First Parish Congregational Church

United Church of Christ • East Derry, New Hampshire
September 2021 Newsletter

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

a just world for all ucc.org

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Child of God,

I'll say it: this "subject to change"- world that we live in is so unsettling! Every plan and every project is "subject to change". There will come a day when I present to the whole congregation the full scope of my 2021 Sabbatical. Until then, I present to you bits and pieces. In this newsletter, I share with you some experiences from Sabbatical and I propose projects based on my experiences. I am presenting two projects: **one book project** and **one creative project.**

Let me begin with this invitation: please participate. For the love of God, join with others in our community as we reject solitude and separation. We are weary from the debates and the anger. We are a community – with a firm foundation of worship, prayer, education, and service. We are a community – who cares deeply for God and for one another. We are being bombarded with loss and tragedy. In the face of that reality, let us rise above! Please participate in some way and let me, Pastor Deborah, know how you've chosen to participate.

The book project is one of the books that I read while on Sabbatical. It is entitled Embody, written by Karoline Lewis, PhD, who was a guest here at First Parish 6 years ago, presenting her remarkable scholarship on the Gospel writer John. Since that time, she has written and published several more books. Embody came out last year. The fact that I was able to read this book while immersing myself in God's

Creation and my own intuitive mind was nothing short of a God-wink. I had the time to consider the contents of this message prayerfully and profoundly.

Embody suggests that there are five key elements to transformational Christian discipleship: accompaniment, attentiveness, authenticity, abundance, and advocacy. With each key, Dr. Lewis presents the story of a woman in Jesus' life. As I considered this material, I was struck with a vision: what if church groups around the country sat together to read this book? What if someone created a "curriculum" so that a clergy person wasn't needed to facilitate, and that a facilitator, given the proper tools, could be someone from within their own group? Some work would need to be done to present the material in such a way – but it's possible! A second vision struck me: what if First Parish members and friends put their hearts and skills together to produce such a curriculum?

Soon after that, I received a third whisper from God: what if everyone in our church read this book – whether they participated in the creation of a curriculum or not? This is the back story to this project that I am commending to all the members and friends of First Parish. You will see details about this book project on a subsequent page of this newsletter. I hope you will participate in some way. There are levels of participation so that every person can be part of this.

The creative project that I discovered and have so enjoyed is creating garden sculptures out of items of glassware of all shapes, sizes, and colors. You gather glass bottles, dishes, platters, tea pots, sugar and creamers, and on and on! And then you allow your intuition to guide you as you create a sculpture for the garden! These can be gifts or sold at a craft fair (wink, wink; nod, nod).

There are several different uses for these statues. Some have become bird baths or bird feeders. Some are simply eye pleasers. This will be a two-pronged project, and everyone can participate on some level. (For examples of these garden sculptures, go to google or Pinterest.)

First, we will need to collect items of glass that members and friends will donate to this project. Start now and bring your unwanted objects to the church and label them for the "garden sculpture project". Remember that these are both unwanted by you AND beautiful, nonetheless.

Second, we will choose a date (or two) this Fall when we will come together – whoever chooses to participate. At that time, we will set all of the glassware up on tables and then take turns prayerfully selecting the ones that we imagine will look good together because of their color, or shape or size.

This creative process is incredibly freeing. God's energy is invitational and intuitive. There will be no "wrong" way and no "bad" outcome. Maybe that upside down vase looks amazing with a beautiful tea pot on top! Or perhaps the tea pot is upside down and inside the vase! This will be fun and freeing! I hope that you will join this freeing activity of creation. Look for more details in the days to come.

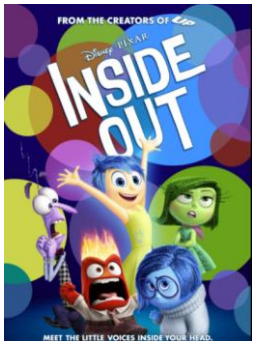
In this "subject to change" environment, what doesn't need to change is the way you listen to God's whisper of encouragement. God-winks abounds! God's "goodness and mercy" has followed/pursued us all the days of our lives. THAT is not subject to change!! Praise God!

