

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,

Easter Blessings be with you! Resurrection is always an option for those who believe! Let us be reminded that positive thinking causes positive results!

We are a people of faith and we live in a culture of fear. We are children of abundance and our culture would have us cling to scarcity. When we are alone with our God and honest with ourselves, we see how beautifully we are cared for. When confronted with newspaper reports, TV news, and social media, we are consistently confronted with a false image in which we **are** not enough or we do not **have** enough. Where Jesus teaches us to love one another, culture teaches us to criticize one another. Our sacred scriptures are full of reassurance that God created us with detailed precision, and provides for us extravagantly and abundantly. We are also told repeatedly to "judge not" and "fear not". Matthew 6:27 "And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?"

Positive thinking is not only a mental and emotional attitude, it is a faithful imperative. We are called as people of faith to focus on the positive. As people of faith, we are called to live a life grounded in faith and therefore act faithfully. As people of faith, we can actually expect positive results!

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Upcoming Events

Thursday, April 2nd

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Friday, April 3rd

Derry Ecumenical Holy Friday Services (p. 6)

Sunday, April 5th

Easter Sunday Schedule (p. 6)

Wednesday, April 8th

Communication Cohort (p. 17)

Thursday, April 9th

CE/YM/YG Joint Meeting (p. 4)

Sunday, April 12th

Founder's Day (p. 15)

Saturday, April 18th

Songweavers Concert (Pastor Deborah sings!) (p. 18)

Sunday, April 26th

FPC Margarita's Fundraiser (p. 17)

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



Continued from Page 1:

The following story illustrates not only how the power of positive thinking works, but also how we are participants in positive results:

Allan applied for a new job, but he didn't believe he would get it, since his self-esteem was low, and he considered himself a failure and unworthy of success. He had a negative attitude toward himself, and therefore, believed that the other applicants were better and more qualified than he was.

Allan's mind was occupied with negative thoughts and fears concerning the job, for the whole week preceding the job interview. He actually, anticipated failure. On the day of the interview, he got up late, and to his horror he discovered that the shirt he planned to wear was dirty, and the other one needed ironing. As it was already too late, he went out wearing a wrinkled shirt and without eating breakfast.

During the interview, he was tense, negative, hungry and worried about his shirt. All this, distracted his mind and made it difficult for him to focus on the interview. His overall behavior made a bad impression, and consequently, he materialized his fear and did not get the job.

Jim applied for the same job too, but approached the manner in a different way. He was sure that he was going to get the job. During the week preceding the interview, he often visualized himself making a good impression and getting the job.

In the evening before the interview, he prepared the clothes he was going to wear, and went to sleep a little earlier. On the day of the interview, he woke up earlier than usual, and had ample time to eat breakfast, then to arrive to the interview before the scheduled time. Jim made a good impression and got the job.

There is no magic here. Marianne Williamson, a spiritual guru, defines a "miracle" as a shift from fear to love.

For the purposes of our example, I would suggest that the shift from fear to faith is what constitutes a "miracle" for us. We are co-creators in our miraculous results. The amazing power of positive thinking is linked to our participation in our reality.



What are you afraid of? Name it. And then pray about it. And then ask God to show you what you can do to contribute to overcoming the negative impact of this fear. Are you fearful about not being in control? Name it. Pray about it. I will pray with you about it, if you like. Are you fearful about our church finances? Name it. Pray about it. I will pray with you about it, if you like. Are you fearful about losing something sacred in your worship life? Name it. Pray about it. I will pray about it with you if you only ask.

With a positive attitude we experience pleasant and happy feelings. This brings brightness to the eyes, more energy, and more happiness. Our whole being broadcasts good will, happiness and success. Even our health is affected in a beneficial way. We walk taller, our voice is more powerful, and our body language shows the way we feel. Prayer is a sending out of vibrations from one person another and to God. Everything in the universe is in vibration. There are vibrations in the molecules of a table. The air is filled with vibrations. The reaction between human beings is also in vibration. When you send out a prayer for another person, you employ the force inherent in a spiritual universe and you create positive vibrations – not just for them but also for you!

This is one more way that you can participate with us in "Operation: Good Word!"

Blessings and Peace be heaped upon you!

Pastor Deborah

CE News from Pastor Heidi

Dear Church,

Happy first day of spring! As I write to you, the birds are singing, the sun is shining, and it is a balmy 25 degrees here. And yet, there are small reminders all around that even after a brutal winter, God is making all things new. We are journeying toward Easter morning, and we are reminded that death (and winter!) will not have the last word. Thanks be to God indeed.

In scripture, Jesus said: "Let the little children come to Me. Never hinder them! Don't you realize- the kingdom of God belongs to those who are like children?" – *Luke 18:16, The Voice Translation*

This week I had the joy of serving Communion for the first time to one of the youngest among us. I continue to think about ways to ensure we are welcoming the youngest among us into our full life as a church. I've been thrilled to see our youngest ones present with us in Sunday worship and during our Wednesday Lenten services. Here at First Parish we believe that faith comes in all shapes, sizes, and ages. Children of ALL ages are welcome to stay in worship (wiggles and giggles included – God made those too after all!). We also welcome them in the nursery and in church school. Your children are valued and loved in their faith community just as they are. You are doing something SO important by bringing your children to church.

