

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

firstparishsomersworth@myfairpoint.net



February, 2018



LENT BEGINS. The 40 day season of the church year, Lent, begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14th. We will gather for worship with our friends from the United Methodist Church, Berwick, ME **at the Berwick Church.** Worship begins at 7PM. The 40 days that follow become an opportunity, a possibility, a definite "set aside time", for God, and God alone. Our Lenten journey is a parallel of the 40 days of Jesus in the wilderness. As we reflect on our lives, this will prepare our hearts for Easter. Our joy on Resurrection Day is personal, it is born in community transformation as disciples of the Risen Christ. Look into Scripture, spend time in prayer, be a part of weekly worship on Sunday and then to put into active response the "edge", the places where changes in daily life bring depth to your spirit, all guided by God's Spirit. To help with your Lenten preparations, *Lenten Devotionals* will be available in the Library area beginning on Sunday, February 11th.

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP, February 14th, 6:30PM, we will join with our friends **at the Berwick United Methodist Church.** First Parish UCC and the UMC, Berwick, have shared Ash Wednesday for many years. Come, join in this time of focused reflection on Scripture, Praise, Prayer and Reflection.



Dear Ones:

Lent approaches and I could easily say, "I'll give up..." and fill in a blank with a word that might have meaning, might have some punch, might even have purpose. But I'm not sure I want to give up anything. Lent approaches and I could easily say, "I'll seek to be more faithful by..." and fill in a blank with a word that might have meaning, might have some punch, might even have purpose. But, I'm not sure I will be more faithful simply by naming a gift or grace.

Lent is about change. Change means different. Different conveys not ordinary. Not ordinary implies beyond my limited vision. Beyond my limited vision speaks of wider scope. Wider scope reveals transformation. Ah, yes, Lent is about transformation.

Turning from and turning to is behind repentance, the "change direction" approach to discerning and decisions. For the friends of the Christ, repentance, discerning decisions and changing directions are holy and held hopefully in our heart. To then consciously give up unhealthy and unholy ways, to seek to be more faithful brings meaning, punch and purpose to the life of a disciple.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday with "return to me with all your heart...tear open your heart and not your garments" [Joel 2:12-13] and will end on Easter with "God will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces." [Isaiah 25:8]

Between the beginning and ending is the journey, and opportunity to embrace repentance, to discern, to decide, to change direction ~ and lean into a transformed life!

Being together in worship on Sunday, daily devotion with prayer and scripture, hands on being and doing in your community...all weave into your journey toward resurrection.

You might give up chocolate but I suggest to you if you simply listen to your heart, God's whisper, and the wider scope of your "vision" will bring you into surprising places where you will find God.

Grace and peace ~ Pastor Mark



Christian Sympathy is extended to the family of:

Arthur Freegard [12/20/2017],
father of Rachel & Gregg Fournier.

Our thoughts go out to Rachel, Gregg, Heather and Bethany, and their wider family.





MINISTRY OF PRAYER & CONCERN

Lucille Berry, *Studley Home*, 15 Eastern Ave.,
Rochester, NH 03867 335-1241

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,
Dorothy Storms, *Wentworth Home*,
795 Central Ave., Dover, NH 03820

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

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



In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Craig Breden [health]

Eric Burgess [health] *Jinny Burgess's son*

Gail Day [health]

Mark Dudley [healing] *son of Carroll & Barbara Dudley*

Dan Gaudreault [healing] *Sue Boucher's nephew*

Fran Karlik [healing]

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

Those affected by the many natural disasters—earthquakes,
fires, hurricanes; the violence in any community—with the
prayer for peace, and access to resources for affordable
healthcare—mental health, primary care, treatment and
recovery from addiction.

AND ongoing prayer focus during these days:

- For our Carroll-Strafford Association Churches, and specifically in February, First Congregational Church, Wolfeboro, NH and their pastor the Rev. Gina Finnochiaro.
- 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.
- 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!
- Follow the Star...we find ourselves on the path of discipleship! The unfolding ministry, teaching, and living presence of Jesus the Christ brings us into the particular days of Lent, Jesus saying, "Follow me..." Will we?



