

First Parish Congregational Church March 2023 Newsletter

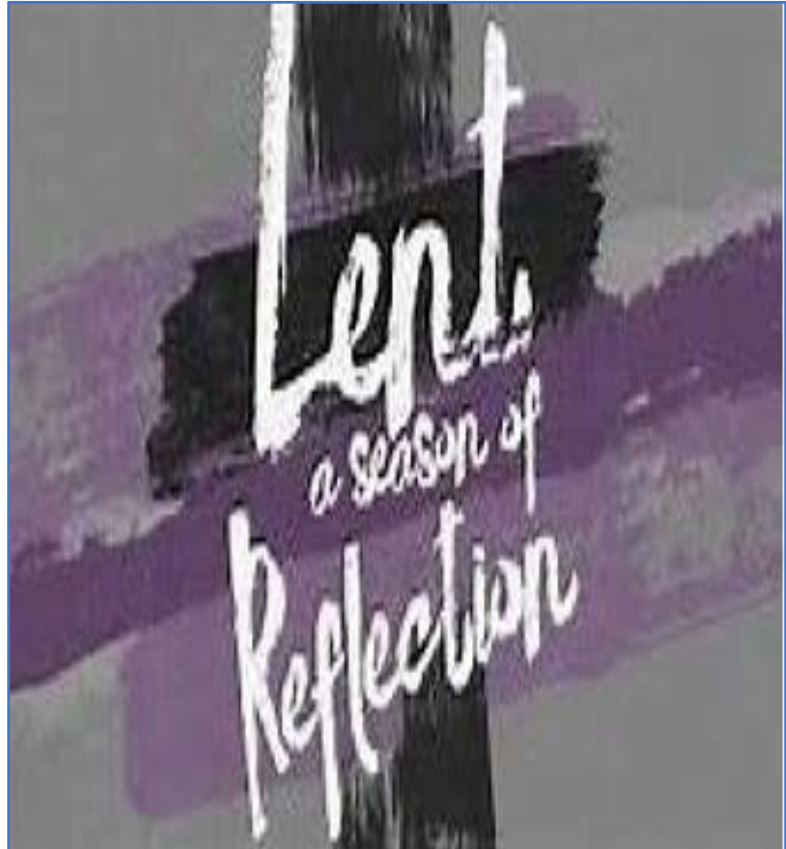
United Church of Christ - East Derry, New Hampshire

Our Mission Statement

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

Welcome to the First Parish Congregational Church's newsletter.

You are receiving this because we have your email address and we want you to know all of the wonderful things that are happening at First Parish.

If you are happy to receive this newsletter and you don't usually get one - **reply** with "**please add me**" in the subject line.

Please let us know: if you **never want to receive** an email from us again - reply with "**remove**" in the subject line.

Thank you and may God bless you!

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Child of God,

We began our journey with Jesus to Jerusalem this year with a preemptive party! Yes, traditionally, Lent begins with Ash Wednesday forty-some days prior to Easter. This year we held a Mardi Gras Fat Tuesday pancake supper to prepare us for the season. Lent is all about preparation, after all. And Mardi Gras is about food, fellowship and fun – as demonstrated in pancakes, bacon, balloons and masks. AND if you noticed the colors of the day, you might have seen the recurring theme of purple, green and gold. Since the 1800's these colors have represented justice, faith, and the power of God's love. (Purple for justice; green for faith; and gold for power, i.e., God's powerful love that transcends everything!)

The scripture reading for Ash Wednesday is also the focus scripture for Lent in our church this year: Matthew 22: 37-39: He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

These verses are not unfamiliar to us. We talk a lot about how to love God. How we must love God in all that we say and all that we do. Micah 6:8: "what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" We do justice and we do service. We are mindful of kindness and humility. And we talk a lot about how to love our neighbors in much the same way. By serving our neighbors, we are serving God.

AND how much effort do we put into loving ourselves? We don't talk much about it or about how to do it or about how the behavior we have is not equivalent to this commandment at all. At least, sometimes. Our culture doesn't want us to get a big head. We don't want to be prideful. We don't want to get too big for our britches, etc., etc., etc. In an effort to avoid pride at all costs, we have fallen into a behavior of putting ourselves down mercilessly. Are we confusing humility with humiliation? Let's face it. We have become cruel – to ourselves. We wouldn't be as cruel to our least favorite person as we sometimes are to ourselves. I've heard you. I've heard me. "I'm such a dummy." "That was so stupid." "I'll never understand." What might you add to the list?

