

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: What's With the Comma?

Dear Child of God,

In 2004, it was concluded that there was a present and real need for the United Church of Christ to spread its message of extravagant welcome, which continues to historically re-shape our understanding of the Christian faith and proclamation. The UCC responded to this call and challenge with a new identity and marketing campaign to let all others know that anyone could find a spiritual home in the United Church of Christ, be strengthened and nurtured in their faith and be blessed to reach out to others with their God-given gifts and talents.

Today, under one collective identity, we can enthusiastically lift up that the UCC is a welcoming, justice-minded Christian community. At a time when religion is too often portrayed as narrow-minded and exclusive, many are raising their voices for an alternate vision:

- Where God is all-loving and inclusive
- Where the Church of Jesus Christ welcomes and accepts everyone as they are
- Where your mind is nourished as much as your soul
- Where Jesus the healer meets Jesus the revolutionary

Continued on Page 2

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

January 10th, 9-noon

SoulCollage® with Liz Greenberg (p. 8)

January 11-17th

Family Promise Hosting Week (p. 11)

Sunday, January 18th

Youth Snow Tubing Trip (p. 4)

Sunday, February 8th (2nd Sunday)

FPC Boards Meet, 11:30-2pm (p.3)

Wednesday, February 11th

FPC Council Meets (p.3)

Sunday, February 15th (3rd Sunday)

FPC Committees Meet, 11:30-2pm (p. 3)

March 6-7th

CityReach Overnight in Boston (p. 4)

March 15th, 2pm

Reader's Theater: Gospel of Mark (p. 2)



Continued from Page 1:

I was blessed to be in the first group of trainers for the "God is still speaking" orientation. I went to numerous churches in our Association and talked with them about this "new image" that the UCC was working on.

What I discovered was history, rather than anything "new". I discovered that the UCC claimed roots going back to 1620 when forebears of the United Church of Christ who were seeking spiritual freedom, prepared to leave Europe for the New World. Later generations would know them as the Pilgrims. Their pastor, John Robinson, urged them as they departed to keep their minds and hearts open to new ways. God, he said, "has yet more light and truth to break forth out of his holy Word."

In the 1630's Congregational polity took shape – looking a lot like democracy, which later spread into the politics of the land. In the 1700's Congregationalists are among the first Americans to take a stand against slavery. The Rev. Samuel Sewall writes the first anti-slavery pamphlet in America, "The Selling of Joseph." In 1773 a young member of the Old South congregation in Boston, Phillis Wheatley, became the first published African American author. In 1785 Lemuel Haynes was the first African American ordained by a Protestant denomination. He became a world-renowned preacher and writer. In 1810 America's first

foreign mission society, the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions (ABCFM) was formed by Congregationalists in Massachusetts.



In 1853 Antoinette Brown was the first woman since New Testament times ordained as a Christian minister, and perhaps the first woman in history elected to serve a Christian congregation as pastor. In 1943 Evangelical and Reformed theologian Reinhold Niebuhr preached a sermon that introduced the world to the now famous Serenity Prayer. In 1972 the UCC's Golden Gate Association ordained the first openly gay person as a minister in a mainline Protestant denomination: the Rev. William R. Johnson.

This "new" campaign traces its roots into our far-reaching history but it doesn't live there. Gracie Allen, the wife of George Burns, said, "**Never place a period where God has placed a comma.**" What this means, of course, is that God is still speaking. A movement and a comma are born!

Thanks be to God! Surely more light and truth will break forth!

Pastor Deborah

An Exciting Biblical Adventure this Lent!

March 15, 2015 - the Fourth Sunday of Lent - at 2:00 pm there will be a Reader's Theatre of the Gospel of Mark, in its entirety. Reading the Gospel of Mark from start to finish takes approximately 2 hours, and is an exciting and meaningful experience. With Reader's Theatre, there is no memorization; simply reading from a script with appropriate emotion. We will have two rehearsals on the Sundays prior to the event, to review staging.

