

*May 2023*



## The MEETING HOUSE CHIMES



First Congregational Church of Wiscasset, UCC  
28 High Street, Wiscasset, ME 04578  
(207) 882-7544

*Welcome to the May edition of the monthly Chimes*

"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." *Jeremiah 29:11*

From your Interim Pastor:

I am aware that our church has two very significant events happening in the next 6 months or so: the choosing of a settled pastor and the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the existence of this church. Both of these events will

evoke both memories and the reality of a very difficult word for any church: “change.” I hope I can offer some help by starting a series of sermons on what has been called “Adaptive Change: how our faith has changed throughout its history.” (There is one break in the series to pay observance to Mothers’ Day or The Family of the Christian Home.) To get us started, I would like to share with you some reflections on the 75 years of my life.

I was born in a time when my house burned coal for heat. We had no thermostat – that was regulated by the amount of coal shoveled into the furnace and the damper settings. Our family was a bit late in getting a TV. I was in the third grade when we got our 17-inch Philco black and white TV. Prior to that our neighbors, the Phillips, used to let me come over every Saturday at noon to see on their TV *The Big Top*, my favorite TV show about the circus. Our phone (attached by a black cord to the wall and with a rotary dial had a party line – shared with our neighbors, the Phillips. If they were using it, we had to wait to make our call until they were finished.

In 1988 a parishioner gave me his Mac computer – well, for six months it was a cumbersome paperweight on my desk. In 1995 I got my first “cell” phone – it was bolted to the console in my car.

A few of you are older than I and no doubt have several other examples of change in your life; and several of you are younger. But no matter your age, if you reflect on your lives you will marvel at how much change there has been. In January of this year Deb and I were a bit startled when our 7- and 9-year-old granddaughters arrived at our house to visit came with their own tablets.

While I have mentioned technology, becoming more mobile has also changed how our society operates. Studies now show that a person in their 20’s entering the workforce will have 7 – 8 different careers (not just jobs) before they stop working.

When I grew up there were “Blue Laws” that prohibited stores from being open. Sunday was a sacred day. The Sundays of my childhood began with church at 9:00; church school at 9:45; and the second service at 10:45. Then we all went home for a big Sunday dinner; played

in the afternoon with neighborhood friends, then went back to church at 6:00pm for Youth Group. There wasn't much to compete with this schedule – no youth soccer, no movie theaters open, all major stores closed. It was the heyday of church growth.

Why now, we don't even have phone books for children to sit on when eating at the dining room table!

Then in the 1960's and beyond society began to change – very rapidly. Suddenly there were stores open, organized activities for children and youth were offered – even on Sunday mornings. Now the church faced stiff competition. We are even discovering that the biggest source of unused space in many towns and cities are churches that are basically unused during the week. Wiscasset had a great financial gift in the 70s – 90s: Maine Yankee and its paying as much as 70% of the town's tax bill, and the many employees living here.

With the coming of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the make-up of society also changed. People came to the United States from countries other than western Europe, many with different faiths! But there is more, having gone through a pandemic and the isolation of Covid we found out we could do worship and meetings online! The church is beginning to discover that in order to – not just compete, but even to survive – the church has to change. As one of my colleagues stated, "The church is now in a time of urgency because our present course is not capturing the hearts and minds and imaginations of large segments of our society."

Some thoughts to ponder as we prepare to begin the next 250 years of our existence.

May you know the blessings of God,

Dave Myers

(See below for upcoming Sermons)

## Stewardship

### A Spiritual Practice of Gratitude

Each morning, cup of coffee in one hand and a pen in the other, I spend a few minutes writing responses to the following prompts:

- 3 things I accomplished yesterday
- 2 things I need to do today
- 1 thing I'm grateful for
- A self-affirmation
- A fear
- One way I will nurture my heart/soul today
- One act of generosity today

In Lent, many of us give something up as a way of making space for the Sacred. As we move from Lent into the season of Easter (from the Easter Celebration to Pentecost), I invite you to adopt this morning practice as a way of growing in generosity. As Easter is a celebration of new and renewed life, so also generosity is a generative practice, cultivating new life in us and those around us. Morning works best for me, but you may find another time of day works best for you. Here are a few notes about each section:

**3 things I accomplished yesterday:** Too often in the “rough and fast current” of life, we don’t take time to reflect on our accomplishments. From spending time with loved ones to composing a challenging email, from fixing that persistent drip in the sink to going for a walk outside, take a moment to celebrate what you did the previous day.