Join me this Lent: be loving and kind to the child of God who looks you back in the mirror. I have prepared a Lenten list of mantras (affirmations) for you to use, if that is helpful. You are free to come up with your own I invite you to pay attention and to be intentional about loving yourself. On Monday *choose* to focus on positive things, on Tuesday *be grateful* for one aspect of yourself, on Wednesday *notice something* remarkable about yourself, on Thursday *honor* something about yourself, on Friday *trust* that God does not make junk! On Saturday *let go of* some negative habit and on Sunday remember that you are a ***beloved*** and ***beautiful*** Child of God!

And in the meantime, remember who you want to be. Remember that God loves you more than you can imagine! Love God; love neighbor; and love self. Thanks be to God. Journey with kindness and the gift of God's grace this Lent,

Pastor Deborah

Christian Education and Faith Formation – March 2023

Save the Date!! July 24th – July 28th

Vacation Church Camp presents... “Food Truck Party”

Bring your appetite for Learning and fun! Volunteers Welcome.

Registrations will begin in April. Look for more information in the April Newsletter.



Children’s Christian Education Program (CCEP) Classes are offered following service every Sunday 11:00am in Room John. Join us each week this March as we journey through Lent together.

Snacks are needed for our CCEP classes. Would you like to help? Sign-up sheets will be available or you can talk to Chris Cox, Paula Robinson, Anne-Marie Merrill, Rachel Cobban, Katie Cobban, or Holly Gorgol. We do have children with nut and coconut oil/nut allergies. A great website to find safe snacks is snacksafely.com.



Board of Christian Outreach and Missions

God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7

Members of the Mission Board are Nancy Murdock, Chair, Karen Wilson, Cyndi Gray, and Liz Greenberg.

The Mission Board currently disburses monthly allocations to the following missions of the church: Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM), Pinkerton Families in Need, Family Promise, Upper Room, Friendship Center, Sonshine Soup Kitchen, Community Caregivers, Baptist Food Pantry, Pastoral Counseling Center, and the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. OCWM receives \$350 monthly, all the others receive \$100 monthly. A vote was taken, and unanimously passed, to continue to fund OCWM at \$350/mo. in order that Liz Greenberg could turn in our church's pledge at Prepared to Serve on 2/25/23.

We also have supported Health Access Sumbawa and a seminary in Zimbabwe in the past. The Mission Board would very much appreciate input from the congregation on your wishes for the expenditure of Mission Funds moving forward.

Our church is proud to be a "5 for 5" supporting congregation, which means that we provide financial support throughout the year to each of the 5 major UCC Missions: OCWM, One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS), Neighbors in Need (NIN), Strengthen the Church, and The Christmas Fund. This month, our families are participating in the One Great Hour of Sharing mission, which is an ecumenical program in the United States.

Mission Board will be deciding at our next meeting whether to increase monthly amounts given (Current available budget is \$1500, but we only expend \$1350/month). Should we increase any category? We currently have carryover funds from the past three years, totaling \$7736. We are contemplating the best way to disburse these funds and would like congregational input into this decision. Should we give a one-time \$500 gift to several agencies? If so, which ones? We will also be making a decision on two special requests for funds—one from the Friendship Center to help close their \$12K gap in building repair costs after insurance; the other for Relief efforts for the Turkey earthquake disaster.

Future meetings will convene over Zoom on third Tuesdays of the month at 4 p.m. except in March when we will meet March 14th @4 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Liz Greenberg

Board of Deacons

We are excited to start our Sunday services to the toll of our bell! Be sure to listen for the ringing of the bell ten minutes before the start of the worship service.

The Deacons have decided to go back to using the offering plates. Digital giving cards will be available to anyone who gives digitally and wishes to put something in the offering plate as it passes.

Fat Tuesday began our Lenten journey! Pancakes, bacon & fruit were served with awesome excitement! Children of all ages enjoyed crafts & dressing up in the wonderfully decorated photo section. The “fun-raising” committee did a fantastic job transforming Currier Hall into an amazing place to start our journey!

