

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

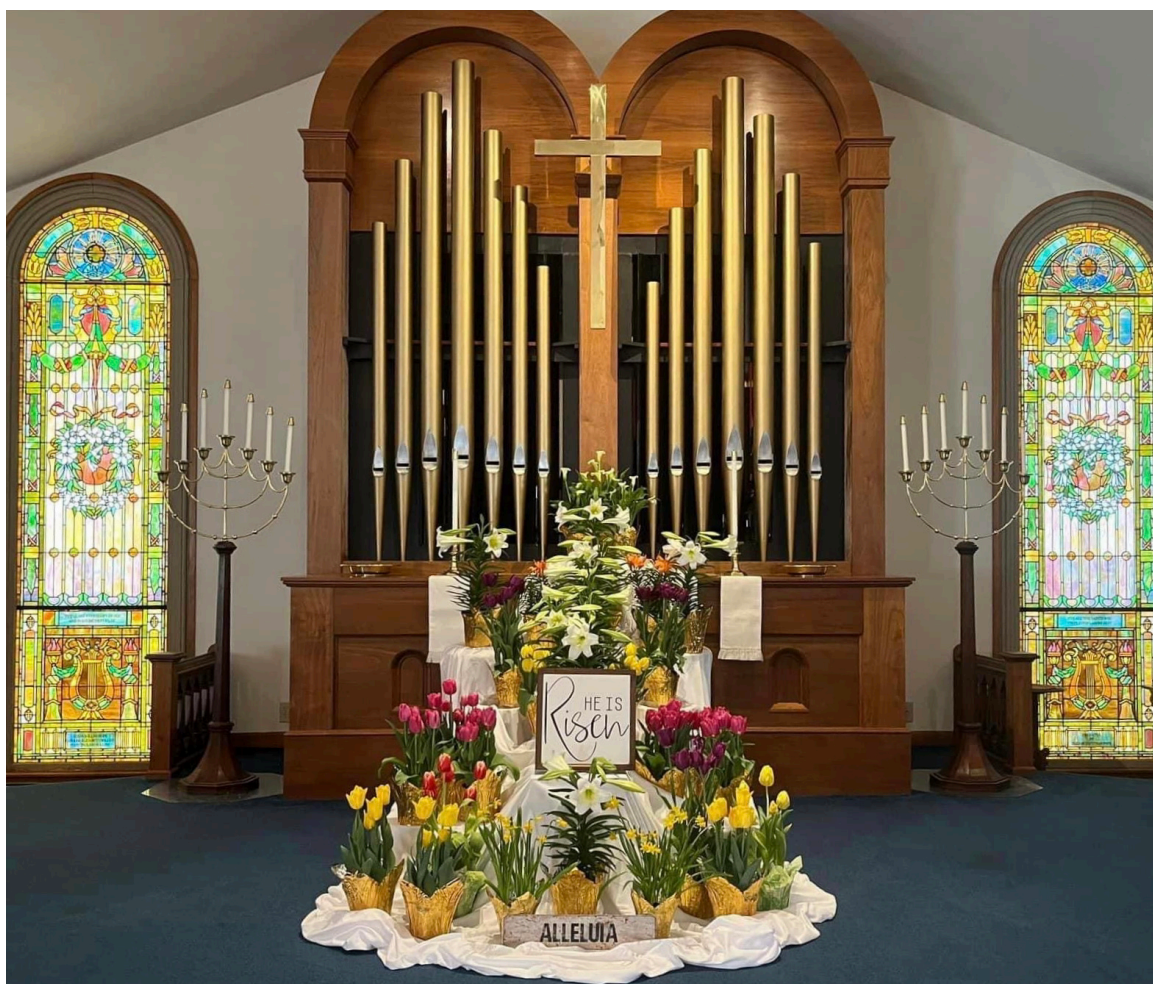
P.O. Box 228, 176 West High Street,
Somersworth, NH 03878-022
Church Office: (603) 692-2057
Rev. Thomas Gardner, Pastor
An Open & Affirming Church

www.somersworthfirstparish.org
pastor@somersworthfirstparish.org



MAY, 2023

HAPPY EASTER





“When Jesus was at the table with them, he took break, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him.”- Luke 24:30-31

The Constitution of the United Church of Christ reads, “In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among (Protestant) Christians, the United Church of Christ recognizes two sacraments, baptism and the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion”.

