



The Messenger



First Parish Congregational Church, Saco
"A Christ-centered Inclusive Community of Faith
with Love and Hope to Share"

April 2024

2024 Concert Series

Jacqui Savage Master's Recital

April 13, 2024
7:30 PM

Please note! Office Hours update!

4/1 & 4/2 will be
9:00 am – 12:00 pm.
4/3 – 4/5 The office will be
closed.
4/8 through 4/10 will be
9:00 am – 12:00 pm.
Thank you.

Hospitality begins at the Parking Lot

With the limited parking on our property we are asking folks, who are able, to park at either Dyer Library or Burns School. There is additional parking behind and on the Spring St. side of Burns School. We will be making more spots in our parking lot available to those with handicapped placards or plates. We hope to provide parking for our guests who don't know where parking is available. There is also parking on Beach St. past Middle St., not between Middle St and Main St. We will be having parking attendants available to assist with parking information.

PLEASE be mindful of the street signs where parking is not allowed. We don't want to see anyone get a ticket or be towed.



Pastor's Bible Study Thursday Evenings 6:30 PM

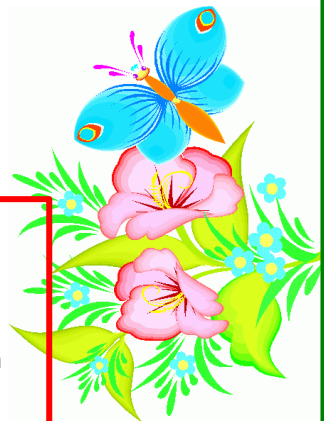
Come join us!



First Parish Book Club 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm 2nd Thursday of each month Meeting in the Parlor at First Parish

Books to read through June

April – "Deacon King Kong" by James McBride
May – "A Fall of Marigolds" by Susan Meissner
June – "The Longest Summer" by Jon Shannon



The First Parish Bean Suppah

Mark your calendars!

April 13, 2024
Serving from
5:00 pm – 6:30 pm
\$10.00 Adults
\$5.00 Children 6-12



Menu will be:

Pea Beans	Kidney Beans
Mac N Cheese	Hot Dogs
Coleslaw	Breads
Desserts	Beverages

Rev. Scott W. Cousineau, Senior Minister
Kristine Galasyn, Director of Christian Education
Jacqueline Savage, Music Director
Sue Burgess, Office Administrator

12 Beach Street,
Saco, ME 04072
207-283-3771

www.firstparishsaco.org
email – office@firstparishsaco.org
Facebook – First Parish Saco UCC
Instagram – @FirstParishSaco



Pastor Scott's Message...

The Pastor's Perspective ...



We enter the month of April with 'Hallelujahs!' still ringing in our hearts and minds. Admittedly, March was not a pleasant month for a number of reasons, but we ended on a high note! A wicked ice storm forced us to cancel worship on Palm Sunday, but Easter Sunday was a glorious day!

As we move into this season, the thoughts of new life stay with me. Those thoughts stir me to consider the ways that we can continue to offer meaningful ministries for our church families and for our community. Hosting the community soup supper to support the Saco and Biddeford food pantries made me think, 'what more can we do?' As you will see elsewhere in this edition of the Messenger, we will be hosting a tea to support the Esther House here in Saco. I love that! What more can we do?

Last month, my wife, Renee, spent two weeks in Ohio assisting her mother who suffered a fall in January and broke her hip. During those two weeks I cooked alone and ate alone, watched television alone. I talked to the dogs as if they might answer me. During those fifteen days, I thought often of those who experience aloneness every day, and then I thought, "What can we do?" We can continue to create community and we do not have to reinvent the wheel. In fact, we can do something that churches have been doing for generations ... after worship luncheons, potluck suppers, etc. So, let us make it happen.

We already have an occasional picnic or supper. Let us make it a regular, more frequent, event. Could we offer three or four after-church luncheons a year? Sure, we can! Can we offer three or four potluck suppers? Sure! Why not?! Can we find other ways that we can gather and create community? Yes! Absolutely!

