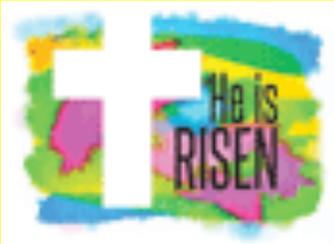




**First Parish United Church of Christ  
(Congregational)**

P.O. Box 228, 176 West High Street,  
Somersworth, NH 03878-0228  
Rev. Mark Rideout, Pastor  
Church Office: (603) 692-2057  
An Open & Affirming Church

[www.somersworthfirstparish.org](http://www.somersworthfirstparish.org)  
[firstparishsomersworth@myfairpoint.net](mailto:firstparishsomersworth@myfairpoint.net)



2018



**Dear Ones:**

Easter has always been, and remains to me a day filled with wonder and mystery. I've pondered the how and why of this many-layered story of our faith. And I come back to both mystery—from death emerges life, and wonder—the shadow of fear is overcome by God-light. Many years ago I went to church where my father had grown up. I don't remember the sermon, I do remember most women wore hats and gloves, and there were shirts and ties on everyone—but oh, the singing! The joy that was so real, because from the sting of death came resurrection and new life. Jesus Christ was raised from death, to life, by God.

In John's gospel [John 12:24-25 NRSV] *"Very truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life."* In another faith-guide I use, this verse reads this way: *"This is the way of the kingdom—if you hold a kernel of wheat in your hand, then there will be no harvest. Unless it falls to the ground and dies, it remains a single seed. But if the kernel dies, then there will be a rich harvest. Is this not the way that it is? This is what I say to you that you must do: Love one another as I have loved you."* [John 13:35]

I have so often read the "grain of wheat" image as that of Jesus dying to reveal new life—which I do believe is one way to understand this. But it is limited! Digging deeper—the grain of wheat is the love of God gifted to us all—if the seed is not planted, unused, it will not grow, there will be no harvest, and the kingdom way, the good news remains embraced by one—me, but no one else. When we invite, include, involve—sacrifice self to love God, love neighbor as much as we love our self—what a potential, what a rich harvest.

This involves the letting go. Just as we must let go of those we love in death, death unto resurrection. Just as we must let go of self, death to self [yup—losing your life to gain your life] to expand the good news sharing, to build the Kingdom of God, the realm of the Holy—here, today.

Alleluia is just such a word to give expression to this wonder and mystery that is still to be found in and through the story of our faith. I pray that these unfolding days of Easter will surround you all with grace and light.

~Alleluia! Pastor Mark



**MINISTRY OF  
PRAYER &  
CONCERN**

- Lucille Berry**, *Studley Home*, 15 Eastern Ave.,  
Rochester, NH 03867 335-1241
- Jinny Burgess**, *The Residence at Silver Square*,  
100 Sterling Way, Dover, NH 03820
- Bertha Carr**, *Rockingham County  
Nursing Home*  
117 North Road, Brentwood, NH 03833
- Gail Day**, *Langdon Place of Dover*, 60 Middle  
Rd, Dover, NH 03820
- Rev. Bill & Pat Hamel**, *The Manor at Canyon  
Lakes*, #210, 2802 West 35th Ave., Kennewick,  
WA 99337-2583
- Audrey Loika**, 1 Huntington Common Dr., Apt.  
208, Kennebunk, ME 04043
- Bob Philbrick**, *Berwick Estates*,  
75 Portland St., So. Berwick, ME 03908
- Dorothy Blaisdell, Janet Giffin**,  
*Wentworth Home*, 795 Central Ave., Dover, NH  
03820

--and all who are residents in long-term care and



- Craig Breden [health]  
Eric Burgess [health] *Jinny Burgess' son*  
Carol Cummings [healing]  
Mark Dudley [healing] *son of Carroll & Barbara Dudley*  
Dan Gaudreault [healing] *Sue Boucher's nephew*  
Debbie Hall [healing]  
Gloria Martel [health] *Linda Farrell's mother*  
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, and specifically in April, the Community Church of Durham, and their interim pastor the Rev. Jill Small.*
- *That God will bless and guide our Transitional Conference Minister, Rev. Dr. Charles Buck, and Associate Conference Minister, Rev. Richard Slater*
- *Recovery effort for all natural disasters.*
- *For all those who are living with cancer; those who are living with mental health concerns, and those who support them as they walk pathways of healing.*
- *Faith formation ministries for all ages - for building strong faith foundations, at all ages and stages of life.*
- *Working together in community to address addiction to drugs, and anything that takes away from wholeness in life-and the building of community to implement strategies for prevention, while providing resources for treatment and recovery.*
- **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!*
- *Embracing the joy of the Great Fifty Days of Easter! Reflecting, living, embodying new life in Christ. Resurrection hope continues to unfold ~ do you see it?*

