

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.

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

Dear Child of God,

Since we have never experienced anything like this in our whole lives, I imagine that we are all searching for meaning in this whole experience. There are days when I am reminded of the stages of loss or grief: shock, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, testing, and acceptance. Who am I kidding? There aren't "days" when I am on this roller coaster! There are HOURS when I can go around to at least five of these in a quick minute! We are in the midst of something yet to be accurately described. "Other worldly" comes to mind because honestly? How can this be happening?

And there you go: my head wants to *understand* this phenomenon so that my heart stops this dizzying flit from one emotion to the other. Staying with that voice in my head for a second: a beloved historian – you know who you are – pointed out to me that every century (or so), there's an outbreak that rips through humanity on this planet. The Spanish flu hit in 1918 and decades before that cholera and decades before that small pox. 2020, one hundred years after the Spanish flu. It was time, so says the historian.

And us? We were busy. We were caught up in our busy days and our busy lives and didn't pay attention to the signs. And now we are in the middle of the Twilight Zone going through the shock one minute, the denial the next; we get angry and blame whoever we think "should have done something"; we promise to stay home until we don't; we get depressed at the staggering numbers of infected and deaths; we test the boundaries of our ability to cope and at the end of the day collapse into bed accepting that this is really happening.

My job is tied to being "good at faith". Some days I'm as zealous for God as Paul and some days I'm like Peter after Jesus was arrested, not knowing who he is or who I am in all of this. But here's the thing: the sacred stories in our Christian faith tradition inform my ability to expand my faith and deal with life on life's terms. It's like a muscle. Faith must be exercised! So, I go to those stories and I find treasure after treasure. I find words to help me get through the next day. I find strength and I find humor! Oh, thank God for the humor! How many times a day are you washing your hands?

From the Pastor's Desk Continued

Check out Psalm 26:

6 I wash my hands in innocence,
and go around your altar, O Lord,
7 singing aloud a song of thanksgiving,
and telling all your wondrous deeds.

When in doubt wash your hands again! And while you are doing that sing aloud a song of thanksgiving! Take nothing for granted! Do you have warm water to wash your hands? Do you have soap? Do you have a towel to dry them? These ordinary things make you among the world's elite right now. Millions of this planet's populations are facing the same pandemic as you are right now – but they have no running water (let alone warm), no soap and no towel. Sing out loud that song of thanksgiving – for we truly are blessed in the midst of this trial!

There is so many water references in the Bible. It is one of our greatest treasures! In the early Middle Ages, Benedictine monks would gather at a fountain outside the sanctuary and wash their hands before entering the church. In the Roman Catholic Mass, the presider ritually washes his hands before touching the elements of bread and wine praying, "Lord, wash away my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin" (Psalm 51:2).

And then there's: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me" (Psalm 51: 10); and "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God...." (Psalm 46: 4a) "Where do you get that living water?" (John 4:11) Imagine the possibilities of cleansing, healing, refreshing water (and its useful companion, hand sanitizer)!

We are all seeking a new normal during this time of extraordinary circumstances. Be assured that God is with you and rely on the stories of our faith ancestors so that you can trust that you are not alone in this. And like you I am seeking words of encouragement wherever I can. I bring some moments to you each day, which are posted on the internet: found on our Facebook page and our First Parish website.

Remember the basics: stay home; wash your hands; don't touch your face; pray for others, call someone and go outside for a few moments each day.

I leave you with a prayer found in the New Zealand Prayer Book, p. 765:

Prayer for People Critically Ill or Facing Great Uncertainty

God of the present moment,
God who in Jesus stills the storm
and soothes the frantic heart;
bring hope and courage to all
who wait or work in uncertainty.
Bring hope that you will make them the equal
of whatever lies ahead.
Bring them courage to endure what cannot be avoided,
for your will is health and wholeness;
you are God, and we need you.

God bless us, everyone.

Pastor Deborah

Christian Education/Adult Faith Formation



CONNECT WITH US ON FACEBOOK AND OUR WEBSITE



The Sunday School Lesson will be posted the Friday evening prior to Sunday Service. We encourage our older students to continue to find the corresponding weekly scriptures in their Children's Bibles. Thank you for joining us as we evolve using the new media platform! The students are doing a great job getting involved in the lessons right away!