The traditional Ash Wednesday worship service included communion and the imposition of ashes. Tuesday evening services for Lent will start with a simple meal at 6:00, followed by the prayer and praise service at 7:00. The dates are March 7, 14, 21, and 28. Joan Virga will lead us in song. Please join us.

Palm Sunday will be on April 2. Easter Sunrise Service will be at Broadview Farms, weather permitting on April 9. More details will be in the next newsletter.

May you have peace this Lenten season!

Deacons: Liz Greenberg, Sue Lindemann, Tom Wood, Reni Harnden, Sue Brown & Jo Worthen.

Fundraising Committee

We have held 2 successful on-line fund raisers so far this year. Happy Valley – for soup packages – yummy, good quality – was able to raise over \$400 towards our goal of \$12,000. We just closed out our MCM fundraiser for pies and cookie dough – this one has resulted in funds of just over \$100 – with the delivery scheduled for March 22@3:45 pm.

Our on-going fundraisers include the Saint Pauley shed. Remember: clothing + textiles = monies for the church. To date we have been able to receive just over \$140.00. And don't forget Hannaford! 5% income.

For those of you who celebrated Fat Tuesday with us for our 1st Pancake Dinner – thank you for all your efforts! I hope you enjoyed your dinner, beads, crafts and pictures. We raised over \$500.00. Praise God!

Our next event will be more of a ‘fun’ event – providing some type of food to the folks that will be coming to work on the cemetery clean-up. Watch for further details after our next meeting on March 12th.

Please stay tuned for future updates as we finalize them. If you have some ideas to share – please reach out to a member of our hardworking team.

Participants: Cathy Zylinski, Julie Greenfield, Stephanie Cm-berg, Beth Hunter, Liz Greenberg, Carol Guerrin, Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof, Jill Taylor, Karen Wilson and Cathy Pottle

Inspiration

Empty Me by Ted Loder

Gracious and Holy One,
creator of all things
and of emptiness,
I come to you
full of much that clutters and distracts,
stifles and burdens me,
and makes me a burden to others.

Empty me now
of growing dissatisfactions,
of anxious imaginings,
of fretful preoccupations,
of nagging prejudices,
of old scores to settle,
and of the arrogance of being right.

Empty me
of the ways I unthinkingly
think of myself as powerless,
as a victim,
as determined by sex, age, race,
as being less than I am,
of as other than yours.

Empty me
of the disguises and lies
in which I hide myself
from other people
and from my responsibility
for my neighbors
and for the world.

Hollow out in me a space
in which I will find myself,
find peace and a whole heart,
a forgiving spirit and holiness,
the springs of laughter,
and the will to reach boldly
for abundant life for myself
and the whole human family.

From *Guerillas of Grace: Prayers for the Battle*

Sound Meditation with Peggo



~ OPEN ~
 ~ BREATHE ~
 ~ LET GO ~
 Sound Meditation
 with Peggo
 March 26 at 1:00
 First Parish Church
 East Derry, NH

Everything around us vibrates, including each cell and particle in our bodies. When we surround ourselves with coherent sound, all the dissonant vibrations within us merge into harmonic coherence. Breath slows. Minds relax. Muscles soften. Join as we sink into a sound bath, restoring our natural healthy vibration.

Relax into whole-body joy with Sound Meditation and revel in the siren sounds of Peggo's voice, the magic of crystal bowls, and foundational rhythms. Using crystal bowls, percussion, and voice, Peggo uses the power of vibration to clear stuck energy in the body and bring you back home to your true nature

Fall into your body. Open your heart and find yourself.

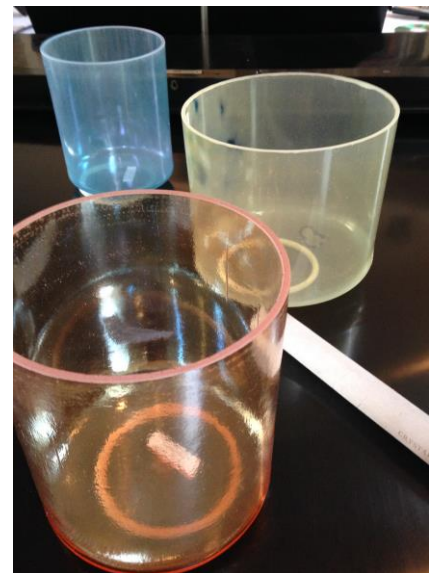
Peggo Horstmann Hodes, M.Mus., M.Ed. is a singer, conductor, seeker, and teacher. Peggo's 35 years' experience encompasses live performing and recording classical, jazz, folk, and women's music, conducting Songweavers, leading Vibrant Voice workshops and teaching voice. She is an experienced yogi and a certified Biofield Tuning practitioner.

