

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

November 2023

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,

Perspective and attitude are key attributes in life. Someone sees a glass that is half empty. Someone looks at the same glass and sees a glass that is half full. And someone else looks at the same glass and thanks God that they have a glass – that there is something in it!

Recently, I gathered with a group of clergy folks and we went around the circle speaking about the blessings and struggles in our respective churches. One of the colleagues was quiet for a long time and then he said, “As for me, I’m going to leave the ministry. The church is dying. You are all trying so hard but what’s the use?” We sat there stunned. He went on to say, “We are all on the Titanic, the ship is going down and we are in such denial.”

We sat shocked and stunned.

...

Wow, is it really that bad? Was this person a prophet like Amos, calling it like he saw it without any sugar coating at all? What is the reality? Is it true? Is the church dying? Or does the church, like so many versions before it, need a makeover? Maybe the church is evolving as it seeks to find ways of being relevant to new generations. Maybe some tried and true traditions need to be set aside once and for all. Maybe the institutional church worship service is – or needs to – change because God, the wondrous Creating God that we worship on Sunday morning, is far from irrelevant and is simply waiting for us to catch up to the urgings of the Holy Spirit.

Friends, look at this newsletter. Read the reports. Look at the pictures. We are a thriving congregation with vibrant ministries and wonderful outreach. We are incredibly active. People in the community need to know how much we care and how much we do. This is the reason that I am so thrilled that First Parish received the nonprofit of the year from the Derry Londonderry Chamber of Commerce. People won’t know what an incredible church we are if we don’t somehow shine a light on all that we do. And we do what we do because of our faith in an ever present, abundantly compassionate God who walks with us through thick and thin.

I am so blessed to walk with all of you at First Parish. I encourage you to spread the word that we are more like a Phoenix rising than a sinking ship. Thank God for this church, which is a faith family where all of God’s children are welcome. Thank God for a generous God who is able to multiply what we offer financially. You will hear about our financial challenges. As always, pray about it and do what you can. God knows.

Keep wonder alive,
Pastor Deborah

Christian Education and Faith Formation

Children's Christian Education Program is our church's overall children's program that includes Sunday School. Our program doesn't just include the wonderful hour of teaching children the word of the Lord with crafts and activities on Sundays. It includes programs like the Advent Workshop, Christmas pageant/play and Vacation Church Camp in the summer.

Schedule

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

1. November 5, 12 & 19- Sunday School 11-Noon
2. November 26- No classes due to Thanksgiving holiday
3. December 3- Advent workshop, a family event with lunch, instead of Sunday School
4. December 10 & 17-Rehearsal during Sunday School 11-Noon
5. December 23- Dress rehearsal for Christmas Pageant (time to be announced)
6. December 24- Children Christmas Play/Pageant at 10:00 (no Sunday School afterwards)
7. December 31- No classes for holiday break

Sunday School

November

During Sunday School, for November we will have a focus on picking parts and practicing our Christmas play. Some people will need to memorize lines, so expect scripts to go home. Taking time to recite lines will make the production run smoothly.

Our theme is 10 Symbols of Christmas, branching the old with the new. Each Sunday until Christmas Eve, we will be working on crafts of the 10 symbols. If your child won't be able to participate on Christmas Eve, they can still come to Sunday School and learn about the meaning of Christmas through the symbols we see all around during the Christmas season and how they relate to the nativity scene.

Look back at October.

We've included some fun photos from last month: The youth as hard workers with team building marshmallow pyramid in Egypt, before the great exodus with Moses.



David becomes King: We discussed how we would celebrate special occasions and how we would react if we got an important role like becoming King.



Advent Workshop: Sunday December 3, 2023

Our theme this year is Tis the “Sea”son. “Sea” as we are having crafts related to using elements of the sea. Please come join the family friendly festivities. Make crafts, have lunch and socialize.

One craft is a seek and find ornament. We will fill a plastic ornament with sand and hide 4 Christian symbols inside. Shake it around to see if you can spot all 4.

Another craft is a returning craft from last year, a shell angel. Making a shell into an angel ornament.

Simple but beautiful to add to any tree. If you have one already, this year, make one as a gift.

If we get enough sea glass, we will make a decorative sea glass Christmas tree. So, if you would like to donate sea glass to make this happen, we will accept all donations. Thank you in advance.

There will be other crafts as well, but you will just have to come and find out what they are!

Looking for a way to help? There will be sign-ups for assisting with crafts for that day. Be on the lookout.

In addition, there will be food! There will be lunch for Advent Workshop this year. We are looking for people to bring in soup, chili, mac n cheese or bread to share with others. There will be a sign-up if you would like to bring anything for this Advent luncheon.

