



Dear First Parish Church,

It's been an amazing first month with you all. You have been so warm and welcoming. I really appreciate how many of you have filled out the "[Connecting with Rev. Katherine Survey](#)" (If you haven't, no worries. I look forward to getting to know you the old fashioned way). In January I met one-on-one with many church members. Each week I've also been blessed to sit with one or two of our long-time members who are no longer able to come into church. I've attended meetings with most of our committees and have reached out to a number of community organizations. Building these relationships - within the congregation and beyond the church walls - will remain a cornerstone of my work as your minister. We are called to live our faith in community; we are better together!

In February we will begin the church season of Lent. 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. These six weeks (2/14-3/30) will provide us an opportunity to Dive Deep into our faith. There will be many opportunities to do so, including:

Weekly Vespers Services: Wednesdays, 6:30pm in the Sanctuary

Weekly Lenten Group Study Series on Five Spiritual Disciplines That Draw Us Closer to God: Mondays, 5-6pm on zoom

Weekly At-Home Devotional: "Wendell Berry and the Sabbath Poetry of Lent"

During Sunday worship in the season of Lent we will also explore the Spiritual Disciplines of Worship, Study, Service, Giving and Witness as they are enacted in our worship service. 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. You will notice some changes to the Order of Worship as well in the month of February. I welcome your feedback as we try something new!

continued

The Season of Lent will begin with a traditional **Ash Wednesday service, in the Sanctuary on Wednesday, February 14th from 6:30p-7p.**

*** Something you probably didn't know about Rev. Katherine ***

You've been so great sharing your stories with me. And while you've got my resume in hand, and are getting to know me through worship and church life, there are probably other things you'd like to know. So - to entice you to read your newsletter all the way through I'll be sliding a tasty tidbit about myself into the end of my newsletter article for the next few months. If you want to be in the know you'll have to read all the way to the end.

For February... I grew up in Dennis, MA (on the other Cape) and my family has deep roots in Dennis on both sides (like 7-8 generations deep). My parents still live in Dennis and are very active in town (Dennis Union Church, Historical Society, Library, local theater, arts, golf, etc). They retired in 2020 after decades working at our family business, Eldred's Auctions. They'll be back for a visit sometime soon and are glad to be part of the extended First Parish family.

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.

The Open Door the need is great so please donate what you can. Pantry items welcome. Coffee & tea, granola bars, oatmeal, pancake & waffle mix, maple syrup, 100% fruit juice. They are also grateful for bake mixes including muffin mixes

The Grace Center welcomes gift cards from local grocery markets to help the center provide cream, butter and other perishables.



It's not too late to pledge for 2024!

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.

First Parish Church Annual Fund Drive 2024

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

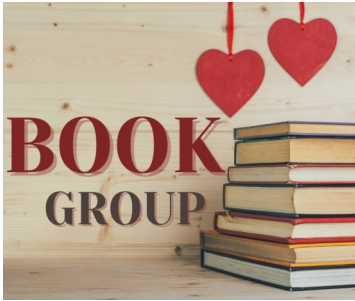
Total Pledge for 2024 _____

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



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.

February 26, 6:30 PM, at Meredith Tufts' home, 3 Woodholm Circle, Manchester. The book is *Beyond That, the Sea* by Laura Spence-Ash. RSVP, for planning purposes only, to Meredith at (978) 500-5439 or mpt32150@gmail.com.

A sweeping, tenderhearted love story, *Beyond That, the Sea* by Laura Spence-Ash tells the story of two families living through World War II on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean, and the shy, irresistible young woman who will call them both her own. As German bombs fall over London in 1940, working-class parents Millie and Reginald Thompson make an impossible choice: they decide to send their eleven-year-old daughter, Beatrix, to America. There, she'll live with another family for the duration of the war, where they hope she'll stay safe. Scared and angry, feeling lonely and displaced, Bea arrives in Boston to meet the Gregorys. Mr. and Mrs. G, and their sons William and Gerald, fold Bea seamlessly into their world. She becomes part of this lively family, learning their ways and their stories, adjusting to their affluent lifestyle. Bea grows close to both boys, one older and one younger, and fills in the gap between them. Before long, before she even realizes it, life with the Gregorys feels more natural to her than the quiet, spare life with her own parents back in England. As Bea comes into herself and relaxes into her new life—summers on the coast in Maine, new friends clamoring to hear about life across the sea—the girl she had been begins to fade away, until, abruptly, she is called home to London when the war ends. Desperate as she is not to leave this life behind, Bea dutifully retraces her trip across the Atlantic back to her new, old world. As she returns to post-war London, the memory of her American family stays with her, never fully letting her go, and always pulling on her heart as she tries to move on and pursue love and a life of her own. As we follow Bea over time, navigating between her two worlds, *Beyond That, the Sea* emerges as a beautifully written, absorbing novel, full of grace and heartache, forgiveness and understanding, loss and love. goodreads