With peace, hope and faith,
Pastor Deborah

Christian Education and Faith Formation

Lava Lava Luau Vacation Church Camp Fun ….

Lava Lava Luau Vacation Church Camp videos are still available for your viewing pleasure on the church website in [Christian Education & Sunday School]



IT'S SHOWTIME!

Disney Pixar's INSIDE OUT-rated PG Bonus viewing September 4th 6pm – 8pm online via Zoom (look for the link in this Friday's E-Blast)! Pre-packaged refreshments will be available for pick up at the office between 9 am -2 pm Friday, September 3rd. Please call ahead. #603-434-0628
A movie for all ages about a young girl named Riley who is uprooted from her Midwest life and moved to San Francisco, and her emotions - Joy, Fear, Anger, Disgust and Sadness - conflict on how best to navigate a new city, house, and school.

RALLY SUNDAY & BACK TO SCHOOL BLESSING
What? What? **Rally Day** and **Blessing of the Backpacks** is moving to **September 19th** and to add even more excitement to this day, we will be celebrating a Baptism. Our service will be joyous for all ages and another wonderful occasion to bring the church family together.
If it should rain….. Please join us via Zoom or Facebook. Pastor Deborah will be blessing the backpacks during the service. In addition, at 2pm Pastor Deborah will be at the Church to present you with your special **Blessing Tag** to carry in your bag.

BACK TO SCHOOL BLESSING *Sunday, September 19th*

All of our students and educators are invited to bring their backpacks, school bags, and totes to First Parish so our church family can offer them a blessing for a safe and successful school year. Please spread the word and remember to label your Bags. All students and educators will be gifted a blessing tag to attach to their bag!

DERRYFEST
September 18th
10am to 4pm at
MacGregor Park in
Downtown Derry

First Parish Church will be there with activities, games with prizes, information, hand sanitizer and masks ;) We will promoting our Puppet ministry, bring our favorite potato pals craft back and even present potato biblical characters to quiz the children. We will also be greeting visitors and welcoming everyone to join us in our worship.

Board of Christian Outreach and Missions

Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. 2Corinthians 7-8
Council approved Missions Board request to distribute undesignated Mission trip funds of $1220.00 to Zimbabwe Seminary. They have urgent need for help due to food insecurity. FPC has received a lovely thank you note from Kennedy.
Due to increased need Mission Board has reinstated donation of $200 monthly to the Pastor's funds.

MISSIONS AUGUST DONATIONS:

Thank you for continuing to support our 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

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

Derry Community Meals- September/ Spaghetti Supper

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

9/12/21- **Church of the Transfiguration (DECOFT)/Elijah's Table (EHS)-** Dinner 2:00 PM to 2:30 PM
9/18/21- ****SPECIAL BREAKFAST EVENT for DERRY FEST, SEPTEMBER 18, 2021, ST. LUKE'S PARISH**: Breakfast to go at 8 AM. Please park on the street or at a municipal lot and walk around to the back of the church. We will have tables set up outside, weather permitting. A free will offering will be accepted but not expected.**
9/24/21- **First Parish Church-** 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM drive up to side door
9/26/21- **Church of the Transfiguration (DECOFT)/Elijah's Table (EHS)-** Breakfast 9:00AM to 9:30AM
9/26/21- **St. Jude's Parish-** Lunch- 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM

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

FUND RAISING

Our mission is to look for sources of revenue above and beyond the pledges of our members and friends. While we do this, we work together to raise fun and friends – in addition to raising funds! There are so many ways for you to participate and we thank you for all the things that you have already done!! Without your support, we could not achieve the success that we have. Your church thanks you and we thank you.

