

First Parish Congregational Church

United Church of Christ • East Derry, New Hampshire September 2022 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,

Welcome! September is the “get up and go” month, isn’t it? Schools go back into session and the rhythm of our lives shifts. Here at church, we begin a new “year” on Sunday morning with the Narrative Lectionary. This will be our 3rd year using this Lectionary. I hope that you are enjoying it as much as I am. I am also excited about our “Sacred Conversations”, the second Sunday of the month that will follow worship for 15 - 20 minutes. These will consist of topics that you choose and submit. We already have topics for September (safety), October (Meetinghouse update) and November (how decisions get made). What would you like more information on? Our conversations are simply that. Sharing information. No votes. No record keeping or decision making. When important information is shared, which involves an action item, whichever task force or Board will take it to their next meeting.

We are excited about launching new Adult and Children’s Faith Formation. We tried something new (a suggestion from the Brown’s). We sponsored a “show and tell”. You’ll see more about it later in this issue. I pray that you will consider participating in Adult Faith Formation this year. We read interesting material – and I have to say that my favorite part is the sharing. We don’t all agree. We don’t all like all the material we are reading. AND we love and respect one another to discuss openly and honestly our faith journey.

Over the summer, we read “Faith after Doubt”. Many of us did not quite understand author Brian McLaren’s arguments - and we appreciated his research, nonetheless. There was one page that I marveled over, and I’d like to share it with you now. This is Brian McLaren’s opinion, and these are his words:

“I picture (the Apostle) Paul as a wiry old bald guy who squints. I imagine him in Galatia, in a crowded house, leaning forward, elbows on knees, almost vibrating with intensity as he speaks to a couple dozen people in the flickering lamplight. He’s trying to tell them in person what we have recorded in one of his letters, written about twenty years after Jesus’ death: “The only thing that matters,” he whisper-shouts, “is faith expressing itself in love.” Then he leans forward even farther and repeats himself, louder now, his bony hands wildly gesticulating for emphasis: “The *only* thing that matters is faith expressing itself in *love!*”

Immediately, I imagine people getting restless. First one, then three, then five hands shoot up with questions and objections.

“What about circumcision? Moses commanded that!” one says

“Circumcision or uncircumcision . . . it’s utterly insignificant,” he says. “The *only* thing that matters is faith expressing itself in love!”

“What about our dietary restrictions? You’re not giving up on that biblical absolute, I hope!” another asks.

The only thing that matters is *faith* expressing itself in *love*,” Paul says, a little louder.

“What about the Gentiles? You’re not talking about granting them equality in our community, are you?” another asks tensely. “That’s just not right!”

The *what abouts* continue . . . observing certain holidays, avoiding meat that had been sacrificed to idols, not fraternizing with people of other religions. . . and each time, Paul responds with the same words, finally ending in a voice so gentle it is barely more than a whisper: “The *only* thing that matters is faith expressing itself in *love*.” I see his eyes brim with tears.” (pg 148)

Wow! Just wow. I have never heard such a beautiful rendering of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Friends, the only thing that matters is faith expressing itself in love! As we say in my profession: “That’ll preach!”

I leave you in faith and with love,
Pastor Deborah

Improving Communication

We are an extremely active church. What is happening that you want more information about? Do you know who is on Council? Do you know when we hope to be back in the Meetinghouse Sanctuary? Beginning in September, on the second Sunday of each month, we will have a 15 minute “conversation” immediately following the worship service. What topic do you want more information about? Who do you want to answer your questions? What other questions do you have? We already have topics for September (safety), October (Meetinghouse update) and November (how decisions get made).

Please give your topics/questions to Jill, at officemgr@fpc-ucc.org

Christian Education and Faith Formation

Christian Education & Faith Formation September Newsletter

September 11th Welcome Day

The Board of Christian Education will be offering a Scavenger Hunt for all ages. Join us in having fun while exploring our Church! Festivities will be held after service.



