



The North Church

BEACON

The deadline for the next BEACON is at **9 a.m. Monday October 17, 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 26, 2011

Worship

1

Pastor and Pew

2

S L & W

3

Youth

3

E G & F

3-4

Seniors

5

M & O

5-6

Administration

6-7

Looking Ahead in Worship

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.

October 9

8:30 a.m. - chapel worship

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

October 16

8:30 a.m. - chapel worship

10:00 a.m. - sanctuary worship with the Meetinghouse Choir, Children's Choir, and the sacrament of baptism; 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. - E G & F Conversation - an opportunity for parents to explore what it would mean for our children to partake in Communion.

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... for our for our Jewish neighbors beginning their High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah.

Concerns:

Glenice Hodgson, who escaped serious injury in a car accident Sunday morning, September 25, after leaving worship; while there was lots of vehicle damage we thank God no one else was injured; **Chuck Milos**, recently hospitalized; **Ed and Fran Silcock** ask prayers for their grandson, Specialist **Ryan Smith** who was recently deployed to Iraq; Kathy Cotter's mother who has been hospitalized in Connecticut.

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.

What Happened at Synod?

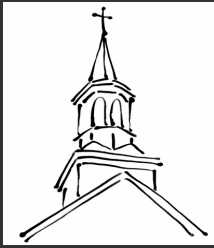
I admit that no one has actually asked me this question.

I shared some reflection with the Church Council this past month and have blogged a little bit about that time in Tampa. Those of you that follow me on Facebook heard my thoughts during that time through continuous status updates. Nonetheless, this thing happened where the members and delegates from across the United Church of Christ gathered in July to discern who we are now. I was there as a member of the Maine Conference delegation - which I learned doesn't mean I agree with every thing that the Maine Conference does. As each member of our church brings their own unique vantage point, I brought my own.

It feels like a long time ago that this time happened where the church was together at General Synod 28 - but as things are gearing up for **Mission:1**, I'm thinking again about that time in Tampa. I'm thinking about the conversations we shared, the frustrations that arose and the blessings that were embraced.

As I think about the future of the church and what it means to be a person of faith in that reality, I'm thinking about how we are called to be a united and uniting church. We are a group of people that identifies Jesus' prayer "that all may be one" as central to who we are. It's on our United Church of Christ logo. It's an emblem of who we are - which I wear proudly in this time and this place.

To be honest, it's not something we talk about enough. So, I'm trying to figure that out. I'm trying to figure out what to share with you about my time at General Synod 28. I'm trying to synthesize my thoughts from 1,000 different places to share with you why I am excited about the future of our church. If this is a conversation that interests you, I hope you'll join me for a short conversation **after worship on Sunday November 20, 2011** in Davidson Lounge. Our calendar is full of wonderful conversations until November - but I look forward to sharing these thoughts with you. In the meantime, I hope you'll share in the spirit of who we are in the United Church of Christ. We are people that are always seeking to be more united and uniting. It is a bold way to live in today's world.



STEEPLE LIGHTING

The steeple is lighted the week of **October 2** in loving memory of **Mark W. Andrews** by his mother Verna and sisters Julie and Ellen.

The steeple is lighted the week of **October 9** in loving memory of **Grace Grinnell Mink** whose birthday is October 12 by her daughter Sue Ellen M. Roberts; and in memory of **Ralph Howard** whose birthday is October 12 by his wife Jane, his Children, his Grand Children and Great Grandson.

The steeple is lighted the week of **October 16** in loving memory of **Earle and Sylvia Angell** by Ed Angell.

The steeple is lighted the week of **October 23** in loving memory of her mother **Jane Manuel** by Martha Ahonen.

The steeple is lighted the week of **October 30** in loving memory of **Marcelia and Kenneth** by Scott Berry.

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.**

“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

Inquirers' Meeting set for Tuesday, October 11

Are you new to the church? Have you been worshiping 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 become a member of our congregation during our worship service on November 16.

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

Love Wins . . . A Three-Part Conversation

What do you believe about heaven and hell? 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.

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

Come for three conversations on the **Sundays October 23 and 30, November 6 at 11:30 a.m. in the**

The Great Religious Recession or a Great Spiritual Awakening?

Like other aspects of American life, religion is going through a challenging period of change, erosion, and decline. Many Americans are no longer satisfied with forms of faith and church that no longer seem to speak to the soul. From membership to traditional beliefs, nearly every measure of conventional religiosity is down.

Diana Butler Bass explores the religious trends reshaping our understandings of faith, practice, and community, drawing out the real questions that Americans are asking about their spiritual lives. Probing these deeper questions--and addressing them in meaningful ways--opens paths for a different sort of Christianity, one that offers genuine hope for spiritual awakening and cultural transformation.

