



The North Church

BEACON

The deadline for the next BEACON is at **9 a.m. Monday September 26, 2011**. Send entries to beacon@fccucc.org.

First Congregational Church
 United Church of Christ
 South Portland, Maine 04106
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<http://www.fccucc.org>

September 12, 2011

Worship

1

Pastor and Pew

2

S L & W

3

Youth

3-4

E G & F

4

Seniors

5

M & O

5-7

Administration

8-9

Looking Ahead in Worship

September 18

8:30 a.m. - chapel worship

10:00 a.m. - sanctuary worship with the Meetinghouse Choir and installation of Sunday School teachers. First day of regular Sunday School classes. John McCall will give the message and fellowship time follows in Wright Pavilion.

September 25

8:30 a.m. - chapel worship

10:00 a.m. - sanctuary worship with the Meetinghouse Choir; Sunday school classes and faith-formation through 8th grade. Elsa Peters will give the message and fellowship time follows in Wright Pavilion.

11:30 a.m. - Acolyte (candle-lighter) training in the sanctuary - grades four and above.

October 2 - World Communion Sunday

Neighbors in Need Special Offering

8:30 a.m. - chapel worship with communion

10:00 a.m. - sanctuary worship with the Meetinghouse Choir and communion; Sunday school classes and faith-formation through 8th grade. John McCall will give the message and fellowship time follows in Wright Pavilion.

PLEASE: remember to bring non-perishable items for our food pantry. The need is greater than ever.



PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Those serving in the military and their loved ones; peace and peacemakers; those suffering from the weather, especially droughts and flooding...

Celebrations: **Megan Dickinson** and **Christopher Malis** who received the blessing on the church on their marriage, September 11.

Concerns: **Tom Saturley** and his family on the death of his mother **Geraldine Fowler Saturley**, three weeks and a day after the death of her husband of 66 years, **Howard Saturley**. **Pauline Ingalls**, home from the hospital; **Ruth Upshall**, at home living with cancer.



STEEPLE LIGHTING

The steeple is lighted the week of **September 11** in loving memory of **Norman Fogg** by Ruth Fogg and Family; and in loving memory of **John Wetmore Jr.** and our parents **Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Strout** and **Mr. & Mrs. John Wetmore Sr.** by John and Ina Wetmore.

The steeple is lighted the week of **September 25** in loving memory of **Fred Baggesen** by his daughter Sandra Hansen.

More Than a Blinking Cursor

Earlier this summer, a church member sent me an email. He'd picked up a book in our Church Library and found one of the ideas that it offered intriguing. He wanted to talk about it.

Email is a tough forum for this kind of conversation. It doesn't allow for nuance. It doesn't give a lot of space for lingering questions. It has no room for silence as we individually absorb what the other has said. Still, it seems to be the forum I share with members of our church. When we have a theological question, we open our email. We type those thoughts to a blinking cursor that might not otherwise be articulated. We hit send. We wait.

I am entirely and completely guilty of this. I love email. I've loved it since my first Prodigy account in high school. Email has allowed me to have startling conversations with church members and family members. It will never cease to amaze me what people will type that they wouldn't dare to speak aloud. It's sacred. It's powerful. It's rare. I am so grateful for this confessional nature of email. It's been a surprising and unique tool in the pastoral care I do in my ministry, but I have to be honest. It's not enough.

Email can't be our only connection. It can't be the only way that we communicate. It can't be the only way that we choose to see each other. There must be more than a blinking cursor on the screen.

Maybe God does wait in expectation for what we will type. Maybe God is blinking at us through those confessions we offer into a computer screen. Maybe. But, I have to think that God didn't come to this world as a computer. God didn't come through Microsoft Word. God's revelation didn't even come through Google to see and experience the world as we see it. We believe that God came to be flesh. God came to dwell among us with skin and bones and bumps and bruises. God came with blinking eyes that shed tears and arms that offer an embrace. God came to laugh out loud with you at the clever things you might say. God isn't as rigid as that little bar on the screen. God is moving all over the place and asking you to notice.

We use email for every meeting and every newsletter in the church. Our pastors send emails to offer the connection of that flesh and bone God to our members and friends, but it's not enough. We need to touch and feel that God is there. Sometimes we need more than email. We need hands. We need feet. We need someone to nudge us. We need someone to push us. We need to feel that connection to the Living God that is alive and well in our own flesh.