Her new book, *Free the Wild Voice of Your Soul*, is headed for publication soon.

Bring: a yoga mat, blanket, and pillow.

Cost: \$15 per person (For interested children the cost is waived.)

If you prefer sitting, chairs are available.



Music Bingo

Join us for an evening of fun, food & fellowship.



Thursday, March 23rd, 7-9pm

@ The Derry Friendship Center



Tommy will be dropping the beats and One Happy Clam will provide the eats.

\$10 Donation ~ Food not included.

Complimentary Coffee ~ Raffle items ~ 50/50 Raffle

Proceeds from the evening will support the Derry Friendship Center.

NH Conference UCC: NEW THING TASK FORCE Reimagine Church Using Lessons from Improv



SATURDAY, MARCH 25 9-2 Church Ministry through Lessons from Jazz Improv
Improv and Music help us imagine new ways of meetings, formation, worship, and coffee hour.

Smith Memorial Church, Hillsboro

Led by the First Church Concord's Jazz Sanctuary House Band with Rev. Emilia Halstead and Rev. Tim Wildman

SATURDAY, APRIL 22 9-2 Church Ministry through Lessons from Theatre Improv
Story drives our mission and improv adds spice and creativity to our stories.

First Parish Congregational Church, UCC, East Derry

Led by Rev. Maren Tirabassi and Mr. Don Tirabassi

SATURDAY, MAY 20 9-2 Church Ministry through Lessons from Improv Recovery of Materials. - Reuse and recycle what you've got to improvise a new church.

First Congregational Church of Littleton Church, UCC

Led by The Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Mae Magill (Liz)

Fee: \$20/person/session \$50/church/session FREE for 6 or more members of a Church

Registration and Questions: Please contact. ANewThingTaskForce@gmail.com for questions and registration. Payment will be at the door. You may register for individual sessions or all 3.

Sponsored by: The A New Thing Task Force of Local Church Ministries of the NH Conference. Our vision is to find new ways to be the church in our changing world. Financial sponsors are the Local Church Ministries and the NH Conference Board of Directors' Fun

Church History: Learn and Do!

Are you interested in history, art, and artifacts? First Parish has manuscripts, books, paintings, photographs and artifacts relating to the history and activities of our three-centuries-old church. You can learn more about them by helping the Historical Preservation Committee at an inventory work party.

The next one is Saturday, March 18, 2023, from 9 am -11 am.

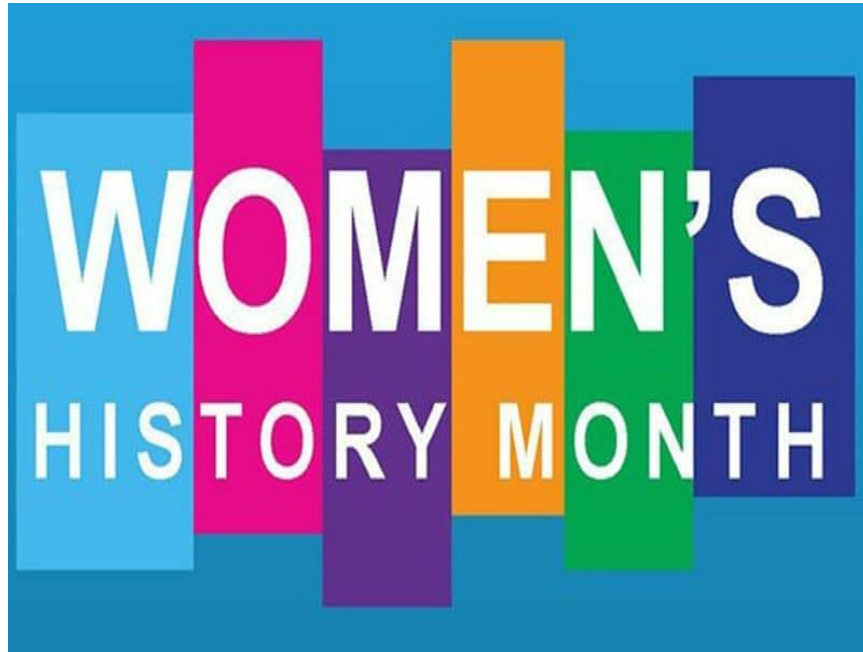
If you're able to help with this important but fun project, please email Nancy Heywood, nancyheywood@yahoo.com.

