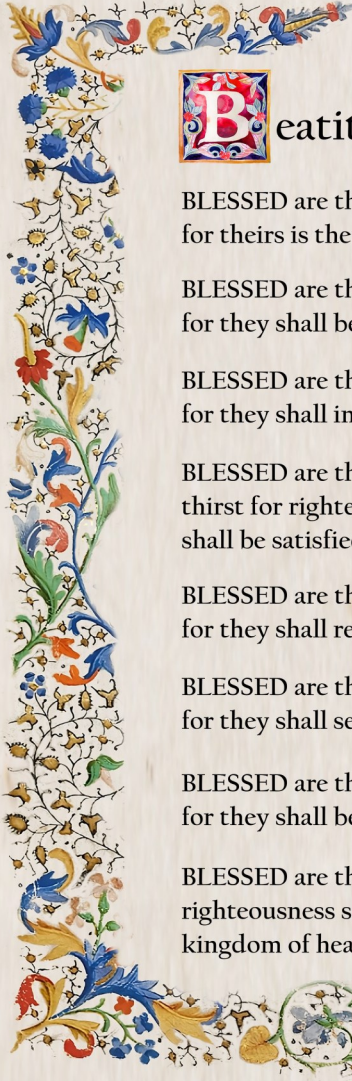




The Beacon

October 2025

Vol. 41, No. 10



eatitudes

BLESSED are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven

BLESSED are those who mourn,
for they shall be comforted

BLESSED are the meek,
for they shall inherit the earth

BLESSED are those who hunger and
thirst for righteousness, for they
shall be satisfied

BLESSED are the merciful,
for they shall receive mercy

BLESSED are the pure in heart,
for they shall see God

BLESSED are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called the children of God

BLESSED are those who are persecuted for
righteousness sake, for theirs is the
kingdom of heaven

men



*From the Interim
Senior Minister's Desk*

Rev. David J. Wood

Dear Friends,

You may have noticed that Christianity is getting a great deal of public display lately...especially in relation to our national politics. I am a strong believer that there should be a robust and lively conversation between our Christian faith and our political life...that Christians should be able to participate as Christians in the political realm. What has been especially troubling of late, however, is not Christian participation in the political realm—but an attempt to promote a Christian domination of the political realm.

To put it another way, what I find so disturbing is the use of Christianity (implicitly and explicitly) as a rationale for the use of force, for the identification of enemies, for the designation of certain groups as outcast, for the elimination of funding for those in need, and for the exercise of retribution. Such use of Christianity is nothing less than a negation of Christianity—a corruption of its character, a degradation of its sacred meaning and message.

Any political participation of Christians should be characterized, at a minimum, by the promotion of politics of care and compassion for the poor, the stranger (which includes the refugee, the immigrant, the non-citizen), the sick, the hungry, and the homeless. Love of God and love of neighbor are intricately bound up with one another. Jesus always defined neighbor in the broadest, most inclusive terms. The lines that others drew—especially those drawn in God's name—Jesus always crossed. Jesus never denied the existence of enemies—he commanded all his followers to love them and pray for them.

I'm all for a Christian influence in our politics. I am thoroughly opposed to and will stand in protest against every attempt to wield Christianity as a weapon to dominate our politics.

In such a time as this, I could not be more honored to be serving in and with a congregation such as FCC...a congregation that is deeply dedicated to following in the way of Christ...to being the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

Peace,

David J. Wood



This past week, long time FCC member GARY SPINNEY was named to UMaine’s Hall of Fame. Gary and his family are seen regularly at our Coffee Hour as “Team D, Delicious Delicacies.”

UMaine Presque Isle names Gary Spinney to 2025 Hall of Fame

Gary Spinney was an outstanding wrestler from 1968 to 1972, compiling a dominant 43–3 individual record for

Aroostook State College and the University of Maine at Presque Isle. The University had a successful program during that era despite only forming the team in 1968, Spinney's freshman season.

In 1971-1972, Spinney was voted captain of his wrestling team and he was voted the 1972 UMPI Most Outstanding Wrestler. It was also what Spinney did after his competition days that he is best known for: Spinney got right to work after graduation and started the Wrestling Team Program at Camden-Rockport High School in 1973. Almost immediately after graduation, Spinney began a long and decorated career in teaching Physical Education in the Rockport Elementary and Camden-Rockport Elementary (SAD 28) schools for 42 years until his retirement in 2014.