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**

**SUNDAY SCHEDULE**

- Sunday Worship - 10:00 AM**  
**Sunday School - 10:00 AM**  
**Fellowship Time Follows Worship**  
*Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of each month.*  
**Ministers:** The People of the Church  
**Pastor:** Rev. Mark A. Rideout  
**Christian Education Coordinator:**  
Susan Vollkommer  
**Moderator:** Richard Whitten  
**Co-Clerks:** Patty Cote & Debbie Hall  
**Treasurer:** Linda Farrell  
**Assistant Treasurer:** Richard Shepherd  
**Organist/Choir Director:** Bette Daley  
**Newsletter Team:** Debbie Hall-Editor,  
Priscilla Chellis-Calendar,  
Luise Watman-Birthdays/Anniversaries



### Resurrection of the Sunday - White

*April 1, 2018*

Acts 10:34-43 *or* Isaiah 25:6-9

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 *or* Acts 10:34-43

John 20:1-18 *or* Mark 16:1-8

### Second Sunday of Easter - White

*April 8, 2018*

Acts 4:32-35

Psalm 133

1 John 1:1-2:2

John 20:19-31

### Third Sunday of Easter - White

*April 15, 2018*

Acts:3-12-19

Psalm 4

1 John 3:1-7

Luke 24:36b-48

### Fourth Sunday of Easter - White

*April 22, 2018*

Acts 4:5-12

Psalm 23

1 John 3:16-24

John 10:11-18

### Fifth Sunday of Easter - White

*April 29, 2018*

Acts 8:26-40

Psalm 22:25-31

1 John 4:7-21

John 15:1-8



- Apr. 1 Rachel Fournier, Andy Allen,  
Shawn Richer
- Apr. 3 Eden-Faith Trussell
- Apr. 4 Madeline Ashley,  
*Ed & Helene Courier*
- Apr. 8 Leah Stucker
- Apr. 9 Clay Oelkuct
- Apr. 10 Marc Cote, Lauren O'Connor
- Apr. 14 Linda Burk
- Apr. 19 Christina Giles  
*Mike & Luise Watman*
- Apr. 23 *Terry & Linda Burk*
- Apr. 24 Mark Rideout  
*Butch & Sue Boucher*
- Apr. 26 Barbara Pay

### Caring Card Ministry

Nancy Brown is handling the Card Ministry. Please feel free to be in touch with Nancy who is to send out a card from the church—sympathy, thinking of you, get well, etc. Please contact directly 332-7610 or [obrowski@aol.com](mailto:obrowski@aol.com) to share the contact information for the recipient.

### A Gentle Reminder:

- \* Sunday Bulletin announcements/information needs to be in writing to the Church Office by MONDAY, or, you may e-mail it directly to Debbie Hall at [kenanddebhall@comcast.net](mailto:kenanddebhall@comcast.net)
- \* Monthly Newsletter items MUST be submitted by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday [OR as noted in the monthly newsletter calendar]. Earlier is better! Email directly to Debbie Hall at [kenanddebhall@comcast.net](mailto:kenanddebhall@comcast.net) Written items may be left in the pocket on the copy room door as well (just let Deb know!).
- \* Monthly calendar dates and times are submitted directly to Priscilla Chellis at [prchellis@comcast.net](mailto:prchellis@comcast.net)
- \* Updates on birthdays, anniversaries may be sent to Luise Watman at [lcwatman@comcast.net](mailto:lcwatman@comcast.net)

Note: If you serve on a committee, please communicate directly with your Committee Chair if you are unable to attend a scheduled meeting or event.

### Our Monthly Newsletter

can be accessed entirely online! Check it out: [www.somersworthfirstparish.org](http://www.somersworthfirstparish.org). Paper copies are available in the Narthex. If you prefer to have the newsletter sent to you in the mail, please send \$20 with your name and address to: First Parish Church, P.O. Box 228, Somersworth, NH 03878, Attn: Newsletter Editor.





## FAITH FORMATION

The children gathered on March 17th at The Gathering Place in Somersworth for a Springtime Craft Event. We had lots of fun painting and meeting new friends.

Information about summer camps will be posted on the downstairs bulletin board in the Sunday School Hallway.

