



First Parish Church
 Congregational
 United Church of Christ
THE MESSENGER

SHARING GOOD NEWS -APRIL 2024

VISION

Following the Way of Jesus, we aspire to authentically invite, courageously include, and generously serve all with compassion and grace.

MISSION

Following the Way of Jesus, we celebrate **inspirational worship**; create **life-changing experiences** for children, youth, families, and individuals; and practice meaningful **congregational care**.

While respecting our diversity, we courageously advocate for **justice and mercy**, and intentionally respond to the needs of our **community and the world**.

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Dear First Parish Church Members and Friends,

As we bask in the glow of the Resurrection, we're reminded of the profound hope that Easter brings. April is not just a month of transition from the somber reflections of Lent to the jubilant celebrations of Easter; it's a time for renewal, growth, and embracing the abundant grace that surrounds us. Just as spring breathes new life into the world around us, Easter rejuvenates our spirits and renews our faith. Let this season be a reminder that no matter how challenging our journeys may be, there's always hope for transformation and renewal. Let's embrace this opportunity to renew our commitment to God and to each other.

April invites us to embrace growth in all its forms. Just as seeds planted in fertile soil grow into beautiful blossoms, let us nurture the seeds of love, kindness, and compassion within ourselves and watch them flourish in our community. Let's support each other as we navigate the challenges of life, knowing that together, we can overcome any obstacle. The Easter story is a powerful testament to the boundless grace and unconditional love of God. As we move forward from Easter Sunday, let's carry this grace with us in all that we do. Let's extend kindness to those in need, forgiveness to those who have wronged us, and love to all who cross our paths. In doing so, we reflect the light of Christ in our daily lives.

As we journey through April, may we carry the spirit of Easter with us in all that we do. Let's strive to live each day with gratitude, compassion, and love, knowing that we are blessed beyond measure. Together, let's continue to grow in faith and fellowship, spreading God's light to all who need it.

Wishing you a blessed and joyous April,

Eric

(continued page 2)

Some Upcoming Events: See announcements about these events in this newsletter.

- Community Outreach: First Wednesday Food Drive, Beach Clean Up, Volunteer Work Day at Pilgrim Lodge.
- Bible Study Series: Beginner Bible Study and Conversation with Pastor Eric .
- April 16, 23, 30, May 7, 14 in Pastor Eric's office at 10am.
- Spiritual Practice Workshop: Meditative Walk and Nature Sit led by White Pine Programs, April 7 at 4pm at First Parish Church.



Join us for Holy Week services in which we relive Christ's last week.

March 28 Holy Thursday

Jesus instituted the Last Supper. Join us in Fellowship Hall for a 7pm Worship Service in which we will witness a ritual hand washing and share Holy Communion.

March 29 Good Friday

Jesus died on the cross. Join us in the sanctuary for a 7pm Worship Service consisting of readings pertaining to Christ's passion and an array of musical offerings.

March 31 Easter

Christ rose from the dead! We will join Union Congregational Church at the Nubble for a Sunrise Service at 6:15am.

All are invited to Union for breakfast following the Sunrise Service.

The 10am Worship Service at First Parish Church will be followed by an Easter Egg Hunt for the children.

MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR

The responsibility of our Church to serve as a good neighbor in the Town of York has been one that we've embraced enthusiastically since both church and town came into being in the 1630s. Part of our Mission Statement reflects that responsibility: it calls for us to respond to the needs of our community and the world. As we enter Earth Month, and spring reminds us of the joys of a clean environment, we're doing much to fulfill that responsibility.

First Parish was a sponsor of the York Climate Action Fair, which was held on March 23. The Fair helps the Town of York implement the voter-approved Climate Action Plan through citizen education. Led by the Creation Care Committee, 13 members of the congregation assisted in the Fair, and several others attended.

The Creation Care Committee is also celebrating Earth Month with its placement of the Planet Aid bins on our campus. The bins are for textiles that are unfit for donation but can be recycled and reused. They also raise public awareness of the moral duty to minimize waste. The Committee reminds us of that duty with this quote from Annie Leonard, "There is no 'away.' When you throw something away, it goes somewhere."

The monthly food drives are additional demonstrations of our responding to community needs. Every month's drive results in a generous supply of food and donations to the York Community Service Association. We're simply trying to follow Jesus' teaching to love our neighbors as ourselves.

