

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
301 Cottage Road
South Portland, ME 04106
(207) 799-3361

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Time Sensitive Newsletter

NEWS FROM CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRIES

Bible Discovery Worship is coming! Letters are going out to all 3rd and 4th graders and some 5th graders who may have missed the opportunity previously. The workshop is one after school meeting per week for three weeks during Lent. Please let Anne Fuehrer or Deb Dagnan know if you would like your son or daughter to participate. This is a great FCC tradition that culminates on Palm Sunday with Bible presentations and the *Books of the Bible* song.

A Roman marketplace is the setting for our next **Vacation Bible School (VBS)**! The title is **ROME: Paul and the Underground Church**. We will start project workshops in April for after school and April Vacation. Registration will begin in late March. Save the dates:

June 20-24, Tuesday-Friday, 9:00-12:30. This is appropriate for Children **age 4** (entering Kindergarten) **through the 5th grade**. Children and youth 6th grade through high school typically enjoy helping and leading workshops.



The **Youth Ministry (YM)** kids (Grades 7th through 12th) are reuniting with their South Freeport friends for a special overnight **retreat** at a cottage on the Harraseeket Harbor in Freeport on **March 4**. This is most likely our last event with Sara Bartlett as she moves on to pastor her own church this spring.

Church Calendar **Mar 2017 (Eastern Time)**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26 8:30am - Chapel 10am - Sanctuary	27	28 6:30pm - Prayer 7pm - Choir Practice	1 9am - Children's 12pm - Ash 6pm - Children's 6:30pm - Eskimos @ 7:00 p.m. Ash Wed.	2 10am - EF&G @ 10:30am - Leisurely 1pm - SAMS @ 2nd 6:30pm - Care & 6:30pm - S, L & W 7pm - Mission	3	4 9am - Children's 5:30pm - Soup
5 8:30am - Chapel 10am - Sanctuary 11:30am - Lenten 4:00 p.m. Sing Hope	6	7 6:30pm - Prayer 7pm - Choir Practice	8 2pm - CCM Review 6pm - Children's	9 10:30am - Leisurely 12pm - Staff 6pm - Hilltop Guild 6:30pm - Administr 7pm - Pastor Parish	10	11
12 8:30am - Chapel 10am - Sanctuary 11:30am - Lenten	13	14 6:30pm - Prayer 7pm - Choir Practice	15 9am - Children's 6pm - Children's	16 10:30am - Leisurely 12pm - Senior's 1pm - Senior's 7pm - Council	17	18 Beacon Deadline 9am - Children's
19 8:30am - Chapel 10am - Sanctuary 11:30am - Lenten	20	21 6:30pm - Prayer 7pm - Choir Practice	22 6pm - Children's	23 10:30am - Leisurely	24	25
26 8:30am - Chapel 10am - Sanctuary 11:30am - Lenten	27	28 6:30pm - Prayer 7pm - Choir Practice	29 10am - Senior's trip 6pm - Children's	30 10:30am - Leisurely	31	1 9am - Children's 5:30pm - Soup

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AT FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

ATTENTION: All graduating seniors and students currently enrolled or any church member pursuing post-secondary education.

Your church supports your continuing education and awards several scholarships each year. You are encouraged to apply for one of those listed below.

The **General Scholarship Fund** is available to any church member who is either a high school senior enrolled in, or intending to study at the college, university, or graduate level, or any church member pursuing post-secondary education. Applicants need to have been accepted or are attending a college or university in order for the funds to be awarded. **Award considerations** include church involvement during and after high school.

The **Loretta Thompson Pond Scholarship** was established in 1995 and is for graduating high school seniors who are members of this church. Criteria for the Pond Scholarship include service to the church and the community, involvement in church activities, academic achievement, and financial need.

Applicants need to complete both the Loretta Thompson Pond Scholarship Application and the General Scholarship Fund Application. Three letters of reference and two essays are also required.

Scholarship Applications are available for downloading from our website (www.fccucc.org) under the GROW heading, or by calling the church office at 799-3361. Completed applications need to be returned to the church office by **Monday, March 13**. If you have questions after reading the applications, direct them to scholarship@fccucc.org or the church office.

Comments from recent scholarship recipients:

"I would like to thank you for your amazing generosity. You all have opened many doors for me with this gift and I truly cherish it. I am a proud member of this church and am blessed to be a part of this community."

"I want to thank you so much for your kindness and generosity. Throughout my life this church has been a safe place, giving me love and support and it means so much to me that you've contributed \$3,000 in a scholarship toward my further education. This gift will really help ease the financial burden of school, and your continued support means the world to me."

