

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

1/1 Happy New Year!
 1/5 Budget Meeting~ 11:30
 1/8 KIT~ 12:30
 Wonder Wednesday ~7:00
 1/12 Pastoral Sabbatical Brainstorming ~ 11:30
 Christian Ed~ 11:30
 1/13 Finance Meeting~ 7:00
 1/14 Adult Faith ~ 6:20
 1/15 Council Meeting~ 7:00
 1/19 Budget Meeting~ 11:30
 1/20 Mission Meeting ~ 6:00
 1/21 Adult Faith ~ 6:20
 1/26 Annual Meeting~11:30
 1/28 Adult Faith ~ 6:20
 Facilities Meeting ~7:00
 1/29 Deacon Meeting~6:30
 1/31 Spaghetti Supper ~5:30

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Child of God,

Over the last year or two I have been reintroduced to the Labyrinth. The labyrinth is a path: one path that circles and double-backs on itself numerous times all the while getting closer and closer to the center. There are no tricks or detours in a labyrinth. There are no dead ends. The labyrinth is a 4,000 - year-old meditation tool. It is a walking prayer or a walking meditation. In sacred and profound ways, it is a metaphor for life.

All of us, we are on a path. We journey forward and although we have some times when we double-back or feel like we're starting over or that we'll never get to our goal, it's never really over until, as they say, "it's over." Our journey, our path is this: we are born, we journey, our journey ends.

Along the way we can be so busy, that our internal questions go unanswered. The mystery and wonder of walking the labyrinth is that we allow ourselves to hear that "still, small voice". It can be a helpful tool to releasing anxiety or recognizing behavioral patterns. It's quite mysterious and wonderful at the same time.

Over the past 14 months I have received training as a labyrinth facilitator. As a facilitator, I explain some of the tenets of the labyrinth and I lead walking events. Being a facilitator for other people's prayers, for other peoples' walking meditations is a sacred journey all its own. I've learned much and I needed to learn more about 'holding space' for others.

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

"Holding space" is a conscious act of being present and open; allowing and protective of what another person needs in the moment. Holding space is a term that has grown in popularity among caregivers, healers, yogis, and spiritual seekers. It's a broadly used phrase to define the act of "being there" for another.

Holding space is the process of witnessing and validating someone else's emotional state while simultaneously being present to your own. In order to "hold space" for another human being four things need to happen: 1) we need to let go of judgment; 2) we have to open our hearts to the unknowing; 3) we must allow the other person to have whatever experience they're having; 4) all the while paying close attention to our own feelings and experience.

To say it in a different way, holding space means that we actively let go of judging and open our hearts to mystery while simultaneously being attentive to the person we are with and their emotions, as well as our own.

The more I thought about it, the more I realized that we do this on Christmas Eve. We hold sacred space for something magical and mystical. It is sacred and it is safe. We are safe here together remembering the story that represents hope. The lights, the music, the candles – we hold sacred space for a sacred story.

And the more I thought about that, the more I realized that what happened in that stable in Bethlehem was the angels, the people and the animals all were holding space for the baby.

Mary holding space for a mystery child; Joseph holding space for his wife and a child; the angels holding space while singing "glory to God in the highest"; the shepherds watching their flock by night came to the stable in order to hold space and finally wise men from the east holding space as they journey to where the child is.

We will not find judgment of any kind surrounding that manger. Each actor in this Christmas pageant is attentive to what is happening and attentive to their own sense of awe. The King of Kings is born in the lowliest of conditions – no judgment – just awe. The smelly shepherds are the first to arrive at this first baby shower – no judgment – only reverence.

God did not wait until the world was ready; we are not ready; we fall into bad habits where screens replace human conversation. We cannot wait until the world is sane – we must now learn to "hold space" for one another – the way that they did – way back then on that sacred night. God did not wait – we must not wait either.

As you continue your life's path, hover over the sacred moments. Notice them. See them clearly. Be attentive to your own feelings and the feelings of others. Resist the temptation to fix someone else and be quick to fix your own trajectory when your journey takes you off course.

And whenever possible, hold sacred space for a fellow traveler – remembering the night when the world held space for a babe born in Bethlehem.

Glory to God in the highest! Pastor Deborah

Board of Christian Education & Adult Faith Formation



Thank you all for a Blessed 2019 and a beautiful Christmas Pageant!



Christian Education & Adult Faith (Continued)

VACATION CHURCH CAMP? WHAT?!

Nope, I did not lose my marbles over the holidays (ok, maybe a little). This is the time we need to start organizing our stellar group of volunteers to pick the theme of what this year's most wonderful Vacation Church Camp will be! So much fun to plan, so little time!



