First Congregational Church UCC – Founded 1812
PO Box 12, 2 Church Street
Ellsworth, Maine 04605
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Come with hope or despair, expectation, or disappointment,
and seek God even as God seeks you.

Hearing devices and large print hymnals are available—
please ask an usher if you require them.
Thank you for silencing electronic devices before worship begins.

***Please stand as you are able**.*

ORDER OF WORSHIP
TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

November 22, 2026 **10 a.m.**

PRELUDE	*We Gather Together*	arr. Lasky
	Come, Ye Thankful People, Come	arr. Lasky
	Let All Things Now Living / Thanks Be to Thee	arr. Page

WELCOME

CHORAL INTROIT *Come Before His Presence*
Come before his presence with thanksgiving.
Let us praise him with a joyful song.

CALL TO WORSHIP (responsively)

One: Some of us have come today with a spring in our step, and some of us are just glad we found our way here!

All: Wherever our journey has taken us, we are welcome in God's presence.

One: Like sheep in a pasture, we've wandered, stumbled, and occasionally gone our own way.

All: Yet God's love never stops reaching for us.

One: We've shared laughter and tears, celebrations and challenges, and through it all, we've traveled together.

All: We give thanks for the gift of this community and the stories we share.

One: So come, you wonderfully imperfect flock! There's room for every one of us.

All: With grateful hearts and joyful spirits, let us worship God together!

*HYMN *Take my gifts* (vs 1-3) 381

*GATHERING PRAYER (unison)

Loving God, our faithful Shepherd, we gather with grateful hearts. Through every twist and turn, every stumble and celebration, your love has remained constant. Thank you for the laughter we share, the friendships we treasure, and the community we call home. Fill our worship with joy, our hearts with gratitude, and our lives with your peace. Amen.

SPECIAL MOMENTS

CHORAL ANTHEM *As Long as I Have Breath* Farrar

As long as I have breath, I will praise you, Lord.
As long as I have life, let my soul rejoice.
In times of sore distress; in times of loneliness;

(Anthem text continues next page→)

As long as I have breath, I will praise you, Lord.
As long as I have breath, I will bless you, Lord.
As long as life is mine, I will sing your song.
Your joy brings forth my praise; your peace fills all my days;
As long as I have breath, I will praise you, Lord.
Let me know your loving kindness every day,
As you walk beside me point out the way.
As long as I have being, I will trust in you;
You are my God; I lift my soul to you!
As long as I have breath, I will serve you, Lord.
As long as life is mine, I'll exalt your word.
And when this life shall pass, and I'm at home at last;
Through all eternity, I will praise you, Lord.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (unison)

Gracious God, as we hear your Word today, open our ears to the stories of old and our hearts to the truths they still reveal. Surprise us with new understanding, stir our curiosity, and help us discover your presence in unexpected places. May your Word bring wisdom, hope, and joy to our lives. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Old Testament	Ezekiel 34:11-16	pew Bible p.759 OT
Gospel	Matthew 25:31-36	pew Bible p.24 NT

SERMON **Lost & Found — 'Sheep', That Is!**

*HYMN *Amazing grace!* 546

MORNING PRAYERS

Joys & Concerns
Prayer for those Celebrating Birthdays: Tyler, Patricia, Steve
Silent Prayer & Pastoral Prayer

(Prayers continue next page→)

The Lord's Prayer (unison)

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Choral Response *Amen* Danish

OFFERING OUR GIFTS & TITHES

OFFERTORY *Peace of Christ* Cagle

*DOXOLOGY 46

*DEDICATION

*HYMN *Give Thanks* 528

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Now Thank We All Our God* arr. Larson

Come before His presence; text Psalm 95:2 | Public Domain

As Long as I Have Breath, words & music Susan Farrar ©1987 Beckenhorst Press, Inc.
CCLI # 11546442 Streaming # 20543232

Thank you for sitting in the front half of the sanctuary today.

Worship is broadcast live through
WDEA AM 1370, Facebook, and Zoom.

VISITORS, GUESTS, AND SEEKERS ARE WELCOME

We pray that your experience of worship enriches and sustains you in the week ahead. If you are visiting, we hope you will introduce yourself to those around you and to the Pastor. Kindly fill out a yellow visitor's card that you'll find in the pew rack. Please join us for coffee after the service. If you have any questions, please ask an usher.