Parents please reach out if you need any Sunday School materials mailed to you (i.e. stories, coloring pages, crafts, etc..) cedirector@fpc-ucc.org or call with any questions or needs 603-264-9261.



FAITH AT HOME

[Coronavirus Explained for Kids](https://youtu.be/ElcgYCWCoa0) (<https://youtu.be/ElcgYCWCoa0>)

(a video, produced by <https://www.gocurriculum.com> and shared by [Ministry to Children](https://www.ministrytochildren.org))

SHARE your highs and lows with each other over dinner if you're able, or another dedicated time together. What about your day went well and what were your challenges? Even though my family and I share a small space, you'd be surprised what you'll learn about each other's day.

Christian Education/Adult Faith Formation (continued)

PRAY with each and for each other. Try Praying in Color!

<https://prayingincolor.com/praying-incolor-praying-in-black-and-white>. Follow this website if you want to learn how this young girl found a new creative way to pray!

TALK (and sometimes quiet is ok, too) Talk about how you're feeling as obvious as it seems. Using Emoji faces to share your mood can actually be quite effective, too. Be open to hear other feelings as well. It's a good idea for everyone in the house to have their own designated safe space where they can go to be alone as well. We will all need to be especially attentive to love of self in addition to love of others:

[Guide to Self-Care for Families Together at Home](#) by *SALT Project

SERVING AND CARING

As a people of hope and as a part of God's family we do not live in this world separate from one another, though a virus might separate us physically. There is much we can do for one another. This week, I've challenged the children and I now challenge all reading this to what I am calling the "Happy Hearts" Challenge:

<https://kidsforpeaceglobal.org/happyheart hunt/>. Simply show your love for one another by cutting out a heart of any size and any material and put it in a front facing window where others can see, with or without a positive message.

ATTENTION PARENTS OF YOUNGER YOUTH GROUP STUDENTS: I will be in touch with you and your Younger Youth Group students over the first week of April to ask permission for student involvement in writing postcards to Church members who may be alone, without internet access, or in need of uplifting words. All materials will be provided and sent directly to your house. If any members know anyone who may need a penpal, please let Christine Lehoullier know cedirector@fpc-ucc.org.



Christian Education/Adult Faith Formation (continued)

VACATION CHURCH CAMP



Information and Details to Follow!

COMMUNITY OF STUDENTS ZOOM CONFERENCE! SEE YOU ONLINE!

Wednesday, April 8th, 3:00 pm

As we navigate these times, we are looking to keep the community of students and their families united and will be planning a Zoom conference call just for them during Holy Week on April 8th:

Christine Lehoullier is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: First Parish Church Families

Time: Apr 8, 2020 03:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/201811643>

Meeting ID: 201 811 643

Board of Christian Outreach and Missions

Life may change, **BUT GOD DOES NOT** and **HE IS ALWAYS WITH US.**

Sunday March 15th, Jeff from Liberty House in Manchester attended our service and spoke about this wonderful ministry. Unfortunately, due to the coronavirus there were not many people in attendance. Despite the small attendance he took back with him 2 boxes full of nonperishable food for Liberty House food pantry. Missions was able to give Jeff a check for \$500. The Addison fund gives money to Missions on a quarterly basis. We used these funds for this gift to Liberty House.

If you missed the February Mission article, Liberty House is a ministry that cares for homeless & struggling veterans and connects them to local services while providing for them a substance free transitional home.

We are in rapidly changing times and the Board of Missions prays that we will be able to worship together again soon. When that day comes, we hope to have someone from the Friendship Center in Derry give a Mission Moment.

The Derry Friendship Center is a non-profit community organization that provides a safe and supportive environment for twelve-step recovery regardless of race, creed, color, gender or ethnic origin. For over 30 years, The Derry Friendship Center, Inc. has provided a safe, confidential, alcohol and drug free environment for people seeking and/or maintaining recovery from substance abuse. We provide activities and ongoing rehabilitative peer support to people in recovery from alcoholism and drug abuse.

The Board of Missions has had to make changes to our monthly gifts to local ministries. Pledges to missions are down from previous years and we felt we had to be fiscally responsible and revise what we give to these local ministries. We voted to reduce each gift to \$80/month including the Pastor Discretionary Fund and the UCC gift to \$300/month. If your financial gifts increase our giving.

