

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

Words are windows, or they're walls,
They sentence us, or set us free.
When I speak and when I hear,
Let the love light shine through me.
- Ruth Bebermeyer -

Dear Child of God,

Blessings and peace to you and to those you love. I thank God for you each and every day. You are in my life for a reason and I pray that God's purpose is revealed to us as we continue to be open and listening. I heard someone say once that we have one mouth and two ears because we need to listen twice as much as we speak. There is truth to that. It's good communication. And there is harm and hurt feelings when communication stops happening. It is one of the ways in which we can be innocently faithless as Christians.

Continued on Page 2

ALL ARE WELCOME

"Friend, you enter this church not as a stranger, but as a guest of God. Come, then, with joy in your heart and thanks upon your lips, and offer God today your love and your service."

- Adapted from a 12th Century Church in Hampshire, England

Upcoming Events

Thursday, September 1st

International Prayer Gathering (p. 11)

Sunday, September 11th

Rally Day Sunday and Blessing of the Backpacks

Sunday, September 18th

Church School Begins

Sunday, September 18th

Hand Chimes Begin

Tuesday, September 20th

Adult Faith Formation ~ Glorify (p. 10)

Saturday, October 15th

Don Eaton Concert (p. 7)



From the Pastor's Desk Continued

Jesus was very specific about how to deal with conflict. In Matthew 18, Jesus explains that if someone sins against you that you must go directly to that person and to explain to them why you feel sinned against. In this first step, Jesus says that it is between the two of you. If the person listens to you, then you can be in right relationship once again. Now if the person does not listen to you, you must go to the next step. In this second step, you take with you one or two persons as witnesses to the offense against the one who sinned. If the one who is said to have sinned again refuses to listen, you then tell the whole church body. If the one who is believed to have sinned still does not listen, there will then be consequences.

Jesus is teaching us to talk our problems out and to listen to one another. Listening is not the same as agreeing. In the United Church of Christ we often say that we "agree to disagree." The main action is listening. As the poem says: our words will be windows or they will be walls. We choose.

Jesus had three steps for conflict resolution and a great article on "Dailygood.org" by Liz Kingsnorth notes 10 "tips for effective communication". Both systems have merit. I encourage you to read the whole article but here is a brief summary. In order to communicate effectively, you need to want connection. She says that the goal is respectful and compassionate quality of connection. Connection is more important and more nourishing than being right. Tips 2-5 are about the other person: listen to them, try to understand them, try to empathize with their experience. Then it's time to take responsibility for your own feelings. Sometimes another person's behavior triggers something inside us that is hurting. That person is not "at fault" - they are simply a lightning rod.

When we get to tips #7 and #8 it is time to be specific about what we need from the other person. We need to make requests that are practical, specific and positive and use accurate, neutral descriptions. Tip #9 is a big one: we need to be willing to hear 'no'. Something that would make you happy may not be the end result of this process - but if you are healthy enough to make it to tip 9, hopefully you are healthy enough to realize that for whatever reason you can't have your way but you have engaged in a healthy process. The 10th tip is about non-verbals. Be aware of how your body reflects your heart. Do you appear to be listening wholly - all the while your legs are crossed, your arms are crossed in front of you and when the other person speaks you are not making eye contact or perhaps even rolling your eyes. In other words, come wholly to the process of healthy and intentional communication.

May our words be windows rather than walls and may we grow in community, in relationship and in trust.

Peace and all good,

Pastor Deborah

The Associate Pastor's Pen

Beloved of God,

It is hard to believe summer is drawing to a close! It seems as though it has flown by. Another program year is upon us.

I want to take a few moments of gratitude to reflect on some of the joys in our faith formation this summer. We had a wonderful, vibrant Vacation Church School program with children both from and outside of the congregation. Thanks be to God for our team of volunteers who make this wonderful time possible. Indeed it takes a village!

We have had consistent attendance at Sunday School this summer across the summer in our Pre-K through 4th grade classroom. Our teenagers have been meeting regularly for Bible Exploration at THEIR request. Thanks be to God for our youth who love their church and their faith enough to ask to spend the summer in faith formation together. Special thanks to Chris Cox, their faithful leader!

I have had vibrant and regular double digit attendance at our summer book group read of *The Shack*. Our discussions have been thoughtful, vulnerable, authentic, and faithful. We all agreed at our last meeting that we were sad to see it draw to a close. Join us in September for our read of *Glorify: Reclaiming the Heart of Progressive Christianity*.

