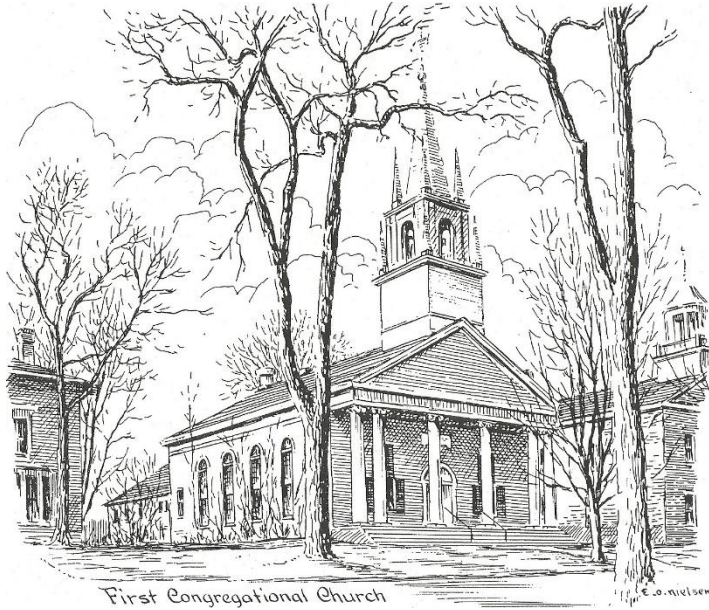


First Congregational Church
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
An Open and Affirming Church



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.

August 2, 2026

TENTH 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.

Spiritual Contemplation Quotes for the week:

“Sometimes, reaching out and taking someone's hand is the beginning of a journey. At other times, it is allowing another to take yours.” Vera Nazarian

PRELUDE *‘Praise and Honor God, Our King’* Max Reger/J. S. Bach

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

* CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called. Have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.

P: For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer.

* OPENING HYMN *‘Be Still, My Soul’* Red Hymnal No.95

OPENING INVOCATION TO PRAYER

God, thank You for this simple truth that impacts our lives, that two are better than one. What a privilege we have as the Body of Christ, to support and encourage one another in the work that You have given us to do. Give me grace and wisdom to hold the things of this world lightly and to consider the needs of others before my own. Unite Your people together in the bond of peace, and may we be a living testimony to the goodness and grace of God and work together for the furtherance of the gospel. AMEN.

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: **Indonesia**

MORNING PRAYER AND SILENT MOMENTS FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

RESPONSE

‘Amen’

ANTHEM

‘O Perfect Love’

arr. David Johnson

SCRIPTURE LESSON **Scripture Lesson: Ecclesiastes 4**

Again I saw all the oppressions that are practiced under the sun. Look, the tears of the oppressed—with no one to comfort them! On the side of their oppressors there was power—with no one to comfort them. And I thought the dead, who have already died, are more fortunate than the living, who are still alive; but better than both is the one who has not yet been, and has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun. Then I saw that all toil and all skill in work come from one person’s envy of another. This also is vanity and a chasing after wind. Fools fold their hands and consume their own flesh. Better is a handful with quiet than two handfuls with toil, and a chasing after wind. Again, I saw vanity under the sun: the case of solitary individuals, without sons or brothers; yet there is no end to all their toil, and their eyes are never satisfied with riches. ‘For whom am I toiling’, they ask, ‘and depriving myself of pleasure?’ This also is vanity and an unhappy business.

The Value of a Friend

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help. Again, if two lie together, they keep warm; but how can one keep warm alone? And though one might prevail against another, two will withstand one. A threefold cord is not quickly broken. Better is a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king, who will no longer take advice. One can indeed come out of prison to reign, even though born poor in the kingdom. I saw all the living who, moving about under the sun, follow that youth who replaced the king; there was no end to all those people whom he led. Yet those who come later will not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and a chasing after wind.

