

**April
2021**



MEETING HOUSE CHIMES

**First Congregational Church, PO Box 350, Wiscasset, ME 04578
(207) 882-7544 www.uccwiscasset.org fcw@myfairpoint.net**

Office Hours: Tuesday through Thursday, 9am-12pm

**Minister: Rev. Josh Fitterling, Interim Organist: Ray Cornils
Sexton: Mary McKinney, Office Administrator/Editor: Janet Leonard**

Resurrection Garden

"Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live." – John 11:25

Last year, when we realized that our Easter service would not look like normal, our Easter flower order was cancelled and the monies given were set aside to bring forth flowers in the future. As the months went on and as we pondered how these flowers may manifest, an idea blossomed from within the Diaconate. A resurrection garden, I'll call it! And so, with bulbs purchased from the Easter flower money, Susan Kubler and Linda Winterberg began to plant in the flower beds that line the front of our church. These bulbs went in the ground and disappeared from our sight. Through the fall and the winter, they were simply buried waiting to burst forth.

In some ways, as they laid beneath the soil, I forgot about them. That was until the Saturday before Palm Sunday, as I stood out front with two members of the Diaconate handing out palms to driving-by parishioners. On that day, I realized that something was beginning to grow as green sprouts began to dot the dark soil. As we were preparing to begin Holy Week which takes us to the empty tomb, a resurrection was beginning to happen right outside our church doors!

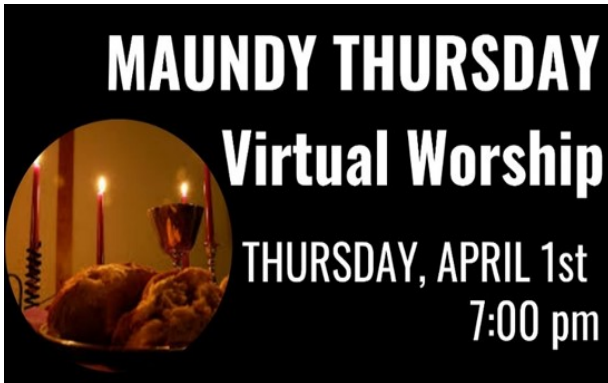
While the flowers planted there will still take some more time before beautiful blossoms are seen, this "Resurrection Garden" will stand as a reminder of this past year. And though it may bring back some difficult memories of a very hard time in our shared life, it will also remind us that we did rise from it and we will continue to rise from it. It will remind us that we as a people can overcome challenges. It will remind us that we are still followers of Jesus Christ who is the resurrection and the life.

Always in Resurrection Hope,

Josh

Rev. Josh Fitterling

Holy Week Offerings 2021



Our **Maundy Thursday Service** will be shared online (by email and Facebook) for 7pm on Thursday, April 1st. Join us at 7pm if you can or watch and worship anytime!

We will be celebrating communion as we remember the last supper. You are invited to partake with bread and juice (or wine) of your choice at home or simply feast through the spoken word.



On **Good Friday**, you are invited to observe a time of quiet prayer and contemplation from 12noon – 3pm at home, marking the hours of darkness while Jesus was on the cross. A reading of the 7 last words of Jesus will be shared online at 3pm, as we remember the moment when Jesus breathed his last



Join us for this **in-person, outdoor Easter Sunrise worship** opportunity on the Wiscasset Town Pier (below Water Street Kitchen). Bright and early at 6:15am, we will rejoice at sunrise! As we maintain social distance and wear our masks, we will celebrate with scripture, hymns, prayer, and the good news of Easter!

Bring a comfy chair if you have one (some metal folding chairs will be provided). Spots will be marked on the pier for households as we maintain 6ft of distance to care for one another. Extra masks will also be available.

The offering collected at this service will benefit St. Philip's Food Pantry. This service is a shared offering of St. Philip's and First Congregational.



Our **pre-recorded, 10am Easter Sunday Service** will be shared online (by email and Facebook) for 10am on Sunday, April 4th. Join us at 10am if you can or watch and worship anytime!

May we find strength and hope as we celebrate the Risen One!



At 12noon on Easter Sunday, our church bell and the bell at St. Philip's will ring to celebrate the resurrection!

Everyone is invited to ring with us at home or swing by the Town Common with your own bells and celebrate the joys of this day!

Easter Offering – Supporting our Special Needs Fund

Traditionally, we collect a special offering on Easter to benefit our Special Needs Fund. This fund is used to help with emergency needs encountered by community members. In the past we have helped with fuel assistance, emergency housing, and other needs that arise. If you would like to contribute, please mail contributions to the church office:

First Congregational Church
P.O. Box 350
Wiscasset, ME 04578

Checks should be made out to "First Congregational Church" with a memo of "Special Needs". Thank you for your support!