Are you willing to help out? Would you like to help plan a couple ... or a few ... church luncheons or suppers? Or what about a picnic ... or two?

How about this? At two of my previous churches, we did a fellowship event called "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner". Several people volunteered to be hosts and the others signed up to be guests. The hosts provided beverages and dessert and the guests brought potluck dishes to share. A small team of people assigned the guests to the various hosts, but it was all kept hush-hush until the night of the event. The guests knew where they were going. The hosts only knew how many were coming but were surprised every time the doorbell rang. It was a LOT of fun! What do you think? Are you up for it?

I have also been thinking about other opportunities to gather in ways that will enhance our spiritual lives. I am wondering about beach vespers or prayer walks. There are so many beautiful spots where we can gather in God's Creation. I love to worship with the sights and sounds of nature all around. Would you like to be part of a vespers team? If you have any thoughts or ideas, please let me know.

What more can we do? Let's find out!

Grace and peace to you,
Scott





From the Moderator...



The church appears to be humming with activity (and not in a bad we're infested by bees way). Scott has spotted new faces and put a new members class on the calendar (always a good sign) in case any of these new faces wish to join the congregation.

The Council is working closely with other teams to keep up with the one thing that appears to be constant—change. We are working with the Personnel Team to review job descriptions. Why? We live in a dynamic time where anything that sits for long gets boxed or moved. Through the Personnel Team, we know that to attract the best, we have to update job descriptions (our Sexton position is the first to be redone). Also, when it comes time to review how well folks are doing, having an accurate measure is critical. Council will review updated job descriptions as they become available. Thanks, Phil Blood, for your leadership with this project.

As I said in an earlier communication, our buildings need attention. This will be a critical and challenging project, but it is a task that can't be ignored. We are working with Facilities to identify the most critical repairs (aside from the repairs due to water damage in the basement) to the building. I intend to present you, the congregation, with a complete list of repairs required and the costs at a future meeting. I offer my thanks to John Brockington and the entire Facilities team for their tireless work in prioritizing the work needed. This will not be an easy conversation, and I want to make sure we have explored every avenue when it comes to the repairs and how we can pay for them.

On a more positive note, we hear of great gatherings after the service, successful bean suppahs, and increased attendance at the music events that are appearing more often—a clear sign of how the community loves great music. We are also working with the community more directly (soup fundraiser for local food pantries), and we will continue to be the rain date location for Saco musical events this summer.

We are also working with Pastoral Relations (Geordie Campbell is leading this effort) to ensure that our senior pastor can maintain a high level of involvement without overextending himself.

Finally, I want to speak to you about parking. With our positive growth comes challenges. We have limited parking near the church. Our visitors may not know where to park and may simply drive by if they see a full parking lot on Sunday morning. For those familiar with the area, we have parking at the library and school, both of which are a short walk to the sanctuary. In the spirit of fellowship and health, if you can, please park away and enjoy the short walk. While doing so, contemplate what Scott may offer up during the service and which treats you can now eat after the service with a little less guilt since you parked away...

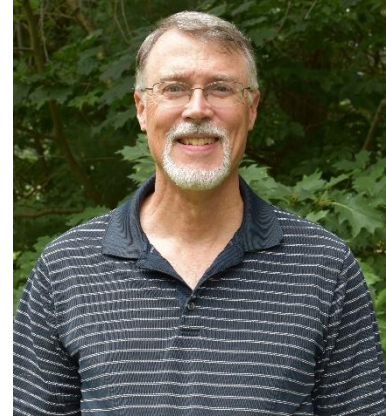
As always, if you have questions, concerns, or comments, please let me know.

Tim

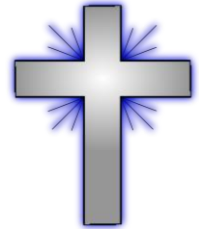




Message from our Vice Moderator



© UNDP PAPP/Abed
Zagout In Gaza,
children wait to receive
food as the
bombardments on the
enclave continue.



