

# *First Parish Congregational Church*

United Church of Christ East Derry, New Hampshire



We are a community of faith built upon a firm foundation of worship, prayer and education. In affirming diversity, we are dedicated to welcoming all people who seek the Word of God, Christian fellowship and service to others. In partnership with Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, we reach out to the ever-widening community through active and loving ministry.

## *From the Pastor's Desk*

Dear Child of God,

This December issue of the First Parish newsletter arrives at a notable timeline crossroads to our modern "chronological" way of thinking. In the church calendar, it is the first month of the second year (Year B) of the Revised Common Lectionary. Year B is the year of Mark on Sunday mornings. We have just spent a year with Matthew (Year A) and now we will hear from Mark. Of course, Mark was written before Matthew so the differences we see are more foreshadowing in nature and fascinating to consider the different points of view.

And this month is my 48<sup>th</sup> month as the Senior Pastor of First Parish! This will be my fourth Christmas and our second Christmas in Currier. Did you realize that there are members who have not ever attended worship in the Meetinghouse Sanctuary? And there are many of us who miss that space terribly and feel the sense of loss every week.

And we are still in "September flood recovery mode". As I write this message I am sitting at my desk in my office for the first time in three weeks. My office was packed into boxes the week before Thanksgiving. (See photo next page.)

## *Upcoming Events*

December 2

Best Breakfast Fundraiser  
7am-12 in Currier

December 6

Deacons Meeting ~ 6:30

December 7

Stewardship Meeting ~ 7:00

December 10

Advent Workshop ~ 11:15

December 13

K.I.T ~ 12:30

December 17

Mission Meeting ~ 11:30

December 20

Council Meeting ~ 7:00

December 29

Spaghetti Supper ~ 5:00

## ALL ARE WELCOME

"Friend, you enter this church not as a stranger, but as a guest of God. Come, then, with joy in your heart and thanks upon your lips, and offer God today your love and your service."  
- Adapted from a 12<sup>th</sup> Century Church in Hampshire, England

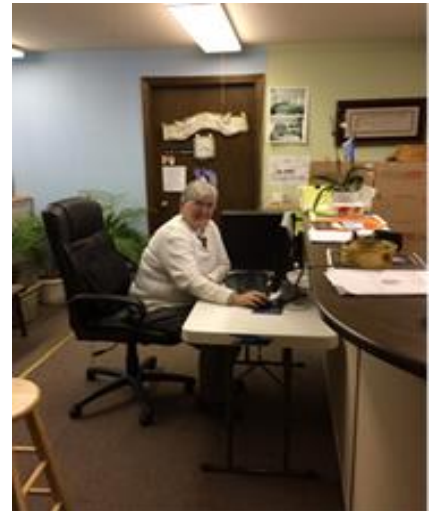


## From the Pastor's Desk Continued



(My office packed in boxes to the left.) And someone was nice enough to set up a computer for me in the passageway of the office. (Photo on right)

It worked when I needed to print things and I'm extremely grateful for that.



**And** it's really nice to have an office again.

All of this has caused me to think about my counterpart in Puerto Rico. It wasn't a question of *inconvenience* for them. The flood waters washed away entire lives. They lost everything: their office, their library, every single thing. For me here in NH, this annoying inconvenience at First Parish is a blip on the screen of God's abundant blessings.

We are so blessed to be "church" and to do "church". When we consider the pillars of our Mission here at First Parish, we can acknowledge that in spite of the inconvenience of our little flood, **worship** is well-attended, **prayer** is plentiful, **education** programs are thriving (see photo on page 9) and FPC's dedication to **serving Christ** in our community (photo page 5) and in the world continues to grow strong.

**And** we enter Advent when our time of "waiting" begins. Each Sunday of Advent we consider a pillar of our Christian lives. Traditionally, we look at "Hope" in week 1; "Peace" in week 2; "Joy" in week 3; and "Love" in week 4. If you reference the 2016 Newsletter on our website you will find a prayer to guide you for each week. I found a different set of pillars and prayers that are very poignant to our circumstances today. They are:

**December 3 -Blessings:** Lord God, reveal yourself to us again. Help us this Advent season to focus on your son Jesus, who came not to be served, but to serve. Help us not to serve ourselves this December, but to serve you as we serve others. Amen.

