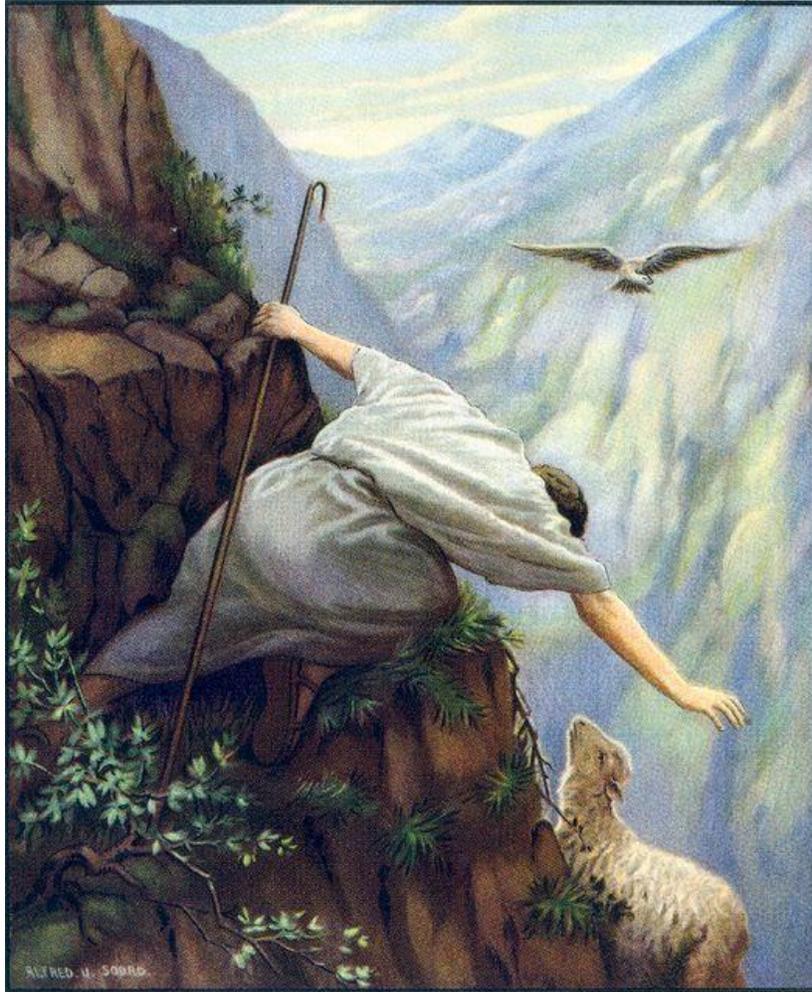


First Parish Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
P.O. Box 114, 47 East Derry Road East Derry, NH 03041
Tel. (603) 434 – 0628

March 7, 2021



Lost: a Sheep, a Coin, a Son

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)

WE GATHER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

CENTERING MUSIC AND LIGHTING THE CHRIST LIGHT

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP (Psalm 119: 169-172) (Led by lay reader.)

One: Let my cry come before you, O Lord;
give me understanding according to your word.

**Many: Let my supplication come before you;
deliver me according to your promise.**

One: My lips will pour forth praise, because you teach me your statutes.

**Many: My tongue will sing of your promise,
for all your commandments are right.**

HYMN: # 459 ***Come, O Fount of Every Blessing*** (vs 1, 3)

Come, O Fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing your grace,
Streams of mercy, never ceasing, call for songs of endless praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above,
Praise the mount; I'm fixed upon it, mount of God's unfailing love.

O to grace how great a debtor daily I am drawn a new!
Let that grace now, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to you.
Prone to wander, I can feel it, wander from the love I've known,
Here's my heart, O take and seal it, seal it for your very own.

INVOCATION (based on Psalm 119: 173-176) (Led by lay reader. Join in at home.)

Wonderful God, Let your hand be ready to help me, for I have chosen your precepts. We long for your salvation, O Lord. May we live to praise you, and may Your ordinances help me stay on Your path. When we have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek out your servant, for we do not forget your commandments. **Amen.**

CALL TO CONFESSION: (lay reader)

Words escape us; meaningful conversation in this twilight zoom zone escapes us. We wonder where You are as we wander from your Presence.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION: (Led by lay reader. Join in at home.)