Christian Education enjoyed a fun and laughter-filled retreat discussing programming for Faith Formation across the lifespan this program year. I give thanks to God for this special group of saints who cares so deeply about our ministries of teaching and learning. I am grateful to do this ministry along side of them.

Lastly, I give special thanks to each of you who have chosen to share your stories with me in these warmer months. I have so enjoyed sitting on your porches, breaking bread together, sharing coffee at the Coffee Factory, or spending time together in my office. It is an honor to bear witness to the deep stirrings of your hearts and their intersections with your faith.

Indeed we are amidst a wavy sea of change, and yet God is very much alive in our midst. Thanks be to God for the one who cannot, does not, and will not leave us alone. If you are feeling like there is something missing from your walk with God, I hope you might think of joining us this fall for one of our faith formation opportunities. They might just change your life, if you let them.

God loves you and so do I,

Pastor Heidi

Faith Formation/Christian Ed/Youth Ministry Updates

Sunday School

Debuting this Fall! A new Christian Education Curriculum for Pre-K - 4th graders!

We will be moving into a trial run of Sparkhouse's Whirl curriculum that follows the Revised Common Lectionary. We are so excited about the possibilities for connection between what is happening in worship, and what is happening in Church School for deeper family faith formation.

Confirmation Quest

Are you in 9th and 10th grade? Are you feeling like you're ready to explore what your faith means to you? Have questions that you think aren't ok to ask in church? Then perhaps confirmation is for you. We'd like to offer a confirmation class in 2016-2017. If you're interested in being confirmed, please be in touch with Pastor Heidi and Pastor Deborah to let them know! Are you outside of the 9th-10th grade age range, but interested? Let us know that too.

New Hampshire Motor Speedway results are in!

Team FPC won the night making over \$1500 for First Parish. By unanimous vote of the Board of Christian Education, over \$1000 was donated to the FPC rehabilitation fundraising efforts in support of our ongoing building restoration. Thanks be to God for Christian Education's generosity.

What's the church's "next big thing"? Come September 20th to find out.

We'll begin our next book group read of *Glorify: Reclaiming the Heart of Progressive Christianity*. All are welcome! Please RSVP to Pastor Heidi and let her know if you need a book: pastorheidiheath@gmail.com.

Worship in September!

With the start of school and activities our church is just as full of exciting things! Take a look:

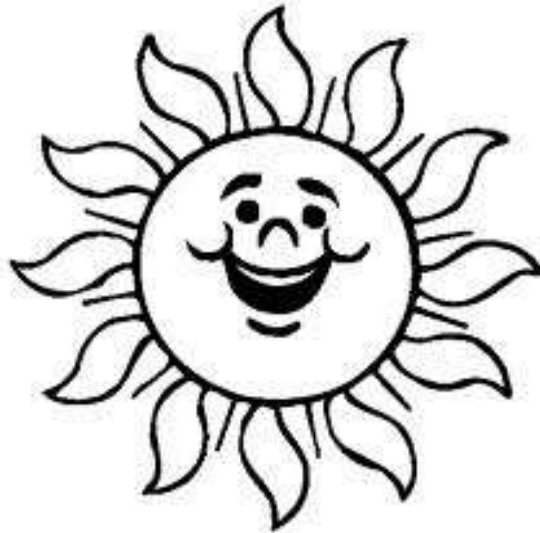
Starting in September worship is at 10am! Coffee hour will follow.

Starting September 1st are the International Prayer Gatherings.

Sunday September 11th is Rally Day Sunday!!

Church School begins **September 18th!**

Hand chimes begin **September 18th!**



Draw something fun you did over the summer and post it to the Church Facebook Page!

Board of Christian Outreach and Missions

Family Promise

The Mission moment for September will be given on Sunday, September 18th during service by a member of Family Promise. First Parish's participation in Family Promise continues, with about 10 people in our congregation regularly participating every 10th week when our turn to co-host comes around. We hope you will be at Church on the 18th to hear about this important program supported by your charitable giving and, if you are interested, how you may help.

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.

