

# 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](http://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 9, 2025

March 9, 2025  
Second Sunday of Lent  
10:00am

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

We joyfully welcome **all** to our worship service, including those of you on Zoom!  
Those present 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.

WORDS FOR CONTEMPLATION:

“If we were to “put” ourselves in the story of Jesus brooding over Jerusalem . . .  
we would be pale yellow chicks protected by the mother hen. It is not a flattering  
thought.” . . . from the sermon

PRELUDE

*Rain*

Brian Crain

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHORAL INTROIT

*Come, Now is the Time to Worship*

\* INVITATION TO WORSHIP

We gather this day to worship our God, whose words and ways challenge us.

**God invites us to lose our selfishness to find ourselves.**

God calls us to be fools in the world to us to show forth the wisdom of Christ.

**God urges us to empty ourselves to discover life’s fullness.**

God bids to be obedient to a divine will so we might know true freedom.

**We come to worship our Creator, seeking to have our faith challenged into growth. We root our faith in worship seeking to find nourishment for our spirits in this growing season of Lent.**

**In the Cross of Christ I Glory****185**

1. In the cross of Christ I glo-ry, tower-ing o'er the wrecks of time;  
 2. When the woes of life o'er-take me, hopes de-ceive, and fears an- noy,  
 3. When the sun of bliss is beam-ing light and love up- on my way,  
 4. Bane and bless-ing, pain and pleas-ure, by the cross are sanc- ti- fied;  
 5. In the cross of Christ I glo-ry, tower-ing o'er the wrecks of time;

all the light of sa- cred sto- ry gath- ers round its head sub-lime.  
 nev- er shall the cross for- sake me: lo! it glows with peace and joy.  
 from the cross the ra- diance stream-ing adds more lus- ter to the day.  
 peace is there that knows no meas-ure, joys that through all time a- bide.  
 all the light of sa- cred sto- ry gath- ers round its head sub-lime.

WORDS: John Bowring, 1825  
 MUSIC: Ithamar Conkey, 1849

RATHBUN  
 87.87

## \* INVOCATION

O God, there are many things that stand between us and the life you intend us to live. Like frozen ground stifling back a bulb's expression of life, these things subdue our spirits struggling to bloom.

A lack of courage chills the ground of our being and prevents our challenging the cold grip of injustice.

A snow-covering of indifference keeps problems out of sight and makes us believe there is no life below the surface.

A sense of self-importance allows the dormancy of faith and permits us to be content without growing into the world. As we worship, God, thaw us out. Through all the chill of self-importance, indifference, lack of courage, we feel

the life-giving warmth of your love. Help us to bloom as persons nourished by that love. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHORAL ANTHEM

*This Lonesome Valley*

arr. Besig/Price

JOYS AND CONCERNS:

After each Joy or Concern please respond:

Pastor: “Lord”    **Congregation: “Hear our prayer.”**

MORNING PRAYER

SILENT 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 LESSON

Luke 13:31 – 35

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” He said to them, “Go and tell that fox for me, ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’ Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

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

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## 188

## Before the Cross of Jesus

1. Be - fore the cross of Je - sus our lives are judged to - day;  
 2. The hopes that lead us on - ward, the fears that hold us back,  
 3. Yet hum - bly, in our striv - ing, O God, we face its test.

the mean - ing of our ea - ger strife is test - ed by his way.  
 our will to dare great things for God, the cour - age that we lack,  
 We crave the power to do your will with him who did it best.

A - cross our rest - less liv - ing the light streams from his cross,  
 the faith we keep in good - ness, our love, as low or pure,  
 On us let now the heal - ing of his great Spir - it fall,

and by its clear, re - veal - ing beams we mea - sure gain and loss.  
 on all, the judg - ment of the cross falls stead - y, clear, and sure.  
 and make us brave and full of joy to an - swer to his call.

SERMON:

“Hens and Brooding”

Rev. David C. Myers

Texts: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem! . . . How I have desired to gather your children as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing.

. . . Luke 13:34

## *“Hens and Brooding”*

Luke 13:31 –35

*Text: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often I have desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!”*

*. . . Luke 13:34*

**“I Will Not Go To the Market Today”** is the title of one of the children’s books which used to be part of the ritual of bedtime with our children. This book is the story of Finnemore B. Buttercrunch who discovers that he is out of his favorite jam and must go to the market – **today!** But as he leaves the house he discovers that it is pouring down rain, so he stays home. The next day he is even more determined to go to the market, but, alas, there is a pea-soup fog. Another day comes, and lo and behold, there is an earthquake just as he walks out the front door.

