

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

February 27, 2022



ALL ARE WELCOME

No matter who you are, no matter where you are on life's journey!!!

WE GATHER INTO THE PRESENCE OF GOD

CENTERING MUSIC (I Want Jesus to Go with Me) AND LIGHTING THE CANDLES

WELCOME by Pastor Deborah **CALL TO WORSHIP** (led by Nancy Heywood)

One: God summons us to wake up and see.

Many: As our eyes open, we see God's goodness all around us.

One: God's sight is perfect and true, hoping the best for us.

Many: Let us seek to understand what we can hardly believe!

HYMN: # 282 Every Time I Feel the Spirit

Refrain: Ev'ry time I feel the Spirit moving in my heart, I will pray.

Yes, ev'ry time I feel the Spirit moving in my heart, I will pray.

Upon the mountain when my God spoke, out of God's mouth came fire and smoke.
All around me, it looked so fine, I asked my Lord if all was mine. [Refrain]

Jordan River, chilly and cold, it chills the body, but not the soul.
There ain't but one train that's on this track, it runs to heaven and runs right back.
[Refrain]

INVOCATION (lay reader)

You refresh us with living water that overflows with your generosity. Let your light shine upon us now to reveal the miracle of your Presence and the possibilities that unfold before us. Amen.

SONG OF PRAISE: #610 **Glory, Glory Hallelujah!** (x3) God's truth is marching on!

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD FOR US

SCRIPTURE: John 9:1-41 – This scene can seem pretty complicated, but it has a flow and a form to it. Settle into the rhythm. Here are the “players” in this little drama: Narrator; Disciples; Jesus; Townspeople; Others; Still others; Formerly Blind Man; Some Pharisees; Other Pharisees; Parents

Narrator: ¹While walking along the road, Jesus saw a man who was blind since his birth.

Disciples: ²Teacher, who sinned? *Who is responsible for this man's blindness?* Did he commit sins that merited this punishment? If not his sins, is it the sins of his parents?

Jesus: ³Neither. His blindness cannot be *explained or* traced to any particular person's sins. He is blind so the deeds of God may be put on display. ⁴While it is daytime, we must do the works of the One who sent Me. But when the *sun sets and* night falls, this work is impossible. ⁵Whenever I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.

Narrator: ⁶After He said these things, He spat on the ground and mixed saliva and dirt to form mud, which He smeared across the blind man's eyes.

Jesus (to the blind man): ⁷Go, wash yourself in the pool of Siloam.

Narrator: Siloam means “sent,” *and its name reminded us that his healing was sent by God.* The man went, washed, and returned to Jesus, his eyes now alive with sight. ⁸Then neighbors and others who knew him were confused to see a man so closely resembling the blind beggar running about.

Townspeople: Isn't this the man we see *every day* sitting and begging *in the streets?*

Others: ⁹This is the same man.

Still Others: This cannot be him. But this fellow bears an uncanny resemblance to the blind man.

Formerly Blind Man: I am the same man. *It's me!*

Townspeople: ¹⁰How have your *lifeless* eyes been opened?

Formerly Blind Man: ¹¹ A man named Jesus *approached me and* made mud from the ground and applied it to my eyes. He then said to me, “Go, wash yourself in the pool of Siloam.” I went and washed, and suddenly I could see.

Townspeople: ¹² Where is this man *who healed you?*

Formerly Blind Man: I don’t know.

Narrator: ¹³⁻¹⁴ The townspeople brought the formerly blind beggar to appear before the Pharisees *the same day Jesus healed him*, which happened to be on the Sabbath Day. ¹⁵ The Pharisees began questioning him, looking for some explanation for how he could now see.

Formerly Blind Man: He smeared mud on my eyes, and I washed; now I see.

Some Pharisees: ¹⁶ God can’t possibly be behind this man because He is breaking the rules of the Sabbath.

Other Pharisees: How can such a lawbreaking scoundrel do something like this?

Narrator: The Pharisees were at odds with one another about Jesus and could not agree *whether His power came from God or the devil.*

Pharisees (to the formerly blind man): ¹⁷ What do you say about this man, about the fact He opened your eyes so you could see?

Formerly Blind Man: *I have no doubt*—this man is a prophet.

Narrator: ¹⁸ Some of the Jews suspected the whole situation was a charade, that this man was never blind. So they summoned the man’s parents to testify about his condition.

Pharisees: ¹⁹ Is this man your son? Do you testify that he has been blind from birth? How therefore does he now see?