Zimbabwe Shipment

On September 10th a shipment of goods (books, school supplies, etc...) will begin its journey to Zimbabwe, Africa. The Board of Christian Outreach and Missions has been able at the last minute to reserve some space (enough for 8 copier size boxes) in the container to be sent to our sister Church in Mutare, Zimbabwe. When this program is offered again we plan to participate earlier and reserve more space to allow us to collect more items from the Congregation.

Monthly 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

Respectfully submitted,

The Board of Christian Outreach and Missions (BOCOM): Joe Weaver, Gloria Bingel, Sue Brown, Beth Hunter, Karen Wilson, Kathy Holland, Kris Barker, Bart Wetherbee, Melanie VanSteensburg (Affiliate Member), Fred Bates (Affiliate Member)

SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE

**An Evening With Don Eaton
Nationally Acclaimed Singer-Songwriter
Saturday October 15 at 7 pm**

**First Congregational Church of Hopkinton
1548 Hopkinton Road
Hopkinton, NH**



An opportunity to see and hear Don Eaton again - or for the first time!!

“Don Eaton’s music, message, and presence combine in a remarkable human being. His songs are...warm, captivating, and insightful...”

Dr. Marcus Borg, Distinguished Professor of Religion and Culture, Dept. of Philosophy, Oregon State University

“Very strong lyrics of social commentary and insight, but most of all, these are songs of deep compassion.”

Robert McAfee Brown, Theologian, Author, Professor Emeritus, Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley

“His songs are true healing for the listener.”

Robert Raines, retired Executive Director Kirkridge Retreat Center, Pennsylvania

Donations to benefit Concord’s Friendly Kitchen

Finance Committee

HOW ARE WE DOING?

| Financial Report as of 7/31/16 | Received | Budgeted |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Pledges year to date: | \$120,123 | \$122,500 |
| Plate year to date: | \$17,315 | \$16,333 |

Should you have any questions please feel free to ask any member of the Finance Committee. You can also email Chris O'Brien at chrisobrienct@yahoo.com with any questions or concerns. Finance Committee meets the second Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

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

SONSHINE SOUP KITCHEN

We had a serving at the Soup Kitchen on August 22. We served 32 people with 4 take outs. The FPC crew worked to prepare chicken/grape salad sandwiches with a lettuce, cottage cheese, pineapple salad. A gardener from Londonderry brought in her yummy garden fresh tomatoes, red and yellow. We are still not using the dish washer so used all paper goods except for the preparation done in large metal bowls and of course cutting boards. Eileen Cox used the sprayers in the metal sinks to wash all of these and herself! Naturally the spray went in several directions!! The next one we host is in October and then we host December 26. SSK Team, Margie Ives, Sue Hunt, Eileen Cox, Paula Cox, Jennifer and Jaimie Cox and two helpers from Londonderry.

Building Rehabilitation Update

As we write this in mid-August, more progress has been made on the remaining work for the Meetinghouse foundation project. Preservation Timber Framing (PTF) is continuing to replace rotted sections of the sill with white oak beams. Millennium Granite of Maine has sliced and returned the granite pieces from the old foundation. These will cover the post-grading exposed concrete so that that our Meetinghouse retains the look of its historic foundation while resting on its solid new foundation.

PTF staff have also begun work on under-floor framing repairs and slight adjustments to ensure the floors of the Meetinghouse – both the MacGregor and the Sanctuary floors – are as level as possible.

Work on the accessibility connector has also started, but FPC faces challenges! As discussed in a special congregational meeting August 14th, for various reasons the cost of building the connector is more than our current budget covers. This means we will be completing just the *connector shell* this fall, and finishing it later when more funds are available (hopefully this spring).

The connector shell currently planned will be enclosed and weather-tight, but the contractor won't be installing siding or windows, or electrical wiring, or finishing the interior walls or floors. There will be passable stairs, but these won't have finished handrails or treads. We are hoping code enforcement officials will sanction occasional use of this structure for access into the Meetinghouse but this is not clear yet; our general contractor Dan Morin is investigating.

The connector shell's exterior will likely be graced by house wrap (e.g., Tyvek) for this fall and winter. Our budget shortfall has led the BAC to recommend eventually installing vinyl siding because of the very significant saving this affords in materials, installation labor, and long-term maintenance. If additional funds become available, wooden siding could potentially be installed this spring, or even as a replacement to the vinyl at any time. (Please talk with any member of the Building Advisory Committee if you are concerned about this, or any, issue.)