**December 10 -Miracles:** Lord God, we need your help today. Help us to make room for the miraculous in our lives that the light of Christ might shine through us again. Amen.

**December 17 -Hope:** Lord God, help us not to be so focused on finding perfection in this season that we miss out on the hope that only you can bring to us. Amen.

**December 24 -Love:** Lord God, help us always to remember that we are redeemed through our belief in your Son. No matter how far we stray, you're always right there waiting for us, loving us. We rejoice in your steadfast love for all the people of the world, fulfilled in the birth of your Son, Jesus. Amen.

May the light of Christ burn brightly for you this Advent. Pastor Deborah

## *Board of Deacons*

Matthew 2:2 “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and have come to worship him.”

Each Sunday of Advent we will enjoy our tradition of singing Christmas carols, starting at 9:45.

December 3 - First Sunday of Advent

December 10 - Second Sunday of Advent

December 17 - Third Sunday of Advent

December 19 - Blue Christmas Service 7:00 p.m.

December 24 - Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve

**Sunday, December 24th at 10:00 am** – We will have our regular fourth Sunday of Advent worship service combined with our Children's Christmas Pageant. Children will be practicing the next few Sundays, getting ready. All children are invited to participate. There will be costumes and fun for all!

**Sunday, December 24th at 4:30 pm** – Our young adults are invited to participate in creating this multimedia version of the Christmas story. Please go now to our FaceBook Page and join the fun of preparing! This service will be an ancient story told in a modern way. Everyone is invited to this 21st century telling, complete with singing and candles.

**Sunday, December 24th at 7 pm** – We will host our traditional candle light Christmas Eve Service with music by the Adult Choir.

**Sunday, December 24th at 10pm** – We will host our traditional candle light Christmas Eve Service with special music.

Poinsettias will be sold to decorate our Sanctuary for Christmas. Please fill out the form available Sunday morning and in this newsletter or contact Cyndi Gray or Diane Dunn.

May the joy of Christmas brighten your world and warm your heart,

Diane Breeden, Diane Dunn, Ken Gould, Cyndi Gray, Harry Handy, Reni Harden, Ryan Lehoullier, Cindy Pingree, Julie Turner and Joanne Worthen

## *Board of Stewardship*

We live in a non-committal world, and that is probably because it is a world full of endless choices. We have to say no very often to protect ourselves - from scams, from falsehoods, from the artificial promises that exist all around us. The sad part of that is that it makes us afraid to say yes.

Take a minute to think about the places in life where you have committed. These are some of the biggest moments in your life...when you committed to your profession, to your partner, to making the decision to have a family. These commitments, while certainly filled with hard work and challenges, are probably the most significantly life-changing times for you. They have shaped your life in amazing ways.

As we go through this pledge season, it's time to think about the ways in which saying yes at FPC can shape your life in amazing ways.

Committing your time, your talent, and your treasure to church can be a worrisome thing. You wonder if you have the time to serve on a committee. You wonder if you can commit to a pledge.

You are not alone. Commitment is not easy for anyone. But, consider the new experiences you will witness, the people you will meet, and most importantly, the ways in which your relationship with God will be strengthened.

Saying yes can be life-changing, inspiring...in this world, even liberating! So, commit! Join the journey to generosity.

Your Stewardship Committee, Margie Ives, Joyce Pope, John Bartel, and Sarah Keller

## Board of Christian Education



### *Advent Workshop & LUNCHEON*

**Save the Date!** This year's Advent Workshop is planned for Sunday, December 10th, 2017. We have many exciting crafts planned for all ages! Soup, Salad, Breads and Desserts will be served following service courtesy of our wonderful volunteers and coordinators and then, the crafting fun begins! We will have a waxed-dipped German paper star craft table and a Nativity Scene candle jar or Suncatcher craft table to make presents for our home-bound members. In addition, there will be several other adult and kid-friendly crafts and one to make and eat too!

There will be lots of fellowship, great food, and wonderful handmade treasures to create, along with memories! Plan to bring your family and friends to this fun event! Signup sheets will be available at our Advent Workshop table outside the front office following service December 3<sup>rd</sup> or contact Melanie Van Steensberg ([mvansteensberg@gmail.com](mailto:mvansteensberg@gmail.com)), Anne-Marie Merrill ([ampmerrill@yahoo.com](mailto:ampmerrill@yahoo.com)), or Christine Lehoullier with any questions or to sign-up.



