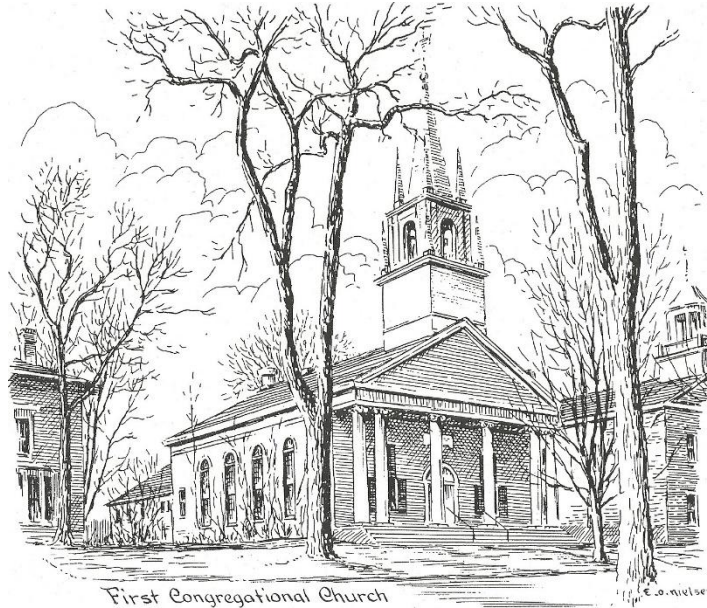


First Congregational Church
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
An Open and Affirming Church



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.

May 24, 2026

**PENTECOST SUNDAY, STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH OFFERING; MEMORIAL
SUNDAY**

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

Special Liturgy: Come, Holy Spirit (Based on the ancient prayer, “*Veni, Sancte Spiritus*”)

**Come, Holy Spirit. Open heaven and shine your light.
O God of the poor, giver of gifts, and light of our hearts, come.
Comforter, dwell with us and bring relief:
To the weary, you are rest, To the burning, you are refreshment,
To the grieving, you are peace.
O blessed light, enlighten our deepest hearts:
Without you, we are empty, our works, worthless.
Come pour your water, cleanse, refresh, and heal.
Come breathe your breath and shape, enliven, and correct.
Come, Holy Spirit, and unite, By your gifts gather us as one.
Lead us, O Spirit, on the pilgrims’ path,
Shining with your goodness As we climb to our heavenly home
And your joy without end. Amen.**

MORNING PRAYER, FOLLOWED BY SILENT PRAYER

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 *‘Holy Spirit, Come to Us’*

Taize

Holy Spirit, come to us. Kindle in us the fire of your love.

Holy Spirit, come to us. Holy Spirit, come to us.

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Acts 2:1-21

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, ‘Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?’

Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.’ All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’ But others sneered and said, ‘They are filled with new wine.’

Peter Addresses the Crowd

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: ‘Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: “In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

L: The Word of God

P: THANKS BE to GOD

* HYMN *‘Spirit of the Living God’* Red Hymnal No.281

SERMON *‘Wind in the Sails’*

OFFERTORY PRAYER

OFFERTORY *‘Come, Come Unto Me’* Ken Dosso

Come, come unto me, all you who are weary, all who are weak,
tired and lonely. Come, come unto me. Strong arms will enfold you, and lift you up.
Oh, come unto me.

Come, come unto me, bring me all your burdens. Show me your wounds and I'll soothe them.

Oh, come, come unto me. Come and drink, now of my goodness, and rest your soul.
Oh, come unto me.

All are invited; there's none who aren't welcome to know of my comfort and peace.
My arms are opened and my voice is calling to come, simply trust and believe.

Oh, come, come unto me. Live with me forever. All those who seek me will find me!

Oh, come, come unto me. Come and strong arms will enfold you, and lift you up.

Oh, come unto me. I'll lift you up, oh come unto me!

* 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 ‘*Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness*’

Black Hymnal No.286

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 He 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.**

POSTLUDE

‘*Great is the Lord!*’

arr. Smith/Husted

You are invited to sit for the postlude.

