

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 5, 2025

SEVENTEENTH 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

“We’re facing an unprecedented epidemic of isolation, alienation and loneliness. We don’t need more awareness or research to know it’s a massive problem. We need bold, innovative solutions from creative thinkers to reignite a sense of community across America.”

Riaz Patel

PRELUDE

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

arr. David Cherwien

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME from Rev. John, ANNOUNCEMENTS from Liturgist

CHORAL INTROIT

Alleluia

Liam Lawton

* CALL TO WORSHIP

Written by Rev. Taisaku OBATA (Minister, Ube Church, United Church of Christ in Japan) Translated by Mr. David McIntosh (Overseas Liaison, United Church of Christ in Japan)

L: In a world that remains divided and in conflict, God is inviting us, to make us one.

P: Today we gather around one table, in answer to God’s will.

L: What do we find at today’s table?

P: God’s love, which endures all things and connects all things.

L: What is not at today’s table?

P: The many powers of the world, which seek to stand over others.

L: Let us repent, and give thanks to God’s power to bring salvation to all who believe.

P: Thanks be to God! Make us witnesses of Your love.

All: Let us worship together the true God, who makes us one.

* OPENING HYMN

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!

No. 10

‘*’ Please stand as you are able.

Bold print indicates congregational spoken or sung responses.

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.

SPIRITUAL NUGGET

'Diversity'

CHORAL ANTHEM

Come to the Upper Room

Joseph Martin

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: Costa Rica

MORNING PRAYER

SILENT MOMENTS FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

CHORAL RESPONSE

O God, Keep Me Safe

Taize

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Psalm 137

Liturgist: This is the Word of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

SERMON

'By The River I Sit...'

OFFERTORY PRAYER

OFFERTORY

Berceuse

Benjamin Godard

* 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.

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

Welcome

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving (From Global Ministries 2025)

L: Like a sower, God scatters, and God will give growth.

All: God scatters life across the earth.

L: God scatters people in every land and nation.

All: God scatters disciples far and wide.

L: Like a shepherd, God gathers.

All: God gathers people into families of faith.

L: God gathers people into communities of love.

All: God gathers people into the body of Christ.

L: Today, on this World Communion Sunday, God gathers us at one table with disciples of every language, culture, and tradition. From cathedrals and chapels, from huts and houses, from fields and cities, God gathers us in many places and makes us one in Christ. At this table, we remember the cost of discipleship and rejoice in the richness of Christ's gifts poured out for the whole world.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (From the Reform Church of Germany)

God of Grace, we grieve that the church which shares one Spirit, one faith, one hope, and one calling, has become a broken communion in a broken world. The one body spans all time, place, race, and language, but in our fear we have fled from and fought one another, and in our pride we have mistaken our part for the whole. Yet we marvel that you gather the pieces to do your work, that you bless us with joy, with growth, and with signs of unity. Forgive our sins as we commit ourselves to seeking and showing the unity of the body of Christ. In his name, Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

In Christ we have the forgiveness of sins and the riches of God's grace. This grace was given to us: to preach to the nations the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

COMMUNION PRAYER AND 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.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND JUICE

HYMN

Let Us Break Bread Together

No. 311

THANKSGIVING PRAYER

COMMISSIONING

* CLOSING HYMN

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ

No. 316

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 on "Amazing Grace"

J. Christopher Pardini

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: Anne and Dewey Harris

Online Streaming: Tom Clement

Reader: Angie Eddy

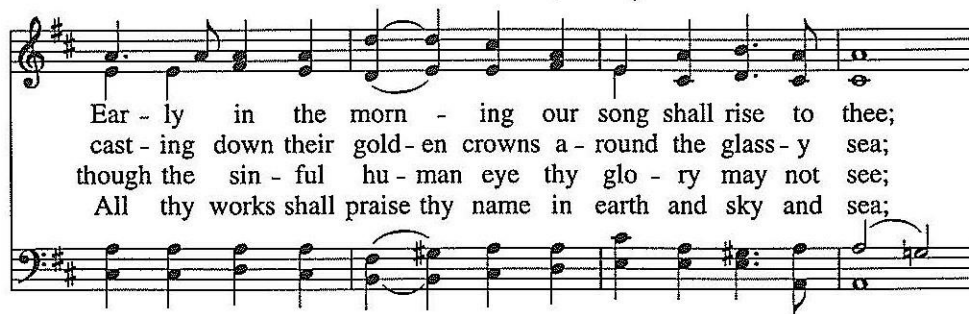
Flowers: Sherri Dunbar

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

10 Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!