Want to know about what the children have been doing in Sunday School? Check out the bulletin board nearest the classrooms. They put some of their projects on there. You can also ask them during coffee hour what they have been learning about. They are excited to learn the stories in the Bible, and are beginning to understand how the Bible tells the story of God and Jesus.

**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.



### CANCELLATION POLICY

**CANCELLATION POLICY** Yes, we've had to do this before! The weather can, and does change. When at all possible, worship WILL take place. But, should the decision be made to cancel worship and/or Sunday School, every effort will be made to have this information available by 8AM Sunday on **radio station WTSN 1270 AM, AND television station, WMUR, Channel 9.** Every effort will be made to leave a message on the voice mail at the church [692-2057]. Please understand that if the church loses power, while voice mail may work; it still may mean that the church does not have electrical power. These decisions will be made taking into consideration the present or anticipated weather, traveling conditions and whether or not Pastor Mark [and others] can get out of their driveways! Please—use common sense in your decision to drive on a snowy Sunday!



Every Tuesday morning, from 9:00 to about 11:00, right here at our church, there is a group of women who get together to work on items for our church holiday fair. But that is not all they do. They laugh together. They catch up on each other's lives. They work on projects to help the community. They pray for those who need prayers. They take time to share their joys and sorrows and listen and learn from each other. Sometimes they even stay and have lunch together. These are some of the things they do. Right now they are looking for new ideas for the Holly Daze Fair. So if you have an idea or are willing to share your talent with them, would you be willing to come and share it with them?



## One Great Hour OF SHARING

It is easy to feel overwhelmed when we look at all the need in God's world. There is hunger, sickness, and injustice in so many parts of the world. It is easy to feel there is nothing we can do to help. We can feel trapped by hopelessness and fear that what little we can do won't have an impact.

But there is hope! We are that hope!

Wishing and dreaming of a better world means nothing if we don't realize that God gives us community to practice love and compassion. We cannot only care for ourselves, but we must also care about those around us, both near and far.

Our gifts become part of a loving legacy in ways we can't foresee. Our gifts become blessings to people we don't know and blesses in ways we can't expect. We can make a difference beyond what we can imagine.

First Parish will be collecting for One Great Hour of Sharing on April 8th. Please consider prayerfully how your gift can go a long way towards being a blessing for someone in need.



Guided Conversation

**March 4th** guided conversation invited us to look at the strengths of First Parish United Church of Christ (inside the church circle), and then to engage our own personal story as to how the Spirit moves us in the action behind our church work and witness (outside the church circle). Some of the themes that emerged: We are active through community conversation settings [Teatotaller, Somersworth High School], Cantata, Community Food Pantry, Table of Plenty, study groups outside of the church. We are delving into podcast of Sunday Service, more complete use of social media to share our faith story, as we plant seeds! We were encouraged to let go of fear, to be with one another to share, listen, offer, reflect—on how to bring the church into our neighborhoods through personal sharing and presence, as we respond to local needs, and ponder how to leverage our individual skills, what we love to do, and then do it for God! Being aware of what we might say and share when the opportunity presents itself, is less about “forcing” the moment, but to “be in” the moment. Embrace kindness, caring, compassion—be consistent, and be yourself! More to come, and more opportunities for this type of sharing, but for now, see the diagram in the Narthex. Thank you to all who stayed to be a part of this unfolding conversation.

**A Pastoral Letter on Sexual Misconduct** from the National Officers, and the Council of Conference Ministers of the United Church of Christ is posted on the Narthex bulletin board.

*Sunday*



**PODCAST**

There is a concerted effort to make our Sunday worship available via you-tube, or as a podcast. While the pieces are still being lined up—there is a definite need for 6 people who would be willing to learn and do the technical end of the process. The

intention is that at least one person each week will set up, and oversee the recording. With a group being trained, it should not fall on one person all the time. ***Are you interested and willing to be one of this group? Speak with Bruce Robbins or Pastor Mark.***



**MISSIONS**

Thank you to all who attended the Chicken Dinner Luncheon. A fun time was had by all! We raised \$271 which will be sent to provide the children at the Daisy Dube Children's Home in Mt. Selinda in Zimbabwe with 300 pounds of protein, such as fish, meats, eggs, and peanut butter. This will provide protein to the children for one month.

