

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



July 2026 THE STEEPLE NEWSLETTER

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

From our Pastor



Growing Together: A Bouquet of Faith

As we enter the month of July, our nation marks a significant milestone: 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence. For a quarter of a millennium, generations of people have worked, struggled, dreamed, disagreed, sacrificed, and hoped together to build communities where freedom, justice, and opportunity might flourish.

While history reminds us that our nation has never been perfect, it also reminds us that people from different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives have continually found ways to come together for the common good. Time and again, we have seen that our greatest strength is not found in uniformity, but in unity.

As believers, we know that unity is not simply a civic virtue, it is a spiritual calling.

The Apostle Paul writes: *"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ."* (1 Corinthians 12:12)

God has never called us to all be the same. Instead, God delights in diversity, different gifts, different voices, different experiences, and different stories. Yet through Christ, we are woven together into one body, united by love and called to serve one another.

As we celebrate this historic anniversary, perhaps we can also celebrate the ways God continues to bring people together. In a world that often emphasizes division, Christ invites us to practice connection. In a culture that can encourage us to focus on differences, God reminds us that we belong to one another.

On Sunday, July 5, we will explore this theme together during worship. As part of the service, I invite everyone to bring a single cut flower from your garden, yard, or favorite local source. No flower is too small or too simple. During worship, we will combine these individual flowers into one beautiful bouquet.

Just as each flower contributes its own color, shape, and beauty, each person contributes something unique to the life of our church and community. Together, we create something far more beautiful than any one of us could create alone.

As we give thanks for 250 years of our nation's journey, may we also recommit ourselves to being people who build bridges, extend grace, seek understanding, and reflect the love of Christ wherever we go.

I look forward to seeing the bouquet we create together—and the reminder it offers of God's vision for God's people.

***Bring a single
cut flower to
worship on
July 5 to make
one beautiful
bouquet.***

Peace & love,
Pastor Andy

JULY CHURCH MEETINGS

- Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:15 a.m.
Choir – on summer hiatus
Music – TBA
Christian Ed – TBA
Deacons – no meeting in July
Trustees – Thursday, July 16, 7 p.m.
Missions – Sunday, July 26, 11:30 a.m.
Council – Monday, July 27, 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.

JULY LECTIONARY READINGS

July 5 – 6th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67
& Psalm 45:10-17 or Song of Solomon 2:8-13
Zechariah 9:9-12 & Psalm 145:8-14
Romans 7:15-25a
Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

July 12 – 7th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 25:19-34 & Psalm 119:105-112
Isaiah 55:10-13 & Psalm 65:(1-8), 9-13
Romans 8:1-11
Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

July 19 – 8th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 28:10-19a & Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24
or Isaiah 44:6-8 & Psalm 86:11-17
Romans 8:12-25
Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

July 26 – 9th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 29:15-28 & Psalm 105:1-11, 45b
or Psalm 128
1 Kings 3:5-12 & Psalm 119:129-136
Romans 8:26-39
Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Memorial Service

for Bob Clement
Tuesday, July 7, 10 a.m.



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 Lamoine Beach in Lamoine on Friday, July 17, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. (Or at Pastor Andy's house in Lamoine if rained out.)

DEACONS

July 5 – Pastor Andy Elliott

July 12 – Pastor Andy Elliott

July 19 – Rev. Cassandra McDonald

July 26 – Pastor Andy Elliott

July Deacon: Anne Bancroft

REMEMBER THE MESSAGE OF HOPE

Paul Nickerson

I love the motto of the UMC Church of the Resurrection, in Leawood, KS. They say, "*The worst thing is never the last thing*". They mention this motto in their [ad](#) for Easter services.

So many people today feel like the "worst things" are happening to them right now. From rising economic costs, to fears of deportation, to war concerns, violence, etc. Many people are distraught and don't know where to turn.

As churches, we need to remember that our primary message is one of hope. As the Apostle Paul said in Romans 8—*nothing can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ*. He lists all the terrible things that might happen (hardship, disease, peril, etc.) and then declares that they are all overcome by the God who loves us.

