

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



November 2026 THE STEEPLE NEWSLETTER

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

From our Pastor



A Season of Thanksgiving, A Future Full of Possibilities

As November approaches and the season of Thanksgiving draws near, I find myself reflecting on just how much we have to be grateful for. Not simply the blessings we have received, but the incredible gift of being part of a community of faith that continues to love, serve, grow, and make a difference in the world around us.

Over this past year, we have continued to build something beautiful together. Through worship, fellowship, outreach, laughter, difficult conversations, shared meals, and countless acts of kindness, we have demonstrated that the Church is so much more than a building or a Sunday morning gathering. **The Church is a living, breathing expression of God's love in the world.**

And what a privilege it is to be part of that!

As I think about the history of First Congregational Church, I am reminded that we are standing on the shoulders of generations who came before us. People who dreamed, sacrificed, prayed, served, and believed that this church had something meaningful to offer their community. They could not have imagined everything our world would become, yet they faithfully planted seeds whose fruits we continue to enjoy today.

Now it is our turn.

What an exciting and sacred responsibility that is!

As we enter this season of Thanksgiving, I want to invite us to do more than simply look back with gratitude. I want us to look forward with imagination, courage, and hope.

What do we want our church to look like in three years? Five years? Ten years? What about twenty-five years from now?

What kind of legacy are we creating for the generations who will come after us?

Will they remember us as a congregation that simply maintained what we inherited? Or will they discover a church that dared to dream, embraced new possibilities, welcomed people who had never felt welcomed before, and boldly carried God's love beyond its walls?

I hope it is the latter.

Because I believe with all my heart that **our church's greatest days do not have to be behind us. Some of our most meaningful ministry may still be waiting to unfold.**

On November 1, we will begin our annual stewardship campaign. And while stewardship certainly includes the financial resources that sustain our ministry, I hope we will see this season as something much greater than a conversation about dollars and cents.

Stewardship is about what we value. It is about how we care for the gifts entrusted to us. It is about the ways we share our time, talents, resources, compassion, and faith to make God's love visible.

Every gift matters. Every act of service matters. Every person who walks through our doors matters.

(Continued on page 4, column 1)

NOVEMBER CHURCH MEETINGS

★ QUARTERLY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING ★

Adult Forum	– Sunday, Nov 1 after worship
Busy Bodies	– Sundays, 8:15 a.m.
Choir	– Mondays, 10:30 a.m.
Music	– Thursdays, 6 p.m.
Deacons	– TBA
Finance	– Sunday, Nov 8, 11:30 a.m.
Trustees	– Friday, Nov 13, 10 a.m.
Missions	– Thursday, Nov 19, 7 p.m.
Council	– Sunday, Nov 29, 11:30 a.m.
	– Monday, Nov 30, 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 November 1, 2026

After worship at 11 a.m.
during a luncheon.

These meetings are for members to
bring questions or issues
to the Council in a public forum.

Please attend so that we have a
quorum to conduct business.

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS

in the wee hours of November 1st. Set your clock backward one hour when you go to bed on Saturday night, October 31st. Enjoy an extra hour of sleep or linger over coffee and breakfast.



See you at worship and at
the Quarterly Congregational
Meeting!

NOVEMBER LECTIONARY READINGS

Nov 1 – All Saints' Day

Revelation 7:9-17
& Psalm 34:1-10, 22
1 John 3:1-3
Matthew 5:1-12



Nov 8 – 24th Sunday after Pentecost

Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25 & Psalm 78:1-7
Amos 5:18-24
Psalm 70
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
Matthew 25:1-13

Nov 15 – 25th Sunday after Pentecost

Judges 4:1-7 & Psalm 123
Zephaniah 1:7, 12-18
& Psalm 90:1-8, (9-11), 12
1 Thessalonians 5:1-11
Matthew 25:14-30

Nov 22 – Reign of Christ

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 & Psalm 100
Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24 & Psalm 95:1-7a
Ephesians 1:15-23
Matthew 25:31-46

Nov 26 – Thanksgiving Day

Deuteronomy 8:7-18 & Psalm 65
2 Corinthians 9:6-15
Luke 17:11-19



Nov 29 – 1st Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 64:1-9
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Mark 13:24-37

Hope



EMPTY BERRY BOWLS

Do you have some from holiday seasons past that you haven't repurposed? Would you consider bringing them to the Busy Bodies so they can make new berry bowls for 2026? Leave them in the church office.

