

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.

Come visit us! Worship is at 10 am.



From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Child of God,

“You can't hold back the spring!” I read a fascinating book with this title about 15 years ago. I just love a good title! And there is so much more to this expression! It is truth. It is philosophy. It is theology. Spring will come – it just will. You can't control it, or stop it. And you can't avoid it. For many people spring is symbolic of newness, new life, and new hope. Spring is refreshing, invigorating and revitalizing. Birdsong fills the air. Trees leaf out. Blossoms are in full bloom. Stale air dissipates and disintegrates. The look of death in the brown and grey trees transforms into luscious yellows and greens, pinks and purples.

In very much the same way, you can't hold God back from creating: from renewing, rekindling and resurrecting.

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Upcoming Events

May 3rd

Deacons Meeting ~ 6:30 in Cook
Adult Faith Formation Registration

May 4th

Stewardship Meeting ~ 7:00 in Cook

May 7th

CE Board Meeting ~ 11:30 in AB

May 10th

K.I.T ~ 12:30 in Currier

May 17th

Council Meeting ~ 7:00 in Cook

May 20th

Celebration of Life ~ 12:00 in Currier

May 21st

Rockingham Association Spring Gathering
at Chester Congregational Church at 1:30

May 26th

Spaghetti Supper ~ 5:00 in Currier

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

God's will is at work – whether we perceive it or not. You can't hold it back. Oftentimes we fall into a false sense of security that we may actually know best – or that we even have the full view of God at work. We don't like what we see and so we think God is somehow absent. When will we ever learn? God is always present – always working. God is always loving us into wholeness.

Take a few minutes every day to observe the changes around you. Breathe in the fresh air. Be open to seeing God at work in your world. Resurrection is our Call. Sometimes that means that parts of who we are or what we are holding on to must die away. It is part of the divine plan.

You can't hold back the Spring! You can't keep God from being all-loving, all-giving, and all-present. Reach out and claim that Presence this Spring! For the love of God!

Peace and all good,

Pastor Deborah

Membership Committee

WELCOME, WELCOME, WELCOME to FIRST PARISH CHURCH

If you would like to learn more about First Parish Church, please come to the New Members Meeting on either April 30th or May 7th. The gathering will be after church around 11:30 and last about an hour. Current Members will share information about our boards and committees, what our beliefs are and how we participate in helping the wider community. Please feel free to join us for this informal event to learn more about what it means to be a member of our Christian community. Additionally, light refreshments will be provided.

There will also be a New Members Service on May 21st for anyone wishing to join our church community.

See Pastor Deborah, Lianne Deranian, Paula Robinson, Hilary Gorgol, or Brian Williams for more information!

Council

Council is in the process of forming a committee to look at the operational structure of the church. If you are interested in being part of this process, please contact Fred Merrill.

Council will host a congregational conversation to discuss the underlying issues that have been circulating around the church. This will be a follow up to the April 30 session on dealing with conflict within a congregation. Both sessions will be facilitated by Dr. David Reynolds. Council will communicate the date for the second session once it's been scheduled.

Paul and Deb Ambler have resigned from their respective positions. Deb is our Treasurer and Paul has been the chair of the Building Advisory Committee and a member of Facilities. Council thanks them both for their hard work and dedication. Deb will stay on until July to help train the new Treasurer. Nominating and Council will be working to find a new Treasurer.

As always, if you have questions about Council activities please contact a member of Council.

Fred Merrill, Moderator; Becky Fleury, Asst. Moderator; Deb Ambler, Treasurer; Linda Webber, Clerk; Anne LaDuke, Member-at-Large; John Bartel, Member-at-Large; Margie Ives, Nominating; Cathy Zylinski, Personnel; Anne-Marie Merrill, Christian Education; Dee Deranian, Facilities; Ken Gould, Diaconate; Joe Weaver, Missions

Finance Committee

How are we doing?

Financial Report as of 3/31/2017	Received	Budgeted
Pledges to date	\$53,820	\$48,000
Plate offerings to date	\$6,875	\$6,630

Submitted by Joyce Pope, Stewardship Rep for the Finance Committee

Note from the Finance Committee

Regarding the Line Of Credit loan we have taken out at Enterprise Bank for the sanctuary rehabilitation: Up until now we have only been able to pay off the monthly interest. Going forward, new Capital Campaign monies that come in will be put toward repayment of the principal as well.