FEBRUARY LECTIONARIES

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany - Green

February 4, 2018
Isaiah 40:21-31
Psalm 147:1-11, 20c
1 Corinthians 9:16-23
Mark 1:29-39

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany/Transfiguration - White

February 11, 2018
2 Kings 2:1-12
Psalm 50:1-6
2 Corinthians 4:3-6
Mark 9:2-9

Ash Wednesday - Violet

February 14, 2018
Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12
Psalm 51:1-17
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

First Sunday in Lent - Violet

February 18, 2018
Genesis 9:8-17
Psalm 25:1-10
1 Peter 3:18-22
Mark 1:9-15

Second Sunday in Lent - Violet

February 25, 2018
Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16
Psalm 22:23-31
Romans 4:13-25
Mark 8:31-38 or Mark 9:2-9



Feb. 1	Geoff Day
Feb. 2	Aiden Allen
Feb. 7	Janice Wentworth
Feb. 9	Nathan Trussell
Feb. 11	Julie Hurley
Feb. 13	Bethany Fournier
Feb. 21	Linda Oelkuct
Feb. 22	Gina Fortier, Alex Vollkommer
Feb. 23	Butch Boucher
Feb. 26	Troy Brown <i>Andy & Stacy Allen</i>
Feb. 28	Stephen Lucey



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

* Monthly Newsletter items MUST be submitted by the 3rd Friday [OR as noted in the monthly newsletter calendar]. Earlier is better! Email directly to Debbie Hall at 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

* Updates on birthdays, anniversaries may be sent to Luise Watman at 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.

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.

Our Monthly Newsletter

can be accessed entirely online! Check it out:

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.



OPEN & AFFIRMING

Greetings from the Open and Affirming Committee.

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

Who is my Neighbor?: these are brief stories that describe a personal moment we have had with a neighbor in our community. An example would be a local immigrant and his challenges.

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!

- February – 24th : Prepared to Serve
- April – 8th : Community Round Table with our community churches
- June – 10th : Topic of Interest based on input during the prior two sessions

Conversations at the High School: we are collaborating with the High School in order to establish a safe environment to have conversations about topics that concern them. Mark has had a positive conversation with the School Counselor Denis Pelletier. He was very welcoming to the suggestion and had several very constructive and specific ideas. We will be developing a 6-week framework to present to the Principal.

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, Open and Affirming Committee



Thank you to all who donated hats and mittens to the mitten tree. The hats and mittens have been donated to local elementary schools where they are very much appreciated.

TRUSTEES

The Annual Meeting is Sunday, January 28, 2018 after the church service. The finance trustees will be presenting the annual budget for 2018. Thank you to those that have made their pledges.

In 2017 the Trustees withdrew \$15,000 from our investments to supplement our operating budget.

Currently there is a total of 46 pledges supporting our 2018 budget.

Gerri Cannon made many necessary repairs to the church and will be assembling a list of repairs that still need to be made to the church and parsonage.

PLEASE sign up to help with the snow shoveling so that people are able to safely attend church activities.

Gregg Fournier continues to work with the bank and Probate Court in York, Maine to petition a new trust to be held at the Missionary Society CT/CT Conference UCC. A transfer from the Pepler Trust will occur once the court has made a decision to terminate the Trust.

Our Monthly income was \$10,550. Monthly expenses were \$14,146. Our YTD income is \$144,469, down \$625 from last year. Our YTD Expenses are \$143,220, down \$8,277 from last year. Our Checkbook Balance is \$839.52

The “Prepared To Serve” Conference will be held on February 24, 2018 at the Pembroke Academy. Church members are encouraged to attend.

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 to share the contact information for the recipient.



COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

The food pantry has been very busy throughout the 2017 year. During calendar year 2017 we served a total of 3,665 families for an average of 305 families per month. The number of individuals served was 9,939. Of this group 3,538 were children and 859 were seniors. The pantry distributed approximately 170,000 pounds of food so far this year.