We'd like you to remember the various ways that you can help the church with little to no effort or out-of-pocket expense. 1) When you make purchases through Amazon – use the Amazon Smile – and designate First Parish as a charity organization to receive donations based upon the purchases that you make. Visit https://smile.amazon.com/ and search "First Parish Congregational Church". The church only receives funds when going through the https://smile.amazon.com/ website. Please visit https://smile.amazon.com/gp/chpf/about/ to learn more details. 2) As you get ready to head back to school, the Saint Pauley shed in our church parking lot is waiting for your donations. This is an excellent way for First Parish to receive funds – without much effort. So, as you replace clothes or shoes that have mysteriously "shrunk" over the summer, remember that they can be retired to the shed and will be used for others less fortunate. 3) Do you or someone you know shop at Hannafords? Purchase a gift card from the office. This can be so easy. Call and talk to Michelle in the office. Send in a check and your gift card will be sent to you. (Pastor Deborah is offering to deliver your card to you if you live within 50 miles of the church! From then on recharges are easy-peasy.)

Just a reminder that if you would still like to purchase a brick for our memorial courtyard – the order is still open accepting orders. Forms are available in the office for your memories, or celebrations. And even though the weather is getting a bit cooler – there are still t-shirts available for sale in the office.

We (the fund-raising committee members) recently had a meeting and are working on a few more events for the coming months. Please stay tuned for a fall/winter Charleston Wrap sale – and another on-line sale from an organization recommended by our friend, Joan Virga – MCM Fundraising – sticky goodies, popcorn, etc.

You can also look forward to the details on an upcoming Pampered Chef fundraiser also a bit later in the season.

Plans are being discussed for an upcoming Sugar Plum Fair – more details will be following as to the modifications that need to be in place based upon the current virus situations. We are definitely planning for this event – but working out the details.

If you have any ideas for a new or wish to help with any of these upcoming events, please reach out to one of our group members.

Thank you,

Cathy Zylinski, Stephanie Cm-berg, Carol Guerrin, Beth Hunter, Kayla Pingree-McCarthy, Cathy Pottle

Fall 2021: TWO PROJECTS: One Book and One Creative

"What If All the Church Read the Same Book" Project:

Everyone is invited to read a book that will be studied by the Adult Faith Formation group this fall. The book is entitled Embody by Karoline Lewis, PhD, who was a guest here at First Parish several years ago. Her innovative analysis of the Gospel of John is remarkable. Dr. Lewis has now written a book for leaders of the church that speaks to getting back to the basics of Christianity.

All members and friends of First Parish are encouraged to read this book. And *some* will choose to join the book discussion. And *some* will discern together a way of turning the material into a curriculum to be used by other churches. We will read the book, discuss it and then talk about creating a curriculum with two guidebooks: one for a "facilitator" and another for the "participant". All our gatherings will be hybrid: in person or Zoom – your choice.

You may participate in various ways: 1) simply read the book; 2) read the book and offer your observations to the Adult Faith Formation group; 3) read the book and attend the discussions; 4) read the book, attend discussions and also attend the sessions intended to create a curriculum for the broader church; or 5) pray for God's presence in this project.

Dates for Discussion of the book: 9/14; 9/28; 10/12; 10/26; 11/9; 11/30 (Please read ahead and be prepared to discuss at our gathering. Note sections that we ought to re-read together. Read Preface and Introduction for the 14th; Chapter 1 for the 28, etc.)

Creating an Embody Curriculum: 9/21; 10/5; 10/19; 11/2; 11/16; 12/7

Recap and wrap-up: 12/14 and No class: 11/23. Or pray unceasingly.

Creative Project: Garden Sculptures!

We will collect items of glass and then glue them together to create imaginative garden sculptures!

YOU can help! We need articles of glass that you no longer use, need, or want.
Go through those kitchen cupboards or closets.
Maybe you haven't used it in a long time, and you don't know when you'd ever use it.
Maybe it has a chip, and you hate to throw it away.
Recycle it and let it live a new life as part of a garden sculpture!

