



The Beacon

November 2014

Vol. 30, No. 11

First Congregational Church of Camden, Maine
An Open & Affirming Congregation of the UCC.



Join Us for Thanksgiving Dinner

The traditional Thanksgiving Dinner will take place on

Thanksgiving Day at 1:00 p.m.

You are all invited to share this wonderful meal
with the Church Family.

Sign up on the Opportunities Table

where you will also find a list asking who can help the day before and on the day of the dinner. Or who can bring a dessert. The dinner is free and you won't have to bring a thing. So if you're alone or without family this Thanksgiving or just don't have the energy or inclination to cook, join us here for a fine turkey dinner with all the trimmings!

The dinner is sponsored by our Outreach Committee and is underwritten by funds generated by Heavenly Threads.

Donations will be gratefully accepted to defray dinner costs and to continue our Outreach Mission.



Grace Notes

When I was a boy, Thanksgiving Day was always celebrated by my family gathering together to feast on turkey, squash, mashed potatoes, giblet gravy and my father's famous oyster stuffing – a meal that would have delighted our Pilgrim ancestors.

Often at those Thanksgiving Day feasts, there would be “special guests” – the college roommate who couldn't travel home, the kid next door whose parent had to work that day, and the nervous girlfriend who came to meet “the family” for the first time.

After we gobbled down my mother's homemade pies, my father would read to us some words of scripture and then ask each one of us to share what we were especially thankful for that year. Our answers to that question were as unique as the people gathered about that table. And as those around that table grew through the years, their answers to the question “what are you thankful for” reflected God's presence in their lives as they travelled on their life journey.

As we approach Thanksgiving Day, I ask you the question my father asked me – “What are you thankful for this year? How have you experienced God's blessings in your life?”

For my part, I give thanks to God for the opportunity to have been able to travel with you on your faith journey during these past months. I have been blessed beyond measure by your love of God and each other. Your generosity to me on my last Sunday as your pastor was heartwarming and I offer you my thanks and gratitude for all of your thoughtful gifts and cards.

So in our parting, as you undertake the next phase of your faith journey, I share with you these words of thanksgiving....

Thou that has given so much to me, give one thing more -- a grateful heart;

Not thankful when it pleases me, as if Thy blessings had spare days;

But such a heart, whose pulse may be Thy praise. George Hebert

A Happy and Blessed Thanksgiving to you all!

Yours in Christ,

~ Dick

FALL MUSIC SURVEY



The Music Committee has created a survey to collect your comments and suggestions for the future of our Church's music ministry. It is available now on Survey Monkey at

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FCCMUSIC2015>

It should take about 10-15 minutes at the most to complete.

Please take the survey at your earliest convenience, and no later than November 10th. Your responses will help us develop a strong sense of direction for the future of our music programming. Whether you choose to identify yourself or not, please be assured that your responses will remain confidential.

We will also have paper copies of the survey available on the Opportunities Table, along with a collection box, for those who prefer to answer the old-fashioned way.

Thank you all for taking the time to participate in this survey!
-- Bruce Cole and Eric Charlton, Co-chairs of the Music Committee



Shields Mission Project Committee
A Ministry of
The First Congregational Church
of Camden
Debbi Hitchings

Grandmothers! What would we do without them? That is a question that quite literally pertains to many children who look to their grandparents for care and shelter. Just within the last few months Shields has been asked to provide financial assistance to two women who have taken on the responsibility of caring for their grandchildren.

A Rockland woman has taken in her two young grandchildren in order to remove them from abusive parents. She gave up her management level job in order to provide the kids a safe and nurturing home and to help them heal from mistreatment they had experienced at the hands of their parents. The children are understandably dealing with significant trauma and require many services to help them in their recovery. She too is seriously impacted emotionally by what her grandbabies have been through and by the impact it has had on her own life. And then, of course, there is the reality of having to pay the ever present bills without a regular source of income.

Shields cannot lessen the trauma of the abuse but we can lessen the stress associated with unpaid bills. The fact that we were able to pay both her CMP and water bill meant the world to her. She made it a point to call and to thank Shields for being willing to reach out a hand of kindness to a complete stranger. "Can you feel the hug coming through the telephone," she asked, "I just want to thank you and your church so much."