We are fortunate to receive large quantities of food from the area grocery stores. We receive bread, pastry, dairy and non-perishable items from Shaw's four days a week, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. We receive a large amount of meats, produce, sandwiches, deli items, breads and, pastries five days a week from the various Hannaford stores. Operation Blessing provides us with Pepperidge Farm bread most weeks. We receive free food from both Maine and New Hampshire U.S.D.A. – Maine on the odd months and New Hampshire on the even months. During the summer months and into the fall we had fresh produce each week from Spillers Farm in Wells Maine and Zach's Farm in York Maine. In addition local gardeners dropped produce off at the pantry. During September and October we received apples on a regular basis from the Master Gardeners who picked at Smith Apple Orchard in Acton Maine and McDougal Apple Orchard in Springvale Maine.

At Thanksgiving we distributed 365 Thanksgiving baskets which included a turkey, stuffing, four types of canned vegetables, cranberry sauce, gravy, apples, onions, potatoes, brownie mix, candy and bread. In addition we received many donated turkeys, allowing us to provide many families with a Christmas turkey.

We receive many donations from businesses, organizations, schools, churches and individuals. Thank you to all of you at First Parish Church for your generous donations throughout the year and for providing the space and utilities for us to operate the food pantry. The staff of the pantry is extremely appreciative of all your support. Without all the help the pantry receives we could not achieve our mission of



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!



Church Council All Church Training

will take place on Saturday, February 3 from 9-11AM in the church hall. If you are new, returning to a ministry of service through a committee, or simply interested, please come as we review some of the nuts and bolts of communication, financial process and awareness of each other's work in the church. We will have some light refreshments, and promise to start and end on time. Questions—speak with Moderator Rich Whitten or Pastor Mark.



Flower Chart for 2018 is posted in the Church Hall. Altar flowers may be offered in memory of someone, in

celebration of an event, to honor someone. While there is not a lot of space on the flower chart, your name secures the date. Please, if you sign up to provide flowers, provide IN WRITING to the church office, one week prior, particular wording and spelling of names. Flowers can include a favorite plant, garden cuttings, special arrangement of fresh, dried or silk flowers. Thanks for your sharing in this way.



As we embark on the journey into 2018, the Diaconate wishes a very Happy and Joyous New Year to All!

Senior Deacons serve through the month of January, as nominations are sought to fill openings left behind as they complete their term. We gladly welcome Priscilla Chellis back for the year! There are other places available for those looking to become more involved in the Life of the Church. Feel free to ask questions or attend a meeting if you think you may be interested. All have something to offer!

We ask that as you head down stairs to fellowship or if you notice someone using the elevator, please be aware that assistance may be needed as they exit on the lower level. Walkers and winter garments can complicate the task of exiting the small space, so holding the door or helping to maneuver these items can be very helpful to those trying to exit the elevator. We thank you in advance for your assistance!

Church Vitality events have brought many of us closer together and we wish to share the joy with those outside our church family. Look for an upcoming bowling excursion and possibly a sledding event in the near future. We continue to look for opportunities to gather and invite friends to join us. If you have ideas but need help with planning or organization, speak to a Deacon and let's see what we can make happen!

Scripture readers and greeters are still in demand - yet another opportunity to be the Church!



Sweeping Up From Christmas.....

posted in the narthex, the church received and shared greetings from:

Joe & Jenny Fortier, Jeff & Carolyn Libby, Keith & Sherie Dinger, Ken & Kathy Latchaw, Brenda Davidson, Mike & Sharon Sirois, Toddy & Sue Eastman, Craig & Linda Breden, Audrey Loika & Alyson & Caroline, Nora Gray [Robin Martin's mom], Mark & Kathy Rideout, Bertha Carr as well as The United Church of Christ Ministry Team—Rev. John Dorhauer, Rev. Jim Moos, Rev. Traci Blackmon.



January was a quiet month for the women. We spent time considering what our 2018 events might be.

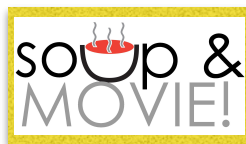
The Women's Fellowship had its Annual Meeting on January 14, 2018. They elected Katherine Latchaw as President, Susan Eastman as Vice President, and Deb Hall as Treasurer. They voted not to have the Spring Fling this spring and focus on other activities to raise money as well as hoping to bring in new women to the group.

