

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,

"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy!" is one of my favorite verses from Christmas Eve. "Good tidings of great joy!" This is the essence of Christmas Eve. But what if this was a message for us to remember throughout the year? What if we put energy into creating, spreading and otherwise sharing good tidings of great joy with one another and the world throughout the Winter months into Spring and then into Summer and well into Fall and then into Advent again? And what if the good tidings of great joy led us to do just a little bit more this year than we did last year? Just a little bit more than last year. It wouldn't be that hard to do.

The great modern mystic Howard Thurman penned a powerful poem entitled "The Work of Christmas". When we take responsibility for actually receiving the gift that is proclaimed in "good tidings of great joy", there is much work to be done in our world.

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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

Sunday, January 8th

Jeff's Last day ☺

Loaf and Ladle with Mission Board

Tuesday, January 10th

Dining for Dollars at Applebee's in Derry from 4-9 pm

Sunday, January 18th

Council Meeting at 7 pm

Sunday, January 22nd

Congregational Information Meeting from 11:30 am - 1 pm

Sunday, January 29th

Annual Meeting from 11:30 am - 1 pm



From the Pastor's Desk Continued

This poem speaks to this reality:

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
 To find the lost,
 To heal the broken,
 To feed the hungry,
 To release the prisoner,
 To rebuild the nations,
 To bring peace among people,
 To make music in the heart.

What if we made “good tidings of great joy” our mantra this year? We have received those good tidings and we have much that gives us great joy. So what if we, in like manner, become purveyors of great joy and give “good tidings” away? The lost, the broken, the hungry are all around us. What if we find them and do one small thing that they may find their way, or heal their brokenness or fill their hunger? Prisoners are not always behind bars. There are unfortunates who are jailed by addiction or loneliness or greed. What if we did one small thing to release them from their barred and confining reality? What if we made decisions to build up our neighbors or bring peace to another or make music in the heart of another?

The songs of the angels, the star in the sky, the kings and the shepherds were all there that sacred night when “good tidings of great joy” was born. It’s up to us now to carry on this sacred tradition. The work of Christmas now begins. It’s up to us!

Merry January Christmas!

In Hope, Peace, Joy and Love,

Pastor Deborah

Adult Faith Formation

We had an amazing group of 15 for the Old Testament Exploring the Bible series. Each session began with “one new thing that you learned” and “what is one question that you have?” This was an incredibly powerful mechanism for sharing of thoughts and ideas! We didn’t always answer the questions and many times, one question led to another. And that was the sacred WONDER of it all. We grew to trust one another in new ways and each one of us grew in personal faith. Thanks be to God!

Mark your calendars: “Exploring the Bible: New Testament” will be held in February and March, with a break for Ash Wednesday, March 1. Dates for this Exploring the Bible, III are: **February 7, 14, 21 and March 7, 14, 21.** (Please email pastordeborah@fpc-ucc.org to reserve a book.)

Please note: there is no class the week of February 26 because Ash Wednesday is March 1.

News from the Council

Council accepted the Nominating Committee's recommendation that Fred Merrill serve as the interim Moderator until the next Annual Meeting. We would also like to thank Chris O'Brien for fulfilling the role of interim Moderator since the Moderator resignation. We appreciate his calm demeanor, open willingness and the ability to keep our meeting on task while giving everyone the opportunity to share their viewpoints and opinions. Thank you Chris!!!

Council agreed that they would hire and work with Dr. David Reynolds to assist Council in the evaluation and improvement in the functionality of the Council Meetings and also to name and manage the undercurrents felt at FPC. To date Dr Reynolds has met with various groups on three occasions. He is scheduled to meet with Pastor Deborah on Wednesday, January 4th, 2017.

Board of Christian Education

After a wonderful term as Interim CE Director, Katie Cobban has left the position to complete her schooling. Christine Lehoullier will be filling in the position until we find an Interim Associate Pastor. Please welcome and support Christine as she embraces her new position here at First Parish. You may contact Christine through the CE Director email (cedirector@fpc-ucc.org).