Another local grandmother is caring for her two grandchildren, one a toddler, the other a teen. Their mom is in prison for several months and the children were left without a home. There is the loss of the mother's income, the lessening of her own wages as she is now working fewer hours, and of course, increased household expenses. Shields made the commitment to pay a month's rent to help lessen the strain and to help her catch up on expenses before she goes for some needed surgery.

I give both of these women tremendous credit for being willing to assume the role of parent once again, for taking on the challenges associated with raising children and most importantly, for giving their grandchildren the nurturing and security that they so desperately need. How fortunate we are, as a church, that we can play a supportive role in making the lives of both these grand moms and their grandchildren a little easier.

Our church can continue to offer this kind of financial outreach because of the support of the congregation and of the greater community. (None of our funding comes from the church's budget.) Your kindness ensures that our church's mission of reaching out to the community will continue in the years ahead. As always, thank you!

Shields Committee: Deb Endl (Chair), Betty Bates, Julianne Edmondson, Bob Garcia, Doug Linder, Shelley Mills, Roberta Walker, Debbi Hitchings (Administrator)

Our mission as an outreach ministry of the church: *"To help provide less fortunate citizens of Knox County warmth, shelter, food, clothing, transportation, education, childcare, health care etc. and to enable them to become more able to live a productive and self-sustaining life."*



**Remember, it's
JAM & JELLY time.**

***Watch for them to be on sale
in the Pilgrim Room on
November 29,
December 6 & 13.***

***They are \$6.00 and the
proceeds benefit
the Shields Mission Project.***



***From Elizabeth Lally
Director of Church School***

November? November? How can it be? The change of season is upon us and with it our own church is entering into another time of change. We welcome Reverend Deb Jenks and say goodbye to Reverend Dick Hanks who has so lovingly guided us through these last months of transition.

During October, the Sunday school classes collected their offering towards a donation to the Shields Oil fund and over 30 members from our Sunday school family gathered for a potluck. There were games and plenty of good food and conversation. When the 3rd graders were given bibles in October, the Sunday school lesson had to be put aside because all the kids had their heads in The Book. This is a good problem to have and we are glad that the graphic novel style bibles were such a hit.

As we look ahead to the Advent season we have begun singing together each week at the start of Sunday school to practice for our December pageant. We have timid voices, strong voices, altos, and sopranos and it is lovely to be able to sing together in worship to God.

We would like to thank Ron Hise and Vicki Fletcher for helping us as substitutes in the classrooms and are always grateful to our regular Sunday school leaders: Jeni Mason, Terri Mackenzie, Kristi Todd, and Carol Spinney.

Come one, come all! Sunday school families will be going to see the new Peanuts movie after worship on November the 8th. We might make a plan to do some food beforehand if there is interest. If you need help affording this event please contact Bob Garcia at: bgarcia@midcoast.com.

We are grateful to have a donor who is willing to help defray the cost if that is barrier to you being able to come. When we know the movie time we will send it out. And we invite the congregation to join us! It would be great to have you along for this fun outing.

In addition to their regular classes, the children will be singing songs to practice for the pageant in December. We started with *O Little Town of Bethlehem* and will be practicing *Away in the Manger*.

In the classes we will be learning about Abraham and Sarah. The focus will be trusting God and being willing to wait patiently for God's time to answer prayer.

Youth Group Dinner & Silent Auction Fundraiser November 21, 6:00pm



Come support our youth group who will be traveling to Guatemala on their Mission Trip! Pulled pork, beans, rice, salad, cornbread and dessert. Adults-\$15, Children-\$10, Family of 4 or more-\$45.

Come support our Youth and enjoy some great conversation and fabulous food.

If you have items for the Silent Auction, please bring them in to the church office.



**Wednesdays at 1:00
after Soup Lunch
The Service of Prayer
& Healing
A half-hour, lovely service.**

Christmas Jams & Jellies



\$6.00

On Sale 11/29, Dec. 6, 13, 20
To Benefit the Shields Mission Project

OUR VOLUNTEERS

For every month, in every *Beacon*, we will be printing the names of our very wonderful volunteers who have signed up for the tasks below. Check your calendars. If Ushers & Fellowship Team Members are unable to assume the duties on that day, **please find a substitute** and alert Nan so she can make the correction for the Sunday Bulletin. Many thanks!

