

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.

Upcoming Events

April 1st

Easter Sunrise service ~ 6:15

April 4th

Deacons Meeting ~ 6:30

April 5th

Stewardship Meeting ~ 7:00

April 9th

Finance Meeting ~ 7:00

April 11th

K.I.T ~ 12:30

April 15th

Missions Meeting ~ 11:30

April 18th

Council Meeting ~ 7:00

March 30th

Spaghetti Supper ~ 5:00

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Child of God,

"Hover over me, Lord. Take me down deep into your Presence." This is one example of the prayers that the speaker used as she opened each session of the Study Leave that I recently attended. As much as I often travel for my Study Leave, and as much as I often have a wonderful time, it is also a sacred time for me to "sharpen the saw" of my profession and my spirit. It is a holy time of renewal and connection with the greater church, God's children from other walks of life and faith. My personal devotion to the sacred art of preaching has led me to one particular event at this time each year, the Festival of Homiletics. This year, however, I felt intuitively led to a different experience and the irony was that I was led to a great modern mystic, one who doesn't just acknowledge her intuition, she trusts her intuitive voice and she teaches others to develop and to learn to trust their intuition.

Caroline Myss is a five-time New York Times bestselling author and internationally renowned speaker in the fields of human consciousness, spirituality and mysticism, health, energy medicine, and the science of medical intuition. In March I went to Kripalu, in western Massachusetts to hear her presentation entitled: "Making Power Choices and Creative Decisions: How to Navigate in Times of Chaos and Possibility." The presentation was based on Caroline's own study of Christian mystics like Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, and Saint Benedict.

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



From the Pastor's Desk Continued

Caroline took us on a four-part journey beyond the notion of our five human senses. She quotes Genesis saying that as we were created in the image of God, we are more than our finite biology would dictate. We have powerful souls that connect with the divine when allowed. She reminded us that we are spiritual beings on a physical journey in this finite lifetime, but to believe that we are only that is to reduce the amazing miracle that we are!

I would like to share with you just a few notes from my time with Caroline. She is, herself, a truth-teller. All too often, people are not truthful to themselves, let alone others. We deny our fears, we deny our shortcomings, and in doing so we deny the wonder that it is to accept the gift of courage in the face of difficult times or the gift of grace in accepting responsibility for our mistakes. A spiritual journey must be first and foremost a non-judgmental time of telling complete truths, no matter how difficult that truth may be. A spiritual journey is one of total devotion to the "now", to present-moment awareness. Too often we live in past resentments or in tomorrow's worries. Jesus said, "Who among you by worrying has added an hour to your life?" A spiritual journey is living in this moment.

Caroline talked about the mystical power of hope. She explained that just like the existence of physical laws, there are also mystical laws. The ego operates in the physical and the soul operates in the mystical and the mystical is where hope endures. The ego seeks validation and judges that things or people aren't good enough, smart enough, rich enough. The ego convinces us that WE aren't "enough". The soul knows that we are human "beings" first and foremost. We are enduring. We are becoming. We are the very source of hope. That is, unless we allow our ego to ground us in wounds and resentments.

Teresa of Avila wrote that the Spiritual Paul is the path of self-knowledge. Why do I choose to **not** be loving, when I could choose to **be** loving? Why do I withhold a compliment? My best choice is to not give in to fear. There is never justification to withhold grace from another child of God.

John of the Cross developed the idea of the "dark night of the soul". He wrote a poem by this name and it has become an archetypal metaphor for the mystical journey that many find themselves on. Heaven calls you into the process of now, and bids you to be shaped by heavenly influences all the while acknowledging earthly trials and difficulties.

From the Pastor's Desk Continued

Caroline spent a significant amount of time on Sunday morning talking about the crucial importance of taking "soul time." Indeed one of the Ten Commandments is "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy." She says we each need to celebrate our soul! It would be a time when we would leave the worries of the world behind. It would be taking a step out of the ordinary and taking a step into grace and soul nourishment. We have these expectations of safety, justice, grace and healings. We are even audacious enough to make our petitions to God. How much time do we set aside for the Holy? Do we value the time we've been gifted to spend some with God?