Beginning to feel jinxed, he is surprised when the next day comes and it is sunny and pleasant. In his eagerness to go to the market and get his jam, he jumps over the hedge and falls and breaks his leg. After that heals, he starts out all over again and meets some friends and visits with them – all day long – so when he finally gets to the market he finds that it is closing, and they have just sold their last jar of his favorite jam. So he has to settle, very

disappointedly, for his second choice. Poor, poor, Finnemore B. Buttercrunch.  
Sad!        Sad, sad, sad.

Yet Finnemore's story is the story of many of us. We set off with great intentions, strong resolve and very quickly get distracted. There is a nursery rhyme written to express the common frustration of not being able to fulfill our best intention.

Pussy cat, pussy cat, Where have you been?  
I've been to London    To visit the queen.

Pussy cat, pussy cat, What did you there?  
I frightened a little mouse    Under her chair.

In that Nursery Rhyme there is a lot of tragedy – much more than most of us grasped as children. We start life with high purpose. We intend to do something big, like go to London to visit the Queen; but find ourselves bogged down in trivia. We spend our days “frightening little mice” under chairs.

The problem might even be more fundamental than being bogged down in trivia when we try to pursue some larger goal. We may have even lost sight of our goal. When he was 88-years-old, the late Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes once found himself on a train – literally. When the conductor came by, Justice Holmes couldn't find his ticket, and he seemed terribly upset. He searched through his pockets and fumbled through his wallet without success. The conductor, who recognized the Supreme Court Justice was

sympathetic, “Don’t worry Mr. Holmes, the Pennsylvania Railroad will be happy to trust you. After you reach your destination you’ll probably find the ticket and you can just mail it to us.”

But the conductor’s kindness failed to put Mr. Holmes at ease. Still very much upset, he said, “My dear man, my problem is not, ‘where is my ticket’, my problem is ‘where am I going?’”

“Where He was going” was never a problem for Jesus. You see, Jesus had to go to Jerusalem. In some sense, of course, He had been heading there His whole ministry, but He was talking about it more and more. Twice already, He has instructed His disciples, saying, “The Son of Man must undergo great suffering . . . The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands”, but the disciples did not understand – or they didn’t **want** to understand – and, thus, they were reluctant to press the subject. In time, He would tell them again in the plainest language and would tie His fate to His destination: “We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished.”

Jesus had to go to Jerusalem because His heart was broken. He had His share of success and acclaim, but even when his teaching had been embraced, it was usually when his hearers had not truly understood Him. Far too often when people comprehended the cost of what they were being called to be, they turned away. But as Kae Evensen, professor of Preaching at Lutheran



Seminary in St. Paul said, “God’s habit is to draw near.”<sup>1</sup> It is not unlike a mother hen drawing her chicks near.

This is the eternal story; a story we relive each year during Lent. Jesus continues to go to the “Jeruselems” of our day. Jesus continues to go to wherever it is that people see Him with eyes dulled and hear Him with ears tuned to other sounds. And so today, through our Gospel text, Jesus comes to us – wherever “Jerusalem” might be for us. Jesus comes with that same heart-breaking lament on His lips. Jesus us saying it still: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often I have desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!” (Lk.13:34)

Jesus, you see, is revealing God’s desire to be close to us. Through the incarnation of Jesus in the flesh, God shows that staying the heavens is not going to work for us. So now we find Jesus weeping for a world plundered by greed, torn asunder by war, and ravaged by hunger and disease. While we pray that Jesus is in Ukraine, Gaza, Jesus is also in Moscow and Washington, London and Paris, where His tears would be for cities blessed with remarkable wealth – and yet they are cities that are often better known for their turning their backs on those in need or on those who seek to establish a world based on freedom. Jesus is at the altar of some houses of worship weeping for the churches and temples of our time which find themselves absorbed in self-interest and devoid of any meaningful ministry and worship.

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<sup>1</sup> Kae Evensen, Christian Century, February 23, 2010, “Living the Word” p. 24.

On the western slope of the Mount of Olives, just across the Kidron Valley from Jerusalem, sits a small chapel called *Dominus Flevit*. According to tradition, it was here that Jesus wept over the city that had refused his teachings.

Inside the chapel, on the front of the altar, is a picture of what never *happened* in that city. It is a picture of the story of the Gospel text today. It is a mosaic medallion of a white hen with a golden halo around her head. Her red comb resembles a crown, and her wings are spread wide to shelter the pale-yellow chicks that crowd around her feet. The chicks look happy to be there. The hen looks ready to spit fire if anything comes near her babies.

