



***Our Advent theme from Rev. Rick Spalding - Rejoice, rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to you...***

So affirms the beloved carol in whose shelter we gather ourselves together, each Advent - to wait and to wonder. The prophet Isaiah proclaims that God's name means "God with us". What are the implications of the with-ness of God - for each of us alone, for all of us together? How does the with-ness of God change our ways of being with each other? with ourselves? with the world? These are some of the questions we'll be pondering as we worship together during this momentous Advent at First Parish - on the cusp of an exciting new chapter in the life of our church, and a season of urgent need in the world. In light of everything that's going on around us, let's be sure to be **with** one another, and **with** God, as we prepare ourselves again through the month of December to receive *tidings of great joy which shall be to all people!*

Advent Guest Ministers

Dec. 3, "With Us" Rev. Rick Spalding

Dec. 10, "I See You" Rev. Rick Spalding

Dec. 17, Cantata Dr. Herman Weiss and Rev. Rick Spalding

Dec. 24, 10 AM, "A New Story" Rev. Rick Chrisman

Dec. 24, Christmas Eve - 5 PM Family Service "Looking Back is Looking Forward" Jeanne Westcott

Dec. 24, Christmas Eve - 7:30 PM, "A Feather in a Gale" Traditional Candlelight Rev. Rick Spalding

Dec. 31, "To See around the Corner" Rev. Rick Spalding



Notes from the Moderator and Church Council

We made it - Hallelujah!!! Our new pastor, Rev. Katherine Schofield, will join us as of January 1, 2024, ending our 16-month journey through the “Do-It-Yourself Church” wilderness!!!! Praise be to God!!!!

But honestly, it wasn't that bad was it? It was actually a wonderful time of strengthening and deepening our relationships with God and each other – and how blessed were we to have been spiritually nurtured and cared for by so many kind and loving foster pastors!?!

All that being said – we are so ready to have Rev. Katherine with us; leading us, guiding us, encouraging and supporting our walk with God as we live out our purpose to Awaken to the Light and Love of God and Be Joyful Beacons to the World!!! It is such an exciting and hopeful time of revival for FPCC!!

We encourage each and every one of you to step into this moment, offering your time, talent and treasures – and prayers!!! – that we may be the hands and feet of Jesus throughout this hurting and broken world.

We have a beautiful Advent Season planned, with Worship lead by our dear friend Rev. Rick Spalding and Herman and the choir gracing us with deeply moving and engaging music. Let us be together throughout the month in hopeful anticipation of Jesus' birth – and FPCC's rebirth!!!

On behalf of lay leadership – thank you for your faithfulness and commitment to this church that we all love so dearly. We have been honored and humbled to have been trusted by you and used by God during this time of trial and testing.

Merry Christmas to all!!



Join us for online Bible Study via Zoom each Thursday afternoon
at 4:00 PM.

This is a lively discussion led by Elsa Marshall.

You can join us with your computer, laptop, tablet, phone or you dial in
with your

landline. To give us a try - just look for the e-mail with the zoom link on Thursday
mornings or contact the Church Office for the phone number to dial in!



You are invited to purchase a traditional **Poinsettia**, (6 & 1/2" plant with 3-6 flowers, \$15) to decorate our sanctuary for the Christmas services. The Diaconate also offers the option of donating to *The Diaconate Fund* to assist people in our community, who are in need.

Following the Christmas Eve/Christmas service, the plant may be taken home or left to be given to our members and friends who are ill or unable to leave their home. A complete list of donors and those remembered will be included in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

I (we) wish to donate a plant(s) *please circle one*:

In Memory of

In Celebration of

In Honor of

Name of Loved One(s) _____

Name of Donor(s) _____

Please check: _____ I will take plant(s) home

_____ Please give my plant(s)

_____ A donation to the Diaconate Fund

of Poinsettia(s) desired: _____ Enclosed: \$ _____

*Please return order form and payment to the church office,
drop in the offering plate or order online [here](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0C4CABA822A1F49-45976124-poinsettia)
by Friday, December 18*

