

# 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent

February 22, 2026



*Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness  
to be tested by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights...*



***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.*

**First Congregational Church of Camden,  
United Church of Christ**

# 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent

(\* indicates congregation stands, if comfortable doing so)

## Prelude

“*Into the Desert*” — Curtis Stephan and Sarah Hart  
\*Laura Woodworth-Gibson, soprano; Jim Gibson, guitar;  
Holly Patterson, oboe

## Welcome and Announcements

Rev. David J. Wood

## Song after Announcements

*Take, O take me as I am;  
Summon out what I shall be;  
Set your seal upon my heart  
And live in me.*

## Call to Worship (congregation reads the **bold** print)

Judy Cucinotta

I will bless the Lord at all times;  
God's praise shall continually be in my mouth.

**My soul makes its boast in the Lord;  
let the humble hear and be glad.**

O magnify the Lord with me,  
and let us exalt God's name together. [from Psalm 34]

## \* Hymn #16 *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*

## \* Prayer of Invocation

Judy Cucinotta

Gracious God, out of your love and mercy  
you breathed into dust the earth the breath of life.  
As we enter this Lenten Season,  
we pray that we might come to see you more clearly  
and follow you more nearly in the course of our daily lives.

**Amidst all the voices that clamor for our attention,  
we seek to listen for your call;  
amidst all the images that overload our vision,  
we seek to be captivated by your light  
that shines in the faces of our neighbors  
and in the beauty of your creation,  
amidst all the motion and commotion of our days,  
we seek the stillness and the solace of your Presence.**

Keep company with us as we keep company  
with one another on this Lenten journey.  
All of this we pray in the name of Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God forever and ever. Amen.

\* **Gloria**

*Glory to our Creator and to the Christ  
and to their gift of love,  
who is Spirit now among us,  
and throughout all creation:  
world without end, Amen, Amen.*

\* **The Passing of Christ's Peace**

David Wood

The Peace of Christ be always with you.  
**And also with you.**

**THE SERVICE OF THE WORD**

**Matthew 4:1-11**

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." But he answered, "It is written,

*'One does not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'* "

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

*'He will command his angels concerning you,  
and 'On their hands they will bear you up,  
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'* "

Jesus said to him, "Again it is written,

*'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'* "

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him,

"Away with you, Satan! for it is written,  
*'Worship the Lord your God,  
and serve only him.'* "

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

The Word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon**

"Temptation Reflections"

Rev. David J. Wood

**Hymn #77**

*On Eagle's Wings*

(please remain seated for the hymn)

## THE SERVICE OF GRATITUDE

### Joys & Concerns ~ Pastoral Prayer & The Lord's Prayer

(we use "...forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors...")

### Offertory Invitation

We continue our worship in the giving of our offering.

### Offertory Anthem

*"In these Days of Lenten Journey"* — Ricky Manalo

\*Laura Woodworth-Gibson, soprano; Jim Gibson, guitar;  
Holly Patterson, oboe

### \* Doxology

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;*

*Praise God, all creatures high and low.*

*Praise God in Jesus fully known.*

*Creator, Christ and Spirit one. Amen.*

### \* Prayer of Dedication

Judy Cucinotta

Gracious God, we give you thanks and praise for the free and abundant gift of grace you have given us in Jesus Christ.

**We offer these gifts and our lives in thanksgiving**

**for your undying love; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

## THE SERVICE OF BLESSING & SENDING

\* **Hymn #619** *My Life Flows On* (Verses 1-3).

### \* Benediction

### \* Sending Song

*Go my children, with my blessing, never alone;  
Waking, sleeping, I am with you, you are my own;  
In my love's baptismal river I have made you mine forever,  
Go my children, with my blessing, you are my own.*

**Postlude** (Everyone is invited to be seated for the postlude.)

*Thy Holy Wings* — John Ferguson

\*Matt Mainster, organ

## GRATITUDE FOR TODAY'S VOLUNTEER PARTICIPANTS

Flowers: Elaine Davis

Liturgist: Judy Cucinotta

Greeters: Debbi Hitchings, Jean & Tim Sheehy, Rich Stuart

Ushers: Melvin Achorn, Scott Achorn

Coffee Team A: "Awesome Angels"

Bette McFarland, Amy Rollins, Elaine Davis, Cathy Eagleson, Sarah Shepherd

## OUR CHURCH OFFICERS

Sarah Reynolds & Natalie Ward, Co-Moderators  
Jane Babbitt, Clerk  
Owen Thomas, Treasurer

## OUR CHURCH MINISTERS & STAFF

Rev. David J. Wood, Interim Senior Minister

[david@camdenucc.org](mailto:david@camdenucc.org)

