

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.

Come visit us! Worship is at 10 am.



From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Child of God,

Br. David Steindl-Rast, OSB wrote: "Imagine a country whose citizens – maybe even its leaders – are brave, calm, and open towards each other; a country whose people realize that all human beings belong together as one family and must act accordingly; a country guided by Common Sense." Could we dare to imagine a church whose members were guided by not only common sense but also the love that God shows each one of us?

Jesus commands us to "love one another" but we don't always do a very thorough job. What happens instead is mistrust, bitterness, resentment or anger. Where do these feelings come from? The Bible warns us quite often "not to fear". "Fear not." "Do not be afraid." You see, love and fear are opposites. We live in a fearful world. We bring that fear with us wherever we go – even to church. But in church we are commanded not to fear but to love one another. How do we accomplish this? How do we go against the cultural norm and live faithfully as children of God and followers of Christ?

[Continued on Page 2 & 3](#)

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 12th Century Church in Hampshire, England

Upcoming Events

February is Black History Month

Sunday, February 5th

Souper Bowl - Bring a can of soup!

Tuesday, February 7th, 14th and 21st

Exploring the Bible - 6:30 - 8:15pm

The New Testament!

In Cook Conference Room

Saturday, February 4th, 11th, 18th and

25th Antique Flea Market in Currier

7am - 1pm

Friday, February 24th

Spaghetti Supper in Currier 5pm



From the Pastor's Desk Continued

According to Br. David, there are five easy things that we can do to counteract fear:

1. Say one word today that will give a fearful person courage.

Gratitude expresses trust. Suspicion will not even recognize a gift as a gift. Suspicion sees a gift as a lure, a bribe, or a trap? Gratefulness has the courage to trust and so overcomes fear. The very air has been electrified by fearfulness these days, a fearfulness fostered and manipulated by politicians and the media. The greatest danger of our age is that fear perpetuates violence. Mobilize the courage of your heart. Say one word today that will give a fearful person courage.

2. Make a firm resolution never to repeat stories and rumors that spread fear.

Gratitude expresses courage, and therefore it promotes calm. Calm of this kind is quite compatible with deep emotions. In fact, mass hysteria fostered by the media betrays a morbid curiosity rather than deep feeling – superficial agitation rather than a deep current of compassion. Truly compassionate leaders are calm and strong. Make a firm resolution never to repeat stories and rumors that spread fear. “Be still and know that I am God.” Be calm and spread calm.

3. Make contact with people whom you normally ignore.

When you are grateful, your heart is open – open towards others, open for surprise. When disasters hit we often see remarkable examples of this openness: strangers helping strangers sometimes in heroic ways. Others turn away, isolate themselves, and then dare even less to look outside of one's self. Violence begins in isolation. Break this pattern. Make contact with people whom you normally ignore. Make eye-contact with the cashier at the supermarket, someone on the elevator, or a homeless person. Look a stranger in the eyes today and realize that there are no strangers. “I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”

4. Give someone an unexpected smile today.

It isn't possible to feel two things at once – and you always have a choice. You can either feel grateful or alienated, but never both at the same time. Gratefulness drives out alienation; there is not room for both in the same heart. When you are grateful you know that you belong to a network of give-and-take and you say “yes” to that belonging. This “yes” is the essence of love. You need no words to express it; a smile will suffice to put your “yes” into action. Don't let it matter to you whether or not the other one smiles back. Give someone an unexpected smile today and in doing so know that you contribute to peace on earth in that moment.