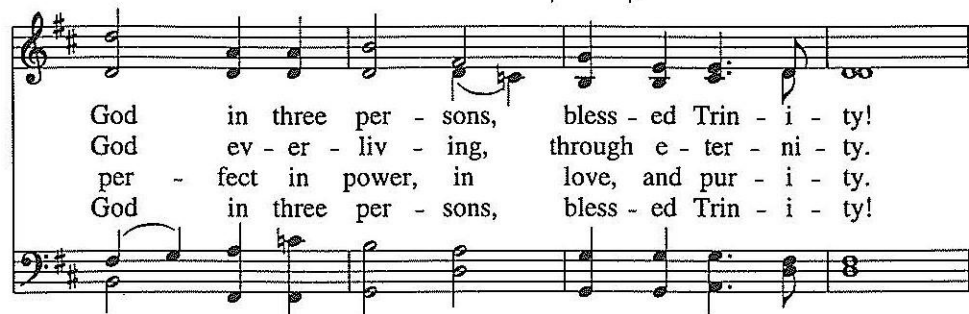
1. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y!
 2. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! all the saints a - dore thee,
 3. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! though the dark-ness hide thee,
 4. Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly! Lord God Al - might - y!



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 Psalm 137

Lament over the Destruction of Jerusalem

By the rivers of Babylon—
there we sat down, and there we wept
when we remembered Zion.
On the willows there
we hung up our harps.
For there our captors
asked us for songs,
and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying,
“Sing us one of the songs of Zion!”

How could we sing the Lord’s song
in a foreign land?
If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither!
Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth,
if I do not remember you,
if I do not set Jerusalem
above my highest joy.

Remember, O Lord, against the Edomites
the day of Jerusalem’s fall,
how they said, “Tear it down! Tear it down!
Down to its foundations!”
O daughter Babylon, you devastator!
Happy shall they be who pay you back
what you have done to us!
Happy shall they be who take your little ones
and dash them against the rock!

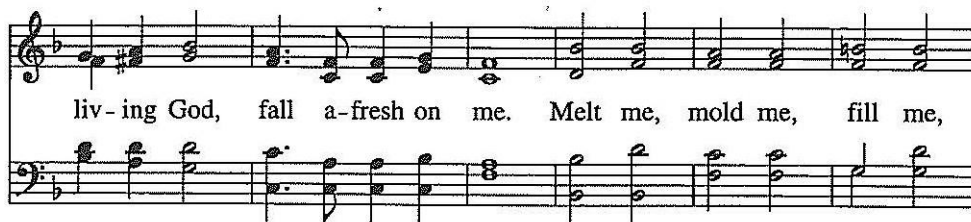
This is the Word of God.
Thanks be to God.

