



First Parish Church
Congregational, Manchester-by-the-Sea • MA

January 2023

The Church Bell Newsletter



Caroling for shoppers and shut ins



Messiah Sing, more inside

Church Council Update from the Moderator

A new year is upon us and with it we welcome our Interim Minister, Rev. Kurt Herber!! Rev. Herber will be settling in beginning Tuesday, January 3, 2023, and will lead us in Sunday Worship on January 8, 2023. An informal “Koffee with Kurt” gathering is planned for Saturday, January 7, 2023, from 10:00 – 12:00 in the Chapel Hall, during which Rev. Herber will make a few remarks and respond to questions. **Please plan to come by and greet Rev. Herber with our trademark FPCC hospitality!!**

Rev. Judy Brain will be guest preacher on January 1, 2023.

It should be noted that Rev. Brain twice blessed us with her presence in our pulpit during our 4-month gap period. In all 7 different guest preachers (2 of whom did double-duty!), 4 different guest speakers and 2 of our own members (the heroic Dr. Llewelyn Smith who led us every Sunday during Advent and Jeanne Westcott who led the Family Service on Christmas Eve) answered the call for us when we were in need!!! We offer each of them our heartfelt gratitude.

We have much on our “to do” list for the coming year, but before we turn our hearts and attention to the next chapter in God’s evolving story of First Parish Church, I’d encourage us all to find some time to reflect on the past year. Not just on what we did – which was a lot! – but on how we’ve grown together as a spiritual community and how we so naturally and instinctively came together in faith and love during an unexpected time of testing.

Through it all there can be no doubt that God was with us. May memory of his steadfastness bring us all great strength and hope and anticipation in the coming year.

As always, the members of Church Council continue to encourage you to reach out to us with questions or concerns, and we ask for your prayers, support and encouragement as we journey together through this ongoing time of transition guided by the Holy Spirit and our call to awaken to the light and love of God and be joyful beacons to the world!

First Parish uses candid photos of Church activities in its publicity from time to time. Any photos of children used will not contain personally identifiable information. Members of the community not wanting their or their children’s photos depicted should inform the Church Office.

Director of Youth and Children's Ministry Jeanne Westcott

On Sunday, January 15, from 5:30 -7 pm, Youth Fellowship will meet for dinner, planning and games and will launch the second Fleece Blanket Project to benefit Action Inc. of Gloucester. Community Service hours will be awarded to anyone completing one blanket kit (2 hours) or by completing one blanket with your own materials from our instruction sheet (4 hours). Tell all your friends to join us for eats and fun and to get their fleece blanket project kit! Limited quantity so don't miss out!

Sunday School will resume after the holiday break on January 8. We will be exploring the early life of Jesus and the significant people in His life. We will also be preparing a special welcome for our new Interim Minister! Our missions element this month will be projects in preparation for COA Valentines. If you know of a family that would like to register for our growing Sunday School have them contact Jeanne Westcott at Jeanne.fpchurch@gmail.com.

The Winter Queen's Emporium was a great success this year and nearly \$100 was raised to benefit Bridge Over Troubled Waters, Boston. Great thanks to those who generously donated and a special thanks to Clarissa and Sydney for their expert help!

Book Group

Book Group News This is a time for church members as well as non-church friends to come together and engage with one another, build relationships, and share in a discussion of books that are of interest to people of various backgrounds. We have fun visiting, conversing about the book and sharing stories and would love to have you join us! Questions? Call Mary Ellen Cook 978-500-0018.

January 20 “*The Two-Family House*” by Lynda Cohen Loigman location TBD.

*Brooklyn, 1947: in the midst of a blizzard, in a two-family brownstone, two babies are born minutes apart to two women. They are sisters by marriage with an impenetrable bond forged before and during that dramatic night; but as the years progress, small cracks start to appear and their once deep friendship begins to unravel. No one knows why, and no one can stop it. One misguided choice; one moment of tragedy. Heartbreak wars with happiness and almost but not quite wins. From debut novelist Lynda Cohen Loigman comes *The Two-Family House*, a moving family saga filled with heart, emotion, longing, love, and mystery.* goodreads

Service and Outreach

**The Outreach and Service collections continue for
The Open Door, The Grace Center and Operation Troop Support**

The Open Door Needs

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

The Grace Center Needs

Gift Cards from local grocery markets
(Shaw's, Stop & Shop, Market Basket, etc.)
so they can purchase butter, cream and other perishables

Troop Needs for January

Cookies, Candies, Sweets

Drop at the Church before Worship or at the Chapel

January Birthdays

01/02	PETERSON, MEGAN	111 CHEBACCO RD S HAMILTON MA 01982	meganpete1@gmail.com
01/06	WEAVER, CASSANDRA	12 ALLEN AVE MANCHESTER MA 01944	
01/09	SCHANLEY, MARIA	4 HIDDEN LEDGE RD MANCHESTER MA 01944	
01/11	MARSHALL, JANET	55 TAMARACK LANE PEABODY MA 01960	janethmarshall@gmail.com
01/19	MCCLAIN, THOMAS	54 RIVER ROAD KENNEBUNKPORT ME 04046	tom_mcclain504@msn.com
01/28	TOSI, JULIE	3 BUTLER AVE MANCHESTER MA 01944	juliemtosi@gmail.com
01/30	COOK, MARY ELLEN	23 HAROLD ST MANCHESTER MA 01944	jerris01@comcast.net

It is not too late to pledge for 2023.
Our Church budget is dependent upon your pledges,
thank you for your generosity!