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

January Book Group



February Birthdays

02/01	WEAVER, PATRICK	12 ALLEN AVE MANCHESTER	
02/02	POWERS, JENNIFER	8 STORY ROAD MAGNOLIA MA 01930	danajenpowers@gmail.com
02/14	GRIFFITHS, LYNDA	16B MORSE COURT MANCHESTER	lynda.griffiths@verizon.net
02/17	LONDON, LINDY	P.O. BOX. 23 MANCHESTER	lindylondon12@aol.com
02/23	BENINCASA, BONNIE	25 HICKORY HILL RD MANCHESTER	bonnie.benincasa@gmail.com
02/24	HESLOP, ANN	34 NORWOOD AVE MANCHESTER	ann@heslopfamily.com
02/28	WILKINSON, BENJAMIN	47 FOREST ST MANCHESTER	

Seaside Parish Knitters

The Seaside Parish Knitters meet each 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at the Chapel, from 1-3 pm, (Feb. 1 & 15). 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.

The knitters recently donated hats and mittens to the Memorial School and were featured on the front page of the Gloucester Daily Times and on the MERSD social media -

Local Group Seaside Parish Knitters Donates Hats and Mittens to Manchester Memorial Elementary School Students

Superintendent Pam Beaudoin and Principal John Willis would like to share that a local group, Seaside Parish Knitters, has donated hand-made hats and mittens to be used by Manchester Memorial Elementary School students.

The Seaside Parish Knitters are a group of townsfolk who meet weekly at the town library to knit hats and mittens for local children and families. They donate their hand-made winter gear to groups such as Beverly Bootstraps and local elementary schools. They also create blankets, shawls, helmet liners, neck gaiters, and scarves for military troops.

MMES was able to connect with the group thanks to Nurse Joanne Seaman, who reached out to former MMES educator and member of Seaside Parish Knitters, Cindy MacDougall. Seaside Parish Knitters donated a basket full of warm, hand-made hats and mittens to students on January 8, 2024.

“I am forever grateful for this wonderful group of ladies,” said Seaman.

“In light of the recent drop in temperatures and winter weather, the new winter items could not have come at a better time. Taking care of our students, whatever they may need, has been a big part of Mrs. Seaman’s career at MMES. She was delighted to be able to pass the hats and mittens on to our students and was even happier to know that they were made with love by members of our own community,” said Principal Willis. “It is so great to see retired staff members, such as Mrs. MacDougall, still taking care of our students and making sure they are warm.”

The Seaside Parish Knitters are looking for knitting needles and yarn that residents plan to throw away. The group uses 100 percent wool and synthetic fibers for yarn, and straight and round knitting needles of all sizes. Anyone who would like to donate materials to the Seaside Parish Knitters can contact Penny Lapham at 978-526-7128 or laphenpen@live.com.

Seaside Parish Knitters



Nurse Joanne Seaman with the hand-made hats and mittens that were donated to MMES students by local group Seaside Parish Knitters. (Photo Courtesy Manchester Essex Regional School District)



The Seaside Parish Knitters meets weekly to craft hats and mittens to donate to local children. (Photo Courtesy Manchester Essex Regional School District)

Vitality

Burgers and Bingo on New Year's Eve

It was a spirited, laughter-filled evening of merriment and fun!

More than 70 people participated. We had 4.5 tables of seniors, 1.5 tables of Parkers and 1.5 tables of tourists, who saw our street sign and attended with a rollicking group. We had visitors from Japan, South Carolina, Cambridge and Medford-- 3 families with teenagers who brought joy and great energy.

It was a joyful, happy, silly night of big outreach and big happiness for all who attended and pitched in.

Read the thank you notes below for a glimpse of the fun -- and plan on attending next year!

From the Tourists at the table near the front:

Hello. We (13 of us) had the opportunity to participate in the Bingo and Burgers at First Parish Church on December 31. We were visiting Manchester by the Sea to ring in the new year. We had such a wonderful time, and felt welcomed. The merriment and laughter was the perfect way to end 2023 and begin 2024. Please let the two women running the event (I cannot recall their names).

The few members of our group who did not come missed a wonderful time. Our group met participating in AmeriCorps service 27 years ago and chose a new location yearly. Next time we are back in Manchester by the Sea we will be sure to stop by.

Have a happy and healthy 2024.

