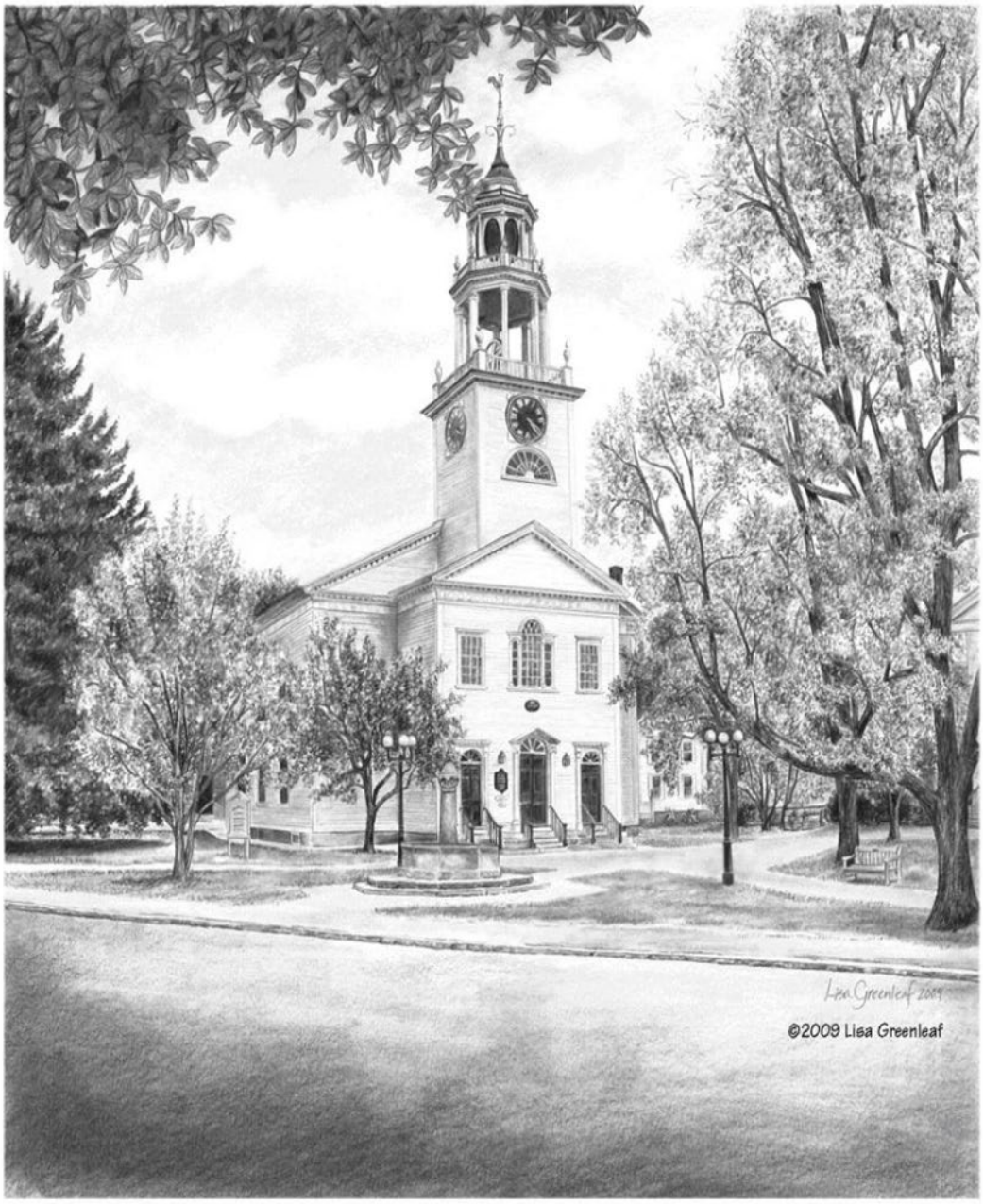


First Parish Church, Congregational
On the Village Green
Manchester-by-the-Sea, Massachusetts

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
Oct 25, 2026

Ringing of the Bell and Lighting of the Candles

Prelude Adoration – Florence Price (1887-1953)

