

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.



October 19, 2025

NINETEENTH 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

“Fall seven times, stand up eight.”

Japanese Proverb

PRELUDE

Adoramus Te, Christe

Andrew Fletcher

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT

Alleluia

Liam Lawton

* CALL TO WORSHIP

L: We have gathered in God's holy presence, the One who etches grace on our hearts.

P: This is the place where God will transform us into disciples.

L: We glorify our God, who yearns for justice, not just for a favored few, but for the least of our world.

P: This is the place where God will write compassion on our souls.

L: We give thanks to God for unceasing grace; we remember God's persistence in saving us.

P: This is the place where God will breathe the Word into our lives.

* OPENING HYMN

Great is Thy Faithfulness

in bulletin

INVOCATION TO PRAYER

DAZZLING BOUQUET

Refrain:

Mine is the church where everybody's welcome.

I know it's true 'cause I got through the door.

We are a dazzling bouquet of every kind of flower.

Jump in the vase, 'cause we've got space for more.

‘*’ Please stand as you are able.

Bold print indicates congregational spoken or sung responses.

SPIRITUAL NUGGET

‘What Do You See?’
(Refrain of Dazzling Bouquet)

SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF ALL OUR LAITY

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: Republic of Congo

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

Oh God, Keep Me Safe

Taize

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 18:1-18, NRSV Updated

Liturgist: This is the Word of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

* HYMN

Kum ba Yah, v. 1,3,4

No. 256

SERMON

‘Persistence and Relentlessness’

OFFERTORY PRAYER

CHORAL OFFERTORY

Lead Me, Lord

Samuel Wesley

* 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

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

Grand Choeur in D-minor

P. J. M. Fallouard

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: Angie Eddy

Reader: Margot Stiassni-Sieracki

Flowers: Nancy Roby

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.

**Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from
One License with license # A-7314.*

Luke 18:1-8

The Parable of the Widow and the Unjust Judge

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Grant me justice against my accuser.’ For a while he refused, but later he said to himself, ‘Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.’ ” And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

This is the Word of God.

Thanks be to God.

New Revised Standard Version Updated Version

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

1. Great is thy faith-ful-ness, O God my Fa-ther; there is no
 2. Sum-mer and win-ter and spring-time and har-vest, sun, moon, and
 3. Par-don for sin and a peace that en-dur-eth, thine own dear

shad-ow of turn-ing with thee; thou chang-est not, thy com-
 stars in their cours-es a-bove join with all na-ture in
 pres-ence to cheer and to guide; strength for to-day and bright

pas-sions, they fail not; as thou hast been, thou for-ev-er wilt be.
 man-i-fold wit-ness to thy great faith-ful-ness, mer-cy, and love.
 hope for to-mor-row, bless-ings all mine, with ten thou-sand be-side!

Refrain

Great is thy faith-ful-ness! Great is thy faith-ful-ness! Morn-ing by

morn-ing new mer-cies I see; all I have need-ed thy

hand hath pro-vid-ed; great is thy faith-ful-ness, Lord, un-to me!

Kum ba Yah

256



1. Kum ba yah, my Lord, kum ba yah! Kum ba yah, my Lord, kum ba
 2. Some-one's cry-ing, Lord, kum ba yah! Some-one's cry-ing, Lord, kum ba
 3. Some-one's sing-ing, Lord, kum ba yah! Some-one's sing-ing, Lord, kum ba
 4. Some-one's pray-ing, Lord, kum ba yah! Some-one's pray-ing, Lord, kum ba



yah! Kum ba yah, my Lord, kum ba yah! O Lord, kum ba yah!
 yah! Some-one's cry-ing, Lord, kum ba yah! O Lord, kum ba yah!
 yah! Some-one's sing-ing, Lord, kum ba yah! O Lord, kum ba yah!
 yah! Some-one's pray-ing, Lord, kum ba yah! O Lord, kum ba yah!

WORDS and MUSIC: Marvin Virgil Frey, 1939

DESMOND

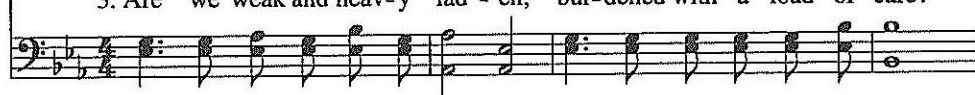
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Long thought to be of folk origin, this hymn was written by Frey, who taught it to an eleven-year old boy. The boy's family carried it to Africa where it was put into Angolan dialect and, later, brought back to the United States in that form.

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.



Oct. 19, 2025 Luke 18:1-8 'Persistence and Relentlessness'

A very religious man was once caught in rising floodwaters. He climbed onto the roof of his house and trusted God to rescue him. A neighbor came by in a canoe and said, "The waters will soon be above your house. Hop in and we'll paddle to safety."