Matthew Mainster, Minister of Music

Becky Brace, Office Administrator

**First Congregational Church of Camden, United Church of Christ**

**55 Elm Street, Camden, Maine 04843**

**207.236.4821 phone 207.236.4822 fax**

**[www.camdenucc](http://www.camdenucc.org)**

**Email: [churchoffice@camdenucc.org](mailto:churchoffice@camdenucc.org)**



**'After Gaza':**

**What Role for the Churches  
in Pursuit of Peace?**

**A Public Presentation**

**by the Rev. Dr. Wesley D.  
Avram**

from Churches for Middle East Peace

**Sunday, March 1 @ 3:00 p.m.  
First Congregational Church  
of Camden**

Following up on this year's Camden Conference, FCC will host a talk and conversation with the Rev. Dr. Wesley Avram, Academic Engagement Director for Churches for Middle East Peace (cmep.org). Through providing educational programs, elevating voices in both the U.S. and the Middle East, and promoting positive advocacy, CMEP works toward justice and peace for all peoples in the Middle East with special focus on Israel/Palestine. CMEP is guided by the thirty-six Christian denominations, communions, and organizations it represents. The United Church of Christ, of which First Congregational Church is a part, is among sponsoring denominations.

## Lent 2026 at FCC:

### Daily Lenten Meditations by David J. Wood

Each morning during the 40 days of Lent,  
a brief meditation will be delivered to your email inbox.  
(contact the church office if you are not already on the FCC email list)  
[churchoffice@camdenucc.org](mailto:churchoffice@camdenucc.org)

### Beginning THIS Tuesday: A Bible Study on the Gospel of Mark

Tuesdays (February 24 – April 7)

4:00 – 5:15 p.m.

**In the Pilgrim Room Facilitator: David J. Wood**

Each week we will take a section of Mark (usually two chapters)  
and discuss its message and meaning for our lives.

All are invited to participate in this study...  
even if you cannot be present for every session.

For this Tuesday: Mark 1:1 – 3:6

**A companion book, Mark for Everyone by Tom Wright  
is available to purchase (for \$10) during Coffee Hour**

### A Conversation on Faith and Rupture in Gaza

Thursday, February 26

6:00 - 7:30 p.m. The Pilgrim Room

**Facilitators: Wesley D. Avram & David J. Wood**

Having lived and studied in Israel, Wes has been engaged for many years  
with the Israeli Palestinian conflict. Our conversation will be informed by  
Peter Beinart's book, *Being Jewish After the Destruction of Gaza: A Reckoning*,  
and by a couple of additional essays.

**Books are available during Coffee Hour for purchase today  
for reduced price of \$15. Essays will be available also.**

### A Lenten Reading/Discussion Book Group:

*Life After Doom: Wisdom and Courage for a World Falling Apart*

by Brian McLaren, facilitated by David J. Wood

Wednesdays: March 4, 11, 18, & 25 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

In the Pilgrim Room

Here's the Schedule:

March 4: Letting Go—A Path of Descent (pp. 1-86)

March 11: Letting Be—A Place of Insight (pp. 89-162)

March 18: Letting Come—A Path of Resilience (pp. 165-207)

March 25: Setting Free—A Path of Agile Engagement (211-265)