The current connector shell construction will also include the masonry elevator shaft, provisions for the elevator's large electrical requirements, and other aspects so that the elevator can be installed when we can finish paying for it.

Until then, accessibility to the Sanctuary level will be limited to the stairs (though the half-flight up from Noyes to the sanctuary via the new connector is better than the two fights up in the narthex, and we are looking at options like a temporary stair-chair lift along that half-flight). Given this situation, the Diaconate is considering whether the church should resume services in the Sanctuary this fall, or have services remain in Currier until Sanctuary accessibility can be achieved.

Meanwhile, the foundation for the accessibility connector has just been poured. The design for this evolved from early versions where the new elevator/staircase building stood directly behind the old connector to shifting most of that building southward into the yard behind Noyes. This results in a less-expensive, more fire-safe structure, and also means the short corridor we will walk along from the elevator (which will be behind Noyes) to the Sanctuary doorway can now be beautifully lit with windows on both sides.

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

Adult Faith Formation

Tuesday Nights 7-8:30 PM

September 20th- October 4th

Glorify: Reclaiming the Heart of Progressive Christianity by Emily C. Heath

We kick off our fall faith formation with this extraordinary work for a 21st century church.

This primer on Christian Discipleship for the progressive church turns the foundations of Jesus' Gospel into a vision of what progressive Christianity needs today.

We'll read the book and discuss it together. At the end of our time together, Rev. Heath will join us for a book signing and our last discussion!

October 11th-November 15th

Exploring the Bible: Hebrew Bible 6 week seriesWe'll go from a broad overview to deeper exploration as we dive into the Hebrew Bible (sometimes called the Old Testament). This portion of the Bible contains some of our most challenging texts. While we can read them alone, it's so much richer to explore them in community. All are welcome if it's your first time or 100th time reading the Bible.

November 21st - Break

Take this time to be grateful for the gifts God has given to us as you prepare for Thanksgiving with your families.

November 29th-December 13th

Advent Exploration

Our 2015 Advent small group was one of the most well reviewed of the year. We'll gather again to explore this sacred, holy, mysterious season of watching and waiting together.

Stay tuned for more details!

December 20th

Blue Christmas Worship Service

This Service is especially geared toward those of us who want to make sacred space for the more tender feelings at this time of year.

(Please note: Whenever possible we will attempt to offer a daytime opportunity for those folks who cannot come in the evening. These sessions will not always mirror the Tuesday evening.

If you are a daytime person, be sure that our Pastors both know your desire to participate.)

“Whenever two or more are gathered...”
Intentional Prayer Gatherings
Starting September 1, 2016

This is a way to **connect** with God and with each other. It is a way to **express** gratitude and joy. It is a way to **dig deep** into our relationship with GOD, who is our Creating, Redeeming, and Sustaining Constant Presence.

Join us in developing an intentional process of praying together as a faith family. You may choose to pray in a group, be part of a daily texting gratitude group or join a closed FB prayer page (see Pastor Heidi).

You may choose to participate in any or all of these ways of praying together – for our church, for our leaders, for our world, and for each other in gratitude for God.

Become a **Prayer Angel** with our Pastors, Beth Hunter and Diana Sweeney!

Gather to pray together:

- **Tuesday:** 6:15-6:45pm at church with Diana
- **Wednesday:** 5:30-6 at The Coffee Factory with Pastor Heidi
- Or 11-11:30am with Beth at her house:
- 11 L Rebecca Lane in Derry
- **Thursday:** 11-11:30am at church with Pastor Deborah
- **Sunday:** 11:30-12 with Diana

You may also sign up to send and receive a gratitude text each day! TEXT Beth at 603-505-0702! Give her your name and she'll assign you a gratitude angel group!

Form a prayer team of your own and let us know what you're doing.

God loves us so much. Let us love God so much that we join in prayer.