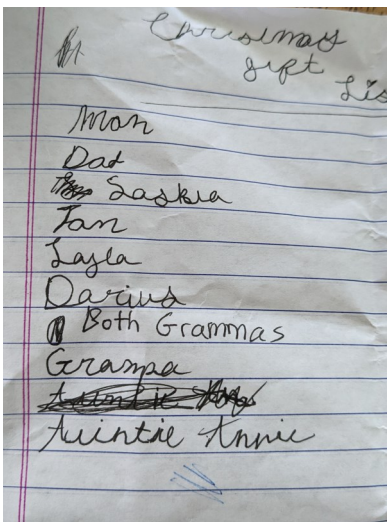
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0C4CABA822A1F49-45976124-poinsettia>

Faith Formation News Jeanne Westcott

In Sunday School, children and teachers share stories about the Old Testament in the first four months prior to the Advent season. These stories are always used as a vehicle for the prevalent trips and snares humans encounter on their faith journeys. Recently, we talked about patience, jealousy, and consequences of behavior choices in connection with the Exodus. As we approach the Advent season, our story selections will exemplify both the joys and concerns about being the hands and feet of Jesus, and the up and downs of human striving. Together we learn what God wants for His people and how we might help to bring God's vision of the kingdom into our every day lives.

In Youth Fellowship, we recently enjoyed a vibrant and active Halloween party complete with costumes, expertly co-hosted by our own Simone Argento! Food, pumpkins, and games, plus a good Halloween movie made for a great evening. All youth parties are family-friendly and intergenerationally designed. Members of the First Parish family are always invited. See you at the Christmas Party?

In other news, Winter Queens Emporium was held November 18 and 19th this year with great success! We hosted 8 families and 14 shoppers, with four separate adult donations. Proceeds will benefit a youth to youth giving recipient, such as Bridge Over Troubled Water or Plummer Youth Promise to be decided soon! The shoppers, as young as pre-kindergarten and as old as 12 plus, carefully chose gifts for parents, grandparents, siblings, and extended family members, as well as best friends and even a teacher! They proudly paid for their purchases, checked their change, and helped to wrap each gift with care. All the gifts were sent home in a decorative holiday bag and included a special candy cane gift from the Winter Queen! A great big hug to all who helped to make this event possible! It's a keeper!



Book Group

Book Group 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! Book Group meets on the last Monday of the month and hosting is shared among members.

December 11, 6:30 PM a potluck dinner, and book swap at Joanne Hadaegh's home. Bring a dish to share and a wrapped used book to swap.

January 29 at Mary Ellen's home, 23 Harold St. The book is Hello Beautiful by Ann Napolitano.

February 26 at Meredith Tufts' home. The book is Beyond That, the Sea by Laura Spence-Ash.

March 25 at Carol Spence's home. The book is Genesis in the Bible.

Diaconate

Our returning guest ministers were Reverend Ellie Richardson and Reverend Judy Brain. Their messages revolved around the Parables as Jesus and his disciples were in Jerusalem prior to the Crucifixion.

Reverend Ellie helped to celebrate World Communion Sunday on October 1st.

Reverend Ellie again helped us to celebrate a Service of Remembrance on October 29th. She was aided by Bethany Woods and Liz Loomis. It was a moving tribute to those lost to us from January 2020 to present time. Candles were lit to commemorate each name and each participant received a white carnation.

The Annual Fund Drive was also kicked off by Mary Ellen Cook and the Stewardship Committee. Building on the Scripture, "therefore encourage one another and build up each other as indeed you are doing" the question "What are your dreams for the future we are building together at First Parish? Has been proposed. Mary Ellen, Paul Lengieza, and Andrian Argento has each spoken. Stewardship Sunday will be November 19th.

Liz Loomis, Deacon

December Birthdays

12/01	LARSEN, JOLENE	221 TURNPIKE RD MONTAGUE MA 01351	jolene.larsen@gmail.com
12/05	FLYNN, WILDER	7 LOADING PLACE ROAD MANCHESTER	
12/20	NICKLESS, GEORGE	124 BRIDGE ST MANCHESTER	georgejune@comcast.net
12/30	DEMOURA, DAVID	47 LEXINGTON AVE GLOUCESTER	ddemoura@comcast.net

The 2024 Stewardship Annual Fund Drive launched with testimonials in October & November and Pledge Sunday on November 19.

