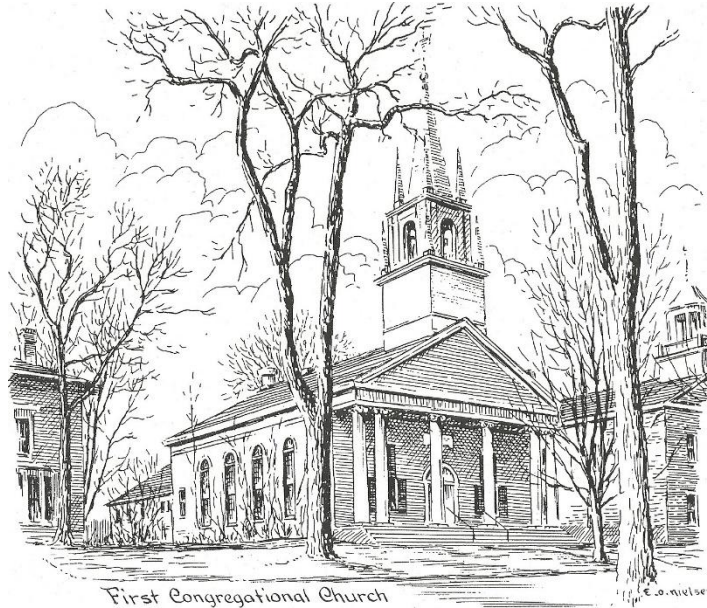


First Congregational Church
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
An Open and Affirming Church



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 10, 2026

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

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

Come and fill our hearts with your peace.
You alone, O Lord, are holy.
Come and fill our hearts with your peace. Alleluia.

SCRIPTURE LESSON John 14:15-21

* HYMN *'Sweet, Sweet Spirit'* Black NCH Hymnal No.293

SERMON **'You are Not Left Hanging'**

OFFERTORY PRAYER

OFFERTORY *'I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light'* Kathleen Thomerson

I want to walk as a child of the Light, I want to follow Jesus.
God set the stars to give light to the world, the star of my life is Jesus.
Refrain: In Him there is no darkness at all, the night and the day are both alike.
 The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.
I want to see the brightness of God. I want to look at Jesus.
Clear sun of righteousness, shine on my path, and show me the way to the Father.
Refrain
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus

* 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 *'What A friend We Have In Jesus'* Red Hymnal No.442

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.**

John 14:15-21: The Promise of the Holy Spirit

'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. 'I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me;

because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.’

POSTLUDE

‘Toccata in D-Major’

Robert Lau

You are invited to sit for the postlude.

* * * * *

“Our worship ends, let our service begin”

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Those serving you today:

Ushers: FCCW Youth Group

Reader: Sarah Joyce

Flowers: Ron Sanchez

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, 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

May 10th - Red Geranium orders available for **Pentecost Sunday (May 24th)**

May 17th - Rev. John's Installation 3:00pm

May 18th - Rev. John in Mexico, ME. for funeral. Out of the office.

May 19th - May 21st - Rev. John will be attending Maine Clergy UCC Convocation in Augusta

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

May 31st-By-law congregational meeting after worship

Coming Up This Week

Monday, May 11

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

Office Hours 9:30am – 1:30pm

Property & Finance Meeting 11:00am

Mah Jongg 6:00pm – 8:30pm

Tuesday, May 12

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

Office Hours 9:30am – 1:30pm

Council Meeting 6:30pm

Wednesday, May 13

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

Office Hours 10:00am – 2:00pm

Organ Society 9:30am (Last Meet-up until Sept.)

Feed Our Scholars packing 11:00am

Rev. John Community of Practice ZOOM 1:30-3:30pm

Sunday, May 17

Sunday Worship 10:00am

Coffee Hour in Fellowship Hall following worship

Outreach Team Meeting after worship

Reverend John's Installation 3:00pm



First Congregational Church UCC
PO Box 350, 28 High Street, Wiscasset, ME 04578

Minister and Teacher: Rev. John Hogue
revjohnwiscassetucc@gmail.com
Pastoral Care – 207 955-0055

Music Director: Joel Pierce
Sexton: Mary McKinney
Office Administrator: Hilary Atwood

Church Office Email – fccw@myfairpoint.net
Church Office Phone – 207 882-7544
Church Website – www.uccwiscasset.org



‘You’re Not Left Hanging: Help Is on the Way’

May 10, 2026 Rev. John Hogue

There are few worse feelings than being left behind. You know that moment when you’re at the grocery store with your spouse, and suddenly you look up from comparing peanut butter prices—and they’re gone. You panic. You start walking faster. You pretend you’re calm, but internally it’s a full spiritual crisis. “God, if I perish here by the frozen foods, tell my family I loved them.” Then suddenly you spot them three aisles over casually examining yogurt like they didn’t just abandon you.