On Sunday, April 22, after church we will be hosting an Alternative Health Fair. We will have representatives to discuss Naturopathic doctors, Reiki, Massage, Acupuncture, Yoga, Essential Oils, Nutrition, and Homeopathic Medicines. This is an event to provide information on what these services are. The representatives will be here to answer questions and to provide literature on their services. If you know someone who could use this information, please invite them. We plan to have the representatives all set up by 11:30AM.

April has 5 Sundays. We are planning a Service Project for each month which has a fifth Sunday. This month we would like to have a group from First Parish to help out at Spirit Up Somersworth Day. This is a morning set aside to help spruce up Somersworth by picking up some litter on the streets. This year Spirit Up Somersworth is scheduled for May 5. Help out for a couple of hours, then stay and enjoy a light lunch.



**Jinny Burgess** now lives at *The Residence at Silver Square*, 100 Sterling Way, #202, Dover, NH 03820 (603) 343-5276 and enjoys attending worship. At present, she will be provided a ride to church—would you be willing to bring her back? Please speak with Pastor Mark if this is something you would consider doing. Hoping we can put together a short list, so this is a shared blessing!

## OPEN & AFFIRMING

We continue to work on the planning of several current and future events.

Who is my Neighbor?: I spoke during a recent “Who is my Neighbor” moment about Jesus of Nazareth being an immigrant. Did this make you think about how we are treating immigrants today? I would be happy to discuss further with you if you have questions.

**Educational events:** These events are intended to provide helpful information about various topics related to being an Open and Affirming church. We have established several future dates so that you may plan to join us. The events will be held at 2pm to allow you plenty of time after worship. Please put these up-coming events on your calendar:

- April 8<sup>th</sup>: Community Round Table with our community churches
- June 10<sup>th</sup>: Topic of Interest based on input during the prior two sessions

**Conversations at the High School:** Community Conversations to be held Somersworth High School Your Open & Affirming Committee sought out a specific way to reach beyond the church to the youth in our community. In conversation with SHS Guidance Counselor, Denis Pelletier, who suggested the topic, Transgender/Transitioning and LGBT + Youth, a Six Session series has been developed. Sponsored by First Parish UCC, Somersworth, our faith challenges us with this purpose: to offer topics of interest to the student body, with knowledgeable facilitation in an effort to provide understanding and resources specific to the topic, offered in a safe space, in a welcoming, non-judgmental manner. These church sponsored sessions will be offered at SHS, facilitated by Gerry Cannon, Pastor Mark and Denis Pelletier. These will be publicized in-house at SHS, with student sign-up taking place directly through Guidance Counselor Denis Pelletier. The after school time frame allows access to the afternoon school bus transportation. Please hold this community outreach in prayer.

The Open & Affirming Committee believes that this format would work for other topics for youth, or any age, such as mental health needs/resources, elderly concerns, questions of life and faith, parenting, ethical decision making in an ethically challenged world, etc.

If you have ideas, we would love to hear them. We would also appreciate your involvement, a little or a lot, with our committee.

Thank you, Geoff and Nancy Day



**The Community Food Pantry** is in need of a couple of volunteers who are willing to pick up food on the weekends for the following months: March, June, August, October and December. Here is what is involved: On Saturday each week during the assigned month: pick up breads, desserts and dairy from Shaws’ and meat, breads and desserts from Hannaford, both on Central Avenue, Dover. If you or someone you know might be a good volunteer and are available to do all or part of this, please let Pat Vachon [communityfoodpantry@comcast.net](mailto:communityfoodpantry@comcast.net), Carol Cummings or Debbie Hall know.

## DIACONATE

During our recent meeting the Diaconate reviewed several items on our agenda.

March brings preparation for Holy Week Services as there is much to do during this special time of year. We will be having our Easter Sunrise Service at the American Legion Hall once again. What do you think of this location? Your feedback would be appreciated. Please refer to the Holy Week Services handout for the events and times.

Church Vitality: We appreciated the input provided by those who participated on March 4th in the “after church” conversation. We hope everyone understands what we are doing and why. Our goal is to find ways in which we can engage the community and we need members of our church family to be involved.

Members of the Diaconate will be assisting people on and off the elevators. Our goal is to ensure everyone is safe and to ensure the elevator is used as effectively as possible.

We have decided to once again sponsor a T-Ball team. Stay tuned for the schedule and we hope you will be able to attend the games.

We conducted a review of our Covenant Membership list. We discussed members who are now attending another church, who no longer attend, etc. We pay a fee to the NH Conference for each member. We have been fairly realistic in terms of how we maintain the list and have worked to keep the list fairly accurate.