Save the date: Trivia Night - October 21, 2023

Trivia Night update. We are looking for someone to head up Trivia Night on October 21. The venue and DJ have already been reserved but there is a need to facilitate the very successful event. All information from last year will be shared. Please email church office or Cynthia Gray if you are interested. Cagray5851@gmail.com



Women's History Month



Women's History Month is celebrated to honor the contributions women have made to society throughout history. It is a month that is focused on educating people about the important impacts powerful women have made, in both the past and the present.

Though the list is long, some popular historical figures who are often studied and recognized during the month of March are Susan B. Anthony, Harriet Tubman, Amelia Earhart and Maya Angelou.

Purple, green and white are all colors that represent Women's History Month, according to Today. The colors were also those of the Women's Suffrage and Political Union,

Though the month of March is dedicated to women's history, International Women's Day is still held on March 8 each year.

At Sunday morning worship, Pastor Deborah will highlight some women's achievements in much the same way she highlighted the gifts of African American poets during February's Black History Month.

Church Calendar

Sunday, March 5 at 10am – Worship Service (Communion)

Tuesday, March 7 at 5pm – Zoom Labyrinth Walk
at 6pm – Lenten Supper
at 7pm – Prayer and Praise Worship Service

Sunday, March 12 at 10am – Worship Service

Tuesday, March 14 at 5pm – Zoom Labyrinth Walk
at 6pm – Lenten Supper
at 7pm – Prayer and Praise Worship Service

Sunday, March 19 at 10am – Worship Service

Tuesday, March 21 at 5pm – Zoom Labyrinth Walk
at 6pm – Lenten Supper
at 7pm – Prayer and Praise Worship Service

Saturday, March 25 9-2 New Thing Task Force Music Improv at
Smith Memorial in Hillsboro

Sunday, March 26 at 10am – Worship Service
at 1pm – Sound Meditation with Peggo (see flyer)

Tuesday, March 28 at 5pm – Zoom Labyrinth Walk
at 6pm – Lenten Supper
at 7pm – Prayer and Praise Worship Service

Narrative Lectionary – Lent 2023

March 5	NL132 Laborers in the Vineyard Second Sunday in Lent	Matthew 20:1-16 Parable of laborers in vineyard (Psalm 16:5-8)
March 12	NL133 Wedding Banquet Third Sunday in Lent	Matthew 22:1-14 Parable of wedding banquet (Psalm 45:6-7)
March 19	NL134 Bridesmaids (or Talents) Fourth Sunday in Lent	Matthew 20:1-16 Parable of laborers in vineyard (Psalm 16:5-8)
March 26	NL135 Last Judgment Fifth Sunday in Lent	Matthew 25:31-46 Parable of the last judgment (Psalm 98:7-9)
April 2	NL136 Triumphal Entry Palm Sunday	Matthew 21:1-17 Triumphal entry, cleansing the temple (Psalm 118:25-29)
April 6	NL137 Words of Institution Maundy Thursday	Matthew 26:17-30 Preparing for the Last Supper, mention of betrayal, Words of Institution (Psalm 116:12-15)
April 7	NL138 Crucifixion: Matthew Good Friday	Matthew 27:27-61 Crucifixion; "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" (Psalm 22:1-2, [14-18])
April 9	NL139 Easter: Matthew Easter	Matthew 28:1-10 Resurrection, empty tomb, women encounter the risen Jesus (Psalm 118:19-24)



Photo credit: Paul Lindemann

**First Parish
Congregational Church,
UCC**

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Office Hours

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

Online

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