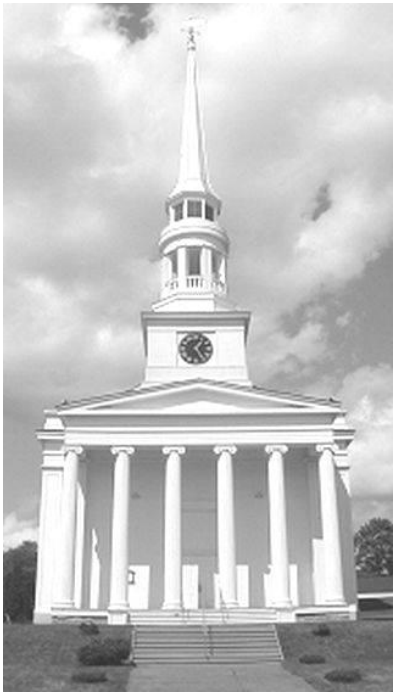
First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Ellsworth, Maine



Founded in 1812

Come with hope or despair, expectation, or disappointment, and seek God even as God seeks you.

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.

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
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
STEWARDSHIP DEDICATION

November 29, 2026 **10 a.m.**

PRELUDE *I Shall Know Him When He Comes* Wagner
Look to the Rose Martin

WELCOME

INTROIT (all) *Prepare the way of the Lord* 121

CALL TO WORSHIP (responsively)

One: We come into this season of waiting, wondering where God might appear.
All: Open our eyes to the unexpected.
One: We come carrying our hopes, our questions, and our expectations.
All: Open our hearts to new possibilities.
One: For the God who comes to us is not confined to palaces, places of power, or carefully laid plans.
All: God meets us in the ordinary and makes it extraordinary.
One: Come, let us begin our journey toward Bethlehem.
All: With hopeful hearts, let us worship God!

*HYMN *O come, O come, Emmanuel* 119

*GATHERING PRAYER (unison)

God of unexpected beginnings, as we enter this season of Advent, help us loosen our grip on what we think your presence should look like. Open our eyes to the sacred in ordinary places, our ears to voices we often overlook, and our hearts to possibilities we have yet to imagine. May this season awaken within us a renewed sense of wonder, a deeper hope, and a willingness to discover you wherever you may appear. Amen.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE **Hope**

CHORAL ANTHEM *Come, O long-expected Jesus* Prichard

Come, O long-expected Jesus, born to set your people free;
from our fears and sins release us, Christ, in whom our rest shall be.
You, our strength and consolation, come salvation to impart;
dear desire of many a nation, joy of many a longing heart.
Born your people to deliver, born a child and yet a king,
born to reign in us forever, born your gracious realm to bring.
By your own eternal spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
By your all-sufficient merit raise us to your glorious throne.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION (unison)

God of wisdom and wonder, as we hear these familiar words, help us discover something new. Challenge our assumptions, expand our understanding, and reveal the extraordinary within the ordinary. May your Word awaken hope within us and prepare our hearts for the journey ahead. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Old Testament	Isaiah 9:2-7	pew Bible p.598 OT
Gospel	Luke 2:1-7	pew Bible p.50 NT

SERMON **God Doesn't Always Show Up Where We Expect**

*HYMN *O little town of Bethlehem* 144

MORNING PRAYERS
Joys & Concerns
Silent Prayer & Pastoral Prayer
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 *Comfort You My People* Bourgeois

OFFERING OUR GIFTS, TITHES, & STEWARDSHIP PROMISES

OFFERTORY *Come and Find the Quiet Center* BEACH SPRING
My Hope is Built Bradbury

*DOXOLOGY 46

*BLESSING OUR STEWARDSHIP PROMISES

*DEDICATION PRAYER

*HYMN *All earth is waiting* 139

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Carol of Remembrance* Martin

Come, O long-expected Jesus, words Charles Wesley 1744, tune HYFRYDOL Rowland H. Prichard 1830
Public Domain

Nancy Sargent, *Pianist & Choral Director*
Andy Elliott, *Pastor*
Martin Vachon, *Liturgist*
Bonnie & Tim Carter, *Advent Candle Lighting*
Myrna & Bob Vallette, *Ushers*
Lois Stevens, *Greeter*
Ruth & Troy Tainter, *Facebook, WDEA & Zoom*
Katharine Schrader, *November Deacon*

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

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



During Advent and Christmas, many churches display Chrismon trees decorated with Christian symbols, or Chrismons. "Chrismon" is a combination "Christ" and "monogram". The first Chrismon tree was displayed in 1957 at Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Virginia. There are several star Chrismons, each with its own meaning. From the five-pointed star to the eight-pointed Natal Star Cross, the former symbolizing Jesus' five wounds, the latter representing Bethlehem star and the four gospels of the New Testament.



Jesus begins this passage with the strong words, "Do not let your hearts be troubled" (John 14:1). Okay, Jesus. Sounds simple enough. And yet, our hearts are troubled, by matters both personal and global. So now what?

Fortunately for us, Jesus doesn't just stop at telling us to set down our troubles. Over the next thirteen verses, in words of comfort spoken just before his death at the hands of empire, Jesus offers a Way; a Way that he assures his followers that they (and therefore we) already have access to, already "know."

Christ consciousness is not a goal to be attained but a path to walk. It's less something to own and more something to participate in. It's not so much finding the truth and clinging to it. It's more like opening every single door in that gracious, spacious house with many rooms (John 14:2) and behind each one finding an invitation, an open embrace, a new song whose words you somehow already knew.

Jesus concludes this passage with a remarkable promise: "Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these" (John 14:12). Stop for a minute and read that again. Listen, really listen, to these words.

Someone will do great things. Greater things, even, than the Holiest One to ever walk this dusty earth. That is Christ's promise to his friends and followers and to you and me. And who is that Someone, walking around doing those great works?

Take a breath and take it in: That Someone is YOU.



Community Christmas Concert

Sunday, December 6, 3 p.m.
At First Congregational Church UCC, Ellsworth

Hear local choirs and a mass choir piece at the end.
Everyone is invited.

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

First Congregational Church UCC – Founded 1812
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