



**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
March 1, 2026**

Ringling of the Bell and Lighting of the Candles

Prelude Air - J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

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

*** Call to Worship**

One: Remember your people, O God.

Many: We call upon you, our everlasting refuge.

One: We long for a way through the frights of the world;
And pray for your support.

Many: Come, Holy One; come, Spirit of Life.

One: Come into this holy place and this holy hour,

Many: Fill us again with assurance of your grace. 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.

*** Opening Hymn** In the Cross of Christ I Glory - #193, NCH

Prayer of Confession (in unison)

God of all creation, Ruler of all peoples, you know us completely, how mean we are and how good we are. We humbly confess the mistakes we have made and the good we have neglected, the promises we have broken and the duties we have refused. Let the power and joy of your love become a mighty force in our lives. Help us to develop the good that is in us, and not be afraid to use it. Fortify our decision to live with honesty, integrity, joy, and unselfishness, through the grace of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Passing of the Peace

Anthem Lord of the Dance – Shaker Hymn – words by Sydney Carter, arr. John Ferguson

Verse: I danced in the morning when the world was begun, and I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun, and I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth; at Bethlehem I had my birth.

Chorus: Dance then wherever you may be; I am the Lord of the dance, said he, and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be, and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

Verse: I danced for the scribe and the Pharisee, but they wouldn't dance, and they wouldn't follow me; I danced for the fishermen, for James and John; they came with me and the dance went on.

Chorus:

Verse: I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame; the holy people said it was a shame. They whipped and stripped and they hung me high, and left me there on a cross to die.

Chorus:

Verse: I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black; it's hard to dance with the devil on your back; they buried my body and they thought I'd gone – But! I am the dance and I still go on. They cut me down and I leaped up high: I am the life that'll never, never die; I'll live in you if you'll live in me. I am the Lord of the dance, said he.

Chorus:

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 My Way's Cloudy – Spiritual, arr. H. T. Burleigh (1866-1949)
Rebecca Shrimpton, solo

Chorus: Oh! brethren, my way, my way's cloudy, my way, go send them angels down. Oh! brethren, my way, my way's cloudy, my way, go send them angels down.

Verse: This is the year of jubilee, send them angels down,
The Lord has come and set us free, o send them angels down.

Chorus:

Verse: Old Satan's mad, and I am glad, send them angels down,
he missed the soul he thought he had, o send them angels down.

Chorus:

Scripture Reading John 3: 1-17

¹ Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ² He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person." ³ Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" ⁵ Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶ What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' ⁸ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." ⁹ Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" ¹⁰ Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?"

¹¹ "Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Sermon "Born Again and Again" Rev. Katherine Schofield

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory Anthem In My Father's House – Pepper Choplin (1957)

The disciples drew closer, to hear the words of promise of the Lord: if you hear the truth I say and follow in My way, the great will be your heavens' reward, and He said: In my Father's house there are many mansions, in my Father's house there is room; and all who believe shall come to live with Me; for in my Father's house I'll prepare a place for you. Let not your hearts be troubled: believe in God, believe now in Me; for if you will believe in Heaven you will see the glory of the great 'I am', and He said: In my

Father's house there are many mansions, in my Father's house there is room; and all who believe shall come to live with Me; for in my Father's house I'll prepare a place for you. I will always be with you. Through every step you'll never walk alone. And when your earthly days are over I will come again to welcome you home. I tell you: In my Father's house there are many mansions, in my Father's house there is room; and all who believe shall come to live with Me; for in my Father's house I'll prepare a place for you. In my Father's house there is room.

*** 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.**

The Sacrament of Communion

Invitation to the Table

The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

One: Welcome to Christ's table.

All: We are glad to be here!

One: Lift up your hunger.

All: We do not hide our needs before God.

One: Prepare yourself to be hosted and fed.

All: The Bread of Life is our joy and satisfaction.

The Breaking, Pouring, and Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Prayer of Thanksgiving (in unison)

Almighty God, we thank you for your mighty acts of deliverance, when you enable us to cross over from despair to hope, from brokenness to wholeness, from death to life. We thank you for the deep love of Jesus, which moved him to risk himself for the redemption of humanity; and for the grace we experience in receiving these symbols of the life he gave. Through lives given over in commitment to you, make us worthy of this great love. Amen.

Hymn When Peace like a River - #438, 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 John Feuerbach and Marianne Round.

Join us, following worship, for coffee and conversation

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

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).

Lenten Study Most of us tend to think of the second half of life in chronological terms, but this book proposes a different paradigm. Spiritual maturity is found "when we begin to pay attention and seek integrity" through a shift from our "outer task" to the "inner task." What looks like falling down can be experienced falling upward—and is not necessarily connected with aging. This new edition focuses on practical guidance that you can use to live a life of love and meaning in a world of suffering and challenge. Falling Upward is an invitation to living the gospel and a call to ongoing transformation.

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.

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. 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, **March 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.

Book Group Upcoming March 2nd (due to the blizzard!), 6:30 PM we will meet in the Chapel Conference Room at 1 Chapel Lane to 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). 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

- **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.

Items can be dropped at the Chapel or Church –



Soup & Conversation: "No matter who you are..."

March 8, 2026 - After Worship

A brave conversation about how to 'walk the walk' of being church together. Rev. Rick Spalding will lead us in discussion about what we really mean when we say, "No matter who you are, you are welcome here." Please sign up to bring a soup, salad or dessert.



Lenten Vespers Service



Wednesdays at 6pm

In prayer and candlelight may we find our center in the midst of a chaotic world. Feb 18 – March 25, all welcome, in the church at 10 Central St, MBTS