Spinney won countless awards, such as the Maine Physical Education Teacher of the Year in 1987, and the 2008 National Jump Rope for Heart Coordinator of the Year award.

Congratulations to Gary!

FCC Potluck and Silent Auction

Silent Auction Clipboards will be in the Mayflower Room

October 4 through October 16

**Potluck Dinner Thursday, October 16, 2025
5:30 to 9pm ~ Auction Winners Announced!**

The Stewardship Committee is again hosting a silent auction and potluck dinner to benefit our church and to kick off the stewardship campaign. We hope that you will join in the fun! There are two ways to participate: donate to the auction, and come to the dinner.

**WE'D LIKE TO HAVE MORE LISTINGS.
STILL TIME TO PUT SOMETHING
IN THE AUCTION!**

**If you have something to offer
please do so immediately!**

Contact John Hufnagel at hufnageljohn@gmail.com

**Bidding sheets will be on the Mayflower Room tables
October 8 through October 16
and at the potluck dinner.**

So far, this year you can bid on several specialty meals, baked goods, a floral arrangement, fishing gear, jewelry, lots of art work.

Please sign up on the clipboard to bring food for the dinner itself. We will be looking for hors d'oeuvres, beverages, entrees, side dishes, salads, and desserts.

Final opportunities to bid on the silent auction items will be take place at the potluck, with winners announced at the dinner.

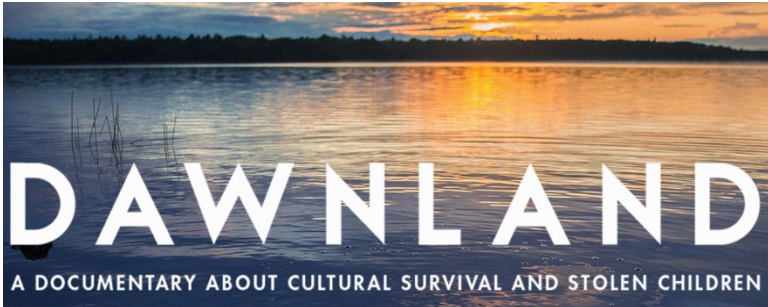
Everyone is invited to bid on the items (church member or not), and you do not need to be present to win. We hope that you will also invite friends and family to join in the fun.

Remember, “you get the church you support”.

JUSTICE & WITNESS

"Dawnland" Film Here in November

The Wabanaki Advocacy and Education Sub-group of the Justice & Witness Committee will host **on Sunday, November 16, at 2:00 pm in the Pilgrim Room**, the showing of the award-winning film "Dawnland," A Documentary About Cultural Survival and Stolen Children - The Story of the Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission(TRC).



"In Maine, a historic investigation—the first government-sanctioned truth and reconciliation commission in the United States—begins a bold journey. For over two years, Native and non-Native commissioners travel across Maine. They gather testimony and bear witness to the devastating impact of the state's child welfare practices on families in Maliseet, Micmac, Passamaquoddy and Penobscot tribal communities. Collectively, these tribes make up the Wabanaki people." - Adam Mazo / Ben Pender-Cudlip, filmmakers

The feature-length documentary *Dawnland* follows the TRC to contemporary Wabanaki communities to witness intimate, sacred moments of truth-telling and healing. With exclusive access to this groundbreaking process and never-before-seen footage, the film reveals the untold narrative of Indigenous child removal in the United States.

A discussion will follow the film and will include Esther Anne, Passamaquoddy and Penthea Burns, non-Native. Both are among the founders of the truth commission and Wabanaki REACH. Carol Wishcamper, who was the co-chair of the truth commission will also join the panel discussion. "If we can work together in that good way [for the truth commission], in a system of mutual respect, to work for our children, then I think we can work together in anything because nothing is more sacred than our children." - Esther Anne, founder, Wabanaki REACH

View the Dawnland Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/227346667>.

Wabanaki REACH is a non-profit organization that works towards a future when Wabanaki and Maine people join together to acknowledge truth and work collectively toward equity, healing, and positive change through our community education programs. Wabanaki REACH promotes Wabanaki wellbeing and deeply believes in the natural strength and beauty of Wabanaki culture, language and ways of being. www.wabanakireach.org

To help with seating setup, Please RSVP to becky@camdenucc.org.

