

2020 The Messenger

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



Happy
Thanksgiving



Church office will be closed

*Veterans Day, November 11th
Thanksgiving, November 26th & 27th*



**Youth Fellowship Thanksgiving Baskets
Sunday, November 22nd**

Rev. Scott Cousineau, Senior Minister
Kristine Galasyn, Director of Christian Education
Jacqueline Savage, Music Director
Bob Mohlin, Church Moderator
Nadeen DeSilva, Office Administrator

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office@firstparishsaco.org

The Pastor's Perspective ...



Thanks be to God!

'Tis the season to be thankful. It is the season of feasts and family gatherings. A time when our houses are crammed full of people and we cram our tummies full of turkey and all the fixings. It is the season of football rivalries and Fall festivals. Or not.

I do not need to tell you the reason why. We all know why we are still isolating and distancing ourselves from one another. We make sacrifices now so that when we are able to gather again there will not be anyone missing.

No one is enjoying this time apart. No one asked for this. I know that this is NOT how I expected my first year at First Parish Church to go. Yet, there are still reasons to be thankful. I am thankful for all of you!

I am thankful for a church family that is patient and understanding as we have traveled through the wilderness of the global pandemic together. I am thankful that you have been so supportive and encouraging as we have tried to find our way. Some of my colleagues have felt pressured by the church families that they serve to resume worship and ministries before they were ready. I have not felt such pressure from you. Thank you!

I am thankful for all of the volunteers that are still serving the church and the church family. You have had to think outside the proverbial box, you have been creative and innovative. You have been faithful. You have continued to reach out and connect with one another. You have cared for each other, our building, and our community. Thank you!

I am thankful for the church staff that has also been resourceful and dedicated as we have faithfully carried out the mission and ministries of the church. We laughed when we had our calendar planning meeting in August. I am so thankful for an incredible team that has truly worked diligently to serve our church family.

We are about to enter a very special season of the year and we will not be able to do things in the manner to which we are accustomed. But as we have done for the last eight months, we will get through this together. I am excited about the wonderful ideas that have come out of our discussions about how we can possibly make this season special and meaningful for the church family. For example:

We are going to present a Christmas pageant! We will record the children and youth separately and then Freddie Connelly will weave it together.

We have another special project for Christmas Eve. Since we will not be able to gather together in the sanctuary to sing 'Silent Night' by candlelight, we are going to ask all of you to take a photograph of yourself holding a candle, or a video of yourself singing 'Silent Night,' and send it to us at the church. Again, it will be woven together for our Christmas Eve services. I think that it will be amazing!

And there is more to come! Thanks be to God!

Scott

Generosity / Stewardship Update

As you are aware, a letter was sent out to the congregation recently that included a pledge card.

The team is requesting that the congregation, please send back your pledge in the provided envelope by November 21st.

This would be very helpful to assist the Financial team in developing the budget for next year.

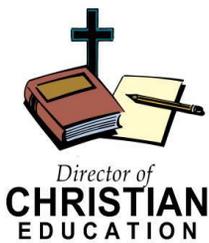


Audio Visual Update

As we all know, the Covid 19 pandemic has created huge issues for everyone. But as inconvenient as it is, at least we have been able to enjoy our somewhat normal Sunday worship, thanks to the live streaming made possible by the hard work of Scott, Jacquie Savage, Freddie Connolly and the Media Team.

However, our Audio Visual System is being taxed beyond its original design intent. The system is 15 years old and has begun to fail. As a result, the council has approved spending \$7,000 to replace the failed microphone system. But this is just the tip of the iceberg. The council has also approved the spending of up to \$13,000 additional funds to hire a consultant to come in, review our current system, make recommendations of what would be required to replace outdated equipment and to perform a complete design of a new system. This design would then be sent out to vendors to bid on the installation.

