



November 2020

Minister's Message  
Rev. Dr. Mark Boyea



The Newsletter of the First Parish Church Congregational

# The Church Bell

Hi...

Last Spring, a number of us spent several Tuesday evenings engaged in a Spiritual Studies unit titled, "Hope Is A Muscle". Throughout those weeks, we discussed how hope is a spiritual "skill" – not something we either have or don't have, but instead all have an innate disposition toward to varying degrees. That disposition can then be grown and maintained through the development of a number of *habits*. *It is an understanding of hope as a by-product of other life practices.*

Of those life practices, one of the few which shows up on nearly every piece of research I have seen regarding people who score highly on inventories assessing hope is *gratitude*. *Hopeful people tend to be people who practice gratitude consistently in their lives.*

As we enter the month of November then – the month of Thanksgiving, and especially in such trying times – I invite you to try something. Each day through the month, perform a "practice of gratitude". For instance, make a list at the end of each day of three things you were grateful for specific to that day. Make a donation to a charity, school or other organization in the name of someone you are grateful to for something that made a difference in your life. Send an email or note thanking someone for something recent, or perhaps even better, something long ago that they might not be aware of or remember.

Then, at the end of the month, see if you haven't become a more grateful person. And because of that, a more hopeful one as well.

Blessings,  
Mark

*Continued...*

## **WORSHIP NOTES**

At the Council Meeting, it was reconfirmed that, especially in light of the significant rise in cases of Covid-19 in our state in recent weeks, we will continue to care for each other best as spiritual sisters and brothers by continuing with Virtual Worship only. This will likely be the case throughout the winter, but hopefully not far beyond that.

Please know that Herman, Rebecca, Paul and I are regularly discussing how we might bring other musical possibilities to our Worship as we approach the Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas seasons. And Jeanne Westcott, our new Director of Youth and Children's Ministry, and I are also working on how we might produce an alternative Christmas Eve experience for our kids in light of our not being able to offer the traditional live Christmas Eve Pageant this year.

## **CHURCH OFFICE ACCESSIBILITY**

The Church Office will continue be open during regular hours if you need to see Nancy Klebart or Mark. We do ask that you call or email ahead if possible, wear a mask, and practice social distancing while there.

In addition, **Mark's "Virtual Office Hours"** will continue each Wednesday from 11am-2pm, unless other obligations require moving it to a different day on a particular week.

## **SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

**Wednesday Prayer and Meditation for November** will take place on November 4 and 18 from 7-7:45pm via Zoom.

**Thursday Bible Study** will take place each week in November from 4-5:15pm.

## **Spiritual Studies Units in November and December**

Our first "Spiritual Studies" unit for the Fall concludes the first week of November:

***"You Mean That's NOT in the Bible?!"***

Tuesday, November 3

7:00-8:15pm

Via Zoom



*"You Mean That's  
NOT in the Bible?!"*

***Continued...***

You know them – the sayings and aphorisms so many Christians and non-Christians alike have learned, passed on and trust in. Ones like:

“God helps those who help themselves.”

“Everything happens for a reason”

Many Christians and non-Christians are certain those sayings come directly from the Bible.

But they, and other commonly shared ones, *don't*.

During this four-week unit, we explore some of those common sayings and aphorisms that people of faith are often strongly invested in, but which are only partly or minimally rooted in the biblical literature. We will also examine both the elements of spiritual truth to be found in them, as well as the ways they inhibit our spiritual growth.

### **Coming in December!**

#### ***“Isn’t There Anyone Who Knows What Christmas Is All About?!”***

Tuesdays: December 1, 8, 15 and 22

7:00-8:15pm

Via Zoom

The Jesus we prepare for the arrival of during Advent and then welcome at Christmas is often referred to in a popular sign and bumper sticker as, “*The Answer*”. But what are the questions? With a title borrowed from the question Linus asks near the end of the classic special, “*A Charlie Brown Christmas*”, this four-week Advent unit will explore some of the vital questions that characters presented in the stories leading up to Jesus’ birth ask, looking to understand what they were searching for in their time and how those questions might speak to us now.

Join us for any or all of these evenings during this sacred time of year.

You will continue to receive details on times and how to participate in all our offerings from the Church Office either on the day of or day before each gathering.

### **ADVENT MESSAGE THEME**

Throughout the four Sundays of Advent this year, we will take a look at “*The Family Christmas Tree*”. Each week, we will look at a character from the genealogy of Jesus presented in the first chapter of Matthew’s Gospel. We will explore aspects of their spiritual journeys, and how their lives speak to us now as members of that same family tree.

## First Parish Remembrances

Shared memories connect our past to the future, honor our ancestors, spur younger generations to value memories and keep us all connected! This seems especially important during the pandemic! The First Parish Church community invites YOU to share your favorite memories of the church! Submissions can be sent to [office.fpchurch@gmail.com](mailto:office.fpchurch@gmail.com).

We hope to make this a regular feature in the Church Bell, Sue Parker

Clare (Kitty) Weaver, 6x great granddaughter of our Reverend Benjamin Tappan, who resides in her family's Tappan house on Bridge Street, remembers this...