Board of Deacons

We have enjoyed a wonderful Lenten Series about different kinds of Protestant Denominations. We have learned about Lutherans, Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptist. Our Lenten journey began on Ash Wednesday and continued through to Easter. Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and our two Easter Services remind us of what our faith is all about.

Having our services in Currier Hall, while our renovations are in progress, has afforded us the opportunity to have five "Church in the Round". Have you enjoyed them? Your Deacons would love to hear your feedback. The Diaconate would like to thank you in advance for patiently waiting in the foyer for the Choir to finish their rehearsals in Currier Hall on Sunday mornings. There are devotional books located in the foyer for anyone who would like to take them home. If we run out we can order more.

Do you need a name tag? Please let us know. This is one way to get to know our neighbors in our church family.

Did you know you have a Deacon? We have tried to assign a Deacon to each member or friend of our church family. As you can imagine it is a monumental task to keep track of everyone in our growing church. The Deacons each have a list of people they are trying to reach out to and get to know better. If you have a joy or concern please let us know.

Yours in Christ,

Diane Breeden, Julie Dubisz, Diane Dunn, Ken Gould, Cyndi Gray, Reni Harden, Ryan Lehoullier, Cindy Pingree, Julie Turner and Jo Worthen

GOD IS LOVE and the GOLDEN RULE

When our young people are Confirmed, we usually hear "statements of faith" from them. They can be brief or not so brief. They are all different, as they should be. We all have different faith journeys with bumps along the way. The essence of the Christian faith is GOD IS LOVE. If one needs to explain a faith journey in a very simple way, it might satisfy the occasion by offering the GOLDEN RULE. Luke 6:31 says "Do to others as you would have them do to you". Matthew 7:12 says "do to others what you would have them do to you".

When the Boy Scouts were with us recently, they shared the similar sentiments of other faiths such as Sahih Muslim Book 1, #72, "None of you has faith until he loves for his brother or his neighbor what he loves for himself". Or the Judaism Leviticus 19:18 "Love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord". Or Buddhist Tipitaka (DHP 130)"Put yourself in the place of others and harm none nor have them harmed". And Hinduism says "This is the sum of duty; do naught onto others what you would not have them do unto you".

GOD IS LOVE and the GOLDEN RULE, keep it simple.

Ken Gould for the Board of Deacons

Board of Christian Education

Adult Faith Formation News

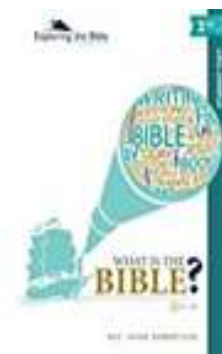
CHECK OUT OUR NEW CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PAGE ON THE FPC WEBSITE



May 9, 16, 23, and 30th: Adult Book Discussion led by Pastor Deborah, “The Four Agreements”. **The deadline to sign up for this book discussion will be Wednesday, May 3rd.** This will allow for enough time to be able to purchase enough books for those who are committing to attend so that students have ample time to read the first chapter before the first discussion on May 9th.

You can also buy the book [here](#) or simply go to our website at fpc-ucc.org and select the Amazon Smile link (this link ensures a certain amount of proceeds from every purchase go directly to our Church)

June 13, 20, 27; July 11, 18, and 25th: Exploring the Bible Series: Introduction to the Bible led by Christine Lehoullier (the 18th and 25th led by Pastor Deborah/Diana Sweeney during VCS). These dates are tentative based on leaders’ and students’ schedules, please give us your feedback as to what times and days work best for you [here](#).



ATTENTION STUDENTS FROM PREVIOUS CLASSES:

Please consider donating any gently used text books or other adult discussion books that are no longer needed for your own personal use to the Christian Education Library so that others will have the opportunity to borrow for future classes or for our high school students to be able to utilize during Church School on Sundays. We appreciate all your help and look forward to many more uplifting and thought-provoking class discussions in the future!

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Board of Christian Education

Horton Center News

Pine Board Project - Over the next few weeks, our youth will be decorating a Pine Board with images that capture and represent the life of our Church. The board will hang on the walls of Spirit Lodge at Horton Center on Pine Mountain in Gorham, NH in the hopes that every camper will look up at the walls of Spirit Lodge and see their congregation's Pine Board as symbol of connection and support.



Guest Speaker

On May 21st, we will have the pleasure of hosting Reverend Leslie Chatfield, the new Acting Director of Outdoor Ministries at Horton Center as a guest speaker during Worship. Please join us that day in giving her a big FPC warm welcome! If anyone wishes to donate items to Horton Center to send home with Reverend Leslie Chatfield along with our FPC Pine Board, please follow this link to see The Center's [Wish List](#).

