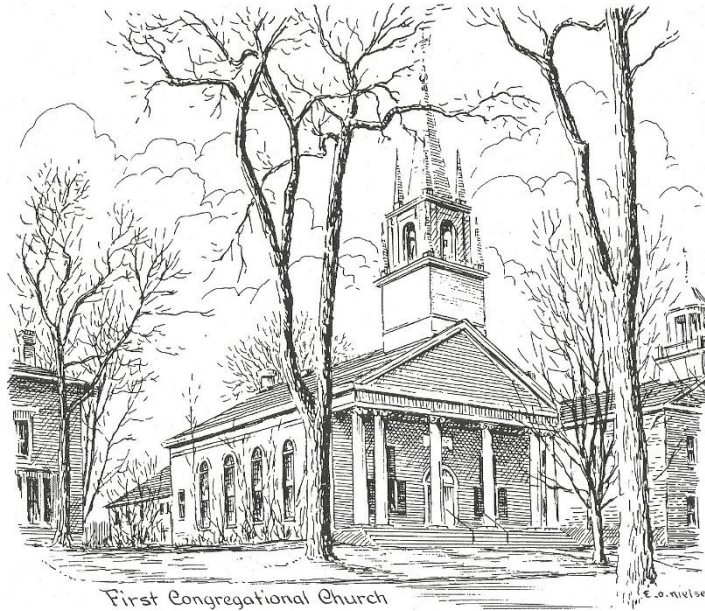


First Congregational Church  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
*An Open and Affirming Church*



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.*

EASTER SUNDAY- APRIL 5. 2026

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

Spiritual Contemplation Quote for the week: "The great gift of Easter is hope – Christian hope which makes us have that confidence in God, in his ultimate triumph, and in his goodness and love, which nothing can shake." — Leila Grandemange

PRELUDE *Easter Fanfare on Der Grab ist leer, der Held erwacht* Paul Fey

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Choral Introit** *Alleluia, Alleluia, Give Thanks to the Risen Lord*

\* CALL TO WORSHIP (BASED ON PSALM 30)

L: This is the day

**All: hope tiptoes us awake; light guides us through the shadows.**

L: This is the day the Lord

**All: plants joy in our winter hearts; drowns out despair's cries with laughter.**

L: This is the day the Lord has made

**All: the day grace does cartwheels in graveyards; resurrection wonder outshines the brightest sun; an empty tomb fills us with good news.**

L: You have turned our mourning into dancing!

**All: You have taken away our funeral clothes and re-clothed us in joy,**

L: so that our whole being—body, mind and soul—might sing praise to you and not be silent.

**ALL: O God, we will give thanks to you forever!**

\* PROCESSIONAL HYMN *'Christ the Lord Is Risen Today'* No.205

OPENING INVOCATION TO PRAYER

**As we gather to celebrate, we ask that You send Your Spirit to fill this place. Remove our fear and replace it with resurrection life. Open our hearts to the joy of this day, that we may be transformed by Your love and power. He is Risen! [Response: He is Risen Indeed!] . Amen."**

SPIRITUAL NUGGET: **Tea Bag Gospel**

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: Japan

MORNING PRAYER

SILENT MOMENTS FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

**Choral Anthem** *Alleluia! Christ Is Risen* Gordon Young

SCRIPTURE LESSON **John 20:1-18**

\* HYMN *‘Morning Has Broken’* No. 258

SERMON **‘When the Tide Turns’**

HYMN *‘I Come to the Garden’* (Insert) No. 237

OFFERTORY PRAYER

CHORAL OFFERTORY *Hallelujah Chorus G.F.Handel* (All are invited)

\* 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

**Sacrament of Eucharist**

**Welcome**

**Great Prayer of Thanksgiving**

L: May the resurrection of God be with you!

**All: And also with you!**

L: This is the day to offer yourselves to God.

**All: We open our hearts to the One who fills them with grace.**

L: Join in the glad songs of all creation this day.

