

First Parish Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ  
P.O. Box 114, 47 East Derry Road  
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**May 3, 2020**



### **Church at Thessalonica**

**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.”*

## WE GATHER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

### CENTERING MUSIC AND LIGHTING THE CHRIST LIGHT

### WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

HYMN #395 "In Christ There Is No East or West" vs.1, 2, 4

In Christ there is no East or West, in Christ no South or North;  
But one community of love throughout the whole wide earth.

In Christ shall true hearts everywhere their high communion find;  
God's service is the golden cord close binding human kind.

In Christ now meet both East and West, in Christ meet South and North;  
One joyous, true community throughout the whole wide earth.

### CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Our hearts are gathered as we sit in separate houses to worship God.

**Many: Let us rejoice in God and give thanks to God's holy name.**

One: God is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

**Many: Let us bring our praise and our prayers to our loving God.**

### INVOCATION (unison)

**We come with all our wounds, asking for healing. We come through the shadowy clouds of our unbelief, seeking the brightness of your Presence, O God. We pray that faith would sustain us through this time of pandemic and physical separation. Make your presence known to us, gracious Spirit. Amen.**

### CALL TO CONFESSION

We are invited to examine our priorities before God. Our Creator calls us to treat all of our brothers and sisters with the love of Jesus Christ. We have fallen short.

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Oh God, we miss perceiving you every day. We live by our own devices rather than taking risks to follow where Christ might lead us. Deliver us, Oh God, from empty forms to receive the fullness of your grace and the power to live as you intend. Amen.**

### ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Rejoice, children of God, and give thanks to God's holy name. Through Christ, God's forgiving love is poured out on all who earnestly seek to be transformed. Thanks be to God!

### SONG OF PRAISE

This is the day, this is the day that our God has made, that our God has made; we will rejoice, we will rejoice and be glad in it, and be glad in it.

# WE SPEAK TO GOD'S YOUNGER DISCIPLES

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

### THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

#### INVITATION TO THE TABLE

#### COMMUNION HYMN #332 As We Gather at Your Table vs.1

As we gather at your table, as we listen to your word,  
Help us know, O God, your presence; let our hearts and minds be stirred.  
Nourish us with sacred story till we claim it as our own;  
Teach through this holy banquet how to make Love's victory known.

#### OUR SACRED STORY

#### SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

#### PEACE HYMN:

Let There Be Peace on Earth and let it begin with me  
Let There Be Peace on Earth The peace that was meant to be  
With God, our Creator - family all are we  
Let me walk with my neighbor in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me Let this be the moment now.  
With ev'ry step I take Let this be my solemn vow  
To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally  
Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me

#### PRAYER OF CONSECRATION, followed by THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever. Amen.**

#### SHARING the MEAL

As we celebrate Communion today, you will first be invited to take the bread – which you will HOLD. If you are with your family, please serve one another. Once everyone is served we will ALL take the bread at the same time. This act symbolizes that we are ONE BODY and that we are all one in the Spirit of Christ.

You will then be invited to take the cup of love which symbolizes the cup of wine that Jesus shared with his friends, saying “This is the cup of love poured out for you.” You are invited to prayerfully drink from the cup at your own pace, in your own time. This demonstrates that we are each individuals in God's Presence - each one doing the best that he/she/they can to be the hands and feet of Christ on this earth.

## WE HEAR GOD'S WORD FOR US

### SCRIPTURE: Acts 17: 1-9

<sup>1</sup>After Paul and Silas had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. <sup>2</sup>And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days argued with them from the scriptures, <sup>3</sup>explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This is the Messiah, Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you." <sup>4</sup>Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. <sup>5</sup>But the Jews became jealous, and with the help of some ruffians in the marketplaces they formed a mob and set the city in an uproar. While they were searching for Paul and Silas to bring them out to the assembly, they attacked Jason's house. <sup>6</sup>When they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some believers before the city authorities, shouting, "These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also, <sup>7</sup>and Jason has entertained them as guests. They are all acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor, saying that there is another king named Jesus." <sup>8</sup>The people and the city officials were disturbed when they heard this, <sup>9</sup>and after they had taken bail from Jason and the others, they let them go. As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

**SERMON:** "Haven't we heard this before?"

HYMN #522 I Love to Tell the Story 1, 3, 4

I love to tell the story of unseen things above,  
Of Jesus' radiant glory, of Jesus' endless love.  
I love to tell the story, because I know it's true;  
it satisfies my longings as nothing else will do.

*Refrain: I love to tell the story; and when I am in glory  
I'll tell the old, old story of Jesus' endless love.*

I love to tell the story; it's pleasant to repeat what seems,  
each time I tell it, more wonderfully sweet.

I love to tell the story, for some have never heard  
the message of salvation from God's own holy Word.

*Refrain: I love to tell the story; and when I am in glory  
I'll tell the old, old story of Jesus' endless love.*

I love to tell the story, for those who know it best  
seem hungering and thirsting to hear it, like the rest.  
And when I sing in glory, I know the new, new song  
will be the old, old story that I have loved so long.

