

*First Congregational Church of
Wiscasset, UCC*



*The
MEETING HOUSE CHIMES
January 2025*

*First Congregational Church of Wiscasset, UCC
28 High Street, Wiscasset, ME 04578
(207) 882-7544*

VISION: We are on a journey to reflect God's love, embracing diversity and affirming the dignity and worth of all.

MISSION: Together we strive to praise God, grow in faith, cultivate love, spread joy, care for all people and God's creation, promote peace, and do justice.

Welcome to the January edition of the Chimes!

"For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord,

plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope." ...*Jeremiah 29:11*



Myers' Musings

January, 2025 – The Season of Epiphany

What Happens When the Sound Goes Off?

*"What you do thunders so loudly that I cannot hear what you say." .
.. Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Some time ago I read this story: "There was giggling in the family room. Something had gone wrong with the television – the picture was there but the sound was missing. It turned out that the canine member of the family, Tam O'Shanter, had decided he wanted to chew on the remote control and apparently had bitten into the mute button. He had rendered the actors mute. They were still making earnest mouth movements, but nothing came out. It was funny because the characters were taking themselves so seriously without communicating anything."

Sometimes I wonder if Christians might look as ridiculous as the TV actors if our "sound" got turned off. Would our actions be enough to validate our testimony? Or do we depend too much on

our words? As one of the senior high weeks I directed a prominent banner read, "If you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?"

During the months of January and February we focus on the Season of Epiphany (a time for spreading the Good News of the presence of the Messiah). It begins with John the Baptist as he baptizes Jesus. Later on in Matthew's Gospel we read of when Jesus was doing His ministry and John's own disciples wondered if Jesus really was the Messiah. So, they went to Jesus to find out if indeed Jesus was the real thing. Jesus didn't answer John's disciples with a flourish of words or resort to a ringing declaration of His divinity, He simply said: "Go and tell John what you have *seen*, . . . the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. (Matthew 11:4 -5)

It is also worth observing that one of the primary Jewish contentions is that without Messianic signs (healings, good news to the poor, justice, and new vision) there is no Messiah. Go boldly in silence proclaiming the Good News with the actions of your love!

May God's Grace and Peace be with you!

