



First Parish Church
Congregational, Manchester-by-the-Sea • MA

May 2024

The Church Bell Newsletter

Dear First Parish Church,

As we embrace the beauty of spring and the renewal it brings to our lives, we are reminded of the importance of community and connection. Following an exciting Membership Sunday at the end of April we are moving into a month of celebration. It's the season of school plays and playoffs, prom and graduations, weddings and family gatherings. And in church we will celebrate Pentecost (the birthday of the Church) as well. The joyfulness of all these celebrations fills us to the brim - and at times fills our schedules with chaos. Perhaps it makes sense then that Mother's Day comes in May, because this is the month when those who care for children are stretched to the limit!

But, in fact, Mother's Day was founded as a movement for Peace. Julia Ward Howe, 5 years after the Civil War, decided she had had enough of war – she could not stand to see another son, or father, or brother go out to battle to be hurt, or to hurt others. So she called for a holiday when all Mothers from all over the world could come together to settle the disagreements of countries and establish World Peace once and for all. That meeting never really happened, but 45 years later another woman, Anna Jarvis, was able to convince President Woodrow Wilson to designate the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day. This day was not just for honoring mothers, but also to remind all of us that everyone is someone's child. And that every life is precious.

Our hearts break for the people of Israel, still crying out for hostages, traumatized and living in fear. Our hearts break for the people of Gaza, under constant bombardment and suffering from hunger, lack of shelter and medical care. We shake our heads at the way anti-semitism and anti-islam bias have both been on the rise in our own country and around the world. And some of us - myself included - are so despairing that to even shout into the wind of this devastating situation feels hopeless. But as followers of Jesus we

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Pastor continued

have two things to lean on: the law of love that calls us to recognize the blessed human dignity of every person, and the gift of prayer. Let us pray this Mother's Day for the people of Israel and Gaza, Ukraine and Yemen, and everywhere in this world living in the midst of war. And as Memorial Day approaches, let us remember the sacrifices of so many who have fought for freedom and justice for all people. Holy God, touch the Earth with the kind of peace that only you can bring - you who can make a way out of no-way.

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

During my seminary years in Chicago I was part of a novel field education program where I served as an intern at both a church and a non-profit organization. The church I served was Primera Iglesia Congregacional de Chicago (a bilingual congregation, and no, I don't speak Spanish) and the organization I worked for was the Interfaith Youth Core. IFYC was founded by Eboo Patel and works with young people, particularly on college campuses, to further interfaith cooperation, dialog and service. Both settings had a profound impact on me and helped me to experience the beauty that emerges when we build relationships across lines of difference.

Faith Formation Opportunities for All Ages

Through study and prayer and service, we aspire to love God "with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength." From the youngest toddlers, to the wisest Elders, we each are called to grow in our faith and understanding.



Sunday School - During Worship (except for Communion Sundays)

Our kids engage in hands-on, age-appropriate learning opportunities that integrate storytelling, the arts and spiritual development in a safe and family-friendly environment.

Youth Group - Gathers monthly for service projects, arts and crafts, and social events.

Weekly Lectionary Bible Study – Will now meet on Tuesdays, 3:30-4:45p via Zoom. We study scripture together, utilizing resources from a variety of traditions, and seeking meaning for our daily lives.

Stephen Ministers

First Parish Stephen Ministers are highly trained lay volunteers who stand ready to provide confidential, one on one presence and counsel for anyone facing a life challenge such as divorce, job loss, major illness, or bereavement, under the direction of our Minister. This service also provides referrals to local agencies which can provide tangible assistance for needs such as housing, energy, or medical care. This program is part of the national inter-denominational Christian movement described here: stephenministries.org. If you or anyone you know might benefit from this service, please contact Rev. Katherine or Stephen Leaders Linda Crosby (978-314-1526) and Steve Carhart (978-407-8454).

Seaside Parish Knitters

The Seaside Parish Knitters meet each 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at the Chapel, from 1-3 pm, (May 2 & 16). 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.



I am very grateful to all who sent wishes via cards and emails for Administrative Assistant Day. It was so much fun to receive every one of them!



Nancy, FPC Office



May 27, 6:30 PM, we will discuss “The Women” by Kristen Hannah at Nancy Peterson's home, 111 Chebacco Rd. South Hamilton. RSVP to Nancy at nancypete1@gmail.com

June 24, 6:30 PM, we will discuss “Mercury Pictures Presents” by Anthony Marra at Carol Spence's home, 4 Overledge Rd. RSVP to Carol at cdspence@gmail.com

July is a free month. Have fun reading whatever you like.

