

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



June 2026 THE STEEPLE NEWSLETTER

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

From our Pastor



As we enter June and settle into the slower rhythms of summer, I found myself reflecting on my sermon from May 17, 2026, when talking about prayer, not simply as words we speak, but as a way we remain present with God and with one another.

So often, we think of prayer as something we must “get right.” We may worry about finding the perfect words or wonder if our prayers are enough. Yet throughout scripture, prayer takes many forms. Sometimes prayer is spoken boldly. Sometimes it is whispered through tears. Sometimes it is silence. Sometimes it is laughter, gratitude, music, or simply sitting quietly in God’s presence.

Prayer is less about perfection and more about connection.

In the busyness of life, prayer invites us to pause and notice. It reminds us that God is already present in the beauty of creation, in moments of peace, in conversations with loved ones, and even in seasons of uncertainty.

This month, I encourage you to explore different ways of praying and connecting spiritually. Perhaps one of these practices may speak to your heart:

- **SILENT PRAYER.** Spend a few quiet moments each day simply sitting with God without needing to say anything at all.
- **WALKING/HIKING PRAYER.** As you walk or hike through your neighborhood, along the shoreline, or through the woods, notice the beauty around you and offer prayers for the people and places you encounter.
- **GRATITUDE PRAYER.** At the end of each day, name three things you are thankful for and offer them to God.
- **BREATH PRAYER.** Use a simple phrase with your breathing such as, “Be still” as you inhale and “and know” as you exhale.
- **PRAYER THROUGH MUSIC.** Listen to a hymn or meaningful song and allow the words and emotions to become your prayer.
- **CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER.** Speak to God honestly and openly, just as you would speak with a trusted friend.
- **PRAYERS OF COMPASSION.** Pray intentionally for those who are hurting, lonely, grieving, or struggling, and ask God to help us become instruments of love and care in the world.

(Pastor’s message continued page 4, column 1.)

JUNE CHURCH MEETINGS

- Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:15 a.m.
Choir – Thursdays, 6 p.m.
Music – TBA
Christian Ed – TBA
Deacons – Sunday, June 14, 11:30 a.m.
Trustees – Thursday, June 18, 7 p.m.
Council – Monday, June 22, 6:30 p.m.
Missions – Sunday, June 28, 11:30 a.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.

JUNE LECTIONARY READINGS

June 7 – 2nd Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 12:1-9 & Psalm 33:1-12
Hosea 5:15-6:6 & Psalm 50:7-15
Romans 4:13-25
Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

June 14 – 3rd Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 18:1-15, (21:1-7)
& Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19
Exodus 19:2-8a & Psalm 100
Romans 5:1-8
Matthew 9:35-10:8, (9-23)

June 21 – 4th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 21:8-21 & Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17
Jeremiah 20:7-13
& Psalm 69:7-10, (11-15), 16-18
Romans 6:1b-11
Matthew 10:24-39

June 28 – 5th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 22:1-14 & Psalm 13
Jeremiah 28:5-9 & Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18
Romans 6:12-23
Matthew 10:40-42

Memorial Service

for Juanita Higgins
Monday afternoon, June 8, 2026

(At publication we still don't have the exact time of the afternoon service. The church office will email the time to you when it is set.)



We will honor graduates
in worship on June 14

Abigail Kimball, MDI High School

(At publication, this is the only name that has been submitted to the office. This list may include more names on June 14. Contact the office *immediately* to add to the list.)

A PRAYER FOR GRADUATES

Loving God, we thank you for all who graduate from grade school, high school and college this time of the year. You have blessed them during their years in school with wisdom, friendships, and skills. You continue to challenge them to make this world a better place because of their education.

Help them to look forward to their next steps: continuing in their education or entering the work world. Help those who are seeking employment to find a job suitable to their education.

Give them faith and a sense of purpose in their next steps. Show them how to serve others in effective ways.

May they always be aware in everything they do that they will find fulfillment in doing your will, and that you will be with them always. Amen.

<https://www.marquette.edu/faith/prayer-for-graduates.php>

DEACONS

June 7 – Pastor Andy Elliott
June 14 – Pastor Andy Elliott
June 21 – Rev. Dr. David Henry
June 28 – Pastor Andy Elliott

June Deacon: Steve Merchant

The letter below is part of a missive from Paul Nickerson. Talk to any of the Deacons if any of these ideas interests you. Or maybe you have an idea.

Ripley's Believe it or Not was originally a newspaper article (1918) and later became a museum filled with amazing things, facts and achievements. In deference to Ripley, I would like to share "*Nickerson's Believe it or Not*": some amazing and creative things churches have done in the spring and summer to connect with new people. I hope this stimulates your creative thinking. So here goes....