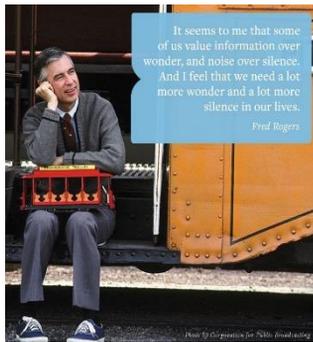
It is obvious to the council that a major fundraiser will be required to pay for the installation of a new system. As we proceed with the review of our system needs, a task force will be created to look into how best to raise the funds needed. The council will keep the congregation informed as information of costs are known.



November is the last month in our **Fall Quarter** for Church school. September was all about **Creation** and our special word was **Creativity**. October we

focused on the story of **Abraham** and our special word was **Faith**. This month our special word is **Blessing** and our stories are about **Jacob and Esau**. Our **Winter Quarter** begins December 7. We will still be online with our Church school program. Celebrate Wonder honors the spiritual life of children. The curriculum seeks to deepen children's faith

formation and to create a safe space for children to ask big questions and claim their spiritual identity as children of



God. I love this quote from Mr. Rogers, "It seems to me that some of us value information over wonder, and noise over silence. And I feel that we need a lot more Wonder and a lot more silence in our lives." Many thanks to Freddie Connolly for bringing this to my attention.

Sign ups for this year's Christmas Pageant



have already been emailed out.

Please fill out the form and let Kris know what part you would like to play in the pageant. Speaking parts

generally go to our third graders and up.

Under third grade are either angels or shepherds. Our Christmas pageant will look different this year, (as most things are), but

it will be amazing regardless. Covid guidelines will be in place at all times. Please return/email Kris with the form or pageant information by

Monday, November 2nd.

Stay safe. Stay well,

Kris



Bible Sunday was celebrated on Sunday, October 18 during the 10am worship service. The following third graders

received their Bibles. **Jonah Hersey, Owen Munson, Cassie Remillard and Chloe Remillard.** Due to the pandemic a Bible Breakfast did not take place.





Virtual Church school pictures

Fellowship

Sunday, November 22nd our youth will gather in the fellowship hall at 11AM to put together Thanksgiving Baskets for area families that are having a hard time making ends meet. We will be asking the congregation for help by bringing in nonperishable food items for the baskets. Items needed are: stuffing, cranberry sauce, can vegetables, chicken broth, can fruits and pie mixes. We will also be taking a “turkey offering”. Through this donation we are able to supply each family with a turkey. If you are able to donate food items there will be a special Thanksgiving shopping cart outside the church door on the parking lot side. If you would like to help supply turkeys you can send a donation to the church, made out to First Parish UCC, and in the memo write YF Turkey Donation. Thank you.



Happy Thanksgiving everyone. Make it a safe one.



We love getting pictures so PLEASE send them to us.

Music Ministry

To see any of our virtual Anthems, please check out our YouTube playlist, please click [Here](#)



To see any of our Cherub Music and Movement Classes with Miss Delaney, please click [Here](#)





Deacon's Corner



Dear family and friends of First Parish,

As we continue to navigate the treacherous waters of this pandemic, we hope you know that your deacons think about and pray for you all. We have met, virtually, pretty regularly since our unavoidable shutdown, and the major business of our meetings is always concern for our fellow parishioners. Pastor Scott reminds us lovingly that life goes on, with the usual ups and downs, losses and celebrations. We hope that you have had some contact with at least one of us during the months we've been physically apart and that you continue to feel connected in some way to First Parish. If not, please let us know where we've been remiss! You can contact the church office or Scott or any of the deacons, and we will do our best to reconnect.

You may already know that some of us have taken on a self-educational project, to learn about the Black Lives Matter movement. (It was one of the precipitating factors in our decision to witness for peace and justice in front of the church on Sundays.) We feel called on to learn about the ways we can face and combat systemic racism, and have been reading and discussing some of the important writings on the subject. (The Deacons' Corner articles in the last two Messengers were excellent reviews of relevant materials by Debbie Grew and Margery Condon. If you missed them, we suggest you look them up in the archives....well worth the read!)

It is our hope that we can eventually use these materials to provide a framework for study groups in the church, either virtually or in person when the COVID-19 guidelines allow. We would love your feedback on this idea...would you like to participate in such a venture? Do you think it is an important subject to discuss? You can let me know your thoughts via email, nadineruss@yahoo.com.