"No thanks," replied the religious man. "I've prayed to God and I'm sure he will save me."

A short time later the police came by in a boat. "The waters will soon be above your house. Hop in and we'll take you to safety."

"No thanks," replied the religious man. "I've prayed to God and I'm sure he will save me."

A little time later a rescue services helicopter hovered overhead, let down a rope ladder and said. "The waters will soon be above your house. Climb the ladder and we'll fly you to safety."

"No thanks," replied the religious man. "I've prayed to God and I'm sure he will save me."

All this time the floodwaters continued to rise, until soon they reached above the roof and the religious man drowned. When he arrived at heaven he demanded an audience with God. Ushered into God's throne room he said, "Lord, why am I here in heaven? I prayed for you to save me, I trusted you to save me from that flood."

"Yes you did, my child" replied the Lord. "And I sent you a canoe, a boat and a helicopter. But you never got in."

Our parable this morning is about prayer. Sometimes we have to admit we don't know what to pray about or in the back of our minds we are thinking about the next project to do or worrying about a loved one. We are easily distracted. This happened to me during a funeral. A 5-year-old sitting in the congregation was playing with an iPad during the sermon. Somehow, my voice triggered SIRI and she responded aloud saying, "I do not understand what you are saying."

We pray as though God is intensely interested in us alone. We have to learn to bring the rest of the world into our prayers. Praying for someone else is hard and even praying for someone we love. It is even harder to pray for people who are difficult and annoying. Even harder to pray for those who harm us and do us wrong. I believe one of the themes of this parable is to pray with passion. To listen to another person's viewpoint. Especially from the vantage point of God.

When we pray, we often say , ‘How long oh God?’” When do you answer our prayers? V. 7-8 reminds us that prayers are answered and it will be swift justice. When we humans pray for a long time, we just don’t get it. We give up too easily. To have persistence like the widow, God will have to eventually respond to us. In this parable the persistent widow never gives up, never surrenders, never gives in, never quits. Daniel Boone is famous for finding new lands for settlers and finding better roads. He was asked one time "Were ever lost in the woods?" He replied no, not exactly just but I have been bewildered for days on end once for more than a week but I kept going on. (William Stidger There are sermons in Stories Abingdon Press 1942, P. 132)

The judge, however, does get bewildered and quits. Too many people are like the judge, we give in too easily and often not for the best reasons either.

This parable has been interpreted in understanding God is the judge and we are the widow. I am theologically arguing the opposite. We are the judge and God is the widow. God has nothing to lose. God has lost everything trying to call us back to repentance, forgiveness, justice, peace ,mercy and living with one another as we should. God does not lose heart over us. Over and over again all the sin and all evil in the world, God forgives again and again. God calls us to do the same. We are the judges. We never think God might be the widow and the tables might be turned. Why then, would Jesus tell a story about using God as a corrupt, uncaring insensitive judge? Doesn't Jesus talk about God in terms of widow's patience, faith, love and caring concerns for the poor in spite of our responses?

This story turns everything upside down. God is after us! God is always after us. God has been through history- never relenting, always finding new ways to catch us up. God cares for the widow, remember the story of the widow's mite? Jesús asks John to care for his mother while he ascends to Heaven.

Why ? To economically provide for her. Remember the story of the widow's son whom Jesus heals? Jesus saves two lives, the son obviously but also from the economic devastation the mother would have had to face alone. We are the judge of our own selves and other people in our relationship with God.

Still, the haunting question is in v 6-8. Will Jesus find any faithful on earth? People give up too easily. What makes us give up so easily or lose heart?

Failed relationships. Mental challenges. Isolation. Do not see the results of prayer. People who ignore us. Evil. Lost self esteem. War, Hunger. Violence.

Having said this, this parable gives us hope. The widow does not lose heart and neither does God! God will never stop or give up on us. In the Hebrew language prayer comes from the Hebrew word Tefillah. It translates as ‘self evaluation’ or I like this , ‘standing in the presence of God.’ So, in reality prayer is complex. Prayer comforts. Prayer sees the

truth. Prayer affirms and confirms. Prayer seeks freedom. Prayer seeks restitution. Prayer seeks obedience. Prayer seeks justice.

If people are afraid of widows and the poor, the aliens and the hungry will come after us someday—Good. God on their side and among them, In other words, if there is more injustice in the world, less people are praying. The more justice there is in the world, the more in truth we are hearing God and praying with heart.