Scholarship Committee:

Jeri Sides, Sally Sutton, Jane and Lee Taylor, Judy Kimball, and Cindy Maddox

FAIR TRADE NEWS

Despite the snow that seems endless, Spring and Easter (April 12) are not that far away, nor is your opportunity to order Fair Trade Products! We will be taking orders on **March 5** and **March 12**, with distribution of your orders scheduled for April 1.

If you are planning to fill Easter baskets for your family, Equal Exchange is offering a box of 18 dark chocolate eggs that are vegan, soy and gluten free, for \$6.99. If you would like to play Easter Bunny to your entire neighborhood, a case (10 boxes) of these eggs is only \$63.00! "Bugs" could not do it for less!



Along with coffee and tea sold in the usual bags and boxes; single serve cups are also available. If you have concerns about the environment and the impact of the throw-away cups, it might interest you to learn that Equal Exchange cups are made of #5 recyclable plastic, recyclable aluminum lids and 88% compostable filters, making the EE cups a more acceptable choice for those of us who use single-serve coffee makers and who are also trying to be thoughtful and careful stewards of our environment.



Equal Exchange continues to offer fair trade products that pay small farmers a fair price for their products. For more information about all the products they offer, go to the website: <http://shop.equalexchange.coop>. The site can be difficult to navigate at times but if you persevere, you will find a lot of good information about Equal Exchange, what they do & what we can do to support fair trade. See you on the 5th!

GIRL SCOUT COOKIES!

On **March 12th**, Girl Scouts representing several troops in South Portland and Cape Elizabeth will have cookies for sale after worship. All your favorite flavors will be available - Thin Mints, Caramel deLites, Lemonades, Thanks-A-Lot, Shortbread, Peanut Butter Patties, Peanut Butter Sandwich, and a new Flavor - *S'mores!* Each box is \$4 and credit, cash, checks are accepted. If you're watching your calories or can't eat them, consider treating your neighbors on Meals on Wheels. Boxes can be purchased and local scouts will deliver them. Thank you for your support!



WOMEN'S CELEBRATION—2018

The 10th UCC Women's Celebration is being planned for **April 6-8, 2018**. The celebration will be held in Portland and organization is beginning to happen. Not only do we need all the help we can get, but there are many things more easily done by people close by.

Committee members are from all over New England and although there are leaders in place, these women need our help. Please contact the church office or Kathy Sahrbeck if you would like more information or know you could help. Thank you!

ELDERS

NOMINATION OF ELDERS

Each year we recognize individuals in our congregation by electing them to the honorary position of Elder. The designation of Elder recognizes people for their extended and exemplary service to our congregation and is a rich long-standing part of our legacy. As the Spiritual Life and Worship Team begins the selection process for this year, we would like to invite you to once again submit candidates for consideration. The selection process is always a challenge given the many worthy candidates but we would like to give consideration to all individuals who are brought forward. If you have someone that you would like to nominate, please email drideout@maine.rr.com, or drop off in the church office a note that would identify the person and explain why you feel they are deserving of the designation of Elder. **Please submit your candidates by March 31.** Nominations will be formally presented to the Congregation during our annual meeting in May. If you have any questions, please contact Jim Rideout at 883-4319.

~ Spiritual Life and Worship Team



One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)

enables the United Church of Christ to reach people and communities around the world, helping them to become stronger, healthier, and better equipped to address hardships and catastrophes. The 2017 theme for the offering is: "Where are you, God"? Psalm 145:18 echoes the refrain throughout scripture that God is nearby. As soon as a person calls on God, God is here. *You are here* shows the church uniting to respond to the many critical needs present in our world today. Our support is given through partner organizations responding to health, education and agricultural development needs, refugee initiatives, and both international and domestic disaster response. When we give, as the United Church of Christ – individuals, groups and congregations – it means the church can stand strong, in the midst of need and whether it is nearby or far away. When God's love abides in us, we are moved to respond with our material goods to the needs of other members of God's family. Every gift allows us to say, "You are here."



The **OGHS offering** will be received on **March 26**. There will be OGHS envelopes in the pews and in other locations for you to use, or you can note a check made out to FCC UCC and add "OGHS" on the memo line. Thank you. ~ *Mission and Outreach Team*.

