



**March  
2022**

**Minister's Message**  
Rev. Dr. Mark Boyea



**FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION**

A minister had invited their favorite seminary professor to offer a presentation to the congregation on the life of Jesus. The professor spoke about several of the significant events in Jesus' life, including his baptism at the Jordan River.

The professor proposed that the baptism served as a revelation of God's presence in Jesus. But after a little back and forth between the professor and some members of the congregation on that point, another member – a long time member who rarely spoke but who everyone recognized as a person of deep faith – said this:

"I see something else."

Intrigued, the professor asked, "So what do you see?"

"The story says that the heavens were opened, and the spirit of God came down", the member said.

"Yes" the professor affirmed.

"Then what I see", the member continued, "is that God's Spirit was let loose in the world. And that is a dangerous thing."

That member was so right. It *is* a dangerous thing for the spirit of God to be let loose in the world.

It's dangerous because that Spirit, as it did Jesus, then sends us out into the wilderness to face the constant temptation to let our lives and the world be ruled by personal gain, misuse of power and privilege, and self-centeredness. It's dangerous because it constantly challenges the accepted ways of culture and nation. It's dangerous because its call to relationship, to love our neighbor – and our enemy – as ourselves, leaves us constantly vulnerable; constantly vulnerable to disappointment and discouragement; to headache and heartache.

But oh, the reward... Emotional and spiritual strength, wisdom and courage. Freedom of heart, mind and soul. Integrity – undivided completeness; wholeness.

The sacred season of Lent that we are now entering together is our call to once again follow Jesus on the road from baptism, to wilderness, to cross. And it is also our call to let God's spirit loose in the world all along the way like he did.

Blessings,

Mark

### **WORSHIP NOTES**

As announced on February 18, in light of the Town's and State's recent decisions to step back from indoor mask mandates, our Church Council unanimously voted at its most recent meeting to do the same for our Sunday Worship and other gatherings, effective February 20<sup>th</sup>.

In addition, the Council also unanimously voted to reinstate post-Worship Coffee Hour Fellowship effective Sunday, February 27<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with our special **"Jazz Sunday"** celebration that morning...

On Wednesday, March 2, with the commemoration of **"Ash Wednesday"**, we begin the sacred season of **Lent**. This period of heightened focus on remembering, reflecting on and recommitting ourselves to the example and call to follow given to us by Jesus will begin with an **Ash Wednesday** time of readings, group Reflection and live music from Kelsey Boyes on Wednesday, March 2 at 7 PM on Zoom.

Also that day, Rev. Mark will be in the First Parish Sanctuary to distribute ashes from both 11am-1pm and again from 4:30-6:30pm. This is open to all who wish to receive them, whether they are members of First Parish or not. In addition, Mark is also available to make "house calls" for distributing ashes should you need. Please contact him to set that up.

Then, throughout the rest of March, we will continue to journey together through Lent through this year's theme of **"These 40 Days"**. Over the course of the Sundays of Lent, we will explore important passages from the Bible that feature the number "40" – the official number of days in the season.

In addition, on Sunday, March 6, we will celebrate the Sacrament of Communion together as a spiritual community, and on Sunday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, our own Rev. Dr. Lelley Smith will serve as Worship Leader and Preacher.

## **SPIRITUAL GROWTH and EXPLORATION**

***Bible Study*** will be held on the following dates in March at 4pm on Zoom:

Thursday, March 3  
Thursday, March 10  
Thursday, March 24  
Thursday, March 31

**There will be no Bible Study on Thursday, March 17.**

After discussions with the regular and frequent participants of ***Prayer and Meditation***, it was decided that those sessions will move from Wednesdays to Thursdays beginning in March. This will allow members of the Choir, some of whom often participate in Prayer and Meditation on Wednesdays the Choir doesn't rehearse, to be able to participate more regularly.

***Prayer and Meditation*** will be offered on Zoom in March only once - at 7pm on Thursday, March 24.

Our current ***Spiritual Exploration*** unit continues and concludes in March:

***“What’s the Least I Can Believe and Still Be Christian?”***

Tuesday, March 1 & **Thursday, March 10 (please note date change)**  
7:00-8:30pm on Zoom

Based on the book of the same name by long-time minister and author Martin Thielen, this five-week unit is exploring “what really matters” when it comes to our beliefs about God, Jesus, the Bible and the Church. We are examining what Thielen identifies as the things we both need and don't need to believe from our tradition, as well as additional beliefs and topics of concern to participants.