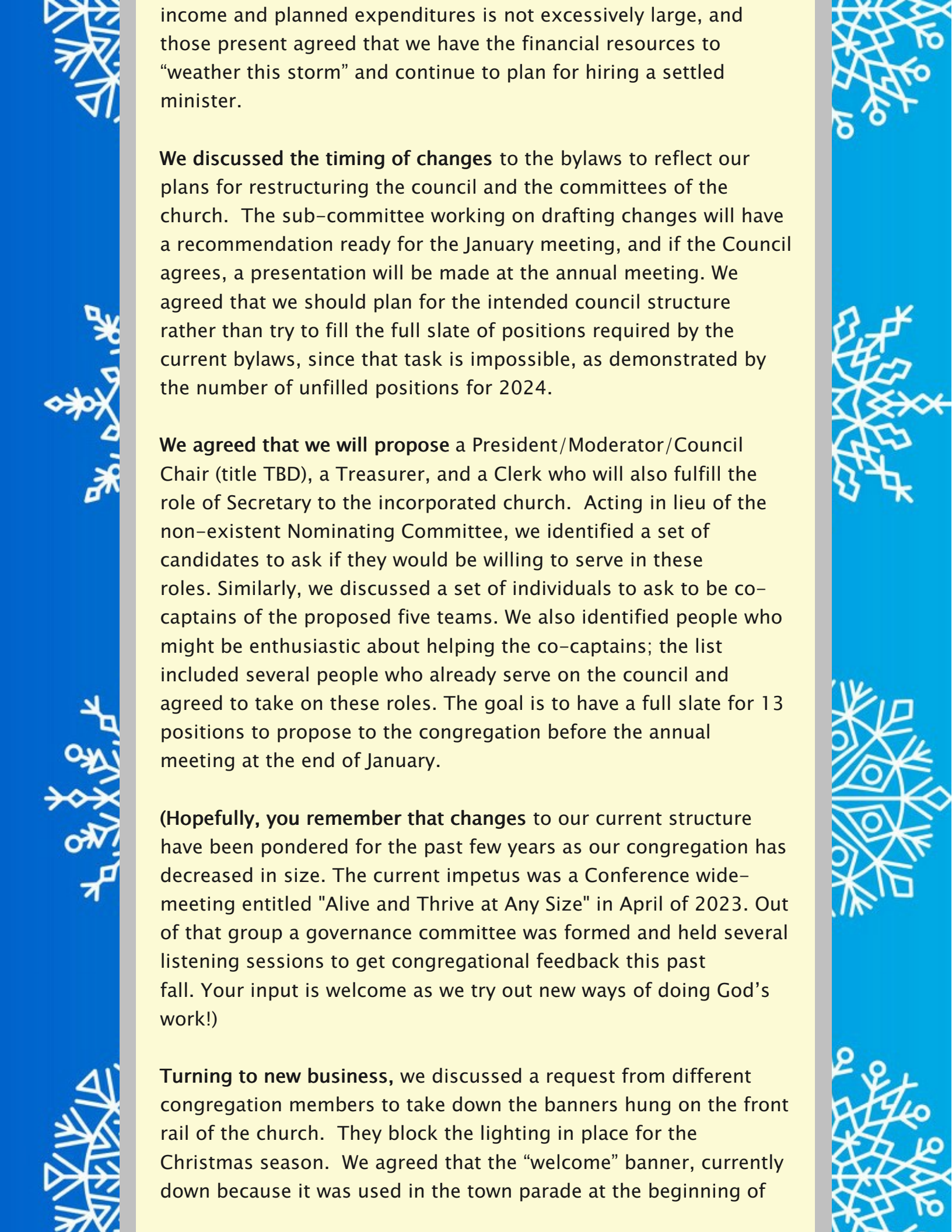
Dave Myers

(See the "Sermons and Scriptures" section below for the upcoming Sermons)

REPORT FROM THE CHURCH COUNCIL

A brief summary

At our December meeting, we heard a report from our interim pastor and the usual committee reports, but we mostly focused on planning for the coming year. The "bad news" is that our pledge campaign fell short of our target. The "good news" is that we have a little more time before we need to finalize the budget AND our endowment increased this year due to positive returns on financial assets. As always, we aim for a balanced budget, but as has been practiced for several years, we will use some of the returns on the endowment to ensure this balance. The gap between pledged



income and planned expenditures is not excessively large, and those present agreed that we have the financial resources to “weather this storm” and continue to plan for hiring a settled minister.

We discussed the timing of changes to the bylaws to reflect our plans for restructuring the council and the committees of the church. The sub-committee working on drafting changes will have a recommendation ready for the January meeting, and if the Council agrees, a presentation will be made at the annual meeting. We agreed that we should plan for the intended council structure rather than try to fill the full slate of positions required by the current bylaws, since that task is impossible, as demonstrated by the number of unfilled positions for 2024.

We agreed that we will propose a President/Moderator/Council Chair (title TBD), a Treasurer, and a Clerk who will also fulfill the role of Secretary to the incorporated church. Acting in lieu of the non-existent Nominating Committee, we identified a set of candidates to ask if they would be willing to serve in these roles. Similarly, we discussed a set of individuals to ask to be co-captains of the proposed five teams. We also identified people who might be enthusiastic about helping the co-captains; the list included several people who already serve on the council and agreed to take on these roles. The goal is to have a full slate for 13 positions to propose to the congregation before the annual meeting at the end of January.

(Hopefully, you remember that changes to our current structure have been pondered for the past few years as our congregation has decreased in size. The current impetus was a Conference wide-meeting entitled “Alive and Thrive at Any Size” in April of 2023. Out of that group a governance committee was formed and held several listening sessions to get congregational feedback this past fall. Your input is welcome as we try out new ways of doing God’s work!)

Turning to new business, we discussed a request from different congregation members to take down the banners hung on the front rail of the church. They block the lighting in place for the Christmas season. We agreed that the “welcome” banner, currently down because it was used in the town parade at the beginning of

December, will not be put back up until after Christmas decorations have been taken down. Two council members took down the “God is still speaking” banner two days after the meeting. Thanks to those who brought this suggestion to us!

The next council meeting will be January 15 at 6:30 via Zoom. Email Cindy Clement if you would like an invitation; the meetings are open to all members.



CHURCH IN SOCIETY COMMITTEE

Cocoa and Conversation!
January 5, 12 and 19
4:30–6 pm

Join us for some conversation and community.
This will be unstructured and low key conversations.

Got something to share? Just want to listen?

You are welcome here !!

Drivers Anyone?

If you would like to provide an occasional ride to and from church on Sunday mornings for those unable to drive themselves, please call Lisa Hargreaves at 207-315-0802. Thank you!



Church
Live streaming

Streaming Sunday Services

Are you good with Audio/Visual equipment? If not, would you like to learn?

