

First Parish Congregational Church

United Church of Christ • East Derry, New Hampshire December 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



From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Child of God,

Let the **Adventure** of Advent begin! We will await together a baby's birth which represents for us the birth of hope, the renewal of forgiveness, and the rebirth of the promise of peace. As we walk this journey together – from darkness into the light – may we bask in the knowledge of God's love for us and may we pierce whatever darkness surrounds us with the light within us.

You may remember my own father's story of being saved by the French Resistance in 1945 in France. Dad was a pilot in the US Army Air Corps/US Air Force during WWII. His plane was shot down in April 1945, he broke his leg, just missed getting captured and was harbored by members of the French Resistance for three months. They saved his life. For this reason, whenever I hear French Resistance stories, my ears perk up.

Abbé Pierre (1912 – 2007) was a French Catholic priest who was a vital member of the Resistance during World War II. He wrote the following poem about hope and personal responsibility:

I will continue to believe, even if everyone loses hope.
I will continue to love, even if others distill hatred.
I will continue to build, even if others destroy.
I will continue to talk peace even in the midst of a war.
I will continue to spread light, even in the midst of darkness.
I will continue to sow, even if others trample the harvest.
And I will continue to shout, even if others are silent.
And I will draw smiles on faces in tears.
And I will bring relief, when we see the pain.
And I will offer reasons for joy where there is only sadness.
I will encourage the one who decided to stop to keep walking ...
And I will stretch out my arms to those who feel exhausted.

But Abbé Pierre wasn't just a poet and a priest. He put his faith into activism. In 1949, he founded the Emmaus movement, with the goal of helping poor and homeless people and refugees. Progress was very slow. On February 1, 1954, Pierre took to the airwaves, informing the French people of the dire situation that existed and pleading for help. The next day the media went wild proclaiming an "Uprising of Kindness."

Pierre's message included facts: "A woman froze to death tonight at 3:00 AM, on the pavement of Sebastopol Boulevard, clutching the eviction notice which the day before had made her homeless... Each night, more than two thousand endure the cold, without food, without bread, more than one almost naked. To face this horror, emergency lodgings are not enough." He talked about aid centers and the need for warm blankets, fresh water, hot soup. The temperature was the coldest they had ever seen. Pierre went on to say: "The forecast is for a month of harsh frosts. For as long as the winter lasts, for as long as the centers exist, faced with their brothers dying in poverty, all mankind must be of one will: the will to make this situation impossible. I beg of you, let us love one another enough to do it now. From so much pain, let a wonderful thing be given unto us: the shared spirit of France. Thank you! Everyone can help those who are homeless. We need, tonight, and at the latest tomorrow, five thousand blankets, three hundred big American tents, and two hundred catalytic stoves."

This "**uprising of kindness**" and the now-famous call for help ended up raising 500 million francs in donations. This enormous amount was totally unexpected; telephone operators and the postal service were overwhelmed, and owing to the volume of donations, several weeks were needed just to sort them, distribute them, and find a place to stock them throughout the country.

An "uprising of kindness" is what we need today. We suffer from a pandemic of mistrust and misinformation. During these times that we are living in, we need to dig deep into our souls and find whatever kernels of kindness and of hope we can muster. With kindness and hope, we can bring light into our own dark times.

May Advent 2021 be transforming for you and may the light within you that you find be the light that saves others. And to God be the glory!

Peace and all good, Pastor Deborah

Christian Education and Faith Formation

ADVENT WORKSHOP

Don't forget to sign up for your seats today! Enjoy delightful background Christmas music while our crew has multiple fun crafts and all the supplies each household/ group/ individual will need set out! Activities will include wreath-making, heavenly angel ornaments, Christ Child-in-the-manger



ornament, creative card making, coloring activities, Advent trivia and more!

Instead of rotating around the room to the crafts, we will have all the supplies you will need right at your table. To make this event as safe as we can and to ensure that there are enough supplies for everyone, we request that you register for this event as supplies are limited.