ALTAR MEMORIALS SEPTEMBER

The flowers on the altar **September 4** were in honor of **Seth and Trish Kelly** who were married September 3rd in New York City. Seth is the son of Margie and Cole Kelly.

The flowers on the altar **September 11** were for the wedding of **Megan Dickinson and Christopher Malis**. Their wedding is being held this afternoon. Megan is the daughter of Sliff and Vickie Strike.

The flowers on the altar **September 18** are in loving memory of **Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd A. Jordan** from Stanley and Marie Jordan and the grandchildren.

The mission globe is lighted **September 25** by Deborah and Jim Rideout in memory of their parents **Eugene and Bernice Rideout and Linwood and Edithe Durrell**.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

The Prayer Shawl knitting group will resume this year on **Tuesday evenings at 6:00 p.m.** beginning **September 13th** in Davidson Lounge. For more information contact prayershawl@fccucc.org.

Darla Harris

Baptisms Scheduled

The sacrament of baptism will next be offered **October 16** and **December 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 (jbm@fccucc.org) or Elsa Peters (elsa@fccucc.org) or call the church at 799-3361 for more information.

Blessing of the Animals

The Feast Day of St. Francis is celebrated in early October to remember St. Francis of Assisi who told the animals that Jesus loved them too.

In honor of this blessed saint of the church we gather today with our animals to give thanks for what they

do for us and for what they mean to us.

Bring your pet or stuffed animal to Fort Williams for a simple service of blessing in the spirit of St. Francis on **Sunday October 2 at 4:00 p.m.**

Acolyte Training for Grades 4-6 and Older

Each Sunday in our 10 a.m. worship one or two acolytes bring the light into our sanctuary, down the center aisle, and up to the altar candles. This ancient symbol reminds us of Jesus who said: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." {John 8:12}

We especially encourage boys and girls in fourth, fifth, and sixth grades to take part, and we welcome older children, too. Please join us (and bring your parents) in the front of the sanctuary at **11:30 a.m. on Sunday, September 25**.

Music News

Yes, the **Joyful Noise Choir** will be I full swing on **September 18th at 11:15 a.m.** in an Undercroft classroom. All little ones through the first grade are welcome. Robin Reinhold is looking forward to making a joyful noise with you.

All other choirs are in full swing. See rehearsal times on the monthly or weekly calendars.

We welcome Bryce Livingston to the adult choir along with the return of Margaret O'Connor.

Carlin as a new ringer; however we still need two more ringers to round out our roster.

The Children's Choir started off last Wednesday with seven singers. In the next two weeks we can welcome in seven more each week, oh, what a great blessing that would be! Carlos is so happy to have another boy in the group. Maybe that will give some of you other guys the courage to give choir a try. More news to come...

*Shirley Curry
Organist and Choir Director*

The Bell Choir welcomes Barbara

Youth Ministry Calendar

The Youth Ministry calendar will hopefully be in the mail this week.

In the meantime, please save the date for the first gathering of your youth (including all kids from 6th grade to 12th grade) on **Sunday September 25**

at 11:30 am. The fun will begin in the Youth Room off the Community Room – and will conclude around 1:00 p.m.

Jerry Reynolds
youth@fccucc.org

“Come All for the Table is Ready”

This year our youth challenged us by asking why they weren't partaking in communion while the rest of the congregation did. We, the EG&F Team, along with the SL&W Team, agree that we're leaving a valuable part of our church out of communion, **our children.** We realize that communion is a sacred time and we respect this and want to explore what it would mean for our children to partake.

To do so, we'll begin the year with two sessions for the parents to answer

questions and concerns, with *the first postponed to October 16, 2011*, directly following worship. Our hope is that this will allow our children to feel more of a part of our church and it may direct some 'family discussion' at home too. If there are any questions please feel free to contact the EG&F Team or Elsa or John.

Education Growth & Fellowship Team
egfteam@fccucc.org

Love Wins . . . A Three-Part Conversation

What do you believe about heaven and hell, about the classic teachings of the church regarding faith and accepting Jesus Christ? What does scripture teach about insiders and outsiders? Read Rob Bell's *Love Wins... A Book about Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person who ever Lived* and find yourself in conversation.

