

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



August 2026 THE STEEPLE NEWSLETTER

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

From our Pastor



I don't know about you, but it's hard to believe that we are entering the last full month of summer. August has a unique feeling to it. The days are still warm, gardens are overflowing with life, children are squeezing every last adventure out of summer vacation, and yet there is a gentle reminder that another season is waiting just around the corner.

Nature has a wonderful way of teaching us about faith. Spring reminds us of new beginnings. Summer invites us to grow and flourish. Autumn teaches us to let go with gratitude. Winter calls us to rest and trust that God is still at work, even when we cannot yet see the signs of new life.

Our own lives follow those same rhythms. We all experience seasons of celebration and seasons of uncertainty, times of abundance and times of waiting, moments when the path ahead seems crystal clear and moments when we wonder what comes next. The good news is that God's presence is constant through every season. The One who walks beside us in the brightness of summer is the very same One who carries us through the coldest winter.

As I reflect on this season of ministry together, I cannot help but celebrate all that God continues to do through First Congregational Church. Week after week, I see lives touched by simple acts of kindness, faithful worship, generous giving, heartfelt prayers, joyful fellowship, and a church family that continues to open its doors and its hearts to the wider community. Ministry isn't measured only by what happens on Sunday mornings. It happens every time someone makes a phone call to check on a neighbor, prepares a meal, welcomes a visitor, sings with joy, volunteers behind the scenes, or simply shows up to remind someone that they are not alone. Thank you for continuing to be the hands and feet of Jesus in Ellsworth and Hancock County. Your faithfulness is making a difference in ways that many of us may never fully know this side of heaven.

On a personal note, Amber, the girls, and I have some exciting news to share. We have found a home to rent here in Ellsworth. While moving is never completely stress-free, this new home brings with it a wonderful sense of stability. It removes the quiet uncertainty that has always lingered, knowing we were renting a home whose owners planned to return someday. We are grateful to have found a place where we can continue putting down roots and investing even more deeply in this wonderful community we have come to love. Thank you for your prayers, your encouragement, and for making us feel so welcomed.

As August unfolds, I encourage all of us to savor these final weeks of summer. Take time to enjoy God's beautiful creation. Gather with family and friends. Sit on a porch, watch a sunset, take a walk, share a meal, laugh often, and thank God for the blessings that surround you. At the same time, remember that whatever season of life you find yourself in today, God is already preparing what comes next. The changing seasons are never a sign that God has left us behind—they are often the very places where God is doing some of God's best work.

(Pastor's message continued at the bottom of page 3, column 2)

AUGUST CHURCH MEETINGS

QUARTERLY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

★ Sunday, August 2 ★

- Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:15 a.m.
- Choir** – on summer hiatus
- Music** – TBA
- Christian Ed** – TBA
- Deacons** – Sunday, Aug 9, 11:30 a.m.
- Finance** – Friday, Aug 14, 10 a.m.
- Trustees** – Thursday, Aug 20, 7 p.m.
- Missions** – Sunday, Aug 23, 11:30 a.m.
- Council** – Monday, Aug 24, 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.



QUARTERLY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Sunday, August 2

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



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

This month it takes place at Ginny Davis' home (49 Ginnie May Way, just off Surry Road in Ellsworth) on Friday, August 14, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

AUGUST LECTIONARY READINGS

Aug 2 – 10th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 32:22-31 & Psalm 17:1-7, 15
Isaiah 55:1-5 & Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21
Romans 9:1-5
Matthew 14:13-21

Aug 9 – 11th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28
& Psalm 105: 1-6, 16-22, 45b
1 Kings 19:9-18 and Psalm 85:8-13
Romans 10:5-15
Matthew 14:22-33

Aug 16 – 12th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 45:1-15 & Psalm 133
Isaiah 56:1, 6-8 & Psalm 67
Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32
Matthew 15: (10-20), 21-28

Aug 23 – 13th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 1:8-2:10 & Psalm 124
Isaiah 51:1-6 & Psalm 138
Romans 12:1-8
Matthew 16:13-20

Aug 30 – 14th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 3:1-15 & Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45b
Jeremiah 15:15-21 & Psalm 26:1-8
Romans 12:9-21
Matthew 16:21-28

Thank
you

Dear Friends,

What a wonderful surprise 96th birthday party that all of you and my daughter Nancy planned. It meant so much to me. Thank you! It was the nicest birthday party I ever had.

John Lacey

DEACONS

Aug 2 – Communion, Pastor Andy Elliott
Aug 9 – Worship on the Lawn, Andy Elliott
Aug 16 – Pastor Andy Elliott
Aug 23 – Rev. Cassandra McDonald
Aug 24 – Pastor Andy Elliott

August Deacon: Rev. John A. Lacey

High Anxiety - Paul Nickerson

Mel Brooks directed a movie called *High Anxiety*. I find many churches are living in a state of anxiety that is not helpful. Between dwindling attendance and the nastiness of the current atmosphere in our country, many church leaders are wringing their hands and feeling their blood pressure rise.

When a church system is in stress, there are some dire effects:

- Decisions are made to relieve the immediate distress but hurt the long-range future of the church.
- One anxious leader's worry can quickly spread panic to other leaders.
- When anxious, churches lose a wide perspective and have trouble seeing options and creative solutions.
- The focus becomes the "*storm of the immediate issue*" and it is easy to forget God's care and love in the midst of that storm.

So, what helps lower the anxiety in a church?

- ✓ It starts with one non-anxious leader; a person who can take a step back, see the bigger picture and ask questions to help others think creatively.
- ✓ Do a faith reminder: God isn't anxious. When the disciples were in a boat in a storm, Jesus was in the boat with them and it changed everything. Jesus was so non-anxious he was asleep!

