

First Parish United Church of Christ (Congregational)

P.O. Box 228, 176 West High Street,

Somersworth, NH 03878-0228

Church Office: (603) 692-2057

Interim Minister: Rev. Dr. Norma Brettell

An Open & Affirming Church

www.somersworthfirstparish.org

pastor@somersworthfirstparish.org



MAY, 2019



PASTOR PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

On March 28th, members of the PPRC met with Pastor Norma to review where we are at the moment and to look to our next steps. The past few months have allowed Pastor Norma to get to know us a bit and us to know her.

Looking ahead we begin the multi-step process where the interim minister leads the congregation through five areas of exploration:

Heritage - Reviewing how the congregation has been shaped and formed

Leadership - Reviewing the member needs and its ways of organizing and developing new and effective leadership

Mission - Defining and redefining sense of purpose and direction

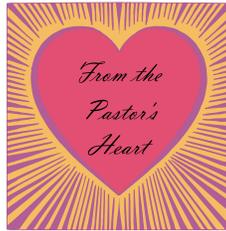
Connection - Discovering all the relationships a faith community builds outside itself

Future - Developing congregational and pastoral profiles

In March, Pastor Norma organized two events pertaining to the time of self-study - working to identify our spiritual gifts. Thank you to all who attended and participated. All of this is part of learning who we are as a congregation now, together and in connection with the wider community, and this will help us to refine our mission, determining goals and methods to achieve them.

When these areas have been explored further we will form a transition committee that represents the needs and values of our church. There is much to be done before we begin the search process to find a settled pastor for our Congregation.

Do not expect this to be a quick endeavor, it will take time. Eighteen months to three years is not unusual and the participation of the Congregation is crucial. We are called to "Be the Church", in faith and love, for a church without the people is just a building, after all.



From the Pastor's Heart....

I feel truly blessed to minister together with you, and I look forward to meeting members who may have left us for warmer climes when the weather here got cold. If you're a snowbird, when you're back please do let me know you're here! I'm grateful to build our relationships, whether it is during Sunday worship, fellowship hour, chance meetings at Dunkin' Donuts or Teatottlers, or scheduled pastoral visits.

We had a great turnout and enjoyed very much our first set of workshops in our interim work together, ***Unwrapping our Spiritual Gifts – Igniting Our Passion!*** Participants said that they ***loved spending the time together***, particularly the small group work, and that they had ***fun!*** What did we learn? We were ***amazed*** at all of the gifts, and the tremendous variety of gifts we have right here among us. There was ***joy among us*** as we considered how these many gifts can be offered for the glory of God in our church's mission here in our building, and outside the walls in our mission to the community. Our small group work allowed us to interact in a closer way with others we might only see on Sundays and not know so well. On a lighter note, we remembered how much we enjoyed arts and crafts-type things, and how they can help us to see things in a new way and also help us to remember learnings. And we were ***pleasantly surprised*** that we learned new things about friends we have known for a long time.

A sacred story that comes to mind with respect to transition ministry is the story of the Buddha having been asked what his monks did, how they practiced their way of life. And the Buddha replied something like, "well, we sit, and we walk, and we eat." And there was a further question, because, of course, everyone sits, and walks, and eats, so what's so different about the Buddha and his followers? And the Buddha continued, saying, "when we sit, we know we are sitting. When we walk, we know we are walking. And when we eat, we know we are eating." Like any ministry, transitional ministry calls us always to be present in the moment. Here, though, we are called especially to remember that the present moment of transition is special in itself, and it is a gift to the congregation.

Transition time has intrinsic value because it provides opportunities for the congregation to develop leadership in areas such as heritage, mission, communication, change, conflict, governance, leadership, connection, and future. These are golden opportunities in and of themselves. And, of course, considering these aspects of church life anew, a church in proceeding through its transition time lays the necessary groundwork for its work later in the interim time in discerning whom to call as its next settled pastor.