I know it can feel daunting when your children want to join you in worship. If you choose to stay in worship, the following column offers some suggestions that may be helpful:

- **Relax!** God put wiggles and giggles in children. Do not feel you have to suppress it here.
- **Participate** to your comfort level in worship. Children learn behavior by copying you. Sing, pray and use your voice with enthusiasm.
- Show them the bulletin program.
Teach them the parts of the service and how to follow along.
- **Attend** worship as often as possible. Children like and need routines where they can participate.

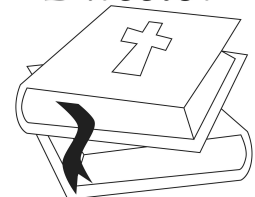
Those of us without children can be helpful in welcoming them into our life too! KIT heard me reflect last week on how I believe children learn through stories. We all need role models in growing our faith! Find a child and ask about their experiences. Tell them about yours! Learn their names. Welcome children you see in the church by name as much as possible. Like adults, kids notice when we remember their names and welcome them. Never underestimate the power of small gestures.

Do you have your own ideas about how to welcome children into our life together? I'd love to hear them! Come by my office, drop me an email or a phone call, and let's talk. Be blessed and be a blessing.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Heidi

**Christian
Education
Director**



Christian Education Updates

Become a Spark Leader!

Wondering what the kids are up to in Sunday School? Want to have a lot of fun, and hang out with some of the most fun people in church? Consider signing up to be a workshop leader for our Spark curriculum! We make it easy and enjoyable. Please see Pastor Heidi or Lianne Deranian, or email pastorheidiheath@gmail.com if interested.

Meeting Dates

April 9th:

6:30 PM – CE meeting in Cook conference room

7:30 PM – CE, Youth Ministry, Youth Group joint meeting, Cook conference room



SPARK (Pre-K to 5th Graders) Update

The K-5th graders have spent March learning about Holy Week and Easter. In April, they'll begin a new lesson on Mary and Martha! Pastor Deborah will join them for a week as they begin. Also, the Middle School and High School classes will resume the week after Easter in A/B and Luke. A reminder: Easter Sunday all children K-12 will remain in worship to help celebrate. Nursery care will be available. A continued thank you to our Spark! leaders for their great teaching and care.

SESSION 6: MARY & MARTHA LUKE 10:38-42	Week 1 (4/12)	Large Group Gathering: Pastor Deborah Teaches!	
	Week 2 (4/19)	Art	Science
	No Class (4/26)	School Vacation Week: Nursery Care Only	
	Week 3 (5/3)	Cooking	Art
	Week 4 (5/10)	Games	Cooking
	Week 5 (5/17)	Science	Games
	No Class (5/25)	Happy Memorial Day! Nursery Care Only	

Star Gathering UCC 1/2

Are you looking for a fun, island getaway for the summer with your family? Looking for a family vacation that doesn't involve the hassle of a lot of travel, and is rooted in UCC values? Then look no further.

Join Pastor Heidi, and other UCC clergy, lay people, families, and more for Star Gathering UCC 1 and/or UCC 2 on Star Island in the Isle of Shoals this August! Star is a crown jewel and one of the best kept secrets of the UCC and UUA! Offering programming, nature, activities, and more for all ages just off the coast of Portsmouth, NH, it makes a wonderful addition to our outdoor ministry offerings.

You can learn more about Star Island and the various programs via their website here:

<http://www.starisucc.com/new.php>

Star Island offers their own scholarship funds, and you are invited to see Pastor Heidi if additional help is needed.



Registration Has Begun for Horton Center

Located on top of Pine Mountain near Gorham, New Hampshire, Horton Center is a beautiful camp run by the UCC. Registration opened on January 28th, and recruitment has already begun for camp counselor positions!

The 2015 season opens with a work weekend for volunteers with all levels of ability on May 15th-17th. The first weekend with campers is the Elementary Half Week (grades 3-5) June 24-27. Other highlights on this summer's schedule include a grandparent/grandchild weekend, a women's weekend, a young adult weekend (for those over 19), and several canoe and hiking weeks.

Rev. Mollie Landers, NHCUCC Associate Conf. Minister for Outdoor Ministries and Director of Horton Center will be with us on Sunday, April 26th to talk about camp, and answer questions. She'll be joining us for worship and a brief presentation afterward.

For more information, or to register for camp, go to www.hortoncenter.org.

Paper registrations are available by calling 603-545-9660.

Partial scholarships toward camp tuition are available through the CE Board. Please let Pastor Heidi know when you have submitted your camp application, and she will ensure you receive our FPC scholarship. There is also tuition assistance available through Horton Center – you must turn in your application by May 15th.

HOLY WEEK



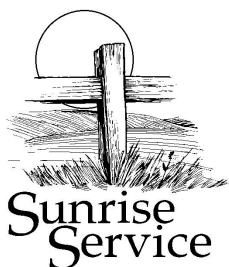
WORSHIP SCHEDULE



Maundy Thursday: Gather with us in Currier Hall at 6:00 PM on Thursday, April 2nd for a dinner of soup and bread, followed by a service at 7:00 PM in the sanctuary.



Holy Friday Service: We will participate in the Derry Ecumenical Holy Friday Service on April 3, 2015. Due to circumstances we begin this year at First Parish sanctuary at 1:00 – We will drive to Church of the Transfiguration for 1:45. We will proceed by car or on foot to St. Luke's for a 2:30 service, and we conclude at St. Thomas Aquinas for Stations of the Cross.



Sunrise Service (Easter): Welcome the dawn of Easter morning at our special Sunrise Service. Join us at 6:30 AM as we worship in the beautiful outdoors on this most Holy Day.

