

# 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](http://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.*

November 23, 2025

**TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
**STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY**  
**THANKSGIVING SUNDAY**

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

“Stewardship is the hallmark of life on earth.”

Sunday Adelaj

PRELUDE

*Take My Life and Let It Be*

arr. Benton Price

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTROIT

*We Gather Together*

**\* CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: Bring praise to our Creator who kissed life into our mortal bodies.

**P: We bring praise to our Creator who trusts us to preserve God’s most precious things.**

L: Bring praise to our Creator who invites us into sacred partnership  
to tend to each other and all of creation.

**P: We bring praise to our Creator seeing the beauty around us and sensing our sacred responsibility.**

**\* OPENING HYMN**

*Jesu, Jesu*

No. 459

INVOCATION TO PRAYER

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: Lesotho

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

*Hear Our Prayer, O God*

George Whelpton

SCRIPTURE LESSON

Luke 13:18-21; 1 Peter 4:8-11

Liturgist: This is the Word of God.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

\* HYMN

*Take My Life, and Let it Be Consecrated*

No. 464

SERMON

‘Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl’

PRESENTATION OF OUR STEWARDSHIP PLEDGES TO GOD

Reading of God's Dry Wall by Dave Hopwood, reprinted with permission

Based on 1 Peter 2:2-10's image of the church as the "living stones" which God is building into a temple for glory.

**So many stones,  
small, large, smooth, jagged, new, old,  
fitting into this craggy, jigsaw body,  
different sizes, different shapes.**

**All vital, all part of a bigger picture,  
not a construction designed to keep others out,  
but a welcoming, generous temple,  
a kind of place to call home,**

**a lighthouse, a divine landmark,  
a place where all varieties of stone may fit together.**

**Standing on the kind of rock that many overlook:  
the kind of rock that will stand forever.**

#### PRESENTATION OF OFFERINGS

Please come forward as you are able and bring your pledge card, volunteer card, offering and your stone. Place your pledge and volunteer cards in the Baptismal bowl; this is a reminder of our Baptismal vows. Place your offering in an offering plate. You will receive in return a pebble, starfish and We Are Living Stones blessing. If you have physical challenges we will not ask you to come forward. For our Zoom participants, please let Rev. John know and he will present a stewardship moment and blessings for you in person.

#### OFFERTORY PRAYER

CHORAL OFFERTORY

*Praise and Thanksgiving*

arr. John Scriveyner

#### \* 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

*They Asked, "Who's My Neighbor"*

No. 460

#### 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

*Come, Ye Thankful People, Come*

arr. Rex Koury

*You are invited to sit for the postlude.*

\* \* \* \* \*

**“Our worship ends, let our service begin”**

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***Minister and Teacher:*** Rev. John Hogue

***Music Director:*** Joel Pierce

**Those serving you today:**

***Ushers:*** Ann Crispin and Anne Harris

***Online Streaming:*** Dewey Harris

***Reader:*** Angie Eddy

***Flowers:*** Beth Maxwell

**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.

**Happy November Birthday** to Harry Green, Rev. John Hogue, Mary McKinney, Deborah Olson, Karl Olson, Margot Stiassni, and Jan Whitfield.

**Help Yourself Shelf November Wish List**

Cereal \* Coffee \* tea \* Canned stew and soup \* Baked Beans \* Pasta \* Ramen \*  
Canned meats \* Condiments \* Pancake mix \* Toothbrushes \* Pet Food & litter

## **Help Yourself Shelf Thanksgiving Wish List**

Turkey stock \* Pie crusts \* Instant Potatoes \* Mayonnaise \* \* Canned Pumpkin \*  
Spices \* Brown sugar \* Sweetened condensed milk \* Tea \* Hot cocoa \* Coffee \*  
Cake and brownie mix \* Pudding mix \* Molasses

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Winter Coat and Cold Weather Gear Collection**

The Youth Group is sponsoring a drive to collect items for folks in need of warmth and comfort in the upcoming winter months. These can be dropped off in Fellowship Hall. The drive will run through to the end of November and donations will go to the St. Philip's Bargain Basement.

### **Organ Society Wreath Sale**

Wreaths will be available for pick-up on Tuesday November 25<sup>th</sup> or Sunday November 30<sup>th</sup>.

