

First Parish United Church of Christ (Congregational)
P.O. Box 228, 176 West High Street, Somersworth, NH 03878-022
Church Office: (603) 692-2057
Thomas Gardner, Pastor
An Open & Affirming Church
www.somersworthfirstparish.org
pastor@somersworthfirstparish.org



APRIL, 2026

YOU ARE INVITED



HOLY WEEK

Maundy Thursday Worship Service

April 2nd, 7PM, Sanctuary

Good Friday Worship Service

April 3rd, 4:30PM, Sanctuary (note time change)

Easter Worship Service

April 5th, 9AM, Sanctuary



Monthly Fellowship

April 12th, following worship, Church Hall

Spring Fling Fair

April 25th, 9AM-1PM, Church Hall

Pancake Breakfast - Fundraiser for Camp Scholarships

May 3rd, 9AM worship followed by breakfast

Church Clean-Up

May 16th, 9AM (storm day-May 30th)





Easter morning, in Gospel of Matthew, does not begin with certainty. It begins in darkness, in grief, and in the quiet act of showing up. The women go to the tomb not expecting a miracle, but simply to be near the one they loved. What they encounter instead is disruption. The earth shakes, the stone is rolled away, and the world as they knew it is undone. Resurrection enters not as a gentle idea, but as a force that refuses to leave anything unchanged.

And still, their first response is fear. Matthew tells us they leave the tomb afraid, and yet filled with great joy. That tension feels true to life. Resurrection does not erase sorrow or pretend that death has not wounded us. It meets us in the reality of loss and speaks a new word. When the risen Christ meets them on the road, it is not after their fear has passed, but right in the middle of it. Resurrection comes to us as we are, still uncertain, still becoming.

There is also a quiet justice in this story. The first witnesses are not the powerful, but the women who remained when others fled. In a world that often dismissed their voices, they are entrusted with the good news. At the same time, those in power try to control the story, to contain what cannot be contained. Even here, we recognize something familiar. Truth and life push forward, even when systems resist them.

So Easter calls us to turn toward life. If Lent has been a season of repentance, then resurrection is a season of courage. It invites us to trust that love is stronger than death, and that God is still at work in a broken world. Our prayer becomes simple. Risen Christ, meet us on the road, and send us to live as people who believe that new life is already breaking through.



Pastor Tom Gardner's Contact Information:

Email: thomasedwardgardner@gmail.com

Pastor Tom's cell: 603-393-4934



The Deacons have received a request to consider changing the time of our church service from 9:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.. We would like to invite our church members to share their thoughts and input on this possible change.

As you reflect on this request, please keep in mind the following:

- * There would be a cost involved in updating the sign by the roadside.
- * We must be mindful of New Journey Church, whose service begins shortly after ours concludes, as we do not want to create any conflict.
- * In addition, our service time returns to 9:00 a.m. during the summer months.
- * At this time, the Church Council has expressed that they are not in favor of making this change.

To help guide our decision, we are developing a brief survey that will be distributed in May. We appreciate your thoughtful input as we consider this matter together.

Blessings.
The Deacons



Hello everyone, I just wanted to let everyone know that our all church clean up is scheduled for May 16th starting at 9am until all tasks are completed (usually approximately one hour). If it rains that day the rain date is May 30th same time.

MINISTRY OF PRAYER & CONCERN

Bill Behrmann, *Kindred Transitional Care and Rehab, 307 Plaza Dr., Dover, NH (formerly Dover Rehab)*

Carroll Dudley, *Harmony Homes By The Bay, 40 Briggs Way, Durham, NH 03824*

Richard Jackson *Wentworth Home, 795 Central Ave., Dover, NH 03820*

Beverly Lyndes *The Lodges Care Center, 51 Main St., Springvale, ME 04083*

Ida Patterson, *Benchmark at Rye, 295 Lafayette Rd., Room 106, Rye, NH 03870*

--and all who are residents in long-term care and assisted living facilities in our area.

Please do send your cards and greetings.



In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Allison Brock
Norm Brown
Kevin Cazeault
John Chesley
John & Carol Cummings
Victoria Eversman
Dorota Grześkowiak

Vicki Hincman
Cynthia Jutras
Linda Palmer
Steven Parsley
Kirsten Russell
Kim Shurtleff
Don Whitten

AND ongoing prayer focus during these days:

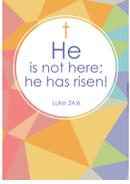
- *For our Granite State Association Churches.*
- *That God will bless and guide our Conference Minister, Rev. Gordan Rankin,*
- *That God will bless and guide Pastor Tom Gardner.*
- *Faith formation ministries for all ages - for building strong faith foundations, at all ages and stages of life.*
- *Working together in community - to build community - and to implement strategies for prevention, while providing resources for treatment and recovery from substance misuse and its stigma.*
- **Jesus said: Love God. Love Neighbor. Love Self.**
- *Those serving in the Armed Services and in support capacities around the world.*
- *The UKAMA Partnership between the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe and the NH Conference UCC.*
- *Continued invitational ministry and mission here at First Parish United Church of Christ: invite, include, involve in the good news way of Christ!*
- *We pray for those who are living with life-threatening illnesses; those who are aging or living with cancer, have mental health concerns and those who are caregivers.*
- **We long for peace in our world**, praying that our nation and world leaders will work together in this time of need, finding peace and harmony with all - the sick, poor, homeless, hungry, victims of violence and abuse, our LGBTQ+ community, refugees, immigration concerns, violence in the schools and violence in our streets.
- **We give thanks for all those who have been working non-stop** behind the scenes at First Parish so that the day-to-day needs move along seamlessly. For our committees that oversee our finances, our children, our prayer needs, worship and building concerns, plus our local outreach with The Community Food Pantry and the Table of Plenty.
- **We are hopeful** that God will bless our own church growth in reaching out to new people as we keep the face of First Parish UCC in our community. We share the good news of God's light and love in Jesus Christ, being faithful disciples while inviting and including all who are seeking hope and a spiritual home.



