

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

## July 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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,

If you do a google search of the woman at the well, you will see her described as sinful, by many biblical authorities. One goes so far as saying that she is living in “unrepentant sin.” For hundreds of years we have accepted that interpretation. Until now. Until one courageous biblical scholar takes the time to say, “Wait. Let’s take a closer look.” We are reminded to look at the biblical story – not through the lens of our own experience. Rather, we must look at the story in its own context of history and culture.

In the times of Jesus, the following were true:

Fact: women did not marry for love.

Fact: women had no legal rights.

Fact: women were counted as possessions, along with livestock.

Fact: women could not divorce. Only men could divorce.

Fact: men divorced women who did not bear children.

Conclusion: women were incubators. When they did not bear children, they could be discarded, the way we would discard a broken appliance.

A much more reasonable conclusion for this women’s fate is that she was barren; to her husbands, she was a broken appliance to be discarded – and she was. If she has had five husbands, it wasn’t her choice. This understanding of the system in which she found herself leads us to conclude that her “sin” was that she could not conceive – which is not sin at all. Her shame was not because of anything she had done. It was a cultural prejudice. Jesus literally went out of his way to talk to her – longer than any one conversation with anyone in the bible.

What this means for us is twofold: 1) It means that Jesus goes out of his way to reach out to us. He understands us. He knows everything we’ve ever done and loves us in spite of ourselves or anything done to us. 2) It means that we need to be careful not to judge others based on cultural norms. When we participate in cultural normality – rather than looking to God for greater understanding, we, too, commit sins of exclusion, we blame and are responsible for sowing seeds of shame. This is not what Jesus taught. Jesus went out of his way to love. Do we?

We have so much to learn from this one conversation between Jesus and the woman at the well. If you weren’t able to join the adult faith book study these past few weeks, pick up a copy of “Belonging” by Karoline Lewis. Find out more about this rich conversation and how we can learn more about belonging to the kingdom of God.

Blessed be,  
Pastor Deborah

## Christian Education and Faith Formation

### CHILDREN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PROGRAM

Our CCEP classes after church on Sundays are taking a summer break. We look forward to September when we resume for the new school year. Until then have a safe and happy summer!

For the summer, there will be coloring pages and other activities that will be available for children to use during service. These will be on the table with the service bulletins.



### VACATION CHURCH CAMP (VCC) JULY 24-28

**Main Course: Give us this day our daily bread. Matthew 6:11**

Tis the month for our long awaited VCC. We are preparing for a week of bible stories that shares how God gives us our daily food needs. There will be fun crafts, games, music and more!

We have created a donation list for supplies and snack foods we need for the week. If you took a post it, thank you! Please bring item(s) to church when you can. If you grabbed produce items, please bring them to church on the July 22 or 23. Thank you in advance for your contribution to our camp.

Volunteering is a big part of this church which makes belonging to this church amazing! Thank you to all volunteers. If you see our VCC head volunteers, Chris Cox, Paula Robinson or Elaine Cox, please thank them for their time and energy to make VCC possible this year. This planning needed to start happening before a new CE Director was in place. Chris has taken it on with grace and has organized it well with the help of her family and others. VCC will be a fantastic Food Truck Party!

We can always use a few more volunteers the week of July 23-24. If you can do a day or two or even the whole week, please let Steph Berg or Paula Robinson know. Can't help during the week of, we can use your help with prep work beforehand. We will be meeting in Luke on Thursdays at 6pm this month along with other days too. Please reach out if you can cut, tape, glue and more. Email [cedirector@fpc-ucc.org](mailto:cedirector@fpc-ucc.org) or see Paula in church for days and times to help.

Registration is still open through Friday July 14

<https://firstparishcongregationalchurch.mycokesburyvbs.com>



### **FLAT JESUS**

"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"

There are Flat Jesus papers in the office if you would like to participate this summer with Flat Jesus. If you take pictures this summer, please share with our CE Director Steph at [cedirector@fpc-ucc.org](mailto:cedirector@fpc-ucc.org)



### **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. We have helped one camper so far. We still can help other campers too. PLEASE NOTE: It is open to campers of all ages. Please see Anne-Marie Merrill for more details.

