

The Messenger

First Parish Congregational Church
United Church of Christ



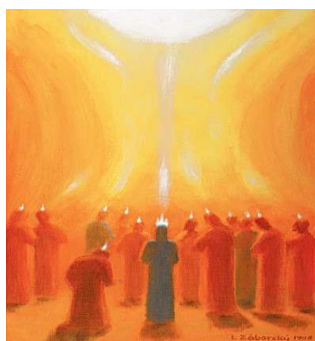
May
2021

The Church with Love and Hope to Share

MUSIC SUNDAY
Sunday May 2nd , 2021



Blanket Sunday
Mother's Day
May 9th , 2021



Pentecost Sunday
May 23rd , 2021

CHILDREN'S DAY



Children's Sunday
May 30th , 2021

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

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The Pastor's Perspective ...

My previous church was just a few miles away from Gillette Stadium, the home of the New England Patriots. That proximity meant that I could sometimes stand in the backyard of the parsonage and hear the louder concerts that took place at the stadium. It also meant that I had the opportunity to attend a game or two.



One afternoon, the doorbell of the parsonage rang. I opened the door to find a friend and colleague standing on the porch. He said that he was going to the Patriots' game that evening and wondered if it would be okay if he parked in the driveway. I replied, "I am going to the game as well. Why don't we go together?"

The opponent for the Patriots that evening was the New York Jets. When the appointed time came, my friend arrived at my doorstep decked out head to toe in Jets' regalia! You may have guessed that my friend had a long evening ahead of him. He was heckled all the way as we walked from the parking lot to the stadium. The Patriots trounced the Jets, so my friend was teased throughout the game. (He wanted to leave early, but I refused. He was going to enjoy every minute of the game!) After the game, people hurled insults at him as we walked back to the car. Most of the heckling was good-natured fun, but some got pretty ugly.

My friend knew what he was getting himself into. He picked out his attire for the evening. My guess is that he had a pretty good idea of what he was getting himself into with his love of the Jets being on full display. I knew what he had in store for him as well. I got heckled at one particular game because I wore a knit hat from Peru. It had nothing to do with the Jets, but for some reason the Pats fans took umbrage with that hat!

If only this sort of behavior was limited to sports fans. Sadly, even tragically, people are accosted, assaulted, beaten and abused every day, not because of the jersey that they wear or the hat upon their head, but because of the color of their skin, or their gender identity, or the person for whom they have affection. Racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and many other manifestations of hate and exclusion are running rampant in the world. People are getting attacked as they walk through the park, or down the street, or in their homes simply because of who they are. People are confronted, convicted and condemned by those who assume a superior position with regard to their neighbors. It is wrong, and it has to stop.

"Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness.'" (Genesis 1:26) God did NOT say, "Let us make *SOME* of them in our image." Or, "Let us make some of them better than the others." Humankind ... ALL of humankind ... is created in the image and likeness of God.

All of God's beloved children are welcome here and loved here. Even Jets fans.

Peace be with you,

Scott



Moderator Update

Sunshine, warmth, and hope abide!! It is very energizing to see light at the end of the “COVID tunnel!” I know we are all looking forward to worshipping together and being together in person to intensify the powerful ministries of hope and love that this church shares.

This is an exciting time for the church as we not only see the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, but also see the light brightening around our Church ministries. As you all know, First Parish Church underwent a significant amount of uncertainty and change over the past few years. This church family did an amazing job of overcoming challenges, bringing on an amazing pastor, and reenergizing a dedicated and gifted congregation...and then...COVID. Despite COVID, First Parish thrives.

Our church is made up of an amazing motivated, dedicated, and energized family and this congregation is blessed with countless gifts and talents. We are now in a great position to finally be able to take a step back and do some assessment to make sure our organization and processes are optimized to capitalize on the great work of the church, while ensuring we are all rowing together under one common FPC vision toward a common goal. As such, your council believes that there has never been a better time to assess ourselves as an organization to ensure we can continue to serve and thrive for years to come.

In 2019, the First Parish Church Sustainability Task Force conducted a study and published a report that highlighted a couple of potential focus areas for improvement. In that same year, Lynne Siulinski met with many of the church teams and conducted some SWOT analysis that highlighted the same focus areas. For those not familiar, a church SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis helps paint a picture of the environment a church operates in. Examining where our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats intersect will help us understand our common goals as a church and help us all row together with a shared vision and cohesion of mission.