This month we will talk a little about the second of our ‘practices of faith’. Last month, we were introduced to baptism. This month we will talk a little bit about the other sacrament, communion. Sacraments are ritual actions in worship instituted by Jesus. In the sacraments, we use physical materials, and ask the Holy Spirit to make visible the grace, forgiveness, and presence of God in Christ.

Throughout the Christian church, there are many diverse beliefs about communion. What exactly is the nature of the elements, the bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ? Who may receive communion and how often? Even within the United Church of Christ, there are a number of different beliefs or practices, but also things that unite us, and other Christians, as we enter God’s presence at the table together.

Communion recalls the last meal Jesus and his disciples shared before Jesus’ death, as well as those meals (like that mentioned at the start of this reflection), after his resurrection. In our tradition, the communion table is open to ‘all Christians who wish to know the presence of Christ and share in the community of God’s people’. Visitors from any Christian church are welcome to participate at their conscience and discretion. Children, too, are welcome at the table at their parents discretion, and usually after some instruction about the meaning of the sacrament. There is no one formula for how communion is served, or how often. In our tradition, communion has often been infrequent, but in recent years there has been movement towards the traditional pattern of the broader Church, which is more frequent, often weekly, communion.

So that’s a little about what we DO in communion, but what are we remembering and celebrating exactly? The word “Eucharist” that we use to describe the Lord’s Supper, is a word that means “Thanksgiving”. Communion is, first, a joyful act of giving thanks to God for all God has done, is doing, and will do to redeem creation. It is a memorial, especially, of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus; a sign of his sacrifice in which Christ is fully and truly present with us. Communion is a sharing of table and presence with God, and also with one another. In Communion, we are united with all those around the world who also share in Christ’s presence, partake of his food, and become the body of Christ, with him to make all things new. The book of worship reminds us, ‘the invitation and call to celebrate is not only the memory of a meal that is past, but an actual meal with the risen Christ that is a foretaste of the heavenly banquet at which Christ will preside at the end of history’.

So, as we gather together in worship, the worship of Word and Table, we enter the presence of Jesus together, and give thanks, bless the bread and cup, and share this meal together, a meal that points us back to Christ’s sacrifice, and forward to the glory of the redemption. In the Eucharist Christ is truly present with us, wherever we are on life’s journey. As often as you can, come, for all things are prepared, take, and eat.



MAY LECTIONARY READINGS

Fifth Sunday of Easter- White

May 7, 2023

Acts 7:55-60

Psalms 31:1-5, 15-16

1 Peter 2:2-10

John 14:1-14

Sixth Sunday of Easter - White

May 14, 2023

Acts 17:22-31

Psalms 66:8-20

1 Peter 3:13-22

John 14:15-21

Seventh Sunday of Easter - White

May 21, 2023

Acts 1:6-14

Psalms 68:1-10, 32-35

1 Peter 4:12-13; 5:6-11

John 17:1-11

Day of Pentecost - Red

May 28, 2023

Acts 2:1-21 or Numbers 11:24-30

Psalms 104:24-34, 35b

1 Corinthians 12:3b-1 or Acts 2:1-21

John 20:19-23 or John 8:37-39



May 1	Craig Breden, Dave Stolpe
May 2	Richard Jutras
May 5	Glen LeSiege
May 6	Alexis Dascoulias
May 9	Richard 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, Geoff & Nancy Day

Holy Week and Easter brought us together in worship many times in the seven days. We continue in the “*great fifty days of Easter*” until the Pentecost on May 28th. A word of sincere thanks to:

Palm Sunday:

- * The Palm display arranged by Kathy Latchaw,
- * Garrett & Hannah LeSiege and Thomas and Caleb Gardner for passing out the palms

Maundy Thursday: Daniel & Katrina Mochamps, Jennifer Haviland, Nancie Cameron, Kathy Latchaw, Debbie Hall, Julie Hurley & Cynthia Jutras for reading the Office of Tenebrae.