The church needs a few more people to step up and stream our services on Sundays. Tom Clement, Dewey Harris, Chris Sieracki and Sarah Whitfield have made an enormous commitment to be responsible for streaming our services each Sunday.

Please contact any of our current “stream team” or Libby Mooney if you would like to become part of the team!



Would you like to bring in flowers to grace our sanctuary?

Bringing in your favorite houseplant to share would be wonderful! Would you be willing to leave your beautiful offering for more than one week?

Please sign up for two weeks in a row if you'd like. Cut flowers are always welcome too!

News from the Hospitality Committee



Thanks to the Trustees for hosting Coffee Hour in December. We also appreciate the efforts of those who signed up to set up, clean up and bake.

The Church in Society Committee will be our hosts in January.

A note from Hospitality Committee:

We have had to dispose of many packages of crackers due to their going stale. To prevent this in the future, please use the provided

clothespins to clip the inner package before putting them away.

Thank you!

Let Jan Whitfield know if you wish to be reimbursed for half-and-half.

Church World Service

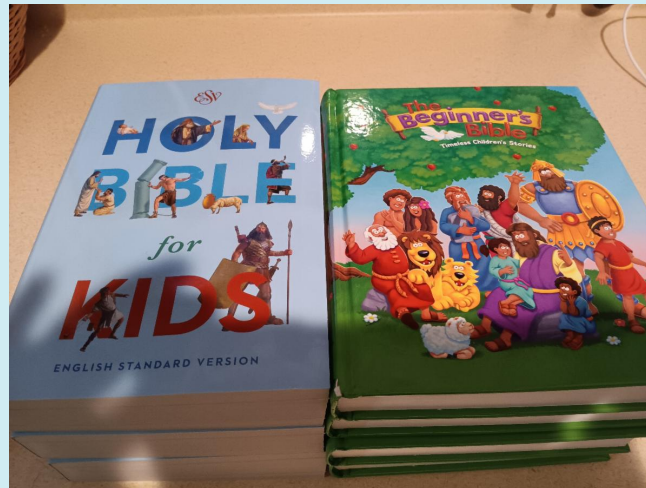
Toys for Tots

You are all incredible! You filled the Toys for Tots box to overflowing with such a great variety of toys, art supplies, stuffed animals, hats, scarves, and more....

The C.W.S. committee,

thanks to the wonderful suggestion by Angie Eddy, has purchased 8 children's Bibles (4 for ages 2-6 & 4 for ages 8-12) to include in our Toys for Tots donations.

Thanks for your donations!!



= SOS = SHOP ORGAN SOCIETY



The First Sunday of each month the Organ Society will set up Shop in Fellowship Hall, offering seasonal items for sale.

This month and each week in January 2025, we will have an assortment of lightly new and used Jigsaw Puzzles for sale. For those short but long winter days and nights.

THE ORGAN SOCIETY THANKS YOU AGAIN!



Our COOKIE SALE was once again a great success, and we want to thank all the congregation members who were kind enough to donate a wonderful variety of tasty cookies again this year. And thanks to those who helped plate the cookies. And thanks to all of you who bought cookies. What a wonderful way to celebrate the Christmas season!

Thank you to everyone who participated in any way for our successful Cookie Sale!!

Worship during January, 2025

(Epiphany)

January 5: Communion Sunday.

Epiphany Sunday. Sermon: “Growing Up:” based on I Samuel 2:18 – 20, 26 and Luke 2:41 – 52. These are wonderful passages of how children were raised in ancient time, and also a story about the worst nightmare a parent could have – losing track of their child – for 2 days! Especially when the child in question is Jesus!

January 12:

The Baptism of the Lord.

Sermon: “The On the Run Baptism” based on Genesis 1:1 -5 and Mark 1:4 – 11. In Mark’s Gospel there is an emphasis on the immediacy of everything – including Jesus’ Baptism by John the Baptist. This Sunday we will look at the “other” sacrament of the protestant church – Baptism – what it means, how it is performed and who are the actors.

January 19:

Sermon: “Has Our Time Come?” based on John 2:1 – 11. This is story of the wedding at Cana of Galilee. Mary and Jesus have been invited to a wedding. Jesus is not yet known as “the Messiah” – just another mother and son from nearby Nazareth. But something happened at the wedding that caused Mary to tell Jesus to transform 6 - 30 gallon water vessels into wine. The very best wine! Jesus time had come! When does ours?