### *Christmas Pageant & Young Adult Service*

Active learning experiences involving all aspects of The Christmas Story will commence during the first three Sundays of December within our Sunday School Classes as well as Pageant Rehearsals. Please be sure that your child/children attend these practices during December so that we may be prepared for a wonderful and joyous family-oriented Christmas Pageant, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM.

**New this year!** The Christian Education Board will be hosting a Young Adult Multi-Media Service Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 PM. If you are a young adult (18 – 35 yrs. old) and would like to be a part of or help with this state-of-the art service, contact Katie Cobban ([kcobban11@alumni.unity.edu](mailto:kcobban11@alumni.unity.edu)) or Christine Lehoullier. **FRIEND US (FPC) ON FACEBOOK** to receive updates and to help us craft this wonderful event by answering our survey questions!

### *Youth Group Updates*

To our Middle and High Schoolers who would like to join us; we will be holding a Youth Group Christmas Party Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> following the Advent Workshop! We will be holding a gift swap, please bring a set of Christmas socks filled with a gift of your choice, handmade or otherwise. We will enjoy some refreshments and fun together. If your child/children need transportation, please let us know, and we will do our best accommodate you to the best of our ability. Please see or contact Chris Cox, Paula Robinson, Holly Gorgol or Christine Lehoullier if you have any questions. Thank you!



## Board of Christian Outreach and Missions

**Thanksgiving Baskets:** For many this is the hardest time of the year to get through and the time in which many of us need a helping hand. Each year the Board of Christian Outreach and Missions receives a list of names of people who need some extra help managing the holidays. Recipients are recommended to us through a number of organizations such as the Derry Community Caregivers, The Upper Room, and by word of mouth. The Board of Christian Outreach and Missions would like to thank you for your generous donations of food and money to provide Thanksgiving meals to those who were in need this year. Your generosity was able to provide Thanksgiving to 61 people (29 families).



**Angel Tree:** Each year at Christmas time, Missions sponsors the Angel Tree program which assists families in need in providing a little more Christmas joy for their children. Mission members will have a table set up after service on December 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> where you can select gifts from the Angle Tree. There will be further instructions provided at the Missions table.

**Christmas Fund:** The Christmas Fund Offering (formerly the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross), one of five Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ (UCC), is an important way of sharing our joy at God's renewing and life-giving grace. The Offering, which is administered by the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance of the Pension Boards on behalf of the UCC, is an expression of joy and gratitude to, and for, those who serve the church. Gifts to the Christmas Fund help provide pension and health premium supplementation to low-income retirees, emergency assistance to the families of clergy and lay employees and Christmas Gift Checks to hundreds of annuitants.

Your gifts are needed more than ever to help the growing number of retirees whose lower-income annuities make it difficult to meet increasing living costs. This is your opportunity to participate in God's promise of renewal by enabling this ministry of compassion and care. Envelopes will be available in the bulletins throughout December.

Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM) - \$350.00  
 Sonshine Soup Kitchen - \$100.00  
 First Baptist Food Pantry - \$100.00  
 Community Caregivers - \$100.00

Derry Friendship Center - \$100.00  
 Pastoral Counseling - \$100.00  
 Upper Room - \$100.00  
 Pastor Discretionary Fund - \$200.00

Please note that the amount of funds available for Missions work is what you designate on your Pledge card. You may also designate money towards special offerings throughout the year by writing Missions in the memo field of your check followed by where you want the donation to go. For example: *Missions: Hurricane Harvey Relief*. The Missions board will send the donation to its destination in the most efficient way.

# Board of Christian Outreach and Missions

## (Continued)

**Liberty House:** The Liberty House in Manchester, NH has been providing a safe, supportive, substance-free housing community for more than a decade for American veterans transitioning out of homelessness. Since opening their doors in 2004, a dedicated team of staff and volunteers has helped more than 200 homeless veterans rejoin their communities and regain fulfilling, independent lives.