Board of Stewardship

Once again another holiday season has come and gone, and we are facing the unlimited prospects of a new year. With regard to stewardship, so many thoughts come to mind. Remembering that stewardship means so much more than financial stewardship, here's what I'm thinking about.

At a recent council meeting one of our newest members reminded us that the church is us. We are the church. The building, i.e. the meeting house is not the church. The church is the congregation, the people. I was reminded of a statement I read sometime in the past year and unfortunately I have forgotten to whom it can be credited. The quote went something like this: "We should remember that these buildings are places of worship and not objects of worship".

Having said that, there is much good work going on right now with the goal of rehabilitating the historic meetinghouse. The actual physical construction work, the marketing and fundraising are all examples of stewardship which should be applauded and our thanks and gratitude are extended to all who have assisted and continue to assist in these efforts. One of the more recent developments is a proposal to create a separate 501c3 organization that will open the fundraising effort to a much broader cross section of the wider community. Keep your ears peeled, more information will be forthcoming shortly.

One thought leads to another and I then remembered the quote from President John F. Kennedy to "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." What if we took this concept to heart with regard to First Parish Church, i.e. "Ask not what FPC can do for you, ask what you can do for FPC"? And tying back to the previous paragraph, FPC is not the building; First Parish Church is the people. What we do in caring for each other is stewardship. If we open our eyes and ears to the needs of our fellow parishioners, what good things might happen? And let's not forget our pastor. She reminded us at that same council meeting in her pastor's report, that she is a member of the congregation too. She does so much for us in times of need, and at all times, it behooves us as good stewards to consider what we could do for Pastor Deborah.

So one more thought, this one inspired by a line in a television show we were watching in recent weeks. The character in the program asked a student: "What makes this country a great country? You do." So consequently, I ask, "What makes FPC a great church? You do." And that applies to each and every one of us. We all have something to offer. For some it will be a lot, for some a little, and for some just being present at Sunday worship. Every single positive thought and action contributes to what makes First Parish a great church.

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Board of Stewardship

And finally, I will mention the name of a man who thoroughly exemplified the stewardship spirit. I only really got to know Glenn Pope in the last couple of years as members on the stewardship board. Glenn was someone who when he saw something that needed doing he did it. When he was asked to help out with something he helped. Not only that he was one half of a couple, along with Joyce, who have a story to compare with any work of fiction you've ever read. We will miss you, Glenn. Rest in peace.

Submitted by John Bartel, a member of the Stewardship Board who are Margie Ives, Carl Hepworth, Joyce Pope and Sue Weaver.



Another Perspective

One of my favorite Santa images is of the jolly old man asleep in his recliner exhausted after his busy December schedule. His elves are nowhere to be seen- presumably equally tired and catching a few winks themselves. First Parish has been a flurry of activity this holiday season too. All the FPC elves have given generously of their time to church activities in addition to their regular household, career and family obligations. Take a moment to think of all that was accomplished.

In addition to FOUR Sunday worship services, we had THREE Christmas Eve services AND a Tuesday evening Blue Christmas service. The Pastor and Deacon elves made the advent season holy and meaningful for us. The Music elves led us in carols in addition to the glorious anthems during worship. The Chime Choir elves entertained us- twice. The Advent Workshop elves made soup, bread and even crafts for us. Mission elves provided 160 gifts to brighten many Christmases. WOW!

Don't forget about our customary elves working behind the scenes. We have Sunday school teacher elves, coffee server elves, spaghetti supper elves, decorating elves, set up and take down elves, the clean and polish elves and even our snow mover elves were called into service. I'm sure I've forgotten to mention some of the unseen elves but their works are wondrous too. We are so blessed at First Parish to have so many elves who joyfully gave of their time to make that magical Christmas happen. The use of one's time and talents to glorify God is a generous, and much appreciated, form of stewardship.

