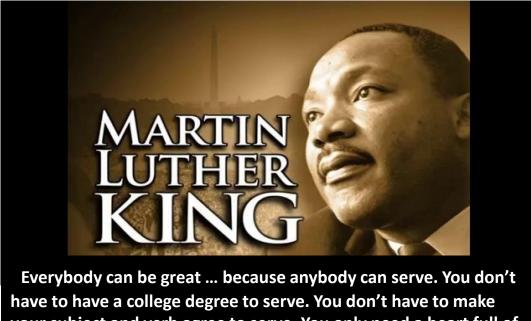
The Messenger

January

First Parish Congregational Church United Church of Christ The Church with Love & Hope to Share

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, January 18, 2021



your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 24th at 11:15 AM

Snow date January 31st

More Info will be coming

Super Bowl Sunday



Look for the Souperbowl sub order forms in this Messenger and on our website and facebook page.

Subs will be available after church on Sunday, **February 7, 2021**.

We will also be taking a special offering for Souper Bowl Sunday. This offering will stay in our community.

Donations can be made to First Parish UCC, Memo line: "Souperbowl offering"

Scott Cousineau, Senior Minister Kristine Galasyn, Director of Christian Education Jacqueline Savage, Music Director Nadeen DeSilva, Office Manager

scott.cousineau@firstparishsaco.org kris@firstparishsaco.org jacqui@firstparishsaco.org office@firstparishsaco.org

The Pastor's Perspective ...

In the days leading up to the end of 2020, I heard of a number of ways that people were planning to mark the event. One medical office invited its staff members to write the things that they were leaving behind and deposit them into a large envelope. The envelope was then burned on New Year's Eve. I heard of a congregation that invited its members to bring their 2020 calendars to a similarly themed bonfire. It seems as though a ceremonial burning was appropriate to bid farewell to a year that many referred to as a "dumpster fire."



I love a good fire as much as the next person, perhaps even more so, but I am not ready to throw everything about the year gone by into the inferno. Do not get me wrong, 2020 was a terrible year. The loss of human life and the suffering because of COVID-19, racial tension and protests, extremely divisive partisan politics took a toll upon this country that will take decades from which to recover. Sadly, much of that pain and difficulty has followed us into the New Year.

However, as difficult and painful as 2020 was, there were some remarkably powerful and meaningful moments. Most of us became well-acquainted with communication platforms that we had never even heard of a year ago. Some of you achieved competence, even advanced skills, in technology that you never imagined. We discovered just how precious our relationships are. Yes, absence does make the heart grow fonder. And many of us were given the opportunity to take stock of how we fill our days and have readjusted our priorities.

Here at the church, we had to reimagine how we do EVERYTHING! Every week presented new challenges and new opportunities for growth and creativity. We had to reinvent how we interact, how we do "business," how we minister to the community, and how we participate in worship. Twelve months ago, we would never have dreamed that we would do some of the things that we did in worship.

And you all rose to the challenge! Our worship attendance did not go down during the pandemic, it went up! Your giving did not go down, it went up! Your commitment to connecting with one another and maintaining relationships did not wither away, it grew stronger! It was not easy. There were some growing pains, and not everything that we tried was successful. But we made our way through this by extending our hearts and our hands and holding one another up.

The New Year brings exciting new possibilities. Three hundred and sixty-five opportunities to love our neighbors, to worship God, to deepen our faith, and to strengthen our relationships. We have three hundred and sixty-five opportunities to share joy, create peace and to offer hope. This is the day ... the week ... the year ... that the Lord has made! Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

May God bless you all and may God bless others through you!

Grace and Peace,

Scott

FROM THE MODERATOR FOR JANUARY 2021

With the end of a very strange year and the coming of a COVID vaccine there appears to be a light at the end of this very long tunnel. Although all our meetings since March have been by ZOOM, the council has remained active and involved with many important decisions in the life of First Parish.

During our last council meeting in December, we made the decision to authorize spending up to \$30,000 to revitalize the outdated live streaming portion of our AV system. A contract was signed with Stone Mountain Sound of South Portland to purchase and install the latest equipment and software necessary to allow the continuation of our very important live streaming of the Sunday morning service. The work is scheduled to begin immediately and completed by the end of January. Many thanks to Robert Guptill, Eric Steva and Freddie Connelly for their assistance in making this happen and to all those who made financial donations to pay for this work

The finance committee is presently working on finalizing our budget for 2021. Pledging has been steady and as of this date pledging totals approximately \$260,000. Many thanks to those who have pledged, and we hope that those who have not yet pledged will do so soon, to help meet our goal of \$280,000.