Board of Deacons

Our NHUCC Conference Minister, Reverend Gordon Rankin, will be our guest preacher on Sunday, November 5th.

Everyone is invited to our Rockingham Association Meeting on November 12th at 2 p.m. at Pilgrim Brentwood UCC. Come at 1:30 to enjoy refreshments.

A celebration of Cindy Pingree's life will be held on November 11th at 10 a.m. In honor of Cindy's generous spirit of hospitality, a potluck lunch will follow the service. Please bring your favorite Italian dish to share!

Our church will be participating in the Very Derry Holiday Parade on November 25th, 1-2:30 pm. The Greater Derry Londonderry Chamber of Commerce will be making us a banner to recognize our church as the 2023 Nonprofit of the Year. We need church members who would like to walk the parade route carrying our banner and signs and folks to ride on our truck. This will be a great opportunity for our church to get more visibility in the community and to share the word about all the great work we do for our community!

Pastor Deborah will be inviting members of the congregation to join with her in building a new worship team to work on various aspects of our services.
Submitted by Liz Greenberg

Board of Missions

Mission Board is getting ready for a big event they sponsor in the month of November - THANKSGIVING "FOOD -not Baskets but FOOD ASSISTANCE

For several years, Mission Board has been giving Grocery cards in the amount of \$25 in lieu of Food Baskets. For many reasons this has been more appreciated so here we go again.

We will be raising funds from our generous congregation to purchase 30 food cards to distribute to the Caregivers clients. For the past few years, we have donated 30 cards at \$25 each. These are really appreciated. Last year we raised over \$600, and Mission supplemented the cost of 30 cards (\$750) from our Mission funds.

This year we need to raise \$1500 for 60 cards as we are helping the Upper Room provide for many families who are no longer being served by another organization. We offered 30 cards for these families.

We ask that our congregation (small and generous) help as best you are able.

In addition, the Upper Room also has 200 families formerly served by the Salvation Army by providing actual food. We pledged 200 cans of cranberry sauce for the 200 bags of food the Upper Room will provide to these families.

So, let's see what we can do!!!!

Cash donations for Grocery cards will be gratefully accepted (if a check please note that it is for the food cards in the memo AND bring a few cans of cranberry sauce

Blessings and may your Thanksgiving be full of joy.

Nancy Murdock on behalf of the Mission Board, Cyndi Gray, Liz Greenberg and Karen Wilson

Holiday Events for Historic Preservation

Get in the Christmas spirit — and have some fun! — while helping fund the Sanctuary rehabilitation.

The festive **Holiday Concert with the Granite Statesmen** returns for a second year, this time at First Parish, on Saturday, December 2. We'll have shows at 3:00 and 7:00 PM, and tickets are just \$20 for adults and \$5 for children 12 and under. Advance tickets will be available online (on our website or Facebook page), or in person after Sunday worship service.



Breakfast with Santa 12.9.23

Breakfast with Santa also returns this year, on Saturday, December 9, from 8:00 to 11:00 AM. Bring the whole family for a delicious breakfast or brunch, visit with Santa, enjoy kids activities, try your luck with raffles, and more. Thanks to sponsor Triangle Credit Union, tickets at the door are just \$10 for adults, \$5 for ages 3–8, and free for ages 2 and under.



Getting Back in the Historical Sanctuary

Christmas next year (2024) is the target for a major milestone in our 13-year Meetinghouse Preservation effort: finishing the Sanctuary Rehabilitation and resuming use of this beautiful space.

A large team of church members plus expert contractors are working hard to make this happen. Come learn about the latest plans and the remaining work at a special session after worship service on Sunday, November 5th:

Sanctuary Preservation Update

Sunday, Nov. 5, 2023, 11:00–11:45 AM

We'll share details of this biggest Sanctuary renovation since 1884, explaining how we'll upgrade systems for modern use and to better accommodate disabilities without harming the historic look and feel. We'll present designs for the wall and flooring finishes, answer all your questions, and afterward offer a guided tour.

You'll also have the chance to help make all this happen through a new *Get Back In!!!* fundraising campaign we'll launch that day. This will feature some nice benefits to donors, including double matching of early gifts. Refreshments will be available for those attending in person, and we will Zoom the session for those who aren't. We'll also have all the information and giving opportunities available online.



The Sanctuary in about 1905.

We are all excited to share these plans for the Sanctuary, and we hope to see you there or online!

Submitted by Paul Lindemann for the BAC (Larry Krantz, Bill Mann, and Bob Wilson); the Sanctuary Design Team (Diane Breeden, Chris Cox, Holly Gorgol, Reni Harden, Nancy Heywood, Sue Lindemann, Paula Robinson, Pastor Deborah, Wendy Williams, and Cathy Zylinski; and our internal audio experts (Dani Allen & Alec Cobban).

