

First Parish Congregational Church

United Church of Christ – East Derry, New Hampshire

October 2025

Newsletter



“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

The Pastor's Page

HARVEST TIME

As I sit in the pastor's office on a beautiful sunny and 74 degree September day, I am struck by how quickly it seems that summer turned into fall. Even before the leaves have turned, there's a feeling of that warm and hazy second summer before winter definitely lands. Maybe the return of Sunday School and the upcoming church events in October make it feel even more like autumn.

Those events include Trivia Night on Oct. 18, the New Hampshire Conference of the UCC's Annual Meeting on Oct. 25, Confirmation Sunday on Oct. 26, and the Spaghetti Supper on Oct. 31. It is time to harvest the fruit of all our planning. Make notes in your calendar, and invite your family and friends!

Also in October, I plan to offer a paint night tying art in with spirituality. Anyone can do the exercises; no experience is necessary; and it is intergenerational. A fun evening of self-discovery and appreciation of others. The date is to be determined based on your interest and availability.

After a number of guest preachers, I will be preaching every Sunday in October. It will give me a chance to build a theme and have some nice continuity with you.

Enjoy the season!

Blessings,

Rev. Bob Fellows



Deacons

What a great September day today is! As I begin to type this report, I am looking at a bag of fresh apples, cider donuts, and apple cider to enjoy cold or hot. It is a new season for everyone as we watch the weather turn a little cooler and wait for the leaves to begin to turn into their glorious fall colors.



On October 26 we will be celebrating our wonderful Abbi Slowick into membership through the act of confirmation. She has journeyed this year alone but with Debbie Gline Allen and with our entire church family beside her. If you have a chance to contribute to her confirmation project that benefits Family Promise please do.

Here at First Parish Church, we will be entering a new season next month! We will welcome Pastor Carrie Burnap to our pulpit on November 23rd as our settled pastor. We want to thank the Search Committee for their diligent and prayerful work to bring Pastor Carrie to us. On that note we will be celebrating Pastor Bob's time with us on his last Sunday November 16th.

In the last two weeks we have been blessed to baptize 4 new Christians into our faith. It is a joy to welcome these three children and one adult into a life of faith and fellowship.

Have you read scripture in worship, or in another setting and would like a few tips on how to read it better, smoother? The Deacons are talking about holding a Scripture session this fall to help those who read in worship, or those who would like to read in worship, feel more comfortable and articulate in their sharing of the word. Please speak to a Deacon if you are interested.

There are many ways to participate in making our worship on Sunday morning welcoming and meaningful. From Ushers, Greeters, Acolytes, and Music. Please let us know if you would like to assist us in any of these ways and we will gladly welcome you in and share these wonderful ministries with you. ~Submitted by Diane Breeden

Blessings and joy from your Board of Deacons,
Rachel Cobban, Beth Hunter, Jo Worthen, Thomas Wood, Deb-Ellen Brown, Kathleen Alger
Diane Breeden, James Hayden.



Christian Education and Faith Formation

Christian Education Calendar:

CE Calendar

October 5- Sunday School 11-Noon

October 6- CE Meeting at 6:30

October 12- No Sunday School due to Indigenous Day weekend

October 19- Sunday School with practice fire drill

October 26- Sunday School

November 2- Sunday School

November 4- CE Meeting at 6:30

November 9- No Sunday School due to Veterans' Day weekend

November 16 & 23- Rehearsals start for Christmas Pageant 11-Noon

November 30- No Sunday School due to Thanksgiving weekend



Sunday School

Sunday School had a great first month back. Leaving service during the last hymn has worked out really well, and we will continue to dismiss Sunday School participants this way. I appreciate your cooperation with this new dismissal. During classes, we have been learning that God keeps his promises and blesses his followers, starting in the Old Testament with Abraham, Jacob, and Moses. This month, we continue to learn of God's blessings from the feeding of His people in the desert with manna and quail, as well as the blessings bestowed upon both David and Solomon.

