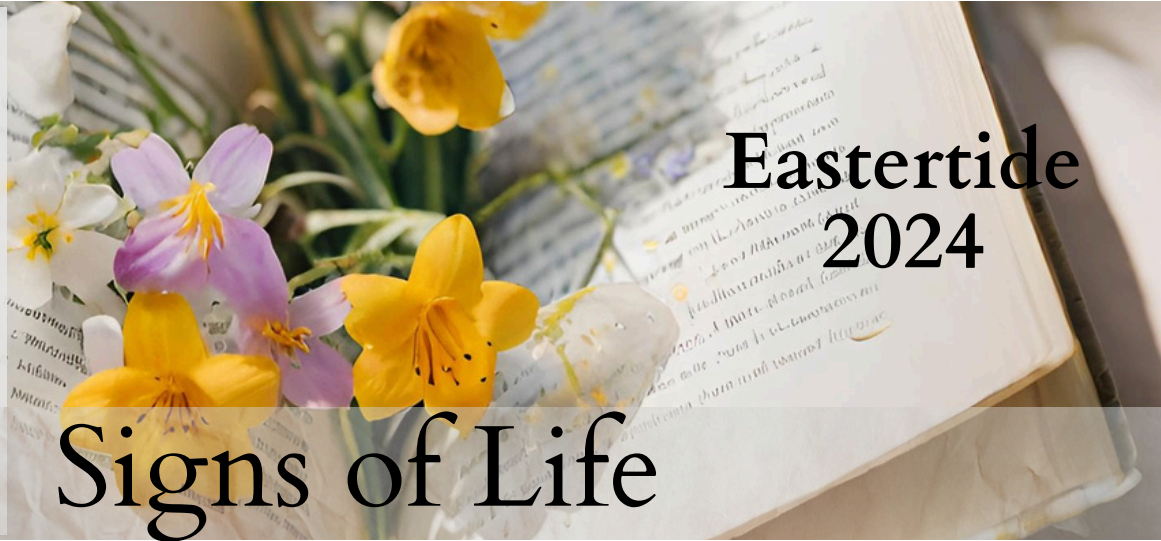




THE CONGREGATOR

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 - Pastor Amelia
- 2 - Council Corner
- 4 - Scholarship
- 5 - Community Life
& Ministry of Worship
- 6 - Ministry of Music
- 7 - Ministry of Missions
- 9- Christian Education
- 10 - Church Family News
- 11 - Calendar



Eastertide 2024

Signs of Life

Dear Falmouth UCC,

In May we will keep immersing ourselves in the miracle of Easter, and Eastertide, the 50 day season of celebration that follows the season of Lent. We will be preaching and teaching through many of the books of the Prophets, people who remind us of God's promises to, and hopes for, God's people. We will celebrate Intergenerational Worship-May 5th, Ascension Day (also Mother's Day)-May 12th, Pentecost-May 19th and Graduation Sunday-May 26th.

Easter, and the Christian story, are a bit of a paradox; the miracle happens without us, even perhaps in spite of us. We are loved and claimed without needing to do anything. And, with the gift there is an appropriate response—we are expected to react with lives that reflect and multiply the love we have received.

The Christian life is a balancing act between these two movements: soaking in God's gifts, and reacting to those gifts by spreading goodness into the world. Soaking up God's love often involves seasons of intentional rest and recovery when we focus on prayer, study, and remembering God's miracles; I will be entering into such a season this summer as I go on sabbatical following worship on June 2nd. I hope that many of you, too, will find ways to rest, restore, and reconnect in the summer months.

The second movement, reacting to the gift, is equally important: we need to experience God's love by spreading it on, even in ways that inconvenience us. This is what I hope we will be doing together the week of May 5th, as we staff the State Street Shelter. We know nothing about the families living there, but we know that they are children of God— and that that is enough. God didn't ask questions about our worthiness, but instead loves us over and above the specifics. We will do likewise as we greet folks and sleep over at the shelter, knowing that by doing so we keep families safe and inside. Please sign up here.

