

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
March 9, 2025**

Ringling 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** Lord Jesus, Who through Forty Days - #211, NCH

***Prayer of Invocation**

Passing of the Peace

Anthem Canon of Praise – Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706), arr. Hal Hopson (1933)

All within me bless the Lord, all within me bless His holy name.

O hear, you righteous, know that the Lord is good.

With truth, with hope, He crowns with 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 El Shaddai – Michael Card (1957), John Thompson (1950)

Rebecca Shrimpton, solo

El Shaddai, El Shaddai, El-elyon na Adonia, age to age you're still the same,

by the power of the name. El Shaddai, El Shaddai, Erkamka na Adonai, we will praise and lift you high, El Shaddai. Through your love and through the ram, You saved the son of Abraham; through the power of your hand, turned the sea into dry land. To the outcast on her knees, You were the God who really sees, and by your might, You set your children free. El Shaddai, El Shaddai, El-elyon na Adonai, age to age you're still the same, by the power of the name. El Shaddai, El Shaddai, Erkamka na Adonai, we will praise and lift you high, El Shaddai. Through the years you've made it clear, that the time of Christ was near, Though the people couldn't see what Messiah ought to be. Though your word contained the plan, they just could not understand Your most awesome work was done through the frailty of your Son. El Shaddai, El Shaddai, El-elyon na Adonai, age to age you're still the same, by the power of the name. El Shaddai, El Shaddai, Erkamka na Adonai, I will praise yo 'till I die, El Shaddai. El Shaddai, El Shaddai, El-elyon na Adonai, age to age you're still the same, by the power of the name. El Shaddai, El Shaddai, Erkamka na Adonai, I will praise you 'till I die. El Shaddai.

Scripture Readings David Lumsden

Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 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 Nebuchadrezzar. 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 Listen to the People Singing – Pepper Choplin
Listen to the people join in singing, halle, sing hallelujah. Come and rejoice in the song they're bringing, halle, sing hallelujah. Listen to the people join in singing, halle, sing hallelujah. Come and rejoice in the song they're bringing, halle, sing hallelujah. Praise, praise, praise in joyful celebration. Raise, raise, raise your voices in song. Shout, shout, shout to the rock of our salvation. Sing, sing, sing your praise to the Lord. Praise the Lord. Listen to the people join in singing, halle, sing hallelujah. Come and rejoice in the song they're singing, halle, sing hallelujah. Praise, praise, praise in joyful celebration. Raise, raise, raise your voices in song. Shout, shout, shout to the rock of our salvation. Sing, sing, sing your praise to the Lord. Sing your raise to the Lord, praise the Lord, come praise the Lord.

*** 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 Just as I Am - #207, NCH**

*** Blessing**

Closing Song God Be with You – Ralph Vaughn Williams (1872-1958)
God be with you 'till we meet again; by His counsels guide, uphold you,
with His sheep securely fold you; God be with you 'till we meet again.

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

Our Deacons are Jason Smith and Jeff Bodmer-Turner.

Our Greeters are David and Mary Lumsden.

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.

The Annual Church Meeting will be held following worship today, Sunday, March 9. A light lunch will be provided by the Deacons.

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

We plan to produce a new Church Directory edition this Spring 2025. Updated photos are always welcome send them along to office.fpchurch@gmail.com. Thank you to all who sent us updated information so we could update our church directory last Fall! Paper copies of the Fall directory are 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.

Although it doesn't feel like it, Spring will arrive and our feathered friends will need affordable housing. If you would like a birdhouse for your home or apartment outdoor area, please contact Jeanne at Jeanne.fpchurch@gmail.com

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 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! March 31, 6:30 PM we meet to discuss “Exodus” at Carol Spence’s home, 4 Overledge Rd, Manchester. RSVP to Carol (for planning purposes only) at (240) 305-5520 or cdspence@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 has resumed serving at The Open Door each 2nd Wednesday of each month (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

Lenten Study Series

If the Bible isn't a science book or an instruction manual, what is it? What do people mean when they say the Bible is inspired? When New York

Times bestselling author Rachel Held Evans found herself asking these questions, she embarked on a journey to better understand what the Bible is and how it's meant to be read. What she discovered changed her--and it can change you, too.

Over the Season of Lent you are invited to join in reading this book. We will have weekly discussions on Mondays, from 6-7pm in the Chapel Hall, beginning March 10th. Paperback copies of the book are available in the office, and it is also available on Kindle, iBooks and Audible.

We will take up two chapters per week:

3/10 - Introduction + "The Temple" and Origin Stories

3/17 - "The Well" and Deliverance Stories + "The Walls" and War Stories

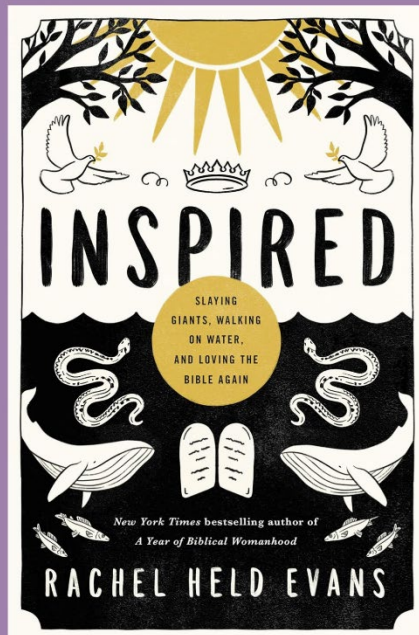
3/24 - "The Debate" and Wisdom Stories + "The Beast" and Resistance Stories

3/31 - "The Water" and Gospel Stories + "The Sea" and Fish Stories

4/7 - "The Letter" and Church Stories + And Then...

If you have any questions, please reach out to Rev. Katherine (email).

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Join us for discussion each Monday at 6pm in the Chapel Community Hall, beginning 3/10.