Raffle Baskets

RAFFLE BASKET IDEAS for THE SUGAR PLUM FAIR

Your past donations have been fantastic and have made the Raffle Table a big money maker supporting First Parish Church. We can't wait to see what you give this year! You can put your item(s) in a clear plastic bag, a basket, a decorative box or one covered with wrapping paper or let us prepare it for you. Get creative and donate a seasonal wreath or decorative item, a new puzzle, game, toy, winter accessories. Gift cards are very popular along with scratch tickets, arts and crafts, snacks, and hostess gifts. How about date night, baking with kids or pamper yourself? There are web sites with more ideas....

Please drop off your donations in the church office beginning mid-November and by noon on November 17th at the latest. **See you at the Sugar Plum Fair on November 18th**

Rockingham Association for the NH Conference Fall Meeting

Event: Rockingham Association of the NH Conference Fall Meeting

Date: November 12th, 2023

Time: Gathering at 1:30 PM, meeting begins at 2:00 PM

Location: Pilgrim UCC, Brentwood-Kingston!

197 Middle Rd

Brentwood, New Hampshire 03833

An agenda and reports will be sent out as soon as they are available.

Safe Church Committee

The Safe Church committee would like to invite you to an upcoming Round Table discussion on Sunday, December 10, 1-4 pm. (snow date Sunday, January 14, 1-4pm) This will be an informal setting with Homeland Security, local police & fire departments. The purpose of these discussions is to help build understanding and/or identify strengths and areas for improvement to provide a safe environment for all. Please note: the 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 Round Table 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>

2023 Non-Profit of the Year

First Parish Congregational Church a community non-profit deeply committed to the Derry community has been chosen as the 2023 non-profit of the year. With a solid past, an active membership and presence within the community, First Parish has been consistently serving the Derry area for decades.

First Parish lives out their values and improves the lives of the people who live right here, by being available in times of need.

First Parish leadership believes in community partnering and works hand in hand with multiple other agencies to provide for the needs of our town. Caring parish members volunteer to care for children and families through food donations, monetary support to agencies that support vulnerable populations and through their own time and contributions to assist during holidays, or when a need arises.

First Parish is a solid community resource, and we are excited to celebrate their presence in our region and honor the work they are doing right here every day. We thank you for your service to our community Pastor Deborah Roof and the entire congregation of First Parish Church.

Gratitude for Trivia Night

FPC friends working together, like the CCEP project pictured here, created a very successful Trivia Night experience!!

Many, many thanks to everyone for their participation in any capacity for a very successful Trivia Night. Anne Marie Merrill, Karen Wilson, Beth Hunter, Cathy Zylinski, Cathy Pottle, Pastor Deborah, Paul Lindemann and Liz Greenberg were vital to our success.

We cleared over \$6,036. As per last year we couldn't have had better partners than Hare of the Dawg and the Boys and Girls Club. A huge thanks to our sponsors: Enterprise Bank, CLM, Derry Friendship Center, Family of Ruthlee Root, Anonymous Donor.



Once again, our congregation and friends came through for a great cause.

A New Vision for the Ten Commandments

So, if God speaks a “Do Not Harm” in Exodus for the whole world rather than a naughty list for personal morality it might sound like this ...

I am the Holy One of a World Community – don’t claim precedence of any particular religion or you may build a wall in place of an open door in your own heart.

Don’t make idols of money, power, tradition, and bow down and worship them.

Don’t make a wrong use of God’s name to justify your ideas, your politics, or your interpretations of ancient faith texts.

Remember the Sabbath means to rest your body, mind and spirit and create a society in which no one needs to work to exhaustion to feed themselves and their families.

Honor all who are elderly, listen to their wisdom, care for their wellbeing, for this is the only way to receive a heritage.

You shall not kill with your death penalty. You shall not kill by making guns accessible. You shall not kill with chainsaws in the water. You shall not kill by starvation unnecessary in an abundant world. You shall not make extinct God’s precious creatures.

You shall not commit abuse in relationships, permit human trafficking, forbid love.

You shall not steal – land or cultural identity. You shall not steal a child’s childhood – not by incest or unjust labor practices. You shall not steal hope.

You shall not lie about the earth and what damages it. You shall not lie in the paying of the taxes that sustain common life. You shall not lie about the weeping past of indigenous people. You shall not lie about the violent history of race. You shall not lie by taking books of honesty and hope from school desks and library shelves. You shall not lie in congress, in court, in seeking office. You shall not invent lies about the future that steal our children’s world.

In a world so divided that the rich serve a gold-calf brunch to their friends with a side of someone else’s ewe lamb, you shall not covet what you do not need.