**Books will be available for purchase beginning today  
at a special price of \$10**

## CHURCH CALENDAR

Tuesdays	8:30-9:30am	Lectio Divina Meditation~call office for Zoom link	
Tuesdays	5am-noon	<b>VOLUNTEER at SOS</b>	
Tue-Wed-Thurs	3 days	<b>VOLUNTEER at Heavenly Threads</b>	
Wednesdays	9:30 am	Staff Meeting	
Thursdays	Noon-1 pm	Prayer Shawls, Knit & Crochet ~ in person and Zoom All yarn supplied.	Call for link
<b>Sun. Feb. 22</b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Sunday Worship</b>	<b>Sanctuary</b>
Mon. Feb. 23	6-7:30 pm	#4 Exploring Grief Series	Downstairs
Tues. Feb. 24	4 pm	Bible Study, Gospel of Mark ~ weekly	Pilgrim Rm
Thurs. Feb. 26	6-7:30 pm	Grappling with Gaza: Wes Avram	
Fri. Feb. 27	12-1 pm	<b>CAKE &amp; COMMUNITY open to all (n</b>	<b>Pilgrim Rm</b>
		<b>Reiki today)</b>	
Fri. Feb. 27	7-10 pm	OUTMaine Rainbow Gala & Dance Party	Rockland
<b>Sun. March 1</b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Sunday Worship &amp; Communion</b>	<b>Sanctuary</b>
Sun. March 1	3 pm	AFTER GAZA, Rev. Wes Avram-Public	Sanctuary
Tues. March 3	3-5 pm	Energy Coaching – John Brock	Pilgrim Rm
Tues. March 3	4 pm	Bible Study, Gospel of Mark ~ weekly	TBD
Thu. Mar. 4	All day	Deadline to donate~Art Show or Auction	
Wed. March 4	6-7:30 pm	“Life After Doom” Book Discussion	Pilgrim Rm
Thurs. Mar. 5	8:30 am	Stewardship	
Fri. March 6	12-1 pm	<b>CAKE &amp; COMMUNITY open to all</b>	<b>Pilgrim Rm</b>
Mar. 7-12	All day	<b>Art Show and Silent Auction Art is on display~COME &amp; BID!</b>	<b>Mayflower</b>
<b>Sun. March 8</b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Sunday Worship &amp; Communion</b>	<b>Sanctuary</b>
Sun. March 8	4 pm	Friends of Music~Gail Archer, organ	Sanctuary
Tues. Mar. 10	4 pm	Bible Study, Gospel of Mark ~ weekly	Pilgrim Rm
Wed. Mar. 11	6-7:30 pm	“Life After Doom” Book Discussion	Pilgrim Rm
Thu. Mar. 12	5:30-9 pm	<b>IRISH SUPPER &amp; ART AUCTION</b>	<b>Pilgrim Rm</b>
Fri. March 13	12-1 pm	<b>CAKE &amp; COMMUNITY open to all</b>	<b>Pilgrim Rm</b>
Sat. March 14	9-11 am	Men’s Breakfast	Pilgrim Rm
<b>Sun. March 15</b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Sunday Worship ~ offering for One Great Hour of Sharing this month</b>	<b>Sanctuary</b>
Tues. Mar. 17	4 pm	Bible Study, Gospel of Mark ~ weekly	Pilgrim Rm
Wed. Mar. 18	6-7:30 pm	“Life After Doom” Book Discussion	Pilgrim Rm
Fri. March 20	12-1 pm	<b>CAKE &amp; COMMUNITY open to all</b>	<b>Pilgrim Rm</b>
<b>Sun. March 22</b>	<b>9:30 am</b>	<b>Sunday Worship</b>	<b>Sanctuary</b>
Tues. Mar. 24	4 pm	Bible Study, Gospel of Mark ~ weekly	Pilgrim Rm
Tues. Mar. 24	5 pm*	Cabinet – note different time	
Wed. Mar. 25	6-7:30 pm	“Life After Doom” Book Discussion	Pilgrim Rm
Fri. March 27	12-1 pm	<b>CAKE &amp; COMMUNITY open to all LAST ONE! (Reiki offered)</b>	<b>Pilgrim Rm</b>

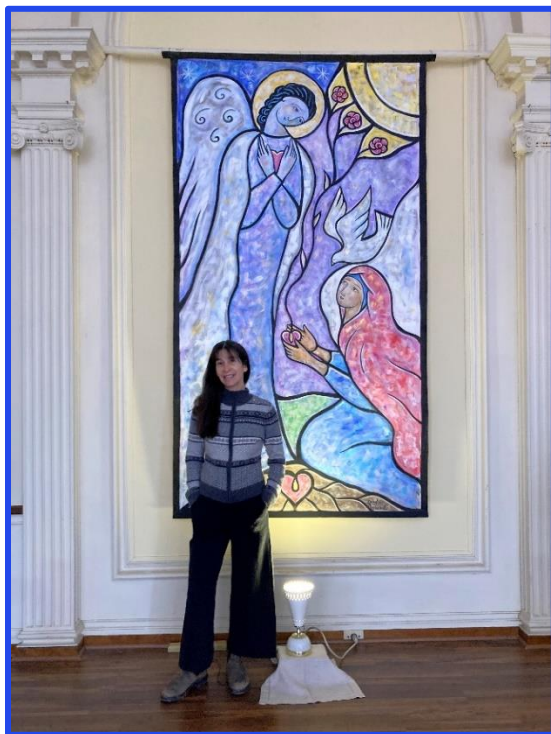
Bring your items here **by Wed. Mar. 4** for the  
**ART SHOW & SILENT AUCTION**

**WELCOMING ART OF ALL KINDS: Painting, sculpture, fiber arts,  
pottery, drawing, photography, printmaking**

**ART SHOW EXHIBIT Mar. 7-12:** artists show their work here,  
then take it home.

**SILENT AUCTION OF DONATED ART:** Bid sheets for all donated art  
will be out **Mar. 7-12** until the silent auction ends at the Irish  
Dinner March 12.

Today we welcome the newest banner from Kathryn Oliver.  
Here is a note from Kathryn about the banner.



“And the angel said unto her, ‘Fear not.’”  
Mary says yes, even knowing, through the promise of God, that her heart would one day be pierced by sorrow.

The Annunciation Icon is the image that first captured my heart. I have pondered it often, and it continues to inspire the paintings I create.

This Lent banner echoes that same gesture, inviting us to say yes and participate in a reality that is intangible and invisible to us. As Scripture reminds us, “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

— Kathryn Oliver, artist