This staying in the present, this present-centeredness allows us at this time in the interim period to be here with God and to discern what God's intention is for First Parish United Church of Christ, Somersworth, and how this church can further God's work in the world. We'll listen for our gifts, we'll listen for our needs, and we'll work on developing in areas where we can grow. We'll listen for the community's needs and gifts, and we'll work to be open to discerning the heart of God for this church. Getting a collective sense of and being able to express our collective discernment in words, that is, what we have come to believe God's heart is for this church at this time, then the church will begin to be prepared to craft a church profile to help the church find the settled pastor to lead the church in just that way, the way that church has discerned God to be calling it!

As we celebrate our faith together in this time between Easter and Pentecost, a transition time for the first disciples, I look forward to sharing with you and learning from you how you see the risen Christ among us in Somersworth. May God bless our ministry together!



Nursing Home
Ministry

MINISTRY OF PRAYER & CONCERN

Edith Bowen & Jinny Burgess *The Residence at Silver Square, 100 Sterling Way, Dover, NH 03820*

Gail Day, *Langdon Place of Dover, 60 Middle Rd, Dover, NH 03820*

Toddy Eastman, *Wentworth Home, 795 Central Ave, Dover, NH 03820*

Pat Hamel, *The Manor at Canyon Lakes, #210, 2802 West 35th Ave., Kennewick, WA 99337-2583*

Audrey Loika, *Huntington Commons, 1 Huntington Common Dr., Apt. 208, Kennebunk, ME 04043*

Bob Philbrick, *Berwick Estates, 75 Portland St., So. Berwick, ME 03908*

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

Please do send your cards and greetings.

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.*

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.

You are the face of First Parish Church!



IN OUR THOUGHTS
AND PRAYERS

Wendy Alves (St. Jean) [health]

Nancy Anderson [health]

Craig Breden [health]

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

Diane Chessman [healing]

Gail Day [health]

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

Betty Foley [health]

Kathe Johnson [health] *Geoff Day's sister*

Ruth Lucey [healing] *Loved one of Mike & Sharon Sirois*

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

Nancy McDonough [health]

Marie Pelloni [health] *Allen Storm's sister-in-law*

Lindsey Richesin [health] *Linda Palmer's daughter*

Susan Sargent [healing]

Leann Schwartz [healing] *Gregg Fournier's sister and Barbara Dudley's daughter*

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.*
- *That God will bless and guide our new Interim Minister, Rev. Dr. Norma Brettell*
- *That God will bless and guide our Conference Minister, Rev. Gordan Rankin, and Associate Conference Minister, Rev. Richard Slater*
- *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.*
- *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!*



Priscilla Chellis has served as our church custodian for over twenty five years and we are grateful for all the time and effort she has put into helping every aspect of our church. She has been the “go to person” and she will be missed. We want to sincerely thank her for all she has done to make our church beautiful and well organized. She will be resigning as our custodian as of May 1, 2019.

If anyone is interested in this position, please contact Ken Latchaw, Trustee, at 603-427-8958.



Thank you to those who joined us for our delicious Chicken Dinner Luncheon. We raised \$220 to send to Lydia's House of Hope in Somersworth.

The items for the collection to the Seafarer's Friend Ditty Bags should be left at church by May 5th. At our May meeting we will put the Ditty Bags together and deliver them to Seafarer's Friend. Thank you to all who are participating in the mission.

Thank you for all the medicine bottles you have been donating to Samaritan's Purse. They are greatly appreciated. Please remember, clean, brown bottles only. If you have any questions please speak with Pat Whitten.



MAY LECTIONARY READINGS

Third Sunday of Easter - White

May 5, 2019
Acts 9:1-6 (7-20)
Psalm 30
Revelation 5:11-14
John 21:1-19

Fourth Sunday of Easter - White

May 12, 2019
Acts 9:36-43
Psalm 23
Revelation 7:9-17
John 10:22-30

Fifth Sunday of Easter - White

May 19
Acts 11:1-18
Psalm 148
Revelation 21:1-6
John 13:31-35

Sixth Sunday of Easter - White

May 26, 2019
Acts 16:9-15
Psalm 67
Revelation 21:10, 22:1-5
John 14:23-29 or John 5:1-9



*Sympathy is extended
to the families of*

William Manning [1/8] *Son of Ken & Karen Manning
of Berwick, Maine*

Francis McFarland [1/30] *Aunt of Geoff Day*

Betty Ann McGuire [2/5] *Aunt of Robin Hamel*

Donna Deranian [3/23] *Close friend of Kathy Latchaw*

Colby Burbank III [3/24] *Cousin of Nancie Cameron*



Children's Sunday will be celebrated on Sunday, May 5. We will be hosting a Cinco De Mayo Taco Luncheon following worship.