My prayer is for this to be an ecumenical production, with readers from all of our Derry area churches. If you would like to participate, I must have your name by **January 6, Epiphany!** And whether or not you decide to participate, I hope that you will come and hear "the Gospel According to Mark" in one sitting. All will be blessed.

Meetings for the First Quarter of 2015

Our Mission Statement says that First Parish is "a community of faith built upon a firm foundation of worship, prayer and education." When one looks at the calendar, one might think that we are built upon busy schedules and meetings. What if we rearranged our schedules more according to faith formation and fellowship? What if we figured out a way to meet AND to come together for faith and fellowship?

Lent begins Ash Wednesday, February 18. I would like to run a series of Wednesday evening Faith Formation Gathering starting on Ash Wednesday. The services last year were well-attended for the most part. Taizé was not a big hit. The format I use in Communication Cohort seems to work well. You are invited to bring me your ideas, if you have them. In order to accommodate Wednesday evenings for Faith Formation, I propose that we prepare an alternative meeting schedule for the months of February and March.

The Bible is full of examples of Jesus eating with his friends and followers. This proposal allows us precious time together to break bread in the literal sense of the word and to be in one another's company while conducting sacred church work.

This plan will improve our communication and contact between Boards and Committees.

Proposal:

All **Boards** will meet the 2nd Sunday and all **Committees** meet the 3rd Sunday, using the following schedule:

- 11:30 Potluck lunch: Boards/Committees eat lunch at their respective table and talk informally about their agenda.
- 12:00 Clean-up (Important: **Committees** clean up on **Board** Sunday and vice-versa)
- 12:10 Each Board/Committee convenes the formal conversation (either in Currier or in another room in the church)
- 1:15 Boards/Committees conclude their meeting
- 1:20 All Boards/Committees reconvene in Currier and spend 30 minutes of organized sharing.
- 1:50 Conclude and breakdown Currier

In February, I suggest that Council meet the 2nd Wednesday. (Ash Wednesday is the following Wednesday.) In March, I suggest that Council meet the 2nd (or 3rd) Tuesday.

At this time, it is uncertain whether or not we will do a Communication Cohort during Lent. As we near the end of Lent, an official survey will go out to everyone, with questions regarding this process. At that time, you will be able to provide your feedback, which will be invaluable in assessing the level of success of this new schedule. If you have any questions, please see me personally.

May the Peace of Christ be with you!

Pastor Deborah

Christian Education Updates

Thank You for an Awesome Advent Workshop!

This year's annual Advent Workshop was a great success. Thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers who contributed supplies, food, helped set-up or clean-up, or supervised an activity table during the event. May the spirit of Advent hope, peace, joy, and love continue to abide with you all year long!



Upcoming Youth Events

Stay tuned for more info on these upcoming events:

January 18: Snow Tubing

March 6-7: CityReach Overnight in Boston

SPARK (Pre-K to 5th Graders) Update

Spark workshops resume with a large group Gathering Sunday on January 4th, when all pre-K through 5th graders will learn about **prayer**. As we transition to a new year, we are also transitioning from Old Testament to New Testament Spark lessons, with our first story about Jesus and John the Baptist. Are you willing to help with the Spark program? There are many ways to get involved - please see Lianne Deranian after church (or email lianned@myfairpoint.net) to get in on the fun!

Session Focus	Date	Pre-K – 2 nd Grade	3 rd -5 th Grade
SESSION 4: JESUS & JOHN THE BAPTIST LUKE 3:1-18, MATT. 3:13-17	Week 1 (1/4)	Large Group Gathering: "Why Pray?"	
	Week 2 (1/11)	Music	Games
	Week 3 (1/18)	Art	Music
	Week 4 (1/25)	Drama	Art
	Week 5 (2/1)	Science	Drama
	Week 6 (2/8)	Video	Science
	Week 7 (2/15)	Games	Video
	No Class (2/22)	School Vacation Week: Nursery Care Only	
SESSION 5: HOLY WEEK & EASTER MATTHEW 21:1-11, 27:32-66, 28:1-10	Week 1 (3/1)	Large Group Gathering: "Learning about Lent"	
	Week 2 (3/8)	Cooking	Games
	Week 3 (3/15)	Science	Cooking
	Week 4 (3/22)	Art	Science
	Week 5 (3/29)	Games	Art
	No Class (4/5)	Happy Easter! Nursery Care Only	

Diaconate Update



Happy New Year! The Diaconate would like to thank everyone who participated in our Christmas pageant and Christmas Eve services. As always, please let us know if you have any questions or comments with respect to the worship services. We want to hear from you.