If you like to decorate, craft, laugh, or in general just have a really great time whether you'll be here in July for Camp or not, please join us for the beginning of the Christian Education Board meeting January 12th, 11:30 am in the A/B Conference Room! Many hands make light work!

YOUNGER ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP UPDATES

The holidays had us on hold for a couple of months, but we are ready to get back into action, are you?

Your Youth Leaders have some surprisingly BIG ideas for you, so you're not going to want to miss out on the next youth gathering December 31st at First Parish Church. The students will begin the night at 5:00 pm by helping out with our monthly Spaghetti Supper offered by the church, enjoy a meal themselves after serving others and we'll complete the night with some time as a group, wrapping up by 7:30 pm.



Board of Christian Outreach and Missions

The Mission Board wants to wish all of you a Blessed New Year and to thank you for your support of many local and international non-profits. As I looked back over 2019 in our minutes and financial reports I was amazed at the number of organizations and people we were able to help. Mission's is so very grateful to all of you for your gifts.

Locally we gave monthly to: Community Caregivers, Derry Friendship Center, Family Promise, First Baptist Food Pantry, Pastoral Counseling, Pinkerton Homeless, Sonshine Soup Kitchen, The Upper Room & the Pastor's Discretionary Fund.

We gave onetime gifts to these local non-profits: Isaiah 58, REACH, Click Cancer

Internationally we gave onetime gifts to: Zimbabwe cyclone relief, Solar panels for the Seminary in Zimbabwe and Health Access Sumbabwa

We supported NH UCC with a monthly gift and gave to all 4 UCC special offerings.

Last, but not least we gave Thanksgiving dinners to 20 families and you purchased over 100 gifts for children & their parents from The Upper Room & FPC. We also gave gifts to 14 clients from Community Caregivers

If you have any questions about what we gave to in 2019 the Mission board would love to answer those concerns.

As a church we have many blessings to be thankful for and one of them is the generosity of all of you.

Beth Hunter, Bart Wetherbee, Kathy Holland, Karen Wilson, Sue Brown, Melanie Pawl

Final Article of the Bylaws

Hello First Parish Church Members,

The final article of the bylaws is finished. Please read it over and if you have any questions please reach out to a member on the committee or bring your questions to the 2020 Budget Informational after Church on January 5th or 19th as there will be someone from the committee to answer your questions.

The next step would be a vote of the Church members by article at the Annual Meeting on January 26th. Copies of the complete proposed bylaws will be available in the Church office.

Anne Engelhardt, (annehardt@comcast.net) Chairman, Fay Chary (fc5320@earthli8nk.net), Cathy Zylinski (czylinski@hotmail.com), Ryan Lehoullier (rlehoullier@hotmail.com), Wendy Williams (wmw03087@gmail.com), Lianne C Deranian (liannecd@myfairpoint.net), Reni Harnden (rharnden@comcast.net), and Pastor Deborah Roof (pastordeborah@fpc-ucc.org).

Board of Deacons

Sabbatical brainstorming conversation - everyone is invited. Please try to come and share ideas. Pastor Deborah will be gone on Sabbatical for three months in 2021. What do we, the congregation want to do while she is away? What is our path of discernment? Do we know who we are? What are our areas of interest? Conversations about this time - even though it's 18 months away - will help us to discern our path.

Conversations have begun and brainstorming will be a great way to continue those conversations. Right after church on Jan. 12 we will convene an open forum brainstorming session to talk about ideas for our time during Pastor Deborah's sabbatical.

Please consider this thought to make your New Year shine:

First Parish is thriving
We're growing it's true,
Have you ever wondered...
What more you could do?

Become part of the DEACONS
The church will shine bright,
And share your ideas
As we grow in God's light.

Please seek out one of our cordial crew,
They will answer your questions to see if deacons is right for you.

Happy New Year!
Sue Lindemann, Brian Williams, Diane Breeden, Rachel Cobban, Ryan Lahoullier,
Joanne Worthen, and Diane Dunn

Special thanks to Ryan Lehoullier, Diane Dunn and Joanne Worthen who complete their terms on Deacons.

Membership at First Parish Church, UCC

Are you a new member within the last year (2019) or are you thinking about becoming a member in 2020? We want to invite you to a conversation with some of the leaders of our church so that we can get to know you and you can learn more about us. Please grab some refreshments and join us in AB on January 19 after the worship service.