Easter Breakfast Buffet: Following the Sunrise Service, our wonderful Best Breakfast crew will be serving up an Easter Breakfast Buffet from 7:00-9:00 AM! Enjoy a delicious, from-scratch meal of your favorite breakfast foods. A \$5 ticket gets you all-you-can-eat!



Easter Service: Our traditional Easter Service will be held at 10:00 AM in the sanctuary. Come worship with us, for He is Risen!

Board of Christian Outreach and Missions News

One Great Hour of Sharing: One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS), as part of Our Church's Wider Mission (OWCM), is the special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that carries God's message of love and hope to people in more than eighty countries.

The UCC works with international partners to provide sources of clean water and food, education and health care, small business micro-credit, emergency relief, and advocacy and resettlement for refugees and displaced persons. OGHS also supports domestic and international ministries for disaster preparedness and response.

Thank you for any support you can give to this very important offering.

Christian Aftercare Ministry: Another ministry the Board of Christian Outreach and Missions is considering supporting is the Christian Aftercare Ministry (C.A.M.) which is a ministry to inmates who have recently been released from jails and prisons in the Manchester/Concord area. They minister to approximately 500 men and women yearly. Many of them are broken people with addictions who have no jobs, no place to live and little or no hope. It was established in 1994 and their office is at 50 Lowell St. in Manchester. C.A.M. helps newly released inmates find housing, jobs and they also have a clothing ministry. C.A.M. also offers weekly bible studies at their office. Donations of gently used clothing, shoes, boots, etc. are appreciated. They also have a need for twin beds and bikes.

Monthly Donations: The Missions Board greatly appreciates the contributions made by the Congregation in support of the Church's Missions work. Your Missions giving provides support to some charities on a regular monthly basis. Other charities are supported on an as-needed basis.

We have recently added Pastoral Counseling to our monthly budget. Currently, we provide monthly support to the following:

Sunshine Soup Kitchen - \$100.00
Vintage Grace - \$125.00
First Baptist Food Pantry - \$100.00
Community Caregivers - \$100.00
The Upper Room - \$100.00
Family Promise - \$100.00
Pastors Discretionary Fund - \$200.00
Pastoral Counseling - \$100.00

UCC – 35% of Mission Income goes to support the Church's wider mission.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Board of Christian Outreach and Missions (BOCOM): Joe Weaver, Gloria Bingel, Sue Brown, Beth Hunter, Matt Simpson, Katelyn Whittier, Karen Wilson, Linda McCarthy

Nominating Committee

“WHAT CAN FIRST PARISH CHURCH DO FOR YOU??”

Did you know that being a member of First Parish Church included “Duties”? And those duties include – **“to share in its organized work”**.

We currently have (11) vacancies available. We’re 90% filled!! The Membership Committee will also be regrouping, and we are looking for 6 members to join!

VACANCIES

Board/Committee	# of Vacancies	Meeting Time	Chairperson(s)
Board of Christian Education	1	1st Thurs. @ 7p	Lianne Deranian/Janet Wetherbee
Stewardship Board	1	1st Thurs. @ 7p	Fran Berube/Margie Ives
Nominating Committee	1	2nd Sun. @ 7:30a	Carl Hepworth
Library Committee	2	TBD	TBD
Membership Committee	6	TBD	TBD

Nominating Committee Still has a place for You in 2015!!

And as always, our motto is – **“NO VACANCY!!”**

The Nominating Committee,
Bill Armstrong, Carl and Gail Hepworth, Paul Dionne and Joe Merrill

Finance Committee

ACH/EFT what??

Do you pay all your bills with a check? Or do you pay something (perhaps a utility bill) by electronic funds transfer through Automatic Clearing House? If you can pay a utility bill in that fashion, what about your regular pledge to your Church? Your Finance Committee has realized that some folks would like to give weekly or monthly to the Church without writing checks. If you are interested in this method of giving, Chris O’Brien is interested in helping you with the process.

This is a new opportunity for giving, but if you love your envelopes and love writing checks to the Church, please don’t stop. We are just trying to catch up with modern ways of doing business.

Everyone should be aware that the weekend snowstorms this winter interrupted regular giving significantly. Our pledge and plate giving is running about \$6000 behind budget. We think everyone should know. The Finance Committee thanks you all for your devotion to First Parish Church.

Debbie Ambler, Fran Berube, Fay Chary, Pat Crowell, Lin dos Santos, Chris O’Brien, Ken Gould

Stewardship Board

Three persons from the Stewardship Board attended the **UCC Conference** in Pembroke, NH on February 21st. The theme was “*Take Pride in How Far We’ve Come – Have Faith in How Far We Can Go*”. Stewardship attendees were **Margie Ives, Joyce Pope, and John Bartel**. There was a choice of 30+ exhibits to purchase that special book or item, and 70 workshops to participate in regardless of your field of interest. There were many choices to spark anyone’s curiosity to learn more on that special subject, and workshops on how you can participate, improve your task, and change in areas that could be helpful at First Parish Church. Some workshops were about *Fundraising, Hospitality, Economics, Justice, Why Church History Matters, Open & Affirming, Where Real Faith Formation Happens, Capital Campaigns, and Missions* to mention a few. Available were breakfast goodies before the service and workshops, and a lunch to take care of your mid-day hunger. Some of our very own members were speakers at this wonderful event; **Bill Mann, Beth Hunter, and Debbie Gline Allen**. Expressed was the enjoyment that was felt during the workshops, and communicating with others when not involved in anything at that time. Comments were...“It was a wonderful experience, and are looking forward to attending again!”. There is encouragement for you to attend whether or not you are serving on a Board or Committee. It’s worth it if you just want to learn more on a subject you have been curious about, and want to understand it more in depth; a chance to see things in a different way on new ideas and understanding, and take pleasure in saying “Hello” to others you will see from First Parish who are attending.

