

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,

In the United Church of Christ covenant language is inescapable. We use "covenant" as a noun. And we use it as a verb. It is a process **and** it can be a document. Mostly it is a choice. In the UCC we choose covenant.

In the Bible "covenant" is most certainly a root theme of scripture. It occurs in many places and times, but never in precisely the same shape. Who initiates covenant -human beings or God? Can covenant be refused?

Historically in the congregational tradition, "covenant" has strong historical meaning. The framers of the American Constitution were steeped in this tradition and shaped our government by their understanding of covenant. They understood that a covenant: a. defines a people; b. creates a body politic (the "incarnational statement"); c. describes common goals and values; and d. outlines the institutions through which the people will act collectively.

Biblical covenants do the same thing. The major difference is that Biblical covenants are instituted by God; historical covenants are instituted by people. The quintessential covenant statement is: "I will be your God, and you will be my people." So what does it mean to be in covenant as a people, not as individuals? Especially since many people have come to the UCC from other, more hierarchical denominations, or from a position of being un-churched, or from congregational churches that behaved in a contract mentality. We simply cannot assume that the concept of covenant is equally understood.

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



Continued from Page 1...

The biggest differences between a “contract” and a “covenant” is that a contract is based on law and built on fear; it limits; the accountability may be one-sided; and it requires no other attention in order to remain enforceable. Whereas a covenant is based on grace, which demands forgiveness; is built on love; nourishes – i.e. is life-giving in the way that the sacrament of Communion is life-giving; the sense of accountability is always mutual; and requires (re-) affirmation in order to live into its promise.

Congregational churches can maintain their integrity as covenantal churches when the responsibility is shared by both the pastors and the congregation. All parties come to the table with a willingness to speak their truth and listen to the beloved Other; express their vision for the church and listen to the beloved Other; take responsibility for their mistakes and forgive the beloved Other for their mistakes, when they, in turn, have taken responsibility for theirs. This is church: mutuality of humanness connected to the Divine.

Let us be mindful of our Covenantal relationship as we embrace 2016 and walk boldly into the Vision that God has for us here in East Derry.

As always, I thank God for you every single day.

Pastor Deborah

**Quote of the month:**

“It doesn’t matter what our surroundings are. What matters is we have the freedom to worship God as we wish in this country.”

- Holly Gorgol (in response to worship in the fellowship hall)

Faith Formation: Offerings for ALL AGES!

Church School Teachers

WE NEED YOU! The time has come to sign up to teach church school through the second half of the year, and the Christian Education Board needs your help. We love for our kids to have exposure and access to a variety of teachers across the year. Please see Anne-Marie Merrill or Katie Cobban if you are interested in signing up. No prior experience required. All are welcome.

Lenten Wednesday Worship

Our Wednesday night worship series during Lent runs through March 16th. Join us at 6 PM for soup and bread, and 7 PM for creative, soul-filling, inter-generational worship. All are welcome if you are here for the first time or the 100th time!



HOLY WEEK



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Maundy Thursday: Gather with us in Currier Hall at 6:00 PM on Thursday, March 24th 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 March 25, 2016. We begin this year at First Parish sanctuary at 1:00 – We will drive to Church of the Transfiguration for 1:40. We will proceed by car or on foot to St. Luke's for a 2:20 service, and we conclude at St. Thomas Aquinas for a 3:00 service.

Sunrise Service (Easter): Welcome the dawn of Easter morning at a special Sunrise Service led by Pastor Heidi. Join us at 6:30 AM outdoors next to the Forest Hill building as we worship 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 with all 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!

Finance Committee

An update on current financial giving: Council approved the financials for the month of January. 2016 is off to a good start. Pledge income budgeted for January was \$17,504.17, actual pledge income received was \$17,707.88. Plate income budgeted for January was \$2,333.33, actual plate income received was \$2,031.00.

Respectfully submitted,

Your Finance Committee: Chris O'Brien (Chairperson), Deb Ambler (Treasurer), Pat Crowell (Financial Secretary), Harry Carter (Assistant Financial Secretary), Fay Chary, Bill Armstrong, Ross Webber and Joyce Pope.