Join John McCall for three conversations on the **Sundays**

October 23 and 30, November 6 at 11:30 a.m. in the Davidson Lounge. It promises to be lively and thought-provoking. You can buy a copy at a discounted price from Nonesuch Books at Millcreek Plaza.

John McCall
jbm@fccucc.org

LEISURELY LECTIONARY RETURNS

Our weekly study of the Bible gathers **Wednesday** mornings at **10:30 am** in Davidson Lounge. We call it **Leisurely Lectionary** as no preparation is required but an open heart. After a summer rest, we'll gather again beginning **September 14.**

ESKIMOS!

The first Eskimo Meeting of the season is on **Wed. October 5th.** A delicious meal will be served by the Hilltop Guild, and Phil has lined up a great program. We're looking forward to a good attendance to start off the year.

Carl Murphy
eskimos@fccucc.org

HILLTOP GUILD FALL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 13 – 6:00 p.m.
Potluck – All Church Women Night

November 10 – 6:00 p.m.
Potluck with significant other or friend invited

December 8 – 7:00 p.m.
Cookie swap

For more information, contact Marie Jordan or Kathy Sahrbeck at hilltop@fccucc.org .

Register for Sunday School at www.fccucc.org



FUN FOR SENIORS

Tuesday, September 20

- Leave at 10:00 for a trip to **Peak's Island** where we'll have a golf cart tour and then **dine at the Cockeyed Gull**. The ferry is \$3.85, the tour is \$15 and lunch is on your own.

Thursday, September 29

- Meet at **I-Hop** for breakfast at 9:00.

Thursday, October 6

- **SAGE** meeting at 1:00 in regular place at regular time.

Wednesday, October 12

- At 11:30 we will leave the church for a picnic at **Kettle Cove**.

Thursday, October 20

- Join us for a trip to **Pine Point** for lunch at **Ken's Lobster Place**, leaving the church at 11:30.

Thursday, November 3

- **SAGE** meeting at 1:00.

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 Indians in the UCC including 20 UCC congregations on reservations

Our Special Offerings

When you hear the stories and see the needs of others, do you wonder how you can make a difference? What need is close to your heart?

SPECIAL OFFERINGS are your opportunity to direct your additional gift to the particular needs, ministries, and programs "over and above" your weekly pledge for our annual budget. You'll find one or all of them to be just the right way to make a difference by doing a little more in a way that's close to your heart. The special offerings for 2011-2012 will be spaced throughout the year, and each designated for a particular use. These are mission offerings that further your outreach to neighbors near and far. Every dollar you give goes directly to the designated ministry, so you can give with confidence that your gift is reaching the goal you intend. These offerings are:

Neighbors In Need - This UCC denominational offering, received the first Sunday in October, is used for domestic relief and development in the US homeland. Details of this year's priorities and special offering envelopes will be distributed through the Beacon and in sanctuary pew racks.

and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis.

We will receive your gift on **October 2nd**. Please make your check payable to First Congregation 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*

The Christmas Offering - The Christmas Offering is received by our Mission Outreach Team and designated for specific outreach projects that go beyond our annual budgeted support. Envelopes are included in the monthly sets (mailed to each household that requests them), or use the all-purpose offering envelope in the pew racks.

The Christmas Fund - A UCC denominational offering for retired clergy and their spouses. This offering supplements retirements and health care benefits, as well as emergency assistance through needs-based applications to the UCC Pension Boards. Envelopes are mailed to each home with the Beacon, and are available in pew racks. All loose (undesignated) offerings at the three Christmas Eve services are added.

Cumberland Assoc. Seminary Scholarship Fund - This offering, welcomed at any time, supports students from congregations in the Cumberland Association of the Maine Conference, UCC who are enrolled in graduate theological education.

(Continued on page 6)

Our Special Offerings (cont.)

Supporting these students encourages international development and community independence. You can use the general-purpose envelope in the sanctuary pew racks at any time.

One Great Hour of Sharing - Generally received in March, this interdenominational offering supported by the United Church of Christ and several others, is directed toward international development and community independence. Safe shelter, water, and food sources are always a priority. Envelopes are mailed with the Beacon and placed in pew racks.

Easter Offering -Like the Christmas Offering, these gifts are administered by our Mission Outreach Team for direct assistance of the work of agencies and ministries that aren't otherwise included in our regular mission budget. Recent examples have been support of the UCC "Hope Shall Bloom" fund for Katrina relief and support for a school in Haiti. Envelopes are included in the monthly sets or use the all-purpose offering envelope in the pew racks.