JUSTICE & WITNESS

Wabanaki News



From an email in September:

Dear Wabanaki Alliance Supporters,
We invite you to join us at our annual celebration, “Nihkaniyane: Let’s Go Forward Together,” on **Wednesday, October 8 in Freeport at the Smith Center for Education and Research, Wolfe’s Neck Center, 180 Burnett Rd.** as we celebrate the achievements of three remarkable individuals who embody the spirit of the Wabanaki people:

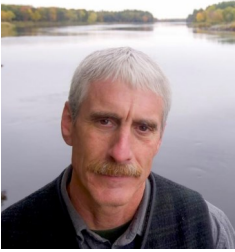
Brianne Lolar, John Banks, and Emma Soctomah. These honorees represent the rich legacy of leadership, the vital work being done today, and the bright future ahead for the Wabanaki Nations.



The Power of Education: Celebrating Brianne Lolar

Brianne Lolar, also of the Penobscot Nation, is a trailblazer in Wabanaki education. She left her classroom to become the first **Wabanaki Studies Specialist for the Maine Department of Education**. Her work is focused on implementing a 2001 law that requires Wabanaki history and culture to be taught in K-12 schools, a law that a 2022 report found had not been meaningfully implemented across the state. Brianne's sense of urgency motivated her "can-do" approach. She has collaborated with educators and Wabanaki knowledge-sharers to create a wealth of resources, including detailed K-12 lesson plans and micro-courses. Her efforts are already bearing fruit: a little girl in her former school district, after participating in a lesson on Wabanaki nations, told Brianne's daughter, "I never told anyone before, but I’m Wabanaki too." Brianne's work is not just about teaching history; it's about helping Wabanaki children feel seen and proud of their heritage.

The work is far from over. A bill to strengthen Wabanaki studies, LD 1474, has been adopted by the House and Senate but lacks funding. Your support can help ensure that Wabanaki studies become a permanent, well-resourced part of the curriculum, fulfilling Brianne's vision of a **Wabanaki Studies Department** in partnership with the Department of Education.



A Legacy of Stewardship: Honoring John Banks

John Banks, of the Penobscot Nation, dedicated his life to environmental stewardship. For 34 years, he served as the Penobscot Nation's representative on the Maine-Indian State Tribal Commission, becoming its longest-serving member. One of John's most impactful achievements was

his pivotal role in the **Penobscot River Restoration Project**. Completed in 2016, this \$63 million project involved removing two dams and creating a bypass around a third, opening nearly 2,000 miles of habitat for 11 species of sea-run fish. The project brought the river back to life, with millions of river herring, Atlantic salmon, and other species returning in numbers not seen for two centuries. In a moment of tension during the project's negotiations, John's wisdom and leadership were crucial. He brought a Wabanaki perspective, reminding everyone at the table of their shared responsibility for "all the creatures of the river."



Promise of the Future: Honoring Emma Soctomah

Emma Soctomah, a citizen of the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Indian Township, represents the bright future of the Wabanaki people. At just 21, she was the 2025 valedictorian at the University of Maine at Machias, where she majored in psychology and community studies.

Emma's achievement is even more significant when viewed in the context of persistent inequities. As she shared in her valedictorian address, in her Passamaquoddy community, only 1 in 7 individuals graduate with a bachelor's degree, compared to a 1 in 3 statistic for the overall population. Emma's success is not just her own; it is for all the next generation of Wabanaki people who need someone to show them what is possible.

In addition to her academic accomplishments, Emma is a dedicated artist, committed to ensuring the long tradition of Passamaquoddy basket-making remains vibrant. She is a recipient of an Abbe Museum Wabanaki Artist Fellowship.



**Cake and Community
is returning
for Season 3!**

What is Cake and Community, you ask?

Cake and Community is a mission of the church that provides a light lunch, dessert, and fellowship to one and all during the dark days of winter. It is a great time to mingle with others and to meet and make new friends!

When: Fridays in the Pilgrim Room from 12-1pm from January 7- March 25.

Run by Volunteers: We would love to add you to our group of volunteers! Each team volunteers one time each month (that's only 3 times!) to provide goodies, coffee, tea and hospitality. Volunteers usually arrive at 11:15 and are finished with clean-up by 1:30.

Look for a sign up sheet in the Mayflower Room. All are welcome!

