



THE BEACON

Volume 1, Issue 1
September 9, 2012

The deadline for the next BEACON is Friday, September 21,
2012. Send entries to beacon@fccucc.org

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Looking Ahead in Worship

September 16

8:30 a.m. – Chapel worship

10:00 a.m. – Sanctuary worship and first day of Sunday school. We'll commission our Sunday school teachers and John McCall will give the message. Fellowship time follows in Wright Pavilion.

September 23

8:30 a.m. – Chapel worship

10:00 a.m. – Sanctuary worship and Sunday school. Diane Harvey will give the message. Fellowship time follows in Wright Pavilion.

September 30

8:30 a.m. – Chapel worship

10:00 a.m. – Sanctuary worship and first day of Sunday school. John McCall will give the message. Fellowship time follows in Wright Pavilion.

PLEASE REMEMBER to wear your nametags, to help Diane Harvey (and everyone else) learn your name!



PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

For peace and peacemakers; for our veterans and those in active service; for those who struggle with PTSD and injury; for all who live without sufficient food, water,

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SUNDAY SCHOOL IS COMING

Regular Sunday school classes for preschoolers through eighth grade begin **September 16**. Each Sunday our children begin in the sanctuary and then leaving for classes after the children's message. Nursery and toddler care are also offered each week for the 10 a.m. service. Families can register children for Sunday school online at: <http://fccucc.org/grow/sunday-school/sunday-school-registration/>

*Prayers of the People
continued...*

shelter, safety, love; for those confined to their homes and to nursing homes.

Continued Prayers:
Edchen Ferguson recently hospitalized; Terry & Richard Cotton on the recent death of his mother **Anna M. Cotton**. Debbie Riley and family on the recent death of her mother, **Barbara Bailey Lord**; Louise Davis' sister, **Meredith Whitney** dealing with several health concerns; Bruce Martel and family on the death of his wife Karen's father, **Jim Kelley**.



Please contact the office if you or a family member is hospitalized. We check the lists at Maine Medical Center and Mercy regularly but may miss your name among the many. Email office@fccucc.org or phone 799-3361 to let us know.

On The Journey

It is so good to be here! Your welcome this past week and on Sunday, Sept. 9 has been very warm and gracious. I am touched by your kindness and I can clearly sense the loving presence of God in your midst. I treasure this opportunity to share in ministry with you as Transitional Minister in this time of loss, change and unfolding possibility; and I look forward to getting to know you better, learning your stories and accompanying you for awhile on the journey of life and faith as we seek to be faithful to God's leading.

Through the end of the year, you will find me up in South Portland on Sundays, Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Please feel free to stop by, to call me at the church office or contact me by email: dlh@fccucc.org. Though I am commuting from my home in Kittery Point, other times to meet can be set up as needed.

There will be more to share once I get settled but for now, let me offer this. As we travel this coming year together, may these words from an unknown source be great hope for you as they are deep conviction for me: "When God asks us to step out into the unknown and we are not sure where the way will lead, or whether we shall be safe, even if it seems like we are being called to step into thin air, we can be assured of this – either the ground beneath us will solid; or, we shall be taught to fly."

In faith,

Diane

BAPTISMS SCHEDULED

The sacrament of baptism will next be offered **October 14** and **November 11**. Baptism is appropriate at any age. For infants and children, families declare their intention to raise their child to be a disciple within the fellowship of the church. For adults, baptism is a confession of faith in Jesus Christ. Contact John McCall for more information, jbm@fccucc.org.

Selecting a Search Committee

Greetings from Nancy MacLean, Moderator.

“Just as the local church is not “our” church but rather God’s, so too the Search Committee is really God’s committee. A search for a new pastor is one of the most spiritual ministries in the church. The selection of Search Committee members is a task that is approached with prayer, wisdom, sensitivity, and awareness that God may be calling certain church members to consider serving in this particular capacity.”

One “best practice” for committee selection includes publicizing the criteria for membership on the Search Committee and inviting persons in the congregation to submit nominations to the governing board. Submitting nominations is one of the many ways that the entire congregation can be informed about

and included in the search process; it should be made clear, however, that not all nominees will be selected. The FCC Church Council has also proposed that members may nominate themselves. **A deadline of September 21 has been set.**

“Those who submit nominations should include a brief description of the reasons why that person would be an asset to the committee. There are a number of personal qualities and attributes to consider in the selection of Search Committee members; individuals should have:

- a passionate commitment to Christ’s church;
- a positive attitude (no grudges!);
- a capacity to approach the task with openness rather than a pre-determined agenda;
- a sense of integrity and respect for

others;

- an ability to be absolutely confidential;
- a capacity to listen, to participate in a group, and to come to consensus.