Peace
 Pastor Deborah, Pastor Heidi, Beth and Diana



Key Sundays and Services for 2016

- September 11th - Rally Day and Blessing of the Backpacks!
(Don't forget to bring your beach balls from your God on the Go boxes if you have one)
- September 18th - Church School Kick-Off Sunday
- Saturday, October 1st - Blessing of the Animals at 12 Noon
Rain Date: Saturday, October 8th
- Sunday, October 2nd - World Communion Sunday
- Sunday, October 30th - Laity Sunday
- Sunday, November 6th - All Saints Day
- Sunday, November 13th - Veterans Day and Stewardship Sunday**
- Sunday, November 20th - Thanksgiving Sunday
- Sunday, November 27th - First Sunday of Advent
- Tuesday, December 20th - Blue Christmas at 7 PM
- Saturday, December 24th - 4:30 PM Vibrant, Inter-generational Service with Pageant, 7:00 PM Lessons and Carols, and 10:00 PM Candlelight Service
- Sunday, December 25th - Christmas Sunday

**Subject to change

Wanted: Handchime Players

The Handchime choir is looking for a few new players. We are looking for anyone from Grade 5 and up. Musical training is nice but not required. We will teach. We are especially looking for someone tall to handle the larger bells. Rehearsals are after Church on Sundays.

The First rehearsal will be September 18. If you are interested or would like more information please speak with Ken Williams.

Around Our Church and in the Community

Pastor Heidi’s Community Office Hours

Pastor Heidi will resume coffee and conversation at the Coffee Factory on Wednesday beginning on September 7th. She'll be extending her hours by 30 minutes from 4 PM-6 PM to ensure even more folks are able to stop by. Join her for coffee, conversation, or a blessing on your way home, resuming in September.

EXTRA, EXTRA, READ ALL ABOUT IT!

September Preaching Schedule

- Sunday, September 4th - Pastor Deborah
- Sunday, September 11th - Pastor Deborah
- Sunday, September 18th - Pastor Deborah
- Sunday, September 25th - Pastor Heidi

First Fridays at First Parish

Just a reminder that First Fridays are on hiatus for the summer months! First Fridays will return at the beginning of October. We look forward to this kind of fun and fellowship together again soon.

Rockingham VNA & Hospice

Rockingham VNA & Hospice will be offering Bereavement Support Groups September 12th through October 18th. An afternoon group and an evening group are planned. These groups are free to the public, but must have 4 registered participants for each group. The afternoon group will meet at the Epping Regional Health Center on Route 125 and the evening groups will be held at the Offices of RVNA & Hospice, 137 Epping Rd. in Exeter. For more information and to register, please call Dick Munsey or Molly Brewer at 772-2981.

Pastors’ Vacation and Study Leave

Pastor Heidi will be off from September 1st-September 6th.

•••••
 • Thanks to Everyone’s help we
 • are only printing 30 newsletters
 • versus 285!! This is terrific! We
 • are saving over \$150 a month!
 •••••

Scripture Readings

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

September 4th – Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jer 18:1-11
Psalms 139:1-6, 13-18 or Deut 30:15-20
Psalms 1
Philem 1:1-21
Luke 15:1-10

September 11th – Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jer 4:11-12, 22-28
Psalms 14 or Ex 32:7-14
Psalms 51:1-10
1 Timothy 1:12-17
Luke 15:1-10

September 18st – Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jer 8:18-9:1
Psalms 79:1-9 or Amos 8:4-7
Psalms 113
1 Timothy 2:1-7
Luke 16:1-13

September 25th – Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jer 32:1-3a, 6-15
Psalms 91:1-6, 14-16 or Amos 6:1a, 4-7
Psalms 146
1 Timothy 6:6-19
Luke 16:19-31

Worship Leadership

Deacons & Lay Readers

Deacons of the Month

Diana Sweeney and Brian Williams

September 4th: Ella Simpson

September 11th: Beth Hunter

September 18st: Diane Breeden

September 25th: Cyndi Gray

Ushers & Greeters

Weekly Usher – Michael Bryan

September 4th: Ushers: Diaconate

Greeters: Verna Elwell and Shirley
Dickason

September 11th: Ushers: Ross and Linda Webber

Kevin and Diane Gordon
Greeter: Betsy McCall

September 18st: Ushers: Ken Gould and Diane
Breeden

Dee Deranian and Shirley Dickason
Greeters: Dave and Lorie McGrath

September 25th: 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-Friday
10 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 Interim Administrative Assistant, Rebecca Cobban:

officemgr@fpc-ucc.org

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

pastordeborah@fpc-ucc.org

Email our Associate Pastor, the Rev. Heidi Carrington

Heath: pastorheidiheath@gmail.com



First Parish Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
47 East Derry Road
PO Box 114
East Derry, NH 03041-0114

Address Service Requested

