

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



September 2026 THE STEEPLE NEWSLETTER

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

From our Pastor



There is something about September that feels like an invitation. The mornings become a little cooler. The evenings arrive a little earlier. School buses return to the roads, schedules begin filling up again, and before long, the first hints of color will appear in the trees around us.

Fall is coming. And while we often think of fall as a season when things begin to slow down, I wonder if God might be inviting us to see it differently.

What if this is a season of beginning?

Throughout Scripture, God is constantly doing something new. Calling people into new places. Opening unexpected doors. Bringing people together. Taking ordinary moments and turning them into opportunities for grace, love, healing, and hope. Maybe September is our reminder that God isn't finished with us yet.

There is still ministry to do. There are still people who need to know they are loved. There are still neighbors who need a place where they belong. There are still tables that need another chair pulled up. There are still stories waiting to be shared, relationships waiting to be formed, laughter waiting to fill our halls, and moments when we will look around and realize that God has been moving among us all along.

As we move into this new season together, I hope we do so with excitement. Not because we know exactly what the months ahead will bring, but because we trust the One who walks into them with us. This fall, I want us to keep asking: ***Who haven't we met yet? Who might be waiting for an invitation? Where is God asking us to show up? How can we love our community a little more boldly?***

Because church isn't simply something that happens for an hour on Sunday morning. Church happens whenever we carry the love of Christ beyond our doors. It happens when we check on a neighbor. When we welcome someone new. When we feed someone who is hungry. When we sit beside someone who is lonely. When we laugh together, serve together, pray together, and remind one another that none of us has to walk through life alone. And I believe there is a lot for us to look forward to.

So as the leaves begin to change and another beautiful Maine fall settles around us, let's enter this season with open hearts, open doors, and open arms. Let's expect God to surprise us. Let's make room for new faces and new ideas. Let's celebrate the traditions that have shaped us while remaining courageous enough to imagine what God might be creating next.

And most importantly, let's keep loving people.

Boldly. Generously. Joyfully.

Because seasons change. Leaves change. Life changes. But the love of God continues to meet us right where we are—and then invites us to keep moving forward. Here's to a beautiful fall together. I can't wait to see what God does next. 🍁

Blessings,
Pastor Andy

SEPTEMBER CHURCH MEETINGS

- Adult Forum** – Sundays, 8:15 a.m.
Choir – Thursdays, 6 p.m.
Music – TBA
Christian Ed – TBA
Trustees – Thursday, Sept 17, 7 p.m.
Deacons – Sunday, Sept 20, 11:30 a.m.
Missions – Sunday, Sept 27, 11:30 a.m.
Council – Monday, Sept 28, 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.



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 Helen's Restaurant, 55 Downeast Hwy (Route 1) in Ellsworth on Friday, September 18, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.



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 share the joy or stock your

own pantry.

Contact Kara Ibarguen, with questions or for special orders. ☕

SEPTEMBER LECTIONARY READINGS

Sept 6 – 15th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 12:1-14 & Psalm 149
Ezekiel 33:7-11 & Psalm 119:33-40
Romans 13:8-14
Matthew 18:15-20

Sept 13 – 16th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 14:19-31 & Psalm 114
or Exodus 15:1b-11, 20-21
Genesis 50:15-21 & Psalm 103:(1-7), 8-13
Romans 14:1-12
Matthew 18:21-35

Sept 20 – 20th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 16:2-15 & Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45
Jonah 3:10-4:11 & Psalm 145:1-8
Philippians 1:21-30
Matthew 20:1-16

Sept 27 – 18th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 17:1-7 & Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16
Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32 & Psalm 25:1-9
Philippians 2:1-13
Matthew 21:23-32



We have a beautiful new church sign. The electronic portion has yet to be installed, but it already looks wonderful! Thank you, Ken Farkas, for spearheading this, and for the folks who assisted in drilling postholes in the ground. Our IT guru Mark Colbert is setting up the electronic management for us.

DEACONS

Sept 6 – Rev. Cassandra McDonald
Sept 13 – Pastor Andy Elliott, Communion
Sept 20 – Pastor Andy Elliott
Sept 27 – TBA

September Deacon: Cindy Sargent

A lot is happening around the church and we are fortunate to have some creative people in the church that have made some major improvements throughout our building:

- ✓ Areas throughout the building have been cleaned up.
- ✓ The new downstairs bathrooms look great.
- ✓ The windows in Fellowship Hall have been redone and are beautiful.
- ✓ The lawn continues to be taken care of and looks very nice, the dry summer grass notwithstanding.
- ✓ The other gardens will be cleaned up and replanted.
- ✓ Our Historical Room looks fantastic, and it isn't even finished. Check it out.
- ✓ The Welcome Table is a free meal that we offer weekly on Wednesday to the community as a take-out meal. Presently, we serve 120-140 meals weekly. The meal count will increase as the weather turns colder. We have begun using compostable containers. The team can always use help preparing the meals.
- ✓ The front deck now has a fiberglass covering so that the porch is waterproof and will not drain or leak into the building or basement! (Can we get a Hallelujah?!)
- ✓ The Mission Committee has a large carboy being filled with loose change. When it is full, Andy dress up in a tutu. (This was his idea.)
- ✓ We have a new church sign so that our community can recognize who we are. It soon will have an electronic announcement board installed. We will dedicate the sign on the first Sunday in October after church.

Please tell your friends about life in our church and about the wonderful things we have going on. Invite your friends to something that is happening here. We have so much to give and share. Share your enthusiasm. If you have an idea for outreach, please speak with a Deacon or Pastor Andy. ♦

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 September:

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



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.



Regular choir rehearsals begin Thursday, September 3 at 6 p.m. in the choir room. We begin singing in worship on Sunday, September 13. We sing into June. We often take off a Sunday here and there

for some other form of music to be shared.