Your church council is reenergizing these efforts that began in 2019 and we will begin by conducting a SWOT analysis at our April meeting. After this first step, we will provide an update in the next Messenger and seek input from the congregation. The SWOT results will allow us to identify where we can find some efficiencies in vectoring our contagious energy to make our church missions more effective and more sustainable, while remaining aligned in our service to God, the church, and the community.

Here's a link for those who would like some more information regarding the benefits of conducting a SWOT analysis as a church:

<https://spreadsheetsforbusiness.com/church-swot-analysis/#:~:text=If%20you're%20not%20familiar,by%20the%20opportunities%20and%20threats>

In your service,
Jen

Music Sunday

Jacqui Savage: Music Director

During this unprecedented year we will have another virtual service for our Music Sunday service. Please join us for our "Covid Choir Documentary" which will explore what it was like for a choir member this past year. Even though we have been virtual, our programs have been active and there are many to thank!

-Jacqui

Thank you!

Peggy Blood: Peggy is our Music Librarian, she has organized all our music this year, put it out when needed and kept track of it all. She has been extremely helpful in helping me to keep our library up to date.

Lynn Beals: Lynn organizes a list of our choir contact information, organizes our robes and has made many of the singers masks choristers are currently wearing.

Susan Marston: *Junior Choir Director extraordinaire!* Susan has worked hard to keep our Junior Choir program alive and well through the pandemic. The group met weekly over zoom and provided virtual choir anthems throughout the year. Susan had so much energy each week along with noodle doodles to share. You will have to ask a Junior Choir Member to show you what they are!

Delaney Clifford: Delaney continues to record Cherub Choir Videos throughout the year so our littles can sing, dance, play instruments and sing all year long.

Sarah Heath: Sarah was our Cantor for many months before the choir came back to sing on Sunday mornings. She accompanied as needed, played percussion and helped Jacqui with anything she might need before service and before rehearsals.



Jamie Beals: Jamie is our Music and Arts Team Leader and also has played Sax and done solos throughout the year as needed.

Music and Arts: Jamie Beals, Lynn Beals, Jennifer Poore, Susan Marston, Al Sicard, Ralph Neumyer, and Tucker Austin. This year Jamie Johnson, Alex Savage and Hope Poore will be joining us (brand new confirmands!)

Scott Cousineau: Scott has supported all that we have done throughout the year. It is clear Music is very important to him and I'm truly thankful for his leadership and support.

First Parish Covid Choir

Peggy Blood, Soprano
Delaney Clifford, Soprano
Dolly Curtis, Soprano
Jean Duling, Soprano
Faith Garnett, Soprano
Judy Gray, Soprano
Sarah Heath, Soprano
Jamie Johnson, Soprano
Vanessa Johnston, Soprano
Denise Meiler, Soprano
Ellie Osborne, Soprano
Jennifer Poore, Soprano
Mary Ann Prince, Soprano
Ella Walters, Soprano
Sean Butterworth, Tenor
Peter Gray, Tenor
Nancy MacNider, Tenor

Lynn Beals, Alto
Sandy Duross, Alto
Suzanne Farley, Alto
Kathleen Judice, Alto
Maya Judice, Alto
Hope Poore, Alto
Susan Upham, Alto
Peggy Warden, Alto
Tucker Austin, Bass
Jamie Beals, Bass
Phil Blood, Bass
Lee Perkins, Bass
Alex Savage, Bass
David Johnston, Tenor
Kathy Lund, Tenor
Marston Poore, Tenor

Junior Choir

Lucy DesRoberts, Jonah Hersey, Lila Hersey, Aiden Karbel, Nora Karbel, Annie Perry, Cassie Remillard, Chloe Remillard, Connor Remillard, Emily Savage

Junior Choir



The Junior Choir year has been nothing short of amazing! Who would have believed that we could have a Zoom Choir for ten faithful singers, ages three through 12? Every week Jacqui and I would get ready at 4:00 Thursday afternoon and watch the monitor as 10 smiling faced children came on-line to visit with each other and sing together. It was true dedication.

It wasn't all singing. We spent a few minutes each week catching up on events in their lives, celebrating birthdays and holidays. I also had some word puzzles each week that I called noodle doodles. The children got very clever at solving the puzzles.

