

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.



November 3, 2024

November 3, 2024
Celebrating All Saints' Day
The Sacrament of Holy Communion
10:00am

We joyfully welcome **all** to our worship service including those who join us on Zoom! The First Congregational Church of Wiscasset is an Open and Affirming Church affiliated with the United Church of Christ. We invite you to Coffee and Refreshments in Fellowship Hall immediately following Worship.

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

For Your Contemplation:

“A person is properly designated as a *saint*, not when that person succeeds in living a strenuously virtuous life, but whenever God commandeers that person’s life, whenever that person embodies, at least to some degree, what God really wants for that person’s life, here, now.” . . . William Willimon

PRELUDE

O Rest in the Lord

Felix Mendelssohn

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

RINGING OF THE BELL

CHORAL INTROIT

Christ, Be Our Light

* INVITATION TO WORSHIP

We gather this morning to celebrate the lives of people we name as saints.

Some of them are living, others have completed their physical lives here on earth.

Some have touched us personally, some through their prayers and faithfulness, some by questioning what we do.

But all have shaken our being,

But all have been examples of lives of faith and belief, sometimes strong, sometimes faltering, but always a child of God.

We celebrate these persons and their lives in all aspects of God’s creation!

* HYMN

I Sing A Song of the Saints of God

No. 494

INVOCATION (*unison*)

Almighty God, to You all hearts are open, all desires known, and from You no secrets are hidden. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit, that we may more perfectly love You, and worthily magnify Your Holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

CHORAL ANTHEM

For All the Saints

arr. Lloyd Larson

JOYS AND CONCERNS:

After each Joy or Concern please respond:

Pastor: "Lord," Congregation: **"Hear our Prayer"**

MORNING PRAYER

READING OF THE NAMES OF THE SAINTS (After each name is read, a chime will ring, then say: **"God, Grant peace to your child!"**)

*Phillip Alonzo Applin, Robert C. Fairfield, Stan Fairservice, John Harris,
Harold "Bud" Lewis, Cathy Spencer Perkins, Dean Shea, Harry Shea,
Hannah Margaret Sieracki, Faye Stanley, Susan Jean Sutter, Hilda Ives Wiley,
Carl Wusterbarth.*

PRAYERS FOR OUR SAINTS

Gracious God, we remember all those whom You have gathered to You and we name them by name, asking that You grant them refreshment, light, growth and peace.

O God, renew our communion with all the saints named and unnamed, throughout all generations. And let us run with perseverance the race set before us, being surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSON

selections from Hebrew 10 and 11

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

People: Thanks be to God.

* HYMN OF PREPARATION

I Am Weak, but Thou Art Strong

No. 436

SERMON:

"The Foundation of the Saints"

Rev. Myers

Text: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, . . . let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us."

(from Hebrews 12:1-2)

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

THE INVITATION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We gather before You, O God, thankful that You receive us when we come to You.

Skillfully, through Your Spirit's fire, find the places where we hurt and shine on them with healing light. Find the places where we run from You and gather us home. Then mold us, shape us, make us one as the grains of many fields become one loaf, one bread, one body in Jesus Christ.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE AND PARDON

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

OFFERTORY

Let There Be Peace On Earth

* PRESENTATION WITH THE 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 CONSECRATION OF THE ELEMENTS

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

The Cry of the Poor

"The Lord hears the cry of the poor. Blessed be the Lord!"

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

The First Congregational Church of Wiscasset, UCC practices open communion. All are invited to receive the grace this sacrament provides. Communion will be served in the pews.

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

When the Saints Go Marching In

Roger Whitney, trombone

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

**Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from
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I Sing a Song of the Saints of God

Unison

1. I sing a song of the saints of God pa-tient and
 2. They loved their Lord so dear, so dear, and his love
 3. They lived not on-ly in a- ges past, there are hun-dreds of

brave and true, who toiled and fought and lived and
 made them strong; and they fol-lowed the right, for Je-sus'
 thou-sands still; the world is bright with the joy-ous

died for the Lord they loved and knew. And one was a
 sake, the whole of their good lives long. And one was a
 saints who love to do Je-sus' will. You can meet them in

doc-tor, and one was a queen, and one was a shep-herd-ess
 sol-dier, and one was a priest, and one was slain by a
 school, or in lanes, or at sea, in church or in trains, or in

on the green: they were all of them saints of
 fierce wild beast: and there's not an-y rea-son,
 shops, or at tea; for the saints of God are just

God, and I mean, God help-ing, to be one too.
 no, not the least, why I should-n't be one too.
 folk like me, and I mean to be one too.