*Refrain: I love to tell the story; and when I am in glory  
I'll tell the old, old story of Jesus' endless love.*

## WE RESPOND WITH PRAYER

SHARING JOYS & CONCERNS and PASTORAL PRAYER

## WE RESPOND WITH OUR FINANCIAL GIFTS

### OFFERTORY INVITATION

Christians sometimes bring peace in the midst of turmoil. At other times, we must disturb the peace with our work for justice and our championing of the oppressed. As we pool the resources God has given us, we become a powerful influence for good. Our offerings proclaim our faith. Let us give faithfully.

### OFFERTORY MUSIC

#### \*DOXOLOGY

Praise to the living God, the God of love and light, whose word brought forth the myriad suns and set the worlds in flight. Whose infinite design, which we but dimly see, pervades all nature, making all a cosmic unity.

#### \*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**With joy and gladness we dedicate our gifts to the service of Jesus Christ. May the abused find solace and courage; may abusers be led to new awareness, sensitivity, and change; may prisoners know release from bondage; and may all humankind be led to accept the saving grace of Jesus Christ. To this end, we offer ourselves with these gifts. Use us as ambassadors of your love. Amen.**

## WE GO OUT TO LOVE AND SERVE A LOVING, SERVING GOD

### HYMN #377 Forward Through the Ages

Forward through the ages, in unbroken line,  
move the faithful spirits at the call divine;  
Gifts in differing measure, hearts of one accord,  
manifold in service, on the sure reward.  
Forward through the ages, in on broken line,  
Move the faithful spirits at the call divine.

### BENEDICTION

### POSTLUDE

MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH - Members of the Congregation  
SENIOR PASTOR AND TEACHER - The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof  
LAY READER – Rachel Cobban  
CHOIR DIRECTOR/ ORGANIST - Joan Virga  
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTOR - Christine Lehoullier  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT - Michelle Guerrin

Visit our FaceBook page or our website for recent videos of services and moments of Christian Faith Formation and inspiration.

## *IN OUR PRAYERS - May 3, 2020*

### **PRAYERS OF JOY**

Joy and gladness for all of the donations to local food pantries. Thank you!

Joy and gladness for Spaghetti Supper – We served over 100 “to go” dinners.

Joy and gladness to see everyone at Wonder Wednesday Service!

Bible Wonder Tuesday night was enriching and enlightening!

Joan Virga says “Thank you for all the prayers and cards received due to the passing of my mother. It truly was a gift and helped greatly during this time. God Bless you all.”

Update: Thank you for all your prayers for triplets Avery, Conner and Bradley. Two have made it through surgery and are home doing well. They are waiting until Bradley is stronger. Thank you from their family too. Lianne D

Gratitude to Doug Pawl (Melanie & Alan’s son) for ear protectors for hospital workers.

Grateful for all of the Zoom technology! Grateful for phone calls and connections!!

So many people are adapting to this era of on-line existence! We are learning so much! Things are different but people are finding ways to connect!

The Ministry of Care Team is spreading so much happiness with their cards!

So many cases of people helping people!

Thanks to everyone for your patience and for helping one another at this difficult time.

Zoom attendance at fellowship events and CE family events! Community at work!!

### **PRAYERS OF ENCOURAGEMENT, CONSOLATION, HEALTH, AND HEALING**

ALL teachers and school personnel.

All the seniors who won’t experience a typical Senior Year.

Joan’s sister, Vicki Hester (a nurse) has COVID, as does Vicki’s husband.

Krzs family (neighbors of the Cobban’s) Stan died Saturday of Covid19, and his wife Gloria tested positive.

Friend of Rachel Cobban, Pat Sullivan’s mother (age 94) tested positive for Covid 19.

For people who are losing their livelihood due to this pandemic.

For health care professionals who are “on the front lines” of this war against covid-19.

Continued prayers for the crews of the USS Roosevelt (aircraft carrier) and the USNS Comfort.

For Paul Dionne, whose mother passed away.

For Lisa Hall, whose father passed away.

For the Smith and Martineau families on the tragic death of their wife, sister & mother.

Diane Breeden and her family as they grieve the loss of Aunt Barbara McKeen, who was married to Diane’s uncle Donald Wyman McKeen.

**CANCERS:** Art Johnson, Avery (Barbara & Brian) William’s boyfriend has been diagnosed with cancerous tumors on his stomach and esophagus; Avis Hanson, Marjorie Palmer’s cousin’s wife; from Nutfield Coop: Grace Theroux; Martha, close friend of Pat and Dick Plouff, recurring leukemia; Joan (friend of Wendy Williams) liver cancer; Janice Paradzick; Bob Dinan (friend of the Wilson’s)



Nancy Murdock's friend Erin Hutchinson has some serious medical issues  
Bonnie Hillsgrove, friend of Tim Beers

### **SPECIAL ONGOING PRAYERS**

Parkland Hospital Personnel, All Nurses and Doctors, Hospice workers and employees  
of Nursing Homes and Extended care facilities; First Responders; National Guard  
Active Military; Aghadowey Rural Kinship; Southern NH Family Promise  
Andrea Cooper health & strength  
Dangamvura – UCCZ – Zimbabwe African Church  
Tim Beers – Health & strength  
Brian Krantz and ALL of the Wildland Firefighters this fire season  
Victims of floods and fires and violence; Refugees and their families  
People of color and members of the LGBTQ+ community  
Friends of the Meetinghouse Board of Directors  
Our Covenant Partner: Pastoral Counseling Services, Inc.

