



First Parish Church
Congregational
United Church of Christ
THE MESSENGER

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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SHARING GOOD NEWS – JANUARY 2024

With the coming of a New Year, I've decided to try a couple new things. Many of you have heard me say, "If you want to get what you never got, you gotta do what you've never done." So, here are two invitations to you for the coming month. First, while most of us probably still have Christmas trees decorated and lights in our windows, January is the time when planning for Lent kicks into gear. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 14, 2024.

I'm inviting you to a time of brainstorming, dreaming, planning, and coordinating for Lent and Holy Week. This is for anyone in the church. We will talk about Lenten themes. We will share ideas for worship, study, music, visuals in the sanctuary, hymns, etc. Perhaps you once had a Lenten experience at a different church that was really meaningful for you. Bring it with you. Maybe you have an idea about a theme for Lent or an adult study during Lent. Bring it with you. You might have ideas about music to include in worship or visuals to have in the sanctuary. Bring those ideas with you. I will lead us through a process in which we can think together and plan together in order to create a meaningful season.

We will take part of the monthly Deacons meeting for this process, so I invite you to join the deacons on Wednesday, January 10th, in the basement of the church from 7:00pm to no later than 8:00pm. If you have questions about it, feel free to contact me.

The second thing I would like to introduce in the time leading up to Lent, is a four-part Beginner's Bible Study. This will be held on January 9, 16, 30, and February 6 from 10am -11:15am in my office. If you are someone who would never go to a Bible study because you're intimidated or you're concerned about how little you know, this is for you. You won't have to feel embarrassed for asking questions, because the class is specifically meant for those who don't claim to know anything about the Bible. Whatever you know or don't know, I hope you will consider joining me for one or all of the classes. Just come as you are. I will have a Bible for you if you don't have one.

I'm excited for this new year at First Parish Church! As the twelve days of Christmas continue, I hope you will join us for Epiphany Sunday, January 7th.

Blessings,

Eric

MESSAGE FROM THE MODERATOR

Friends,

January is the month of “it’s-all-over,” white sales, and resolutions. Ah, resolutions. Those promises we make to ourselves to lose weight, get organized, read more, and the like. We hope they’ll stick, but, sooner or later, they lapse, usually just after a week or two.

An editorial that appeared in *The New York Times* on December 26 opined that the nearly inevitable failure of our resolutions is that they’re self-oriented. “What does the great wide world care,” the author, Roger Rosenblatt, asks, “if you lose weight, or work out, or work harder, or quit drinking or smoking?” The most meaningful self-improvement, he says, is actually selflessness. Mr. Rosenblatt recommends that we resolve to do something that helps others, even if just one person at a time.

I heard a good suggestion along that line in a piece on NPR a couple of weeks earlier. It’s simply this: We should nod when someone’s speaking, whether we’re in a group or one-on-one. That small gesture is a big help to the speaker. It not only shows that we’re listening to what the person is saying, but that we agree with, or at least accept, it. It gives the speaker a boost of confidence, especially when he or she is addressing a group, and that’s a boost we can all use.

I like to see nods when I’m speaking from the podium during a service or in front of classes at Wells High School. Of course, if I see nodding off instead of nods, that’s a different story!

We’ll probably never lose those pounds, clean the cellar, or conquer the pile on the nightstand, but we can certainly nod. And that will be even better.

With faith, optimism, and thanks,

John Covino

MUSIC AND WORSHIP
JANUARY 2024

Sunday, January 7, 2024

First Sunday After Epiphany/Communion
"Born To Be the Bread"

Sunday, January 14, 2024

Second Sunday After Epiphany/Gospel Music Sunday
9:45am Hymn Sing
"I Have a Dream", "I Dream a World"

Sunday, January 21, 2024

Third Sunday After Epiphany
"Lead Me, Lord"

Seacoast Community Chorus Concert
3pm
First Parish Church

Sunday, January 28, 2024

Fourth Sunday After Epiphany
"Canticle of Hope", "Let All the World Rejoice"



A T T E N D A N C E
December 2023 Worship

12/3: 136
12/10: 163
12/17: 172
12/24: 134-10am
136-5:30pm
195-8pm



A View from the Bench

Happy New Year! As you know, the traditional calendar year begins with the month of January, but the liturgical begins with Advent in either late November or early December. As a faith community, we really receive a double dose of “Happy New Year!”

