

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 26, 2025

TWENTIETH 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

“Life is a long lesson in humility.”

James M. Barrie

PRELUDE

For All the Saints

arr. Roger Whitney

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

MUSICAL INTROIT

In the Bulb There is a Flower

arr. Roger Whitney

* CALL TO WORSHIP

L: This is the day the Lord has made:

P: a day for praise and prayer; a day for gratitude and generosity.

L: This is the time God has given us:

P: a time for singing and silence; a time for speaking and listening.

L: This is the life to which God calls us:

P: a life of humility and service; a life of faith and trust.

* OPENING HYMN

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

No. 469

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.

SPIRITUAL NUGGET

‘Inflated Ego’
(Refrain of Dazzling Bouquet)

‘*’ Please stand as you are able.

Bold print indicates responses spoken or sung by the congregation.

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: Palestine

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.

MUSICAL RESPONSE

Hear Our Prayer, O Lord

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 18:9-14, NRSV Updated

Liturgist: This is the Word of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

* HYMN

The Church's One Foundation, v. 1,2,4

No. 238

SERMON

'Humility'

OFFERTORY PRAYER

OFFERTORY

Be Thou My Vision

arr. Roger Whitney

* 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

* CLOSING HYMN

Faith of Our Fathers

No. 418

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

I the Lord of Sea and Sky

arr. Roger Whitney

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: Cindy Clement and Martha Speed

Online Streaming: Angie Eddy

Reader: Becky Lenz

Flowers: Ron Sanchez

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 18:9-14

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.’ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven but was beating his breast and saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other, for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.”


This is the Word of God.

Thanks be to God.

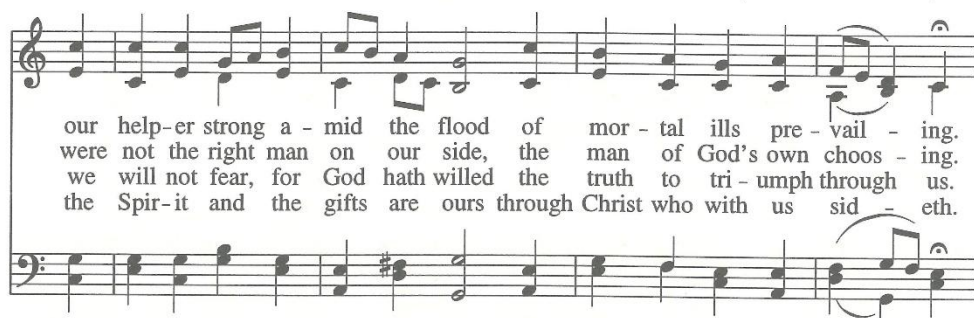
New Revised Standard Version Updated Version

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

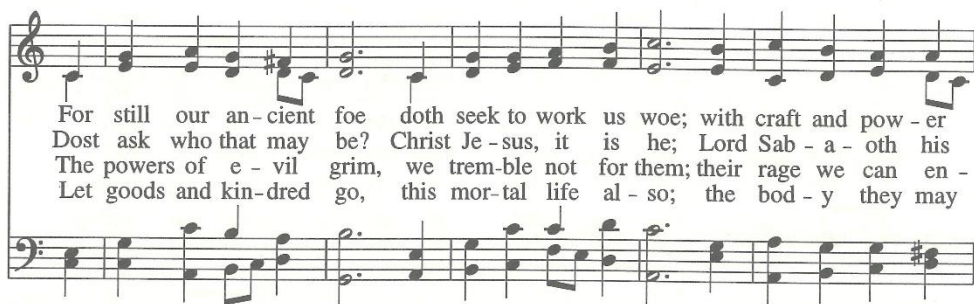
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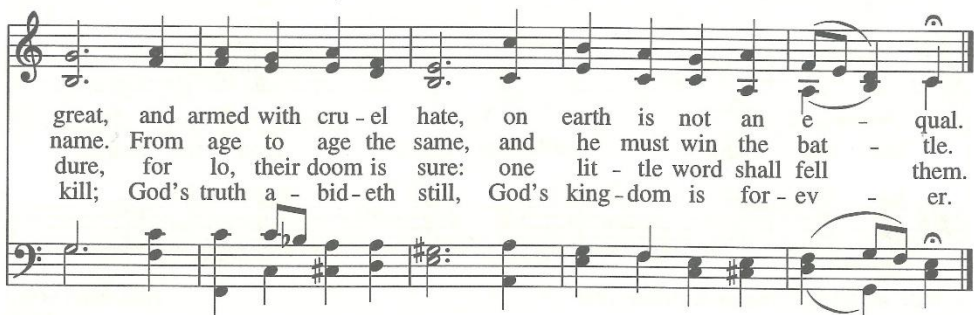
1. A might-y for - tress is our God, a bul-wark nev - er fail - ing;
 2. Did we in our own strength con - fide, our striv-ing would be los - ing,
 3. And though this world, with dev - ils filled, should threat-en to un-do us,
 4. That word a - bove all earth - ly powers, no thanks to them, a - bid - eth;