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LITURGIST</u>	<u>USHERS</u>	<u>FELLOWSHIP</u>
November 8	Judy Cucinotta	Elaine Davis, Nan Haid, Marty & Andi Hamalainen	Sarah Shepherd, Bruce & Ann Cole, Gloria Guiduli, Debbi & Roy Hitchings, Marcia Dietrich
November 15	Debbi Hitchings	Rita Elliott, Deb Endl, Roger Hurkey, Loel Kline	Phil & Judy Cucinotta, Marty & Andi Hamalainen Julianne Edmondson Rita Elliott, Ralph & Audrey Preuster
November 22	Nancy Laite	Ellen & Jeff Stanclift, Sally & Allen Fernald	Karin Rector, Debbie Brady, Marge Wester, Mike & Vicki Fletcher Ann Rafferty
November 29	TBD	Nan & Chase Lasbury, Jinx & John Hufnagel	Becky Ford, Mary Libbey, Sally & Allen Fernald, Mimi Edmunds, Zella & David Walker, George McKiernan

Notes from the Maine Conference

By Debbie Brady

What has 277 people from all over Maine, 100 clergy, 80 lay delegates, (oh, I couldn't write as fast as they went through the list) where else can you sit in worship with close to 300 people in a beautiful cathedral, and just soak in the love and the music booming out from the awesome organ up in the balcony?

You guessed it: Maine UCC annual conference in Augusta!

Thanks for allowing me to represent our church. I went to my workshops and collected lots of info, met some very nice folks, and introduced myself to the new conference minister—Rev. Deb Blood. I also invited her to our church, so be on alert!

A quick summary. We voted on the budget, learned about the Maine Conference deacons. We found out that Pilgrim Lodge REACHED their \$2 million goal for building the new dining hall/kitchen. We learned of our ties to a NH camp AND learned that PL gives out over \$45k in scholarships paid by local churches.

We voted on changes to clergy compensation specifically that of associate pastors, and made some good changes to policy on parental leave for clergy.

We saw a presentation by the anti-racism resource team and then heard the state of the conference address by Rev. Blood. She has been here only 6 weeks and her last church was in Bloomfield, CT. She let us know she's "not from AWAY, she's from CHURCH." She was an INSPIRING speaker, and I for one am ready "to transition to the next way of BEING the church!"

I have a folder full of info from the UCC musicians association from the Halcyon center, BTS center, the Maine school of Ministry, etc.

If you want to take a peek, I will have it with me. Or go on line and check out the Maine UCC conference.
Lots is happening!

THANKS for the opportunity!

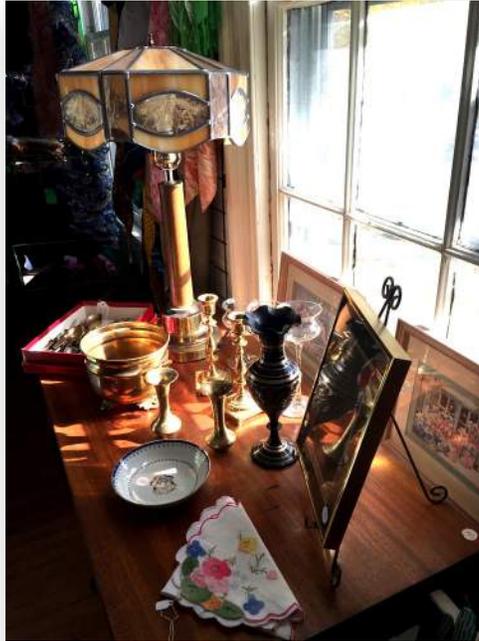
It's Turkey Feather Time!

Once again we will gather items to help make Thanksgiving a feast for needy families in our area. The TURKEY is on the Pilgrim Room Bulletin Board. Pluck a feather from our bird and bring the dinner items that are noted on your feathers to the church by **Sunday, November 15. Put your non-perishable items on the table in the Sanctuary.** Please be sure to mark and put foods that need refrigeration in the refrigerator/freezer in the kitchen. Thanks for making Thanksgiving a day of hearty celebration for some of our neighbors in need. All items will be given to families that come to the Camden Area Christian Food Pantry.