Nominating Committee

The nominating committee will be working for the next couple of months trying to fill any vacant positions on the boards & committees. These boards and committees help keep First Parish Church running. A few people cannot do everything that is needed to assure that things get done in our church. You are needed to help keep FPC healthy and vibrant. We know many of you are very busy, but most of the available positions would take 1-2 hours a month. Below is a list of positions that are available. Please take a look and see if there is something that you might be interested in being a part of.

- Do you like to give away needed resources ministries near and far? Mission Board meets the 3rd Mon night of the month at 6:00. There are 3 available positions.
- Are you interested in ways to share our faith through education? Board of Christian Education meets the 2nd Sunday morning at 11:30. There are 2 positions available.
- Do you enjoy fixing things around the house - or in our case, the church? Board of Facilities meets the 4th Tues night at 7:00. There are 3 positions available.
- Would you like to contribute to the worship event? Board of Deacons meets the last Wed night of the month at 6:00. There are 3 positions available.
- You don't have to sing, you do need to appreciate the contribution of music in our worship? Music Committee has 2 available positions available. Meeting time to be decided.
- Are you good with numbers? Finance Committee meets the 2nd Monday night at 7:00. There is 1 position available.
- It's like computer dating! Match the needs we have as a church with the gifts individuals have to offer Nomination Committee has 3 available positions available. Meeting time to be decided.
- Do you have an eye for the care of safety of our building and events? Safe Church committee has 2 available positions available. Meeting time to be decided.

Most of these positions are for a 2 year term. We know you will have questions so please ask us. We will be very happy to spend time with you answering your questions and concerns.

Beth Hunter, Karen Wilson & Pastor Deborah

Scripture Readings

*Readings are from the Narrative Lectionary for
Sundays and Festivals – Year 2*

January 5th ~ Communion Sunday

Jesus' Ministry Begun

Mark 1:21-45 (Psalm 103:1-5)

January 12th ~ Jesus Heals and Teaches

Mark 2: 1-22 (Psalm 103:6-14)

January 19th ~ Parables in Mark

Mark 4:1-34 (Psalm 126)

January 26th ~ Jairus' Daughter Healed

Mark 5: 1-20 (Psalm 89: 1-4)

The Work of Christmas

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and the princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart.

(Written by Howard Thurman, an
African-American theologian, educator,
and civil rights leader and author of: *Black Fire:
African American Quakers on Spirituality and
Human Rights*.)

Worship Schedule

Ushers & Greeters

January 5th

Ushers: Diaconate

Greeter: Tom Woods

Deacons: Sue Lindemann, Brian Williams

Lay Reader: Cathy Zylinski

January 12th

Ushers: Dee Deranian, Nancy Berry,
Michael Bryan

Greeter: Liz Greenberg

Deacon: Ryan Lehoullier

Lay Reader: Brian Williams

January 19th

Ushers: Stanley Gorgol, Holly Gorgol, Tom
Cooper, Michael Bryan

Greeter: Jean Brodeur

Deacon: Rachel Cobban

Lay Reader: Jack Martin

January 26th

Ushers: Jack Martin, Michael Bryan

Greeter: Shirley Dickason

Deacon: Joanne Worthen

Lay Reader: Fred Merrill

First Parish Congregational Church

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

Office Hours

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

Check us out on the web

www.fpc-ucc.org

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

Michelle Guerrin:
officemgr@fpc-ucc.org
[603-434-0628](tel:603-434-0628)

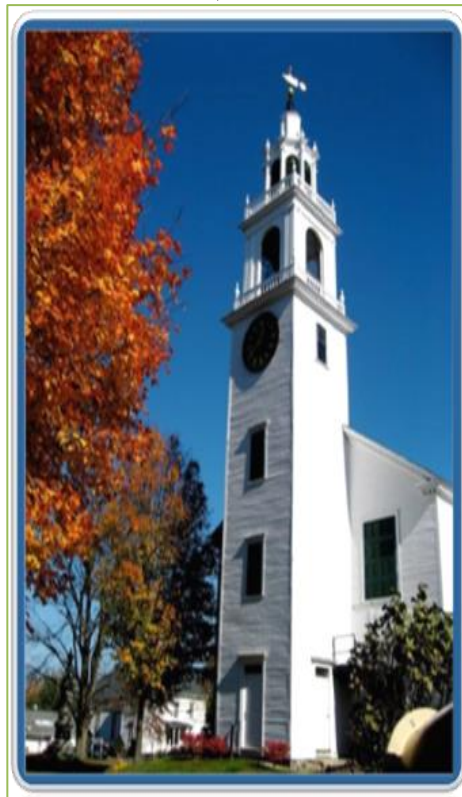
First Parish Congregational Church, UCC

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
47 East Derry Road
PO Box 114
East Derry, NH 03041-0114
Address Service Requested