

May
2017

**Worship ~ Sundays
at 10:00 A.M.**

The Chimes

Leave-taking

“I thank the First Parish Church, United Church of Christ, its members and friends, for the love, kindness, and support shown me these last five years. “

--“Times of Passage: Farewell”

Book of Worship, United Church of Christ

“I will not, upon my termination and departure from a ministry position, interfere with nor intrude upon the ministry of my successor.”

--“The Ordained Minister’s Code”

Manual on Ministry, United Church of Christ

We now enter our final two months as pastor and people. My last Sunday in worship will be June 18, as I will be travelling with our youth group on a mission trip during my last week before retirement. The time is rapidly approaching when we will say “good-bye” to the pastoral relationship we have shared for the past five years.

In life, times of transitions can be complicated, emotional, stressful, and sometimes confusing. There are better and worse ways of “leave-taking,” or saying good-bye. Sometimes the break is too abrupt and we have no time to share our feelings (the note and wedding ring left on top of the TV set). Sometimes the new reality is not clearly enough defined (the retired employee who still shows up at the office every day). One of my personal goals during this time of transition is to do a good job of leave-taking. Toward that end, two things strike me as most important: sharing appreciation for the past and providing clarity for the future.

In August 2012, I began my work as your pastor. Since that time, this church has changed and developed and so have I. It is difficult for me to express just how grateful I am to you for the time we have shared together. These have, in so many ways, been the best five years of my ministry—a great capstone! You have given me the gift of patience—putting up with my mistakes, my foibles, and my weaknesses. You have given me the gift of challenge—helping me to face tough situations and make hard choices. You have given me the gift of respect—taking my words to heart and honoring my leadership. For all these gifts, I am profoundly grateful.

Starting on July 1, I will no longer be your pastor. It does not diminish my appreciation for our shared ministry for me to be absolutely clear that it will conclude. My affection and care for you will continue—but in a much different way. I will pray for you. I will think about you and smile about good memories. But I will not be your *pastor*. Even though our family will continue to live in Dover, I will not return to provide pastoral services for baptisms, weddings or funerals. I

will not consult with church members about the future direction of the church. I will not make pastoral visitations or intervene in crisis situations. I will be attending worship with Sue and John at St. John's United Methodist Church, but I will continue my affiliation with the United Church of Christ by transferring my UCC membership to a congregation in the Rockingham Association of the UCC. In that way I will have access to UCC collegiality without interfering with the collegiality your future pastors will find here in the Carroll-Strafford Association.

This sort of clear separation may seem severe at first. But it is absolutely necessary for the long-term institutional integrity of the church. A host of United Church of Christ guidelines wisely encourage this understanding. My successors will need space and freedom to develop new ministries without comparison to, or comment from, Mike Bennett. This congregation's lay leadership and staff will need to develop new loyalties and new habits of communication and collaboration. In none of these tasks can I be constructively helpful after my departure. And, accordingly, I will establish and maintain a clear boundary.

But my deep appreciation will remain intact. The time we have shared will be complete as a highly-valued memory. The Greek word for "complete" is telos, which also means "end." Our time together will soon be completed. In the meantime, I welcome opportunities to talk with you about the time we have shared together or about our diverging journeys as we move forward into the future. You will be in my prayers and I hope that you will keep me in yours.

United by the "tie that binds," may we all serve Christ in new ways!

--MSB

Holiday Fair News

Our enthusiastic Holiday Fair committee is planning for our Fair on November 18, 2017! This is a wonderful church wide, community outreach and fund raising event. There are many ways to be involved! As you do your spring cleaning, or if you are downsizing, please consider a donation of specialty furniture or other items to FPC for our Tiffany Collectibles & Antiques Room. Jim Prue, who specializes in this field, is happy to assist anyone with items that might be appropriate. Contact Jim at 749-6897 or jeprue@comcast.net. A letter of donation can be provided for you to use for Income Tax purposes.

I am looking for a co-chair to work with me and Bethany Gould this year to take over as Coordinator of the Fair in 2018. Bethany is an enthusiastic and dedicated young woman who has expressed a desire to help out with future fairs. However, we need an "older adult" to learn with us because Bethany is a working-student and her schedule for next fall is not firm. Please give prayerful consideration to this request and let me know if you are interested.

Paula Sterling is also looking for people to help her collect items for the raffle room, prepare gift baskets and help set the room up on the Friday night before the fair.

If you would like to learn more about our Fair or get involved with the planning contact Kathy Baker – 742-5976, skmbaker@comcast.net.

Thank you,
Kathy Baker

***Men's Group meets
Wednesday evenings at
7:00 p.m. in the Parlor.***

SAVE THE DATES! Big Doin's at FPC!