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



## 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!)

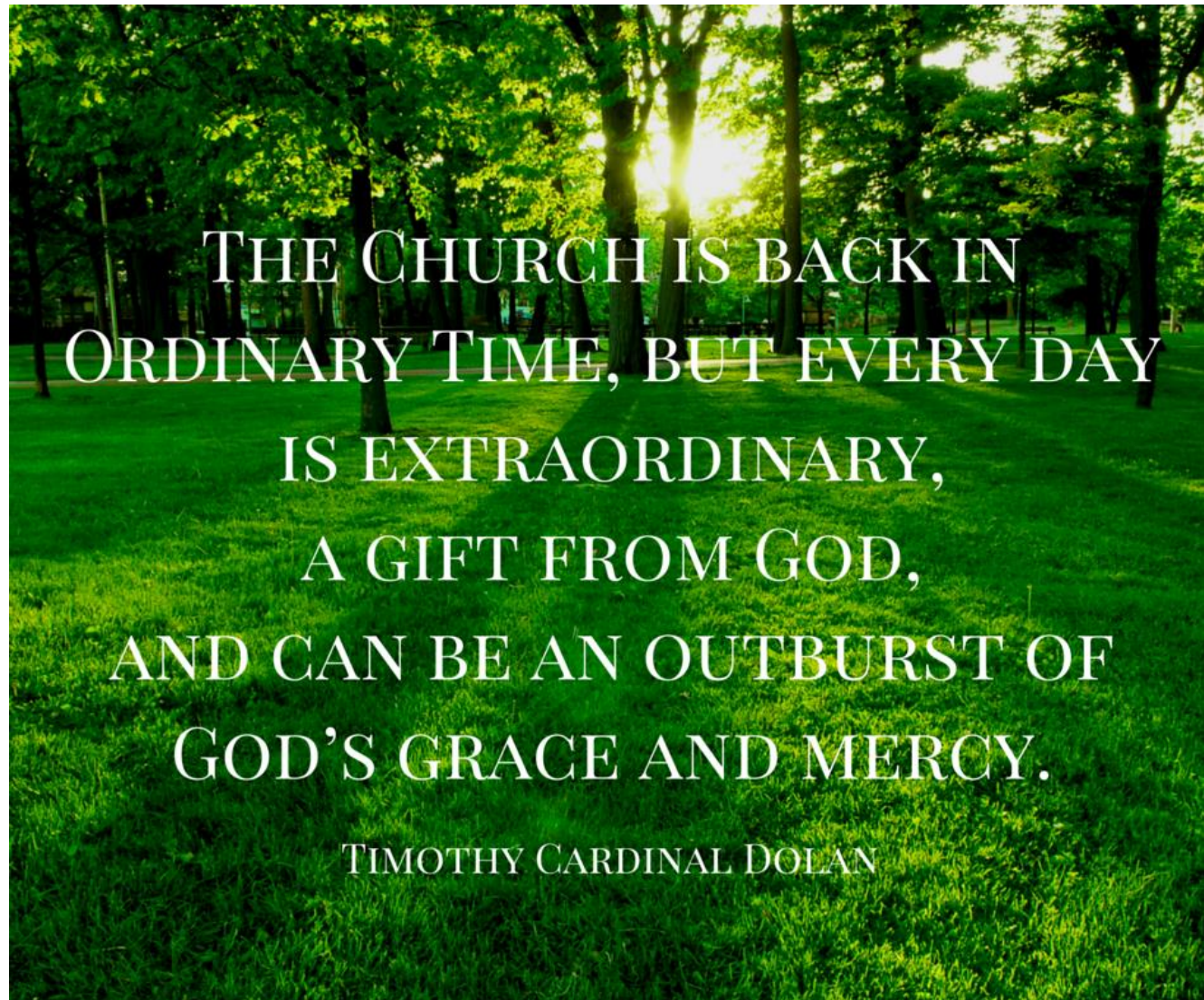
## Ukama Partnership Mission Visit

Dear Friends,

The UCCNH had 2 visitors from the UCCZ (Zimbabwe), Reverend John Matiza, president on the UCCZ and his wife Ketani. We were encouraged to prepare a packet of articles and items for these visitors back to our partner church. Our packet contained pictures and information about our church including Flat Jesus and celebration rings. Nancy Murdock was kind enough to take our packet to the UCCNH. While we didn't get a chance to speak with them directly, we are happy we provided insight into our church's mission and ministry.

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](mailto:officemgr@fpc-ucc.org)

Blessed be, Jill Taylor (Office Manager)





## 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 1<sup>st</sup>.

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 might sponsor this event?

## John Platanitis Letter

A Letter to the Parish Family of First Parish, Derry

Dear Members of First Parish,

I just wanted to take a moment to write how much of a pleasure it's been working with Rev'd. Deborah and Katie and playing for Sunday Services with a congregation that can really sing!

First Parish is a wonderful place and I would've loved to fill your position of Music Director. However, due to a variety of reasons, my original plans of relocating from Cape Cod to the north shore area of Massachusetts by September just won't be feasible.