That tiny panic is what the disciples are feeling in this text. Jesus has been telling them hard truths: “I’m leaving.” “You can’t come right now.” “Things are about to get rough.” The disciples are basically saying, “Excuse me, God...what do you mean you’re leaving? We quit our jobs for this.” Peter is thinking, “This was not in the brochure.” But Jesus knows their anxiety. He knows their hearts are trembling. So He gives them one of the most encouraging promises in all Scripture: “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come

to you.” (v.18) In other words: “You are not abandoned. You are not forgotten. You are not left hanging.” That’s good news for disciples then—and for us now.

Because life can feel like abandonment sometimes. A diagnosis comes. A relationship ends. A church changes. A dream dies. A loved one Passes. We quietly ask: “God, where are you?” Jesus answers: “I am still here.” Not always obvious. Not always loud. Not always according to our preferred schedule. But present. Always present.

Some of the key encouragement takeaways from this text are:

- Failure is not fatal; but it is often part of the journey of learning and success.
- We Don't Wait for Perfect Moments, we start where you are with what you have.
- Life's problems are like a river; you must face them and move forward rather than waiting for them to disappear.
- Partnering with others, we value community and turn struggles into opportunity.

The value of community surfaced in the midst of a technological challenge. This happened in the recent Buffalo Sabres hockey game. In Game 5 of Stanley Cup playoffs in Buffalo, singer Cami Clune stepped in to perform ‘O Canada’ when her microphone was cut out. In most arenas that might have meant awkward silence and a quick move on. Not in Buffalo. Thousands of American fans immediately picked up where she left off. They belted out every word in unison and leaving players on both benches visibility moved. Clune told CBS news it was a cool community moment that gave her the chills. It wasn't a total surprise to anyone who knows Buffalo. The Sabres have played both national anthems before the game since 1970, honoring the tradition for thousands of Canadians who traveled to the US to watch the game. Kind of consistency that builds over time. Sabres lost that game but went on in overtime to win the series. Their first playoff series since 2007 but what is everyone talking about? The moment everyone sang together. You can watch it on YouTube.

Jesus reminds us over and over- “If you love me, keep my commandments.” Now let’s be honest—everyone likes saying they love Jesus. We put it on bumper stickers. Coffee mugs. Wall art written in suspiciously fancy cursive. But Jesus says love isn’t decorative. Love is demonstrated. Anybody can say “I love Jesus” on Sunday. The test comes Monday morning. Yes, even those people who drive 25 in a 50 on a perfectly good Maine road. God, give us strength. Christian love is not sentiment—it is obedience. Not because we’re earning love, but because we’ve received it. Do we forgive? Do we tell the truth? Do we love difficult people? This reminds me of the parable of a newly married couple.

A young couple moved into a new house. The next morning while they were eating breakfast, the young woman saw her neighbor hanging the washing outside. “That laundry is not very clean; she doesn’t know how to wash correctly. Perhaps she needs better detergent.” Her husband looked on, remaining silent. Every time her neighbor hung her washing out to dry, the young woman made the same comments. A month later, the young woman was surprised to see a nice clean wash on the line and said to her husband, “Look, she’s finally learned how to wash correctly. I wonder who taught her this?” The husband replied, “I got up early this morning and cleaned our windows.” So it is with life ... What we see when watching others depends on the clarity of the window through which we look. So don’t be too quick to judge others, especially if your perspective of life is clouded by anger, jealousy, negativity or unfulfilled desires. “Judging a person does not define who they are. It defines who you are.” Jesus said: “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate.” The Holy Spirit. Comforter. Helper. Advocate. Not temporary help. Not customer service that puts you on hold for 47 minutes. Real help. Now some of us act like the Christian life is meant to be lived entirely on our own strength. We say: “I’m just trying harder.” That works about as well as trying to push-start a snowblower with positive thinking. The Christian life was never designed as a solo project. God gives His Spirit. The Spirit comforts when grief overwhelms. Guides when decisions are confusing. Strengthens when faith feels thin. You are not expected to