Liz and I were out to dinner recently and across from us sat a family: a mother, a father, a son in his early teens and a girl about 6 years old. That little girl was amazing! She chatted away, asking questions, making observations, absolutely enthralled with a book she had borrowed. She was divine light, pure and simple. Her three dinner companions each had a phone in their hands. Each one absorbed in a world far away from this little treasure, far away from the meal on the table before them, and worlds away from the very "now" they'd been gifted. My heart was breaking for her and for them. And then I wondered: how often does God's heart break because we are otherwise occupied with things "a world away" from God's gift called "now"?

I am so very grateful to you, my church, for allowing me the opportunity to experience this "soul retreat". I was reminded of God's presence and God's love. I learned more about myself and for a moment or two I remembered who I want to be. We are on a quest, you and I. We are searching for meaning. Let us seek to be authentic to our Spirit in the here and now. Whenever possible let us hope together and bring about the reality of which Teresa of Avila wrote:

"Christ has no body now on earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours, Yours are the eyes through which to look out Christ's compassion to the world
Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good;
Yours are the hands with which he is to bless men now."

God's peace to each one.
Your servant in Christ,
Pastor Deborah

Council

This is an article about communication.

I have written a number of newsletter articles for the stewardship board. This month I am writing for the church council. There is a lot going on at this church right now. And there is always a lot going on here. And that's the way we like it. And it can be scary, but we are never overwhelmed. This church is an abundant church. It is a glass half full church. We are a "everything's gonna be alright" church. We are a happy, positive, welcoming church!

Do you ever wonder how much is enough? How much is too much? Enough money? Enough stuff? Too many projects? Well when it comes to communication, I don't think we can ever have too much. And communication is a two way street. This newsletter is one way council and the other boards and committees communicate with the congregation. Periodically, Pastor Deborah communicates important news by way of a letter or email blast. And there are weekly email blasts from the church office letting us all know what's coming up for Sunday worship, and occasionally for other reasons. And God is guiding us in each and every one of these acts of communication. Do you have something you want to communicate to council? To Pastor Deborah? To the church office? Please speak up. Do you have questions about what is happening in the church? Please communicate! What is God, the Holy Spirit whispering in your ear?

Your help is needed. You don't have to do it all. But if you can do something, please step up. Phase two of the Capital Campaign is looking for ideas, and as various fundraisers and other activities are rolled out they will be looking for volunteers. And don't hesitate to speak up with positive words when talking about the meetinghouse restoration project.

Are you new here? Do you feel like there are cliques and old-timers who know the ropes and have all the answers? It's not true. Some of those folks are burned out and would welcome a helping hand. A new perspective on an old problem.

There is a committee right now working on ways to reorganize the current structure of our council/boards/committees. The impetus for this effort is the general feeling that there are too many boards and committees. And the nominating committee can never find enough people to fill all the positions on these boards and committees. As this effort shakes out there will be tasks and projects to be accomplished. Can you help? Once again you don't have to do it all. And if you can't do anything at all at this time, that's okay too. There will come a time when the spirit moves you to step up and take on something that feels meaningful to you. That fuels your passion. Does it feel risky to step forward? Try it. In taking the risk, you may just find joy.

So talk to your at large council members, Reni Harnden, Cathy Pottle, and John Bartel. Their job is to represent each of you at council. And let me conclude by thanking each member of council for showing up at each monthly meeting and doing the hard work of managing the business of First Parish Church.

Submitted by John Bartel on behalf of the Church Council: Fred Merrill, Anne LaDuke, Becky Fleury, Linda Webber, Cathy Zylinski, Joe Weaver, Anne-Marie Merrill, Dee Deranian, Margie Ives, Harry Handy, Reni Harnden, Cathy Pottle.