Liturgist: This is the Word of God.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

* HYMN

‘Thy Word is a Lamp Unto My Feet’

Red Hymnal No.297

SERMON

‘FOMO’

OFFERTORY PRAYER

CHORAL OFFERTORY

‘Voluntary in F-major’

John Stanley I. Andante

* 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

SACRAMENT OF EUCHARIST

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

L: God be with you.

P: And also with you.

L: Lift your hungry hearts to our God.

P: We offer them to the One who feeds us with grace.

L: God gives us all we need in every moment.

P: Our mouths will sing God's praise in these moments.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Hear us as we confess our sins in silence...

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

L: By God's grace you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls. Amen.

EUCCHARIST PRAYER- Rev . John

where we speak the truth in Christ:

**Christ died, the witness to obedience;
God raised Christ, the witness to the resurrection;
Christ will come, the witness to the promises to us.**

Continued Eucharist Prayer Rev. John

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

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Commissioning

* CLOSING HYMN *‘Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ’* Red Hymnal 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 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.**

POSTLUDE

‘Fanfare on "Xavier"’

arr. Douglas Wagner

You are invited to sit for the postlude.

* * * * *

“Our worship ends, let our service begin”

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Those serving you today:

Ushers: Cindy Clement & Mary McKinney

Reader: Harriet Matthey

Flowers: Ron Sanchez

Online Streaming: Tom Clement

Communion: Mary McKinney & Veronica Hogue

Please join us for fellowship, coffee or tea, and refreshments in Fellowship Hall following worship.

Happy August Birthdays to Janet Cappers, Cindy Clement, Scott Murry (husband to Lori LaBar) Scott tunes the pianos for church, Jim Spurlin, Bill Sutter, Judith Sutter, and Beth Whitney

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

Any interest in Bible study and/or book study, please let Rev. John know what day is preferable, Sunday -Wednesday.

Sunday August 9th- James Madison Speaks

Music & Worship Meeting

Tuesday August 11th - Property & Finance Meeting 11:00am

Council Meeting 6:30pm

Hilary will be out of the office 8/11, and in on Thurs. 8/13.

Sunday August 16 – Mission Offering

Coming Up This Week

Monday, August 3

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

Office Hours 9:30am – 1:30pm

Mah Jongg 6:00pm – 8:30pm

Tuesday, August 4

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

Office Hours 9:30am – 1:30pm

Wednesday, August 5

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

Office Hours 10:00am – 2:00p

Sunday, August 9

Sunday Worship 10:00am

Coffee Hour in Fellowship Hall following worship



Global Mission Partner this week: Indonesia

Ina, a 33-year-old woman from Kupang City in the province of East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, is fighting to pursue her case as a survivor of workplace sexual violence. She wrestles with trauma and stress as a result of her ordeal as well as feelings of depression, sorrow, and anxiety. She is struggling to reclaim her sense of worth after the violence she endured. A lack of social support exacerbates her despair, as her coworkers blame her and pressure her to remain silent about the case. However, working with The House of Hope, Ina's life began to transform.

The House of Hope GMIT, through the partnership with the Disciples and UCC (through Global Ministries), has provided Ina with both psychological care and legal assistance. Although she still experiences fear from the events that scarred her, she is gradually recovering emotionally, thanks to the support she receives. She also feels a great sense of support from the House of Hope GMIT and from within herself, which gives her confidence as she works through the legal system despite the numerous obstacles she has to overcome. Ina's story demonstrates how services from The House of Hope GMIT make a significant difference for survivors, reminding them that they are not alone. We remain committed to helping survivors like Ina in East Nusa Tenggara.

