



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
Sunday Worship, 10:00 am
February 16, 2025**

Ringing of the Bell and Lighting of the Candles

Prelude Barcarolle (from 'The Tales of Hoffmann') – Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880)

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

*** Call to Worship**

One: We come to hear the stories of our generous and compassionate God.

Many: We come to share the stories of God's love and mercy in our own lives.

One: Let us learn to embody God's grace, and witnesses to God's love in the world.

Many: May we, like God, be generous and merciful with our lives and show compassion as we serve others. May our lives give honor and glory to God, forever and ever. Amen.

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** Spirit of Love - #58, NCH

***Prayer of Invocation**

Passing of the Peace

Anthem If Ye Love Me – Thomas Tallis (1505-1585)

If ye love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another comforter, the He may abide with you forever, ev'n the spirit of truth.

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 You Must Believe in Spring – Michel Legrand (1932-2019);

lyrics by Alan and Marilyn Bergman

Rebecca Shrimpton, solo

When lonely feelings chill the meadows of your mind, just think when winter comes, can spring be far behind? Beneath the deepest snows, the secret of a rose is merely that it knows you must believe in spring. Just as a tree is sure its leaves will reappear, it knows its emptiness is just a time of year. The frozen mountain dreams of April's melting streams. How crystal clear it seems you must believe in spring. When angry voices drown the music of the spheres and children face a world that's far beyond their years, above the darkest sky the far horizons lie, with all the reasons why, you must believe in spring. You must believe in love and trust it's on its way, just as the sleeping rose awaits the kiss of May. So in a world of snow, of things that come and go, where what you think you know, you can't be certain of: you must believe in spring and love.

Scripture Readings

Jeremiah 32:1-3a, Jeremiah 32:6-15

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of King Zedekiah of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. ² At that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and the prophet Jeremiah was confined in the court of the guard that was in the palace of the king of Judah, ³ where King Zedekiah of Judah had confined him. Zedekiah had said, "Why do you prophesy and say: Thus says the LORD: I am going to give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it;"

⁶ Jeremiah said, "The word of the LORD came to me: ⁷ Hanamel son of your uncle Shallum is going to come to you and say, 'Buy my field that is at Anathoth, for the right of redemption by purchase is yours.' " ⁸ Then my cousin Hanamel came to me in the court of the guard, in accordance with the word of the LORD, and said to me, "Buy my field that is at Anathoth in

the land of Benjamin, for the right of possession and redemption is yours; buy it for yourself.” Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD.

⁹ And I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel and weighed out the silver to him, seventeen shekels of silver. ¹⁰ I signed the deed, sealed it, got witnesses, and weighed the silver on scales. ¹¹ Then I took the sealed deed of purchase containing the terms and conditions and the open copy, ¹² and I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah son of Mahseiah, in the presence of my cousin Hanamel, in the presence of the witnesses who signed the deed of purchase, and in the presence of all the Judeans who were sitting in the court of the guard. ¹³ In their presence I charged Baruch, saying, ¹⁴ “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, both this sealed deed of purchase and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware jar, in order that they may last for a long time. ¹⁵ For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.”

Matthew 13: 31-35

³¹ He put before them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

³³ He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

³⁴ Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables; without a parable he told them nothing. ³⁵ This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet:

“I will open my mouth to speak in parables;
I will proclaim what has been hidden since the foundation.”

Sermon “Telling Our Story” Rev. Katherine Schofield

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory Anthem The Gift of Love – arr. Hal H. Hopson (1933)
Rebecca Shrimpton, solo

Though I may speak with bravest fire, and have the gift to all inspire, and have not love my words are vain, as sounding brass, and hopeless gain. Though I may give all I possess, and striving so my love profess, but not be giv'n by love within, the profit soon turns strangely thin. Come spirit come, our hearts control. Our spirits long to be made whole, O come, spirit, come let inward love guide every deed. By this we worship, and are freed. Amen

*** 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 Sent Forth by God's Blessing - #76, NCH**

*** Blessing**

Closing Song The Peace of the Earth – words and music Guatemalan traditional

The peace of the earth be with you, the peace of the heavens too; the peace of the rivers be with you, the peace of the oceans too. Deep peace falling over you; God's peace growing in you.

* Indicates the congregation is invited to rise in body or in spirit.

Our Deacons are Liz Loomis and Sue Parker.

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 x 1.

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.

Readers and Greeters are always needed. To volunteer speak to the Deacons, or you can also sign up online.

Join us, Sunday, March 23rd, during 10am Worship for a special presentation of Lincoln Portrait. Lincoln Portrait is a 1942 classical orchestral work written by the American composer Aaron Copland. Dr. Herman Weiss has arranged the piece for piano, to accompany the reading of excerpts of Abraham Lincoln's great speeches, including the Gettysburg Address. We offer this special piece of word and song so that it might inspire the hearers, and affirm this nation's foundational commitments to liberty and justice for all people.

A **Church Directory**, Fall is available at the Church and in the Church Office.

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.

Family Worship (first Sunday of the month) children of all ages stay in worship for these special intergenerational services.

Church School (all other Sundays) children depart from worship around 10:15a for their own time of learning, crafting, sharing and playing.

Weekly Bible Study (meets 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.

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 interdenominational 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).

The Annual Church Meeting will be held today, Sunday, Feb. 16 following worship. A light lunch is provided by the Deacons.

The Seaside Parish Knitters meet each 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at the Chapel, from 1-3 pm, Feb 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. Contact Penny Lapham at 978-526-7128.

Book Group is open to everyone! Book Group is 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!

Feb. 24, 6:30 PM we meet to discuss “The Art Thief” at Mary Ellen Cook’s home, 21 Harold St, Manchester. RSVP to Mary Ellen (for planning purposes only) at 978-500-0018 or cook.maryellen7@gmail.com.

Book Group meets on the last Monday of the month, at 6:30 PM, and hosting is shared among members.

Hands on Opportunities at First Parish

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



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