In addition, an individual under consideration for the Search Committee should be:

- an active supporter of the church as demonstrated by worship attendance, financial support, and participation;
- trusted and respected by the congregation;
- willing and able to make this responsibility a very high priority because many meetings are required for a long period of time.”

The members should reflect, as much as possible, the diversity of the congregation (racial, cultural,

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SENIOR PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE FORMATION

At its August 23 meeting, the Church Council set up a small team to gather nominees to serve on a Search Committee for the Senior Pastor for our church.

The team is looking for a diverse group of 9 to 11 people: people of assorted ages, gender, occupation, interests and church involvement. A more detailed description is elsewhere in this Beacon.

Are you interested? Do you know someone you want to nominate? The commitment includes:

- A year or more of bi-weekly or possibly weekly meetings
- Committee work includes a discernment process with the congregation, i.e., who are we, what do we want, what do we need?
- Committee members review profiles of candidates, then engage in discussion and evaluation

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SENIOR PASTOR SEARCH *cont...*

- Roles on the committee include chairperson, recorder and chaplain

The Council meets on Oct. 4 to approve the Search Committee...and away they go, meeting as soon as Oct. 10.

If you are interested, or want to nominate someone, please contact one of these folks before September 21:

Betsy Keiter 767-6182
bwkeiter@gwi.net

Peggy Murray 883-6535
pjmurray@roadrunner.com

Elinor Redmond 767-4198
eredmond@maine.rr.com

Nancy MacLean,
Moderator

The **Community Crisis Ministries** committee would like to thank all those who have pledged and/or donated to help our neighbors who are in need. We are very concerned about the future for many families in our area and appreciate all the support you have given over the past and continue to give. Thank you very much!

Selecting a Search Committee *(continued...)*

economic, sexual orientation) and there should be at least one youth member. All persons on the Search Committee should be full members of the congregation.

The Church Council has already designated a subcommittee to review the names in light of the identified criteria and make recommendations to the entire Council.

For this purpose, we have a special meeting scheduled for the date of October 4.

So, the subcommittee

needs to have all names by **September 21**, please.

Betsy Keiter
767-6182
bwkeiter@gwi.net

Peggy Murray
883-6535
pjmurray@roadrunner.com

Elinor Redmond
767-4198
redmond@maine.rr.com

**EXCERPTED FROM
SEARCH AND CALL: A
Pilgrimage through
Transitions and New
Beginnings

SECTION THREE: THE
SEARCH AND CALL

PROCESS in The United
Church of Christ

<http://www.ucc.org/ministers/a-pilgrimage-through.html>

From the Music Committee

On **Sunday, September 30** the choir will be performing an anthem entitled "*Praise the Lord*". This is a very special piece of music, not only because it is beautiful but also because it was composed by one of our congregation. Scott

Steidl may be known to some of you as your ophthalmologist. What you probably don't know is that he is also a talented composer, receiving a doctorate in composition from The Juilliard School in 1985. The choir, under Shirley Curry's direction, has

been preparing to perform this piece since last spring! Please be sure to attend worship on **Sunday, September 30 at 10:00 a.m.** to hear this special music composed by one of our community.

The Music Committee
music@fccucc.org

From the Spiritual Life & Worship Team

In January and February, the Spiritual Life and Worship Team together with the Education, Growth & Fellowship Team sponsored three Communion Conversations for the congregation. These conversations were opportunities to share our thoughts and feelings about Communion, and to discuss the church's position on children participation in Communion.

There were several points of unanimous consensus of those attending the Communion conversations:

- Parents should be the ones to decide when a child is ready to participate in Communion. The church shouldn't set an age or condition for children to receive Communion, since each child is an individual and will be ready at a different time. Parents will know their child best, and know when it is right for their child.

- The church should

provide education about Communion. This could be part of the Sunday school curriculum, a separate class (like Bible Discovery) open to any and all ages, and/or educational materials for parents who would like to provide the education at home.

- The policy about children and Communion should be widely shared with the congregation, and published in the bulletin on Communion Sundays so that those attending know how we feel about children participating in Communion.