It has been a full year that Pastor Deborah has been with us, and it has been a blessing and a joy that she has been teaching and leading us as we grow in faith. Consistent with our Mission Statement, she continues to guide us as we become a stronger "community of faith built upon a firm foundation of worship, prayer and education." Pastor Deborah challenges us to be a truly welcoming church. Reach out to those around you, and introduce them to others, too.

As we ring in a new year, we look forward to new Diaconate members. We are thankful for all of the Deacons that have served this past year, and will certainly miss those that have completed their terms. If you have any questions about what we do, please contact us. We meet on the first Wednesday of each month. The agenda is usually very full, and never boring. We have a lot of laughs, too.

Submitted by: The Board of Deacons
 Reni Harnden, Steve Davis, Sandy Carter, Diane Gordon, Cyndi Gray, Pat Plouff, Diana Sweeney, Julie Turner, & Brian Williams

Advent Reflections

Advent 2014 was filled with **HOPE**, **PEACE**, **JOY** and **LOVE**! Week by week the children helped Pastor Deborah to "fill the stable" with witnesses to the baby's birth. We also watched as the Kings got closer and closer.

On Sunday December 21 we received a gift in the form of the Jerusalem flame from Boy Scout Troop 405. From this flame all the Advent Candle Wreath was lit on Christmas Eve. Also on the 21st the Senior Choir, under the inspired direction of Sue Handy, presented a Christmas Cantata. Over two hundred people were blessed by the music of the blessing story of Christ's birth. The Sacred Dancers danced and one of our own youth, Ella Simpson, sang a solo. The entire worship service was a blessing for one and all!

On Christmas Eve, there was a 4:30 family service. The Youth Group told the story as our little ones, dressed in wonderful costumes, acted it out. We had services of "Lessons and Carols" at 7:00 and at 10:00. At the 7:00 service the Senior Choir sang and at 10:00 the Chime Choir played and we heard Ben Allen play trumpet, accompanied by his mom, Debbie Gline-Allen. All services were filled with joy and with candlelight. Over 400 people attended these services. The highlight for me was handing a candle to each and every person in attendance.

What a joy! Immanuel! God is with us!

- Submitted by: Pastor Deborah

2014 Capital Campaign Committee

Expand our Present; Preserve our Heritage; Ensure our Future

The Capital Campaign officially wrapped up on Decision Sunday on October 5. However, some additional commitments have continued to come in, and the campaign will continue over the next 3 years to allow new folks to participate. To date, **\$799,496.94** have been committed by our generous congregation, thus meeting our goal of \$800,000, and over \$71,000 has already been received. We are now poised to start our rehabilitation work.

In June we applied for an LCHIP (Land and Community Heritage Investment Program) grant from the state of New Hampshire in the amount of \$100,000 to assist with the foundation project estimated to cost \$447,000. Unfortunately, we did not get the grant as the state's budget for this program was unexpectedly cut from \$4.5 million to \$2.5 million, thus affecting the number of projects the LCHIP program could support. During a debriefing meeting with the committee, which has not yet been scheduled, we will get some insight into why we were not selected.

This unfortunate failure to obtain a grant impacts our available funds to start the foundation project. At the November Council meeting, Paul Lindemann of the Building

Rehabilitation Committee presented the current status and suggestions for various options for moving forward.

After much discussion, the Council voted to postpone the start of the foundation project until 2016 to allow for additional funds to be received through the Capital Campaign. During the next year, more complete planning will take place on the staging of the foundation and connector projects and the affected ancillary systems. For example, it might be possible to realize some financial and time-saving by combining the foundation and connector/elevator projects. Numerous details need to be vetted to ensure our rehabilitation work addresses our needs and desires as best possible. Also, Council will continue to look at potential funding options, from a bank loan to outside fund raising, as well as how to best manage the project work. Exciting times are ahead and careful planning will ensure we make the most of our campaign funds.