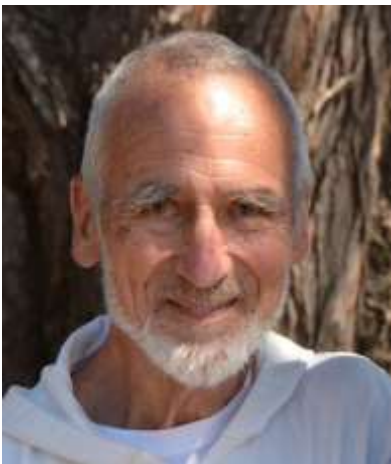
From the Pastor's Desk Continued

5. Listen to the news today and put at least one item to the test of Common Sense.

What your gratefulness does for yourself is as important as what it does for others. Gratefulness boosts your sense of belonging; your sense of belonging in turn boosts your Common Sense. The common sense that springs from gratefulness is incompatible with a set mind. Your "yes" to belonging attunes you to the common concerns shared by all human beings – all beings for that matter. In a world we hold in common, nothing else makes sense but Common Sense. We have only one enemy: Our common enemy is violence. Common Sense tells us: we cannot put an end to violence by acting violently. War is not the pathway to peace. "Darkness cannot cast out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot cast out hate; only love can do that." Listen to the news today and put at least one item to the test of Common Sense.

Imagine a church filled with people who are brave, calm, and open towards each other. Imagine a church whose members are all guided by the love of God, the love of neighbor AND Common Sense. Imagine a church that is "grateful" not "hateful" and this will be our reality.

May the Peace of Christ guard your hearts this day and beyond,
Pastor Deborah



David Steindl-Rast

"Imagine a country whose citizens—maybe even its leaders—are brave, calm, and open towards each other; a country whose people realize that all human beings belong together as one family and must act accordingly; a country guided by Common Sense."

Faith Formation For all Ages

With all that is happening, we are so excited to continue to welcome many new families to First Parish Church! We continue to emphasize the connection between what is happening in worship, and what is happening in Church School for deeper family faith formation. Please reach out to our new members and make them and their little ones feel at home!

Lenten Wednesday Program

Wednesday, March 1st (Ash Wednesday) begins our Wednesday evening series during Lent. For the six weeks of Lent (starting Ash Wednesday) join us at 6 PM for dinner and 7 PM for mindful program or worship experience. All are welcome! Please e-mail Christine Lehoullier if you are a family with little ones who would like to attend and need childcare during service so that we can plan ahead. cedirector@fpc-ucc.org

Church School Teachers WE WANT YOU!

Come help us teach our children, tell your stories, show our kids love, and help us fulfill our baptismal promises to our children and their parents. It matters more than you'll know! We love for our kids to have access to a variety of teachers across the year. Please see Christine Lehoullier, or use the sign-up sheet on the Board outside the CE Office if you are interested in impacting our youth. No prior experience required. All are welcome.

Adult Faith Formation

Have you ever wondered what on earth a particular Bible passage means in today's world? Do you have questions about the Bible? Want to learn a little more about our sacred texts and how they apply to everyday practical life experience? This Bible exploration is for you! Sessions will be held with Pastor Deborah Tuesdays, February and March: 7, 14, and 21, 6:30-8:15 PM. Come see where the Spirit moves us as we grow and learn together.

SHOUT-OUT

I'd like to give a thankful shout-out to all our dedicated, continuing educators and a special warm welcome to our wonderful new helpers, Ashley Cox and Jennifer Robinson, as well as, Ethan Forbush, Nina Paradzick, Malysa Deranian and Jaime Robinson. The children love having these wonderful young church members as role models, teachers, and playmates!



FAITH FORMATION

Board of Stewardship

Being on the Stewardship Board is a tough job, but somebody needs to do it. We know it's not glamorous. We have tried to update our stodgy reputation with a jazzy new moniker. We call ourselves the Stew Crew. On rally day we gave away 100 Grand. Okay, it was not real money. The candy bar was a gimmick, as were the candy Hershey Hugs. They were a small token given to express our thanks to the church family for its generosity. The bite of candy was small but our feelings of gratitude are huge.

The Stewardship Board is charged with gathering the monies to fund all those items listed in the annual church budget. A huge job indeed. Who would be crazy enough to take on such a task? The answer to that are people who trust in faith. We have faith that God is working within the heart of each of our church members. We trust that God has instilled gratitude in each of you who will, in turn, give generously of your own personal God-given gifts. God has bestowed upon each and every one of us blessings and gifts. These gifts are as varied as the people upon whom they are bestowed. What a cornucopia! We see these talents being shared throughout the church, throughout the year. Some have musical talents, some are magicians in the kitchen, some have the proverbial green thumb, some can light up a room simply by their presence, some can build/fix property and some can make money grow. Look around and appreciate all God's gifts being shared with each other. It's a joy to witness. Stewardship is so much more than dollars and cents. Giving of time and talents counts too. Being part of the Stew Crew opened my eyes to these wonders so freely given. Please consider volunteering to join our crew. Your participation and new ideas would be very welcome. It's not ALL about the money.