But, like I said, it never happened, and the picture does not pretend that it did. The medallion is rimmed with red words in Latin. Translated into English they read, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!” The last phrase is set outside the circle, in a pool of red underneath the chick’s feet – *“you were not willing”*.

“You were not willing” are words that reflect the theme exists throughout the Bible – it is the tension between God’s faithfulness and our doubt, our lack of faith to trust God and live in that freely given grace. It is a tension between our wanting to be faithful and the self-doubt and lack of resolve to resist the powers and seduction of worldly values.

Back to the picture at *Dominus Flevit*. Now, if Jerusalem was filled with hardy souls, this would not be a dangerous situation. Unfortunately, it is filled with pale yellow chicks and at least one fox whom Jesus identifies as Herod. But the

mother hen is absent, and in the absence of a mother hen, some of the chicks have taken to following the fox around. Others are huddled out in the open where anything with claws can get them. Across the valley, a white hen with a gold halo around her head is clucking for all she is worth. Most of the chicks cannot hear her, and the ones that do make no response. They no longer recognize her voice. They have forgotten who they are.

One of the most effective techniques of Bible Study is to insert yourself into the characters of the story. If we were to put ourselves in the role of the participants in this teaching, who would we be? Certainly, we are not the mother hen – that clearly is Jesus. That leaves us to be the pale-yellow baby chicks (or perhaps the fox, but most likely the chicks) protected by the mother hen. It is not a flattering thought . . . So, . . . how does it feel to be compared to a baby chick? How does it feel to be accused of following sly foxes instead of your mother who wants to protect you?

Given the number of animals available, it is curious that Jesus chooses a hen. Where is the biblical precedent for that? What about the mighty eagle of Exodus, or Hosea's stealthy leopard? What about the proud lion of Judah, mowing down his enemies with a roar? Compared to any of those, a mother hen does not inspire much confidence. No wonder some of the chicks decided to go with the fox.

It is also interesting that Jesus again chooses a feminine image to represent the divine; especially in the context of that very paternalistic society. But perhaps it is only the deep, resistant, and seemingly foolish love of a mother hen that is willing to give all and risk all for her chicks. Kae Evensen, wrote, "Only a God

Who enters into death can promise that there is nothing in the whole universe that can separate us from Who God is.”<sup>2</sup>

But a hen is what Jesus chooses, which – if you think about it – is pretty typical of Jesus. Jesus is always turning things upside down, so that children and peasants wind up on top while kings and scholars land on the bottom. Jesus is always wrecking our expectations of how things should turn out by giving prizes to losers and paying the last first. So, of course Jesus chooses a chicken, which is about as far from a fox as you can get. That way the options became very clear: you can live by licking your chops or you can die protecting the chicks.

If you have ever loved someone you could not protect, perhaps someone going through that agonizing period between childhood and adulthood, then you understand the depth of Jesus’ lament. All you can do is open your arms. You cannot make anyone walk into them. Meanwhile, this is the position a hen makes clucking, stretching and spreading her wings to call her chicks to her protection. And it is also the most vulnerable posture in the world – wings spread, breast exposed. It is not unlike a posture Jesus would assume on the cross.

Jesus won’t be king of the jungle in this or any other story. What Jesus will be is a mother hen, that stands between the chicks and those who mean to do them harm. She has no fangs, no claws, and no rippling muscles. All she has is her willingness to shield her babies with her own body. If the fox wants them, the fox will have to kill her first.

Which the fox does, as it turns out. He slides up on her one night in the yard while all the babies are asleep. When her cry wakens them, they scatter. She dies the next day where both foxes and chickens can see her – wings spread, breast

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

exposed – without a single chick beneath her feathers. It breaks her heart, but it does not change a thing. Or does it?

If Jesus goes to Jerusalem or to our contemporary “Jeruselems” – the places of power and prestige to which we have invested our trust and allegiance – will we see Him? Will we see Him as a mother hen, calling her chicks to come and be protected? Probably not. If we do see Jesus in our current places of power, wealth and prestige, it will only be when we see Jesus on a cross.

The cross is the corrective lens that provides the only possibility of seeing Him – of truly seeing Him. It is the cross, which finally reveals God’s Son in defeat. And the amazing paradox is that we may never be able to see God until we see Him defeated.

We may never see Who Jesus really is until we understand the emptiness of our things, the void of our values, the meaninglessness of so many of our pursuits, and the fragility of our relationships. As Jesus’ many followers did not see Jesus until He was defeated in Jerusalem, neither will we see Him until we have lost the need for the power and possessions to which we have clung too long.