What a wonder to have a God who loves us, no matter what.

What a wonder to pass that on.

Yours in Christ, Pastor Amelia

Eastertide 2024

Signs of life

Small Group: Telling Our Story

Our lives are part of the story of God, and we each have a story to tell about how God has impacted us.

You are invited to a small group to tell, draft, and eventually preach a story about how your life has been impacted by God.

Small group preparation sessions will be held May 15, May 22 (zoom), and May 29 3:00- 4:00 PM.

The first three preaching dates & preachers will be June 30 TBD, July 28 Kristen (Coleman) Tripp, & August 25 Virginia Eddy. Bill Nugent will preach in September.

COUNCIL

Corner

The Miracle on Falmouth Road

Miracle? Does that seem like an exaggeration?

Continue reading and decide for yourself.



The definition of miracle is defined as “a surprising and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is therefore considered to be the work of a divine agency.” The events of this past month provide witness to divine agency through the Holy spirit working in the hearts of the people of our church. Three months ago our lower level renovation project received an estimate of nearly a half million dollars. This far exceeded the generous donations that sparked this project to life. The project was stalled. We prayed for guidance and the building committee met again and Jud Cleveland stepped up and offered to find new subcontractors and GC the project saying “I can do it, this is what I do.” Miraculously, less than a month later, we have a plan forward, subcontractors lined up, a builder found, and a project cost of one half of the original estimate with project start date this May! Smiling over this good news yet?

While the cost estimate is significantly less than the original estimate, it was still substantially more than the initial generous anonymous gift. We needed to raise \$104,000 to engage the builder and lock in our May start date. We prayed about this and wonderfully, within three days, multiple people stepped up and we raised the \$104,000 allowing us to have a unanimous Council vote to proceed. You must be smiling now!

COUNCIL Corner



Yet the power of God's ripple effect was not finished. There are several important items in this renovation that are not included such as new windows and a new rubber roof to protect this investment. We have the funds to proceed with the renovation as planned but we do not have the funds to include these important items. Then two days ago, I received a phone call from a person offering a \$25,000 matching contribution. What this means is that if we can raise an additional \$25,000 we will receive \$50,000! This will go a long way to funding these important items. If you are moved to financially support this renovation endeavor please do so by writing a check with "Building Renovation" on the memo line and mailing it to the church or dropping it in the offering plate.

I know you now have a broad smile on your face thinking how can all these wonderful responses to our prayers be happening? Is it a miracle? After all, people opening their checkbooks and donating funds is certainly scientifically explicable. However, if we look, not at the action of the generous giving but rather, the spirit that motivated these people to give, we become aware of a force that is not as easily explained. A force or spirit that can influence people's hearts turning them toward love, compassion, and in this case generosity. This is not as easily explained through scientific thought. I believe in the power of the Holy Spirit to influence our hearts and minds. And if we choose, we can see the Holy Spirit working everywhere. You choose how you see and evaluate the events and actions around you. Is it a miracle?..your choice. Is it an answered prayer?...your choice. How you choose may affect how you act. After all love begets love. No wonder the Christian story is so compelling and hopeful. Thank you for being you and for all you do. Tom Stegemann, Moderator

At our April Council meeting we discussed these items:

- The Kirk Patrick Pond Scholarship fund was approved. This is an educational scholarship fund given to the church by the Pond family in memory of Joel's father Kirk Pond. See pg. 4
- We have created and approved a formal Falmouth UCC ride share program, which will match up people needing rides to Sunday service with people volunteering to provide rides with their personal vehicle. The church's insurance will protect drivers over and above their personal auto insurance. Marilee Beinema has generously agreed to be the program's point person.
- The lower level building renovation project was unanimously approved after funding was raised to cover the project cost. The contractor has been engaged and the renovation will begin this May with a hopeful completion date in September.