Bring it to church and let us create!

For more information, please read the pastor's message on page 1-2

Creating a Community Prayer

Many of the Psalms were written by the community of faith in their context. First Parish Church could do that! Together, we could write a community prayer that speaks to our gratitude and our losses.

Please fill out the form below and return it to the office by September 26, in time for our October newsletter.

These are the things we lift up together as a church wide community of faith.

1. The past year has felt _____ to us.
2. We lost _____.
3. We remember _____.
4. What hurt was _____.
5. And yet, we discovered _____.
6. We gained _____.
7. We remained grateful for _____.
8. We celebrated _____.
9. Now, as we gather, we pray for _____.

Community Baptism- Outdoor Worship Service August 15th

New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ

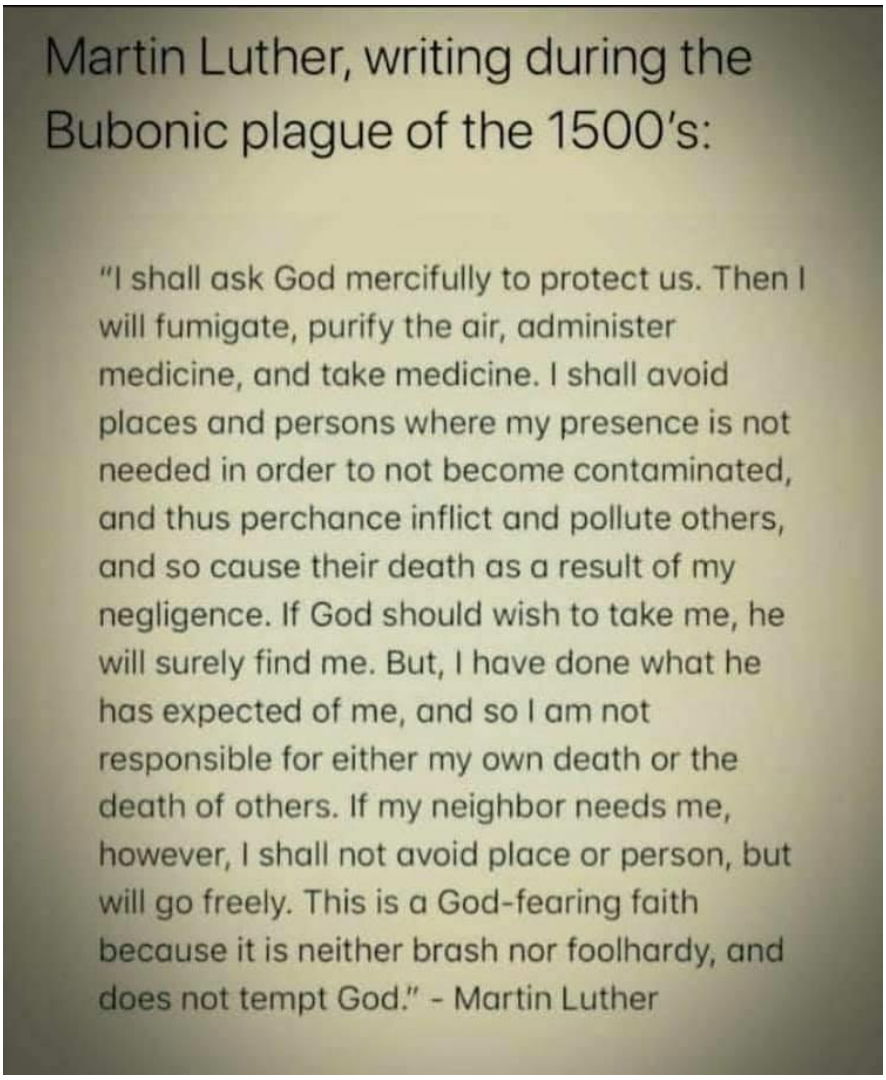
The Annual Meeting Planning Committee invites you to come together for the 220th Annual Meeting of the New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ.

