

First Congregational Church

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

An Open and Affirming Church

PO Box 350, 28 High Street, Wiscasset, Maine 04578

207-882-7544, www.uccwiscasset.org



We welcome you to the First Congregational Church of Wiscasset.

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.



March 2, 2025

March 2, 2025
Transfiguration Sunday
10:00am

* Indicates to please stand with your heart or your posture.

We joyfully welcome **all** to our worship service this morning, including those of you on Zoom! Those present here are invited to Coffee and Community in Fellowship Hall immediately after our worship service!
The First Congregational Church of Wiscasset is an Open and Affirming Church affiliated with the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ denomination,

For Your Contemplation:

“We may be visible to one another simply because we reflect and absorb various quantities of white light, but God made us to do much more; God made us to shine!
... Adam Thomas

PRELUDE

In Memoria

Jeanne Cotter

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT

Come, Now is the Time to Worship

Brian Doerkson

* INVITATION TO WORSHIP

The glory of God transfigures the everyday!

The light of God transfigures familiar faces!

At the heights of our worship, may God’s presence shine through the commonplace.

At the depths of our pain and struggle, may God’s presence give us courage and peace. May God’s light, shining in the face of Christ, illumine our days!

* HYMN

On Eagle’s Wings

S - 12

* PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Mighty God, stay with us always, as we worship and as we share the risk and challenge of living our faith. By Your powerful Spirit, turn our fear to courage and our confusion to confidence. Your glory shines in the face of Christ. Shine in our hearts and lives. May Your name be praised, glorious and transfiguring God. Amen!

CHORAL ANTHEM *Shall We Gather at the River?* arr. John Carter

JOYS AND CONCERNS: After each Joy or Concern please respond:
Pastor: "Lord," **Congregation: "Hear our Prayer"**

MORNING PRAYER MOMENTS OF SILENCE FOR PERSONAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom 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 kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CHORAL RESPONSE *Amen*

SCRIPTURE LESSONS Exodus 34:29 – 35
Luke 9:28 – 36

Liturgist: This is the Word of God for the people of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

* HYMN OF PREPARATION *Be Thou My Vision* No. 445

SERMON: "Just Trying to Get Away from It All" Rev. David C. Myers
Text: "And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My Son, My Chosen; listen to Him!'" . . . Luke 9:35b

OFFERTORY PRAYER

OFFERTORY *Claire de Lune* Claude Debussy

* PRESENTATION WITH DOXOLOGY

No. 46

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.**

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

Today Communion will be served in the pews by our Communion Servers. Please wait until all have received the elements and the minister invites you to take the elements. Our bread is gluten free.

* HYMN

This Little Light of Mine

No. 364

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTORY RESPONSE

***Go now in peace. Never be afraid. God will go with you each hour of every day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true. Know God will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love, and show you believe. Reach out to others so all the world can see.
God will be there watching from above. Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.***

POSTLUDE

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

arr. Larry Shackley

You are invited to sit for the postlude.

* * * * *

“Our worship ends, let our service begin”

NOTE: Liturgy for today’s worship is taken from *Flames of the Spirit: Resources for Worship*.
Edited by Ruth C. Duck, The Pilgrim Press, New York, 1985

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On Eagle's Wings

1. All who dwell in the shelter of the Lord, who a -
 2. Snares of the fowl - er will nev - er cap - ture you, and the
 3. For to God's an - gels is giv - en a com - mand: they shall

bide in God's shad - ow for life, say to the Lord: "My
 fam - ine will bring you no fear; un - der God's wings your
 guard you in all of your ways; up - on their hands they will

ref - uge, my rock in whom I trust!"
 ref - uge, God's faith - ful - ness your shield.
 bear you, lest you dash your foot a - gainst a stone.

Refrain
 "And I will raise you up on ea - gle's wings,

bear you on the breath of dawn, make you to shine like the

sun, and hold you in the palm of my hand."

Exodus 34:29 – 35

Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke with them. Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; but whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would take the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of his face was shining; and Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

Luke 9:28 – 36

Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah” —not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!” When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

Liturgist: This is the Word of God for the people of God.

People: Thanks be to God!

Be Thou My Vision

445

Unison

1. Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;
 2. Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;
 3. Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,
 4. High King of heav - en, my vic - to - ry won,

nought be all else to me save that thou art.
 I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord;
 thou mine in - her - it - ance, now and al - ways;
 may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heav - en's Sun!

