



The Messenger



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

February 2024

2024 Concert Series

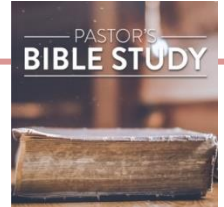
BOLD RILEY

February 10, 2024 7:00 PM

Pastor's Bible Study

Thursday Evenings 6:30 PM

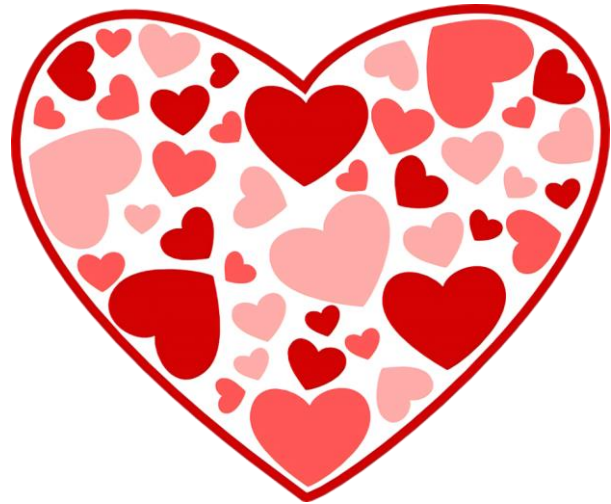
Come join us!



American



Heart Month



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 February through June

February - "The Other Eden" by Paul Harding

March - "Accidental Saints: Finding God in all the
Wrong People" by Nadia Bolz-Weber

April - "Deacon King Kong" by James McBride

May - "A Fall of Marigolds" by Susan Meissner

June - "The Longest Summer" by Jon Shannon



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

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Pastor Scott's Message...



The Pastor's Perspective ...

Welcome to February! It has been a pretty incredible few weeks here at First Parish Church. It seems as though it has been non-stop action since Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving Sunday ... Thanksgiving baskets for our neighbors ... Advent ... the Gingerbread Fair ... the Giving Tree Christmas gifts ... the Christmas Pageant ... Christmas concerts ... Christmas Eve ... our Noon Year's Eve Party ... Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service ... Annual Affirmation Meeting ... as well as worship, Sunday school, choirs and all of the other wonderful ministries and activities that take place here. Wow!

And then we jump right into Lent. This is one of those years when the season of Lent arrives very shortly after we celebrate Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. It seems somewhat odd to gather at the cradle in Bethlehem and then just a few weeks later begin our trek to the cross on Calvary. It suddenly occurred to me last week, as I was attempting to organize my office, that I need to start planning our Lenten worship services! Ash Wednesday is just two weeks away!

Over the years of my ministry, I have often used a particular theme to tie our worship services together. As I was contemplating a theme for this year, one thought kept coming to mind, "I wish that we could go to Israel together". I wish that we could be like Dorothy in "Wizard of Oz," and click our heels together saying, "There's no place like home. There's no place like home. There's no place like home." And then we open our eyes and find ourselves in the Holy Land. But I do not happen to have any ruby slippers.

I had the opportunity to travel to Israel in 1999 for an eleven-day study tour. It was not nearly long enough. There was so much more to learn. But being there, even for those eleven short days, gave me a greater understanding and appreciation for the words of scripture. When I read the Twenty-third Psalm, I can picture the hillsides because I have been there. I swam in the Sea of Galilee and in the Dead Sea. I ate fish in Capernaum and broke bread in a garden not far from Gethsemane. I have been in the wilderness and the desert. I have eaten the food and smelled the smells. I have been in Bethlehem and walked through the ancient streets of Jerusalem. I have visited the Temple Mount.

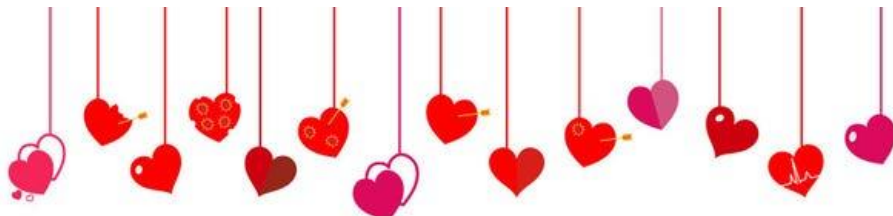
I can tell you all of these things and often mention my trip in my sermons. However, I wish that you could feel what it feels like to be there. When I was on the Cardo Maximus, the main street in the center of Jerusalem, I bent down and placed my hands on the cobble stones. I said, "Jesus walked here ... on these stones". It was powerful. I want you to feel that as well.