our help-er strong a - mid the flood of mor - tal ills pre - vail - ing.
 were not the right man on our side, the man of God's own choos - ing.
 we will not fear, for God hath willed the truth to tri - umph through us.
 the Spir-it and the gifts are ours through Christ who with us sid - eth.



For still our an-cient foe doth seek to work us woe; with craft and pow - er
 Dost ask who that may be? Christ Je - sus, it is he; Lord Sab - a - oth his
 The powers of e - vil grim, we trem-ble not for them; their rage we can en -
 Let goods and kin-dred go, this mor-tal life al - so; the bod - y they may



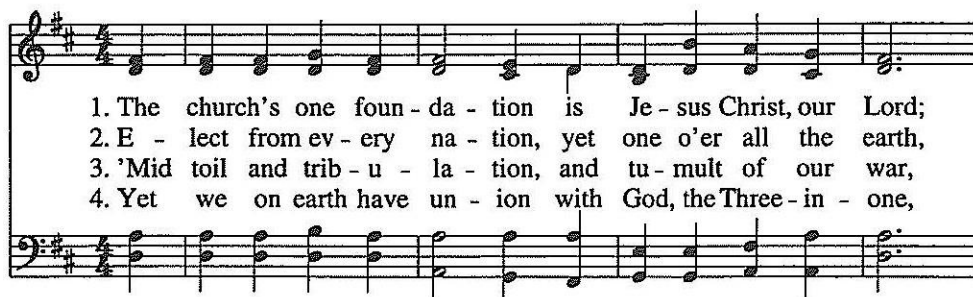
great, and armed with cru - el hate, on earth is not an e - qual.
 name. From age to age the same, and he must win the bat - tle.
 dure, for lo, their doom is sure: one lit - tle word shall fell them.
 kill; God's truth a - bid-eth still, God's king-dom is for - ev - er.

WORDS: Martin Luther, c. 1529; tr. Frederick H. Hedge, 1852, alt.; st. 3 alt. Ruth Duck, 1981
 MUSIC: Melody Martin Luther, c. 1529

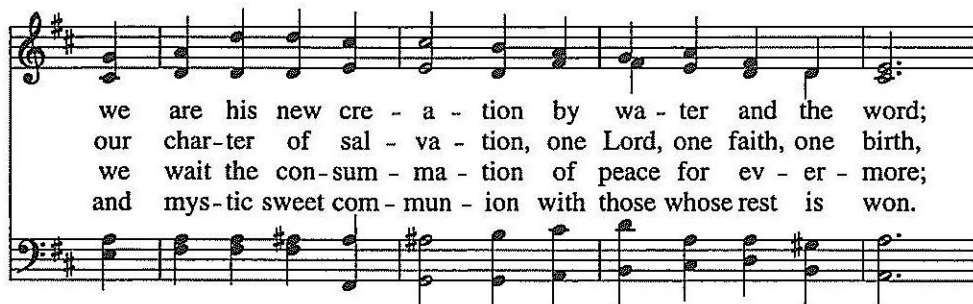
Ein' feste Burg
 87.87.66.667

Based on Psalm 46, this hymn by Martin Luther was probably inspired by the 1529 meeting that gave birth to the word 'Protestant.' Luther wrote or edited thirty-seven hymns and many hymn tunes.