**All: Our voices praise the One who opens the gates of life.**

## **Unison Prayer for Forgiveness**

**We come on this day, walking through the shadows of our lives. Too often, we believe our foolishness is hidden from you; too often, we stand before the open door of hope, wondering if we dare enter. Uncertain of the good news offered to us, we would rather return to the comfort of our familiar ways rather than trusting in you. Yet you come, as persistent as Mary at the tomb, Joy of our hearts, to open the gates of hope, so we might walk in the gardens of hope; you come, to open the gates of grace, so we might plant peace in the wilderness of the world; you come, to open the gates of resurrection, so we might know our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.**

Silence is kept.

### **Assurance of Pardon**

This is the day of resurrection and new life. This is the day God offers us steadfast hope and love which will never end.

We will sing and dance on this day! We will rejoice and give thanks to the God who saves us. Amen.

### **Eucharistic Prayer**

As we stand before the empty tomb,  
celebrating the great news of this day,  
we would have that faith which is a mystery:

**Christ died, so sin could not hold on to us;  
Christ was raised, so death could not hold on to him;  
Christ will come, to hold us in steadfast love and hope.**

### **Continued Eucharistic 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**

*Sevenfold Amen*

**Words of Institution**

**Sharing of the Bread and the Juice**

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**Commissioning**

\* CLOSING HYMN

*'In the Bulb There is a Flower'*

No. 493

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.**

POSTLUDE

*Toccata in C Major*

Percy Fletcher

*You are invited to sit for the postlude.*

\* \* \* \* \*

**“Our worship ends, let our service begin”**

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***Minister and Teacher:*** Rev. John Hogue

***Music Director:*** Joel Pierce

**Those serving you today:**

***Ushers:*** Sarah Joyce & Mary McKinney

***Reader:*** Angie Eddy

***Flowers:*** FCCW Congregation

***Online Streaming:*** Jenny Surgenor

## **John 20:1-18 The Resurrection of Jesus**

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus's head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed, for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

### **Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene**

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb, and she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not touch me, because I have not yet ascended to the

Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’ ” Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord,” and she told them that he had said these things to her.

This is the Word of God. People: **Thanks be to God.**

**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.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Happy April Birthday** to Anne Harris, Harriet Matthey, Meg Skidmore, Linda Wallace & Susan Zimmerman

#### **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 \*

#### **April 19th Auction**

Donations for April 19th Auction

Got a talent to share or a hidden treasure in your closet? We’re looking for high-quality items and unique experiences for our upcoming church auction! From themed gift baskets to home-baked treats, to gift cards to your favorite restaurant, your generosity helps us fundraise! Please fill out this form if you'd like to donate: <https://forms.gle/r5ver4fF9i6Xwwhh7>

For any questions contact Sarah Whitfield ([sarahmariewhitfield@gmail.com](mailto:sarahmariewhitfield@gmail.com)) or Lisa Hargreaves ([runawaylisah@gmail.com](mailto:runawaylisah@gmail.com))

#### **Church World Service (CWS) Kit Program**

Please complete and return all kits to church by **Sunday, April 19.**

If you have questions, please contact the CWS Team:

Sally Howe, Joan Shea, Anne Harris, Ann Crispin & Nancy Roby.

## **Hawaii Flooding**

As noted in Chimes, Hawaii is experiencing two significant Kona storms, causing relentless flooding throughout the Hawaiian Islands. The UCC Global HOPE team is actively working with our siblings at the Hawaii Conference to link them with immediate response resources to try to lessen the impact of this unimaginable loss for our congregations. We are accepting donations for this emergency.