Families can register all children [here](#)

(<https://form.jotform.com/222365795202153>) ahead of time or before the Children's Christian Education Program begins September 18th. We look forward to offering a third classroom for our students in 4th and 5th grade levels. Please consider training to substitute as a teacher for times when our teachers are away.

September 25th, Blessings of the Bags

Anyone who has a bag and would like it blessed please bring it to church Sunday, September 25th. Each bag will receive a special tag which can be attached.



October 4th Drive-Thru Blessing of The Animals

3:00pm - 4:00pm; 4:10 – 4:30 via Zoom

“Animals remind us of the amazing diversity, beauty and complexity of God’s creation, as well as its fragility. They bless our lives in countless ways, so it is fitting that we take time to remember and give thanks for the gift of their being. At a time when our creation and climate are threatened by our destructive, human environmental practices and policies, they embody our call to be responsible

stewards of God’s creation,” Sandy Sorenson, director of the UCC offices in Washington, D.C., inter-religious Blessing of the Animals ceremony October 22, 2015.

Come visit First Parish Church in person if you can or let us know if you need a Zoom invitation if you can't make it in person as we honor and ask God's blessings upon our animal companions.





Practical Resources for Churches

Check out this great resource with lots of webinars, workshops and a great online resource center with almost every category you could think of.... <https://www.prcli.org/>

Adult Faith Formation Survey Choices September 2022

Everyone is invited to read the descriptions below of this list of amazing submissions.

If you can participate PLEASE VOTE on your top five (5) choices [HERE](https://forms.gle/RckqAkqoaxNkwDYE6)
(<https://forms.gle/RckqAkqoaxNkwDYE6>)

1. **The Homebrewed Christianity Guide to the Holy Spirit: Hand-Raisers, Han, and the Holy Ghost**

By: Grace Ji-Sun Kim

This isn't simply a guide to what the church is saying about the Holy Spirit - it's a guide to actually opening our theological imaginations to a Spirit that is present, active and calling us to participate in life-giving work.

2. **Accidental Saints** By: Nadia Bolz-Weber

In a time when many have rightly become dis-illusioned with Christianity, Accidental Saints demonstrates what happens when ordinary people share bread and wine, struggle with scripture together, and tell each other the truth about their real lives.

3. **Pastrix** By: Nadia Bolz-Weber

This book is for every misfit suspicious of institutionalized religion but who is still seeking transcendence and mystery.

4. **No Act of Love Is Ever Wasted: The Spirituality of Caring for Persons with Dementia**

By: Jane Marie Thibault, PhD & Richard L. Morgan, PhD

Besides being an excellent resource for individuals caring for loved ones, this book serves as a reminder that every act of love brings positive transformation to the recipient, the giver, and the world.

5. **Grace in Tension: Discover Peace with Martha and Mary** By: Claire McGarry

Grace in Tension is centered on Jesus' interactions with Martha and Mary in the gospels and affirms that although God doesn't create our tension, God does show up in the midst of it to lead us through.

6. **The Gospel on the Ground: The Grit and Glory of the Early Church in Acts - Bible Study Book with Video** By: Kristi McLelland

Come along with biblical culturalist Kristi McLelland as she unpacks the life of the early church in the book of Acts and shows us that the kingdom of God is always on the move, always looking outward to bring meaning and joy to a world searching for true fulfillment and hope.

7. **Experiencing God** By: Henry T. Blackaby

Over the years, God has used the truths of Experiencing God to awaken believers to a radically God-centered way of life and, as a result, millions have come to know God intimately, to recognize His voice, and to understand His will for their lives.

8. **Encountering God** By: Kelly Minter

Join Kelly Minter in this 7-session Bible study as she unpacks the biblical foundation for these sacred habits along with approachable ways to practice disciplines like prayer, study, worship, rest, simplicity, generosity, celebration, and many more.