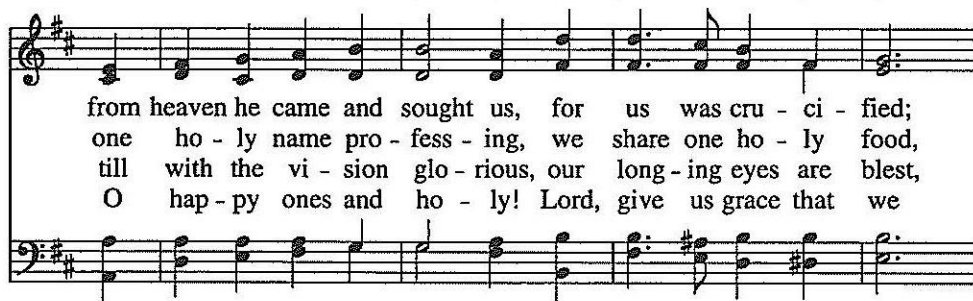
St. 3 alt. © 1981, 1990 Ruth C. Duck



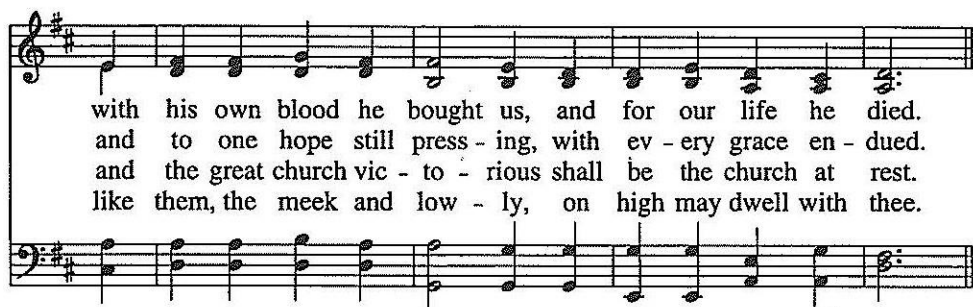
1. The church's one foun - da - tion is Je - sus Christ, our Lord;
 2. E - lect from ev - ery na - tion, yet one o'er all the earth,
 3. 'Mid toil and trib - u - la - tion, and tu - mult of our war,
 4. Yet we on earth have un - ion with God, the Three - in - one,



we are his new cre - a - tion by wa - ter and the word;
 our char - ter of sal - va - tion, one Lord, one faith, one birth,
 we wait the con - sum - ma - tion of peace for ev - er - more;
 and mys - tic sweet com - mun - ion with those whose rest is won.



from heaven he came and sought us, for us was cru - ci - fied;
 one ho - ly name pro - fess - ing, we share one ho - ly food,
 till with the vi - sion glo - rious, our long - ing eyes are blest,
 O hap - py ones and ho - ly! Lord, give us grace that we



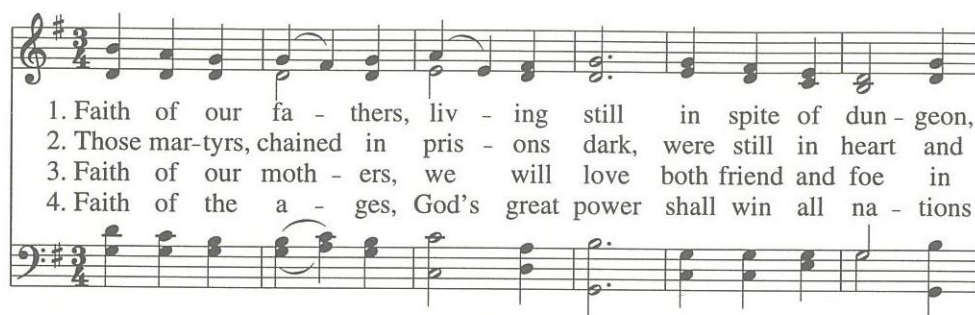
with his own blood he bought us, and for our life he died.
 and to one hope still press - ing, with ev - ery grace en - dued.
 and the great church vic - to - rious shall be the church at rest.
 like them, the meek and low - ly, on high may dwell with thee.

