



The Dazzling Dark

Sunday Worship August 10, 2025

We are a progressive community of faith seeking to follow the teachings of Jesus, pursue justice and live God's love.

*No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here.*

UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST 

A Note for Families / Folks of All Ages: We worship all together this morning. There are clipboards with paper and coloring pages at the back of the sanctuary, for worshippers of any age to use during the service.

PRELUDE

Hiding in the Shadow of God

Heather Sorenson

WELCOME TO WORSHIP

Rev. Jill Saxby

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: We gather . . .

ALL: We gather around a mystery.

One: We listen . . .

ALL: We listen for a voice we may not recognize, still and small, coming from nowhere and from everywhere.

One: We seek...

ALL: We seek connection with the holiness that lies all around us, even when we cannot see it.

One: We trust ...

ALL: We trust in God's presence, because even the darkness is as light to the Creator of all.

One: And therefore, we worship...

ALL: We worship, rejoicing that the God of our lives is with us, always.

***OPENING HYMN**

The Lone, Wild Bird

#86

UNISON PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS

Creative, Loving God, in the many hours we spend focused on our own goals and accomplishments, our own griefs and grievances, we sometimes forget that your presence surrounds us at all times, even when we can't see or hear or feel it. We forget that your steadfast love is always creatively at work, even when we find ourselves on confusing paths or in shadowed valleys. May we learn to look for your presence in the dark as well as the light, and to listen for you beyond our own words and behind the world's noise, as we offer now, in silence, the meditations of our hearts . . .

PRAYERFUL PAUSE

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

*Please rise, on your feet or in your hearts.

***PASSING OF THE PEACE**

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

***SUNG RESPONSE**

Gathered Here

Philip A. Porter

Gathered here in the mystery of the hour.

Gathered here in one strong body.

Gathered here in the struggle and the power.

Spirit, draw near.

BLESSING OF THE MISSION TRIP TEAM

Responsive Words of Blessing:

One: As we commission you to represent our congregation in your ministry of labor and of love this week, know that we will be holding you in our hearts, in gratitude and in prayer.

ALL: May the work of your hands, the words of your mouth, the gifts of your time, talents and energies be received by those you meet as outward signs of God's self-giving love.

One: In addition to what you build with your hands this week, may you also build relationships of love, mutual respect and joy with one another, and with those you serve.

ALL: As you work side-by-side, we pray that the week ahead will be filled with joy and laughter, giving and receiving, learning and renewal. May your labors add to the storehouse of hope for our neighbors in Cherryfield, and for our larger community.

One: Beloved friends, we send you forth with this commission, and with the tools of our community of worship and service: faith, hope and love. As you go and as you return, may you be held each moment in the palm of God's hand.

ALL: Amen.

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

We Are One in the Spirit

Peter Scholtes

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Pat Thatcher

One: This is the sacred story of God's journey with God's people.

All: Holy One, open our ears to hear, our hearts to receive and our lives to be expanded by your Word. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Genesis 32:22-31

SERMON*The Dazzling Dark*

Rev. Jill Saxby

MOMENT OF CONTEMPLATIVE SILENCE**ANTHEM***Precious Lord, Take My Hand*

Thomas A. Dorsey

Pop-up Chime Choir

PASTORAL PRAYER**The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father-Mother in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kin-dom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kin-dom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

SUNG RESPONSE*Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying*

Ken Medema

Lord, listen to your children praying**Lord, send your Spirit in this place.****Lord, listen to your children praying.****Send us love, send us power, send us grace.****OFFERING INVITATION**

Help us to live God's love and justice. You can make a secure gift by using the QR code, going to fccucc.org/donate, or by adding your contribution to the box at the back of the sanctuary. Thank you!

**CLOSING HYMN***Shadow and Substance*

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ANNOUNCEMENTS**BENEDICTION****POSTLUDE***Lord, Whose Love Through Humble Service*

B. F. White

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Join us for lemonade on the front porch after worship.

WORSHIP NOTES

Thank you to this morning's ushers: Team D, Scott Berry, captain.

The flowers on the altar are given in Loving Memory of Jeff York and Bo Baker by Terry York and Judy Baker; Seth York and his wife Sarah Hughes and children Levi and Magnolia; William York and his wife Susan York and their son Oliver.

Thank you to Rev. Jill Saxby, FCC UCC member, for serving as our guest preacher and worship leader this morning.

