

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,

Holy Week greetings! You will receive this newsletter as we prepare our hearts for the wretched grief of Maundy Thursday and the jubilation of Easter morning. A week of so many changes! How quickly the tables turn – for ill and for good! From the Jubilation when Jesus enters Jerusalem to the secret meetings, the propaganda of lies that surround Jesus, to the trial and abuse of his physical body to death – and then resurrection! May you walk through Eastertide with the knowledge and confidence of a child of God – knowing that God is with you no matter what you walk through and trusting that death is not the end, but the beginning of a new creation.

After two delays, 2019 and 2020, my three-month Sabbatical has arrived! The Sabbatical Coverage pastor is ready to hit the ground running. You'll hear more about and from Pastor Linda in this April issue of the Newsletter. My last service with you will be on Easter morning. We have an in-person service in the parking lot at 6:00am and I will host the 10:00 pre-recorded service on Zoom and Facebook.

The theme of my Sabbatical 2021 is: “A Creative Path to Deeper Spiritually.” As you know, I am a Veriditas trained and certified Labyrinth Facilitator. Two years ago, I hoped to spend much of my Sabbatical, traveling through France and Germany, visiting labyrinths there and speaking to people about their labyrinth practices. The labyrinth is a pathway to divine inspiration. Due to the circumstances that the pandemic forced upon us all, I was introduced to even more pathways to God. I discovered the joy of a regular practice of SoulCollage*. I took time to do “painted pages” and incorporate those into my collage

endeavors. I also discovered Zentangle, a wonderful way to meditate and create simultaneously. After 8 months of covid-induced isolation, I realized that these intuitive, right-brained practices had allowed me a balance that many of my colleagues in ministry desperately needed.

They say, “When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.” Liz reminded me of a book entitled: “The Artist’s Way.” The truth is that Liz has been recommending this book to me for years but I resisted. I could not get past the title. At a young age a teacher told me that I had “no artistic ability whatsoever”. I believed him. How often does that happen? We believe someone else’s perception of us. When I took a look at the book, I saw that the subtitle of the book was: “A Spiritual Path to Greater Creativity.” Now that was something I could wrap my head around! I opened up the book and began to read and was immediately taken in. It is an amazing book. It will serve me so well as a framework for my Sabbatical discernment.

During the 13 weeks of my Sabbatical, I will be seeking God’s presence through all of these creative, intuitive resources. I look forward to sharing with you upon my return. I leave you in good hands with Pastor Linda. Be assured of my prayers, even though we will not see one another.

God speed. Be well. Stay safe. See you in July!

Pastor Deborah

Board of Christian Outreach and Missions

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING: The OGHS is a Lenten mission offering of the United Church of Christ. The UCC works with international partners to provide sources of clean water and food, education and health care, emergency and disaster relief, refugee assistance, development aid and more to over 100 countries. We appreciate your supporting this important offering.

MISSIONS MONTHLY DONATIONS: Thank you for your monthly donations.

Community Caregivers \$100
Family Promise \$100
Our Church’s Wider Mission \$350
Pinkerton Homeless Program \$100
Upper Room \$100

Derry Friendship Center \$100
First Baptist Food Pantry \$100
Pastoral Counseling \$100
Sonshine Soup Kitchen \$100

KEN GOULD FUNDS: The Missions Board continues to distribute funds from Ken’s generous bequest. \$750 to First Baptist Food Pantry, \$750 to Sonshine Soup Kitchen, \$750 to Family Promise, \$750 to the Upper Room Food Pantry, \$2500 to United Theological College in Zimbabwe and \$2500 to Health Access Sumbabwa in Indonesia

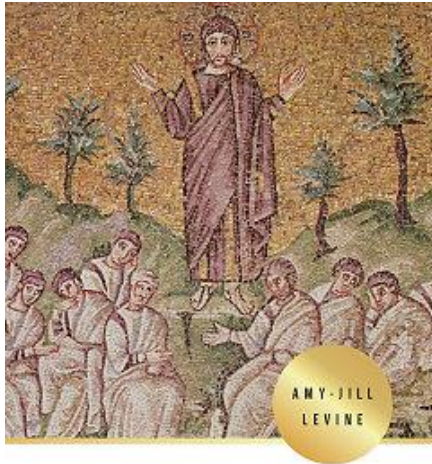
Respectfully submitted by BOCOM members: Nancy Murdock-Chair, Karen Wilson, Melanie Pawl, Bart Wetherbee, Heather Paradzick, Carol Guerrin, Sue Brown (Treasurer)