January 26:

Sermon: “There Is Time, and There is TIME” based on Ecclesiastes 3:1 – 12 and Luke 13:6 – 9. When I was young, my granddad simplified fishing, “You have to have the right bait in front of the right fish at the RIGHT TIME.” Today we will examine two views of time: “Chronos,” or the chronological time that rules our lives; and “Kairos.” Knowing that difference makes a huge difference in our understanding of faith. It might even help us as a church understand there might be something God has in mind about the seemingly endless search for a new settled pastor.

February 2: Communion Sunday.

Sermon: “Today: The Grace of Prophecy”: based on Jeremiah 4:4 – 10 and Luke 4:21 – 30. As a young, “wet-behind-the-ears” pastor serving eager to show off my biblical knowledge and how it related to current times, my supervising pastor cautioned me with these words, “A prophetic word is always needed, but seldom wanted.” It is an appropriate truth about our faith that is right up there with the oft stated “don’t kill the

messenger just because you don't like the message." I don't profess to have prophecy skills, and Jesus had a much better sense with His words, "Today, in your hearing, the prophecy has been fulfilled."

Christian Ed

The FCCW youth Group was busy this past December! Decorating christmas trees, baking cookies and participating in the Wiscasset Town parade.



St. Philips Capital Campaign

St. Phillip's Church, our sister Church in Wiscasset, is undergoing a capital campaign to raise money for their continued operation.

Specifically, they are attempting to raise \$100,000 for repairs and improvements to their building that last saw a significant renovation in 1866 and \$100,000 for ongoing pastoral and outreach functions.

As such, your Trustees recommended and in November Church Council approved a donation from our endowment of \$20,000. This donation is from FCCW as a fellow Wiscasset Church. Individual Church members are encouraged to provide their own

contributions to this campaign.

If you would like to donate please send your donations to:
St. Philip's Church
12 Hodge Street
Wiscasset Maine 04578

Thanks, Dewey Harris for Trustees

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING OUR NEW "KEEPER OF THE CHURCH HISTORY"?

Hi all! You've probably heard that Greg and I are moving to Thornton Oaks in Brunswick at the end of the year, and I would like someone to replace me as the "Keeper of the Church History".

All the boxes in the safe are catalogued except one, and a notebook is available in the safe closet which lists the contents of each box. A lot of you heard about our many historic items at our 250th Anniversary Celebration last summer.

Please let me know if you would be interested in taking over the job. I will be happy to walk you through the process which is pretty much complete. We just need someone who can familiarize themselves with our wonderful church history.

Many thanks! Joan Shea, joanzone7@gmail.com, 207-882-4067.

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A Message from the Trustees:

Please practice of closing **all** doors when we're not in the building.

Closed doors make a huge difference in the event of a fire.

Thank you,
Your Trustees

CLYNK Reminder

CLYNK bags, in which you put your returnable bottles and cans, are available in the church office. The tags that must be put on these bags are in Fellowship Hall tacked on the CIS

bulletin board near the kitchen; there are also pre-tagged bags there.

Take the tagged filled bags (no more than 20 pounds) to any local Hannaford CLYNK station or bring it to church and notify Beth Maxwell who will take the bag to Hannaford. There is a bag in the kitchen if you want to bring in bottles and cans and deposit them there instead of collecting them at home.



The money collected by using these bags is used to support the Feed Our Scholars program.

Many thanks for participating in this effort.

what's in season **January**



Pastoral Care

In case of a pastoral emergency please use Rev. Dave's cell phone

202-302-6903. Office hours are T, W, Th 9:00am – 12:00pm.
Please continue to use the church number (297-882-7544) for all
other church business.

Cindy Clemet
Church Council President

Directories!

**If you have moved, new phone number, new email address,
please let the office know so we can update the directory with
any changes.**

The 2024 directory are now available. Please pick one up in
Fellowship Hall or in the Narthex. If you are away, Ted is happy to
put one in the mail to you, or Email to it to you.

Please keep the office posted when phone numbers or addresses
change. It is easy to update the database so the next time the
directory is printed, your change will be included.



Thank you for reading the January issue of The Chimes!

If you have news, you'd like to share for the **February issue**, please
send in your article by **January 20th** to fccw@myfairpoint.com.

>> [Click here for the December Chimes](#)

*First Congregational Church of Wiscasset, UCC
Mailing address: P.O. Box 350
www.uccwiscasset.org ~ fccw@myfairpoint.net
Office Hours: Tuesday through Thursday, 9am-12pm*

*Worship: Sunday 10 a.m.
Interim Minister: Rev. Dr. David C. Myers
Music Director: Joel Pierce
Office Administrator: Ted Gilbert
Sexton: Mary McKinney*



First Congregational Church, Wiscasset | 28 High Street P.O. Box 350 | Wiscasset, ME 04578
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