Thank you ALL.

Submitted by Joyce Pope on behalf of the Stewardship Board

Board of Deacons

As you receive this you are still recovering, or perhaps, still celebrating the holidays. It is a wonderful time of the year and we have much to be so grateful for. We have been blessed this season with our many talents within the church family. The vocal and chime choirs-how lucky are we that our church excels with these glorious additions to our services. Their music is enlightening, transformative and thoughtful as we reflect on the words that we hear and that we sing. For me, it always brings back memories singing the Advent hymns as a child and makes me remember all those times with our loved ones, many of whom we can no longer see but certainly feel them around us. We are a grateful nation to enjoy that freedom of Christianity.

Children bring us such joy in their Sunday morning messages and presentations. Although some of the answers are rather riotous it is their innocence that we wrap around us. The children's choir is lovely and we certainly thank Sue Handy for reining them in this exciting Christmas season. I suspect it is no easy task.

The food we enjoy? From the people making after church coffee to the soups and breads and all the pleasures in between, we express our thanks to you in the kitchen. (Our waist lines, not so much!)

The decorations are second to none. They remind us of the simple pleasures of being such an old church, high on the hill, nearly three hundred years old. How many other places of worship can brag about that longevity and New England simplicity and sustenance? And yet we are able to hold it together which brings us to another area of gratitude and that is YOU. Through thick and thin our congregation has always been there. We rally, we rejoice, we put our arms around those who are grieving and we live together, not in the literal sense but in the community sense.

Yes, we have much to be grateful for. As your Deacons we wish you the best the holidays have to offer and a happy new year with many blessings but, most of all, our thanks to God for bringing us together.

Thank You Note

Dear First Parish Family

How can I thank my church family for all the kindnesses shown to me and my family during Glenn's quick illness, then passing? Whatever I needed was supplied so graciously and lovingly. Every card (and hug too) gave comfort and reassurance. I am truly blessed to have you all as my friends.

With Deepest Gratitude,
Joyce Pope

Board of Christian Outreach and Missions

Angel Tree Gift

Each year at Christmas time, Missions sponsors the Angel Tree program which assists families in need providing a little more Christmas joy for their children. The program also provides Christmas joy to adults who are unable to provide for themselves. This year through your generous donations to the Angel Tree we were able to provide gifts for 17 families and 16 individual Community Caregiver clients. All together you provided 160 gifts. Thank you for donating to this program.



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.

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. Below is our 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).

Liberty House

On January 8th Missions will be hosting Keith Howard, Executive Director of Liberty House. Keith will be available after service in Currier Hall to meet with us and answer questions. Missions will be having a Loaf & Ladle (bread & soup) in Currier for those interested in speaking with Keith about the Liberty House program.



Keith Howard,
Executive Director of Liberty House

Board of Christian Outreach and Missions

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

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

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 11/30/16	Received	Budgeted
Pledges year to date	\$181,541	\$192,500
Plate year to date	\$18,672	\$25,667
Try A Tithe offering	\$5,182	

In December we are inundated with appeals for our money. Campaign ads are finally a thing of the past. Now all the charities get their turn to compete for our attention. Veterans groups, children's groups, animal rights groups, hospitals, disaster relief efforts and so many others are all crying out for donations. All these are worthwhile and provide necessary services to those in need. It's wonderful and heartwarming to know these groups are working so diligently. Please donate to any or all. But also please remember to look close to home. First Parish Church does wonderful work too. If you are writing end-of-year checks to worthwhile causes, look no further. First Parish is a very worthwhile charity and is also tax deductible.

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

Fundraising Committee

Hannaford's Fundraiser Program

Our weekly re-load order is running between \$1000 & \$3000 weekly, earning the church \$50-\$150/week--just to buy groceries we would buy anyway! Remember you can load any amount up to \$500 on your Hannaford's gift card by cash or check and your card will be ready for grocery purchases by Tuesday. You can reload or purchase cards every Sunday following church. Any questions, see Liz Greenberg or Joyce Pope.

