



THE CONGREGATOR

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*January 2024
Guiding Words*



Dear Falmouth UCC,

January is a time of visioning-- we set goals, take stock, and dream about what the next year might hold. It is the church season of Epiphany; we focus on the star that proclaimed Jesus's arrival and purpose in the world.

It is a perfect time to take on a project to grow ourselves and our faith, and we are doing just that; in 2024 we will be reading the Bible together-- cover to cover. If you choose to participate you can pick up a Bible reading plan - on top of the piano in Fellowship Hall - or download the Read Scripture App -www.readscripture.org. The app also has weekly videos from The Bible Project. Whether or not you dive into the daily reading the sermons this year will follow the whole ark of the Bible so we can glimpse this unified story (song/ poem/ letter/ dream), written in many voices and in many times, that leads to Jesus the Christ.

You do not need to read the whole Bible this year, but I hope you do. I hope you do because I think it gives Christians a sense of ownership, to have read every word in our Scripture. I think it also gives us an understanding of how incredible-- and incredibly complex-- our Scriptures are. The Bible is a masterpiece. And, it is a collection of so many people's experiences with God, and life-- some terrible, some beautiful, some infuriating, some breathtaking. In reading all of those voices, layered on top of each other, we learn so much about the human experience, Divine encounters, and our own selves. We learn much, and also understand how much more there could be to learn-- it is both empowering and humbling.

We will spend January meditating on the power of language, both through Bible study and through our annual tradition of choosing Guiding Star Words- One Word to symbolize what we hope God will be doing in our lives in this year ahead.

Read on for a look at all the things God- and your community- is doing in January!

*In Christ,
Pastor Amelia*

ANNUAL REPORTS DUE JANUARY 2

All committee chairs can send their reports to the office for inclusion in the 2023 Annual Report.

ANNUAL MEETING SUNDAY, JANUARY 28

This meeting is open to all; voting is open to church members. Come and see what your church community has been up to this past year and what is planned for the year ahead.

see you there!

Hi – As I write this, we are at 99% of our pledge goal of \$250,000. Thank you to all who have already donated. In my four years as Moderator, this is the earliest we've reached our target so a sincere thank you for your prompt and generous pledges. This is going to help greatly with our budget which we will present at our Annual Meeting to be held on Sunday, January 28. The meeting will begin at 11:30 AM and will include lunch.

One of the items on the agenda for the annual meeting is Pastor Amelia's sabbatical proposal. Her contract provides for up to a 3-month sabbatical after every five years of service to the church. The following page gives a high-level overview of her sabbatical proposal. The Council will vote on her proposal at our meeting on Sunday, January 14. We will provide an overview of the plan at the annual meeting.

Many blessings,

~ Kim Hendry, Moderator, khendry1972@gmail.com

Proposed Council Slate 2024

Tom Stegemann, Moderator
Steve Hendry, Vice Moderator
Sarah Davis
Chan Sinnett
Joel Pond
Felicia Garant
Alicia Johnson

**The Church Council is still
accepting members for 2024-
Will you serve?
Please talk to Kim Hendry or
Tom Stegemann**

COUNCIL

*Corner***Proposed Sabbatical Overview**

Theme: Selah- A holy pause to re-connect and renew in prayer, Scripture, and connection
This time of holy pause will be focused on renewing my prayer and faith practices so that I can return to the congregation able to lead centered firmly and deeply in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Timeframe:

Leave after/on “Sending Off Sunday” June 2, 2024 – Return September 1, 2024 (Church School and full programming resuming September 8)

Coverage:

FCC UCC Minister of Children & Families, Lydia Hoffman, will preach and preside the first, second, and third Sundays of the month. She will continue the Scriptural focus of 2024 where we will be preaching and reading through the Bible. It is my hope that the Congregation will spend 2024 grounding itself even more deeply in Scripture and spiritual practices so that we can journey together. In April or May I will lead a small group to prepare Lay Preachers who would like to share their experience and insight from six months of consistent Bible reading in lay sermons the remaining ~four Sundays. Depending on how many people are interested in giving lay sermons we can also get pulpit coverage from the Maine UCC.

