

October 2023

First Parish Congregational Church 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



“My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.”

Thomas Merton

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Child of God,

There is a funny little story that goes like this:

“There are four people whose names are *Everybody*, *Somebody*, *Anybody*, and *Nobody*. There was an important job to be done and *Everybody* was sure that *Somebody* would do it.. *Everybody* thought *Anybody* could do it, but *Nobody* realized that *Everybody* wouldn't do it. It ended up that *Everybody* blamed *Somebody* when *Nobody* did what *Anybody* could have.”

Oh, my goodness!

We have a choice to make when we face situations that remind us of this story. We can get angry, or we can laugh. We can judge, or we pitch in.

Our world is changing. Our culture is changing. Our church is changing. Some people don't like change. I understand that. Of course, I do. AND change is the only constant in our lives. We need to ask ourselves important questions. As people of faith, we need to ask ourselves important questions. As people within a thriving church family, we need to ask ourselves important questions. What are these questions? I'll suggest some and I'd like to hear what questions YOU may have. As a child of God, how can I serve? As a member of a faith community, what gifts do I have that could be shared with others? As a member of this church, am I as generous as I could be? What does that generosity look like? Is it financial? How else can I be generous?

One of the things that is changing right under our feet is the structure of how things get done. A church who doesn't try new ways of doing things will perish. An organization who does things in the way that they always have is doomed to experience negative outcome. Think about that little story and then think about something that you'd like to see improve. You see a problem perhaps. What is a solution? How can we shift from a problem-focused viewpoint to solution-minded vision? That is one change that would be fantastic! Boards and committees need your help! And you don't have the wherewithal to join a board or a committee. AND you do have a skill that you could lend from time to time. Let people know. Join in the activity.

We are experiencing our pledge drive this month. We used to do it in November, even though the Finance committee needs to know numbers in November. So, guess what? We changed it! Hallelujah! We used to call it the “Stewardship Campaign”. Guess what? EVERYTHING that we do to share what we have (finance, gifts and time) is stewardship!! So, we changed the name! It's the **pledge drive**! Now, back in the day, we would ask people to fill out forms of what they might like to sign up for. That system always created problems. So, guess what? We don't need to keep doing something that doesn't work! The question is: what WILL work? Do you have an idea? Share it! Do you have a gift? Share it! Would you like to paint the kitchen? OK! Would you like to sing a solo in church? OK! Would you like to work in the garden? OK! Let's EVERYBODY start telling ANYBODY our ideas, hopes and dreams so that ANYBODY who has something to share, can do it. And EVERYBODY can celebrate! Thanks be to God!

I celebrate you, dear friends of First Parish!
Blessings and Wonder, Pastor Deborah

Christian Education and Faith Formation

CCEP has just started but it is never too late to join! Welcoming children from preschool to 8th grade.

September has flown by! The Children Christian Education Program (CCEP) has started off its year wonderfully. So happy to see so many smiling faces on the children in our classes.

This month, the Youth (5th-8th graders) have started to explore the Bible and use it index like a URL on a computer to find stories. They have started a collage on where we see God in our world, like in smiles on faces, in people, in pets, and flowers. They have discussed what the Bible stories in church mean to them, along with getting to know one another as there are many new faces in this group this year, which is a blessing!



The younger group (preschool-4th grade) has had fun creating silly stories to make us laugh as Sarah laughed in her story. They illustrated Jacob's story to have a better understanding of how we "see" the story. We also learned what our names mean as Jacob's name changed to Israel meaning God Wrestles.



And together both groups created a board to remind us that each of us is an important piece to God's plan. We are needed and wanted and loved.



As we look forward, there are important dates to keep in mind. Take note of the following Sunday dates to remember in 2023.

1. October 8-no classes
2. November 26- no classes due to Thanksgiving holiday
3. December 3-Advent workshop, a family event, instead of CCEP classes
4. December 23-dress rehearsal for Christmas Pageant (time to be announced)
5. December 24-Children Christmas Pageant (no CCEP afterwards)
6. December 31-no classes

For the Sundays CCEP is in session, we are looking for volunteers to send snacks. It can be cut up veggies and dip to bags of goldfish. We are looking for nut free snacks to feed the children to be ready for fun in class. There will be a sign up sheet right by the children activities on the table on Sundays. Thank you in advance for signing up.