One of the great challenges of life is reconciling the tension between conditions in our world and the promises of God's Kingdom as expressed in the Bible and demonstrated in the life of Jesus. Like many of you, I come to First Parish on Sunday wanting to leave this tension behind, even temporarily, and find solace in the beauty of the sanctuary and the collective worship.

I am aware that there are differences in how each of us interprets world events, and that these differences often cause us to avoid dialogue in fear of creating anger and division.

I have also learned over time that avoidance of difficult conversations often results in immense grief, when opportunities for new growth and new understandings are lost, irrevocably, as a result.

I would like to share a story with you. About twenty years ago I was employed in a manufacturing plant where part of the business was involved with coating jet engine parts for military aircraft. I was the lead engineer for the production process. The contract was good for the plant and its workers. Good, steady work. One day I was alone in a remote part of the facility where some of these parts were staged for production. I picked one up and marveled at its remarkable technical properties.

As I held this part in my hand, in the quiet and solitude of that place and that moment, there appeared in my mind's eye a small, brown-eyed Palestinian child. It came to me in that moment that some of these very parts, maybe even the one in my hand, may make their way to military aircraft that delivered bombs on Gaza, on this beautiful child looking at me through her beautiful eyes. Suddenly there was more to the picture than "good, steady work". Somehow dots were connected, and the picture broadened.

The current suffering in Gaza weighs heavily on my mind and on my heart. Yes, the conflict is complex and not easily reduced to "sound bites". But the suffering of innocents is impossible to deny. On 13 March, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) said that more children have been killed in Gaza in recent months than in four years of conflict worldwide.

For this reason I have sent a draft resolution to the Church Council asking for a declaration of support for a ceasefire in Gaza to allow the delivery of humanitarian aid. I do not know how the Council will receive it. For me, that is not the important issue. I know where I stand, and why. However, I also needed to use my voice, and I thank this faith community for hearing me.

In God's Peace,
Tom

Message from our Deacons...



Welcoming Spring in Maine is always a mystery regarding whether our temps will rise or snow will fall, or budding perennials will be covered with ice! Whatever the weather, it is always great to have the sun setting later and it is wonderful to be outside again!

The Deacons are excited to continue our chats with members, visitors, and all those attending First Parish who may have an interest in finding out how to become an integral part of our church's spiritual ministry. During the month of April, anyone who has questions or would like more information, is invited to join us after the Sunday 10:00 am service. One or two of the current Deacons will be in the front of the sanctuary near the chancel for a few minutes to chat with you. Many opportunities are available for participation as a Deacon or as a volunteer support member of the Diaconate.

The Deacons are very interested in receiving your comments and suggestions for advancing opportunities for involvement in the many activities and services available at First Parish. Please contact me at pnwemerald14@gmail.com, or place your suggestion (include your name and contact information) in the offering plate on the table in the vestibule. We want to have the opportunity to discuss every idea that we receive. We would also like your participation and willingness to help implement suggestions that you offer.

We held two new member classes in March and are very excited to be receiving new members into the church on April 7, 2024 during the 10am service.

A new project that we hope to have available to introduce in April will be our "Busy Bags". These bags will be available for parents to borrow for some of our youngest attendees who may have a more difficult time sitting quietly through the service.

The Diaconate will soon be replacing most, if not all, the hearing devices we have available for those who may need assistance during the service. We are also in the process of replacing all of our Communion Elements that are losing their silver plating and are deteriorating with every additional use. We are considering ways in which we might offer options to contribute to these purchases in the form of a special gift to the church or as a memorial gift in honor of a loved one. Details will be forthcoming.

First Parish continues to be a very vibrant church with a diverse congregation and open and welcoming to everyone! We hope that you already are, or will become, an active member and share your talents with all of us!

With faith and blessings,
Peggy Warden, Chair of the Diaconate



From the Director of Christian Education

The team has had some wonderful conversations about food allergies and the need to be more inclusive in our fellowship treats. We would like to encourage all teams to always have a fruit or a veggie platter option at fellowship time. Food allergies are very common and this is another way to show our extravagant welcome here at First Parish.