Registration is still open



If September was busy, but now things are slowing down, and you would like to have your children attend Sunday School when they come to church, please register them by clicking on this link. This way, we have contact and essential info on file when they can attend. We look forward to seeing all our young people from pre-K to 8th grade in Sunday School.

Snack Donations Wanted

We are looking for snack donations. After service, many are hungry, and when they have a snack, they are happier to enjoy learning and have fun. We have nut allergies so we would like nut-free snacks. Some ideas are goldfish, veggie straws, pretzels, and crackers. We always enjoy some fresh fruit or vegetables and dip. We will serve those on the day they come in. Thank you in advance for these donations.



Submitted by Christian Education Director: Steph Berg

CE Board: Chairperson Anne-Marie Merrill, Chris Cox, Eileen Cox, Holly Gorgol, Sue Lindemann, Eileen Page, and Paula Robinson

Confirmation

Almost eleven months ago, this congregation joined in a Circle of Blessing around Currier Hall to make promises to our Confirmand, Abbi, to help her in her confirmation process, often joining her in some of the activities, and keeping her in our prayers.

By the end of the Confirmation year, she will have completed nine classes:

The Apostles Creed

Science and Faith

Baptism

The Seasons of the Church Year

Communion

The Bible

Mission and Service

Worship

and the last class coming up will be on the United Church of Christ. — it's history and beliefs.

Plus, together with all of you, she has “Romped Through the Old Testament”; enjoyed the musical “Jesus Christ Superstar”; went on a “Pilgrims vs. Accused Witches” Pilgrimage to Salem, MA; learned about worship and then the teachings of Jesus during two different services of worship, and is spearheading the collection of items to help Family Promise move into their new Derry facility (see below).

She has served as a Lay Reader, attended Annual Meeting and got the hang of Robert's Rules, she has sung in the Choir, she played her recorder for the Christmas Eve service, she sang a beautiful solo at Pastor Deborah's Farewell Service, and participated in the Maundy Thursday service. It has been an eventful year!

Please mark Sunday, October 26th on your calendar to attend worship to hear from Abbi herself about what she has learned, and to celebrate both her learning and yours throughout this year in our All-Church Circle of Blessing Confirmation Program.

Many thanks for your support!

- Debbie Allen, Confirmation Teacher

Confirmation Project: Collection for Family Promise in Derry — please help!

Abbi (our confirmand) has selected her final mission focus! The idea is to bring the congregation together for this project. Working with Family Promise (<https://familypromisesnh.org/about-us/>), we are creating "homewarming" baskets for the families coming to the new Derry facility. We would like to ask each member or person interested in helping create these baskets to purchase one (or more!) item from a list given to us by Family Promise (see below). On Sunday, October 26th, we will bless these collected items during worship and then you are welcome to help us pack the items during Coffee Hour. Please drop off your item(s) in one of the boxes outside of the sanctuary doors. Thank you for your help with this Confirmation Project.

Wish List for Family Promise

Toiletries

*Men's & Women's Shampoo

*Men's & Women's Conditioner

*Individual Hand Soap

*Feminine Hygiene Products

*Men's & Women's Razors

*Combs/Brushes

* Men's & Women's Deodorant

*Toilet Paper

*Toothpaste

*Body Wash/Bar Soap

* Men's & Women's Shaving Cream

*Children's Toothbrushes & Toothpaste

Ministry of Care

What is the Ministry of Care

“Carry each other’s burdens and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ” Galatians 6:2



