

7th Sunday of Easter
Ascension Sunday
May 17, 2026



Scottish Clouds by Jennifer Wood



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**

*** 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

Acts 1: 1-11

Elaine Lohrman

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Luke 24: 44-53

Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised, so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

The Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon “The Binding of Heaven and Earth”

Rev. David J. Wood

Song of Response

Christ Is Alive!

(Please remain seated for this hymn)

Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.
His cross stands empty to the sky.
Let streets and homes with praises ring.
His love in death shall never die.

Christ is alive! No longer bound
To distant years in Palestine,
He comes to claim the here and now
And conquer every place and time.

In every insult, rift and war,
Where color, scorn or wealth divide,
He suffers still, yet loves the more,
And lives, though ever crucified.

Christ is alive! His Spirit burns
Through this and every future age,
Till all creation lives and learns
His joy, his justice, love and praise.

THE SERVICE OF GRATITUDE

Joys & Concerns ~ Pastoral Prayer & The Lord’s Prayer

(all are invited to pray the Lord’s Prayer using “debts and debtors”)

Offertory Invitation

We continue our worship in the giving of our offering.

Offertory Anthem

My Hope is Built on Nothing Less — John Carter

*Sanctuary Choir with Meg Thomas, piano

* Easter Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Praise God, all creatures here below.

Christ is risen, Alleluia!

Praise God in Jesus fully known

Creator, Christ, and Spirit one.

Christ is risen, Alleluia!

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

*** Prayer of Dedication**

Elaine Lohrman

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 #234** *Crown Him with Many Crowns*

*** Benediction**

David Wood

*** Sung Benediction**

*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.)

"Hornpipe" from Water Music — G.F. Handel
*Matt Mainster, organ

**Please join us during Coffee Hour
for a Special Presentation by our Scout Troop 200
Scoutmaster: Doug Grant**

**First Congregational Church of Camden has sponsored Troop
200 and Pack 200 for many years. We have seen many fine
young people move through the ranks here. Scouts participate
in our community, give to others, and learn life skills.**

GRATITUDE FOR TODAY'S VOLUNTEER PARTICIPANTS

Altar Flowers: You are welcome to sign up to bring altar flowers or natural
arrangements on any given Sunday. Signup poster is in the Pilgrim Room, or
contact the office.

Liturgist: Elaine Lohrman

Greeters: Kris & Rob Edmonds, Terri Mackenzie, Esther Sexton

Ushers: Melvin Achorn, Scott Achorn

Coffee Team C, "Congo Coffee Crew": Wendy & Roger Wickenden,
Nancy Laite, Debbi Hitchings, Mimi Edmunds, Deb Endl

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

Matthew Mainster, Minister of Music
Jeanne Denny, Shields Fund Administrator
James Cook, Heavenly Threads Manager
Ryan Berry, Custodian of Buildings & Grounds
Lee Bross, Full Charge Bookkeeper
Becky Brace, Office Administrator

A Poem for Ascension Day *Ascension Day*

We saw his light break through the cloud of glory
Whilst we were rooted still in time and place
As earth became a part of Heaven's story
And heaven opened to his human face.
We saw him go and yet we were not parted
He took us with him to the heart of things
The heart that broke for all the broken-hearted
Is whole and Heaven-centred now, and sings,
Sings in the strength that rises out of weakness,
Sings through the clouds that veil him from our sight,
Whilst we ourselves become his clouds of witness
And sing the waning darkness into light,
His light in us, and ours in him concealed,
Which all creation waits to see revealed.

By Ayodeji Malcolm Guite — an English poet, singer-songwriter, Anglican priest and academic. Born in Nigeria to British expatriate parents, Guite earned degrees from the University of Cambridge and Durham University.

Do you have a **graduating Senior** in your family this year? (High School, College, Graduate School, local or away) We like to acknowledge these graduates in a June bulletin. Please let Becky know in the office: becky@camdenucc.org or 236-4821.