One of my favorite old-timey hymns in the Pilgrim Hymnal (1958) is “Ring Out, Wild Bells!” The melody is based on a Grenoble church melody called “Deus Quorum Militum.” Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) wrote these inspired words to help welcome the new year.

*Ring out, wild bells to the wild sky,
the flying cloud, the frosty light;
the year is dying in the night.
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.*

*Ring out the old, ring in the new.
Ring, happy bells across the snow!
The year is going, let him go.
Ring out the false, ring in the true.*

One of my favorite Christmas-time poems, written by Portland-based poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882), is “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day.”

*I heard the bells on Christmas Day
their old, familiar carols play,
and wild and sweet
the words repeat
of peace on earth, good-will to all!*

*And pealed the bells more loud and deep:
“God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
the Wrong shall fail,
the Right prevail,
with peace on earth, good-will to all.”*

Speaking of bells, maybe you have noticed that I play the organ chimes a couple of times during the worship service. I also use the zymbelstern (a set of small rotating bells that sound like wind chimes) occasionally — symbolizing the Holy Spirit for me. The use of bells in religious ceremonies has a long history, and in my own small way, I’m honored to be able to continue in that ancient tradition.

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May the new year bring you hope, peace, joy, and love in the new year. The music-makers of First Parish will certainly be singing and ringing in 2024! Plan to come to church for Epiphany and Communion on 7 January, a hymn-sing and Gospel Music on 14 January, and a winter concert entitled "Sing Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs" at 3:00 PM on 21 January performed by the Seacoast Community Chorus.

So come to church; ring in the new year; hear the bells; listen to the Word, and sing loud and proud!

Stay warm and loving...because LOVE always wins!

WSP



Donation jar in the narthex.

Checks made to First Parish Church with Daisy's Children in the memo.

YOUR SPARE CHANGE WILL FEED HUNGRY CHILDREN IN HONDURAS.

Please donate to Daisy's Children by placing cash donations in the glass container located in the Narthex. Checks can be made to First Parish Church with Daisy's Children written on the memo line and sent to the church office. The York Association is providing an incentive to give now by matching our financial gifts through January 21, 2024. Thank you for caring! FMI see <http://daisyschildren.org/>

January Birthdays

- 1 Nancy Ramsdell
- 7 Cindy Bufithis
- 16 Sherry McConnell
- 17 Faye Gourlie
- 20 Heidi Oliver
- 25 David Cox, Nathan Cox
- 26 Dan Gray
- 27 Wendell Purrington
- 29 Don Gough

*Happy Birthday
to You!*



Wishing you all a happy birthday and healthy year ahead.



Food Pantry Drive

**First Wednesday Food Pantry Drive
January 3 from 10am-11am**

Would LOVE two volunteers! Wish list not available yet, but I bet it will include Progresso soups, white tuna and Knorr pasta and sides! THANK YOU!

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

Out to Lunch Bunch



2nd Sunday of the month at 11:15am

Out to Lunch Bunch had a wonderful time at Ore Nell's BBQ restaurant on Badger's Island Sunday, October 8 after church! We never know who's joining us and we never know until the last minute where we'll be dining! Always fun, though! Join us Sunday, January 14 at 11:15ish

Need more info? Linda Drew 207-351-8141 or p.l.drew79@me.com



We will be signing up for the DINE with NINE program via email for the next two weeks. So take a look at the offerings (time/date/activity). Select one and then email Linda Drew [p.l.drew79@me.com] with your selection. She will make sure there are openings available for that activity and email a confirmation to you. If it is “sold out”, she will, of course, email that info to you as well. Then you’ll have to select another venue.

We are trying this method as there is NO coffee hour this Sunday, December 31 and the Drews are out of town during the first week of January and the first activity is January 13th! THANK YOU for your willingness to experiment!

“DINE with NINE” - 2024

There are 124 opportunities to enjoy food, drink, games, smiles, and community!