* * * * *

“Our worship ends, let our service begin”

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Those serving you today:

Ushers: Jan Shaw & Judith Sutter

Reader: Sarah Joyce

Flowers: Jan Shaw

Online Streaming: Dewey Harris

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 May Birthday to Ann Dunlevy, Angie Eddy, Sally Flesher, Jackie Lowell, Steve Whitfield

Help Yourself Shelf Wish List

* jarred spaghetti sauce * 1lb. white rice * drink mixes * canned chicken * tuna * * cereal
* SPAM * mayo * baked beans * toothpaste * dish soap * cat litter *

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Special thank you to everyone who helped adorn the sanctuary with red geraniums for Pentecost!

May 30th-Organ Society Clearance Sale & Purse Auction, including some “celebrity” purses, and bake table

May 31st- We will uplift Memorial Day on this Sunday

Special congregational meeting after worship

June 7th- Worship will receive new members into the life of the Church

Coming Up This Week

Monday, May 25 **MEMORIAL DAY (Office closed)**

Mah Jongg 6:00pm – 8:30pm

Tuesday, May 26

Rev. John’s Office Hours 9:00am-12:00pm

Office Hours 9:30am – 1:30pm

Wednesday, May 27

Rev. John’s Office Hours 9:00am-12:00pm

Office Hours 10:00am – 2:00pm

Feed Our Scholars packing 11:00am

Thursday, May 28

Rev. John’s Office Hours 9:00am-12:00pm

Office Hours 9:30am – 1:30pm

Saturday, May 30

Organ Society Purse Auction, Clearance Sale, and Bake Table-Begins at 9:00am,

Purse Auction starts at 10:00am

Sunday, May 31

Sunday Worship 10:00am

Coffee Hour in Fellowship Hall following worship

Special Congregational Meeting, also after worship

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

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Shining the Light of Christ
FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH
in the Heart of Wiscasset

10 Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!

1. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y!
 2. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! all the saints a - dore thee,
 3. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! though the dark-ness hide thee,
 4. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y!

Ear - ly in the morn - ing our song shall rise to thee;
 cast - ing down their gold - en crowns a - round the glass - y sea;
 though the sin - ful hu - man eye thy glo - ry may not see;
 All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea;

ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! mer - ci - ful and might - y;
 cher - u - bim and ser - a - phim fall - ing down be - fore thee,
 on - ly thou art ho - ly; there is none be - side thee,
 ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! mer - ci - ful and might - y;

God in three per - sons, bless - ed Trin - i - ty!
 God ev - er - liv - ing, through e - ter - ni - ty.
 per - fect in power, in love, and pur - i - ty.
 God in three per - sons, bless - ed Trin - i - ty!

WORDS: Reginald Heber, 1826, alt.
 MUSIC: John Bacchus Dykes, 1861

NICAEA
 11 12.12 10

Spirit of the Living God

Spir - it of the liv - ing God, fall a - fresh on me; Spir - it of the

The first system of music consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. It contains a melody with a repeat sign at the end. The lower staff is in bass clef and provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

liv - ing God, fall a - fresh on me. Melt me, mold me, fill me,

The second system continues the melody and accompaniment. The upper staff shows the vocal line with lyrics. The lower staff continues the accompaniment.

use me. Spir - it of the liv - ing God, fall a - fresh on me.

The third system concludes the piece. The upper staff shows the final vocal phrase. The lower staff provides the final accompaniment, ending with a double bar line.

Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness

James K. Manley, 1978; alt.

Unison, brightly

Refrain

D G A Dsus4 D

Spir - it, spir - it of gen - tle-ness, blow through the

Bm E7 Asus7 A7

wil - der-ness, call - ing and free,

D G A Dsus4 D

Spir - it, spir - it of rest - less-ness, stir me from

Bm G A7 D G D

Last time, end

plac - id-ness, wind, wind on the sea.

D G A G

1 You moved on the wa - ters, you called to the
 2 You swept through the des - ert, you stung with the
 3 You sang in a sta - ble, you cried from a
 4 You call from to - mor - row, you break an - cient

*Reduced-size notes may be played with organ pedals in lieu of or in combination with the other notes.