Horton Center Financial Aid Applications

If you wish to attend any [Horton Center events](#) and need financial assistance, don't forget all Horton Center Financial Aid Scholarship Applications must be turned in by **May 15th**. You can go directly to the application [here](#) and e-mail Christine Lehoullier at cedirector@fpc-ucc.org for in-house financial assistance information as well.

CE BOARD MEETING REMINDER:

Our next board meeting will take place May 7th at 11:30 in the AB Conference room. I look forward to seeing everyone!

Submitted by Christine Lehoullier, CE Director

Board of Stewardship

Oops. Over the last three years the stewardship board has offered “Thrive on a Tithe” as a tax season initiative. It seems like tax season has come and gone and we forgot to ask for your participation in this program for 2017. But, better late than never. What does “Thrive on a Tithe” mean? We ask that if you received a tax refund from the IRS this year, to prayerfully consider contributing ten percent (the tithe) of that refund to First Parish. Just write the words “Thrive on a Tithe” in the memo line of your check. Thank you for all you do. And now on to our continuing series of articles on our narrative budget.

This month we look back at the piece of the narrative budget referred to as “Community of Christian Faith”. This piece makes up seventeen percent of our total budget, amounting to over forty-eight thousand dollars. Thank you for your generosity.

What is faith? **Hebrews 11:1** tells us *“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”*. By the way, it is interesting to note that the author of Hebrews is believed by many scholars to have been a woman, Priscilla, a disciple of Paul the apostle. And I'll put in a plug here for the Bible Wonder series that Pastor Deborah offered this past winter and will be offering again soon. But back to faith.

In **Matthew 17:20**, in response to Jesus' disciples who had asked why they could not cast out a demon, *“He said to them, “Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.”* Think about it. What might our FPC community be able to accomplish with this kind of faith? And what *has* been accomplished. Like the way in October 2015 this congregation stepped out in faith to bring an Associate Pastor on board. We had an amazing year with Pastor Heidi!

Luke 12:27-28 *“Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you – you of little faith!”* This has always been one of my favorite bible verses. I will admit that I forget this lesson much of the time and need to be reminded of the abundance with which we have been blessed. And that we are taught over and over not to worry but to pray, to listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit, and to act in faith.

And our church community frequently does in fact act according to these teachings. Just one example that comes quickly to mind is the prayer group(s) and gratitude chain(s) that are currently active in our community. Here's a good one. That associate pastor mentioned above left at the end of 2016 for a position closer to home. And what happened? A relatively new member of the congregation, Christine LeHoullier, stepped up to take on the role of Christian Education Director, and is doing a terrific job. And Diana Sweeney heard a call, and is now a Member in Discernment, and is using her gifts to assist Pastor Deborah with worship services and in other ways. I'm sure you could think of many more examples that you have either observed or participated in.

Blessed Be.

Submitted by John Bartel on behalf of the Stewardship Board: Margie Ives, Sarah Keller, and Joyce Pope.

Board of Christian Outreach and Missions

Food Basket Program: The Food Basket program is a vital part of our Missions work as a Church of Christ. The food basket is kept outside of Currier Hall where services are now being held. The food from the food basket alternates between the Derry Food Pantry and the Upper Room, both important programs supported by your missions giving. If you have donated canned goods or other food items to this program in the past, thank you. If not, please consider dropping off items in the food basket on Sunday, or anytime the Church is open. Donations are desperately needed and always appreciated.

Food Challenge: A while ago, the Choir had challenged the Board of Christian Outreach and Missions (BOCOM) to a contest to see who could collect the most food for the Food Pantry. Missions gladly accepted the challenge. Now, Missions is encouraging other Boards and Committees to create their own challenge to provide much needed food in support of the Food Pantries mission to feed the hungry among us. Council representatives of each of the boards will be bringing the challenge back to their respective members so stay tune for the next Food Challenge event.

May 21st Mission Moment - Derry Friendship Center: On May 21st the Board of Christian Outreach and Missions is hosting the Derry Friendship Center to give the Mission Moment during service. This will be followed by a luncheon (Pizza & Salad) in Currier Hall for those wanting to stay after service to learn more about this important program.

Also, the Board of Christian Outreach and Missions will be hosting the Coffee Hour on this day so it will be a perfect opportunity to meet the members of Missions and ask questions about the missions that are supported by your pledges.