The CE Board meets the first Thursday of every month at 6:30 in the evening. All are welcome to join to see what Christian Education is planning. Our next meeting is Thursday October 5. We are always looking for fresh faces to join the board. If interested, please reach out to Anne-Marie, the head of the CE Board at ampmerriell@yahoo.com or stop by a meeting.

Adult Faith Formation – “Not your average Bible Study”

It's not too late to join our Bible Wonder Fun on Tuesday evening between 6:45 and 8:00 – the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Tuesday in October. We are getting to know the Bible better! No tests! No studying! No worries! If you have any questions, see Pastor Deborah.

Mindfulness Practice - Labyrinth

We are all entirely too busy!! Give yourself the gift of 30 minutes THREE times during October. Join Pastor Deborah on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Tuesday in October. We began a labyrinth walking practice during Covid. It continues to this day. We have people from all over NH call in a we participate in a one-half hour mindfulness exercise. Many are UCC and some of our Catholic friends join us. It is open to whoever has zoom!

We gather right at 6:00 pm, we check in and consider a reflection or prayer of the day. We then take 10 minutes to walk or journal in silence. Some write poetry. Some trace the labyrinth. Some color. Some sit silently. We then come back “on screen” and share as we feel called to do so. It is a wonderful way to “reset” and recharge our energy.

All are welcome! Please let Pastor Deborah or Jill know that you would like to be added to the list of folks who receive the zoom invitation.

Board of Deacons

Welcome to Fall! Isn't it beautiful!

We are anticipating so many exciting happenings in worship this month. The Board of Deacons welcomes your participation and hopes to see you often.

- October 1, 8, 15, 22: The church pledge drive begins with speakers each week
- October 8: Pastor Deborah's book is out!!! Come to a book signing and celebration
- October 12: First Parish has been named Nonprofit of the Year by the Derry/Londonderry Chamber of Commerce. There is a dinner on October 12 to honor all 2023 recipients.
- October 14: The NHCUCC Women's Fall Gathering is at First Parish this year. All are welcome to come. For more information, please click on the link. https://fpc-cc.org/Wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/2023_2_LINK_Fall_East-Derry-Revised.pdf
- October 14: It's Trivia Night! Proceeds will help with the preservation of the Meetinghouse
- October 15: The Just Peace Players will be performing during the morning worship service
- October 21: The NH UCC Annual Meeting will take place in Concord. Everyone is invited to attend.

NH Women of UCC Fall Gathering at First Parish – October 14

CALLING ALL WOMEN OF NH UCC!

Come, spend a few hours with other UCC women from around New Hampshire: 10.14 from 9:30-3

9:30 Registration and coffee; Set up White Elephant Tables

Welcome: Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof, followed by worship with communion

Presentation: FAMILY PROMISE OF SOUTHERN NH: "In from the Cold"

Lunch, White Elephant Table, Quilt Raffle

Business (secretary's report) (financial report) (any other business)

"JUST PEACE PLAYERS": Women of the Greatest Generation: Stories of Faith, Hope, Love, and Courage

3:00 Closing

Board of Missions

The Mission Board continues to disburse funds to the following organizations on a monthly basis. The funds are designated offerings from those who pledge each year for the purpose of supporting organizations who serve those in need. We who serve on the Mission board take this responsibility seriously and use the funds to the best of our ability.

Our disbursements are:

Community Caregivers	\$100.00
First Baptist Church Food Pantry	\$100.00
Sonshine Soup Kitchen	\$100.00
Upper Room	\$100.00
Pinkerton family support (homeless teens)	\$100.00
Derry Friendship Center	\$100.00
Family Promise	\$100.00
Churches Wider Mission (UCC)	\$350.00*
Pastor's Discretionary Fund	\$100.00
Pastoral Counseling	\$100.00

*One of the 5 for 5 to support the UCC.

