

# *The Messenger*

**First Parish Congregational Church  
United Church of Christ**

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*The Church with Love and Hope to Share*



## “We Miss You!”



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## Pastor Scott's Message...



Do you remember the old-time May Day celebrations ... children skipping and dancing around the May Pole decorating it with streamers and flowers? What a wonderful celebration of spring! Of course, the decorating of May Poles had gone the way of the dinosaur by the time I was growing up, but the images conjure up thoughts of happier days. Oh, what we would give to see the children ... to see ourselves ... dancing around the May Pole!

But, alas, that is not to be just yet. We are entering our second full month of quarantine and physical distancing. I am certain that we are all feeling the same things ... we want to DO something, we want to GO somewhere, we want to see people in real life ... not on some digital platform. We want to be together. We want our old lives back.

Or, do we?

How often did you feel stressed about your schedules? How often did you actually complete your 'To Do' list for the day? How often did you simply sit and enjoy a meal without interruption? How often did you go for a walk or sit and listen to the music of the earth?

I am not suggesting that we have returned to the Garden of Eden. I know that many of us are struggling right now. Some have had family members and friends suffer with the coronavirus. Some are working endless hours as frontline caregivers and essential employees. Some have lost jobs or experienced a reduction in income. Some have had to delay medical care and surgical procedures because hospitals and rehab facilities are not safe places right now. Some are trying desperately to work from home AND have become home educators for children. Some have missed out on proms, dances, concerts, graduations ... all of those milestone events in their lives. Some are feeling lost and alone.

O God, hear our prayers. Be with those who struggle. Give them your peace. Lift up those who are weary. Be their strength. Be with those who grieve. Enfold them in comforting arms. Be with those who are anxious. Give them hope. Take each and every child by the hand, be our rock and our salvation. Fill us with your Holy Spirit and lead us upon the way of healing and light. We need you ... how we need you ... for the living of this day. We pray in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

In the midst of these difficult days, I have been touched by the ways that this church family has responded and ministered to the needs of our community. You have made cloth masks and headbands, you have shopped for your neighbors, volunteered at food banks, given generously to the Deacons' Discretionary Fund. You have sent cards and letters; you have checked in on one another. You have embodied precisely what it means to live in the Kingdom of God! I thank you all from the depths of my soul for all that you have done to love and serve your neighbors.

Grace and Peace,

Scott

## Staying Connected



### **Sunday Night Coffee Hour – Sundays at 7:00 PM**

We miss every aspect of church life ... worship, Sunday school, coffee hour ... even meetings! Studies of church-going people have revealed that the number one reason that they go to church is because that is where their friends are. We have been able to “gather” together for virtual, live-streamed worship services. We have been able to conduct meetings via digital platforms. The choirs, prayer ministry, book group, and Men’s Fellowship have had online meetings. The one thing that we have missed is coffee hour.

So, let us gather for a virtual coffee hour on Sunday evenings at 7:00 PM. Last week, an email blast was sent out with an invitation to the first one. If you did not receive the email, please call the church office and we can send it to you. If you do not have internet access, there is an opportunity to call in on the phone. You can call the office to get the access number.

I look forward to seeing you there!

Scott



### **Worship Services on Cable Access TV**

Good news! People without internet access can now watch our worship service on television. The services will be aired on Biddeford’s community access channel (#1302) on Sundays at 12:30 PM and then daily, Monday through Friday, at 11:30 AM. Residents of Biddeford, Saco and Old Orchard Beach are able to watch.

Thank you Nadeen DeSilva for setting this up for us!



# Music Sunday!

**SUNDAY MAY 10<sup>TH</sup>, 2020**

Please join us online at 9:50AM for a video of pictures of the music program from 2019/2020



## Special Thanks.....

**Directors** ~ **Susan Marston** who directs the Junior Choir, **Audrey Cabral** who directs the Bell Choir, and **Delaney Clifford** who directs the Cherub Choir.

These groups have added so much to worship services throughout the year

**Music and Arts Team** ~ Jamie Beals (Team Leader), Lynn Beals, Al Sicard, Tucker Austin, Ralph Neumyer, Jennifer Poore, and Susan Marston

**Music Librarian** ~ We thank Kathy Lund for years of service keeping our music files organized, and we welcome Peggy Blood who will take over that position.

**Robe and email list keeper** ~ Lynn Beals

**Trumpeter** ~ Nancy MacNider

**Percussionist and Youth Choir Accompanist** ~ Sarah Heath

*We also have amazing parents in the church that bring their kids to and from rehearsals for Junior, Youth, and Cherub Choirs. Thank you!*



## Deacons' Corner

Greetings! What a weird new world we are living in during these days of the COVID-19 pandemic!

It is inhibiting and frightening and depressing, and sometimes even boring. We pass the time separated from friends and family, bombarded with bad news and scary updates. We long for a return to normal, knowing normal will never be the same as we remember.