*** Call to Worship** (Psalm 46)
One: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
Many: Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea.
One: There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.
Many: God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns.
One: The nations are in an uproar; the kingdoms totter; God speaks; the earth melts.
All: The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Welcome

Hymn God Moves in a Mysterious Way - #87, Pilgrim Hymnal

***Prayer of Invocation**

Baptism

Casey Josephine Lefeber
Child of John and Adrienne Lefeber
Godchild of Lindsey and Tim Welch

Blessing of the Water

The Litany of Baptism
One: We are gathered to present Casey Josephine Lefeber to the Church and to dedicate her to God. What can we affirm about her?
Many: She is a child of God, made in God's image.
One: As Casey grows and matures, how will she know she is a child of God and how will she learn of the Christian story?
Many: We will tell her about Abraham and Sarah, the parents of our faith; about Moses and Miriam who led our ancestors out of bondage;

about Mary and Joseph's openness to mystery; about the Savior, Jesus.
One: In turn, what will we expect of Casey?
Many: We look forward to sitting with her at the Lord's Table, sharing with her the costs and joys of discipleship, learning and growing with her in the Christian pilgrimage, and declaring with one voice our faith in God and God's son, Jesus.
One: Do you, John and Adrienne, parents, assume your primary responsibility for fulfilling these expectations by growing with Casey in the Christian faith, helping her to become a faithful member of the church of Jesus Christ, and by offering her the nurture and support of the Christian church? And do you, Lindsey and Tim, godparents, agree to guide Casey into becoming an engaged and complete human being, teaching her about personal sacrifice for a greater good, about grace and reconciliation at times of human weakness, and the power of unconditional love for all people?
Parents and Godparents: We happily and genuinely accept this serious duty.
One: And First Parish Church, do you pledge to maintain a nurturing and challenging Christian environment for Casey?
Many: We do, for she belongs to us as well.

Baptism

Congregational Welcome (Unison)
We rejoice in God's empowering love, freely given to each and all. We welcome you, newly baptized, into the circle of love in Christ's church. We promise to pray for you, to seek the depths of faith with you, to support you, and to love you. We covenant with you to love God with all our hearts, minds, souls, and strength, and our neighbors as ourselves. Amen.

Passing of the Peace

Choir Anthem Standin' in the Need of Prayer – spiritual, arr. Kathryn S. Shutz
Not my brother, not my sister, but it's me, oh Lord – standin' in the need of prayer. It's me, it's me, oh Lord – standin' in the need of prayer. Not the preacher, not the deacon, but it's me, oh Lord – standin' in the need of prayer.
It's me, it's me, oh Lord – standin' in the need of prayer. Not my father, not my mother, but it's me, oh Lord – standin' in the need of prayer. It's me, it's me, oh Lord – standin' in the need of prayer. I'm standin' in the need of prayer, Hallelujah, it's me, it's me, oh Lord – standin' in the need of prayer.

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 Adagio Sostenuto (from “Moonlight” Sonata, op. 27 #2) – L. van Beethoven (1770-1827)
Dr. Herman Weiss, piano

Scripture Readings John Todd
Judges 6:11–24
11 Now the angel of the LORD came and sat under the oak at Ophrah, which
belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, as his son Gideon was beating out wheat
in the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. 12 The angel of the LORD
appeared to him and said to him, “The LORD is with you, you mighty
warrior.” 13 Gideon answered him, “But sir, if the LORD is with us, why then
has all this happened to us? And where are all his wonderful deeds that our
ancestors recounted to us, saying, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up from
Egypt?’ But now the LORD has cast us off and given us into the hand of
Midian.” 14 Then the LORD turned to him and said, “Go in this might of yours
and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian; I hereby commission you.” 15 He
responded, “But sir, how can I deliver Israel? My clan is the weakest in
Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.” 16 The LORD said to him, “But I
will be with you, and you shall strike down the Midianites, every one of
them.” 17 Then he said to him, “If now I have found favor with you, then
show me a sign that it is you who speak with me. 18 Do not depart from here
until I come to you and bring out my present and set it before you.” And he
said, “I will stay until you return.”