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

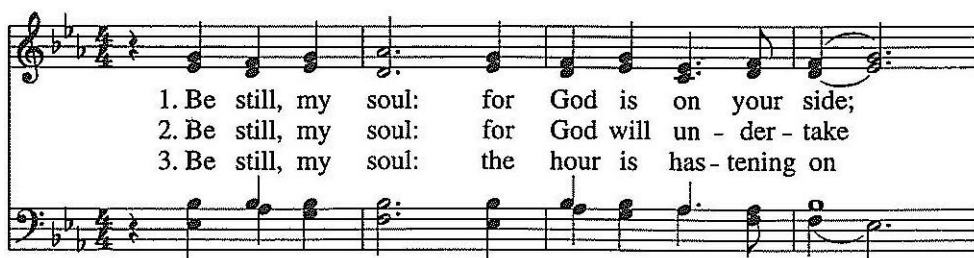
Office Administrator: Hilary Atwood

Church Office Email – fccw@myfairpoint.net

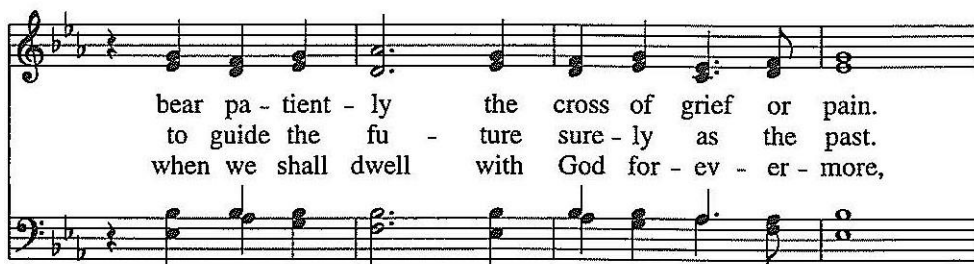
Church Office Phone – 207 882-7544

Church Website – www.uccwiscasset.or

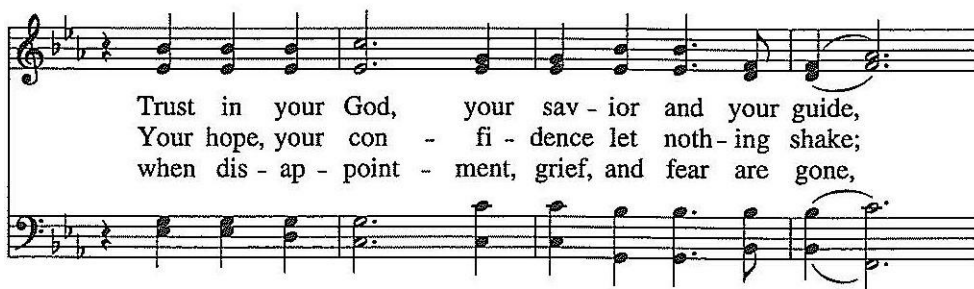
Be Still, My Soul



1. Be still, my soul: for God is on your side;
 2. Be still, my soul: for God will un - der - take
 3. Be still, my soul: the hour is has - tening on



bear pa - tient - ly the cross of grief or pain.
 to guide the fu - ture sure - ly as the past.
 when we shall dwell with God for - ev - er - more,



Trust in your God, your sav - ior and your guide,
 Your hope, your con - fi - dence let noth - ing shake;
 when dis - ap - point - ment, grief, and fear are gone,



who through all chang - es faith - ful will re - main.
 all now mys - te - rious shall be bright at last.
 sor - row for - got, love's pur - est joys re - stored.

WORDS: Katharina von Schlegel, 1752; tr. Jane Borthwick, 1855, alt.
 MUSIC: Jean Sibelius, 1899; arr. *The Hymnal*, 1933