Do you want to see Jesus? If you do, you will have to have the same determination Jesus did to go to Jerusalem – to go to a contemporary Jerusalem. And maybe then you will see the brooding hen, . . . lamenting, . . . spreading her wings, . . . totally exposed, . . . totally loving.

After all, as Kae Eversen wrote, “God’s habit is to draw near. . . . God will not leave us or fail us. In Christ, God longs to gather all [God’s] children, as a hen gathers her brood.”<sup>3</sup>

OFFERTORY PRAYER

OFFERTORY

*Simple Gifts*

arr. Jeanne Cotter

DOXOLOGY

No. 46

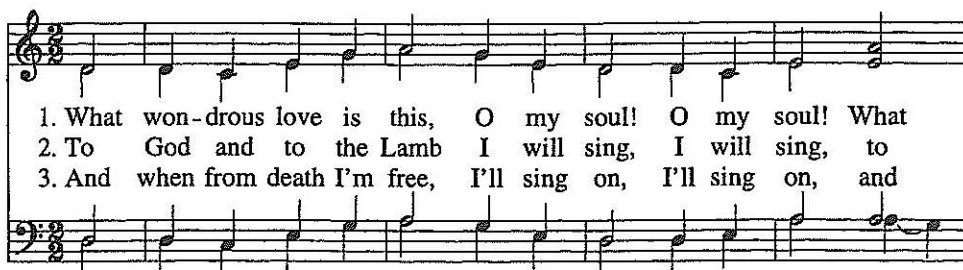
**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God for all that love has done;  
Creator, Christ, and Spirit One. Amen.**

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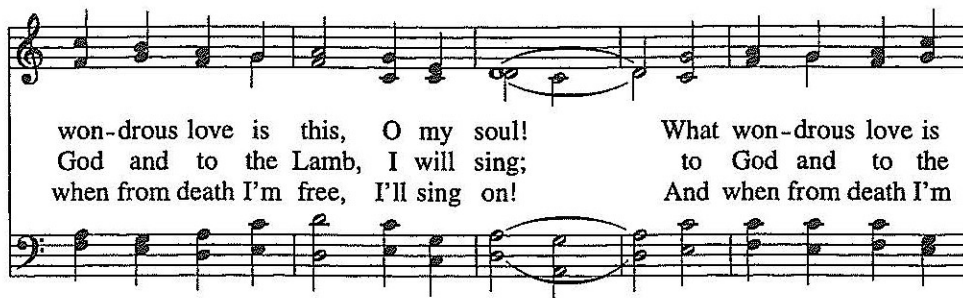
<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

## What Wondrous Love Is This

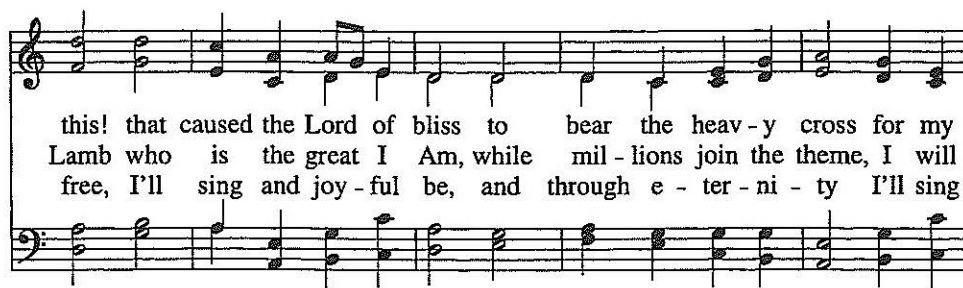
183



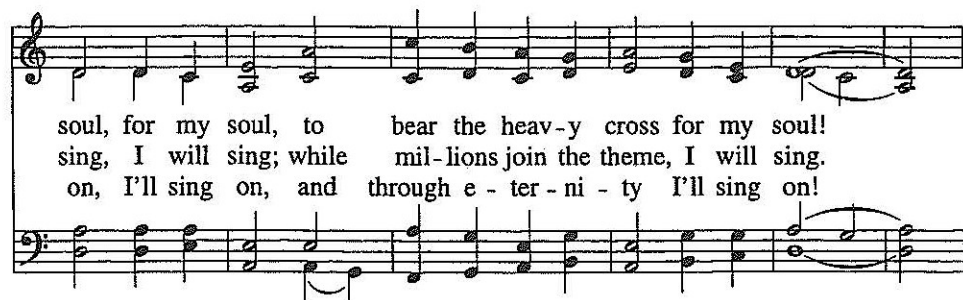
1. What won-drous love is this, O my soul! O my soul! What  
 2. To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing, to  
 3. And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on, and



