

First Parish Congregational Church United Church of Christ – East Derry, New Hampshire

June 2023 Newsletter

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,

It is an honor to address you this month as I do each month, sharing my faith experience, witnessing to the love of God and I hope encouraging you in your faith development. We are heirs to a great treasure – a love without end, a compassion with no exceptions and a benevolence for all of God's children – no matter who they are or where they are on life's journey. I thank God for you, as you live out your faith, incorporating God's love, compassion, and benevolence into all that you say and do. We are blessed beyond our comprehension.

First Parish grants me two weeks of Study Leave each year. The idea of Study Leave for a Pastor is two-fold. It is a time for regeneration and renewal, and a time for further study and attention to the skills of church work. I go to conferences that will help me to be a better witness to God's Presence in the lives of God's children near and far. Over the years I have been blessed by many rich continuing education experiences. All of them have helped me to grow in faith, cultivate my skills further in the craft of preaching, learn from other churches and other clergy, and develop a renewed commitment to the sacred presentation of the worship experience on Sunday morning.

In May, I attended a one-week worship design workshop with 40 other church clergy and musicians from around the country, presented by Dr. Marcia McFee, founder of Worship Design Studios. In March this year, sixteen women from First Parish experienced Dr. McFee's brilliance in Manchester, where she led four amazing worship experiences throughout the weekend of the New England Celebration XI weekend.

For nearly four decades, Dr. McFee has helped worship teams present a more kinesthetic experience in worship. Based on Dr. McFee's research, we all have an energy modality. Some of us move quickly, some slowly. Some generate ideas and are great brain-stormers, some prefer to flesh out ideas in detail to know their viability. No one is right. No one is wrong. We are each different and resonate at our own frequency. You can hear more about this when I present to the congregation some of what I learned immediately following the worship service on June 25. I hope to see many of you there.

After the week of Study Leave Liz and I visited Yosemite National Park. There aren't enough words. I wrote a poem and still – it's not enough. Go when you can. Visit this spectacular array of God's Creation.

Enjoy the spring-into summer weather! Remember to give thanks for your blessings! Bless those you meet and spread kindness all around!

God's peace and compassion,
Pastor Deborah

Christian Education and Faith Formation

Children's Christian Education Program (CCEP)

Summer is fast approaching! One last CCEP on June 3rd until we pick back up in the Fall. We will be preparing for Celebration Sunday. Along with finishing up our gifts to special people in our lives.

As summer is approaching, we will see FLAT JESUS roaming around again. After worship on the 11th, there will be a coloring station available for you to color and laminate your very own Flat Jesus. Or you may take a copy home to color and bring with you wherever you go this summer. Take pictures with your Flat Jesus. Send pictures to cedirector@fpc-ucc.org or post them to our Facebook group. The link is on the Flat Jesus handout that you can pick up.

“Take me with you on vacation,
To the beach, the park
And almost everything you do.
Snap a pic and include me, too!
Remember I am always with you.
I am always here to pray with you morning, day or night.
And I want to remind you that the world needs your beautiful love and light!
Love from Your Forever Friend,
Jesus”



SUNDAY JUNE 11 CELEBRATION SUNDAY

Celebrating the Children

Our Sunday School classes have learned the Lord's prayer. The prayer that Jesus taught us to pray this spring. Not only do they know the prayer, they also can sign it pretty well with the help of our Ms. Katie. We look forward to showing you all on Celebration Sunday. They have a special song to sing as well. Stay tuned.

Celebrating Teachers

“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.” 1 Thess. 5:11 Teaching is a calling that God bestowed on many. We thank our God for all the wonderful teachers and school staff of all schools. It takes a big heart to teach a younger generation. Please accept our humble thank you for all your hard work, your time and energy you used this past school year. Thank you.

Thank you to all our CCEP teachers! Taking time out of their weekend to share the love God has bestowed on us all to the children of our congregation and to help them have a better understanding of the bible in unique creative ways.

Celebrating Graduates

Congratulations to all those who graduated from high school or college. A special shout out to Jen Robinson, who graduated with a BA in Art and Psychology, to Dr. Dana Breeden, now a Doctor of Physical Therapy and to Malysa Deranian, who graduated with a BS in Industrial Engineering and MS in Management.