New Revised Standard Version Updated Version

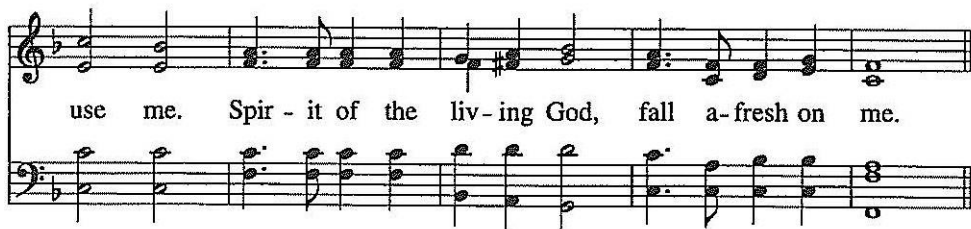
Spirit of the Living God



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



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

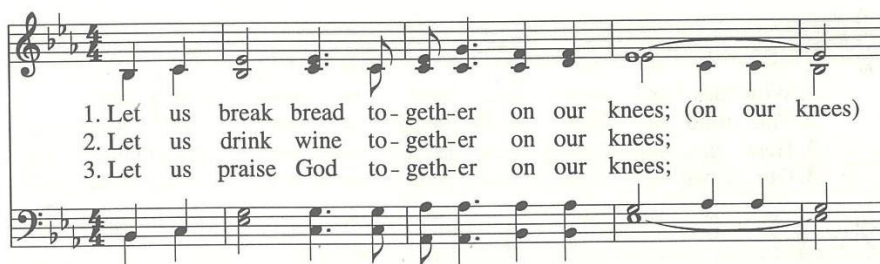


use me. Spir - it of the liv - ing God, fall a-fresh on me.

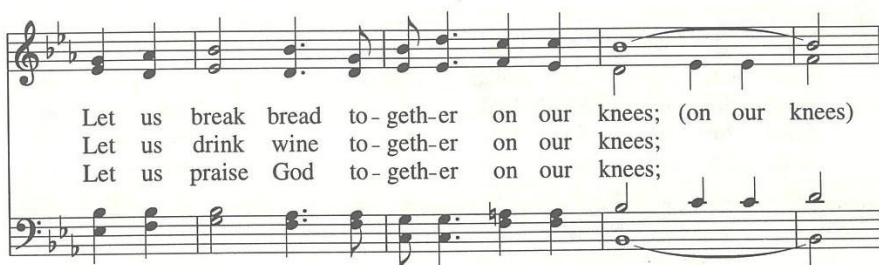
WORDS and MUSIC: Daniel Iverson, 1926

IVERSON

Let Us Break Bread Together

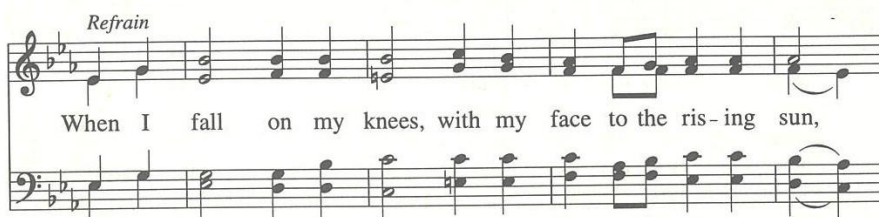


1. Let us break bread to- geth- er on our knees; (on our knees)
2. Let us drink wine to- geth- er on our knees;
3. Let us praise God to- geth- er on our knees;



Let us break bread to- geth- er on our knees; (on our knees)
Let us drink wine to- geth- er on our knees;
Let us praise God to- geth- er on our knees;

Refrain



When I fall on my knees, with my face to the ris- ing sun,



O Lord, have mer- cy on me. (on me)

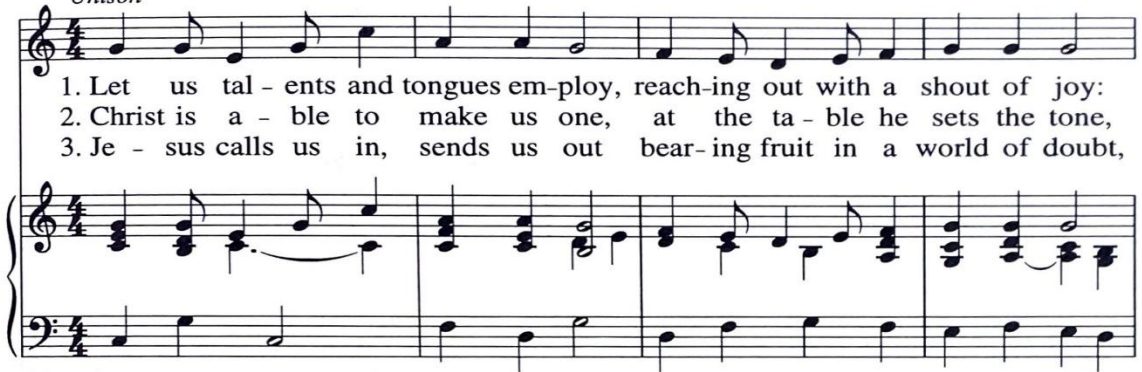
WORDS: African-American spiritual
MUSIC: African-American spiritual, arr. Carlton R. Young, 1964, adapt.

