

**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



January, 2018

2017 Christmas Flower Display



Thank you Dean & Robin Martin and Kim Conley for arranging our beautiful display!



Dear Ones,

Read along for the back-story of just one Christmas carol....

While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks

Words: Nahum Tate, 1652-1715

Tune: Winchester Old C.M. from Thomas Este's "Whole Book of Psalms," 1592

While shepherds watched their flocks by night, All seated on the ground,
The angel of the Lord came down, And glory shone around.
"Fear not," said he, for mighty dread Had seized their troubled mind,
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring To you and all mankind.
"To you, in David's town, this day Is born of David's line
The Savior, who is Christ the Lord; And this shall be the sign:
"The heavenly babe you there shall find To human view displayed,
All meanly wrapped in swathing bands, And in a manger laid."
Thus spake the seraph; and forthwith Appeared a shining throng
Of angels praising God, who thus Addressed their joyful song:
"All glory be to God on high, And to the earth be peace;
Good will henceforth from heaven to men Begin and never cease."

Nahum Tate was born in Dublin, Ireland, the son of Puritan ministers. He was a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, and a writer, who was Poet Laureate of the Kingdom of England (1692). His name is connected with the famous New Version of the Psalms of David (1696) for which he collaborated with Nicholas Brady. He wrote this now, well-known carol in 1702, and is also most know for "As Pants the Hart," a hymn based on Psalm 42.

Nicholas Brady was an Anglican minister, also born in Ireland, and also a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin. As the collaborator with Nahum Tate on the New Version of the Psalms of David, which was a metrical version of the Psalms. He did not write the music for the two well-known settings for this song, but it is the musical settings, in print, that were becoming the norm for use in worship in the Anglican Church, which had a profound effect on worship in New England churches.

We have to understand, that prior to 1700, few Congregational Churches observed Christmas—as a day set apart. Firstly, while the birth is named in scripture, the day/date is not. Be reminded Easter is based on the dating of Passover, even though the Julian and Gregorian calendars still propose different dates! The early church chose December 25th, and co-opted the Roman Saturnalia, which did have partying and recognition of the Winter Solstice—all pagan origins. Clearly, a reason to "steer clear" of the Romish, popish origins of such a feast! Remember—while Puritans sought to "purify" the church—their antecedents were still within the Church of England—who, across the pond, were having their own troubles in melding "low church" and "high church" inclinations—as well as the ongoing drinking, sexual license, brawling association with Christmas celebrations.

In New England, for most of the 1600's, the law forbade outward observance, and it was a day of work. Most families did not observe Christmas in their homes either. This is well before our today inclusion of decorations (particularly the Christmas tree), or of specific gift giving of any kind, let alone the focus on children. Some of this was to negate the reveling which was the norm in England, taking away from any solemnity of the day as the Birth of Christ. Our Puritan mothers and fathers wanted observance of the Sabbath only, and if Christmas Day fell on a Sunday, what they named and claimed as the Sabbath Day of rest, it was Sunday worship alone that drew them together.

This began to change in subtle ways. The lining out of Psalms to be sung, without accompaniment was the norm. The introduction of music beyond the lining out of hymns without musical accompaniment, with the specific use of instrumental music [often bass viol or other lone instrument] to help carry the tune, changed the experience of worship. Hymnals were yet to come, but the tide turned with wider congregational singing, including the shift to include the observance of Christmas Day as a day worthy of recognition, to celebrate the Nativity of the Savior, Jesus Christ—on December 25th.

Christmas hymns followed, but ministers were careful to make sure they held focus on the holy birth, its meaning for the faithful, and most often, were scripturally based. *“While Shepherds Watched”* met this criteria in the early 1700’s, as it is based on the **Gospel of Luke, Chapter 2:8-14**. Interestingly, it was the **only** Christmas hymn authorized to be sung by the Anglican Church. Prior to 1700 only the *Psalms of David* were permitted to be sung.