Board of Christian Education

Dates to Remember:

April 1st: Easter! No Sunday School Classes

April 3rd, 10th, 17th, & 24th: Adult Faith Formation Film Series

April 5th: CE Board Meeting ~ Nursery

April 7th: New England Youth Environmental Justice Summit

April 8th: Vacation Church School Meeting ~ AB Conference Room

April 15th: Earth Day project during Sunday School

April 22nd: No Sunday School Classes, Start of April Vacation



Adult Faith Formation Film Series

ROB BELL'S NOOMA SHORT FILM SERIES

Jesus lived with the awareness that God is doing something, right here, right now, and anybody can be a part of it. He encouraged his listeners to search, to question, to wrestle with the implications of what he was saying and doing. He inspired, challenged, provoked, comforted, and invited people to be open to God's work in this world. Wherever he went, whatever he did, Jesus started discussions about what matters most, because for Jesus, God is always inviting us to open our eyes and join in.

NOOMA is a series of short films that explore our world from a perspective of Jesus. NOOMA is an invitation to search, question, and join the discussion. **Join us Tuesdays @ 6:30 pm** starting April 3rd for 4 weeks, [register here](#).

Board of Christian Education

New England Youth Environmental Justice Summit **April 7th, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm**

The Summit is open to all middle school, high school and college students; as well as teachers, mentors, pastors, lay leaders and advisors: and anyone interested in acquiring tools for facing the pressing moral issue of climate change. Registration Deadline is Tuesday April 3rd, [register here](#) or see Christine Lehoullier for further questions: cedirector@fpc-ucc.org

The fee for the day is \$20.00 and includes breakfast pastries and lunch. Scholarships are available

Vacation Church School Volunteer Meeting **April 8th 11:45 – 12:45**



Venture onto an uncharted island where kids survive and thrive. Anchor kids in the truth that Jesus carries them through life's storms. Each day at Shipwrecked VCS, kids travel through field-tested rotations that reinforce relevant Bible Points and immerse kids in new adventures. At Shipwrecked, one memorable Bible Point is reinforced throughout each station, each day – making it easy to apply long after VCS is over.

If you are interested in what VCS volunteering is all about (and how much fun it is!) don't miss this meeting! See Christine Lehoullier for more information.

APRIL AT A GLANCE: Rejoice, First Parish! Rejoice!

SUNDAY APRIL 1 EASTER 6:15: Sunrise Service; 10:00 Worship

SUNDAY APRIL 8 We will celebrate Sue Handy's 35th year as a church musician.

WEDNESDAY APRIL 11 "Wonder Wednesday: A Powerful time of Prayer and Praise" 7pm.
This is a program of coming together on **the second Wednesday of the month** for an **interactive** worship, using current technology and mindfulness of ecology (NO PAPER!)
The idea for this service came from the Lenten Wednesday folks who wanted to "keep it going"!

SUNDAY APRIL 15 Founder's Day Celebration
We'll hear about our sacred history on this 299th Birthday!

SUNDAY APRIL 22 Earth Day
How do we show our compassion toward the environment?
What more can we do?

SUNDAY APRIL 29 Guest preacher: the Rev. Dr. Anne Robertson, Director of the Massachusetts Bible Society, Author of the Exploring the Bible series.
Dr. Robertson will present to our very own CE Director, Christine Lehoullier with a "Certificate of Biblical Literacy", a program that Christine has been working on over the past year.

Questions for you, our brothers and sisters in Christ:

Do you receive the electronic weekly updates? If you do not, please call the office or email Pastor Deborah.

Would you like to be a lay reader? If so, please see one of the Deacons and add your name to our list.

Would you like to help with the Wonder Wednesday program? If so, please let Pastor Deborah or a Deacon know what you would like to do. This is something that we are creating, so all ideas are welcome!

Board of Christian Outreach and Missions

Mission Moment: A Mission moment will be held on April 15th. Mike Schroeder will be presenting the Kairos (Prison Ministry) program. If you are interested to learn more about Kairos or to participate in this ministry, please stay after the service to speak with Mike. There will also be pizza served during this time of fellowship.

Mission Trip: A group from First Parish Church will be traveling to Marathon in the Florida Keys to assist in the Hurricane Irma disaster relief effort in April. The Board of Christian Outreach and Missions wishes all of the travelers a safe journey and we pray for their safe return. To help defray some of their expenses, Missions has donated \$400 towards this effort.

