

**First Parish United Church of Christ
(Congregational)**

P.O. Box 228, 176 West High Street,
Somersworth, NH 03878-022
Church Office: (603) 692-2057
An Open & Affirming Church

www.somersworthfirstparish.org
pastor@somersworthfirstparish.org



January, 2023



**THE CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS
BEGINS AT 4:00PM ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24TH**

(Note time change)

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December 8, 2022

Dear Members and Friends of First Parish UCC Somersworth,

At the congregational meeting held on Sunday, December 4, 2022, members of First Parish United Church of Christ (Congregational), came together and voted to support the Call Agreement of Pastor Thomas Gardner. Twenty-seven members of First Parish voted to accept him as their half-time Settled Minister.

How blessed we are to have found Pastor Tom and to have him join our family after our long search for the right candidate. Pastor Tom is the 6th minister to be called into the ministry at First Parish in its 293 years of history. He is the 38th minister since the church's settlement in old Somersworth.

Pastor Tom will start his ministry with us on Sunday, December 18th, the Fourth Sunday of Advent, at our new worship time of 9am.

Please join us on the 18th and be there in support of our church's future and life together with Pastor Tom. For now, he'll be in our church office on Mondays, Wednesdays and Sundays He will continue to serve half time at the First Congregational Church of Farmington, NH but he is available by phone any time he is needed. More information will follow in the January Newsletter.

Again, please note our new worship time of 9am, beginning on Sunday, December 18th, and join us as we celebrate our church's new beginning with excitement and celebration of our new minister, Pastor Thomas Gardner.

Your Friends in Christ,

Kathleen Latchaw Priscilla Chellis Debbie Hall Julie Hurley
Cynthia Jutras Sharon Sirois Susan Vollkommer

Letter from Rev. Tom Gardner on next page

OUR NEW MINISTER, REV. THOMAS GARDNER & HIS CHILDREN



"Pastor Tom Gardner grew up in the New Jersey Pine Barrens, and graduated from Cairn University in Philadelphia in 2009. Since then, he has served churches in Indiana, Maine, and for the past 8 years, has lived and served in New Hampshire.

He says, "I have really come to love so much of what life here in New Hampshire has to offer. It's important to me to have opportunities to connect and serve in the local community, and that's something that our state does really well, and I'm grateful for those opportunities!"

Pastor Tom brings a personal and collaborative spirit to pastoral ministry. "Right now the world is so marked by division; its so important to listen to God's call to come together in love for each other and our community- to be the church in the world together."

Pastor Tom lives in Middleton with his family that includes his two sons and an assortment of pets and farm animals."

ANNUAL MEETING

This year's Annual Meeting will be held on **Sunday, January 29th** following worship. This meeting is open to everyone, but it is very important for members to attend, in order to meet our quorum. Reports from all committees need to be sent to Debbie Hall at d_hall47@comcast.net by **January 13th**.



MINISTRY OF PRAYER & CONCERN

Edith Bowen *The Residence at Silver Square*, 100 Sterling Way, Dover, NH 03820

Pat Hamel, *The Manor at Canyon Lakes*, #210, 2802 West 35th Ave., Kennewick, WA 99337-2583

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

Bob Philbrick, *Berwick Estates*, 75 Portland St., So. Berwick, ME 03908

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

Please do send your cards and greetings.



Sympathy is extended to the family of:

Christopher Perry (12/10/22) Family friend of Nancie Cameron

Betty Foley (12/12/22) Betty has been a long term member of First Parish. Her funeral will be on December 20th at Burns Funeral Home, Billerica MA.

May the blessing of hope and health surround their families.

Remember, every church activity is an opportunity for YOU to invite, include and involve someone who you know into our shared life here at First Parish Church.

You are the face of First Parish Church!



In Our Thoughts and Prayers

- Madeline Ashley (health)
- John Chesley (health)
- Sherie Dinger (health)
- Stephen Ferranti (health)
- Gina Fortier (health)
- Lynn Jackson (health)
- Bev Lyndes (health)
- Ida Patterson (health)

Those who walk with mental health concerns, those who walk the pathway of treatment and recover from addiction.

AND ongoing prayer focus during these days:

- *For our Carroll-Strafford Association Churches.*
- *That God will bless and guide Rev. Tom Gardner.*
- *That God will bless and guide our Conference Minister, Rev. Gordan Rankin, and Associate Conference Minister, Rev. Richard Slater*
- *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.*

Home for Christmas



Our Music Director, William Asher, entertained the audience at our "First Annual Christmas Concert" on December 10th by performing original Holiday songs, and music. He ended the evening by leading us in a wonderful Christmas sing along. What a talented musician!

It was a perfect way to get us all in the Holiday spirit! We are very fortunate to have him at our church!

Thank you, William.



THANK YOU, TERESA!

We were so fortunate to have Teresa Rogers leading us in worship the past three months. We initially asked her to lead worship for one month and she was willing to continue helping us until we hired our new settled pastor. We enjoyed her messages every week and loved her music and, especially, getting to know her. This picture is of Teresa singing "Mary, Did You Know" last Sunday.

Teresa is now in the final part of the process to get ordained and become a minister with her own church. We wish her well!