CHURCH CALENDAR

Mondays	beg 6/15	SUMMER HRS Office Closed Mondays	
Tuesdays	8:30-9:30a	Lectio Divina Meditation~ call office for	Zoom link
Tuesdays	5am-noon	VOLUNTEER at SOS	
Tue-Wed-Thurs	3 days	VOLUNTEER at Heavenly Threads	
Wednesdays	9:30 am	Staff Meeting	
Thursdays	Noon-1 pm	Prayer Shawls, Knit & Crochet ~ in person and Zoom All yarn supplied.	Call for link
Sun. May 17	9:30 am	Sunday Worship	Sanctuary
Wed. May 20	5 pm	Trustees	
Thur. May 21	1 pm	Shields	
Thur. May 21	6 pm	Film: Life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer	Pilgrim Rm
Sun. May 24	9:30 am	Sunday Worship	Sanctuary
Mon. May 25	HOLIDAY	Memorial Day ~ Church Closed	
Mon. May 25	4 pm	DownEast Singers Bach Mass in B minor	Sanctuary
Thurs. May 28	6 pm	Book Discussion on Dietrich Bonhoeffer	Pilgrim Rm
Sun. May 31	9:30 am	Sunday Worship	Sanctuary
Sun. May 31	4 pm	Handbells for Hope ~ Benefit Concert for Shields Fund ~ Penobscot Bay Ringers	Sanctuary
Mon. June 1	6 pm	Baccalaureate – CHRHS Senior Class	Sanctuary
Wed. June 3	7 pm	Public Lecture~ Dr. Andrew Root, “Bearing Witness in a Time of Christian Nationalism”	Sanctuary
Thurs. June 4	8:30 am	Stewardship	
Sat. June 6	9-11 am	Men’s Breakfast ~ all men welcome	Pilgrim Rm
Sun. June 7	9:30 am	Sunday Worship & Communion	Sanctuary
Thurs. June 11	6-8 pm	Book Discussion “Here Comes the Sun” Bill McKibben	Pilgrim Rm
Sat. June 13	1 pm	U. Maine Jazz Ensemble – free concert	Sanctuary
Sun. June 14	9:30 am	Sunday Worship	Sanctuary
Mon. June 15	Closed	Begin Summer Hrs ~ Office Closed Mondays	
Tues. June 16	4-6 pm	PRIDE EVENT: Youth Craft Workshop	Pilgrim Rm
Wed. June 17	5 pm	Trustees	
Wed. June 17	7 pm	Penobscot Bay Singers Concert: Sierra Lary	Sanctuary
Thurs. June 18	9 am	Outreach	Conf. Rm.
Thurs. June 18	7 pm	Public Lecture: Bill McKibben, NY Times	Sanctuary
Fri. June 19	Juneteenth	HOLIDAY ~ Church Closed	
Sun. June 21	9:30 am	Sunday Worship	Sanctuary

NOT TO BE MISSED ~ PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR!

MOZART MENTORS ORCHESTRA
ANTHONY ANTOLINI, CONDUCTOR
present

J.S. BACH'S
MASS IN B MINOR

Part I (The Kyrie-Gloria Mass of 1733)

MEMORIAL DAY
MONDAY, MAY 25, 2026, AT 4:00 PM
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
55 ELM STREET, CAMDEN
Dessert reception to follow

\$25 ADMISSION
18 & under by donation

SOLOISTS:
Jennifer Bates, soprano
Erin Chenard, soprano

Tickets available at
downeastingers.org



**Wed. June 17 at 7 pm,
in our Sanctuary
Sierra Lary, Conductor**

Sierra is well known to us for her solos during worship. The Penobscot Bay Singers will present a concert celebrating America's 250th anniversary with a selection of music by American composers. Light reception to follow here in the Pilgrim Room.

Public Lecture
by acclaimed
environmentalist and author

Bill McKibben

Author of the bestselling book,
*Here Comes the Sun: A Last Chance for the Climate
and a Fresh Chance for Civilization*

**"Back to the Wall,
Face to the Sun"**

Thurs, June 18

7:00pm

Public Lecture
by acclaimed
MIT humanities professor,
physicist and author

Alan Lightman

Author of the bestselling book,
*Einstein's Dreams, Searching for Stars on an Island in
Maine and The Miraculous from the Material.*

**"The Miraculous
from the
Material"**

Wed., July 8

7:00pm