Meanwhile, let us keep each other in our thoughts and prayers until we can be together again in church!

Love and blessings, Nadine Russell, Co-chair, FPC Diaconate



Treasurer's Message



Hello friends,

What a year 2020 has been! I hope that you and your families are safe and secure. We are very fortunate that First Parish has remained in a position to provide weekly services through streaming services. Thank you so much all members and friends who have continued to support the First Parish and its programs despite the challenges we have all experienced in our personal lives. First Parish has also been able to aid our neighbors in need through collections for the Pastor's Discretionary Fund and the collections and activities of the Mission team.

As many of you may recall, back in January we approved the 2020 annual budget. At that time, we budgeted just over \$353,000 in 2020 income from congregation contributions, church rentals, and investment income. The investment markets were in good shape for 2019 and more than \$93,000 was available from Legacy Funds for specific teams. (As a reminder, Legacy Funds are available from appreciated investments, and the First Parish investment team needs to sell investments to make this cash available.) Back in January, we also budgeted for 2020 expense of just over \$358,000. We budgeted for a deficit of just under \$5,000, with expenses exceeding income by this amount for 2020.

Now that we have financial reports through September, let us compare our budget to actual performance for the first three quarters of 2020.

During the initial government responses to the pandemic, the Council of First Parish successfully applied for Payroll Protection Program (PPP) funds. This is a low-interest loan from the federal government that may be forgiven if specific criteria are met by the lender; the intent of the program was to help businesses and nonprofits keep their employees employed. First Parish obtained a PPP loan in April for \$32,037.50. This is currently classified as loan on the church balance sheet that I send around each month to team chairs. First Parish applied for loan forgiveness at the end of September and is waiting for determinations to see if the loan will be forgiven. Once the loan is forgiven, the loan balance will be transferred to a one-time income account on the income and expense statement.

Council used the initial PPP loan forgiveness criteria to determine actions First Parish needed to take to ensure the loan would be forgiven. Council voted to pay every employee a bonus equal to one two-week paycheck to meet the loan forgiveness criteria. This is one reason that all payroll expense accounts are over budget.

Note that even after the shut-down of schools in March, both Saco Schools and Spurwink Services continued to make their monthly lease payments per their respective agreements. No leased rental income has been lost during the pandemic.

During the 2020 budget process, we assumed that Saco Schools would not renew its lease agreement with First Parish for pre-K program space. Because of the pandemic, Saco Schools did renew its annual lease for space for one of its elementary school programs to help with social distancing of students.

First Parish and its tenants are all carefully cleaning and disinfecting surfaces to minimize risks to building users during the pandemic. This fall, both Spurwink and Saco Schools have contracted with First Parish for custodial services. First Parish was fortunately able to hire Guy Rochefort during 2020, and he has been doing a great job, which was noticed by our tenants. Both Spurwink Services and Saco Schools

Continue on next page

are now paying additional fees for custodial services provided by our employee. These additional fees are recorded in rental income, another reason these accounts are over budget for 2020. Because our employee is now working more hours and even some overtime, personnel expenses will similarly be over budget.

Some other areas that are over budget and will show-up in future financial statements include the Good News Team. In last month's Messenger, Music Director Jacqui Savage explained how she makes the virtual choir. We can all appreciate the time and effort she and Freddie Connelly are putting into the streaming services. Jacqui needed a new computer to handle the software, video, audio and editing she is performing that is beyond the typical office computer; that expense will be recorded in October.

Similarly, the media team has had to replace microphones and make other repairs to keep the live streaming services working. You can expect another \$7,000 or more to be spent in the remainder of 2020 for media equipment.

Larger media expenses are imminent. Now that we are all watching live streaming services, the aging and limitations of our media equipment have become apparent. Many cameras no longer work. Because of changes in technology, we cannot just replace old cameras, microphones, or other equipment as they are now obsolete and no longer manufactured. Most people can appreciate that technology has changed in the last 16 years since the church re-opened. Since 2004, most folks have retired flip-open cell phones that only make calls and texts, tube-televisions and VCRs. Our media equipment is similarly outdated. With lots of care from the media team, the system has been kept on-line. The reality is that we need to plan for the next decade or more of media delivery. This is going to require Congregation-level approval and budgeting outside of the annual budget. Stay tuned for more information around media services and capital improvements over the next few months.

