

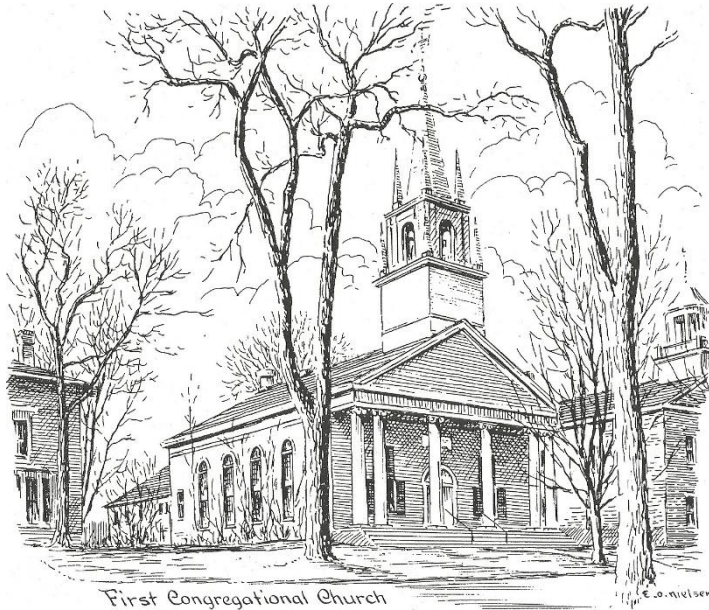
First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

An Open and Affirming Church

PO Box 350, 28 High Street, Wiscasset, Maine 04578

207-882-7544, www.uccwiscasset.org



We welcome you to the First Congregational Church of Wiscasset.

VISION: We are on a journey to reflect God's love, embracing diversity and affirming the dignity and worth of all.

MISSION: Together we strive to praise God, grow in faith, cultivate love, spread joy, care for all people and God's creation, promote peace, and do justice.

November 16, 2025

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

We welcome all to our worship service, whether present in the sanctuary, joining us on streaming video, or watching our service in the future.

FOR YOUR CONTEMPLATION

“Endurance is not just the ability to bear a hard thing, but to turn it into glory.”

William Barclay

PRELUDE

Prelude on "Thaxted"

arr. Anna Laura Page

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTROIT

I Love Thy Church, O God

* CALL TO WORSHIP

L: God's promises are awesome!

P: In the midst of difficulty, God gives us a word of hope.

L: Something new is coming!

P: We stand eagerly on tiptoes awaiting God's new creation.

L: Prepare your hearts to receive God's mighty blessings.

P: Open our spirits and our hearts, Lord, to be ready to receive all that you have to offer.

* OPENING HYMN

Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

No. 102

INVOCATION TO PRAYER

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Jenny Surgenor

JOYS AND CONCERNS: After each Joy or Concern, Please respond:

Pastor: "God," Congregation: **"Hear our prayer."**

LIGHTING OF THE PEACE CANDLE

Global Mission Partner Prayer this week: Colombia

MORNING PRAYER

SILENT MOMENTS FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors, 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

Hear Our Prayer, O God

George Whelpton

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Isaiah 65:17-25

Liturgist: This is the Word of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

* HYMN

Be Still, My Soul

No. 95

SERMON

‘Depends on Which One You Feed’

OFFERTORY PRAYER

CHORAL OFFERTORY

Thy Word

arr. Jack Schrader

* PRESENTATION WITH THE DOXOLOGY

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit One. Amen.**

DEDICATION PRAYER

* CLOSING HYMN

God of the Sparrow and God of the Whale

No. 98

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTORY RESPONSE

**Go now in peace. Never be afraid. God will go with you each hour of every day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true. Know God will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love, and show you believe. Reach out to others so all the world can see.
God will be there watching from above. Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.**

You are invited to sit for the postlude.

* * * * *

“Our worship ends, let our service begin”

Minister and Teacher: Rev. John Hogue

Music Director: Joel Pierce

Those serving you today:

Ushers: Youth Group

Online Streaming: Jenny Surgenor

Reader: Becky Lenz

Flowers: Linda Wallace

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Please join us for fellowship, coffee or tea, and refreshments in Fellowship Hall following worship.

Please take note of the colored paper prayer slips in the pew rack. These are for you to write a word or phrase of prayer or concerns. Fold it and place it in the offering plate. It will only be shared with Rev. John.