August 26, 6:30 PM, We will discuss “A True Account” by Katherine Howe at Mary Ellen's home, 23 Harold St. Manchester. RSVP to Mary Ellen at cook.maryellen7@gmail.com.

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

Hands on Community Service - 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.

Mary Martin Fund

Mary Martin Fund: It's been a long time since we reported on this fund, but it's been held up trying to establish its legality with the Putnam Fund. We were informed we needed a 501c3 designation, and filed with the Newburyport probate court which closed down during the coronavirus pandemic. We are at a point where we still need another form so that the funds can be accessed and transferred to the Cape Ann Savings trust department. We're hoping that the process is now in its final steps so that the funds will soon be available for our use.

What is the Mary Martin fund?

The Mary Martin Fund was established under the will of Mary C. Martin, dated January 4, 1875.

Persons designated in such will to hold and manage said trust fund are:

- Three Senior Selectmen of Manchester;

- Three members of the Orthodox Congregational Society (now First Parish Church, Congregational) of Manchester:

- Two members of the Baptist Society.

In synopsis, the fund was established for the benefit of 'indigent persons' of good moral character of Manchester. People who are not just 'paupers', but those that have fallen on bad times from misfortune in business affairs or from loss of health or friends or property who may be embarrassed by their circumstances and who are unwilling to speak of their circumstances and whose case if known would solicit sympathy. Although not stated specifically, the fund has been used for mostly but not exclusively for women of the town. We do not know how much money is in the fund at present, our last knowledge was in 1988 when there was about \$27,999 available.

Who knows how much at this point? We'll find out soon.

Submitted by George Nickless

Vitality Membership Sunday



Please welcome our new members

Andrea Kunst and Eric Grant were married at First Parish Church in June of last year. They reunited 4 years ago, after 55 years apart, when Eric returned from Northern Canada and world travels. Eric paints, Andrea works at the only Boston Public School with a "green" mission, and they share their lives with dear friends old and new, as well as a Mastiff, a Norwegian Forest Cat, and an Angora Bunny.

Rebecca Shrimpton has been associated with First Parish Church since 2006 as a staff Soloist/Soprano Section Leader for the choir. She is a professional musician and full-time Assoc. Professor of Voice at Berklee College of Music. She performs regularly with several jazz groups, including the 21-piece Jazz Composers Alliance Orchestra, and will be recording her 16th album in a few weeks--a special duo project with pianist/composer Herman Weiss, First Parish's Music Director (you can read more at rebeccashrimpton.com). Rebecca's family includes husband, Jeff, grown sons, Sam and Ben, and mother, Diane Houghton. This church has become a second home for Rebecca and she is so happy to become an official member at last!

Diane Houghton is a retired professional actor and singer, having spent 60+ years on stages in New York, Chicago, and across the country. In 2014, Diane and her husband, Bill (deceased in 2019), moved back to her native New England to live near their daughter, Rebecca, and she has been part of the First Parish choir ever since. Diane is still a faithful member of Central Presbyterian Church in Louisville, KY, and will be joining First Parish as an Associate Member.

Adilia James is a Professor of Sociology at Endicott College and has lived on the North Shore since 2017. She and Katherine have two kids - Rosie and Eliot - who keep her on her toes. Adilia is happy to have found a new church home at First Parish Church.

Heather Reid has been living and working just outside Washington DC for the past four years and is glad to be returning to the North Shore, both to rejoin First Parish Church, where she had been an active member for twenty five years, and to be working as a Fine Arts Administrator overseeing a collection of Japanese art. In her earlier career she had roles as a museum curator, landscape painter and art teacher. She enjoys walking the beautiful beaches and trails on the North Shore, oil painting, reading and supporting arts organizations.

Deacons

Under Reverend Katherine's guidance we took a deep dive into the Lenten season through services and discussions focused on learning, prayer and exploration.

We began the observance of the Holy Season of Lent when we gathered at Our Ash Wednesday service. The theme of "Living Our Faith in Worship" was carried throughout our Sunday Worship Services. And the Wednesday Vesper Candlelight Services offered the blessing of prayerful meditation. The weekly Lenten Group Study Series focused on spiritual practices to deepen our faith.

Holy Week Services of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday led us to the Majesty of Easter, celebrated at the Ecumenical Sunrise Service at Singing Beach and the First Parish Easter Sunday Service!