Our next ***“Spiritual Exploration”*** unit is Lent-focused, and begins the latter part of March:

### ***“The Usual Suspects”***

Tuesdays: March 22 and 29; April 5 and 12  
7:00-8:30pm on Zoom

During this four-week unit we will examine the lives and actions of some of the characters the Gospels identify as playing important roles in the death of Jesus, such as Judas, the religious leaders in Jerusalem, Herod and Pilate. We will also explore how those actions, as a function of timeless human failings, emotions, and the context of time and place, might speak to us in our time and place.

As always, you will continue to receive reminders and details on dates, times, and how to participate in all our offerings from the Church Office either on the day of or day before each gathering.

## **Vitality**

The Vitality Committee helped with making and distributing valentines to seniors around our area through the Council on Aging and Seacoast Nursing Home.

On Jazz Sunday we distributed Mardi Gras beads to all.

We are so looking forward to spring and outdoor activities.

If you are new to our Church or you have met someone new to our Church please contact Allison at 978-526-1904 or Mary Ellen at 978-500-0018 so we can welcome all!

## **Women’s Fellowship**

It’s been so long, ladies, since we’ve gathered. I hope to have a spring date soon. Maybe a potluck dinner in our newly renovated Chapel! Mary Ellen

## March Birthdays

03/01	KNOX, PAUL	12B PICKETT ST BEVERLY MA 01915	paulknox1@comcast.net
03/06	CICALA, PHILIP	114 PINE ST MANCHESTER	
03/07	SMITH, RICHARD	13 WASHINGTON ST MANCHESTER	richard.w.smith@gmail.com
03/12	GRAYDEN, LOIS	266 W SEAVIEW DR MARATHON FL 33050	lgrayden@comcast.net
03/15	HARRIS, ELEANOR	P.O. BOX 383 MANCHESTER	ekeharris@gmail.com
03/18	BOTHWELL, TUCKER	121 PLEASANT ST MANCHESTER	
03/19	MICHAEL, MARGARET	12 FULLER ST MAGNOLIA MA 01930	mills_margaret@yahoo.com
03/21	DUNN, DONALD	6 TREETOP LANE MAGNOLIA MA 01930	dondunn@verizon.net
03/29	CROFT, CARSON	44 PINE ST MANCHESTER	
03/29	CROFT, JARRETT	44 PINE ST MANCHESTER	

## Book Group

**Book Group** is open to everyone! Consider joining us. Questions can be directed to Mary Ellen Cook at 978-500-0018.

We next meet **Monday, March 28 at 6:30 PM** at Nancy Peterson's home 111 Chebacco Road, South Hamilton. The book for discussion is "Traveling with Pomegranates" by Sue Monk Kidd and Ann Kidd Taylor.

*Sue Monk Kidd has touched the hearts of millions of readers with her beloved novels and acclaimed nonfiction. Now, in this wise and engrossing dual memoir, she and her daughter, Ann, chronicle their travels together through Greece and France at a time when each was on a quest to redefine herself and rediscover each other.*

*As Sue struggles to enlarge a vision of swarming bees into a novel, and Ann ponders the classic question of what to do with her life, this modern-day Demeter and Persephone explore an array of inspiring figures and sacred sites. They also give voice to that most protean of human connections: the bond of mothers and daughters. goodreads*

In April, we meet on **Monday, April 25** at 6:30 at Mary Ellen's home 23 Harold Street to discuss. "The Henna Artist" by Aika Joshi.

## Stewardship

Many of you do not use the pledge offering envelopes anymore; but look in the Narthex to see if your name is on a box. If you don't need them, please let Mary Ellen know she can take you off of the boxed envelope list.

The Stewardship Committee will be planning our annual *Thank You Party* at Tuck's Point this summer. Look for more information soon, we can't wait!

## Diaconate

The Diaconate invites you to participate in the Compassion International Mission in 2022. The months of April through October and December are all available. You are invited to sign up for a month [here](#)

Chepkirwok is the six-year-old boy FPCC is sponsoring. He lives in the valley of Sandai Community, Nakuru, Kenya, home to approximately 4,000 residents. Typical houses are constructed of dirt floors, mud walls and tin roofs. The primary ethnic group is Endorois. The regional diet consists of maize and cereal. A common health problem in this area is malnutrition. Most adults in Sandai Community are unemployed, but some work as animal herders, day laborers or market traders and earn the equivalent of \$30 per month. This community needs higher enrollment in primary schools and transformation of traditional values.

Our sponsorship provides Bible teaching, health screenings, immunizations, community service opportunities, gardening classes, counseling on and testing for HIV/AIDS, life skills training and mentorship programs. Modern farming techniques training is provided to Chepkirwok's parents.

