



# The Beacon

March 2026

Vol. 42, No. 3

## For Lent, the banner from Kathryn Oliver



“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



*From the Interim  
Senior Minister's Desk  
Rev. David J. Wood*

*"The tsunami of information fragments our attention. It prevents the contemplative lingering that is essential to narrating and careful listening... Bits of information are like seeds of dust, not seeds of grain. They lack germinal force. Once they are registered, they immediately sink into oblivion, like answerphone messages once they have been listened to."*

*— From Byung-Chul Han, The Crisis of Narratio*

There used to be a lot of time between news flashes...between the editions of newspapers, or news programs or radio reports. The cadence of “news” was much slower. The flow of information we call “news” was not constant. There was more room in the present for other things to orient us and occupy our attention. These days, it feels like we are in a state of constant alarm... lurching from one crisis to the next, a kind of emotional whiplash.

No wonder it feels like we’re losing track of time...or that time is running out...or that we are running against time.

When the present feels unprecedented, the past fades away as a reliable guide for our lives and the future begins to feel more unpredictable and precarious than ever. That being said, the present itself begins to feel unsettled and fleeting because we cannot help but feel it will soon be overtaken by yet one more unprecedented, ominous turn of events.

In such a time, the world of the church can feel like a different time. To step in into church is to step into a present where the past and the future loom large with possibility and promise. Whenever we gather for worship, we find ourselves in a time and place that situates our lives, our existence, into a larger frame of reference. A frame of reference that harkens back to the beginning of all things

and we are called to know ourselves as bearers of the image of God who is the Creator and sustainer of all that is, who abides with us in every present, and who beckons us onward towards the Kingdom which is a final and abiding home. Church is where the past, the present, and the future of our lives are woven together by a larger story of redemption...of faith, hope, and love.

It is not accidental that the church has its own calendar that paces our remembrance of a story that is worthy of orienting our lives—our past, our present, and our future. It begins with Advent—when we prepare the unprecedented news of God’s coming to us in Christ which we celebrate at Christmas and in Epiphany. In the season of Lent, we trace the footsteps of Jesus and what it means to follow...even as it leads us to remember his love-bound suffering and death. We gather on Easter Day to celebrate the unprecedented news of Resurrection and over the following fifty days of Eastertide we reflect on what it means to live in the light of Resurrection—culminating in the Day of Pentecost when the Spirit is sent to abide with us through all the days of our lives. In the weeks that follow, we recount stories from Scripture that orient us to the presence and purposes of God and what it means for us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. And, after thirty some weeks, we arrive once again at Advent, when we begin again.

In our Sanctuary here at FCC, to aid in our remembrance of this unfolding, unprecedented story, we are encountering a series of liturgical panels from our resident artist, Kathryn Oliver, that help to awaken our imagination and invite us into a deeper awareness. With each turn of the season—from Advent to Christmas and Epiphany, to Lent, to Easter, and to Pentecost—new panels will be unveiled.

In a world that works hard to captivate our attention and degrade our sense of time and purpose, our practice of gathering for worship and remembrance could not be more essential to the our recovery of the fullness of time...and of our lives...for the sake of the world.

Grace and Peace,

David J. Wood

## Continuing in Lent @ FCC:

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**Daily Lenten Meditations by David J. Wood**

Beginning on Ash Wednesday, each morning during the 40 days of Lent, a meditation will be delivered to your email inbox.

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**A Bible Study on the Gospel of Mark**

**Tuesdays: 4:00 – 5:15 p.m. February 24 – April 7**

**The Pilgrim Room Facilitator: David J. Wood**

Each week we will take a section of Mark 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.

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**A Reading/Discussion Group facilitated by David J. Wood:**

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

**by Brian McLaren**

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

Brian McLaren is well known for his books that address the intersection of religious faith and contemporary culture.

*Books will be available for purchase at a special price  
beginning Sun. Feb. 15*

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MID COAST INTERFAITH ALLIANCE · MCIA

**In a time tormented by rancor and enmity,  
we call out for empathy, kindness and understanding.**

Please join us in an

## **Interfaith Service**

*Prayers for peace and justice*

**FRIDAY, MARCH 6 · 7:00 PM**

**Aldersgate United Methodist Church**

*15 Wesley Lane · Rockland ME*



**Irish Potluck Dinner**

**Thurs. March 12**

**5:30—9pm**

**PLUS**

**Silent Art Auction & Art Exhibit**

**in the Mayflower Room**

**Sun. March 8-Thurs. March 12**

**DONATE ART OF ANY KIND TO BE  
SOLD AT OUR SILENT AUCTION**

**SILENT AUCTION OF DONATED ART Mar. 8-12:** Bid sheets for all donated art will be in the Mayflower Room until the silent auction ends at the Irish Dinner March 12. Come during the day, bid often! Then join us for the Potluck Dinner—signup sheet on hall table.