Gratefully,

Your Capital Campaign Committee:

Beth Hunter, Co-Chair; Bill Mann, Co-Chair; Alec Cobban; Becky Fleury; Sue Handy; Nancy Heywood; Margie Ives; Betsy McCall; Pat Plouff; Linda Webber; Wendy Staggs, Moderator; Pastor Deborah

Thank You, Capital Campaign Committee!

It's long overdue, but I'd like to thank all those who were involved in the work of the Capital Campaign Publicity Committee. From those who developed the terrific video to the people who took on roles to bring to life our First Parish Carol, your dedication and commitment are much appreciated. I hesitate to name you all by name because I'm sure I would forget someone. Just know that pitching in and helping the way you did was a blessing!

Submitted by: Sue Handy, Music Director

Who's Who at First Parish: Helen Batchelder



Every year when our various committees discuss budgets, planning for projects and expenses the next year, the "Batchelder Fund" enters into the discussion. This fund was named for Helen Batchelder, who was a member of FPC in the mid-1900's. She was extremely active in the church, Daughters of the American Revolution, and in Derry (Citizen of the Year), where as chairman of the School Board she was instrumental in the founding of South Range School in 1966, and a major addition to Hood Junior High School.

In her will, Ms. Batchelder bequeathed \$38,000 to FPC. On an annual basis, the interest from this account is used for organ repairs, the Historical Preservation Committee, and on a four year rotating basis: Board of Christian Education, The Social Action World Service Board, The Board of Trustees or the Diaconate Board.

Thanks to Ms. Batchelder's foresight and her love of FPC, she placed this bequest in her will for present and future generations. This generosity has enabled us to expand and carry out our church mission. We are blessed to have members and friends who have been committed to the long-term financial needs of our church.



What's This?

Items from the Historical Preservation Committee Archives of Artifacts & Ephemera

Congratulations to Julie Turner for being the first to recognize last month's *What's This?*, the mold

used to make the chandelier globes in the Sanctuary. We replaced several broken globes recently, through a Connecticut company called Grand Light. The hollow space in the mold holds and shapes the heated glass, and then the fluted edge and the etched designs on the sides of the globes are added.

Our next "What's This?" item is a collection of very small pins. Do you know the significance of these pins, or do you have a similar pin tucked away in a

jewelry box? Any ideas? Enter your guesses in the envelope on the bulletin board across from the Archive Room in the Noyes Building, or give your guess to Lindsey in the church office. The answer will be posted next month!

- Submitted by Janet Wetherbee, on behalf of the Historic Preservation Committee: Janice Braley, Marilyn Ham, Nancy Heywood, Paul Lindemann, Ginny True, Janet Wetherbee

Nominating Committee

Our goal is to strive for 100% occupancy of all positions in the church. If you would like more information about serving on a board or committee during 2015, please contact either the chairperson or a member of the Nominating Committee. New members will be confirmed at the January Annual Meeting.



Board or Committee	Number of Vacancies	Meeting Time	Chairperson
Christian Outreach and Mission Board	2	3 rd Sunday @ 11:30am	Gloria Bingel & Joe Weaver
Community Life Cmte	3	Sunday Mornings	Connie Cox
Facilities Board	1	4 th Wednesday @ 7pm	Bill Wheeler
Music Ministry Board	1	2 nd Tuesday @ 7pm	(Sue Handy)
Youth Ministry Cmte	1	2 nd Wed. @ 6:30pm	Nancy Magee, Reni Hamden

Your Nominating Committee:

Bill Armstrong 432-5446, Paul Dionne 244-8360, Carl and Gail Hepworth 434-2053, Sarah Keller 425-1226 and Joe Merrill 247-3051.

Membership Committee



We are looking forward to January 11th when we welcome our first new members of 2015. **Perhaps you would like to be one of them?** If you are interested in

joining First Parish Church, please contact Pastor Deborah as soon as possible.