"I came across a letter written in the summer of 1943 when I was here visiting my grandparents. I was three and a half years old. My mother wrote to my doctor, Major Dad, who was in the army preparing with other doctors from MGH to go overseas. He was gone two years! I love this part — Last Sunday we were walking on the town green when the church bell rang. It was so loud that our curious Kitty had to go over and investigate. So I let her go in the vestibule and hold the end of the rope while the man was ringing the bell. Naturally, she thought that she rang it and now she calls the church her bell house. The minister came over to speak to her and invited me to the afternoon service at an other church where he said he would let little Kitty ring the bell all by herself as it was a much lighter bell.

How sweet is that! I even have a vague memory of that bell rope and ringing. Every time I hear the bells these days, I think of it. Such good memories, time and place. Kitty."

## November Birthdays

11/04	<b>LATIONS, KIMBERLY</b>	16 WASHINGTON ST MANCHESTER	kim.lations@verizon.net
11/05	<b>HALGREN, DONALD</b>	35 CENTRAL ST MANCHESTER	doninvent@aol.com
11/07	<b>SMITH, ATTICUS</b>	42 FOREST ST MANCHESTER	
11/10	<b>CARHART, STEVE</b>	12 BRIDGE ST MANCHESTER	scarh10428@aol.com
11/16	<b>CICALA, ANTONIA</b>	114 PINE ST MANCHESTER	
11/17	<b>BOYEA, CINDY</b>	28 ROCKWOOD HEIGHTS MANCHESTER	cmsb13@aol.com
11/21	<b>WARNOCK, MAX</b>	5 RUNNING RIDGE ROAD MANCHESTER	
11/22	<b>POWERS, DANA</b>	8 STORY ROAD MAGNOLIA MA 01930	danajenpowers@gmail.com
11/27	<b>PORTER, GRACE</b>	13 HIGHWOOD ROAD MANCHESTER	gracein8@gmail.com
11/30	<b>SMITH, ANNABEL</b>	42 FOREST ST MANCHESTER	

## Director of Youth and Children's Ministry [Jeanne Westcott](#)

### The Best Practices of Faith Formation

Sunday School and Youth Groups have been the prepared and fertile soil beds for planting the seeds of faith, community awareness, empathic development, and church polity for as long as any of us can remember. This, in conjunction with the faith practices of the family, have served children in much the same way that our educational system has. As teachers and supportive adults, we have presented the A B C's of God's Word and modeled the characteristics of Christian life to the best of our abilities. At every turn, we hoped and prayed that the messages we tried to impart would indeed be accepted and, perhaps even, devoured by the young minds and souls before us. With enough repetition, and a few games and artistic endeavors thrown in for good measure, it is always our greatest wish that the children before us will acquire the heart and mind to want to know God and to follow in the ways of Jesus.

Research and observation have given Christian Education some ideas about methodology to help us meet our primary goal, which is, in fact, faith formation and spiritual awareness. One of the most enlightening ideas, although seemingly obvious, is that children, no matter their age, are already having an experience of God. They are already experiencing "the sacrament of the present moment", a phrase used by theologian Jean-Pierre de Caussade to describe a child's full awareness of the presence of God. They know inherently and sensorially the essence of relationship, of belonging. A feeling of connection to one's self, to parents, to family, to the material world and to God is the basis for feeling comfortable and receptive with teachers and all those who minister.

Another of these transcendent ideas is that children like questions. I realize that this isn't a radical piece of information. Spending an hour with any 3-year-old will tell you how much children like to ask questions. The important part is that adults are under the impression that their primary job is to effectively answer all and any of these questions. Adults are sometimes uncomfortable with unanswered questions. We like to tie up loose ends and take advantage of teachable moments. Children don't mind having a question go unanswered. In fact, it is in keeping with the previous concept of relational consciousness to present a child's question back to them. For example, in a recent conversation about the greatness of God, a child inquired, "If God is so great, why didn't he save all the dinosaurs?" In teacher mode, I might have responded with the science of species development or with the esoteric "God's plans are not always understood by mere mortals like us". In relationship mode, I instead answered in a way that is foreign to my teacher self and said, "Why do you think God might have let the dinosaurs die off?". The conversation that followed matters little but the 8 or 9 minutes of fostering relationship that took place served as an example of what discipleship is: love in action.

In the next installment of this piece, we will peek at analytic vs. experiential learning and how, we, the entire church family, can minister to our youngest participants and how they can help us understand how we are all part of the ongoing story of God's love for humanity!

Until next time,  
Jeanne Westcott, Director of Youth and Children's Ministry

## Worship Appreciation

Many Diaconate and Vitality hands worked together to create these gifts of appreciation.

\$50 gift cards (chosen with care, with each Worship Team member in mind) are from the congregation, from your support of the Diaconate expense budget. They were procured by Mary Ellen Cook.

Prayer was written by Sue Parker.

Certificates of Appreciation were written by Sue and decorated in watercolor by Allison Moir-Smith.

Small gifts were selected by Bethany Woods.