Broad overview:

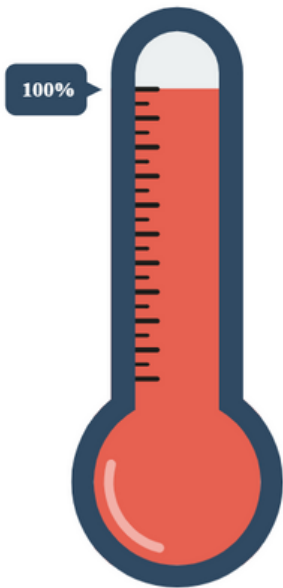
I will spend June, July and August in rural Maine and spend time each day in prayer, Bible study, and also engage in a running practice, which I find spiritually grounding. Concurrently I will be enrolled in an online course with the Society of Saint John the Evangelist *Crafting a Rule of Life* which brings monastic principles to the lives of non monastic people. A Rule of Life is a guiding mission statement made by individuals, families, or communities. It is made in a process of prayer and discernment around how God is calling you to order your days. Inspired by the monastic rules of the Desert Fathers and Mothers and Christians monastic communities, such as the Rule of St. Benedict, Rules of Life help translate our faith into the habits and rhythms of daily life. The course is offered fully online but I expect to spend somewhere between a long weekend and a week on site at the Monastery in Cambridge.

I hope that the time of experimentation and focus will translate into a renewed ability to focus on spiritual practices and Scriptural grounding when I return to my ministry in the fall. In addition, I plan to share my learnings by teaching a small group to Falmouth Congregation UCC in either Advent 2024 or Lent 2025.

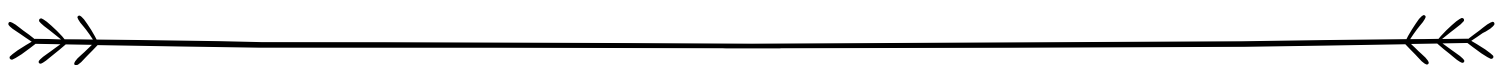
Stewardship Update



GOAL: \$250,000



As of December 20, the church has received 64 pledging units totaling \$250,342 which is over 100% of our goal of \$250,000! Many thanks to all who have pledged!
~2024 Stewardship Committee



Many, many thanks to all who have pledged towards the 2024 Stewardship Campaign. Gini Medford, our Financial Secretary, does a great job receiving all your pledges and has provided this list of those who have generously donated as of December 20, 2023:

- Nancy & David Althaus
- Russell & Beth Anderson
- Joan Ashley
- Marilee Beinema
- Lorraine Bergen
- Joe & Jo Blinick
- John & Edie Boothby
- Ken & Cathy Bowden
- Carol & Steve Carter
- Gerald & Louise Caruso
- Anne & Rodney Coleman
- Jeaneen Coleman
- Terri & Dana Collins
- Tom & Judy Crosby
- Chris & Molly Davis
- Laurie Davis
- Paul & Sarah Davis
- Jacob & Amelia Edson
- Felicia Garant
- Rebecca & Ryan Gibbons
- Barbara Graustein
- Alyce Graves
- Betty Graves
- Anne Gribbon
- Maureen Grubb
- Margaret Halleck
- Charles Harriman
- Kimberly & Steve Hendry
- David & Phoebe Horne
- Mark & Peggy Horton
- Mark & Katie Howison
- Michael & Alicia Johnson
- Lauren Jordy
- Joan & Tim Kaijala
- Carol Kauffman
- Karin & Jorma Kurry
- Nancy Lightbody
- Jennifer Major
- Kimball & Molly Mason
- Alan & Diane Mathieu
- Linda McGill & Michael Ryan
- Judith Nilsen
- Craig & Marybeth Page
- Jim Parr
- Larry & Susan Perry
- Phillip & Rae Pierce
- Joel & Joanna Pond
- Julia Poppell
- Rachel Rier
- Charles & Barbara Roth
- Joan Russell
- Ann Sanborn
- Jim Scherer
- Janice Siegle
- Tom Simmonds
- Kathie & Chandler Sinnett
- Jim & Kaye Smith
- Tom & Jane Stegemann
- Beth Stouder & Bill Nugent
- Robert & Barbara Taylor
- Diana Wescott
- Kathy Whitmore
- John & Eunice Wilcox
- Nancy Wulbrecht

MINISTRY OF
Worship & Covenant



Did you know that, in the Congregational tradition, the congregation is the keeper of the chancel? The Ministry of Worship and Covenant has taken on new responsibilities for preparing the chancel for worship. We have already been arranging for ushers and liturgists and preparing and serving communion. Now we will tap our creativity to change the look of the chancel as the church moves through each liturgical season. Judy Crosby has begun by painting a nativity scene based in downtown Portland, which was placed in the chancel during Advent.