# LIBERTY HOUSE

## WISH LIST

*Donations can be dropped off at 75 W. Baker St, Manchester NH during daylight hours.*

### FOOD

- ☆ Pasta & Pasta Sauce
- ☆ Canned Soup
- ☆ Mac & Cheese
- Canned Tuna
- Peanut Butter
- Canned Chicken
- Fruit Cups & Canned fruit
- Granola bars
- Spam
- Canned potatoes
- Beans
- Canned ravioli
- Canned veggies
- Ramen noodles

### CLOTHING

- ☆ Men's shorts waist sizes (30-34)
- ☆ Men's workboots, sizes (10-10.5 preferred)
- ☆ Men's sneakers all sizes
- Men's jeans waist sizes (30-34)
- Men's and women's hooded sweatshirts
- Men's boxers small, medium and large
- Flannel Shirts
- Thermal Underwear
- Socks
- Women's Clothing

### HOUSEHOLD

- ☆ Paper towels
- ☆ Toilet paper
- 35 gallon trash bags
- Air freshener

### MISC

- ☆ Bicycles
- Shaving razors (disposable)
- Shaving cream
- Deodorant
- Conditioner full size
- Shampoo full size

### HOMELESS ASSISTANCE

- ☆ Sleeping bags
- ☆ Backpacks
- ☆ Tents
- Can Openers
- Tarps
- Blankets

Respectfully Submitted,

**The Board of Christian Outreach and Missions (BOCOM):** Joe Weaver, Sue Brown, Beth Hunter, Karen Wilson, Kathy Holland, Bart Wetherbee, Melanie VanSteensburg

## *Membership Committee*

The Membership Committee seeks to connect, to nurture, and to sustain evolving relationships within the First Parish Church Family." That is our purpose as written in the Church By-Laws. The Outdoor Ministry is one avenue that has been successful in helping people make connections with others. Do you have a suggestion for another method in getting people connected? We would love to hear from you.

Speaking of the Outdoor Ministry, don't miss out on our next activity. Contact me at [WILLIBI1910@gmail.com](mailto:WILLIBI1910@gmail.com) so we can add you to the mailing list. Yes, this is a year-round ministry!

Submitted by,  
Brian Williams on behalf of the Membership Committee and Lianne Deranian, Hilary Gorgol, and Paula Robinson

## *Tree Removal - Future Site of Labyrinth*



## Financial Update

### HOW ARE WE DOING?

Financial Report as of 10/31/2017	Received	Budgeted
Pledges to date	\$155,228	\$160,000
Plate offerings to date	\$19,597	\$22,917

Submitted by Joyce Pope, Stewardship Rep to the Finance Committee

## FPC Dining for Dollars Returns!

We've been approved for one new location for our popular Dining for Dollars fellowship & fundraising events, and will be welcomed back to an old favorite this month.

On **Sunday December 10th** from 11-6 Bertucci's, at the Mall of New Hampshire, will welcome our group on and the church will receive 15% back.

On **Wednesday December 13th** from 4-9 Applebees, right here in Derry on Crystal Ave will welcome us back for another evening also providing the church with 15% back.

Come on out to one or both events to celebrate the holiday spirit with friends and family! **Please remember your flyer!**

Ways you can help make our Dining for Dollars events an even bigger success:

1. **Email People:** *Send an email to your contacts about your event. It's also a good idea to send a reminder email the day before the event.*
2. **Facebook Event:** *when you create a Facebook event, be sure to tell your supporters you really need their help and direct them to your page to commit to eat there as well.*
3. **Phone Calls:** *Call the people you know and invite them out. Usually the more personal contact you have with others, the better. A text message on the morning of your event can also be a helpful reminder to people who want to come, but might have forgotten.*
4. **Meeting/Team Announcement:** *At your next group gathering, don't forget to announce your fundraiser and formally invite your group. Ask other members to invite their contacts too. This can really make a huge impact.*

These are just a few ideas, and there are many, many more things you can do. Remember, people have to eat! So why not ask them to do it with you? Getting together, talking, and eating to raise money is one of the most low-key and simple ways to support your cause. A little effort can go a long way!



### Christmas Poinsettia Order Form

Red Poinsettia plants are available for \$7.00 a pot. Please indicate the number of plants that you would like in the space provided and return this order form with your payment to the office, in the offering plate, or to Cyndi Gray **no later than Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>**. If you wish, you may take home your Poinsettias after Christmas Eve services.

