

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

**P.O. Box 228, 176 West High Street,
Somersworth, NH 03878-0228**

Church Office: (603) 692-2057

Bridge Pastor: Rev. Thomas Hourihan

An Open & Affirming Church

www.somersworthfirstparish.org

pastor@somersworthfirstparish.org



March, 2021

Easter Promise

*Easter is a promise
that God gave to you,
a promise of eternal life,
a season of renewal.
As the scent of roses
fills the air,
and blue jays sweetly sing,
remember that God is with you
and guiding you this spring.
For he vowed that he will
always be there,
to wrap you in his arms
when you need his care.
He has faith in you,
and his heart shall ever be true,
no matter what you way or do.
Even should you stumble or fall,
God will lead you a hand
to help you stand tall.*



Dear Members and Friends of First Parish,

I mentioned in my remarks to you this past Sunday that I have been with you for three months. And I also noted that one of you commented that “the rust” had been scraped away (I do hope you are right!). And, again, from my initial skepticism about functioning as your pastor under the rules of the ‘new normal,’ I have settled into my life with you joyfully. But I have quipped, half amusingly, that I wonder what it will be like to preach from the pulpit each Sunday after being able to say “cut” to Amy whenever I trip over my tongue or lose my way or someone’s phone rings, etc. We’ll see how it feels to come back to ‘normal’.

We are going to pass through the season of Lent, beginning with Ash Wednesday and forty days later, Easter to mark the resurrection. This forty day period replicates Jesus withdrawing into the desert for 40 days to fast and prepare himself before beginning his public teaching.

The number 40 is mentioned 146 times in Scripture. Here are a few examples:

- Moses spent 40 days on Mt. Sinai twice; *Exodus 24 and 34*
- Elijah spent 40 days traveling to Mt. Horeb; *1 Kings*
- God sent 40 days and nights of rain in the Great Flood of Noah; *Genesis 7*
- The Hebrews wandered in the desert 40 years while traveling to the Promised Land; *Numbers 14*
- Jonah’s prophecy of judgment gave Ninevah 40 days to repent or be destroyed; *Jonah 3*

The 40 day/year number is seen as a time of testing, trial or probation.

The word ‘lent’ comes from an Old English word meaning ‘spring season’ as it culminates with Easter, a spring rite itself. For centuries, Christians have marked this period with fasting (no meat for some), deep reflection and repentance. The customs and traditions of the ‘high churches’ are not those of Congregationalists historically; but we generally agree to a dedicated time in our church year when we do turn inward and reflect on our lives - take some spiritual inventory. I chuckle remembering as young Roman Catholic asking each other “what are you giving up for Lent?” Some would say chewing gum (I was never big on gum); some would say candy; we all had to abstain from meat on Friday (good for the local fishermen). And some would ‘add’ as well as ‘give up’. Go to mass, confession and receive communion each week. I served mass every day during Lent - the youngest altar boy in my church at 8 years old. I would get up at 6 and walk a half mile to church for the 7 am mass. Walk back home, make my lunch and walk another half mile to school. Lent was a very serious time for me.

I do not think we need to make the Lenten time a sacrificial time, but I am warm to the idea of using these 6 weeks or so to be more introspective - take a close look at who we are. I have not become the ‘perfect person’ I had hoped to become after a few decades of experience. Maybe there is still a little rust here and there, waiting to be scraped off. Let’s all go to the BODY SHOP together in these next 40 days.

Let us look to the day when we are all vaccinated and can worship, sing, pray and LISTEN TO HIS VOICE together.

Blessings and peace be with you.

