



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

February 2025

The Church Bell Newsletter

Dear First Parish Church,

While February is typically a quieter month for all of us, there is a lot going on behind the scenes to prepare for our Annual Meeting on February 16th. This reminds me of the seeds and bulbs lying in the frozen soil. Something magical is happening; new life is getting ready to burst forth. May it be so with the seeds we are planting as a faith community.

Following the recent Inauguration, and in anticipation of our upcoming Annual Meeting, it feels like the right moment to reflect on the relationship between our values as a congregationalist church, and the broader democratic ideals that shape our nation. Democracy, at its core, embodies the values of participation, equity, and mutual respect. These principles resonate deeply with our congregational mission to love and serve our neighbors. In a time when divisions often overshadow our common ground, our church can be a beacon of hope, encouraging dialogue and collaboration, while upholding the dignity and blessedness of every person.

We note in the bulletin each week: “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.” Our Annual Meeting is more than a procedural gathering; it’s an opportunity for us to embody the congregationalist spirit within our church community. Each of us has a voice, and every voice matters. As we review our achievements, set goals, and make decisions, let’s approach these discussions with open hearts and minds.

Coming up in worship, in the beginning of February we will wrap up our series on 1 Corinthians with an invitation to a life grounded in love. We will then turn to some of the most cherished passages of the Gospel of Luke.

Please note that we will have our usual Ash Wednesday Service on March 5th.

continued

Also, please Save the Date for my Installation Service, March 2nd at 3pm.

Blessings,

Rev. Katherine



Please join us as we celebrate the

Pastoral Installation

of

Rev. Katherine A. Schofield

Sunday, March 2 at 3:00 pm

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

Guest Preacher: Rev. Dr. Nancy S. Taylor

Reception to Follow



Deacons

The Deacons last met in November to prepare for Advent and Christmas.

Deacons mailed Advent cards to everyone in the FPCC directory.

Deacons and Trustees led the decorating and storage of the sanctuary.

Donated poinsettias were distributed.

We continued to serve at memorial and wedding services.

Nancy Peterson assumed the role of chair at the start of 2025.

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>



**Winter Queens Emporium elves
help in the wrapping process
for our young shoppers**

Outreach & Service



First Parish resumed serving at The Open Door in January. We will serve the 2nd Wednesday of each month (Feb. 12, Mar 12, Apr 9...) 2 volunteers are needed from 3:30-6:30 on each of those dates. You can sign up on our Sign Up Genius online (link below) or by speaking to Jim Brennan after worship or at 978-580-9623.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0C4CABA822A1F49-54306850-open>

First Parish has continuing collections for –

The Open Door Most needed items – canned chicken & tuna, peanut butter, healthy snacks, 100% juice boxes, cereal, hearty soups, canned fruits & veggies.

Operation Troop Support Socks, and small board and card games.

The Grace Center Gift Cards from local grocery markets for perishables like cream, butter, milk.

Drop items at the Chapel (inside and outside bins) and at the Church

February Birthdays

02/01	WEAVER, PATRICK	12 ALLEN AVE MANCHESTER	alance@nextchapterma.com
02/02	POWERS, JENNIFER	8 STORY ROAD MAGNOLIA	danajenpowers@gmail.com
02/04	LORING BYRNE, ROSEMARY	33 WAY TO THE RIVER W NEWBURY MA	rkloring@gmail.com
02/06	CLARK, PAUL	18A KENNEDY RD GLOUCESTER	peecee@me.com
02/14	MCCAFFERTY, BEVERLY	26 FULLER STREET MAGNOLIA	jean.mccaff@gmail.com
02/17	LONDON, LINDY	P.O. BOX. 23 MANCHESTER	lindylondon12@aol.com
02/23	BENINCASA, BONNIE	25 HICKORY HILL ROAD MANCHESTER	bonnie.benincasa@gmail.com
02/24	HESLOP, ANN	34 NORWOOD AVE MANCHESTER	ann@heslopfamily.com
02/28	WILKINSON, BENJAMIN	47 FOREST ST MANCHESTER	

Our Chapel building at 1
Chapel Lane is a buzz of
activity any day of the week...