Lent is more than a season on the church's calendar. It is ... or should be ... an experience. Lent should move us. Lent should draw us in and then make us stop ... and marvel at the moment. Lent should afford us the opportunity to feel the Presence of God.

Let us journey together to Jerusalem. Let us make the journey slowly and thoughtfully pausing to truly drink it in. In the coming weeks, we will share the experience.

Grace and peace to you all,

Scott





From the Moderator...



There's an old joke that goes like this...

"How'd you get the position?"

"I left the room at the wrong time..."

As your new Moderator, filling a position that has been vacant for a year, I could say I left the room at the wrong time. However, I will offer an alternative view and say timing is everything. When Dale stepped down from the position in early 2023, I felt I was too new to offer up my services, so I waited, and now, the timing is right. I am honored to be taking on this role.

Let me first acknowledge the tremendous work Bob Condon did as acting Moderator. He helped guide us through some difficult and interesting times (who knew that our gutters needed to be cleaned or that significant flooding could occur far from any large body of water?). Not only did he lead us through these challenges, but we are thriving at a time when other churches are struggling. On behalf of the Church Council, let me offer a heartfelt thank you to Bob for his leadership.

There are probably many of you who are wondering who this new Moderator is. A brief bio—my wife, Ruth, and I moved to Saco in 2021 after a long stint in Florida. Yes, we're the ones who moved from Florida to Maine and did it during a full-blown pandemic—we have some good stories as a result, but I wouldn't recommend it. I won't bore you with the reasons (if you find yourself with no one to speak to at a coffee hour and see me standing alone, I'll be happy to share the reasons), but just say we took the plunge and love it here. I spent a great deal of my life working in Corporate America before 'retiring' to write, which I still do most days (I write fiction, and you can find my books in the book kiosk outside the front door). Again, if you're bored at a coffee hour and want to talk writing...

When we moved here, we did our due diligence to find a congregation where we felt comfortable and challenged. We sampled many congregations before being told that we should try First Parish. We did. We really liked the atmosphere (the music is amazing, and Scott's sermons always resonate) and joined in April of 2022. I've been in many congregations (I was raised in a Baptist church, went to a Dutch Reformed affiliated college, got married by a Lutheran, and attended Reformed Church, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches over the ensuing years), and I can honestly say that First Parish is something special. I won't belabor the point—I'd be preaching to the choir (something I will never do—they're doing fine without me), but I truly think this is a great place.

The things done here are incredible, not only for our fellow parishioners but for the surrounding community. The support and compassion you show on a daily basis are needed now more than ever. I look forward to meeting you and working with you to get the message of love, community, and compassion out to the greater world.

Tim



Vice Moderator Update...



Dear First Parish Church,

2024 looks to be full of challenges and excitement! I am grateful to be a part of this community as we grow and live into the love of Christ both personally and collectively. It is said, "it takes a village" to raise a child and I also believe it "takes a village" to raise a Christian. It certainly has been my life experience.

When my wife Jane and I came to First Parish our youngest child Mary was thrilled to be in the Children's Choir directed by none other than Sue Marston! How fast the next twenty-some odd years passed. As teenagers all three of our children were fortunate to go on mission trips which taught them important lessons about life and faith. Jane and I have served on various committees and teams. I was privileged to work with Loren Downey to bring our Open and Affirming statement to First Parish, and with Kathy Angel Lee and others to bring Rev. Doug Nielsen as pastor.

As Vice-Moderator I will work to support Tim McGee, Pastor Scott and the Council as best as I possibly can. Currently I am working as a chaplain in the port of Portland for Seafarers' Friend. We are a small non-profit ministering to the social, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of seafarers arriving in New England ports.

Sincerely,

Tom Kircher





February is a month of Valentine's, Souper Bowl and Black History. It is the month that we look in anticipation to the Pilgrim Lodge schedule being announced.

Here is what's happening for the month of February at First Parish.



This month our Church school will focus on Jesus' relationships. Our stories are: The Lord's Prayer, Jesus Calms the Storm, Mary and Martha and Zacchaeus. Our Wonder Word for the month is **Guide**. February is the last month in our Winter quarter. Check out all the pictures within these articles. They are all from our 2023 Christmas Pageant.

Stay safe and stay warm
See you at Church.

Kris



The Pilgrim Lodge schedule is out and looking awesome. So many cool camps, for the week, weekend, and half week

adventures. For more information go to www.pilgrimlodge.org. Pilgrim Lodge camperships will be available in the spring. We have many PL alumni in our church family so if you have any questions, please ask. There are camping opportunities for ALL ages.