WORDS: Samuel J. Stone, 1866, alt.
 MUSIC: Samuel S. Wesley, 1864

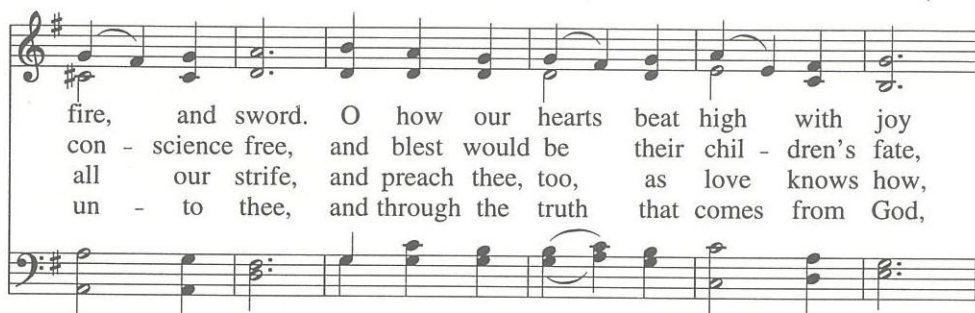
AURELIA
 76.76D

Faith of Our Fathers

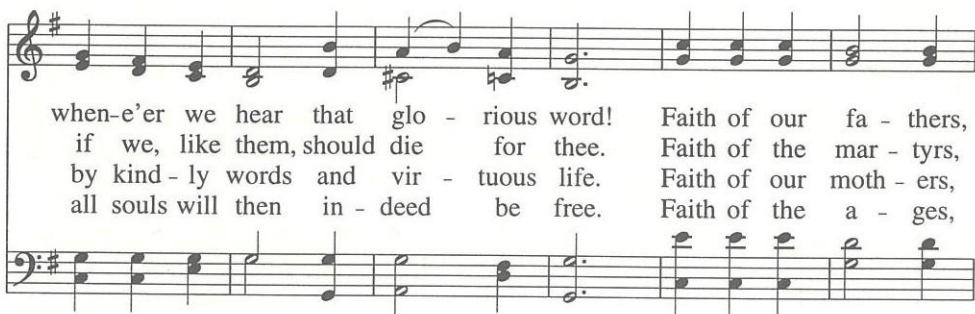
418



1. Faith of our fa - thers, liv - ing still in spite of dun - geon,
 2. Those mar - tyr - s, chained in pris - ons dark, were still in heart and
 3. Faith of our moth - ers, we will love both friend and foe in
 4. Faith of the a - ges, God's great power shall win all na - tions



fire, and sword. O how our hearts beat high with joy
 con - science free, and blest would be their chil - dren's fate,
 all our strife, and preach thee, too, as love knows how,
 un - to thee, and through the truth that comes from God,



when-e'er we hear that glo - rious word! Faith of our fa - thers,
 if we, like them, should die for thee. Faith of the mar - tyr - s,
 by kind - ly words and vir - tuous life. Faith of our moth - ers,
 all souls will then in - deed be free. Faith of the a - ges,



ho - ly faith, we will be true to thee till death.

WORDS: Frederick W. Faber, 1849, alt.

MUSIC: Henri F. Hemy, 1864; adapt. James G. Walton, 1874

ST. CATHERINE

88.88.88

From a Protestant Huguenot upbringing Frederick Faber was led by Henry Newman and the English Oxford Movement into the Roman Catholic Church. His original version read, 'Faith of our Fathers! Mary's prayers shall keep our country fast to thee.'

October 26, 2025 'Humility' Rev. John Hogue

Muhammad Ali in his prime about to take off in airplane flight, The stewardess reminded him to fasten his seat belt. He replied brashly. 'Superman doesn't need a seat belt. 'The stewardess quickly came back. "Superman doesn't need an airplane either." Ali fastened his seatbelt.

Some background information on the Pharisees. On the surface people admired the Pharisees. They prayed every day at 9 am, noon and three pm. Pharisees fasted Monday and Thursday. Pharisee stood where people could see them and be pleased with himself. Pharisee did not pray to God but prayed for himself. The Pharisee informed God how good he was. The beating of the chest is often a sign of mourning but in our context, the prayer is for himself. People admired their public righteousness but seldom liked them.

Now for the tax collector. The office of the tax collector was put up for auction and from this position, the tax collector would pay a fee to the government which in the meantime make sure to be well off himself. Research shows in archeological archives, people would be taxed 35- 40 % of their income. This is a crushing amount for people barely making a living wage. You can see the ill will of the people. Tax collectors were often disposed of for corruption and extortion. Thus their office was looked upon as untrustworthy.