DEACONS

Nov 1 – **Quarterly Congregational Meeting**
Pastor Andy Elliott, Communion

Nov 8 – TBA

Nov 15 – **Friendsgiving**, Pastor Andy Elliott

Nov 22 – Pastor Andy Elliott

Nov 29 – **Advent I**, Pastor Andy Elliott

November Deacon: Katharine Schrader

It's Not About Me!

Rev. Paul Nickerson

(Nickerson Coaching is dedicated to helping church grow in vitality, reach new people, and make a difference.)

I am often amazed and stunned by the stories of why people leave a church. If there are some legitimate theological reasons why you can't grow as a disciple in your church, fine, find a new faith community.

But what I often see are people leaving for crazy/silly reasons, such as:

- Not liking a hymn. They aren't always going to be just your favorite.
- A sermon you disagree with. Pastors work hard to deliver messages and some you won't agree with—go talk with the Pastor about it.
- Not being part of the majority vote taken by the congregation. Sometimes we will be in the minority vote, but we can still work with others.
- Having their favorite event or program changed or dropped. Many events have a shelf-life.
- Allowing a comment or the behavior of one member to overly bother you. The Biblical model is to go to that person and work it out.

(continued next column)

My Point:

Growing as a disciple is discovering that *"it's not about me"*. We have not joined a club where my individual tastes are paramount; we are part of a faith community to shine the Light of Christ out into the world. As we go deeper in faith, we find *faith is all about serving others, putting others' needs before our own, doing what is needed to strengthen the Body of Christ, and learning to get along with others we disagree with us as a model of how community can work.*

When people leave for petty reasons, energy is diverted from the mission of the church and remaining members are discouraged and lose energy.

If you are struggling, go and talk with the Pastor and leaders, seek to understand others and continue to contribute to the health of your church. **It's about the mission, not about us.** ♦

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 November:

Roberta Keep
Stephen Merchant
Julianna Wood
Christina Allen
Kassidy Robidoux
Robert Wullen Jr
Evan Lacey
David & Linda Ballard
Abby Morrow



Would you like to sing with our Choir for the Community Choir Concert on December 6? Contact Nancy Sargent or Bonnie Carter. The Choir would love some extra voices for the concert. Rehearsals are Thursdays at 6 p.m. If you only want to sing for the Holiday season or just the Concert, you can choose to do that.

(Pastor Andy's column continued)

Our financial generosity helps make ministry possible, and thoughtful stewardship helps ensure that the ministry we cherish today can continue to grow and flourish tomorrow. But our invitation is not simply to support a budget. **It is to invest ourselves in a vision of what this church can become.**

And that vision belongs to all of us.

As we gather around our Thanksgiving tables this month, I encourage each of us to consider what we are thankful for in the life of this congregation. Remember the people who helped shape your faith, the moments when this church offered comfort or belonging, and the ways we have made a difference together.

Then ask yourself one more question:

What seeds can we plant today that someone else will be thankful for twenty-five years from now?

That is the beauty of the Church. We are part of a story that began long before us and, with faith and courage, will continue long after us.

We honor those who came before us not by refusing to change, but by carrying forward the same spirit of faith, generosity, and hope that inspired them.

So, church family, let us enter this Thanksgiving season with grateful hearts, open hands, and bold imaginations. Let us celebrate what we have accomplished together while remaining excited about all that God is calling us to become.

There is still so much love to share, so much good to accomplish, and so much life ahead of us.

Our history is a gift. Our present is an opportunity. And our future is a promise we get to help shape together.

Thanks be to God for all that has been, all that is, and all that is yet to come!

With gratitude, hope, and excitement for our shared ministry,

Pastor Andy



STEWARDSHIP IN NOVEMBER

You will receive a stewardship letter and pledge card in the mail very soon. Thank you in advance for reading it and prayerfully considering its contents.

The November bulletins will feature weekly inserts on the theme **There Our Hearts Will Be**, reflecting Matthew 6:2. Church members will share stewardship stories.

On Sunday, November 22, Pastor Andy will focus on stewardship at FCC. And then we will present and dedicate our cards on Sunday, November 29.



Bring a friend to worship and stay for our **Friendsgiving potluck meal on Sunday, November 15**, after the service. The Deacons will provide ham and turkey, and beverages. Please bring side dishes and desserts to share. Let's open our table and celebrate!

BUSY BODIES

CHURCH FAIR

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5 8:30 AM – 1 PM



The Busy Bodies invite everyone to their Christmas Fair. They will offer our usual knitted and crocheted items, other crafts, books, delicious food, antiques and attic treasures. *And our popular berry bowls!*

They would appreciate your donations of baked goods: pies, cookies, bread and more. If you have your own crafts or something special in your attic that you would like to donate, they would love to have those, too. Things that usually sell well are gently used, clean household items, books, puzzles and other appropriate items. No clothing or electronics. The BBs really appreciate all the congregation does each year to help them with their fairs.