**2 things I need to do today:** As you look ahead to the day, what items stand out as most important? Maybe the bills need to get paid or you need to reach out to a friend. Maybe there’s a work project to start, complete, or make progress on. Maybe you need to plan for an upcoming event.

**1 thing I'm grateful for:** Neurological scientists tell us that daily consideration of our gratitude moves us toward a happier, healthier, and more joyful place. From the beauty of the sunrise to the love of friends and family, we have so much to be thankful for. Write one (or 2!) down.

**A self-affirmation:** Our cultures, upbringings, and personal demons

regularly tear us down and remind us of all we aren't. Take a moment to affirm who you are. It might be, "I am worthy" or "I am loved." Or perhaps "I do my best in the moment" or "I'm a good friend." We all have aspects of ourselves to affirm and celebrate.

**A fear:** Many of us avoid our fears. Writing them down helps me get to know them better and address them consciously. The fear may be general, or it may be related to the self-affirmation; it may be large and existential or tangible and practical: "Loneliness and rejection," "I'm a failure," "Facing my supervisor today," "Not having enough funds to make it through the month."

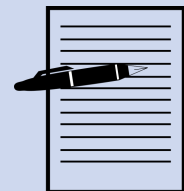
**One way I will nurture my heart/soul today:** How can you be good to yourself? How can you attend to the needs of your heart and soul? Common responses for me here include meditation, going outside, playing a game with my family, reading, and talking with a friend.

**One generous act today:** As you move into the day, consider one small generous act you can do. You may or may not get the chance to do it, but it puts us in the mindset of looking for opportunities to be generous. Can you send a supportive text to someone? Make a financial donation to a person in need or an organization doing good work? Offer a few minutes of help to a coworker or neighbor? A small act of kindness for your partner, parent, or child?

This short and simple morning practice sets me on a course for the day that brings healing and opens me to seeing and sharing the peace and love of God with those around. Try it for two or three weeks and see what kind of difference it makes in your life.

Some Exciting News from the Church Council!

Please join us Sunday in the sanctuary! After more than three months of worshipping in Fellowship Hall, we have returned to the sanctuary. A huge thank you to all of you who helped us set our new worship space and then work through all the kinks. All your efforts made things run smoothly and made for a very pleasant experience.



We have also brought back a favorite part of our service – the sharing of joys and concerns. Please remember that we will still be live streaming. In order to keep these shadings' private as possible, please use no

name or just the first name of the person and to use as few details as possible. Thank you for your discretion.

### CLYNK Reminder

CLYNK bags, in which you put your returnable bottles and cans, are available in the church office. The tags that must be put on these bags are in Fellowship Hall tacked on the CIS bulletin board near the kitchen; there are also pre-tagged bags there. Take the tagged filled bags (no more than 20 pounds) to any local Hannaford CLYNK station, or bring it to church and notify Beth Maxwell who will take the bag to Hannaford. There is a bag in the kitchen if you want to bring in bottles and cans and deposit them there instead of collecting them at home. The money collected by using these bags is used to support the Feed Our Scholars program.



Many thanks for participating in this effort.

### ***For Her*** – A small start

***For Her*** is a new program in Wiscasset which provides pads and tampons free of charge in the public bathrooms of the Wiscasset Community Center and First Congregational Church as well as providing them to the Wiscasset Food Pantry at St. Philip's.

In initiating ***For Her***, The Ladies Organ Society of First Congo joined organizations in Maine and throughout the country which provide free menstrual products in schools and other public places, a need which has been widely recognized and even legislated in some states.

Funded initially by the Ladies Organ Society, ***For Her*** will need contributions to continue and expand its program.

Contributions may be sent to the Organ Society c/o First Congregational Church, Box 350, Wiscasset, ME 04578. Please indicate ***For Her*** in the memo line.

### ***Helping Those in Need ...***

"It is going to be hard to leave a job I love but my heart and soul need a rest", words from Katie Junkert as she finishes up her time at Amistad. There will no longer be a receptacle near the fellowship hall for the purpose of collecting items of clothing for those experiencing homelessness. She would like to thank all those that have generously given clothes, socks, bedding and even chocolate, a real treat, for those in need in Portland. Your generous hearts have warmed many and the love that goes with those items is God's gift too.