Keep in mind we have a special crafting time for volunteers, so don't worry, you won't miss out on the fun! We will need a group of holly jolly volunteers to make this event magical! Won't

you consider helping out? We also welcome any donations of cider, hot cocoa, pre-packaged snacks or cups for hot beverages. Thank you in advance!

REGISTER TODAY! [ADVENT WORKSHOP REGISTRATION FORM](#)

VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION FORM: [ADVENT WORKSHOP VOLUNTEER FORM](#)

PRIOR TO THE WORKSHOP....

All participants are invited to enjoy warm cider or hot cocoa and snacks outside and walk the Advent Story Trail that will be set up. Pick up your bag of interactive items to accompany the Advent Story Walk at the refreshment table before walking the trail...

There will be an option for anyone who is unable to walk the trail physically as well; Participants will be able to enjoy the devotional aspects of the Advent Story Trail in the Corinthians Conference Room upstairs during this time. Masks are required.

ADVENT STORY TRAIL



You may have seen or maybe you've visited a "Live Nativity," "Stations of the Cross," or some similar type of "walk-through" learning experience. The "Advent Bible Story Trail" is a similar type of "journey" through a story — and one that seems like a particularly good fit for the social-distancing needs as we face concerns of Covid-19 surges and breakthrough variants.

The following idea for an "Advent Trail" was inspired by one author's local nature center. They enlarged and laminated the pages of children's nature books and placed the laminated page along the side of a short trail near the center.

Similarly, everyone is invited to walk along the trail with an activity guide, during Advent, around the First Parish Church grounds, and at the end of the Story Trail warm up with a cup of warm cider or hot cocoa and a snack before joining the Advent Workshop festivities.



NATIVITY PLAY

To keep everyone safe, we are thrilled to announce this year's online Nativity Play. Our students will be the voices of the characters of the very cherished and sacred story everyone gathers to read and listen to each year while animated figures will mime their words and actions! Everyone will have access to the play by December 24th online on Facebook, the FPC website and Padlet platforms. Parents, if you prefer your child/children does not participate in this play OR would like to participate via Zoom, please contact Christine Lehoullier directly ASAP at cedirector@fpc-ucc.org

Board of Christian Outreach and Missions

Don't forget to do good and to share what you have because God is pleased with these kinds of sacrifices.
Hebrews 13:16

MISSIONS NOVEMBER 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
Sonshine Soup Kitchen \$100

Derry Friendship Center \$100
First Baptist Food Pantry \$100
Pastoral Counseling Services \$100
Pastor's Discretionary Fund \$200
Upper Room \$100

NEIGHBORS IN NEED OFFERING and the DIAPER DRIVE FOR AMOSKEAG HEALTH



During October the Missions Board asked you to support the special NIN Offering of the United Church of Christ. We also held a Diaper Drive to help supply diapers and wipes to Amoskeag Health and Makeover Ministry's outreach program on the first and third Saturdays of each month. We greatly appreciate all of you who donated to these worthy causes.

THANKSGIVING GIFT CARDS

Each year the Missions Board receives a list of families who need some extra help managing the holidays. Recipients are recommended to us through Community Caregivers, the Upper Room and you. If you know of someone who needs a helping hand, please talk with Pastor Deborah so we can add them to our list. This fall, we are suspending our food collection and giving grocery gift cards on November 16th. If you would like to donate to the cost of these cards, please designate Thanksgiving on your check/envelope by November 14th.

ANGEL TREE

This year we are hoping to have the name tags available after church services beginning November 28th and available in the foyer by the office. These presents will need to be wrapped with the gift tag taped to it and returned to the FPC office by December 15th. When you take a gift card, it is important that you fill out the form on the clipboard with your name, phone number and the gift tag family number. The office will have forms for you to fill out if you know someone in need.