They will be spending the month of February discussing activities for 2018. There will be more information in the March newsletter.

The Wednesday night group has decided to discontinue their meetings until Spring.

All women and friends are welcome and we are interested in your thoughts about activities or crafts we could do. If you have an idea, please contact Katherine Latchaw at klatchaw@comcast.net or call her at 603-427-8958

Gratefully,
Katherine Latchaw



FAITH FORMATION

On Sunday, February 18, following worship, Faith Formation will host a Soup Luncheon/Family Movie. There will be a sign up sheet in the Narthex if you would like to sign up to bring a soup. During the luncheon we will be showing a family friendly movie. This is an opportunity to invite and share with others. Please invite another family to attend with you. The luncheon is being planned to start at 11:30am. We will start with a bowl of soup. Dessert and popcorn will be served during the movie.

PREPARED TO SERVE

Prepared to Serve, *a training event* for all church members in the New Hampshire Conference, United Church of Christ including exhibits, worship and a time for fellowship will be held 8AM-3:30PM on **February 24, 2018** at Pembroke Academy, Pembroke, NH. This year's theme is: *"God's various gifts are handed out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various ministries are carried out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit."* 1 Corinthians 12:4-5 [*The Message*]. A Master Copy of the schedule, and workshops being offered and directions are will be available in the Narthex. Registration deadline is February 14th. Cost is \$40/person which includes resources, breakfast, refreshments and lunch. All materials and registration process/payment will be on line through the NH Conference website: www.nhcucc.org. If you do not have access to the internet, you may register by calling Cynthia Bradley at 603-225-6647, X1100 to register over the phone. Same day registration after 2/14 is \$50/person. NOTE: If you are serving on a committee here at First Parish Church, or have a particular interest in Christian Formation, Spirituality, Stewardship, Peace, Justice, Evangelism, Stewardship of Creation, Mission....there is probably a workshop/learning opportunity for you, as there are over 70 workshops, 30 exhibitors, and last year over 500 people attending. There will be people going from First Parish Church who will share a ride....but YOU need to register.

SPAGHETTI SUPPER

We would like to give a heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped make January's Spaghetti Supper a success.

Our next supper will be on February 24th. Please join us for a plate (or 2) of our savory spaghetti with meat sauce, cole slaw and 3-bean salad, bread (garlic, garlic herb or white) and sumptuous desserts. All of our food is homemade, fresh and delicious.

Don't forget to tell your friends about our suppers or invite them to join you.

Tom Allen ~ Patty Cote ~ Debbie Hall



Adult Study for Lent

Pastor Mark is putting together a Lenten Series that will use your questions of life and faith. We will delve into themes being raised, discern how the Spirit is inviting a particular direction in life, and broadly invite deeper reflection for our Lenten journey, as well as the broader path of being a person of faith and disciple in these days.

There will be a sign-up, packet and information of study location for both an evening and morning session. **Your sharing of questions in advance will help in the preparation and planning.** Please share any questions on your mind, heart, soul, and Pastor Mark will do some digging to offer a response, and invite a deeper conversation. He will also include the weekly lections for Sunday Worship to kind of "round out" the sessions, planned to being in late February. **You may share your questions in writing, or send via email** pastor@somersworthfirstparish.org. Dates, times and locations are still being firmed up.



**Thank-you received from
Riverside Rest Home** [*posted
in the narthex*]

To the First Parish congregation: thank you so much for the beautiful Christmas gifts for our residents. Thank you for taking the time and the heart, care and consideration into making sure our residents have a very special Christmas morning. It means the world to us that they have joy on Christmas and throughout the year and you play a big part in making that a reality. With sincere gratitude, Jessica Cobb & the Riverside Family. [Jessica is the Director of Volunteer Services & Public Relations].

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Word of Thanks

A sincere word of thanks to the entire First Parish Church family for their many cards, gifts, remembrances, and generous check with which I was gifted on December 24th. Thank you all for your continued prayer and the joy of sharing ministry and mission together in Jesus' name. ~Pastor Mark