



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

April 2025

The Church Bell Newsletter

Dear First Parish Church,

Through this Season of Lent we have explored the parables of Jesus, these stories which help us unearth deeper truths about our lives and the coming of God's reign. In April we will begin a series of workshops aimed at helping us find our voices and tap into our own stories as a source of wisdom and strength. Susan Turnbull will lead us in this work, starting with a Soup and Conversation on April 6th called "Letter to My Family". Those who choose have the opportunity to continue meeting as a group for two additional sessions on April 27 and May 4 to find success in creating one of the most meaningful gifts you can give to your loved ones and in the process, to yourself.

As we move through the last weeks of Lent and approach Holy Week, God invites us to deepen our connection to the story of Jesus' final days.

Palm Sunday (April 13) at 10am: A Journey of Hosannas

We begin our journey on Palm Sunday, remembering Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, when crowds greeted him with joy and hope, shouting "Hosanna!" Our Palm Sunday service will include selections from "Once Upon a Tree" by Pepper Choplin, performed by the choir. As we shout "Hosanna," we also prepare our hearts for the deeper journey that Holy Week leads us toward.

Maundy Thursday (April 17) at 7pm: The Last Hours

On Maundy Thursday, we gather together to commemorate the Last Supper and Jesus' final hours. Through a Service of Tenebrae, accompanied by further selections from "Once Upon a Tree," we will experience together the lengthening shadows and growing darkness as we approach Jesus' death.

continued

Pastor continued

Good Friday (April 18) at 12pm: The Cross

Good Friday is a day of solemnity and reflection. We tell the story of Jesus' crucifixion, acknowledging the depth of sacrifice made for our redemption. Through scripture readings, hymns, and moments of silence, we sit with the sorrow of this day and ponder the gravity of what Christ endured.

At 1pm you are invited to join the Associated Clergy of Cape Ann at the Gloucester Fisherman's Memorial Monument in Gloucester for a Stations of the Cross Prayer Walk for Justice - benefitting World Central Kitchen

Easter Sunday (April 20): Christ is Risen!

Easter is the day we proclaim with joy that Christ is risen, and that the story of death is not the end. It is a day of celebration, transformation, and new beginnings.

Sunrise (5:53am) - We will gather at dawn on Singing Beach for an ecumenical sunrise service, with hymns and trumpets. I have the honor of preaching this year.

10am - Our main Easter Family Worship Service will be filled with hymns of praise, additional movements from "Once Upon a Tree" by Pepper Choplin, trumpets, timpani and the joyful news of the Resurrection. The message of Easter is one of hope, renewal, and the promise of life everlasting.

As we enter this holy season, let us reflect on how each part of the story of Holy Week speaks to our own lives. How do we walk with Jesus into the city? How do we participate in the breaking of the bread and sharing of the cup? How do we confront the darkness of the cross? And, most importantly, how do we live into the promise of resurrection?

We hope you will join us in telling this story anew, in whatever way you are able, through worship, prayer, and acts of love. Together, we will journey through Holy Week and celebrate the story that unites us all.

Blessings,
Rev. Katherine

Deacons

March was a very busy month for the Deacons. It began with a wonderful celebration of Rev. Katherine's installation service on March 2nd . That same week we entered into the Lenten season with an Ash Wednesday vespers service on March 5th . That service commenced a season of Vespers services that will take place throughout Lent on Wednesday evenings at 6pm. We look forward to continuing to serve the congregation as we look with anticipation to Holy Week, the celebration of Easter, and beyond.

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>



Rev Katherine's Installation March 2



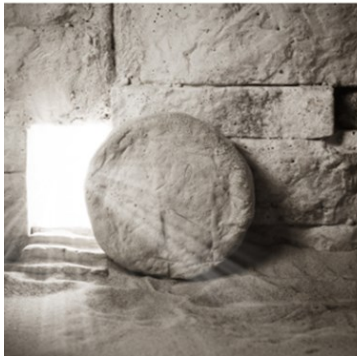
PALM SUNDAY
APRIL 13 - 10AM



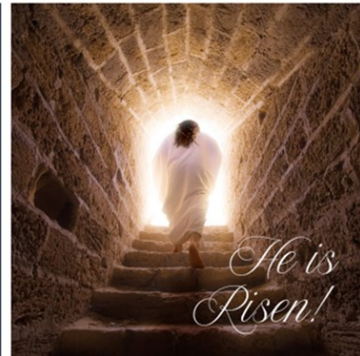
MAUNDY THURSDAY
APRIL 17 - 7PM



GOOD FRIDAY
APRIL 18 - 12PM



EASTER SUNDAY
APRIL 20
SUNRISE SERVICE
SINGING BEACH
5:53AM
FAMILY WORSHIP 10AM





Celebrate The Artists -- A Joyful Event!