Thomas



Join us for Maundy Thursday & Easter Services



Maundy-Thursday service-will be observed on April 1st, 2021 at 4:30 pm

Easter Service- will be celebrated on Sunday, April 4th, 2021 at 10:00am

Both services will be in our church Sanctuary and on Facebook and YouTube. We will need to follow the CDC guidelines of wearing masks, and social distancing must be observed. **If you are interested in attending either service in the church, please contact Nancie Cameron at bballmom824@yahoo.com or 603-781-5302 and let her know which ones you will be attending.**

This is what you can expect when you come to church:

- * *All people entering the church MUST wear a mask. If you are sick, please stay home.*
- * Upon entering the church, you will have your temperature taken with a no touch thermometer, you will be asked the typical Covid questions, extra masks will be available and you will be asked to use the hand sanitizer available.
- * You will be escorted to your seat as soon as you enter the church - conversations in the Narthex will be discouraged. We will be seating people from front to back, depending on when you arrive. If you have a disability that requires you to be seated in a specific area, please let Nancie Cameron know when you contact her. We ask that you not leave your seat to visit with others. Every other pew will be blocked off for spacing.
- * A bulletin will be placed on your seat earlier in the week. Please take it home with you - no recycling available in the church.
- * There will be no singing during the worship service. The hymnals and bibles will be temporarily removed.
- * We will have to wait for a safer time to include "passing the peace".
- * An offering plate will be placed in the back of the sanctuary or in the narthex for you to place offering envelopes as you leave.
- * Though Thomas and Annette would love to talk with each of you personally, this is not a safe time to do so. For this reason, they will remain in their seats until everyone has left.
- * At the end of the service, you will be escorted out of the church from the back row to the front. Please remember to leave at least 6 feet between you and the person in front of you.
- * The upstairs bathrooms are available for use. Disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer will be available in or near the bathrooms for your use. Please use the wipes to clean surfaces you touch before and after use (including door knobs).
- * Communion is strongly discouraged by the state and the insurance board, so we will wait until it is safe participate in it.
- * If, at any time, the state tells us we cannot worship in the church, we will contact you by email or phone and will resume services on Facebook and YouTube only.



MINISTRY OF PRAYER & CONCERN

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

Toddy Eastman, *Wentworth Home, 795 Central Ave, Dover, NH 03820*

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

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.

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!



Sympathy is extended to the families of

Helene Courier (11/28/20) *Ed Courier, husband, Lori Smith, daughter*

Lionel Couture (1/29/21) *Connie Ricker's brother-in-law*

Audrey Loika (12/23/20) *Mother to Roger Tricco & Alyson Quinnelly, Step Mother to Mike & Andy Allen & Alexis Dascoulias*

Helen Merrill (1/29/21) *Sharon Brown's mother*

May the blessing of hope and health surround these families.



Kenneth Bouffard [health] *Linda Palmer's cousin*

Craig Breden [health]

Priscilla Brock [health] *Robin Hamel's mother*

John Cummings [healing]

Sherie Dinger [healing]

Barbara Dudley [health]

Betty Foley [health]

Kathe Johnson [health] *Geoff Day's sister*

Ruth Lucey [healing] *Loved one of Mike & Sharon Sirois*

Gloria Martel [health] *Linda Farrell's mother*

Linda Palmer [healing]

Steve Ricker [health] *Connie Ricker's son*

Mike Sirois [healing]

Allen Storms [health]

Mike Watman [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 our Bridge Pastor, Rev. Dr. Thomas Hourihan and his partner, Annette Jacques.*
- *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.*
- *Peace in our world; harmony in our relationships, hope in our active response for transformational change.*
- *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!*
- *For our church family and community during the COVID 19 pandemic.*



Easter Flowers

We will be decorating the alter for Easter again this year!
The cost of the flowers is a donation of \$15.00 for each plant.