Contributions and pledge payments have remained consistent throughout 2020. Thank you to all members and friends who have helped First Parish continue to deliver services to the community. You should have recently received a mailing from the 2020 Generosity Team. Please reply and let First Parish know your plan for giving in 2021 so that we can budget our income. Teams, similarly, please submit your budgets for 2021 by December 1 so that we can prepare a 2021 budget for income and expenses.

This is a lot of information to digest, but we need to start planning for 2021 and reviewing 2020 is a good place to start. If you need more information or have questions, please reach out to me at amy.chute@firstparishsaco.org or 207.730.9636.

Stay safe,

Amy Chute, Treasurer



Flower & Altar



Thanksgiving Cornucopia

Each year First Parish youth fill Thanksgiving baskets for families in need. I just read Pastor Scott's message letting us know how we can contribute nonperishable food items or money towards turkeys. Flower & Altar will again create a thanksgiving Cornucopia and the fruits and vegetables will be added to the baskets. We are thankful for Legacy funds, designated for Thanksgiving, which will cover our costs for the cornucopia.

Sunday Flowers

Would you like to remember, honor or celebrate a loved one or event? The following Sundays are available: **November 15th & 29th**. 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.

October 11, 2020 Given by Denise Bilodeau in memory of her husband, Roger Bilodeau

October 18, 2020 Given by Maureen O'Donnell in memory of her Nana, Anne LeBon Quinn and Aunt, Lorraine Ward Parker

October 18, 2020 Given by the Baillargeon and Fogg Families in memory of Audrey and Don Fogg





Live Services every Sundays at 10:00 am on our YouTube channel...

[Click Here](#)

Or watch us every Sunday at 1:00 pm on Channel 85 (This service runs one week behind)

To Keep up to date on Bored Pastor [Click Here](#)



