



The Messenger



First Parish Congregational Church, Saco
"A Christ-centered Inclusive Community of Faith
with Love and Hope to Share"

January 2024



First Parish Night of Talent
January 12, 2024 – 7:00 pm
Come and support the local talent.



ANNUAL
CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING

**January 21, 2024
11:45 am
Snow Date
January 28, 2023**



**MARTIN LUTHER KING
DAY OF SERVICE**

January 15, 2024

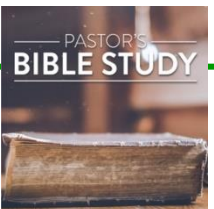
The 16th Annual First Parish
Church Day of Service!!

For more information please
see Kris Galasyn

Pastor's Bible Study

Thursday Evenings 6:30 PM

Come join us!



Do you have questions about the 2024 Budget for First Parish Church?
We will be holding Budget Meetings at 11:30 am on January 7th and January 14th to
answer any questions you may have. Our Treasurer, Amy Chute, will be making the
presentation.

Rev. Scott W. Cousineau, Senior Minister
Kristine Galasyn, Director of Christian Education
Jacqueline Savage, Music Director
Sue Burgess, Office Administrator

12 Beach Street,
Saco, ME 04072
207-283-3771

www.firstparishsaco.org
email – office@firstparishsaco.org
Facebook – First Parish Saco UCC
Instagram – @FirstParishSaco



Pastor Scott's Message...



The Pastor's Perspective ...



Happy New Year! As we take our first steps into 2024, many people will spend time considering what the year holds in store for them. Many people will make resolutions about changes that they hope to make in their lives. This is a time when most of us look forward. However, an article in this week's edition of 'The Christian Citizen' suggests that before we look forward ... we look back.

The author, Rev. Margaret Marcuson, shares an exercise that she began seven years ago. Before she makes plans for the year ahead, she gives prayerful consideration to a series of questions regarding the year gone by. Here are some of the questions that she ponders:

- What happened this year?
- What can we celebrate about this year? What went right?
- What did we learn this year?
- Who are the people that mean the most to us?
- What did we do with regard to our spiritual life this year?

A little over a month ago, we gathered together with family and friends to give thanks to God for all of the blessings in our lives. Just a week ago, we celebrated the amazing gift of the birth of Jesus Christ, and we again gathered with family and friends to exchange gifts of our own. And now, with the spirit of loving kindness still filling our hearts and homes, we consider a new year filled with opportunities.

The exercise suggested by Rev. Marcuson is an important practice for us as individuals and as a community of faith. Later this month we will gather for our Annual Meeting. The annual reports written by the members of the staff, church leadership, and our teams and ministries will help us focus upon those questions regarding what we did this year. The reports will be filled with many points of celebration that we share as a church family.

In anticipation of that meeting, I would ask you to prayerfully consider how you would answer those questions for yourself and for our church. Write the answers down if it will help you focus. Go ahead ... I will wait.

Now ... what excites you about the year ahead?

This is an extraordinary time in the life of our church family! The spirit and the energy that has filled our worship and our programs has been exhilarating. People can feel it as soon as they enter into the building. A recent visitor said, "This is what it means to be 'community.'" I agree. I feel it too. This is what it means to be a community of faith. At a recent small group gathering, one person said, "We should do this more often." Yes! That too! Nearly fifty children and youth in our Sunday school. Incredible music and a choir that has outgrown the choir loft. Yes! And yes! Mission and outreach ministries that serve our neighbors in meaningful ways. YES!! What excites me about First Parish Church? Everything! I cannot wait to see what 2024 brings!

Pastor Scott





Vice Moderator Update...



Happy New Year to all!!

Annual meeting will be coming up and we will have a change in leadership. Tim McGee will take up the Moderator Position. Tom Kircher will take up the Vice Moderator position. Charley Carter will take the lead role of Treasurer. Amy Chute will step to Assistant Treasurer. I plan to meet with Tim and Tom to let them know what is happening and I will be available if there are any questions so we keep a smoothly running transition.

I have been Vice Moderator for two years now without a Moderator this year. We asked several individuals to join the team over the year and did not get any takers. We added Scott as a secondary check signer because driving from Scarborough became a challenge. Thanks to Scott for helping with that role.

With the help of so many people, we have made some advancements in many areas.

- We moved the bulk of our checking account to an investment account adding about \$1000 per month to our operating budget with minimal impact.
- We worked (tweaked) our Bylaws to reduce (by merging) the number of groups, put some financial controls in place, removed the groupings of groups because the groups were not meeting. This information will be presented to the Congregation soon for your approval.
- We merged the Finance Team with the Investment/CCMG Team which will reduce the number of meetings per year. Our financials are very stable and does not require monthly review (based on the great work of Amy Chute, our Treasurer).