Christian Education and Faith Formation

April – May Adult Faith Formation ~ Sermon On The Mount Series

Starts Tuesday, April 13th on Zoom; 6:30 pm

In Sermon on the Mount, Dr. Amy-Jill Levine takes a detailed and colorful overview of Matthew 5-7, collectively known as Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Through Dr. Levine's engaging method of biblical interpretation, readers will come away with a solid understanding of the Sermon on the Mount in its historical and theological context.



SERMON *on*
the MOUNT
A BEGINNER'S GUIDE to the KINGDOM of HEAVEN

Chapters include:

1. The Beatitudes
2. The Extensions
3. Practicing Piety
4. Our Father
5. Finding Your Treasure
6. Living into the Kingdom

Explore the major topics in the most popular sermon ever delivered and unpack how Jesus makes his points using a solid knowledge of Hebrew Scriptures and moral teachings.

The six-session DVD features Dr. Amy-Jill Levine guiding participants through the study. The video sessions are approximately 10-12 minutes in length and, when combined with the six book chapters, make an ideal six-week group study. All videos sessions are closed captioned. Explore more here: <https://www.abingdonpress.com/product/9781501899898/>

- Please contact the front office or Christine Lehoullier, cedirector @ fpc-ucc.org, if you are interested in having a book ordered for you and being added to the ZOOM invitation list for this bible study. Books can be found on Amazon; Paperback \$14.53 or Kindle \$9.00.

Sunday School Curriculum Bags~ Post Easter – July 4th

Delivery begins the week after Easter

Dear Families and Friends, the Christian Education Board hasn't skipped a beat! Our next curriculum bags will be ready for delivery the week following Easter! We truly hope everyone has been enjoying the activities and lessons that have been provided and always enjoy your families' feedback as this helps us serve each and every student of EVERY age in a spiritually effective way. Please don't hesitate to reach out to Christine Lehoullier with any questions or comments, cedirector@fpc-ucc.org.



This next curriculum batch will include exploring bible scriptures from the Road to Emmaus, Ascension Sunday, Scriptures from the Book of Acts where we'll learn about Paul's journeys and struggles with the Apostles and a really fun unit about Psalms and songs collaborating with Mrs. Virga! We can't wait to share and explore with all of our students!

Vacation Church Camp ~ Mission: DEEP SEA

Virtual Camp in July: Dates TBA

Grab your scuba gear as we dive deep *virtually* this July into our Vacation Church Camp Mission: DEEP SEA with the hopes of a COVID-safe in-person Closing Celebration! During Mission: DEEP SEA, kids will dive deep into the ocean to explore the depths of God's love!

This unique Vacation Church Camp will have kids of all ages entertained with unique ocean-themed STEM activities, entertaining stories, crafts, music and much more.

Parents and Caregivers will love the flexibility of accessing the exciting and entertaining camp materials and videos as it fits into your families' schedule. Registration opens in May. Watch for more details in our May Newsletter.



THANK YOU AND BLESSINGS

A great big thank you to all who participated in the beautiful display of kindness, gratitude, love and caring thoughts and prayers that adorned the Lenten Cross of Kindness and Gratitude this Lenten season. It was an emotional and spiritually moving time each week adding each one of your joys and prayers to the cross. I am so blessed to be a part of such a caring community!

Blessings to each and every one of you, Christine Lehoullier



Board of Deacons

As you read this Pastor Deborah is preparing to begin her Sabbatical. Although, we will miss her we wish her our best and encouragement in her studies.

Hopefully you were able to “meet” the Rev. Linda Snyder, our Sabbatical Coverage Pastor, at the Palm Sunday service where she led us in a Sabbatical blessing of Pastor Deborah.