won-drous love is this, O my soul! What won-drous love is  
 God and to the Lamb, I will sing; to God and to the  
 when from death I'm free, I'll sing on! And when from death I'm



this! that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the heav-y cross for my  
 Lamb who is the great I Am, while mil-lions join the theme, I will  
 free, I'll sing and joy-ful be, and through e-ter-ni-ty I'll sing



soul, for my soul, to bear the heav-y cross for my soul!  
 sing, I will sing; while mil-lions join the theme, I will sing.  
 on, I'll sing on, and through e-ter-ni-ty I'll sing on!

WORDS: Appalachian folk hymn, Stith Mead's *A General Selection of the Newest and Most  
 Admired Hymns and Spiritual Songs Now in Use*, 1811, alt.  
 MUSIC: Appalachian folk hymn, Walker's *Southern Harmony*, c. 1835; harm. FCC, 1997

WONDROUS LOVE  
 12.9.12 12.9

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

*Lenten Medley*

arr. Stephen DeCesare

*You are invited to sit for the postlude.*

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**“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

*\*Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from One License with license # A-7314.*



# 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.**

**Those serving you today:**  
*Interim Minister:* Rev. David Myers  
*Music Director/Organist:* Joel Pierce  
*Ushers:* Ann Dunlevy  
*Reader:* Linda Wallace  
*Flowers:* Ron Sanchez

***ANNOUNCEMENTS:***

**Lenten Potluck and Bible Study** on people of the Bible Sunday Evenings  
(March 9 – April 23) 5:30 – 7:00pm.

**Overview:** This Lenten Series, led by Rev. Myers and all who participate, is designed for us to be able to better understand some of the important figures in the Bible. This in turn will help us have a new and better understanding of what human faithfulness means even though we are all people with flaws.

**Please bring your favorite foods** to share and be ready to eat at 5:30 pm.

**Preliminary Discussion** on what the Bible, its stories and teachings can do for us.

**March 9: Rahab** and Suggested Readings: Joshua 2:6 – 25, Hebrews 11:31 and Matthew 1:5.

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

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

Anyone who would like to attend should email Cindy Clement at [cindytubaclement@gmail.com](mailto:cindytubaclement@gmail.com) to get the link.

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

**There are additional copies** of the “Annual Report” available for pickup in Fellowship Hall.

**There are also copies** of the “Basic Tenets of the 2025 Governance Trail” available for pickup in Fellowship Hall.

**“Lost and Found”** Looking for your favorite baking dish? Maybe it is in the kitchen "Lost and Found" on the shelf over the stoves. Over time pans and plates are left behind when people bring coffee hour goodies. Please put your name on the pans and dishes you bring so they can be returned to you in a timely manner. There is a roll of blue painter's tape and a marker in the kitchen that you can use to

identify your dishes when you bring them in. These items will not be kept indefinitely.

**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.

**Coming Up:**

<p>Sunday, March 9:</p>	<p>Choir Practice, 8:10am.  <b>Sunday Worship – 10:00am.</b>          Coffee &amp; Fellowship following church in F.H..          Youth Group, 11:45am.  <b>Lenten Bible Study</b> and Pot-Luck Supper in Fellowship Hall, 5:30pm.</p>
<p>Monday, March 10:</p>	<p>Mah Jongg, 6:00pm – 8:30pm.</p>
<p>Tuesday, March 11:</p>	<p>Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm.          Sheepscot Valley Chorus, 7:00pm.</p>
<p>Wednesday, March 12:</p>	<p>Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm.          Organ Society, 9:30am.          Feed Our Scholars(FOS), 11:00am.          Chair Yoga with Samantha, 12:00pm(noon).  <b>Church Council Meeting</b>, 6:30 Zoom. Request a link with Pres. Cindy Clement.</p>
<p>Thursday, March 13:</p>	<p>Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm.</p>
<p>Sunday, March 16:</p>	<p>Choir Practice, 8:10am.  <b>Sunday Worship – 10:00am.</b>          Coffee &amp; Fellowship following church in F.H.  <b>Worship &amp; Music Meeting</b> after Church, 11:20.          Youth Group, 11:45am.  <b>Lenten Bible Study</b> and Pot-Luck Supper in Fellowship Hall, 5:30pm.</p>

**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](mailto:sharman1738@gmail.com) or 207 481 1043 for more info.