15 artists and 25 church members enjoyed an evening filled with portraits, creativity and bravery!

Vitality wishes to thank our 5 FPCC models -- George, Betsy, Eric, Vivian and John. Each held still for 20 minutes so that the artists could draw and paint them. Modeling was a generous gift to the artists, and, we hear, an interesting and challenging experience for our members -- thank you all!

After each pose, artists taped their art on the Community Hall walls, for all to see and ooh and ahh and enjoy, buy, and receive.

The artists and FPCC had so much fun that this was deemed the First Annual Celebrate The Artists event.

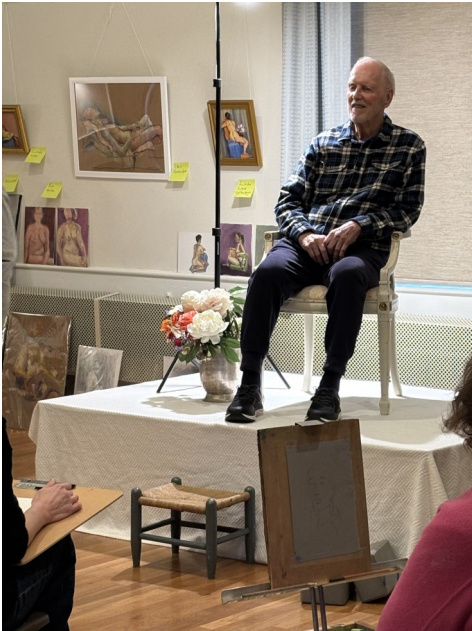
We will hold another in 2026 -- please come! You never know: you may have 15 portraits drawn of you!

Enjoy the photos from this magical night of bringing 2 communities together. We love being a Church of the Arts!

See the photos next pages

**Celebrate
the
Artists
March 8**





Soups, salads and more still needed.


Sign up [here!](#)



SOUP & CONVERSATION: LETTER TO MY FAMILY

SUNDAY APRIL 6TH
Following Worship in the Chapel Hall

There is nothing like the intimacy of a letter to express what is most important for loved ones to know and understand, directly from you. We all have stories to share, information and values to pass down through the generations. Join us for a special Soup & Conversation led by Susan Turnbull that will help unearth some of these stories and invite us into the practice of letter writing. Those who choose have the opportunity to continue meeting as a group for two additional sessions on April 27 and May 4 to find success in creating one of the most meaningful gifts you can give to your loved ones and in the process, to yourself.





**Progressive
Dinner
March 29**

We plan to produce a new Church Directory edition Spring 2025.
Updated photos of you or your family are welcome!
Send them along to office.fpchurch@gmail.com.

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.

Bird Houses 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, Apr 3 & 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.

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

Sunday Worship Music



Youth/Young Adult Event March 30



April Birthdays

04/01	GUDONIS, PAUL	56 MASCONOMO ST MANCHESTER	pgudonis@gmail.com
04/01	PETERSON, SAM	111 CHEBACCO RD S HAMILTON 01982	samuelpete1@gmail.com
04/01	ZELLER, PAT	15 TAPPAN ST MANCHESTER	pattrimmerzeller@gmail.com
04/05	FRANKLIN, CYNTHIA	15B ANNAPOLIS ST ANNAPOLIS MD 21401	cpfranklin@comcast.net
04/11	PARKER, CAROLINE	40 PINE ST MANCHESTER	
04/11	SMITH, LLEWELLYN	8 MASCONOMO ST MANCHESTER	lellysmith@verizon.net
04/12	ALMY, BARBARA	19 BOARDMAN AVE MANCHESTER	birdalmy@gmail.com
04/15	SHRIMPTON, BENJAMIN	1 DOUGLAS DRIVE ROCKPORT MA 01966	bwshrimpton@gmail.com
04/16	GREENLEAF, ANN	14 OCEAN ST MANCHESTER	dickgreenleaf1@gmail.com
04/16	ROUND, MARIANNE	3 GREENBRIER ROAD MANCHESTER	marianne.round@gmail.com
04/20	ALSOP, CHRISTIANE	675C HALE ST BEVERLY MA 01915	christianealsop@gmail.com
04/24	SMITH, JASON	42 FOREST ST MANCHESTER	jason@jungiantherapist.net
04/27	WESTCOTT, JEANNE	15 HILLSIDE AVE APT 1 MARBLEHEAD	jeanne.fpchurch@gmail.com
04/29	MCCOY, LAURIE	8 PINE ST MANCHESTER	laugin@mac.com

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



Ballet de Mar holds adult dancing Friday evenings in the hall.
Contact balletdemar@gmail.com to find out more.