muscle through life alone. That is deeply encouraging. Because some of us are tired. Being church tired. Being family is tiring. Being soul tired. This may be the tenderest verse in the bible: "I will not leave you as orphans." Orphans know instability. Uncertainty. Not knowing who's coming back. Jesus addresses that fear directly. Let's be honest: adulthood sometimes feels like spiritual 'playing it by ear.' However spiritually speaking, Jesus says: You belong. Not an orphan. Not abandoned. Not forgotten. Child of God. Claimed. Held. Loved. Even when circumstances suggest otherwise. How can a person claim spiritual maturity if we complain?

Reminds me of an illustration of a wise man who once faced a group of people who were complaining about the same issues over and over again. One day, instead of listening to the complaints, he told them a joke and everyone cracked up laughing. Then, the man repeated the joke. A few people smiled. Finally, the man repeated the joke a third time—but no one reacted. The man smiled and said, "You won't laugh at the same joke more than once. So what are you getting from continuing to complain about the same problem?" Another words, one is not going to get anywhere if you keep complaining about the same problem but doing nothing to fix it. Why waste your time complaining, expecting other people to continue to react to your complaints. Instead, take action to make a change. That is the love commandment in action; Love is the soap applied to our bodies.

I've always wished I had a superpower, with a stunning costume of course. No really. My superpower would be to be able to offer compassion in action. So if a robbery was taking place I would have the power to revert that instant compassion like a hug. But sadly, nobody has those powers. We don't choose the times we live in, but it's often the case that the times chooses us, to live out our faith, our resistance, and our healing. It is seldom, if ever, fun or easy. We have the capacity to make choices about what matters. We get to say how the story ends. Our story can be challenged from time to time. So we benefit and

grow from necessary periods of soul searching. Not to the extent of great pain. However, such moments do invite us to ask questions about things that truly matter.

Giving up our “dreams”—you know, about the way we think life “should” be—is not easy. But what if our dreams are not the only way to make the world a better place. We live in a world where it is tempting to buy into an image or role or model or persona that carries with it certain values. Values like to be powerful, to be impenetrable, to be bulletproof—but once given the opportunity to say “yes” or “no” to that image, we recognize that’s not who we are. With blessing, there’s an experience in our lives—a road to Damascus moment - where we can ask, “Is this who I am, and what I choose to honor?”

What we see as long as success is measured only by keeping score, or by being in control, it’s easy to lose track of most everything that makes us human. We can lose track of what it is to be glad to be alive. Such as small gestures of kindness. Acts of grace like inclusion or being a community to someone left out, or someone on the fringes.

Extending a hand of healing like empathy, or acceptance, or sanctuary to someone who hurts. We need to find and embrace our voice. That voice knowing that silence in order to not ruffle feathers or be silent takes a toll we do not need. We need to say “No” to acts of narrow-mindedness, inequality and meanness rests in moments of gratitude. Why not share laughter, a smile, camaraderie and dance for joy with God. Jesus never promised a life free of trouble. He did promise presence. He promised: “Because I live, you also will live.” That changes everything. So let us live. You may feel uncertain—but not abandoned. Grieving—but not alone. Confused—but not orphaned. Still we need to be alive with our faith!

So as a gift of surprise this morning as people of God, there is a delight awaiting you. During the offering, please take a bar of chocolate. Through delighting together in the many sacred moments and simple gifts of life. I realize life is not about the chocolate,

it's about the people we share it with. Please take a piece and remind yourself that every person is a sacred gift. Following Jesus can be an adventure in imagination that brings hope, delight, and beauty to the world. Every one of us can turn imagination into a tangible community of healing for our friends. The Holy Spirit is still moving. Love still has the final word. So when life feels like you've been left alone in aisle seven next to canned soup and existential dread— Remember: You are not left hanging for Jesus says: "I am with you still."

I remember not long ago when someone replied to me, "I'm just waiting for God to show me what God wants from me." Okay. But in the meantime, you know, until you have only this life. I have a suggestion: Live this day, with this self, without holding back. So today; utilize this one word encouraging spiritual phrases: savor, doubt, embrace, question, wrestle, give, risk, love, you fall down but get up, accept your incomplete and fractured self. Know that anything worth doing is worth doing badly, for we learn from our failures. Speak the truth from your whole heart, and whenever you can, lavish excessive compassion, mercy, healing, hope, second chances, grace, restoration, and kindness on anyone who crosses your path. Who knows, we may love one another into existence.