On behalf of the Stewardship Board we say a big THANK YOU to all of you stewards who so generously share your gifts, whatever those gifts may be. Freely you have received and freely you give.

Submitted by Joyce Pope

Technology Committee

In January the Council approved the formation of a "Technology Committee". This year they will assess all of the aspects of First Parish's technology needs, to include the work started by the Tech Team and moving beyond and into new opportunities for effective technology for today's mission field. If you are interested in any aspect of technology and church today please contact Becca Cobban via email rcobban@rivier.edu or by phone (603) 490-0884.

Board of Christian Outreach and Missions

Missions Giving

The Board of Christian Outreach and Missions is thankful to each of you for sharing so generously with those in our community who are struggling. We can do nothing without your kindness.

Food Basket Program

The Food Basket program is a vital part of our Missions work as a Church. The food basket is kept outside of Currier Hall where services are now being held. The food goes to the Derry Food Pantry and the Upper Room, both important programs supported by your giving. If you have donated canned goods or other food items to this program in the past, thank you. If not, please consider dropping off items in the food basket on Sunday, or anytime the Church is open. Donations are desperately needed and always appreciated.

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. If you would like to support this mission, there is a wish list below. Items can be placed in the container at the Missions table outside of Currier Hall (where the services are currently held), and someone from Missions will deliver them to Liberty House

The list of charities receiving monthly Mission support:

Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM) \$350
 Sonshine Soup Kitchen \$100
 First Baptist Food Pantry \$100
 Community Caregivers \$100
 Derry Friendship Center \$100
 Family Promise \$100
 Pastoral Counseling \$100
 Upper Room \$100
 Pastor Discretionary Fund \$100

In addition to our monthly giving we also gave donations to the Haiti Hurricane Matthew relief (\$350) and the Pinkerton Academy Homeless Program (\$500).

Respectfully submitted,

The Board of Christian Outreach and Missions (BOCOM):

Joe Weaver, Gloria Bingel, Sue Brown, Beth Hunter, Karen Wilson, Kathy Holland, Bart Wetherbee, Fred Bates, Melanie VanSteensburg (Affiliate Member)

Board of Deacons

Friends, the New Year is underway and what a great beginning we have had. The winter Christmas services were an overwhelming success. The family Christmas Eve service was extremely well attended and there was fantastic feedback on the Blue Christmas Service, which continues to be an important and unique offering by our congregation. Additionally, during the string of holiday worship, we experimented with a "Service in the Round" format that received very positive response. The consensus seemed to be that it was a great opportunity to "see" our fellow parishioners during worship. In response to this feedback the Deacons have suggested that this format be used more frequently, perhaps as much as once a month. There will be more to come on this and please reach out to your Deacons with any questions or concerns.

Have you noticed the new candle on the communion table? It is called a Christ Candle. Similar to the candle used during Advent, the lighting of the Christ Candle signifies the light of Christ coming into our presence during worship. As the flame is carried out during the postlude we signify Christ's light going out into the world.

The Deacons would like to extend a great big THANK YOU to our outgoing members who have provided years of service and support to our congregation. At the same time we are given an opportunity to open our arms and hearts to welcome a new group of Deacons who look forward to supporting the services and the congregation in a welcoming and helpful way.

Are you interested in becoming more involved in the church? Are you in need of a new opportunity to join as you depart from a completed term on a different Board? The Board of Deacons still has two openings that we are looking to fill. If you are interested in this opportunity please contact the nominating committee.

Here's to another great month, may February bring peace and joy to us all!

Respectfully submitted by: Ryan Lehoullier, on behalf of the Board of Deacons

Theology of Money

My prayer is that this article will be a springboard to further conversation. Open and honest conversation with one another is one way to build up the body of Christ – the church. What I heard at our recent Annual Meeting regarding the topic of money was often centered on the “fear of not having enough” or other general feelings of economic insecurity. I totally understand. These feelings are quite real. I would encourage us to recognize that these are fears that are based in culture – not based in Biblical teaching. I also heard members speaking for the importance of faith, justice and fairness – values that are based in Biblical teaching.