In addition, we sent \$1000 to the medical debt relief program called RIP. The Merrimack Association of NH UCC challenged us to join them. Our donation of \$1000 will relieve \$100,000 worth of debt. No, that's not a mistake! This is an amazing program and we are honored to participate.

The Mission Board met in September to plan for the Thanksgiving and Christmas events.

Facilities Board

Our Facilities Team Needs Your Help. As you all know, our Facilities team works incredibly hard for all of us, and does a great job. But they can't do everything. One thing we cannot expect is for them to perform minor tasks that require no special skills and little time, such as changing a lightbulb or cleaning up a mess. These tasks would normally be done by a church sexton or janitor, but we have not had someone to fill this position for several years, due to our limited budget. So, we all need to pitch in and do simple things ourselves that we see need to be done, rather than tell a Facilities Board member that it needs to be done. If you see a task that needs attention and is straightforward but beyond your physical capabilities, see if a fellow church member can help with that task.

Thanks for your help with this. It will be a big help to our Facilities group, so they can devote their time to the many more challenging tasks that our old building requires. And thanks to Dee Deranian, Bob Wilson, Lianne Deranian, Larry Krantz, and Bill Armstrong for the countless hours they spend keeping our church safe and functional.

Upper Room



The Upper Room is organizing a few small groups specific to a student's need over the next year. This will begin on October 16th with our first group of the year. Run by clinical staff, hand crafting session for 4 – 6 weeks to address concerning adolescent habits. (sexting, bullying, unhealthy relationships and developing strategies to manage life to start). We know that this will offer our youth a positive opportunity to look at some of the habits that could impact then lifelong. Please visit our website for updates on those programs at www.URTeachers.org

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, October 21, 2023, from 9 am -11 am in Corinthians.

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

Save the date: Trivia Night - October 14, 2023

October 14 is coming soon. Don't forget to get your tickets so you can be part of this great event. You can go to the church web site to sign up electronically or call Jill at the office and register that way. We have been fortunate to have 4 great sponsors to offset much of the expenses and there are wonderful raffle items to bid on. Keep your eye out for Cathy Zylinski-who knows what she will dress like this year!!

NuDay

You may have seen articles about NuDay, knowing that our church has been trying to assist in their humanitarian efforts. First, know that we never sent any money to NuDay, our contribution has been just labor, loading bags for refugee uses. The issue with NuDay is that articles were sent on to Syria from Turkey and they should not have, Syria is a sanctioned country. There was misunderstanding with the Director and with international laws. Nothing was covert or criminal. We will continue to work with them in the warehouse and Cyndi Gray will continue to be the liaison with them if you care to help.

2023-4 Ukama Appeal

SPECIAL OFFERING SUPPORTING FOOD SECURITY IN ZIMBABWE: Following a request from the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe, New Hampshire Conference's Ukama Mission Group is launching an appeal to support the UCCZ in addressing people's need for food. Our Ukama relationship has been issuing conference-wide appeals for some years to address needs which UCCZ leaders think are the most urgent. Once again, as in 2020, they have asked that we designate our gifts to improve food security. The funds we raise will be used both for food as well as for maize (corn) seeds to the many families who grow their own food.

The offering coincides with Ukama Sunday, observed this year on October 22. You can give anytime through the end of 2023. The NH Conference will receive all donations from individuals and congregations and forward them to Common Global Ministries. Global Ministries securely transmits our gifts to the head office of the UCCZ, which distributes the funds to the three conference ministers. They pass the gifts along to local churches, who distribute the gifts to the households which are experiencing the greatest need,

Rev John Matiza, president of the UCCZ, writes: "We cannot talk about three meals a day, most families survive on 2 meals a day. A number of organizations who used to support people in the rural

areas are leaving the country because of the disputed elections."

Checks can be made to NHCUCC with the notation: "Zimbabwe Appeal" on the memo line.