Recently we upgraded our video monitors in our classrooms. The old ones were emitting a high pitch sound that was obnoxious to our students. Short videos are a part of the Church school curriculum. A WiFi extender was added in the nursery to support better connectivity of the TV in that space. This TV allows caregivers to view the live service on Sunday mornings. Thank you to Eric Steva and Michael Remillard for making these upgrades happen.

In Church school for the month of April our Wonder Word is **Share**.

See you at Church,

Kris



We are so sad to say good bye to the Salas family- Glenys, Jay, Philip and Jack. Palm Sunday was their last Sunday with us as they move to Newtown, CT.

Glenys was a constant helper in our nursery as well as a wonderful First Parish advocate especially among young families. She was also on the Good News Team. Jay has been a youth leader and teacher. He is a fabulous teacher and great at making videos with our youth. Philip and Jack were both baby Jesus in previous Christmas pageants. They will be so missed. We thank you for being a part of our faith community at First Parish and wish you all the very best. Godspeed.



Pilgrim Lodge

We will be celebrating our Church's Church camp, Pilgrim Lodge with stories and camp songs, on Sunday,

April 21st After worship there will be lots of information about PL and during our fellowship time there will be ice cream cones just like at camp. PL has a lot of different camping experiences that will be happening this summer/fall for all ages.

The Christian Education Team is offering camperships again this year. Camperships are now available and the applications are due into the church office by May 1st. Please register with Pilgrim Lodge before applying for a campership.

FMI: www.pilgrimlodge.org bulletin board in the atrium for more information about Pilgrim Lodge.

March



March 3	Connor Remillard
March 10	Cassie Remillard
March 17	Emily Savage
March 24	Chloe Remillard
March 31	Jo Fitzgerald



*Jesus says:
"Let the little
Children come
to me" - Matthew
19:14*

Helping **Lisa** and **Mary** in the Nursery for
the month of **March** was:

3rd **Tracy Seymour**
10th **Lindsey Martel**
17th **Lindsey Hersey**
24th **Donna Hobbins**
31st **Mary Feeley**

"It's Only One Sunday!"

First Parish Christian Education Team
appreciates your time. After our recent
announcement about needing help in our
nursery, four people came forward to offer
their assistance. We appreciate their help
and look forward to seeing them again.

Thank you to **Lindsey Hersey, Donna
Hobbins, Mary Feeley and Marcia Lord.**

Thank you



Baptism

Welcome to the UCC

March 10th

Celeste Ann Marie Shoop

Starla Lula May Shoop

Parents: Emily and Spencer Shoop



**Vacation
Bible
School**

July 8-12

Monday – Friday

9-11:30 AM

Children 4 years through 5th
grade. Our theme for this year is
"**Camp Firelight: A summer
camp adventure with God**".
More information and online
registration will be available next
month. Our Bible Verse is:
"**Whenever I'm afraid I put my
trust in you.**" - **Psalm 56:3**

On Saturday, March 16th we had an
Online Training. Our VBS team
learned about the wonderful Bible
Stories we will share, the Songs that we will
sing, Crafts we will make, Snacks that we
will eat, Science experiments we will see
and Games we will play. There is also a
Mission and Reflection component to our
program. It will be an incredible week.





Fellowship

Our Youth have been very busy with a number of exciting programs and fun things. After all our Super Bowl activities, subs, video announcement and skit during worship we took some time to have some fun. We joined many others in the community for a showing of "The Princess Bride" movie at City Theater over February vacation



In March we presented Bon Appetit with a check for \$634.50 from our Super

Bowl of Caring Offering. Trina Triggs accepted this check for Bon Appetit. Trina said that Jim, at Bon Appetit, was very grateful for the donation. We would like to thank Heather Nolette for her artistic talent in making us a BIG check.