Through the years, the reveling and partying which our Puritan ancestors feared would subside, the Reformation largely changed liturgical music in Reformed Churches, with the Congregational Churches in New England really bringing up the rear. With immigration from the Continental countries, and their Reformed heritage including hymn singing, and in particular, the rise of Methodism, you can connect the dots for wider use of music, choral presence, inclusion of pump-organs, then pipe organs as the prosperity of the Colonies allowed for what some always felt was a “showy” side of church life. And we’re just talking about music—it would be a whole other conversation to address even the *heating of the meeting house, let alone stained glass, cross or candles!*

Back to *While Shepherds Watched*. . .the hymn/carol has a progression, a message, a scriptural base, and with music and word, praise of the Living God! As you listen to many of the carols of times past, some re-worked, some very current with what might be called “fresh words” for a very old, but timeless message—be attentive to how it is that God is named, how it is that you and our world are challenged to live the message of what Jesus, God’s Christ (the Anointed One)—hope beyond today while naming, changing, working for healing, wholeness, loving-kindness, justice, all while walking humbly with God. Christmas gives life to a message of comfort and joy. . .it is a message of peace, love, hope and good-will to all—meaning ALL—not just the friendly folk you know and love. . .stranger, sojourner, wanderer. . .

With expectancy **watch!** With joy **invite!** With hope **live!**

~Merry Christmas!

~ Mark Rideout 2018 ~



Jacob Brown's Confirmation

Congratulations to Jacob Brown who was confirmed after the worship service on December 24th, joined by his family. Pictured are [left to right]: his girlfriend - Hannah Claxton, his mother - Cori Brown, Rev. Mark Rideout, his grandmother - Sherie Dinger, Jacob, his father - Troy Brown, his grandfather - Keith Dinger, his grandmother - Diane Brown and his grandfather - Tom Brown.



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,

Luisse Watman-Birthdays/Anniversaries



In Our Thoughts and Prayers

Craig Breden [health]

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

Barbara Dudley [healing]

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

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

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

Helen Merrill [health] *Sharon Brown's mother*

Those affected by the many natural disasters—earthquakes, fires, hurricanes; the recent violence in Las Vegas—and 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 January, First Congregational Church, Wakefield, NH and their pastor, the Rev. Mary James.
- 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!
- Christmas gifts us with the newly born child, Jesus; Epiphany reveals God's anointed Christ; and unfolding is a pathway of hope revealed, injustice overcome and faith called forth for active response! Follow the Star....



- Jan. 2 Sharon Hall
- Jan. 3 *John & Carol Cummings*
- Jan. 8 Tyler Benner, Janet Giffin, Bill Voyer
- Jan. 9 Audrey Loika
- Jan. 10 Debbie Hall, William Hurley
- Jan. 12 Richard Shepherd
- Jan. 14 Paul Cazeault
- Jan. 17 Gerri Cannon, Bob Philbrick
- Jan. 18 Dave Hamel
- Jan. 19 Jeff Libby, Josiah Allen
- Jan. 21 Richard Hurley
- Jan. 23 Sherry Cazeault
- Jan. 26 Patricia Kovalik
- Jan. 29 Mike Watman, Krystian Lucey,
Kathy Latchaw
- Jan. 30 Esther Eastman

Women's Fellowship

We had thirty ladies attend our Hour of Diversion on December third. There was a lovely luncheon served followed by an ornament exchange. It was a nice opportunity to share and enjoy each other's company. There was general agreement that having it in the afternoon was very good time to be together so we are going to plan to have it at that time next year.

The Women's Fellowship's annual meeting is January 14, 2018. We will be voting on officers and making plans for the year. All women in the church are welcome at this meeting. It will be held after the budget meeting in the classroom. If you have recommendations or would like to be an officer, please let Kathy Latchaw know.