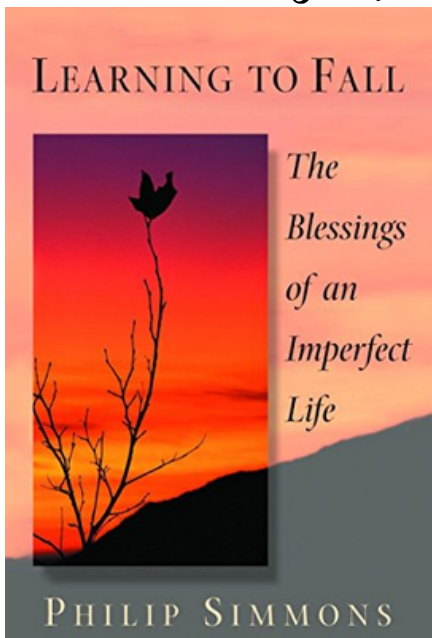
MINISTRY OF
Music

The Kids Chorus was busy practicing and performing during worship throughout December. The Bell Choir rang out often last month accompanying the lighting of the Advent candles and playing preludes. We were fortunate to have Wendy and Ted Hagarty add their music on the trumpet and clarinet and Mary Carol Kennedy play her flute during our services in December. ~ Laurie Davis, MWC



MINISTRY OF
Community Life

Women's Spiritual Book Group



The Women's Spiritual Book Group's next meeting is on Wednesday January 3 at noon. January's discussion will be on Learning to Fall: The Rewards of an Imperfect Life. by Philip Simmons. Participants may meet in the Grant Room or attend by Zoom. Let the office know if you need a zoom link.

Simmons tells the story of his spiritual journey with wisdom and humor, finding answers to life's deepest questions in everything from turtle behavior to Buddhist philosophy to Keat's poetry to toads mating practices. He shows us how to live lives of depth, courage, and compassion. The book is available in paperback and is only 157 pages. A slim book for fitting into busy holiday schedules. All are welcome to join this lively group. Bring your lunch and get ready for great conversation and a few laughs! Questions? Contact Judy Crosby.



MINISTRY OF
missions



What's a granola bar's favorite exercise routine?
CRUNCHES, OF COURSE!

If you are looking for something to eat to give you more energy,
BE SURE TO "CHEWS" A GRANOLA BAR!

Our church will be collecting GRANOLA BARS for the Food Pantry during January and February 2024. If you would like, please put boxes of GRANOLA BARS into the collection bin in Fellowship Hall, and they will be given to grateful Food Pantry families.

If you have questions or know someone with an urgent need, please contact Nancy Lightbody. Thank you for your support: You are all the best, BAR none!

State Street Shelter - Volunteers Needed



Last winter we partnered with State Street Church to open an overnight family shelter to keep children and parents warm and safe in the coldest months of the year. It is reopening in January.

Our church is responsible for staffing the shelter February 18-24 and March 17-23. Please put this on your calendar- we will need one greeter and two overnight volunteers each day in order to keep the shelter open.

Maine Needs

DONATIONS TO MAINE NEEDS WILL BE GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED FOR:

Winter Coats * Winter Boots * Snow Pants

Please be sure that the items are clean. Items may be left in the Mission Bin that is inside Fellowship Hall and will be delivered to Maine Needs.



Bakers Needed!

Please plan ahead for the Saturdays before Communion Sundays! Over the past year Loaves of Love has generated close to \$2,000 to support the five special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ. We need to keep the good work going! The next Saturday we will be baking is January 6, 2024. After that we will need bakers on February 3, March 2, April 6, and May 4. Please contact Alyce Graves if you would like to join in the fun!



MINISTRY OF

missions

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FOOD DRIVE DONATIONS!



Many thanks to everyone who contributed many different foods for the canned food drive on December 3! It was wonderful to see the kids walk next door to the Falmouth Food Pantry and bring many much-needed cans and boxes of food. It was also perfect timing, in that everything was brought over before the rains came that afternoon! The Food Pantry families have already been enjoying your donations. Thank you very much for all your efforts!



Pastor's Discretionary Fund

If you or someone you know has a financial need in a difficult time, please contact the church office. There is limited funding in this account for just such a purpose.

Thank you for all the Angel Tree Gifts!

Thank you very much to all the angels who made Christmas a very merry one for so many children in our community! Falmouth Congregational Church angels gave generous gifts that were beautifully wrapped, anonymously labeled, and secretly handed out to very appreciative parents. Many many thanks to all our angels who gave so willingly and helped so many children celebrate and enjoy a true Christmas!

To all in the Congregation who hope that the Maine Legislature will finally enact gun safety laws to help keep our families and communities safe, please come to the Augusta Statehouse on January 3 to bear witness. [Click Here for more information.](#)

Maine Gun Safety Day of Action
 Maine State Capitol - Augusta, ME
 January 3, 2024 - 9:30 AM

~ Peggy McGehee Horton



MINISTRY OF
*Christian
Education*



This has been a season of JOY in Kids' Church! We have been Christmas caroling, cookie decorating, and Christmas pageant-ing! Our Kids' Church friends worked so hard on their lines for the pageant this year, and they put together a wonderful and worshipful service!