Happy November Birthday to Harry Green, Rev. John Hogue, Mary McKinney, Deborah Olson, Karl Olson, Margot Stiassni, and Jan Whitfield.

Help Yourself Shelf November Wish List

Cereal * Coffee * tea * Canned stew and soup * Baked Beans * Pasta * Ramen *
Canned meats * Condiments * Pancake mix * Toothbrushes * Pet Food & litter

Help Yourself Shelf Thanksgiving Wish List

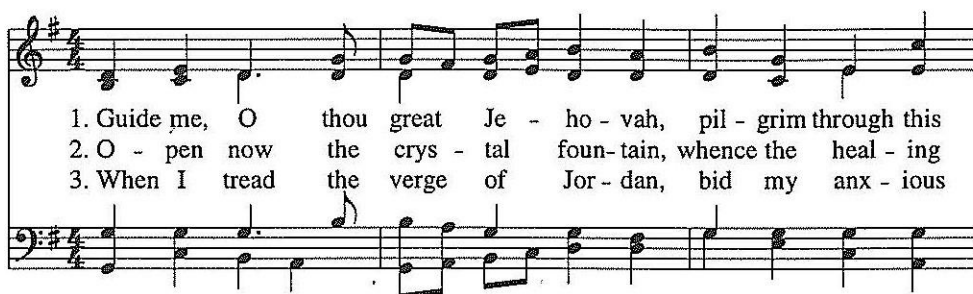
Turkey stock * Pie crusts * Instant Potatoes * Mayonnaise * * Canned Pumpkin *
Spices * Brown sugar * Sweetened condensed milk * Tea * Hot cocoa * Coffee *
Cake and brownie mix * Pudding mix * Molasses

For I am about to create new heavens
and a new earth;
the former things shall not be remembered
or come to mind.
But be glad and rejoice forever
in what I am creating,
for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy
and its people as a delight.
I will rejoice in Jerusalem
and delight in my people;
no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it
or the cry of distress.
No more shall there be in it
an infant who lives but a few days
or an old person who does not live out a lifetime,
for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth,
and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed.
They shall build houses and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
They shall not build and another inhabit;
they shall not plant and another eat,
for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,
and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
They shall not labor in vain
or bear children for calamity,
for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord—
and their descendants as well.
Before they call I will answer,
while they are yet speaking I will hear.
The wolf and the lamb shall feed together;
the lion shall eat straw like the ox,
but the serpent—its food shall be dust!
They shall not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain,
says the Lord.

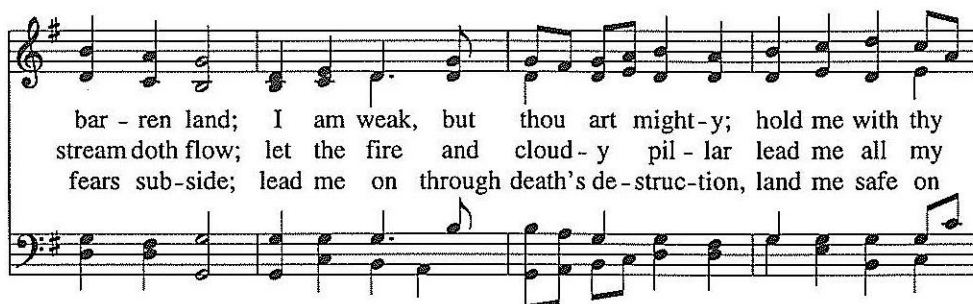
This is the Word of God.

Thanks be to God.

New Revised Standard Version Updated Version



1. Guide me, O thou great Je - ho - vah, pil - grim through this
 2. O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain, whence the heal - ing
 3. When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious



bar - ren land; I am weak, but thou art might - y; hold me with thy
 stream doth flow; let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar lead me all my
 fears sub - side; lead me on through death's de - struc - tion, land me safe on



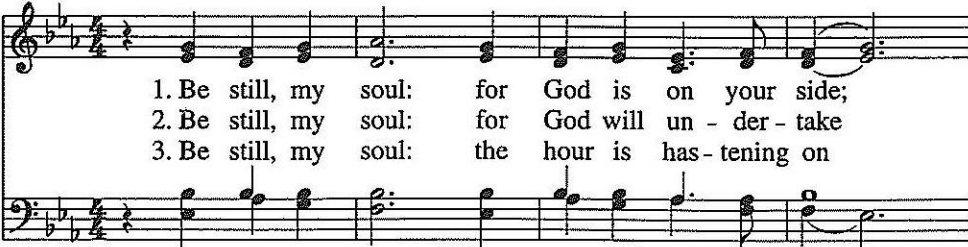
power - ful hand. Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,
 jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - erer, strong de - liv - erer,
 Ca - naan's side. Songs of prais - es, songs of prais - es,