FINLANDIA
 10 10.10 10.10 10

297 Thy Word Is a Lamp Unto My Feet

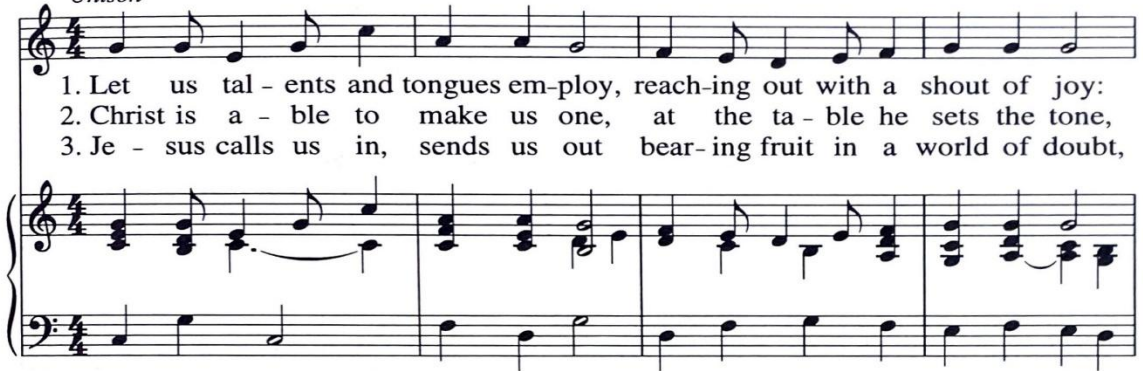
The musical score is written for a single melodic line in 4/4 time, featuring a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody begins with a half rest, followed by a quarter rest, then a dotted half note. The lyrics 'Thy word is a lamp un-to my feet' are aligned with the first part of the melody. The second part of the melody, starting with a dotted half note, is aligned with the lyrics 'and a light un-to my path.' The melody concludes with a final dotted half note. The score includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are written in a simple, sans-serif font below the staff.

Thy word is a lamp un-to my feet and a light un-to my path.

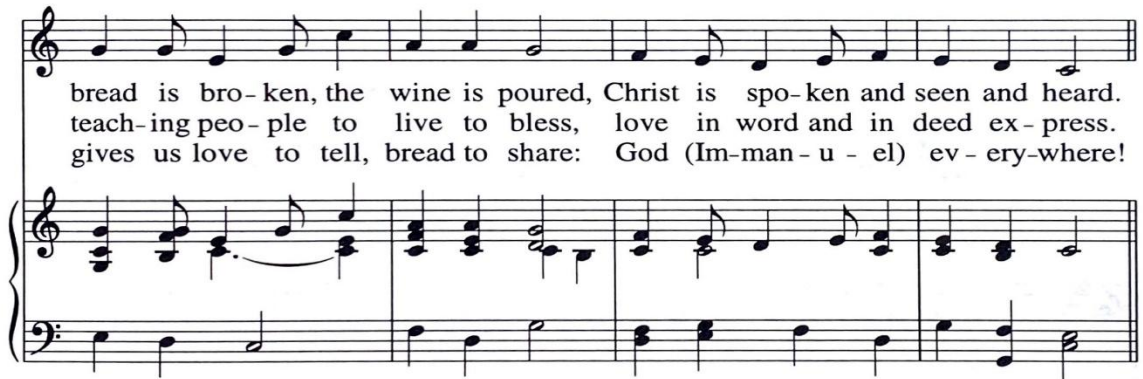
WORDS: Psalm 119:105
MUSIC: Hugh Porter (1897-1960)