Thank you, everyone, for participating and making these programs such a great success!

Welcoming New Members of Fundraising Committee

We would love to welcome more people to this committee to help brainstorm and implement fundraising and fun & fellowship ideas/programs! I am also looking for a few more people to assist on Sunday mornings with accepting checks and recording reload orders so I can participate in hand chime choir. If you have an interest, contact Liz Greenberg at [\(585\)472-0458](tel:5854720458) or lizgreenberg26@gmail.com

Submitted by Liz Greenberg

Dining for Dollars

We have scheduled another popular First Parish dining out event at Applebee's in Derry! **January 10th, 4-9 PM, You must bring the flyer with you!!** This is a great opportunity to spend time with friends and family during dinner and also help raise money for the church. ALL are welcome!

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

How to "Turn Tippers into Tither's"

Paul Nickerson Stewardship Workshop

"How to 'Turn Tippers into Tithers'" has helped many congregations develop a year-round process of stewardship training. Join Paul Nickerson on Saturday, January 21, 2017 to learn how to become a church that funds the vision God has for your congregation.

For more information on this workshop send an email to events@nhcucc.org

PLAN to Attend: Prepared to Serve February 25, 2017 - workshops galore! Fellowship with other NH UCC churches!

Pembroke Academy; Pembroke, NH

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*

January 1st – 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Eccl 3:1-13
Ps 8
Rev 21:1-6a
Matt 25:31-46

January 8th – 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isa 42:1-9
Ps 29
Acts 10:34-43
Matt 3:13-17

January 15th – 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isa 49:1-7
Ps 40:1-11
1 Cor 1:1-9
John 1:29-42

January 22nd – 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isa 9:1-4
Ps 27:1, 4-9
1 Cor 1:10-18
Matt 4:12-23

January 29th – February 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Micah 6:1-8
Ps 15
1 Cor 1:18-31
Matt 5:1-12

Worship Leadership

Deacons & Lay Readers

Deacons of the Month

Reni Harnden & Cindy Pingree

January 1st: Cindy Pingree

January 8th: Mackenzie Kittery

January 15th: Libby Keller

January 22nd: Beth Hunter

January 29th: Diane Breeden

Ushers & Greeters

Weekly Usher – Michael Bryan

January 1st: Ushers: Diaconate

Greeter(s): Verna Elwell and
Shirley Dickason

January 8th: Ushers: Ken Gould, Brian Williams,
Dee Deranian & Shirley Dickason
Greeter(s): Connie Cox

January 15th: Ushers: Stanley & Holly Gorgol,
Tom & Andrea Cooper
Greeter(s): Diane Breeden

January 22nd: Ushers: Becky Fleury, Verna Elwell
& Sue Hunt
Greeter(s): Lisa & Wayne Hall

January 29th: Ushers: John Bartel,
Kevin & Diane Gordon
Greeter(s): Mark Pingree
& Nancy Magee

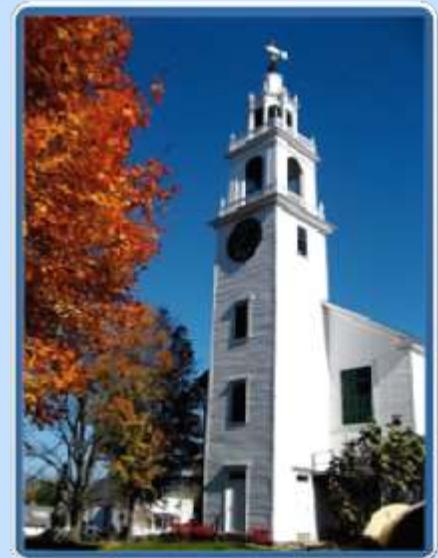
First Parish Congregational Church, UCC

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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