



***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, 10 AM, Sunday  
February 15, 2026**

**Ringling of the Bell and Lighting of the Candles**

**Prelude** Prelude in E Flat Minor (from 'WTC', book 2) – J. S. Bach (1685-1750)

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

**\* Call to Worship**

One: Come! Says the Lord. Come up to the Holy Mountain!

**Many: We hear your challenge, O God, and your call.**

One: We are assembled in this sanctuary, this holy place.

Let us join together here, away from the distractions of the world.

**Many: May we receive instruction in holiness, righteousness, compassion, and peace.**

One: Let the anointing oil of God's Spirit open our eyes, our ears, and our hearts.

**Many: Bless us as your holy people.**

One: Come! Says the Lord. Come up to the Holy Mountain!

I am the Sovereign and Holy One. Do not be afraid.

**Many: Come! Let us worship God!**

**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** 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 bide 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 Reading Mark Heslop**

##### **Isaiah 58:1-14**

<sup>1</sup> Shout out; do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!  
Announce to my people their rebellion,  
to the house of Jacob their sins.

<sup>2</sup> Yet day after day they seek me  
and delight to know my ways,  
as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness  
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;  
they ask of me righteous judgments;  
they want God on their side.

<sup>3</sup> "Why do we fast, but you do not see?  
Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?"  
Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day  
and oppress all your workers.

<sup>4</sup> You fast only to quarrel and to fight

and to strike with a wicked fist.  
Such fasting as you do today  
will not make your voice heard on high.

<sup>5</sup> Is such the fast that I choose,  
a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush  
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast,  
a day acceptable to the LORD?

<sup>6</sup> Is not this the fast that I choose:  
to loose the bonds of injustice,  
to undo the straps of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?

<sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your bread with the hungry  
and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
when you see the naked, to cover them  
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

<sup>8</sup> Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing shall spring up quickly;  
your vindicator shall go before you;  
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

<sup>9</sup> Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;  
you shall cry for help, and he will say, "Here I am."

If you remove the yoke from among you,  
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

<sup>10</sup> if you offer your food to the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,  
then your light shall rise in the darkness  
and your gloom be like the noonday.

<sup>11</sup> The LORD will guide you continually  
and satisfy your needs in parched places  
and make your bones strong,  
and you shall be like a watered garden,  
like a spring of water  
whose waters never fail.

<sup>12</sup> Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;  
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;  
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,  
the restorer of streets to live in.

<sup>13</sup> If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath,  
from pursuing your own interests on my holy day;  
if you call the Sabbath a delight  
and the holy day of the LORD honorable;

if you honor it, not going your own ways,  
serving your own interests or pursuing your own affairs;  
<sup>14</sup> then you shall take delight in the LORD,  
and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth;  
I will feed you with the heritage of your ancestor Jacob,  
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

### **Matthew 17:1-9**

<sup>1</sup> Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. <sup>2</sup> And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became bright as light. <sup>3</sup> Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. <sup>4</sup> Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will set up three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." <sup>5</sup> While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" <sup>6</sup> When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. <sup>7</sup> But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." <sup>8</sup> And when they raised their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone. <sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

### **Sermon "Set Your Sights Higher" Rev. Katherine Schofield**

#### **Invitation to the Offering**

#### **Offertory Anthem Hem of Your Robe – Pepper Choplin (1957)**

Rebecca Shrimpton, solo

When our worship moves higher, let us touch the hem of Your robe. When our worship moves higher, let us touch the hem of Your robe. For all heaven's praise and all heaven's songs make all our humble worship seem lowly. For our highest praise and our highest songs are just a tiny glimpse of Your glory and Your power. When we're bowing lower, let us touch the hem of Your robe. When we're bowing lower, let us touch the hem of Your robe. For all heaven's praise and all heaven's songs make all our humble worship seem lowly. For our highest praise and our highest songs are just a tiny glimpse of Your glory and Your power.

#### **\* Doxology #780 NCH**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise Him all creatures here below,  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;**

**Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! Amen.**

**Prayer of Dedication**

**Hymn Sent Forth by God's Blessing - #76, 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 Susan Parker and Liz Loomis.  
Our Greeters are Ann and Mark Heslop.**

**Join us, following worship, for a light lunch and the Annual Meeting.**  
Read the Annual Report online at [www.firstparishchurch.org](http://www.firstparishchurch.org)  
On the Home page *click on the annual meeting graphic to view*

**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](mailto:office.fpchurch@gmail.com), 978-526-7661 x 1**

You can contribute to the good work of First Parish Church or pay your pledge @PayPal.Me/FPChurchManchester or Venmo to @FirstParish-Church (978-907-3781).

**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.

We also have traveling prayers walls throughout the year. Look for us at the 4th of July Parade, Festival by the Sea, Burgers & Bingo and other community events!



## Looking for a space for your upcoming event?

Our community hall is a lovely spot, with a sound system and projector available. Members pay a discounted rate. Check availability by call 978-526-7661 x1 or email [office.fpchurch@gmail.com](mailto:office.fpchurch@gmail.com).

### Events going on in our hall during the week –

**Manchester Seniors - Drop in for Coffee & Conversation** - Every Monday (except holidays) 9:45 - 11:45 AM 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!

**Strong Women** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9 AM Sponsored by the Council on Aging

**Mindfulness Meditation** Wednesdays 11AM, 5 PM sponsored by the MBTS Library

**Stephen's Ministry** 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](http://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).

**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** (second 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.

**The Seaside Parish Knitters** meet each 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month, **Feb. 5 & 19, 1-3 PM**. We welcome all to stop by. 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.

**Considering Book Group?** Try us out in the new year!

**Upcoming February 23rd**, 6:30 PM we will meet at Mary Ellen Cook's home, 23 Harold St, MBTS. We will discuss *The Grimkes: The Legacy of Slavery in an American Family* by Kerri K. Greenidge and selections from "Praise, Lament, and Prayer: A Psalter for Singing" by Carl P. Daw, Jr." (Contact Rev. K for a copy).

RSVP to Mary Ellen at 978-500-0018 or [cook.maryellen7@gmail.com](mailto:cook.maryellen7@gmail.com) for planning purposes only

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

### **Hands on Community Service**

**First Parish Church serves dinner at The Open Door**, Gloucester, Emerson Ave. Gloucester, monthly. Sign up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0C4CABA822A1F49-54306850-open> or speak with Coordinator Jim Brennan 978-580-9623.

### **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** Pantry items welcome. 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.