Chepkirwok's birthday is June 21, 2014

His hobbies are dancing, arts and crafts, marbles, hide and seek, clapping hands to rhythm and jumping rope.

You are invited to sign up for one month of support for \$38. Checks for that amount should be written to First Parish Church and sent to P.O. Box 187, Manchester, MA 01944.

If you sign up for the month of May, for instance, you will be encouraged to write to the child that month. This can be done digitally or on a form supplied by Compassion. Letters from the child will be shared with the entire congregation.

A onetime additional financial gift can be given to the child on his birthday and Christmas, as well as a designated gift for the entire family. Once we know detailed information about the child, those opportunities will also be available on the SUG and anyone can sign up to support these special occasions.

Questions about the project can be directed to Sue Parker at [sueparker33@aol.com](mailto:sueparker33@aol.com)

# Calendar

## March 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		<b>1</b> 07:00 PM-Spiritual Studies	<b>2</b> 11:00 AM-Ash Distribution 04:30 PM-Ash Distribution 05:30 PM-Summerstage Meeting 07:00 PM-Ash Weds on Zoom 07:30 PM-Choir Rehearsal	<b>3</b> 10:00 AM-VNA Health Clinic 01:00 PM-Seaside Parish Knitters 04:00 PM-Bible Study	<b>4</b> 12:00 PM-AL-Anon	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b> 10:00 AM-Worship 10:00 AM-Communion	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 06:30 PM-Outreach and Service 07:30 PM-Choir Rehearsal	<b>10</b> 04:00 PM-Bible Study 07:00 PM-Spiritual Studies	<b>11</b> 12:00 PM-AL-Anon	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b> 10:00 AM-Worship	<b>14</b> 07:00 PM-Board of Trustees	<b>15</b> 11:00 AM-Woman's Club Luncheon 06:30 PM-Church Council	<b>16</b> 11:00 AM-Minister's Virtual Off Hr 07:30 PM-Choir Rehearsal	<b>17</b> 10:00 AM-VNA Health Clinic 01:00 PM-Seaside Parish Knitters	<b>18</b> 12:00 PM-AL-Anon	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b> 10:00 AM-Worship 10:00 AM-Rev Dr L Smith leads wors	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> 11:00 AM-COA Luncheon 02:30 PM-Friends of COA	<b>23</b> 11:00 AM-Minister's Virtual Off Hr 07:30 PM-Choir Rehearsal	<b>24</b> 04:00 PM-Bible Study 07:00 PM-Prayer & Meditation	<b>25</b> 12:00 PM-AL-Anon	<b>26</b> 01:00 PM-Memorial Service Payne
<b>27</b> 10:00 AM-Worship	<b>28</b> 06:30 PM-Book Group	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 11:00 AM-Minister's Virtual Off Hr 07:30 PM-Choir Rehearsal	<b>31</b> 04:00 PM-Bible Study 06:00 PM-Deacon Meeting		

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

### Christian Education Experiences

An interview with Nancy Peterson, a long time Hamilton resident and member of First Parish Congregational

There are some life events, particularly earth-shifting occurrences, which are unforgettable. Extreme weather and global pandemics come to mind today, but on other days, days that are more routine and ordinary, more pleasant events creep in and dominate the musings. The day we find the "one," or land that life-long dream job. A smile of blessed remembrance comes across our face, and we feel, for a brief time, a semblance of the joy we felt then.

Some life experiences reside in the mind vault labeled "Insubstantial" or "Mundane." Events barely worth remembering at all until someone walks around the corner. Then the face you see reminds you of the girl in Sunday School that loaned you that sweater when you insisted to your mother you weren't cold and wore a t-shirt even though it was 36 degrees out.

What do you remember about Sunday School? Too hard? What do you remember about your children's experiences in Sunday School? What about Youth Group? Perhaps you have filed your own religious education experiences in the "Insubstantial" File. Many do. Most folks are more likely to recall their academic interactions or sports achievements. Perhaps our religious education experiences have a special place in the vault of memory and if so, perhaps they are worth revisiting.

I had the pleasure of speaking with Nancy Peterson, long time member of First Parish Congregational. Although our conversation was brief, I was so engaged in Nancy's recollections I felt as though we had talked for hours.

Nancy and I began with her earliest memories of becoming a member of First Parish, being married, and adopting her children. Those were the days when "everyone went to church" and the children going to Sunday School was just an automatic decision. They wanted to go. There was something there that the children responded to.



When the children were old enough to attend Youth Group, they did that as well. It was a family value to engage in the church community and youth group provided a safe place to practice empathy, grace, and generosity of spirit. Friendships were bonded and at the tender age of emerging self-consciousness and worry about the judgements of others, this experience provided a safe place to land.

