

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.

“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,

One of my favorite scripture stories is about Naaman, a commander in the Syrian army. His story is found in the book of 2 Kings, chapter 5. In other words, he was an “enemy” to Israel. He had a skin disease and the prophet Elisha suggested he bathe in the river Jordan. He balks at this request. No, he doesn’t balk. He is enraged by the request. Why can’t he go to his own river? Why does it have to be that one? A servant – an extremely courageous and faithful follower of God – says this: “If the prophet had commanded you to do something difficult, would you not have done that?”

Sometimes we can’t believe that a solution could be so simple. If it’s simple, if it’s not difficult, do we not trust it? If it were more difficult, would we trust it more? The Adult Faith Formation program is reading the Four Agreements. As we consider these agreements, we have a very particular focus: we are taking each agreement and looking up corresponding scriptures. This book is easy to read and many people will read it and think, ‘yeah, yeah, I can do that.’ And then how many of us really do live by these agreements?

Simple? Sure! Easy to do? Not so much! For example, the first agreement is this: “Be impeccable with your word.” Sounds easy, right? So when is the last time that you told “a little white lie”? We justify and think that “it didn’t hurt anybody.” When in reality, it hurt you because you were not impeccable with your word. When is the last time that you gossiped? When is the last time that you took the Lord’s name in vain? Can you see how difficult it can be?

What we found in scripture were 22 verses in Proverbs, 10 verses in Psalms, 8 more in the Old Testament. Then we found 23 more in the New Testament. There is incredible power in our word. We underestimate the positivity that we can offer when we speak lovingly. We also underestimate the negativity that we cause when we speak without being impeccable. Miguel Ruiz, the author of the Four Agreements, talks about our words as seeds. Sound familiar? And just like the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13, our words can create and they can rot away.

In our modern society we do so much work on the computer and in our private lives we participate in social media. But have you noticed that the psychological “distance” that is inherent with social media somehow gives people permission to leave impeccability behind? Our “word” is our word whether it is spoken face to face or written in a group conversation with hundreds of followers. Somehow, however, people take advantage of a false sense of anonymity to insult or degrade or otherwise demean someone else. There is no “impeccability” in these cases. We are not justified in spreading untruths or participating in conversations that damage others.

There are ten Commandments. Two of them speak to using our speech impeccably. Remember that John 1:1 says: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.” We have been taught that in this case the Word was Jesus, our divine brother. Miguel Ruiz makes a case that with Jesus, our brother, we must be as Jesus was: we must speak with love – even in anger. Our word creates. It’s a simple – and as profound – as that.

Jesus was asked in the Gospels Matthew, Mark and Luke: what is the greatest commandment? The answer: to love God completely and to love your neighbor as yourself. This means that we love God, we love our neighbor and we love ourselves. So, let me ask you this: when is the last time that you demeaned yourself? When is the last time that you called yourself a name? It feels somehow oddly “normal” to say to ourselves, “you idiot”, after a mistake is made or after we are reminded of something a 2nd or 3rd time. Calling yourself a name is not normal. It should not be considered normal. It is using your word to destroy, to demean, to tear down. There is no impeccability in that action. We fool ourselves when we consider it harmless.

To truly love ourselves is to acknowledge Matthew 5:14: “You are the light of the world.” In order to consistently speak impeccably, we must embrace the Christ light within us and we must also embrace the amazing power of our words to create goodness in the world. We will continue these amazing conversations on Tuesday night from 6:45-8:00. All are welcome. Just let Michelle, Christine or I know that you would like to be part of the conversation. We will send you the link.

Philippians 4:8 “Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

God’s peace,
Pastor Deborah

Christian Education and Faith Formation

Adult Faith Formation ~ The Four Agreements, Tuesdays, Zoom Meetings 6:45PM

February 2nd and 9th we will be diving into the 3rd and 4th agreements in Don Miguel's, "The Four Agreements," in addition to discovering parallel bible passages that correspond to these agreements. Join us for a delightful discussion of personal reflection.