What does the Bible teach? Jesus tells us to “ask and you shall receive.” Jesus also tells us to “feed the hungry” and “give alms to the poor”. Money – and all of our resources, which include our personal gifts as well – are to be stewarded more like a revolving door rather than like a safe deposit box. Even our culture calls money “currency”, which implies movement, ebb and flow; it is not stagnant; it does not wait.

Imagine our stewardship of money as a revolving door. We give away what we have when we have an excess. And when we need money, we ask. We are a generous people who are motivated to respond to perceived needs. At our Annual Meeting this year we witnessed, not manna falling from the sky, but the generous responses of our own members to a clearly understood and recognized need. As New Englanders we prize our privacy: not asking for attention, not asking for help. AND there is the biblical foundation of asking for what you need.

A few years ago there was over a thousand dollars in the Community Life Fund. It sat there. It sat there for years “just in case.” Friends, we are not “just in case” people. The money was needed in town and that committee voted to give away a significant portion of that money. It was their right at the time. Thanks be to God! Now there is not much money in that fund. That does not then mean that we, as a congregation, would put hardship upon the members of that group. On the contrary! They asked at the Annual Meeting and they received monies in their budget line item.

Another real-life example in our church family was that thousands of dollars sat for years in the Mission Fund. To hold Mission monies in a savings account and watch it is contrary to God’s economy. Mission requires that the money is put to God’s purpose out in the world. When that money is gone – and I pray that it will be – then it is up to the Mission Board to tell us, the Congregation, when there is a need for more. It is currency and it is like the current of a mighty river. “Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream.” (Amos 5:24) The goodness of God flows abundantly when we steward it faithfully.

There is a time for everything under the heavens, my friends. There IS a time to give away and there IS a time to ask for more – so that God’s work on earth is realized.

Let’s talk more about this one day soon.

Pastor Deborah, in response to comments from Annual Meeting 2017

Family Promise

Family Promise continues to do well, with two families recently leaving the program for their own new apartments. Only one family is in the program currently, as is often the case right before the holidays when many homeless families stay with family or friends for a short time. We expect more people to enter shortly after New Year's Day.

Our next hosting week is February 26-March 4. Many thanks to the sixteen members of First Parish who helped out during the year by cooking, hosting, or spending the night at the Family Promise office at Calvary Bible Church. The program could not exist without your support. For those who haven't volunteered, please consider doing so. The families are very appreciative of the Christian caring we provide, and it's very rewarding to participate. Please call me if you'd like to learn more about what's involved.

Randy Brown
Host coordinator for Family Promise

Finance Committee

How are we doing?

Financial Report as of 12/31/16	Received	Budgeted
Pledges (total for the year)	\$204,425	\$210,000
Plate (total for the year)	\$23,256	\$28,000

Submitted by Joyce Pope on behalf of the Stewardship Board and Finance Committee

The Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC)

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION for FIRST PARISH CONGREGATIONAL UCC, EAST DERRY, NH

29 January 2017

One of the duties of The Pastor Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) is to establish a procedure to resolve conflicts between the Pastor and the congregation. During the last five months the PPRC has developed our procedure and, as part of that procedure, has held seven formal meetings and a few informal meetings among ourselves. The formal meetings have included a variety of attendees: those with concerns, Pastor Deborah, and Dr. David Reynolds, a professional mediator from Pastoral Counseling Services, Manchester NH. These meetings have provided an opportunity to listen carefully to all parties. The following is a summary from Dr. Reynolds.

“In my first meeting at First Parish, we listened to Philippians 4: 4-7 in which the final verse says, “And the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” In a series of meetings, I have met with the Council, PPRC (Pastor Parish Relations Committee) & People with Concerns, and PPRC & Pastor Deborah. In listening to the concerns of all people, I think a combination of personal conflicts and congregational conflicts have made moving forward very difficult. In order to move toward reconciliation, listening is the first step.