January 2024

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Jan. 13 Hor’d - 6PM | Jan 13 Hor’d - 5:30PM |
| Jan 20 FPC - kitchen demo | Jan 20 Hor’d - 7PM |
| Jan 26 Hor’d - 5PM | Jan 27 Dinner - 6PM |

February 2024

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Feb 3 Dinner - 5:30PM | Feb 3 Hor’d - 5PM |
| Feb 3 Dinner - 5:30PM | Feb 4 Firepit/pizza - 4PM |
| Feb 10 Dinner - 6:00PM | Feb 17 Dinner - 6:30PM |
| Feb 17 Sunrise/Brf - 6AM | Feb 24 Bridge - 7PM |

March 2024

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Mar 2 Dinner - 5:30PM | Mar 2 Hor’d - 5:30PM |
| Mar 9 Lunch/fire/games - 1PM | Mar 16 - 7PM cribbage |

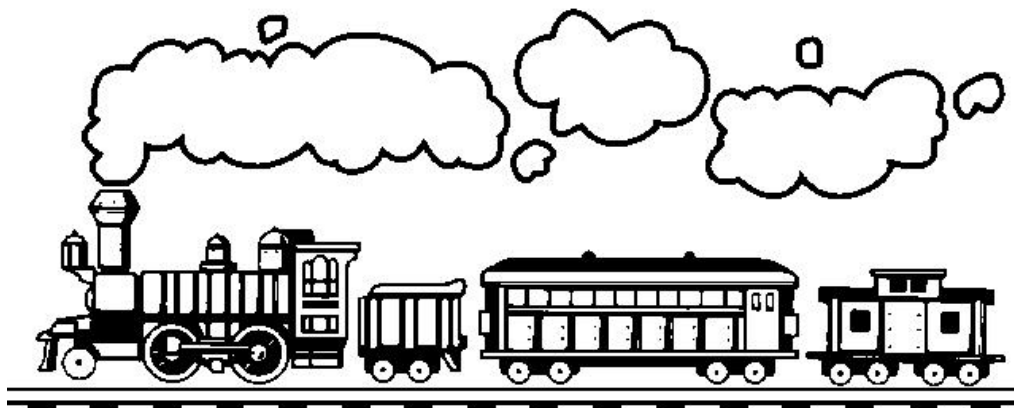
*** Remember the point of these gatherings is to meet new people. Please don’t disclose the date of your event to your friends.

*** Please limit your sign up to one for this week; as the weeks go on, there will likely be opportunity to sign up for another event.



MISSION@HOME

If you find yourself in need of a little extra help, contact the Mission@Home service of First Parish Church. Volunteers from many walks of life with a variety of skills are willing to lend a hand. Recently, parishioners have requested and received help with rides to church, small household projects, and moving furniture. Email the church office at office@firstparishyork.net or 207-363-3758 to be linked with a volunteer.



TRAIN NIGHT OPEN HOUSE 2024

Saturday, January 13, 2024

2pm to 5pm

at the Parton's

17 Wavecrest Drive, York

*An event for the young at heart.
Watch the trains! RUN the trains!
See the lights! Have some refreshments!*



FELLOWSHIP IN ACTION

“Winter Wonders” at Sandy Hill Farm

34 Sandy Hill Lane, Eliot, ME 03903

Largest and Most Creative Holiday Light Show in New England
First Parish Church Group attending on Friday, December 29th at 5pm

- Buy on line tickets in advance - \$18 (plus \$2 Ticket Fee). ASAP so we can all go together.
- Click on link: <https://www.sandyhillmaine.com/winter-wonders>
- Meet at Fellowship Hall at 4:15pm to carpool to the light show, or arrive yourself for the 5pm entry.
- Perfect for families and adults of all ages.
- Go at your own pace on a one mile trail that is a gentle rolling terrain of compacted gravel. It will take about an hour.
- Snack and drinks available.

Any Questions: Please contact Sue Wierzba. susanwierzba@gmail.com





After a hiatus of four years, Wreath, Greens and More! was welcomed back with open arms, open hearts and open pocketbooks! It appeared to be quite a success with nearly \$5000 being grossed in three hours on Saturday Dec. 2 with additional sales during coffee hour the next day.

It was wonderful to see people back in the Fellowship Hall busy bundling greens, decorating wreaths, arranging outdoor and indoor pots and wiring swags. The Christmas Decor tables were meticulously organized and looked very festive as did the baked goods and crafts tables.

A big THANK YOU to each and every volunteer who helped in their unique way. From gathering greens to being a cashier, from decorating to cleaning, from baking to knitting, from lugging boxes to buying a wreath, from setting up to breaking down. Thank you. Also another big thank you to Deneen Barclay and her crew from the York Garden Club - they jumped in and decorated wreaths and arranged several beautiful outdoor pots. They had fun and will be back next year and we hope you will too!