Katie Junkert

## Church World Service

Another successful CWS Spring Kit Program has been completed. Thank you so much for your donations of kits and items for the clean-up buckets.

Everything was boxed and will be delivered to Woodfords Congregational Church in Portland on May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Our church donated 4 hygiene kits, 10 period packs, 16 school kits and 3 emergency clean-up buckets.

Thanks so much for caring!!

Your CWS committee:

Betty Applin, Sally Howe, Ruth Gilbert, Ginny Withee, & Nancy Roby

## 250th Anniversary Committee

Did you know this is the third church on this site? The first House for Publick worship was completed in 1767. In 1771, it was voted to "Pew the meeting house with 44 pews"; and the ordination of the meeting house was August 4, 1773. That original meeting house was torn down in 1840 and a new church was built. The second meeting house was consumed by fire in 1907. The dedication for the third and present church building was July 27, 1909.

(from "Ye Olde First Parish by Rev. Harold Tucker)

The 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary committee is learning many interesting facts about our church that we will be sharing with you. Remember to save the weekend of September 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> for our grand finale Homecoming celebration. You won't want to miss it!!

We are hoping as one of our celebration events to have a strong, enthusiastic showing in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade. We want to show our pride in our church and our pride for being here in this town shining the light from the head of the Common for 250 years! We need YOU!!! We need a strong participation. Please speak to a member of the committee listed below with questions & your interest.

We are also looking for a skilled craftsman in our congregation (or maybe someone you might know) to build a "curio box" a glassed topped "box" that interesting historical documents can be safely viewed in. Again, please speak to a committee member if you are able to help with this. You can be reimbursed for materials, etc.

Thank you!

Your 250<sup>th</sup> committee:

Martha Speed, Joan Shea, Deb Olson, Linda Winterberg, Susan Zimmerman, Jackie Lowell, Carol Peck & Nancy Roby

The Organ Society has been busy making beautiful, colorful flower pots. These are now on sale now in Fellowship Hall. These would make great Mother's Day gifts.



## News from the Hospitality Committee



## Hospitality Committee –

We want to thank the Stewardship Committee for hosting Coffee Hour in April. The Nominating Committee will be in charge in May.

If you would like to assist with Coffee Hour (set up, clean up, or food), please sign up on the clipboard in Fellowship Hall. We would appreciate any volunteers!

## Summerfest –

### Summerfest –

I hope everyone has Summerfest on their calendar! The date, July 22nd, is approaching quickly, and the hours are 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The sign-up poster is in Fellowship Hall, so please look at it and sign up to help at a table. We need all of us pitching in to ensure that our biggest mission project of the year is a success.

We have heard from four organizations that Summerfest supports who are offering us help to set up and take down the fair, and we hope to hear from others.

The church basement will be open during regular church office hours (9:00 to noon on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday) if you wish to drop off any donations for the fair. We need items for the Yard Sale (please no clothing or furniture ), Jewelry, Treasurers, and Books. The Bake Table would really appreciate some delicious baked goods as well.

Our next Summerfest planning meeting will be on Sunday, May 7th, after church, in the Parlor. Please join us!

–Jan Whitfield

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### **Wanted: Jewelry, hats, scarves, purses:**

**Why:** Summerfest is right around the corner and our very successful Jewelry Table almost sold out last year! We are desperate for new items to tempt all those who attend on Saturday, July 22. Now is a great time to go through your jewelry boxes, drawers, bags and such. Got things passed down from your mom or mother in law or aunt or great aunt? How about things you just don't ever wear? We're happy to take everything and anything. We love displaying sterling or gold pieces but costume jewelry is always a big seller. We've also sold lots of scarves

and purses and even a few very distinctive hats.



**When:** Please bring your items to the church parlor during church hours (Tuesday through Thursday, 9–12) or anytime you are in the church. Leave them on the counter labeled “jewelry for Summerfest.”

Thank You!



## **Beginners Springtime Cardmaking, crafting/ Scrapbooking social gathering!**

**Sunday May 21, 2023**

**Join us for a fun 2 hours of hands-on crafting** – make some cards, make a page for photos that can be changed out, and even learn some quick tips on sorting pictures that are stored away in boxes, or in your phone. Learn about long term ways to store your pictures – in a scrapbook or a mini album to be shared! Or use your photos on a card with an encouraging note.