Please check off which plant you would like:

Tulip_____

Lily_____

Total_____

in memory of_____

celebrating_____

Make checks out to First Parish UCC
and send to before March 26th:
First ParishUCC
PO Box 228
Somersworth, NH 03878
attn: Kathy Latchaw

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Sunday Worship, 10AM (In church & on Facebook & You Tube)

“**For The Children**” virtual page is on the church’s Facebook page every Sunday and Wednesday

Ministers: The People of the Church

Bridge Pastor: Rev. Dr. Thomas Hourihan

Faith Formation Coordinator:

Susan Vollkommer

Moderator:

Clerk:

Contracted Treasurer: Linda Gauthier

Assistant Treasurer: Richard Shepherd

Organist/Choir Director: Bette Daley

Newsletter & Calendar Editor: Debbie Hall

MINISTER'S CONTACT information



Rev. Thomas Hourihan contact information.

603-433-2170 (home)

603-817-7312 (cell) (texting accessible)

thomasfhourihan@gmail.com

Be the Church

Protect the environment. Care for the poor.

Forgive often. Reject racism.

Fight for the powerless.

Share earthly and spiritual resources.

Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life.

God is still speaking

The **Purpose Statement**, the UCC reason for being, is drawn from a passage in Matthew’s Gospel: *To love God with all our heart, mind soul, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves.*

The **Mission Statement:** *United in Spirit and inspired by God’s grace, we welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all.*

The Vision: *United in Christ’s love, a just world for all.*



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

Dottie Douglas, (603) 332-6113,

Email: dottiedouglas@metrocast.net

Fran Karlik, (603) 397-5674,

Email: kinross2@comcast.net



MARCH LECTIONARY READINGS

Third Sunday in Lent - Purple

March 7, 2021

Exodus 20:1-17

Psalm 19

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

John 2:13-22

Fourth Sunday in Lent - Purple

March 14, 2021

Numbers 21:4-9

Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

Ephesians 2:1-10

John 3:14-21

Fifth Sunday in Lent - Purple

March 21, 2021

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Psalm 51:1-12 or Psalm 119:9-16

Hebrews 5:5-10

John 12:20-33

Palm Sunday - Red

March 28, 2021

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 31:9-16

Philippians 2:5-11

Mark 14:1-15:47 or Mark 15:1-39, (40-47)

Mark 11:1-11



March 2

Kaleigh Richer

March 9

Priscilla Chellis,

Kelsey Conley

March 14

Becky Scribner

March 22

Doug & Kelly Whitten

March 24

Genevieve Allen

March 28

Don Whitten,

Susan Sargent,

Jamie Conley

Women's Fellowship

Our ability to sit around the tables in the fellowship hall may not be possible right now, but that doesn't mean we can't take time to connect with each other by phone, a note, an email, or social media. You are all in my thoughts and I miss you.

We are looking into having a "virtual" Holly Daze Fair in November. So, if you are sewing, knitting, doing crafts or creating something, keep doing them! I will keep you updated as I get more information.

I am hoping as the weather gets warmer, we might be able to gather outside again.

If you are having trouble registering for the vaccine, please let me know. I would be glad to help. If you need a ride to get a vaccine, that can be arranged also. My phone number is 603-427-8958 or 603-978-0785.

Just some thoughts-

Winter is almost over and spring will soon be here. It is a time when we can renew our faith. Maybe it is a good time to reflect on our relationship with God. Who is God to you? What does it mean to "live your faith" in today's world? In this time of Lent, may you deepen your relationship with the God who loves you and is always with you.

Blessings~

Kathy Latchaw



Missions

The Mission Committee would like to ask you to keep a few dates in mind. On March 5th, the NHCUCC State Women's Fellowship celebrates the World Day of Prayer. This year they are joining with the women of Vanuatu in prayer. The focus of their worship will be Matthew 7:24-27. It is a story Jesus tells about the kingdom of Heaven using the image of a house and the land on which it is built. We would like to ask you to include the women of Vanuatu in your prayers, as well as all women across our great world.

February 24th was Wear Pink Day. It was started in Nova Scotia in 2007, and is becoming increasingly popular in many countries, including the United States. It is a day to call attention to childhood bullying. The date may have passed us by, but we would ask that you include in your daily prayers a special prayer for bullying awareness.