If you are a crafter or maker - we need folks to start knitting, hammering, crocheting, etc. for the crafts table next year. Give a shout out to Martha at marthasgarden207@gmail.com if you are interested in getting together to make Christmas decorations, to knit or make other items for next year.

Thank you, thank you, thank you. Wreath, Greens and More! was more than just a fundraiser for the church and church missions. It brought people together for fellowship, to learn something new, to work for a common cause and to perhaps brighten a person's outlook on life. May the light and joy we conjured up, be with us throughout the New Year.

Martha for the Wreath, Greens and More! Committee.

COFFEE HOUR TEAM NEEDS HELP!

I know you enjoy visiting with friends after church while enjoying coffee and treats, but we need help! We have several members of the **Java Mamas and Papas** that will be away over the next few months. Those of us left behind will be unable to carry the burden without your help.

Please consider joining our team, or signing up to do **one** Sunday in January, February or March. This involves coming in at 9am, preparing the coffee and sitting up two tables. It also includes pouring the coffee and doing a quick cleanup after. I have information sheets that describe the process with good directions. Or at your convenience I can meet you in the kitchen to show you what you need to do. If we all pitch in, we can continue to offer this time of fellowship each Sunday. If we don't get enough people to sign up there will be Sundays we won't be able to have Coffee Hour.

As always, we count on you who are not making the coffee to provide the goodies we enjoy. Please sign up or call me to talk about how you can help.

Linda Hart
207-337-0782





2024 Pledge Campaign
There Is Still Time to Be Part of the Campaign
Help First Parish Continue To Change Lives

We are deeply grateful to the 95 households that have pledged over \$263,000 toward the 2024 operating budget. The joy and celebration of Christmas has consumed all of our energy and concentration over the past month, but it is now time to refocus our efforts toward funding the budget and continuing First Parish's work. In mid to late January, the Stewardship Committee will reach out to those who have yet to make a pledging decision. We'd like to provide any information you might need, provide a pledge packet and hear any thoughts or suggestions you might have regarding the campaign and your support.

The committee looks forward to talking with you.

The Stewardship Committee

Phyllis Giordano, Bob Myers, Sandy Nelson and Sondra Weaver



JANUARY

2024

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|---|--|--|--|------------------------------|---|
| | 1 8am Shake It Up | 2 8:30am Yoga 9am Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting | 3 8am Cardio/Strength 9:30am Wednesday Bible Study-Zoom 10am First Wednesday Food Pantry Drive | 4 8am Zumba 5pm Handbell Rehearsal 6pm Sweet Spirit Rehearsal | 5 8:30am Aerobics | 6 8:30am Christian Education Meeting-Zoom |
| 7 10am Worship/Communion 11:30am Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal | 8 8am Shake It Up 6pm Fellowship in Action | 9 8:30am Yoga 10am Beginners Bible Study 6:30pm Assessors/Church Council Meeting | 10 8am Cardio/Strength 9:30am Wednesday Bible Study-Zoom 6:30pm Deacons Meeting 7pm Lent & Holy Week Planning Meeting | 11 8am Zumba 5pm Handbell Rehearsal 6pm Sweet Spirit Rehearsal 6:30pm Stewardship Committee Meeting | 12 8:30am Aerobics | 13 |
| 14 9:45 Hymn Sing 10am Worship 11:15am Out to Lunch Bunch 11:30am Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal | 15 8am Shake It Up 6:30pm Church Council Meeting | 16 8:30am Yoga 10am Beginners Bible Study | 17 8am Cardio/Strength 9:30am Wednesday Bible Study-Zoom 4pm Mission Committee Meeting 6:30pm Assessors Meeting | 18 8am Zumba Meeting 4:30pm Stewardship Meeting 5pm Handbell Rehearsal 6pm Sweet Spirit Rehearsal | 19 8:30am Aerobics | 20 |
| 21 10am Worship 11:30am Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal 3pm Seacoast Community Chorus Concert | 22 8am Shake It Up 4:30pm Capital Campaign Committee Meeting | 23 8:30am Yoga | 24 8am Cardio/Strength 9:30am Wednesday Bible Study | 25 8am Zumba 5pm Handbell Rehearsal 6pm Sweet Spirit Rehearsal | 26 8:30am Aerobics | 27 |
| 28 10am Worship 11:30am Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal | 29 8am Shake It Up | 30 8:30am Yoga 10am Beginners Bible Study | 31 8am Cardio/Strength 9:30am Wednesday Bible Study | | | |

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

office@firstparishyork.net

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