Breads were baked by Jane Pearson.

1 Peter scripture for Mark handlettered was by Allison and decorated from nature by Christiane Alsop.

Thank you again Worship Team!



## Daily Lectionary Committee

Sun. Nov. 1 Twenty-second  
Sunday after Pentecost  
Joshua 3:7-17 Psalm 107:1-7,  
33-37 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13  
Matthew 23:1-12

Mon., Nov. 2 Psalm 128  
Joshua 4:1-24 1  
Thessalonians 2:13-20

Tues., Nov. 3 Psalm 128  
Joshua 6:1-16, 20 Acts 13:1-  
12

Wed., Nov. 4 Psalm 128  
Joshua 10:12-14 Matthew  
15:1-9

Thurs., Nov. 5 Psalm 78:1-7  
Joshua 5:10-12 Revelation  
8:6—9:12

Fri., Nov. 6 Psalm 78:1-7  
Joshua 8:30-35 Revelation  
9:13-21

Sat., Nov. 7 Psalm 78:1-7  
Joshua 20:1-9 Matthew 24:1-  
14

Sun., Nov. 8 Twenty-third  
Sunday after Pentecost  
Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25 Psalm  
78:1-7 1 Thessalonians 4:13-  
18 Matthew 25:1-13

Mon., Nov. 9 Psalm 78  
Joshua 24:25-33 1  
Corinthians 14:20-25

Tues., Nov. 10 Psalm 78  
Nehemiah 8:1-12 1  
Thessalonians 3:6-13

Wed., Nov. 11 Psalm 78  
Jeremiah 31:31-34 Matthew  
24:29-35

Thurs., Nov. 12 Psalm 123  
Judges 2:6-15 Revelation  
16:1-7

Fri., Nov. 13 Psalm 123  
Judges 2:16-23 Revelation  
16:8-21

Sat., Nov. 14 Psalm 123  
Judges 5:1-12 Matthew  
12:43-45

Sun., Nov. 15 Twenty-fourth  
Sunday after Pentecost  
Judges 4:1-7 Psalm 123 1  
Thessalonians 5:1-11  
Matthew 25:14-30

Mon., Nov. 16 Psalm 83:1-4,  
9-10, 17-18 Judges 4:8-24  
Romans 2:1-11

Tues., Nov. 17 Psalm 83:1-4,  
9-10, 17-18 Exodus 2:1-10 1  
Thessalonians 5:12-18

Wed., Nov. 18 Psalm 83:1-4,  
9-10, 17-18 Esther 7:1-10  
Matthew 24:45-51

Thurs., Nov. 19 Psalm 100  
Genesis 48:15-22 Revelation  
14:1-11

Fri., Nov. 20 Psalm 100  
Isaiah 40:1-11 Revelation  
22:1-9

Sat., Nov. 21 Psalm 100  
Ezekiel 34:25-31 Matthew  
12:46-50

Sun., Nov. 22 Reign of Christ  
Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24  
Psalm 100 Ephesians 1:15-23  
Matthew 25:31-46

Mon., Nov. 23 Psalm 28  
Numbers 27:15-23 2 Timothy  
2:8-13

Tues., Nov. 24 Psalm 28  
Zechariah 11:4-17 Revelation  
19:1-9

Wed., Nov. 25 Psalm 28  
Jeremiah 31:10-14 John 5:19-  
40

Thurs., Nov. 26  
Thanksgiving Day Psalm  
80:1-7, 17-19 Zechariah 13:1-  
9 Revelation 14:6-13 or Deut  
8:7-18 and Psalm 65 2  
Corinthians 9:6-15 Luke  
17:11-19

Fri., Nov. 27 Psalm 80:1-7,  
17-19 Zechariah 14:1-9 1  
Thessalonians 4:1-18

Sat., Nov. 28 Psalm 80:1-7,  
17-19 Micah 2:1-13 Matthew  
24:15-31

Sun., Nov. 29 First Sunday of  
Advent Isaiah 64:1-9 Psalm  
80:1-7, 17-19 1 Corinthians  
1:3-9 Mark 13:24-37

Mon., Nov. 30 Psalm 79  
Micah 4:1-5 Revelation 15:1-8



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*First Parish Church, Congregational  
P.O. Box 187  
Manchester-by-the-Sea, MA 01944*



## **Stewardship**

The Stewardship Committee is off and running with our Annual Fund Drive 2021. Our theme is “First Parish- For Such a Time as This”. Reverend Mark introduced the drive in Sunday worship, and it officially begins Sunday, November 1. The drive will run through November with Pledge Sunday on November 22.

There will be three testimonials at the November church services: Allison Moir-Smith, Chip Price and Liz Loomis. A letter from Reverend Mark will go out the second week of November. Our Stewardship letter and pledge cards will follow the following week.

For 2021 the Board of Trustees has set a budget of \$230,000, a 4.5% increase over 2020. Please consider helping us reach this goal.

Mary Ellen Cook and David Lumsden-Co-Chairs  
Chip Price  
Bruce Warren

Please try to have pledge cards in before November 22 for Pledge Sunday.