Please feel free to talk to us.

Beth Hunter, Melanie Pawl, Karen Wilson, Cathy Holland, Bart Wetherbee



Board of Deacons

Hello! I'm sure you have all heard the phrase "The times have certainly changed," or "We can't do things like we used to before." Even with the truth behind those words, we as a faithful community know that it is not forever. We are resolved in our way of love not only for each other but also in God. Though it can be tough to sometimes see it, we do need the reminder that God loves us. With this in mind, the way we do things is evolving. For example we are handing out palms on Saturday from 9-11am, so that you have them for Palm Sunday.

Speaking of Palm Sunday; it is Communion Sunday. You will be invited to participate. So have the elements ready to join with us in breaking bread and drinking the cup of love.

Easter Flowers will be available Monday and Tuesday 10am -1pm. Please contact if office to arrange an alternate time. They will be on a cart right outside the main entrance.

Social distancing doesn't mean that people shouldn't socialize. However, it is the way we socialize. We are researching the ways to do more virtual services through Zoom and Facebook. It is important that we remain in one another's lives and stay social.

We are still looking for more people to join the Diaconate and other ways to help out the church.

Submitted by Jack Martin

Supported By:

Rachel Cobban, Brian Williams, Sue Lindemann, Diane Dunn, Sue Brown, Pastor Deborah

Fundraising Committee

As with so many other things in our lives right now, fundraising activities are suspended until further notice. In the meantime, we can all reach out to support local businesses who have supported us in the past. If you can afford to do so, order takeout from restaurants who have sponsored a Dining for Dollars event(s) or given us gift certificates for raffles. Be sure to thank them for staying open to continue to serve us and for their past support for our church fundraisers!

Even though we are not having in person church these days, we are still all buying groceries. You can continue to load your Hannaford card by sending a check to the church or dropping it in the "mailbox" in the foyer between the entry doors into Currier. As soon as Michelle has received \$1000 she will load your card and notify you that it's ready to go! Easy Peasy! Call Michelle if you have questions.

Submitted by Liz Greenberg

Return to the Sanctuary

As you probably were aware a group of people came together ready to embark on a plan to return to the sanctuary. There is no secret that the central obstacle to that is financial. We had a meeting with many of the disciplines involved, we had an informational session and letters were ready to go out to the congregation March 16. And then the virus became a reality. The news worsened, the economy tumbled, jobs were lost and, in general, people were forced with new financial hardships. There was great debate as to what to do with the campaign-lose what momentum we felt we had versus stepping back, realizing it would be more sensitive not to ask for financial commitments at this time. We collectively chose the latter.

Having said that our mission still stands. We are hoping the elevator and building companies share our concerns though they also need commitments. They need to know we are viable to raise the money in a short time.

Our original wave of pledges still stands, specifically we had hoped to have raised \$64,000 by June 1. Our hope is that those who can will go forward and send in your contribution. You can mail it to the church with a note or memo explaining this is for the rehabilitation project.

Optimistically in May we will be able to redeploy our campaign, raising the next \$100,000 or so during 2020.

Sanctuary-"a place of refuge or safety." Boy, could we use that right now. We can do this with God's help and your desire to return to the sanctuary.

Be safe.

Wash your hands.

Distancing the length of a hockey stick!

Cynthia Gray, Sue Lindemann, Margie Ives, Anne Marie Merrill

News from the Music Room

I have loved coming to the church to play for the services and thank you all for your uplifting comments as we continue to bring our church services to you virtually.

I have reached out to the choir and they continue to stay at home to keep safe. I have enlisted Melanie into making me Reese's peanut butter cups! Something I wouldn't have found out but we've been talking.

I am looking forward to putting our summer special music together as I am praying that we are back together by then. If you have a special musical talent that you'd like to share with First Parish during the summer or any time, I'd love to hear from you. It can either be accompanied by me or not. Please email me to let me know your availability.

I can't believe Holy Week is virtually here.

May this week bring you ever closer to our Lord and Savior.

"Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent!" V. Hugo
God Bless, Joan Virga Choir/Music Director

Facilities Board

The Facilities Board remains active during these times when we cannot hold a regular service in Currier. There are projects that we have completed over the last months but there are still other ongoing projects that we will accomplish over the next months ahead. We will gladly accept volunteers once this Coronavirus is under control.

- Projects completed
 - Removed cabinet from boys' room
 - Stove Pilot repair
 - More LED conversions
 - ASAP – Kitchen Hood Inspection
 - Check lights in kitchen
 - Replace bulb in women's and men's bathroom
 - Replace bulb in A/B. 8'
 - Incandescent bulb in girl scout closet
 - Hand wash sink drain

Ongoing projects

1. Under stage doors - fix hinges, wood glue and toothpicks
2. Adjust choir light
3. Wash windows in Parish hall
4. Find thermometers for refrigerators
5. Paint Parish hall door trim
6. Hang new sign(s) in hall
7. Add hook to hold front door open
8. The inside left currier door crash bar needs work
9. John room needs ceiling tiles replaced. 16-24
10. John Window Well covers -3
11. Repair deacons' bench in John
12. Paint around John exit to crawl space
13. Replace Fire alarm box plaques in downstairs hall -2
14. Placard for nursery, Luke, John -2 and Cook Evac plan
15. Consolidate shelf in ds men's BR into maintenance closet
16. Replace ceiling tiles - 24 tiles in women's BR downstairs
17. Donate mirror for downstairs women's bathroom
18. Wash downstairs hall and touch up hall paint
19. Patch hole in staircase under railing
20. Find cover for air vent - stairway landing
21. General Spring cleaning of all conference rooms, closets and front entry
22. Installation of new oil tanks

Submitted by Dave Breeden

BAC Update

After the church service on March 15, an informational meeting was held for the congregation to provide details and plans for moving back into the sanctuary by the third quarter of 2021. This meeting provided an understanding of the work that will need to be completed to accomplish that goal. Also provided were estimates of the costs to perform the many projects needing to be completed. One of the projects is addressing the peeling paint on the sanctuary ceiling. Since that meeting, the BAC, led by Larry Krantz, has been working on developing a better understanding of the costs associated with removal of the lead paint on the sanctuary ceiling and repainting it. Meetings have been held with two painting contractors during which the issues and options were presented and discussed. We now await their estimates for the work, which we should receive in a couple weeks. Our desire is to have more accurate costs to understand our fundraising needs. While on site, the painters were shown the outside of the meetinghouse and requested to provide an estimate for painting it in the fall of 2021.

The BAC will use the same process to determine the costs for addressing the sanctuary floor with asbestos abatement vs. encapsulation, as well as the repair of the plaster walls. Also, we will meet with Morin Contracting Services (MCS) in the near future to review the connector exterior work requirements & confirm that the listings of materials are accurate to use for potential material donations. In light of the current COVID-19 preventive actions it is recognized that the task of meeting with potential donors becomes more difficult, both with meeting vendors & their ability to afford to make donations.

We continue to work with the various sources of funds, internal and external, to determine what projects can be accomplished according to our priorities list. If you have questions or wish to get involved, please reach out to one of us.

BAC Members: Larry Krantz, Paul Lindemann, Bill Mann, Nancy Murdock, Bob Wilson



Spaghetti Supper

Each month we have a dedicated group of volunteers, fondly referred to as “Spaghetti Angels”, that prepare and serve a meal of spaghetti, sauce, meatballs, green beans, garlic bread, drinks and desserts (donated by Hannaford in Derry). We have a fairly regular group of folks who come and dine each month. Whether it’s the free meal that they need or the socialization that they enjoy, we typically provide 60 to 150 meals. Most meals are eaten in Currier Hall while many take a meal home as well.

Knowing that there are many in our community that might need that meal, we were faced with the tough decision of what to do for our planned meal on Friday March 27. With the recommendation to practice social distancing and Governor Sununu imposing a “stay at home” order for the state starting at midnight on the 27th, there was a great deal of influences to cancel our meal. However, there were already a number of people who had been laid off and might really need that meal. So, we made the decision to prepare our typical meal as “To Go” only. A small group of 7 of us prepared the food. We each had a job of:

- cooking spaghetti;
- cooking meatballs;
- preparing garlic bread;
- preparing the sauce;
- opening the cans of beans;
- filling the To Go containers with the prepared food;
- directing cars to the drive-up spot outside the kitchen door; and
- delivering the meal containers to the cars.