Stewardship Board

**First Parish Church Stewardship Board Encourages Members and Friends To:
"THRIVE ON A TITHE YOUR TAX REFUND FOR 2016"**

Stewardship is a journey that is grounded in gratitude, revealed in prayer, and lived in faith. Each of these vital elements of Stewardship is necessary for growing faithful and generous stewards here at First Parish Church.

Real Bounty, Real Generosity occurs when we are mindful of our most vital partner on this journey, and that is God.

Scripture directs us to give generously, willingly, and happily. We should not give out of self-serving motives (Acts: 8, 18, 19) seeking to gain something from God. Our giving, when done rightly, is an act of worship. So, we should each procure the right intentions for our giving. Our motivation should be worship; our attitude should be willing.

"Thrive on a Your Tax Refund for 2016" is a creative and alternative for 2016 to generate additional income from the Stewardship Board to go into your Pledge Income.

We really want you to get excited when that US Treasury check comes in the mail and you know that 10% will be pledged to First Parish Church. The Stewardship Board wants to make this FUN and give weekly updates in the Sunday bulletin. Feel free to write the words **"Thrive on a Tithe"** in the memo section of your check!

Your Stewardship Board,

John Bartel, Carl Hepworth, Margie Ives, Glenn Pope, Joyce Pope, and Sue Weaver.

Stewardship 2016

“TRY A TITHE SUNDAY” – JUNE 19, 2016

With Joy and Thanksgiving!

In an effort to connect with discipleship and faith practices, the focus of Try a Tithe Sunday is to invite and encourage each household to grow toward a tithe, to a tithe and beyond a tithe as they have been blessed.

Stewardship is more than just giving to a budget. Living and growing as faithful stewards means that we give of our Time, our Talents, and our Treasures with Joy and Thanksgiving. Stewardship is a statement of faith that who we are and everything we have, not just possessions, but all of creation, belongs to God. Stewardship is an act of worship, an expression of our faith in God our creator, redeemer, and sustainer, and a discipline for spiritual growth that helps us become the kind of faithful, grateful, generous people we want to be.

We want everyone to experience a taste of God’s abundance, and what is possible when we become grateful and generous stewards of all that belongs to God, through

“Try a Tithe Sunday”

“Try a Tithe Sunday” an invitation for those who call First Parish Church their church home to try for one Sunday giving one week’s tithe (10 percent of your household’s net weekly income), on **Sunday, June 19th**.

What is “Try a Tithe Sunday”? It is first an invitation for those to give one week’s tithe on Sunday, June 19th (10 percent of net household weekly income). * **“Try a Tithe Sunday” is above and beyond your regular weekly pledge.** * The purpose is to demonstrate what our giving potential could be if every household in our church family tithed (gave 10%).

Why are we doing this? God’s Work is accomplished on earth through tithes and offerings of God’s people. By having a “Try a Tithe Sunday”, we will experience the abundance of God’s provision and witness the possibilities for ministry and mission. As we witness the resources available through being grateful and generous givers with the Tithe (10%), we become excited about what God can accomplish through us. Another reason we do this to have a starting point and plan to take steps toward becoming Tithers together.

How are we going to do “Try a Tithe Sunday”? You will be receiving a letter, spreadsheet, and a special “Try a Tithe” envelope two weeks prior to “Try a Tithe Sunday”, June 19th (we will also have them available at church). Find your weekly giving level if you were to tithe and write a check for that amount, and put it into the “Try a Tithe” envelope and bring that to worship on June 19th to be added to your regular weekly pledge amount.

Continued on Page 6...

Continued from Page 5...

What if I won't be in church that Sunday? If you can't attend church on Sunday, June 19th, please use one of these options:

1. Mail in your "Try a Tithe" envelope so it will arrive prior to June 19th.
2. Give your "Try a Tithe" envelope a week earlier.
3. Drop off your "Try a Tithe" envelope in the church office ahead of time.

What if I do not feel I am able to participate in "Try a Tithe Sunday". Or tithe? God calls us to give what we can, not what we can't. The Bible reminds us that God loves a cheerful giver. If you are unemployed, underemployed, in school, under the financial care of someone else, there may be no income to tithe. God's challenge in the Scripture is for each Christian to become a generous giver by giving our first and our best to Him. Therefore, tithing becomes less an issue of the wallet, and more an issue of faith and trust. Maybe God is calling you to give more of your time in service, through the church or in the community?