The Micah Project is Back!

Several years ago, the Mission & Outreach Team worked on creating one-day opportunities to engage in hands-on mission with those agencies that we financially support through the Mission Fund. It disappeared for a little while ago -- but after the Mission Trip this summer, there is new energy... so the next Micah Project will be on **Saturday October 29, 2011** with Deb Theriault's leadership.

We'll volunteer our time and talent at the Fall Work Day with Pilgrim Lodge, our summer camp in West Gardiner. It's the end of the summer so we'll help put PL to bed! Yard work, roofing, cleaning,

Blanket Sunday - This offering is received each year on Mother's Day. Church World Service - a shared ministry of major Protestant denominations - purchases blankets to provide shelter, warmth, security and comfort for people around the world. Wherever disaster strikes, no matter the cause, your gift will be there to "blanket the world with love."

Community Crisis Ministries

Initiated in 1999 as the "Gift Ministries" of First Congregational Church, this fund provides direct assistance to neighbors in South Portland and Cape Elizabeth who find themselves in crisis. Emphasizing the compassion of our church, our Outreach Coordinator works cooperatively with families in need and other resources in our communities.

*Mission & Outreach Team
moteam@fccucc.org*

wood cutting, splitting and stacking, moving items for the winter: There is work for all ages and abilities.

We'll carpool together from the church. Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the Sawyer St. Parking Lot. Work ends by 4 p.m. We'll return at approx. 5 p.m. If you're interested in attending this Micah Project please check the website for more info (including health forms and age requirements): <http://fccucc.org/serve/>.

*Deb Theriault
micahproject@fccucc.org*

RUMMAGE SALE DATE CHANGE

I want to advise everyone that I had to change the date of the sale to 10/15. I hope to have the same great sale with everyone participating. I already have a great supply and hope for lots more. Please just drop your items off in Guptill Hall. If you need help with dropping things off give me a call and I will have someone pick them up for you!

*Prudy Wiggins
799-5705*

rummagesale@fccucc.org

FOOD PANTRY

The Food Pantry is looking for volunteers to help fill orders, shop for food, etc. We have a meeting **Thursday, Sept. 15th at 4:00 p.m.** in the Laity Room

Please join us at the meeting, or phone the office if you would like to help in any way.

Thank you,

*Cyndi Alden
foodpantry@fccucc.org*



COFFEE LOVERS PRACTICE JAVA JUSTICE

The Fair Trade Coffee group ("FTC") was formed by a few thoughtful and energized Church members who began taking coffee orders in May 2008.

The last round of coffee sales was the largest thus far. This translates into the knowledge that by ordering coffee through the Fair Trade Coffee group, we are not only helping to make this program a success, but we are also a force for change and justice!

As we head into autumn, and we begin to feel the chilly mornings and evenings, isn't it a perfect time to take stock of your existing coffee, tea and hot chocolate supply to determine how much you'd like to order through the UCC Coffee Project.

Future order dates are:

• **September 18, 2011**
(Distributed October 9, 2011)

• **November 6 and 13, 2011** (Distributed December 4, 2011)

**Coffee orders will be taken after both chapel and 10 a.m. worship services (look for the order table outside of worship or in Wright Pavilion). Payment in check or cash will need to be received on the day you order.

Mission: 1, 11.1.11 – 11.11.11 -That they may all be One



MISSION: 1 is one united church on a shared mission for 11 powerful days to feed the hungry and confront food-related injustice. It is an opportunity to live out our united faith by offering the worship that God most desires from us: loosening the bonds of injustice and sharing our bread with the hungry. It is an opportunity to make real Jesus' prayer for his disciples: "Holy One, protect them in your name, those that you have given me, so that they may all be one, as we are one" (John 17:11). These facts compel us to act with compassion and to be voices for justice:

- 925 million people still suffer from chronic hunger and famine worldwide.
- 50.2 million people including 17.2 million children are food insecure in the United States.
- 13.3 % of Maine households,

Message from Maine Sea Coast Mission

Thank you for sharing your time, talents and treasure with the Housing Repair Program this summer. You made a difference in the lives of many of our neighbors.