Livestream: Thank you to Alex Ratta for managing our worship livestream, this week and every week!

WEEKLY @ FCC UCC

Tuesday Bible Study will continue, every Tuesday, 12:30 - 1:30 pm in Davidson Lounge: While Pastor Steve is on his much-deserved sabbatical, a loyal group of FCC UCC members will continue their Tuesday tradition of worship reflection. All are welcome!

Meetinghouse Choir, Handbells and Handchimes are on summer recess. Rehearsals will resume on August 27.

SUMMER AT FCC UCC

Handbell Workshops coming this summer: The FCCUCC handbell director will be presenting two more workshops this August.

Bell Basics

Wednesday, August 13, 6:00 pm-7:00 pm

For those who want to learn how to ring handbells and play in the choir or are just curious about how the instrument works.

Advanced Ringing Techniques

Wednesday, August 13, 11:00 am-12:00 pm

For ringers with at least one year of ringing experience who would like to learn more advanced techniques.

If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Sharon Potter at handbells@FCCUCC.org.

FCC UCC Goes to the Theater! For those of you who love the theater, we have one more opportunity to take in a show together this summer:

- *Grease* - Hackmatack Playhouse on **Thursday, August 14** at 2:00 pm.

Want to join us? Contact Kathy Sahrbeck to let her know you are interested (or if you have questions) at outreach@fccucc.org. You can also find Kathy after worship, at Lemonade on the Porch, most Sundays.

MISSION CORNER

Volunteer for Preble Street Food Hub: On the last Friday of each month, we prepare meals at the Food Hub, 75 Darling Avenue, South Portland, for delivery to Preble Street satellite sites. Please join us! To learn more about how to volunteer, see the Weekly Word or contact Danna Wiggins at dannawig2@gmail.com

Clynk Bags are available in the narthex (inside main entrance). Fill with returnable bottles and cans and return it to a Clynk collection site near Hannaford to support FCC!

BUILDING UPDATES!

Small Parking Lot: The small church parking lot adjoining Mitchell Road is about to be repaved. The town is also scheduled to repave Mitchell Road this summer. Stay tuned for updates.

WHAT'S UP?

Want to stay in the loop? Make sure you are on our email list! To UPDATE or ADD your contact info, go to: fccucc.org and select "Contact Us" then select "Contact Info Update Form."

Also, look for us on Facebook: facebook.com/fccucc

on Instagram: instagram.com/fccucc_s.portland

and on our YouTube channel: youtube.com/@FCCUCCSouthPortland



IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Community Sing, August 17 and every other Sunday, 3:30 pm (2:45pm for anyone looking to get organized around singing at demonstrations and public events): A bi-weekly gathering to find hope in singing together. Sign up to learn about future events or to opt-in to the Response Team to sing at resistance and change events:

- To register or ask questions, email Emilia Dahlin at: emilia@emiliadahlin.com

Ideal Maine Band, Tuesdays at 6 pm, Ocean Gateway: Sing along with the Ideal Maine Band during their weekly rehearsals. It's joyous and raucous! Come for the music, the camaraderie, and the community singing. And if you're up for it, get ready to sing at upcoming protests. <https://www.idealmaineband.org/>

A DAILY BLESSING: Need a spirit-lift? Sign up to receive a daily blessing in your inbox, each morning between now and September 15. Offered as part of the **Bless Project** at South Congregational Church, UCC, in Kennebunkport.

Sign up here:

<https://www.southchurchucc.org/blessproject#daily-blessing>



Help Love and Justice to *Flourish*

Make a Summertime Gift!

In January, our congregation approved an aspirational budget, because we want ministries that spread God's love and justice to *flourish*.

We need your help to make that happen.

Gifts and pledges we have received to date won't cover all our 2025 costs.

Join our flash appeal to raise \$20,000 by August 15!

Why? When you invest in this community of faith, you help us to:

- 🌸 Gather Community 🌸 Nourish Spirits
- 🌸 Make Music 🌸 Pursue Justice
- 🌸 Care for Vulnerable Neighbors
- 🌸 Declare God's Extravagant Love
- 🌸 Equip, Bless and Cheer Each Other On!

Please make a new or additional gift today. Go to:
fccucc.org/donate ("Summer Appeal" in memo)

OR

Mail your donation to:

First Congregational Church, UCC
301 Cottage Road, South Portland, ME 04106