For up to date information about First Parish, make sure to "Like" our Page

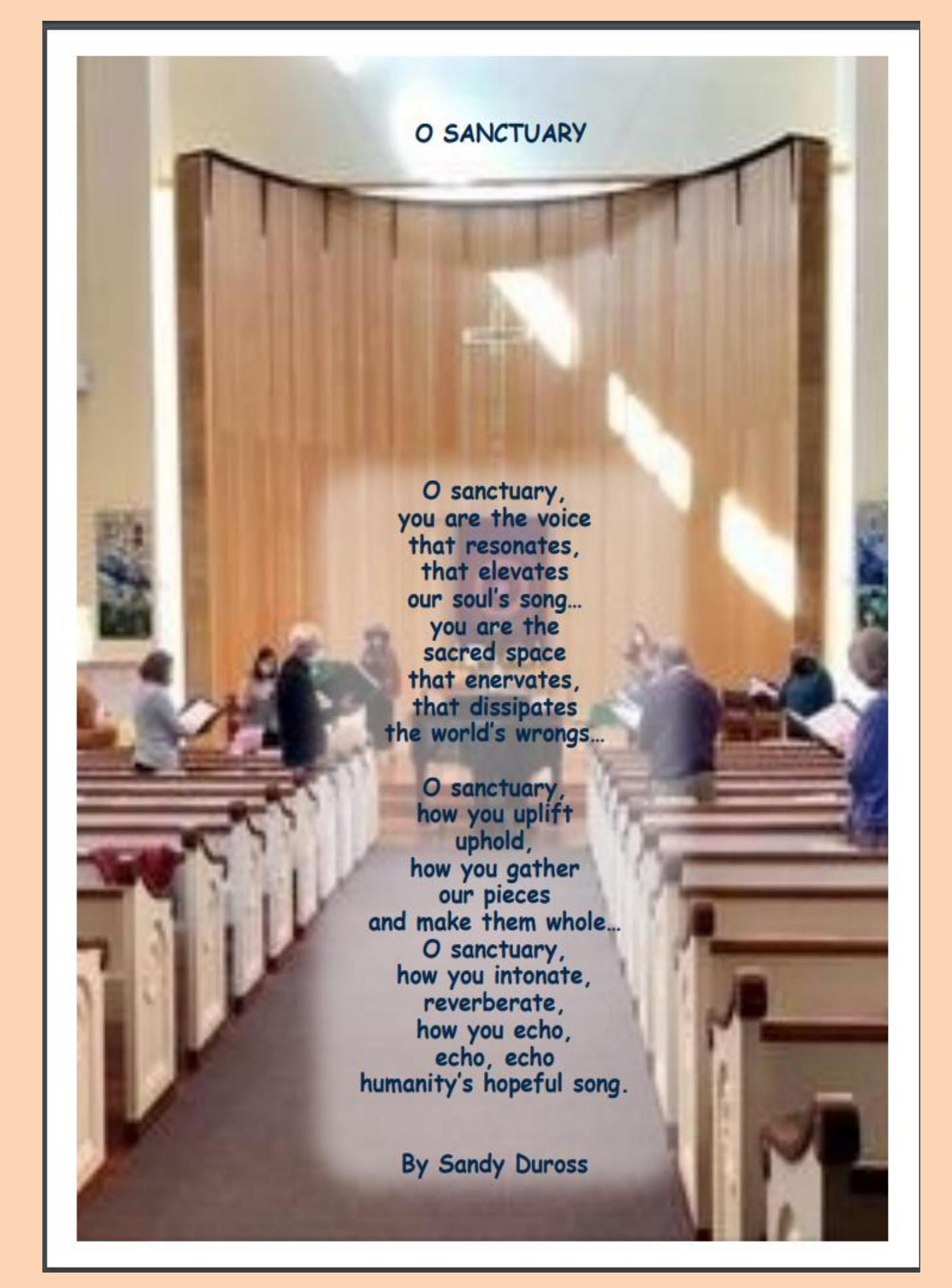


First Parish Face Masks Are Still Available!



Protect your neighbors, promote the church, and look good doing it!
First Parish face masks are available at the church office.

We are accepting free-will donations to cover the cost. Thank you!

A photograph of a church sanctuary. The walls are made of vertical wood panels. Sunlight streams through windows, creating bright patches on the wall. A cross is visible on the wall. People are seated in pews, some holding books. The scene is viewed from the back of the sanctuary looking towards the front.

O SANCTUARY

O sanctuary,
you are the voice
that resonates,
that elevates
our soul's song...
you are the
sacred space
that enervates,
that dissipates
the world's wrongs...

O sanctuary,
how you uplift
uphold,
how you gather
our pieces
and make them whole...

O sanctuary,
how you intonate,
reverberate,
how you echo,
echo, echo
humanity's hopeful song.

By Sandy Duross

Just for Fun: Puzzles and Riddles

Riddles

What can you keep after giving to someone?

Answer: ρρωμ ιουλ

What goes up but never comes down?

Answer: ερε ιουλ

BIBLE WORD SEARCH

Y Z Y A H Y Q Z X Q U D K L F
T M R F T H O T E H O E U V N
F G M N I K A L N C T U X P T
R K A U A T B D T E V T Z Y I
E E S J F A C G R D P E Z G L
D C H U R C H N Y Q C R O U A
E S N A I T A L A G F O E F U
E A P L X L Q V D S D N X S B
M E H E L H T E B F M O S E S
G O L I A T H Z R Y C M W K I
R D F I E J U I T P L Y P T C
A E R Q L L D Z T A Q Y A E T
C M W G L A S T S U P P E R C
E G N X Y K G P O L A D S Y J
B K T O Q L R D L Y W Q R X Y

FAITH	GALILEE	CHURCH
GOLIATH	GOOD FRIDAY	BETHLEHEM
GRACE	PAUL	REDEEM
MOSES	LAST SUPPER	SANCTIFY
SERPENT	GALATIANS	PSALMS
DEUTERONOMY	ETERNAL LIFE	PARABLE

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Be Thankful!

