



**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 25, 2024, 10 AM**

**Ringling of the Bell and Lighting of the Candles**

**Prelude** Passion Chorale - Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612), arr. J. S. Bach

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

**\*Call to Worship**

One: As darkness gives way to light  
And winter sleep to fresh beginnings,

**Many: We come today to be reminded of God's love for us.**

One: Like the green shoots of renewed life,  
Stirring beneath the soil,

**Many: We welcome an awakening of God's word in our lives.**

One: In this time of reflection and repentance,

**Many: We affirm our identity, we claim our security,  
as children of God.**

**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** Sing Them Over Again to Me (Wonderful Words of Life) – #319,  
NCH

*Sunday school students leave for the classrooms after the hymn.*

**\* Prayer of Invocation**

**Passing of the Peace**

**Anthem** The Crown of Roses - P. I. Tchaikovsky (1840-1893), words by A. N. Pleshcheev

When Jesus Christ was yet a child He had a garden small and wild,  
wherein He cherished roses fair and wove them into garlands there. Now  
once, as summertime drew nigh, there came a troop of children by, and  
seeing roses on the tree, with shouts they plucked them merrily. 'Do you  
bind roses in your hair?' they cried, in scorn, to Jesus there. The boy said  
humbly: 'Take, I pray, all but the naked thorns away.'

Then of the thorns they made a crown, and with rough fingers pressed it down, 'till on His forehead fair and young, red drops of blood like roses sprung.

## **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** Po' Pilgrim – spiritual, arr. Roland Hayes (1887-1977)

Rebecca Shrimpton, solo

I am a po' pilgrim of sorrow, I'm in this wide worl' alone. No hope in this worl' for tomorrow, I'm strivin' for heav'n my home. Sometimes I'm both tossed and driven, sometimes I know not where to roam. I've heard of a city called heav'n, I've started to make it my home. My mother, she's reached de pure glory, my father still walks in sin. My sisters and brothers won't own me, because I am tryin' to get in. Sometimes I'm both tossed and driven, sometimes I know not where to roam. I've heard of a city called heav'n, I've started to make it my home.

#### **Scripture Reading Luke 4:14-21 & Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10 Sue Parker**

<sup>14</sup> Then Jesus, in the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding region. <sup>15</sup> He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

<sup>16</sup> When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, <sup>17</sup> and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

<sup>18</sup> "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

because he has anointed me

to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives

and recovery of sight to the blind,

to set free those who are oppressed,

<sup>19</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

<sup>20</sup> And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. <sup>21</sup> Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

<sup>1</sup> all the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had given to Israel. <sup>2</sup> Accordingly, Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. <sup>3</sup> He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand, and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law.

<sup>5</sup> And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people, and when he opened it, all the people stood up. <sup>6</sup> Then Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, “Amen, Amen,” lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

<sup>8</sup> So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

<sup>9</sup> And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep.” For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. <sup>10</sup> Then he said to them, “Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our LORD, and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

## **Sermon “To Study the Word” Rev. Katherine Schofield**

### **Invitation to the Offering**

**Offertory Anthem** Dear Lord and Father of Mankind – Hubert Parry (1848-1918)

Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways!  
Re-clothe us in our rightful mind, in purer lives thy service find,  
in deeper reverence, praise;  
O Sabbath rest by Galilee!  
O calm of hills above, where Jesus knelt to share  
with thee the silence of eternity interpreted by love!

**\* 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 I Love to Tell the Story - #522, 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 Susan Parker and Marianne Round.**

**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. Meeting ID: 836 0243 2476 Passcode:

221681

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83602432476?pwd=YkorMzNPbVQ0ZzU2NVVhc25vVS9UUT09>

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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!

**Kindness Rocks Project** Come one! Come all! Join the Youth Fellowship Kindness Movement! No, you don't have to make an oath or pay a fee, just come paint a rock or two and leave them in the community for someone

else to find! Imagine a person who might be having a tough day, turn their frown upside down, because you left a gem for them to find! The Kindness Rocks Project is a movement of grace and joy. From their official web page," Our goal is simple, connect many, inspire & empower others to join us in creating a kinder world!" You can find out more at [The Kindness Rocks Project®](#). Join us for rocks, fun and inspiration, as well as a couple snack options, on March 3, 2024. YF members are invited to come at 6:00 pm for a brief dinner meeting and all inspired artists of any age can join us at 6:30-7:30 for rock painting. Chapel Hall. Let's Rock!

### **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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:loomisliz@hotmail.com).

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