- Yours in Faith...The Stewardship Board.

Thrive on a Tithe 2015!

We at First Parish are thriving! To thrive: to flourish, prosper, burgeon, bloom, blossom, mushroom, do well, advance, succeed! We have more people on Sunday morning – when the weather cooperates! We have fewer vacancies on Boards and Committees! We have an amazing CE Director! We have more children in Sunday school classes! We have a very active youth group!

We at First Parish look to the Bible for instruction. The ancient “tithe” means 10% off the top. It wasn’t a request. It was understood.

Last year the Stewardship Board challenged us to donate 10% of our tax refund to First Parish. They called it “thrive on a tithe”. We received hundreds of dollars in this effort, which is yet another contributing factor to us ending 2014 in the black. Let’s do it again. When you receive your tax refund, will you consider taking 10% off the top and add it to your regular pledge or gift? God loves a cheerful giver!

We thank you in advance for prayerfully considering your financial gift to our precious mission called First Parish. -- Your Stewardship Board

Council News

In December when the Council worked on the budget there was a line item put in for fundraisers in the amount of \$13,000. With this in mind, Council felt the need to coordinate fundraisers going forward. In 1992, there was a policy developed with regards to ALL fundraisers that happen at Church. That policy fell by the wayside over the years. With the fundraising issues ahead of us, Council has decided to review, revise and reinforce that policy going forward. Basically, what this policy is designed to do is to coordinate all (church, church sponsored and outside groups) fundraising activities through Council and the Church office so there are not conflicting/overlapping efforts.

At the Council meeting held in March, the following policy was revised and approved with an effective date of implementation of May 1, 2015. If you have any questions or concerns please contact a member of the Church Council.

POLICY: The Church Council will take all of the responsibility for approving and scheduling fund raising in coordination with the Church office. This pertains to anything held on church property. Anyone wanting to fund raise will submit an "Intent to Hold a Fundraiser" form to the Council for approval. The Council meets once a month, usually on the 3rd Wednesday, so requests should be submitted 30 days in advance, although approvals can happen between Council meetings by email if necessary. It would be preferred to do such approvals at official meetings. There will be two parts to the Council's decision process: 1. The idea is acceptable, and 2. The schedule permits. No one should assume that approval will be forthcoming and go ahead with plans until officially notified by Council. Not all fundraisers may be approved or scheduled for the dates, times or length of time as requested. The Council will give priority to groups within the church and secondly consider groups sponsored by the church and then groups from outside. These forms will be available in the church office.

Your Church Council,
Wendy Staggs, Ken Gould, Linda Webber, Reni Harnden, Joe Weaver, Dee Deranian, Cathy Zylinski, Sue Handy, John Bartel, Ed Sullivan, Tom Cooper, Anne LaDuke, Dawn Gilbert,
Pastor Deborah



Diaconate News

Happy Spring! We are thrilled to announce that we recently added 5 new Deacons to the Board. We welcomed Bill Burke, Sarah Keller, Fred Merrill, Cindy Pingree, and Dick Plouff to the fold. We immediately went to work reviewing our Deacon duties and procedures. Additionally, we have appointed a task force that will perform a thorough review of our purpose in accordance with the By-Laws.

Greeters: In an effort to extend our hospitality, we agreed that we need to have at least two greeters down in the entry way of the church, both before the service and after. One of the greeters will assist with the operation of the elevator. Greeters, please remember to ask our guests to sign the Guest Book. This is important, as Pastor Deborah will follow up with a quick note to visitors. In addition, we concluded that we would like an usher to staff the elevator upstairs in the Narthex.

We hope you are finding the Wednesday Lenten Services meaningful. They have been well-received. Maundy Thursday, April 2nd, will complete the mid-week Lenten Services, with soup and bread being served at 6:00 PM in Currier Hall. The service will commence at 7:00 PM in the sanctuary.

Lastly, we continue to discuss how we can better reach out to all of our members and friends of the church. However, please do not hesitate to contact any one of us if you have a concern.

Submitted by: The Board of Deacons

Reni Harnden, Brian Williams, Bill Burke, Steve Davis, Cyndi Gray, Sarah Keller, Fred Merrill, Cindy Pingree, Dick & Pat Plouff, Diana Sweeney, and Julie Turner



Thank You Building Rehabilitation Committee!

It is both a joy and a concern that we worship in a complicated building that, in some parts, dates back to 1769. This structure has evolved and changed to meet the needs of its Congregation for almost 250 years! Planning significant renovations for this type of complex building requires research, professional advice, and lots of information. Many different individuals have contributed to this effort. FPC's Annual Reports over the past decade mention the Building Restoration Sub-Committee and the Building Rehabilitation Committee.