PAGEANT WORDS PAGEANT WORDS PAGEANT WORDS
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Happy New Year FCC! We have had such a fun end of the year, and 2024 already holds so much for us! This year in Kids' Church we will be diving into the stories of the Bible, starting from Genesis, just like we will be doing in "big church". I can't wait to learn about these stories together!



Lydia Hoffman

Minister of Children and Families

lydia@falmouthcongregationalchurch.org

Hold for Pageant Pics

Hold for Pageant Pics

Hold for Pageant Pics

CHURCH

family news

- Baby Forrest Stephens who had heart surgery in Boston on December 20th for VSD (a hole between the two heart ventricles). Here is a caring bridge with updates: <https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/forreststephens>. And here is the page if you can help the family financially: <https://www.givesendgo.com/Forrestspreciousheart>



- Jim Scherer whose father died on December 21. 77 Babbidge Road Falmouth, ME 04105
- Ollie McNeill is doing well in his recovery- He's back to school a few hours a day now! Please send card to Ollie & his parents, Devin and Erin: 158 Deepwood Drive Portland, ME 04103
- Julia Poppell as she adjusts to life without Jim. 20 Blueberry Ln. L112 Falmouth, ME 04105
- Cards of support for Bee O'Brien as she spends her first holiday season in Hawthorne House in Freeport. 6 Old County Rd, #13A, Freeport, ME 04032
- LauriAnn Moran who continues to recover from a procedure to treat the aneurysm in her brain. 81 Deepwood Dr Portland Maine 04103.
- Kathy Whitmore's sister, Corinne, who has received a cancer diagnosis.

We Lift in Prayer...



- Joan Jensen's son Michael who had a seizure after a series of strokes and is in hospice care at Maine Medical. Cards to Joan: Ashton Gardens 830 Ocean Ave. Apt. 217 Portland , ME 04103
- Cathy and Ken Bowden as Cathy continues to care for both of her parents in hospice care. Cards of love and perseverance: 9 Ashwood Lane Falmouth, ME 04105
- Janie Anderson, who has not just stabilized but improved and is more alert and responsive in these past weeks. She continues to receive so much love and care from her husband, Larry; Cards: 44714 Audubon Square Apt. 105 Ashburn, VA 20147
- The great Christmas joy given by Michael and Alicia Johnson to many due to the generous gift of tickets to Magic of Christmas!
- Randy Boardway's father, Paul, who is fighting liver cancer.
- Sally Emery who is cared for in her home. Prayers and cards of encouragement: P.O. Box 102, Gray, ME 04039.



Thank you to the congregation for the generous Christmas bonus!

~ Pastor Amelia, Kat, Lydia, Laurie, Janice, Jane, Gini & Jack

Ushers

- 31- Alyce Graves & Jennifer Major
- 7 - Judy Crosby, Lauren Jordy & Karin Kurry
- 14 - Kathie & Chan Sinnett
- 21 - Julia Poppell
- 28 - Sarah & Paul Davis

Liturgists

- 31 - Laurie Davis
- 7 - Alyce Graves
- 14 - Nancy Lightbody
- 21 - Laurie Davis
- 28 - Marilee Beinema

January Birthdays

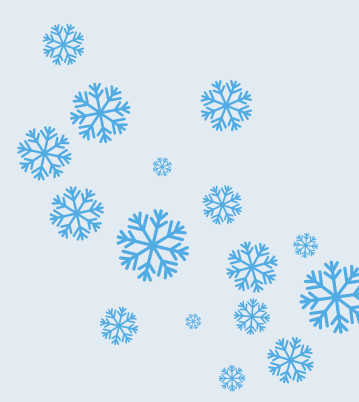
- 3 - Cathy Bowden
- 6 - Judy Nilsen
- 7 - Betty Graves
- 8 - Carol Carter
- 8 - Sue Perry
- 9 - Dolores Vail
- 16-Kim Mason
- 17-Ted Vail
- 18-Ruth Smith
- 20-Jim Scherer
- 27-John Boothby
- 29- Jerry Caruso
- 29- Kathleen Henderson