(Author: Maren Tirabassi)

Horton Center



Summer '23 by the NUMBERS

Total Number of
Campers:

230

Gallons of
Ice Cream Served:

72

Value of
Camperships Awarded:

\$9,000+

New Elements Built
(Gaga Ball, 9 Square,
Whale Watch):

3

The 2023 Summer was an amazing, inspiring, and successful camp season! The Fruits of the Spirit were our focus, and as we delved into conversation, prayer and singing about love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and faithfulness, it became abundantly clear that each week our communities were not just *learning* about the fruits, but we were *living them*. In each meal we shared, hike we accomplished, friend we made, and challenge we overcame, we became more connected to ourselves, to our fellow campers, and to God. **The transformative power of outdoor ministries is thriving on Pine Mountain!**

Camper fees alone are not enough to cover the operating costs. Hiring amazing staff, cooking delicious food, replacing rock climbing ropes, rising energy costs, and, of course, purchasing materials for shaving cream whiffle ball (it's as fun as it sounds!) all cost money. In order to guarantee that next summer will be as big a success as 2023 was, we need to raise \$20,000 in donations.

Will you please make a donation to our vital ministry?

Thank you for prayerfully considering your capacity for giving to another lifechanging summer at Horton Center.

Shalom,

Tivvi Pare (she/her) Horton Center Executive Director



In anticipation of his week as a first-time camper, John's mom brought him to see Horton Center. John was anxious about the prospect of being with so many new people, and he got back in the car as soon as his mother allowed. In July, on the first day of camp, John was clearly nervous and unsure of how to make friends. John resisted engaging in activities and often asked, "Do I have to do this?" John had taken his familiar role as 'the kid who doesn't fit in.' In typical Horton Center fashion, he was accepted by campers and adults alike and encouraged to join in the fun. As the week went on, he got more involved and his true, caring, funny and creative personality began to shine through. On the last night of camp at the talent show, John sang and played a song on his ukulele in front of a rapt audience to thunderous applause! The look on his face as he took his theatrical bow was one of pure joy. John is now one of many campers who know Horton Center is a place where they can be their true selves, belong, and make lifelong friends.

Church Calendar – November 2023

Thursday, November 2nd at 7pm – CE Meeting

Sunday, November 5th at 10am – Worship Service, Communion
Guest Preacher Rev. Gordon Rankin, NH Conference Minister

Monday, November 6th at 7pm – Finance Meeting

Saturday, November 11th at 10am – Cindy Pingree's Celebration of Life Service,
followed by potluck Italian lunch buffet.

Sunday, November 12th at 10am – Worship Service

Tuesday, November 14th at 4pm – Mission Meeting

Tuesday, November 14th at 6pm – Labyrinth Walk

Tuesday, November 14th at 6:45pm – Adult Faith Formation

Wednesday, November 15th at 7pm – Council Meeting

Saturday, November 18th at 9am – Sugar Plum Fair

Sunday, November 19th at 10am – Worship Service

Sunday, November 19th at 3pm – Jazz Jam

Thursday, November 23rd – Thanksgiving Holiday

Friday, November 24th – Thanksgiving Holiday (office will be closed)

Friday, November 24th at 4:30pm – Spaghetti Supper

Sunday, November 26th at 10am – Worship Service

Tuesday, November 28th at 6pm – Labyrinth Walk

Tuesday, November 28th at 6:45pm – Adult Faith Formation

Jazz Jam – Sunday, November 19th

A vibrant poster for a Jazz Jam event. The background is white with a light purple brushstroke at the top. The word "JAZZ" is written in large, bold, black letters, with "JAM" in a similar style below it. Various musical instruments are illustrated in yellow and orange: a trumpet, a guitar, a violin, a saxophone, and a French horn. There are also several musical notes floating around the instruments. The text is arranged in a clear, easy-to-read layout, with the event details and location prominently displayed.

**WANTED:
MUSICIANS OF ALL LEVELS
& LISTENERS OF ALL AGES
IN A SAFE PLACE**

**JAZZ
JAM**

**FIRST PARISH CHURCH
47 E DERRY RD. DERRY**

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2023:
3 - 5**

BRING YOUR INSTRUMENT OR VOICE
TO PLAY OR SING & LET'S JAM!
ALL ARE WELCOME TO THIS CRITIC-FREE
ZONE TO PLAY, SING OR LISTEN
A COMMUNITY BUILDING EVENT

\$5 AT THE DOOR
WHETHER YOU PLAY, SING OR LISTEN



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

www.fpc-ucc.org

facebook.com/fpcucc

Senior Pastor and Teacher

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First Parish Congregational Church

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