19 So Gideon went into his house and prepared a kid and unleavened cakes
from an ephah of flour; the meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in
a pot and brought them to him under the oak and presented them. 20 The
angel of God said to him, “Take the meat and the unleavened cakes and
put them on this rock and pour out the broth.” And he did so. 21 Then the
angel of the LORD reached out the tip of the staff that was in his hand and
touched the meat and the unleavened cakes, and fire sprang up from the
rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened cakes, and the angel of
the LORD vanished from his sight. 22 Then Gideon perceived that it was the
angel of the LORD, and Gideon said, “Help me, Lord GOD! For I have seen
the angel of the LORD face to face.” 23 But the LORD said to him, “Peace be

to you; do not fear; you shall not die." [24] Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it, "The LORD is peace." To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiezrites.

Judges 16:23-31
[23] Now the lords of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon and to rejoice, for they said, "Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hand." [24] When the people saw him, they praised their god, for they said, "Our god has given our enemy into our hand, the ravager of our country, who has killed many of us." [25] And when their hearts were merry, they said, "Call Samson, and let him entertain us." So they called Samson out of the prison, and he performed for them. They made him stand between the pillars, [26] and Samson said to the attendant who held him by the hand, "Let me feel the pillars on which the house rests, so that I may lean against them." [27] Now the house was full of men and women; all the lords of the Philistines were there, and on the roof there were about three thousand men and women who looked on while Samson performed.

[28] Then Samson called to the LORD and said, "Lord GOD, remember me and strengthen me only this once, O God, so that with this one act of revenge I may pay back the Philistines for my two eyes." [29] And Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and he leaned his weight against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other. [30] Then Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines." He strained with all his might, and the house fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So those he killed at his death were more than those he had killed during his life. [31] Then his kindred and all his family came down and took him and brought him up and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah. He had judged Israel twenty years.

Message "Might and Strength" Rev. Katherine Schofield

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory Anthem Be Blessed - Kurt Carr, arr. Keith Hampton
Be blessed my brother, be blessed my sister, be blessed wherever this life leads you. Let me encourage you, let me speak life to you. You can depend on God to see you through. You can depend on me to pray for you. You might be hurting, you might be crying, you might be worrying and frustrated too. Let me encourage you. Let me speak life to you. You can depend on God to see you through. You can depend on me to pray for you. Pray, I'm gonna keep on praying. Pray, I'm gonna keep on praying for you. Pray, I'm gonna keep on praying. Pray, I'm gonna keep on praying for you. You can depend on God to see you through. You can depend on me to pray for you. I see you in the future, and you look better. I see you walking in favor and

prosperity too. Let me encourage you, let me speak life to you. You can depend on God to see you through. You can depend on me to pray for you. (Refrain, 6 times): I pray for you, you pray for me, and watch God change things.

*** 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 Let Justice Flow Like Streams - #588, NCH

*** Blessing**

Closing Song God Bless You and Keep You – Jay Althouse (1951)
God bless you and keep you wherever you may go; His love be a constant companion. God lead you and guide you and be at your side. God bless you and keep you forever.

Our Deacon is Susan Parker and Cynthia Westland.

Our Greeter is John Todd.

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 by Venmo to @FirstParish-Church (Church cell phone 978-907-3781). You can also use @PayPal.Me/FPChurchManchester.

Outreach and Service Partner for October - Beverly Bootstraps

BeverlyBootstraps
EMBRACE · EDUCATE · EMPOWER

For more than a decade, First Parish Church has supported Beverly Bootstraps. Their work reaches far beyond groceries. Along with their food pantry and mobile market, the organization offers free tax preparation, financial coaching, English classes, help earning a high school diploma,

and more. Our gifts will strengthen neighbors not just in Beverly, but Manchester, Hamilton, Wenham and Essex.

Stephen 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).

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!