I sincerely wish all a very blessed New Year,

Kathy Latchaw

TRUSTEES

The new tables and chairs have replaced the well used ones and nearly all of the old ones are gone. We have received donations for the old ones.

The building and grounds trustees put out winter plow stakes, sand and salt. A sign up list for snow shoveling has been placed in the Narthex. Please consider volunteering to help with the shoveling.

The income for November was \$ 20,833. Our expenses were \$11,361 which left a balance of \$9,522 but in order to cover our expenses and show a balance, we have had to continue to withdraw from our savings investment account. Our congregation needs to help find ways to reduce our deficit without withdrawing money from our savings.

The current mortgage is \$45,063.

Greg Fournier has been doing significant research on how to best manage one of our trust funds. Presently the bank's fees exceed the interest paid to the church. The trustees hope to transfer the account to another institution that would charge much less fees. Ken Latchaw is working with our federal congressional leaders to help resolve our trust issues. If anyone has questions regarding any information, please ask Greg Fournier, Ken Latchaw or Robin Hamel.

The Finance Budget Hearing is scheduled for Sunday, January 14, 2018.

Respectfully submitted by Ken Latchaw

Fellowship

Did you know that we have several people in our church that need to eat a Gluten Free diet?

When you are responsible for Fellowship's refreshments, please make sure you serve something that is Gluten Free. There are usually Gluten Free crackers and/or cookies in the kitchen closet available for Fellowship, but it would be a good idea to double-check the week before or just bring something with you.

Thank you!



JANUARY LECTIONARIES

Epiphany of the Lord - White

January 6, 2018

Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalms 72:1-7, 10-14

Ephesians 3:1-12

Matthew 2:1-12

Baptism of the Lord/First Sunday after Epiphany Green

January 13, 2018

Isaiah 43:1-7

Psalms 29

Acts 8:14-17

Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Second Sunday after Epiphany - Green

January 20, 2018

Isaiah 62:1-5

Psalms 36:5-10

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

John 2:1-11

Third Sunday after Epiphany - Green

January 27, 2018

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10

Psalms 19

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a

Luke 4:14-21



The Annual Meeting of First Parish United Church of Christ will be held following worship on Sunday, January 28, 2018. A reminder that **ALL committees are asked to generate a report of their work** that will be distributed in advance of

this meeting. Reports are requested to the Church Office or Church Clerk as soon after Christmas as possible. An Annual Report is a compilation of the ministries in which we are engaged, and speaks of the vision, hope and joy that we share as the Body of Christ in the world. Every effort is made to put these in an orderly packet, and distribute them [at church or by mail] prior to the Annual Meeting. Assistance is needed to prepare, produce and distribute the Annual Reports. Please speak with Moderator, Rich Whitten if you are willing to help with this effort.

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 kenanddebbhall@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 kenanddebbhall@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 lewatman@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.

DIACONATE

December was a very busy month for the Diaconate.

At our last meeting we discussed our Church Vitality and ideas for reaching new people, such as bowling, indoor movie time, outdoor movie with a firepit.

Pastor Mark will be on vacation 12/25/17 - 1/3/18. Gerry Cannon will lead worship on Sunday 12/31. Laurel Curtis will be the contact person during that week.

The women of the Church had Hour of Diversion on Sunday, December 3rd hosted by Women's Fellowship. Everyone had a wonderful time.

The Senior Deacons will be stepping down in January. It has been a wonderful experience and hard to believe how fast three years have gone by.

Respectfully,

Linda Palmer



Pastor Mark will be on vacation 12/25—

1/3/18 Emergency Pastoral coverage is being provided by Rev. Eliza Buchakjian-Tweedy, pastor of First Church, Congregational, Rochester, NH. In the event of an **emergency need**, please call the Deacon Laurel Curtis [603-969-1815] who will be in touch with the minister on call. Non-emergency church family needs are channeled through the Deacons, who can assist with a visit, phone call, or in some other way.

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.



