8 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Christian Ed & Deacons	9 OFFICE CLOSED	10 6 pm Boy Scouts	11 9 am Steeple deadline 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out 5:30 pm The Chosen	12 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	13 OFFICE CLOSED 10 am Finance	14 
ANDY ELLIOTT ON VACATION						
15 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	16 OFFICE CLOSED	17 5:30 pm Pancake supper 6 pm Boy Scouts	18 ASH WEDNESDAY  Violet 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out 7 pm Service at Ells Falls Ch	19 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir 7 pm Trustees	20 OFFICE CLOSED 6 pm Seats Open at Helen's	21
ANDY ELLIOTT ON VACATION						
22 Violet 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Missions	23 OFFICE CLOSED 6:30 pm Council	24 6 pm Boy Scouts	25 9 am Bulletin deadline 5:30 pm The Chosen	26 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	27 OFFICE CLOSED	28 5 pm Turkey supper

Roast Turkey Supper

Saturday, February 28, 2026

Serving 5:00 to 6:30 pm



Roast turkey, stuffing, gravy, green beans, glazed carrots, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, Caesar 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.**

Sunday Worship Service 10 a.m.

Church office hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Andy Elliott, Pastor
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:
Marianne Jordan
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.