Project Linus Workshop: We are having a Project Linus Workshop at FPC on May 20th after service. There will be more information coming in the May Newsletter.

Coffee Hour: The Board of Christian Outreach and Missions will be hosting Coffee hour on April 8. We would be glad to talk to you if you would like more information about the Churches Missions work.

Missions Giving: The Board of Christian Outreach and Missions is thankful to each of you for sharing so generously with those in our community who are struggling. We can do nothing without your kindness. Below is our list of charities who received your support last month:

Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM) - \$350.00	Derry Friendship Center - \$100.00
Sonshine Soup Kitchen - \$200.00	Pinkerton Homeless Program - \$100.00
Pastoral Counseling - \$100.00	Upper Room - \$100.00
First Baptist Food Pantry - \$200.00	Family Promise of Nashua - \$100.00
Community Caregivers - \$100.00	Pastor Discretionary Fund - \$200.00
Hurricane Irma disaster relief Missions trip - \$400.00	

Please note that the amount of funds available for Missions work is what you designate on your Pledge card. You may also designate money towards special offerings throughout the year by writing Missions in the memo field of your check followed by where you want the donation to go. For example: *Missions: Hurricane Irma Relief*. The Missions board will send the donation to its destination in the most efficient way.

Board of Christian Outreach and Missions

(Continued)

The Liberty House: The Liberty House in Manchester, NH has been providing a safe, supportive, substance-free housing community for more than a decade for American veterans transitioning out of homelessness.

LIBERTY HOUSE WISH LIST

Donations can be dropped off at 75 W. Baker St, Manchester NH during daylight hours.

FOOD

- ☆ Pasta & Pasta Sauce
- ☆ Canned Soup
- ☆ Mac & Cheese
- Canned Tuna
- Peanut Butter
- Canned Chicken
- Fruit Cups & Canned fruit
- Granola bars
- Spam
- Canned potatoes
- Beans
- Canned ravioli
- Canned veggies
- Ramen noodles

CLOTHING

- ☆ Men's shorts waist sizes (30-34)
- ☆ Men's workboots, sizes (10-10.5 preferred)
- ☆ Men's sneakers all sizes
- Men's jeans waist sizes (30-34)
- Men's and women's hooded sweatshirts
- Men's boxers small, medium and large
- Flannel Shirts
- Thermal Underwear
- Socks
- Women's Clothing

HOUSEHOLD

- ☆ Paper towels
- ☆ Toilet paper
- 35 gallon trash bags
- Air freshener

MISC

- ☆ Bicycles
- Shaving razors (disposable)
- Shaving cream
- Deodorant
- Conditioner full size
- Shampoo full size

HOMELESS ASSISTANCE

- ☆ Sleeping bags
- ☆ Backpacks
- ☆ Tents
- Can Openers
- Tarps
- Blankets

Respectfully submitted,

The Board of Christian Outreach and Missions (BOCOM): Joe Weaver, Sue Brown, Beth Hunter, Karen Wilson, Kathy Holland, Bart Wetherbee, Melanie VanSteensburg, Sharon Hartmann

Songweavers
Peggo Horstmann Hodes, director

with Songweaver Drummers
Grace Schust and Lindsey Schust, Co-Directors

WE ARE THE WORLD

CONCORD
COMMUNITY
MUSIC
SCHOOL

Sunday, April 15, 2018 @ 4:00pm
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church • 102 N. Main St. • Manchester, NH
For tickets or information, call 603-622-8632

Saturday, April 21, 2018 @ 5:00pm
South Congregational Church • 27 Pleasant St. • Concord, NH
For tickets or information, ccmusicsschool.org or 603-228-1196

The Songweavers will NOT be singing at First Parish this year.
The theme and the songs are so very important in our lives in these difficult times.
Try to attend one of the concerts. Pastor Deborah will be singing in the Concord concert.
Notice that the time is earlier than in the past.

We are the World!!

