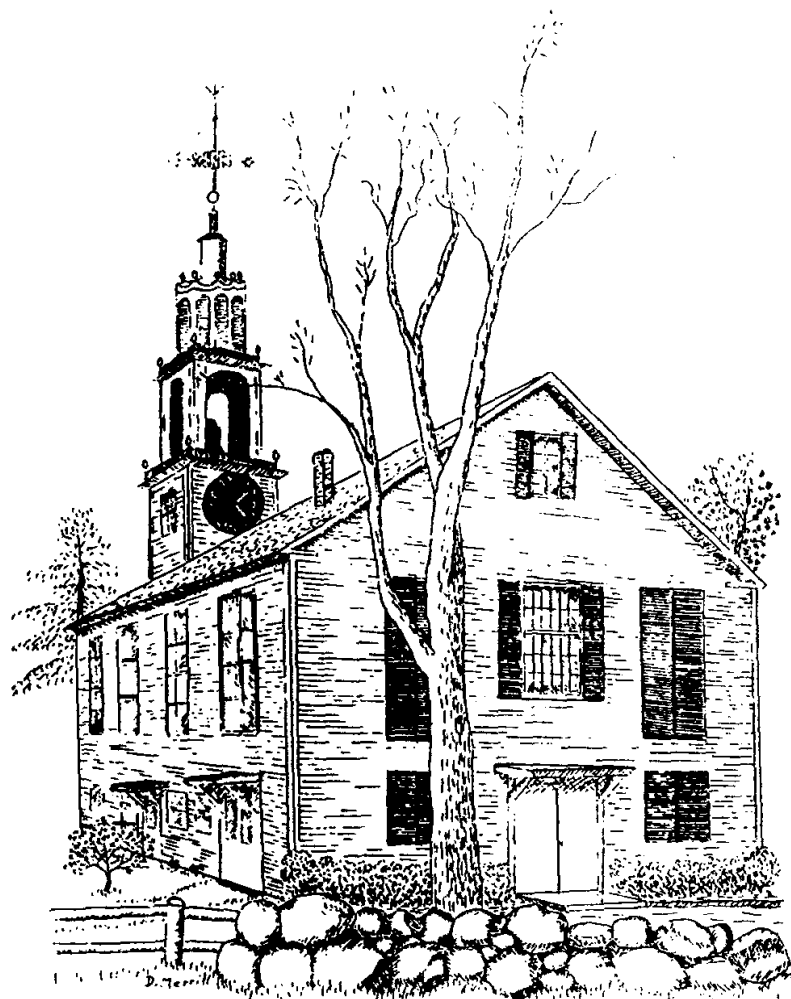


First Parish Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
P.O. Box 114, 47 East Derry Road
East Derry, New Hampshire 03041
Tel. (603) 434 – 0628

September 6, 2015



Doris Merrill

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)

September 6, 2015 Proper 18

Welcome Visitors!

As members of the United Church of Christ we say: “No matter **who** you are or **where** you are on life’s journey, **you** are welcome here! We mean it!”

Please introduce yourself to an usher and come meet Pastor Deborah.

Feel free to join us for refreshments in Currier Hall immediately following the service.

If you would like information about our church or would like to be added to our mailing list, please fill out a bright yellow “How May We Serve You”/ “Communication Options” card located in the pews and at the back of the Sanctuary. We also have cards available in the church office.

Thank you for worshipping with us. We are honored to have you with us today.

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS & JOYS AND CONCERNS

WE GATHER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Lighting the Candles

*HYMN NO. 31

“All Things Bright and Beautiful”

*CALL TO WORSHIP RESPONSE

One: Listen! God is welcoming us to this time of worship.

All: This is a place where all belong.

One: The Maker of all seeks our common good.

All: We are called to love our neighbors as ourselves.

One: Come to sing praises and put your trust in God.

All: Let us share faith and hope with others.

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (in unison)

Author of all humankind, come to lift us up to our full humanity as we worship you in this hour. You surround us on every side and are acquainted with all our ways. You are aware of the distinctions we make and the favoritism we express. Yet you welcome us, not as strangers but as heralds of your reign. We want to worship you and to represent you well. Come among us now with your transforming power. Amen.

*SONG OF PRAISE #759 – **Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, Three in One; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.**

CALL TO CONFESSION

The Holy One – who opens eyes and ears, makes the mute to speak, and delivers the tormented from demons within – invites us to seek the healing we need. Confess our estrangement from the One who offers us true freedom.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (in unison)

O God, we confess that our good intentions have gone astray. We favor the people who are like us and honor those we deem to be important. We dishonor the poor, write off those with whom we disagree, excuse our self-serving behavior, and sow injustice. It is so much easier to give advice than to do good. (Silent confession.) O God, we plead for your forgiveness and for a depth of faith that will make a difference in us and in our world. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

When we show mercy, we are able to accept God's mercy, which triumphs over judgment. God can turn our waywardness upside down and set us on the path of true community with those whom we have disdained or ignored. God opens our minds and hearts to hear and understand those who need our help.