Please bring baked goods to the church on Friday afternoon, December 4, from 12-2 p.m. Or bring them in Saturday morning as soon as you can.

HELP NEEDED FOR SILENT AUCTION

The Busy Bodies will hold a Silent Auction during their Christmas Fair. The auction will benefit the upgrade to our kitchen. The whole church is requested to help us to make the auction a success.

Please contact Sue Fuller to receive instructions and obtain the official request form and to make sure no one has already chosen your favorite businesses.

FROM DEACON STEVE MERCHANT

The week before my return to First Church, I was waiting for L.M. Zecca's **Saint Francis and the Wolf** to arrive in the mail. So, on my first Sunday back, when the subject of the sermon was *St. Francis and the Wolf of Gabbio*, I knew I had come home!

St. Francis' feast day is October 4. The choir sang his famous prayer during worship on October 11. This is a look at the story...

When Francis was a young priest in Umbria on the mainland of Italy, a lone wolf was preying on the people's flocks and on people, too, if someone got in the way. Francis decided to go talk with the animal and explain things to him. The people were horrified and didn't know what to expect. Did Francis think he would snap his fingers and the wolf would just go away? Some of the village people followed Francis as he went to the wolf's place in the woods to see what would happen.

The wolf came running up to Francis, snarling, but Francis made the sign of the cross and met the wolf's eye. The wolf was a pitiful sight—half starved to death, and suffering from disease. God used Francis to heal the creature and strike a bargain that was a win/win for everyone: the wolf went to work as a security guard. Every day the wolf patrolled the village, and every night he'd go to a different kitchen door and be fed by the lady of the house in exchange for not killing village sheep.

The wolf lived well and became a mascot for Gabbio, letting the children ride his back and give him tummy rubs. When the wolf died of old age, the villagers buried him in the local cemetery, among the pack who had accepted him as one of their own.

St. Francis and the Brother Wolf story is a shining example of how former adversaries can become the best of allies.

At a time when our planet is in worsening crisis, St. Francis stands as an example of how to respect all of God's creatures and this big blue marble we call home.





Grief & the Holidays

A Place to Pause and Connect

The holidays can be especially difficult after the death of someone we love. This three-week group offers practical guidance and connection. Led by trained, caring facilitators, we will explore ways to navigate the holidays while making room for grief, memories, and changing traditions.

If you are wondering, “How am I going to get through the holidays?” We encourage you to join us to pause, remember, and connect with others who are grieving. Each session will include a different 20-minute topic followed by a support group.

Tuesdays, 6:00-8:00pm at HVHC, Ellsworth

November 17: Moving Through the Holidays

Anticipating the holidays and identifying what may be difficult.

December 8, 2026: Honoring your Grief, Finding Comfort

Thanksgiving reflections and Planning Ahead.

December 15, 2026: Remembering and Connecting

Making space for the person who died while finding ways to remain connected. We will complete a craft project in memory of the person we lost. All supplies provided.



Session
Three
Craft



To Register

Call 207-667-2531 or visit our website at hospiceofhancock.org

November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 ALL SAINTS DAY DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service & Communion 11 am Qrtly Cong Mtg Luncheon	2 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	3 6 pm Boy Scouts	4 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	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 Deacons	9 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	10 6 pm Boy Scouts	11 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	12 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir	13 OFFICE CLOSED 9 am Finance	14
15 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11 am Friendsgiving Luncheon	16 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	17 6 pm Boy Scouts	18 2-3:30 pm Welcome Table take-out	19 9 am Bulletin Deadline 4 pm Chess Club 6 pm Choir 7 pm Trustees	20 OFFICE CLOSED	21
22 Green 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service	23 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities	24 9 am Steeple deadline 6 pm Boy Scouts	25 9 am Bulletin Deadline No Welcome Table	26 OFFICE CLOSED THANKSGIVING 	27 OFFICE CLOSED	28 9 am Garland making & lunch
29 ADVENT I Violet 8:15 am Adult Forum 10 am Worship Service 11:30 am Missions	30 OFFICE CLOSED 10:30 am Busy Bodies activities 6:30 pm Council	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 Noon Fair setup	5 8:30 am - 1 pm Christmas Fair 



Come make the garlands that will adorn the front of the church. We will meet on Saturday, November 28. It will be helpful to bring garden work gloves to handle the greens. And please bring a dish to share at the noon potluck luncheon. This is always a fun event.

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
Mark Remick, 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.