Celebrating Us

“Isn’t it amazing that we are all made in God’s image, and yet there is such a diversity in His people?” said by Desmond Tutu, a South African Anglican Bishop and Theologian

This is so true! And God didn’t make any mistakes. We are all sisters and brothers in Christ. We are proud to be part of First Parish Congregational Church. Remember you are all loved!

After the worship service on June 11th, we would like to invite you to participate in a “deluxe coffee hour.” Please feel free to bring a snack to share with everyone. (And thank you for putting a label of ingredients with your treat.)

VACATION CHURCH CAMP (VCC) July 24-28

This month the CE Board and friends will be preparing for July’s VCC. We can use all the help we can get! So if you are creative, know where to hang signs around town, or you are an able body willing to help, please see Steph Berg or Chris Cox. We would love your help.

We are looking for a few more volunteers to help the week of July 24-28th. Position available our Hosts. Hosts are adults to guide our chefs (the children) to the different activities.

If you can be a host for a day or the week. Please let Steph Berg or Chris Cox know.

Do you know any families looking for activities for the children this summer? Share with them about our Vacation Church Camp. Children entering kindergarten through entering 5th grade are welcome to join.

Register to volunteer or to register a child please use this link

<https://firstparishcongregationalchurch.mycokesburyvbs.com>

HORTON CENTER

The CE Board has set aside \$500 in scholarship money to go towards any campers who would like to attend Horton Center Camp this summer. PLEASE NOTE: It is open to campers of all ages. Please see Anne-Marie Merrill for more details.

Sincerely,

Anne-Marie Merrill, Paula Robinson, Chris Cox and Steph Berg, CE Director



Board of Deacons

The Season of Pentecost is upon us! Our worship color is reds and yellows and oranges to represent the flaming Holy Spirit. We would like to bring attention to the beautiful visual ministry of Diane Breeden! She continues to amaze us each week with her vision and display of the Biblical themes.

The Deacons are truly appreciative of the musicians who have played during our services. With the help of our song leader, Katie Cobban, our services have been amazing! Thank you to all who have been a part of our services.

After much discussion, we have chosen to use gluten free bread and grapes for the foreseeable future. These elements seem to be currently the healthiest and easiest choices.

We are considering outdoor services this summer. Although we have enjoyed some amazing services outdoors, it is a great deal of work to get all the technical equipment back and forth across the driveway. We are considering other options. We will provide more details in the next newsletter.

As an act of welcome to all of God's children, pronoun stickers are now available for those who wish to use them. When **we** display **our** pronouns (she, her, hers; he, him, his; or they, them, theirs), and not assume that everyone fits into two categories, we show visitors that they are welcome – no matter what pronoun they identify with.

Last but not least: we hope you are enjoying the warmer weather.

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

Board of Personnel

We are very happy to have Stephanie CM-Berg as our new CE Director and she is very happy to be serving FPC in this position.

We continue to seek a suitable Music Director. Katie is asking other members of the congregation to help lead singing on Sunday morning.

Personnel emailed performance appraisal forms for staff members Pastor Deborah and Jill to all Council members and hope that they will all fill them out. Review forms were also sent to CE and Deacons. We have combined the results from completed forms into one each for Pastor Deborah and Jill.

We hope to do reviews the first week of June. We are grateful to everyone who returned completed forms to Personnel. It is so important for employees to hear the good comments about their job performance. These also help our staff set goals for the next year and work on their weaknesses.

Beth Hunter, Margie Ives, Karen Wilson

Board of Outreach and Mission

NuDay/Mission

On June 3 we invite you to meet at the church in Corinthians at 9:30 for coffee, juice and cookies before we set off to work at the NuDay warehouse at 8 Tinkham Ave. Once there you will be directed to assist with packaging up used clothing, medical supplies, and non-perishable items. These items get loaded into boxes and then put onto a tractor trailer. When a trailer is full it finds its way over to Syria, Ukraine, Turkey, or Lebanon to help those victims of war or natural disasters. There is no commitment on your part. It can be a one-time thing but it can also be something you do frequently.