Once again we will be sending out our College Care Packages for our college kids. If you have a youth at college please email: kris@firstparishsaco.org and let me know name, address of your student and year, (ie. freshmen, sophomore etc.).



We would like to ask our church family for contributions of items for these care packages. We are specifically looking for items that are individually wrapped, small, and light in weight (we mail these care packages). Some examples: candy, popcorn, small packets of kleenex, band aids, small packets of hand wipes (no liquid please). These packages will be sent out mid-April. There will be a special laundry basket in a shopping cart that will be in the atrium beginning **April 7th.** Thank you



Flower and Altar Update

Sunday Flowers for March given by:

- Mary Johnson, Jane McKechnie, & Nancy Brookshire in Memory of "Our Mom", Helen Atkinson
- Charles & Debra Clark Memorial Flower Fund in Memory of Fred Clark
- Edward Olsen
- Bill & Sue Burgess in Memory of Loved Ones

Palm Trees are given by Deb & Mike Richard in Loving Memory of Their Daughter, Tracy Lynn

Easter Lilies and Tulips are given in Memory or Honor of Loved Ones



If you wish to remember/honor a loved one or celebrate an event with altar flowers, the sign-up sheet is on the wall outside the church office. We know that many of you remember loved ones every year. If you have a specific date/time of year that you wish to provide flowers, sign up early or that date may already be filled. Also, you may contact Patrice Tripp @ rtripp@maine.rr.com or 207-590-1109 or Marcia Lord @ mvlord@aol.com or 207-768-1699.

Women's Retreat Teaser

Exploration is in the works regarding the possibility of another Women's Retreat. We are currently looking for a venue and deciding on a date. Or, deciding on a date and looking for a venue! It's looking like it would be no sooner than the fall of this year.

Your input is welcome. Please contact any of us with ideas or suggestions. We will do our best to answer any questions. Please understand that planning is in its infancy and we will share more details as they become available.

Thank you for your interest and wish us luck!

Faithfully,

Susan Anton, Cathy Baillargeon, Dolly Curtis,
Norma Gorham, Pam Mohlin, Joan Sonneborn



Mission Outreach Team Update

FMI – Carol Spencer-Lemay
or Wylie Herzberg



The next Mission Outreach Team meeting is scheduled for April 10th at 6:30 pm in the Conference Room. Please join us!

Saco Food Pantry



Thank you for your support of the Saco Food Pantry!

Don't forget to donate to the Saco Food Pantry if you are able. The need is great.

The **Saco Food Pantry** thanks First Parish Congregational Church members for their ongoing generosity. Please continue to donate non-perishable food items and hygiene items and place them in the shopping cart in the Atrium. Thank you!

At this time the Saco Food Pantry is in need of Progresso Soups, jams and/or jellies. No grape jam/jelly please.

The Saco Food Pantry, located at 67 Ocean Park Road, is open Monday to Friday from 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM, and the last Tuesday of the month from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM.

The **Red Cross Blood Drive** at **First Parish Congregational Church, Saco** is **Saturday, April 6 from 9:00 am – 1:45 pm**. The need is great!

Sign up to give blood at redcrossblood.org, or call **1-800-RED-CROSS**. Donors receive *Godzilla x Kong* and/or a Red Cross T-shirt. Don't miss out on receiving these limited quantity gifts!

Welcome Spring

coloringpage.eu





CHARITABLE DONATIONS FOR "ESTHER RESIDENCE"

Esther Residence provides a safe, nurturing community that is based on safety, respect and dignity. It focuses on assisting each woman in identifying and celebrating her strengths and gifts. The home is a bridge that promotes healthy connections to family (when appropriate) and to the larger community.

Women's Fellowship and the Mission Team are holding a "Spring Into New Life Tea" on Friday, April 26th here at First Parish Church. If you are unable to attend the event, there are other ways to help with this fundraiser.

