



**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
March 3, 2024, 10 AM**

Ringling of the Bell and Lighting of the Candles

Prelude Whispering Hope – Septimus Winner (1827-1902), arr. Jennifer Cook

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

***Call to Worship**

One: Give thanks to God, for God is good;

Many: God's love endures forever.

One: Let all who know God tell of their story,

**Many: From east and west, from north and south,
we will tell our story.**

One: When we cried to God in our trouble,
God saved us from our distress;

Many: God sent out the Word and healed us.

One: Let us give thanks for God's unfailing love,

Many: And tell of God's deeds with songs of joy.

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** Beneath the Cross of Jesus - #190, NCH

Sunday school students stay in worship today.

***Prayer of Confession**

**All: O God of Comfort and God of Challenge,
we come to you this morning the way the Israelites did,
full of complaints and dissatisfaction.**

Nothing is enough;

**we do not recognize your blessing
at work in our day to day lives.**

**Forgive us when we become so self-centered
that we moan and groan about the small stuff.**

**Help us look to you, and acknowledge our brokenness
And your amazing, sustaining grace. Amen.**

***Words of Assurance**

Passing of the Peace

Anthem Ride the Chariot – spiritual, arr. W. H. Smith

Rebecca Shrimpton, solo

Ride the chariot in the morning, Lord, I'm getting ready for the judgement day, my Lord. Are you ready my brother? (Oh, yes) Are you ready for the journey? (Oh, yes) Do you want to see your Jesus? (Oh, yes) I'm waitin' for the chariot 'cause I'm ready to go. Are you ready my sister? (Oh, yes) Are you ready for the journey? (O, yes) Do you want to see your Jesus? (Oh, yes) I'm waitin' for the chariot 'cause I'm ready to go. I never can forget that day, ride! Ride in the chariot to see my Lord. When all my sins were taken away, ride! My feet were snatched from the miry clay, ride! I'll served my Lord 'till judgement day, ride! Ride, oh, Lord. Ride the chariot in the morning, Lord. I'm getting ready for the judgement day, my Lord, ride the chariot in the morning, Lord. I'm gonna ride in the chariot to see my Lord.

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 Wayfaring Stranger – trad., arr. Eva Cassidy

Rebecca Shrimpton, solo

I am a poor wayfaring stranger while journeying through this world of woe. Yet there's no sickness, toil nor danger in that bright land, mmm, to which I go. I'm going there to see my father, I'm going there no more to roam. I'm only go, going over Jordan, I'm only going over home. I know dark clouds will gather o'er me, know my way, my way is rough and steep. Yet beautiful fields lie just before me, in God's redeemed their vigils keep. I'm going back to see my father, I'm going back, no more to roam. I'm only go, go, going over Jordan, I'm only going over home. I'm going back, oh, to see my mother. I'm going back, no more to roam. I'm only go, going over Jordan, I'm only go, going over home. I want to wear that crown of glory when I get home to that good land. Well, I want to shout salvation story in concert with, oh, the blood-washed band. I'm going there to see my saviour,

I'm going there no more to roam. I'm only go, going over Jordan, I'm only going over home. Well, I'm only going over home.

Scripture Reading

First Lesson Numbers 21:4-9

⁴ From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom, but the people became discouraged on the way. ⁵ The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." ⁶ Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷ The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸ And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." ⁹ So Moses made a serpent of bronze and put it upon a pole, and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

Second Lesson John 3:14-21

¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Those who believe in him are not condemned, but those who do not believe are condemned already because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹ But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

Sermon "Look Up! Look Up!" Rev. Katherine Schofield

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory Anthem In My Father's House – Pepper Choplin (1957)

The disciples drew closer, to hear the words of promise of the Lord: if you hear the truth I say and follow in My way, the great will be your heavens' reward, and He said: In my Father's house there are many mansions, in my Father's house there is room; and all who believe shall come to live with Me; for in my Father's house I'll prepare a place for you. Let not your hearts be troubled: believe in God, believe now in Me; for if you will believe in Heaven you will see the glory of the great 'I am', and He said: In my Father's house there are many mansions, in my Father's house there is room; and all who believe shall come to live with Me; for in my Father's house I'll prepare a place for you. I will always be with you. Through every step you'll never walk alone. And when your earthly days are over I will come again to welcome you home. I tell you: In my Father's house there are many mansions, in my Father's house there is room; and all who believe shall come to live with Me; for in my Father's house I'll prepare a place for you. In my Father's house there is room.

*** 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.**

The Sacrament of Communion

Invitation to the Table

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts!

All: We lift them up to God!

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

The Breaking, Pouring, and Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Prayer of Thanksgiving (in unison)

Thank you for giving yourself to us

In so many different ways.

May we too distribute you to all

In new ways, old ways, every way, any way,

So that the hungry will be fed,

The dying will have life,

The lonely will be accompanied,

**The oppressed will have justice,
And all of us together
Will rejoice in your love.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

* **Hymn** As We Gather at Your Table - #332, 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 Deacon is Liz Loomis.

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>

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.

NOTE FROM THE MODERATOR

At its most recent meeting, Church Council and Rev. Katherine appointed Adrian Argento, Sandy Bodmer-Turner and Paul Knox to the Pastor Parish Relations Committee (the "PPRC").

The PPRC exists to promote a healthy, faithful, shared ministry between pastor and congregants. To that end, the committee will meet regularly with Rev. Katherine and is available as a confidential resource to the congregation offering a discrete sounding board for concerns. The PPRC will provide input to the Executive Committee as part of their annual Pastor evaluation.

We are excited to be moving together into the future that God has called us, and we are committed to honoring that call by encouraging open, spiritually mature communication.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like further details.

Thank you!
Bethany

PPRC's contact information:

Adrian Argento adrian.argento@gmail.com

Sandy Bodmer-Turner sandyjbt37@comcast.net

Paul Knox paulknox1@comcast.net

Bethany M. Woods, Moderator

781-308-2791

bethany@bmwoodsllc.com

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.

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

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 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.

You are invited to purchase a traditional Easter Lily, \$15, to decorate our sanctuary for the Easter morning Worship Celebration.

The Diaconate also offers the option of making a donation to *The*

Diaconate Fund to assist people in our worship community, who are in need.

Following the Easter 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 Easter bulletin.

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

In Memory of

In Celebration of

In Honor of

Name(s) of Remembered

Name(s) of Donor

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

_____ Please give my plant(s)

_____ A donation to the Diaconate Fund

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

Please order by Friday March 22