So please consider joining us. 9:30 at church, 10:00 or thereabouts at the property and definitely over by 12 though you can leave anytime. Children 8 and over can come as long as there is adult supervision. I ask you to sign up with email address in case there is nothing to be done on that particular day as this project has become very popular with churches and other organizations. That is unlikely to happen, but it would only be fair to let you know at least the night before. Thank you for considering giving of your time and sweat equity.

Cynthia Gray on behalf of the Board of Outreach and Missions.

Cagray5851@gmail.com

Dangamvura UCC in Zimbabwe

Dear Friends,

First Parish Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, participates in the NH sister church program with churches in Zimbabwe. Our church has had a long relationship with a sister church in Dangamvura, Zimbabwe. When I joined First Parish last year, I wanted to learn more about our sister church in the hopes of enlarging our relationship as members of a global community and our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe.

Currently I have had the pleasure of communicating with Sister Loveness, the head deaconess at Dangamvura UCC as a pen pal. There is a phone app called "WhatsApp" that you can download on your phone to send texts to the people of Dangamvura. A couple of other members communicate with their members and Pastor Deborah is in touch with their pastor, Rev. Joshua. It would be fantastic to see this program grow even more by connecting with other members of our sister church. Please consider becoming a pen pal and let me know if you would like to start a conversation. With WhatsApp, you can text, send photos and even send videos.

Along with Pastor Deborah and the Mission Board it was decided to send \$500 to Dangamvura UCC as part of our mission outreach for 2023. Sending funds to African countries can be problematic but we have found a solution and pray that these funds will go a long way to assist our sister church. For example, they are doing fundraising to get Pastor Joshua a car. He now walks 14 kilometers each way when he ministers to the people of Dangamvura.

Jesus is very clear in his ministry that relationships are more important than money. If you are interested in becoming a pen pal or if you have ideas on programs of exchange that we might do, please contact me, Jill Taylor, via email at officemgr@fpc-ucc.org

God's peace to each and every one of you, Jill Taylor (Office Manager)

Family Promise

Family Promise continues to be very successful at serving homeless families from Southern NH in their Nashua facility. There are currently about 20 families in residence, comprised of xx adults and yy children. In addition, the program serves about 200 people annually through its Diversion and Supportive Housing programs.

A group of about 12 volunteers from First Parish continues to provide a meal for the families on the first Thursday of every month. This is greatly appreciated by the 18-24 families typically in residence and the staff. We prepare the food at home (we rotate through 6 different meals) and drop it off at the church, where a couple of us pick it up and take it to Family Promise. Once there, we heat it up in their kitchen and serve it buffet style to the families (and ourselves). If you'd like to help cook and/or serve, please let me know and I'll add you to my email list of volunteers.

Family Promise continues to move forward with establishing a Derry facility for the program. The program has purchased the Vintage Grace Adult Day Care building, which is located behind the Shaw's shopping center. If it receives the state grants that it expects to get, it will move forward with the \$1.9M transformation of the building into a facility that will house up to 9 families. The Derry zoning board has concluded that FP's use of the building is consistent with the current zoning designation, so no change is required. FP will work with the town planning board on the detailed specifications of the renovation. It is also exploring the purchase of a former dormitory in Manchester to help that city establish its own facility and program, if they are able to obtain the grant funds needed.

Some of you have asked about other ways to volunteer at Family Promise and what you would do. Their brochure suggests 4 ways you can help. In addition to meals, they need help with:

- Onsite support in early mornings, evenings, and weekends--answering the door for visitors and helping families with general needs and support as needs arise
- babysitting on Monday and Tuesday evenings (6:30-8:30) while the parents take classes
- helping out at fundraising events
- minor building maintenance tasks

Please contact Matt Hodgkiss at matthew.hodgkiss@familypromise.org or 603-883-7338 (ext.3) if you can help with any of these tasks.

Finally, a number of you have asked whether the program and its guests can use good quality used furniture and other items. The answer is "it depends." If you have such items you'd like to offer, please take a picture of them on your cell phone and send it to me or directly to Matt at the above email address or phone number.