DANGAMVURA UCCZ- Our partner church in Zimbabwe has reached out after months of silence and we hope to rebuild our relationship. We will be looking for people who can use “Whatsapp” on their phone or iPad. This is how we can communicate with them

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

The Christmas Fund

The past eighteen months have had a profound impact on UCC clergy and congregations - physically, emotionally, spiritually and financially. Because of gifts to the Christmas Fund, those who have been affected the most have known that they were not alone. It has been caring for active and retired clergy and retired employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years. It has provided emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums and Christmas “thank you” gift checks to our lower income retirees.

Gifts to the Christmas Fund bring relief and hope to those who have dedicated their lives to serving the church. You can make a difference and bring great joy! First Parish Church will be collecting donations during December. Envelopes are provided for this offering or please write Christmas Fund on your check.

Music Ministry

Do you like to sing? Do you play an instrument? Or do you know someone who likes to sing or can play an instrument? The Music Committee is looking for singers and musicians who would like to share their talents for Sunday worship.

If you are interested or would like additional information, please contact someone from the Music Committee.

Respectfully submitted by: Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof, Deanna Butler, Jean Brodeur, Eileen Cox; Melanie Pawl

Nominating Committee

God has given each of us special abilities: be sure to use them to help each other, passing on to others God's many kinds of blessings.

1 Peter 4: 10

Many years ago (in the 80's) there was a Duncan Donut commercial showing "Fred the Baker" leaving in the morning saying "time to make the donuts" then he came home at night saying "I made the donuts". Well, among other things at FPC it is "time to fill positions on boards and committees". I pray that at our Annual Meeting in January 2022 we can say "we filled the positions" Will you prayerfully consider where you might enjoy serving and are able to serve FPC.

Below is a list of boards and committees here at FPC and positions that need to be filled. Will you prayerfully consider where you would enjoy and are able to serve First parish Church.

- **Mission Board:** Allocates dedicated mission funds & keeps the congregation informed about new & existing non-profits we support. **1 position**
- **Christian Ed:** Works with Christine to promote the Christian education program for all ages. **2 positions**
- **Nominating Committee:** Talk with and encourage members to volunteer on boards/committees. **3 positions**
- **Facilities Board:** Care for facilities of the church. **3 positions**
- **Deacons:** Work with Pastor to prepare worship services and to care for the spiritual life of the church and community. **3 positions**
- **Finance Committee:** Oversees the financial life of the church. Prepare (along with council) & monitor the budget, audit the books and manage FPC investments. **1 position**
- **Safe Church:** To identify and implement ways to create a safe church culture. **2 positions**
- **Clerk:** Keeps records of all Congregational meetings and Church Council **-FILLED**
- **Assistant Moderator:** Presides at all Congregational Meetings and Church Council in the absence of the Moderator

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact:

Beth Hunter 1-603- 505-0702 or beth.hunter2@comcast.net or Pastor Deborah

In Person Worship Services Reminders

We enjoy seeing everyone!

- Masks will be worn **correctly** at all times in the building.
- UPON ARRIVAL, IN THE FOYER/NARTHEX:
 - Pick up your bulletin and the children's bulletin (if needed)
 - **NEW Collection Box**- Please leave your financial donations and pledge cards. The box will be collected by Deacons
 - Write down all prayers that you wish to share
 - On Communion Sundays: you will pick up your Communion elements
- Chairs will be spread out in different "bubbles" around the room. Please select the number of seats that you need for your family.
- Please remain seated for the worship service.
- Children will sit with their families for the worship service.
- These are subject to change as the conditions may change.
- Volunteers will be needed to help this time of transition.

LAY READERS: We are welcoming volunteers for upcoming Worship Services. Please reach out to Pastor Deborah if you would like to join the list of lay readers.

Season of Giving

Remember First Parish at Christmas

At First Parish we have abundant resources: an amazing physical plant and an equaling amazing staff. We are able to pay salaries and keep the lights on! We host a pre-school and community groups like Scouts – Boys and Girls, as well as recovery groups like AA. We offer a monthly spaghetti supper for the community at no cost to them. Our annual budget last year was \$291,000 but that was a deficit budget. It was risky but we adopted it prayerfully and many people stepped up financially. We are close but we are not quite in the black yet.