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: Beth Maxwell

Church Office Email – [fccw@myfairpoint.net](mailto:fccw@myfairpoint.net)  
Church Office Phone – 207 882-7544  
Church Website – [www.uccwiscasset.org](http://www.uccwiscasset.org)

## **Luke 13:18-21**

### **The Parable of the Mustard Seed**

He said therefore, “What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it? It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.”

### **The Parable of the Yeast**

And again he said, “To what should I compare the kingdom of God? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

## **1 Peter 4:8-11**

Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

This is the Word of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

New Revised Standard Version Updated Version

## Jesu, Jesu

*Refrain (Unison)*

Je - su, Je - su, fill us with your love, show

*Fine*

us how to serve the neigh-bors we have from you.

1. Kneels at the feet of his friends, si - lent - ly wash-es their  
 2. Neigh-bors are wealth-y and poor, var - ied in col - or and  
 3. These are the ones we would love, these are the ones we would  
 4. Lov - ing puts us on our knees, thank-ful and hum-ble and

*D.C.*

feet, Je - sus, our broth-er, a hum - ble man.  
 race; neigh-bors are near and far a - way.  
 serve; all these are neigh-bors, your child - ren, too.  
 true; this is the way we would live with you.

WORDS: Tom Colvin, 1969, alt.

MUSIC: Ghanaian folk song; arr. Tom Colvin, 1969; harm. Charles H. Webb, 1988

CHEREPONI  
Irr. w. refrain

This text was written for a meeting of evangelists at Chereponi, Ghana, and translated by Church of Scotland missionary Tom Colvin. The Ghanaian folk tune was collected in the Chereponi area.

Words, music © 1969,  
harm. © 1989 Hope Publishing Co.



## 464 Take My Life, and Let It Be Consecrated



1. Take my life, and let it be con-se-crat-ed, Lord, to thee;  
 2. Take my hands, and let them move at the im-pulse of thy love;  
 3. Take my will, and make it thine; it shall be no long-er mine;  
 4. Take my love: my Lord I pour at thy feet its treas-ure store;

take my mo-ments and my days, let them flow in cease-less praise.  
 take my feet, and let them be swift and beau-ti-ful for thee.  
 take my heart, it is thine own; it shall be thy roy-al throne.  
 take my-self, and I will be ev-er, on-ly, all for thee.

WORDS: Frances R. Havergal, 1874  
 MUSIC: Melody, Justin H. Knecht, 1797

VIENNA  
 77.77

In this hymn, Havergal expresses a commitment  
 that rises above her own frail constitution.

# They Asked, "Who's My Neighbor"

460

*Unison*

1. They asked, "Who's my neigh - bor and whom should I love; for  
 2. There once was a trav - el - er set on by thieves who  
 3. A cer - tain Sa - mar - i - tan then came a - long to  
 4. I know who's my neigh - bor and whom I should love, for

whom should I do a good deed?" Then Je - sus re - lat - ed a  
 beat him and left him to die; a priest and a Le - vite each  
 bind up his wounds and give aid; he took him to stay at an  
 whom I should do a good deed; for Je - sus made clear in the

sto - ry and said, "It's an - y - one who has a  
 saw him in pain; but they turned a - way and walked  
 inn un - til well, and for all the ser - vice he  
 sto - ry he told, it's an - y - one who has a

need, yes, an - y - one who has a need."  
 by, yes, they turned a - way and walked by.  
 paid, yes, for all the ser - vice he paid.  
 need, yes, an - y - one who has a need.

WORDS: Jan Wesson, 1981, alt.  
 MUSIC: Jan Wesson, 1981

NEIGHBOR  
 11 8.11 88

Written for the dedication of Wesson's church in Nashville TN,  
 this text expresses the spirit, rather than the literal message of  
 the story of the Good Samaritan.

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 admin. Hope Publishing Co.

STEWARDSHIP AND SERVICE

## Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl Nov. 23, 2025 Rev. John Hogue

I suspected this sermon title would turn some heads. I thought to myself, I need a title that people can remember. A title that reflects the message of stewardship. When I was in seminary, more theology came from Theologians in Germany. Names like Moltman, Schaeffer, Barth, Bonhoeffer. So there was an influx of German thinkers and thankfully in the last 20 years we have had wonderful diverse thinking in theological circles with different insights. Therefore my sermon title is the product of German theological insight- the word: Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl. It means ‘fellow-feeling of sympathy’ (especially for someone in a similar situation, of similar tastes). It can also mean ‘togetherness’ as the ‘state of being close together.’ I like the word because in my understanding: means ‘a sense of belonging.’ We are a community of faith belonging together. As your settled Minister, the question in some people’s minds is ‘Where are we going? First, we will continue to work on our missions. Reach out to people, new and current members and the question: what do we have to share? I hope in the last few months you have sensed the belonging to create a community of welcoming all people and engage in a positive outlook in the midst of society that is so negative. We offer the light of hope to our community. A seed ready to sprout and offer love to the community and God.