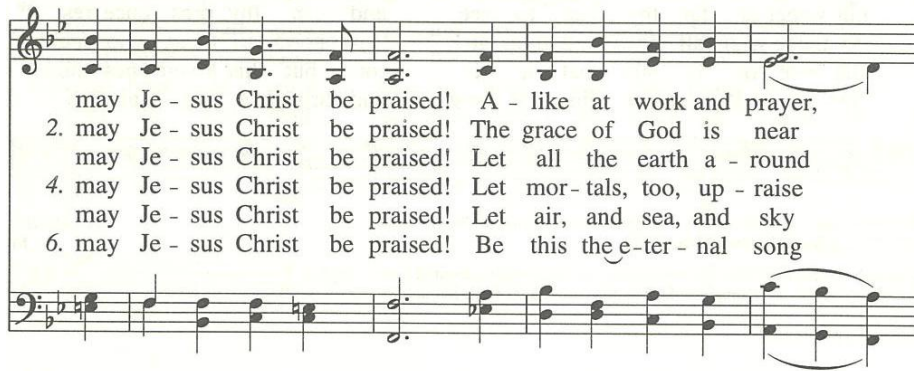
I'm sure God won't mind.

When Morning Gilds the Skies


111



1. When morn - ing gilds the skies, my heart a - wak - ing cries:
 2. The night be - comes as day, when from the heart we say:
 3. Dis - cor - dant hu - man - kind, in this your con - cord find:
 4. To God, the Word, on high, the hosts of an - gels cry:
 5. In heaven's e - ter - nal bliss the love - liest strain is this:
 6. Be this, while life is mine, my can - ti - cle di - vine:



may Je - sus Christ be praised! A - like at work and prayer,
 2. may Je - sus Christ be praised! The grace of God is near
 may Je - sus Christ be praised! Let all the earth a - round
 4. may Je - sus Christ be praised! Let mor - tals, too, up - raise
 may Je - sus Christ be praised! Let air, and sea, and sky
 6. may Je - sus Christ be praised! Be this the e - ter - nal song



I joy - ful - ly de - clare: may Je - sus Christ be praised!
 2. when this sweet chant we hear: may Je - sus Christ be praised!
 ring joy - ous with the sound: may Je - sus Christ be praised!
 4. their voice in hymns of praise: may Je - sus Christ be praised!
 from depth to height re - ply: may Je - sus Christ be praised!
 6. through all the a - ges long: may Je - sus Christ be praised!

WORDS: *Katholisches Gesangbuch*, Würzburg, 1828; tr. Edward Caswall, 1854, alt.
 MUSIC: Joseph Barnby, 1868

LAUDES DOMINI
 666.666

This German Catholic hymn text was brought to Protestants through the translation of Edward Caswall, an English convert to Catholicism.

PRAISE TO CHRIST

Cor. 3:17-5:5

Sweet, Sweet Spirit

Doris Akers, 1962; alt.

Slowly

1 There's a sweet, sweet Spir - it in this place, and I
2 There are bless - ings you can - not re - ceive till you

know that it's the Spir - it of the Lord; there are
know that Spir - it's full - ness and be - lieve; you're the

sweet ex - pres - sions on each face, and I
one to prof - it when you say, "I am

to Refrain

know they feel the pres - ence of the Lord.
going to stay with Je - sus all the way."

This is one of the most popular gospel songs from the corpus of

Tune: SWEET, SWEET SPIRIT
0 11 0 11 with refrain

Refrain

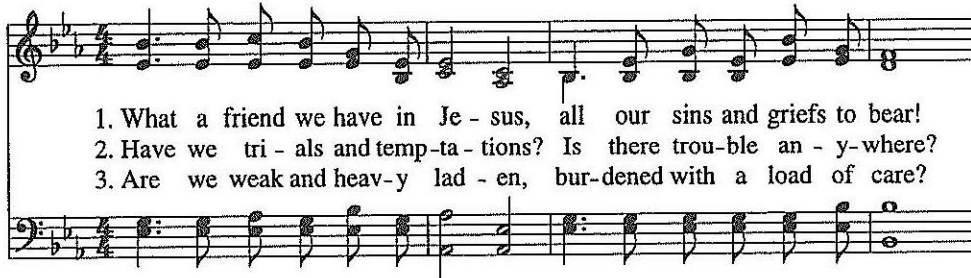
Sweet Ho - ly Spir - it, sweet heav - en - ly Dove, stay right here