Thou my best thought, by day or by night,
 thou my Re - deem - er, my love thou hast won;
 thou and thou on - ly, first in my heart,
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,

wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.
 thou in me dwell - ing, and I with thee one.
 Rul - er of heav - en, my treas - ure thou art.
 still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

WORDS: Ancient Irish, tr. Mary E. Byrne, 1905; vers. Eleanor H. Hull, 1912, alt.
 MUSIC: Traditional Irish melody, harm. David Evans, *Revised Church Hymnary*, 1927

SLANE
 10 10.9 10

The original Irish text dates from c. A.D. 700. SLANE is an ancient ballad tune named for the hill where St. Patrick lit Easter fires.

Harm. © 1927, by permission
 of Oxford University Press

David C. Myers
March 2, 2025
Transfiguration Sunday

“Just Trying to Get Away From It All”

Exodus 34:29 – 35

Luke 9:28 – 36

Text: “And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My Son, My Chosen; listen to Him.’ . . . Luke 9:35b

I suspect you know this conversation. It has happened in my life with many people, including beloved extended family members.

“I don’t go to church, but I do try to do right and to live a good life. I read the Bible and pray; I don’t need to go to church.” Sometimes I hear added, “I find church people so pious and hypocritical.” A corollary is, “I feel much closer to God when I am in nature, climbing a mountain, or fishing a stream. That’s where I can really worship!”

I always am perplexed as to just what is the best response – especially because the people that make such comments to me know that I am a preacher. Sometimes I try to ignore the comment. But sometimes I try to offer – with various degrees of passion – my perspective. It goes something like this: “No, you poor, simple, secular soul” – well, that’s what I’d like to say, but somewhere along the line I learned that wasn’t a very effective tact – so I stumble with something like “No, that is not what the Christian faith is all about. The Christian faith is about more, so much more than our private moments of good deeds, or our individualistic communing with nature. It’s about being **corporate** – as in being with other people – corporate worship, awe, ecstasy. Before it is anything we do, the Christian faith is

about something God does, a gift, self-giving, revelation; not just to me, but to everyone!”

Well, this morning Scripture reading from Luke kinda got me on this rant. It is the story of Peter, James and John going off and climbing a mountain with Jesus. I don't know exactly what was on the minds of the three disciples; and I never presume to try to second guess Jesus. I don't even know why Jesus only chooses just the three of them and not the other nine disciples. Perhaps they, after an incredibly hectic pace during the previous eight chapters of Luke's Gospel, perhaps they thought they were just going to the mountain top to “get away from it all” “to commune with God in the splendor of nature.” Mountains are good, quiet, restorative places for Sabbath, for retreat, rest, and renewal. For Jesus and the three invited disciples it was time to head for the hills!

Or maybe, just maybe, for Jesus this was a setup. Jesus probably had a different reason than the three disciples. Everybody in the Bible, from Moses on, knows that mountains are places that you climb to get close to God, to experience divine revelation. Moses had to climb up on Mount Sinai to get the Ten Commandments. Elijah found God on the mountain in a voice of utter silence – or as some versions translate it, “a still, small voice.”

At any rate, what the disciples experienced on this mountain was a dazzling vision of Who Jesus was. There was a voice from heaven. Moses and Elijah, two prophets long dead, stood there among them, beside Jesus. The appearance of Jesus was transfigured before them, and they fell on their knees in awe and worship. Peter blurted out, “Lord, it is good for us to be here!”

If something like that has **never** happened to you, I hope that you wish it would. If something like that **has ever** happened to you, then you know what I am talking about here. You know how our petty, moralistic religion pales in significance when we experience such a glorious moment. How our “Daddy, look at me, look at me” becomes, “I just saw God and lived to tell about it.”

If the three disciples thought they were getting away from it all, they were terribly mistaken. Suddenly Jesus appearance changes and His clothes became dazzling white. Then Moses and Elijah appeared and began engaging Jesus in conversation.

Peter was overcome. He wanted to build three shrines on the mountain top – one for each of the big three – Jesus, Moses and Elijah. Fortunately, we are also told that Peter did not know what he had said. And then a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were terrified as a voice spoke to them; “This is my Son, My Chosen; listen to Him!”

If there were any doubts as to Who this traveling rabbi was they were following, there shouldn't be now. But it is curious how the revelation came. It was not through miracle, not through teaching, not through the hectic-ness of the ministry in Galilee, not even through what Jesus had said. Aren't those the usual types of methods we would use to understand the true nature of someone?

But this is different. It was up on the mountain – where they went to get away from it all – that the spectacular broke into the normal, the extraordinary cracked open the ordinary. There was a transfiguration of Jesus – and, apparently, the transfiguration of the disciples.

You might ask yourselves what is a transfiguration? Were Peter, James and John given a glimpse of the supernatural; or, is this really the natural, seen rightly?

Is this event on the mountain truly ordinary; or, is this the ordinary seen through the eyes of faith? Maybe it would all seem like a miracle if we had eyes to see.