We are so weary, O LORD, of this pandemic reality that numbs our senses. How much longer must we endure masked faces we once knew so well and hug-less encounters with old friends at a safe distance? Help us to hold on and to rise up and to endure until this is over. Give us strength not only to walk with Jesus to Jerusalem, but also to continue a life of faith in spite of the numbness we feel. Help us, caring Creator. Create within us hearts that will endure as long as we must. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON: (lay reader)

It is written: "nothing can separate us from the love of God": not even spotty zoom connections, claustrophobic cabin fever, or apathy born out of boredom. Hold on; hold on; hold on. The promise of the manger lives on: Emmanuel!

SONG OF PRAISE: *Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ*

GOD'S YOUNGER DISCIPLES

He's Got the Whole World in his Hands (repeat)

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

COMMUNION HYMN: #321 ***Break Now the Bread of Life***

Break now the bread of life, Savior, to me,
As you once broke the loaves beside the sea;
Beyond the sacred page I seek you, Lord;
My spirit yearns for you, O Living Word.

Bless now the truth, dear Christ, to me, to me,
As you once blessed the bread by Galilee;
Then shall all bondage cease, all shackles fall,
And I shall find my peace, my all in all.

OUR SACRED STORY

PEACE HYMN: ***Let There Be Peace on Earth***

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

(Please extend a hug or a handshake and say "Peace be with you" to others.)

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION and 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

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD FOR US

SCRIPTURE: Luke 15: 1-32

¹ Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. ² And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

³ So (Jesus) told them this parable: ⁴ "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? ⁵ When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends

and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' ⁷ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

Pause to Reflect with Pastor Deborah

⁸ "Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' ¹⁰ Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Pause to Reflect with Pastor Deborah

¹¹ Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'" ²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

²⁵ "Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' ²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' ³¹ Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and

all that is mine is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.”

Pause to Reflect with Pastor Deborah: Never “lost” to God

HYMN: #202, O God, How We Have Wandered

Our God, how we have wandered and hidden from your face;
In foolishness have squandered your legacy of grace.
But now in exile dwelling, we turn with fear and shame,
As distant but compelling, you call us each by name.

And now at length discerning the evil that we do,
By faith we are returning with hope and trust, to you.
In haste you come to meet us and home rejoicing bring,
In gladness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.

O God of all the living, both banished and restored,
Compassionate, forgiving, our peace and hope assured.
Grant now that our transgressing, our faithlessness may cease,
Stretch out your hand in blessing, in pardon and in peace.

WE RESPOND WITH PRAYER

SHARING JOYS & CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER

MUSICAL RESPONSE: Use the next few moments to share joys and concerns in the chat. Our services are recorded. Please use first names. God knows who you mean.

WE RESPOND WITH OUR FINANCIAL GIFTS

GETTING TO KNOW ANOTHER CHILD OF GOD - Nancy Murdock

OFFERTORY INVITATION

We have been granted more than our fair share of the world’s wealth. Often we take this for granted and forget our blessing. This is the time to ponder and to reexamine our handling of God’s bounty in our hands. Let us share accordingly.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

DOXOLOGY: *Masithi*

(Masithi) Amen, si ya ku du mi sa, (masithi) (Repeat)
Amen, Bawo, Amen, Bawo ; Amen, si ya ku du mi sa.

(sing amen) Amen, we praise your name, O God. (Sing amen)
Amen, amen, amen, amen; Amen, we praise your name, O God.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Led by lay reader. Join in at home.)

Thank you, God, that we are never lost to You nor to You judge our value – other than seeing us as priceless in Your eyes. Thank You for the privilege of sharing the bounty you have entrusted to us, so that those less fortunate may receive Your blessing by our hands. Amen.

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

HYMN: #18 *Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer* (vs 1, 2)

Guide me, O my great Redeemer, pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but you are mighty; hold me with your powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more,
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain, where the healing waters flow.
Let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer, ever be my strength and shield,
Ever be my strength and shield.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE: “Go now in peace. Go now in peace. May the love of God surround you everywhere, everywhere you may go.” *Words & Music: Natalie Sleeth, © 1976 Hinshaw Music, Inc.; All rights reserved. Reprinted under ONE LICENSE #A-708716.*

MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH - Members of the Congregation
SENIOR PASTOR AND TEACHER - The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof
GREETERS – Anne-Marie Merrill, Sue Brown
LAY READER – Rachel Cobban
CHOIR DIRECTOR/ ORGANIST - Joan Virga
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTOR - Christine Lehoullier
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT - Michelle Guerrin
AV/ TECHNICAL – Paul Lindemann

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

IN OUR PRAYERS - March 7, 2021

PRAYERS OF JOY

The trinity of vaccines rolling out across the country! Thank you, God!