'The Wind Sails' Acts 2:1-21

Rev. John Hogue

May 24, 2026

Pentecost. The birth of the church. The day the Holy Spirit descends on the church, cutting us loose. The day that sets us free leaving us to lead us to God. What a strange day Pentecost turned into a babel of tongues. The Greek word for tongues is 'glossolalia'. The best way to describe it was a strange way of people speaking in a weird, wonderful way. Peter storms out and says 'Drunk' At ten in the morning, how could we be drunk?"

With all respect and professionalism, I mean to say in truth we in the mainline church don't quite understand the gifts of the Holy Spirit. If anything, if I say so politely, the mainline church is spiritually dead. We are descended from the European model of worship. While there is nothing wrong with our style of worship, we tend to push on the fray of spiritual decline. During COVID, 1/3 of the smaller UCC congregations folded. Gone. Closed doors. The Spirit is the invisible activity of God, it is the invisible activity and strength of God that breathes and blows where it wills like the wind on the sails of a sailboat.

Beloved, A true story. A certain church had seen better days. Paint peeled from the walls, the roof leaked during heavy rain, and on a good Sunday maybe 8 people sat scattered across pews built for two hundred. The congregation was aging, tired, and quietly wondering if it was time to close the doors. One Pentecost Sunday, the pastor prepared a fiery sermon about the Holy Spirit coming like wind and fire. He was ready to preach with all the energy he could muster, though privately he felt as weary as everyone else. That morning, just before worship began, the power went out. No lights. No microphones. No organ. At first people groaned. One member muttered, "Well, maybe this is a sign we should all go home." But instead of leaving, someone opened the sanctuary windows. And suddenly, as if on cue, a strong wind blew in from outside. The candles on the altar flickered wildly. Papers flew off the pulpit. Hats nearly blew off heads. One child squealed, "Look! It's like the Bible!" People laughed—real laughter, the kind they hadn't heard in church for months. Without electricity, they sang a cappella. Without microphones, they leaned closer to hear each other. Without all the usual structure, something unusual happened: people actually talked after worship. A widow confessed her loneliness. A laid-off worker admitted his fear. A teenager shared she was leaving for college and was terrified. People prayed

for one another right there in the aisle. By the end of the morning, nobody remembered the ruined sermon.

But everyone remembered the Spirit. Not because it was dramatic. Not because there were literal flames dancing above their heads. But because for one holy moment, they realized church was never about the building, the program, or even having the lights on.

The church was people being awakened by God. That's Pentecost.

Pentecost is not God decorating the church with spiritual fireworks. Pentecost is God interrupting business as usual. The disciples in Acts were hiding behind locked doors of fear, uncertainty, and grief. Jesus had ascended. The future was unclear. They were probably asking, "Now what?" Then suddenly—Luke loves that word—suddenly there came a sound like a rushing mighty wind. Not a polite breeze. Not a gentle suggestion.

A holy disruption. Because the Spirit rarely asks permission before showing up.

The Spirit barges into fearful hearts, tired churches, discouraged people, and says:

"Move over. God is not finished yet." That's good news for us. Pentecost is God's holy disruption. In the rushing wind and tongues of fire, the Spirit breaks open locked rooms, frightened hearts, and tired imaginations. The disciples who once hid behind closed doors are thrust into the streets with courage, conviction, and a new language of love that crosses every barrier of culture, fear, and division. The vision of Pentecost is that the church is never meant to be a museum preserving yesterday's ashes, but a living fire carrying God's hope into the world. Wherever the Spirit moves, old assumptions are challenged, dry bones stir, and what seemed impossible suddenly becomes imaginable.

For the church today, Pentecost calls us beyond maintenance into mission, beyond comfort into courage, and beyond nostalgia into holy creativity. The same Spirit that birthed the early church is still whispering, "Behold, I am doing a new thing." This means daring to imagine ministries not yet tried, relationships not yet built, justice not yet realized, and communities not yet welcomed. Pentecost reminds the church that our future is not secured by clinging tighter to what was, but by opening wider to what God is creating now. When the Spirit falls, ordinary people become bold witnesses, scattered communities become beloved families, and the church rediscovers that its greatest days are not behind it, but still unfolding in the power of God.