THE HILLTOP GUILD

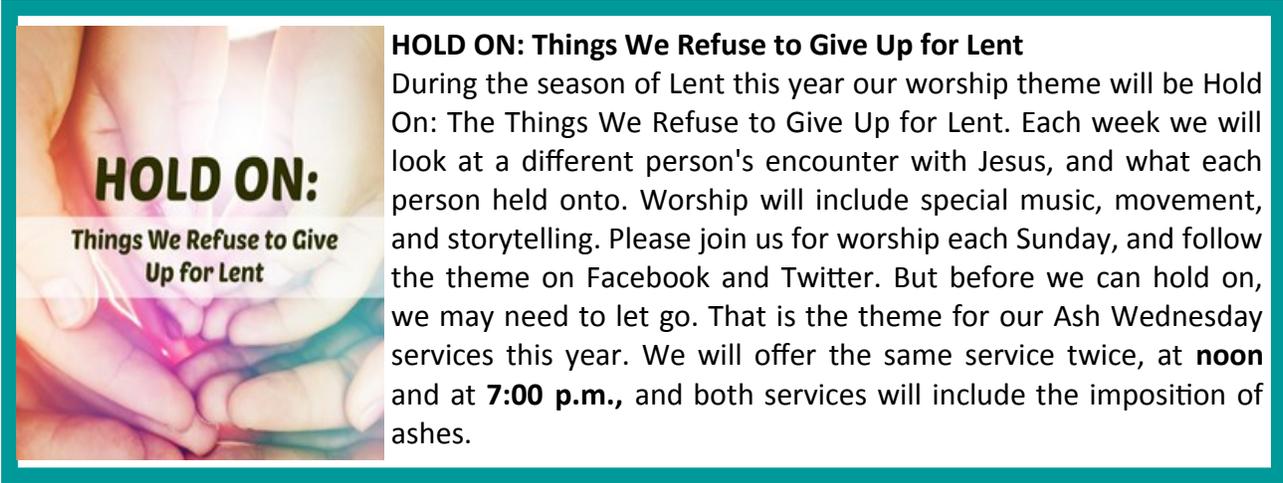
Dinner and entertainment, that's what you'll get if you attend the **Hilltop Guild's Men's Night on Thursday March 9, at 6:00 p.m. in Wright Pavilion**. All women of the church are invited as well as the Eskimos and anyone else who would like to join us. Our special guest is back for the second time. You loved her last year. Yes, It's Ida, *Woman Who Run With the Wolves*. If you are not on the Guild's regular calling list, please phone Debbie Rideout for a reservation 883-4319. Remember: Everyone is welcome.



STAFFING NEWS

In May of 2015 we hired Sara Bartlett to be our Director of Youth Ministries, a position funded through the Dream Initiative. We knew that Sara, as a recent seminary graduate, might be leaving us before the three-year term of the project was complete, but we felt her gifts were worth having regardless of how long she was with us. It is bittersweet, therefore, to share the news that Sara will soon be leaving us. She has been chosen as the candidate to be the pastor of THE Alfred First Parish Church. She will meet with the congregation the weekend of March 11-12 and, assuming all goes well, will begin her ministry with them in April.

We will have a **farewell reception for Sara** during fellowship time after worship on **Sunday, March 26**. There will be a basket for cards, gifts, and expressions of appreciation for Sara's ministry with us. Although her primary ministry has been with a small segment of our congregation, she has made a difference in the life of our community as a whole. For this, and for her, we are grateful. ~ *Cindy Maddox*



HOLD ON: Things We Refuse to Give Up for Lent

During the season of Lent this year our worship theme will be Hold On: The Things We Refuse to Give Up for Lent. Each week we will look at a different person's encounter with Jesus, and what each person held onto. Worship will include special music, movement, and storytelling. Please join us for worship each Sunday, and follow the theme on Facebook and Twitter. But before we can hold on, we may need to let go. That is the theme for our Ash Wednesday services this year. We will offer the same service twice, at **noon** and at **7:00 p.m.**, and both services will include the imposition of ashes.

SING HOPE

On **Sunday, March 5, at 4:00 p.m.**, we will offer a special worship opportunity called Sing Hope. It is a service created for the purpose of encouraging us in our work for justice. The outreach ensemble of **Women in Harmony** will sing several songs for us, plus lead us in two singalongs. We also will sing justice-oriented hymns and national songs. Although rooted in the tradition of Christian worship, it will be a service open and accessible to all. Please join us, and please invite your friends who need a dose of hope.



A REMINDER IF YOU ARE IN THE HOSPITAL

Once upon a time, community parish clergy were permitted to see hospital patient listings at Maine Medical Center and could learn if one of their members had been admitted to the hospital. Those days are gone. This means that if you (a family member, friend, etc.) has not informed your pastors that you will be in the hospital, or are currently in the hospital, you will not receive a pastoral visit. Please call the church office, or contact either Cindy or Bob directly. We are always glad to visit you in the hospital, but can only do that if we learn you are there.



