

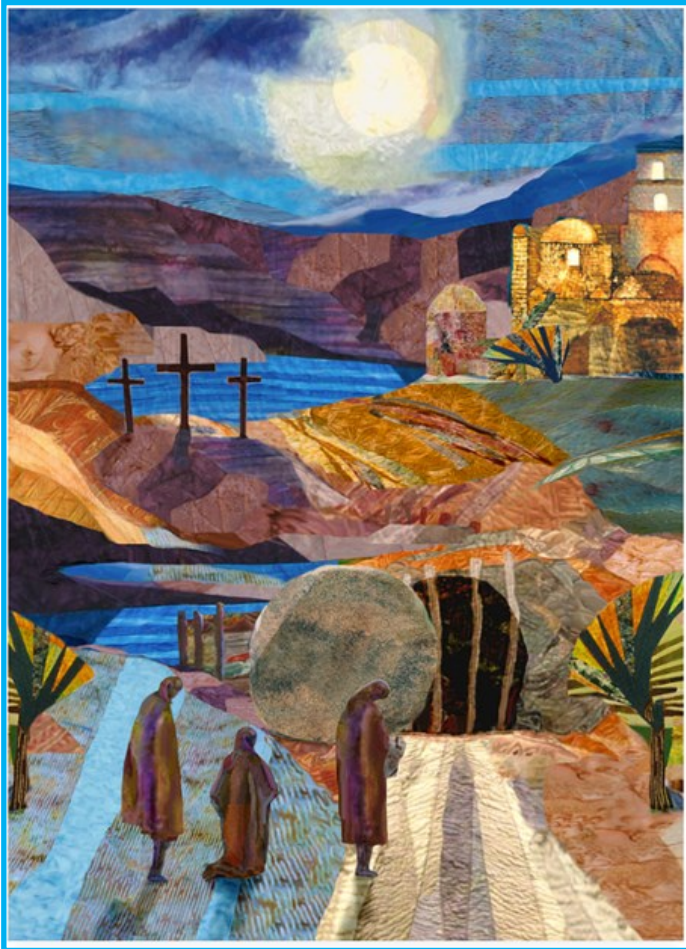


The Beacon

April 2026

Vol. 42, No. 4

EASTER 2026



**"Who will roll away the stone for us?"
by Michael Torevell**



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

Living Witnesses to a Living Faith

How did a group made up largely of peasants and itinerant teachers end up spearheading what would become one of the most history and culture shaping movements in human history? Even martyrdom of their beloved leader fails to provide an explanation. The claim of the earliest followers of Jesus of Nazareth was that his martyrdom was eclipsed by an event they themselves were wholly unprepared for—namely, the Resurrection. That being said, just because a group of loyal followers claim that an unforeseeable revelation of their leader has taken place is not enough to explain the world-altering and enduring impact of this movement that became known as Christianity.

There has to be more to it than that they had a great story to tell. It had to be that what they claimed to be true was congruent with how they actually lived. It had to be that they lived a way of life for which something as extraordinary as Resurrection was the only plausible explanation. It had to be that at the center of their existence was the reality of a living encounter with the One who had lived, died, and been raised.

On Easter Sunday, some 2000 years after the fact, we will gather in the sanctuary of the First Congregational church of Camden in concert with Christians all around the world, and in remembrance of all those who have gone before us, to recall that morning on the First day of the week when Mary, Salome, and Mary went to the tomb of their teacher and friend. Just days before they had witnessed his torture and horrifying execution by crucifixion. They had come with spices to anoint the body for burial. It was the least and the most they could do. What they discovered was something impossible to prepare for.

That story lives on for one reason and one reason only: the truth of it lived on, in and through their lives, period. Despite all the failures, the corruptions, the distortions, and contradictions that have beset the movement that in time would become known as “Christianity,” there remains a mustard seed of faith that springs forth anew in the flesh of the living. The body of evidence for the Resurrection has always been the living witnesses to a hope and a love that will not die.

Join with us on Easter Sunday as we seek to be among those faithful, living witnesses to a living hope and an undying love.

Peace,
David

**6:00 a.m. Easter Sunrise Service at the Camden Yacht Club:
RAIN or SHINE!**

9:30 a.m. Easter Worship & Communion in the Sanctuary

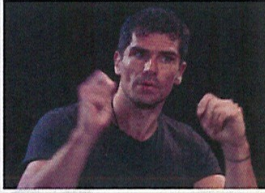
**Upcoming Formation Events and Gatherings
in April at FCC**

Thursday April 9 @ 6 pm in the Pilgrim Room: A Presentation by David J. Wood and Molly Mulhern on Luke Kemp’s book, *Goliath’s Curse: The History and Future of Societal Collapse*. All are welcome. Reading the book ahead of time is NOT required. The purpose of this event will be to become acquainted with the key themes of the book in preparation for Luke Kemp’s visit and presentation here at FCC on April 14.