Submitted by Randy Brown
Board member, Family Promise of Southern NH
Randybrown1119@gmail.com

Fundraising Committee

Thank you to every one of the hard working folks that helped to make the 2nd Annual Spring Fling a wonderful success! So many fun things to do and try. Plants, yard sale, crafters, cookie parade, music, kids' activities including face painting from the YMCA folks – and snacks and ice cream!! It was a fun day for all, and we were able to add over \$2,400 towards our annual fundraising goal. Stay tuned for #3 in 2024.

One of our committee members – Liz Greenberg – is working to bring back a pre-Covid fun/fund activity. How many of you have heard of Dining for Dollars? Join us in July at Panera's for dining and conversations, plan to meet your friends and family there – First Parish will receive a portion of sales in return. Win-win for all.

Please make sure to add the Sugar Plum Fair to your calendar for November 18, 2023 – it's coming sooner than you think.

Again, thanks for all your support and contributions to these activities – your time and talents are greatly appreciated.

Submitted on behalf of the Fundraising team by Cathy Pottle

Save the date: Trivia Night - October 14, 2023

We are happy to report that plans for the second annual Trivia Night is underway. "Hare of the Dawg" has agreed to return so we can look forward to another scrumptious array of appetizers. We have had a lot of interest in this event, people saying they will return and they "have friends" who want to get a table. The price will be the same of \$25. Tickets will go on sale no later than August 1st.

The Boys and Girls Club can seat 300 people. Wouldn't it be great to fill it up? We are looking for sponsors to defray some of the costs which will promise more profit for our Rehabilitation plans.

- If you can help in any way, please see the following list of Planning members:
- Registration: Julie Greenfield and Jill Taylor
- Sponsorships: Liz Greenberg
- Raffle table: Karen Wilson
- Publicity: Cathy Zylinski

Also supporting this team are Pastor Deborah, Cathy Pottle and Cyndi Gray

Proceeds to benefit the Meetinghouse project. Sponsorship is a great way to grease the wheel. Who can you think of who might sponsor this event?

Historical Preservation Committee

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.

Saturday, June 10, 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

Mental Health Awareness

(We received an important letter from Pastoral Counseling Services' Executive Director, Dr. Cal Genzel. May was Mental Health Awareness month. It is important to share, even if this is the June newsletter.)

Dear Friends,

Recent studies reveal that there has been an increase in addictive behaviors in response to the severe and chronic stress that we are experiencing. An addictive attachment to a substance, such as nicotine, cocaine, alcohol, heroin, or sugar can temporarily make us feel better and relieve pain. It is also possible to develop addictive attachments to activities, such as gambling, overeating, Internet use, shopping, and exercise.

Five key features of an addiction are:

1. Craving: a strong need to use the substance or engage in the behavior, even though we know that the activity is harmful to us and others.
2. Loss of control: not being able to stop using the substance or engaging in the behavior, and doing it more than intended, despite the harmful consequences.
3. Tolerance: the need to consume larger amounts of the substance or engage in longer periods of the behavior to feel the desired effects.
4. Dependence: a physical and emotional reliance upon a substance or behavior, indicated by withdrawal symptoms (nausea, shakiness, sweating).
5. Denial (often called stinking thinking): the false idea that a person with an addiction utilizes to rationalize continued engagement with the addictive substance or behavior. Examples include: I can stop anytime. This does not really hurt me or anyone else. I can control this behavior.

Fortunately, effective treatments are available. If you think you may be struggling with an addictive attachment to a substance or behavior, please reach out for help.

Sincerely,

Dr. Calvin Genzel
Executive Director

Horton Center NHUCC Summer Camp



Come to Camp This Summer!

Horton Center on Pine Mountain in the beautiful White Mountains of New Hampshire is OUR camp!

It is owned and operated by the NH United Church of Christ and offers week-long camping experiences for all ages.

Programs include hiking, canoeing, rock climbing, caving, and other favorite camp activities such as S'mores around the campfire, archery, and field games.

Register for camps such as Climate Superheroes, Archery, Music/Arts/Drama, Hiking, Wacky Water World, Hogwarts on the Mountain, Grandparents/Grandchildren, Women's Week, and Family Camp.