Selections from Hebrews 11 - 12

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.

By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain's. Through this he received approval as righteous, God himself giving approval to his gifts; he died, but through his faith he still speaks.

. . .

By faith Noah, warned by God about events as yet unseen, respected the warning and built an ark to save his household; by this he condemned the world and became an heir to the righteousness that is in accordance with faith.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old—and Sarah herself was barren—because he considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, 'as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.'

All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country,

that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, God has prepared a city for them.

. . .

Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better so that they would not, without us, be made perfect.

. . .

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider Jesus who endured such hostility against Himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart.

. . .

Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and through it many become defiled.

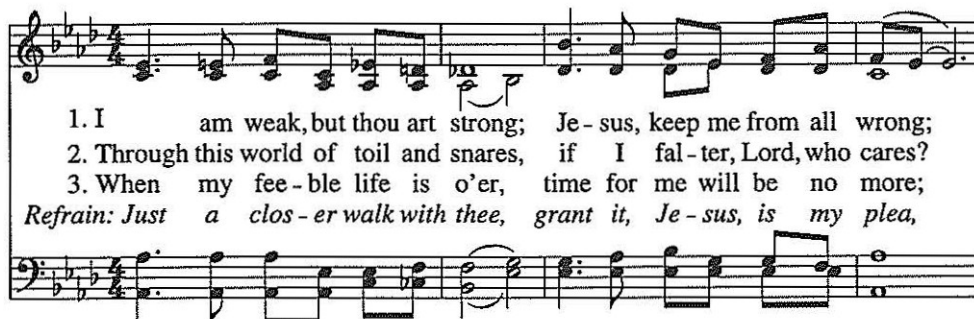
Liturgist: The Word of God for the people of God.

People: Thanks be to God!

I Am Weak, but Thou Art Strong

(Just a Closer Walk with Thee)

436



1. I am weak, but thou art strong; Je - sus, keep me from all wrong;
2. Through this world of toil and snares, if I fal - ter, Lord, who cares?
3. When my fee - ble life is o'er, time for me will be no more;
Refrain: Just a clos - er walk with thee, grant it, Je - sus, is my plea,



to Refrain

I'll be sat - is - fied as long as I walk, let me walk close to thee.
Who with me my bur - den shares? None but thee, dear Lord, none but thee.
guide me gent - ly, safe - ly o'er to thy shore, dear Lord, to thy shore.
dai - ly walk - ing close to thee: let it be, dear Lord, let it be.

WORDS and MUSIC: Anonymous

CLOSER WALK
Irr. w. refrain

We Are One in the Spirit

386

Unison

1. We are one in the Spir - it, we are one in the Lord,
2. We will walk with each oth - er, we will walk hand in hand,
3. We will work with each oth - er, we will work side by side,

we are one in the Spir - it, we are one in the Lord,
we will walk with each oth - er, we will walk hand in hand,
we will work with each oth - er, we will work side by side,

and we pray that all u - ni - ty may one day be re - stored:
and to - geth - er we'll spread the news that God is in our land:
and we'll guard each one's dig - ni - ty and save each one's pride:

Refrain (Harmony)

And they'll know we are Chris-tians by our love, by our love,

yes, they'll know we are Chris-tians by our love.

David C. Myers
November 3, 2024
All Saints' Sunday
Communion

The Foundation of the Saints
from Hebrews 11 and 12 (selected verses)

Text: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, . . . let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.” . . . from Hebrews 12:1 - 2

Today is All Saints' Sunday, that time of the church year when we remember the saints – ***all*** of them. But please note, when we use the word ***saints*** in a biblical way, we are not just talking about the saints listed in the Bible, or those who have been elevated to Sainthood by the church, or even only the dear, departed ones whose names we remember today. Biblically speaking, ***saints*** to refer to the faithful, ***all*** the faithful, not just those who have, as we say, “gone on to their reward,” but also those of us who are here, now, still busy living into whatever God has in store for us. All Saints' is therefore not just a time to think about the dead, but also about the living; all the saints, including you and me.