Our theme for the year is

“Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.”

1 Thessalonians 5:11.

Reflection question: “What are your dreams for the future we are building together at First Parish?”

A pledge card is below, drop it in the offering plate or mail it to P.O. Box 187 Manchester, MA 01944

Updating our information - We will be sending forms in the mail for you to update your contact information. Please update and mail back to First Parish Church P.O. Box 187 Manchester, MA 01944. This is our chance to get current addresses, phone numbers, emails, etc. which will be so helpful to our committee.

Thank you!

First Parish Church Annual Fund Drive 2024

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Total Pledge for 2024 _____

Thank you for your pledge

“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as indeed you are doing.”
1 Thessalonians 5:11



Please use the enclosed pre-stamped envelope to return your pledge or bring to Church on Pledge Sunday, November 19

Hands on Community Service, all items can be dropped at the Chapel or Church –

Operation Troop Support Socks, any size any color. Small board and card games.

Thanksgiving Food Drive for The Open Door Cereal, coffee & tea, granola bars, oatmeal, pancake & waffle mix, maple syrup, 100% fruit juice.

The Grace Center Gift Cards from local grocery markets.

Gift bags for the Council on Aging and Freshman care packages See the sticky notes with items needed in the Church.

Toys for Tots Ballet de Mar is collecting new toys for Christmas.





FIRST PARISH CHURCH

INVITES YOU TO A COMMUNITY

Messiah Sing

COME SING WITH US OR JUST COME LISTEN

MUSIC BY G.F. HANDEL, PART ONE & "HALLELUJAH" CHORUS WITH

MARSHA JOHNSON, SOPRANO REBECCA SHRIMPTON, MEZZO-SOPRANO

ROBERT CINNANTE, TENOR PAUL KNOX, BARITONE

AND MEMBERS OF THE CAPE ANN SYMPHONY

CONDUCTED BY DR. HERMAN WEISS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2023, 7:30 PM

ON THE VILLAGE GREEN AT 10 CENTRAL ST., MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

DOORS OPEN AT 7 PM

BRING YOUR OWN MUSIC OR DOWNLOAD HERE:

[HTTPS://WWW.FIRSTPARISHCHURCH.ORG/EVENTS/MESSIAH-SING/](https://www.firstparishchurch.org/events/messiah-sing/)

EXTRA SCORES WILL BE AVAILABLE

KINDLY DONATE \$20 AT THE DOOR TO HELP PAY FOR THE MUSICIANS

RECEPTION FOLLOWS

FIRST PARISH COMMUNITY HALL (BEHIND SANTANDER BANK)

FOR MORE INFORMATION: (978) 526-7661 OR WWW.FIRSTPARISHCHURCH.ORG

THIS EVENT WILL BE LIVE STREAMED & VIDEO AVAILABLE LATER ON THE FPC WEBSITE

Messiah Sing

Save the date, all are invited! The 2nd Community "Messiah Sing" will be presented at First Parish Church, 10 Central St. Sunday evening, Dec.10, 7:30 PM A reception at the FPC Community hall will follow. This event is again being made possible by a bequest from Laura Ells, who was for many years a member of the First Parish Choir. It's open to the community, singers and listeners alike. We plan a 14-piece orchestra and professional soloists and a chorus consisting of anyone who is eager to sing this beautiful music.

As Music Director Dr. Herman Weiss describes 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." We will sing the choruses for Part I of the Messiah plus the beloved Hallelujah Chorus, and the arias and recitatives will be sung by professional soloists. If you have your own Messiah score, please bring it, but we will hand out printed scores to anyone who needs one.

Last year following our first Messiah Sing, Christiane Alsop wrote a heartfelt message to the choir that encouraged us to do it again and captured exactly the response we had hoped 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."

So, if you missed it last year, don't let that happen again! Following the singing, there will be a reception in the Chapel Hall. Invite your friends!