We're no better, or worse, in approaching our responsibilities to others than were the many generations of First Parish who preceded us. And those who follow us will do the same. It's just a First Parish thing.

With faith, optimism, and thanks,

John Covino

WORSHIP AND MUSIC

APRIL 2024

Sunday, April 7, 2024

Communion

Special music with Jim White and Nathan Cox

Sunday, April 14, 2024

9:45am Hymn Sing

Special music with Kathy Mason and Karen Lynge

Sunday, April 21, 2024

Earth Day

"Ubi Cantas"

"The Gift of Life"

Sunday, April 28, 2024

"God So Loved the World"

"Be the Change"-Sweet Spirit



A T T E N D A N C E

March 2024 Worship

3/3: 117

3/10: 99

3/17: 138

3/24: 175



from the Music Director

A View from the Bench

“Dance, then, wherever you may be. I am the Lord of the Dance, said he.”

The Sanctuary Choir and Seacoast Community Chorus have sung the Shaker tune “Lord of the Dance” from time to time. And it’s so nice to revisit the lyrics by Sydney Carter (1915-2004) and recall how they capture the life of Christ in one song.

*I danced in the morning when the world was begun,
and I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun,
and I came down from heaven and I danced on earth;
at Bethlehem I had my birth.*

*I danced for the scribe and the pharisee,
but they would not dance and they would not follow me,
I danced for the fishermen, for James and John,
they came with me and the Dance went on.*

*I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame,
the holy people said it was a shame;
they whipped and they stripped and they hung me on high,
and left me there on a cross to die.*

*I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black,
it’s hard to dance with the devil on your back,
they buried my body and they thought I’d gone,
But I am the Dance and I still go on.*

*They cut me down and I kept up high,
I am the life that will never, never die;
I’ll live in you if you’ll live in me;
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he.*

In Hymns of Truth and Light (1998) we read that the lyrics of poet “Sydney Carter bring us back to the medieval, joyous tradition of a dancing Savior, and dancing becomes a metaphor for living life in the fullest sense.” You might remember that the sanctuary choir sings the carol “Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day” at Christmas, suggesting that the narrator’s voice is Christ. You may also have noticed that Terrie Ilaria’s sister, Bonnie Periale, is very interested in creating a sacred dance ensemble. Here’s hoping that the members of that group could present a choreographic offering sometime soon during worship. In the meantime:

“Dance, then, wherever you may be; I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,
and I’ll lead you all, wherever you may be, and I’ll lead you all in the Dance, said he.”

Happy spring...and let the joy of the Resurrection story inspire you to dance today, tomorrow, and forevermore!

WSP

P.S. I’ll be away for the first two Sundays in April. I’ll be playing for the District 3 Middle School Festival Choir in Topsham, ME during the first weekend. Rob Finch will be conducting that choir. And then I’ll be playing for the York High School Chamber Singers and Treble Choir at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City on the following weekend. Terrie Ilaria and members of the choir will be creating some joyful music in my absence.



Thank You all for the greeting card donations to the Caregiving Ministry. All are greatly appreciated. We are always looking for Valentines, Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Thinking of You, Sympathy, Get Well and Birthday Cards. And donations of postage are always helpful. You can leave your donations at the church office.

Thank You
The Caregiving Ministry

I'd like to express my sincerest gratitude for all the cards, emails, texts, and heartfelt messages I have received from my church family in the past few weeks. Your support has given me strength and comfort during a very difficult time. Now there is much relief in knowing that my mother is finally at peace in God's loving embrace after navigating the challenges of Alzheimer's disease for many years.

Thank you.
Blessings, Kathy McQueeney

White Pine Programs Workshop

White Pine Programs is a local organization that provides outdoor experiences to awaken curiosity, and cultivate caring relationships with self, community, and the natural world. They have agreed to run a workshop for First Parish members and friends on our grounds. It will include a meditative nature walk and nature sit. It will involve individual reflection and group discussion. All are welcome.