- * James Ochotan and Julie Hurley for reading the scriptures and Rev. Tom Gardner for the Washing of Feet.
- * Merry Lineweber for providing music.

Easter Sunday: Kathy Latchaw for our Easter flower display and Jennica LeSiege for helping arrange the flower display

- * Julie Hurley, Dave & Robin Hamel for their special music “Christ Arose”

- * Rev. Tom Gardner for his inspirational leadership and worship services during Easter.

- * William Asher for his music ministry and lifting up our joy for music.

- * On Easter Sunday, we welcomed as new members of our church: Glen & Jennica LeSiege and Gabrielle Smith!



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

Priscilla Chellis, (207) 698-5977,
Email: prchellis@comcast.net

Carol Cummings, (603) 842-5059,
Email: :
johnandcarol55@comcast.net

Fran Karlik, (603) 397-5674,
Email: kinross2@comcast.net



MINISTRY OF PRAYER & CONCERN

Madeline Ashley *The Pines of Newmarket*, 9 Grant Rd., Newmarket, NH 03857

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

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

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

Ida Patterson, *Benchmark at Rye*, 295 Lafayette Rd., Room 106, Rye, NH 03870

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.



**Sympathy is
extended to the
family of:**

Sean Collins [4/4/23]
Son of Martha Collins, brother to
Tim and Maureen

Jim Vollkommer [4/12/23] Uncle
to Pete Vollkommer

*May the blessing of hope and health
surround their families.*



In Our Thoughts and Prayers

John Chesley (health)
Alexis Dascoulias (health)
Sherie Dinger (health)
Gina Fortier (health)
Lynn Jackson (health)
Bev Lyndes (health)
Diane Shepherd (healing)
Mike Sirois (healing)

AND ongoing prayer focus during these days:

- *For our Carroll-Strafford Association Churches.*
- *That God will bless and guide our Conference Minister, Rev. Gordan Rankin, and Associate Conference Minister, Rev. Sara Marean*
- *That God will bless and guide Rev. Tom Gardner.*
- *Faith formation ministries for all ages - for building strong faith foundations, at all ages and stages of life.*
- *Working together in community - to build community - and to implement strategies for prevention, while providing resources for treatment and recovery from substance misuse and its stigma.*
- ***Jesus said: Love God. Love Neighbor. Love Self.***
- *Those serving in the Armed Services and in support capacities around the world.*
- *The UKAMA Partnership between the United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe and the NH Conference UCC.*
- *Continued invitational ministry and mission here at First Parish United Church of Christ: invite, include, involve in the good news way of Christ!*
- *We pray for those who are living with life-threatening illnesses; those who are aging or living with cancer, have mental health concerns and those who are caregivers.*
- ***We long for peace in our world***, praying that our nation and world leaders will work together in this time of need, finding peace and harmony with all - the sick, poor, homeless, hungry, victims of violence and abuse, our LGBTQ+ community, refugees, immigration concerns, violence in the schools and violence in our streets.
- ***We give thanks for all those who have been working non-stop*** behind the scenes at First Parish so that the day-to-day needs move along seamlessly. *For our committees that oversee our finances, our children, our prayer needs, worship and building concerns, plus our local outreach with The Community Food Pantry and the Table of Plenty.*
- ***We are hopeful*** that God will bless our own church growth in reaching out to new people as we keep the face of First Parish UCC in our community. *We share the good news of God's light and love in Jesus Christ, being faithful disciples while inviting and including all who are seeking hope and a spiritual home.*



FAITH FORMATION

The last day for Sunday School class will be Sunday, May 21st. I will provide activity pages for any child in church over the summer. If I happen to be in church any Sunday over the summer, I will be glad to take the children downstairs for a fun activity.

Horton Center is now accepting applications for summer camps. If you are unfamiliar with Horton Center, a UCC summer camp for children and adults you can find more information at www.HortonCenter.org

This summer Cassidy and Kaleigh Richer are already registered for a week at camp. Cassidy will be attending Archery 1 & 2. Kaleigh will be learning about Mysteries On The Mountain. It sounds like they will have a fun week!