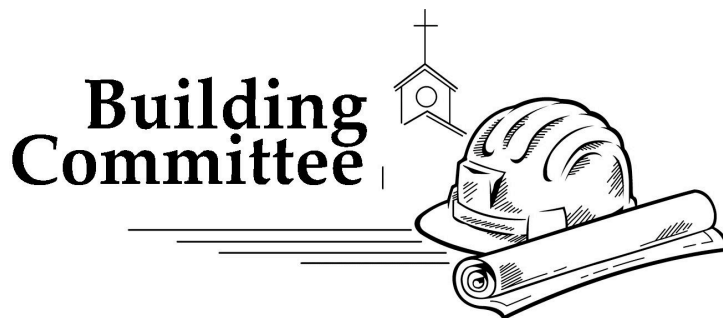
We want to recognize the following people who have served on these committees and have helped with activities related to planning the rehabilitation of First Parish's historic structure:

Bill Armstrong, Eileen Cox, Lee DeBell, Paul Dionne, Becky Fleury, Marilyn Ham, Jane Krantz, Larry Krantz, Paul Lindemann, Alice Ling, Suzanne MacGibbon, Bill Mann, Nancy Murdock, Wendy Staggs, Charlie Stewart, Ginny True, Bart Wetherbee, Janet Wetherbee
Also, thanks to all others who have contributed, but who weren't mentioned in the Annual Reports.

The newly formed Building Advisory Committee (BAC) is now charged by Council with leading the meetinghouse rehabilitation effort forward. We will definitely need volunteers and/or teams to help with planning and implementing the series of interrelated rehabilitation projects at FPC that will be paid for by the successful Capital Campaign. More information about requests for volunteers and helpers will be forthcoming.

Right now (as the BAC gets up-to-speed) is an appropriate time to pause and acknowledge and appreciate all of the work of the BRC. The documentation (historical assessment studies, reports, preliminary design plans) that have been created by various Building Rehabilitation Committee members and experts supervised by various committee members is an amazing resource. This work of all those BRC folks provides a stable foundation from which the next phase (the implementation of the projects funded through the Capital Campaign) can occur.

Submitted by Nancy Heywood on behalf of the Building Advisory Committee (Paul Ambler, Larry Krantz, Paul Lindemann, Bill Mann)



Fun Raiser Committee

Greetings and Spring Tidings to all,

Myself and 15 others met in our family room on March 9th to begin discussion on some Fun Raisen ideas and how we might move forward with them. I have to tell you, I was blown away by the folks in our congregation that step forward, open themselves to New Beginnings, and yes, even leave their comfort zone. Oh my!

Discussion centered around goals and doability, past and present ideas along with new ideas that would include involvement with other Committees and Boards. We spoke of challenging Boards and Committees to participate and even run or organize events with our support, of course.

We spoke of financial goals that need to be met and other goals that would involve the congregation, greater community awareness and wider outreach. We spoke of contacting Mission to find groups and organizations that need support as well, and tithe a % of our Fun Raisers for them.

We spoke of doing events that support our church, our community, our partnership church in Zimbabwe and the greater UCC. We spoke of the tools needed to get these events up and running and how our congregation always rises to the occasion and rallies with great support and conviction.

We felt these events have always and will define our love of FPC and that the financial rewards would just be an amazing by-product of them.

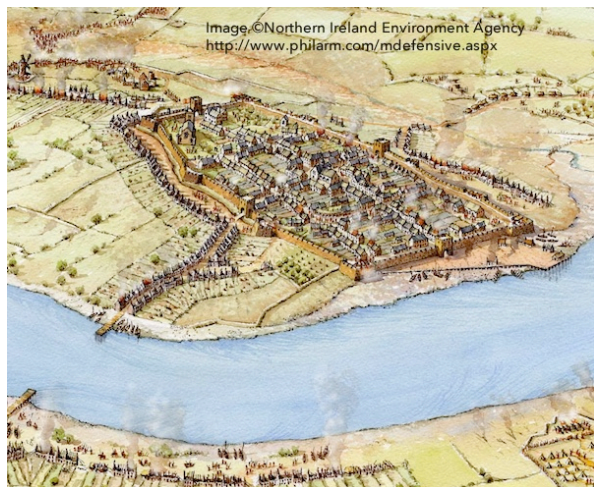
We have a Kick-Off Celebration date of Saturday, May 2nd with a car wash and Saturday, May 9th in Currier with a 9AM-2PM Mothers Day Flower and Bake Sale – maybe even a small Live Auction and Raffle. More to be revealed and discussions are moving forward with a Live Online Auction, Miracle Mile!, Concerts, Halloween Costume Party and Dance, Hiking, Biking, Loose Change, Recipes, Picnics-BBQ, Nascar, oh my! Sizzling Summer suggestions will be coming soon and we welcome your thoughts as well.

Yes, we met for only two hours, two hours! Think of what you could do in a week, a month, a year. Embrace the concepts of getting to know each other better through these events. Feeling the sense of accomplishment. Hanging with old, young and new. Staying connected, looking for ways in and not ways out. Embrace these amazing and historical times in our church lives and history. We need your Gifts and Talents to help us get there. Amen! Come on, can I hear Amen! Ah! That's better...and inhale a deep breath, Amen it on its way out. Wow! Isn't God great?

Peace and Joy,

Bill Burke on behalf of the Fun Raiser Committee

Founder's Day: Why the First Settlers Came to Nutfield



It's almost sunset on a hot July 28, 1688, and a twelve-year-old boy is climbing stairs to the highest point in the walled city of Derry, Ireland.

He's no doubt thinking of the several thousand soldiers and residents who recently died within those walls, on this the 105th day of a terrible siege. Rations are scarce – there are few dogs left alive in the city – and only two days worth remain.