Best regards, Katherine

From Lynda Griffiths:

This was only the second "Burgers and Bingo" you and others presented, but it's now so successful that you all are attracting out-of-towners. Soon we'll have to rent the Boston Garden!!! Everyone was in such a happy, festive mood -- highly successful! Thank you to all -- and I know others helped, so please forward this complimentary note to those who

deserve a pat on the back!

Lynda

P.S. The gifts were great, too!

From Paul Lengeiza:

Friends,

Thank you so much for the wonderful "Burgers and Bingo"!

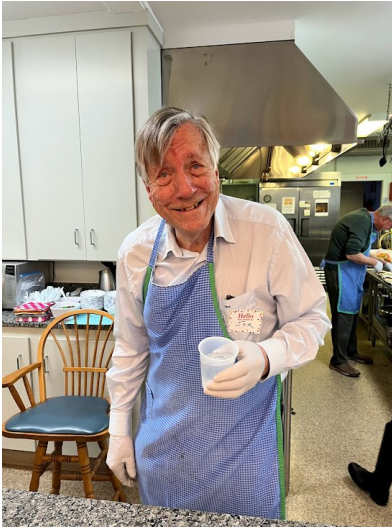
If you were hoping for a packed hall where everyone of all ages had a ton of fun, your hearts must be full with gratitude. The burgers were good.....really good. The sundaes were a special treat. Great food for all ages.

Talk about a well-organized, humor-filled bingo fest! Yikes.

*Personally, it was extra special to connect with an old friend whose daughter played high school basketball together. Our trip down memory lane was special.
Peace, Paul*

From Sue Parker:
We had a blast at Burgers and BINGO!





Happy New Year from Burgers & Bingo!

Deacons

Hark! The herald angels sing, the Deacons did their thing....in December.

The Deacons set out to have a joyous Advent Season and to make it memorable for the congregation; our interaction with the congregation and our works fulfilled that. To get things going, Advent cards were sent out to each parishioner, trumpeting the season and wishing all peace and wellness, signed by a Deacon.

As December progressed, Deacons provided support for the town Messiah Sing (110 in attendance), being welcoming hosts, helping visitors get comfortable and explaining a wee bit about the Congregational Church and its role in the Town Square. This was on the heels of the tree lighting ceremony and the Town Sing. All efforts were taken to make the Church as welcoming as possible.

Another December and Advent Season saw the Deacons arrange poinsettias for the congregation. Like busy elves, Deacons worked with Nancy Klebart to announce available poinsettias, tracked orders, picked up poinsettias and arranged them with a certain elegance (thanks to Liz Loomis) around the altar for Christmas and helped distribute some to welcoming individuals. The poinsettias, with the lit Christmas tree and greens throughout the church, made things very festive in the church.

While we were preparing for Rev. Katherine's January arrival, Deacon's continued their close contact with the visiting minister to coordinate Sunday services. We have fond memories of Rev. Rick Spalding and the spiritual leadership he provided.

Christmas Eve services capped a cheerful, mirthful and merry December. Having window candles while the lights were turned down during "Silent Night" created a mystical and spiritual state of being. The Christmas pageant at the 5:00 PM service validated the story of Jesus' birth. Throughout the services- and in fact a generous feature of December- Herman and the choir led us through many carols. Voices rang and rose through the church.



Faith Formation News Jeanne Westcott

Announcements

The Youth Fellowship program will host an intergenerational Valentines Creation Workshop in Chapel Hall on Sunday evening, Feb 4, from 6:30-7:30. come and create one or more works of Valentine beauty to benefit the COA. Make one for your sweetheart as well. Snacks, and all materials will be available so come if your medium is crayons or come if your textile guru! All are welcome.

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!

Article

What's the buzz with intergenerational?

(excerpts from Building Faith/ Stop, Collaborate and Listen: Practical Steps to Increasing Intentional Intergenerationality)

When I was a girl, church meant self-control, a class with a bunch of kids from the local schools and, if I behaved, a donut afterward. To be completely honest, it was the donut that offered the greatest incentive to participate. Not because it was delicious, but because it meant sitting in a tiny coffee shop with adults who engaged me in conversation about what church class was like that day. They were not talking to me; they were talking with me. I felt seen, heard, and important. Rather good return for the then five cent cost of the donut!

From the kid perspective, intergenerational faith building means being wholly included. From the adult perspective it means engaging and learning from the ages of belief and trust and genuine excitement.

“ We are most fully the people of God when we are gathered for worship, service, learning, and fellowship together with all ages. We learn, worship, serve, and build community best when we honor the perspectives and gifts of all ages. But being intergenerational does not always just happen. Intentionality is the key.”