Sonshine Soup Kitchen:

The Sonshine Soup kitchen has moved into its new building at 6 Crystal Ave. The Gala was attended by a number of First Parish Church members. The Sonshine Soup Kitchen is almost entirely staffed through the efforts of volunteers in the community. Volunteers are used in a variety of ways, from cooking and serving meals, to delivering and picking up various items.

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Board of Christian Outreach and Missions

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. Since opening their doors in 2004, a dedicated team of staff and volunteers has helped more than 200 homeless veterans rejoin their communities and regain fulfilling, independent lives. Please keep in mind that summer is coming so think summer clothes donations.

Items can be placed in the container at the Missions table outside of Currier Hall, and someone from Missions will deliver them to Liberty House.

In Need of One Member: The Board of Christian Outreach and Missions has one open position to fill. If you are interested in becoming a member of Missions please contact Joe Weaver at 560-0420 or talk to any member of the Missions board. If you are not interested in joining us at this time, please still contact us if you would like more information about what we do at Missions or about the important Missions we support.

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	First Baptist Food Pantry \$100
Sonshine Soup Kitchen \$100	Community Caregivers \$100
Derry Friendship Center \$100	Family Promise \$100
Pastoral Counseling \$100	Upper Room \$100
New Hampshire Special Olympics	Pastor Discretionary Fund \$100
Manchester team \$500	

Respectfully submitted,

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

Historical Preservation Committee

What Were Presbyterian Services Like At First Parish?

Last month's newsletter included a short piece summarizing information about the Scots-Irish founders of our community (the settlement known as Nutfield, and later renamed Londonderry) and First Parish. Rev. James MacGregor and his flock of 16 families arrived in Nutfield in April 12, 1719. They were Presbyterians and religion was a focal point of their lives. On April 12, 1719 (the day after they arrived) they worshipped outdoors (on the Shore of Beaver Lake). The congregation remained Presbyterian until the time when Rev. Edward Parker was pastor (1810-1840).

The Scots-Irish settlers built the first meetinghouse in 1722. Decades later, the congregation needed a larger space to worship, and they built another meetinghouse in 1769. The structure built in 1769 was the core of the structure that is our current meetinghouse – a worship and community space that has been enlarged and reconfigured many times.

If you could travel back in time and attend a Presbyterian service at First Parish, what would you be likely to experience? Here are some traditions of those early Presbyterian services:

- People sat in family groups in the box pews. Single men and women were required by some communities to sit under the supervision of families. In other communities, the single men would sit toward the back of the sanctuary or in the balcony, and the single women would sit at the sides of the meeting house.
- The arrangement of the furniture from 1769 into the 1800's had the pulpit on the north wall of FPC (the side along East Derry Road) with pews for the ruling elders and deacons in front of it facing the congregation.
- They did not have hymnals. The "precenter" stood and sang short phrases that the people sang back.
- The congregation stood with their hands raised over their heads during prayer. People would pass forward pieces of paper with the names of persons or situations they wished to have remembered in prayer. The precenter passed these papers on to the minister.

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Historical Preservation Committee

- People remained seated for singing during worship. This was to distinguish singing from praying.
- During the sermon, people responded “amen” aloud to the portions of the sermon which they wished to stress.
- Ministers were told “they ought to be careful not to make their sermons so long as to interfere with the more important duties of prayer and praise.”
- An hour glass was attached to the pulpit and it was generally turned once or twice during a sermon.
- The “tithingman” used a feather or hard end of a stick on any of those whose attention strayed from the business of the worship.

Information for this article was compiled from “Presbyterian Worship in the Spirit of ‘76” by Doug Adams (1976) and “An Outline of Christian Worship” by William D. Maxwell (1936).

[Submitted by Janet Wetherbee and Nancy Heywood for the Historical Preservation Committee (including Paul Lindemann, and volunteers Ginny True and Janice Braley.)]

Fundraising Committee

Sunday May 7th, after church Karen Wilson will be taking orders for beautiful boxed greeting cards. Boxes of 30 cards sell for \$30, each card is individually wrapped in its own cellophane sleeve, and cards are presented in a lovely keepsake box. There are Children’s Birthday selections and All Occasion card selections to choose from. Karen says these are high quality well produced cards – where else can you get a nice high quality greeting card for only \$1 each? They would make nice gifts! The church will receive a percentage of the sales and 10% of our proceeds will be tithed to one of the missions chosen by our Mission Board.

Dining for Dollars – many of you have asked when we will be having our next event? Nothing is scheduled yet, but I am working on scheduling dates with Bertucci’s (in the Mall of New Hampshire).