Parents: ²⁰ We can tell you this much: he is our son, and he was born blind. ²¹ But his new sight is a complete mystery to us! We do not know the man who opened his eyes. Why don’t you ask our son? He is old enough to speak for himself.

Narrator: ²² The man’s parents were a bit evasive because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. It had been rumored that anyone who spoke of Jesus as the Anointed One would be expelled from the synagogue. ²³ So they deferred the thorny question to their son, ²⁴ and the Pharisees called on him a second time.

Pharisees: Give God the credit. *He’s the One who healed you.* All glory belongs to God. We are persuaded this man you speak of is a sinner *who defies God.*

Formerly Blind Man: ²⁵ If this man is a sinner, I don’t know. *I am not qualified to say.* I only know one thing: I was blind, and now I see.

Pharisees: ²⁶ What did He do to you? How did He give you sight?

Formerly Blind Man: ²⁷ *Listen*, I’ve already answered all these questions, and you don’t like my answers. Do you really need me to say it all over again? Are you thinking about joining up with Him and becoming His followers?

Pharisees (berating him): ²⁸ You’re one of His followers, but we follow Moses. ²⁹ We have confidence that God spoke to Moses, but this man *you speak of is a mystery*; we don’t even know where He comes from.

Formerly Blind Man: ³⁰ Isn’t it ironic that you, *our religious leaders*, don’t even know where He comes from; yet He gave me sight! ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but He does respond and work through those who worship Him

and do His will. ³² No one has ever heard of someone opening the eyes of any person blind from birth. ³³ This man must come from God; otherwise, this miracle would not be possible. *Only God can do such things.*

Pharisees: ³⁴ You were born under a cloud of sin. How can you, *of all people*, lecture us?

Narrator: The religious leaders banished him from their presence. ³⁵ Jesus heard what had happened and went to find the man.

Jesus: Do you believe in the Son of Man?

Formerly Blind Man: ³⁶ I want to believe, Lord. Who is He?

Jesus: ³⁷ You have seen His face *with your new eyes*, and you are talking to Him now.

Formerly Blind Man: ³⁸ Lord, I do believe.

Narrator: The man bowed low to worship Jesus.

Jesus: ³⁹ I have entered this world to announce a verdict *that changes everything*. Now those without sight may begin to see, and those who see may become blind.

Some Pharisees (who overheard Jesus): ⁴⁰ Surely we are not blind, are we?

Jesus: ⁴¹ If you were blind, you would be without sin. But because you claim you can see, your sin is ever present.

SERMON: Blind Sight

WE RESPOND WITH OUR STEWARDSHIP

OFFERTORY INVITATION (lay reader)

God has bestowed upon us that which is good and right and true. What a joy to share this bounty with others – that they, too, know God's love through our giving. If you are joining us virtually, please share your joys and concerns in the chat. Our services are recorded. Please use first names. God knows who you mean.

GETTING TO KNOW A CHILD OF GOD – Nancy Heywood

MUSICAL OFFERING – Daemian Allen

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Led by lay reader, please join in.)

Loving God, as You lead us to greater meaning, bless our meager offerings – that they may multiply to Your use among all Your children. We find meaning in giving, knowing that we have received so very much. Amen.

DOXOLOGY: #760 *Masithi*

Amen siakudumisa. (x2) Amen bawo, Amen bawo, Amen siakudumisa.

WE RESPOND WITH GRATITUDE AND PRAYER

SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS and PASTORAL PRAYER,

followed by 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.

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

ANY FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

HYMN: #75 Lord, Make Me More Holy

Lord, make us more holy; (x3) until we meet again:

holy, holy, holy, until we meet again.

Lord, make us more loving; (etc.)

Lord, make us more patient; (etc.)

Lord, make us more faithful; (etc.)

BENEDICTION

Postlude (#2 Glory, Glory, Hallelujah!)

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

MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH - Members of the Congregation

SENIOR PASTOR AND TEACHER - The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

LAY READER – Nancy Heywood

GREETERS – Reni Harnden and Sue Lindemann (Remote)

GUEST MUSICIAN – Daemian Allen

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTOR - Christine Lehoullier

OFFICE MANAGER - Michelle Guerrin

AV/ TECHNICAL – Paul Lindemann with Mike Schroeder



Martin Luther King Jr. was an American Baptist minister and activist who became the most visible spokesman and leader in the civil rights movement from 1955 until his assassination in 1968.