- When waiting in line to get ice cream, pay for the next few customers behind you and tell them it's a thank you from your church.
- Take a worship service or Bible study out to a local park where people gather.
- Give out packs of cookies as town members go to local fireworks.
- Do a "fix-up" project at a school during the summer months.
- If near the water, do a blessing of the boats, or a blessing for 5k runners, or a blessing of the bikers on a charity run.
- Have your coffee hour after worship in a visible place where people passing by can join in.
- If you are in a boating area, do a worship service on Saturday afternoon on a boat and meet people where they are.

I hope you will do something amazing and creative in your community this spring and summer. ♦

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 in June:

Anne Bancroft
Victor Eastman
Rev. John Lacey
Albert Scott
Ernie Tracy
Christopher Turner
Jeff Jones
Nancy & John Scott
Mary Morrow
Nancy Sargent

Pastor Andy is looking for folks willing to speak during **SPECIAL MOMENTS** in worship. He would like you to share something that has been meaningful to you in your spiritual journey. If you have questions, speak with Andy.

PASTORAL CARE COMMITTEE

Our newly appointed Pastoral Care Committee: Tim Carter, Brendan Minear, Charlie Sargent, Katharine Schrader, and Myrna Vallette.

Pastor Andy wants everyone to feel welcome and comfortable reaching out to him directly at any time. However, if you would rather speak with someone else first, or want another person with whom to share thoughts, suggestions, encouragement, or concerns, please connect with one of the individuals listed above.

(Pastor's message continued)

Prayer does not always change our circumstances immediately, but prayer often changes us. It softens our hearts, centers our spirits, and reminds us we are never alone.

As we move into this summer season together, my prayer is that each of us may discover renewed moments of peace, presence, and spiritual connection. May we continue learning to notice God not only in worship on Sunday mornings, but also in the ordinary and sacred moments woven throughout everyday life. ♦

Peace and love,
Pastor Andy



Thank you to the chefs, sous chefs, servers, dishwashers, and cleaners—church members and community volunteers—who donate their time and skills to this vital community feeding ministry.



Please join us for our monthly gathering at a restaurant, *Seats Open: Meet & Eat*. We share a meal, conversation, and the simple joy of being together. No agenda, no program. Just open seats, good food, and fellowship. And *a lot* of laughter. Bring a friend.

This month it takes place at Pat's Pizza in Ellsworth on Friday evening, June 12, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.



**The HYSSONGS will appear in concert
Saturday, June 27, 6:30 p.m.
after the church's public supper**

Dell, Susan and Richard Hyssong travel full-time as the award-winning Hyssongs. Their energetic ministry combines family vocal harmony, humor and brass instruments (trumpet and trombone) to delight audiences with their Christ-centered message, shared through the powerful medium of music. The family's classical music background, along with their harmony and specific chord structures, lends them a unique sound that has made quite an impact on audiences. The group has been singing together as a family for nearly 30 years.

GORDON THOMAS WARD IN CONCERT

JUNE 20, 7:00 P.M.

**ELLSWORTH
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH**

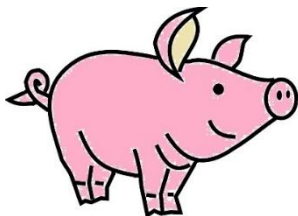
**2 CHURCH STREET
ELLSWORTH, ME**

*"GORDON THOMAS WARD IS
SETTING THE GOLD STANDARD
FOR SINGER/SONGWRITERS FOR
GENERATIONS TO COME."
~ JIMMY RAE, SKOPE MAGAZINE*



Roast Pork Supper

Saturday, June 27, 2026 ~ Serving 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)

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

June 2026

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  | 1 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities | 2 6 pm Boy Scouts | 3 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 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service & Communion | 8 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities 2 pm Higgins service | 9 6 pm Boy Scouts | 10 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out | 11 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir | 12 OFFICE CLOSED 6 pm Seats Open at Pat's Pizza | 13 |
| 14 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Deacons | 15 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities | 16 6 pm Boy Scouts | 17 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out | 18 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir 7 pm Trustees | 19 OFFICE CLOSED | 20 7 pm Gordon Thomas Ward Concert |
| 21 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service | 22 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities 6:30 pm Council | 23 9 am Steeple deadline 6 pm Boy Scouts | 24 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out | 25 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club | 26 OFFICE CLOSED | 27 5 pm Pork Supper 6:30 pm Hyssongs Concert |
| 28 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Missions | 29 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities | 30 6 pm Boy Scouts |  | | | |



OUR CHANCEL CHOIR

will end the season during the morning service on June 21 before taking their summer hiatus. **Thank you** to the singers, director, and accompanist who have rehearsed diligently and faithfully to enrich our corporate worship. There will be a schedule of diverse special music on summer Sundays.



Please bring vegetable, herb, and flower seedlings or seeds for our courtyard garden. We also need 2 small bags of potting soil (because we cannot handle/lift the large bags!) Questions? Speak with Ginny Davis ASAP.

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
Kara Ibarguen, Missions
Bonnie Carter, Music & Christian Education
Council Members at Large:
Marianne Jordan
Rhyne Robidoux



First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

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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.