JANUARY LECTIONARY READINGS

First Sunday after Christmas - White

January 1, 2023

Isaiah 63:7-9

Psalm 148

Hebrews 2:10-18

Matthew 2:13-23

Epiphany of the Lord - White

January 6, 2023

Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14

Ephesians 3:1-12

Matthew 2:1-12

Baptism of the Lord - White

January 8, 2023

Isaiah 42:1-9

Psalm 29

Acts 10:34-43

Matthew 3:13-17

Second Sunday after Epiphany - White

January 15, 2023

Isaiah 49:1-7

Psalm 40:1-11

1 Corinthians 1:1-9

John 1:29-42

Third Sunday after Epiphany - White

January 22, 2023

Isaiah 9:1-4

Psalm 27:1, 4-9

1 Corinthians 1:10-18

Matthew 4:12-23

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany - White

January 29, 2023

Micah 6:1-8

Psalm 15

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

Matthew 5:1-12



Jan 3	John & Carol Cummings
Jan 8	Tyler Benner
Jan 10	Debbie Hall, William Hurley
Jan 12	Richard Shepherd, Rev. Tom Gardner
Jan 13	Garrett LeSiege
Jan 14	Paul Cazeault
Jan 17	Bob Philbrick
Jan 18	Dave Hamel
Jan 19	Josiah Allen, Jeffrey Libby
Jan 21	Richard Hurley
Jan 23	Sherry Cazeault
Jan 29	Kathy Latchaw, Krystian Lucey, Mike Watman

Table of Plenty

We need your help: Our team is serving at the Table of Plenty on Wednesday, March 1st and needs volunteers from our church to help. The meal is served from 4-5:30. We need help with preparing the meal from 3-4PM, serving from 4-5:30 and clean up from 5:30 to end. You can come for part of this time or all of it. The jobs are easy and fun.

If you are interested in helping or have questions, please contact Laurel Curtis at dkc2069@gmail.com or 603-969-1815 .



Linda Palmer
5885 Arbor Isle Way, Apt. 201
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577



Faith Formation

"For The Children" on our Facebook page will continue throughout the fall. It is our hope this will encourage children of all ages to read their Bible and see what amazing stories the Bible contains.



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

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The Women's Group has been meeting at 9:00 each Tuesday this past fall. We participated in Newington's Congregational Church's Holiday Fair and we made about \$1,400. We met on Tuesday, Nov. 29, 2022, the women voted to take \$1,500 from our account and donate it to the church's general account.

We also decided to bring our Holly Daze Fair "back home" in 2023. In order to do this we need your **time, talents, and treasures** to make this successful. There will be more information about this in the coming months.

Please consider joining this group of women on Tuesday mornings to work on a project or to just join in the conversation and bring a friend.

We wish you many blessings the Christmas season.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Sunday Worship and Sunday School, 9AM

"For The Children" virtual page is on the church's Facebook page every Sunday and Wednesday

Ministers: The People of the Church
Pastor: Rev. Thomas Gardner
Faith Formation Coordinator: Susan Vollkommer
Moderator: Nancie Cameron
Clerk:
Contracted Treasurer: Linda Gauthier
Assistant Treasurer: Richard Shepherd
Pianist/Choir Director: William Asher
Newsletter & Calendar Editor: Debbie Hall

CHURCH WORSHIP CANCELLATIONS

In the event of a church cancellation, we will send an "All Church" email notification and will announce it on Facebook.

If you do not have internet access and would like to be notified, please speak with a Deacon, so they can arrange a telephone call to you.



	November, 2022	Year-to-Date, 2022
Total Income	\$3,433.18	\$62,866.46
Total Expenses	<u>\$5,519.80</u>	<u>\$60,115.56</u>
Net Income	(\$2,086.62)	\$ 2,750.90
Checking Account Balance as of November 30, 2022		\$21,480.70
Savings Account Balance		<u>\$ 5,002.76</u>
Total Checking and Savings		\$26,483.46
Unavailable Checkbook Funds		<u>(\$4,967.02)</u>
Total Checkbook Funds Available		\$21,516.44
Memorial Fund Checkbook Balance		\$20,701.84
Mortgage Balance at Service Credit Union at 11/30/22		\$23,545.94

MISSIONS

Thank you so much for filling so many Christmas wishes from Riverside. Your generous gifts will make Christmas day a little brighter for the residents.

Do you have any hats and mittens for the hat and mittens tree in the Narthex. We will be bringing these to the local elementary schools after their winter break. The teachers use these donations for children who arrive at school without hats or mittens. The mittens are borrowed, the teachers hang them to dry after each use. Children can borrow mittens as often as needed. If a child needs a hat, they are given a hat that they are allowed to keep.



Dear First Parish UCC,

What an incredible blessing you are to the ministry of Operation Christmas Child. Thank you for the time, energy and love that went into packing your boxes this year!

Each shoebox represents the love that Jesus has for His children. It matters here and it matters for Eternity.

Blessings,

Rochester Drop Off Center



Thank You

Thank you to:

- * Our Advent Candle lighters - Laurel Curtis, Priscilla Chellis, Nancy Brown, Linda Palmer, Sue Vollkommer, Angie, Cassidy and Kayleigh Richer, Glen, Jennica, Garrett & Hannah LeSiege.
- * Everyone who helped set up Advent & Christmas decorations: Sue Vollkommer, Angie, Cassidy & Kayleigh Richer, Sharon Sirois, Richard Whitten, Priscilla Chellis, Christina Giles, Linda Palmer, Cynthia Jutras, Kathy Latchaw, Debbie Hall.
- * The Christmas Eve scripture readers: Laurel Curtis, Richard Whitten, Robin Hamel, Nancie Cameron, Kathy Latchaw, Debbie Hall