



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



October 2025

“Hand on My Shoulder”, sung by Alexandra Mullaney
and accompanied by William Asher



On September 7th, we joyfully gathered for *Welcome Back Sunday*. God blessed us not only with much-needed rain, but also with a spirit-filled service. We were uplifted by a beautiful rendition of “Hand on My Shoulder” sung by Alexandra Mullaney and accompanied by our own William Asher, shared in communion together, and were inspired by a thoughtful message from our minister, Tom Gardner. The morning ended with a wonderful time of fellowship, warmly hosted by our deacons.

Thanks to Sebastian Asher, the music was videotaped. With Alex’s permission, William shared the video and music on his Facebook page. I hope you can check it out!



As October colors climb the Whites and the first frosts silver our fields, New Hampshire settles into peak-fall rhythms—orchards busy, church suppers warm, woodpiles stacked along old stone walls. The psalmist prays, “Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a wise heart” (Psalm 90:12). Wisdom in this season looks like steady purpose rather than hurry: thoughtful planning, generous sowing, and trust that God “crowns the year with...bounty” (Psalm 65:11)—in a good apple harvest, a neighbor’s help with the splitter, or a sanctuary full of song.

Not every turn is easy; some carry grief or uncertainty into this bright month. For you, hear the promise: “My help comes from the Lord,” who keeps our “going out and coming in” on back roads and busy routes alike (Psalm 121:2, 8). So let’s practice small stillnesses—on a leaf-lined trail, at the communion table, over coffee after worship —“Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). And with grateful hearts, let us say, “This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24).



BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

First Parish invites you to an outdoor, “*Blessing of the Animals*” on Sunday, October 5th at 2PM in the lower parking lot.

This brief time of worship and blessing falls near the traditional “feast day” of St. Francis of Assisi [October 4th], who “developed a profound connection with living things through his fascination with nature. His main inspiration came from animals. He viewed animals as living examples of spiritual integrity, blessing them and striving to understand and connect with them. St. Francis is remembered for his love of all creatures, especially birds, and is probably most known for his “Canticle to the Creatures” and “Sermon to the Birds.” [from *Blessing of the Animals*, Diana L. Guerrero, Sterling Publishing Co., NY 2008] **PLEASE NOTE: ALL ANIMALS MUST BE BROUGHT UNDER APPROPRIATE RESTRAINT.**

As an expression of the love and joy our pets and animals bring into our lives, **An offering will be received** for the *Cocheco Valley Humane Society*. Please consider donating: canned pet foods, **used/clean** towels and blankets, rope toys for dogs, stuffed animal dog toys, litter boxes, small, comfy cat beds, baby blankets [**used/stained, but clean**], toys for cats/kittens & dogs, milk bone dog biscuits, bottles of bleach, laundry detergent, or financial gifts are welcome as well. Friends are welcome to join you.



October 5th

World Wide Communion, 9AM, Sanctuary

October 11th

Blessing of the Animals, 2PM, Lower Parking Lot (information listed above)

Spaghetti Supper & Bingo, 4PM, Church Hall (information in Women’s Fellowship)



MINISTRY OF PRAYER & CONCERN

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

Stephen Ferranti *Johnson Creek Village, 301 Durham Rd., Dover, NH 03820*

Gina Fortier *Langdon Place, 60 Middle Rd., Dover, NH 03820*

Richard Jackson *The Residence at Silver Square, 100 Sterling Way, 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.



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.



Rev. Tom Gardner's
Contact Information

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



In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Norm Brown

Don Brock

Kevin Cazeault

John Chesley

John Cummings

Linda Palmer

Kristen Russell

Diane Shepherd

Kim Shurtleff

Elaine Weatherbee

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.*



OCTOBER LECTIONARY READINGS

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost - Green

October 5, 2025

Lamentations 1:1-6, Lamentations 3:19-26 *or*
Psalm 137

Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4, Psalm 37:1-9

2 Timothy 1:1-14

Luke 17:5-10

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost - Green

October 12, 2025

Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7, Psalm 66:1-12

2 Kings 5:1-3, 7-15c, Psalm 111

2 Timothy 2:8-15

Luke 17:1-19

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost - Green

October 19, 2025

Jeremiah 31:27-34, Psalm 119:97-104

Genesis 32:22-31, Psalm 121

2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

Luke 18:1-8

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost - Green

October 26, 2025

Joel 2:23-32, Psalm 65

Sirach 35:12-17 *or* Jeremiah 14:7-10, 19-22,
Psalm 84:1-7

2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

Luke 18:9-14

OCTOBER



- Oct. 1 *Troy & Cory Brown*
- Oct. 2 *Ken Hall, Ken & Debbie Hall*
- Oct. 5 *Joe & Jenny Fortier*
- Oct. 8 *Kelly Whitten*
- Oct. 11 *John Cummings*
- Oct. 14 *Brenda Davidson*
- Oct. 16 *Fran Karlik*
- Oct. 17 *Barbara Brown*
- Oct. 28 *Diane Shepherd, Jacob Brown*
- Oct. 29 *Robin Martin*
- Oct. 30 *Angela Richer*



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 "Pot Luck Supper and Bingo night " was so much fun that the Women's group decided to host a "Spaghetti Supper Night with Bingo" night! So please put Saturday, October 11th at 4:00pm on your calendar! Bring friends too. The cost will be \$5.00 for a delicious meal of spaghetti and meatballs, salad, garlic bread, and ice cream sundaes for dessert. Look for a sign up sheet in the Narthex. Did we mention prizes for the bingo winners?

Also, on Saturday, November 1st is our Holly Daze Fair. We need volunteers to help on that day. If you can help, would you please let Diane Chessman know?

MINIATURE GOLF



	August, 2025	Year-to-Date, 2025
Total Income	\$ 5721.17	\$57,358.70
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 6,525.67</u>	<u>\$73,644.98</u>
Net Income	\$ (\$804.50)	(\$16,286.28)
Checking Account Balance as of August 31, 2025		\$ 13,563.28
Savings Account Balance		<u>\$ 5,004.14</u>
Total Checking and Savings		\$ 18,567.42
Unavailable Checkbook Funds		<u>(\$3,655.31)</u>
Total Checkbook Funds Available		\$ 14,912.11
Memorial Fund Checkbook Balance		\$13,414.84
Mortgage Balance at Service Credit Union at 8/31/25		\$ 9,833.93