This year has been excellent with the increase in membership and we welcome these new members to our community. We have a solid increase in our number of children which sometimes take Scott down the side rails, entertaining for the kids but also the adults!! As I write this, I am so looking forward to the Pageant and Christmas eve service.

I will put a plug in for my wife (who is stepping down from the Diaconate after 4 years) that we need a more diverse group of Deacons. Most of our Deacons are older but engaging with additional younger members of the church will lighten the load and provide a profound understanding of the worship process. If you are a newer member and would consider becoming a Deacon, you will meet so many wonderful people.

Have a great new year and see you at Annual Meeting!!

Bob Condon
Vice Moderator





Deacon Ministry

With the turning of a calendar page to a new year, yearly church events, such as the Annual Meeting, are quickly approaching!

Therefore, it is timely that I share with you that I have made the decision to step down from the Diaconate in January. I have served First Parish as a Deacon for the past (almost) four years, starting just before the Covid Pandemic and shortly after joining First Parish!

Serving in this capacity at First Parish has been extremely gratifying, and it's been made more enjoyable and satisfying by serving alongside the other Diaconate members! We really are both a team and family, strongly supporting each other!

As I prayerfully consider how I may be of service at First Parish in the future, I want to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to Pastor Scott, Sue Burgess, and the Deacons for all of their support and friendship! In particular, I want to thank Peggy Warden, who stepped up soon after joining the Diaconate, to be a Co-Chair! Already, Peggy has made significant improvements to our inventory and budget tracking and reporting systems! The church will be in good hands under Peggy's Diaconate leadership, and gaining a second Co-Chair in 2024 will be the icing on the cake!

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve First Parish in this way.

Margery Condon,
Diaconate Co-Chair



Happy New Year

The New Year is here!

For the month of January our Church school classes will focus on the Bible stories of Jesus' Baptism, Calling the Disciples, Showing Love and God's Kingdom.. Our Wonder Word for the month is **Include**. First Parish takes the word Include very seriously. We even say it on our bulletin cover with the words:

A Place for Everyone!

Last month was our Christmas Pageant supper and rehearsal. It was wonderful to have over 80 people in fellowship together. Our Church school Christmas Pageant was amazing. We had 34 children with 20 families participating. Thanks to all our participants, their families and all our music directors for making this happen. Many thanks to our youth, **Connor Remillard, Aaron Blow and Jo Fitzgerald** and adult helpers **Katherine Karbel, and Mike Remillard** that kept our angels, shepherds and wisemen on track. Thank you to **Linda Lambert and Art Morrisette** for our incredible animals. They are so amazing. There are so many moving parts to a Children's Christmas pageant. More thank yous to the **Top of the Hill Gang**. To our King soloists: **David Johnston, Phil Blood and Peter Gray**. Thank you to the Christian Education Team for hosting our Pageant supper and rehearsal. Many hands made this

Christmas Pageant possible. Here are a few behind the scene pictures as we prepared for the pageant.



Pictures of the pageant will be in our February Messenger.

Happy New Year

Stay safe and stay well

See you at Church

Kris



December

December 3 **August Fernandes**
 December 10 **Jo Fitzgerald**
 December 17 **Connor Remillard**
 December 24 **Cassie Remillard**
 December 31 **Chloe Remillard**



Jesus says:

*"Let the little
 Children come
 to me"*

-Matthew 19:14

Helping **Lisa or Mary** in the Nursery for the month of **December** was:

3rd **Cathi Morin**
 10th **Denise Bilodeau**
 17th **Carol Spencer Lemay**
 24th **Karen Brann**
 31st

We are in need of volunteers for our Nursery. Please consider signing up for **Just ONE Sunday**. For many of our Church school families, the nursery is there first stop in coming to our church. Thank you to all who have signed up for helping in our Nursery. Our sign up sheet for the Winter is up and we hope you will continue your generosity by signing up.

"It's Only One Sunday!"

First Parish Christian Education Team appreciates your time. **Thank you**



Watch for your **Souperbowl Subs** order form in **January** and also on the web site. Subs will be available after church on **Sunday, February 11, 2024**.