- Regarding Sunday School having Communion during their service in the chapel, the consensus was that the children should not have a separate Communion service in the chapel because Communion should be shared with the whole community, not separate groups. If children are to participate in Communion, they

should be with the rest of the congregation.

The following statement will be printed in the bulletin on Communion Sundays:

"At the First Congregational Church of South Portland, A United Church of Christ, we believe that there are no barriers to the Communion table. All who seek to share in Christ's love are welcome to receive the elements of bread and cup. Children are welcome to receive Communion as permitted by their parents. *[Added during intinction services, Children not receiving the elements are invited to come forward with their family for a blessing.]*"

The Education Growth and Fellowship Team will be planning the educational classes and materials about Communion. Please watch their articles in the Beacon for more information.

INQUIRERS' MEETING SET FOR OCTOBER 15

Are you new to the church? Have you been worshipping for a few weeks or few months? Have you been around for a long time and never (quite) gotten around to becoming a member? You're warmly invited to join us **Monday, October 15, 7-9 p.m.** in Wright Pavilion for an informal **Inquirers' meeting** where we'll get to know each other, talk about the church, and answer questions so you can decide whether you're ready to become a covenant member.



Please call the church office (799-3361) or send us an email (office@fccucc.org) to say you'll be there.



SENIOR ACTIVITIES

Thursday, September 20 - leave the church at **10:30** for a trip to Dundee Park in Windham where we will have a **picnic lunch and stop to see a covered bridge**. In case of inclement weather we will "picnic" at the church, followed by a Domino game.

Thursday, September 27 - meet at **I-Hop** for breakfast at **9:00**.

Thursday, October 4 - **SAGE** meeting at **1:00**.

Wednesday, October 10 we'll have **lunch at SMCC at noon**. The price is now \$16 per person. Please RSVP by Oct. 1 - no exceptions, as they're being very strict about reservations this year.

Wednesday, October 24 - join us for a foliage ride through Gray and **lunch at Cole Farms** restaurant. More details will follow.

Civil Discourse on Same Sex Marriage

How do people of faith talk together about *big issues* when we don't agree? Four Maine spiritual leaders will explore how civility makes it possible for people of faith to "disagree without being disagreeable." Episcopal Bishop Steve Lane, UCC Conference Minister

Susie Craig, United Methodist pastor Michael Davis, and Roman Catholic priest Joe Daniels will explore the topic, **Thursday, September 20, 7 p.m. at Luther Bonney Hall, University of Southern Maine.** Admission and parking in the Bedford Street parking garage are free.

The event is jointly sponsored by the Maine Council of Churches (Rev. Jill Job Saxby, Executive Director) and the USM Interfaith Chaplaincy (Rev. Andrea Thompson McCall, Director).

Neighbors in Need

Neighbors in Need is the UCC's annual offering to support ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. Your gift allows UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries to continue its strong policy advocacy work on issues such as the federal budget, voting rights, immigration, health

care, hate crimes, civil liberties, and environmental justice. Neighbors in Need also supports our American Indian neighbors in the UCC. Today there are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis.

We will receive your gift on **October 7**.

Please make your check payable to First Congregational Church, UCC and write NIN on the memo line. There will be Neighbors in Need envelopes in the pew racks. Thank you for your annual support of Neighbors in Need.

Mission & Outreach
Team
moteam@fccucc.org

Fall Rummage Sale

Summer is over and it is time for another **Rummage Sale!** It will be **Saturday October 20**. Please start sorting out those

things that have been hanging around and not used. We can use them for sure! You can start dropping off in Guptill Hall on

September 15. We are looking for a big successful sale!!!

Prudy

799-5705

PER CAPITA CONTRIBUTIONS

Have you made your 2012 donation towards your Per Capita dues? If not, look for the **blue** boarder envelope with our **per capita logo** in your October envelopes. This is the \$15.00 annual fee that the church pays on your behalf to the Cumberland Association and the Maine Conference. This year, our total paid for all church members was \$11,284.

Cyndi Alden
Business Manager
cda@fccucc.org

**A Christian
family:
loving,
welcoming,
serving.**

Volunteer Opportunity – Thanksgiving Baskets

With the warm days and nights quickly turning to crisp days and chillier nights, Thanksgiving is just around the corner. The Mission Outreach team is looking for a

volunteer to organize our annual Thanksgiving Baskets. If you might be interested in this short volunteer commitment and make a real difference in our

community, please contact a M&O member or email moteam@fccucc.org.