Mail contributions to: NHCUCC 140 Sheep Davis Road Pembroke, NH 03275-3711

(churches can collect the funds and send a single check, or you may encourage your constituents to send their donations directly to the NH Conference, UCC.)

Safe Church Committee

The Safe Church committee is focused on keeping First Parish Church members safe! We are in the process of reviewing and updating the policies and procedures of FPC.

We would like to invite you to the upcoming NH Homeland Security Emergency Preparedness Tabletop Exercises (TTX) for Faith Based Community Organizations (FBCOs), on Sunday, December 10, 1-4 pm. (snow date Sunday, January 14, 1-4pm)

This will be an informal setting intended to generate discussion of various issues regarding hypothetical, simulated emergencies. They can enhance general awareness, help validate and assess plans, procedures, concepts, or procedures. Generally, TTXs are aimed at building understanding and/or identifying strengths and areas for improvement.

Please note: the Tabletop Exercises are non-denominational; they are intended to be generic and do not relate to any one religion. All religions, first responders, and community leaders are welcome to attend this Tabletop Exercise.

Please see below for more information and the link to register. **Registration is required & free!** If you need help to register, please see Jo Worthen! <https://fpc-ucc.org/Wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/FBCO-TTX-flyer-1.pdf>

Author Celebration for the Rev. Dr. Deborah Roof

Join us on Sunday, Oct. 8th from 11:30-1:30 in Currier Hall as we celebrate Pastor Deborah, who is now a published author. Her book, *Words, Wonder, and the Divine In You*, is a story of faith, discovery, and joy! Pastor Deborah encourages people to notice the words they use, the wonder that surrounds us and the Divine that abides within us.

Come and join us for light refreshments and hear her talk about her book. Although the official “pub date” is November 1, books will be available for purchase, and she will also be signing them.

“Roof ’s book presents an original framework for introspection on the daily life of faith.” —**Sarah Drummond, founding dean of Andover Newton Seminary at Yale Divinity School**

2024 Pledge Drive

Our theme: **“Because of you, our church changes lives.”**

Our Scripture: Galatians 6:9: **“Let us not grow tired of doing good.”**

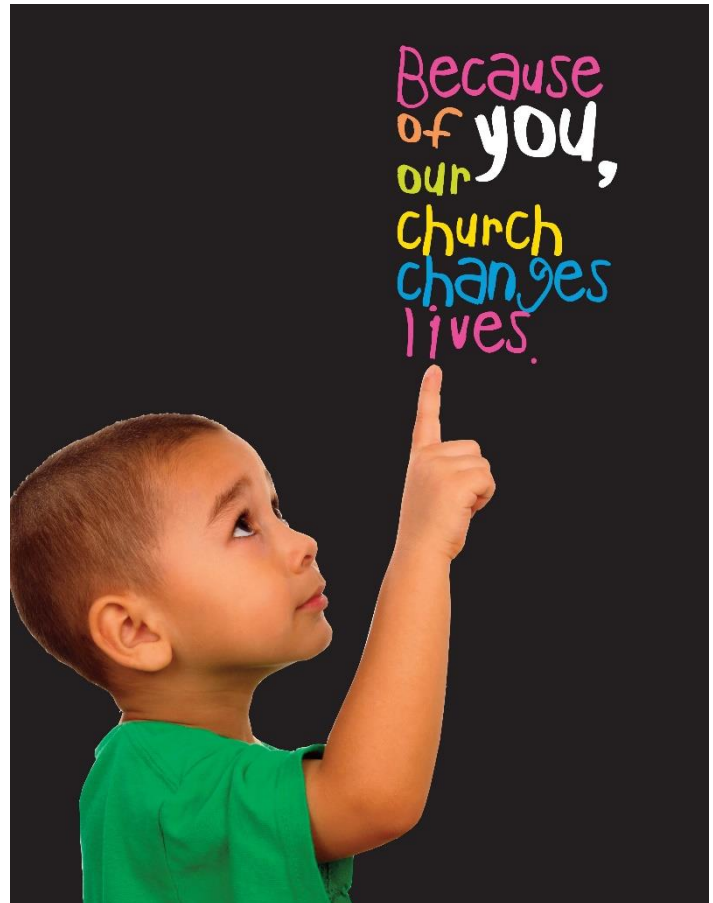
The Financial Stewardship pledge drive task force has met several times in preparation for the 2024 pledge drive. These faithful disciples are: Eileen Cox, Reni Harnden, Beth Hunter, Margie Ives, Paula Robinson, Cathy Zylinski and Pastor Deborah. If you have any questions, please see one of them.