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

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

7th **Snow storm**
14th **Glenys Salas**
21st **Annie Ingraham**
28th **Lindsey Martel**

"It's Only One Sunday" First Parish Christian Education Team appreciates your time. **Thank you**

January



January 7 **Snow Storm**
January 14 **Caleb Blow**
January 21 **Alex Brochu**
January 28 **Aaron Blow**



Vacation Bible School 2024

Coming this summer.



“Whenever I’m afraid I put my trust in you.” - Psalm 56:3

There will be a team online training on Saturday, March 16 at 11AM EST.

In this workshop we will learn:

- Training on all key stations of Camp Firelight VBS!
- Bible Story Backgrounds for each session!
- Featuring Music Video Previews with Producer/Performer, Andy Wilson!
- Science experiments!
- Crafts, snacks, and recreation previews!
- And much more!



Watch for your Superbowl Subs order form in our bulletins and also on the web site. Subs will be available after services on Sunday, **February 11, 2024.**

We are very excited to announce that the new owners of Pizza by Michael will be our vendor for all our Sub ingredients.



On that Sunday we will take a Souper Bowl of Caring offering. This offering will go to the Bon Appetit meal program located at the Second Congregational Church in Biddeford.

“I was hungry and you fed me.” ---Matthew 25:35, The Message by Eugene Peters



Our youth will be gathering on Friday, Feb. 9 to prepare the ingredients for sub making on Sunday morning. We will also be working on a Souper Bowl of Caring skit.





Martin Luther King Day of Service January 15, 2024

Not A Day Off, But A Day
On

Life's most urgent question is?
"What are you doing for others?"

-Martin Luther King

The weather, believe it or not, was a balmy 30 degrees and sunny for our 16th annual MLK Day of Service. This year with the help of over 50 volunteers we served over 135 people, including many families. Our clients came from our tri city area of Saco, Biddeford and OOB but also from as far away as Standish, Sebago and Bath.. Our shoe ministry gave away over 125 pairs of shoes/boots. Our four hairdressers did 30 haircuts, with 30 head checks, and our medical students took 32 blood pressures. We provided a hot breakfast, of eggs, fruit and muffins and a hot lunch, of chop suey, vegetable soup or corn chowder. We gave away a tremendous amount of warm clothing, new underwear, bras and socks. There were bins full of toiletries, shampoo, soap, toothpaste and toothbrushes and much more. We gave away free books for children and adults and a few games. Our Diaper Bank handed out bags of diapers. People were as grateful as ever. Thank you to Scotch, our therapy dog, who provided many smiles.. Thank you to Sue Burgess and the food crew. Thank you to all who helped sort and organize. Thank you to everyone that help set up the sanctuary after the Sunday service. Thank you to all those who donated items. Thank you to everyone who helped clean up. Thank you to our

youth who helped serve food and cleaned up afterwards. We did all of this with a smile on our faces and a compassionate heart.

Any clothes left over went to Maine Needs, a group in Portland, that supplies "you name it" to anywhere in Maine.

For pictures of this Day of Service please check out the rolling chalk board in the atrium.

Another great quote from MLK is this:

"Everybody can be great ... because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

--Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

**Next MLK Day will be
January 20, 2025**



Flower and Altar Update

It's hard to believe that Easter is just two months away. Stay tuned for information regarding ordering flowers for Easter Sunday.

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 @ 207-590-1109 or Marcia Lord @ 207-768-1699.

Sunday Flowers for January given by:

- Edward Olsen
- Flower & Altar Team



Hospitality Team



We are an Easter People, and as such, we are all about resurrection! After our Annual Meeting on Sunday two members inquired about the Hospitality Team. At this time there are not any members on the team. According to our bylaws, "the Hospitality Team with the support of other teams, ministries, groups and other organizations of the church ... facilitate hospitality and fellowship activities and events." That sounds like fun to me!

Calling all social butterflies and party planners ... who would like to be a part of the Hospitality Team? Who wants to be able to tell their friends when they ask what you do at the church, "I plan all of the fun stuff!"

If this sounds like the perfect place and the perfect fit for you, please let me know.

Pastor Scott

Mission Outreach Team Update

FMI – Carol Spencer-Lemay
or Wylie Herzberg



The next Mission Outreach Team meeting is scheduled for February 14th 6:30 pm in the Conference Room. Please join us!