Nearing the top, the boy can hear cannon and musket fire from a couple of miles down the calm river Foyle. Emerging at the top of the cathedral tower, he can just see the great battle going on downstream. There, a wooden and chain boom stretches shore to shore, blocking the relief ships sent by King William and

Queen Mary, Protestant rulers in England.

The boom was built and defended by the French and Irish army of deposed Catholic King James II. He had promoted Catholicism and threatened the Protestant establishment during his brief reign, and had been banished to France. His attempt to regain the throne centered on taking over Northern Ireland, and till now his forces had been quite successful.

The boy on the tower and his family and many other faithful Presbyterian Protestants had fled to the safe walls of Dublin to escape the Catholic army sweeping the Irish countryside. Soon he sees the answer to their prayers, as the British ships break through the boom and sail towards the city. With great joy and excitement he fires a signal cannon to let the famished residents know that relief is on its way. Two days later and the Catholics give up, abandon the siege – and the war – and a defeated King James heads back to France.

That twelve-year-old boy was James MacGregor, who would go on to found what became Derry and our First Parish Church.

MacGregor's immediate ancestors had been among the 100,000-plus Presbyterians moving from the Scottish Lowlands to Northern Ireland between 1607 and 1697. They occupied the farms and towns of the defeated local Irish Catholics, at the invitation of the Anglican Protestant King of England and Scotland.

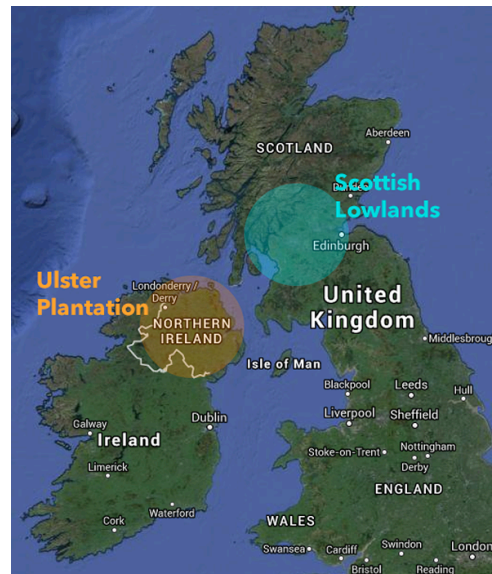
That king's motivation in establishing this *Ulster Plantation* was to use the less-unfriendly Scottish Presbyterians to create a buffer between England and the unruly Irish Catholics. This was a great economic success, but Irish/Protestant tension in Ulster oscillated through the decades, peaking in 1688 with the terrible Siege of Derry we just glimpsed.

Cont. on page 15

War left MacGregor determined to pursue a life devoted to peace. In 1701 he became a pastor in Aghadowey, a small village near Derry, and there lead a decidedly Scottish Presbyterian congregation for many years.

Meanwhile, Ulster became the most economically successful part of Ireland and began to rival England. The concerned British rulers took steps to control the economy and force the state-sanctioned Anglican Protestant religion on all the Presbyterian residents. This made religious and economic life more and more challenging for the Ulster Scots, and lead to yet another migration, this time to the New World.

In the spring of 1718, Rev. MacGregor and sixteen families from his congregation – probably about 300 people – left Belfast on the British ship *Robert* and sailed to Boston. They were first offered land in Maine along Casco Bay, and the *Robert* took most of the group north to check it out. They ended up stuck there for the winter, freezing and starving, until an offer of new land finally came. The *Robert* sailed down to the Merrimack River and landed at Haverhill on April 2nd, and a group of men proceeded North to the flock's new home, Nutfield.



This was a 12 square mile tract known for its plentiful nut trees and rich potential farmland. The governor in Massachusetts gave them this territory in part to create a buffer between the native Indians and the more civilized establishment in Boston. This sort of attitude would persist for many years, as our resilient band of Scots-Irish settlers continually sought to clarify that they were Presbyterian Scottish immigrants, not the even more scorned Irish Catholics.

Finding Nutfield satisfactory, most of the men returned to Haverhill to fetch their families. Some of the party returned via Dracut to pick up Rev. MacGregor, who hadn't gone to Maine with the congregation, and instead spent the winter teaching in Dracut. They all arrived there on April 11.

The next day, April 12, 1719, Rev. MacGregor gathered everyone under an oak tree on the east shore of Beaver Lake and preached the First Sermon. This marks the founding of our church.

Cont. on page 16

Nutfield grew vigorously from that point on, becoming a formal town and changing names from “Nutfield” to “Londonderry” in 1722. Much later, in 1827, a religious split led to a departure of many from our congregation to the West Parish, where they kept the town name Londonderry and Derry was incorporated as it is today.

The challenging move of the middle-aged Aghadowy congregation to New England was less “grand adventure” and more “the lesser of two evils”. In a sermon the night before their departure, Rev. MacGregor gave these four reasons for leaving their home:

1. “To avoid oppressive and cruel bondage,”
2. “to shun persecution and signed ruin,”
3. “to withdraw from the communion of idolaters” and
4. “to have an opportunity of worshipping God according to the dictates of conscious and the rules of his inspired Word.”

This vision of religious freedom helped our First Settlers to preserve through very tough times, as had the same spirit helped their ancestors back in Scotland and Ireland.

There is much more to the story of our founding First Settlers. Watch for an expansion of this article on the Archive Room bulletin board, and read more here:

Derry Town Historian Richard Holmes tells the full story in his book Nutfield Rambles. Find it in our local libraries, or read [a free excerpt online at Londonderry Hometown Online News](#).