First Parish Church Annual Fund Drive 2023

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Total Pledge for 2023 _____

Thank you for your pledge

*Alone we can do so little,
together we can do so
much.*

Helen Keller



Please use the enclosed
pre-stamped envelope
to return your pledge or
bring to Church on Pledge
Sunday, November 20

**Manchester Seniors - Drop in for
*Coffee and Conversation***

Every Monday (except holidays) 10 AM-12 PM
at the First Parish Chapel Hall

Hospitality provided by *The Friends of The Manchester Council on Aging*
Come sit down and talk!

Visiting Nurses Health Clinic

Held the 1st & 3rd Thursdays of the month, 10 - 11:45 AM at First Parish Chapel Hall.
Services offered include: health assessments, blood pressure screenings, B12
administration, pulse, heart and lung monitoring, blood sugar screenings for
diabetics, medication and diet consults. Drop in. Free.

Diaconate

The Deacons continue to regularly meet every month via Zoom to make sure that everything runs smoothly during this period of transition. We have been fortunate to have a great group of Ministers supporting us each week, and we have taken on more responsibility each week as we welcome them along with church goers both in person and online. It's been great to hear a different style of preaching each week. For simplicity, we continue to provide communion via our "Covid-friendly" single serve portions but look forward to returning to traditional offerings once we welcome Rev Herber in the new year.

Coffee and refreshments continue to be provided by the deacons on duty each week to foster fellowship with all in attendance. If anyone isn't burned out from all that Christmas cooking and would like to provide a homemade treat, please reach out to the Deacon on duty for the week to make arrangements.

Sue, Jeff, and other volunteers worked hard to make our church festive during this Advent season. And with our own Lelly leading us during this special time of year, we haven't skipped a beat. We began with the lighting of the advent wreath by Ann, William and Mark Heslop on the last Sunday of the month, November 27th.

We remain in touch with Chepkirwok, FPCC's Compassion Child and wish him and his family all the best during this holiday season.

Use the links below to learn more about First Parish Church online:

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

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

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

[YouTube Worship Services](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUvfURhmsH8lfE13FLaRtWcw-pOTC9T2h)

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLUvfURhmsH8lfE13FLaRtWcw-pOTC9T2h>

Stephen Ministry

You Are Invited to Participate in the Stephen Ministry at First Parish

A number of members are organizing a Stephen Ministry at First Parish. The Stephen Ministry—named for Stephen, who in Acts 6 was appointed to assist members of the community suffering acute hardships—is a 50-year-old interdenominational Christian tradition. The service trains lay members of the congregation in psychology and theology to be a Christian presence with any in the community suffering acute challenges. Typical examples would include bereavement, divorce, terminal illness, substance abuse, or mental illness. Fully details of the program are here: [Stephen Ministries](#)

A Stephen Minister's objective is not to "solve" the challenge but rather to ensure that none feel alone in their struggles. (Jesus, after all, did not come to "fix" all of our challenges, but rather to be *with* us in our struggles.) At the same time, the Stephen Ministry in a congregation develops a network of specialized services suitable to assist individuals with particular problems. For example, someone struggling with alcoholism would be introduced to a local AA group, while the Stephen Minister would continue to meet with that individual as a friend and witness.

The team is currently working closely with the Outreach & Service Committee and the Care Team on this project. Two of us are planning to participate in the 25-hour live training program for team leaders offered by the Stephen Ministry headquarters. In the short term, as the leadership is trained and the program develops, our intention is to augment the work of the Care Team and develop our network of local services to which we can refer people for specialized support. Our tentative expectation is that during the current program year we will assist people within the congregation, with the goal of offering a fully trained and developed service to the broader local community in the following program year.

Currently the group meets virtually at 5 pm the first and third Tuesdays of each month to develop the program. In person training and social events will follow! There are many ways to participate depending upon your gifts and availability, so if you think you might be interested, please feel free to just attend and listen.

If you are interested in learning more about this project, call Linda Crosby at 978-314-1526 or Steve Carhart at 978-407-8454.

First Annual Messiah Sing—a great success!