Last year church members adopted a deficit budget. We made as many cuts as we could and even cut the beloved Music program, which is so vital to meaningful worship. AND with a lot of prayer and hard work, we are doing ok, under the circumstances.

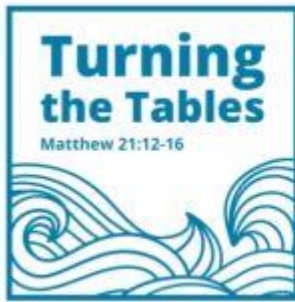
We have a challenge ahead of us. The task force recognizes this and decided to start early this year. This fall the Pledge Drive will be in October, in hopes of presenting our Finance

Committee with the information they need to prepare the 2024 Budget. We will hear personal testimonies from church members throughout October, sharing why they pledge.

Your Financial Stewardship letter from the pastor, as well as pledge cards, was made available **Sunday, September 24th** and the rest were mailed. If you didn't get one, let the office know. Pledging is a faith practice - like gratitude, like prayer, like worship. **Please consider pledging this year.** And feel welcome to contact the members of this Task Force with any questions.



Turning the Tables



*Official Call to the
2023 Annual Meeting
New Hampshire Conference
United Church of Christ*

Dear Members of the New Hampshire Conference Family,

The Annual Meeting Planning Committee invites you to come together, as the Gathered Conference, for the **222nd Annual Meeting of the New Hampshire Conference, UCC.**

When: Saturday, October 21, 2023 **Where:** **Grappone Conference Center** 70 Constitution Avenue, Concord, NH 03301 **and** via **Zoom** Webinar, YouTube Livestream access information to be provided upon registration

The theme for the 222nd Annual Meeting of the New Hampshire Conference is “Turning the Tables”. We will spend our day reflecting on the lessons the Spirit will draw forth from Matthew 21: 12-16

Our keynote speaker will be Bekah Maren Anderson. Bekah (she/her) is a queer disabled writer, theologian, and activist. She has been writing and speaking about disability Ministry and Theology since 2016, earned her master of divinity from Union Theological Seminary in 2021, and currently serves as co-chair for the United Church of Christ Disabilities Ministries Board of Directors. When not trapped in her inescapable desk, she can usually be found playing Dungeons and Dragons.

Throughout the month of October there will be opportunities to participate in educational sessions to prepare for the business meeting on October 21st and to reflect on the current and future work of the Conference.

- October 10 (7pm): Review of the 2024 Mission Income and Spending Plan
- October 12 (7 pm): Envisioning the Future of Associations w/ Association Capacity Task Force
- October 17 (7 pm): Reflections on General Synod 34 with your NHCUCC Synod Delegates
- October 24 (7 pm): Conversation with Annual Meeting Keynote Speaker Bekah Anderson
- October 22 (4 pm) & October 26 (7 pm): Conversations with the Conference Ministers

On October 21st, the Gathered Conference will convene to:

- Approve the Mission Income Spending Plan for 2024
- Elect Conference Officers and Members of the Board of Directors
- Install Ms. Tivvi Pare as the Executive Director of Horton Center.
- Much more.

We will ground ourselves in the presence of the Holy Spirit through communal worship on multiple occasions during our day together. Our morning will begin with the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. We will conclude our time together with inspirational reflections offer by our Conference Ministers: the Reverends Sara Marean and Gordon Rankin.

An offering will be received during our afternoon worship for the support of the Fannie Lou Hamer Scholarship Fund for Disabled Theologians of Color. By supporting these theologians, this scholarship will enrich the church through increased awareness of the intersections of race and disability in theology. We encourage churches to send a special offering with your delegates. Churches and individuals may also elect to make a donation online or send a special offering to NHCUCC, 140 Sheep Davis Road, Pembroke, NH 03275.

