



**First Parish Church, Congregational
On the Village Green
Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts**

*Awaken to the Light and Love of God;
Be a Joyful Beacon to the World*

**First Parish Church, Congregational
United Church of Christ
February 18, 2024, 10 AM**

Ringling of the Bell and Lighting of the Candles

Prelude A Warm Breeze – Herman Weiss (1946)

Please maintain a prayerful quiet during the prelude as we prepare our hearts for worship.

***Call to Worship Psalm 25**

One: To you, O GOD, we lift up the spirit of our whole selves.

**Many: O God, we trust unashamedly in you;
seeking that you be not ashamed of us;**

One: May we begin our Lenten journey together in right relationships;

Many: Teach us. Show us. Guide us in your paths.

Grow us to know your ways more clearly.

One: You are the God of our salvation and the Sustainer of good relations.

Many: For you we wait.

One: May integrity, a clean conscience, and upright living preserve us.

All: Amen.

Welcome

First Parish Church is rooted in the Congregational tradition of democratic governance and the full inclusion and participation of all who call this their spiritual home. We take seriously the responsibility to make the Christian faith our own in this time and place, and seek to live lives of generous service.

*** Hymn In the Cross of Christ I Glory - #193, NCH**

Sunday school students leave for the classrooms after the hymn.

*** Prayer of Invocation**

Passing of the Peace

Anthem Wondrous Love – Austin Lovelace (1919-2010)

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul, what wondrous love is this! O my soul. What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul, to bear the dreadful curse for my soul. When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down, when I was sinking down, sinking down. When I was sinking down beneath God's righteous frown, Christ laid aside His crown for my soul, for my soul, Christ laid aside His crown for my soul. To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing, to God and to the Lamb I will sing. To God and to the Lamb, who is

the great I am, while millions join the theme I will sing, I will sing. And when from death I'm free, I will sing, I'll sing on, I'll sing on, and when from death I'm free I'll sing on! And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be, and through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on, and through eternity I'll sing on!

Prayer Intentions

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Meditation Come Sunday – Duke Ellington (1899-1974)

Rebecca Shrimpton, solo

Come Sunday, oh come Sunday, that's the day.

Lord, dear Lord above: God Almighty; God of love,
Please look down and see my people through.

I believe that God put sun and moon up in the sky.

I don't mind the gray skies, 'cause they're just clouds passing by.

Lord, dear Lord above: God Almighty; God of love,
Please look down and see my people through.

I believe God is now, was then and always will be.

With God's blessing we can make it through eternity.

Lord, dear Lord above: God Almighty; God of love,
Please look down and see my people through.

Scripture Reading Psalm 95 Paul Clark

¹ O come, let us sing to the LORD;

let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

² Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;

let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

³ For the LORD is a great God

and a great King above all gods.

⁴ In his hand are the depths of the earth;

the heights of the mountains are his also.

⁵ The sea is his, for he made it,

and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

⁶ O come, let us worship and bow down;

let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

⁷ For he is our God,

and we are the people of his pasture
and the sheep of his hand.

O that today you would listen to his voice!

⁸ Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,
as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,

⁹ when your ancestors tested me
and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.

¹⁰ For forty years I loathed that generation
and said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray,
and they do not regard my ways."

¹¹ Therefore in my anger I swore,
"They shall not enter my rest."

Sermon "The What, the Why and the How" Rev. Katherine Schofield

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory Anthem Lord of the Dance – Shaker hymn – words by Sydney Carter, arr. John Ferguson

Verse: I danced in the morning when the world was begun, and I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun, and I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth; at Bethlehem I had my birth.

Chorus: Dance then wherever you may be; I am the Lord of the dance, said he, and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be, and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

Verse: I danced for the scribe and the Pharisee, but they wouldn't dance, and they wouldn't follow me; I danced for the fishermen, for James and John; they came with me and the dance went on.

Chorus:

Verse: I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame; the holy people said it was a shame. They whipped and stripped and they hung me high, and left me there on a cross to die.

Chorus:

Verse: I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black; it's hard to dance with the devil on your back; they buried my body and they thought I'd gone – But! I am the dance and I still go on. They cut me down and I leaped up high: I am the life that'll never, never die; I'll live in you if you'll live in me. I am the Lord of the dance, said he.

Chorus:

*** Doxology #780 NCH**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,

**Praise Him all creatures here below,
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! Amen.**

***Prayer of Dedication**

* **Hymn** Just As I Am - #207, NCH

* **Blessing**

Closing Song God Bless You and Keep You – Jay Althouse (1951)
God bless you and keep you wherever you may go; His love be a constant companion. God lead you and guide you and be at your side. God bless you and keep you forever.

** Indicates the congregation is invited to rise in body or in spirit.*

**Our Deacons are Marianne Round and Jan Marshall.
Our Greeters are Wendy and Paul Clark.**

Listening devices are available for those in need; they are at the back of the Sanctuary. Feel free to ask a Deacon should you need help.

Join us following worship for hospitality!

Welcome to all who are new to our Worship time. **To join our mailing list** please fill out a “Welcome Card” to place in the collection plate or contact office.fpchurch@gmail.com, 978-526-7661 ext. 1.