Did you know Horton Center offers camps for adults? There is a camp for grandparents and grandchildren to attend together! There is also a weekend for women only.

Want to check it out and see what Horton Center is all about? Plan to attend Open House on June 7th! You will have an opportunity to spend an afternoon and experience all that Horton Center has to offer!

If you would like to learn more about this wonderful experience, check out www.Hortoncenter.org or speak with Sue Vollkommer.



Rev. Tom Gardner's Contact Information

Email: pastor@somersworthfirstparish.org
Telephone: Church Office: 603-692-2057
Rev. Tom's cell: 603-393-4934

DIACONATE

Congratulations to Gabrielle Smith, Glen & Jennica LeSiege who joined our church during the worship service on Easter Sunday! Welcome to First Parish Church!

Ten members of First Parish joined The New Journey of Faith Church on March 26th for a Pot Luck Dinner. We had a wonderful time! The members of The New Journey Church were so excited to have us there and made us feel very welcome. The food was delicious! Various people of all ages sang throughout the meal and they even had us join them with dancing. We have been invited to join them again in June. We are all looking forward to it!

Starting on Easter Sunday, we are collecting offering the way we did pre-Covid. The deacons will pass the plate around during the Offertory.

We are looking forward to also changing "Passing the Peace" to the way we did it before Covid. Everyone will be welcome to greet each other saying "Peace be with you" and, if desired, touching elbows, shaking hands or even giving hugs. This will start on Pentecost Day.

Church Clean-Up is May 20th beginning at 9AM. We need many hands to make our church grounds beautiful!

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!

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Sunday Worship and Sunday School, 9AM

Ministers: The People of the Church
Pastor: Rev. Thomas Gardner
Faith Formation Coordinator: Susan Vollkommer
Moderator: Nancie Cameron
Clerk:
Contracted Treasurer: Linda Gauthier
Assistant Treasurer: Richard Shepherd
Pianist/Choir Director: William Asher
Newsletter & Calendar Editor: Debbie Hall



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The women meet on Tuesday mornings from 9 to 11AM. If you are available at that time, we would love to have you join us.

We are currently working on crafts for the Holly Daze fair in November. We are going to have a select few vendors join us at the fair this year. If you know of someone who has a craft they sell, we welcome them. There is an application to fill out. Let Kathy Latchaw know if you want an application.

We are collecting Easter baskets and items to go in the baskets to give to the Food Pantry next year. This is a great time to stock up on these items because they are being sold at greatly reduced prices. Donations can be given to Kathy Latchaw or any women from the Women's Fellowship.

Thank you!



CHANGE OF ADDRESSES

Madeline Ashley and Connie Ricker have recently moved. Their new addresses are listed below. They would love to hear from you!

Madeline Ashley

The Pines of Newmarket
9 Grant Road
Newmarket, NH 03857

Connie Ricker

191 Maple St., #202
Somersworth, NH 03878
Tel: 603-841-5960

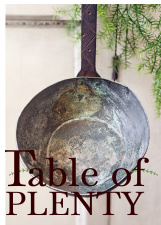


TABLE OF PLENTY

Our church's team will be serving at the Table of Plenty on Wednesday, May 10th. We need a total of 6-8 people to help with food prep and serving starting at 2PM. We need 3-4 people to help cook the food and prepare it for take-outs from 2-4:00PM. We then need 3-4 people to help with serving from 4:00-5:30 followed by clean up. If you would like to help for all or part of these times or for more information, please contact Laurel Curtis at dlc2069@gmail.com



	March, 2023	Year-to-Date, 2023
Total Income	\$4,501.24	\$21,855.77
Total Expenses	<u>\$10,627.09</u>	<u>\$26,019.96</u>
Net Income	(\$4,125.85)	(\$4,164.19)
Checking Account Balance as of March 31, 2023		\$20,578.60
Savings Account Balance		<u>\$ 5,002.93</u>
Total Checking and Savings		\$25,581.53
Unavailable Checkbook Funds		<u>(\$3,569.02)</u>
Total Checkbook Funds Available		\$22,012.51
Memorial Fund Checkbook Balance		\$20,801.84
Mortgage Balance at Service Credit Union at 2/28/23		\$22,036.41