Making the Lenten Journey – Praying in Color

Using a calendar template

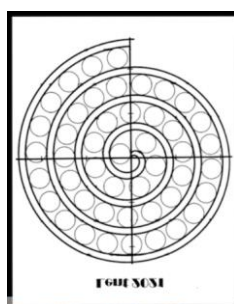
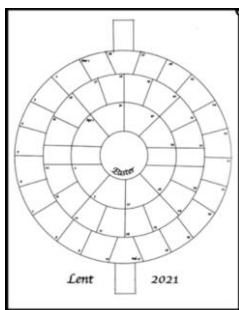
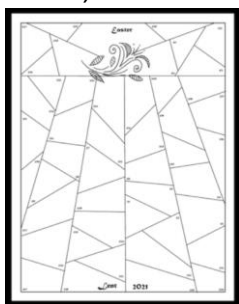
Using a calendar template is a simple, daily, and playful but serious practice for praying our way through the forty days of Lent.

Each day choose a word to ponder or a person to pray for. Write the word or name in the allotted space with a pen and draw or doodle around it. Add color with colored pencils or markers. Let the word or name speak to you. If words come to you as you draw, pray them. If not, just continue to draw, stay quiet, and let the word or name burrow into your mind and heart. Returning to the calendar each day establishes a special time to be present with God and to listen.

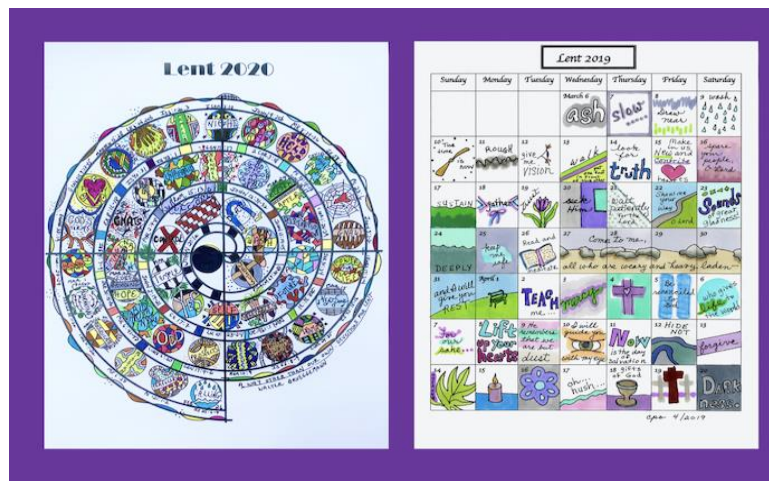
Think of each mark of the pen or stroke of a colored marker/pencil as a small non-verbal prayer. The goal of the doodling and drawing is not to make a beautiful work of art (though it often does), but to create a visual prayer. Drawing/doodling invites the body into the prayer, gives the eyes and hand something to do, and helps to focus attention on the word or person.

Either download the calendar templates below by clicking on them or you can find on the website or at the church. Please let us know if you need one mailed to you by emailing cedirector@fpc-ucc.org or calling the church at 603-434-0628.

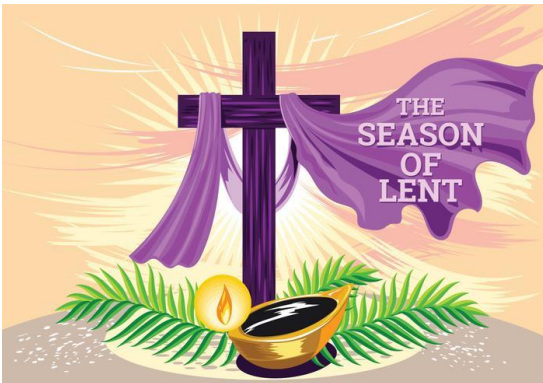
Although Lent is officially 40 days, there are 46 spaces on each template to include the weekends. (Sundays are not officially part of Lent, but some don't like to break the rhythm of their daily practice.)



Here are examples of completed calendars from previous years:



Sunday School Curriculum Bags ~ Lenten Season



The Christian Education Board is both happy and excited to continue our Sunday School virtual program complete with activity supplies and lists of upcoming lessons and scriptures for reference that will come straight to your doorstep!