The Kirk Patrick Pond Scholarship

The Kirk P. Pond Scholarship has been established for the benefit of graduating high school seniors or students pursuing a post-secondary degree program. This scholarship is intended to assist members and friends of Falmouth UCC who have demonstrated service to the church and community, good academics, and a strong work ethic. The Scholarship fund may award up to \$5,000 annually. The deadline to submit an application is May 20, the recipient(s) will be honored on Graduate Sunday.

To apply:

- Complete the Kirk P. Pond Scholarship Application: [Click here or visit our website.](#)
- Submit a brief letter of recommendation written by a church member (not including family or the pastor). Letters can be submitted to the church ATTN: Scholarship Committee
- Complete the required essay.
- Applicants need to have been accepted or are currently attending a college, university, or post-secondary program for the funds to be awarded.
- Applicants are allowed to reapply annually.



Scholarship Committee:

Joanna Pond

Karin Kurry

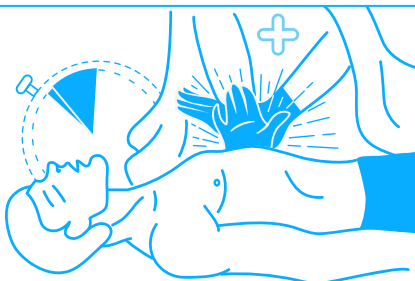
Jim Parr

Kathie Sinnett

MINISTRY OF

Community Life

CPR Class
Wednesday,
May 8 ~
9 AM to 11 AM



A free CPR class will be offered in Fellowship Hall. Nick Pelletier from the Falmouth Fire Department will show us what to do in case of a cardiac emergency.

This hands-on workshop builds on a previous session using the church's AED machine. You do not need to have attended the AED class to participate in this CPR workshop.

Please be aware that this program does not lead to CPR certification.

Sign-up: Email Laurie Davis at davislaurie84@gmail.com.



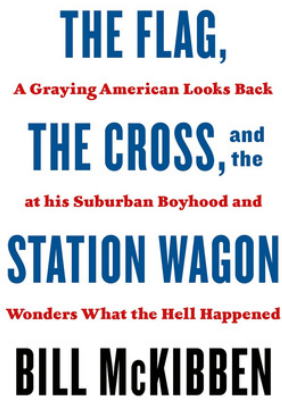
MINISTRY OF

*Community Life***Women's Spiritual Book Group**

The Women's Spiritual Book Group's next meeting is on Wednesday, May 1 at noon. May's discussion will be on "The Flag, the Cross, and the Station Wagon", by Bill McKibben

Participants may meet in the Grant Room or attend by Zoom. Let the office know if you need a zoom link. "The Flag, the Cross, and the Station Wagon", was recommended by Kathie Sinnett and Cathy Bowden knows the author. It is now available through our library, Amazon, and Thriftbooks.

All are welcome to join this lively group. Bring your lunch and get ready for great conversation and a few laughs! Questions? Contact Judy Crosby.


 MINISTRY OF
*Worship &
 Covenant*

The Ministry of Worship and Covenant supports the experience of worship at Falmouth UCC and has recently divided its role into two distinct functions: the Chancel Creative Team and the Tech Team.

The purpose of the Chancel Creative Team is to create visual environments in the chancel and the sanctuary to evoke what is happening during each liturgical season. For example, for Eastertide the chancel was decorated with flowers, vines, ribbons, and candles to reflect the season's theme, "Signs of Life." Now it's planning for Pentecost (May 19-June 2) and Ordinary Time (June 3-November 30). Jump in to add your creative talents to this team. See Karin Kurry or Laurie Davis for more information.



The Tech Team supports Pastor Amelia's multimedia approach to worship. An upgraded video switcher has enabled split screens, improved graphics, and other visual elements for worship. Jan Stover's energetic and expanded vision for Falmouth UCC's music program has attracted more musicians and more vocalists to participate in worship. Our current system does not quite have the capacity or structure to accommodate her vision seamlessly. Generous private donations are allowing the Tech Team to acquire the additional equipment, including microphones and monitors, needed to support these musical contributions. Improvements in the physical layout will also give Jan a greater degree of control over the sound directly from the chancel. Proposals from different contractors were entertained, and an excellent company has been selected and retained. These upgrades will begin in the next few weeks! Anyone interested in AV production is welcome to check out our setup, and if someone has an interest in supporting Falmouth UCC's worship from 15 feet above ground level, please reach out to Virginia Eddy.