This is the description of the Center for Progressive Renewal's (CPR) upcoming two-hour special web event with Diana Butler Bass. CPR is one of the new resources through the United Church of Christ. Its focus is upon offering resources for today's church. While CPR hosts some conferences, most of these educational opportunities are broadcast over the internet for any church member to access at a fee. This special web event is one of those opportunities. This has been a hot topic among many of our

Guild Meeting – October 13

The next Guild meeting will be on **Thursday October 13 at 7:00 p.m.** in Wright Pavilion. Kathleen Fobear from the Animal Rescue League will be speaking about the ARL's mission and the programs they offer. She'll be bringing a surprise guest with her.

The ARL's always looking for donations of supplies. Suggestions: cats - unscented clay cat litter, canned and dry food, cat toys, brushes, used blankets, dogs - rawhide bones, large rope toys, Kong toys. We'll collect donations and send Kathleen back to

committees this past year and guarantees to shift some of our assumptions about what is happening in our culture right now.

If you're not already familiar with Diana Butler Bass, you'll find that she's a real treasure especially for a church historian. She holds a Ph.D. in religious studies from Duke University and is the author of eight books including *Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening*, forthcoming from HarperOne in February 2012. Her other books include *A People's History of Christianity: the Other Side of the Story* (HarperOne, 2009) and *Christianity for the Rest of Us* (2006). Both of these books are worth picking up.

As this is a web event that requires a strong internet signal, we will gather in the 5th and 6th Grade Classroom above the Church Offices promptly at **6:30 p.m. on Tuesday October 25, 2011**. The web event starts at 7:00 p.m. and concludes at 9:00 p.m. We will hold 30 minutes for questions and conversation after the web event concludes. I hope you'll come to join in this conversation.

Elsa A. Peters
elsa@fccucc.org

the Rescue with some goodies. Please join us for this evening of fun, fellowship, and good eats. If you're not a member of Guild, we'd love to have you attend and get to know us, find out about the work we do, and share some laughs.

If you're not on our regular call list, please call Joan Dennison at 799-3193 by Monday October 10th to let her know that you're going to join us for the evening.

Kathy Cotter, Program Chair

NAME TAGS

If you're tall enough to easily reach the upper two wires on the name tag boards, hanging your tag up there will make more space for us shorter folks on the lower wires. The name tags do not need to be kept in alphabetical order - we just need to remember where we put ours.

Please turn the clip upwards when you hang your tag so your plastic holder will not bend at the clip.

Don't have a name tag? Please sign up for one in the narthex.

ESKIMOS!

The first Eskimo Meeting of the season is on **Wednesday October 5**. 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

FAIR TRADE COFFEE ORDERS

Future order dates are **November 6 and 13** with an expected distribution of December 4.

**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).



FUN FOR SENIORS

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, October 27

- We'll meet you at **I-Hop** for **breakfast** at 9:00.

Thursday, November 3

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

RUMMAGE SALE DATE CHANGE TO OCTOBER 15

The date of the sale has been changed – **October 15**. Please pull those items and get them to me! Drop off your items in Guptill Hall. You can see the pile of "stuff" that is there now! If you need help with pickup, let me know. Thank you!

Prudy Wiggins
799-5705

rummagesale@fccucc.org

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

Update on Japan

After the tsunami this past spring, our own Deb Sandler faithfully coordinated efforts to support Maine's sister state Aomori. She shares this update for those that offered funds and prayers for the people of Japan.

In mid-September, the State of Maine hosted a delegation from our sister state Aomori to explore fishing practices, sharing of food products and energy sustainability. As part of this delegation, my husband Jeff and I helped with the "Taste of Aomori" presentation at SMCC. On that same day in Bath, the delegation hosted a thank you party for all that we did to help in the earthquake/tsunami relief effort. As the Friends of Aomori, we were able to send about \$35,000 in aid money from Maine. Pretty amazing.

The Micah Project is Back!

The next Micah Project is set for **Saturday October 29, 2011**. We'll volunteer our time and talent at the **Fall Work Day** with **Pilgrim Lodge**, our summer camp in West Gardiner. Yard work, roofing, cleaning, wood cutting, splitting and stacking, moving items for the winter: There will be work for all ages and abilities.

Meet at 7:30 a.m. in the Sawyer St.

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

We will receive your gift on **October 2**. 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

I also arranged for the Chairman of the Art Department at SMCC to come and present the 1000 cranes that the 3D sculpture/design class folded with the intention of sending hope and healing wishes to the people of Aomori. They've been hanging in the Maine International Trade Center window on Congress Street since last April just waiting for this day.

Also, these photos were shared by a Japanese friend showing the contrast between then and now. They're pretty amazing...showing that grass insists on growing and time passes on....
<http://www.theatlantic.com/infocus/2011/09/japan-earthquake-six-months-later/100146/>.