Faith Formation will be hosting Storytime and Crafts at The Pines in July. We have chosen, The Prodigal Son, Jonah and the Whale, and we will choose a story about a woman from the Bible. The committee will be there to do the craft with the children, and we would welcome having someone join us to read the story to the children. Please speak with Sue Vollkommer if you are interested.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The Woman's Fellowship wants to thank all of those people who donated items, did advertising, worked in the kitchen, and helped with the set up and clean up for our Silent Auction. It was a huge success and we made almost \$1,000.00.

All women of the church are invited to " *Women's Night Out*". We will be dining at the Weathervane Restaurant, 2 Dover Point Rd, Dover on Monday, May 6th at 5:30PM. Anyone interested in carpooling can meet at the church at 5PM. Please RSVP to Kathy Latchaw (427-8958 or klatchaw@comcast.net) or fill out the sign up sheet being passed around during worship service.

The Women's Fellowship is blessed to have so many women who come Tuesday mornings and work on crafts or take time to just chat with each other. All women are welcome and so are friends. If you know someone who would like to come and share a craft with us, invite them. We are looking for Holly Daze Fair ideas so we can get started on making crafts for it.

The Women's Fellowship's scholarship is available to someone who is an active member of our church and is going to be continuing their education. If you are interested in learning more about this please contact either Carol Cummings, Martha Collins or Kathy Latchaw.



- May 1 Craig Breden, Dave Stolpe,
Mark & Kathy Rideout
- May 2 Richard Jutras,
Brian & Christine Boucher
- May 4 Heather Day
- May 5 Christopher Rideout
- May 6 Alexis Dascoulias
- May 7 Lori Pay
- May 9 Bea Gardner, Rich Whitten
- May 11 Jonathan Chellis
- May 12 Beverly Lyndes
- May 15 Ken Latchaw
- May 16 Connie Ricker,
Marc & Patty Cote
- May 18 *Bill & Mary Horton*
- May 20 Scott Vollkommer
- May 27 Anthony Trussell
- May 29 *Rob & Kim Conley*
- May 31 Ed Courier, Sue Vollkommer,
Matthew St.Jean,
Geoff & Nancy Day

SPAGHETTI SUPPER

We are very fortunate to have a wonderful group of volunteers! We appreciate the awesome job you do before, during and after the suppers and we are grateful for everyone who has answered our last minute call for help! Thank you!

Tom Allen will be stepping down from the Spaghetti Supper soon. We appreciate his help and will miss him and the wonderful job he does with helping to prepare our sauce.

We need someone to replace Tom on the committee and we are also in need of more volunteers to help make our suppers successful. We need people willing to help prepare the meals on the Friday before the supper at 2:30PM, during the suppers and we need more desserts. Please let Kathy Latchaw or Debbie Hall know if you are interested in helping us.

We are very pleased to contribute \$591 from the March Spaghetti Supper to the church's general funds.

We have two more suppers before our summer break, April 27th and May 25th. Please join us and bring your friends and family!

A Gentle Reminder:

- * Sunday Bulletin announcements/ information needs to be in writing to the Church Office by TUESDAY, or you may e-mail it directly to Debbie Hall at kenanddebbhall@comcast.net
- * Monthly Newsletter, Calendar and updates on birthdays or anniversary items MUST be submitted by the 1st 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!).

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.

DIACONATE

Your Diaconate Members are: Kathy Latchaw, Debbie Hall, Laurel Curtis, Geoff Day, Nancy Day, Diane Chessman, Robin Hamel, Dave Hamel

Deacons on Duty in May are Kathy Latchaw and Debbie Hall.