The Son of Man will come, he will judge and the justice will be swift sure and to the heart like an arrow tears through flesh and bone. However, why does it take so long for justice to come? Because we lose heart or don't pray for justice we claim to be the bringer of good news and a community that cares for the world. Micah the minor prophet, reminds us what we should do with God, -(Micah 6:8) Walk humbly, love tenderly and do justice among the poor. By doing these three things we will not lose heart. Push forward with: persistence,
Endurance,
standing together with those who need a voice, accompanying the
poor,
fulfilling our responsibilities, opposing
injustice,
hope outrageously for we are not allowed to despair!

The modern phrase is ‘Hang in there’ is our way of expressing persistence. A graduate changes majors and pursues a new profession. Husband or wife enduring an illness we say, ‘Hang in there’ and they help each together.

When World War II ended, Colonel Sanders began working to sell franchises of his chicken business. He was in his 50s by this time.

His delicious recipe was rejected 1,009 times! He had over a thousand rejections, yet he didn’t quit. He knew he had a successful idea on his hands. Finally, Sanders made his first sale in 1952 to a restaurant in Salt Lake City, Utah. His recipe was named “Kentucky Fried Chicken,” and it was a hit. We know the rest of the story.

Despite her last flight ending in her death, Amelia Earhart set records being committed to making a difference like first woman transatlantic flight when the engine sputtered. She traveled close to the sea, for hazards going on were no greater than hazards of going back. (William Stidger page 133)

It was the summer Olympics of 1992. It was the quarter finals of the 400 metre sprint. British athlete Derek Redmond was one of the favorites for the gold medal. A lifetime of training had brought him to this moment. The starter's gun fired and the athletes burst out of the blocks.

Halfway through the race Derek Redmond was leading. Then disaster struck. His hamstring went and he collapsed on the track. The agony on his tear streaked face was both physical and mental. It was a crushing blow.

Medical attendants ran to assist him. Derek waved them away. He came to the race and he was going to finish. He got to his feet and started hobbling down the track.

The crowd was mesmerized. Officials didn't know what to do. And then an older man ran onto the track. He brushed off officials who tried to stop him. He ran up beside Derek and placed his arms around him. The man was Derek Redmond's father, Jim.

"You don't have to do this son," Jim said. "Yes I do," Derek replied.

"Then we'll finish this race together" came the response from Derek's father. Arm in arm, with agony on Derek's face, tears on his father's, Derek and Jim continued down the track. Derek buried his face in his father's shoulder. His father's strong shoulders carried his son physically and emotionally. Jim waved away officials who tried to stop them.

Finally, accompanied by a now roaring crowd, standing on their feet and applauding, Derek Redmond crossed the line. It became the defining moment of the Barcelona Olympics.

Friends, may the holy spirit push us forward with persistence and endurance. Let us stand together with those who need a voice. Let us stand against injustice. It is perseverance that wins the crown. Yes, we will struggle in life, so we need to 'hang in there' to the end. Faithfulness requires persistence and let us all be like the widow who did not know the meaning of quitting. It can be a death and a resurrection: a miracle. Isn't that alone worth the try?

Happy October Birthday to Carol Peck, Raegan Eddy, Ann Crispin, Greg Shaw, Thomas Cramer, and Zoe Bigley

Help Yourself Shelf October Wish List

Cereal * Coffee * Soup * Taco Kits * Pasta * Ramen * Canned Pumpkin * Jams & Jellies * Salad Dressing * Cake Mixes * Canned Meats * Pet Food

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wednesday, October 22, 4pm – 5:30pm study group to discuss Psalm 23 through the reading of the book The Lord is My Shepherd by Rabbi Harold Kushner., followed by a Potluck Supper. If you are interested in participating, contact Margot Stiassni to purchase a copy of the book.

Historic Pot Luch Luncheon, Sunday October 26, following worship. Come to discuss important events in the life of the church and the current vision for the church. Sharing remembrances and ideas for future events to further the vision and mission of the church will help Rev. John and newer members and friends understand the importance of the church for all of us.

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Church Website – www.uccwiscasset.org
Minister and Teacher: Rev. John Hogue
revjohnwiscassetucc@gmail.com
207 955-0055
Music Director: Joel Pierce
Sexton: Mary McKinney
Office Administrator: Beth Maxwell*

Sunday, October 19	Choir Practice 8:10am Sunday Worship 10:00am Coffee Hour following worship in Fellowship Hall. The Chosen 5:30, including potluck supper
Monday, October 20	Rev. John's Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Mah Jongg 6:00 – 8:30pm
Tuesday, October 21	Rev. John's Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Sheepscot Valley Chorus 7:00pm in Fellowship Hall
Wednesday, October 22	Rev. John's Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm 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 followed by potluck supper
Thursday, October 23	Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm
Sunday, October 26	No Choir Practice Sunday Worship 10:00am Historic Potluck Luncheon following worship in Fellowship Hall The Chosen 5:30, including potluck supper