



**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
Worship Sunday, May 11, 2025
10:00 am**

Ringling of the Bell and Lighting of the Candles

Prelude Nocturne in E Flat, op. 9, #2 – Frederic Chopin (1810-1849)

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

*** Call to Worship**

One: We've come to worship God,

Many: Who loved us before we were yet born,

One: Who knows us even better than we know ourselves,

Many: Whose presence never leaves us, And whose love for us never ceases.

One: This is our God.

Many: Let's worship together!

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.

*** Opening Hymn** O Word of God Incarnate - #315, NCH

Presentation of the Mother's Day Flowers Allison Moir-Smith

Blessing of the Flowers (Unison)

God of sun and rain, light and shadow, surf and sand, we are reminded of your artistry as we behold this stunning array of flowers before us – every one its own form and color just as we too are our own unique being. We pray your blessing on each person that is represented by these blossoms and give thanks in turn, for the blessings they have bestowed upon us. We are grateful for the way our lives have been shaped by these mothering figures and send a silent "thank you" to them for their kindness, challenges, support, and love. Amen

*** Passing of the Peace**

Anthem Wondrous Love – Austin Lovelace (1919-2010)

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul, what wondrous love is this! O my soul. What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul, to bear the dreadful curse for my soul. When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down, when I was sinking down, sinking down. When I was sinking down beneath God's righteous frown, Christ laid aside His crown for my soul, for my soul, Christ laid aside His crown for my soul. To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing, to God and to the Lamb I will sing. To God and to the Lamb, who is the great I am, while millions join the theme I will sing, I will sing. And when from death I'm free, I will sing, I'll sing on, I'll sing on, and when from death I'm free I'll sing on! And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be, and through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on, and through eternity I'll sing on!

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 A Flower Is a Lovesome Thing – Billy Strayhorn (1915-1967);

arr. Herman Weiss

Rebecca Shrimpton. Solo

A flower is a lovesome thing, a luscious living lovesome thing; a daffodil, a rose, no matter where it grows is such a lovely lovesome thing. A flower is the heart of spring that makes the rolling hillside sing – the gentle winds that blow, blow gently for they know; a flower is a lovesome thing. Playing in the breeze, swaying with the trees; in the silent night or in the morning light - such a miracle. Azaleas drinking pale moonbeams, gardenias floating through daydreams - wherever it may grow, no matter where you go - a flower is a lovesome thing. Playing in the breeze, swaying with the trees; in the silent night or in the morning light – such a miracle. Azaleas drinking pale moonbeams, gardenias floating through daydreams - wherever it may grow, no matter where you go – a flower is a lovesome thing. (tag) In the silent night, in the morning light.

Scripture Reading Acts 9: 32-43

³² Now as Peter went here and there among all the brothers and sisters, he came down also to the saints living in Lydda. ³³ There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden for eight years, for he was paralyzed. ³⁴ Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed!" And immediately he got up. ³⁵ And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

³⁶ Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. ³⁷ At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. ³⁸ Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, "Please come to us without delay." ³⁹ So Peter got up and went with them, and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. ⁴⁰ Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, get up." Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹ He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. ⁴² This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. ⁴³ Meanwhile, he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

Sermon "Precious" Rev. Katherine Schofield

Invitation to the Offering

Choir Anthem All Things Bright and Beautiful – John Rutter (1945), lyrics by Cecil Frances Alexander

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small, all things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all. Each little flow'r that opens, each little bird that sings, He made their glowing colours, He made their tiny wings. All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small, all things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all. The purple-headed mountain, the river running by, the sunset and the morning, that brightens up the sky; the cold wind in the winter, the pleasant summer sun, the ripe fruits in the garden, He made them ev'ry one: All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small, all things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all. He gave us eyes to see them, and lips that we might tell how great is God almighty, Who has made all things well. All

things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small, all things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.

Offertory

*** 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 When Peace, Like a River – 438, NCH**

*** Blessing**

Closing Song Siyahamba (We Are Marching in the Light of God) – Zulu Song, arr. Doreen Rao

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

Our Deacons are Paul Gudonis 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.

Join us following worship for coffee and conversation.

New Members Info Session Sunday, May 18th, following worship

Want to learn more about the life of this community of faith, ask any questions you may have, and get to know other newcomers and church members? Whether you're planning to join First Parish Church as a member or not, this Info Session will help you learn more about our commitments as a faith community, the various programs and ministries we

offer, and how you can get involved. Contact Pastor Katherine for more info.

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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).

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>

You can **contribute to the work of First Parish Church** or pay your pledge [@PayPal.Me/FPChurchManchester](https://www.paypal.com/paytogether/@PayPal.Me/FPChurchManchester)

Hands on Community Service, all 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.

The Seaside Parish Knitters meet each 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at the Chapel, from 1-3 pm, (May 1 & 15). 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 usually meets on the last Monday of the month, at 6:30 PM, and hosting is shared among members.

In May 26 at Lauren Gudonis’ home, 56 Masconomo St, MBTS. We will discuss "Run Towards the Danger: Confrontations with a Body of Memory" by Sarah Polley. RSVP to Lauren at 617-633-5333 or lbudonis@gmail.com for planning purposes.

On June 30th we will discuss “The Berry Pickers” by Amanda Peters.