At this time we will be taking a special offering for **Super Bowl Sunday**. This offering will stay in our community. This year we will donate the money to Bon Appetit. "I was hungry and you fed me."---Matthew 25:35, The Message by Eugene Peters



SPURWINK

ADOPT-A-FAMILY

Thank you to all who participated in this project. We helped out 3 families which included 7 children. Isn't this what Christmas is all about? **Susan Anton** and her daughter made Christmas stockings for each child and filled them. Through other generous donations, like three full dinners from the Snowmobile Club (thank you **Gordon Mehlman**) and gift cards we were also able to put food on the table for the holidays. We helped another local family with a tree and decorations along with gifts and stockings for four children. Through our website we were asked to help a local person in need of a little extra attention this year. This is all provided because of generous people in our congregation who give to the Discretionary fund. Thank you.



Martin Luther King
Day of Service

January 15, 2024

Not A Day Off, But A Day On

Life's most urgent question is?
"What are you doing for others?"

-Martin Luther King

Martin Luther King, Jr Day of Service will take place Monday, January 15, 2024. This will be our Sixteenth year!! We invite our Faith community to start collecting...

Health and Beauty items: toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, feminine sanitary products, deodorant (men and women), shampoo etc.

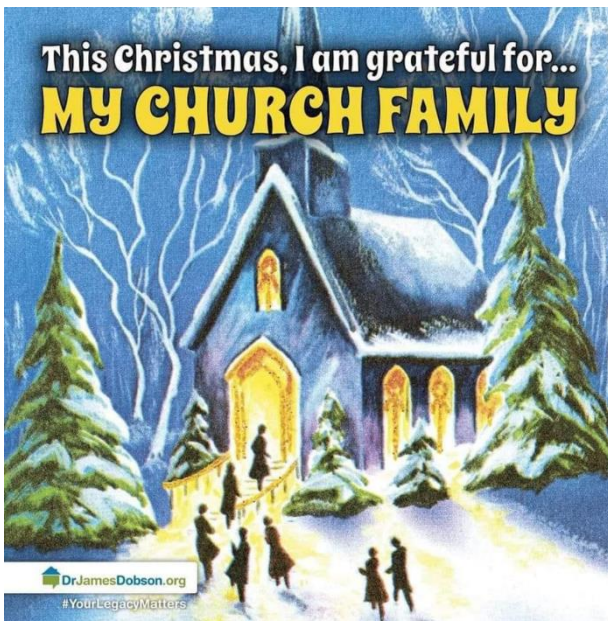
New Underwear, all sizes, New Socks, all sizes.

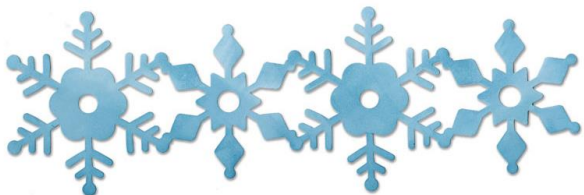
After Christmas is a great time to clean out those closets, bookshelves and toy bins. We take gently used clothes, toys, games, books, towels, blankets etc.

Starting Dec. 31 there will be shopping carts in the atrium for all items to be left. A sign-up sheet will be available soon. If you would like to help on MLK Day of Service please email me:

kris@firstparishsaco.org

Thank you





Flower and Altar Update

If you wish to remember or honor a loved one or celebrate an event in someone's life with altar flowers, the 2024 sign-up sheet is on the wall outside the church office. We know that many of you remember loved ones every year. If you have a specific time of year that you wish to remember loved ones, sign up early or that date may already be filled. Also, you may contact Patrice Tripp at 207-590-1109 or Marica Lord at 207-768-1699.

Sunday Flowers for December were provided by/for:

- Lorie Faubert in Loving Memory of Winafred Schnarr
- Poinsettia Sunday
- Barbara & Jack Kidder in Loving Memory of Cora & Henry Truslow
- Rich & Patrice Tripp in Loving Memory & Honor of Our Families
- Edward Olsen Wishing a Happy New Years' to All



Mission Team Update

FMI – Carol Spencer-Lemay



The next Mission Team meeting is scheduled for January 11th at 6:30 pm in the Conference Room. Please join us!

We need your unwanted footwear!!!

If you have sturdy footwear and/or boots in very good condition, but are not using them, please donate them to our shoe ministry table.

Our supply is running low.

Saco Food Pantry



Thank you for your support of the Saco Food Pantry!

Don't forget to donate to the Saco Food Pantry if you are able. The need is great.

The **Saco Food Pantry** thanks First Parish Congregational Church members for their ongoing generosity. Please continue to donate non-perishable food items and hygiene items and place them in the shopping cart in the Atrium. Thank you!

The Saco Food Pantry, located at 67 Ocean Park Road, is open Monday to Friday from 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM, and the last Tuesday of the month from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM.



Women's Fellowship

The Gingerbread Fair



The Cookie Table Ladies would like to thank everyone who baked cookies for the table this year. We had SO many cookies and the variety was amazing! All the shoppers had so many kinds of cookies to choose from. We really appreciate how everyone took the time to bake and drop off cookies. We're looking forward to next year!