9. **Seamless: Understanding the Bible as One Complete Story** By: Angie Smith

In seven sessions, Seamless covers the people, places, and promises of the Bible, tying them together into the greater story of Scripture.

10. **Crazy Christians** By: Michael B. Curry

An expansion of his wildly popular sermon for the 77th General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 2012, Rt. Rev. Michael B. Curry gives inspiration and guidance on being bold Christians for a modern audience.

11. **Dalai Lama** By: 14th Dalai Lama

After forty years of study with some of the greatest scientific minds, as well as a lifetime of meditative, spiritual, and philosophic study, the Dalai Lama presents a brilliant analysis of why all avenues of inquiry—scientific as well as spiritual—must be pursued in order to arrive at a complete picture of the truth.

12. **Island** By: Aldous Huxley

In the novel Huxley considered his most important, he transports us to the remote Pacific island of Pala, where an ideal society has flourished for 120 years and inevitably, this island of bliss attracts the envy and enmity of the surrounding world.

13. **Killing Jesus** By: Anthony Granger

Killing Jesus will take listeners inside Jesus' life, recounting the seismic political and historical events that made his death inevitable and changed the world forever.

14. **Daughter of Cana** By: Angela Elwell Hunt

When Thomas impulsively decides to follow the teacher from Nazareth (Jesus), he and Tasmin argue--since the twins have been together since the womb, Tasmin can't accept losing her brother to some magician-prophet, so she decides to follow the Nazarene's group and do whatever she must to mend the fractured relationship and bring her brother home.

15. **Love Letters from God** By: Lee Richards

Love Letters from God is a Christian devotional and bible study book for personal and spiritual growth that will deeply touch you and provide you with the inspirational encouragement that you need on a daily basis from God.

16. **Proverbs Bible Study** By: Rose Visual Bible Studies

In this six-session study, you'll learn about practical, day-to-day godly living from the book of Proverbs.

17. **Holy Envy** By: Barbara Brown Taylor

In Holy Envy, she contemplates the myriad ways other people and traditions encounter the Transcendent, both by digging deeper into those traditions herself and by seeing them through her students' eyes as she sets off with them on field trips to monasteries, temples, and mosques.

18. **Hadassah: Queen Esther of Persia** By: Diana Wallis Taylor

Hadassah: Queen Esther of Persia imagines what life was like for the woman who saved her people—and perhaps found love in the process.

19. **The God Conversation** By: J.P. Moreland and Tim Muelhoff; Foreword by Lee Strobel

Here is sound, empathetic coaching for those of us who long to communicate our faith more effectively.

Board of Christian Outreach and Missions

Each of you are encouraged to use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. 1 Peter 4:10

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 Church Food Pantry \$100

Pastoral Counseling \$100

Sonshine Soup Kitchen \$100

Zimbabwe-Dangamvura Partner Church \$200 (annual)

MISSION BOARD OUTREACH

The Board's busiest months are on the horizon. Last November we helped provide Thanksgiving meals for over 30 people/ families in our area. In December, Angel Tree gifts brought Christmas joy to many teens and younger children. Are you interested in helping with these outreach activities as a short-term volunteer with the Mission Board? If so, please contact one of our members or Pastor Deborah.

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

Announcing Electronic Giving

DONATIONS TO FIRST PARISH CHURCH

If you - or someone you know - would like to make an electronic donation to the First Parish Church, you may use 'square' click on this link: <https://square.link/u/CPiB4sjq?src=sheet>

or Venmo @**First-Parish** (Warning: there are A LOT of "First Parish's in New England!!!Check)

In Other News

OFFICE UPDATE: As you may have noticed, a large calendar has been hung in the office. We envision this calendar is for FPC activities. Keep in mind building use can be found on your website. Got an event in mind? Check the timing of other church events. If you have any questions, please contact Jill at officemgr@fpc-ucc.org

The office and copier room have been re-organized. If you are looking for something, please check the copier room shelves or the cabinets. Questions? Please contact Jill at officemgr@fpc-ucc.org

VERNA ELWELL

The family of Verna Elwell wishes to thank you all very much for all the work done to make her celebration come off without a hitch. We appreciate you taking time out of your busy schedules and honoring our mother this way. Thank you again.