MINISTRY OF
Music



Summer is coming!

Bell Choir will say “Good-bye” after May 19 and Chancel Choir will say “Good-bye” after June 2 . . . just for the summer. They will both resume rehearsals in September, hopefully with many interested new people joining each group!

Kids Chorus will prepare music at least twice a year: Christmas and spring.

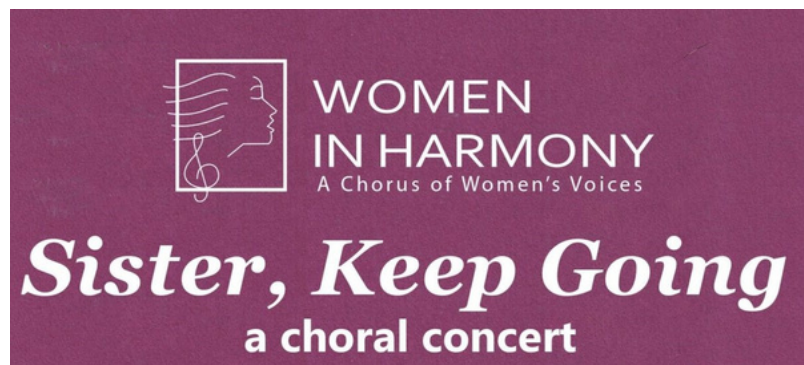
Worship will continue to be prayed over, planned & joyfully experienced all summer long. We will continue to sing and to be blessed by the wonderful youth and adult talent in our church.

If you would like to participate musically in any way, or if you have ideas for songs and hymns that you would like to sing, let our Minister of Music, Jan Stover, know.

She will be so glad to hear from you!

(603) 978-3910 ~ janiceleastover@gmail.com

So . . . “Good-bye” to the Choirs for now, but we will sing & worship all summer long. Come!



Women in Harmony is a vibrant feminist chorus of approximately 60 members working together for unity among women. The group is dedicated both to musical excellence and social justice. They will be performing two concerts in our sanctuary on Friday, May 31 and Saturday, June 1. Tickets are available on their website: wihmaine.org.

MINISTRY OF

*missions***State Street Shelter Now Open! Volunteers Needed!**

Due to the housing emergency in Portland, **State Street Shelter has now opened its doors!** The construction isn't done, but the need was too great to wait. Right now there are two families, one with a five- and a two-year-old and one with a two-year-old who are expecting a new baby any day now! They need our help to keep the shelter open.

Please click here to sign up to welcome families or sleep overnight the week of May 5th: That week our church is responsible for keeping the shelter open.

You may also sign up at <https://tinyurl.com/2brb5a85>

In addition, we are continuing to support Family Promise and its mission of addressing the needs of families facing homelessness in the Greater Portland area. Its biggest needs right now are QUARTERS for laundry as well as Hannaford and Wal-Mart gift cards. If you would rather donate money, please write a check made out to "Falmouth Congregational Church" and put "Family Promise" in the "memo" line.

You may give rolls of quarters, Hannaford/Wal-Mart gift cards, and personal checks to the church office or to any of our Ministry of Mission members. Thank you for your help!

Maine Needs

Spring is here and we are in need of spring clothes and shoes.

All sizes: infant, children, teens, women, men

Special needs:

Sneakers in good condition

Light-weight jackets

Ankle socks

T-shirts

Donations can be left in the bin under the Ministry of Mission's bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

**Strengthen the Church Offering: May 19**

This "5 for 5" mission offering helps develop spiritual life in our youth and young adults, establish new churches, and awaken new ideas in existing churches. Strengthen the Church funds will also be used to award grants to help congregations communicate the "God is still speaking" message.