Thanks again!

Cathy Baillargeon, Mary Coyne, Betty Robideau,
Renee Kaufman





Winter Things To Do

☐ Do at least one random act of kindness each month

☐ Give back

☐ Pay it forward

☐ Build a snowman

☐ Go ice skating

☐ Make a homemade soup, stew or chowder

☐ Share your homemade soup, stew or chowder with a neighbor

☐ Shop at a local shop

☐ Enjoy some hot chocolate

☐ Attend church services

☐ Wear slippers all day

☐ Have a pajama day

☐ Build and play in a blanket fort

☐ Bake cookies

☐ Go to a movie

☐ Try a new restaurant



☐ Read stories by the fire

☐ Go to a museum

☐ Go bowling

☐ Do a puzzle

☐ Do something nice for a family member

☐ Volunteer in your community

☐ Shovel a neighbor's driveway or walkway

☐ Have a movie night, don't forget the popcorn

☐ Play a new board game

☐ Make handmade Valentine's cards

☐ Go to a hockey game

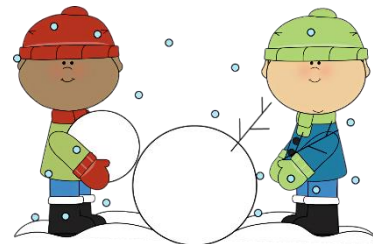
☐ Volunteer at your Church

☐ Donate to your local food pantry

☐ Visit someone who lives alone


☐ Get outdoors – sledding, snowshoeing, snow tubing, Xcountry skiing, etc.

☐ Have a "no screen time" day





January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Office Closed 	2 9am Counters 9:30am Fellowship Workshop 5pm SoME Dance 6:30pm Facilities Team 7pm Men's Fellowship	3 4p Diaper Bank 6:45p Sr Choir	4 9am TOHG 4pm Tutor & Ed Testing 5pm SoME Dance 6:30pm Book Club 6:30pm Bible Study	5	6 12pm Milo's Birthday Party
7 8:30am Sacred Conversations 8:50am CE Team 10am Service 11:30am M&A Team 11:30am Budget Meeting 1pm TV Service 2pm Beals Baby Shower	8 9am Counters 6pm Bell Choir 7pm Big Book	9 9:30am Fellowship Workshop 5pm SoME Dance 7pm Men's Fellowship	10 4pm Diaper Bank 5:30pm Jr Choir 6:30pm Mission Team 6:45pm Sr Choir	11 9am TOHG 4pm Tutor & Ed Testing 5pm SoME Dance 6:30pm Bible Study 7pm Maine Steiners Concert	12	13 7pm Night of Talent 
14 8:30am Sacred Conversations 10am Service 11:30 am Budget Meeting 11:15am P&W Choir 1pm TV Service	15 Office Closed  9am MLK Day of Service 6pm Bell Choir 7pm Big Book	16 9am Counters 9:30am Fellowship Workshop 5pm SoME Dance 7pm Men's Fellowship	17 10am Theological Group 4pm Diaper Bank 5:30pm Jr Choir 6pm GS Troop 1106 6:30pm Finance Team via Zoom 6:45pm Sr Choir	18 9am TOHG 4pm Tutor & Ed Testing 5pm SoME Dance 6:30pm Bible Study	19	20 7pm Will Sawyer Concert 
21 8:30am Sacred Conversations 10am Service 11:15am P&W Choir 11:45am ANNUAL MEETING 1pm TV Service	22 9am Counters 6pm Bell Choir 7pm Big Book	23 9:30am Fellowship Workshop 5pm SoME Dance 7pm Men's Fellowship	24 4pm Diaper Bank 5:30pm Jr Choir 6:30pm Council via Zoom 6:45pm Sr Choir	25 9am TOHG 3pm Guiding Eyes for the Blind 4pm Tutor & Ed Testing 5pm SoME Dance 6:30pm Bible Study	26	27 
28 8:30am Sacred Conversations 10am Service 11:15am P&W Choir 11:45am Diaconate 11:45 am Snow Date for Annual Meeting 1pm TV Service	29 9am Counters 6pm Bell Choir 7pm Big Book	30 9:30am Fellowship Workshop 5pm SoME Dance 6:30pm Personnel Team 7pm Men's Fellowship	31 4pm Diaper Bank 5:30pm Jr Choir 6pm GS Troop 1106 6:45pm Sr Choir			

The Messenger
First Parish Congregational Church
12 Beach Street
Saco, ME 04072