Parking Lot and we'll carpool together. Work ends by 4 p.m. with a return time 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
micah@fccucc.org

The Holly Daze Bazaar – November 19

Would you be interested in contributing to this year's Bazaar? Here are our needs:

- Food for the food table & lots of it! (Pies, cakes, breads, cookies, homemade pickles, jams, baked beans, etc. and of course, CANDY.)
- Homemade items for Fair Fancy
- Knit goods
- Jewelry
- Christmas decorations
- Paper back books
- Items for Grandma's Attic
- Gift Table
- Trash & Treasures

Our goal this year is \$10,000., and we are looking for items to sell & buyers to buy.

If any one has any questions, or needs items to be picked up, please call either Lynn Lanctot at 799-1785, Karen Pierce Souza at 772-5238 or Janice Files at 799-3457.

Janice Files
hollydaze@fccucc.org

Count Yourself Blessed...

That's a great way to live each day – to know how blessed we are in large ways and small ways. God is generous and pours so much into our lives.

"Count Yourself Blessed..." is also the theme of this year's stewardship campaign. As you likely know, "stewardship" is a single word that refers to our relationship with everything we have and everything God has given us. And in our church stewardship refers to the way we commit our gifts and offerings to make so many ministries possible.

Whether you're a long-time member or occasional worshiper, you know that you're welcome here. There's no admission cost or service charge. There's no registration fee for teaching your children in Sunday School and no sermon tax! You can't put a price-tag on the spirit and vitality we enjoy here; or the wonderful music or the great fellowship. But we all know, too, that our ministries and outreach take money, and the money comes from

all of us when we count ourselves blessed.

While no one will tell you what annual gift is right for your household we all need to recognize that some of our most generous members are our oldest members. Honestly, it's time for our younger members to step up and count ourselves blessed and to grow in our giving so the church can continue to be here for all.

Consecration Sunday, October 23rd, is the day we ask each and every household to make a commitment to support our ministries in 2012. Over the next few weeks we'll have Sunday morning messages from some of our members, lifting up their own experience of counting their blessings.

Thank you...

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

WANTED: E BAY & AUCTION PEOPLE

I am looking for someone who uses and is familiar with EBay or is involved with auctions. I have an article that was given to us for a sale but I know the value is more than I would get. Selling at either of these sites would provide closer to its value. Please give me a call at 799-5705.

Prudy Wiggins

A SIMPLE & 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 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.



SNOW BIRD ALERT

If you are flying south, to Florida, Arizona, wherever, please consider letting the church office know so that we can continue to communicate to you via the Beacon, etc. If you'd rather not receive church mailings while you're away, then consider letting us know so that we don't pay the postage to mail things to you as well as the return postage, when it can not be delivered. We can always hold mailing until you return. Thanks for considering to make this effort. Call 799-3361 or e-mail cda@fccucc.org with your instructions.

*Cyndi Alden
Business Manager*

**FCC UCC
A Christian Family:**

**loving,
welcoming,
serving.**

AN EVENING OF ILLUMINATION

The Future of Marriage, Thursday, October 27, 7 p.m.

Mark your calendars for an interactive dialogue **The Future of Marriage, Thursday, October 27 at 7 p.m.** at Hannaford Hall, 88 Bedford Street, on the USM Campus. Hosted by Bangor Theological Seminary (www.bts.edu) the Rev. Dr. Marvin Ellison and the Rev. Kate Braestup will discuss the constant and changing profile of marriage in our society.

Marvin, familiar to many in our congregation, is Willard S. Bass Professor of Christian Ethics at Bangor Seminary, and author of several books: *Same-Sex Marriage? A Christian Ethical Analysis*; and *Sexuality and the Sacred: Resources for Theological Reflection*. An ordained Presbyterian minister, he lectures widely on ethical issues related to human sexuality, health care, and economic justice. He co-chairs Maine's Religious Coalition Against Discrimination, is a member of the Board of Directors

of Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, and serves on the advisory board for the Religious Institute on Sexuality Morality, Justice, and Healing.

Kate is a community minister, law enforcement chaplain, and the author of the memoir, *Here If You Need Me; Marriage and Other Acts of Charity and Beginner's Grace: Bringing Prayer to Life*. The event is free and open to all; dessert, conversation, and book-signings follow. For more information, click on www.bts.edu/newsandevents/fall_event.html.

Maine Conference Fall Learning Event

John Dominic Crossan will be at **Falmouth Congregational Church on Nov. 4-5, 2011**. This is an exciting chance to hear this world-renowned Jesus scholar and author up-close and personal.

Tickets are still available from the Conference office. You may order your tickets by printing an order form from the Conference website (www.maineucc.org) and sending it with your check, or by calling the Conference office if you prefer to pay by credit card. Or simply call 207-846-5118.



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