When April 7th
Time 4-5:30pm
Meet Outside Fellowship Hall
Questions contact Pastor Eric

An Update on First Parish Church's Safe-Church Policy and Response Team

Back in 2019, the Church Council voted to approve the current version of First Parish Church's Safe-Church Policy. The policy states for the church to have a Safe-Church Response Team; due to delays caused by the pandemic, this committee has just recently been established. We are writing now to inform the church of the newly-formed Safe-Church Response Team and the work that we are doing. A little background on what that all means:

"Safe-Church" is a term used in the business to refer to the policies and procedures used by different faith-based organizations to ensure that youth and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse, harassment, and neglect while on the organization's grounds or at one of the organization's programs or events. (This is not to be confused with church security; ie. fires, criminal activity, and the like. "Safe-Church" is an element of church safety that is targeted and focused for the protection of the most vulnerable among us.) It is customary to update these sorts of policies every few years as industry standards, legal requirements, best practices, and cultural awareness evolve.

This policy will not directly affect many people who call First Parish home. The individuals who are most actively engaged with this policy are as follows: (1) Any volunteer or paid-staff who work with or otherwise supervise youth or vulnerable adults; (2) "Key Holders" of the church who unlock the church's buildings for the purposes of events and programming; and (3) Youth, vulnerable adults, and their families, who benefit from the protections of this policy.

The contents of the policy include (but are not limited to): a code of conduct for volunteers and staff as well as their training and screening requirements, detailed policies outlining relevant programming and events, and directions and support for anyone who may need to report suspected or witnessed abuse or suspicious activity, as well as what is required of First Parish when such reports take place.

Our job as the Safe-Church Response Team is to: (1) review the policy and suggest any needed updates or revisions; (2) to meet periodically to make sure the policy is functioning and implemented as intended; and (3) to be on-hand if any incidents of abuse of youth or vulnerable adults should arise.

Copies of the policy in its entirety, or selections of interest, will be made available to anyone who asks at the church office. They will also be provided to all staff and volunteers who work with youth and vulnerable adults as they are trained in its use. Incidence response checklists will be located prominently in areas frequently used for youth programming, in the unlikely event they are needed.

It's important to note that there has been no precipitating incident that warranted these changes; an up-to-date and comprehensive Safe-Church Policy simply protects the most vulnerable among us, those who work with them, and the institution as a whole. The 2020 revision of First Parish Church's policy does just that. Many thanks to everyone who was involved in bringing it to life.

If you have any questions about Safe-Church or the policy updates, feel free to reach out to Pastor Dan or any of us on the Safe-Church Response Team. Phil Bufithis is also available by phone at 207-363-3673.

Sincerely, The Members of the Safe-Church Response Team

Phil Bufithis (chair), Joanne Myers, Harriet Sanclemente, Jerri LeConte, and Amy Burke



DINE WITH NINE 2024

A short review of this year's program.
18 wonderful opportunities to "dine"
which meant that 101 guests could attend the events.
56 folks participated, obviously some several times.

Hope to repeat this again in 2025.
Thank you for your interest!



Time for spring cleaning! Drawers, closets, garages, basements, etc. We are asking you to bring your old linens, towels, small rugs, curtains, etc. to the bins.

We have one short month after that it will mean a trip to the Witchtrot Transfer facility where there are TWO permanent bins.

Although these bins say "Clothes and Shoes", they also accept the above.

We strongly encourage you to donate all of your sellable clothing and shoes to the thrift stores in our area.

Bring your textiles to the bins! In 2023 the bin was emptied every Tuesday hopefully it will be the same this year!



Visitors and Guests
of
First Parish Church, Congregational
United Church of Christ

You are Invited to
**Our Spring
Inquirers Coffee and Conversation**
Sunday, May 5th, 2024

Pastors Eric Dupee and Dan Hollis and First Parish Church invite you to an informational meeting for those who have been visiting First Parish. We would love to learn more about you and introduce you to our church and denomination.

The Inquirer's Information Session will be held on
Sunday, May 5 from 11:15- 12:30

- We will enjoy getting to know each other better and discussing the United Church of Christ teachings, history, and traditions. You will learn about our First Parish Church in York, reviewing our mission and how we serve our community. Childcare will be available if needed.
- **Gathering with Council members on Saturday, May 18th, 4:00 - 6:00** Enjoy Drinks and Eats with our governing body, and get to know each other.
- **New members will join on May 19th, Pentecost Sunday, during the Worship Service.**

Please contact the Parish Office at office@firstparishyork.net or 207-363-3758 to let us know you can attend. Sue Wierzba, Welcoming Team Coordinator, in church or at susanwierzba@gmail.com or 207-361-4541.