Pastor Linda Snyder begins her ministry with us on Monday, April 5th. Ordained in the American Baptist tradition, Pastor Linda has UCC churches in NH as their interim pastor. She was at the Pilgrim Congregational Church in Brentwood-Kingston (2015-2017) and most recently the Hampstead Congregational Church in Hampstead (2017-2019).

We have started to get some cards for Easter delivery for the “introduce yourself card exchange” and they will sent out as they come in. Please feel free to drop off cards at any time as we would like to continue this activity through the year.

Back to the Sanctuary

By now you should have received the background information and pledge card as we attempt to get to Phase 2 of the Back to the Sanctuary campaign. Trust me, I know it seems like we are always asking for money, but this has been, and will continue to be, a huge undertaking. But we are steadily making progress. It is obvious by the outside work, but the elevator will be in within a few weeks and the internal connector is being built. Your money is definitely at work and we are grateful for it. This year’s goal is a mere \$150,000 (not mere, but less than last year). Considering next phase will be three times larger we are fairly confident we can get this portion done-namely painting the Meetinghouse and finishing the interior.

Any amount helps and if you can get your pledge in soon then we will be better able to assure everyone that Phase 2 will be successful.

Again, much gratitude for all you have done in the past. We look forward to continued progress.

Back to the Sanctuary Fundraising Group: Margie Ives, Anne Marie Merrill, Sue Lindemann, Cynthia Gray

From Pastor Linda Snyder, our Sabbatical Coverage Pastor

Greetings First Parish Friends and Members,

It is a joy to begin as the congregation's sabbatical coverage pastor beginning April fifth.

During Palm Sunday worship we offered a blessing for Pastor Deborah as she embarks on an extended time of sabbath-keeping. We prayed for her a time a deep rest, introspection and learning. We also prayed a blessing on the congregation as we continue your many ministries. As the end of this difficult year begins to come to an end I am suggesting that we move into a time I'm call "The Pause," that is an intentional time of reflection and exploration into the meanings of this unusual year. What is God showing us? What does that mean for a faith community? What is your sense of how your gifts and strengths mesh with that new thing God is always doing?

These have been hard months for so many. You know the litany. Families were strained and experienced incredible losses. Workers lost jobs (and salary) or faced reduced hours also straining finances. Millions had to keep working in the midst of COVID danger. Fissures and divides among Americans came into even sharper relief. Children and young people carried the burden of isolation, being away from friends and missing out on the fun of celebrating life's key milestones with others. Add a racial reckoning and unsettling politics and I think we're all ready for a little fresh air and a hug.

How does one begin ministry in a time of physical distancing? Usually I would begin with visits to listen and get to know you! This is only slightly possible right now. So we will find ways! So far I have been blessed to meet face-to-face with most of the church staff and some of your leadership, all wonderful. Pastor Deborah and I have had many chances to talk and for her to 'introduce' me to the workings of the congregation, and again this has been enormously helpful.

My plan is to be in the office Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:30- 12:30. I am very free to set up face-to-face meetings at other times as well. We can meet in Currier Hall and remain physically distant when needed. I look forward to connecting by Zoom for weekly bible study on Tuesday nights (Christine and I have talked together, and she is announcing the next series in this newsletter—I hope you will take part.) As the weather gets better I hope to have small group gatherings to reflect on ministry here at First Parish with an eye to envisioning what this pandemic year has shown us related to God's call for us. I am NOT coming into to start any great program or project! Rather we will gather to identify strengths, where the Spirit might be tugging at the edges of growth for you, and generally enjoy the pursuit of insightful conversation. These gatherings will be set up at various times, places and formats so that as many as possible can take part. And, as with any sabbatical time, I hope we will have some fun together along the way.

I am lucky enough to have had both vaccine shots. So I look forward to people dropping in as they can and want to. I live about 35- 40 minutes away but will always come if there is an emergency of any kind, night or day. My personal cell # is (203) 927- 5387 and I

hope you won't hesitate to be in touch—just to say hi, to share your thoughts, to set up a time to get together. Office visits, visits in Currier Hall, driveway and outside visits work too!