Each week Pastor Scott secretly tried to surprise the Choir and sneak into the picture, but always someone would shout out, "I see Pastor Scott". It was great fun.

The children have prepared and recorded five songs. That is no easy feat. It was completely new to me and to them, but these children have grown up with technology and they rose to the challenge.

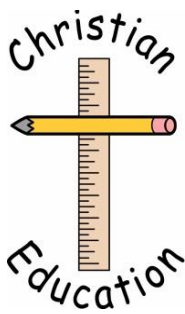
We can never have Junior Choir without the parents. The parents made sure their children were on-line on time, helped record the songs and sent them in. Jacqui and I are so grateful to each of the families. It takes a village to have a Zoom Junior Choir.

Susan Marston
Junior Choir Director

Thank You!!

Music Sunday
May 2nd





This year has been like no other year before it. Covid has changed everything we have ever done and will do again. Our world is different and so is how we do Church and Church school. Last September we introduced a new curriculum to our church family.



Through this curriculum we have had virtual church school not only for our children and youth but also for our adults. With Scott's help, we introduced the "Good Morning Everyone" show. At the end of this month we will be at Episode 39 of Season 1. We have met Carly, Gabby, Samuel and Abigail. We have travelled through God Creates, the Christmas Story, Easter and will end with Pentecost. We have learned the words: Creativity, Faith, Blessing, Joy, Include, Guide, Remember, Share and Love

We have changed the items on our Wonder Table every month, (9 times) and after every quarter we have changed our Wonder Wall, (for a total of 3 times). We have handed out curriculum packets, candy, Valentines, candy, ice cream cone cupcakes and blessed backpacks with our drive thru's.

We have Baptized two youth and Confirmed eight youth as new members. We have handed out six bibles to our third graders and had a cast of 20 for our virtual Christmas Pageant.

It has been a whirlwind of a year. We have lost some things and gained some things. We have learned to be together in new and fun ways. We have learned to slow down.

On Sunday, May 30th we will be celebrating our Church school children and youth. At that time we will acknowledge all our adult leaders who give so graciously of their time and talents in sharing their faith with our future generations. Please join us for this time of celebration. Thank you.

Stay well and stay safe,

Kris



Blanket Sunday/ Mother's Day

This month we will be inviting people to buy a blanket for Church World Service to "Blanket the World with Love". Anyone wishing to buy a blanket please send a check to First Parish, UCC, 12 Beach Street, Saco, Maine, 04072. Please make checks payable to FPYF, (First Parish Youth Fellowship), and write blankets in the memo line. Blankets are \$10. Since it is Mother's Day, if you would like to give a blanket in honor/memory of your mother or another loved one please email me, kris@firstparishsaco.org, their name and I will be glad to list them in next month's Messenger. If you would like a CWS card to send to your honoree please stop by the church and I will have them in the office. Thank you so much

April Baptisms

Welcome to the UCC

April 11

Grace Doyle

Parents: Jennifer and Brian

Gabriella Amanda Walters

Parents: Karen Hanna and John Walters



Fellowship

College Care Packages

This year we have three college students preparing for their exams. **Kaeley Brann** and **Ben Steva** are both sophomore's at UMO. **Sadie Gray** is a freshman at UMF. We recently sent them each a college care package to remind them of how much their church loves and cares for them. Each box contained lots of snacks and a DD gift card.



Anna DiMatteo recently participated in a 10

week Central America gap year program with Pacific Discovery. This included Mexico, Guatemala and Costa Rica. It was a combination of service learning, environmental/cultural education and adventure programming. We are so proud of all our youth and wish them well.



Vacation Bible School

July 6-9, 2021

Tuesday – Friday

9-11:30 AM

In

person/Covid protocols

Children 4 years through 5th grade

Our theme for this year is **Discovery on Adventure Island**. Our Bible verse is:

“Arise, shine! Your light has come; the LORD’S glory has shone upon you!”

— Isaiah 60:1

Explorers are guided by the lighthouse Keeper and Beacon the Puffin as they discover clues to find four lanterns while learning how God’s light shines in the lives of Bible characters from the Old and New Testament.