Tax collectors in our context were humble but Jesus tried to stir the consciousness of Pharisees. Meanwhile, Jesus is stirring all Pharisees today to think from being self-important. We people congratulate ourselves on our moral achievements. We say things like, 'why can't other people be like me?' "I am glad I am not like them." Friends, don't we hear people talk like this? The purpose of religion draws us closer to God and not selfishness. The Pharisees wanted God in the temple only and only in the Pharisee's heart. True worship makes us humble with our focus on God alone. Not tithing, or self-preservation or self-interest.

We are no better than other people. True religion makes us strive for God and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

I have heard and discussed with theologians that true wicked ones are the ones who are accustomed to think they are too good and have no faults. No one is immune from perfection. My father used to say, 'the higher the ape climbs, the more the ape shows his /her tail.'

We cannot shut ourselves out of the grace of God. Some people don't believe God offers grace while others believe they do not need it. Getting right with God is no legal achievement but the basis of God's mercy through faith - a gift from God and one that still today echoes from the reformation- solia gratia. Meaning Grace alone.

In the Disney movie The Hunchback of Notre Dame, the gypsy woman Esmeralda walks into the Notre Dame cathedral and listens to the prayers of the rich people walking by. They pray for wealth, fame, and fortune. She, in turn, sings a song called "God Bless the Outcasts," in which she says, "I ask for nothing, I can get by, but there are so many less lucky than I. Please help my people, the poor and downtrodden. I thought we all were children of God." The chorus follows, which begins with the prayer, "God bless the outcasts." With her song, Esmeralda, a non-Christian, reveals a depth of spiritual understanding that most of the Christians in the movie do not have.

In Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, the Pharisee plays the role of a self-righteous, uncaring, religious leader. In his "prayer," he reminds God of his moral superiority to those around him, including the tax collector, at whom he looks down his nose. The tax collector, on the other hand, is a sinner who knows his own shortcomings. In fact, he is so overcome with his sins that he doesn't even notice the Pharisee nearby; he is conscious only of his sin and of his need for forgiveness. His prayer, heart-felt and pure, is this: "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" It's easy to have a feeling of moral superiority over our theological or political opponents, and it's also easy to fall into the trap of "praying" in such a way that we praise ourselves and lambaste our adversaries.

Our text reminds us of the absolute spiritual necessity of humility. It's not that we pretend to be humble because that's how God wants us to act. It's that we really are humble, because we really are sinners in need of God's mercy. As prophetic Christians, we can't afford to get so bogged down by feelings of guilt that we are unable to speak God's word to the world. But as we do so, we can't fall into the trap of believing our own press (assuming there are people who praise our efforts), forgetting our weaknesses and failures. When we speak, we speak with the words and authority of God, but at the same time we remember that we are speaking to ourselves as well.

Humility is typically a hard thing for us to grasp. It involves being able to see the truth about who we really are and accept others as they are. And more than that, it leaves room for us to see the grandeur that is God. It allows us to be who we are called to be in God's order, rather than who we envision ourselves to be. It enables us to prepare to receive

God into our lives—not the God we want or the God we think we need but God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, who loves us more than we can even fathom, on the days when we are sinners and the days that we get it right and the days (which is most of them) when we don't even know which we are.

This Church in all its diversity is rooted in the reformation. We should remind ourselves we are no better than any other denomination or our other religious group. The message—the good news of Jesus Christ—is the same in every age, but how it finds its expression and its practice is deeply rooted in context and therefore constantly re-forming. The world around us changes. We either re-form for the sake of the gospel, or we entrench in the security of our traditions and assumptions. We must constantly explore new and fresh ways to share the good news, employ effective ways of incorporating folks into our communities of faith, and retool our approaches to ministry and mission.

For example, no one would think of dragging out the 16mm projector to show a film this weekend. Most of us probably don't even have a VCR anymore. It's quite possible that we might use that DVD, but some folks would choose to upload the movie to their laptops and project it—quite possibly from YouTube, Netflix, or Hulu Plus. Gutenberg is giving way to Google whether we like or loathe it. And just look how much mobile phones have changed! We've come a long way from Ma Bell's party line, with whom several folks shared the line. The principles and the content are fairly constant, but the delivery is changing with increased frequency. Most of us willingly “re-form” how we view the media and make contact with one another, yet we tend to resist change in the church. Why not celebrate the very real fact that the Church is a living, breathing organism that (gulp) changes and reforms. I don't know about you, but I'd sure prefer to be a part of something alive than something lifeless and non-responsive.