We have a steadfast but small group of singers who do their best to provide music for our church services. We welcome new members gratefully, so if you've been thinking you'd like to join us, please do. You can just show up! All that is required is to be able to carry a tune and be open to learning. If you have played an instrument in the past and/or can read music, that is a plus, but not required. ♪



*Gracious God, thank You for
the gift of a new month.*

*As summer gives way to the crisp air
and golden tones of autumn,
I welcome the change.*

*Order my steps, renew my strength,
and guide me
through the transitions ahead.*

*Fill my heart with peace,
and let this month bring
new hope,
protection, and
fresh opportunities.*

Amen.

- Found on Facebook



LOOKING AHEAD

**Maine Conference UCC
Annual Meeting
October 2-3, 2026**



at Pilgrim Lodge
103 Pilgrim Lodge Lane
West Gardiner, Maine

[Annual Meeting Registration](#)

Everyone is invited.
Pastors and Delegates.
Church members and friends.

Click for the meeting schedule,
overnight lodging options, and
meeting documents.



GriefShare is a Christian-based support group, 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.

Tuesdays 5:30 – 7 p.m.
September 8 – December 1, 2026

OR/AND

Wednesdays 1 – 3 p.m.
September 9 – December 2, 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.



Gifts to **Neighbors in Need** support the United Church of Christ's ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). The other two-thirds of the offering support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, direct service projects, and grants. **Neighbors in Need** grants are annually awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities.

This offering is transformative because it calls us to collective justice—not isolated programs and pitches, but a genuine ecosystem of people who work collaboratively across issues and geographies to bring about social change. Our gifts represent our faith in God's ability to multiply what we have. Jesus' ministry was full of abundance, but not because he started with overwhelming resources. Rather, what was offered in community became enough to meet the needs of the day.

When we walk, roll, march, and pray in love together, justice will come.

FCC will accept gifts to the NIN fund through September. Please use a pew offering envelope and write **NIN** on it and in your check memo.

Gracious God,

May the offering we gather be special, not because it is unusual in our commitment to justice, but because it allows us to take a moment to stretch ourselves in our giving.

Connect us with our siblings across the United Church of Christ who are sharing in the collection of these gifts.

May we, in our collective witness, bend an unjust world toward justice, as we fund and launch ministries of transformative change.

Come and bless not just the money we share, but also the advocacy and witness we bring.

In your holy name we pray, Amen.



Thank You for Being Part of CWS Blankets

Dear friends,

As we prepare for another fall Blanket season, I want to begin with two simple words: **Thank You!**

Because of the generosity of congregations like yours, CWS Blankets are being shared with organizations across the country as they prepare to care for neighbors facing difficult times.

This summer, blankets were sent to organizations including:

Women's Refugee Center, Providence, RI
Heaven's Care, Gonzales, LA
Food & Shelter Ministry, Norman, OK

From helping communities prepare for emergencies to providing comfort to individuals and families facing difficult circumstances, a simple blanket can be a powerful reminder that someone cares.

Your congregation helps make this possible.

As fall approaches, I hope your congregation will join us again in sharing warmth, compassion, and hope with neighbors facing difficult times.

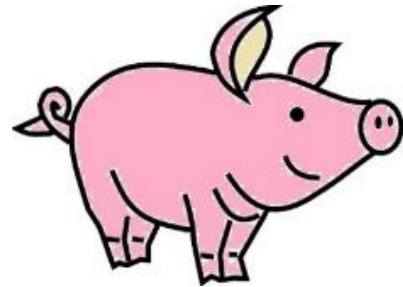
Together, we can **Blanket the World in Love.**

With gratitude,
David Costellow
CWS Congregational Team

You can purchase a heavy-duty blanket using an offering envelope found in the pew racks. Blankets are \$10 each. Please write BLANKET in the memo.

Roast Pork Supper

Saturday, September 26, 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)

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.**

HISTORICAL ROOM A NEW LOOK

Cindy Sargent has done beautiful work, giving the Historical Room a lovely facelift. Beneath the old carpeting, she found a vintage linoleum floor that she cleaned, refinished, and buffed. She gave texture to the walls so that the room has an old European feel. She's not finished yet, but you are welcome to pop your head around the corner and admire what she has done. Thank you, Cindy!



September 2026



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		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
	6 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	7 OFFICE CLOSED 	8 6 pm Boy Scouts	9 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	10 9 am Bulletin deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	11 OFFICE CLOSED
12	13 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Deacons	14 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	15 6 pm Boy Scouts	16 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	17 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir 7 pm Trustees	18 OFFICE CLOSED 5:30 pm Seats Open at Helen's
19	20 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	21 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	22 6 pm Boy Scouts	23 9 am Steeple deadline 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	24 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	25 OFFICE CLOSED
26	27 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Missions	28 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities 6:30 pm Council	29 6 pm Boy Scouts	30 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	1 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	2 OFFICE CLOSED Maine Conference UCC ANNUAL MEETING
3						

Upcoming community events that may interest you...and you can reach out and talk about our church!

September 3-7, [The Blue Hill Fair](#) – Visit Troy & Ruth at the Billings Food Booth that has been in operation *since 1948* by Ruth's family!



September 1-6, [Acadia Repertory Theater](#) in Somesville. **The Butler Did It.** Tuesday through Saturday at 8 p.m., and Sunday at 2 p.m.

September 12, Praise in the Park 1-6 p.m.

September 23- 27, [Autumn Gold](#) is happening throughout Ellsworth. Includes live music, local food vendors, boat rides, storefront decorating contests, and family activities hosted by the [Ellsworth Area Chamber of Commerce](#). There is also a car show, golf tournament, and a Murder Mystery at the Black House on the 23rd.

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

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.