

Winthrop Congregational Church, U.C.C.
Winthrop, Maine



Mission

Our mission is to be a Christ-centered community of prayer and worship, of welcome and care, of learning and growing, of witness and service in the worldwide church of Jesus Christ.

Who We Are

We are a loving and welcoming Christian church family who cares deeply about our faith, about those with whom we share Christ's teachings, about those who need a helping hand in life, about our community, about our country and our world. Our church is located in a traditional New England town. Our congregation has about one hundred and ten members; an average of forty-five adults and four children attend weekly services.

We are a mature congregation with an average age in the late 50's with less than 15% of our membership having children living at home. While our membership is Caucasian we are made up of diverse backgrounds and interests and gladly welcome people of all races and ethnicities. The members of the church make the final decision concerning the budget, major expenditures and other important matters. The church council directs the month-to-month functions of the church. The Deacons assist the pastor with planning and preparations for worship services.



The Winthrop Congregational Church is located in the center of town on the corner of Main and Bowdoin Streets. The sanctuary seats one hundred-five people comfortably. It is handicapped accessible with a paved ramp to the main entrance. AA, the Library Trustees and other groups use the vestry on a regular basis. It is also the home of our famous Fish Chowder Luncheon, summer fair, sidewalk art show luncheon, Christmas Fair and other fund raising events. On ground level,

in addition to the office, there is also a Chapel and a flexible classroom. We own a rustic camp dwelling on Maranacook Lake in Winthrop that is used in summer for fellowship and outdoor worship.

Where We Are

Winthrop is located in the central part of the State of Maine, about ten miles west of the capital, Augusta, and about 20 miles east of Lewiston-Auburn. It is a community of approximately 6,400 residents with 15% of those being seasonal. Three large lakes surround us.

Winthrop has its own town beach as well as a boat landing and a picnic area. The lakes and ponds of Winthrop afford great summer and winter fun for the whole family. The summer recreation program includes a summer swimming program for the children as well as summer outings through the YMCA recreation program. There are several family and children's camps nearby including the Maine Conference U.C.C. (Pilgrim Lodge), the State YMCA Camp, and a United Methodist Camp (Mechuwana). Other recreational opportunities abound.

Winthrop High School has been named in the "Top High Schools in the State of Maine for 2009" by the US News and World Report's America's Best High Schools Annual Report. Only 15 schools were recognized in Maine, and Winthrop High School is the only high school in the area to receive this honor.

There are also a number of excellent colleges within commuting distance of Winthrop: Bates, Bowdoin, Colby, Thomas, and the University of Maine branches in Augusta and Farmington. In addition, Bangor Theological Seminary has campuses in both Bangor and Portland.

Winthrop offers a modern full service outpatient health care center of family practitioners and a pediatrician's office. Two full service hospitals are located near Winthrop: MaineGeneral Health 11 miles east in Augusta and Central Maine Medical Center 20 miles west in Lewiston. The Harold Alfond Center for Cancer Care, opened in 2007,

provides the latest in cancer treatment and is located in Augusta. The town also has dentists, chiropractors, and veterinarians.

Winthrop is a very sports oriented community. The Grade School and YMCA collaborate to offer seasonal sports for younger children. The Middle School and High School have competitive seasonal sports teams and an abundance of community support.

The Winthrop Performing Arts Center, which offers cultural opportunities, is located at the high school. Nearby attractions include the State Library, the State Museum, the State House, and the Blaine House, which is the Governor's home. Augusta also has several shopping malls and the Civic Center, which offers many forms of entertainment for the family. Two additional area museums are Fort



Western, a Revolutionary War site on the shores of the Kennebec River, and the Discovery Museum, a children's attraction. Within a fifteen minute ride from Winthrop is the Theater at Monmouth, a Shakespearean Theater.

How We Got Here

During the summer of 1776, while other men were meeting in Philadelphia, a group of men and women were holding frequent meetings to attempt to organize a church for the isolated but growing community of "Pond Town." Their efforts were finally brought to fruition on September 4, exactly three months after the affixing of signatures to the Declaration of Independence.

The first services were held at the local tavern, Squire Bishop's Inn. In June of 1825, the Masonic Lodge of Winthrop (Temple) laid the cornerstone of the new Congregational Church located on what is now upper Main Street. From that year until 1904, this building was the home of the Congregational Church. A chapel or vestry was built in the center of town in 1861 and is the present building of this Congregation. Renovation of the "Vestry" was completed in 1904, at which time the large building on Main Street was sold. With the help of generous bequests and fund drives, the Church added a new wing in 1975, replaced its pipe organ with an electronic organ in 1985, added an elevator and made the Church handicapped accessible in 1996.

In 1967 the Church voted to become a part of The United Church of Christ. This was an emotional step as it created fear among many that the church would no longer be independent. Time has erased those fears and laid this issue to rest.

What We Do

Sunday morning worship services are held at 10 a.m. (9:30 a.m. in the summer months). Maundy Thursday, Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday, and Easter Sunrise services are also a part of the church's worship offerings. Music is an integral part of our Church's worship. We are fortunate to have a talented Music Director and a dedicated choir.



The Christian Education Board leads our religious education programs. Volunteer lay people lead our youth group and Sunday School classes. Our Sunday School program runs from September to May. Over the past 10 years our Sunday School enrollment has decreased from about 16 to our current average of about 4 children – we would love to see this grow again. We also want to reestablish adult education programs with some lay leadership to provide topics of varying interest for our church family.

Missions is an important part of our life together and includes the Deacon's Fund (Pastoral Discretionary Fund for local assistance/missions), Winthrop Food Pantry (special offerings, food donations, and volunteers), Family Violence Project (white gifts at Christmas, and Christmas gifts for a family at the shelter), St. Francis Hot Meals Kitchen (volunteers from Congregation), and Pilgrim Lodge (special collection).

Special mission offerings are collected with the amount sent directly to such causes as One Great Hour of Sharing, Church World Service Blanket Sunday, emergency school and health kits, and other causes recommended by the Missions Committee.

The Missions Committee informs the congregation of other needs, national and international, to which individual members may contribute. As part of the international mission, the Women's Guild sponsors a child in Jerusalem through the Child Sponsorship Program.

Who We Are Looking For

Over the past 25 or more years Winthrop Congregational Church has been led by a full time pastor. In recent years we have been drawing down on investments to meet expenses. This past January the membership made the commitment to live within a balanced budget; hence we are searching for a part-time minister.

We are a warm, caring church that is seeking a minister who is patient with our decision-making process, who will challenge us intellectually, someone who will share the life journey with us, preach to us rather than at us, lead us without directing us and someone who will help us grow spiritually. Our Search Committee will wait before calling a minister until we find the right match for our church and for our new minister.



Web Sites with Additional Information

Church: <http://www.wccucc.org/>
Schools: <http://winthropschools.org/>
Town: <http://www.winthropmaine.org/>
Area Chamber of Commerce: www.augustamaine.com
Area Newspaper: www.kjonline.com
State Office of Tourism: www.visitmaine.com
State of Maine: www.state.me.us
University System: www.maine.edu
Maine Conference: UCC: www.maineucc.org
Lewiston-Auburn: <http://www.laitshappeninghere.com/>
Bangor Theological Seminary: www.bts.edu