CARING CARD MINISTRY

Nancy Brown is handling the Card Ministry. Please feel free to be in touch with Nancy who will 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.

CARROLL-STRAFFORD ASSOCIATION

Our local association includes 14 local United Church of Christ churches, is the “place” where authorized ministries originate, are sustained, and is where mutual counsel and support are sought between congregations to strengthen our shared witness and to provide comfort in time of need. The Association is truly a place of purpose and needs people who feel called as disciples to this particular ministry beyond the local church. There are two positions that are open: one at-large member of the Executive Board, and the Vice-Moderator [who must be a lay person as the next moderator is ordained] who serves a two-year term, followed by a two-year term as Moderator. Ponder and pray. Speak with Pastor Mark, or Marc Cote, who is our Association Treasurer.

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Greetings, Our last meeting was on December 9th in the Church Hall. With the Winter Months approaching, we settled in for a nice warm breakfast.

The main subject we discussed was the future of the Men's Fellowship Group. We have had declining attendance and interest within our group over the past 6 months. We voted to keep the group active in the future, although we have decided to cancel our monthly breakfast meetings starting in January 2018. We are going to wait until Springtime to discuss options for the group. We do plan to continue the Hack-ma-Que barbeque as well as the Annual Womens' Breakfast during the Summer Months. Also, the Annual Veterans Sock Drive will continue in September. We will have to see how the interest in these events progress in 2018.

Our Group has accomplished a lot in the past and we would like to see that continue moving forward. Our last business decision was to donate \$500.00 to the Church's General Fund. These proceeds were from the Ham and Bean Suppers as well as personal donations. We thank everyone who volunteered their time and efforts with these events and fund raisers.

The Men's Fellowship is open to all men who want to be in the know!

Share your contact information with Dave Hamel davehamel175@comcast.net or Rich Whitten richwhit10@comcast.net to receive updates when they are available.

Please feel free to talk to anyone in the group in the future.

Submitted by Dave Hamel
for the Mens Fellowship Group.



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!



Flower Chart for 2018 will be 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.

*Thanks
for your
generosity*

Can't thank-you enough when First Parish folk come through to help others! And you really did come through! There were 22 wishes provided for at Riverside Rest Home; at least 39 White Gifts for local children [and thanks to Jinny Burgess for her passion], flowers and poinsettias arranged by Robin & Dean Martin and Kim Conley; the hats, mittens, and scarves which appeared on the Narthex Christmas Tree; Cookie Walkers donated funds for Summer Campers (the list of camps will be posted in the Sunday School hallway); Christmas Card Board shared greetings through our church; Deacons and others who "hailed out the holly" (and a lot of other decorations); Christmas Cards donated; Priscilla Chellis for filling the urns by the front door; the Love Offering and other specific gifts that helped meet immediate needs in these days; your participation in the Somersworth Christmas Parade and caroling with Spirit to share the message of God's love, and the Music Ministry of our Adult Choir and organist/choir director, Bette Daley who have added so much to our celebrations. God Bless you all!

~Pastor Mark



Christian Sympathy is extended to the family of :

Arthur Fregard [12/20], daughter is Rachel Fournier.

May the deep peace of the Lord surround this family.

FAITH FORMATION

The Advent Workshop was a great success. We had a wonderful time, met some new and some old friends, ate cookies, and made some fun ornaments to take home.

The Cookie Walk earned \$295 for the Summer Camp Fund. Thank you all so much for your delicious cookies!!

Sue Vollkommer will be downstairs during the Budget Meeting and the Annual Meeting. She will have game, activities, and snacks to entertain the children, so parents can feel free to attend the meetings.



Greetings from the Open and Affirming Committee.

We have been working 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 and before the Patriots play!

- February – 11th : 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.

Our next meeting will be on **Sunday, January 7th**

Agenda:

- Review the inventory of material we have (DVDs, etc..)
- Preparation for the February 11th event
- Preparation for future events

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