What if I'm already tithing? Again, this is an "additional" special tithing offering, like a 53rd week!

What if I do not feel I am able to participate in "Try a Tithe Sunday" or tithe? God calls us to give what we can, not what we can't. The Bible reminds us that God loves a cheerful giver. If you are unemployed, underemployed, in school, under the financial care of someone else, then there may be no income to tithe. God's challenge in the Scripture is for each Christian to become a generous giver by giving our first and our best to Him. Therefore, tithing becomes less an issue of the wallet, and more an issue of faith and trust. Maybe God is calling you to give more of your time in service, through the church or in the community?

If you have any questions, see Carl Hepworth or any member of the Stewardship Board.

Council News

The Rehabilitation Fundraising Committee that is working on the external/community capital campaign has requested to hire a consultant to help them in their efforts. Due to the size of the contract the Church Council has recommended this come to the congregation for a special vote. On Sunday, March 6, 2016 at 11:45 there will be a special congregational meeting to approve the expenditure. The request is to borrow up to \$66,800 from the Capital Campaign/Rehabilitation funds, to be repaid with first funds raised by this committee.

There will also be a request to authorize the Council to open a line of credit up to \$400,000 as a bridge loan for the current portion of the project. Due to the timing of Capital Campaign contributions the cash flow could become an issue this summer to complete the planned project. Payment for any money borrowed would be paid with the future Campaign receipts.

Please join us for the Special Meeting on Sunday, March 6th at 11:45am.

Board of Christian Outreach and Missions



Zimbabwe Pen-Pal Program: The Board of Christian Outreach and Missions (BOCOM) in collaboration with the Board of Christian Education are in the process of revitalizing the Pen-Pal program with our sister church at Dangamvura in Mutare, Zimbabwe. There will be more information to follow. Also, the BOCOM in collaboration with the Community Life Committee hosted a Zimbabwe Presentation and Pot-Luck last month to kick off the Pen-Pal Program.

New Members: The Board of Christian Outreach and Missions would like to welcome Kathy Holland, Kris Barker, and Bart Wetherbee to the board.

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS): One Great Hour of Sharing is an offering that makes the love of Christ real for individuals and communities around the world who suffer the effects of disaster, conflict, or severe economic hardship, and for those who serve them through gifts of money and time. Today, projects are underway in more than 100 countries, including the United States and Canada. In the 1990s, receipts have exceeded \$20 million annually. While specific allocations differ in each denomination, all use their One Great Hour of Sharing funds to make possible disaster relief, refugee assistance, development aid and more. You can find offering envelopes in the pews throughout March. Thank you in advance for donating to this worthwhile charity.

Monthly Giving: Mission 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 Church's Wider Mission (OCWM)	\$350
Sonshine Soup Kitchen	\$100
First Baptist Food Pantry	\$100
Community Caregivers	\$100
Vintage Grace	\$100
Family Promise	\$100
Pastoral Counseling	\$100
Upper Room	\$100
Pastor Discretionary Fund	\$100

Respectfully submitted,

The Board of Christian Outreach and Missions (BOCOM): Joe Weaver, Gloria Bingel, Sue Brown, Beth Hunter, Karen Wilson

Community Rehab Fundraising Progress

Our new committee has identified an excellent consultant for the upcoming community-oriented fundraising drive. The congregation has an opportunity to learn more and vote to move forward with this consultant in the special March 6th meeting.

Get a head start by downloading the report I wrote describing our selection process and all the firms we considered here: <http://bit.ly/rfc-consultant>

Then learn more about the firm we're recommending, Carlton & Company, by visiting their website: www.fundraising.org

Please feel free to ask any member of the committee for more information. We're looking forward to seeing you at the meeting!

- Submitted by Paul Lindemann for the Rehabilitation Fundraising Committee,
Liz Greenberg, Harry Handy, Bill Mann, Chris O'Brien

Fundraising Committee

FPC Dining for Dollars Fun and Fellowship Events

Save the Date: Tuesday, March 8th, 4pm-10pm, our next FPC Dining for Dollars Fun and Fellowship Event will be hosted by Texas Roadhouse in Manchester. They normally only give a 10% donation for their Fundraising events, but I was able to negotiate 15% for us when I shared how successful previous events have been for us! If you haven't been to one of these yet, come on out to enjoy the chance for fellowship and good food!