## **Coming Up This Week**

Monday, April 6

Rev. John Off

Office Hours 9:30am – 1:30pm

**Mah Jongg New Hours 6:00 – 8:30pm**

Faith Development Meeting 6:30pm

Tuesday, April 7

Rev. John's Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm

Office Hours 9:30am – 1:30pm

Wednesday, April 8

Rev. John's Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm

Office Hours 10:00am – 2:00pm

Organ Society 9:30am

Feed Our Scholars packing 11:00am

Thursday, April 9

Garden Club Event- Nocturnal Pools 6:00pm

Church Council Meeting 6:30pm

Sunday, April 12

Sunday Worship 10:00am

Coffee Hour in Fellowship Hall following Worship

First Congregational Church UCC

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

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revjohnwiscassetucc@gmail.com

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Music Director: Joel Pierce

Sexton: Mary McKinney

Office Administrator: Hilary Atwood

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## **John 20:1-18 ‘When the Tide Turns’ Easter Sermon April 5, 2026**

This is a true story of psychological study of identical twins. One twin was a hope filled optimist—who always replied ‘ ‘Everything is coming up roses !’ The other twin was a hopeless pessimist. He was certain that Murphy, as in Murphy’s Law, was an optimist. The worried parents brought them to a renowned psychologist, who suggested on their next birthday, to balance their personalities. Put them in separate rooms to open their gifts. Give the pessimist the best toys you can afford and the optimist a box of manure. The parents followed these instructions very carefully. The parents peeked in the pessimist son and heard him say- “I don't like the color of this computer,” ‘I bet this calculator will break,’ “I don't like this game”, “ I know someone who has a bigger car than mine.” Parents tip toe to the next room, little optimist was throwing manure up in the air. He was giggling, ‘You can’t fool me! Where there is so much manure, there has to be a pony.’”

Regardless of your perception of life, there is still the reality of a certain kind of fear one only understands if you’ve lived through a Maine winter storm. You go to bed with the wind howling off the coast, the house creaking, and the power flickering just enough to make you nervous. Sometime in the night, everything goes quiet—but not peaceful quiet... that eerie, heavy quiet. You wake up before dawn, pull on your boots, and open the door. Then there it is.

Snow piled higher than you expected. Branches down. Maybe a tree across the road. And for a moment, you just stand there thinking, “How am I going to get through this?”

That’s the feeling of Easter morning in our story. Not bright lilies and brass music—not at first. It starts in the dark...with fear... with obstacles... with hearts that feel like they’ve been buried. The women were afraid. The women come to the tomb carrying spices—not hope. They are not expecting resurrection. They are expecting death to still be in charge.

The Gospels tell us plainly: they were afraid. Honestly, who wouldn’t be?

- Their teacher was executed
- Their future uncertain
- Their world shattered

Fear shows up when what we trusted collapses.

We know that kind of fear.

- The diagnosis you didn't see coming
- The relationship that broke apart
- The church worry that keeps you up at night
- The quiet fear that things won't get better

Fear is real. Easter doesn't deny it. It meets us right in it.

On the way to the tomb, they ask the question that echoes in every human heart: "Who will roll away the stone?"

That stone wasn't just physical. It also represents an analogy of bigger things in our lives. It represents-

- Finality
- Hopelessness
- A barrier they couldn't move on their own

Here's the truth: Most of our stones are too big for us too.

If you've ever tried moving one of those old glacial rocks in your yard—you know the kind. Looks manageable until you put a shovel under it. It doesn't budge. You get a neighbor, then another... still nothing. Some stones are just too big.

Life has stones like that:

- Addiction
- Grief that lingers
- Guilt you can't shake
- Systems and situations bigger than you

We walk toward them anyway, asking, "Who's going to move this?" Sometimes we humans are our own worst enemy. Share with you about a man called Ben. He died last year. We all know a person like Ben and may even be Ben. Ben was 76 years old and had been a widow for 2 years. He was alert, intelligent, healthy and desperately unhappy.

In the Spring last year, Ben took a nasty fall. Doctors felt his injuries were not that serious but three days later he was dead. The conclusion by a number of people who knew Ben, was that he has quit living. He chose to no longer cling to hope. Ben did not die from the fall, he died of acute loneliness. Ben had no will to live because his days were empty.

Perhaps the saddest part of this story is that Ben chose loneliness. After the death of his wife, his family and friends constantly invited him to get out and get involved. He was invited on trips, invited to join clubs. He was invited to dinners. His response?? “I do not want to have anything to do with crippled old fools.” That is his explanation of giving rejection. Yet, in his next breath, he would lament his loneliness. Ben’s prison of isolation was erected brick by brick with his own hand.