Any questions, please feel free to ask!
Natalie Ward 703-409-0098
Mary Brett 207-691-4758
Annie Woodruff 616-634-2502

JUSTICE & WITNESS

News from the Anti-Poverty Work Group

LEARN MORE ON THURSDAY, Oct.9 at 5 pm

The Anti-Poverty Work Group is beginning an exciting collaboration with the Landing Place and its parent organization, Homeworthy. Homeworthy is an organization whose mission is to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty. It maintains a residence for families on Old County Road in Rockport and a low-rent cluster of houses on Talbot Avenue in Rockland, and it helps other people find affordable housing. It also runs the Landing Place, in Rockland, a mostly after-school program for adolescents, most of whom are from working-class or poor families, many of whom have tenuous living situations, and many of whom have trouble fitting in at school. At the Landing Place they find companionship, engaging activities, good meals, and many occasions for celebration. They have the opportunity to shower and do laundry, and they can get free food, clothing, and hygiene products to take with them. Youth are welcome to drop in for any of these services from 10 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

Recently, after an hour-long orientation and training session, several members of our group signed up to volunteer in various capacities at Homeworthy and the Landing Place.

The group has other projects and possibilities in mind, too. Given the current state of federal governmental indifference, or even hostility, to the needs of the poor and near-poor, the task for a group such as ours is enormous. Of course we can't take it all on. But please join us in trying to figure out what we *can* do, and in setting about to do it.

The next meeting of our group will be on Thursday, October 9, from 5:00 to 6:30 in the Pilgrim Room. All are invited, come to offer your ideas and time.

Jonathan Frost, Chair
jonathanfroststudio@gmail.com



Shields Fund Administrator *Jeanne Denny*

The Shields Fund Lives!

This summer has proven to be very busy for the Shields Fund Committee. We have had several successful fundraisers as well as some very generous donations. Thank you one and all for your continued support of Shields! These funds, combined with the distribution of some of the Heavenly Threads proceeds and the payment of the administrator's salary, will permit Shields to continue making gifts to residents of Knox County and Lincolnville for some time to come. Shields kicked off successful fundraising, starting with the Penobscot Bell Ringers concert in June, and continued with a generous donation from the estate of Carole Brand, memorial donations to honor Allen Fernald, the film "76 Days Adrift" showing at the Strand, the pizza sale at Flatbread, etc. A full report of all the events this year will be included in the annual report for Shields. These endeavors demonstrate the caring and support of the larger congregation as we move into this beautiful fall weather and closer to winter. Shields will be able to support the needs of community residents more effectively. Thank you all for your donations as well as your caring and support of the fundraising events.

Perhaps a review of some of the gift requests will help you understand the stress facing many families in our local communities. In addition, there has been an increase in the number of requests with increased complexities for paying such gifts.

- An 18 year old is requesting assistance as she attempts to maintain the apt. for her disabled mother and 4 younger siblings; the family resides in subsidized housing which is substandard, but it does provide a roof and heat for the family.
- A disabled single man was in an accident when he tried to avoid a deer, and wrecked his truck in the woods. The truck was towed to a local repair service where it sat for several months in storage. Fortunately, the State of Maine prohibits charging the storage rate beyond 2 weeks, but even with that stipulation, the tow and the storage fees equal \$1000. This man needs his truck to support his small income as an independent handyman.

- A disabled young mother, who has suffered 2 heart attacks at the age of 40, is trying to secure rent to keep her 2 little daughters safe while also repairing her car. Her disability prevents her from seeking employment, and her monthly income is \$950 to support the family of 3.
- A single mom with 2 preschoolers broke the rear window on her vehicle. The glass company scheduled to complete the repairs provided a quote but misquoted the price of the replacement. When the part arrived, the service department realized the mistake, having ordered a front windshield replacement rather than the rear window needed for the hatchback. The correct window cost 3 times the amount quoted to Shields. While Shields did not pay this amount, all the confusion delayed the repair work. Another agency took on the adjusted cost of the window and Shields stepped in to pay the needed car insurance to get the family vehicle back on the road. All these changes caused delays in completing the repairs in an expedient manner, but Shields stays involved until we can determine a satisfactory conclusion for the request.

As you can imagine, all these complexities cause delays in the repair work at a time when our society is very impatient. I could go on with other case scenarios, but I believe you can already appreciate the invaluable work that Shields supports. Families are appreciative of these gifts and the Shields Committee is very appreciative of the support and donations coming from the congregation and the larger community! It is gratifying to see agencies and churches starting to work together to meet the needs of individuals and families in our area.