Registration is now open!

Visit <https://hortoncenter.org/> to see the list of camp offerings, admire photos of the beautiful camp site and the surrounding mountains, and register for the camp that interests you and/or your children.

Debbie Allen will be the Dean at Wacky Water World this summer for those entering 3rd, 4th, & 5th Grades in the fall. Come and join her for a fantastic week of swimming, canoeing, water games, water stories and more. (Cabins leaders are needed, too — let's make this a First Parish week!)

Blessings for Earth and Fire and Water and Air

The Irish poet, John O'Donohue, wrote a series of blessings for earth, fire, water, and air. Below you will find excerpted selections from each. God has given us extraordinary blessings in nature. I invite you to read these and repeat them – perhaps even pray them – giving thanks to God for our incredible world.

These poems can also be found in his two of his books, *To Bless the Space Between Us* and *Four Elements: Reflections on Nature*.

We invite you to consider them each slowly, thoughtfully and with gratitude for this precious planet we are blessed to call “home”.

Let us bless
 The imagination of the **Earth**,
 That knew early the patience
 To harness the mind of time,
 Waited for the seas to warm,
 Ready to welcome the emergence
 Of things dreaming of voyaging
 Among the stillness of land..
 Let us thank the Earth
 That offers ground for home
 And holds our feet firm
 To walk in space open
 To infinite galaxies.
 — John O'Donohue, from *In Praise of
 the Earth*

Let us praise the grace and risk of **Fire**:
 In the beginning,
 The Word was red,
 And the sound was thunder,
 And the wound in the unseen
 Spilled forth the red weather of being.
 In the name of the Fire,
 The Flame
 And the Light:
 Praise the pure presence of fire
 That burns from within
 Without thought of time.
 — John O'Donohue, from *In Praise of Fire*

Let us bless the grace of **Water**:
 The imagination of the primeval ocean
 Where the first forms of life stirred
 And emerged to dress the vacant earth
 With warm quilts of color. . .
 The courage of a river to continue belief
 In the slow fall of ground,
 Always falling farther
 Toward the unseen ocean.
 —John O'Donohue, from *In Praise of Water*

Let us bless the **Air**,
 Benefactor of breath,
 Keeper of the fragile bridge
 We breathe across.
 Air waiting outside
 The womb, to funnel
 A first breath
 That lets us begin
 To be here,
 Each moment
 Drawn from
 Its invisible stop. . .
 — John O'Donohue, from *In Praise of Air*

Church Calendar

Saturday, June 3 at 7am – Civil War Encampment

Sunday, June 4 at 10am – Worship Service – Communion

Sunday, June 11 at 10am – Worship Service – Celebrating teachers and Graduates

Monday, June 12 at 7pm – Finance Meeting

Wednesday, June 14 at 5pm – Music Planning Meeting

Friday, June 16 at 6pm – Contra Dance

Saturday, June 17 at 8:30am – Historical Preservation Committee

Sunday, June 18 at 10am - Worship Service – Welcoming New Members

Sunday, June 18 at 3pm – Jazz Jam

Wednesday, June 21 – 7pm – Council Meeting

Friday, June 23 at 9:30am – PAC (Pastor's Advisory Committee) Meeting

Friday, June 23 at 2pm – Deacon's Meeting

Sunday, June 25 at 10am – Worship Service

Sunday, June 25 at 10:45am – Study Leave Presentation

Tuesday, June 27 at 7pm – Facilities Meeting

Friday, June 30 at 4:30pm – Spaghetti Supper To Go

Lectionary - June 2023

June 4	Acts 2:5-21	The Holy Spirit makes her entrance in Jerusalem.
June 11	Acts 8:26-40	The Holy Spirit leads to teaching the Ethiopian Eunuch
June 18	John 20:19-31	Thomas and the Holy Spirit
June 25	Isaiah 61:1-11	The Spirit blesses Isaiah

June is Pride Month

June is Pride Month dedicated to the celebration and commemoration of LBGTQIA observed in the Western World.





Photo credit: Paul Lindemann

**First Parish
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Office Hours

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

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