And please help us raise the funds to do this again next year. A donation of \$20 per person at the door will get us halfway to that goal.

Christmas Eve 5 PM service needs 5 actors, three men and two women. The women will portray Mary at two different times in her journey and the two men will accompany her as the role of Joseph. One man will portray Jesus. Our renowned soloists will give us two beautiful selections in Part One of the script and the actors will be engaged in short conversation. Our two youngest church members will portray the expectant Mary and Joseph, with Jesus as Narrator for that part of the script, entitled, Looking Back is Looking Forward. Please see Jeanne or contact her at jeanne.fpchurch@gmail.com if you would like to help present a version of the Greatest Story Ever Told!

The Stephen Ministry at First Parish Goes Live in the New Year

We are pleased to report that the First Parish Stephen Ministry completed the training of its first cohort of eight Stephen Ministers the Sunday before Thanksgiving. This group stands ready to support Rev. Katherine and other care functions at First Parish by providing confidential one on one spiritual support to parishioners dealing with life challenges such as bereavement, divorce, or terminal illness. The Stephen Ministry will of course work with all elements of the lay leadership to identify any among us could use additional emotional and spiritual support from the Church.

The team is currently working with Rev. Katherine to ensure that the service will be fully functioning in the New Year. The Stephen Ministers will be commissioned at the regular Sunday service on January 28. Following the service, the team will present a Soup and Conversation presentation on the history of Stephen Ministry and its practical implementation at First Parish and beyond. The recently commissioned Stephen Ministers will be distributed throughout the hall to participate in table conversation.

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 specific problems. For example, someone struggling with alcoholism might be introduced to a local AA group; or someone temporarily displaced from a home could be referred to an agency qualified to assist in finding temporary housing. The Stephen Minister would continue to meet with that individual to provide spiritual support. One of the most important roles of the Stephen Ministry is to be a "one stop shop" which can refer members of the community to agencies which can provide needed practical support, as well as providing Christian companionship.

As we hope the congregation is aware, 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 life challenges. To date, the movement includes about 13,000 congregations and has trained 75,000 Stephen Leaders who have in turn trained 600,000 Stephen Ministers. Fuller details on the movement are here: [Stephen Ministries](#)

There are many ways to participate depending upon your gifts and availability. If you are interested in participating or are aware of any individual in the congregation who might benefit from our care, please feel free to contact Stephen Leaders Linda Crosby at 978-314-1526 or Steve Carhart at 978-407-8454.

Misc.

Contribute to the work of First Parish Church by going to <http://www.PayPal.Me/FPCChurchManchester> 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/>

Manchester Seniors - Drop in for Coffee and Conversation! Every Monday (except holidays) 10 AM-12:30 PM at the First Parish Community 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 - Noon 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. Open to all.

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

[Facebook](#) www.facebook.com/FirstParishChurchManchesterMa/

[Instagram](#) www.instagram.com/fpcmanchesterbythesea/

[Website](#) www.firstparishchurch.org/

[YouTube Worship Services](#)

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

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.

First Parish Church
P.O. Box 187
Manchester, MA 01944



Coming in December, mark your calendar!

Sing Carols During the Holiday Stroll, Friday, Dec. 1, 6-7 PM in front of the Friendship Tree, join us for a very merry hour of caroling to the holiday shoppers. All voices welcome. Bring a flashlight and a joyful spirit (or, if you need a spirit boost, join us -- it will make you happy). Music and festive hats provided. If it's rainy or snowy, stay cozy at home. Hope to see you!

Sunday, Dec. 3, Community Carol Sing, just before the Friendship Tree concert. 2:30-3:15 PM inside First Parish Church, 10 Central St. Join us around the piano to sing some traditional carols and get in the mood for the tree lighting. Happening no matter the weather.

Sunday, Dec. 10, 2nd Annual Messiah Sing, 7:30 PM followed by a reception at the Chapel Hall.

Sunday, Dec. 24, Christmas Eve 5 PM Family Service Looking Back is Looking Forward

Sunday, Dec. 24, Christmas Eve 7:30 PM Traditional Candlelight