LAMP
97

Unison

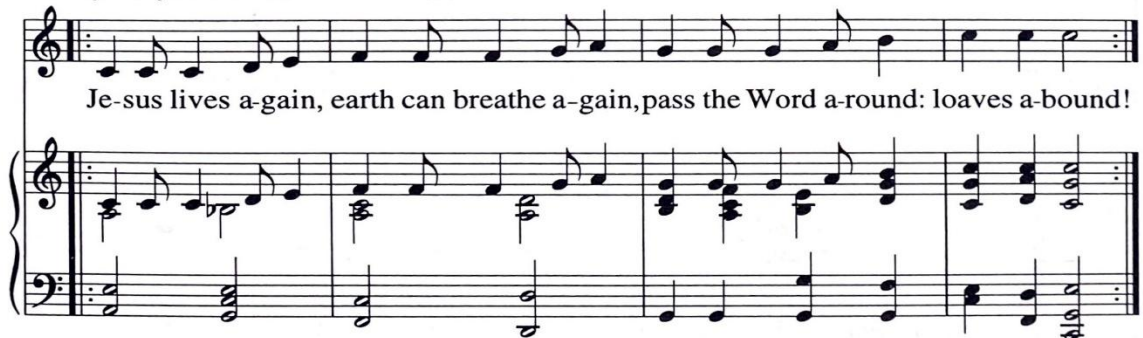


1. Let us tal - ents and tongues em-ploy, reach-ing out with a shout of joy:
 2. Christ is a - ble to make us one, at the ta - ble he sets the tone,
 3. Je - sus calls us in, sends us out bear-ing fruit in a world of doubt,



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.

August 2, 2026 'FOMO' Rev. John Hogue

On the coast of Maine, island residents know that one of the most important things to remember is the time of the last ferry. Miss it, and you don't simply wait fifteen minutes for another one—you may spend the entire night on the mainland or island. A few years ago, a visitor lingered in a waterfront gift shop because there was one more store to browse and one more ice cream to enjoy. They kept saying, "I've got time." When they finally reached the dock, the ferry was already pulling away. They waved, shouted, and even ran to the end of the pier—but it was too late. Their hotel, clothes, and family were all on the island. One small decision to delay cost them an unexpected night away. The next morning, the ferry captain reportedly said, "The ferry always leaves on time. It's the passengers who decide whether they'll be on it."

Our culture is driven by FOMO—the fear of missing the next experience, opportunity, or trend. Ecclesiastes reminds us that chasing every opportunity "under the sun" can leave us empty. Ironically, many people are so afraid of missing out on the world's offers that they miss what matters most: the invitation of God. Jesus' call is not, "Don't miss the next trend." It is, "Follow me." The greatest fear shouldn't be missing out on what everyone else is doing. It should be missing the life God is offering today. You could close with this question: "What are you so busy chasing that you may be missing the ferry God has already prepared for you?" Most people think of ambition as climbing, upward mobility, always looking for a step up and in some cultures willing to step on others to get it. But biblical ambition points in the other direction—the direction Christ traveled. Jesus emptied himself, lighting the path for our ambitions. We are called to follow him. As we empty

ourselves, we find the fullness of Christ. We look out for others' rights I had of our own. We find joy and advance seeing others succeed. We ask others to help us think realistically about ourselves. Reminds me of the attributed African proverb *'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.'*

Whether young or old, Americans are feeling more isolated. According to a recent study from the Pew Research Center, about half of Americans have weekly interactions with their neighbors, which means half of us don't. A survey by AARP found about one-third of respondents over the age of forty-five are lonely. And according to the American Psychological Association, loneliness and social isolation have similar effects on health as obesity and can lead to premature death. No surprise, social media doesn't help the feelings of isolation. We can have a serious fear of missing out (FOMO) when it seems we aren't invited to the places everyone else is (or even have the same number of likes or comments as someone else). The opposite is also true. When we replace a virtual meet-up with a real one, we can decrease our actual isolation.

Missing the boat, missing the bus, missing a spouse, missing a promotion, missing a stock tip, or missing a date with friends — we have all experienced missing out. That's why the fear of missing out (FOMO) is a universal experience in the human condition.

And our phones don't make the situation any easier. Social media is a constant refresh of our comparisons with others, and a constant recharge of our fears of missing out. I suspect many of human beings' worst phone habits are borne from FOMophobia. FOMO and social media go hand-in-hand, even down to the new Oxford English Dictionary entry ("FOMO — fear of missing out, anxiety that an

exciting or interesting event may be happening elsewhere, often aroused by posts seen on a social media website”).

We want to know, we want to see, we want to Tweet. We don’t want to be left out of a “cool kid conversation.” We want to be “in the know,” we want to hear the beeps and pings, and we want to refresh our feeds to make sure we aren’t missing anything.