A good definition of faith, is “a conviction of things not seen.” Faith is the gift of being able to see what’s really going on beneath the surface.

Or, we might try to frame it so it makes scientific sense and then move to the religious. Adam Thomas wrote, “We may be visible to one another simply because we reflect and absorb various quantities of white light, but God made us to do much more; God made us to shine.”

So, in so many ways, today’s Scripture is different. We know Jesus, not through our efforts to penetrate the truth of who He is, but rather through Jesus’ gracious revelation, through this mystical self-revelation. Christianity is a revealed religion. That means it is not something that we have thought up or something that is humanly devised. It is a gift, some-thing that comes to us, a truth shown to us rather than discovered by us.

The transfiguration of Christ on the mountain is thus pure worship, something at the heart of our faith. We cannot fully explain it. We can only proclaim it, relish it, enjoy it, and wonder at the sheer glory of it all.

And for a shining moment, the disciples see, and the disciples believe. And as Peter said, “Lord, it is good for us to be here!”

But perhaps as we study this strange and wonderful story that is Jesus’ transfiguration, perhaps our challenge is not so much to ask, “Did this really happen?” but rather, “Do we have the imagination that is required for such a story to speak to us?”

And maybe that is why you come to worship in the first place. You know how easy it is to become accustomed to the anesthetizing routine, how easy it is to have your vision dulled by the reassuring ordinariness of the everyday. So, you come into this gathering hoping that the veil will be pulled back, the curtain will be lifted and for a shining moment you will be able to see the world as God wants us to see it. That's my theory of why people go to an art museum, to Shakespeare, or to a symphony in the first place. We hunger for many things, but among the things for which we hunger is beauty; because through beauty we can see our everyday lives in a new light.

A few years ago, when attending the West Virginia Wesleyan Trustees mid-winter Retreat and after our dinner on Friday evening we had a time for "entertainment" by our European Tour Choir, a select group of the Chapel choir. When they had finished singing, at the last stanza of the last piece, there was a rather awkward moment of complete silence. Then the Trustees exploded! Yes, that was it; we exploded into applause! We were standing up, shouting, and applauding for all that we were worth. Why? I am sure it was partly their gratitude for the work of the singers. But the true source of that audience's gratitude was that we had witnessed the creation of beauty offered to an audience who were gathering to deal with deferred maintenance needs, new building hopes, retainage of students, development of online classes, and how hard we would have to hit the endowment – not pretty stuff. That spontaneous rising to the feet, that energetic clapping of the hands, that is worship. Kinda like how Dan Bigley taught you all to clap at exciting moving moments in worship! That is worship at its best. Or rather, Christian worship is something much akin to that.

On the mountain, Jesus was transfigured, his garments were gleaming white, and a light shone from him brighter than the light of the sun. His disciples, who had walked dusty roads with him, fell to their knees, overwhelmed with wonder.

And then the disciples worshiped.

Pray that someday, stumbling through our worship services, we might be granted such a moment of wonder. Pray that the beauty of God might break through to us, might reach down to us. For this is when religion rises taking us up the mountain, lighting the fire within, removing our veil, letting there be light, and making us shout with excitement, “Lord, it is good that we should be here!”

And it is good that we should be **here**. But the Scripture doesn’t end there. Today we see the transfigured nature of worship, but that in turn transfigures our lives into action. “And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My Son, My Chosen; listen to Him!’”

Are we ready to listen?

On this Sunday we stand on the threshold of Lent, that forty-day journey with Jesus to the cross. On the way, before the journey’s end, there will be opposition, betrayal, resistance, cruelty, and death. Are we willing to listen to that Jesus for the next forty days? Are we willing to be led by Jesus down from the glorious mountaintop to the valley of the shadow of death?

Who is this Jesus we are to listen to?

There is a character in one of Iris Murdock’s novels that says, “Saints are those who are able to absorb evil without passing it on.” Isn’t that just like Jesus?

Someone else has said that saints are these who, like the stained-glass windows in churches, let some of the glory of God shine through.

We come down from the mountain, having heard the voice, having seen the glory. We are changed, determined, and amid the great cacophony of life we will listen to Jesus. And that listening transforms us.

We see not only who Jesus is – God’s very Son – but also who we see who we are, Jesus’ disciples who are to listen to Him – even along the journey to the cross.

And to think, maybe like us, all the disciples wanted to do was to head for the mountains – just to get away from it all.

“This is my Son, listen to Him.”

Will you pray with me?

Please pray with me:

Lord Jesus, we have caught a glimpse of your glory as God’s only begotten Son. We have been to the mountaintop and seen Your majesty.