It wasn't always easy or struggle-free. There were times when a disengaged teen found it easier to stay in their room when Youth Group called. Yet the social opportunities, under the watchful eye of caring adults, were like a balm to the trials that teen years can be.

Nancy taught Sunday School, volunteered her time and her heart to Youth Group offerings, and served First Parish in most ways possible. She says of her children's church-related experience, that it "supported a core belief system that began with a relationship with a higher source." She believes, looking back, that a stable church life, including religious education, provided a stage for human engagement that has been not only worthwhile but a necessity in a world that so often calls on our tolerance and kindness.

Our own religious education experiences might be hard to revisit. There have been a few moments I would rather not recall, but generally speaking, nearly everything I believe about how to treat the other humans on this planet, I learned and practiced in those Sunday School and Youth Group rooms.

The next time you have a minute and start opening the vaults in your memory, maybe you will move a few from "Insubstantial" to "Formative." It may be worth a revisit or two.

Jeanne Westcott, Director of Youth and Children's Ministries, First Parish Congregational Church



A group of five adults and two teens created 35 Valentines delivered to recipients associated with the Council on Aging and the Seacoast Nursing home. Special thanks to Vitality for their help with this seriously fun afternoon!

## John Elder's Passing



John Elder, 60, of Leland, NC, formerly of Manchester and Hamilton, Ma, passed away on December 9th, 2021 surrounded by his wife and daughters. John was born September 21, 1961, to Jean and Edward Elder.

He will be remembered as a kind and gentle man and a true gentleman. You had to pay close attention to catch his subtle humor, but if you did, it was well worth it. He loved nothing more than being a husband and father. Family always came first.

John is survived by his wife Elizabeth, daughters Ashley Elder and Carley Mills, son-in-law Scott Mills, and granddaughter Abigail. He is also survived by his mother, Martha, sister, Joan (Joseph) Costa, aunt, Elise Howatt, and many nieces, nephews, and extended family. In addition to his parents, John was preceded in death by his grandson, Trevor.

The family welcomes donations in his name to the Shriners Hospitals or St. Jude Children's Hospital in lieu of flowers.

A celebration of John's life will be held Saturday, April 30th, 2022 from 2-4pm at the Manchester American Legion Hall (14 Church St, Manchester-by-the-Sea, MA 01944). All are welcome and encouraged to wear their favorite tie-dye.

**Use the links below to hear more First Parish Church online:**

[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/FirstParishChurchManchesterMa/) [www.facebook.com/FirstParishChurchManchesterMa/](https://www.facebook.com/FirstParishChurchManchesterMa/)

[Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/fpcmanchesterbythesea/) [www.instagram.com/fpcmanchesterbythesea/](https://www.instagram.com/fpcmanchesterbythesea/)

[Website](https://www.firstparishchurch.org/) [www.firstparishchurch.org/](https://www.firstparishchurch.org/)

[YouTube Worship Services](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUvfURhmsH8lfe13FLaRtWcw-pOTC9T2h)

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUvfURhmsH8lfe13FLaRtWcw-pOTC9T2h>

## Service and Outreach

### The Outreach and Service collection continues for The Open Door and The Grace Center

#### Needed:

Baking Mixes - Cake, Brownie, Cookie, Muffin, Pancake  
Peanut Butter  
Canned Tuna, Chicken, and Turkey  
Healthy Snack Items  
100% Juice/Juice Boxes  
Breakfast Cereal  
Hearty Soups  
Canned Vegetables and Fruits  
Spaghetti Sauce  
Macaroni and Cheese  
Rice, Noodles, Pasta  
Pet Food  
Gift Cards from local grocery markets  
(Shaw's, Stop & Shop, Market Basket, etc.)  
so they can purchase butter, cream and other perishables  
Drop at the Church before Worship or at the Chapel

#### From the Open Door and the Service and Outreach Committee

The Open Door is looking for volunteers to feed our community.  
Consider registering for the following:  
Fulfillment Center, 11-1pm  
Fulfillment Center, 1-3pm  
Pick-Up Assistant, 3-5pm  
No Contact Deliveries, 3-5pm

There will also be another SORTING EXTRAVAGANZA on Friday, 10-12pm. We're looking for 6-8 volunteers to help us sort donations from our generous community. This opportunity is available to all fully vaccinated volunteers (full onboarding not required).

Visit VolunteerHub to claim your spot now: <http://foodpantry.volunteerhub.com/>

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



**Sunday,  
March 13**

**2:00 AM**