*Blessings to you as we journey through this Holy Week
to the joys of Easter morning!*

Red Cross Blood Donations to Honor Rich Kubler

As many of you may recall, May 9, 2020, our church sponsored a Red Cross Blood Drive in honor of our own Rich Kubler. Rich, a firefighter and 9/11 first Responder, passed away last year from liver cancer, believed to have been linked to exposure at Ground Zero. As a man who had dedicated his life to service, we honored him by serving our community.

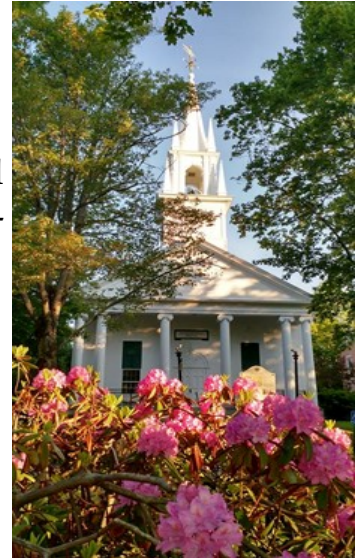
This year we were unable to commit to the Red Cross in January for a May blood drive due to our concerns surrounding the pandemic. Fortunately a blood drive has been scheduled at the Wiscasset Community Center for May 14, to replace ours. Church in Society would like to encourage our fellow church members to give on that day, or at another time this spring, in honor of Rich Kubler. You can sign up for upcoming Red Cross Blood Drives at <https://rcblood.org/3bNieh7/>.

Sunday Worship Beyond Easter

Beginning on Sunday, April 11th, we will return to our hybrid model of worship (with limited, in-person attendance and continued virtual option). This prayerful decision of the Church Council was detailed in a letter to the congregation in February and that letter remains available on our church website. To attend in person, with masks and social distancing, sign-ups will be required. Sign-ups will open weekly on Tuesday morning at 9am via email. You can also sign-up by calling the church office. A complete list of safety protocols will be available in the weekly sign-up email. The service will be livestreamed on Zoom and Facebook, with a recording of the service available later in the day each Sunday on YouTube.

Thank you to everyone who continues to make our services possible and to all who are preparing for April 11th and beyond! A true team effort!

Please know that your Pastor and Church Council are continually monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic, and that we will make adjustments as needed. Any changes will be communicated as swiftly as possible.



April Birthdays

Robert Bickford Anne Harris Gardner Knight
Susan Ross Martha Speed Wendy Thompson
Linda Wallace Sarah Whitfield



Sunday Night Zoom Bible Study – 7pm

Sunday Night Bible Study continues our study of Genesis in April at 7pm. If you would like to join us, know that you are welcome! Meetings will be on:

April 11th
April 18th
April 25th

Reach out to Rev. Josh if you have any questions or to get the Zoom login information (207-882-7544 or josh-fitterling@myfairpoint.net).



Church In Society Celebrates Earth Day 2021 and Invites You to Join Us

Earth Day comes around again, just like the earth revolving around the sun. We can all do our part by planting native pollinator-friendly plants/shrubs in our yards. For a comprehensive list of native plants for our area and how to plant them, check out wildseedproject.org. Look at the websites for Maine organizations that work hard to conserve our native habitats: <https://maineaudubon.org/>, <https://www.midcoastconservancy.org/>, <https://www.kennebecestuary.org/>, www.coastalrivers.org.

Cleanup activities are scheduled in Farmington and Falmouth. Contact Beth Maxwell for more information.

Earth Day seeds for a garden-friendly, monarch necessary, milkweed plant will be available at Sunday services starting on April 18, and in the church office. For more information about the importance of planting these in your garden check out www.saveourmonarchs.org.

The tried and true hints remain:

- Replace plastics in the home with long-lasting options (glass refrigerator containers instead of plastic).
- Bring your own shopping bags to markets.
- Bring your own reusable cup when purchasing beverages.
- Get a stainless steel, glass, or bamboo straw if you need one to drink your beverages at restaurants.
- Buy a filtering pitcher and trusty food-grade water bottle to use instead of buying water in plastic ones. (BONUS: It is cheaper in the long run.)
- Choose clothing and other personal items made from earth-friendly materials instead of microfibers and other synthetic fibers, which pollute our water. How, you ask? Every time you wash an item microscopic “stuff” washes out of the fabric and into the water system.
- Make your own reusable market bags, or buy them from the Organ Society table at Summerfest. Try this quick idea for a “10 minute” no-sew bag from a T-shirt (I think it would take me longer than 10 minutes to tie all the cute knots but well worth it and a good use for one of those “been there, done that, bought the T-shirt” T-shirts). Use this web address for the instructions: <https://mommypotamus.com/no-sew-t-shirt-tote-bag-tutorial/>.

Weekly Offering - Your Support Makes our Ministry Possible!