Our annual meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 24th at 11:15 AM with a snow date of January 31st. It will certainly be a different kind of meeting. We are currently in the process of determining the details of how to set up a ZOOM meeting with perhaps a small, limited gathering at the church for those who can not access a computer. Details of the meeting will be published when the "call" is sent out soon.

Finally, after three years serving as your moderator, it is time for a new facilitator to be chosen, who will be announced during the annual meeting. I feel honored to have been allowed to serve in this position and hope that whatever I contributed was worthwhile to the church. There are so many people I would like to thank for helping during my time as moderator. Our congregation is made up of many talented and devoted volunteers whose tireless work allows the church to continue providing the wonderful services that it does. And we are blessed by a very devoted staff under the leadership of Pastor Scott, including Nadeen DeSilva in the office, Jacqui Savage in music, Kris Galasyn in Christian Education, and our newest member of the team, Guy Rochefort as sexton. Working with the staff and with all the devoted volunteers has made my tenure as moderator very enjoyable. Thank you all very much.

Sincerely,

Bob Mohlin, Church Moderator

DEACONS' CORNER

Dear family and friends of First Parish,

By the time you read this message from the Diaconate, it will be 2021, a muchanticipated New Year. We will have weathered a troubling year, to say the least, dealing with the COVID-19 virus and all of its various implications for our daily lives, and a divisive presidential election that leaves us wondering just where our nation is headed. I think we are all very glad to see the end of 2020.

Of course, there have been some bright spots. We now have vaccines coming to help stem the surge of COVID-19 and most of us will be able to receive a vaccination in the coming months. Our democracy has survived in spite of unprecedented problems with the election and its outcome. We have entered the season of winter, but spring is only a few months away!

Locally, our church has been able to stay connected through the magic of technology. Our ZOOM meetings and, especially, our streaming worship services have brought us together even though we are apart. Which brings us to a problem that leads us to an opportunity. The problem, as you have undoubtedly noted, is the continual degrading of our audio-visual equipment. It seems that every week there is one more failure, one new glitch. Even though the system was new when the church was rebuilt, it has outlived its usefulness as technological advances have been made and we can no longer buy replacement parts for the outdated system.

The opportunity is that we have the impetus for a whole new redesign of the system. You may know that the church is raising money to replace the failing system, to the tune of about \$40,000. That is a lot of money, representing a lot of fund-raising, but we want to assure you that the Diaconate is fully behind this project. Our ability to live-stream our services, especially during the ongoing pandemic, is vital to the life of our church and to our community mission. Please consider giving whatever you can to this fund-raising effort. Happy New Year!

Love and blessings,

Nadine Russell and Dan Carter Co-chairs, FPC Diaconate



The New Year is here! I know that we are all hoping that this New

Year will bring the end to our pandemic and once again our church will be open and our pews filled with people instead of pictures. In the mean time we will be diligent mask wearers, social distancing, washing hands and continue to take care of each other. Yes, it has been a different kind of year but the First Parish community has rose to the occasion and has made the best of it.

Our virtual Church school Christmas Pageant was fantastic. We had 17 children with 12 families participating. Next year



I'm sure we will have double. Thanks to our participants, their families and all our music directors for making this happen. Heather Galasyn was a great helper getting everyone in costume as we had a shooting schedule to keep. A HUGE shout out to Freddie Connelly for shooting all the video and editing the entire pageant. Freddie, it would never have happened without you. I have received numerous emails and thank you's on Facebook about the pageant. We are so

happy that everyone loved it and that it brought great JOY to YOU. That is what the Christmas story is all about. Thank you everyone for the kind and beautiful words. They are greatly appreciated.

It has been a "different" kind of year, this year but our Faith Community has shined through with their love and generosity. After Thanksgiving each staff member found a



sweet little Christmas tree in their office covered in holiday cheer. Cards, candy, gift cards, magnets, holiday mask, ornaments, a set of lovely potholders. It was amazing. It was our own Advent calendar. What a sweet and caring gift from our Flower and Altar team and other teams and individuals. Thank you also to our Women's Fellowship for the kind gift.