with us, fill - ing us with your love; And for these bless - ings we

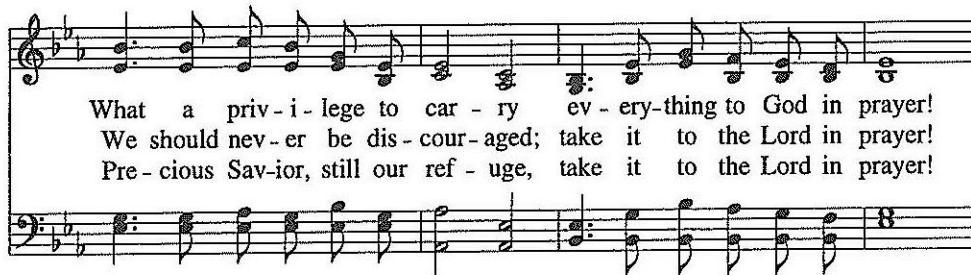
lift our hearts in praise. With - out a doubt we'll know that we have

been re - vived when we shall leave this place.

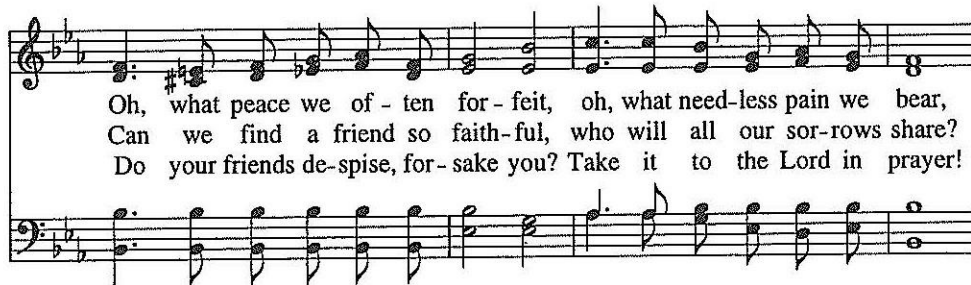
What a Friend We Have in Jesus



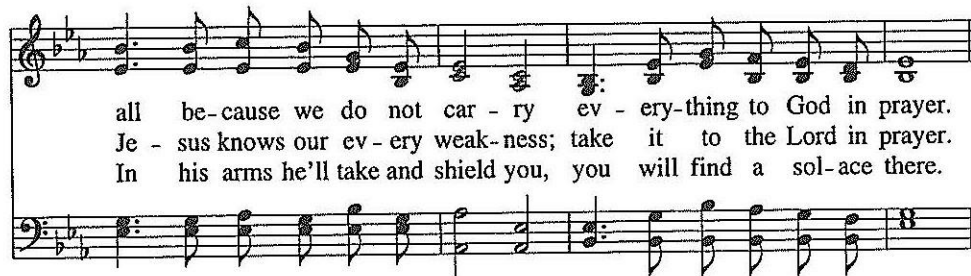
1. What a friend we have in Je - sus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
 2. Have we tri - als and temp-ta - tions? Is there trou-ble an - y-where?
 3. Are we weak and heav-y lad - en, bur-dened with a load of care?



What a priv-i - lege to car - ry ev - ery-thing to God in prayer!
 We should nev - er be dis - cour - aged; take it to the Lord in prayer!
 Pre - cious Sav-ior, still our ref - uge, take it to the Lord in prayer!



Oh, what peace we of - ten for - feit, oh, what need-less pain we bear,
 Can we find a friend so faith-ful, who will all our sor-rows share?
 Do your friends de-spise, for - sake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer!



all be-cause we do not car - ry ev - ery-thing to God in prayer.
 Je - sus knows our ev - ery weak-ness; take it to the Lord in prayer.
 In his arms he'll take and shield you, you will find a sol-ace there.

WORDS: Joseph Scriven, 1855, alt.
 MUSIC: Charles C. Converse, 1868

ERIE
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