Kevin R. (friend of Liza D) is doing much better!

Spaghetti Supper served nearly 100 people!

Pancake Breakfast - Virtual! We had a good time.

First Virtual choir rehearsals! Thank you, Joan!

In person Ash Wednesday Service

The orchid in Pastor Deborah's office is blooming beautifully.

The piano (given in memory of Arlene W.) in the Virtual studio has been tuned

Melanie and Alan P. have a new "fur baby" – Hunter!

Pastor Deborah and Liz's piano found a new home!!

Jo W's sister, Sue and her husband, Bruce, are home after having Covid.

Successful and peaceful Annual meeting. Gratitude to all of the tech support!

Over 100 scarves knitted by Sharon H!

Spaghetti Supper: The frigid weather did not stop our team! Nearly 100 dinners were served in spite of the frigid cold temperature and brisk wind.

Peaceful transition of power in Washington

Tuesday night Adult Faith conversations were rich and rewarding.

Gratitude for our Irish Friends who worship with us every week!

Gratitude for our friends in Zimbabwe!

Gratitude for member in Georgia and Laconia and other faraway places!

Gratitude for the people who put themselves in harm's way for our country's safety.

Welcome to Rory Jean, born January 4! Congratulations to Kayla and Christopher, and to Grandma Cindy and Grandpa Mark!

Successful COVID-19 Vaccine being distributed.

Labyrinth finger walks and growing appreciation in this ancient spiritual practice.

PRAYERS OF CONSOLATION

Prayers for the family of Nancy Sullivan, Cyndi G's sister-in-law, who died 2.7.21.

Pat C's sister Judy, whose husband, Bruce, died 2.4.21 from Covid

Prayers for Jo W's family as Uncle Rudy has died from Covid (2.5.2021)

Families of the over 500,000 deaths in the US due to COVID.

PRAYERS OF STRENGTH, HEALTH, AND HEALING

Kate (friend of Chris C) dealing with difficulties in pregnancy

Diana (friend of Heather R) undergoing tests to rule out cancer

Pam P needs prayers of encouragement.

Carl (friend of Melanie P) had open heart surgery. Pray, too, for his wife Sandy for comfort while he's in the hospital as she can't be with him.

Anne E and her family

Wendy W's health concerns.

Kathleen M (friend of Trudie B) recently diagnosed with cancer on her lung will have surgery after Thanksgiving.

Teachers and all school personnel; Medical Professionals of all levels and in all locations; pastors; world and local leaders

For those with cancer: Liza D's husband's Uncle Walt has Stage 4 cancer and has an operation Feb 25; Kate, Jesse's friend is battling terminal cancer; Jay, Marjorie P's friend, a 41-yr old father of 3 young children who has been diagnosed with multiple cancers. Martha, close friend of Pat and Dick P, recurring leukemia; Janice P; Bob Dinan (friend of the Bob and Karen); Danny with stage 4 cancer, brother of Mary Jane (friend of Rachel and Alec)

SPECIAL ONGOING PRAYERS

Law Enforcement and other protectors of our safety and democracy; especially Active

National Guard Military; First Responders;

Family Promise in their new expanded facility

Everyone in Zimbabwe, a country riddled with revolution and pandemic

Tom and Andrea C - health & strength

For the families of those who are hospitalized and are unable to visit them.

For teachers, staff, & students the uncertainty of going back to school.

For people who are losing their livelihood due to this pandemic

Parkland Hospital Personnel, and All Nurses and Doctors, Hospice workers and employees of Nursing Homes and Extended care facilities

Aghadowey Rural Kinship – all of our friends in Northern Ireland

Our Covenant Partner: Pastoral Counseling Services, Inc.

Southern NH Family Promise; Sonshine Soup Kitchen; Marion Gerrish; Upper Room

Dangamvura – UCCZ – Zimbabwe African Church

Union Theological College in Zimbabwe, as well as our friend Kennedy Gondongwe

Tim B – Health & strength

Bonnie H, friend of Tim B

Brian K and ALL of the Wildland Firefighters this fire season

Victims of floods and fires and Covid and violence; Refugees and their families

People of color and members of the LGBTQ+ community

Friends of the Meetinghouse Board of Directors