MISSION GLOBE, ALTAR FLOWERS & STEEPLE REMEMBRANCES

STEEPLE DEDICATION:

February 26—March 4: In loving memory of **Gordon Mitchell, husband, father and grandfather**, from his wife Marilyn and family.

To remember or celebrate loved ones with flowers on the altar or light the Mission Globe, please contact Dana Wiggins at danawig@gmail.com.

For Steeple Dedications, please call the Church Office.

LENTEN STUDY

We are offering a new adult education opportunity during Lent – a study on the important topic of white privilege. We will meet **each Sunday during Lent at 11:30 a.m.** Please pick up a reading packet from the narthex. The reading assignment for the first class is on the back of the first page.

GIFT ANNOUNCEMENTS

In 2016 our church received bequests from the Estates of Maxine Wright and Marie Nathan. We would like to take this moment to acknowledge these gifts and express our gratitude for the generosity of those who gave them. Remembering the church in your will or trust is a wonderful way of creating a legacy and assuring that our congregation is alive for many years to come. ~ The Administration Team

A NOTE OF THANKS

“Over the past several months, while dealing with cancer, I have been fortunate to receive so much from you - my church family. Each week I have been remembered in the church prayers, many times I felt sermons were spoken specifically for my family and me, and the correspondence, through mail and technology, warmed my heart. Whether or not in prayer, I believe thoughts were sent my way as healing vibes.

Your kindness, encouragement, messages and support helped give me the courage to face my challenge though “receiving” which was not always easy for me. Thank you, my church family, for providing me place of warmth and comfort - a reaffirmation of my sense of belonging.” ~ Louise Nisbit

SENIOR ADULT MINISTRIES ACTIVITIES

Thursday, March 2—SAM meeting at 1:00 p.m. in 2nd/3rd grade classroom above the church office.

Thursday, March 9—Check out the Hilltop Guild article on page 4.

Thursday, March 16—We will have a “**Lunch and Movie Day.**” **Lunch** will be “bring your own” at **noon** in the **Laity Room** and the **movie** will be shown at **1:00 p.m.** in **Davidson Lounge**. It’s a good to be able to get out of the house in the winter, and we hope you do just that. The movie is “**Florence Foster Jenkins,**” starring Meryl Streep, and is a biographical comedy- drama film about a New York heiress. Florence had dreamed of becoming an opera singer but had a terrible singing voice. It should be fun to hear Meryl Streep imitate her, so please join us.

Wednesday, March 29—10:00 a.m. we will carpool from the church for the **Dobra Tea House** in Portland for a tea and dining experience. If you need a ride to the church please call, and RSVP by March 24.

Thursday, April 6—SAM meeting at 1:00 p.m. in 2nd/3rd grade classroom above the church office.



THE BEACON

MARCH 2017

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 3

Deadline for the April BEACON is Saturday, March 18. Send entries to beacon@fccucc.org

LOOKING AHEAD IN WORSHIP



PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

For those who live without sufficient food, water, shelter, or safety; for veterans and those in active service; for peace and peacemakers; for areas in strife around the world.

Prayers for Karen Ellis;

Prayers for Ed Saxby;

Prayers for Jim Ekedahl;

Prayers for Charlotte Knapp;

Prayers for Elaine Pitkin;

Prayers for Debbie Conlon, wife of our sexton Tom, as she is undergoing dialysis and awaits a kidney transplant.



March 1

12:00 p.m.
7:00 p.m.

Ash Wednesday

Sanctuary Worship
Sanctuary Worship

March 5

8:30 a.m.
10:00 a.m.

First Sunday in Lent

Chapel Worship with Communion
Sanctuary Worship with Communion, Meetinghouse Choir and Sunday School. Cindy Maddox will give the message. Fellowship time follows.

March 12

8:30 a.m.
10:00 a.m.

Second Sunday in Lent

Chapel Worship
Sanctuary Worship with Meetinghouse Choir and Sunday School. Cindy Maddox will give the message. Fellowship time follows.

March 19

8:30 a.m.
10:00 a.m.

Third Sunday in Lent

Chapel Worship
Sanctuary Worship with Meetinghouse Choir and Sunday School. Cindy Maddox will give the message. Fellowship time follows.

March 26

8:30 a.m.
10:00 a.m.

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Chapel Worship
Sanctuary Worship with Meetinghouse Choir and Sunday School. Cindy Maddox will give the message. Fellowship time follows.

STORM CLOSING NOTICES will be listed on the following TV stations: WCSH Channel 6, WMTW Channel 8, and WGME Channel 13.