Now is the time for two-pronged approach towards the next steps of reconciliation. One is to have meetings between individuals with conflicts to listen to each other. The second is to have a group meeting of the congregation to hear the historical and systemic nature of how the congregation perpetuates conflict by ineffective and unhealthy responses to it. In that meeting, I will define clearly healthy responses to conflict.

In all meetings, the emphasis from the Prayer of St. Francis will be our guiding star, “God, make me an instrument of your peace.” I believe if the congregation is willing to hear the congregation or systemic issues playing out, steps toward reconciliation will be possible. I will be working with the PPRC to set the next set of meetings.” **Rev. Dr. David B. Reynolds**

News from the UCC Conference

New Hampshire School of Ministry to offer Pastoral Care Course

Beginning in February 2017, the Rev. Dr. David B. Reynolds, Executive Director of Pastoral Counseling Services in Manchester, NH will offer an online course entitled Pastoral Care: Creating Meaning with Individuals and Communities.

Drawing from Dr. Carrie Doehring's book, *The Practice of Pastoral Care: A Postmodern Approach*, the course will provide students with an understanding of the practice of pastoral care in contemporary ministry settings.

The course will be 12 hours over a six-week period and will include a face-to-face class for 2-3 hours. For further information go to the New Hampshire Conference UCC web site. To register for the course, please contact the Rev. Rebecca Maccini at revrwm@tds.net

Prepared to Serve

This year's "Prepared to Serve" day-long conference will be on February 25, 2017 at Pembroke Academy in Pembroke NH.

Lunch and refreshments are included in the registration fee.

This is an amazing opportunity to meet other UCC'ers from around the state! You can see the schedule and register at www.nhcucc.org the registration fee is \$40. Online registration will be open until February 15th.

For those who do not register by the 15th will have to wait until the day of to register, the registration fee will be \$50.

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ

Plymouth Congregational UCC ONA Celebration - Honoring 25 years of commitment to diversity and Plymouth Congregational UCC's pride of being the first Open and Affirming UCC church in New Hampshire. And further honoring all NH Churches with the same commitment. We are asking each ONA Church in NH that wishes to participate, to select an art piece made by a member of their congregation on the theme "**In Praise of Diversity**".

In Praise of Diversity - An Art Exhibit will be held Saturday, April 29th 2017 to June 30th 2017. Opening Reception will be Saturday April 29th 2017 at 4:30 pm followed by a late supper for the artist.

IMPORTANT DATES:

Entry Deadline April 1, 2017

Drop off: April 22-24, 2017 (9 am - 12 pm)

Opening Reception: April 29, 2017 at 4:30 pm

Supper for Artists following Opening Reception

Show ends: June 30, 2017

Pick up: July 1, 2017

Entry forms must be turned in by April 1, 2017 to **Plymouth Congregational UCC POB 86, Plymouth NH 03264**

“In Praise of Diversity” ENTRY FORM: Deadline: April 1, 2017

Name: _____

Address: _____
City, State, Zip

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

Title: _____

Medium: _____

Artist’s Statement (25 words or less)

How does your work reflect the theme of the exhibit?

By returning this form, I am committing to participate in the PCUCC exhibition.

My artwork will be properly labeled with my name and the title of the artwork on the back

I will pick up work after show on the dates indicated.

I understand that my work will not be insured.

Images of my work may be reproduced for PR

Signature _____

Date _____

Scripture Readings

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

February 5th – 11th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isa 58:1-9a, (9b-12)
Ps 112:1-9 (10)
1 Cor 2:1-12, (13-16)
Matt 5:13-20

February 12th – 18th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 or
Sir 15:15-20
Psalm 119:1-8
1 Corinthians 3:1-9
Matt 5:21-37

February 19th – 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18
Psalm 119:33-40
1 Cor 3:10-11, 16-23
Matt 5:38-48

February 26th – 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Ex 24:12-18
Ps 2 or Ps 99
2 Pet 1:16-21
Matt 17:1-9

Worship Leadership

Deacons & Lay Readers

Deacons of the Month

Julie Turner and Ken Gould

February 5th: Reni Harnden

February 12th: Julie Turner

February 19th: Diana Sweeney

February 26th: Ken Gould

Ushers & Greeters

Weekly Usher – Michael Bryan

February 5th:: Ushers: Diaconate
Greeter(s): Verna Elwell and
Shirley Dickason

February 12th: Ushers: Ken Gould, Brian Williams,
Dee Deranian & Shirley Dickason
Greeter(s): Becky Fleury