This upcoming supply bag will include lesson supplies running from February 14th through Easter Sunday, April 4th and will include some really great activities that will help students of all ages follow through the Journey of Lent by

practicing habits of gratitude and kindness. The season of Lent is a season of love and we look forward to sharing lots of that love and gratitude it with all of you!

If you know of a friend or family member who is interested in following our weekly lessons, please let us know by February 7th and we will be happy to include them! Christine Lehoullier

cedirector@fpc-ucc.org or Holly Gorgol feetpower@usa.net

REMINDERS

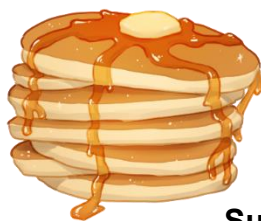
1. CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ZOOM MEETING ~ FEBRUARY 22ND 6:45 PM

2. ALL VALENTINE'S DAY CARDS FOR NURSING HOME DONATIONS DUE BY FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12TH



THANK YOU TO EVERYONE FOR YOUR HELP!

Lenten Pancake and Pajamas Breakfast



Let's have some fun and fellowship as we connect with one another at a Virtual Lenten Pancake Breakfast February 20th from 8- 9:30 AM. Fill up your favorite mug with a fresh cup of coffee or tea and kids, fill up your juice cups. The zoom link will be sent on Thursday (February 18th) so that there is no confusion with Friday's (February 19th) link for Sunday's service. Please call the church office at 603-434-0628 if you need any supplies.

Easter Cross of Kindness and Gratitude:

This year, the Christian Education Board is inviting **EVERYONE** to



participate in an intergenerational Lenten/Easter project. We are inviting all members and friends – and their friends - to share answered prayers, acts of kindness received from others, and prayers for others.

Share these with us either during the worship service during “Joys and Concerns” on Zoom/Facebook or through email and phone. The Christian Education Team will be writing these messages of gratitude on flowers and butterfly cutouts and posting them to a cross in the Vestibule.



On Easter Sunday, the Cross will be a beautiful display of our love and gratitude for Jesus, his sacrifice for us and love of each other.

News from the Board of Deacons

We hope that you will participate in the fellowship opportunities happening all around us.

- Please join the “getting to know you” card campaign.
- Join the CE Board with their Valentine's to nursing homes!
- Come to “drive-in church” on Ash Wednesday at 7pm. Receiving ashes is optional.
- Come to the virtual pancake breakfast on February 20!
- Attend one of the offerings of the Black Heritage Trail – flyer in this issue of the newsletter.

February is Black History Month. What is your favorite Spiritual? Let Pastor Deborah or Joan know. What is your favorite story about an African American that other folks may not know and ought to! Share it with the office and we will share it with everyone.

We are still looking for two Deacons. Can you help? Please let us know. In the meantime, if you would like to be a lay reader on Sunday morning, let Pastor Deborah know.

Next month we will introduce you to our Sabbatical Coverage Pastor. Stay safe! Be well!
Your Board of Deacons

2021 Elenor Williams Hooker Tea Talk Series

A Black man wearing a blue fedora-style hat and a dark blue coat over a blue shirt is sitting at a blue table. On the table is a small glass vase with yellow and pink flowers. He is looking directly at the camera. The background shows a blue door and a window with a reflection of a car.

2021 ELINOR WILLIAMS HOOKER TEA TALK SERIES

IT'S TEA TIME

Claiming Our Place: Blacks In White Spaces

SUNDAYS, FEBRUARY 7 - MARCH 14
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

A BLACK HERITAGE TRAIL OF
NEW HAMPSHIRE VIRTUAL EVENT

SPONSORED IN PART BY
NEW HAMPSHIRE HUMANITIES

www.blackheritagetrailnh.org
603- 570-8469

[Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire \(blackheritagetrailnh.org\)](http://www.blackheritagetrailnh.org)

Lenten Challenge

Lent begins on February 17. Pastor Deborah would like to offer a Lenten challenge to each and every one of us. It'll be simple AND easy!

You don't have to "give up" a thing!

Each and every day of Lent, as soon as you wake up, start your day by saying:

"Good Morning, Jesus!"

Sound easy?

"If the prophet had commanded you to do something difficult, would you not have done it?"