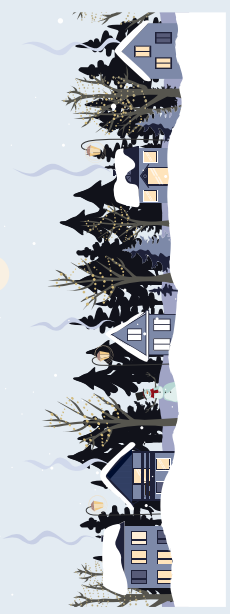
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January 2024 Calendar

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Happy New Year!</p> <p>Epiphany 7 9-9:30 AM Choir Warmup 9:30 AM Prayer & Tech Check 10 AM Worship In-person or Online 7 PM Troop 93 Com. Mtg.</p>	<p>Office Closed 1</p> <p>7 AM Men's Breakfast 12 PM Bible Study 4:15 PM Music Lessons 5:30 PM Worship & Covenant 5:30 PM CE Meeting 6 PM Fiddle-icious 7 PM Cub Scout Com.</p>	<p>11 AM Staff Mtg. 6 PM Family Restored</p> <p>10 AM Bible Study @ Oceanview 11 AM Staff Mtg. 6 PM Family Restored</p>	<p>12 PM Women's Spiritual IBook Group 2:30 PM Forever Growing Club 6:45 PM Private Group 7 PM Choir Rehearsal</p> <p>2:30 PM Forever Growing Club 6:45 PM Private Group 7 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>6 PM Troop 93 Mtg. 6:30 PM Ministry of Missions</p> <p>6 PM Troop 93 7 PM Finance meeting</p>	<p>9 AM Hiking Club</p> <p>9 AM Hiking Club</p>	<p>Loaves of Love Baking</p>
<p>Office Closed 14 9-9:30 AM Choir Warmup 9:30 AM Prayer & Tech Check 10 AM Worship In-person or Online 11 AM New Member Session 11:30 AM Council of Ministries</p>	<p>Office Closed 15 MLK JR. Day 12 PM Bible Study 4:15 PM Music Lessons 7 PM Fiddle-icious</p>	<p>11 AM Staff Mtg. 6 PM Family Restored</p>	<p>Congregator Deadline 17 2:30 PM Forever Growing Club 6:45 PM Private Group 7 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>6 PM Troop 93 6:30 PM Falmouth Writer's Group</p>	<p>9 AM Hiking Club</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>9-9:30 AM Choir Warmup 9:30 AM Prayer & Tech Check 10 AM Worship In-person or Online 11:10 AM Toddler Music Class 11 AM Men's Group</p>	<p>Office Closed 22 12 PM Bible Study 4:15 PM Music Lessons</p>	<p>11 AM Staff Mtg. 6 PM Family Restored</p>	<p>2:30 PM Forever Growing Club 6:45 PM Private Group 7 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>6 PM Troop 93</p>	<p>9 AM Hiking Club</p>	<p>27</p>
<p>Annual Meeting 28 New Members Join 9-9:30 AM Choir Warmup 9:30 AM Prayer & Tech Check 10 AM Worship In-person or Online 4 PM Youth Group</p>	<p>12 PM Bible Study 4:15 PM Music Lessons</p>	<p>11 AM Staff Mtg. 6 PM Family Restored</p>	<p>2:30 PM Forever Growing Club 6 PM Bell Choir Rehearsal 6:45 PM Private Group 7 PM Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>6 PM Troop 93 Mtg.</p>	<p>9 AM Hiking Club</p>	<p>FEB 3 Loaves of Love Baking</p>



Reminder: If there is a snow day for Falmouth or Portland schools the office will be closed.



Falmouth Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
267 Falmouth Road
Falmouth, ME 04105
Phone: 207-781-3413
Email: officemanager@falmouthcongregationalchurch.org
Website: www.falmouthcongregationalchurch.org

Falmouth Congregational Church United Church of Christ

Ministries

Kim Hendry
Chair, Council of Ministries

Kristen Tripp
Chair, Ministry of Christian
Education

Jane Stegemann &
Kathleen Henderson
Ministry of Community Life

Steve Hendry
Chair, Ministry of Missions

Virginia Eddy & Laurie Davis
Ministry of Worship & Covenant

Church Staff

Rev. Amelia Edson, Settled Pastor
Katharina Roderick, Office Manager, Newsletter Editor
Laurie Logan, Office Assistant
Lydia Hoffman, Minister of Children and Families
Jane Stegemann, Minister of Visitation
Jan Stover, Minister of Music
Gabby Colby-George, Nursery Caregiver
Jack Gervais, Tech Assistant

Officers

Kim Hendry, Moderator
Tom Stegemann, Vice Moderator
TBD, Clerk
Paul Davis, Treasurer
Gini Medford, Financial Secretary
Carol Kauffman MSN, RN, Faith Community Nurse