LET US BREAK BREAD
10 10 w. refrain

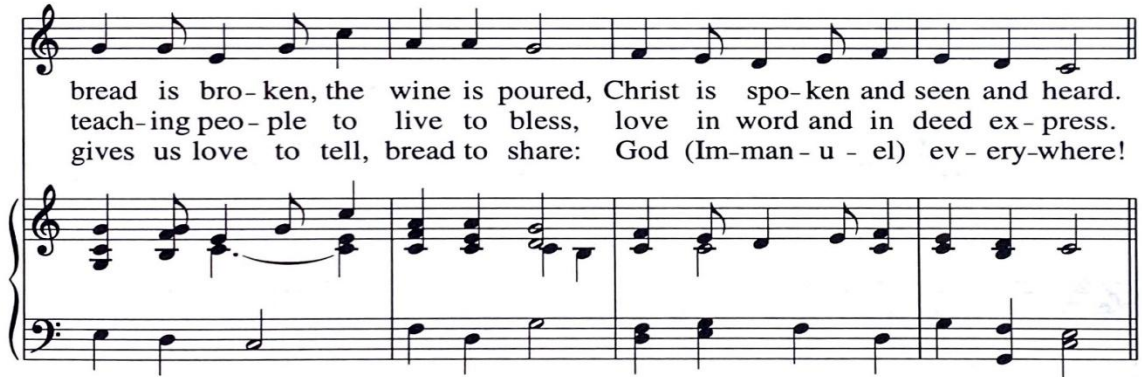
The earliest version of this spiritual consisted of stanza three, used to call slaves in Virginia to secret, unlawful meetings. The communion stanzas were added after the Civil War.

Arr. © 1965 Abingdon Press, admin. The Copyright Co.

Unison

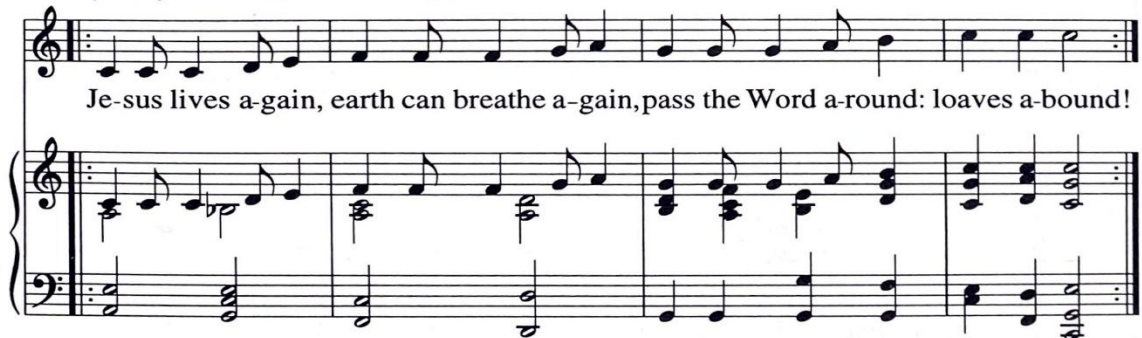


1. Let us tal - ents and tongues em-ploy, reach-ing out with a shout of joy:
 2. Christ is a - ble to make us one, at the ta - ble he sets the tone,
 3. Je - sus calls us in, sends us out bear-ing fruit in a world of doubt,



bread is bro-ken, the wine is poured, Christ is spo-ken and seen and heard.
 teach-ing peo-ple to live to bless, love in word and in deed ex-press.
 gives us love to tell, bread to share: God (Im-man - u - el) ev - ery-where!