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Fundraising Committee

Another new church fundraiser will take place on Saturday June 3rd from 1-3 p.m. at church in Currier Hall. Cathy Zylinski has coordinated with multiple LuLaRoe vendors to have a trunk sale. LuLaRoe sells women's leggings, tops, skirts, and dresses in unique, limited edition patterns. This event is open to the public so please help us publicize it! Invite your friends! Not sure what the buzz is all about? Come on out and see. We'll have changing rooms set up so you can try on clothes before buying. Each vendor, and the company, will offer a portion of their proceeds to the church, and again 10% of our proceeds for this event will be tithed to a church supported Mission, Community Caregivers.



As always, our Hannafords gift card fundraiser continues on Sundays after church. If you're not familiar with how this works, you can buy (and reload) Hannafords gift cards in any amount between \$5 and \$500 through the church to buy your groceries and the church receives 5% of our total purchases. We must have a minimum order each week of \$1000, which means that the church budget receives at least \$50/week – just for us spending money we would spend on groceries anyway. Church members who have been doing this for a while say, "It feels like I'm getting my groceries for free when I use my gift card".



Thanks to everyone who has supported all these fundraisers to benefit our budget and to build our sense of community! We really are striving to come up with ways for our church to thrive financially and to feel more connected to one another!

Submitted by Liz Greenberg

First Annual 5K for Hadassah is Truly an Interfaith Event!

NH4Israel started planning the Run for Healing last fall, not knowing how many people would support this very large endeavor. But we have been very busy securing help and recruiting people from many walks of life and the response has been heart-warming!

Our "supporters" are organizations who have agreed to promote the event with their members and so far include: NH4Israel, The William Einhorn Interfaith Education Fund, Hadassah, The Jewish Federation of New Hampshire, Etz Hayim Synagogue, The Church of the Transfiguration, Temple Israel of Manchester, Congregation Betenu, New Vision Church, First Baptist Church, Word of Life Christian Fellowship, Israel My Delight, Portsmouth Believers Church, Christians and Jews United for Israel with more to come.

There is no fee, and the supporters will be listed on the back of the free t-shirt that comes with registrations received before April 21st...so REGISTER NOW at **NH4Israel.org!**

The Run for Healing will raise funds for an ACCUVEIN device for Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem. Hadassah is truly a "Bridge for Peace," forging links between patients of all nationalities, races and religions who come to its doors for healing.

This fun family event is Sunday, May 7th at 2:00 P.M. (registration starts at 1:00 P.M.) and will include a 5K run, a 3K walk, or simply enjoyment of camaraderie, music, food and dancing! The cost is only \$18 for adults and new pricing for teenagers and younger is only \$10.



Scripture Readings

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

May 1st – 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Acts 2:42-47

Ps 23

1 Pet 2:19-25

John 10:1-10

May 8th – 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Acts 7:55-60

Ps 31:1-5, 15-16

1 Pet 2:2-10

John 12:1-14

May 15th – 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time

Acts 17:22-31

Ps 66:8-20

1 Pet 3:13-22

John 14:15-21

May 22nd – 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Acts 1:6-14

Ps 68:8-20

1 Pet 4:12-14, 5:6-11

John 17:1-11

Worship Leadership

Deacons & Lay Readers

Deacons of the Month

Ryan Lehoullier and Diane Dunn

May 7th: Joanne Worthen

May 14th: Diane Dunn

May 21st: Julie Turner

May 28th: Reni Harnden

Ushers & Greeters

Weekly Usher – Michael Bryan

May 7th: Ushers: Diaconate
Greeter(s): Verna Elwell
and Shirley Dickason

May 14th: Ushers: Becky Fleury, Verna Elwell
& Sue Hunt
Greeter(s): Maury Davidson

May 21st: Ushers: John Bartel and Brian Williams
Greeter(s): Diane Breeden

May 28th: Ushers: Ken Gould, Dee Deranian
and Shirley Dickason
Greeter(s): Lisa & Wayne Hall

First Parish Congregational Church, UCC

Church Office Hours:

Tuesday-Friday
9:00 am - 4:00 pm

You are most warmly invited:

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

Check us out on the web or call our office:

www.fpc-ucc.org | 603-434-0628

Email our Administrative Assistant, Hannah Collier:

officemgr@fpc-ucc.org

Email our Senior Pastor and Teacher

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof:

pastordeboraah@fpc-ucc.org



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