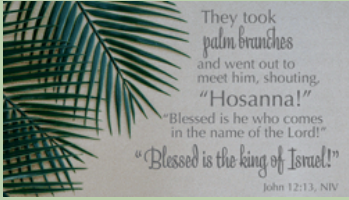


First Parish United Church of Christ
(Congregational)
P.O. Box 228, 176 West High Street,
Somersworth, NH 03878-022
Church Office: (603) 692-2057
Rev. Thomas Gardner, Pastor
An Open & Affirming Church
www.somersworthfirstparish.org
pastor@somersworthfirstparish.org



MARCH, 2026

Holiday Breakfast

Thank you, Women's Fellowship, for a delicious breakfast and a fun morning.





Lent invites us into the quiet work of repentance. Not a performance of sorrow, not a spiritual self improvement project, but an honest turning. The prophets remind us that repentance is less about feeling bad and more about changing direction. It is the courage to stop walking paths that harm our neighbors and ourselves, and to choose again. When we hear the call to return to God, we are being summoned back to the One whose mercy is wider than our failures and whose justice is deeper than our fear.

Repentance and justice belong together. The prophet Isaiah asks, what good is fasting if we continue to exploit and ignore? The fast God chooses loosens the bonds of injustice, shares bread with the hungry, and brings the unhoused into safety. True repentance always has a social dimension. It reshapes our habits, our spending, our speech, and our silence. It presses us to examine not only private sins but public systems. Lent asks us to look at where we benefit from inequity and where we have grown comfortable with suffering that is not our own.



Yet this season is not meant to crush us. It is meant to free us. When Jesus proclaims the reign of God, he links repentance with good news. To turn around is to step toward healing. It is to trust that justice is not a threat but a promise. God's justice restores dignity, lifts the bowed down, and makes room at

Pastor Tom Gardner's Contact Information:

Email: thomasedwardgardner@gmail.com Pastor Tom's cell: 603-393-4934

In This Season of LENT

- Fast from hurting words and say kind words.
- Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.
- Fast from anger and be filled with patience.
- Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.
- Fast from worries and have trust in God.
- Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.
- Fast from pressure and be prayerful.
- Fast from bitterness and be compassionate to others.
- Fast from grudges and be reconciled.
- Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.

Pope Francis



Spring forward in faith!
CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS and
join us on time for worship.

March 8, 2026



MINISTRY OF PRAYER & CONCERN

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

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
Keith Dinger
Victoria Eversman
Gregg Fournier

Dorota Grześkowiak
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.

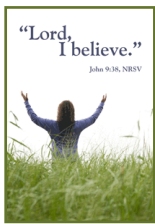


Sympathy is extended to the family of:

Grace Millers [2/5/26] Her husband, Imants Millers, was active member of our church until he passed away in 2022..

May the blessing of hope and health surround her family.





MARCH LECTIONARY READINGS

Second Sunday in Lent - Purple

March 1, 2026

Genesis 12:1-4a

Psalm 121

Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

John 3:1-17 or Matthew 17:1-9

Third Sunday in Lent - Purple

March 8, 2026

Exodus 17:1-7

Psalm 95

Romans 5:1-11

John 4:5-42

Fourth Sunday in Lent - Purple

March 15, 2026

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Psalm 23

Ephesians 5:8-14

John 9:1-41

Fifth Sunday in Lent - Purple

March 22, 2026

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Psalm 130

Romans 8:6-11

John 11:1-45

Palm Sunday - Purple

March 29, 2026

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29 or Psalm 31:9-16

Matthew 21:1-11 or Philippians 2:5-11

Matthew 26:14-27:66 or Matthew 27:11-54



March 2	Kaleigh Richer
March 9	Priscilla Chellis
March 22	Doug & Kelly Whitten
March 24	Genevieve Allen
March 28	Don Whitten

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.





WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP



The women had fun getting ready for the breakfast on February 15th. Thank you to all who came and enjoyed the fun and fellowship.



They are also creating some beautiful items for the Spring Fling Fair on April 25th. As of this time there will also be at least 10 vendors joining us for the fair. We will be looking for some volunteers to help on that day.

Next will be filling Easter baskets for children . We are looking for gender neutral items and we are hoping to fill 36 Baskets again this year. The list of items we need is listed below. The Women's fellowship certainly appreciates any contributions.

NON-GENDER ITEMS FOR EASTER BASKETS

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Coloring Books | Individually wrapped candy (to put in eggs) |
| Crayons | Sticker books |
| Water Paints | Small balls |
| Bubbles | Glow Sticks |
| Small stuffed animals | Unlined paper |

Many Blessings, Kathy Latchaw

		
	January, 2026	Year-to-Date, 2026
Total Income	\$ 12,129.24	\$112,129.24
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 13,289.25</u>	<u>\$103,090.71</u>
Net Income	(\$1,160.01)	(\$1,160.01)
Checking Account Balance as of December 31, 2025		\$ 20,267.44
Savings Account Balance		<u>\$ 5,004.35</u>
Total Checking and Savings		\$ 25,271.79
Unavailable Checkbook Funds		<u>(\$3,437.12)</u>
Total Checkbook Funds Available		\$ 21,834.67
Memorial Fund Checkbook Balance		\$13,414.84
Mortgage Balance at Service Credit Union at 1/31/26		\$ 7,183.42

SPRING FLING FAIR

April 25, 2026

9am-1pm

First Parish Church UCC

176 West High Street

Somersworth, NH

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

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