Thank you for your donations of Easter Basket gifts!

Because of your generous donations of Easter basket gifts, **36 children from the Community Food Pantry** were blessed with special treats, and their parents are very grateful.





APRIL LECTIONARY READINGS

Maundy Thursday - Purple

April 2, 2026

Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11/14

Psalms 116:1-2, 12-19

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Good Friday

April 3, 2026

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Psalms 22

Hebrews 10:16-25 or Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9

John 18:1-19:42

Resurrection of the Lord - White

April 5, 2026

Isaiah 25:6-9

Psalms 114

1 Corinthians 5:6b-8

Luke 24:13-49

Second Sunday of Easter - White

April 12, 2026

Acts 2:14a, 22-32

Psalms 16

1 Peter 1:3-9

John 20:19-31

Third Sunday of Easter - White

April 19, 2026

Acts 2:14a, 36-41

Psalms 116:1-4, 12-19

1 Peter 1:17-23

Luke 24:13-35

Fourth Sunday of Easter - White

April 26, 2026

Acts 2:42-47

Psalms 23

1 Peter 19-25

John 10:1-10



April 1 Rachel Fournier, Andy Allen,
Shawn Richer

April 9 Clay Oelkuct

April 10 Marc Cote

April 13 Kathy Erickson, Peter Erickson

April 14 Linda Burk

April 19 Christina Giles

April 23 *Terry & Linda Burk*

April 24 Mark Rideout

April 26 Barbara Pay

April 27 Marilyn Sirois

If you have another birthday or anniversary that you would like to have listed in the bulletin, please contact Debbie Hall at 603-781-8230 or d_hall47@comcast.net.



Do you know someone who needs some prayers? Please contact one of the Prayer Group members listed below:

Priscilla Chellis, (207) 698-5977,
Email: prchellis@comcast.net

Carol Cummings, (603) 842-5059,
Email: :
johnandcarol55@comcast.net

Fran Karlik, (603) 397-5674, Email:
kinross2@comcast.net



Food Collection for the pantry: As an ongoing mission, we are collecting canned pasta (such as Spaghetti O's) and canned baked beans (such as B&M baked beans). Donations can be placed in the basket in the narthex.



On Sunday May 3rd, the women's fellowship will be holding a pancake breakfast following worship. During breakfast, Sue Vollkommer's granddaughter's, Cassidy and Kaleigh, will be there to lead us in their favorite grace from Horton Center, and hopefully a game or two. They will be bringing two or three of their friends from other churches who have attended Horton Center with them. The girls will talk with you about their experiences at Horton Center.

In the past, First Parish had a fund that helped to offset the cost of camp for students from our church who had an interest in attending any of the UCC summer camps. This breakfast will be an opportunity to start this fund up again. There will be a basket for donations.

We hope you will attend the breakfast, these girls absolutely love Horton Center, and I'm sure their stories will prove it! Thank you.



The women assembled 36 Easter baskets for the Food Pantry to distribute and would like to thank everyone who donated items. Each basket was filled with wonderful treasures that the children who receive them are sure to enjoy.

Now, the women are getting ready for their Spring Fling Fair, a variety of beautiful gifts for every occasion, including many of handmade items. We are also pleased to welcome vendors again this year. We hope to see you there and please tell your friends to come. The fair will be held on April 25th from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

The Women's Fellowship meets every Tuesday morning from 9:00 to 11:00 am, and all women are warmly welcome to join.

Happy Spring!



	February, 2026	Year-to-Date, 2026
Total Income	\$ 10,506.22	\$22,635.46
Total Expenses	\$ <u>8,252.61</u>	<u>\$21,541.86</u>
Net Income	\$ 2,253.61	\$ 1,093.60
Checking Account Balance as of February 28, 2026	\$ 23,175.06	Savings
Account Balance	<u>\$ 5,004.38</u>	Total
Checking and Savings	\$ 28,179.45	
Unavailable Checkbook Funds		<u>(\$3,497.12)</u>
Total Checkbook Funds Available		\$ 24,682.33
Memorial Fund Checkbook Balance		\$13,414.84
Mortgage Balance at Service Credit Union at 2/28/26		\$ 6,750.31

SPRING FLING FAIR

April 25, 2026

9am-1pm

First Parish Church UCC

176 West High Street

Somersworth, NH

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Seasonal items, crafts,
baked goods, themed gift baskets
along with a variety of items
from several area crafters.