As of August 18, 2011:

- 235 volunteers from 9 churches traveled to Cherryfield Maine.
- Collectively, you provided 8,400 hours of labor and
- Repaired 21 homes, one church and the Downeast Center were completed.

representing over 175,000 people, experience food insecurity. 19.5% of Maine's children are affected. Maine ranks 9th in the nation for food insecurity, 1st in New England.

For the first 11 days of November (11.1.11-11.11.11), the UCC will join together to collect more than 1 million items for local food banks, raise \$111,111 in donations for special funding of Neighbors in Need, send 11,111 letters to Congress asking that U.S. foreign assistance be reformed to more effectively serve the world's poorest people.

The Mission and Outreach Team has begun discussions about what we could do -- but *we need you* to move this forward. If you are interested in finding out more about Mission:1, please come to a **Mission:1 Planning Meeting, Monday, September 19th at 5:30 in the Laity Room.**

Jan Bosse
Mission & Outreach Team
moteam@fccucc.org

Our neighbors are better equipped to face the winter as a result of your efforts. 7 roofs were replaced or repaired. Insulated skirting was installed on 8 trailers. Windows and doors were replaced on 2 homes. And many of the homes are brighter and cleaner thanks to interior and exterior painting.

Gratefully yours,
Maine Seacoast Mission

A Simple and Convenient Way to Give

This fall, consider signing up for electronic giving. Our church relies on the financial support of the congregation and electronic giving offers an easy way to give on a recurring basis. To give electronically, visit www.fccucc.org, and locate the "Donate" button on the home page.

Giving by credit card is ideal for single gifts and special gifts. Since the church pays 2.5% service charge, if you want to give frequently by electronic means consider using your own bank's bill-payer program. This

Count Yourself Blessed...

As another too-short summer comes to an end we're reminded how blessed we are to live in such a beautiful, welcoming place. As we prepare to greet each other on Homecoming Sunday, we also are reminded how blessed we are to be part of such a vibrant, caring and welcoming faith community.

Soon you will be seeing posters going up around the church with the message "Count yourself blessed." This is the theme your Stewardship Committee has chosen for our annual

Inquirers' Meeting set for Tuesday, October 11

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 Tuesday, October 11, 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

will assure that your full donation benefits your church.

If you give electronically and still like to drop something in the plate on Sundays you can find a stack of small red and black "I gave electronically" cards in the rear of the sanctuary and on the welcome table.

Please contact Cyndi Alden, Business Manager at cda@fccucc.org with any questions.

emphasis leading up to **Consecration Sunday on October 23.**

In the coming weeks we'll be celebrating all that we have to be thankful for as members of this church, and ways we can express our gratitude for the relationships we have with God and with each other.

Stewardship Committee
Jerry Reynolds, Bill Campbell, Betsy Keiter, Ted O'Meara & John McCall

PER CAPITA CONTRIBUTION

Your October envelopes will contain the second Per Capita Contribution envelope for 2012. Many of you have already responded by donating in April (which may cause some confusion). If you've already contributed for 2012, then please disregard.

Our membership to the Maine Conference requires that we pay \$14.90 per member as dues. Our dues for 2012 to the Maine Conference totaled \$11,295 for our 758 members. If you haven't contributed towards your 2012 dues, please consider helping us by making your donation.

Thank you,
Cyndi Alden
cda@fccucc.org

GIVING STATEMENTS

Giving statements have been mailed this week. Please check yours for accuracy and contact me if there is a discrepancy.

Also, please feel free to contact me at any time for a current copy of your giving. I can e-mail your statement as an attachment.

Thank you,
Cyndi Alden
cda@fccucc.org

Planned Giving

Over the past two years, the Planned Giving Committee has presented messages in The Beacon discussing various ways for you to include the church in your long term financial plan. A planned gift is not a contribution that is received by the church in response to the annual pledge drive. Instead, a planned gift is either a major one-time event or, more often, the result of church members including the church in their estate plans, thereby creating a lasting legacy of support for the church and its mission. It is usually received by the church after the member's death. This message discusses why are planned gifts are beneficial to both the First Congregational Church and the donors themselves.