Each week there are several guests worshipping among us. Please introduce yourself and invite them to sign the yellow card in the pews and the guestbook in the narthex and walk with them to coffee hour. Along the way, you can mention the church's fascinating history and show them the artifacts. Thank you for your support!

Membership Committee: Andrea Cooper, Ruth Honnors, Suzanne Hunt, Nancy Cheyne, Sandy Carter, Carol Guerrin

SoulCollage® Event

SoulCollage® is a fun, creative, intuitive and absorbing process of creating cards with collated images. Liz Greenberg recently returned from an intensive weekend workshop in which she was trained to share this process with others. Her excitement and passion is overflowing and she would love to share her enthusiasm and knowledge with her church family by offering a 3-hour introductory workshop from 9-noon on **Saturday, January 10th** in A/B. SoulCollage® is stress-free fun, with all materials provided.

Advanced registration is necessary: please RSVP by e-mailing Liz at lizgreenberg26@gmail.com.

From the Pastor's Desk: Money Matters

Merry Christmas to you! I pray that you and yours are enjoying a very blessed and sacred Christmas Season together. The Kings will arrive to see the baby King on January 6. The season of Epiphany is full of potential and possibility.

We have arrived at the end of our fiscal calendar, as well. This year we conducted a very successful Capital Campaign, achieving our \$800,000 goal for the rehabilitation projects. Statistically, churches who run successful Capital Campaigns have concurrent successful pledge drives. The idea of a Capital Campaign is to use monies from assets, whereas we pledge from our income. I hope we did enough education in that regard. We seem to be experiencing an unfortunate shortfall this year. The pledged amount to First Parish was \$185K, but we have only received \$160K. This is only 86% of our target. We will need your help to catch up.

In twelve step programs like AA, one of the valued traditions states: "We are self-supporting through our own contributions." The fact is that as a church, we, too, are "self-supporting." Three-quarters of our income is financial support given by members and friends on or because of Sunday morning.

Jesus says: "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back" Luke 6:38 (NRSV).

A MESSAGE FROM THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY:

If you want contributions to be included in your tax returns for 2014, they must be at the church on or before **January 11, 2015** and should be dated **December 31, 2014**. The books will be closed **Monday, January 12, 2014**. Thank you!

- submitted by Pat Crowell
(rpcrowell@myfairpoint.net)

"A clergy person once announced to his congregation: 'I've got good news and I've got bad news. The good news is that we have all the money we need to balance our budget and continue doing our mission work... And the bad news is that the money is still in your pockets.'"

Can you help? First Parish Congregational Church does great work here on the hill in East Derry and in the community below. In a variety of ways we feed the hungry, we help the helpless and the homeless. We provide hospitality through spaghetti and Family Promise. We welcome the stranger and the outcast. We visit the sick and the imprisoned. All of these things, Jesus calls us to do for "the least of these." Your financial contribution is needed and it is, of course, tax deductible. Please consider adding to your financial support of First Parish. God loves a cheerful giver! (Yes, the Bible really does say that! 2 Cor. 9:7)

Leaving you with Hope, Peace, Joy and Love,

Pastor Deborah

Family Promise Update



The Family promise program is making a big difference in the lives of Rockingham county homeless families. The program is thriving, with a full contingent of 4 families and a new Director. **Maggie Doughty** previously served as the program's caseworker, but has now stepped in to fill the Director position on an interim basis, and she is doing an absolutely fabulous job. The Board of Directors for the program, on which I sit, is currently weighing various staffing options regarding both the Director and Caseworker positions, but in the meantime, the program is functioning more smoothly than ever.

The annual fundraiser gala was a great success and raised over \$21,000 for the program. FP is financially sound, the 11 host churches are all actively engaged, and the families are investigating their options for permanent housing while working or looking for work or attending school.