Thanksgiving
Food Drive

From Heavenly Threads



The leaves are falling down, there is frost on the pumpkins and the vegetable and flower gardens are put to bed. Our thoughts now turn to the holidays. November is our thankful month, being thankful for all the veterans who served our country. We are thankful for all those who gave us wonderful donations as the downsized their homes. Their donations were well received and added a great deal to our shop. We have hats, gloves, cozy sweaters, scarves and winter jackets for the whole family. And if you need extra serving platters, wine glasses,

tablecloths or aprons for this month's big dinner. Check here first! Our customers often tell us how thankful they are, that we provide a wonderful friendly shop in the community. They appreciate the quality and the prices of the merchandise. The managers are thankful for all our volunteers who come every week and put in time to help run the shop. We are always looking for more volunteers and right now we are in need of a couple of people to steam the clothing before it is put out. This week, soup lunch starts at the church on Wed. So think about coming over to Heavenly Threads for a visit after lunch. We wish you and yours a happy and safe Thanksgiving. We are open the day after Thanksgiving.

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY
November 22
"Moving Forward . . . The Future Is Now!"

In the midst of a time of transition at First Congregational Church, it is important to remember that the life and ministry of our Church and community will soon be moving on into yet another new year, its 221st since our founding in 1805.

As they do every year at this time, the Church's various boards and committees are now planning for 2016 and determining what their budgets will be. These budgets must then be worked into the Church's overall budget by the Cabinet and Finance Committee. To ensure that this 2016 budget is based on realistic pledge numbers, the Church Cabinet has requested that we try to get our pledges in by November 22. Having our pledges in by that date also allows time for the congregation to participate in after-church discussions of budget issues before the vote at the January Annual Meeting.

Pledge cards and envelopes will soon be mailed out or available at services or in the office. Please return your envelope and filled-in pledge card to the Church office, either by mail, in the plate offering, or by hand delivery to the office.

Many thanks, Stewardship Committee: Allen Fernald, Charlie Graham, Roy Hitchings

NEW WEBSITE LAUNCH!

The website committee is excited to announce the launch of our newly designed and updated website. We will unveil the site following church on November 8th so be sure to stick around for coffee hour to see our marvelous new look!

Partners in Health TAG SALE

Saturday, November 14

8:00 to noon Pilgrim Room

If you have new or almost-new items to donate to the sale, please call Eliza Hazelton, 691-9471





The Dove Tree

We'll soon be counting the days until Christmas. Our congregation will again have the opportunity to help make Christmas brighter for some of our less fortunate neighbors.

**Look for our "Dove Tree" on
Sunday, November 15
in the Mayflower Room.**

Each dove will represent a wish for a child, a family gift or cash towards a Hannaford gift card for a Christmas Dinner. Please note that this year the gifts should be returned **unwrapped. Please place the gift in a plastic bag with the dove attached.** Gifts must be dropped off in the church office by

Sunday, December 13

If you would like to donate wrapping materials such as wrapping paper, ribbon, bows, tags, etc., they would be most welcome.

DON'T FORGET!



Every Wednesday,
Noon, Soup Lunch
1:00pm, Service of
Prayer & Healing

PLEASE NOTE:
we will not have
lunch or the
healing service
on Wednesday, Nov. 25.

Craft Fair

Saturday, December 5, 9-2

We will be hosting crafters from the area to sell their beautiful hand-made items. And just in time for Christmas too! Come and do your Christmas shopping early from local artisans, SERRV, Youth Group, and of course, our holiday Jams and Jellies to benefit the Shield's Mission. Of course we hope you'll hang around or come back for the annual Ringing in the Season, to follow in the Sanctuary at 4 P.M. We have room for 8 artisans. Costs are \$10 person and \$10 per table rental. Please let Jan Kelsey know, 975-7644, or sign up on the Opportunities Table.



Ring in the Season

The annual
Christmas-By-The-Sea
Handbell Concert
will take place in our
Sanctuary
Saturday, December 5,
4:00 p.m.