Here’s the turning point that is the same for our spiritual lives. When the women arrive... the stone is already moved.

God has already been at work before they even got there. They didn’t roll it away. They didn’t solve the problem. They didn’t fix the ending.

God did. Notice something important:

The stone wasn’t rolled away so Jesus could get out. It was rolled away so they could see in. Inside the tomb, they hear the words that change everything: “Do not be afraid... He is risen.” That’s the heartbeat of Easter.

Not:

- “Try harder”
- “Fix yourself”
- “Be less broken”

But:

- Death doesn’t win
- Fear doesn’t get the last word
- Brokenness is not the end of your story

This is a true story of a College girl flying home from Pittsburgh, PA. She stared out the plane window at the green countryside below, her heart was heavy, tears were in her eyes. She was a student returning home for the Easter holidays. Her first year in college was nearly over and it was a disaster. She was convinced that life no longer held any real meaning for her. Her only ray of happiness lay in the fact that she would soon see the ocean, which she loved dearly. As the plane touched down on the runway, the girl wondered what kind of Easter vacation was possible after a difficult time in college. Her grandmother met her at the gate. The two of them drove home in complete silence. As they pulled into the driveway, the girl's only thought was getting to the ocean. It was well past midnight when she arrived at the beach. What happens next? She just sat in the moonlight watching the waves roll up on the beach. Slowly, the first disastrous year passed before her eyes, day by day, week by week, month by month. Then her whole experience fell into place. It was over and passed. She could forget about it forever, but at the same time she didn't want to forget it. The next thing she knew, the sun was rising in the east. As it did, she sensed her feelings to peak, just as a wave peaks before it breaks. That morning, that young girl arose. It was as if her mind, heart, body were drawing strength from the ocean. All of her old goals, dreams and enthusiasm came rushing back stronger than ever. She rose with the sun, got into her car and headed for home.

After her Easter vacation, the girl returned to college and picked up the broken piece of her first year and fitted them back together again. In the short span of Easter vacation, that girl died and rose again. For the first time in her life, she understood the practical meaning of Easter. The women in our scripture struggle. They tremble. They are amazed. They are unsure. Because resurrection is hard to believe when you've lived too long on Friday.

After any Maine big storm, there's always that moment. You've been digging out for hours. Snowbanks everywhere. Roads are barely passable. Then suddenly... the clouds break. Sunlight hits the snow, and everything sparkles. Drips start from the roof. You hear water running again. Life starts moving.

Nothing changed instantly—but everything changed decisively.

That's resurrection. Not denial of the storm. Not pretending winter didn't happen. But the unmistakable sign: Winter does not have the final say.

What Does This Means for Us? Easter speaks directly into our lives:

To our fear: You may still feel it—but it doesn't define the ending.

To our obstacles: Some stones you can't move... but God already has.

To our brokenness: What feels final... isn't final anymore.

There's something about early morning on the Maine coast.

Before the tourists. Before the noise. Just the sound of waves... and that first light breaking over the water. You stand there, and it reminds you: No matter how long the night... Morning always comes.

Maybe you walked in today carrying fear. Maybe you're staring at a stone that won't budge. Maybe something in your life feels buried. Easter doesn't say, "Ignore it." Easter says: Go to the tomb anyway.

Walk toward the fear anyway. Bring your questions anyway. Because when you get there... You just might find the stone has already moved.

The stone shifted around 1930, Communist leader Bukharin journeyed from Moscow to Kiev, Ukraine. His mission - address a large crowd . His subject? Atheism. For one solid hour is attacked Christianity- hurling argument after argument and ridicule. Finally he was finished, and what seemed to be smoldering ash of humanity's faith. ' Are there any questions, Bukharin asked?' A man rose to the platform and asked permission to speak. Moved close to the communist. Look from the right to the left, then left to the right. He shouted the ancient Orthodox Greeting 'CHRIST IS RISEN!' The entire assembly rose and what sounded like an avalanche - 'He is RISEN INDEED.'