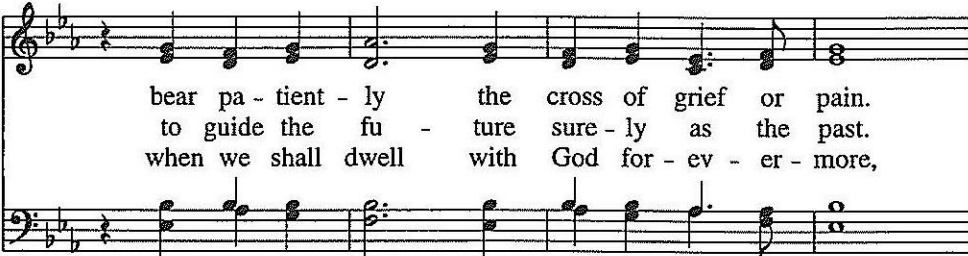
feed me till I want no more; feed me till I want no more.
 be thou still my strength and shield; be thou still my strength and shield.
 I will ev - er give to thee; I will ev - er give to thee.

WORDS: William Williams, 1745; st. 1, tr. Peter Williams, 1771; sts. 2,3, tr. William Williams, 1772, alt.
 MUSIC: John Hughes, 1907


Be Still, My Soul




1. Be still, my soul: for God is on your side;
 2. Be still, my soul: for God will un - der - take
 3. Be still, my soul: the hour is has - tening on



bear pa - tient - ly the cross of grief or pain.
 to guide the fu - ture sure - ly as the past.
 when we shall dwell with God for - ev - er - more,



Trust in your God, your sav - ior and your guide,
 Your hope, your con - fi - dence let noth - ing shake;
 when dis - ap - point - ment, grief, and fear are gone,



who through all chang - es faith - ful will re - main.
 all now mys - te - rious shall be bright at last.
 sor - row for - got, love's pur - est joys re - stored.

WORDS: Katharina von Schlegel, 1752; tr. Jane Borthwick, 1855, alt.
 MUSIC: Jean Sibelius, 1899; arr. *The Hymnal*, 1933

FINLANDIA
 10 10.10 10.10 10

98 God of the Sparrow God of the Whale

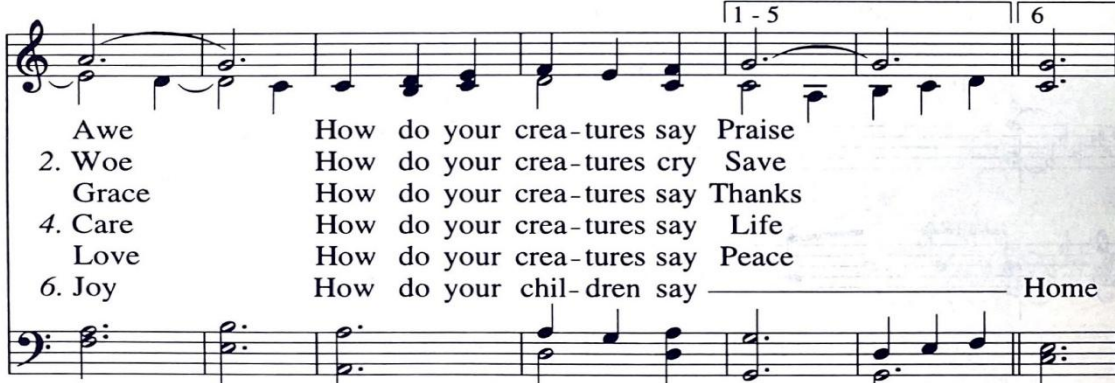
Unison



1. God of the spar - row God of the whale
 2. God of the earth - quake God of the storm
 3. God of the rain - bow God of the cross
 4. God of the hun - gry God of the sick
 5. God of the neigh - bor God of the foe
 6. God of the a - ges God near at hand



God of the swirl - ing stars How do your crea - tures say
 2. God of the trum - pet blast How do your crea - tures cry
 God of the emp - ty grave How do your crea - tures say
 4. God of the prod - i - gal How do your crea - tures say
 God of the prun - ing hook How do your crea - tures say
 6. God of the lov - ing heart How do your chil - dren say



Awe How do your crea - tures say Praise
 2. Woe How do your crea - tures cry Save
 Grace How do your crea - tures say Thanks
 4. Care How do your crea - tures say Life
 Love How do your crea - tures say Peace
 6. Joy How do your chil - dren say Home

WORDS: Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1983, alt.
 MUSIC: Carl F. Schalk, 1983

ROEDER
 546.77

ROEDER was composed by Carl Schalk, Lutheran organist,
 educator, editor, and premier historian for the Lutheran
 Church, Missouri Synod.