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

**ART SHOW EXHIBIT Mar. 8-12:** artists can show their own work here (not to be sold at auction) then take it home after the 12th.

We invite artists among our congregation to exhibit their own works and/or to donate their own works to our auction. We are open to the wide range of art—paintings, drawings, photographs, fiber arts, pottery, models, stained glass, etc.



*From Matt Mainster*  
*Minister of Music*  
[matt@camdenucc.org](mailto:matt@camdenucc.org)

**Music for 2026!**

**~ Again, an invitation to be part of our choir ~**

For *anyone* who's enjoyed what they've heard from the bells or Sanctuary choir, please know that everything was accomplished in **just one rehearsal!** That means if you were sitting out in the congregation feeling wistful, wishing you could be a part of something like that, you CAN! Anyone can easily participate with zero-pressure and very low-commitment.

Please reach out to me at [matt@camdenucc.org](mailto:matt@camdenucc.org) with any interest in ringing or singing. Our choir rehearsal/service dates this semester are as follows:

**March 23/29:** What Wondrous Love is This — Jason Krug  
(Choral Bells)

**March 30/April 5:** Alleluia from “The King Shall Rejoice”  
(*Coronation Anthems*) — Handel (Sanctuary Choir)

**April 13/19:** He is Risen! He is Risen! — Cathy Moglebust  
(Choral Bells)

**May 11/17:** My Hope is Built on Nothing Less — John Carter  
(Sanctuary Choir)

**May 26/31:** Glorious Praise — Behnke (Choral Bells)

**Our first Friends of Music concert is on Sun. March 8 at 4 pm — coming right up!** Reviewers often use the words “vivid” “arresting” and “mesmerizing” to describe the performances of our first artist, the renowned concert organist, **Gail Archer.**

Happy 2026!

Matt

## News from the Anti-Poverty Work Group

By Jonathan Frost

On Thursday, January 29, the Anti-Poverty Work Group and CamdenCAN, an environmental group, co-hosted a Winter Warmth Potluck at the church. There was a large turnout. The food was varied and bountiful. The incentive for the joint potluck was a conviction that our two groups needed to get to know each other and, at times, to work together.

After the feasting, Molly Mulhern, founder of CamdenCAN, invited everyone in the room to tell about her or his pursuits. As Molly wrote in a recap of the occasion, “The evening’s real treasure was hearing from all gathered about their interests and passions. We live in truly amazing community, as evidenced by the breadth of activities, cares, and concerns raised by those gathered.”

I proposed a regional Alliance for Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice, in which each of the participating organizations (like CamdenCAN and the Anti-Poverty Work Group) would maintain its own identity and its own focus, while contributing to the interrelated efforts of the other groups. Current social, economic, and environmental problems are so massive and numerous, so potentially overwhelming, that we need coordination and mutual support and fellowship among those working mainly on social issues and those working mainly on environmental issues. There's plenty of overlap and interplay between the two areas of concern, as exemplified in an Energy Coaching project getting started in Rockport and Camden and designed especially to serve low-income households.

Some members of our group are working closely with The Landing Place, bringing food and art supplies or spending time with the kids. Some are awaiting mentorship training at Homeworthy, the Landing Place’s parent organization. One is building electric bikes, both for youth and for others who can’t afford to own and run a car. Some are pursuing the possibility of our members’ serving as tutors and mentors for public school students who need support.

**The next meeting of the Anti-Poverty Work Group will be Thursday, March 5, from 5-6:30 p.m. in the Pilgrim Room.**

Please join us. At this meeting, we’ll hear from Marina Schaufler, who is heading up an Energy Coaching project aimed to serve mostly low-income households in Camden and Rockland, an effort in which our members might be able to help. We’ll also be discussing a chapter in *See Poverty... Be the Difference*, by Donna M. Beegle. If you’d like a copy of this book, please contact me at (207)296-0800. or [jonathanfroststudio@gmail.com](mailto:jonathanfroststudio@gmail.com)