Refrain (first time p, second time f)



Je-sus lives a-gain, earth can breathe a-gain, pass the Word a-round: loaves a-bound!

WORDS: Fred Kaan, 1975

MUSIC: Jamaican folk melody, adapt. Doreen Potter, 1975

LINSTEAD
LM w. refrain

Jamaican folk rhythms meet the spirit of ecumenist Fred Kaan in this 'communion calypso' hymn, first sung at the World Council of Churches Assembly in Nairobi, 1975.

Oct. 5, 2025 'By The River I Sit.... Psalm 137 Rev. John Hogue

Psalm 137 is challenging. Especially its violence. Its high point is the question "how shall we sing God's song in a strange land?" This is an important question: when everything is turned upside down and what shall we do now? This is the question asked by refugees, cancer patients, downsized workers, homeless persons, and bereaved spouses. This is the question congregations are asking in a post-COVID world. People ask if they have no place at the table, experiencing the alienation of the intentionally marginalized. We live in a strange land – state sponsored violence against immigrants, glaciers collapsing, presidential hate speech, escalating violence, and Christians defending dishonest leaders and denying climate change. No clear outcome is evident.

The Psalmist's query ends with thoughts of vengeance and homicide. He wants to wreak vengeance on his enemies and the enemies of his nation. He wants to kill the children – or have God kill the children – of those who have harmed him and threatened his way of life. We are not without our anger – even what we perceive righteous indignation – at false patriotism and cruelty of our leaders. We would love, in our worst moments, to annihilate perpetrators of conspiracy theories, racism, and false facts. Violence against persons are symptoms of the nation's troubled soul. But, while we cannot act on these impulses, we must admit we have them and confess our own inner turmoil and violence.

Perhaps, we can see this Psalm as an example of bringing everything to God in prayer. We can only hope that the Psalmist was cured of his violence in the course of his praying! Perhaps, he will discover that God even cares for his enemies as did an equally angry biblical character, Jonah. I did not want to read this challenging text with such blood thirsty imprecations. Even as we see God's presence in those who seek to silence us and those perpetrating injustice, we must recognize our fallibility and ask for God's peace to descend on us and the nation.

One of the most serene and spiritual moments is by the river I sit with our Ancestors both Native American and ancestors in Europe and longing for peace. Yet we all have been in the presence of grief: weeping, torment, disbelief, witnessed vindictiveness, envy, anxiety, wrath, bitterness, tears, betrayal, affliction, distress, desertion, desolation, weakness, violence, and the silence of God who appears not to save. By venting our frustrations, and pain, the Biblical writers encourage us to do the same. There's not the faintest suggestion that we should repress our questions, stifle our emotions, or resort to artificial optimism or superficial clichés. Psychologically we must do this in what call Gestalt Therapy, smack the heck and scream at a pillow and not a human being. That way they release those emotions and no one gets hurt.

We will never understand everything about the mysterious ways of God. Period. Some of the suffering we experience is inscrutable, it admits to no resolution no matter how much time, money, effort, prayer, or therapy we throw at it. In the words of Augustine (354–430), "the secrets of heaven and earth still remain hidden from us" and therefore we must "rest patiently in unknowing." So, if venting our emotions is okay, so is making peace with our ignorance.