Happy New Year
Stay safe and stay well

Kris





SPURWINK ADOPT-A-FAMILY

Thank you to all who participated in this project. We helped out six families, 15 children. Isn't this what Christmas is all about? Another program that we were able to still do but we did Covid safe. We collected donations, \$1500.00, and bought gift cards for each family to buy gifts for their children. We did this because we did not want to ask people to go into stores. Once again, Susan Anton and her daughter made Christmas stockings for each child and filled them. Through other generous donations, two full dinners from the Snowmobile Club (thank you Gordon Mehlman) and gift cards we were also able to put food on the table for the holidays.



Many thanks to our Youth for their leadership during our 5PM Family Christmas Eve service. We did the shoot many Sundays ago. This service also featured the Silent Night Project, Friendly Beasts and Away in a Manger from the Christmas Pageant and a Christmas story, "Jesus' Christmas Party" by Nicholas Allan.





Watch for your **Superbowl Subs** order form in **January** and also on the web

site. Subs will be available after church on **Sunday, February 7, 2021**

We will also be taking a special offering for **Souper Bowl Sunday**.



This offering will stay in our community

."I was hungry and you fed me."---Matthew 25:35, <u>The Message</u> by Eugene Peters



Martin Luther King Day of Service

January 18, 2021

Not A Day Off, But A Day On

Life's most urgent question is?

"What are you doing for others?"

-Martin Luther King

Due to the pandemic we are still working on a way to make Martin Luther King, Jr Day of Service happen. At this time we ask our Faith community to start collecting **Health and Beauty items**: toothbrushes,

toothpaste, soap, feminine sanitary products, deodorant (men and women), shampoo etc. items, toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, feminine sanitary products, deodorant (men and women), shampoo etc.

New Underwear, all sizes New Socks, all sizes

There is a shopping cart outside the parking lot entrance for all items to be left.

Thank you

FPYF Super Bowl Sub Sale

The First Parish Youth will once again be making their delicious SUPER SUBS!!!! **Order now** so that on February 7th you can relax and enjoy the Super Bowl, and not worry about dinner.

Due to Covid, Please order online or send/bring back this form to First Parish UCC.

Attn: Kris 12 Beach Street, Saco, Maine 04072 **Payment may accompany order, (checks payable to FPYF and in the memo line Souper bowl subs),** or pay at time of pick up.

Orders must be into the church office by **February 1**st.

PRICE \$4.50 PER SUB. All subs will be made fresh the morning of February 7th.

You may pick them up **Curbside** (**from 11-noon**) **that day**. A few extras will be made, but place an order to be sure that you won't be disappointed.

Special Orders DON'T Upset Us!

Thank you.	Dhone#
Name	Phone#
Email	
#Ham with onions	#Ham –NO onions
#Salami with onions	#Salami –NO onions
#Veggie with onions	#Veggie –NO onions
All subs come with pickles, che	ese, tomatoes, green peppers and black olives.

A Big thanks to Michael's Pizza for helping us with the fresh ingredients.



Advent/Christmas playlist

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL_NUr5JZJeHcA_sIGzPCbcZmvgFOAcXC7





Flower & Altar

Poinsettia Sunday

We hope that you enjoyed the poinsettias this year. Flower & Altar Team provided the poinsettias in honor and remembrance of all of our First Parish loved ones.

Altar Flowers

December 5th Given by Eddie & Jen Fullmer in memory of Eddie's Mom, Helene Fullmer

December 24th & 27th Given by Elizabeth Shaw In Memory of George Patrick Shaw

Would you like to remember, honor or celebrate a loved one? Most Sundays are available. If you wish to provide flowers, contact Marcia Lord at mvlord@aol.com or 207-768-1699 or Patrice Tripp at rtripp@maine.rr.com or 207-590-1109.



Men's Fellowship

The Men's Fellowship Group is alive and well after nearly two years of meetings, despite Covid-19! We are meeting via Zoom every Tuesday evening at 715PM and are currently studying Mark's Gospel. We discuss one chapter each week, so it is possible to join any evening and fully participate.

If you are interested in giving the group a try, please contact John Grew at grewjd@gmail.com

Please consider joining us for excellent study and fellowship!