This workshop is **perfect for beginning crafters and there's something for everyone!** If the thought of “photos and scrapbooking” seems overwhelming, come see why it's not scary or intimidating and why it may be just what you are looking for. And **if you are already a scrapbooker or card maker, there will be new things to learn too!**

Margot Stiassni's friend Lanita Medina of Camden, an experienced advisor for Creative Memories, is offering this free workshop just for us and any of your friends who might be interested.

This free workshop happens from 2–4pm on the afternoon of Sunday, May 21st in Fellowship Hall. If you think you will or might attend, please email or call Martha Speed by May 18. Registration isn't required, you can just show up, but it is helpful for us to have an idea of how many plan to come. Lanita will bring extras and everyone is welcome including teens.

Set aside and bring 2–5 favorite photos you would like to use for the hanging project. If your photos are not printed, no problem! We can print them from your phone!

Looking forward to "crafting/scrapping" with you!  
Margot Stiassni and Lanita Medina



### Christian Education committee

Our 8-week Lenten study ended on April 30th. We enjoyed watching and discussing season 1 of *The Chosen* and shared some wonderful food together! We are now discussing other opportunities of study for this coming fall.

Our youth group got together for an Easter party this past month and enjoyed making cookies for fellowship

along with an egg hunt with some friends.

We will be celebrating our youth group on Sunday June 11th during the service to end the season.

Angela Eddy

### Sermons for May and beyond on Adaptive Change:

May 7: **"Adaptive Change: The Sticking Point"** based on Exodus 16:1 – 3 and 18:17 – 27; Matthew: 13:44 – 46.

May 14 – Mother's Day or Family of the Christian Home:  
**"Jesus and His Mother"** a sermon looking at five vignettes from Scripture that depict what we know of Jesus and Mary.

May 21: **"Adaptive Change: Bridging the Gap"** based on Acts 10:1 – 22; 24 – 38; 34– 35; 44 – 48; Acts 11:1 – 4a, 15 – 18 and Luke 4:16 – 30

May 28: Pentecost Sunday: **"A Wild Gospel!"** based on the story of Pentecost recorded in Acts chapter 2. You think we are in the midst of change now – look what happened when our faith was shaken to its very foundation at the first Pentecost!

June 4: **"Adaptive Change: Goings Out and Comings In"** based on Psalm 121 and II Kings 2:1 – 12.

June 11: **"Encouragement for Grasshoppers"** based on Numbers 13:17 – 20 and 25 – 14:10; Matthew 14:22 – 33. What better way to conclude this series than with the comforting and encouraging words from Joshua, when after hearing the unfavorable report from the spies he had sent into Canaan to see if Israel could occupy the land, Joshua essentially said, "Our hope has never been in ourselves, but in the Lord."

### Pastoral Care

At the last council meeting it was decided to purchase a Tracfone (Cell Phone) for the use by the minister. There has been concern for some time that in case of an emergency, it would be difficult to get hold of the minister if the office was closed. The number of the Tracfone is **207-656-7080**. David Myers has agreed to be in charge of pastoral care for the time being. Please use this number if you need to get in touch with David for pastoral care or in case of an emergency. Please continue to use the church number (297-882-7544) for all other church business.

Becky Lenz

## New Directories!

The 2023 directory is available. Please pick one up in Fellowship Hall or in the Narthex. If you are away, Ted is happy to put one in the mail to you.

Please keep the office posted when phone numbers or addresses change. It is easy to update the database so the next time the directory is printed, your change will be included.



***Thank you for reading the May issue of The Chimes!***  
***If you have news you'd like to share for the June issue, please send in your article by May 19 to [fccw@myfairpoint.com](mailto:fccw@myfairpoint.com).***

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First Congregational Church of Wiscasset, UCC  
Mailing address: P.O. Box 350  
[www.uccwiscasset.org](http://www.uccwiscasset.org) ~ [fccw@myfairpoint.net](mailto:fccw@myfairpoint.net)

Office Hours: Tuesday through Thursday, 9am–12pm  
Worship: Sunday 10 a.m.

Office Administrator: Ted Gilbert  
Organist: Joel Pierce  
Sexton: Mary McKinney



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