In January, we will have our annual meeting. A budget is presented. Yes, it will be a line item budget. However, our budget is more than just a line item. There is a story behind those numbers. The story of our mission outreach. The story of energy. A story of compassion for this church reaching out into the community. We are making a difference!

A few weeks ago, at the end of October we had a Historical Vision Potluck. Those notes were shared in the weekly Chimes, I'll be happy to

resupply those notes for your discernment. I listened to what you said- We discussed what I call the Five pillars.

**Pillar One: Spiritual Discussion of important Spiritual aspects of the church**

**Pillar Two: Structural -building, renovations that took place over the years.**

**Pillar Three: Leadership- pastors, staff, members, community**

I have to say we need to thank the Larrabee's and Miss Varney who established the endowment. We honor their ongoing legacy and anyone who wishes to discuss legacy gifts to the church, please let me know and help secure those wishes. Then we talked about:

**Pillar Four: Mission/Outreach : Ministries, community Events.**

**Pillar Five: Relational: conflicts, reconciliations, and celebrations.**

Then we shifted to **Today our church is Strong in.....**I believe these are worth repeating in your responses: Music, new organ. The Minister. Working to get jobs done. Funerals. Weekly chimes for Communication. Fellowship. Consistency of Worship.

I asked the **One Challenge we face is: Responses were:** Different types of music for the younger people to enjoy. Diverse types of Worship. Lack of children/youth. Invite others to church. Organization of By-laws. Age and size of church. Direct outreach. Consensual Decision Making

Then I asked- **'We hope God will lead us to \_\_\_\_\_next few years.'**

Willingness to change and try new things Attract more diverse members. Care for each other. Be a stronger Open and Affirming church and diversity of safe communities. Membership Growth. More involvement in the community. Working at Pilgrim Lodge.

All of these will take time and commitment, of which I am fully committed to assisting. In some cases radical hospitality can take unexpected turns. For example: At a service club luncheon when the keynote speaker sat down beside a man. The guest speaker was in such a hurry to get there he forgot to put in his dentures. Turning to the man, he whispered, "I forgot my teeth!" The man said, "No problem," reached into his briefcase, and pulled out a pair of dentures. "Try these," he said. The speaker tried them. "Too loose," he said. The man dug around again. "Here, try these." "Too tight," said the speaker. The man dug around again and said, "Here. Give this pair a try." The guest speaker smiled, saying, "They fit perfectly." He was able to eat his meal and give his speech without any trouble. As everyone was leaving, he went over to thank the man and return the spare parts. "I want to thank you for coming to my rescue," he said. "Where is your office? I've been looking for a good dentist." "Oh, I'm not a dentist," said the man. "I'm the funeral director."

I do believe in the coming year and beyond, our Ministry will influence this community, the region and beyond. We all are wanting to make a difference—to live a life of significance. Just this past week, several of you have graciously stepped up to help one of our own members. Even the smallest of congregations do big things. We are doing what we know and love.

Our scripture texts reveal the purpose of wealth is reckless generosity for a seed brings forth much more seeds and the kind that sings of the lavish love of

God. The kind that rekindles hope on dark days. The kind that reminds us that God is with us always.

Can we read our VISION statement together on the front of our bulletins? *We are on a journey to reflect God's love, embracing diversity and affirming the dignity and worth of all.*

Can we read our MISSION statement together?: *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.*

Our budget should reflect the vision and mission-driven statements. By providing glimpses of how this community of faith lives out in practical ways the broad brushstrokes of ministry. This narrative connects your story with the story of the Christian faith. I cannot wait to see how 2026 and beyond unfolds in sharing our narrative.

**In Pillar five at the historical potluck, we talked about conflict and challenges this church faced.** I heard about Vietnam, Open and affirming and challenges of COVID. Beloved, I heard you. However, that is the past. We need to let go and move into the future.