You may have heard of the Ministry of Care here at FPC and you do not know what it is and what we do? The Ministry of Care (MOC) seeks to identify any needs of our congregation, so that we may offer help & support in their time of need. So that is our mission. What does it mean? Have you ever been in the hospital, have you lost a loved one or maybe you just had a baby. Whatever you are going through we would like to help. That’s where MOC comes in. We will send cards of condolence, get well cards, cards of encouragement or congratulations. We may call you to see if you would like us to provide a meal or help in other ways. We want to help carry your burdens or celebrate with you. When the Pastor or someone in our congregation hears of a need, they contact MOC and we will take it from there. We are aware of prayer requests made during worship and often respond to them. If you would like to part of this ministry or if you or someone you know has a need, please contact the Pastor or Beth Hunter 603-505-0702

Karen Wilson, Wendy Williams, Anne Englehardt, Sue Brown, Mary LaFrance, Beth Hunter

Shawl Ministry



The Shawl Ministry needs help! Do you knit or crochet? Could you help us by making shawls for those who need a hug from the church? All work can be done at your leisure, from your home or favorite vacation spot.

Since 2004 we have been providing shawls in times of sorrow and joy. Shawls have been given to church members, friends and our high school graduates. If you would like information about the background of Shawl Ministries visit their website <https://www.shawlministry.com/>.

For more information here at First Parish church talk to Barbara Williams or email her at bbwtextiles@gmail.com

Missions

Finances continue to be good thanks to your generosity. We continue to look for ways to strengthen our Mission’s work. It’s been pointed out that there are other ways to show our stewardship other than financial, so we recently looked into Operation Care for Troops. Although we would like to make a big impact for this Christmas season it was decided that time to properly do this probably wasn’t going to work but, in lieu of that, we are working with CE so that we can do cards for Veterans-on-Veterans Day and also during the holiday season. Stay tuned.

In October we will receive the lists from Upper Room and Community Caregivers for our annual holiday giving. We continue to look into ways to support Zimbabwe and look forward to Rev. Rankin’s visit September 28. If there are individuals who are especially interested in establishing relationships with Zimbabwe, please seek us out. We are also reminded that both Derry Family Promise and our own Spaghetti Supper crew could use help, another way to support our church’s commitment to others.

Cynthia Gray, Karen Wilson, Marge Palmer, Beth Nelson, Anne Englehardt, Sue Brown.



FPC MUSIC NEWS COMING SOON

'Ring It On!

Come have some fun with Hand Chimes!

September and October

2nd and 4th Sundays Before Service

9:20-9:40 downstairs in Luke.

We will work on preparing pieces for Preludes and Postludes at services in November and December.

No prior ringing experience needed. (Preteens through Adults)

FPC Choir News

WE NEED YOUR VOICE!

Choir rehearsals will begin on October 16th and will be held on Thursday evenings at 6-7 pm in the sanctuary to prepare music for November and December's festive services.

The tentative schedule for rehearsals will be

Oct 16, 23, 30, Nov 6, 13, 20, Dec 4, 11, 18

Please join us for some singing, laughs, and fellowship.

Information on Christmas Childrens Choir coming soon

Questions? See or email Sandy Olson at music@fpc-ucc.org

COUNCIL CORNER

Council met on Wednesday, September 17. Here are the key things we discussed and did:

- Sanctuary Update: Paul presented an update on the sanctuary work schedule. Discussed proposed Architectural Assessment by CPW Architects and its cost. Sent back to Finance for further discussion. Finance will meet jointly with BAC, and any Council members wishing to participate, at a future date.
- Motion was approved to sign contract with Keeley Painting Company to scrape, prime, and paint bare siding, trim, and windows to seal up/preserve bare wood for future painting. The amount is not to exceed \$10,500, to be paid from the Meetinghouse Stewardship Investment Fund.
- Motion to accept gift of lighting for the sanctuary was approved.
- Search Committee: Our new pastor, Rev. Carrie Burnap, has signed the Call Agreement; We are working with her on next steps in the process and copying her on Council business. Her start date is Nov 17.
- Pastor's Report: Pastor Bob continues with visitations and is attending more committee meetings. He plans to have an art and spirituality event with the date to be determined. He will meet with Pastor Carrie to discuss how he can best help with the transition. He suggested that the church website and Facebook pages be updated with Pastor Carrie's information.
- Treasurer: Income through August is \$5,500 over budget; expenses are \$38,000 below budget. Cash on hand is approximately \$55,000.
- Mission: Mission will speak with Rev Gordon Rankin about our relationship with the pastor at our sister church in Dangamvura, Zimbabwe. Mission would like to develop a relationship with the church through member interaction and sharing of ideas between the children of each church. Abbi has started her mission project for confirmation class, collecting personal items for the families in Family Promise.
- Facilities: Facilities completed 11 projects; 7 more are underway. Sue L. encouraged everyone to use the work slips or contact a member of Facilities when they see an issue with the building. The Facilities meeting time has been changed to Monday morning. There was discussion about how to deal with the air quality issues in the sanctuary. Paul reported that a professional assessment is quite expensive. The sanctuary will receive deep cleaning, and if necessary, the church will purchase UV sanitizers to help with air quality.
- Deacons: Abbi Slowick will be confirmed on October 26.
- Nominating: The clerk's position remains unfilled. Nominating will meet to seek a candidate.
- Member-at-Large: Anne reported on several important dates for the NHCUCC:
October 4: NH Women's Fellowship will gather at Laconia Congregational Church.
October 17: Trivia Nite from 4-7. Yard signs will soon be available for people to distribute throughout the community.
October 25: NHCUCC Annual Meeting in Moultonborough. Pastor Bob and Melody, Paula Robinson, and Anne will attend. Scholarships are available to cover the registration fee.
- Member-at-Large: Paula requested that Nutfield be reminded to unlock the fire door when they leave for the night.
- The meeting was closed with prayer and a moment of silence for those who are suffering.

Safe Church

Safe Church Committee looking for Volunteers

Your Safe Church Committee would like to wish you a Safe & Happy Autumn!

Our Safety Evacuation team is small & we are still looking for volunteers to help with the important task of keeping everyone safe.

There are some functions that we need help with in case the Sanctuary and building need to be evacuated. These functions are:

Sanctuary Assistant: Their main functions are to make sure the Narthex doors are open, direct and assist people down the stairs, check the balcony and report to the Evacuation Coordinator.

Elevator Corridor Assistant: Their main function is to oversee the Elevator connector. They recruit helpers to assist in the evacuation of the mobility challenged, assist those who need help, check that the Sanctuary is evacuated and report to the Evacuation Coordinator

Main Entrance Assistant: Their main functions are to lock the Connector door and the Main door during the service, and to stay in the Office Lobby to let latecomers in. The service is live-streamed on the monitor in the lobby. During an evacuation they open the Main Entrance Doors, assist people down the ramp then report to the Evacuation Coordinator.

These functions do not require much on the card holder's part. You will only be needed, if there is an emergency! It is the whole church's responsibility to keep everyone safe while worshipping & while in the church buildings.

“Thank You!” to those of you who take Safety cards on a regular basis.

Please see Jo Worthen, if you are interested in helping.

Your Safe Church Committee: Jo Worthen, Christie Lombardi, Ken Williams, Paula Robinson, Tom Wood, Bill Armstrong, James Hayden & Paul Lindemann



FAMILY PROMISE OPENS IN DERRY September 19, 2025

The Family Promise program for homeless families has opened its new Derry facility and currently has 1 family. The program can serve that single family without too much help. Still, as the facility approaches its capacity of 8 families (16- 32 people), it will need assistance with meals and volunteers, similar to the 24-family facility in Nashua.

We hope to provide a monthly meal for the residents of the Derry facility, as we have been doing for the Nashua facility residents for the past 5 years. Here's how we think that would be possible if we could get a couple more volunteers to join our group of about 13 cooks.

First, let's talk about exactly what we are asking you to do, since it is pretty minimal. What we need is people to provide either a pre-determined main course or side course in a 9"x13" aluminum casserole pan—enough to serve 8-10 people. The food is cooked in advance and simply reheated and served at Family Promise. The main courses are pre-determined, and are items that are easy to make:

April and October--Lasagna
 May and November—Pork tenderloins (supplied by Browns)
 June and December—Shepherd's pie
 July and January—Ham (supplied by Browns)
 August and Feb-Meatloaf
 March and September--Chicken your way



The side dishes can be anything that you think would go well with the main course. That could be mac and cheese (for some months), a potato dish, veggie trays, fruit platters, baked beans, cooked vegetables, vegetable casserole, lettuce salad, or whatever you come up with. In addition, we bring frozen chicken strips, frozen peas, and frozen corn, to make sure the kids have something they will eat.

People providing the food leave it in the church refrigerator sometime before 2:00 on the day of the meal. Two or 3 of our team members pick up the food at about 4:15 and drive it to the Nashua facility, reheat it in the commercial ovens there, and set it out to serve at 6:00 sharp. We typically eat there ourselves and then head home—the residents do all the cleanup.

To serve the Derry facility while continuing to provide our monthly meal to Nashua, we would make slightly more food of the same kind each month and simply drop the amount needed in Derry at that facility on our way to Nashua. So we will just need one or two more main courses (e.g., 5 or 6 meatloaves instead of 4) and one or two more sides. The exact number will depend on how many residents we have in the Derry facility. We may or may not have a team member who can stay at the Derry facility to heat up the food and serve it.

So, if you would like to help serve a meal once a month to homeless families in Derry, or if you have more questions, please email me at randybrown1119@gmail.com or call me at 609-240-6049.

Thanks: the families receiving the food and the operators of the Family Promise program greatly appreciate any help we can provide. (I think they like our meals better than the ones they get from other churches.) There are other ways to help out at the Derry facility, as described in the previous newsletter. Please call me if you would like to learn more about those opportunities.

~Randy Brown

PRESENTED BY
 First Parish
 Congregational
 Church, UCC 

4TH ANNUAL TRIVIA NIGHT
To benefit the historic 1769 Meetinghouse

\$30 per person,
 or \$200 for
 team of 8
 Admission includes
 appetizers, desserts,
 and a night of game
 play!

**Registration
 & More Info:**
 Scan me 

**SATURDAY
 October 18**
 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM | Boys & Girls Club
 40 E. Derry Rd
 Derry, NH

**Family-friendly
 event, but
 game is best
 enjoyed by
 ages 13+**

**Cash Bar
 Live Music
 50/50 Raffle
 Ticketed Raffle**

East Derry Contra Dance

3rd FRIDAYS of the MONTH—7:30-10:30

BAND: JumpStart (Paul Lizotte, fiddle; Victor Troll, piano, Gene Albert, bass), Joe Pollock (mandolin), Nancy Fiske (clarinet, recorder)

First Parish Church Hall
 47 E Derry Rd., East Derry NH

COME DANCE WITH US!



CONTACT: Paul Lizotte
wordworthy2@gmail.com
 (603) 438-9921
 WEBSITE: wordworthy2.org

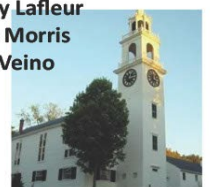
Free to all members of First Parish Church

2025

Dates	Caller
Sept 19	Gale Wood (<i>FREE dance</i>)
Oct 17	Don Veino
Nov 21	Alice Morris (<i>FREE dance</i>)
<i>(This month the dance will be in the Upper Village Hall—just across the street)</i>	
Dec 19	Sandy Lafleur

2026

Dates	Caller
Jan 16	TBA
Feb 20	Dereck Kalish
Mar 20	Sandy Lafleur
April 17	Alice Morris
May 15	Don Veino
June 19	TBA



v

Sugar Plum Fair



Saturday, Nov. 22

9am – 3pm

First Parish Church
46 E. Derry Rd., Derry NH 03038

Crafts & Gifts
Live Music
White Elephant



Cookie Walk
Pecan Rolls
Lunch – Raffles

81st Annual! • Admission Free!



Breakfast with Santa!

Sat. Dec. 13, 8-11am

*Selfies, games, crafts,
raffles & more!*

\$10 for adults, \$5 for kids 3-8
Free for kids 2 & under

First Parish Church

47 E. Derry Rd.
E. Derry NH

Proceeds benefit the ongoing
Historic Preservation work
on the 1769 Meetinghouse
at First Parish.



Holiday Concert



Sat. Dec. 6, 2025

3:00 PM

First Parish Church

47 E. Derry Rd., Derry

\$20 Adults, \$5 Kids ≤12

★ \$2 discount through Nov. 1 ★

Online, at First Parish,
or at the door.

www.fotmh.org

Proceeds benefit the ongoing Historic
Preservation work on the landmark
1769 Meetinghouse at First Parish





Monday 9-2:30
Tuesday 9-2:30
Wednesday 9-2:30
Thursday 9-2:30
Friday 9-12

*The Church office will be closed
 from October 20th - 24th, Debi will be on Vacation.*



The Church Calendar

We keep our public Google calendar up to date with all church events, meetings and all groups that are using our building. Check out our calendar on our website <http://www.fpc-ucc.org> or by clicking https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=fpc-ucc.org_6s1980fengv0fd17h843u246lc%40group.calendar.google.com&ctz=America%2FNew_York

Electronic Giving

We have electronic giving available for anyone who would like to offer a paperless gift to the church.
 God Bless You!



First Parish

@First-Parish • 7 friends

We accept Venmo. Please note **where** you want the contribution to go. **General fund** (we need all the help we can to get to close the books in the black); **Mission – which one?** Or Meetinghouse or some other fund. Make sure you pick the right Venmo account – see our account picture on the left.

First Parish Church's Identity Statements:

The United Church of Christ is guided by covenants rather than creeds. We don't tell you what you must believe. As an organization we discern how we see ourselves in God's Creation. We are then guided by various statements, which are voted upon by the entire congregation at a meeting called for that purpose. See below our Mission Statement, Our Open & Affirming Statement and our new Vision Statement.

Mission Statement

(Background: First Parish worked with nationally known consultant Alice Mann to discern who we were as a church. The result was the Mission Statement. Over the past decade leaders have looked at this statement to see if it still fits. It does and so it stands.)

“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.”
(Adopted April 2000)

Open & Affirming Statement

(Background: In 2013, First Parish underwent a dedicated study with the goal of discerning whether we felt called to become Open & Affirming. The result of that process was a vote to be listed as Open & Affirming and the following statement.)

“We affirm Christ's call to love God and love our neighbors as ourselves. We therefore pledge ourselves to be open to and affirming of all people of every age, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, socioeconomic status, family configuration, or cultural background. All who affirm the love of Christ in their lives are welcome into this community and to share fully in its life and ministry. We rejoice in the worth, gifts, and dignity of every person as a child of God.” (Adopted January 2014)

Vision Statement

(Background: In 2023, the Council recognized that although we had a Mission Statement that we liked, we lacked a Vision Statement. The following is the result of this process.)

“To live our faith by being a compassionate, accepting, and generous presence in the community: a church where all people find purpose and belonging.” (Adopted January 2024)



**First Parish
Congregational Church, UCC**

(603) 434-0628

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 114

E. Derry, NH 03041

Office Hours

Generally, our office is open

Monday through Friday 9am-2:30pm

Please call ahead to make sure we are
in the office

Online

www.fpc-ucc.org

facebook.com/fpcucc

Bridge Pastor

Reverend Robert Fellows

pastor@fpc-ucc.org

Office Manager

officemgr@fpc-ucc.org

First Parish Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

47 East Derry Road

PO Box 114

Derry, NH 03038