Enjoy a **FREE MOVIE MATINEE, *Summer of Soul*, Sunday February 18, 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM** in the **Chapel/Flex Use Room** upstairs with discussion after the movie.

Help us celebrate Black History Month by watching this acclaimed documentary.

Popcorn, soda, and water will be available. Bring your own bag lunch if you are so inclined.

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



Thank you for your support of the Saco Food Pantry!

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 Soup, 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.

Welcome In our New Neighbors (WIONN) is in need of specific items for our immigrant friends. Any donated items can be left at the Kennebunk UU church any weekday morning in the parish hall where the WIONN collection is located. Or e-mail marylyn.wentworth@tns.org

toddler car seats twin bed sheet sets towels blankets coffee mugs pillow cases

Volunteer Work of Great Importance to support WIONN. These jobs are especially good for those who need to work from home or do not have time for Care Teams (and do have time), and want to support WIONN. If you can do any of these jobs, notify marylyn.wentworth@tnsk.org

1. Coordinator of \$5,000 Good Shephard Grant to provide access to culturally appropriate foods. Contact Randat@gwi.net for details. This is not a difficult job and not very time consuming, but very interesting.

2. CARE TEAMS. We really need people willing to be the close contacts for new Mainers. It is a rewarding commitment and takes time. WIONN trains and mentors Care Teams. Right now we have 3 families without Care Teams who need help acclimating to their new home in Maine. THIS IS THE HEART OF WIONN and we need about 6 more people who would get personal satisfaction helping New Mainers.

3. Volunteer Coordinator: Someone to keep track of who is volunteering and for what and enter into our new directory.

4. Fundraising Coordinator: Keep track of our grants and opportunities to apply for grants.

5. Data manager: Keep track of our forms, brochures, directory.

If you would like to support **WIONN** financially, you can make a check out to Christ Federated Church, Kennebunk, with **WIONN** in the memo line. The check can be mailed to Cheryl Mills/ 32 Garden St/ Wells, ME 04090.




February



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 9am TOHG 4pm Tutor & Ed Testing 6:30pm Bible Study	2 	3
4 8:30am Sacred Conversations 8:50am CE Team 10am Service 11:30am M&A Team 1pm TV Service	5 9am Counters 10:30am WOU 6pm Bell Choir 7pm Big Book	6 9:30am Fellowship Workshop 5pm SoME Dance 7pm Men's Fellowship	7 4pm Diaper Bank 5:30pm Jr Choir 6pm GS Troop 277 6:30pm Mission Team 6:45pm Sr Choir	8 9am TOHG 3pm Guiding Eyes for the Blind 4pm Tutor & Ed Testing 6:30pm Bible Study 6:30pm Book Club	9 6:30pm Youth Group	10 5pm Bean Suppah  7pm Bold Riley in Concert
11 8:30am Sacred Conversations 10am Service 11:15am P&W Choir 11:30am Movie in Chapel 1pm TV Service	12 9am Counters 10:30am WOU 6pm Bell Choir 7pm Big Book	13 Fellowship Workshop 5pm SoME Dance 7pm Men's Fellowship	14  4pm Diaper Bank 5:30pm Jr Choir 6pm GS Troop 1106 6:30pm Ash Wednesday Service 6:45pm Sr Choir	15 9am TOHG 4pm Tutor & Ed Testing 6:30pm Bible Study	16	17 10am – Bovin event
18 8:30am Sacred Conversations 10am Service 11:15am P&W Choir 1pm TV Service	19  OFFICE CLOSED 6pm Bell Choir 7pm Big Book	20 9am Counters 9:30am Fellowship Workshop 5pm SoME Dance 7pm Men's Fellowship	21 10am Theological Group 4pm Diaper Bank 6:45pm Sr Choir	22 9am TOHG 3pm Guiding Eyes for the Blind 4pm Tutor & Ed Testing 6:30pm Bible Study	23	24
25 8:30am Sacred Conversations 10am Service 11:15am P&W Choir 11:45am Diaconate 1pm TV Service	26 9am Counters 10:30am WOU 6pm Bell Choir 7pm Big Book	27 9:30am Fellowship Workshop 5pm SoME Dance 6:30pm Personnel Team 7pm Men's Fellowship	28 4pm Diaper Bank 5:30pm Jr Choir 6pm GS Troop 1106 6:30pm Council via Zoom 6:45pm Sr Choir	29 9am TOHG 4pm Tutor & Ed Testing 6:30pm Bible Study	Happy February! 	



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First Parish Congregational Church
12 Beach Street
Saco, ME 04072



February