Re-formation among the faithful has been a reality long before the Protestant Reformation became big news 508 years ago, it has not stopped, and it seems unlikely to do so any time soon. Celebrate the goodness of God, the amazing message of which we are stewards, and the myriad ways the church has and continues to reform with the constant reminder of humility as it was the case for this example-

A man received a promotion to the position of Vice President of the company he worked for. The promotion went to his head, and for weeks on end he bragged to anyone and everyone that he was now VP. His bragging came to an abrupt halt when his wife, so embarrassed by his behavior, said, “Listen Bob, it's not that big a deal. These days everyone's a vice president. Why do they even have a vice president of peas down at the

supermarket!” Somewhat deflated, Bob rang the local supermarket to find out if this was true. “Can I speak to the Vice President of peas please?” he asked, to which the reply came: “of fresh or frozen?”

We cannot be getting uppity and overconfident. Beware of high horses. It’s about God, not us—and that’s a very good thing indeed.

Truly, the constant thread runs throughout the scriptures. God is gracious, merciful, and desires to save. God is with us. We are called to center our lives in God, to worship and offer praise and thanksgiving. When we stick with God, we are free to be, to love, and to give.

Pride makes it difficult to accept grace, because grace is humbling, pride would rather do it alone. I have known some true incredible examples of life. Some I want to share with you.

A food truck delivers food to the homeless in Philadelphia. I remember a woman struggling in a fight to get a meal. The food truck owner said it was worth the fight? Her reply, ‘ Oh yes ,but not for myself. I got this for the homeless woman around the corner who cannot fight for a meal. ‘

I have been to three mission trips to Puerto Rico. I have seen a young man give \$20 from panhandling to share with friends on the street. In the same location I witnessed and heard a homeless girl as I asked her ‘What she wanted to be growing up?’ She said, “I want to own a grocery store.” I replied, “Why?” “So I give food to the hungry people.”

In the streets of Minneapolis, my colleague shared this true story of a Blind street musician who was abused by young guys. They mocked her, cursed her and even sprayed Lysol in her eyes. My colleague helped her and replied “There are a lot of bad folks in the world aren't there?” She replied “Oh yes, but there are a lot of good ones too. And the bad ones make you, the good ones seem even sweeter.”

So be aware of pride, it’s not the whistle that pulls the train.

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

Today, Historic Pot Luch Luncheon, following worship. Come to discuss important events in the life of the church and the current vision for the church. Sharing memories 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.

The Chosen will not meet this week; will resume on Sunday November 2.

Bylaws review team, Monday, October 27, 4pm

Bring your own supper; we'll eat while we meet.

Property and Finance Team, Tuesday, October 28, 2pm in the parlor

Organ Society Program, Wednesday October 29, 9:30am- Everyone is invited to hear this important information.

Meegan Burbank is an attorney at Berry & Burbank in Edgecomb with over 25 years of experience in the practice of law. Meegan will discuss the importance of having estate planning documents in place and will give a brief overview of some of the strategies available in Maine. This discussion and conversation are for the purposes of education and not legal advice. Attending the presentation does not create an attorney-client relationship with Meegan. Meegan's talk will be available in person, on Zoom, and recorded for future viewing.

Wednesday, October 29, 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.

Church Council, Wednesday, October 29 at 6:30 pm in person in Fellowship Hall. A Zoom link will be provided for those who are unable to attend in person. Ask Cindy Clement or call the church office for the link.

Sunday, October 26	No Choir Practice Sunday Worship 10:00am Historic Potluck Luncheon following worship in Fellowship Hall.
Monday, October 27	Rev. John's Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Mah Jongg 6:00 – 8:30pm Bylaws review team 4:00pm; bring a bag supper
Tuesday, October 28	Rev. John's Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Property and Finance Team meeting 2pm in the parlor Sheepscot Valley Chorus 7:00pm in Fellowship Hall
Wednesday, October 29	Rev. John's Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Organ Society Meeting 9:30am – Special Program Feed Our Scholars packing 11:00am in the activity room upstairs Book Study 4pm – 5:30pm in the parlor followed by potluck supper Church Council 6:30
Thursday, October 30	Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm
Sunday, November 2	Choir Practice 8:10am Sunday Worship 10:00am Mission Sunday The Chosen 5:30, including potluck supper



First Congregational Church UCC
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Sexton: Mary McKinney
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