One of my all-time favorite songs is by U2 “I Still Haven’t Found what I’m Looking For.” Share some of the words-

I have climbed highest mountain I have run through the fields Only to be with you
I have run I have crawled I have scaled these city walls These city walls
Only to be with you But I still haven't found what I'm looking for

The last verses say:

I believe in the kingdom come Then all the colors will bleed into one Well yes
I'm still running You broke the bonds and you Loosed the chains Carried the
cross Of my shame Of my shame You know I believed it

The song ends with four last, forlorn calls “I still haven’t found what I’m looking for.” That song has such appeal because much of life feels like that. Searching and feeling like what we want or need is just beyond our grasp. We

keep thinking that the right job, relationship, experience or accomplishment, self-help book will finally be the thing. Augustine understood this, the theologian who wrote the first real self-help book in his “Confessions.” He came to the conclusion that most of our fruitless searching was really because we do not realize we are ultimately searching for God. Until we know that we are dissatisfied with even the good we find. Augustine believed we have a God shaped void inside, that nothing else can fill and said, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.” It is not easy to be restless. Jesus said, “Seek and you will find.” But he did not say when or how long. But it is in seeking that we find growth. The last thing we need is someone pretending there is no pain, or it doesn’t hurt. The good news is that when we don’t have words, we can offer the gift of ourselves. And that’s when the healing begins.

When a young girl returned home from school in tears, her Mother worried, and asked, “Sweetheart, what happened?” “It was awful,” the girl told her Mother. “My best friend’s cat died. And she was very, very sad. And I don’t think I’m a good best friend, because I didn’t know the right words to say, to try to help her.” “What did you do?” the mother asked. “I just held her hand and cried with her all day.” When we have the least answers, we are most needed. Let’s make presence and attention our new currency.

I’m remembering a scene from the show West Wing. The episode when Josh is navigating Post Traumatic Stress, and life (internally and literally) for him, is on edge. Leo tells Josh this story; “This guy’s walking down the street when he falls in a hole. The walls are so steep he can’t get out. “A doctor passes by and the guy shouts up, ‘Hey you. Can you help me out?’ The doctor writes a prescription, throws it down in the hole and moves on. “Then a priest comes along and the guy shouts up, ‘Father, I’m down in this hole can you help me out?’ The priest writes out a prayer, throws it down in the hole and moves on. “Then a friend walks by, ‘Hey, Joe, it’s me, can you help me out?’ And the friend jumps in the hole. Our guy says, ‘Are you stupid? Now we’re both down here.’ The friend says, ‘Yeah, but I’ve been down here before and I know the way out.’”

Amen.

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.

Rev. John can be reached in the church office at 882-7544 during his office hours Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 9am to Noon. He can be reached by text or call at (207) 955-0055. His email address is revjohnwiscassetucc@gmail.com.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today

*** Collection of the Neighbors in Need Offering

*** **After church** everyone is invited to attend the meeting in the parlor to discuss disbursement of mission monies. Thanks to all who participated in the many events that raised funds for our mission giving.

*** **2pm** Blessing of the Animals at the Common

The purpose of the blessings is to recognize the interconnectedness between God, creation, and all living beings. The blessing also serves as an act of stewardship, acknowledging the church's care and concern for God's creation. The blessing celebrates the love between humans and animals, and expresses gratitude for the joy and companionship they bring. Join us with your beloved pets and companions!

*** **5:30pm** "The Chosen" Season 5 video, discussion, and Potluck supper

Monday, October 6, 6:30pm. Revision of the church's bylaws group will meet in the parlor. Everyone is welcome to attend. If you have any ideas on how to improve the organizational structure of the teams, we hope to hear from you on or before October 6th. Please share your ideas with Rev. John or Cindy Clement!

Sunday, October 5	Choir Practice 8:10am Sunday Worship 10:00am Neighbors in Need Offering collected Coffee Hour following worship in Fellowship Hall. Meeting in the parlor following Coffee Hour to discuss disbursement of mission monies Blessing of the Animals 2:00pm on the Common “The Chosen” and potluck supper 5:30pm
Monday, October 6	Rev. John’s Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Mah Jongg 6:00 – 8:30pm in Fellowship Hall Bylaws Review Team 6:30 in the parlor
Tuesday, October 7	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 8	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
Thursday, October 9	Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm
Sunday, October 12	Choir Practice 8:10am Sunday Worship 10:00am Coffee Hour following worship in Fellowship Hall Worship and Music Team meeting in the parlor following Coffee Hour
Saturday, October 18	Memorial Service for Wally Roby 11:00am, followed by a reception in Fellowship Hall