Registration is now open on the website. Please go to our Christian Education page.

www.firstparishsaco.org

First Parish



Many years ago, First Parish voted to become an Open and Affirming Church. This means that not only do we welcome everyone of all genders and sexualities, but we stand true to the Christian ideals of loving everyone equally, just as Jesus asked us to do. All churches say everyone is welcome, but for many, there is an asterisk there, an asterisk especially aimed at those in the LGBTQ+ community. But not here. Here, at First Parish in Saco, when we say we love and accept everyone, we mean it. We wholeheartedly accept that Jesus calls us to love everyone and we intend to live up to that call. First Parish is a safe place for LGBTQ+ people. A place where you can be loved. A place where you can be accepted. A place where we embrace our differences in celebration that at our core, we are all children of God, the flock of Jesus, and a church family.

In that spirit, The Christian Education Team has called for the formation of a **First Parish**



This group will be our way to better connect with the wider LGBTQ+ community. FP Pride will have three main focuses: Educate the church community of issues in the LGBTQ+ Community, Outreach to the community and spread our message of love and acceptance to let people of all genders and sexualities know they are welcomed and loved at First Parish as well as help out those in need in those communities in any way we can, and Celebrate the LGBTQ+ community including Pride month celebrations. Our first meeting will be May 15th, at 9:30 AM, please join us if you are interested in participating in this wonderful new team, no matter your identity or orientation, if you are part of the LGBTQ+ Community or if you are an ally of the community. Our first

meeting will be planning our first Pride Sunday as well as coming up with projects we will be doing in the coming months! We are so excited to begin to step up our efforts and really show the world we mean it when we say

ALL ARE WELCOMED!



New Members

April 11th was Confirmation Sunday. All of the youth are very involved in the church.

They enjoyed a celebratory drive thru in their honor and we thank everyone who drove by to welcome these new members. Ice cream cone cupcakes were enjoyed by all.



Deacons' Corner



Dear family and friends of First Parish,

Finally! It's spring! There are daffodils in our gardens and leaf buds in the trees. It's glorious to be able to open the windows and hear the birds singing praises to the universe. There's a palpable sense of renewal in the air, in our church and in our community. The pandemic isn't over, but many of us are now vaccinated and we can see a very bright light at the end of a long, dark tunnel.

Things are happening at church, too. The Sunday after Easter, we had a wonderful Confirmation Sunday with eight amazing young people confirming their faith and becoming full church members. We were able to actually hold that service in the sanctuary with the confirmands and their families, along with their mentors, all masked and socially distant. There was no congregational singing (a recommended Covid safety protocol) but those of us who were fortunate enough to be there felt blessed to be back in church again. Sometime in the next few months, everyone will have a chance to experience that blessing.

You might like to know that a sub-committee of deacons (and some very enthusiastic volunteers) are preparing to establish a diaper bank here at First Parish. Pam Mohlin has done a lot of research on the subject and has discovered there is great need in York County. The cost of diapers is not covered by Mainecare or family assistance programs. Since we are the "church with hope and love to share," we decided it was a natural and important way to minister to our community. Planning is ongoing but we expect to begin soliciting contributions and distributing diapers in the very near future. (First Parish folks are famously generous.) Stay tuned!

We sincerely hope you are all feeling the promise of spring. Meanwhile, please hold each other in your prayers, as we deacons hold you in ours.
Happy Spring!

Love and blessings,
Nadine Russell and Dan Carter





Coming soon to the Three Great Loves Initiative of the ucc.org website:
The story of Daisy's Children!

Saco Food Pantry Ministry



volunteers needed 7:30 am to 8:30 am weekdays at the **Saco Food Pantry**. Call Lynn Steed at (207) 494-8662 or email lsted203@gmail.com if you would like to volunteer.

If you would like to donate to the Saco Food Pantry, please consider some new items: **jelly or jam, but not grape**, and/or **coffee**. Other items, as listed below, would also be welcome:

Food

- *Complete Pancake Mix and Syrup
- *Can Stew, Chili, Hearty Soups and Chowders
(NO tomato or cream of mushroom)
- *Spaghetti
(regular spaghetti, not elbows, etc.)
- *Rice Pilaf, Rice-a-Roni, Ramen Noodles

Hygiene Products

- *Shampoo
- *Toothbrushes
- *Bath Tissue
- *Bar Soap



*The cart for the Saco Food Pantry will be located outside the main doors of First Parish Congregational Church-UCC, Saco, **Monday to Friday** from 9 am to 4 pm.*



Flower & Altar



We are blessed to have donations for altar flowers in honor or memory of loved ones. Most Sundays after May 9th are open.