The next week that our church is scheduled to co-host, with People's United Methodist church of Fremont, is **Jan 11-17**. This takes place at the Calvary Baptist church just a mile or so down East Derry Road from our own church. **If you can help out that week by cooking and delivering a meal, spending a few hours in the evening with the families as host, or spending the night there, please call me at 603-612-0489, or email me at sueandrandybrown@gmail.com.** If you'd like to keep up with news on the program or homelessness in our area, or want to contribute in any way, please check out the website: http://familypromisegrc.org/Family_Promise_GRC.

Thanks for all of your past support, and for whatever help you can provide in 2015.

- Submitted by Randy Brown

Thank You!

Senior Choir, Jeff, and Ella:

Through many extra rehearsals, repetitive reviews of sections of music, and just plain "can we go home yet?" thoughts, you hung in there and brightened the Christmas of 2014 for the FPC congregation, as well as for me. Your never-wavering commitment to the Dec. 21st cantata is more appreciated than you'll ever know. Thanks you for all you do all year 'round, but especially what you accomplished during this venture. I am honored to serve you.

Thanks for sharing your musical gifts with FPC!

- Submitted by: Sue Handy, Music Director

Brrrr! It's Cold Outside!

We continue to collect items to donate to unsheltered homeless individuals. There will be a bin in the lobby area near the office for donations. We are in need of the following items: gloves, thick socks, toiletries (small trial sizes) including lotion, body wash, toothbrushes, toothpaste and chapstick. If you have any questions, please contact Lindsey in the church office. Please help us to help others make it through this harsh winter.

Scripture Readings

January 4th – Second Sunday After Christmas

Jeremiah 31:7-14
Ephesians 1:3-6,15-19a
Matthew 2:13-15,19-23
Psalm 84 or 84:1-8

January 11th – First Sunday After The Epiphany

Genesis 1:1-5
Psalm 29
Acts 19:1-7
Mark 1:4-11

January 18th – Second Sunday After The Epiphany

1 Samuel 3:1-10(11-20)
Psalm 139:1-5, 12-17
1 Corinthians 6:12-20
John 1:43-51

January 25th – Third Sunday After The Epiphany

Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Psalm 62: 6-14
1 Corinthians 7: 29-31
Mark 1:14-20

Worship Leadership

Ushers & Greeters

Weekly Usher – Michael Bryan

Jan. 4th: Ushers: Diaconate
Greeter: Verna Elwell

Jan. 11th: Ushers: Ken Gould, Bill Burke
Dee Deranian, Shirley Dickason
Greeters: Mark Pingree & Nancy Magee

Jan. 18th: Ushers: Stanley & Holly Gorgol,
Tom & Andrea Cooper
Greeter: Ruth Honnors

Jan. 25th: Ushers: Rod & Sue Hunt,
Becky Fleury, Verna Elwell
Greeter: Shirley Dickason

Nursing Home Friends

Patricia Rankin & Theo Johnson,
Hillsborough Country Nursing Home
Phil Guertin,
Pleasant Valley Nursing Home

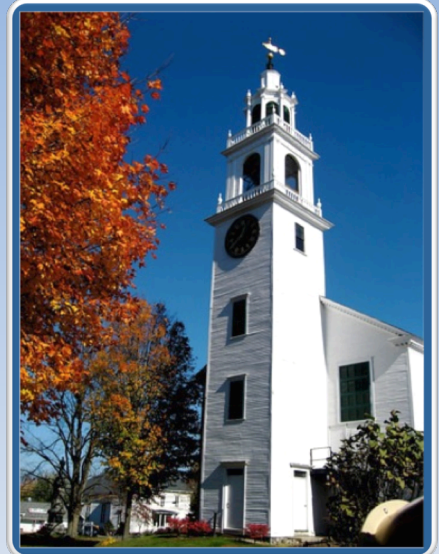
First Parish Congregational Church, UCC

NEW Church Office Hours:

Monday: Closed
Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 9 am – 4 pm
Thursday: 10:30 am – 6 pm

You are most warmly invited:

10 am Sunday Worship & Church School
11 am Coffee Hour



Check us out on the web:

www.fpc-ucc.org

Email our office manager, Lindsey Roman:

officemgr@fpc-ucc.org

Email our pastor, the Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof:

pastordeborah@fpc-ucc.org

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United Church of Christ
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january