Hannafords Fundraiser

This very successful program continues to grow and run smoothly. Several people have stepped forward recently to assist in the weekly re-loading process. Some of the new faces you will be seeing are Joyce Pope, Lin dos Santos, Beth Hunter, and Dawn Gilbert – their support is much appreciated! Our weekly re-load order is running between \$1000 and \$3000 weekly, earning the church \$50-\$150/week – just to buy groceries we would buy anyway!

Even if you're not a Hannafords shopper regularly, you could still support the program (and the church) by purchasing the bonus cards we earn each week. FPC earns free gift cards representing 5% of our total order. We currently have several cards in a range of dollar amounts available for purchase. These make great gifts for your college student, a friend or neighbor going through a rough patch, a donation to the Upper Room or Pastor's discretionary fund, or just a "Pay It Forward" gift to someone in the grocery line!

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

Building Advisory Committee

You have probably noticed that the top of the tower is no longer on the front lawn. Based on the advice of our timber frame contractor, we decided to have it dismantled and moved to storage at his warehouse facility/shop in Nottingham, NH. This process proved to be the best decision as much more rot and deterioration of the structure was present. Our weathervane, bell and all the pieces of the lantern and belfry are now secure and out of the weather.

Work to rebuild this intricate top structure will occur at the shop over the next 18 months. Repair of the tower base will take place in the summer of 2017. At the end of that summer, the restored top will return to its lofty home on the base (and the bell can ring again). The award of the LCHIP grant of \$125,000 is specifically intended for this tower rehabilitation work, which is expected to cost over \$300,000 when completed in 2017.

BAC has been working with Arron Sturgis, our timber framer, and Norman Larson, our architect, to prepare for the foundation project to begin in April. Simply put, the historic meetinghouse will be raised, a four foot crawl space excavated, sills and floor framing replaced/repared, a new concrete foundation poured and the building lowered onto the new foundation. Occuring in conjunction with the foundation work will be the pouring of a foundation for a new connector building that will connect the Noyes building with the meetinghouse. This connector will house a modern elevator that will make our whole facility handicapped accessible. Much design work has been occuring with Norman Larson to develop the best plan to accomplish our goal of accessibility while preserving the historic nature and look of our facility. Plans for this work are currently going out to contractors for bid.

With the meetinghouse lift and rehab work required on the tower base, the organ pipes will be removed from the room in the tower behind the alter in order to protect them from damage and contamination. This will occur in April after Easter and means that the organ will not be useable until the tower is complete and the pipes are returned in the fall of 2017.

The last two months have been busy with disassembling, planning, designing, scheduling, preparing and addressing questions that arise. Soon we will be busy with the start of the foundation project. Stay tuned, things are going to become very exciting.

Your BAC: Paul Ambler (Chair), Nancy Heywood, Larry Krantz, Paul Lindemann and Bill Mann



Around Our Church

A Friendly Note from the Diaconate:

There will be a bin in Currier Hall for nametags. This is an effort to encourage all to wear their nametag to fellowship after services. Nametags provide hospitality and recognition for newcomers and new members who are still not familiar with names and faces. The Diaconate will be responsible for putting the nametags back where they belong in the Narthex.

If you need a nametag, there is a signup sheet on the bulletin board in the church office.

Thank you, everyone, for your help in this important effort!

Pastor Heidi's Installation

The installation of the Rev. Heidi Carrington Heath into the Rockingham Association of the UCC has been scheduled for 1:30 PM on Sunday, March 13th, with a snow date of March 20th. This glorious celebration will take place in our sanctuary. There will be a reception in Currier Hall following the installation.

Congregational Meeting

There will be a Congregational Meeting after worship on Sunday, March 6th at 11:45 AM. This meeting is regarding rehabilitation community fundraising and other financial updates.

CHURCH NEWS

Save the Dates!

Professional photographers from Lifetouch will be at the church on May 20, 21, June 10 and 11 taking our pictures for the new pictorial directory. At no cost, all are invited and encouraged to participate so that we have the best directory ever. Stay tuned on how you can make an on-line appointment. Additional information will be available soon.