- ✓ Recognize that every church, and every organization, goes through difficult times. Stressful times are normal, no need to panic; it's all in how we handle the current crisis.
- ✓ Focus on the long-range vision and the plan God has for your church. The big picture puts the current issue in perspective.

Martin Luther King, Jr., reflecting on a time when the church was very powerful, said: *"In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society"*. ♦

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 August:

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

(Pastor's column continued)

I cannot wait to see what this fall brings for our church. There is so much to look forward to, and I truly believe God is continuing to lead us toward exciting new opportunities for ministry, service, and community. Until then, may you enjoy every beautiful August day, knowing that wherever this season finds you, God is walking beside you every step of the way. ♦

Peace & love,
Pastor Andy

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. Questions? Speak with Andy.



The Missions Committee is pleased to announce the return of the far more delicious and ethical coffee from Equal Exchange to your mug each coffee hour!

We have selected a few varieties to offer for sale as well, so you can spread the joy or stock your own pantry. This coffee is not only superior in flavor, but

the business model behind it is far more nurturing to the farmers, the planet, and the communities it comes from. Here is their mission statement: "Equal Exchange's mission is to build long-term trade partnerships that are economically just and environmentally sound, to foster mutually beneficial relationships between farmers and consumers and to demonstrate, through our success, the contribution of worker co-operatives and Fair Trade to a more equitable, democratic and sustainable world."

For special orders or any questions, reach out to Kara Ibarguen, krowholla@gmail.com. ☕

AUGUST 9 SPECIAL OUTDOOR SERVICE ON THE PORCH/LAWN

Maine summer is short; we need to enjoy the weather and nice times as much as possible. Please bring your lawn chair or blanket and join us for worship on the front steps and lawn. Of course, if the weather does not cooperate, we will be in the Sanctuary.



WE ARE BUSY!

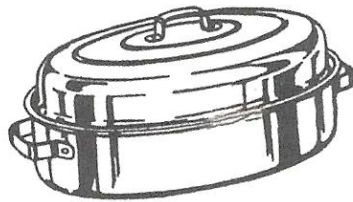
- We appreciate your patience while we work on the front porch. Fiberglass craftsmen will work on Saturdays as they are able. So, we cannot say for sure when we are unable to use the front doors. **THANK YOU** for being flexible about using the Parlor door and State Street entrances on Sunday mornings in upcoming weeks. Questions? Talk with Troy Tainter.
- Please excuse the mess in the narthex while we update the historical room.
- A new church sign should appear this month on the front lawn! Speak with Ken Farkas about this.
- While the church steeple is being cleaned and repaired, we are not ringing the bell at the beginning of Sunday morning worship. Once this project is completed, we will restore this item to the Order of Worship.



Pot Roast Supper

Saturday, August 22, 2026

Serving 5:00 to 6:30 pm



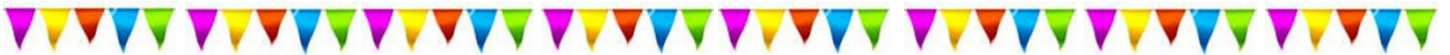
*Beef pot roast, mashed potatoes, carrots,
green beans, salad, rolls, homemade pies,
and beverages (coffee, tea, lemonade)*

\$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.**



CHURCH FAIR

Saturday, August 1

8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

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, July 31, from 12-2 p.m. Or bring them in Saturday morning as soon as you can.

Do you need more information? Contact Sue Fuller (610-1626), or Louise Emerson (667-4414).

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

August 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1  CHURCH FAIR 8:30 am – 1 pm
2 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service & Communion Qtrly Cong Mtg	3 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	4 6 pm Boy Scouts	5 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	6 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club	7 OFFICE CLOSED	8
9 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Outdoor Worship service 11:30 am Deacons	10 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	11 6 pm Boy Scouts	12 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	13 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club	14 OFFICE CLOSED 10 am Finance 5:30 pm Seats Open at Ginny's	15
16 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	17 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	18 6 pm Boy Scouts	19 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	20 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club 7 pm Trustees	21 OFFICE CLOSED	22 5 pm Pot roast Supper
23 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Missions	24 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities 6:30 pm Council	25 9 am Steeple deadline 6 pm Boy Scouts	26 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	27 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club	28 OFFICE CLOSED	29
30 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	31 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	1 6 pm Boy Scouts	2 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	3 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	4 OFFICE CLOSED	5

	August special music during worship	
	Aug 2	– Nancy Sargent
	Aug 16	– The McIntyres
	Aug 23	– Lynn Hall & Nancy Sargent, flute & piano duet
	Aug 30	– Nancy Sargent & Kathy Schrader, duet

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

08/03 Matt Keep
08/03 Dylan Lacey
08/05 Jeanne Fernald
08/05 Mike Fuller
08/11 Albert Scott
08/15 Jane Langley
08/20 Charles Sargent
08/20 Marshall Smith
08/21 Andy Elliott

08/25 Jessica Johnston
08/26 Tucker Cambridge
08/27 MacKinlee Grace Hannigan

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

08/19 Amber & Andy Elliott
08/29 Philip & Mary Morrow



Please help us conserve paper and ink. If you received this newsletter by snail mail and have an email address, please contact the church at 667-8321 or **office@ellsworthucc.org**.
You may also leave a note on the secretary's desk. Thank you!

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

PO Box 12, Ellsworth, Maine 04605

207-667-8321 office@ellsworthucc.org ellsworthucc.org
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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.