The Deacons continue to work on several initiatives. These are:

* Holy Week was planned with services for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunrise Service and the Easter service.

* Pastor Norma has led two Unwrapping our Gifts workshops. These were very informative as we discussed the multitude of gifts that we as individuals bring to the church.

* Somersworth T-Ball: The Church will be sponsoring a Somersworth T-Ball team once again. Please keep this on your radar for next spring!

* Church Vitality – Do you have ideas on how we can reach new people? We would love to hear them. Several ideas we are discussing. What do you think?

- Concert
- Sock Hop
- Motivational speaker

* Open and Affirming update - we had a very candid discussion concerning the letter sent to the Church Council about the Open & Affirming flag.

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If you have questions, comments or concerns for the Diaconate please feel free to contact one of the Deacons and we will do our best to help.

Geoff Day, for the Diaconate

ALL ARE WELCOME!

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Sunday Worship & Sunday School- 10:00AM

Fellowship Time Follows Worship
Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of each month.

Ministers: The People of the Church

Interim Pastor: Rev. Norma Brettell

Faith Formation 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 & Calendar Editor:

Debbie Hall

PRAYER GROUP MINISTRY

Do you know someone who needs prayers? Please contact one of the Prayer Group members listed below.

Prayer Group's next meeting is June 6th.

Prayer Group Members:

Carol Cummings, 6 Bennett St., Somersworth, NH 03878

(603) 692-2450

Email: johnandcarol55@comcast.net

Dottie Douglas, 20 Columbus Ave., #213, Rochester, NH 03867

(603) 332-6113

Email: dottiedouglas@metrocast.net

Fran Karlik, 15 Church Hill Road, Durham, NH 03824

(603) 397-5674

Email: kinross2@comcast.net

LIBRARY RESOURCE

Do you like working with books? **We are looking for someone interested in taking care of our church library.**

Please talk with Pastor Norma or one of our church leaders if you would like to learn more about this very rewarding job.

OPEN & AFFIRMING

Greetings from the Open and Affirming Committee!

Each Sunday after the Sharing a Sign of Peace with One Another we sing the Response Song written by Bryan Sirchio.

(Chorus) Dream God's dream, Holy Spirit, help us dream... Of a world where there is justice, and where everyone is free to build and grow and love and to simply have enough. The world will change when we dream God's dream.

I'm dreaming of a world where the color of one's skin will mean less than what's within the person's heart. A world where water's clean, and where air is safe to breathe, and every child born has enough to eat. (Chorus)

I'm dreaming of the call God is offering to me how to use my energy and my best gifts to do the work of Christ -- to say, God please use my life to spread Your healing love -- and to live your Truth (Chorus)

I'm dreaming of the way that I want my life to go. I've got hopes and I've got goals I'd like to meet. I'm reaching for the stars, but I won't forget the scars of Christ who died to show that the Dream's for all... (Chorus)

Each Sunday I think about these words. Especially, those in the chorus – “Dream God's dream, Holy Spirit, help us dream... Of a world where there is **justice**, and where **everyone** is **free to build and grow and love** and **to simply have enough**. The world will change when **we dream God's dream.**” It makes me think about our Open and Affirming statement and question if I do enough to truly live it and do it justice. Do you think about these words? Do you think about how you can truly live our Open and Affirming statement?

Our statement says:

We, the members of First Parish United Church of Christ (Congregational), joyfully welcome all who seek to know God in Jesus Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In declaring ourselves an Open and Affirming Church, **we celebrate the sacredness of every person as a child of God.**

We welcome all, following Jesus' example, including persons of every age, gender, race, national origin, faith background, marital status and family structure, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, mental and physical ability, economic and social status, and educational background , to...

Do these words in our statement resonate with you? They certainly do with our committee. How is our church living the words of our Open and Affirming statement? This has been a significant topic of discussion during our recent committee meeting. How could we be better at this? Do you agree one goal should be to make sure that those who are not aware know our doors are open and we are a safe and welcoming place for everyone to hear and share the Good News? We would like to hear your opinion. Please consider being a part of the on-going discussion.

Peace,

Geoffrey and Nancy Day , Open and Affirming Committee

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.