To protect our customers and ourselves, we cleaned all our pots and utensils in the dish washer before we used them. We maintained our distances from each other as best we could. Only one person made contact with the customer and wore gloves and a mask. And most importantly, we each washed our hands numerous times. Our efforts were appreciated by numerous folks who picked up 78 meals To Go.

As we all go through the upcoming days of new practices and everyday “routines”, we will assess our position relative to the scheduled Spaghetti Supper on April 24. Hopefully, we will be able to provide another To Go meal.

A big Thank You to our special volunteers: Michelle Guerrin, Beth Hunter, Diana Kittery, Lynne Mann and Cathy Zylinski.

Coordinators: Kevin Gordon and Bill Mann

April Schedule

Holy Week

These will be virtual Services using both Zoom and Facebook unless otherwise noted.

April 5 is Palm/Passion Sunday:

We begin with "Hosanna" and end with "Crucify Him!"

April 9 is Maundy Thursday:

We will have Communion and Service of Shadows (Tenebrae) at 7:00pm

Good Friday:

There is no wandering Ecumenical Service this year. Take some time for prayer and reflection.

April 12 is Easter!

Sunrise Service beginning at 5:55 (Facebook only)

Traditional Easter Service at 10:00. He is risen! He is risen indeed!

Scripture Readings

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

April 5th - Communion Sunday

Triumphal Entry

Mark 11: 1-11

Psalm 118: 25-29

April 12th

Resurrection

Mark 16: 1-8

Psalm 118: 21-27

April 19th

You shall be my Witness

Acts 1: 1-14

Mark 6: 7-13

April 26th

Peter Heals in Jerusalem

Acts 3:1-10

Mark 6: 53-56

Uplifting!

Waiting for Spring

I'm waiting for Spring
When the days will be longer
I'm waiting for Spring
When the sun will shine stronger

I'm waiting for Spring
When the grey skies move on
I'm waiting for Spring
When the snow will be gone

I'm waiting for Spring
When the new birds will sing
I'm waiting for Spring
And the green it will bring

I'm waiting for Spring
When I'll get a fresh start.
I'm waiting for Spring
To bring joy to my heart

Eileen Cox

Keeping Quiet by Pablo Neruda

Now we will count to twelve
and we will all keep still.
For once on the face of the earth,
let's not speak in any language,
let's stop for a second,
and not move our arms so much.
It would be an exotic moment
without rush, without engines;
we would all be together
in a sudden strangeness.
If we were not so single-minded
about keeping our lives moving,
and for once could do nothing,
perhaps a huge silence
might interrupt this sadness
of never understanding ourselves
and of threatening ourselves
with death.
Perhaps the earth can teach us
as when everything seems dead
in winter
and later proves to be alive.
Now I'll count up to twelve
and you keep quiet and I will go.

**First Parish
Congregational Church**

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

Office Hours

(Please call ahead to make
an appointment)

Monday: 9:00-3:00

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,

Michelle Guerrin:

officemgr@fpc-ucc.org

603-434-0628

Senior Pastor and Teacher

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof:

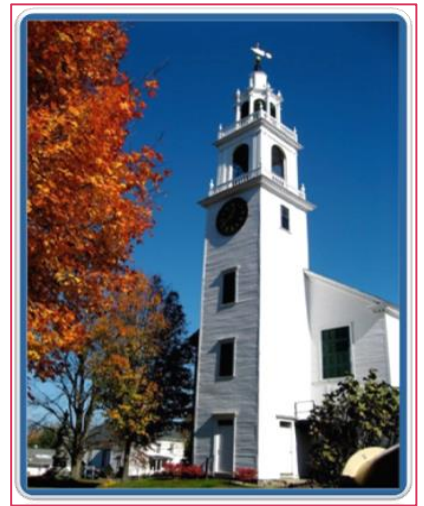
pastordeborah@fpc-ucc.org

First Parish Congregational Church, UCC

You are most warmly invited to join us on
Facebook or Zoom at 10:00am for Sunday
Worship & Church School

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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