WE INVITE FORWARD GOD'S LITTLE CHILDREN

CHILDREN'S OFFERING

"I'm Gonna Sing"

I'm goin' a sing when the Spirit says sing (x2)

I'm goin' a sing when the Spirit says sing, and obey the Spirit of the Lord.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in unison)

In our thanks, these gifts we bring, for you give us everything. Teach us how to follow you, in all we say, and all we do. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Ken Williams

Followed by THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever. Amen. (Children may now go onto their classes.)

*HYMN NO. 42

"O, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing"

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD FOR US

HEBREW SCRIPTURES

Proverbs 21:1-2, 8-9, 22-23

NEW TESTAMENT

Mark 7:24-37

SERMON

"Women, Dogs, and Demons: A Biblical Tale"

Pastor Heidi Carrington Heath

WE RESPOND WITH OUR PRAYERS

PASTORAL PRAYER

WE RESPOND WITH OUR MONETARY GIFTS

OFFERTORY INVITATION

Hear again the proverb: "Those who are generous are blessed, for they share their bread with the poor." What a joy we can know when our thankfulness exceeds our desire for "more" and our concern for others outweighs our greed! We are invited to share what we have received.

OFFERTORY MUSIC

*DOXOLOGY #780

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below;

Praise God above, you heavenly host:

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (UNISON)

We give because you have been generous to us, gracious God. May the ministries of this church meet the needs of our members, our community, and our world. Help us to love our neighbors as ourselves. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

HYMN NO. 337

“Draw Us in the Spirit’s Tether”

PRAYER of CONSECRATION

OUR SACRED STORY: JESUS in the BREAKING of the BREAD and CUP Poured out

SHARING the MEAL

We celebrate Communion this morning by bringing you the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation. As you pass the trays, try to make eye contact with your neighbor.

As you pass the bread, please say the words **“The Bread of Life”** or **“Take and eat.”** The appropriate response when receiving the gifts or elements is **“Amen”** or **“Thanks be to God.”** You may eat the bread when you receive it. This symbolizes that we, each, have a private relationship with God.

As you pass the tray of grape juice, please say the words **“The Cup of Salvation”** or **“The Cup of Love”**. Again, your response will be **“Amen”** or **“Thanks be to God.”** Please hold the cup until everyone is served. We will drink the Cup of Salvation in unison, which symbolizes that we are together in a community of faith.

If you are accompanying your children: they are invited to participate and we trust that you will teach them the meaning of this sacred meal.

Gluten-free bread is available. Let the server know.

PRAYER of THANKSGIVING (in unison)

Thank you, God, for life in the Spirit of Jesus:

For gladness in this bread and cup, for love that cannot die,

For peace the world cannot give, for joy in the company of friends,

For the glory of creation, for the mission of justice you have made our own.

In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

WE ARE SENT OUT TO LOVE AND SERVE A LOVING, SERVING GOD

*HYMN NO. 76

“Sent Forth By God’s Blessing”

BENEDICTION

BENEDICTION RESPONSE NO. 81

“God Be with You” (v. 1)

POSTLUDE (Please remain seated.)

**Indicates all that are able may stand.*

FLOWERS Offered by Cathy Pottle in celebration of Don Noel’s birthday – “You are Still the One” –
Cathy, Shanna, Melanie, River, Emery and Colleen

MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH

DEACONS OF THE MONTH

LAY READER

USHERS

GREETER(s)

PASTOR

AFFILIATE PASTOR

MUSIC DIRECTOR

ORGANIST

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

CE DIRECTOR

Members of the Congregation

Cindy Pingree and Cyndi Gray

Ella Simpson

Diaconate, Michael Bryan

Verna Elwell

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

Rev. Chester R. Ham

Susan Handy

Jeff DeLangie

Lindsey Roman

Heidi Carrington Heath

Scriptures – September 6

Proverbs 21:1-2

¹The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD;
he turns it wherever he will.

²All deeds are right in the sight of the doer,
but the LORD weighs the heart.

⁸The way of the guilty is crooked,
but the conduct of the pure is right.

⁹It is better to live in a corner of the housetop
than in a house shared with a contentious wife.

²²One wise person went up against a city of warriors
and brought down the stronghold in which they trusted.

²³To watch over mouth and tongue
is to keep out of trouble.

Mark 7:24-37

²⁴From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, ²⁵but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. ²⁶Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷He said to her, 'Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' ²⁸But she answered him, 'Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.' ²⁹Then he said to her, 'For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.' ³⁰So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

³¹Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. ³²They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. ³³He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. ³⁴Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, 'Ephphatha', that is, 'Be opened.' ³⁵And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. ³⁶Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. ³⁷They were astounded beyond measure, saying, 'He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.'