This year's hybrid Annual Meeting will utilize numerous forms of technology. Every effort is being made to allow delegates to select options for interactive participation via a desktop computer, laptop, tablet, or smart phone. Many segments of the meeting will also be shared on YouTube to allow for visitor viewing without interactive participation. We will be providing educational resources, helpful tips, and technology stewards to assist you in this experience. Remote connection information will be emailed to all those registered for the meeting.

The Conference Bylaws define the voting membership as "those delegates duly appointed by the churches, the Conference officers, members of the Board of Directors, and each ordained, licensed, or commissioned minister with standing in a New Hampshire Association." (Bylaws, Article VII, Section 2). Each church shall be entitled to four (4) lay delegates, one (1) of whom shall be under twenty-five (25) years of age at the date of election. Churches with more than one hundred (100) members shall be entitled to one (1) additional delegate for each one hundred (100) additional members or major fraction thereof."

Visitors are welcomed and strongly encouraged as a means of deepening the covenant that our congregations share in the NH Conference and the United Church of Christ.

Please visit <https://www.nhcucc.info/annualmeeting> for up-to-date Annual Meeting Resource Materials and a link to the registration website – which officially opens September 5. This year all registrations will be processed **online on or before Thursday, October 5** at 5 PM, when online registration officially closes. The Youth Delegate Rate will be \$50/person; Retired Clergy and Retired Clergy Spouse/Partners will be \$65/person; and Delegates & Visitors will be \$95.00/person – whether in-person or virtually. Major credit cards and personal checks will be accepted for online registration. Given our hybrid event format, we are unable to accommodate "walk-in" registrations. If you do not have access to the internet or have any trouble registering yourself, please call Cindy Bradley at 888- 642-8229, ext. 1100 (Monday – Friday / 10am-3pm / September 5 – October 5). Please feel free to contact the Conference Office with any questions regarding the Annual Meeting. We look forward to gathering with you on October 21st!

May God's Peace be with you. Your 2023 Annual Meeting Planning Committee: Rev. Carlos Jauhola-Straight (Chair), Rev. Gail Doktor, Mr. Bruce Kinney, Rev. Gordon Rankin, Rev. Tanya Stormo Rasmussen, Rev. Dr. Lynn Wickberg; Staff to the Annual Meeting Planning Committee: Ms. Cindy Bradley, Mr. Thaddeus Sieverding

Church Calendar – September 2023

Tuesday, October 3 at 6pm – Labyrinth Walk

Tuesday, October 3 at 6:45pm – Adult Faith Formation

Thursday, October 5 at 6:30pm – CE Meeting

Sunday, October 8 at 10am – Worship Service

Sunday, October 8 at 11am – Safe Church Meeting

Sunday, October 8 at 11:30am – Celebration of our resident author

Monday, October 9 at 7pm – Finance Meeting

Saturday, October 14 at 9:30am – NHCUCC Women's Fall Gathering

Saturday, October 14th at 4pm – Trivia Night – Derry B&G Club

Sunday, October 15 at 10am – Worship Service with guests: Just Peace Players

Sunday, October 15 at 3pm – Jazz Jam

Tuesday, October 17 at 6pm – Labyrinth Walk

Tuesday, October 17 at 6:45pm – Adult Faith Formation

Wednesday, October 18 at 7pm – Council Meeting

Friday, October 20 at 6pm – Contra Dance

Saturday, October 21 9-4 – NH UCC Annual Meeting at Grappone in Concord

Sunday, October 22 at 10am – Worship Service

Friday, October 27 at 4:30pm – Spaghetti Supper To-Go

Sunday, October 29 at 10am – Worship Service

Sunday, October 29 at 11am – Sage Church Meeting

Tuesday, October 31 – 6pm – Labyrinth Walk

Tuesday, October 31 at 6:45pm – Adult Faith Formation



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

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