Business Meeting & Keynote Address Saturday, October 16, 2021 via Zoom Webinar, YouTube Livestream access information to be provided upon registration.

THEME: This year we will explore the theme "Building Beloved Community" as inspired by the words from Lamentations 3:22-23 (The Inclusive Bible), "YHWH'S favor is not exhausted, nor has God's compassion failed. They rise up anew each morning, so great is God's faithfulness.".

REGISTRATION Please visit https://www.nhcucc.org/conference-ministries/2021-annual-meeting starting Sept. 7th – Oct. 4th. Registration fee is $25. If you do not have access to the internet or have any issues, please call Cindy Bradley at 888-642-8229, ext. 1100

Martin Luther, writing during the Bubonic plague



Letter from Rev. Dr. Kennedy Gondongwe

UNITED THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
"Spes Unica - Unique Hope"
132 Valleyview Lane, Hatfield, Harare, Zimbabwe
www.utc.ac.zw
P.O Box H97 Hatfield, Harare, Zimbabwe
info@utczim.co.zw
+263777808539 - +263715715233247

20 August 2021

Dear Revd Dr Debora Roof and the members of the First Parish

Special greetings from United Theological Seminary.

I write to confirm receipt of USD 4 000.00 that members of the First Parish graciously gave for the soul purpose of the extension of God`s Kingdom. We have received these funds with great appreciation and humility especially when we are fully aware of the challenges that you are facing as a nation. Your sense of mission is exceptional and the seminarians are deeply grateful for your labour of love. These funds will be deployed for the sole purpose for which they where raised. The issue of food insecurity is the most urgent virus to be confronted by all those who are willing to share their portion of blessings with those without.

Please know that as an institution we are doing our level best to confront the injustices that our people continue to experience in their daily walk of faith. We also envisage a covid free environment where you our real friends will be able to visit the Seminary so we can together break bread and share the redemptive stories that makes us a people on a journey.

Once again UTC, Myself and my family are deeply indebted to Pastor Deborah and her family as well as every member of the First Parish Church. We say thank you for noticing and for willing to be part of our struggle

Yours in His Grip

K Gondongwe

Revd Dr. Gondongwe
Principal

September Worship Services and Events

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

Worship Services in September:
(Weather permitting and subject to change)
For all outdoor services,
please bring your own chair.

Sept. 5: Communion at both services: please prepare your own elements.
10:00 zoom/Facebook (Greeters: Anne-Marie Merrill, Sue Brown)

Sept. 12: 8:30 in person; informal modified worship (singing a cappella and shorter service) in the driveway near the brick garden/flagpole
10:00 zoom/Facebook (Greeters: Sue Lindemann, Sue Brown)

Sept. 19: Rally Sunday & Back to School Blessing
10:00 OUTDOOR In Person Worship with Baptism
(Greeters: Jack Martin, Sue Lindemann)

Sept. 26: 10:00 zoom/Facebook (Greeters: Rachel Cobban, Katie Cobban)

Disney Pixar's INSIDE OUT: September 4th 6pm – 8pm online via Zoom - Contact the Christine if you are interested

Labyrinth Walks: September 7 & 14 at 6pm via Zoom - Contact the office if you are interested

Adult Faith Formation: Tuesday evenings starting September 14th; meet from 6:45 to 8:00. To read and develop a curriculum for "Embody" - Contact the office if you are interested.

Spaghetti Supper: To-Go Friday September 24 at 5:00-6:00pm

New Hampshire Conference, UCC – Annual Meeting- October 16th - via Zoom – Registration starts Sept 7th

The UCCNH Rockingham Association: Fall Meeting November 14th- via Zoom social time starting at 1:30pm followed by the business meeting starting at 2:00pm.

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

Senior Pastor and Teacher
The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof
pastordeborah@fpc-ucc.org

Office Manager
Michelle Guerrin:
officemgr@fpc-ucc.org
603-434-0628

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