I will work from home on Monday and Wednesday and my sabbath day will be Friday. As we get into the pace of ministry together this may be modified as I learn new needs of the congregation.

Every blessing to each of you,

Linda

Linda Lea Snyder

LindaLeaSnyder@gmail.com

Charleston Wrap - Fundraiser

If you're looking for that special gift to celebrate spring, Mother's Day, Graduation, Father's Day check out Charleston Wrap [on line](#). Catalogs available at the church.



ATTENTION! Please REGISTER NOW for First Parish Church Spring Fundraiser's fundraiser!

It's **super easy**! Please help support our fundraiser by following the steps below to register online today. When you register, we'll know you're committed to supporting our fundraiser and helping us reach our goals. To help our organization even more, send 10 email invitations to friends & family and spread the word about our need for help. With over 2,500 gift ideas, supporters can shop and accomplish all of their gift giving needs, all while supporting our important cause.

Will you follow the instructions below and register today? It's easy, it's simple, and it's important!

Here's how to register today and help us spread the word!

Invite friends and family (even if they're out of town), online orders ship directly to the purchaser!

Organization ID:

21682



Step 1: REGISTER at www.charlestonwrapstore.com
(use organization ID to the left)



Step 2: Use our Email-Invite Generator to invite out-of-town friends & family to shop and support! Plus, share your unique invite links via text and social media.



Participant Registration



Charleston Wrap®
BETTER PRODUCTS. BETTER FUNDRAISING.

Family Promise- Update

The Family Promise program for homeless families is in full swing. We received the following update on the program this week from its volunteer coordinator Matt Hodgkiss on the status of the program and the help they could use from us and others (see section NEEDS & VOLUNTEER NEEDS below). Please consider supporting this badly needed program with your time and financial support:

Family Promise of Southern NH is busy and grateful! Families continue to move in, construction is still underway, and staff is tending to the finer details needed to get and keep everything running smoothly. We are incredibly busy; busier than we thought we would be at this point! But we are happy and blessed. We currently have seven families living onsite. The building is full of baby laughs and cries, toddler feet as they canter through common areas, and a cafeteria full of conversation and play. All security cameras and locking systems are in place to keep everyone safe as they begin to settle into their new home. We are getting regular food donations from Corpus Christi and the Hudson Food Pantry. We could still use donations of fresh fruits and vegetables, juices, and milk. And we do need volunteers to come in and cook (or deliver) evening meals Monday thru Thursday. We have a fully operational industrial kitchen that is available to these volunteers.

Because our need for evening meals is paramount, we are incredibly grateful that White Birch of Hudson is helping to pick up the slack by delivering a meal for families every other Monday until we can get a regular influx of meals. Also lending a hand is as Triumphant Cross (Salem, NH) and St. Matthews Church (Windham, NH).

On another note, we are going to start classes for our parents the week of March 14th. The first to be scheduled will be a parenting class taught by Renee Moloney. Renee is certified to teach Systematic Training for Effective Parenting, the program used here at Family Promise. She is also a pre-school teacher and runs art therapy classes. Coming up soon will be Financial Literacy classes.

Because these essential classes are required of all parents, we need volunteers to babysit the little ones while Mom and Dad participate every Monday evening 7-9pm.

Below is a full list of our current needs:

NEEDS

Dry Goods
Fresh Fruits and Veggies
Milk and Juices
Cleaning supplies
Toiletries
Diapers of all sizes!

All other in-kind donations are on hold as we rebuild our storage area.

VOLUNTEER NEEDS

Evening meals (delivered or cooked onsite) Monday thru Thursday

Babysitters – Monday evenings, 7pm-9pm (mainly for toddlers and older children)

Onsite volunteers for flexible **evening hours** between 6 and 9pm and **weekend hours** between 6:30 AM and 9 PM. **Evening volunteers** are needed to help transition the building from daytime to evening. These volunteers would be available during mealtime, and after to help families with whatever needs they may realize before bedtime. **Weekend volunteers** accept donations on our behalf and are a presence in the house in case of emergency.