Board of Christian Outreach and Missions

Missions

When did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you something to drink....
The king will reply, "Whenever you did it for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine,
you did it for me"
Matt.25:38-40

Pinkerton Homeless program is a nonprofit that First Parish has supported for many years. The program continues at Pinkerton; however, it has evolved. It is now called The Family in Need program. Jessica Smith is in charge of this program. They do still work with homeless students, but they also help their families, because so often their families are in need also. Members of the Pinkerton community help to identify students in need. The students are helped with school supplies, backpacks and warm clothing as needed. At Thanksgiving and Christmas, they provided 10 families with food and gifts.

First Parish is blessed to have the funds to continue to support this program. We have these funds because you, the congregation, have been so very generous in your pledges to Missions. Thank you.

Thank you.

The Missions Board is evolving too. It is time for Kathy Holland & Beth Hunter to leave the Board. Carol Guerrin, Nancy Murdock & Heather Paradzick will be joining the Board. We want to thank Beth & Kathy and welcome Carol, Nancy & Heather.

Your Mission Board,
Beth Hunter, Karen Wilson, Bart Wetherbee, Kathy Holland & Melanie Pawl

Personnel Board

Pastor Deborah will be on Sabbatical beginning April 5th and going through July 5th. She has been working with Council and the Deacons to coordinate coverage while she is away.

You may be asking: what is the purpose of a Pastoral Sabbatical? What can the congregation expect?

Pastoral Sabbaticals are a time for renewal. In an article written by the director of the Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Programs January 23, 2018 he writes: “Reframing the pastoral sabbatical as a journey for the entire congregation can diminish resentment and help make regular periods of renewal a part of the Christian life. One of my favorite jokes, particularly during the period when I served in a parish, tells of a pastor who is in her office, head bowed and hands folded in silent and fervent prayer. The church administrator walks in the office door without knocking, sees the pastor and sighs in relief, “Oh, good. You’re not busy.”

The wry smiles that this joke would often elicit when I told it to fellow clergy testify to the odd disconnect that many pastors face in the perception of their work by people in their congregations. The very practices (prayer, slow study, contemplation) that tend to sustain a healthy pastorate are often the activities least likely to seem like “real work” to many parishioners.”

Pastors all too often face the age-old joke: you only work one day a week! The truth is that weekly sermons, walking with parishioners in the most emotionally intense periods of their lives, community outreach, being on call around the clock -- excellence in ministry - magnified by a pandemic! - requires a massive expenditure of physical, mental and emotional energy each week.

This time of renewal is true for both the Pastor and the congregation. It has the potential to be a shared learning opportunity that allows all of us to focus on our journey of spiritual awareness. The pastor has uninterrupted time for prayer, slow study, and contemplation. This allows her to retool spiritually and move deeper into the practices that will sustain her as a child of God. As a congregation, we have an opportunity to actively discern our ministry, “step up” when needed and support our pastor with prayers and our blessings.

In the months to come, we will introduce you to our Sabbatical Coverage Pastor and also share the next steps in the process.

God Bless,

Cathy Zylinski

On behalf of the Personnel Board

How Can We Meet While We Are Socially Distant

The best thing about coffee hour isn't really talking to people you know—though that is important—it's having a conversation with someone you really don't know that well or meeting someone new. The deacons have been wondering how we could create that feeling or opportunity while everyone is social distancing.

One way we can meet each other is very old fashioned: let's send each other cards as a way to introduce ourselves. Our first time will be to send cards for delivery by Valentine's Day.

What we would like everyone to do us as follows:

1. Write one or more cards.

Your card will go to a randomly selected member of our church family. You introduce yourself and provide the level of contact information you're comfortable with: at least your name and mailing address, but maybe also your phone number or email. The more contact information the more easily someone can reach back to you.

Note: If you can't purchase cards, please reach out to a deacon or the office so we can provide you with up to five cards with postage.

2. Put each card in an envelope with your return address and add a stamp.

Because we will be using the USPS, the envelopes need to be legal size (not the little envelopes the kids use in the classroom). If you can, please put proper postage on your card. We're asking for your return address so we don't send the card back to you.