Offerings can be mailed to the church office at First Congregational Church, P.O. Box 350, Wiscasset, ME 04578. Even when we are apart, our call to be the church continues.. Thank you for your support!

News from the Maine Conference



Welcome the Rev. Alexis Fuller-Wright, our Designated Term Associate Conference Minister!

It is a joy to announce that, on March 20th, the Board of Directors unanimously voted to call the Rev. Alexis Fuller-Wright as a full-time Designated Term Associate Conference Minister serving the Maine Conference. She will begin her ministry with us in the final week of May, taking up a portfolio that includes curating a culture of generosity among us, supporting Maine Conference congregations served by full-time pastors, and encouraging the ministries of Pilgrim Lodge.

2021 Update



Pilgrim Lodge

Maine Conference, United Church of Christ

After months of thoughtful and deliberate analysis, members of the Pilgrim Lodge Leadership Team (PLLT) and the Maine Conference UCC Board of Directors have made the difficult decision **to continue the pause on traditional summer camp for the summer of 2021.**

Based on the state guidance in place at the time of the decision, PL could not ensure a completely safe experience for all using our traditional camp model. Additionally, given the many COVID-related restrictions, alterations that would be needed to staffing models, and limits on the number of campers, fully opening and staffing PL for this summer would not make good financial sense.

While this news will surely sadden many who have come to love and cherish their time at Pilgrim Lodge, please know that the PLLT is doing all in their power to create some safe opportunities to get people to PL this summer, including looking at offering day passes to come take a swim, walk the labyrinth or the nature trails, and maybe enjoy some ice cream. As more information becomes available, it will be shared with you!

If you would like to make a donation to support Pilgrim Lodge through another challenging summer, please do so! Your donation will be put to use to help ensure PL's presence and programs continue long after this pandemic has passed. Donate online at www.pilgrimlodge.org/giving/ or send your donation to:

Pilgrim Lodge
103 Pilgrim Lodge Lane
West Gardiner, ME 04345

You can reach out to the Pilgrim Lodge office at 207-724-3200 if you have any questions.

Notes of Gratitude – Results of Recent Offerings

Thank you for supporting the Navajo Stove Project!

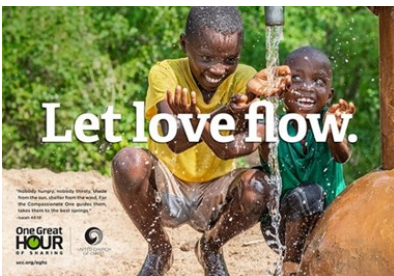
Including an anonymous matching contribution, in December and January, we raised \$790 to go toward the purchasing of wood/coal burning stoves for Navajo families in the Southwest. Through your generosity, we covered the cost of more than one stove (each stove costs \$539). Thank you!



Thank you for supporting the Maine School of Ministry!

Including a \$200 match from our Seminary Student Fund, we have raised \$590 to support this vitally important ministry for laity and clergy in the state of Maine!

Thank you for supporting One Great Hour of Sharing!



As of March 24th, donations totaling \$445 have been received to support One Great Hour of Sharing! OGHS is one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ and supports the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the United Church of Christ.

Thank you for supporting our Card Shower for the Wiscasset Green Residents!



Thank you again to everyone who participated and donated nearly 100 cards! Each resident received a hefty bundle of cards containing the love and warm wishes of their neighbors! What a wonderful outpouring of care!

Organ Society Special Presentation April 22

Rev. Char Corbett (Pastor at Second Congregational Church in Newcastle) will join the Organ Society's meeting at 10am on April 22. Her presentation will feature a slideshow about her recent trips to Puerto Rico to help repair homes after Hurricane Maria devastated the island in 2018. She will show highlights of what work has been done by the volunteers; what the remaining needs are; and their hopes for continuing to share our love, support and care of our Puerto Rican brothers and sisters.

This is a joint project of MEUCC, UCC Disaster Ministries and Iglesia Evangelica Unida de Puerto Rico.

CWS Kit Program

The CWS committee is pleased that we are able to resume our Kit Program at this time. You may remember that we were in the midst of this last Spring when churches had to close so we had to put the Program on hold. We have been notified that Woodfords Church in Portland will be accepting kits again in early May.

These kits bring hope to our neighbors around the world who are fleeing violence, rebuilding after disasters, are homeless, or unable to get the school supplies needed to learn.

Because we have many items on hand that were donated last year, below is a list of what is needed to complete 6 hygiene kits and 5 emergency clean-up buckets. You can also donate additional complete school or hygiene kits; or if you don't want to shop, you can donate the monetary equivalent for a kit: hygiene kits, \$15 value; school kits, \$15 value; or emergency clean-up buckets, \$75 value with a check made out to First Congregational Church with CWS kits (specify school, hygiene, or clean-up bucket) in the memo. Please go to cwskits.org for more information about items needed for each kit or call Nancy Roby (phone # below).