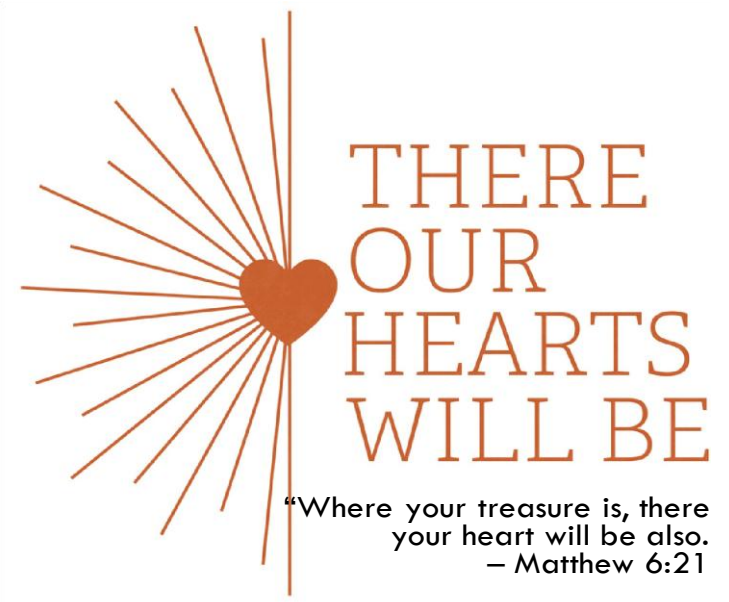
While the church steeple is being cleaned and repaired, we are not ringing the bell at the beginning of morning worship. Once this project is completed, we will restore this item to the Order of Worship.



THE WELCOME TABLE SERVED 130 MEALS ON NOVEMBER 18.

Our free community meal serves take-out only on Wednesdays from 2-3:30 p.m. Please call the church on Wednesdays **before 11 a.m.**, 207-667-8321, to reserve a meal.
Donations always gratefully received.

THERE IS <u>NO</u> MEAL THIS WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25.



The Book of Proverbs may not be the first place one turns to for ideas about stewardship, philanthropy, or generosity. However, Proverbs has a lot to say about living one's best life. Too often, living a good life focuses on accumulating wealth and goods. Proverbs—and Jesus—teaches that a good life is much more than hoarding money and things.

The cycle of endless consumption and accumulation is as old as time and is evolving every minute. While corporations, advertising, and marketing strategies urge us—some would even say, compel—us to buy, buy, buy, it is human nature to question if that's all there is.

The Book of Proverbs provides answers to that question.

At the center of Proverbs is a profound and unshakable reverence for God—recognizing and acknowledging that God is the creator and sustainer of all life. Here we read that pursuing wisdom leads to longevity, wealth, esteem in the eyes of others, and a healthy respect for others. Choosing the path of wisdom leads to purpose and meaning as one moves through life.

A good life is lived in a trusting and faithful relationship with God, who blesses us with meaning and purpose, and authentic and deep relationships, as we live in humble obedience to God's teachings—lives of love, generosity, integrity, and in community. Jesus tells us, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt 6:21).

The Busy Bodies will hold a SILENT AUCTION during their Christmas Fair on Saturday, December 5. The auction will benefit the upgrade to our kitchen.

The Busy Bodies invite you to their **CHRISTMAS FAIR**. 8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. They will offer the usual knitted and crocheted items, crafts, books, delicious food, antiques and attic treasures. *And the popular berry bowls!*



Our purpose,
First Congregational Church, UCC, Ellsworth, Maine:
To embrace the life, ministry and teachings of Jesus Christ
In meaningful and dynamic ways through
creative worship,
supportive fellowship,
compassionate outreach, and
stimulating Christian education for all ages;
To be a faithful community which, led by the Holy Spirit,
expresses hospitality,
nurtures spiritual growth, and
promotes a deep sense of belonging;
To strive to build on commonalities while seeking to
understand, accept, and
celebrate our differences;
To stand as a beacon of hope in a hurting and troubled world by
sharing the Good News of the Gospel, and
practicing God's love as embodied by Jesus Christ.
We welcome all to walk with us on the journey of faith.
As adopted by the Congregation at its Annual Meeting – January 22, 2012