At the church annual meeting last spring mention was made of some of the significant benefits in 2010 to our church community resulting from members having made planned gifts to the church in past years. One benefit was the sizable contribution (nearly \$50,000) made directly to the annual operating budget from the income earned on endowments. Also, scholarships totaling nearly \$22,000 were awarded to members of our church family with funds from endowments established by donors for that purpose. Finally, more than \$100,000 in major building improvements such as roof, steeple and window upgrades were paid for, not with annual pledge support, but with endowment funds designated for major maintenance projects.

Without generous planned gifts from our members in past years, our church would not be able to support

the programs listed above unless (1) annual pledge support increased significantly (about 30%) over our current experience, (2) the church successfully reached out to its members for additional funds throughout the year, or (3) the church went into debt.

While increasing pledges is always an important element in the support of the church, planned giving is equally critical in providing long-term stability for the church's missions and its physical plant. By including the church as a beneficiary in your will or by making another type of planned gift as discussed in previous messages in the Beacon, you can provide permanent endowments for the church. The income from permanent endowments can either be unrestricted (the church can designate how the income is to be used) or restricted for specific purposes. Such specific purposes can be to establish scholarships, provide for building maintenance, or to provide special program support such as music or Christian education. With careful stewardship and prudent spending policies, these endowment funds can help support the church and its missions for generations.

If you should be interested in pursuing a planned gift or have questions about the information in these messages, feel free to contact committee member Ron Bennett at 772-1981.

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

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 a 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.

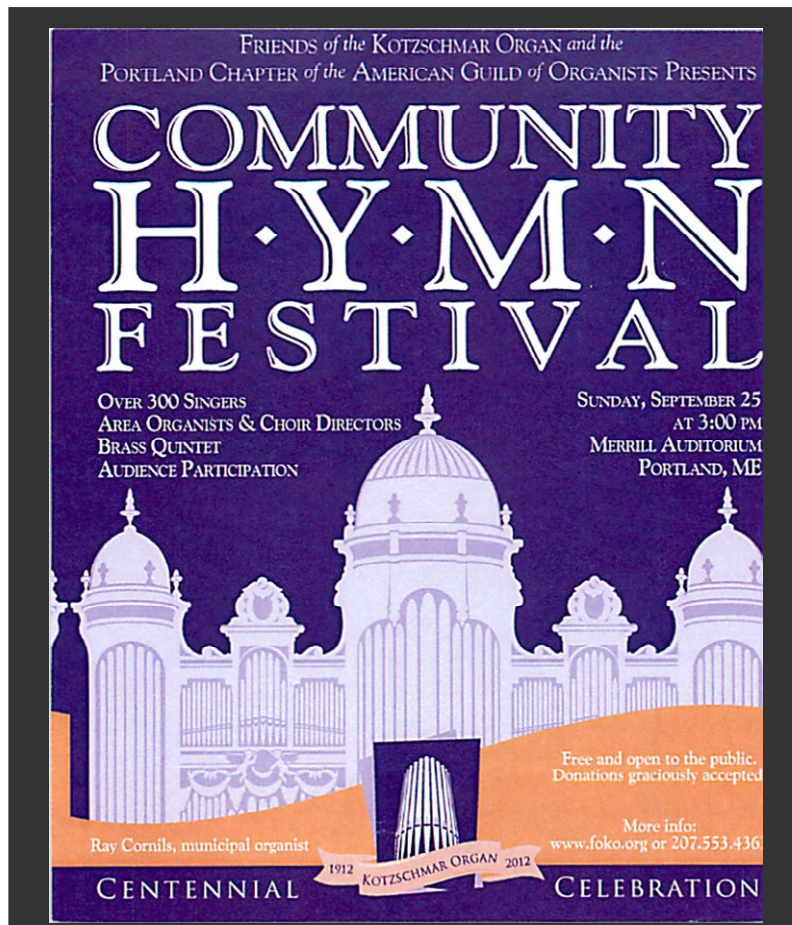
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PORTLAND CHAPTER of the AMERICAN GUILD of ORGANISTS PRESENTS

COMMUNITY H·Y·M·N FESTIVAL

OVER 300 SINGERS
AREA ORGANISTS & CHOIR DIRECTORS
BRASS QUINTET
AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25
AT 3:00 PM
MERRILL AUDITORIUM
PORTLAND, ME

Free and open to the public.
Donations graciously accepted

More info:
www.foko.org or 207.553.436

Ray Cornils, municipal organist

1912 KOTZSCHMAR ORGAN 2012

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION