

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



2026 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

Growing Faith Like a Garden

There is something sacred about the month of May in New Hampshire. The earth softens, the days stretch a little longer, and signs of new life begin to appear all around us. Gardens are being planned, seeds are being planted, and we are reminded that growth—both seen and unseen—is always unfolding in God’s time.

Jesus often spoke in the language of gardens. He told stories of seeds scattered on different kinds of soil, of mustard seeds growing into great shrubs, of vines and branches deeply connected. These images remind us that faith, like a garden, is not something we force into being. It is something we tend, nurture, and trust.

As a church community, we might ask ourselves: What are we planting in this season?
Are we planting seeds of kindness, even in difficult conversations?
Are we cultivating compassion for our neighbors, near and far?
Are we making space for curiosity, growth, and the movement of the Spirit among us?

Gardening requires patience. Seeds do not sprout overnight. Roots grow deep before anything breaks through the surface. In the same way, our spiritual lives often develop quietly. Prayer, acts of service, moments of connection—these are the small, faithful acts that prepare the soil of our hearts.

And, of course, every gardener knows that tending a garden means more than just planting. It means watering, weeding, and sometimes letting go of what is not thriving. There are seasons when we are called to release old patterns or expectations that no longer give life. Though this can be difficult, it creates space for something new to grow.

The Pastor's Page – *continued*

The good news is that we are not gardening alone. God is both the gardener and the source of life itself. The Spirit moves like rain and sunshine, nurturing us in ways we may not always see or understand. Even when we feel dormant or uncertain, God is at work within us. This May, I invite you to notice the gardens around you—and within you. Take a moment to pause, to breathe, and to reflect:

- What is beginning to grow in your life right now?
- What needs tending or care?
- What might God be inviting you to plant for the future?

As we continue to grow together as a community of faith, may we trust the slow, holy work of God in our midst. May we be patient with ourselves and one another. And may we rejoice in every small sign of new life, knowing that each one is a glimpse of God's ongoing creation.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Carrie



~~~~~

## A Mother's Day Reflection

Parenting isn't really about how our kids turn out. It's about how we keep turning toward them—again and again—and how we keep turning toward God. Because motherhood isn't about raising perfect kids who never fall. It's about letting our kids see what it looks like to love a good God in real life. It's letting them see our faith not just when it's easy, but when it's not.

It's letting them see that we don't have it all together... and that we don't have to.

We're going to mess up. We're going to have moments we wish we could redo. But what matters is that our kids see us keep going, that they see us keep coming back to God, keep trusting, keep learning, keep loving.



Maybe the most important thing we show them is not how to get everything right, but how to return again and again to grace. And the truth is, this isn't just the work of parents. As parents, we do the best we can with what we have right now.

And as children, no matter our age, we learn to offer forgiveness the best we can right now. We're all growing. We're all still becoming. And through it all, there is grace— meeting us right where we are, every single day.

Pastor Carrie

## The Pastor's Page – *continued*

### A Mother's Day Prayer

Loving God, on this day, we hold up all the ways we come to motherhood with joy, with gratitude, with grief, with longing, with complicated hearts.

For those whose relationships with their mothers are tender or strained, for those who carry loss, distance, or unanswered questions, for those who are trying, in their own way, to heal meet them with your gentleness.

For those who mother in ways seen and unseen, strengthen them with your grace.

Help all of us to keep turning toward love, to keep choosing compassion, and to trust that you are at work in every imperfect, faithful step.

Amen.



### Dates For Your Calendar

National Day of Prayer is May 7<sup>th</sup>; the sanctuary will be open from 9 to noon for independent prayer

Coffee and Conversation will be on Tuesday May 12 at 10:00am in Currier Hall.

Lunch Bunch will be on Thursday May 28 at 11:30PM in Currier Hall

### Joyful Sundays Ahead on May 10, 2026

On Sunday, May 10. Pastor Carrie will be away, but she is grateful that our worship will be in wonderful the hands of Deb-Ellen Brown. She will be leading the service, bringing her thoughtful leadership and care to our time together.

This Sunday will also be a special and sacred occasion in the life of our church. We will celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism with Julie Greenfield and her family as we welcome Lucas into the household of God. Baptism is a beautiful reminder of God's promises of love, grace, and belonging and it is a moment for all of us to reaffirm our shared calling to nurture and support one another in faith.

Even in my absence, I encourage you to gather, worship, and celebrate this meaningful day together. Your presence will be a blessing to Lucas and his family, and a witness to the strength of our community.

## **A Pentecost: “In Us, Through Us, Together”**

Pentecost can sometimes feel like a moment from long ago, a rushing wind, tongues of fire, voices speaking across every barrier. A powerful story... but distant. Except it isn't. Because Pentecost was never meant to be a one-time event. It was the beginning of something that is still unfolding right here, right now.

The same Spirit that stirred that room full of disciples is still stirring hearts today. Not always with fire we can see or wind we can hear but in quieter, just-as-powerful ways. In the courage it takes to speak truth. In the nudge to reach out when it would be easier to stay silent. In the strength to keep going when life feels uncertain.

In the compassion that softens us toward one another.

Pentecost reminds us that God did not step back from the world, God moved closer. Closer in breath. Closer in presence. Closer in Spirit. And that means we are never left to figure this life out on our own. The Spirit is still moving in our communities, in our conversations, in our questions, in our becoming. Sometimes the Spirit shows up as disruption pushing us beyond what is comfortable or familiar. Sometimes the Spirit shows up as connection helping us understand one another in ways we couldn't before. And sometimes, the Spirit shows up as a quiet whisper “Keep going. I'm with you.”

Pentecost is not just about what happened.

It's about what is still happening. It's about trusting that even now, God is at work in us and through us speaking love into a world that desperately needs it. And maybe our call is not to wait for wind or fire, but to pay attention. To notice where the Spirit is already moving and to be brave enough to move with it. Because the story of Pentecost is still being written. In us. Through us. Together.

Please join us for worship Sunday May 24 to celebrate Pentecost and be sure to wear RED!





## Mission and Coffee and Conversation

You are warmly invited to join us for a special Coffee & Conversation gathering on May 12 at 10:00 a.m. in Currier Hall. All are welcome—bring a friend and join us for a morning of fellowship, learning, and inspiration.



You're invited to join us for **Lunch Bunch** on May 28<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 a.m. in Currier Hall. Bring your own lunch and enjoy a relaxed time of conversation and connection. Coffee and treats will be provided. All are welcome, come as you are and stay as long as you're able!

## Deacons

The Webster's Dictionary defines change as making (someone or something) different; alter or modify. Replace (something) with something else, especially something of the same kind that is newer or better; substitute one thing for (another). Sometimes change means we all must give a little to get a lot!

It is great joy to see the kids line up in the sanctuary for church school, and the families with babies that are to be baptized in the next weeks. With growing comes growing pains and with everyone's co-operation we will make it through this transition until the rest of the restoration is complete, yes there is more work to be done under the Meeting House.

At our meeting we reviewed the Lent and Easter celebrations, and it all seemed to go smoothly, needing very few adjustments in the next year.

Our new arrangement for assigning Deacons of the Day to each Sunday is working out really well. Your bulletin will tell you who is on duty each week but don't hesitate to approach any Deacon you see with a concern or question.

As we look forward to the month of May we have a great calendar of events to celebrate:

May 23<sup>rd</sup> Spring Fling

May 24<sup>th</sup> Pentecost – **Don't Forget to Wear Red!!**

May 31<sup>st</sup> Celebration Sunday

And one for early June:

June 6<sup>th</sup> Windham Pride Table

Blessings, warmth and love, be yours, Diane M. Breeden, Rachel Cobban, Tom Wood, Beth Hunter, Sharon Cann, Deb-Ellen Brown, Kathy Alger, James Hayden, and Karen Wilson.

# Christian Education

## Sunday School (SS) Calendar

May 3: Combined SS Class with special projects

May 10: SS after service

May 17: Last SS classes for 2025-2026 year

May 24: Memorial Day Weekend

May 31: Celebration Sunday with children being involved in many parts of the service

Other CE events Calendar

May 5: CE Board Meeting 6:30 hybrid

June 2: CE Board Meeting 6:30 hybrid

July 20-24: Vacation Church Camp 9-Noon



## Sunday School Recap

April was a short month for Sunday School. There was one Sunday where classes met downstairs. The elementary class got to experience Ooblek for our scripture on Thomas. When Jesus appeared to the disciples without Thomas and the disciples excitedly told him Jesus was alive, Thomas wanted to physically see Jesus. Ooblek is something you must see to believe it can be a solid and a liquid at once. In addition, the children took turns playing hide and seek with our Jesus plushy. Our Youth, discussed about does God still create things today? They learned that God sends his spirit to inspire people to make things. The youth also had a chance to enjoy the sunshine and create artwork outside that reminded them of God. In addition, we had an exciting intergenerational event to celebrate our church's birthday. There were cupcakes and potato themed snacks. People were able to check out four different stations to explore history and to enjoy activities to go along with each topic. Many people buzzed around Currier Hall to check out the historical facts, participated in the activities along with having conversations. It was wonderful to have so many join the festivities.



## Sunday School for May

May 3<sup>rd</sup>, we come back from school vacation as a combined class. We have special projects to complete. We will make gifts for their parents and something special to hand out to our congregation on Celebration Sunday. May 31<sup>st</sup> is Celebration Sunday and there will be discussion on how children would like to participate in service on this day as well.

May 10<sup>th</sup>, Happy Mother's Day! There will be Sunday School. If your children are able to attend, we will be sharing God's love. God's so loved the World is the theme for the elementary class with a fun game of "God so loved...". It's like the upset fruit basket game; a fun game they have enjoyed in the past. The Youth will learn what catholic with a lowercase c means. It is about the whole Christian church. God's love is in all these churches.

## Christian Education -continued

May 17<sup>th</sup> is the last Sunday School classes for this school year. The youth class has been learning about the Apostle Creed and about the UCC Statement of Faith. As they finish up their lesson with one last fun video about the Holy Spirit, they will then have a chance to write their own creed or faith statement. We will encourage those who are willing to share theirs during Celebration Sunday. In the Elementary class, we will wrap up with repeats of favorite games that they have played throughout the year. Along with a craft and science experiment to go with the scripture.

### Celebration - Sunday May 31

May 31<sup>st</sup> is a celebration! Sunday School is over and the children will celebrate by bringing service to life for all. They will be lay readers, collecting the offering, act out of the Gospel reading, and special presentation at the end. But we are not just celebrating the Sunday School children, we are celebrating all children. We have 12 new children in our church since last June and they will be presented with new bibles. Our church is so blessed with the growing families we see weekly.



Also, we are celebrating graduates. If anyone in your family is graduating high school, or receiving a higher degree, please share with us. Our Christian Education Director Steph Berg would love to make a slide show to share with the congregation of the graduates for 2026. If you know of a graduate, please email Ms. Steph at [cedirector@fpc-ucc.org](mailto:cedirector@fpc-ucc.org) with name, school, degree and a picture of the graduate. After service, we will have a celebration coffee hour. There will be cake! Come join and fellowship together before the busy June starts. Feel free to bring a dessert to share.

### Vacation Church Camp

Last Call for registrations! We are almost full! This is exciting. May 31<sup>st</sup> will be the last day to register unless we hit 30 campers before then. It is going to be a fun week on top of Snowball Mountain with catchy tunes, challenging games, enlightening science experiments, a story time they won't want to miss, and crafts to delight in. "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" Philippians 4:13 is our verse for the week.



Can't wait for the fun to begin!

Before the fun begins, we will need help. We started asking for donations and thank you to those who took an item or two to bring back. Please make sure you bring them to church next time you are in. We will have take & bring back kits again to help prepare for our crafts. This was so helpful last year. Be on the lookout for these this month. They will have cutting or sorting that is needed. If you can take one home and complete the task and bring it back, it is much appreciated.

Submitted by CE Director Steph Berg

CE Board: Anne-Marie Merriell (chairperson), Holly Gorgol (secretary), Sue Lindemann, Chris Cox, Eileen Cox, with friend of the board Paula Robinson

## Council Corner

Council met on April 16. The main issues discussed included:

### **Update on Sanctuary Work**

- The plans from the architect have still not been received, which will likely result in missing larger grant opportunities, as letters of intent are due in May. Despite this, it may still be possible to submit grant applications for more modest-sized projects. Once the assessment plan has been received, the Committee will be able to coordinate presentations and discussion groups to identify and prioritize projects.
- New ceiling fans will be installed in the Sanctuary this week.
- In order to utilize the lower level of the Meetinghouse for the White Elephant sale at the Spring Fling (May 23), breakdown must be completed no later than the Saturday after the event (May 30), as the area must be completely clear during the scheduled fire department inspection on that day. We need a number of breakdown volunteers to ensure this happens and does not fall on a small number of organizers. Contact Anne Engelhardt if you are able to help clear out unsold items on Saturday May 23-Friday May 29. Watch for work party requests from the committee and volunteer, please.
- The New Hampshire Preservation Alliance will be visiting the Sanctuary on Thursday, April 16, as a potential site to host their annual awards ceremony.
- **Safe Church Update:** Safe Church is looking for volunteers to serve as the door attendant during Sunday School.

### **Thrift Shop Update**

- A formal Committee has been established, with officers: Co-Chairs, Julie Greenfield and Anne-Marie Merrill; Finance Representative, Anne Englehardt; Secretary, Kathy Pottle; and Council Liaison, Cathy Zylinski. The Committee will begin submitting official minutes to the office, and financial reports to the Treasurer.
- The first pop-up sale raised \$1,300. Additionally, there were some guests present at Easter Service who heard about the church through the pop-up.
- A pop-up event is scheduled for each month for the remainder of the year.
- 10% of profits will be designated to Missions, 50% to the General Fund, and 40% will remain with the Thrift Store to cover expenses for racks, advertising, etc. The percentages will be revisited after the next three (3) pop-up events.
- The Committee has been working with Brookside to learn about the logistics of establishing a permanent home. The events are labor-intensive, requiring several volunteers.

### **Space Planning Update**

- The drawings of proposed storage space for Sanctuary decorations that Mr. Lindemann presented at the March Council meeting were intended to be representative only. Formal storage decisions and designs have not been determined.
- **The CE Committee** is also exploring how to best utilize the John classroom.
- **Conflict of Interest Forms:** The Personnel Board will meet on Monday to review outstanding COI forms, which are required annually of all members of Council, Boards, and committees.

## **Treasurer's Report**

- The General Fund cash balance is \$42,685; Building Rehabilitation Fund balance is \$167,270; Missions Fund balance is \$12,942.
- Promissory note (mortgage): \$15,470 was recently paid to the bank to pay down the mortgage. The bank will be re-setting the monthly payment of the loan for the remaining 182 months on the note at a lower amount to reflect the current balance (about \$245,000). Over the last year, the loan has been reduced by \$49,000.
- Income and expenditures: Mortgage pledges are about halfway to the goal amount. Pledge and plate income are above the YTD budget projections. Total income is \$14,467 better than YTD budget. Expenditures are about \$3000 over the budgeted amount, due to high heating oil costs and purchase of new smoke detectors. Net income is \$11,114 above YTD projections. We continue to need everyone's participation to eliminate the projected deficit.
- **Christian Education:** Twelve age-appropriate Bibles will be presented to children in the Congregation at the end of the school year. All of the children are new to the community. Children do not need to attend Sunday School to receive a Bible. The CE Committee is currently preparing for Vacation Church School.
- **Missions & Outreach Report:** The Lenten giving campaign brought in \$623. The Congregation is encouraged to wear red on May 24 in celebration of Pentecost Sunday. A representative from REACH attended the April Coffee and Conversation to discuss their work with victims of domestic violence. Mission would like to have posters available in all bathrooms with information about how victims can seek help
- **Facilities Report:** New pulls have been installed on all of the kitchen drawers and cabinets. Renovations to the front steps are almost complete, pending a final skim coat. Numerous other small items were addressed by the Board.
- **Deacons Report:** There are three upcoming baptisms scheduled. The Deacons are currently seeking an additional rocking chair for the back of the Sanctuary. Please let them know if you have one available. Windham Pride will be held on June 6 from 12 PM to 4 PM. Our church is planning to have a tent, as usual.
- **Clerk's Report:** Memberships for Pastor Deborah Roof, Liz Greenberg, and Debbie Gline Allen have all been transferred to their new congregations. This will be Ms. Page's final in-person Council meeting before moving to Pennsylvania. She is away in May, but able to provide notes remotely in June if necessary. She made the announcement on April 19 that the Council is seeking a new Clerk. Please contact her or Randy if you are interested.
- **Assistant Moderator/Finance Chair Report:** The Church is expecting paperwork from the bank that requires a signature by May 1. Finance will review the paperwork for any problems and make a recommendation to Council via email re approval. Council members will respond to an email request for their vote this week to ensure the paperwork is reviewed and signed in a timely manner. The interest rate on the loan will be reset on June 28, per the terms in our original agreement. We are investigating ways to minimize the rate increase. A separate checking account will be set up for the Thrift Shop.
- Other items: The Horton Center fundraiser, Souper Saturday was held on April 11 in Concord. The Women's Fellowship Spring Gathering was held on April 15.

Randy Brown, Moderator

## 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 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 and 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 and 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](mailto:bbwtextiles@gmail.com)

## Missions

Finances remain strong for Mission for which the Board is grateful. On April 14 a representative from REACH spoke at the coffee hour. Federal funding for the organization's food needs had run out and would not be available until June 30 so the Mission Board voted to buy food gift cards for their population in need. Please remember while shopping in May to start buying nonperishable food items for the food drive that will be donated to them in June.

Pentecost Sunday is May 24. Strengthen the Church campaign information will be coming in May also. We will celebrate how this endeavor assisted the Raymond church in its start up.

A process for scholarships has been created. There is still money available for Horton Center, Starr Island and perhaps any other programs that encourage mission work.

On Communion Sunday, June 7, we will collect food for the REACH organization. Please be ready to donate canned tuna and chicken, spaghetti sauce, pasta, peanut butter, jelly, healthy cereal and granola bars.

---

### Raffle Basket Ideas for the Spring Fling

Your past donations have been incredible and have helped make the raffle table a major success often raising over \$1,000 to support First Parish Church. We can't wait to see what you create this spring!

You can package your items in a clear plastic bag, a basket, a decorative container, or even a box wrapped in festive paper. Get creative and have fun with a theme!

Some popular ideas include:

- Seasonal décor
- New puzzles, games, or toys
- Spring and summer accessories
- Boston sports memorabilia
- Gift cards (always a favorite!)
- Scratch tickets
- Homemade crafts or hostess gifts



You might also consider themed baskets like a date night, baking with kids, gardening, or a “pamper yourself” self-care kit. If you need inspiration, there are plenty of ideas online to spark your creativity.

Donations can be dropped off in the church office beginning Sunday, May 9, and no later than noon on Thursday, May 21.

We look forward to seeing you at the Spring Fling on Saturday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>

## SPRING FLING 2026



Here we are, just weeks away from our 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Fling event that is on May 23rd — and we need your help in making this a fun family event.

We are still looking for more vendors and crafters to exhibit, they can even choose to be outside — if the weather is in agreement - if you know of anyone interested — reach out to Cathy Pottle for more details (clpottle@yahoo.com) or (603) 497-0437.

Spring Fling wouldn't be complete without our wonderful plant sale! It's time to clean out your flower beds and hopefully donating any perennials that you might be dividing to the sale. Anne-Marie Merrill and friends will have some amazing offerings for sale. Got some seeds started — consider donating your seedlings also.

The White Elephant Sale will be going on also, back in the old library/music room of the meeting house. Donations will be accepted, please work with Anne Engelhardt for more details.

Raffles, raffles, raffles — donations for these can be discussed with Carol Guerrin.

Spring Fling wouldn't be complete without our Cookie Walk — it is not too late in the season to get those ovens going to make amazing volumes of your delicious cookies — remember — Sugar Plum Fair — 2025 ... we were sold out by 10:30.

Please take time to fill out our volunteer sign-up sheet — so we know who we can count on for working at this event.

Cathy Zylinski, Julie Greenfield, Anne Engelhardt, Anne-Marie Merrill, Carol Guerrin, Beth Hunter and Cathy Pottle

**Dear Beloved Church Family,**

Most of you know who I am, but for those who do not (and we have a lot of new members – thanks be to God!) I will provide a brief introduction.

My name is Diana Sweeney, and I have been a member at First Parish Congregational Church for over 25 years. As a matter of fact, I was married in this church 25 years ago to my husband Joe. We live in Manchester and have 3 grown children, 3 grandchildren and 2 calico cats. Joe is retired and is a self-taught artist (painter) and woodworker. He is the perfect “retired guy” with plenty to keep him busy! I am employed full time as an HR manager for a small certification company in Salem, NH. I have been at the same company for over 25 years and in those years have held many positions, but HR has been at the very root of all of them. I truly love what I do (most of the time) but about 10 years back I realized that there was more that God was asking of me. In fact, God had been asking for a long, long while, but I wasn’t ready to listen.

**A Call to Ministry**

In the summer of 2016, I accepted a call to ministry which had been beckoning to me most of my life. I met with my pastors and then petitioned our Council (and the membership) to support me on my journey to ministry. Later that year I was granted status in the UCC as a Member in Discernment (MID). (There is more about my call in writing if you are interested)

**What is a Member in Discernment**

A Member in Discernment (MID) is just that. It is one who has a call to ministry and begins the discernment process of who, what, why, where one’s call might lead. So, for the past 10 years I have been in discernment, in covenant with God, my local church and the UCC to explore where God’s call leads me. I have always felt a call to ministry that takes me outside the walls of the church. That said, I have been discerning chaplaincy and other ministries that reach beyond the confines of parish ministry.

**Education:** Part of the discernment process requires the MID to take required courses to fulfill the educational aspect of ministry. Since I was unable to attend seminary full time, I chose an alternate path which includes coursework from various seminaries and UCC-recognized Schools of Ministry. To date, my “required” coursework is complete. For a list of those courses and my grades please feel free to reach out. I’m happy to provide you with this information.

**The Marks of Ministry:** In addition to or in conjunction with the educational piece, a MID is expected to use the Marks of Faithful and Effective Ministry as a discernment and evaluation tool to reflect upon foundations, competencies and areas for growth in authorized ministry. Each year I have added to these competencies in various ways I have a report available should any of you wish to have a look, just let me know and we can sit down over a cup of tea or coffee and chat in more detail.

## A Note from Diana Sweeney – continued

**Pulpit Supply:** Some of you may wonder why you don't see me every Sunday in church. During my educational journey I was taking courses each semester (Fall, Winter, Spring) in addition to working my full-time job. Thus, weekends were for reading, studying and writing. AND... I was preaching! Some of you would find me in the pulpit of FPC here and at times I was invited to supply preach for pastors who would be away. I cannot tell you how much I enjoy preaching! Not only the preaching part, but the sermon preparation or “crafting” as we often call it. I continue to provide this and will until I enter my Field Ed\* (below).

### **Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)**

Another requirement for MID's is to take at least one unit of CPE. This means that the MID will attend classes and work directly with folks either in a hospital setting, a hospice setting, jail or other medical venue. From August of 2021 through May of 2022, I spent each weekend and several evenings at Holy Family Hospital meeting with my team and visiting patients in the hospital. This experience confirmed for me that I have a calling to chaplaincy. I have the opportunity to take 3 more units to fulfill this requirement should I choose to go in this direction. Oversight: Once per quarter I meet with a mentoring team comprised of 4 people. Three of those folks are pastors and one is a representative from my local church committee. One of the three is also a personal mentor. Each year, this mentoring team submits an Annual Renewal Report to the NH Conference who will then interview me and decide whether to allow me to continue my process toward ordination. Each year I have been granted (unanimously) the blessing of continuing my journey.

### **What have I discerned in these 10 years?**

- ❖ I am definitely called to ministry – and the UCC is where I belong
- ❖ I feel strongly that I am called to chaplaincy, but need to keep an open mind and listen for God's guidance
- ❖ I made the choice to go through with ordination (I didn't intend on this when I answered my call)
- ❖ The Holy Spirit is constantly moving me in my discernment and doors really do open and close
- ❖ What it means to be in covenant and how sacred that is
- ❖ I am loved and valued more than I could ever imagine
- ❖ I am worthy and I am enough
- ❖ There is much work to be done in God's “Kingdom” and I'm all in
- ❖ I need to “give up my day job”

## Next Steps

### **Re-establish my “Local Church Discernment Committee”**

Somewhere in the middle of my journey, it was brought to my attention that I needed to form a Local Church Committee. The committee should have 3-4 members and one of those members would be appointed as my representative to my Mentoring Team. That individual would attend the quarterly meetings with my Mentoring Team to provide feedback to the team regarding local church activities. The committee provides support to the MID and remains alert to the changing needs of the MID. They are also responsible for providing the MID with opportunities to preach, teach, and develop leadership skills within the Local Church. Regular meetings include feedback from the committee, new opportunities and prayer for and with the MID.

Originally, I formed a committee of three members. Two of those members are still with us and one (the one that was my Rep) has departed. I am currently discerning who I will ask to fill that position and will probably choose a 4<sup>th</sup> member to join us as I am coming to the finish line. I am hoping to meet with the committee soon to update them and to bring us all together as it has been quite a while since we have gathered.

### **\*Field Education**

One of the final requirements for ordination is to complete a unit of Field Ed. Generally, this means that I will be placed in a supervised ministry setting either in a church, a chaplaincy role or other type of ministry for a specified period. During this time, I would incorporate theological reflection and practical service. It has been recommended by my mentoring team that my Field Ed be in a parish setting. We are still working on the “where” and if all goes well, I will begin my Field Ed in the Fall of this year.

So, this is what I’ve been up to. I do attend most services online and those which I do not, I try to catch up on video. Now that things are slowing down a bit (other than pulpit supply which should pick up in the summer) I look forward to attending church more often over the next few months and seeing your smiling faces. I am always open to conversation and any questions or concerns you may have. I’m happy to set up a time with any of you to answer any questions or just to have an informal chat if you want to get to know each other a little better or just to catch up.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to you, my beloved church family and for your continued support, encouragement and prayers as I move forward on this journey. Know that you are always in my prayers.

Until we meet again, may God’s grace and peace be with you!

Your Sister in Christ,

Diana



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



## 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=fpcucc.org\\_6s1980fengv0fd17h843u246lc%40group.calendar.google.com&ctz=America%2FNew\\_York](https://calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=fpcucc.org_6s1980fengv0fd17h843u246lc%40group.calendar.google.com&ctz=America%2FNew_York)

## Electronic Giving



First Parish

@First-Parish • 7 friends

We have electronic giving available for anyone who would like to offer a paperless gift to the church. God Bless You! **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 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](http://www.fpc-ucc.org)

[facebook.com/fpcucc](https://facebook.com/fpcucc)

**Pastor**

Reverend Carrie Burnap

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

**Office Manager**

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

**First Parish Congregational Church**

United Church of Christ

47 East Derry Road

PO Box 114

Derry, NH 03038