The Children's Closet

While drafting the fall schedule for the Children's Closet it has become apparent that we need a few more volunteers. Typically the Closet is open on the first and third Wednesdays & Saturdays from 9-11:00 a.m. Volunteers help with sorting & hanging clothes, sorting toys,

rearranging shelving, and of course, just being there when the Closet is open. We prefer to schedule volunteers for one shift each month, however we can always use people willing to come in as a back-up sub when "regulars" can't make it.

If you are interested

and/or need more information, please contact Jill Gorneau at gorneau98@gmail.com or 799-4109. And of course, contributions of gently used toys & children's clothing are always welcome. Thank you for your continued support of the Children's Closet.

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR From Our Diversity Committee

Many of you may have seen in the Portland Press Herald the September 4th letter to the editor written by former members of our congregation. The letter was unkind and, in addition, implied an

inaccurate picture of the process by which our faith community makes decisions. The Diversity Committee feels strongly that some kind of response should be made and has accordingly drafted a

letter which we plan to submit to the paper this week:

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MISSION & OUTREACH / ADMINISTRATION

From our Diversity Committee (*continued...*)

Letter to the Editor
Portland Press Herald
September 10, 2012

In a letter to the editor September 4th, former members of our congregation misrepresented the facts and criticized our pastor for acting “arrogantly” and “pushing” for the freedom to marry for same-sex couples when “many of his congregation disagree with him.”

To set the record straight, we are a congregation of people who have agreed to wrestle with ethical issues in light of our Christian faith. Our strength as a diverse faith family is in our respect and regard for each other while we seek to discern the ways of justice and peace as followers of Christ Jesus.

At First Congregational Church UCC in South Portland, we spent six years studying the Bible, reviewing scientific literature, consulting with scholars, conversing with each other, and praying a lot. Finally, at a congregational meeting in 2000, we voted overwhelmingly (83%) to become an Open and Affirming congregation, welcoming gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons as equal and valued members of our church. Taking a further step in 2002, we voted (60%) to authorize our pastors “at his or her discretion to offer the blessing of the church to any couple which sincerely desires that blessing in the context of their Christian faith.”

True, not everyone agreed. A very few, uncomfortable with these congregational decisions, have regrettably chosen to leave our church family. Others, while also not voting with the majority, have stayed, in large part because of the integrity of our pastor and because we prayerfully try to make room for dissent and respectfully learn from our differences. At the same time, numerous individuals and families have chosen to join our congregation, aspiring in faith to live out an invitation we recite together every Sunday morning: “No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.”

Members of the Diversity Committee
First Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ, South Portland

Connie Baskett	Mike Kasputes
Dolores Broberg	Carol Scheffler
Joan Carrier	Karen Verdelli
Kathy Cotter	Karen Westerberg
Deborah Dagnan	
Marvin Ellison	

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY IN SOUTH PORTLAND SCHOOLS

South Portland’s Mahoney Middle School principal, Carrie Stilphen, is seeking volunteers from the community to help out at the **Learning Lab, weekday afternoons from 1:35-3:30 p.m.** She writes: “By having some volunteers come into the school, my hope would be that positive relationships might be built that would encourage those students, who may not decide to stay at school to do their homework, but would in order to see their ‘friend’. It would be very structured, a teacher would always be supervising. The key to my idea is to provide students with positive and encouraging role models .” For more information, contact Carrie Stilphen at stilphca@spsd.org.

**FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**
301 Cottage Road, South Portland, ME 04106

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FLOWERS AND GLOBE HONOR LOVED ONES

Each Sunday as we enter the sanctuary our eyes are drawn to the altar and the cross. Most Sundays we'll see flowers on the altar and occasionally the world globe. These donations are a familiar way of remembering a loved one, honoring a dear friend, or celebrating a special time in the donor's life. Information about the donor and the occasion are included in the worship bulletin and the Beacon.

Flower donors may gather flowers from their garden or order an arrangement from a florist, to be delivered on Saturday. After the service the donor may take the flowers or ask that they be delivered to a home or nursing home.

Mission Globe sponsors choose this alternative by making a donation to the mission fund, used by our Mission Team for special projects and outreach. Our flower committee schedules donors for Sundays throughout the year, and welcomes your contact to learn more. Please email flowers@fccucc.org.