The cooler weather along with a dusting of snow arrived just in time to add to the holiday season atmosphere of the “Messiah Sing” presented at the Church on Sunday evening, December 11th. This “Sing” was dedicated to the memory of Laura Ells, who was for many years a member of the First Parish Choir and whose bequest helped make the evening possible. As Music Director, Dr. Herman Weiss described it, “The whole idea is that people who may or may not know each other will spontaneously get together with professionals to create something beautiful.” And we did! The event was widely advertised and open to anyone who wanted to sing or listen. The Deacons counted 136 people in the Sanctuary and some of them drove two hours through the snow to sing with us. Herman had been planning this event for many months, indeed since last year when we had to postpone it due to the surging pandemic. This was the 8th such Messiah Sing that he has directed. The format of the evening had the singing audience, including the First Parish Church Choir, seated in four sections with visitors who were provided with scores if they didn’t bring their own – which many did. We sang the choruses for Part I of the Messiah plus the beloved Hallelujah Chorus, and the arias and recitatives were song by four profoundly professional soloists: Holly Cameron, soprano; Rebecca Shrimpton, mezzo-soprano; Robert Cinnante, tenor; and Paul Knox, baritone. Such magnificent voices! We were accompanied by a professional orchestra of nine members of the Cape Ann Symphony and a harpsichordist, Robert Littlefield of Beverly.

Christiane Alsop wrote a heartfelt message to the Choir that encouraged us to do it again and captured exactly the response we had hope to elicit. “The Messiah-Sing-Along will forever be engraved in my memory as such a moving, and yes, glorious moment. I loved every minute of it: Herman’s inviting, anxiety-melting ways of introducing the event and conducting it, the soloists, the orchestra and then us, the expert choir singers and the commoners (like me), all together joining in the creation of it all - awe-inspiring in the true sense of the word.... Cannot think of a better way to open our Church’s doors for all those who usually shy away from entering.”

Following the singing, a reception was held in the newly renovated Chapel Hall where there were delicious refreshments and time to mingle with new friends and celebrate an inspiring evening. Having worked up an appetite, nearly half the attendees joined us for charcuterie, sandwiches, donated Prosecco and cookies. Many hands (and voices) went into making this event successful, but the round of applause when Herman walked into the room was most deserved and a testament to the joy of music.



Seaside Parish Knitters

The Seaside Parish Knitters meet each 1st and 3rd Thursday (Jan 5 & 19) of the month at the Chapel, from 1-5 pm. We welcome all to stop by anytime during that time.

Over the years we have enjoyed our time knitting and crocheting items for baptismal events at the church, shawls and blankets for friends at home, scarves, neck gators, and helmet liners for our veterans in combat, and mittens and hats for Cape Ann children.

We are always looking for knitting needles and yarn that you might be considering “casting” aside, especially wool. Contact Penny Lapham at 978-526-7128.

Contribute to the work of First Parish Church by going to <http://www.PayPal.Me/FPChurchManchester> and clicking the “send” button.

Readers and Greeters are always needed. To volunteer speak to the Deacons, or you can also sign up [online](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0c4caba822a1f49-diaconate). <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0c4caba822a1f49-diaconate>

First Parish is looking for help with streaming. Full training is provided! Not sure? Sign up to be an assistant to the volunteer who is streaming. We need your help to continue to provide online access to Worship services. Sign up [here](#) or contact Richard Smith at richard.w.smith@gmail.com.

Our Online Prayer Wall Give it a try! Request prayers and pray for others through the Prayer Wall on our website. Feel more connected to the Joys and Concerns of our congregation, and hear what's on each other's hearts. You will be touched to receive notifications every time someone prays for you. <https://www.firstparishchurch.org/prayer-wall/>

If you would like to donate flowers for the altar, please contact Penny Lapham 978-526-7128.

It is a great way to honor an event or remember a family member.

Calendar

January 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10:00 AM-Worship	2 09:00 AM-Church Office Closed	3 09:00 AM-Church Office Closed	4 11:00 AM-Chess COA 06:15 PM-Outreach & Service 07:30 PM-Choir Rehearsal	5 10:00 AM-VNA Health Clinic 01:00 PM-Seaside Parish Knitters 04:00 PM-Spiritual Study	6 03:30 PM-Adaptive Dance	7 10:00 AM-Welcome Coffee
8 10:00 AM-Worship 10:00 AM-Sunday School	9 03:30 PM-Adaptive Dance 06:30 PM-Trustees Meeting	10	11 07:30 PM-Choir Rehearsal	12 04:00 PM-Spiritual Study	13 03:30 PM-Adaptive Dance	14 11:00 AM-Memorial Service M Kirby 12:00 PM-Collation M Kirby
15 10:00 AM-Worship 10:00 AM-Sunday School 05:30 PM-Youth Fellowship	16	17 06:30 PM-Church Council	18 07:30 PM-Choir Rehearsal	19 10:00 AM-VNA Health Clinic 01:00 PM-Seaside Parish Knitters 04:00 PM-Spiritual Study	20 03:30 PM-Adaptive Dance	21
22 10:00 AM-Worship 10:00 AM-Sunday School	23	24 11:00 AM-COA Luncheon 02:30 PM-Friends of the COA	25 07:30 PM-Choir Rehearsal	26 04:00 PM-Spiritual Study 06:30 PM-Diaconate Meeting	27 03:30 PM-Adaptive Dance	28
29 10:00 AM-Worship 10:00 AM-Sunday School	30 06:30 PM-Book Group	31				

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



Saturday, Jan. 7, 10 AM
An informal "Koffee with
Kurt" gathering is planned
from 10 - noon in the Chapel
Hall

Rev. Herber will make a few
remarks and respond to
questions.

Please plan to come on by!