Ballet de Mar
Inside out 2 Pop Up Camp



Tuesday, February 18th 9:00 - 1:00 PM ages 4-6
Thursday, February 20th 9:00 - 1:00 PM ages: 7-10

**A FUN sample of Musical Theatre and Hip Hop
dancing to our EMOTIONS!
Crafts and Trivia Games!**

**Please bring our own lunch and snack.
\$60.00 per dancer**

**Please email Ballet de Mar if you're interested
in the camp by Friday, February 14th!
balletdemar@gmail.com**



**Magic Years
Cooperative Preschool**

**First Parish Church
Community Hall & Office**

**Coffee and Conversation for Seniors
Mondays 10am-12 noon FCOA**

Ballet de Mar

**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, talk and play some games!

**Fridays local artists meet for
a figure drawing class** led by
Pat Alto, of Rockport, who
exhibits in Rockport Art
Association and Museum,
North Shore Art Association,
the New England Experimental
Art Group, Rocky Neck Art
Colony and local businesses.

She is the recipient of several
awards for her works in acrylic
and oils and is an avid volunteer
of many art organizations
where her organizational and
creative skills prove invaluable.



Faith Formation

Christian Education: A Village Effort

Christian Education is not just about the stories. It is a process wherein God reveals Himself to the recipient, meeting that person where they are and drawing them closer to a power so much greater than themselves. Committed leaders and guides, biblical truths, and character, and engaging curricular materials are embraced to equip disciples for living out Gods call for their lives.

In reality, the act of educating children is inherently a spiritual practice. The children, in classrooms everywhere, are offered a safe place, designed for them, with trusted and prepared adults, who recognize each child's unique gifts and learning styles. Christian Education lessons are designed for the spiritual developmental stage of the children (see James W Fowler) and activities are offered to support the primary message. In each experience, the underlying, defining message is one that supports the children's need to know how much God loves them and how important they are to the greater community of Christians. As they grow in knowledge and confidence, they are prepared to guide others.

Sunday School is not the only venue for this process. Each family is the hub of their children's spiritual reality. Parents and siblings help children to understand biblical character in every example of conflict resolution and every celebration of life. They are living examples of how Christians treat one another, respect differences, and embrace each person's contribution to the encompassing community. In addition, the extended family of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins give children's emerging Christ-centered ideas a safe audience to discuss and help refine their budding knowledge.

In truth, the stories are a time-honored vehicle for finding out what human beings in Gods care, are made of. We hear about grand events and everyday troubles. We talk about unending, joy-filled faith and, wanning and waxing faith. We hear about the impossible situations of men made possible with God. The children come to rely on the stories of commitment to God and determination to serve His Kingdom on Earth as foundational and inspirational.

If you have wondered what it is that is happening in Sunday School, now you know a bit more. Let me know when you want to drop in to join the fun!

Jeanne Westcott, Dir. Of Youth and Children's Ministries

FIRST PARISH CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL
United Church of Christ
Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts
WARRANT FOR ANNUAL MEETING February 16, 2025

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 immediately following Worship Service on Sunday, February 16, 2025 for the following purposes:

To wit:

ARTICLE I: To accept the report of the annual meeting held on February 4, 2024.

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

ARTICLE III: To see what action the Church will take in regard to the budget proposal for 2025 as submitted by the Church Council.

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

ARTICLE V: To review and act upon the revision of the Board of Trustees (BOT) job description as recommended by the Church Council.

Change from:	To:
“The BOT shall cause an audit by a suitably competent person of all books of the TREASURER.”	“The BOT shall cause a periodic audit by a suitably competent person of all books of the TREASURER.”
“The BOT shall request a special meeting of the Church concerning matters involving the cessation of regular Church services, and in financial matters	“The BOT shall request a special meeting of the Church concerning matters involving the cessation of regular Church services, and in financial matters ex-
Change wording of “Annual Business Meeting”	To “Annual Meeting”
“The BOT shall appoint an INVESTMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE to advise the BOT regarding investment of endowment funds.”	“The BOT shall appoint an INVESTMENT ADVISOR / COMMITTEE to advise the BOT regarding investment of endowment funds.” Note: this change occurs
“The BOT shall appoint a subcommittee to be known as the MEETING HOUSE ADVISORY BOARD (MHAB) to oversee the use of funds resulting from the First Parish Church Capital Campaign”	“The BOT shall appoint a subcommittee to be known as the MEETING HOUSE ADVISORY BOARD (MHAB) to oversee the use of funds resulting from the First Parish Church Capital Campaign conducted in 2006-7.”
“The chair of the MHAB will be a nonchurch member.”	“The chair of the MHAB will be a church member.”

ARTICLE VI: To hear and act upon the recommendation of the Church Council that the regular Sunday Service from July 6 to August 31 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

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



Seaside Parish Knitters

The Seaside Parish Knitters meet each 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at the Chapel, from 1-3 pm, in February 6 and 20. 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 or donations to purchase wool, for the items we knit for the troops.



Contact Penny Lapham at 978-526-7128.