That is a message that we need to share with the community around us. As you listen to people's stories and hear of their pain, tell them of how God's love has transformed your life, helped you deal with your most difficult moments and transformed your pain into new life. Remind them (and yourself) that even death doesn't have the final word. That hope will bring comfort to many people. And then invite them to join you in a community of faith that provides encouragement and support for the road ahead.

Church is a lot more than a group of "nice people". It's a place where we recognize that we are all daughters and sons of God who are beloved.

The last word belongs to God and that is message worth sharing.

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 July:

Peter & Sue Bedard
Louise & Sid Emerson
Barry & Marianne Jordan
Brian & Jane Langley
Donna Shea
Mary T. Turner
Martin Vachon
David & Susan Jordan
George Sealy
Chris & Gayle Cambridge
Jeanne Weeks
Steve & Marie Alley



Minister's Discretionary Fund

The Minister's Discretionary Fund helps people in need: members of the church family, and people in the community. It is not a part of the church budget; it is supported by donations earmarked for the Fund. Please use the designated envelope in the pew rack. Make checks out to FCC.

• ON VACATION •

The church secretary is taking vacation the second week of July. If you can sit in the office and answer the phone from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday (July 7,8,9), please speak with Lois Stevens.

Theological education for the life of the church



Dear friends,

Thank you so much for your donation of \$134 to The Maine School of Ministry.

Your contribution plays a vital role in the present and the future, equipping our congregations and leaders to creatively and vibrantly live out the values of Jesus through the ministries and congregations of the United Church of Christ. Your generosity helps us BE Church together as we build a loving and faithful community—respecting, challenging, empowering and supporting one another—that follows Christ into the world for the benefit of all.

With gratitude,

Rev. Malcolm Himschoolt
Dean, Maine School of Ministry

MESOMS's primary program is based on a solid and innovative curriculum leading toward a certificate in Christian Studies, Pastoral Leadership, or Word and Sacrament. "Non-traditional students" will find a welcome here!

MESOM also offers mentored-practice fieldwork serving congregations in Maine and beyond. Some "traditional students" fit here. Whether on an academic path, an alternative path, or something in-between, your progress with the Maine School of Ministry will be unique. And you will contribute something new to our learning community.

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 to Andy.



Church members and special guests—Monteux students, The McIntyres—will provide music during summer worship.



Summer Activities

Take time to claim your strength;
they are gifts of God.
Take time to have fun;
it's God's way of teaching you your strengths.
Take time to grow yourself;
only you can grow you.
Take time to trust yourself;
God trusts you.
Take time to share with others;
they will bless you, and you will bless them.
Take time to have hope,
you are a child of God.

Let's put ourselves into the hands of the Lord, and pray that God will bless us and our families during the wonderful months of summer.

May we all help make our homes places of relaxation, joy, love, peace and safety.



May we be generous and considerate, not thinking only about ourselves, but helping others enjoy the blessings of summertime. Lord God,

Creator of all things, guide our steps and strengthen our hearts, during these months of summer and vacation days.

Grant us refreshment of mind and body. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

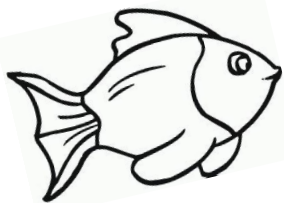
xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/summer-prayers

July 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	2 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club	3 OFFICE CLOSED	4
						Church secretary on vacation
5 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service & Communion	6 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	7 10 am Bob Clement service 6 pm Boy Scouts	8 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	9 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club	10 OFFICE CLOSED	11
C h u r c h s e c r e t a r y o n v a c a t i o n						
12 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	13 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	14 6 pm Boy Scouts	15 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	16 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 7 pm Trustees	17 OFFICE CLOSED 5:30 pm Seats Open, Lamoine Beach	18
Church secretary on vacation						
19 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	20 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	21 6 pm Boy Scouts	22 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	23 9 am Bulletin Deadline 9 am Steeple deadline 4 pm Chess Club	24 OFFICE CLOSED	25 5 pm Haddock Supper
26 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Missions	27 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities 6:30 pm Council	28 6 pm Boy Scouts	29 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	30 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club	31 OFFICE CLOSED	1  CHURCH FAIR 8:30 am – 1 pm

Baked Haddock Supper

Saturday, July 25, 2026 ~ 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.**

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.