If you would like to provide flowers for the altar, contact Patrice Tripp at 590-1109 or rtripp@maine.rr.com or Marcia Lord at 768-1699 or mvlord@aol.com. Please tell us if the flowers are in remembrance of someone, or in honor of a person.

Easter flowers were provided by the Flower and Altar Team. Thank you to Nadine Russell for providing flowers in honor of the confirmation class.

Would you like to be active in a small way to help with the exterior plantings at the church? We would like to start "Weeding Wednesdays" in an attempt to beautify and maintain the fish garden and the garden near the sign. Watch the announcements for more details.

We are all looking forward to the time when we will be together again for worship and fellowship. Happy Spring!

Patrice & Marcia



Hi Folks!



Spring is here and I've been working around the church doing spring cleaning. I'm keeping the church clean and making sure it looks nice for when people come to visit.


We've also been working on the air quality system for the building, this will help the air flow better and help to keep the church air clean.

As always, if you need anything just let me know!

Guy



Sandy Duross, Biddeford: 'Garden of friend' a place of sun and breeze where time slows

 [pressherald.com/2021/04/22/sandy-duross-biddeford-garden-of-friend-is-a-place-of-color-and-breeze-where-time-slows/](https://www.pressherald.com/2021/04/22/sandy-duross-biddeford-garden-of-friend-is-a-place-of-color-and-breeze-where-time-slows/)

April 22, 2021

There is a place that could be aptly named "Garden of Eden" but in actuality is really "garden of friend": a friend who comprehends the healing, nourishing properties of nature's proximity. It is a place that intersects between heaven and earth, a place that invites thought and introspection. It is a "homing" place to birdlife, wildlife, plant life, quietude ... it is the place I call my "sanctuary."

For it is among the floral scents, the birdsong, the serenity, that I discover the essence of my being, that I become one with Universe, that my soul sings the melody that life beholds. It is among the rock formations, the granite boulders, the man-made stepping-stones and rock walls that my spirit climbs, ascends to heights previously unknown.

It is a place where time, where breath, where step slows, where song sings on the breath of trees, where oak, where maple, where pine complement each other, provide breeze and canopy as needed. It is among the coneflowers, the coreopsis, the asters, the periwinkle, columbine, daylilies, lupine, that my pen is inspired to write the words, the poem that dwells in the deepest folds of my soul ... the ode simply titled "Sanctuary."

"There is a place where you become one with nature/one with the intrinsic being of your soul/a place where lone is not alone/but a figment of a unified whole/ a place where seed thought/like flower, develops, blossoms/ becomes more."

Oh yes, there is a place I call "garden of friend" that belies, defies a world pandemic; that provides respite from its stresses and woes. It is a place where plants free-form dance, where shrubs hug and thrive, where a hummingbird's hum is nature's lullaby. It is a place



"It is among the coneflowers, the coreopsis, the asters, the periwinkle, columbine, daylilies, lupine, that my pen is inspired to write the words, the poem that dwells in the deepest folds of my soul," Sandy Duross writes. *Photo courtesy of Sandy Duross*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sandy Duross is a resident of Biddeford, where her poetic writings germinate and blossom in "garden of friend."

Continue

where wind chimes climb or descend an octave or two or more, say welcome and inquire how-do-you-do; where peace and tranquility intertwine like nearby climbing roses or vine.

And when comes time for sunrise, for garden to waken, pry open its nature-imbued eyes, is when “alive” becomes an understatement, is when dawn dawns on an awe-struck humankind. As day develops, as flowers are sun-teased open, they invite pollinators to pollinate, to spread their glory; just as I invite their inspiration to feed and pollinate the words that flow from my pen ... to know growth and return in kind.

And so it goes ... life in “garden of friend” not unlike the garden of Eden, where life and spirit blossom as one.


Gail Caiazzo, Saco: Blossoming garden feeds growing family, lingering memories filed under: gardens, Meetinghouse © 2021





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Please email feedback@firstparishsaco.org

www.firstparishsaco.org



Worship Services on Cable Access TV

People without internet access can watch our worship service on television. The services are aired on Biddeford's community access channel (#1302) on Sundays at 12:30 PM. Please note that the services that are aired are one week behind the live church service.

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