3. Drop it off at the church by Sunday 31 January in the Deacon Card Exchange Mailbox in the entryway.

What the Deacons & Ministry of Care will do:

1. Help you get cards if needed.
2. Mail your card to someone in the church family.

The deacons and members of the ministry of care will randomly add mailing labels to the cards, postage if needed, and mail them. (We will use your return address, so we don't send your own card back to you.)

If we're lucky, we'll get enough cards so every household—better yet every house member—will receive a card. If we're even luckier everyone will get two cards!

If this works, we'd like to do it again for Easter (even if we aren't distancing).

Submitted by: Sue Lindemann on behalf of Deacons

FUN/ FRIEND/ FUND RAISING COMMITTEE

We kicked off a new year with a great team and there's room for anyone who might want to join us. We updated our "Mission" to include the words FRIEND and FUN. It's not all about money. We want to gather as friends in faith and have FUN events that will involve not only our church family but also the greater community as a whole.

Some of the friend/fun/ fundraisers we hope to bring you this year:

Virtual Escape Room: what's "fun" about this is that the host is the one locked in a room! We just have to figure out how to liberate him.

5K Road Race/walk: Dave Breeden offered previously to help us accomplish this. We talked about incorporating history.

Charleston paper: we had some success with this at Christmas. We can easily host a Spring campaign.

Dance Party via Zoom

Seed/plant on-line sales with the company Botanical Interests

We still have those great social justice T-shirts to sell.

AND MORE!!

As you can see we have lots of possibilities that we are working on – and many more to come as conditions allow within safety guidelines.

We made an agreement that 10% of ALL proceeds will go to Mission to help others.

Please also remember that we have TWO really WONDERFUL ongoing fundraisers that are low/no impact. You can drop donations of soft goods off to the Saint Pauly shed as you do your spring cleaning. We made over \$600 last year, which is not bad for not doing anything!

We also have Hannafords. We made \$1,725 with limited loading as Hannafords changed their internal structure. There are many of you who shop at Hannafords and don't take advantage of this program. We could double our earnings with your help.

If you have an idea, let us know.

Thank you,

Cathy Pottle, Chair; Kayla Pingree-McCarthy, Carol Guerrin, Cathy Zylinski, Margie Ives, Stephanie Cm-berg, Liz Greenberg, Michelle Guerrin and Pastor Deborah Roof.

Next ZOOM meeting February 7th after church

February Worship Services and Events

Worship Services are Sunday mornings at 10:00am. These are currently virtual-only. Participate with Zoom (see the pre-service church eBlast for meeting details) or live on our Facebook page (facebook.com/fpcucc).

Worship Services using the Narrative Lectionary 2020-2021 (Readings for Year 3 ~ Luke)

February 7

Raising the Widow's Son: Luke 7:1-17
Greeters: Jack Martin and Sue Lindemann

February 14

Transfiguration: Luke 9: 28-45
Greeters: Anne-Marie Merrill, Sue Brown

February 21

Good Samaritan: Luke 10:25-42
Greeters: Rachel Cobban and Katie Cobban

February 28

Lament over Jerusalem: Luke 13:19-9, 31-35
Greeters: Jack Martin and Sue Lindemann

Remember to start every day during Lent:

Good Morning, Jesus!



Labyrinth Walks

Tuesdays

Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23 at 6:00pm

*Zoom-only group meditation;
email the office if you need an
invitation.*



Adult Faith Formation –

Tuesdays Feb. 2, 9, 16 at 6:45pm
The Four Agreements

Ash Wednesday – Feb. 17th at 7:00pm Drive In Service
(Weather dependent! We will send an email if we need to cancel!)

Spaghetti Supper- To-Go

Friday Feb. 26 at 5:00-6:00pm

**First Parish
Congregational Church, UCC**

(603) 434-0628

Mailing Address:
PO Box 114
E Derry, NH 03041

Location:
47 East Derry Road

Office Hours

Temporarily closed to the public;
please call to make an appointment.

Monday – Friday
9:00am – 3:00pm

Online

www.fpc-ucc.org

facebook.com/fpcucc

Administrative Assistant

Michelle Guerrin:

officemgr@fpc-ucc.org

603-434-0628

Senior Pastor and Teacher

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

pastordeborah@fpc-ucc.org



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