Scripture Readings

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

April 1st

Acts 10:34-43 or Isa 25:6-9
Ps 118:1-2, 14-24
1 Cor 15:1-11 or Acts 10:34-43
Jn 20:1-18 or Mk 16:1-8

April 8th

Acts 4:32-35
Ps 133
1 Jn 3:1-7
Jn 20:19-31

April 15th

Acts 3:12-19
Ps 4
1 Jn 3:1-7
Luke 24:36b-48

April 22nd

Acts 4:5-12
Ps 23
1 Jn 3:16-24
Jn 10:11-18

April 29th

Acts 8:26-40
Ps 22:25-31
1 Jn 4:7-21
Jn 15:1-8

Worship Schedule

Deacons of the Month:

Cindy Pingree and Joanne Worthen

Ushers & Greeters

Weekly Usher – Michael Bryan

April 1st:

Ushers: Diaconate
Greeter(s): Verna Elwell &
Shirley Dickason
Layreader: Cyndi Gray

April 8th:

Ushers: Becky Fleury, Verna Elwell
& Sue Hunt
Greeter(s): Liz Greenburg
Layreader: Julie Turner

April 15th:

Ushers: Brian Williams, Margie Ives
& Pat Cefaly
Greeter: Beth Hunter
Layreader: Ryan Lehoullier

April 22nd:

Ushers: Ken Gould, Dee Deranian, Shirley
Dickason & Reni Harnden
Greeter: Carol Guerrin
Layreader: Sue Lindemann

April 29th:

Ushers: Stanley & Holly Gorgol, Tom &
Andrea Cooper
Greeter: Diane Dunn
Layreader: Diane Dunn

**First Parish
Congregational Church**

**PO Box 114, 47 East Derry
Road, E Derry, NH 03041**

Office Hours

Monday: Closed
 Tuesday: 9:00-3:00
 Wednesday: 9:00-3:00
 Thursday: 9:00-3:00
 Friday: 9:00-3:00

Check us out on the web

www.fpc-ucc.org

**Administrative Assistant,
 Hannah Collier:**

officemgr@fpc-ucc.org
 603-434-0628

**Senior Pastor and Teacher
 The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof:**
pastordeboraah@fpc-ucc.org

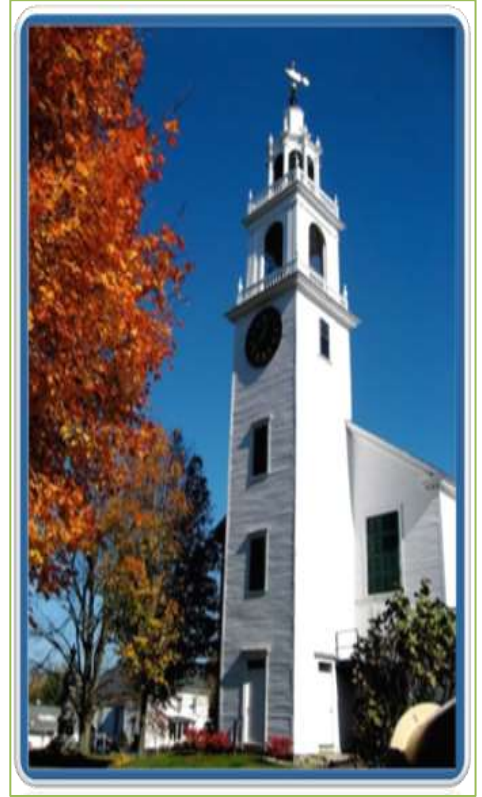
First Parish Congregational Church, UCC

You are most warmly invited:

10:00 am Sunday Worship & Church School
 11:00 am Coffee Hour

**First Parish Congregational
 Church History**

The oldest church in the immediate area, First Parish Church was founded by Scotch-Irish Presbyterians in the spring of 1719. Faith was and continues to be a priority. Worship was held one day after arrival, a church body was organized in one month and a building was built in 1722. A "more imposing structure" replaced the first in 1769, and although altered and expanded through time, the main building and sanctuary remain our center of worship.



First Parish Congregational Church
 United Church of Christ
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