Furthermore, may I paint a picture of how money and ministry work together as you live out your church's mission. This is how I envision the ministry- Did you ever hear of the documentary **Accidental Courtesy: Daryl Davis, Race & America**”? (2016) It is a documentary about Daryl Davis and his work with KKK members.

- Daryl Davis is a African-American musician who actively befriends members of the Ku Klux Klan, even leading to some of them leaving the Klan altogether.
- He collects their robes and hoods when they renounce the Klan.
- The documentary explores his belief that dialogue and understanding can change deeply held hate — his question:

“How can you hate me when you don’t even know me?”

- It also shows tension: some Black activists (like from Black Lives Matter) disagree strongly with his approach, arguing that simply befriending white supremacists doesn’t “free” Black people.
- Filmed over years, the film goes across the U.S. — including conversations with Klan leaders and former members.

### Why It’s Important and What Makes It Powerful-

- It challenges conventional ideas about how to confront racism — not by shouting or protesting, but by listening and conversing.
- It raises hard questions: Is dialogue enough when it’s with people who’ve done terrible harm?
- The documentary is a real-world example of bridge building — but also doesn’t shy away from how controversial or imperfect that bridge-building is.
- It’s not just about the Klan — it’s also about generational and ideological divides in how to address systemic racism (Davis vs younger activists).
- The robes are a powerful symbol: each piece represents a person who, in some way, was changed or at least questioned their beliefs.

Starting in January for three months on Thursday evening at the local Tap Room in town, and with blessings of Faith and Development Team, is called Theology on Tap. It will be an opportunity for the community to meet at the Tap room to have a roundtable of open , honest theological, philosophical discussion(s) or anything in nature over a drink. Plus we will support our local establishment. If anything, it can be a listening session where people who are hurting or lonely, can be a living example of true bridge building.

Like I mentioned last week, the hard work of the lamb and wolf eating together can be exhausting. Dearly beloved, I do not have all the answers.

We cannot change each other's theological beliefs or persuasions. However, **I know we can make a difference.** With that charge, I believe whole heartedly, this church is a diamond in the rough. All of you, those online and folks yet to grace our presence in the future will enhance the vision and mission of this church. I feel so strongly and passionate about ministry because ministry is like this incredible story- which is from the book: "The Star Thrower" from THE UNEXPECTED UNIVERSE by Loren Eiseley. Copyright © 1968 by Loren Eiseley and renewed 1996 by John A. Eichman. It goes like this:

A young girl was walking along a beach upon thousands of starfish that had been washed up during a terrible storm. When she came to each starfish, she would pick it up and throw it back into the ocean. People watched her with amusement. She had been doing this for some time when a man approached her and said, "Little girl, why are you doing this? Look at this beach! You can't save all these starfish. You can't begin to make a difference!" The girl seemed crushed, suddenly deflated. But after a few moments, she bent down, picked up another starfish, and hurled it as far as she could into the ocean. Then she looked up at the man and replied, "**Well, I made a difference for that one!**"

The man looked at the girl inquisitively and thought about what she had done and said. Inspired, he joined the little girl in throwing starfish back into the sea. Soon others joined, and all the starfish were saved.

We are members, friends, associates/affiliates and people of the community- **Let us love each other deeply , be faithful stewards, and offer hospitality without complaining.** For our calling is to be engaged in belonging together as our German brothers and sisters say -**Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl , or as the little girl reminds us, it will make a difference to that one!**



Sunday, November 23	Choir Practice 8:10am Sunday Worship 10:00am Pledge cards to be collected Coffee Hour following worship in Fellowship Hall Thanksgiving Dinner at Wiscasset Community Center g potluck supper
Monday, November 24	Rev. John's Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Feed Our Scholars packing 10:00am in the activity room Upstairs Mah Jongg 6:00 – 8:30pm
Tuesday, November 25	Rev. John's Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Organ Society Wreath Decorating 9:30am Sheepscot Valley Chorus 7:00pm in Fellowship Hall – last rehearsal of the season
Wednesday, November 26	Rev. John's Office Hours 9:00am – 10:00am 00pm
Thursday, November 27	Thanksgiving Day
Sunday, November 30	No Choir Practice Sunday Worship 10:00am First Sunday of Advent Hanging of the Greens The Chosen 5:30, including potluck supper