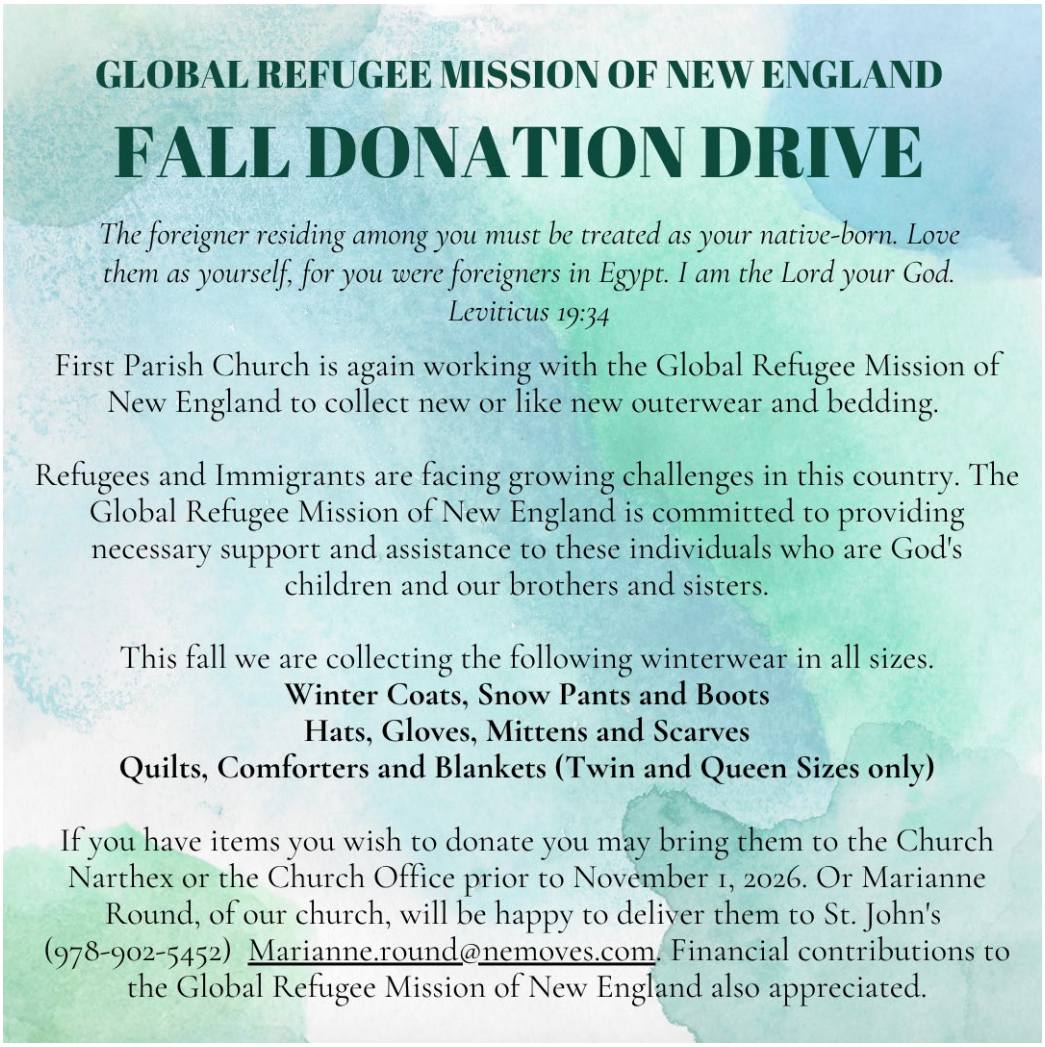
Readers and Greeters are always needed. To volunteer speak to the Deacons, or you can also sign up online.
https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0c4caba822a1f49-diaconate

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.
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 September through June, on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays, 1PM-3PM, in the FPCC Chapel Conference Room. We will meet again on Nov. 5 & 19. 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 gaiters, helmet liners and hats 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 has begun! We would love to have you join us!
Monday, Oct 26, at Marianne Round's home, 3 Greenbrier Rd MBTS. We will gather to discuss Whistler by Ann Patchett. RSVP to Marianne at 978-902-5452 or marianne.round@gmail.com for planning purposes.

Book Group meets on the last Monday of the month, 6:30 PM, and hosting is shared among members. It is a time for church members as well as non-church friends to come together and share in a discussion of books that are of interest to people of various backgrounds.

Books and Dates

November 30th Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor Frankl
December TBD The Book Club for Troublesome Women by Marie Bostick
January 25th Daughters of the Sun and Moon Lisa See
February 22nd The Race Underground by Doug Most
March 29th The Measure by Nikki Ehrlich
April 26th The Paris Library by Janet Skeslien Charles
May 31st The Salt Stones by Helen Whybrow
June 28th Broken Country by Clare Leslie Hall
July summer break
August 30th The Calamity Club by Kathryn Stocket