I told a bunch of you that I'd love to stay in touch, so please feel free to send me a friend request

on Facebook! With a name like mine I'm easy to find



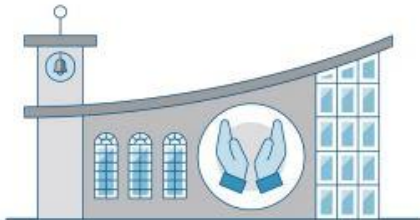
I'll continue to watch the Sunday services at First Parish and hope to visit you again in the future!

All the best,  
John Platanitis

# Protecting Places of Worship



## PROTECTING PLACES OF WORSHIP: SIX STEPS TO ENHANCE SECURITY AGAINST TARGETED VIOLENCE



### OVERVIEW

This document outlines actions that faith-based organizations and community leaders can take to increase security. These six steps can help protect places of worship against potential threats of targeted violence in a cost-effective manner that maintains an open and welcoming environment.

### PLAN AHEAD

Following these six steps will help places of worship better understand potential risks, prepare a response plan, and pursue additional resources for security.

### IF AN INCIDENT OCCURS

Immediately call 9-1-1. Set the emergency action plan in motion. Every employee and volunteer who has an emergency task should know how and when to perform it; this may include life-saving procedures. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) [You Are the Help Until Help Arrives](#) curriculum and the Department of Defense [STOP THE BLEED®](#) program teach life-saving first aid techniques that should be incorporated into planning efforts. After the emergency, report the incident to your local [Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\)](#) field office, community groups, and relevant faith-based security organizations.

### STEP 1 Understand the Risk

- ▶ Review the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletin](#) to understand and monitor national trends and developments.
- ▶ Connect with local law enforcement, the local FBI field office, DHS Intelligence Officers within the [DHS Fusion Centers](#), and other places of worship in the area to better understand localized threats.
- ▶ Perform a [security self-assessment](#) of the facility to determine potential vulnerabilities or contact the local Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) [Protective Security Advisor](#) or local law enforcement to conduct the assessment.

### STEP 2 Understand Your Space

- ▶ Evaluate your facility through a [layered security approach](#) that considers the outer, middle, and inner perimeters of the building and grounds.

### STEP 3 Develop and Practice a Plan

- ▶ Create a security and emergency action plan to [document](#)<sup>1</sup> the steps that personnel and volunteers will take to respond if an incident occurs.
- ▶ [Practice](#) the plan to build muscle memory of the actions that will be taken if an incident occurs.

### STEP 4 Inform and Educate Greeters

- ▶ Identify suspicious behaviors and possibly prevent a potential attack through [de-escalation](#) techniques.
- ▶ Recognize [signs of terrorism-related suspicious activity](#) and how to [Report Suspicious Activity](#) to local law enforcement or a person of authority. Many states also have designated a unique "tip line" to collect reports of terrorism-related suspicious activity.

### STEP 5 Pursue Grants

- ▶ Apply for [grants](#) that can provide new resources for security.

### STEP 6 Report Hate Crimes and Other Incidents

- ▶ [Report](#) hate crimes or any other criminal incidents to local law enforcement and the FBI.



## RESOURCES



### Protecting Places of Worship

**CISA Faith Based Community Resources:** [cisa.gov/topics/physical-security/protecting-houses-worship](https://cisa.gov/topics/physical-security/protecting-houses-worship)

**FBI Active Shooter Safety Resources:**

[fbi.gov/about/partnerships/office-of-partner-engagement/active-shooter-resources](https://fbi.gov/about/partnerships/office-of-partner-engagement/active-shooter-resources)

**CISA De-Escalation Series:** [cisa.gov/resources-tools/resources/de-escalation-series](https://cisa.gov/resources-tools/resources/de-escalation-series)

**CISA Critical Infrastructure Exercises:** [cisa.gov/resources-tools/services/stakeholder-exercises](https://cisa.gov/resources-tools/services/stakeholder-exercises)

**DHS Prevention Resource Finder:** [dhs.gov/prevention](https://dhs.gov/prevention)

**Department of Justice (DOJ) Hate Crimes Prevention and Enforcement:** [justice.gov/hatecrimes](https://justice.gov/hatecrimes)

**DOJ Protecting Places of Worship Program:** [justice.gov/file/1376571/download](https://justice.gov/file/1376571/download)



### Grants

**DHS Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention Grant Program:** [dhs.gov/tvtpgrants](https://dhs.gov/tvtpgrants)

**DOJ Grants to Combat Hate Crimes:** [ojp.gov/doc/fy23-hate-crime-funding.pdf](https://ojp.gov/doc/fy23-hate-crime-funding.pdf)

**FEMA Nonprofit Security Grant Program:** [fema.gov/grants/preparedness/nonprofit-security](https://fema.gov/grants/preparedness/nonprofit-security)