Path to the Sanctuary Update

FIRST TRIVIA QUESTION:

What part of the cinnamon tree becomes the spice?

We have very exciting news to report this month. First, the pledge money has been coming in. Recently \$20,000 was received in one week which helps to solidify the matching fund. To recap: the matching fund, potentially is \$100,000 on pledges made after April 30 and monies received. Our congregation always makes their commitments, so our confidence is high right now!

Secondly, the Trivia Night on October 15 is beginning to gain momentum. We have a professional facilitator from Game Time Trivia and food and drink will be coming from Hare of the Dawg, a new restaurant in Derry. We are soliciting donations from businesses in town and will also have raffles. What we will need in the next 6 weeks is your participation. We need friends and families to form teams, perhaps with a team name and some may even have their own tee shirts made. A team can be as many as 2 up to 8. Age does not matter. We all have something stored in that memory box and what we don't know some of the teens will help us out with. The price per ticket is a mere \$25. We hope to have a minimum of 150 participants and more would really put us over the top. Remember: this can be your contribution towards returning to the Sanctuary.

Continue to watch the church web site and weekly eblast for upcoming news. Opportunities to purchase these tickets will be forthcoming.

SECOND TRIVIA QUESTION:

What British queen presented a desk to America that remained unused until John F. Kennedy's presidency?

Save the date for December 11 at 2:00 and pray we don't have a snowstorm that day. We are blessed to have a wonderful men's choir presenting Christmas music to help get us in the season of joy.

Did you know these trivia questions? Find the answers in this newsletter! If not, better study up!!! As always, thank you for your support in each endeavor.

Submitted by Cyndi Gray, on behalf of a whole team of energetic folks who are working hard to get us back into the Meetinghouse Sanctuary.

Scouting News

Enjoy a campfire.
Set up a tent.
Race pinewood derby cars.
Blast-off model rockets.
Hike Broadview Farm.
Hike to a fire tower.
Tie knots.
Explore science.
Create and construct.
Tube down a snowy hill.
Meet first responders.
Practice first aid.
Learn some sign language.
Perform community service.
Oh my!



Cub Scout Pack 405 resumes its regular meetings and activities in September. We welcome girls and boys in grades Kindergarten to 5th grade. We also welcome young-at-heart adult volunteers for anything from a one-time sharing of a favorite hobby to more regular support of our funtastic adventures.

We meet here at First Parish most Thursday evenings throughout the school year. Contact us at pack405nh@gmail.com or visit our website pack405nh.com for more information.



September 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).

Upcoming September Worship Services

September 4 th	10:00 In Person Worship and Zoom/ Facebook (Communion) Guest Preacher – Rev. Linda Snyder
September 11th	10:00 In Person Worship and Zoom/ Facebook WELCOME SUNDAY! FUN, FAMILY DAY! Scavenger hunt after worship!
September 18th	10:00 In Person Worship and Zoom/ Facebook The stories of Hagar and Sarah
September 25th	10:00 In Person Worship and Zoom/ Facebook The story of Potiphar's wife

Adult Faith Formation Thursday evenings ~

September 15th and 29th – 6:45 – 8:15PM in Corinthians / zoom available

Labyrinth walks will resume on the 2nd and 4th Thursday in September from 6-6:30PM

Spaghetti Supper: To-Go Friday September 30th at 5:00-6:00pm

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!

Trivia Answers:

Okay....drum roll please.

First answer is **The bark.**

Second answer is **Queen Victoria.**

**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

facebook.com/fpcucc

Senior Pastor and Teacher

The Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof
pastordeborah@fpc-ucc.org

Office Manager

Jill Taylor:
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.

Photo credit: Paul Lindemann

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United Church of Christ

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Address Service Requested