For the Diaconate,  
Geoff Day

“**The Lee Church is doing a used clothing drive for NuDay Syria**, a non-profit NH corporation that sends food, clothing, medical supplies and toys to women and children who are refugees from the violence in Syria. All attending the Association meeting are invited to bring clean, gently used clothing which we will then deliver to NuDay Syria’s warehouse. For additional information about this worthy endeavor, please check their website [www.nudaysyria.org](http://www.nudaysyria.org)”

### 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.*

## SPAGHETTI SUPPER

In February, I received an email that had a heartwarming offer that filled me with relief (though I stubbornly said no thank you at first!!). Laurel Curtis and Kathy Latchaw decided they wanted to take over running the February and March supper since they knew that Patty & Marc Cote had made plans to be away from February to April and that I was looking at major surgery soon. We decided that they would learn everything they could in February (and be there to help) and take over organizing and running the March supper. I am extremely glad they did because I was in no condition to do it in March! Thank you Kathy and Laurel from the bottom of my heart! Of course, I know they had a lot of support and help from so many of you. We talk about the wonderful things about our church family. This is one of them. We are all more than willing to step up and help each other, and we look out for each other!

We have two more suppers before we take a break for the summer. Our April supper will be held on April 28th and the May supper will be on May 26th. I hope you can stop by and bring friends for our mouthwatering Spaghetti with meat sauce, salads, breads and desserts. Where else can you get an all you can eat meal with drinks and dessert for only \$7.00?

With sincere appreciation!

Debbie Hall



Greetings from your NH Conference Delegates.

We attended the recent NH Prepared to Serve conference and listened to several excellent presentations, and I wanted to share a few key observations.

- Beyond White Supremacy
  - Racism is not **their** problem - it is **our** problem!
  - If the conversation ends when we get uncomfortable, progress and understanding also end. Remember, God is still talking - don't stop listening.
  - White supremacy is a **white** problem
  - How do we move beyond white supremacy - we need to act as positive role models
- Rejection by the Church - presented by our own Gerri Cannon
  - We need to purposefully welcome people
    - Welcome them warmly
    - Ask "What brings you to this place?" to help understand how we can best serve them.
  - We need to let people know we don't think the same as those Christians who may have treated them poorly in the past.
  - We need to be constantly thinking about ways we can welcome others and live Open and Affirming.
- Sanctuary Everywhere
  - A Level 1 Sanctuary church would take in immigrants who are in danger of imminent exportation
  - A Level 2 Sanctuary church would support a Level 1 church by providing support resource (people, food, laundry, etc.)
  - For each Level 1 Sanctuary church there needs to be 5-10 Level 2 churches to provide support
  - During the 2017 Annual Meeting A RESOLUTION OF CHRISTIAN WITNESS was adopted and calls for the NHCUC in all its settings (Local Churches, individual church members, Associations, and Conference) to offer spiritual or physical support, advocacy and/or sanctuary that will aid immigrants and asylum seekers within NH communities. The resolution can be found here (<https://www.nhcucc.org/uploads/documents/weekly-news-documents/Resolution%20-%20Immigration.pdf>)

Thank you,  
Geoff and Nancy Day  
For the NH Conference Delegates



**Spirit Up  
Somersworth  
Clean-up Day** is  
right around the  
corner on May 5<sup>th</sup>,

7:30AM-1PM. Everyone is invited to gather at Idlehurst School after 7:30AM—where there will be coffee. But you can simply go to any of the Ward locations (as noted below) for a cleaning assignment. **Our Mission Committee at First Parish Church is working to build a team** to participate in this community clean-up. Our “team” can work together or split up. Each of the five City Wards will have a “go to” spot to get a clean-up assignment, to which you bring back the bags and trash you collect. *Details are still being worked out*, but it looks like the locations for each ward will be: Ward 1: the Pines, Ward 2: Flanagan Center, Ward 3: Willand Pond [High St. side], Ward 4: Millenium Park, Ward 5: Jules Bisson Park. All participants are invited to gather at Idlehurst School for lunch at 12 Noon, where there will be many people with booths/information about sustainable practices which can enhance our lives, as well as Touch a Truck, and a bike safety focus. If you want to be a part of this effort, watch for on-line registration, or you can add your name to the Narthex List. Whether you sign up or not—if you can come for all or part of the time—do come!



A sincere Thank You to everyone for all your cards, flowers and well-wishes during my recent surgery. A special thank you to so many of you for your support and concerns before and after the surgery. I feel so blessed to have all of you in my church family and as special friends.

With lots of hugs!

Debbie Hall