PRAYER MINISTRY GROUP AT FIRST PARISH

Dear family and friends of First Parish,

2020 was quite a year! There is a group at First Parish who has been praying for family and friends in need, throughout the year. We are here for you, to add you or a loved one (pets included) to our prayer list. Please know that no prayer is too small. Sometimes, just knowing that others are thinking about you makes all the difference. If you are in need, please feel free to contact me or one of our group members.

Also, group member Brenda MacDonald, sends a series of books to those grieving the loss of a loved one. These books can provide comfort as you journey through your loss. She explains below.

Journeying through Grief is a set of 4 short books that are sent to grieving people at four crucial times during the first year after they have lost a loved one. Each of these four books focuses on the feelings and issues a person is likely to be experiencing at that point in his or her grief, offering comfort, help, and hope throughout that difficult first year.

Right after a loss, there is a lot of support and care shown. Within a few weeks, though, the cards, letters, visits and calls tend to taper off. Just when the reality of the loss is sinking in, grieving people can find themselves feeling alone and forgotten.

By sending these booklets out over the course of the year, we reach out with care at four crucial points during the grieving process, giving helpful timely information while helping the person feel valued and remembered.

This ministry is available to anyone you know who has lost a loved one recently. Please contact me if you want more information ~ *Brenda MacDonald*

May 2021 bring you peace, health and hope!

In Christ's love,

Debbie Grew 317-509-0551 debgrew1@gmail.com



Group Members

Jane Avery, Catherine Brockington, Karen Donoghue, Judy Gray, Debbie Grew, Jan Hryniewicz, Ethelee Jackson, Mary Johnson, Kathleen Larsen, Brenda MacDonald, Sue Neumyer and Joan Sonneborn.

Do you Pray? I loved this interpretation of Prayer. What is a prayer? Prayer doesn't just Happen when we kneel or put our hands Together and focus and expect things From God. Thinking positive and wishing Good for others in a prayer. When you hug A friend. That's a prayer. When you cook Something to nourish family and friends. That's a prayer. When we send off our near and dear ones and say, "drive safely" Or "be safe". That's a prayer. When you are Helping someone in need by giving your time and energy. You are praying. When You forgive someone by your heart. *That is prayer. Prayer is a vibration. A feeling. A thought. Prayer is the voice of love, Friendship, genuine relationships. Prayer Is an expression of your silent being. *Keep praying always*

Mission Team

Mission Team is again accepting donations of sturdy shoes and boots to give away on MLK Day.



Please leave the donation at the church, or in the shopping cart that is outside.

THIRTEENTH YEAR!



WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR OTHERS?

COME TO OUR OPEN DOOR

Please wear a mask and social distance FROM 9:00 AM to 1 PM

at



First Parish Congregational Church, UCC 12 Beach Street, Saco MONDAY, JANUARY 18, 2021 all Covid protocols will be in place



Saco Visiting Nurses Foot Care





Eye Screenings







Shoes

Warm clothes & Blankets

UNE



FMI: Call 283-3771

thank you

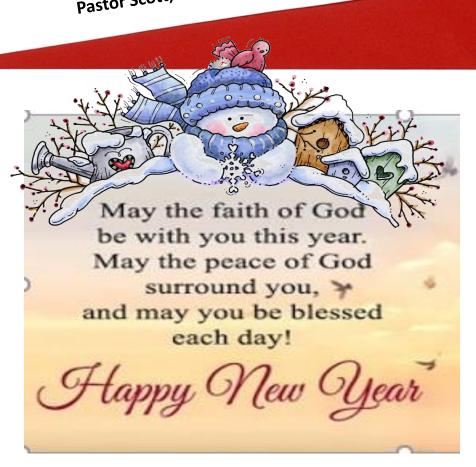
The First Parish Staff, would like to thank Flower and Altar and all the other teams that helped to put together our Advent Trees! It was such a wonderful surprise!

We'd also like to thank Women's Fellowship and everyone that brought us Christmas surprises and goodies.

This year has been very challenging and you all made it just a little bit easier.

Thank you! We really appreciated your thoughtfulness and kindness.

Sincerely, Pastor Scott, Kris, Jacqui, Nadeen and Guy



The Messenger First Parish Congregational Church 12 Beach Street Saco, ME 04072