Please make your **check payable to: Cynthia Gray- put in the memo - POINSETTIA.**

Number of Poinsettia Plants you want ordered: \_\_\_\_\_ Pots at \$7.00 each (red)

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

How would you like your dedication to appear in the bulletin? For example:

**In Loving Memory of** \_\_\_\_\_  
**In Celebration of** \_\_\_\_\_,  
**For God's blessings** \_\_\_\_\_, etc.

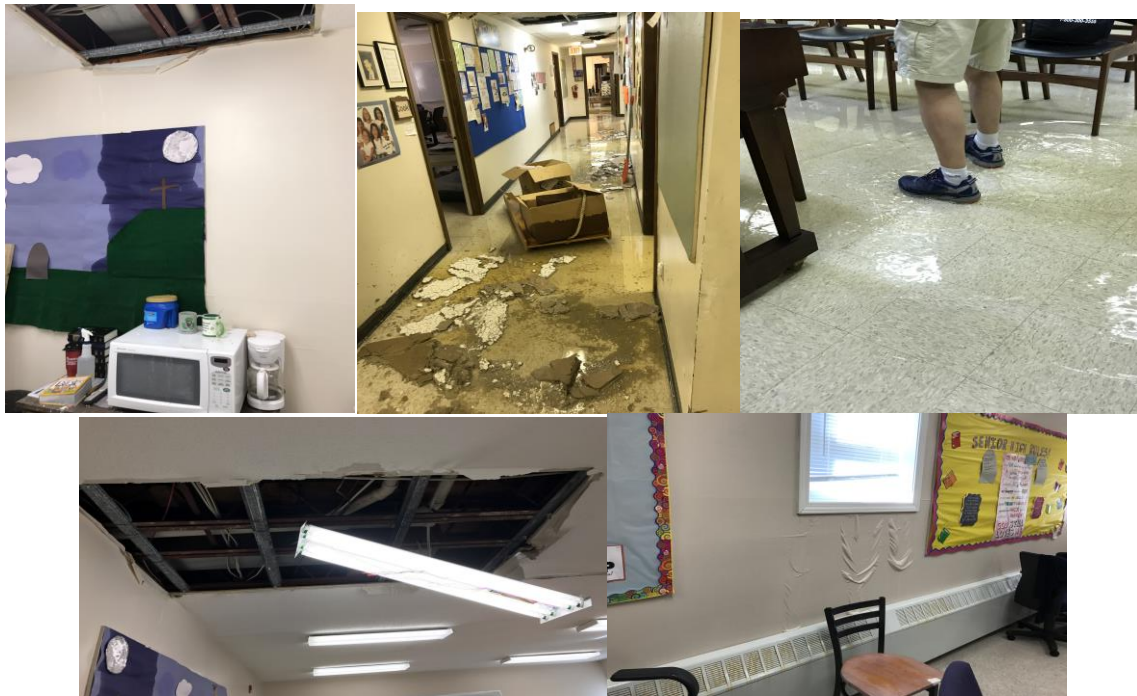
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### Adult Faith Formation Class

Join us January 2 for the next class! 6:30-8:00pm.

# *Flood of 2017 Before and After Pictures*



## Scripture Readings

*Readings are from the Revised Common Lectionary  
for Sundays and Festivals – Year A*