We often have these moments described above when family is extended and joy-filled, like holidays and family reunions, but how often do we recognize these moments as acts of worship? If in these situations, we breathe out a thankfulness to God for our blessings do

we realize it is the mix of ages and experiences that have culminated in that thankfulness? If we can have this in our homes, we can have it in our worship spaces. But as with any other gathering, there must be planning and forethought, with welcome, conflict resolution and soul food designed for implementation.

There are ways to begin. The following is from the above article and is food for our thought as the church. In this space and in this time, how do we intentionally embrace intergenerational faith experiences?

“Stop: Stop before adding more programs. Resist the urge to try that next “great new program” and first consider what is *already* happening that can be more intergenerational. Also understand that being intergenerational is about more than programs and events; it is a way of being. A goal of our intergenerational ministry team was to focus on learning, visioning, and culture first, and not get sidetracked by programs. Lay the foundation first and then programs will naturally evolve out of your goals.

Collaborate: It is time to get out of our age-segregated ministry silos! What energy would come from ministry teams working together? In my church context, a joint calendar planning meeting brings together representatives from a variety of church committees to look intentionally at plans for the church year. During this time, we find ways to collaborate and work together, creating better quality ministry. Instead of quantity, we are looking for ways we can pare down our events/programs and work together as committees in order to enable a better quality of ministry, less burned-out volunteers, and less overwhelmed families.

Listen: Intergenerational ministry is already happening in your congregation, whether you intend for it to. Listen for the stories of how your congregation is already intergenerational and then share those stories far and wide to help your congregation see with a lens of intergenerationality and the possibilities already among them. Perhaps you have a couple who encourages a college student in your congregation by checking in and inviting them consistently for dinner. This can happen organically without a full-fledged Adopt-a-Student program. In particular, smaller churches are specifically set up for success in intergenerational ministry as it often happens organically in ways that larger churches spend countless hours and energy trying to emulate. But whatever the size of your congregation, celebrate and share those stories of where intergenerational culture and practices already exist as a way to help others see the possibilities.”

What are your thoughts? Are we ready to think in other ways about Faith Formation? With great love for the smallest, the oldest, the newbies and the wise ones, your Director of Youth and Childrens Ministries, Jeanne.

WARRANT FOR ANNUAL MEETING
First Parish Church, Congregational
United Church of Christ
Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts
December 31, 2023

TO: Active Members of the First Parish Church, Congregational, United Church of Christ, Manchester-By-The-Sea, Massachusetts.

You are hereby notified to meet in the Church or Zoom Conferencing immediately following Worship Service on Sunday, February 4, 2024 for the following purposes:

To wit:

ARTICLE I: To accept the report of the first combined annual and financial meeting, held on February 12, 2023

ARTICLE II: To accept the report of the Special Meeting held on September 17, 2023.

ARTICLE III: To hear the recommendations of the Nominating Committee and to elect officers, board and committee members of the church.

ARTICLE IV: To see what action the Church will take in regard to the budget proposal for 2024 as submitted by the Church Council.

ARTICLE V: To hear and act upon the reports of officers, boards, committees, and organizations connected with the church.

ARTICLE VI: To hear and act upon the recommendation of the Church Council that the regular Sunday Service from July 7 to September 1 inclusive, shall start at 9:00 a.m.

ARTICLE VII: To hear and act upon any other business, financial or otherwise, that may come before the meeting.

Respectfully submitted;
George A Nickless, Clerk

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-12:00 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/

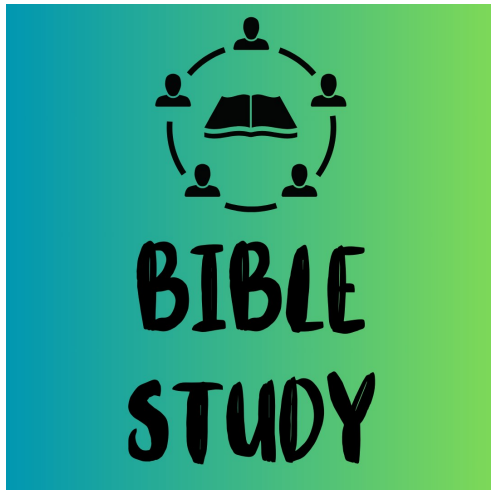
[Website](#) www.firstparishchurch.org/

[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



Each Thursday we look at the Sunday Scripture via Zoom. Join us from any location on your computer, tablet, smart phone or dial in on your home phone.

Here's the schedule:

3:30p-3:45p Joys and Concerns

3:45p - Devotional and brief Check-in

3:50p - Bible Study begins