Horton Center is planning their summer activities and needs your help. They are looking for adult counselors and nurses. These can be week-long positions. If you are interested, or know someone who may be interested, you can reach out to Horton Center at hortoncenter.org. Horton center also has a wish list of things they need to help out with their sessions this coming summer. Check out their wish list at <https://hortoncenter.org/wish-list/> to see if there is something on their list that you could help them with.

We would also like to remind you to check on your friends, neighbors, and loved ones. It has been a long winter for those who are home bound. A phone call or letter is always appreciated.



The Wednesday afternoon and Sunday morning "For The Children" posts will continue through the fall months. My hope is to encourage children, or anyone who reads these posts, to read their Bible and continue with their daily prayers. Our building may be closed but our faith is strong. God is still speaking to us, we only need to listen.

DIACONATE

We would like to welcome Kathy Latchaw, Linda Palmer and Debbie Hall to the Diaconate. Debbie offered to stay another year. We were sad to see Susan Nye, Geoff & Nancy Day leave us and want to thank them for all they did for the church.

If you would be willing to either read a Psalm or the Lord's Prayer for a Sunday service, we are looking for people who would be willing to help with this. We enjoy being able to see each other on Sunday, even if it is on a computer. We can arrange to video you. You can contact Kathy Latchaw at 603-427-8958 or 603-978-0785.

PPRC

The PPRC met on 2/9/21 to begin compiling and reviewing any documents in our possession, or that we can find online, that might be helpful to us in putting together the profile for submission in our search for a settled pastor. We have some historical documents that would be helpful, from previous searches, we have gathered and reviewed profiles from other UCC churches to see what similarities we might find that would be helpful. We are planning to meet at least twice a month to start moving this process along.

If anyone has pictures of the following, please send them to Sharon at blondib00@aol.com: Living Nativity, Crafts at the Pines or Story Time at the Pines, Christmas in the church, Fairs, Auctions, Spaghetti Suppers, Choir, Easter, Blessings of the Animals, any pictures of "doings" at the church.

Respectfully,

The PPRC

TRUSTEES

31 January 2021 Financial Update

	JAN 2021	YEAR TO DATE	ANNUAL BUDGET
Income	\$9,388	\$9,388	\$57,635*
Expenses	\$7,321	\$7,321	\$80,022
Net	\$2,067	\$2,067	

*Note - \$22,387 will be available from Savings and Investments to balance budget

Savings and Checkbook balance: \$27,008.19

Mortgage balance: \$31,472.08

Custodian - Heidi our custodian ended her contract with First Parish in December - Rich Shepherd has expressed interest and is willing to start around Jun for \$5 less per hour than we were paying Heidi - the Trustees voted to give Rich first refusal

Plowing Contract and Shoveling - Plowing is going well - just need to ensure entries are shoveled out - Gregg ended up shoveling the choir door exit and the entire deck in front of the church so you can now access the pastor's office and chapel



Meetings - Nancie Cameron is coordinating a meeting with **Rev Gordon Rankin**, Gregg, Ken and Kathy to discuss how the NHCUCC can support us as we move forward through our current transition - **Wakefield UCC** - Gregg has contacted the Administrator and Moderator and inquired about finances, church structure, bylaws and their church profile - we are planning to have a cross feed Zoom meeting with them on **2 Mar** to see how we may be able to assist each other - they just recently hired a new 3/4 time settled Pastor in Jan 2021 and have just completed what we are going through

Facility Risk Reduction Webinar - Is being held by the Somersworth Fire Dept on 23 Feb from 1-2:30pm and includes how to apply for federal grants and other key information - some trustees plan on attending

Pledge Envelopes - are at the church and if you'd like yours please contact a trustee or deacon - please reach out if you have any questions or concerns about pledging

The **Trustees** continue to address items that are identified in the monthly checklist

Submitted by Gregg Fournier