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 Music © 1983 GIA Publications, Inc.

Nov. 16, 2025

Isaiah 65:17-25

Rev. John Hogue 'Depends which one you Feed'

Beloved, did you hear the words God speaks --"I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind."

The presence of God, offering good news. Offering release to the captive. A chance, a breath, a real hope to let the oppressed go free. It is an invitation. It is an opening to nurture the full growth, peace and joy of all God's beloved people and creation. We call this grace. This is grace in its fullness. We sure do need a lot of it.

Recent scientific studies in various professional journals back up this holy noticing. They reveal to us the reality of the patterned thinking of humans. What has emerged in these studies is that approximately 93% of our thoughts are repetitive and useless. Shocking, isn't it? But it gets even better! Of this 93%, nearly 80% of our thoughts are negative. Fear and anger and anxiety is all around us.

So what do we do with this? What is God's holy, healing, living invitation in this place?

We begin with noticing the small things in life. Allow the gift of a holy spirit to catch ourselves in the middle of a patterned response. Maybe and just maybe perhaps we commit ourselves to seeking to practice another way of being. I say practice, because that is what it takes to learn a new behavior. As human beings we should always be willing to learn new things and engage in spiritual growth. I say practice too because it is a deep truth that in practice, in the intentional seeking and striving to live in a new way to which God is calling us. Grace does abound as an ever flowing stream.

However, this is hard work! Just ask the lamb and the wolf! Did you catch that image in our reading? Isaiah proclaims, "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox". It is an image that, while so deeply loved, has in many ways become domesticated. We treat it as a commonness, to the point that it perhaps no longer catches our breath with its powerful proclamation of transformation.

We are talking about transformation, while deeply filled with grace, can be disorienting to our very core. This image of the wolf and the lamb thus points powerfully to the disruptive power of God's grace to change, to transform, even the most ingrained ways.

In our NT lectionary lesson of Luke 21:9-15 this week, Jesus prepares His followers for difficult times ahead — the destruction of the Temple, persecution, and turmoil. What He offers is not false reassurance that life will be easy, but the deeper promise that God's presence and purpose remain steadfast even when the world seems to crumble.

Jesus reminds us that faith is tested not when things go smoothly, but when everything feels uncertain. "Do not be terrified," He says — because even in chaos, God's plan is unfolding. Followers of Christ are called to stand firm. Testify with wisdom and grace, and to trust that God holds them secure. Our endurance is not wasted effort; it is how our souls are strengthened and made whole.

So let's explore this just a little bit more. And let's start with the wolf, because this is a major game changer!!! Can you even begin to imagine the wolf's confusion at that first inkling of an urge to have table fellowship with that lamb upwind from him, without the lamb being turned into lamb chops??? What would the wolf's mother think? And what would they possibly eat for dinner that night?

And what about the lamb? Taught by her elders from day one to stay far away from that mean old hungry wolf and to run like the wind with that first whiff of his presence! What would her flock say if it ever knew of that strange desire that bubbled up in her to invite the wolf over to play, to romp in the grass?!?

It's disruptive, is it not? It is insane! It's wild! And yet the image holds within its offering the proclamation of the truth and the good news of God's power and grace to transform even our most ingrained ways of being.

This is not to say that it happens right away. Transformation just doesn't seem to be instantaneous, at least 99.999% of the time. Transformation rather seems to emerge and to blossom over time. It is truly a journey that unfolds one grace infused breath at a time. And yet as we are on this journey, we notice that the world begins to open up to us. We notice that the fear that ate at the very marrow of our bones begins to lose its grip. We notice that the very places and circumstances where we never thought we could choose differently, begin to blossom with possibility infused with the goodness of God. We begin to notice the possibility of a real opportunity to choose to respond in love and presence, to find and work for ways to lift up the brokenhearted.