Please prayerfully consider how you might help the church financially this Christmas. Perhaps you can pledge a certain amount for next year. Perhaps you are one of the lucky ones who has more than they need right now and would be in a financial position to offer a Christmas gift to FPC. We prayerfully hope that we might end this year in the black. You can trust that if we end this year in the black and there is a surplus, it will help us going into next year's budget.

December Worship Services and Events

Participate In-Person or 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 December:

Dec. 5th: 10:00 In Person Worship and Zoom/ Facebook

Communion: please pick up your Communion packet if you are joining in person. At home, please have your elements ready.

Dec. 12th: 10:00 In Person Worship and Zoom/ Facebook

Dec. 19th: 10:00 In Person Worship and Zoom/ Facebook

Dec. 24th: 10:00 In Person Worship and Zoom/ Facebook

Dec. 26th: Christmas Eve- 5:00 In Person and Zoom/ Facebook 7:00 is In Person only

December's Greeters (except December 12) will be Sue Brown (In-Person) and Sue Lindemann (Zoom & Facebook)



Advent Workshop: Sunday December 5th after Worship Service- Currier Hall

Angel Tree: Dec. 5th- name tags available/ Dec 8th - Caregivers gifts to be wrapped & returned/ Dec.15th- Upper Room gifts to be wrapped & returned

Advent Adult Faith Formation: Tuesday Dec. 7th & 14th meet from 6:45 to 8:00. Hybrid. Contact the office for the link.

Butter Braid/ Cake Roll Fundraiser Pick up: December 17th Time TBD

Spaghetti Supper: To-Go Friday EARLY THIS MONTH December 17th at 5:00-6:00pm

Blue Christmas: 7:00pm In person only

Christmas Eve: 5:00 & 7:00 Please return the survey to help us plan accordingly. The 5:00 service will also be on Zoom/Facebook

Office Hours: COVID has caused many changes, with working remotely, online meetings and hours shifting to accommodate new schedules. Though someone is typically here daily during the week, we ask that you continue to make an appointment if you are coming to the office. We don't want to miss seeing you!

The Office will be closed on Monday December 27th.

Christmas Eve

The Deacons are happy to announce good tidings of great joy this Christmas Eve. We will gather in person for two services, zoom one of the services and the Board of Christian Ed will produce a nativity play that everyone can enjoy online. At church, we will offer two services: one at 5:00pm and one at 7:00pm. Both of these services will be in the Currier worship space, and we must still adhere to safety protocol due to the pandemic, (i.e. masks required for all).

We are limited to 150 people in the room at one time. We need your help! Please let us know which service you hope to attend and how many people will be in your group. Note: We will not be offering Poinsettias this year.

Please let us know as soon as possible so that we can plan accordingly.

To make it easy, we created a survey with three ways to respond:

- Click the link
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdGBFF1cBLmwcieciIgBIp_qe9idedDyiRzvfTTZcbMA3BozQ/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0
- Complete this sheet and return to the office
- Call the office or email officemgr@fpc-ucc.org

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What time will you be attending?

5:00

7:00

How many people- approximately?

\_\_\_\_\_

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

If your plans change, even day of, please let us know! We appreciate your participation.

**First Parish  
Congregational Church, UCC**

(603) 434-0628

Mailing Address:  
PO Box 114  
E Derry, NH 03041

Location:  
47 East Derry Road

**Office Hours:**

Please call to make an appointment  
as office hours may vary daily.

**Online**

[www.fpc-ucc.org](http://www.fpc-ucc.org)  
[facebook.com/fpcucc](https://facebook.com/fpcucc)

**Senior Pastor and Teacher**

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof  
[pastordeborah@fpc-ucc.org](mailto:pastordeborah@fpc-ucc.org)

**Office Manager**

Michelle Guerrin:  
[officemgr@fpc-ucc.org](mailto: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.

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United Church of Christ  
47 East Derry Road  
PO Box 114  
East Derry, NH 03041-0114

***Address Service Requested***