### December 3<sup>rd</sup> – Advent 1

Isa 64:1-9  
Ps 80:1-7, 17-19  
I Cor 1:3-9  
Mk 13:24-37

### December 10<sup>th</sup> – Advent 2

Isa 40:1-11  
Ps 85:1-2, 8-13  
2 Pet 3:8-15a  
Mk 1:1-8

### December 17<sup>th</sup> – Advent 3

Isa 61:1-4, 8-11  
Ps 126 or Luke 1:47-55  
I Thess 5:16-24  
Jn 1:6-8, 19-28

### December 24<sup>th</sup> – Advent 4

2 Sam 7:1-11, 16  
Luke 1:47-55 or Ps 89:1-4, 19-26  
Rom 16:25-27  
Luke 1:26-38

### December 31<sup>st</sup> – First Sunday after Christmas

Isa 61:10-62:3  
Ps 148  
Gal 4:4-7  
Luke 2:22-40

## Worship Schedule

### Deacons of the Month:

Ken Gould and Julie Turner

### Ushers & Greeters

**Weekly Usher** – Michael Bryan

### December 3<sup>rd</sup>:

Ushers: Diaconate

Greeter(s): Verna Elwell & Shirley Dickason

### December 10<sup>th</sup>:

Ushers: Stanley and Holly Gorgol,  
Tom and Andrea Cooper

Greeter: Joyce Pope

### December 17<sup>th</sup>:

Ushers: Becky Fleury, Verna Elwell, Sue  
Hunt, and Pat Cefaly

Greeter: Diane Dunn

### December 24<sup>th</sup>:

Ushers: Joan Crimlisk, Brian Williams, Pat  
Cefaly and Margie Ives

Greeter: Maury Davidson

### December 24<sup>th</sup>:

Ushers: Ken Gould, Dee Deranian, Shirley  
Dickerson and Joan Crimlisk

Greeter: Liz Greenberg

## First Parish Congregational Church

PO Box 114, 47 East Derry  
Road, E Derry, NH 03041

### Office Hours

Monday: Closed  
Tuesday: 8:00-2:00  
Wednesday: 9:00-4:00  
Thursday: 9:00-4:00  
Friday: 8:00-2:00

### Check us out on the web

[www.fpc-ucc.org](http://www.fpc-ucc.org)

Administrative Assistant,  
Hannah Collier:

[officemgr@fpc-ucc.org](mailto:officemgr@fpc-ucc.org)  
603-434-0628

Senior Pastor and Teacher  
The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof:  
[pastordeboraah@fpc-ucc.org](mailto:pastordeboraah@fpc-ucc.org)



# First Parish Congregational Church, UCC

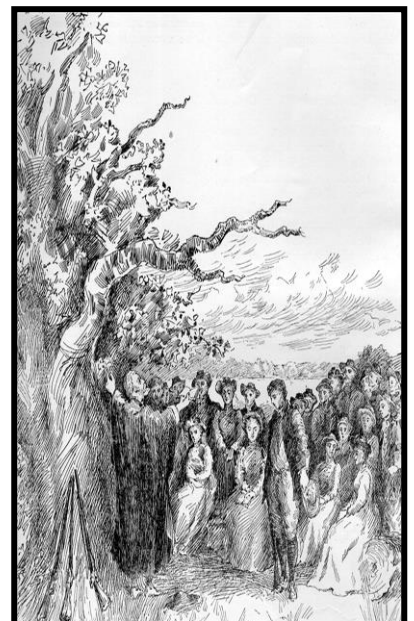
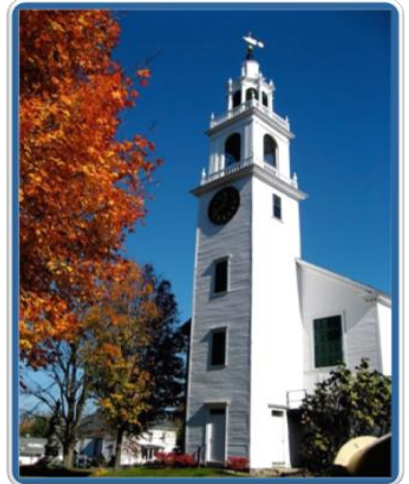
### You are most warmly invited:

9:45 am	Sing-a-long – your favorite Carol
10:00 am	Sunday Worship & Church School
11:00 am	Coffee Hour

## First Parish Congregational Church History

**The oldest church** in the immediate area, First Parish Church was founded by Scotch-Irish Presbyterians in the spring of 1719. Faith was and continues to be a priority. Worship was held one day after arrival, a church body was organized in one month and a building was built in 1722. A “more imposing structure” replaced the first in 1769, and although altered and expanded through time, the main building and sanctuary remain our center of worship.

**First Parish Church** became an independent community church in the Congregational tradition about 1810 as new settlers came to the area. Through the years the church has always had a strong instinct for both survival and faithfulness. In 1973 and again in 1985, we made major commitments to educational and community ministry through the additions of Noyes Hall and Currier Hall. We joined the United Church of Christ in 1995.



First Parish Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
47 East Derry Road  
PO Box 114  
East Derry, NH 03041-0114  
**Address Service Requested**