Read much more about the religious history and background in [Scotch And Irish Seeds In American Soil](#).

Follow the story of the settlement in Nutfield as told in 1890 in [Scotch-Irish In New England](#).

Submitted by Paul Lindemann, for the Historical Preservation Committee:
Janice Braley, Marilyn Ham, Nancy Heywood, Ginny True, Janet Wetherbee

Anniversary Preparations

In four years (2019), First Parish will be celebrating its 300th birthday! Do you want to find out more about how other churches have celebrated significant anniversaries? Attend an event in Concord, Massachusetts, on April 25 from 9:00 until 2:00. The program, “Your Church Anniversary: New Life from Old Stories,” is sponsored by the Congregational Library & Archives. The fee is \$85 per person. If 3 or more register at the same time, the cost is \$80 per person. Lindsey is willing to collect the names of people who are interested so they can register together. Please let her know by April 10.

<http://www.congregationallibrary.org/events/church-anniversary-and-history-workshop>

Around Our Church

Family Promise Update

Homeless Families Need Your Help, April 5-12

The next week that we will co-host for Family Promise, the program that provides food and shelter to homeless families in Greater Rockingham County through 10 area churches, is April 5-12. We are in great need of volunteers from First Parish, because People's United Methodist, the host church that we support, is struggling. They only have 45 members, and without enough support from us and another support church, they may have to drop out. So please call Randy Brown at 603-612-0489 or email at suerandybrown@gmail.com for more information or to volunteer to make and deliver a dinner (for up to 14 people; current info on guest families will be provided the week prior to hosting), to host the families (i.e., being present at the Center between 7-9 pm any evening), or to spend the night there (9 pm- 7:30 am). The hosting takes place at the Calvary Baptist Church, just a mile down the road from our own church. Thanks for your support; while the program is on very solid footing financially, your time is greatly needed.

- Submitted by Randy Brown

Save the Date! April 26, 2015

Come to Margarita's Mexican Restaurant in Manchester on Sunday, April 26th for food, fellowship, fun, fundraising, and a festive time! Our server will note that we are from First Parish Congregational Church and all of our orders will be tallied together at the end of the event. The next day they will mail the church a check for 15% of our total orders for the event! What a fun and easy way to build community and raise money for our church! We will have raffles and maybe a silent auction! Let's celebrate the end of Cabin Fever and the Return of Spring!



Communication Cohort: It's back!

We hope to see members of all Boards, Committees and Projects attend this important gathering. Please note: All members & friends are welcome to come. If you want to know what's going on, please attend! We gather the 2nd Wednesday of the month in April, May and June.

Ecumenical Prayer and Communion

Need a midweek pick-me-up - a way to get through the rest of the workday and connect with God? Gather with us each Thursday at 12:15 p.m. in A/B for prayer and communion!

In the Community

Sonshine Soup Kitchen

We need more help! We serve a dinner at the First Baptist Church on Monday, April 27 from 4:30 to 5:45. Our team starts preparing the meal at 3:00, serves at 4:30 then cleans up, finishing before 6. Come meet the guests. The guests come in at 4:30, we say a blessing and then serve the meal. The church is located at the corner of Crystal Ave. and Broadway. Please come join us. A team of six would be most helpful. Contact Margie Ives for more info.

Interfaith Choir Concert

Save the Date! The Interfaith Choir's spring concert will be on Sunday, April 19, at 4:00pm at Pleasant Street United Methodist Church, located at 8 Pleasant Street in Salem, NH. In addition to the choir, the Windham Flute Ensemble will perform, and they are always wonderful. As you can imagine, we had to cancel several of our Sunday evening rehearsals due to weather problems, but we are now back on track, and the concert promises to be a good one. As always, there will be refreshments after the concert.

Rockingham VNA & Hospice is offering comprehensive Hospice volunteer training beginning April 3 and continuing every Friday from 9am-noon through May 22, 2015. There must be a minimum of 5 people registered for the training to be held. Classes will be held at Rockingham VNA & Hospice, 137 Epping Rd., Exeter, NH 03833.

To register or for more information:
Call Martha Carlson, 772-2981 ext. 140.

Songweavers Concert

"How Can I Keep From Singing?"

Sat., April 18, 2015, 7:00 pm
S. Congregational Church
27 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH

Back in September, Pastor Deborah joined Songweavers, a 130+ women's a capella chorus at Concord Community Music School. Conducted by Peggo Horstmann Hodes, Songweavers performs music from a wide variety of ethnic traditions, with instrumental accompaniment. Having performed for the past 20 years, Songweavers have earned a beloved place in the New Hampshire music community.

On Saturday, April 18, come support Pastor Deborah and Songweavers for an unforgettable and entertaining night of singing!



Songweavers



UCC News

NHCUCC State Women's Fellowship:

The annual Spring Gathering for the State Women's Fellowship will be held at FPC on Saturday, April 18, 2015, with registration starting at 9:30 a.m. The theme for the day is Recharging our Spiritual Batteries. Guest speakers will be Rev. Dr. David Reynolds, "Replenishing Spiritual Energy" and Debbie Gline Allen, "Recharging our Singing Spirits". The program will end around 3:00 p.m. The \$12 registration fee includes coffee in the morning and lunch. Registration forms are on the informational table in the Narthex or available in the office.