## **Shields Fund Administrator** *Jeanne Denny*

### **Shields Update**

Some time ago I wrote an article entitled “More than just a check.” It was my effort to share with all of you that Shields is more than just a check. There is a lot that goes on behind the scenes to keep Shields viable. With the coffers again filled with donations to ease the burden of financial challenges, the Shields Committee has once again stepped up to the plate to redistribute the workload. The committee members have taken on specific responsibilities to keep Shields running smoothly. They are as follows:

- Natalie Ward – Chair of the Shields Committee
- Jean Forest – coordinator of Public Relations
- David Giansiracusa – coordinator of fundraising, joined by David Jones and Rich Stewart
- Zella Walker – coordinator of Thank you notes and letters
- Rich Stewart - coordinator of publicity
- Jeanne Denny – administrator

The committee members will continue to work together to provide access to resources, participate in fundraisers, and serve as ambassadors for Shields as well as the First Congregational Church of Camden.

January and February have proven to be true to form. While we typically think of these months as demanding for fuel requests, it has not increased as much as we anticipated; we’re learning that these requests now come in March and April when traditional funding evaporates for the season and CMP bills come due! A sample of requests that Shields assisted in January include families facing the following challenges:

- Single older woman needing home repairs for her camper to make it leak proof,
- repairing the leaking skylight.
- Single father who cares for his young daughter and his elderly mother required
- fuel assistance.
- Elderly veteran assisted with mortgage payment to prevent foreclosure.
- Single male receiving health care assistance at PBMC needed assistance with shelter upon discharge.
- Single mom requesting shelter rather than continue to live in her car.

In addition to actual financial gifts, sometimes providing active listening helps to restore hope as many of these requests come from those who feel disenfranchised and unvalidated. Some of the case managers also call to discuss resources to assist them with their client's needs, especially when they are new to the area.

Important facts that may be of interest to you:

- January 2026, we reviewed 22 requests and gifted 18 for a total of \$10,915.
- Received \$636 from the HT proceeds with \$948 received through traditional donations.

So even though we do have incoming streams of income under the new configuration with HT, it is important that you consider Shields when you are giving to the church, especially during these winter months when HT profits are down. As you can readily see, we spend it faster than we receive it in the winter. Be sure to mark SHIELDS FUND on your check so it gets deposited in the correct checking account! Thank you for all your support!

Stay warm and try to enjoy the beauty of the snow!  
With warm regards,

*Jeanne*

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



*News  
from Heavenly Threads  
James Cook, Manager*



**Heavenly Threads in Winter**

March has a reputation for being a trickster month: if it comes in like a lamb, it will go out like a lion. Here in Maine, there's an added sense of betrayal in our conversations about March: the calendar tells us it's spring, but a quick look out the window or at the bottom of our boots tells us something else. It's hard to wait. Still, to have felt tricked and betrayed by this time of year, there must have been some glowing nugget of hope we've held tightly in the cold. We know, after a long season of withering deprivation, that green growth isn't that far away. We look for it in the bulbs pushing out of hard soil, in the lengthening light, and in our rousing hearts. Not long now, we tell ourselves. Not long. Hold on.

It's not just the weather that changes when Spring finally comes. It's the time for new relationships, new activity, and new projects. In this slowly warming season we get ready for the busyness of summer. What might we do come the hot, people-filled months? To make our dreams real, now's the time to get ready.

Here at the Heavenly Threads charitable thrift shop, we have growth on our minds. Last year, we successfully expanded from just two open shop days to three. In 2026, could we grow once again to four? That growth wouldn't just be reflected in some annual report ledger; it's about opening the doors of our church mission more widely, too. Welcoming more people. Building more ties in our community. Sustaining members of our community with more affordable goods in less affordable times. Raising more funds for Shields. Enabling more contributions to important non-profit organizations.

At the end of winter, we can feel the possibility of this growth – but it takes work. To open on another day of the week, we need

the sustaining effort of just a few more volunteers. Could you and a church friend be the ones who make that happen? Come by the shop during our open hours (Tuesday 1-6, Wednesday 10-4, Thursday 10-4) and say the magic words that make all that growth possible: “I’d like to volunteer.”

James Cook  
Manager, Heavenly Threads



*Heavenly Threads in Winter*



**Cake & Community is going well this year!**

**Tables are filling up on Fridays; come and bring a friend or two.**

**The food is delicious—and different every week due to our volunteer sandwich and dessert makers.**

**When: Fridays in the Pilgrim Room  
from 12-1pm  
January 9- March 27.**

**JOIN US! We're offering small sandwiches and fruit in addition to desserts!**

You're invited for conversation, companionship, and help in chasing away the winter blues. Teams of volunteers will provide sweet and savory treats and hot beverages. You are welcome to bring a brown bag lunch if desired. Spread the word to friends and neighbors, as all are welcome!