February 19th: Ushers: Stanley & Holly Gorgol,
Tom & Andrea Cooper
Greeter(s): Beth Hunter

February 26th: Ushers: Becky Fleury, Verna Elwell
& Sue Hunt
Greeter(s): Betsy McCall

First Parish Church UCC, Nutfield, Other Groups, Holidays in United States

Feb 2017 (Eastern Time)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28 9am - Choir Practice 10am - Worship ~ 11:30am - Annual	30 7pm - Troop 405 ~	31 6:15pm - GS 20321~ 7pm - OA ~ A/B	1 10am - GS Troop 5:30pm - Womens 6:30pm - Deacons ~	2 6:30pm - Cub Scout 7pm - CE Board 7pm - Choir ~ 7pm - Stewardship	3 7pm - AA Serenity	4 5am - Flea Market ~ 4pm - Technology 7:30pm - AA ~
5 SOUPER BOWL 9am - Choir Practice 10am - Worship ~ 11am - CE ~ Nursery 11:30am - Deacon 1:30pm - Troop	12 9am - Choir Practice 10am - Worship ~	13 7pm - Troop 405 ~	14 Valentine's Day 6:15pm - GS 20321~ 6:30pm - Exploring 7pm - Music 7pm - OA ~ A/B	15 10am - GS Troop 5:30pm - Womens 7pm - Council ~	16 6:30pm - Cub Scout 7pm - Choir ~	17 7pm - AA Serenity 5am - Flea Market ~ 7:30pm - AA ~
19 7am - HPC ~ Archive 7am - Youth 9am - Choir Practice 10am - Worship ~ 11:30am - Mission ~ 1:30pm - Troop	20 Presidents' Day 7pm - Troop 405 ~	21 9:30am - Gym in the 6:15pm - GS 20321~ 6:30pm - Exploring 7pm - OA ~ A/B 7pm - Troop 405 ~	22 5:30pm - Womens 7pm - Cub Scout	23 6:30pm - Cub Scout 7pm - Choir ~	24 5pm - Spaghetti 7pm - AA Serenity	25 5am - Flea Market ~ 7:30pm - AA ~
26 9am - Choir Practice 10am - Worship ~	27 7pm - Troop 405 ~	28 6:15pm - GS 20321~ 7pm - Facilities 7pm - OA ~ A/B	1 10am - GS Troop 5:30pm - Womens 6pm - Lenten Supper 7pm - Ash Wed Service	2 6:30pm - Cub Scout 7pm - Choir ~ 7pm - Stewardship	3 7pm - AA Serenity	4 5am - Flea Market ~ 7:30pm - AA ~

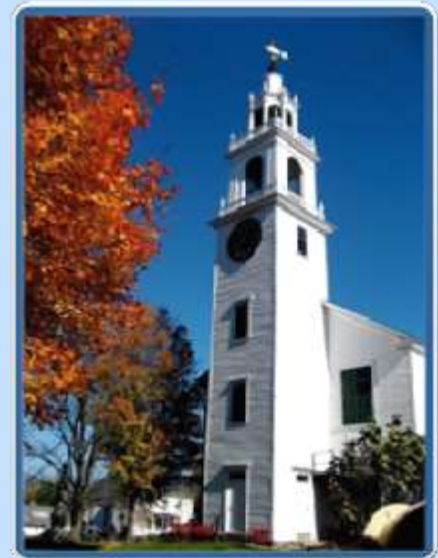
First Parish Congregational Church, UCC

Church Office Hours:

Tuesday-Friday
9:00 am - 4:00 pm

You are most warmly invited:

10:00 am Sunday Worship & Church School
11:00 am Coffee Hour



Check us out on the web or call our office:

www.fpc-ucc.org | 603-434-0628

Email our Administrative Assistant, Hannah Collier:

officemgr@fpc-ucc.org

Email our Senior Pastor and Teacher

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof:

pastordeboraah@fpc-ucc.org

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