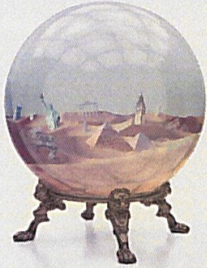
Tuesday, April 14 @ 7 pm in the Sanctuary, a Public Lecture by Luke Kemp: “Are We on the Road to Collapse?”

[See poster and more details next page]

Tuesdays, April 21 & 28; May 5 & 12 @ 4 pm: A Bible Study on the New Testament book of Philippians, facilitated by David J. Wood. All are invited to read and discuss the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Church at Philippi. This letter has four chapters and we will take one chapter a week. We will meet in the Pilgrim Room.



Goliath's Curse



“Are We on the Road to Collapse?”

Public Lecture by Luke Kemp
from the University of Cambridge

Author of the bestselling book,
*Goliath's Curse: The History and Future
of Societal Collapse*

Goliath's Curse is a strangely hopeful book.
- *New York Time Book Review*

"[A] brilliant and unnerving debut... Pointing to modern elites' failure to address climate change, Kemp offers a Cassandra-like warning about the path today's oligarchs have set. It adds up to a sweeping and dire vision of a world on the brink."

- *Publishers Weekly*

Tuesday, April 14 - 7:00pm

First Congregational Church
in Camden, 55 Elm St.

This event is free and open to the public.

Luke Kemp is a Research Affiliate at the Centre for the Study of Existential Risk (CSER) at the University of Cambridge. He has advised and led foresight studies for multiple international

organizations, including the WHO and Convention on Biological Diversity. Luke's research has been covered by the BBC, the New York Times, and the New Yorker.



First Congregational Church
in Camden, 35 Elm St.
United Church of Christ

Drawing from his bestselling book, *Goliath's Curse: The History and Future of Societal Collapse*, scholar Luke Kemp will speak about the recurring collapse of large, hierarchical societies (Goliaths) throughout history, from ancient empires to the modern world. Kemp argues that these collapses, often triggered by inequality and concentrated power, were frequently beneficial for the general population, and he warns that our current global system faces a similar, potentially final, collapse unless we build more collaborative and democratic structures.

JUSTICE & WITNESS

LGBTQ+ Action Group Update

Coming: another FCC Chefs project! Think granola bars!

Big thanks to those of you who made contributions to THE LANDING PLACE in January/February from the **FCC Donations Wish List**. The Landing Place staff was thrilled to accept our donations of hygiene products, bicycle locks, hand and feet warmers, warm winter socks, and art supplies.

* Requests from the **FCC Donation Wish List** for **April/May** are **prom dresses (all sizes); hygiene supplies (male and female); flashlights and extra batteries; bike locks; Connect Four and Stratego games; guitar amp, a 32-in TV.**

* **Art and school supplies are an on-going request.** These supplies, new or used, are available for use at the **The Landing Place After School Club** offered five afternoons a week.

DONATIONS MAY BE PLACED IN A BIN LOCATED IN THE CHURCH OFFICE.

LGBTQ+ Action Group Co-Chairpersons:
Ben Perry and Zella Walker

News from the Anti-Poverty Work Group

The Anti-Poverty Work Group had a lively meeting on March 25, beginning with a discussion of the opening chapter of *See Poverty. . . Be the Difference*, by Donna M. Beegle. We heard presentations from six local organizations and programs (three of them based at the church) that serve the poor and the general community.

At our next meeting, on Wednesday, April 30, at 5:00 p.m., we'll follow up and expand on some of these ideas, working closely with Joseph Hufnagel, director of the Landing Place in Rockland, which serves youths affected by adverse economic, familial, and social factors.

You're welcome to join us at our April 30th meeting. There are still copies of Donna Beegle's book available on the white cabinet across the hall from the office.

If you have any questions, please contact Jonathan Frost at (207)596-0800 or jonathanfroststudio@gmail.com.



Shields Fund Administrator
Jeanne Denny

1/4 of a year!

With the beginning of April, the moratorium for CMP bills will end. I imagine Shields will be inundated again this year since it was such a brutal winter and most everyone was short of cash! Already requests are coming to the office for CMP assistance; however, disconnection notices won't be issued until 4/15/26. And I never cease to be amazed by Maine ingenuity! I had one family that lost their furnace early in the season and managed to keep from freezing by running electric space heaters. While it was expensive heat, it worked but they have a huge electric bill! In years past, those in need often turned on the oven and opened the door to provide heat in the kitchen, not efficient either, but definitely safer.

In March 2026, Shields funded 22 gifts for a total of \$17,638. (It was significantly higher this month since the Shields Committee decided to pay the mortgage for an elderly veteran who is struggling with renal failure and receives dialysis 3 times a week.

In addition, there was a larger number of requests this month.