**Office of Management and Budget (OMB):** [grants.gov](https://grants.gov)



### Stay Informed

**DHS National Terrorism Advisory System:** [dhs.gov/national-terrorism-advisory-system](https://dhs.gov/national-terrorism-advisory-system)

**DHS TRIPwire (Technical Resource for Incident Prevention):** [tripwire.dhs.gov](https://tripwire.dhs.gov)

**Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI)**

**Threats Against Houses of Worship Highlight the Importance of Religious Community Outreach:**

[dni.gov/files/NCTC/documents/jcat/firstresponderstoolbox/129S-First-Responders-Toolbox-Threats-Against-Houses-of-Worship-Highlight-the-Importance-of-Religious-Community-Outreach.pdf](https://dni.gov/files/NCTC/documents/jcat/firstresponderstoolbox/129S-First-Responders-Toolbox-Threats-Against-Houses-of-Worship-Highlight-the-Importance-of-Religious-Community-Outreach.pdf)

**ODNI US Violent Extremist Mobilization Indicators (2021 Edition):**

[dni.gov/files/NCTC/documents/news\\_documents/Mobilization-Indicators-Booklet-2021.pdf](https://dni.gov/files/NCTC/documents/news_documents/Mobilization-Indicators-Booklet-2021.pdf)



### Suspicious Activities and Incidents

**Report Hate Crimes to FBI:** [tips.fbi.gov](https://tips.fbi.gov)

1-800-CALL-FBI

**DHS "If You See Something, Say Something®" Campaign:** [dhs.gov/see-something-say-something](https://dhs.gov/see-something-say-something)



### Contacts

**CISA Protective Security Advisors (PSAs):**

To locate the PSA in your area, contact [central@cisa.dhs.gov](mailto:central@cisa.dhs.gov) or visit

[cisa.gov/resources-tools/programs/protective-security-advisor-psa-program](https://cisa.gov/resources-tools/programs/protective-security-advisor-psa-program)

For additional CISA Regional Support, visit [cisa.gov/about/regions](https://cisa.gov/about/regions)

**DHS Intelligence Officers (IOs):**

To locate the IO in your area, contact [DHS.INTEL.ORI.OMT@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:DHS.INTEL.ORI.OMT@hq.dhs.gov)

**FBI Field Offices:** [fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices](https://fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices)

To access the digital version of this guidance, follow the QR code below:



## I REFUSE TO BE DISCOURAGED

I refuse to be discouraged, to be sad, or to cry.

I refuse to be downhearted, and here's the reason why....  
I have a God who's mighty, who's sovereign and supreme;  
I have a God who loves me, and I am on His team.

Though everything is changeable, my God remains the same.

My God knows all that's happening, beginning to the end,  
His presence is my comfort, He is my dearest Friend.

When sickness comes to weaken me, to bring my head down low,  
I call upon my mighty God.... into His arms I go.

When circumstances threaten to rob me from my peace.  
He draws me close unto His breast, where all my strivings cease.

And when my heart melts within me, and weakness takes control;  
He gathers me into His arms, He soothes my heart and soul.

The great "I AM" is with me, my life is in His hand,  
The "Son of the Lord" is my hope, and it's in His strength I stand.

I refuse to be defeated; my eyes are on my God;  
He has promised to be with me, as through this life I trod.

I'm looking past all my circumstances, to Heaven's throne above;  
My prayers have reached the heart of God, I'm resting in His love.

I give God thanks in everything; my eyes are on His face;  
The battle's His, the victory mine; He'll help me win the race.

-Lita Kurtzer

## Church Calendar

**Sunday, July 9 at 10am – Worship Service**

**Monday, July 10 at 7pm – Finance Meeting**

**Sunday, July 16 at 10am - Worship Service**

**Wednesday, July 19 at 7pm – Council Meeting**

**Friday, July 21 at 9:30am – PAC Meeting**

**Friday, July 21 at 2pm – Deacon's Meeting**

**Friday, July 21 at 5pm – Contra Dance**

**Sunday, July 23 at 10am – Worship Service**

**Sunday, July 23 at 3pm – Jazz Jam**

**Monday, July 24-28 – Vacation Church Camp**

**Monday, July 24 at 7pm – Facilities Meeting**

**Friday, July 28 at 4:30pm – Spaghetti Supper To Go**

**Sunday, July 30 at 10am – Worship Service**





Photo credit: Paul Lindemann

**First Parish Congregational Church**

United Church of Christ  
47 East Derry Road  
PO Box 114  
Derry, NH 03038

**First Parish  
Congregational Church,  
UCC**

(603) 434-0628

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 114

E. Derry, NH 03041

**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**

Jill Taylor

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