- **Event volunteers** - we are beginning to plan several outdoor **fundraising events** for this spring/summer. We will need volunteers and event committee members in various capacities.

If you are interested in helping our families succeed by joining us for a few hours a week, please reach out to Matt Hodgkiss! matthew.hodgkiss@familypromisesnh.org / 603-883-7338 ext. 3

If you would like to donate *nonperishable* items but can't deliver them to the facility at 3 Crown Street in Nashua yourself, please bring them to the church and I will collect them and make a periodic delivery. I will speak with Michelle and Pastor Deborah about providing a box for these contributions.

Finally, by the time this article appears, we will have provided our first meal to Family Promise guests, on Tuesday March 23. We hope to make this a regular monthly activity, with each of 6 to 8 people providing a 9x13 aluminum casserole pan of main course, side dish, or vegetables, or dessert to feed the families in residence at the time. If you'd like to be part of the meal brigade (you don't need to commit to participating every month), please let me know.

Randy Brown

Randybrown1119@gmail.com

612-0489

Music Ministry

As I write my newsletter, we have just finished our Palm Sunday service and we are preparing for Holy Week, mentally and spiritually. Music has been selected and submitted and the bulletins are done. But are we ready? Pastor Deborah and I have been selecting music, going over our selections, changing hymns, and then agreeing on just the right hymns for this year, a year that has seen such change in our lives, and in the music ministry. We wanted to pick as much music to bring the feeling of tradition to our lives and homes so we wouldn't miss out on singing the hymns that cry out "tradition" and "Easter". So, enjoy the music selections, and let us exclaim; "He has Risen, He has Risen, Indeed!"

Virtual Choir rehearsals will resume the Thursday after Easter, April 8th at 6:30 pm. Please let me know at least one hour before at: joan.virga@gmail.com.

First Parish Family 5k or 5mile- Virtual Race- Fundraiser!

Course can be either a 5K or 5 Miles or any comparable distance that you choose.

Price: \$15.00 Race Fee + \$1.87 SignUp Fee / Registration: Registration ends April 24, 2021

Sign Up: <https://runsignup.com/Race/NH/Derry/FirstParishFamilyFive>

A virtual race can happen any time between April 17th and 24th. Come tackle the course that was challenging and picturesque running around Beaver Lake and the adjacent farm fields or pick a place that shows some of the historic sites in Derry such as the Robert Frost Farm or Taylor Sawmill. Or take a stroll past the house where Alan Sheppard of NASA fame grew up. His fame gave the local high school, Pinkerton Academy its mascot, the Astros. Or select your own route, even a treadmill, we invite you to walk with us.

Meetinghouse Preservation Update

We reached a milestone in the Elevator Installation project as Stanley Elevator finished the main hydraulic, mechanical, and physical components. Partner Liberty Electric will now work on the electrical and fire alarm systems through April. Stanley will then tune the elevator's operation and complete the job.

General contractor Morin Contracting Services (MCS) continues to support the installation work, and is planning the Sump Pump Installation and Drainage effort to take place this spring.

Excavation will uncover the existing extensive drainage system. The goal is then to tie the elevator sump pump output into that system. We also have to reduce the general water build-up around and under the Connector and are working on means to achieve that.

New Projects: Exterior Painting and Connector Interior Finishing

With the Elevator Installation nearly done, we are designing and specifying the remaining details for finishing the inside of the Connector. In April we'll receive project plans and quotes for the walls, floors, ceilings, staircase, and trim from MCS, and for the electrical, lighting, and fire alarms from Liberty. Our own Bob Wilson will design and quote the heating.

For the Meetinghouse Exterior Painting project, we are meeting with the lead paint remediation and painting contractors we vetted last year and will soon receive updated quotes from the two of the three who still have availability. We're also detailing the extent of the pre-painting structural and carpentry repairs required for the entrances, walls, and trim. We're discussing that work with local craftsman Mike Gibbons and historic structures expert Arron Sturgis.

With these contractors we are exploring the viability of phasing the repairs and painting work — just handling the worst two sides this year and touching up the others — so we might apply more of our limited Rehab Funds to the Connector Interior.