Scouting Section

March started out with Troop 405 participating in force at Winter Carnival where over 600 cub scouts came out for a beautiful day on the ice and snow covered lake at Camp Carpenter to learn what fun it is to be outdoors in the winter. Eight brave scouts and four adult leaders spent the night in tents as the temperatures plummeted to -1 degrees F. Colin Whitney and Scott Masessa are now up to 70 degrees of frost in just two campouts. Jon Potter, Josh MacCuish, Aaron Coppeta, Ethan Coppeta, Nicholas Burke, and Sam Pendergast each earned 33 degrees of frost.

As of this writing, the troop is gearing up for the Spring Equinox Hike on Mt. Pierce and Mt. Willard on March 28th. The next Court of Honor is March 30th at 7:00 PM in Currier Hall and will include the annual Friends of Scouting Fundraiser program. The Chuckwagon Encampment at Camp Carpenter was moved from April to May so the boys will be planning another April trip. Summer camp planning is also in full swing – we have 13 boys, 1 guest scout and 3 adults attending Hidden Valley and we have 9 boys and 2 adults attending Camp Bell July 26th-August 1st.

The troop has a new Chaplain, Mark Reimer, and he will be working with our Chaplain's aid, Josh Overton to help the boys with the religious aspect of our program.





GO GREEN: Earth Day, April 22

Earth Day is April 22. "May we be good stewards of all that you give, protecting creation wherever we live. May we be a church that renews and restores and lovingly cares for this earth that is yours".

Please remember:

We all live downstream. Pick up litter. Recycle. BE GUARDIANS. Help the monarch butterfly. Plant purple cone flowers, black-eyed susans, bee balm and native milkweed. Steer clear of systemic pesticides such as neonicotinoids. Give thanks for our air, dirt, and water. Give thanks for our wildlife. Look at the stars.

Earth, by Ashley Cox

The Earth gives us many delights,
such as sunny days and starry nights.
It gives us trees, bushes, rocks, and flowers,
and days of sunshine, clouds, snow, or showers.
Animals gigantic as elephants or puny as mice,
and the North and South poles covered with ice.
But lots of the ice is melting away,
and creatures of forests have no where to stay.
Each day, more and more trees are cut down,
so we must recycle and not litter our towns.
Stop using pollutants that destroy
Water, earth, and air,
so everyone can have a
clean environment everywhere.
Earth Day reminds us to keep it clean,
and teaches us all to go a little more green.
This planet is where humans and animals roam,
Earth is the place we all call home.



The Shell, by Eileen Cox

A single shell upon the shore,
The one that I am headed for.
I reach to lift it from the sand
And there I see my Jesus stands

You ask of what He says to me.
No words just peace and harmony.
Surrounded by His warmth and light
I stand and gaze in sheer delight.

When our little meeting's through,
I find that I've come back to you.
I have a sense of peace and calm,
As though He held me in His arms.

The Birch Tree in the Yard, by Eileen Cox

I've watched this lovely birch tree
Since it was very small.
Reaching always reaching,
Trying to grow tall.

And now it's grown and still its arms
Reach up to the sky,
Reaching up and praising God
And saying "Here am I".

Scripture Readings

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

April 5th – Easter Sunday

The Gospel of Mark: Chapter 16

April 12th – Second Sunday of Easter

Acts 4:32-35

Psalm 133

1 John 1:1-2:2

John 20:19-31

April 19th – Third Sunday of Easter

Acts 3:12-19

Psalm 4

1 John 3:1-7

Luke 24:36b-48

April 26th – Fourth Sunday of Easter

Acts 4:5-12

Psalm 23

1 John 3:16-24

John 10:11-18

Worship Leadership

Deacons & Lay Readers

Deacons of the Month

Cyndi Gray and Pat Plouff

April 5th: Libby Keller

April 12th: Pat Plouff

April 19th: Steve Davis

April 26th: Beth Hunter

Ushers & Greeters

Weekly Usher – Michael Bryan

April 5th: Ushers: Diaconate

Greeter: Verna Elwell

April 12th: Ushers: Becky Fleury, Verna Elwell

Rod and Sue Hunt

Greeter: Diane Breeden

April 19th: Ushers: Ross and Linda Webber

Kevin and Diane Gordon

Greeter: Ruth Honnors

April 26th: Ushers: Ken Gould, Bill Burke

Dee Deranian, Shirley Dickason

Greeter: Lisa Hall

Nursing Home Friends

Patricia Rankin & Theo Johnson,

Hillsborough Country Nursing Home

Phil Guertin, Leon Berry

Pleasant Valley Nursing Home

First Parish Congregational Church, UCC

Church Office Hours:

Monday: Closed
Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 9 am – 4:30 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

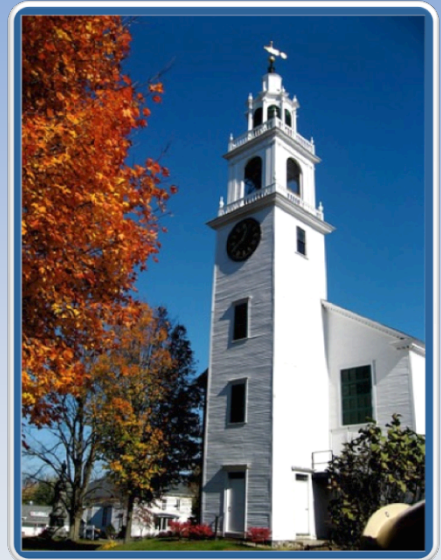
Email our office manager, Lindsey Roman:

officemgr@fpc-ucc.org

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

pastordeborah@fpc-ucc.org

Call our office: 603-434-0628



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