We've got some rethinking to be done about heaven. Sometimes we think of Heaven as the place where God is. Most Christians think of heaven as related exclusively to the afterlife. It goes like this: if we, in this life, believe in Christ then when we die we “get to go to heaven.” To be sure scripture is concerned with our eternal fate. But what often gets obscured is scripture's stress upon Jesus Christ as the invitation to share in God's life here and now. Scripture reminds us that Jesus

came to earth not to get people into heaven, but rather to get heaven into people. God comes to earth bringing heaven to earth, making all of this earth into what God intended earth to be in the first place.

With that understanding, the saints are not only the dead who have died in the Lord, but also the living whom presently, to some greater or lesser degree, live in the Lord. Heaven isn't just an eventual destination; it is also our present vocation.

So, indeed God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Esther, Mary and Priscilla. Our God is the God of Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Wesley. And our God is the God of Bud Lewis, Dan Bigley and the many other saints who have witnessed by their living their faith among us. They are the foundation, and we are dependent on each one of them – and so many more – as we struggle with living out our faith today. With their very lives, they have shown us something of God's grace, something of God's way.

Dependence on them is not enough, however. We also continue what they began; we “pick up where they left off”. These are the things that are bound up in the meaning and celebration of All Saints' Day.

So here we are today, remembering the saints in this service on the first Sunday in November. And part of our remembering and honoring them is building on the foundation they have laid for us.

So who are the saints?

One isn't born a saint or elevated simply through anyone's formal announcement. Nor is one a saint because they died or have been imprisoned for their faith. A saint is a saint because of their faith and their commitment and their

perseverance. What it takes to become a saint is available to each and every person who lives faith, commitment and perseverance.

The writer of Hebrews was talking about saints in our Scripture reading for today.

“Therefore since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, . . .” (Hebrews 12:1-2)

The writer here builds a challenging call to faithfulness. The whole chapter that precedes this text – chapter 11 – has been called the “hall of fame of the faithful”. Indeed, we read there of many great heroes and heroines of faith. Abel and Noah; Abraham and Sarah; Isaac and Jacob and Moses; Rahab and Gideon and Samson. We are dependent on those saints, challenged by them and the many others who follow after them.

Some saints are remembered by name; others more easily by their experiences. But they are remembered. If we were to forget them we would be the losers, for they are not merely figures in history. Their experiences in the face of challenges requiring courage and/or suffering may be just what gives us the courage to face our own challenges. And courage is often no more than just plain stick-to-it-ive-ness. The kind reflected in the words of contemplation this morning that mountaineers have learned: “Heroism, the mountaineers say, is endurance for one moment more.”

But our saints aren’t limited to only the ones who have gone before us. And while today we do honor those who have gone before us; we need to understand that to refer to all the saints refers to, among others, all of us. Indeed, we have saints in our midst. Bishop William Willimon defines a saint in this way: “A person is

properly designated as a ‘saint’, not when that person succeeds in living a strenuously virtuous life, but whenever God commandeers that person’s life, whenever that person embodies, at least to some degree, what God really wants for that person’s life, here, now.”

We are inspired by the saints in our midst as we see them walk faithfully in the face of the same challenges we face. And the surprising thing is that some times we discover that our living becomes as a saintly example for others.

It’s all about standing on the shoulders of someone who brings God’s realm to you. Riding on the shoulders of another can be important. Just think how difficult it was to see the parades when we were children, *except* when a parent or a big-hearted adult let us watch from his or her shoulders.

And I stand on the shoulders of many as I live out my life:

- I stand on the shoulder of my dad who genuinely loved life.
- I stand on the shoulders of Whittie Rogerson, Malinda Argotsinger, and Jane Keeler who showed me how to live while facing death.
- I stand on the shoulders of a Jane Keeler, Bob Fisk, and Sarah Myers LaGrassa who showed and show me how to live gracefully in the face of pain or daily struggle with disease;
- on the shoulders of Dewey Harris me shows me faithfulness, calm, and gentle strength;
- on the shoulders of Becky Lenz, Cindy Clement and Joel Pierce who show me thoroughness of preparation in their leadership;
- on the shoulders of a choir who sings the Lord’s song with music of praise and perseverance of faithful work;
- on the shoulders of Libby Mooney who always has a wonderful smile and is faithful to God’s optimism in the midst of . . .;