By the end of April we expect to have all these project plans and quotes (or firmer estimates) in hand and a sense of currently-available and pledged Rehab funds. Council will then decide if we can pursue both projects, or just the higher-priority Exterior Painting. (Get your *Back to the Sanctuary* pledge cards in early to help ensure we can do both projects!)

Please direct any concerns or questions to your Building Advisory Committee:

Paul Lindemann (paul@nutfieldhistory.org), Larry Krantz, Bill Mann, and Bob Wilson



Where walking in circles is healthy

By Diane Bair and Pamela Wright BOSTON GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS 3.27.21

Could something as simple as walking a labyrinth help boost your mood and improve your health? Absolutely, according to Dr. Darshan Mehta, medical director at the Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital. Mehta believes that this ancient practice can be a balm for modern-day miseries.

Labyrinths have existed in all the world's cultures — in Europe, Southeast Asia, with the indigenous cultures of North America, virtually everywhere, Mehta said in a recent Zoom seminar hosted by Boston's Rose Kennedy Greenway (in honor of the labyrinth at Armenian Heritage Park). Labyrinths have been found on Spanish petroglyphs and on the floors of medieval cathedrals. "It's an experience that can be shared across cultures and age groups, and it offers an opportunity for people who disagree politically to enjoy a common space," Mehta said.

The labyrinth has been such a persistent tool for relaxation, Mehta continued, because walking is the most fundamentally important activity people can do. "Walking meditation, supported by the labyrinth, creates a space to be in the moment. It's a practice of returning to a sense of balance and grounding and your own inner strength."

A labyrinth is not a maze, or a problem to be solved, but a pattern of pathways that weave in a circle around a central point, said Brigham & Women's senior professional coach Maura Koutoujian in the same seminar. Labyrinths fuse the imagery of the circle and the spiral into a meandering, purposeful path. "We lose our way in a maze. We find our way in a labyrinth," Koutoujian explained. "It is ultimately a symbol of life's journey."

Of course, walking counts as exercise, but Koutoujian urged everyone to fully embrace the labyrinth ritual, not merely use it as a step-counting tool. "You can feel the energy of those who walked before you," she noted. "You can walk on the labyrinth, or you can dance on the labyrinth. There are no rules." Want to give it a go, or celebrate World Labyrinth Day (coming May 1)? These outdoor labyrinths are accessible to the public but note that mask-wearing and social distancing are required. For more possibilities, visit www.labyrinthlocator.com and search by state.

Photo on the following page: Labyrinth and Abstract Sculpture, Armenian Heritage Park on the Rose Kennedy Greenway. Opened in 2012, this park is a gift from Armenian-Americans to the City of Boston and the Commonwealth. The park's two key features are a labyrinth, 60 feet in diameter, and an abstract sculpture. The circular winding path, delineated by grass and inlaid stone, celebrates life's journey. At its center is a single jet of water, representing hope and rebirth and etched in granite, the symbol of eternity. The abstract sculpture, a split geometric shape made of stainless steel and aluminum, commemorates the immigrant experience. Every spring, a crane separates Wellesley College's outdoor labyrinth is made from trees recovered from campus. The labyrinth at Armenian Heritage Park (top) has a single jet of water at its center, representing hope and rebirth. the two halves and reconfigures them to create a new sculptural shape, a symbol for immigrants who left (or were forced to leave) their country of origin and made a new life here. This year's reconfiguration will take place on Sunday, April 11. www.armenianheritagepark.org

The Labyrinth, a circular winding path paved in grass and inlaid stone, celebrates life's journey. Art, Service, Science, Commerce are etched around its circle in tribute to contributions made to American life and culture.



Derry Community Meals

The Derry Community Meals will provide free bag meals to go. Please share with your family, friends and neighbors.