KITCHEN RENEWAL

We are looking for your help to refresh and restock the First Parish House Kitchen with unused or duplicate items you may have in your own kitchen at home. As you “Spring Clean”, please consider donating such items that are in reasonably good condition to this effort. First Parish is blessed to have such a large kitchen to use for general and special events, but over time, the cookware, bakeware, appliances, and utensils have declined, making the kitchen less efficient.

A team of volunteers plans to clean, re-organize, label and equip the kitchen with your donated items. Items that we cannot use will be donated to local organizations for families in need.

The items that are greatly needed include household-sized sauce pans, saute’ pans, silverware, storage organizing racks, utensils. Labeled bins will be located in the Fellowship Hall Pilgrim Room to collect your donations.

For questions regarding this effort, please contact Holly Hayes at hollyhayesnh@yahoo.com or 603-767-4217 or Dianne Goodwin at 207-361-7231 or ammygood57@gmail.com.

Thank you



Climate Action Fair Update

Despite the AWFUL weather, we were uplifted by the response to our second annual Climate Fair. We had over 200 participants/visitors come to learn and celebrate our efforts to deal with our increasing climate issues.

Extremely proud of the 13 people from First Parish who spent all or part of Friday set-up and/or Saturday Fair doing what they could to make the experience a success.

A reminder that First Parish significantly supported the efforts of York Ready for Climate Action with their budget. THANK YOU!

Linda Drew

Mission Team and Creation Care Committee



Food Pantry Drive

**First Wednesday Food Pantry Drive
April 3
10am – 11am**

Wish List: 1-2lb sugar, 16 oz. vegetable oil, Knorr Pasta sides, rice pilaf, raspberry or strawberry jam, Hamburger Helper.

Other non-perishable food items are wonderful as well! Monetary donations cash or checks made out to YCSA Food Pantry are always welcome.

Would love a volunteer or two to join us.

Linda/Phil Drew p.l.drew79@me.com

April Birthdays

- 3 Linda Blake
- 4 Kathy McQueeney
- 6 Gail Berneike, Mark Oliver
and Andrew Smith
- 7 Burke Eldredge
- 10 Duncan Leith
- 12 Linda Bardwell
- 13 Chris Briley and Sondra Weaver
- 14 Judy Goodwin
- 17 George Parton and Gloria Gustafson
- 18 Sabrina Stephens
- 21 Scott Dalley
- 22 Phil Drew, John Moses and Faith Webster
- 29 Per Jonas
- 30 Linda Elwell

*Happy Birthday
to You!*



Wishing you all a happy birthday and healthy year ahead.



Creation Care to Meet Sunday, April 7

In preparation for EARTH DAY (month), hope that YOU will join us to catch up with what we have been doing as a church with regard to caring for our planet.

We will meet **Sunday, April 7 at 11:15AM**. Hope to brainstorm, consider ongoing activities and forge ahead!

Would love new voices and thoughts.

Linda Drew p.l.drew79@me.com questions



Pilgrim Lodge

Maine Conference, United Church of Christ

Friday, April 28-29

VOLUNTEER WORKDAY

We have a Mission opportunity to help open UCC Camp-Pilgrim Lodge in Gardiner, Maine for the upcoming camping season. We will be going up Friday, April 26 and returning Saturday, April 27.

There are jobs for all ages (over 15) and skill levels. Cleaning, sweeping, and generally opening the cabins. Repair of winter damage and general ground cleanup, etc. Some indoor work may be needed in the large old Lodge.

Bring your sleeping bag; stay in one of the cabin units with bath and shower; breakfast and lunch on Saturday provided.

Gary Goss, Eric McCulley, David Perry, Jackie Perry, Judy Goodwin, Eric Dupee, Larry Richburg, Mike St. Cyr all went last year, as did I. Any of us would be happy to discuss our experience. Gary, Eric M. and myself plan to go this year. Join us! Philip Drew at p.l.drew79@me.com/[518-391-9753](tel:518-391-9753)



Creation Care Committee

Beach Clean Up Saturday, April 13 at
9:30am on Long Sands Beach.