- Brian Williams, Carol Bates, Cindy Pingree, and Paula Robinson



First Friday

Join us for our next First Friday game night on March 4th from 6-8 PM! Bring your favorite board game and a spirit of fun. Snacks will be provided. All ages welcome! See Pastor Deborah or Pastor Heidi if you'd like to volunteer or have ideas for future "First Fridays".

So Glad I'm Here: Songweavers Celebrate 25 Years!

CONCORD
COMMUNITY
MUSIC
SCHOOL

Songweavers

25

Peggo Horstmann Hodes, Director

April 3, 2016 at 4:00pm
First Parish Congregational Church,
47 E. Derry Rd., E. Derry, NH
and
April 16 at 7:00pm
South Congregational Church
27 Pleasant St., Concord, NH

TICKETS: for tickets or information, ccmusicsschool.org 603-228-1196
for E. Derry concert, call 603-434-0628

All proceeds will benefit the Building Project! * Family rates available *



Easter Flower Order Form

Easter flowers are available for \$6.00

per 6 inch pot of: Tulips, Daffodils and Hyacinths.

Please write-in the number of each type of flower that you would like,
and give this order form with your payment
to Cyndi Gray or at the church office
no later than Palm Sunday, March 20th.

Please make all checks payable to: **Cynthia Gray.**

Tulips _____ Daffodils _____ Hyacinths _____

Your Name _____

How would you like it to appear in the Easter bulletin: for example:

"in celebration of _____" "in memory of _____", other _____

Total # of flowers ordered _____ at \$6.00 each.

Total amount paid \$ _____ Cash or Check

Please take your flowers home after the Easter Service. Thank you!

Scripture Readings

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

March 6th – Fourth Sunday in Lent

Joshua 5:9-12

Psalm 32

2 Cor 5:26-21

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

March 13th – Fifth Sunday in Lent

Isa 43:16-21

Psalm 126

Phil 3:4b-14

John 12:1-8

March 20th – Palm Sunday

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

Luke 19:28-40

Isa 50:4-9a

Psalm 31:9-16

Phil 2:5-11

Luke 22:14-23:56

March 27th – Easter Sunday

Acts 10:34-43

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

1 Cor 15:19-26

John 20:1-18

Worship Leadership

Deacons & Lay Readers

Deacons of the Month

Cindy Pingree and Reni Harnden

March 6th: TBD

March 13th: Dee Deranian

March 20th: Reni Harnden

March 27th: Cindy Pingree

Ushers & Greeters

Weekly Usher – Michael Bryan

March 6th: Ushers: Diaconate

Greeters: Verna Elwell, Shirley Dickason

March 13th: Ushers: Ross and Linda Webber

Kevin and Diane Gordon

Greeter: David and Lorie McGrath

March 20th: Ushers: Ken Gould, Diane Breeden

Dee Deranian, Shirley Dickason

Greeter: Lisa and Wayne Hall

March 27th: Ushers: Stanley and Holly Gorgol

Tom and Andrea Cooper

Greeter: Diane Breeden

Nursing Home Friends

Theo Johnson

Hillsborough Country Nursing Home

Phil Guertin

Pleasant Valley Nursing Home

First Parish Congregational Church, UCC

Church Office Hours:

Monday: Closed

Tuesday-Friday: 9 am – 4:30 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, Lindsey Roman:

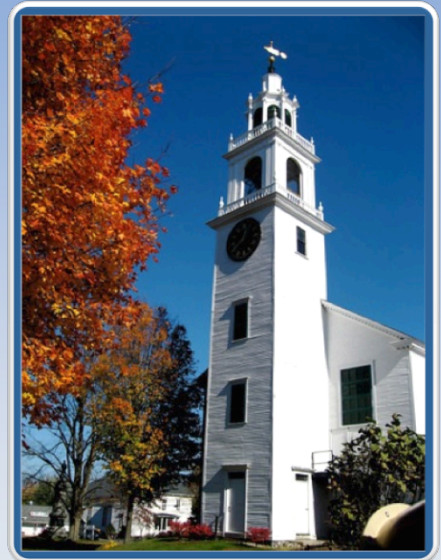
officemgr@fpc-ucc.org

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

pastordeborah@fpc-ucc.org

Email our Associate Pastor, the Rev. Heidi

Carrington Heath: pastorheidiheath@gmail.com



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United Church of Christ
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MARCH