1. Christ the Lord is risen to - day,  
 2. Lives a - gain our glo - rious King,  
 3. Love's re - deem - ing work is done, Al - - le - lu - ia!  
 4. Soar we now where Christ has led,  
 5. Hail the Lord of earth and heaven!

Mor - tal tongues and an - gels say:  
 Where, O death, is now thy sting?  
 Fought the fight, the bat - tle won, Al - - le - lu - ia!  
 Fol - lowing our ex - alt - ed Head,  
 Praise to thee by both be given,

Raise your joys and tri - umphs high,  
 Dy - ing once, he all doth save,  
 Death in vain for - bids him rise, Al - - le - lu - ia!  
 Made like him, like him we rise,  
 Thee we greet tri - umphant now,

Sing, ye heavens, and earth re - ply:  
 Where thy vic - to - ry, O grave?  
 Christ has o - pened Par - a - dise, Al - - le - lu - ia!  
 Ours the cross, the grave, the skies,  
 Hail, the Res - ur - rec - tion thou!

# Morning Has Broken

258

1. Morn - ing has bro - ken like the first morn - ing, black-bird has  
 2. Sweet the rain's new fall sun - lit from heav - en, like the first  
 3. Mine is the sun - light! Mine is the morn - ing born of the

spo - ken like the first bird. Praise for the sing - ing!  
 dew - fall on the first grass. Praise for the sweet - ness  
 one light E - den saw play! Praise with e - la - tion,

Praise for the morn - ing! Praise for them, spring - ing fresh from the Word!  
 of the wet gar - den, sprung in com - plete - ness where his feet pass.  
 praise ev - ery morn - ing, God's re - cre - a - tion of the new day!

WORDS: Eleanor Farjeon, *Enlarged Songs of Praise*, 1931  
 MUSIC: Traditional Gaelic melody, harm. David Evans, *Revised Church Hymnary*, 1927

BUNESSAN  
 55.54D

## I Come to the Garden Alone

(In the Garden)

John 20:14-18

C. Austin Miles, 1912

1 I come to the gar - den a - lone, while the dew is still on the  
 2 He speaks, and the sound of his voice is so sweet the birds hush their  
 3 I'd stay in the gar - den with him, though the night a - round me be

ros - es; And the voice I hear, fall - ing on my ear, the  
 sing - ing; And the mel - o - dy that he gave to me with -  
 fall - ing; But he bids me go; through the voice of woe his

*Refrain*  
 Son of God dis - clos - es.  
 in my heart is ring - ing. And he walks with me, and he  
 voice to me is call - ing.

talks with me, and he tells me I am his own, And the

joy we share as we tar - ry there, none oth - er has ev - er known.

C. Austin Miles wrote this hymn and its music to tell the story of Mary Magdalene's encounter with Jesus at the tomb, when she recognizes him and calls him "Rabboni" ("Teacher").

Tune: GARDEN 8.9.5.5.7. with refrain  
 C. Austin Miles, 1912

# In the Bulb There Is a Flower

493

*Unison*

1. In the bulb there is a flow - er; in the seed, an ap - ple tree;  
2. There's a song in ev - ery si - lence, seek - ing word and mel - o - dy;  
3. In our end is our be - gin - ning; in our time, in - fin - i - ty;

in co - coons, a hid - den prom - ise; but - ter - flies will soon be free!  
there's a dawn in ev - ery dark - ness, bring - ing hope to you and me.  
in our doubt there is be - liev - ing; in our life, e - ter - ni - ty.

In the cold and snow of win - ter there's a spring that waits to be,  
From the past will come the fu - ture; what it holds, a mys - ter - y,  
In our death, a res - ur - rec - tion; at the last, a vic - to - ry,

un - re - vealed un - til its sea - son, some - thing God a - lone can see.

WORDS and MUSIC: Natalie Sleeth, 1986

PROMISE  
87.87D

Sleeth was a well-known author/composer of numerous anthems for children and adults.  
This hymn was dedicated to her husband, Methodist minister Ronald Sleeth.

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