Sunday Worship Series: Living Our Faith in Worship Feb.18 – Mar. 17, 10am

Lent is a season of preparation, when we strive to strengthen our discipleship skills, grow in our spiritual lives, and renew our connection to God and one another. During these six weeks we will explore a different spiritual discipline, Worship, Study, Service, Giving and Witness and how it informs and shapes our worship. Everything we do in worship is done for a purpose, and has a deep meaning rooted in scripture and tradition. Our worship is more meaningful, and we can participate more fully when these intentions are clear.

Weekly Lenten Group Study Series, Spiritual Practices to Deepen Our Faith, Mondays, 5 - 6pm on Zoom. [Click to join](#),

Meeting ID: 836 0243 2476

Passcode: 221681

One tap mobile

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Focusing on five central spiritual practices: Worship, Study, Serve, Give, and Witness. Each week we will explore a scripture passage related to the topic and highlight practical suggestions for ways to grow in these disciplines. This study draws on resources from "The Walk" by Adam Hamilton. No preparation is required, but there is an accompanying book that is available to those who are interested.

Vespers Evening Prayer Service, Wednesdays, 6:30pm

Meditation, candlelight and prayer. Based upon the traditional evening liturgy of scripture, music, prayers, and silence, this thirty-minute candlelit service is open to all.

Weekly At-Home Devotional: "Wendell Berry and the Sabbath Poetry of Lent" Available in the Narthex and in the Weekly E-News The word "Lent" comes from the old English word for "lengthen," and refers to the lengthening days of spring. Anticipating Easter, the church prepares with forty days of prayer and reflection. We are called to set time apart, to observe a sabbath each week, when we pause from the busyness of our lives and clear space to reconnect - with ourselves, with nature, with beauty, and with God. The poet Wendell Berry calls "the idea of sabbath...as rich and demanding an idea as any I know" – and over the decades, Berry has devoted many Sundays to writing "sabbath poems" that explore the depths of this rich, demanding idea. In this Lenten devotional, biblical texts walk hand-in-hand with Berry's sabbath vision of the natural world, and together they suggest simple, accessible practices you can try yourself, with your family or friends, in your workplace, or even at church. Week by week, as the light continues to lengthen, we'll walk through the woods together toward Easter morning, keeping sabbath as we go. This devotional is produced by the SALT Project.

Faith Formation Sunday School is available every Sunday except for Communion Sunday. Know of a family that might like to join us? Invite them

to come and try out a Sunday School session. It's fun in a faith-filled fantastic way!

Holy Week

Palm Sunday, March 24th at 10am

Maundy Thursday, March 28th at 7pm

Good Friday, March 29th at Noon

Easter, March 31

Ecumenical Sunrise Service

6:26am at Singing Beach

Easter at First Parish at 10am

[Click](#) to read the most recent edition of **The Church Bell Newsletter**.

Manchester Seniors - Drop in for Coffee and Conversation Every Monday 10 AM-12:00 PM (except holidays) at the First Parish Community Hall located behind Santander Bank. Hospitality provided by The Friends of The Manchester Council on Aging. Come sit down and talk!

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>

Our FPCC **Compassion child**, Chepkirwok always needs supporters, [sign up now](#). Questions can be directed to Sue Parker, sueparker33@aol.com.

You can **contribute to the work of First Parish Church** or pay your pledge [@PayPal.Me/FPChurchManchester](#)

The Stephen Ministry at First Parish is Live

A Soup and Conversation describing this initiative in detail will be presented at a later date. A Stephen Minister's objective is not to "solve" the challenge but rather to ensure that none feel alone in their struggles. 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.

Book Group February 26, 6:30 PM, we meet at Meredith Tufts' home, 3 Woodholm Circle, Manchester. We will discuss "Beyond That, the Sea" by Laura Spence-Ash. RSVP to Meredith at (978) 500-5439

or mpt32150@gmail.com.

March 25, 7 PM at Lauren Gudonis' home, 56 Masconomo St. Manchester. We will discuss "Hang the Moon" by Jeanette Walls. RSVP to Lauren at lbgudonis@gmail.com.

A riveting new novel about an indomitable young woman in Virginia during Prohibition. Most folk thought Sallie Kincaid was a nobody who'd amount to nothing. Sallie had other plans.

Sallie Kincaid is the daughter of the biggest man in a small town, the charismatic Duke Kincaid. Born at the turn of the 20th century into a life of comfort and privilege, Sallie remembers little about her mother who died in a violent argument with the Duke. By the time she is just eight years old, the Duke has remarried and had a son, Eddie. While Sallie is her father's daughter, sharp-witted and resourceful, Eddie is his mother's son, timid and cerebral. When Sallie tries to teach young Eddie to be more like their father, her daredevil coaching leads to an accident, and Sallie is cast out. Nine years later, she returns, determined to reclaim her place in the family. That's a lot more complicated than Sallie expected, and she enters a world of conflict and lawlessness. Sallie confronts the secrets and scandals that hide in the shadows of the Big House, navigates the factions in the family and town, and finally comes into her own as a bold, sometimes reckless bootlegger.

You will fall in love with Sallie Kincaid, a feisty and fearless, terrified and damaged young woman who refuses to be corralled. goodreads

April 29, 6:30 PM, we will discuss the book of Genesis at Liz Loomis' home, 34 Bennett St. Manchester. RSVP to Liz at loomisliz@hotmail.com.

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