"ALLELUIA HE IS RISEN"

May Birthdays

05/01	GUDONIS, LAUREN	56 MASCONOMO ST MANCHESTER	lbgononis@gmail.com
05/02	MOIR-SMITH, ALLISON	42 FOREST ST MANCHESTER	allison.moir.smith@gmail.com
05/08	BACHMAN, FRAN	13A THE PLAINS MANCHESTER	
05/08	BUDDENHAGEN, JEN	105 HESPERUS AVE MAGNOLIA	
05/08	WOODS, BETHANY	26 LINCOLN ST MANCHESTER	bethany@bmwoodslc.com
05/12	WARNOCK, LYNANNE	5 RUNNING RIDGE ROAD MANCHESTER	lswarnock@aol.com
05/13	TOSI, SANTANA	3 BUTLER AVE MANCHESTER	
05/13	JONES, HAROLD	389 SUMMER ST MANCHESTER	hljones@gmail.com
05/21	CURRY, SALLY	609 CANTERBURY DR #239 EXETER NH 03833	smcurry@gmail.com
05/21	DEOREO, SARA	6 BROOK ST MANCHESTER	sara@deoreo.com
05/21	GRAYDEN, WILLIAM	1340 S. OCEAN BLVD. POMPANO BEACH FL 33062	
05/25	POWERS, ABIGAIL	8 STORY ROAD MAGNOLIA MA 01930	
05/26	CLARK, WENDY	18A KENNEDY RD GLOUCESTER	hillerclark@gmail.com
05/26	BUDDENHAGEN, ER-ICH	104 HESPERUS AVE MAGNOLIA	
05/26	PRICE JR, ROBERT	38 EVERETT ST BEVERLY FARMS MA 01915	cprice@westoakllc.com
05/26	SCHOFIELD, ELIOT	10 BRIMBAL HILLS DRIVE BEVERLY MA 01915	adilia.james@gmail.com
05/31	LUMSDEN, DAVID	18 WOODCREST ROAD MANCHESTER	dklumsd@gmail.com

Faith Formation News Jeanne Westcott

During Lent, the Sunday School class worked on two projects which supported the lessons, Jesus, The Healer. The lessons centered around who Jesus healed, why He did so and what that means to us as His Followers. The stories we chose followed Jesus travels, starting in Cana, the place of the first miracle.

The class then created a 3-D map which culminates with Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem on the back of a baby donkey.

Our second project was based on the respect and love Jesus showed children, giving them the confidence to also be His hands and feet in the building of Gods Kingdom.

Jesus raised Jairus' daughter not only to show the Power bestowed upon Him by God, but to illuminate the importance of children in His mission on earth and beyond.



Surely the raising of Lazarus was a show of power enough for generations of believers, but Jairus' daughter, a mere female child, allowed Jesus to shine the compassion and grace so foundational to His mission. He raised her up into a place of wonder, as all children are.

Continued

Faith Formation continued

In this light, the children extended their own compassion to the members of our congregation who might need a little cheer. They painted small clay pots, planted succulents and these were delivered to nine happy recipients!

Small we may be, but mighty is our commitment to following Jesus.



Youth Fellowship (ages 12-24) will meet April 28, from 6-7:30 for dinner and a Make Your Own Sundae Bar. We will engage in three games with the ice cream theme and create seed bombs from wildflower seeds and recycled paper.

The finished products will be offered to visitors of the church this Spring as welcome gifts! Tell you friends. Be there for fun, fellowship, and a few calories.

The Fourth annual Art Show is in the planning stages. This year's theme is "Bright and Beautiful." Look for more detailed information in the coming month. What will you create?

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.

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.

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!

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

[Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/FirstParishChurchManchesterMa/) www.facebook.com/FirstParishChurchManchesterMa/

Instagram www.instagram.com/fpcmanchesterbythesea/

Website www.firstparishchurch.org/

Our Online Prayer Wall - Give it a try! Request prayers and pray for others through the Prayer Wall on our website. <https://www.firstparishchurch.org/prayer-wall/>

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.



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



MBTS 21st Annual Community Cleanup

Saturday May 4th, 9:00am to 12:00

Bring your community spirit and join TEAM FIRST PARISH CHURCH to help beautify our town! Even if you can only spare an hour we can use your help. Gloves, bags, water, and snacks provided, plus lunch for anyone who participates. Let's have a great turnout and live our faith outside the church walls!



**COMMUNITY
CLEAN UP DAY**