And that, my brothers and sisters, is how we join with God in creating God's holy mountain in every place we stand. A place where all are invited to live, move and have their being

free of fear, free of injustice, free of oppression. A place where all are invited to live and move and have their being in fullness of life and joy and vitality. A place where all can flourish--where all can enjoy the work of their hands, where all can dwell in the homes they have built, and where all can delight in the fruits of the vineyards they have planted. Where all can live together in peace and wholeness.

This takes works, brothers and sisters, co-creating with God this holy place. But it is exciting, is it not? It's wonderful, is it not? And it is the most real ground of our being, of our life with God and one another, and so we rejoice as we let these words from God forever reverberate in our hearts:

"For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight."

However, we need to be realistic. Even Jesus reminds us we WILL face opposition, perseverance matters. Because culture and the forces of evil WILL place stumbling blocks in our path. Perseverance matters.

Because our lights will shine in the darkness, reflecting the light of Christ to a hurting, chaotic, and broken world, our perseverance matters. (Object Lesson)

So do not be dismayed, and don't give up. When the going gets tough, dig into prayer and study. Do good. Be generous. Immerse yourself in the community. Show up for worship and dine at the Lord's table.

Don't be weary; your perseverance makes all the difference in this world and for the sake of the life to come. I believe this powerful story illustrates our scripture text. It comes from the native American tribe of the Cherokee nation, it is a parable and is entitled : ' The Story of the Two Wolves'

A young boy came to his Grandfather, filled with anger at another boy who had done him an injustice. The Grandfather said to his grandson, "Let me tell you a story. I too, at times, have felt a great hate for those that have taken so much, with no sorrow for what they do. But hate wears you down, and hate does not hurt your enemy. Hate is like taking poison and wishing your enemy would die. I have struggled with these feelings many times."

"It is as if there are two wolves inside me; one wolf is good and does no harm. He lives in harmony with all around him and does not take offence when no offence was intended. He will only fight when it is right to do so, and in the right way. But the

other wolf is full of anger. The littlest thing will set him into a fit of temper."

"He fights everyone, all the time, for no reason. He cannot think because his anger and hate are so great. It is helpless anger, because his anger will change nothing. Sometimes it is hard to live with these two wolves inside me, because both of the wolves try to dominate my spirit."

The boy looked intently into his Grandfather's eyes and asked, "Which wolf will win, Grandfather?"

The Grandfather smiled and said, "The one I feed".

This story reminds us to continue to take responsibility every day. Every that every day we make choices, important choices that could be overlooked as being trivial – and these choices define us. They are a statement of who we choose to be in this life and what impact we will have on the world around us.

It reminds us that even when the outside world is demanding, the state of my inner world should always be my primary concern. Works bring the wolf and the lamb together because without inner balance, without mindfulness, we cannot properly live in harmony and wisdom with ourselves and with life. Yes, it depends on which one we feed

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today we are collecting for our general mission giving.

Wednesday November 19, Church Council meets via Zoom at 6:30pm.

Winter Coat and Warm Weather Gear Collection

The Youth Group is sponsoring a drive to collect items for folks in need of warmth and comfort in the upcoming winter months. These can be dropped off in Fellowship Hall. The drive will run through to the end of November and donations will go to the St. Philip's Bargain Basement.

Organ Society Christmas Wreath Sale

Wreaths will be available for pick-up on Tuesday November 25th or Sunday November 30th. Please pre-order by Thursday November 20th. Order forms are available from the ushers, on the table in the Narthex, in Fellowship Hall and in the church office.

Sunday, November 16	Choir Practice 8:10am Sunday Worship 10:00am General Mission Offering to be collected Coffee Hour following worship in Fellowship Hall Worship and Music Team meeting after Coffee Hour The Chosen 5:30, including potluck supper
Monday, November 17	Rev. John's Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Mah Jongg 6:00 – 8:30pm
Tuesday, November 18	Rev. John's Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Sheepscot Valley Chorus 7:00pm in Fellowship Hall
Wednesday, November 19	Rev. John's Office Hours 9:00am – 10:00am Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Organ Society Meeting 9:30am Feed Our Scholars packing 11:00am in the activity room Upstairs Book Study 4pm – 5:30pm in the parlor Church Council via Zoom 6:30pm
Thursday, November 20	Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm
Sunday, November 23	Choir Practice 8:10am Sunday Worship 10:00am Stewardship Sunday – offering of pledge cards The Chosen 5:30, including potluck supper



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