With warmest regards,
Jeanne

Shields Committee: Deb Endl (Chair), Jean Forest, David Giansiracusa, Rich Stuart, David Jones, Zella Walker, Natalie Ward, Jeanne Denny (Administrator)



*from Heavenly Threads
James Cook, Manager*



Signs are Important

The recently developed core values document of the First Congregational Church asks that when we gather in community, we strive to act in a way that is *inspired* by the wisdom and questions of those before us and *involved* in service to “lift up those who suffer any form of oppression.” The third core value of our church asks us to be *inclusive*, to “celebrate all people, affirming our diverse sexual orientations, gender identities,” and other aspects of identity and experience, in acknowledgement.

As a mission of the church, the Heavenly Threads Thrift Shop is charged with advancing these values with all we do. In that light, we’ve made a change within the last month that may seem small but that we consider important. At the entrance to the shop, we’ve had a sign for a while to let folks know about what we sell upstairs, including listings for “women’s dresses, skirts, and slacks” and “menswear.” We’ve changed the sign, because while it might accurately match the clothing preferences of many people, it doesn’t include all. There are so many women who wear “men’s clothes” these days that the major brands have taken to offering “boyfriend jeans.” Throughout history, there have always been men who wear long, flowing garments. On top of that, our culture has recognized the existence of people who don’t identify or express themselves within the traditional gender binary. Are the items of “women’s dresses” or “menswear” not for them?

Of course not. And so we’ve changed a few words on that sign heading upstairs, in a hope that folks of all sorts feel encouraged and empowered to make their own choices, freely. We hope this makes the Heavenly Threads shop a bit more inclusive. If you have ideas about how to make the shop more inclusive, please drop by and let us know; we’d always be glad to listen.

James Cook, Manager, Heavenly Threads



Previous sign



Current sign

We have new Fall Hours.

Tues. 1-6 pm (to accommodate those who work until 5)

Wed. & Thurs. 10 am-4 pm

New things every week!

Donation days: Tues, Wed., Thurs. when shop is open.

Stuffing Mix, Cranberry Sauce, Gravy

Please leave in the box across from the office, and
thank you for helping.

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- 10/2 Marge Wester Brown
- 10/3 Vicki Fletcher
- 10/6 Donna Crane
Carole Brand
- 10/8 Sally Cowan
- 10/9 Lisanne Finston
- 10/11 David VanRyn
- 10/13 Paul Monska
Chris Mills
- 10/14 Jinx Hufnagel
- 10/15 Laura Rothermel
- 10/16 Lexi Doudera
- 10/17 Marion Brown
- 10/19 Ann Harmon Fear
Lila Vultee
- 10/20 Leigh Smith
- 10/27 Kathy Pease
- 10/28 Jan Kelsey
- 10/29 Xander Rothermel
- 10/31 John Longmaid



If your birthday isn't listed please
call the office and we'll add it!

GAMES & WORTHY PASTIMES

Fall and Winter weather sends us indoors more. Come join us for fellowship and fun!

Knitting & Crochet: join us on Thursdays at noon for 1 hour, here in Mayflower Room or by Zoom, to make prayer shawls.

All yarn is supplied. We have patterns, needles & hooks also. More than 800 prayer shawls have been knitted and given away to those who are ill or suffering.

Jigsaw Puzzles: we have a Lending Library for puzzles here in the Mayflower Room. Come and select one, enjoy putting it together at home, and return it for another.

Mahjong: want to come for a weekly game here in the Pilgrim Room?

Please indicate interest in playing mahjong at First Congregational Church, Camden. Whether experienced or a beginning player, you will be welcome.

If interested, reply to Sally Cowan at scowan15179@earthlink.net or Becky Brace at becky@camdenucc.org.

Depending on responses, the weekly games will be either Tues., Wed., or Thurs. at 2 pm in the Pilgrim Room

FIRST
CONGREGATIONAL
CHURCH
CAMDEN, MAINE
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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

Inclusive. Inspired. Involved.

**We are an Open and Affirming Congregation embracing diversity
and affirming the worth and dignity of every person.**

We welcome everyone to share in all aspects of our church life.

To CONTACT US:

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

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

Check out our website: www.camdenucc.org