**Reiki will be offered on March 27<sup>th</sup>.  
Special thanks to Lisa Allen for coordinating these sessions.**

For questions: contact Cake and Community coordinator  
Natalie Ward at [wards05@verizon.net](mailto:wards05@verizon.net).



## A blast from the past!

If you were here during Covid you'll most likely remember that we often included some of Nathan Scott's recipes in our weekly email newsletter.

Yes, OUR Nathan Scott, who teaches Culinary Arts at Eastern Maine Community College in Bangor. It's Lent, so we won't tease you with his Chocolate Babka recipe just yet.....

Here's a nice wintry meal.

OPEN KITCHEN with NATHAN SCOTT

## Corn and Black Bean Quesadillas

These corn-filled quesadillas are a delicious and quick-to-prepare meal that the entire family will love.

### Ingredients

Serves 4

|     |                                                                      |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3   | large ears corn, husks and silks removed                             |
| 1   | tablespoon olive oil, plus more for greasing                         |
| ½   | small red onion, peeled and chopped                                  |
| ¼-1 | jalapeño, seeds discarded and minced                                 |
| 1   | can (15 ounces) black beans, rinsed and drained                      |
| 2   | Roma tomatoes, cored and chopped                                     |
| 2   | cloves garlic, peeled and minced                                     |
| 2   | tablespoons fresh cilantro, coarsely chopped                         |
| 1   | teaspoon ground cumin                                                |
| 1   | tablespoon freshly squeezed lime juice, plus lime wedges for garnish |
|     | Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper                          |
| 8   | (8- to 10-inch) flour tortillas                                      |
| 12  | ounces Monterey Jack or Cheddar cheese, shredded                     |
|     | Assorted garnishes, such as guacamole, salsa, and sour cream         |

### Directions

1. On a cutting board, stand each cob on its end. Using a sharp knife, slice down the length of the cobs to release the kernels. Discard the cobs and reserve the corn.
2. In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium-high. Add the corn kernels and cook, stirring often, until golden brown, 4 to 5 minutes. Toss in the onion and some of the jalapeño (go according to your taste here). Continue to cook, stirring often, until the onion is soft, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in the beans, tomatoes, garlic, cilantro, cumin, and lime juice. Cook until well heated. Remove from the heat and season to taste with salt and black pepper.
3. Spoon some of the corn mixture onto each of the tortillas. Spread the filling out into an even layer and top with some of the shredded cheese. Fold each tortilla in half, forming 8 half-moon shaped quesadillas.
4. Lightly grease a skillet or grill with olive oil and warm over medium heat. Lay in the quesadillas and cook, flipping halfway through, until the cheese has melted and the tortillas are lightly toasted, 3 to 4 minutes. Remove the quesadillas and cut into wedges. Serve with the lime wedges and assorted garnishes.

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camden  
area  
CHRISTIAN

food  
pantry

Requesting donations  
for March

## Canned Chicken Canned Pasta

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

## March BIRTHDAYS

- 3/3 Tim Sheehy
- 3/8 Rita Elliott  
Michael Lally
- 3/11 Tracy Wheeler
- 3/13 Ward Wickwire  
Ru Monsell
- 3/23 Kathy Jex
- 3/24 Bob Carter  
Marcia Dietrich
- 3/25 Deb Endl  
Fred Bucklin
- 3/31 Claudia Griffiths

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



*Thank you, Jessica!*

# Midcoast Villager



& Waldo counties

Proudly Local Since 1829

February 5, 2026

COMMUNITY

## One Cold Night in Rockland

When the temperature dips dangerously low, the Emergency Warming Center is a lifesaver.

BY JOHN BLODGETT



*Jessica Bergelin, assistant manager of the Rockland Emergency Warming Center, sets up bedding at the Flanagan Community Center on January 29*

*Link to the complete article in Midcoast Villager*  
[https://www.midcoastvillager.com/news/local/one-cold-night-in-rockland/article\\_75adf0dd-a60f-44d6-b01f-f402887a58a1.html?utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=email&utm\\_campaign=user-share](https://www.midcoastvillager.com/news/local/one-cold-night-in-rockland/article_75adf0dd-a60f-44d6-b01f-f402887a58a1.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share)

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

**Check out our website: [www.camdenucc.org](http://www.camdenucc.org)**