Your donations will be collected on Pentecost Sunday, May 19, 2024.

Alternatively, please make a contribution to this far-reaching ministry by sending a check to "Falmouth Congregational Church" (267 Falmouth Road, Falmouth, ME 04105) with "Strengthen the Church" mentioned in the memo line.

Through the **Strengthen the Church Offering**, we help support the work of conferences and the national setting as we become a multi-racial/ multi-cultural church.



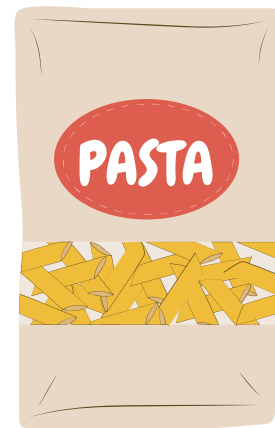
MINISTRY OF *missions*



You PASTA your test! Thank you for your very generous donations of PASTA over the past few months.

It's now time to spice up your daily ROTINI and enjoy spring!

If you would like, please put boxes of pasta into the collection bin in Fellowship Hall, and the pasta will be given to grateful Food Pantry families. You are pasta-tively amazing!



The Falmouth Food Pantry continues to do an entirely doorstep delivery distribution system. Volunteers still deliver boxes of non-perishable food, fresh vegetables, eggs, and meat to families who need food assistance. If you have questions or know someone with an urgent need, please contact Nancy Lightbody. Thank you for your continuing support.

Pastor's Discretionary Fund

The church keeps a confidential community fund for people experiencing financial emergencies. Over the past year we have used it to do things such as:

- Put new tires on the car of a mom escaping domestic violence;
- Pay the cell phone bill for a family that had a medical emergency and was facing shut-off;
- Pay multiple heating and electric bills for families facing shut-off;
- Put up families or singles in a hotel room for a few nights until they could be placed in a shelter;
- Put gas in a family's RV so they could make it out of state to get help; and
- Buy food cards and bus passes for people in acute need.

At this time the Pastor's Discretionary Fund is critically low due to unprecedented need. To donate, please speak with Paul Davis.



Loaves of Love: Baking on Saturday, May 4

Church volunteers continue to bake loaves of bread once a month to serve at Communion and also as a thank-you to everyone who donates to current 5-for-5 UCC missions.

Loaves of Love is a community effort. Even if you have no baking experience, please consider donating four hours of your time baking ANADAMA bread on Saturday, May 4, 2024. Please contact Alyce Graves if you would like to join in the fun!

If you have furniture you would like to donate as you are spring cleaning, please consider calling Furniture Friends.

Furniture Friends is a nonprofit organization that provides donated furniture to people in need throughout Greater Portland. For more information, contact furniturefriends.org or (207) 210-5797.





MINISTRY OF
*Christian
Education*



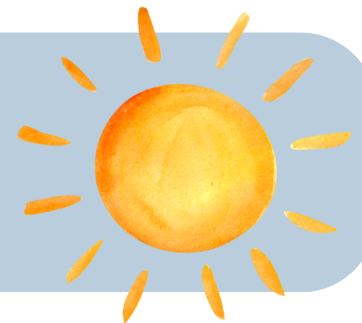
FCC 2024 EGG HUNT RECAP!

What a wonderful community event we had in March! This year's Easter egg hunt was SO MUCH FUN. So many of you came out to join in on all of the goodness, to make friends and gather with our community, and to celebrate the Easter season. A big thank you to all of the volunteers who made this event possible, and to Craig Page who each year pours his heart into the Egg Hunt.

Until next year, here are a few egg-cellent pictures from the event. Thanks to Jim Scherer for taking photos for us!

COMING UP SOON!

Youth Group Summer Send Off: May 19
Kids' Church Summer Send Off: June 2



Lydia Hoffman
Minister of Children and Families
lydia@falmouthcongregationalchurch.org

We Lift in Prayer...