The truth is that FOMO is neither unique nor modern. It predates the acronym coined in 2004, it predates Wi-Fi and our always-connected phones, and it precedes our fast-typing opposable thumbs. FOMO is an ancient phobia with a backstory that reaches back in the human experiences of yore. In the book, Possible: How We Survive (and Thrive) in an Age of Conflict, by renowned hostage negotiator William Ury, tells a story about being contracted to help a Brazilian supermarket tycoon, Abilio Diniz, in a stalemate with his business partner. Animosity had soured the business relationship, but the desire for victory and control had consumed Diniz’s life. When asked what he really wanted, Diniz said, “freedom,” citing time with his family as his most important value. Ury was able to frame true victory in terms of being released from the burden of the business partnership and freed to be with his family. In other words, it was the battle, not the opponent, that was truly at risk of defeating Diniz. What would have previously been seen as a loss by Diniz—relinquishing control—was now a win because he gained a true victory. Life under the sun can be lonely, competitive, and unjust—but God created us for community, compassion, and mutual support.

Ecclesiastes 4 asks uncomfortable questions. Why is there oppression? Why do we compete ourselves into exhaustion? Why do we isolate ourselves? Yet woven

throughout this chapter is a thread of hope: two are better than one. God's answer to a fractured world is faithful community. Let's take a deeper look at the text.

In vv. 1-3 God Sees the Tears of the Oppressed. The Preacher begins by noticing something many people try to ignore. "I saw the tears..." That is to say, God notices suffering before we do. For example in Maine, anyone who has worked on a lobster boat knows that when someone falls overboard, nobody says, "Well, that's unfortunate." Every boat nearby changes course immediately. Out on Casco Bay or the Sheepscot River, everyone understands one simple truth: Someday it could be me in the water. That's the Church. We don't simply wave from a distance—we *throw the rope*.

In vv. 4-6, reminds us that competition Can Become Our Idol. "I saw that all toil springs from envy." Success isn't wrong. However, trying to outdo everyone else steals joy. For example, have you ever noticed two Mainers comparing snowstorms? "I shoveled twenty inches." "Oh yeah? We had thirty." "My power was out for two days." "Ours was out four." "My driveway's longer." "I had to shovel uphill...both ways!" Sometimes we're competitive about being miserable! The Preacher says that's chasing the wind. Did you know that the famous Rockefeller family was once asked, "How much money is enough?" John D. Rockefeller reportedly answered, "Just a little bit more." Enough never arrives if comparison is driving us.

In vv. 7-12 is the heart of Ecclesiastes 4 by making aware of the Danger of Living Alone. The text reminds us "two are better than one. "We were never designed to carry life alone. In Maine's woods, experienced loggers never head deep into the forest completely alone. One person can get hurt. One chainsaw can fail. One wrong step changes everything. There's wisdom in having someone beside you.

You remember three weeks ago I talked about the giant sequoias of California that can grow over 250 feet tall. Surprisingly, their roots are often only six to twelve feet deep. How do they survive massive storms? Their roots intertwine with neighboring trees. They literally hold one another upright. The Church was designed exactly that way. Faith is personal. It was never meant to be private.

In vv. 13-16, success Without relationships Is empty. Power comes. Power goes. Popularity fades. The applause eventually stops. Only relationships rooted in God endure. Around Maine, we know this truth. Nobody puts on a gravestone, “He always got the best parking space at Reny’s.” People remember kindness.

Faithfulness. Generosity. Love.

Who needs encouragement this week?

Who has been carrying burdens alone?

Who needs a phone call?

Who needs forgiveness?

Who needs an invitation to church?

God often answers prayers through ordinary people willing to stand beside someone.

One winter in rural Maine, an elderly man became stranded after a snowstorm blocked his driveway. Before the plows even arrived, neighbors appeared with snowblowers, shovels, and hot coffee. No one asked whose responsibility it was. They simply showed up. By afternoon the driveway was open. More importantly, the man no longer felt alone.

That is Ecclesiastes 4. The greatest gift wasn’t the cleared snow. It was knowing someone cared enough to come. The Church is called to be those neighbors.