- Rent/mortgage-3
- CMP-2
- Shelter-6
- Fuel-3
- Car repairs-6
- Storage-2

Little known facts about Shields:

* The position of Shields Administrator requires attention to details! So far this year there have been 3 checks that failed to reach their destination! This break-down in mail delivery resulted from incomplete/incorrect addresses provided by the case managers who referred the applicants. This results from being in a hurry, sending the business address instead of the mailing address, etc. However, when the mail can't be delivered it sits somewhere for 7 weeks before it is "returned to sender."

* While most of the public believes that the poor make up a small percent of the population, and while they also believe that the poor are

looking for a handout, the majority of those applying to Shields for assistance are first time applicants. Only 3 of the applicants were known to Shields, or 12%, this month!

* In 2025, Shields received 13 applications in March and funded 10 requests. In 2026, we received 24 applications and 22 were funded. Shields is better known this year due to the community fundraisers, but the economic stressors of these times has had a greater influence on the increase in referrals.

It is wonderful that Shields exists! The Shields Fund is the only assistance available to help with large car expenses, mortgages, etc. (The Shields Committee believes that when the individual or family is housed, we should assist in keeping families housed rather than let them experience foreclosure or eviction.)

Please consider giving a donation to Shields to assist with the needed care of families facing financial challenges. Contact Jeanne Denny, Administrator, for further information.

Jeanne@camdenucc.org

cell phone: 207-466-5374

With warm regards,

Jeanne

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



OUR MEMBER ANNA WEBER INVITES YOU TO TAKE PART IN A SURVEY. For her course in environmental economics at Colby College, she is collecting data on coastal Mainers' perspectives on seaweed aquaculture. The survey is completely anonymous and takes less than 10 minutes. Those participating have the chance to win a \$200 gift card. Here is the link:

https://colby.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bg5F4kchhxm9KBg?Q_CHL=qr



*News
from Heavenly Threads
James Cook, Manager*



What Should I Donate to Heavenly Threads? Do They Only Accept Clothing?

One of the most frequent questions we get here at the Heavenly Threads Thrift Shop is about what sort of items we accept as donations.

Here's a quick guide:

* Overall, we would be delighted to accept gifts of clothing, shoes, accessories, jewelry, kitchen and dining items, artworks, crafts, linens and blankets, fabrics, decor, small appliances (like blenders and lamps), and other interesting, unclassifiable doodads.

* Condition of Donations: Clothing and shoes should be in good condition, and shouldn't need a wash. We cannot accept used underwear, socks, or pillows. Appliances you donate should work.

* Books: We adore books, and we will begin accepting books again some time in the future, but we have so many in store that **we don't have room for more right now**. We'll let you know when this changes.





We would be delighted to receive your donations during our shop hours, which are:

- * Tuesdays from 1 to 6 pm
- * Wednesdays & Thursdays
from 10 am to 4 pm

Thank you so much for all the gifts you bring to us. Like loaves and fishes, the grace of your donation is multiplied through the many further gifts to our community that it makes possible.

James Cook, Heavenly Threads Manager

SPRING CLEANING, ANYONE? Don't forget about Heavenly Threads when you have extra things to give away!





**THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO
MADE CAKE & COMMUNITY SUCH
A SUCCESS THIS YEAR!**

**Our Teams of Volunteers produced
delicious bites for us each Friday,
and took care of cleanup.**

**Students from the Camden-Rockport Middle School
came each week to set the tables.**

If you'd like to join the teams and help next season
(Winter 2027) please contact Cake and Community coordinator
Natalie Ward at wards05@verizon.net.



A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW BOOKKEEPER, LEE BROSS!

Lee arrived late in December 2025, and has quickly learned the many intricacies of our accounting system (*as well as the many intricacies of our staff and committee members...*). It was not an easy task, to take on the books at the end of a fiscal year.



Her photo is on our website, along with this “getting to know you” paragraph:

Lee is a born and raised Midcoast Mainer who joined the First Congregational Church in December 2025. A self-admitted iced coffee addict and HGTV enthusiast with entirely too many reno projects to count, she brings over 28 years of bookkeeping experience to the role. When she isn't at work, she enjoys sitting in the sun, playing fetch with her Staffie and spending time with her family.

camden
area
CHRISTIAN

food
pantry

Requesting donations

FOR APRIL

Packages of INSTANT OATMEAL PACKETS ~ Any Flavors ~



GRATITUDE!

Our Irish Potluck Dinner was delicious,
and our Silent Art Auction was very
successful!

The Men's Group thanks all who donated art, bid on art, and enjoyed our large week-long art display. More than \$5,000 was raised to put toward our planned energy improvements.

April BIRTHDAYS

4/2 Cayla Mäki-Pittman
4/4 Ellen Claussen
4/5 Judy Schleder
4/7 Linda Bjelland
4/9 Deb Hall
4/21 Allie VanRyn
4/26 Alisa Dowd
Douglas Webb
Lilou Webb (child)

If your birthday is not listed
please contact the office.



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