MISSION TRIP OPPORTUNITY

We would love you to join us as we travel to Salem TWP, Maine from June 23-28 to do mission work. Our work will include home repair, painting etc for those in need in this rural area of our state. We will live and eat together and sleep in 2 bunk houses. The property sleeps 22 with RV and tenting sites available.

We are looking for folks high school age and older to join us for this week of sharing our hands and hearts with those in need. We are hoping for some people with some experience with tools, painting, and small construction projects but we have jobs for all skill levels. If you would like to be part of preparing meals instead of working in the field, you are welcome to join us.

We hope to raise much of the funds for the trip which is \$300/person. All of this cost goes directly for materials for the home improvements. There will be an additional nominal cost for food and transportation. We hope to fundraise and seek donations to offset some of this cost of materials and food.

If you are interested or have any questions, please contact

Carolyn Dupre

cardup8@gmail.com or call 207 752-3247

Here is a link to the website:

<https://www.umeconomicministry.com/bring-a-mission-team>



APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY FLOWERS

The age-old saying “April Showers Bring May Flowers” still holds true today. But just how did this fun saying originate? The poem as we know it today originated in 1157, in the form of a short poem written by Thomas Tusser.

The poem goes as follows:

“Sweet April showers Do spring May flowers”

“When in April the sweet showers fall
That pierce March’s drought to the root and all
And bathed every vein in liquor that has power
To generate therein and sire the flower;”

You are probably asking what this old saying has to do with Stewardship. The Stewardship Committee is looking for some fresh flowers! Today’s bouquet is only three (3) budding stems and that doesn’t necessarily mean they are new sprouts. Our membership can be up to five (5) according to the church By-laws. So, what we’re hoping for in April showers is a spring enthusiasm that “may” bring two (2) additional members to the Stewardship Committee. We welcome your consideration!

If you have interest, please contact Pastor Eric or any member of the Stewardship Committee.

Bob Myers (Chair), Sondra Weaver, and Susan Covino



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|---|---|---|--|------------------------------|---|
| | 1 8am Shake It Up | 2 8:30am Yoga | 3 8am Cardio/Strength 9:30am Wednesday Bible Study-Zoom 10am-11am First Wednesday Food Pantry Drive 5pm Personnel Committee Meeting | 4 8am Zumba 5pm Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal | 5 8:30am Aerobics | 6 8:30am Christian Education Committee Meeting |
| 7 10am Worship/Communion 11:15am Creation Care Committee Meeting 11:30am Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal | 8 8am Shake It Up 6:30pm Fellowship in Action | 9 8:30am Yoga 6:30pm Assessors Meeting | 10 8am Cardio/Strength 9:30am Wednesday Bible Study-Zoom 6:30pm Deacons Meeting | 11 8am Zumba 5pm Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal | 12 8:30am Aerobics | 13 10am-2pm Beach Clean Up-Longs Sands Beach |
| 14 9:45am Hymn Sing 10am Worship 11:15am Out to Lunch Bunch 11:30am Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal | 15 8am Shake It Up | 16 8:30am Yoga | 17 8am Cardio/Strength 9:30am Wednesday Bible Study-Zoom | 18 8am Zumba 5pm Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal | 19 8:30am Aerobics | 20 |
| 21 10am Worship 11:30am Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal | 22 8am Shake It Up 6:30pm Church Council Meeting | 23 8:30am Yoga | 24 8am Cardio/Strength 9:30am Wednesday Bible Study-Zoom | 25 8am Zumba 5pm Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal | 26 8:30am Aerobics | 27 |
| 28 10am Worship 11:30am Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal | 29 8am Shake It Up | 30 8:30am Yoga | | | | |

Ministers

All the Members of the Congregation

Rev. Eric Dupee, *Senior Pastor*

eric@firstparishyork.net

Rev. Dan Hollis, *Associate Pastor*

dan@firstparishyork.net

Staff

Wendell S. Purrington, *Director of Music Ministries*

Terrie Ilaria, *Music Associate*

Betty Roker, *Office Manager*

Stacey Crowell, *Buildings and Grounds Supervisor*

Todd Frederick, *Cemetery Superintendent*

First Parish Church Lay Leaders

John Covino, *Moderator*

Kristin Schrimper, *Vice Moderator*

Ray Hamlin, *Treasurer*

Susan Mancinelli, *Clerk*

207-363-3758

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