- on the shoulders of Beth Maxwell and those who pack lunches that “feed our scholars” and practice Christian compassion;
- on the shoulders of Beth Whitney, who for many years displayed a meticulousness with our finances kept us on an even keel;
- on the shoulders of Jon McKinney who climbs on ladders, Roger Whitney, Dave Lenz, Ken Cooper, and Lisa Hargreaves, who helps with the unseen little things;
- on the shoulders Linda Wallace and Nancy Roby who help take our church outside our walls and interact with the needs and justice issues in our society;
- On the shoulders of Jan Whitfield and her able assistant, Steve, who guided us through Summerfest, keeping a tradition of mission giving, and town celebration alive for 40 years;
- on the shoulders of Jackie Lowell and Martha Speed, who help publicize our church activities,
- on the shoulders of a certain church mouse who prefers to do things unnoticed;
- and especially on the shoulders of Oscar, Angie, and Samantha, and especially Raegan, Corinne, Vivian, and Natalie who give us a bit of their energy and their dreams of the church of the future.

And if your name wasn't mentioned, it's not because you aren't a saint in my eyes. It is also your shoulders on which I occasionally stand. For we, each and every one of us, the Body of Christ found in this church, are the saints of God.

So even as we keep on running our part of the race of faith, let us give thanks for those who ran ahead of us, those who run with us and those who have been and will be our shoulders to faithful service to God, our shoulders to glimpse God's new realm – let's give thanks to . . . all the saints!

Those serving you today:
Interim Minister: Rev. David Myers
Music Director/Organist: Joel Pierce
Ushers: Becky & David Lenz
Reader: Linda Wallace
Flowers:

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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

Meal Train, Please note, if you have meals for Linda Winterberg and family. There is a large green cooler by the back shed to put the food in.

SHOP ORGAN SOCIETY today after church, featuring Apple, Pecan, Pumpkin, All Homemade Pies! \$18.00ea.

“The Chosen” Continues today at **5:30pm**. Watch Season 4 and Pot-Luck Supper and discussion in Fellowship Hall.

Christian Education Meeting, November 4, 6:30pm.

Pastoral Search Committee will meet with Rev. John Fiscus, the associate conference minister supporting search and call, at the church on Sunday, November 7 at 7:00pm. All are welcome to attend!

Diaconate Meeting, Sunday November 10, following church.

Council Meeting, Wednesday, November 13 via Zoom. All are Welcome! Please email Cindy Clement for the Zoom link. @ cindytubaclement@gmail.com

Trustees Meeting, Tuesday Nov, 19, 6:30pm via ZOOM.

Stewardship Season is Upon Us. This year our Stewardship emphasis rests on four faithful responses to God's love. Prayers, Presence, Gifts and Service. Our church provides or helps enable many missions and ministries, both local and worldwide.

This week we will be sending out the Annual Stewardship Mailing complete with pledge cards. Please give prayerful consideration for your pledge for the coming year 2025. Please try to have your pledge card completed and back to the church by Wednesday, November 20!

CHRISTMAS WREATH SALE 2024

It's time for the Annual Organ Society Wreath Sale. Wreaths will be available for pick-up on Tuesday, November 26th, or on Sunday, December 1st. **Please order by Thursday, November 21st.** Prepayment is appreciated! Forms and payments, (Make out checks to the Organ Society), can go to the church office or to Libby Mooney libbymooney1954@gmail.com.

Volunteer Opportunity at St. Philip's Church

St. Philip's is looking for individuals to work 3 or more hours on Saturdays in the Bargain Basement thrift shop. Volunteers can work behind the scenes, or out front helping. Contact Sharman Ballantine at sharman1738@gmail.com or 207 481 1043 for more info.

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:

Sunday, November 3:	All Saints' Sunday Worship – 10:00am <i>Shop Organ Society</i> , Fresh homemade pies for sale today after church in Fellowship Hall. No Youth Group “The Chosen” Series, Season 4. Pot-Luck Supper and Discussion, 5:30 in Fellowship Hall
Monday, November 4:	Mah Jongg, 6:00pm – 8:30pm Christian Ed Meeting, 6:30pm
Tuesday, November 5:	Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Church in Society Meet , 12:30pm
Wednesday, November 6:	Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Organ Society Meets, 9:30am Feed Our Scholars(FOS), 11:00am
Thursday, November 7:	Office Hours 9:00am – 12:00pm Garden Club of Wiscasset, 11:30am – 2:00pm
Sunday, November 10:	Sunday Worship – 10:00am Diaconate meeting following church ay 11:15am
Drivers Anyone?	
If you would be willing to provide an occasional ride to and from church on Sundays for those unable to drive themselves, please call Lisa Hargreaves at 207.315.0802.	