- Bob Stakel who has been diagnosed with dementia and is figuring out next steps. No calls please but cards and prayers are welcome.
- Anne Gribbon's husband who is suffering medical challenges. We also pray for Kevin, Anne's friend, who is battling brain cancer. Cards: 17 Blueberry Cove Rd. Yarmouth, ME 04096
- Marion Olen, Don Jr. and the family and friends of Don Olen who passed away April 12th. Don's Celebration of Life will be a small private service later this month. Cards to Marion: 27 Forest Falls Drive Apt. 207 Yarmouth, ME 04096
- Morgan and Noah Barney who had beautiful twin girls last Friday! And prayers of congratulations to Great Grandmother Jeaneen Coleman and the Coleman/ Barney family.



- Barbara Corey's niece, Ronda Williams, who was diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma and Secondary Plasma Cell Leukemia and is facing a number of related health challenges.

- Junior Bridges who had a stroke on April 22. Cards of encouragement: New England Rehab Hospital, 335 Brighton Ave, Portland Maine 04102
- Virginia Eddy, that her hands would heal and that she might have patience and perseverance with pain.
- Laurie Davis who is recovering from knee surgery.
- Bea O'Brien who needs cards & encouragement.
- Joan Jensen who mourns her son Michael who died after a long hospital stay after a stroke. Cards: Ocean View Falmouth House: 32 Blueberry Lane, Apt. #233 Falmouth, ME
- Sarah Davis' cousin Scott Atkinson, who is in Midcoast Hospital with pneumonia.
- Carol Kauffman who is coping with health challenges and misses being in church. Cards of connection may be sent to: 33 Blueberry Lane C29, Falmouth, ME 04105
- Tom Stegemann as he supports his friend, Tim who has multiple cancers and his friend, Bruce, who is struggling with Parkinson's.
- The Howison family as Mark's father battles Parkinson's disease.
- Joan Russell as she prays for her son, Brian, who is experiencing long COVID.

Ushers

- 5 - Paul Davis
- 12 - Nancy Lightbody & Jim Parr
- 19 - Chan Sinnett
- 26-

Liturgists

- 5 - Jim Parr
- 12 - Nancy Lightbody
- 19 - Marilee Beinema
- 26 - Laurie Davis

- Tomas, Elba Parr's brother in law, who has advanced lung cancer.
- Jane Stegemann's sister, Marcia, for her health and well being.
- Stephen, Andrew and all those serving our country in the Middle East.
- Kathy Whitmore's sister, Corinne, who is in cancer treatment.
- Janie Anderson, who continues to receive love and care from her husband, Larry; Cards: 44714 Audubon Square Apt. 105 Ashburn, VA 20147
- Randy Boardway's father, Paul, who is fighting liver cancer.
- Sally Emery who is joyful about her new rescue dog, Kojo! Prayers and cards of encouragement: P.O. Box 102, Gray, ME 04039.

Falmouth Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
267 Falmouth Road
Falmouth, ME 04105
Phone: 207-781-3413
Email: officemanager@falmouthcongregationalchurch.org
Website: www.falmouthcongregationalchurch.org

Falmouth Congregational Church United Church of Christ

Ministries

Tom Stegemann
Chair, Council of Ministries

Kristen Tripp
Chair, Ministry of Christian
Education

Jane Stegemann &
Kathleen Henderson
Ministry of Community Life

Laurie Davis, Virginia Eddy
& Karin Kurry
Ministry of Worship &
Covenant

Church Staff

Rev. Amelia Edson, Settled Pastor
Jan Stover, Minister of Music
Lydia Hoffman, Minister of Children and Families
Katharina Roderick, Office Manager &
Newsletter Editor
Laurie Logan, Office Assistant
Jane Stegemann, Minister of Visitation
Tonne Writer, Nursery Caregiver
Jack Gervais, Tech Assistant

Officers

Tom Stegemann, Moderator
Steve Hendry, Vice Moderator
TBD, Clerk
Paul Davis, Treasurer
Gini Medford, Financial Secretary