4/3/21- **St. Thomas Parish**- Breakfast 10 AM to 10:30 AM

4/11/21- **Church of the Transfiguration (DECOFT)/Elijah's Table (EHS)**- Lunch 2:00 PM to 2:30 PM

4/17/21- **St. Thomas Parish**- Breakfast 10 AM to 10:30 AM

4/17/21- **St. Luke's Church**- Lunch 12:00 PM to 12:30 PM drive around to back door

4/25/21- **Church of the Transfiguration (DECOFT)/Elijah's Table (EHS)**-Breakfast 9 AM to 9:30 AM

4/25/21- **St. Jude's Parish**- Lunch- 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM

4/30/21- **First Parish Church**- 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM drive up to side door

Sonshine Soup Kitchen – Serving drive by, to-go meals from 4:30-5:30 pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays

Restructure Committee

As you may or may not remember, a few years ago a committee was formed to study the current structure of our church and other possible models that which might be more effective. At the time there was an opinion that we had too many boards and committees in the current structure resulting in an inability to fill open positions. The committee consisted of Fred Merrill, Cynthia Gray, Melanie Van Steensburg, Becky Fleury, John Bartel, Anne Engelhardt and Pastor Deborah. Committee members met with the various Boards and Committees and welcomed their input. Term limit changes were a running theme. We met or talked with other churches and reviewed their By-Laws for suggestions. A theme also emerged that we should be asking people to seek those projects or committees that were more gift centered, tapping into ones' strengths and exploring individual talents.

One thing that kept popping up was that some of the terms were too long and volunteers would rather sign up for tasks rather than long time commitments. To that end these were some of the changes that were made that many may not have recognized:

Membership committee was eliminated because it seemed to be more a clerical function.

The premier task of the Stewardship Board, namely the annual pledge, was absorbed by the Finance. Committee. Truth be told, we are ALL "stewards" as we give back to God our time, talent and treasure. If you serve, you are a Steward.

Deacons had multiple obligations that needed assistance so the Ministry of Care was formed, a function of Pastoral Care to check in with our members and friends, an endeavor that has never been more important than it is now. This group also organizes visits, meals, prayers, and cards. This ability to "reach out" through others has been most successful.

By-laws, through the work of many, guided by Anne Engelhardt were completely and carefully scrutinized to make sure all changes were correctly captured. This was a massive undertaking, to synchronize what we thought we were doing with the task of written concurrence.

Effective communication is the nexus that melds us all and is also the burden so many organizations struggle with. We now have Eblast on Fridays, a monthly Newsletter, Worship via Zoom and Facebook. It is a trying time but First Parish manages to shine.

Our church, like all organizations, is constantly evolving. Our work may not be done, we may reconvene at another time but the task at hand was felt to be completed. Church Council would be more than happy to hear any other suggestions going forward. We hope you have seen these improvements and share in the positive changes made.

(Submitted by Cyndi Gray, upon Council request.)

Join us for Worship Services & Education online!

Worship Services and Christian Education videos continue to be available for watching (or re-watching) at your convenience online. https://www.facebook.com/fpcucc/videos/?ref=page_internal



April 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 Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) Year B

April 4

Easter Luke 23

Greeters: Jack Martin and Sue Lindemann

April 11

Acts 4:32-35

1 John 1:1-2:2

John 20:19-31

Psalm 133

Greeters: Rachel Cobban and Katie Cobban

Lay Reader: Sue Lindemann

April 18

Acts 3:12-19

1 John 3:1-7

Luke 24:36b-48

Psalm 4

Greeters: Anne-Marie Merrill and Sue Brown

Lay Reader: Rachel Cobban

April 25

Acts 4:5-12

1 John 3:16-24

John 10:11-18

Psalm 23

Greeters: Jack Martin and Sue Lindemann

Lay Reader: Katie Cobban



Maundy Thursday Service –
Thursday, April 1 7pm via Zoom
& Facebook

Easter Sunday April 7
6am- Drive In Service/ 10am via
Zoom & Facebook

Charleston Wrap Fundraiser –
Tuesday, April 7-June 7

Adult Faith Formation –
Tuesdays Apr. 13, 20, 27 at
6:30pm Sermon on the Mount

**First Parish Family 5mile/5K
Fundraiser –April 17-24**

**Newsletter Deadline – Tuesday,
April 27.** (Church Office will be
closed on Thur. morning.)

Spaghetti Supper- To-Go
Friday Apr. 30 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

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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