Blessings abound, however! The technology that keeps us informed and often frustrated also brings us together in new ways. It is easy for most of us to reach out and be face-to-face with our friends and loved ones, via the internet. We have virtual family reunions and our children are still going to school. Many of us are able to work from home if we are fortunate enough to still be employed. Church boards are having Zoom meetings to talk about how we can maintain the church and stay connected through all this.

We even have online worship services, through YouTube and Facebook, with wonderful, uplifting messages from Pastor Scott and amazing music from Jacqui Savage. A lot of people are "attending." The Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Easter services were incredible! As a church, we are truly blessed, even while the world around us is changing.

The Diaconate is currently meeting (Zoom!) every Friday morning at 11:30, to encourage each other and to discuss the needs of our congregation. Our mission at this moment is to maintain connections with our members, particularly those folks who live alone or who have no internet access. We make personal phone calls and send cards or notes to several people in those situations. We all find that folks are glad to be called and, as deacons, we are also blessed by the contact. We have come to believe there really is a silver lining to this cloud of uncertainty.

If you need anything within the realm of possibility for the church or pastor or deacons, please let us know. Call or email the church office or Pastor Scott. We are here to help, in Jesus' name.

Thanks and blessings,  
Dan Carter and Nadine Russell,  
Co-chairs





The month of May is always a very busy time for the life of our church. It is a time of wonderful celebrations. The program year is winding down and we are all looking forward to summer. This year is a little different but I would still like to say Thank you to so many people who make our **Christian Education** program so full and exciting.



Thank you to our **Christian Education Team:**

Karen Brann, Chair, Youth Fellowship Leader

Mary Coyne

Lisa Edstrom, Nursery Coordinator

Jennifer Erickson

Linda Lambert, Church school teacher

Mary Sicard, Recorder

Eric Steva, Youth Fellowship Leader



To our **Church School Teachers:**

Linda Lambert, Danielle Roberge and Michael Remillard- PreK, K and 1st grade

Heather Nolette, Allison DiMatteo, Rachel and Brent Reiche- Grades 2, 3, &4

Jane and Rick Campbell- 5, 6, & 7

Amy Chute and Jen Erickson (in the Campbell's absence

Karen Brann and Brian Doyle-Senior high class (Grade 8 through 12)



First Parish Christian Education Team appreciates all of our **Nursery Volunteers**. Up until Covid-19, our nursery has been in the double digits. We appreciate all our volunteers for helping Lisa in our nursery. **Thank You**

**you - you - youth**



To our **Youth Fellowship Leaders**

## Fellowship

Karen Brann

Brian Doyle

Eric Steva



To our **Acolytes**

Johanna Fitzgerald

Lucy Perry

Connor Remillard

Cam Roberge

Alex Savage

Cameron Wiggins-Mehlman



To our **Children's Music Directors**

Delaney Clifford, Cherub choir

Susan Marston, Junior Choir

Jacqui Savage, Youth Choir



To our **Vacation Bible School Leaders**

We are still planning on holding this summer's VBS, July 6-10<sup>th</sup>  
from 9-11:30 AM.

Marge Belanger, Bible Story Tellers

Susan Marston, Music

Ella Marston, Crafts

Cam and Danielle Roberge, Recreation

Nadine Russell, Science

Aldene Walters, Snacks

Judy & Peter Gray, Helpers



Every Mother's Day our youth give each person the opportunity to buy a **Blanket from Church World Service (CWS)**

These Blankets are \$10 each and provide relief in times of disasters. Due to Covid-19 we will not be able to have our Mother's Day Breakfast but that doesn't mean we can't participate in this special Sunday offering. If you

would like to donate to CWS through Blanket Sunday please send your check to First Parish UCC, 12 Beach Street, Saco, ME 04072. Please make checks payable to First Parish UCC with Blankets in the memo line. Thank you so much. Please remember that because Saco First Parish donates to CWS Blanket Sunday we are able to receive a shipment of blankets, free of charge, to hand out to our neighbors during our Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service

Please read the following excerpt from the CWS website

### **Blanket the world with LOVE**

As I sit in the middle of the cold winter months, I often think about our neighbors that are experiencing the cold differently than my family and me. I think about our neighbors who can't afford to keep their furnace set at 72 degrees all day long; our neighbors who spend cold winter nights in their car because they don't have a house to go home to; our neighbors who sleep on a park bench or under a bridge. These are also the times that I think about the impact a simple blanket can make on the spirit of our neighbors in these situations. The CWS Blanket ministry is an easy way for churches to participate in a broad-reaching mission to provide our neighbors that are experiencing poverty, displacement or disaster with a warm blanket to comfort them in their time of need.



Pilgrim Lodge is taking registrations for summer 2020 camping experiences. PL Campership applications are on the First Parish Website.



### **High School and College Graduations**

Those graduating from High School or College will be honored in our June Messenger. Parents, please let Kris know, [kris@firstparishsaco.org](mailto:kris@firstparishsaco.org)

if you have a graduate in YOUR family. We need Name, H.S. or College graduating from, future plans (i.e. College attending or job), and parent's names. Thank you.