Manchester Seniors - Drop in for Coffee & 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!

Also available in the hall this month - Sponsored by the Council on Aging -
Strong Women Thursdays, 9 AM
Zumba, Thursdays, 10:15 AM
Cookie Decorating April 9th
Decoupage Eggs, April 16
Call the COA at 978-526-7500 to register for any of these events.

**The Manchester-by-the-Sea
Cultural Council presents**

THE ROTUNDA EXHIBIT

...different views

June 27th - July 13th, 2025



**On exhibit throughout Manchester-by-the-Sea to
include Manchester Museum, First Parish Hall,
Santander Bank, Manchester-by-the-Sea Library
& local businesses**

Faith Formation

Growing Faith
Jeanne Westcott

Quite a few years ago, I was blessed to accompany a Youth Group on a weekend retreat in the middle of Winter. We had the opportunity to participate in this experience yearly, but one year was particularly memorable.

The retreat center is located on a lake, which in Summer is active, inviting and noise filled. In Winter it is a foreboding, grim and dangerous sight. The year in question was no exception. The lake was frozen over, with one small access to the water, which remained, for the time being, untouched by Winters sting.

After arriving and unpacking late on Friday evening, our group hurried to attend the planned welcome reception but on our way were distracted by two people at the water edge, touching the water at the small, accessible shore. Three of our adults went to investigate, thinking a youth may have become an impetuous risk-seeker but when we got to the spot, the risk was not the one we expected.

There were no youth in sight: only two leaders who had volunteered in youth ministry for well over 30 years each. Known to us from years prior, we immediately asked why the two were now standing in exceptionally chilly water with snow boots and socks on the water's edge. Their joy-filled response flipped our perspective on Faith Formation for the better. The risk here was no longer one of open water but one of open hearts and minds.

“We are watering our Faith! A practice we highly recommend. Will you join us?” one of the leaders enthusiastically proclaimed. We three shocked adults looked sheepishly at each other not knowing how to respond. Then the second of the two brave waders spoke up saying, “Wait for us to us get our gear back on, then we can walk up to the gathering together and I can explain.” I was immediately relieved that in 23-degree weather I was not going to feel peer pressured to engage in freezing my toes off.

Paulette, the leader whose group hailed from Cape Cod, told us about this experience she and some of her counterparts had practiced for 20 or more consecutive years. At every youth retreat, the leaders pair up and share an experience of water together. The youth know nothing about it, because they all benefit from the results of the experience and that is the point.

The leaders stand in water, or pour water over one another, or dip their arthritic hands in bowls of warm water, in pairs. The ritual may last ten minutes or an hour, but the goal is to share the awe-inspiring reality that our continued faith journey, beginning with baptism, is to reflect what and who God is, so that others may long to know Him. We, like the water that began our seeking, are mirrors for each other and for ourselves. They stand in pairs to remember that one cannot reflect without the longing eyes of others and can never see themselves without first seeing God in another. They speak a simple phrase when they are inspired to do so, "I see myself and my God in you."

The leaders then return to their charges ready to see deeply into the young eyes and hearts of those who's journeys are fresh. They are renewed in a remembrance of the baptismal invitation into Gods family and are ready to meet cold and bitter winds, facetious and doubting minds and risk-taking or calculating hearts. The watering of Faith reminds us that even in the darkest, deepest Winter of the souls, Faith lives, breathes, and needs our intentional care.

I am regularly reminded by my relationships with small children, that I can slip into an abyss of business and tasks quite easily. Let one three-year-old show you what you look like while they are pretending to be you, and you will know for certain that your falling short of seeking the God within your charges. It is in those moments that I ask myself, "Lady, when was the last time you watered your Faith?"

Who will join me at the water's edge? Shoes optional.

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.

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.

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.

GLOBAL REFUGEE MISSION OF NEW ENGLAND

SPRING DONATION DRIVE

The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.

Leviticus 19:34

Refugees and immigrants are under increasing stress in this country. Global Refugee Mission of NE is once again partnering with the International Institute of New England, an organization that creates opportunities for refugees and immigrants in Massachusetts and New Hampshire to succeed through resettlement, education, career advancement and pathways to citizenship. IINE is currently serving over 21,000 displaced people.

The Spring Donation Drive will be collecting:

Men's Coats (any season) Children's Clothes (any season)

Shoes in all sizes

Donations should be in excellent condition - new or like-new

Donations will be received until May 1st. Items can be dropped off in the Church Narthex on Sundays or Church Office Mon-Fri mornings.

Please speak with Marianne Round for more information.