Beloved, we will engage in information at our congregational meeting next week about vitality. Ways to 'Do a new thing'. As your Pastor and Teacher and as I was asked by the former Search team, we need some kind of 'movement' or 'Shake things up'. I am not here to collect time and look to retirement. I am going to use every fiber of my being to help this congregation to keep from becoming a statistic. I need your help. We need the Holy Spirit to 'do a new thing'. I will be bringing up suggestions for concrete proven ways that other churches have turned themselves around. However, there is a fundamental underlying spiritual grounding that needs to arise. When I went through the most disheartening and lowest moments of my life in losing 11 family members within one year, it was only when I sought God in my weakest moment, the Holy Spirit literally rushed in around me. I was transformed. I was energized. I felt the presence of God. Maybe your soul feels like that little church—worn thin, roof leaking, paint peeling, wondering if there's enough strength left to keep going. Maybe your faith feels more maintenance than miracle. Pentecost says: open the windows. Let the wind in. I am not seeking high energy worship services. Just something to liven the place up. Make people feel and see, 'Wow that was uplifting!' You do not have to manufacture the Spirit. You only have to make room. Here's the beautiful irony: the disciples were not sent out after they had all the answers. They were sent out while still confused. That being said, I have no idea what the future may lead us but we need to do something. Let the spirit guide us!

Peter, who couldn't even get through the events of Holy Week without denying Jesus three times, suddenly becomes bold enough to preach to thousands. That's the Spirit. The same Peter who once folded under pressure now unfolds into purpose. Because Pentecost is what happens when ordinary people become available to extraordinary grace. The church was born not from strategy, but from surrender. Not from certainty, but from openness. Not from perfection, but from power. That power wasn't given so the disciples could feel spiritually impressive. It was given so they could love boldly, welcome radically, and speak hope in languages people could actually understand. That may be the greatest miracle of Pentecost—not tongues of fire, but understandable love. A church is most Spirit-filled not when it is loudest, but when people hear God's love in their own language of need. The lonely hear companionship. The grieving hear comfort. The doubting here is welcome. No matter who you are, where you have been, you are welcome here. The weary hear hope. That is Pentecost.

Our lives are interwoven together. Whatever God intends for us is part of our story to tell into the future. When this church was founded in 1773, it faced the onslaught of an uncertain future as our Republic was born and faced the British Empire. We survived. The Embargo Act of 1807 devastated Wiscasset's bustling maritime economy by halting all foreign trade. As the chief shipping port east of Boston, the sudden ban on exports stranded dozens of merchant vessels, bankrupting local shipowners. The 14-month embargo drove the movement to succeed from the state of Massachusetts in 1820. From sending people in the Civil War, WWI, II, Vietnam and economic depression to the church fire in 1907, the church rose to the challenges. Today in 2026, we need to rely on the living and trustworthy God to lead us in transformation and let our story unfold. Even my favorite theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran Minister who challenged Adolf Hitler's regime of hatred, power and senseless atrocities and even attempted to assassinate him in order to serve the greater good, died in prison from the Nazi regime. While he failed, he said, "God can and will bring out our failures even out of evil actions which God is able to redemptively utilize." I am not sure what holds the future for this church. Some people say—"Oh it's not good. It's bleak." It may feel like a failure. Well, God knows a great deal about failures. Faith is seeking the ultimate challenge to complete in any circumstances, right up to the final breath. What I am certain of is that I am in this with every breath of my being to help this congregation to thrive and steer into the future. I am in this for the long haul. Let us grapple together with how we can utilize our imaginations and creativity together. Then envision what we see in 2056 and how God can use us in this context.

So today, maybe the question and statement is simple- I hope the Green church you are listening to for this message is for you as well. What windows in your life need opening? What locked room have you been sitting in too long? What fear has convinced you that the story is over? Because Pentecost reminds us: God specializes in entering closed spaces. God doesn't want our faith to be pusillanimous. That is to say, lack of courage. No locked door can keep out the holy wind. No exhausted church is beyond revival. No discouraged heart is beyond renewal. The Spirit still blows. Still surprises. Still startles sleepy disciples awake. Still whispers, and sometimes shouts—"Behold, I am doing a new thing." So open the windows. **Let the wind find you.**