Now, in our life in the valley, help us to move from vision to discipleship. Help us, having seen You, to now listen to You. Having opened our eyes, now open our ears. Help us to hear You and, in hearing You, help us to obey You. Amen.

This Little Light of Mine

1. This lit-tle light of mine, (of mine) I'm gon-na let it shine; (Oh ___)

(of mine) (Oh ___)

This lit-tle light of mine, (of mine) I'm gon-na let it shine; (Oh ___)

This lit-tle light of mine, (of mine) I'm gon-na let it shine;

(of mine)

let it shine, let it shine, let it shine. (oh, let it shine.)

st. 1-4

2. This great joy I have, I'm gon-na let it shine . . .
3. Ev-'ry-where I go I'm gon-na let it shine . . .
4. All- through the night I'm gon-na let it shine . . .
5. repeat st. 1

Those serving you today:
Interim Minister: Rev. David Myers
Music Director/Organist: Joel Pierce
Ushers: Becky & David Lenz
Reader: Beth Maxwell
Flowers: Ron Sanchez

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Communion Sunday: We are now serving all gluten free (gf) elements during communion, and “the cup” contains grape juice.

The “Outreach Team” is inviting everyone to a meeting after church today, Sunday March 2, 2025.

One of the tasks that is included on all of the Team lists of duties is to “**coordinate with other teamsin raising funds.**” This is up to all of us, team members and all members of the Congregation.

To begin that task, there will be a joint meeting after worship today, to begin brainstorming fundraising ideas. Hopefully, we will be able to raise funds equal to what Summerfest provided for us to give to others.

We need everyone’s input and ideas! Please plan to attend this important first step with the Outreach Teams!

Faith Development Meeting, March 3, 2025 6:30pm.

Chair Yoga with Samantha Main, Wednesday, March 5, 12:00pm.

Council Meeting, Wednesday, March 12, 6:30pm via Zoom.

Anyone who would like to attend should email Cindy Clement at cindytabaclement@gmail.com to get the link.

Worship & Music meeting after church, Sunday, March 16, 2025

Please take note of the colored paper prayer slips in the pew rack. These are for you to write a word or phrase of prayer or concerns and place it on the plate of offering. It will only be shared with the pastor.

Chair Yoga with Samantha Main

Class Details

- Day: Wednesdays
- Time: 12:00 PM

Overview

Chair Yoga with Samantha is a gentle form of yoga that is practiced sitting on a chair or standing using a chair for support. This class is perfect for those who want to enjoy the benefits of yoga but have limitations with traditional mat-based poses.

Benefits of Chair Yoga

- Improved Flexibility: Increases range of motion in joints.
- Enhanced Balance: Helps in maintaining balance and preventing falls.
- Stress Reduction: Promotes relaxation and mental clarity.
- Accessibility: Suitable for all ages and fitness levels, including those with mobility issues.

What to Expect

During the session, Samantha will guide you through a series of movements and breathing exercises designed to promote physical and mental well-being. Each class is structured to accommodate various abilities, ensuring everyone can participate comfortably.

How to Prepare

- Wear Comfortable Clothing: opt for something that allows free movement.
- Hydrate: Drink water before and after the session.
- Find Your Space: Choose a quiet, comfortable area with a sturdy chair.

Join Samantha for a rejuvenating experience that brings the benefits of yoga to everyone, right from the comfort of a chair!

*Sam is a Registered Yoga Teacher with over 200 hours and is a Personal Trainer.

Coming Up:

Sunday, March 2:	Choir Practice, 8:10am Sunday Worship – 10:00am Outreach & Social Concerns meet after church, 11:15 Youth Group, 11:45am
Monday, March 3:	Mah Jongg, 6:00pm – 8:30pm Faith Development Meeting, 6:30pm
Tuesday, March 4:	Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Sheepscot Valley Chorus Practice, 7:00pm
Wednesday, March 5:	Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Organ Society Meeting, 9:30am Feed Our Scholars(FOS), 11:00am Chair Yoga with Samantha Main, 12:00pm
Thursday, March 6:	Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Garden Club Wiscasset, 11:30am – 2:00pm
Sunday, March 9:	Choir Practice, 8:10am Sunday Worship – 10:00am Youth Group, 11:45am
Wednesday, March 12:	Council Meeting , 6:30pm via Zoom. Request a Zoom link with Cindy Clement.

Need a ride or Can you provide a ride?

If you need or would be willing to provide a ride to and from church on Sundays for those unable to drive themselves, please call Lisa Hargreaves at 207.315.0802.

Volunteer Opportunity at St. Philip's Church

St. Philip's is looking for volunteers to in the Bargain Basement thrift shop. Contact Sharman Ballantine at sharman1738@gmail.com or 207 481 1043 for more info.