Here is the list of what is needed to complete what is on hand:

Hygiene Kits:

- 6 hand towels
- 6 WIDE tooth combs, with at least 6" of teeth
- 6 fingernail or toenail clippers, either is acceptable

Clean-Up Buckets:

- 3 large sponges
- 16 regular sponges
- 2 sets of 18 reusable, lightweight cleaning towels, like Handiwipes
- 1 50 oz (or 2-25oz) bottle of liquid laundry detergent
- 3 16-28 oz bottles of liquid dish soap
- 1 12-17 oz bottle of household cleaner that can be mixed with water (no spray bottles)
- 2 pkgs of 48-50 clothespins
- 1 100' clothesline
- 4 pair of heavy duty waterproof dishwashing gloves (latex free)
- 2 sets of 24-28 heavy duty or contractor type 30-45 gallon trash bags on a roll
- 2 6-9oz bottles of non-aerosol insect repellent

Please call Nancy Roby 882-6441 or 380-9081 to report the items you will get and she will keep track. Please call before you purchase anything. All items should be returned to the CWS Kits box in Fellowship Hall by April 22nd.

If you have any questions or would like your items picked up, please call Nancy Roby. Thank you all so much!!!

Meet our New Members!



Mark and Ann Light are from southern California, more or less, and settled down in Wiscasset after Mark retired from the US Navy in 2019. For 31 years before that they and were travelling the world courtesy of the Navy. Ann was a nurse, but due to the combination of raising four kids while being married to the Navy, she eventually opted to stay at home with the youngsters. Mark also abandoned his formal college training as an electrical engineer, to join the Navy and be a pilot. They have lived in Guam, Japan and Egypt as well as in numerous locations in the USA. Their four kids are a bit scattered about. Hailey is a vet in central Virginia. Christian is a computer software engineer in California. Madison is living in Maine with Ann and Mark and taking online classes, and Julia is at Penn State University. Mark and Ann enjoy travel, good food and being outdoors with their chickens and bees and puppies.



Laurie LaBar moved to Maine in 1984 to work at a four-week archaeological dig and has been here ever since. She is the Chief Curator of History at the Maine State Museum. Laurie lives in Dresden with her husband, Scott Murray. George LaBar, a member of this church who sings in the choir, is their next-door-neighbor. Laurie's work has taken her all over Maine, studying Acadian culture in Fort Kent; excavating a shell midden in Pembroke; and talking with the granddaughter of a lighthouse keeper in Kittery. She has worked with contemporary quilters, and excavated archaeological sites that were occupied 11,000 years ago. She has written three books: on Wabanaki textiles, Maine in the Civil War, and Maine quilts.

Mark, Ann, and Laurie were officially welcomed into our congregation on Tuesday, March 9th in a Zoom celebration! Welcome all!

Pastoral Relations – Josh's Sabbatical Leave Coming in 2022

What is a Sabbatical leave? After a certain amount of time, specified in a pastor's call agreement, a pastor can take a Sabbatical leave from the work of ministry for rest, travel and/or research. According to Josh's call, after five years as our pastor, he is eligible to take a Sabbatical leave of three months. As of March 1, 2022, Josh will have been with us for five years.

A small committee has been appointed by the Church Council, working to apply for the Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program. This subcommittee consists of Joan Shea, Pastoral Relations Chair, Sarah Whitfield, Diaconate Chair, and Deb Olson, Trustee. If we are accepted into this program, Josh will be given an amount of money to help him plan for a rewarding Sabbatical.

While Josh is on Sabbatical, the church will also be given money from the Lilly Endowment to help cover the costs of hiring a supply minister. Tentatively, this leave will take place mid-August to mid-November of 2022. During this three-month period, the theme that will be guiding Josh's Sabbatical will also guide our congregation's life during that time.

At the end of three months, Josh will return refreshed and ready to start up again, and we will welcome him back with open arms. He will share with us his experience; we will share ours with him; and we will journey forward in ministry together!

The details of his Sabbatical are not yet finalized as a lot of these details will depend on the grant from the Lilly Endowment. But we are hopeful that our church will be accepted into this program to benefit Josh and our congregation.

We will keep you updated.

If you have any questions, please reach out to me – Joan Shea, joanzone7@gmail.com.

Meeting House Chimes
First Congregational Church, U.C.C.
P.O. Box 350, 28 High Street
Wiscasset, ME 04578



**April
2021**

**First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
28 High Street, PO Box 350
Wiscasset, Maine 04578**

**We welcome you to the First
Congregational Church of Wiscasset.
We are an open and affirming
congregation and are open
theologically, growing spiritually, and
concerned socially.**