Harriet Tubman was an American abolitionist and political activist. Born into slavery, Tubman escaped and subsequently made some 13 missions to rescue approximately 70 enslaved people.

Frederick Douglass was a social reformer, abolitionist, orator, writer, and statesman. After escaping from slavery in Maryland, he became a national leader of the abolitionist movement.

Sojourner Truth was an American abolitionist and women's rights activist. Truth was born into slavery in Swartekill, New York, but escaped with her infant daughter to freedom in 1826. Famous for her essay: "Ain't I a Woman".

Madam C.J. Walker was an entrepreneur, philanthropist, and political and social activist. She is recorded as the first female self-made millionaire in America.

James Mercer Langston Hughes was an American poet, social activist, novelist, playwright, and columnist from Joplin, Missouri. One of the earliest innovators of the literary art form called jazz poetry.

Rosa Louise McCauley Parks was an American activist in the civil rights movement best known for her pivotal role in the Montgomery bus boycott. The United States Congress has honored her as "the first lady of civil rights" and "the mother of the freedom movement".

Quincy Delight Jones Jr. is an American record producer, musician, songwriter, composer, arranger, and film and television producer. His career spans 70 years in the entertainment industry with a record of 80 Grammy Award nominations, 28 Grammys, and a Grammy Legend Award in 1992.

Maya Angelou was an American poet, memoirist, and civil rights activist. She published seven autobiographies, three books of essays, several books of poetry, and is credited with a list of plays, movies, and television shows spanning over 50 years.

Barack Hussein Obama II is an American politician who served as the 44th president of the United States from 2009 to 2017.

IN OUR PRAYERS - February 27, 2021

PRAYERS OF JOY

It's a joy to welcome Daemian Allen to our worship this morning!

Youth event was lots of fun! Thank you, Miss Christine!

So much gratitude to Debbie Gline Allen and Kaitlyn Leahy.

Diapers! Diapers! Thank you to everyone who donated diapers for Upper Room!

Thavy & her husband Brian, friends of the Guerrin family, welcomed their first child on Feb 8th, a son, after many years and a very high-risk pregnancy.

Storms do not prevent us from worshipping together!! Technology helps us worship!

Rumors of a balanced budget are TRUE!!! God's abundance and God's people's generosity!

Gratitude from the staff for the raises and insurance coverage.

Renewed energy for projects and events around the church!

Thank you to Laurel Devino, our musician in early February. She is no stranger to First Parish, and we welcome her back with enthusiasm.

Thank you to Paper Angels!

Congratulations! Pat and Dick Plouff on the birth of another sweet great grandbaby!

Congratulations and joy to Mark and Cindy Pingree on the birth of their new grandbaby.

Gratitude for members and friends in Indiana, Georgia, Zimbabwe, and N. Ireland.

PRAYERS OF CONSOLATION

For the families of the **932,894** people who have died in the US due to COVID. (2/23/22)

PRAYERS OF STRENGTH, HEALTH, AND HEALING

Carol (Carol G.'s sister-in-law) facing multiple operations to deal with the effects of Parkinson's; Sue (Jo W's sister) still in the hospital awaiting surgery and family cannot see her; Gail and George (Jo's friends) in ME need our prayers; Lincoln, Karen W's nephew, struggling with Autism and other mental health concerns. Jenny, friends of Jeff S; Davida, Jo's friend, suffering from migraines after surgery; Benjamin Plouff, Dick's brother, suffering from cardiac issues, breathing now difficult
Jim, Jeff S.'s father, for prayers of confidence and healing

For those with cancer: Caroline M's surgery was 1.27 – she will need radiation but prognosis is good; BB Dinan (friend of the Bob and Karen) – approaching the end of his life; Bruce with stage 4 colon cancer; Janice P continues to fight her cancer; Priscilla with colon cancer; Tracey with aggressive cancer who has 3 children/ only 46 years old; Liza D's husband's Uncle Walt has Stage 4 cancer; Martha, close friend of Pat and Dick P, recurring leukemia

SPECIAL ONGOING PRAYERS

Law Enforcement, fire fighters; first responders, active military

Prayers for peaceful resolution to conflict situations around the world
Parkland Hospital personnel, Elliot Hospital personnel, staff at Dartmouth Hitchcock
and all nurses and doctors, Hospice workers and Southern NH Family Promise;
Sonshine Soup Kitchen; Marion Gerrish; Upper Room; United Theological College in
Zimbabwe, as well as our friend Kennedy Gondongwe; Tim B – Health & strength and
Bonnie H, friend of Tim B