❖ **Donate Gift Cards from local businesses:** Shaw's Hannaford's, Reny's, Walmart, Kohl's, Marden's, Bus cards. Other fun cards that they appreciate include: Saco Scoop, Dunkin Donuts, Fielder's Choice Ice Cream, Apple Theater in Saco, Mulligan's Restaurant. **These cards can be brought to church and we will have a donation basket available on Sunday mornings through April 21st.**

❖ **Donate with a check to:** Esther Residence
PO Box 296
Saco, ME 04072

❖ **Donate by going online to their website listed below and use PayPal**
<https://estherresidence.org/support-us/>

Spring Into New Life Tea

Friday, April 26, 2024 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

If you would like to attend the tea by hosting a table or by sitting with another table, please reach out to Carol Spencer-Lemay. You can see Carol at church or call her at 207-229-1902. Carol will need your name, phone #, email and the size table you would like to host. Tables can seat 4 people or 6 people.



American Red Cross

The **Red Cross Blood Drive** at **First Parish Congregational Church, Saco** is **Saturday, April 6 from 9:00 am – 1:45 pm**. The need is great!

Sign up to give blood at redcrossblood.org, or call **1-800-RED-CROSS**. Donors receive Godzilla x Kong and/or a Red Cross T-shirt. Don't miss out on receiving these limited quantity gifts!



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 9am Counters 10:30am WOU 12:30 pm JMS 6pm Bell Choir 7pm Big Book	2 9:30am Fellowship Workshop 12:30pm JMS 5pm SoME Dance 6:30pm Facilities via Teams 7pm Men's Fellowship	3 4pm Diaper Bank 5:30pm Jr Choir 6pm GS Troop 277 6:45pm Sr Choir	4 9am TOHG 3pm Guiding Eyes for the Blind 4pm Tutor & Ed Testing	5 	6 9 am Red Cross Blood Drive 
7 New Member Sunday 8:30am Sacred Conversations 10am Service 11:30am M&A Team	8 9am Counters 10:30am WOU 12:30 pm JMS 6pm Bell Choir 7pm Big Book	9 9:30am Fellowship Workshop 12:30pm JMS 5pm SoME Dance 7pm Men's Fellowship	10 4pm Diaper Bank 5:30pm Jr Choir 6:30pm Mission Outreach Team 6:45pm Sr Choir	11 9am TOHG 4pm Tutor & Ed Testing 6:30pm Book Club 6:30pm Bible Study	12 6:30pm Jacqui Rehearsal	13 5pm Bean Suppah  7:30 pm – Jacqui Savage Master's Recital
14 8:30am Sacred Conversations 8:50am CE Team 10am Service 11:15am P&W Choir	15 9am Counters 10:30am WOU 6pm Bell Choir 6pm Tri City Rehearsal 7pm Big Book	16 9:30am Fellowship Workshop 7pm Men's Fellowship	17 10am Theological Group 4pm Diaper Bank 6:45pm Sr Choir	18 9am TOHG 3pm Guiding Eyes for the Blind 6:30pm Bible Study	19	20 
21 Pilgrim Lodge Sunday 8:30am Sacred Conversations 10am Service 11:15am P&W Choir	22 9am Counters 10:30am WOU 12:30 pm JMS 6pm Bell Choir 7pm Big Book 6pm Portland Community Chorus Rehearsal	23 9:30am Fellowship Workshop 12:30 JMS 5pm SoME Dance 6:30pm Personnel Team 7pm Men's Fellowship	24 4pm Diaper Bank 5:30pm Jr Choir 6pm GS Troop 1106 6:30pm Council 6:45pm Sr Choir	25 9am TOHG 4pm Tutor & Ed Testing 6:30pm Bible Study	26	27 11am Nero Celebration of Life 7pm Portland Community Chorus Concert
28 8:30am Sacred Conversations 10am Service 11:15am P&W Choir 11:45am Diaconate 2pm Portland Community Choir Concert	29 9am Counters 10:30am WOU 12:30 pm JMS 6pm Bell Choir 7pm Big Book	30 9:30am Fellowship Workshop 12:30pm JMS 5pm SoME Dance 6:30pm Personnel Team 7pm Men's Fellowship				

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