This Christmas concert here at church features Choral Bells, Joyful Bells, Penobscot Bay Ringers, Pine Tree Academy Bell Ringers, and handbell soloist, Debra Hall, with Steve Weston on piano. A Massed Ring will conclude the program.

Doors open 3:00 p.m. Pre-show music with Midcoast Harps and Friends starts at 3:30.

A free-will offering will benefit the Camden Area Christian Food Pantry.

F.M.I.: call Leigh Smith at 921-6628.

Mark your calendars now and join us for this
wonderful concert of seasonal music!

November BIRTHDAYS

11/1	Gail Vincent	11/23	Ed Wester
11/3	Jean Forest	11/25	Natalie Hamalainen
11/4	Dana Southworth	11/27	Scott Achorn
11/5	Debbi Hitchings	11/28	Mary Wells
11/8	Barbara Davidson	11/29	Ron Smith
11/9	Bob Garcia	11/30	John Claussen
11/13	Don Flock		

David Dodson & Friends Concert
Saturday, November 8, 7:00pm in our Pilgrim Room

Anne Dodson Concert in our Sanctuary
Sunday, Dec. 6, 7:30pm

Red Cross BLOOD DRIVE
Monday, November 16
12:30-5:30pm Pilgrim Room

Sunday, November 22rd @4 pm.
An Interfaith Thanksgiving Service
Second Congregational Church of Warren
252 Main St, Warren, Maine 04864

Bringing together the choirs and leadership of several churches and/or faith groups representing the Midcoast Interfaith Alliance

November Activities

1 SUNDAY, 9:30am, Worship, Communion; All Saints;

2Monday

3Tuesday

4Wednesday: 9:30am, Staff meeting; Noon, Soup's On!; 1:00pm, Prayer Service; 6:00pm, Choral Bells Rehearse; 7:00pm, Sanctuary Choir rehearses

5Thursday, Noon, Prayer Shawl meets

6Friday

7 Saturday, 2:00pm, Ollie Roberts Memorial Service & Reception

8 SUNDAY, 9:30am, Worship, 7:00pm, David Dodson Concert

9Monday, **CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED**

10Tuesday

11Wednesday, 9:30am, Staff meeting; Noon, Soup's On!;
1:00pm, Prayer Service; 6:00pm, Choral Bells Rehearse; 7:00pm,
Sanctuary Choir rehearses

12Thursday, Noon, Prayer Shawl meets

13 Friday

14Saturday, 8-noon, Partners in Health SALE

15SUNDAY, 9:30am, Worship; LAST CALL for Turkey Feather food

in Sanctuary; DOVE TREE up STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

16Monday, Noon-12:30pm, Blood Drive

17 Tuesday, December BEACON COPY DUE

18Wednesday, 9:30am, Staff meeting; Noon, Soup's On!;
1:00pm, Prayer Service; 6:00pm, Choral Bells Rehearse; 7:00pm,
Sanctuary Choir rehearses

19Thursday

20Friday

21 Saturday, 6:00pm, Youth Group Dinner/Auction

22 SUNDAY 9:30am, Worship, Thanksgiving Sunday;

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY; 4:00pm, Interfaith Thanksgiving Service

23Monday

24Tuesday

25Wednesday, 9:15am, Staff meeting; **NO SOUP LUNCH;**
no Prayer Service; 6:00pm, Choral Bells Rehearse;
7:00pm, Sanctuary Choir rehearses

26Thursday, **HAPPY THANKSGIVING, Dinner at 1:00pm**

27Friday, **Church Office Closed**

29 SUNDAY, 9:30am, Worship, 1st Sunday of Advent



First Congregational Church
55 Elm Street
Camden, ME 04843

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF CAMDEN
An Open & Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

Growing in Faith, Centered in Christ, Committed to Community

OUR MISSION & VISION

Our vision is that all people here find a spiritual home, grow in faith, and experience and share God's unconditional love and grace through Christ. As disciples of Christ, our mission is to build a community of faith by learning and living the word of God.

TO CONTACT US:

Call the Church Office at 207.236.4821, Monday through Friday, 8:30-3:30pm

E-mail the Church Office at churchoffice@camdenucc.org

Check out our website: www.camdenucc.org