**Confirmation** At present we are still hoping to have Confirmation Sunday on May 31<sup>st</sup>. At this time, we do not know exactly what that will look like, but that is our hope.

# Missions



## Are you bored of staying home?

You can still safely volunteer at 3 local places that continue to operate during the Covid-19 Pandemic:

**Saco Food Pantry**, 67 Ocean Park Road, Saco, needs volunteers to deliver food or help in other ways. No more than 5 volunteers can be in the building at one time. Gloves are provided, and the volunteers have worn their own masks. Volunteers unload trucks and restock shelves between 7 am and 9 am. People who pack the food into units (to give away) generally work from 9 am to 10:30 am.

The clients remain outside and the carts are sanitized when returned to the building. There is no contact between the workers and the clients. Some volunteers are called on to deliver food to people with underlying conditions or who are housebound. The volunteers who deliver the food wear gloves (and masks if available) and leave the food outdoors near the client's main entrance.

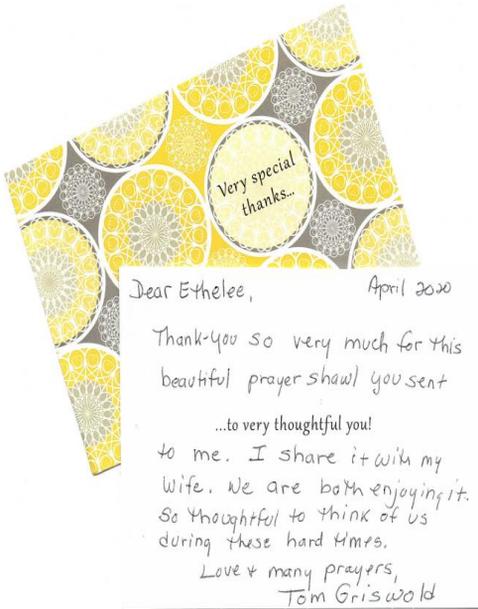
Please contact Lynn Steed at 494-8662 or [lsted203@gmail.com](mailto:lsted203@gmail.com) if you would like to volunteer. As always, monetary or food donations are gladly accepted! You may also visit [sacofoodpantry.org](http://sacofoodpantry.org) for information.

**Bon Appetit**, 19 Crescent St, Biddeford, remains in operation for carry-out meals. Contact Laura Cortwright at [llccmb@yahoo.com](mailto:llccmb@yahoo.com) for more information.

**Seeds of Hope**, 35 South St, Biddeford, provides (carry out) brown bag breakfast and lunch 5 days per week. The volunteers are provided with gloves and cloth masks, and need to stay 6 feet apart. Visit [seedsofhope4me.org](http://seedsofhope4me.org) for more information or to donate online. You may also contact Rev. Shirley Bowen at [rev.shirley@seedsofhope4me.org](mailto:rev.shirley@seedsofhope4me.org), or phone (207) 571-9601.

# PRAYER MINISTRY

## Thoughts on Prayer



*Pray as you can,  
Not as you can't -  
Don John Chapman*

*To clasp the hands in prayer is the  
beginning of an uprising against the  
disorder of the world -  
Karl Barth*

*...When you pray, go into your room,  
close the door, and pray to your Father,  
who is unseen. Any your Father, who sees  
what you do in private, will reward you. -  
Matthew:6:6 Good News Bible*

*True, whole prayer is  
nothing but love - St.  
Augustine*

**Whether we like it or not, asking  
is the rule of the kingdom. -  
C. H. Spurgeon**

***...Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.  
Romans 12:12 NIV***

**PRAY BIG....  
WORRY LITTLE -  
John L.**

***...Be cheerful no matter what;  
pray all the time; thank God no  
matter what happens. This is  
the way God wants you who  
belong to Christ Jesus to live -  
1 Thessalonians - The Message***

**...Whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive -  
Matthew 21:22 NKJV**

## Flower & Altar

Flower & Altar wants to thank the following people for the flowers/plants that graced our sanctuary during the month of April

April 5th Edward Olsen in memory of Mary Agnes Hayes

April 12th Easter Flowers were provided through the Hewes Flower Fund

April 19th Gerald Scribner in honor of Family Birthdays

April 25th Marianne & Eddie Cook in memory of Marianne's parents, Charles & Priscilla

Large Palms given by Deb & Mike Richard in memory of their daughter, Tracy Lynn

The month of May is open if anyone would like to provide flowers for the Altar.

Please contact Patrice Tripp at [rtripp@maine.rr.com](mailto:rtripp@maine.rr.com) or 590-1109

*If I had a  
Single Flower  
for every time  
I Think About You,  
I could walk forever  
in my garden...*



*-Claudia Ghandi*



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Check it out at <https://www.firstparishsaco.org>

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and  
Subscribe to our YouTube channel

Search either service for *First Parish Saco*

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Do you have Feedback or Suggestions?  
Please email [feedback@firstparishsaco.org](mailto:feedback@firstparishsaco.org)