As Pastor Mike Bennett begins his retirement from ministry at the end of June, your Deacons and Council want to share the plans for our congregation to bid farewell and Godspeed to Mike and his family.

On Saturday, June 17, in the afternoon, a reception and farewell program will be held at the church. We will gather first in Fellowship Hall for refreshments and a time of informal greetings. Following the reception, we will gather in the sanctuary for a program which will include greetings, presentations of various kinds, music, and even some "toasting and roasting" of Pastor Mike. More specific details on that day will follow in our church publications.

Sunday, June 18, will be Pastor Mike's last official Sunday with us. Mike will be giving the message that morning, the choirs are planning special musical offerings, and Mike will share his last Children's Message with our younger members. During that service, the congregation will be led in a Liturgy of Release and Farewell by Rev Gary Schulte, Senior Conference Minister of the New Hampshire United Church of Christ. Following the service here that morning, Mike will depart immediately as his wife, Rev Sue Frost, will be saying goodbye to her congregation at a farewell event honoring her ministry following the service that morning at the Eliot Methodist Church.

Please save both Saturday, June 17 and Sunday, June 18 on your calendars to join with your church family as we express our gratitude and goodbyes to Pastor Mike.

50 Year Member ~ New Member Celebration Dinner



Our Annual Dinner celebrating those who have been members of First Parish Church for 50 or more years and those who have joined in the past year will be held on **Monday, May 15**, at **5:30 P.M.** in our Fellowship Hall. We will conclude before dark so folks can still be home early. Please sign up on the bulletin board across from the church office or call the office by May 8th to let us know if you are coming so we can plan the food.

This is an ALL CHURCH event.
PLEASE JOIN US!

The Granite State Ringers

In concert on Saturday, May 6th, at 7:00 p.m. in our sanctuary. This group of 15 handbell ringers tours throughout New England presenting a wide variety of music for handbells from classical to modern. An event for the entire family! Concert donations are \$10.00 for adults; \$5.00 for children/students and a special family rate of \$25.00.

Annual Reports from each Board and Committee Chair covering July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017 are due in the church office no later than MAY 15th. Please send your reports electronically in a Word format.

Thank you!

IMPORTANT DATES

May 21st – Last Regular Day of Sunday School

May 28th – Special Program (No Regular Sunday School)

June 4th – Children's Sunday

June 18th – Youth commissioned during the service for their Mission Trip



We are looking for Sunday schoolers of any age to do the

Call to Worship

for the 10:00 AM service

on the following days:

May 14th or May 28th

Email Donna at

hondagirl1967@msn.com

if you are interested



An Ark for Today's World

Sunday, May 7th
is our annual
HEIFER FAIR!

Heifer International

is a global nonprofit working with communities to end hunger and poverty and care for the Earth. Since 1944, Heifer has helped 10.5 million families in more than 125 countries move toward greater self-reliance through the gift of livestock and training in environmentally sound agriculture.

Our Sunday school kids and families have a goal to raise **\$1200** for **Llamas, Trees and Honeybees!**

We will have FOOD AND OTHER ITEMS FOR SALE.

Each classroom has created their own 'specialty'.

Join us in Fellowship Hall immediately following the service that day.



May 28th

SPECIAL PROGRAM
beginning @ 10:00 AM in
Nazareth Hall

Activities to include:

Preparation for Children's Sunday & the Annual Steeple Tour!!!



Graduates

We would like to honor our high school, college and post-graduate students in worship on June 4th. Please let the church office know who has earned a degree in your family by **May 31st**. Thank you.
firstparish@comcast.net

SUPPORT GRAB & GO!

Feed Hungry Dover Children This Summer! The goal is \$12,000.

Many of you know that End 68 Hours of Hunger provides for food insecure children in Dover over each school year weekend. Dover Cooperative Ministries and Strafford County Community Action are picking up the summer weeks with the GRAB & GO Weekend Food Bags for over 200 children at the seven sites where lunch is served. Each child receives a bag of food every Friday. Happy thankful smiles follow from both the children and their parents!

This idea originated with our own FPC member Pat Sorensen and she has continued to direct the program each summer. The program has grown each summer as more and more families struggle with finances to pay for child care, rent, utilities and food.

Help is needed! Money will go to pay for food for each bag. You can help by contributing and gathering donations from businesses. Volunteers can help pack bags, assist weekly delivery service and to gather food donations. Our FPC Mission and Action is also supporting this program.

To donate or volunteer, contact Pat Sorensen at patpopster@comcast.net or Jane Kennedy at Janewkennedy55@comcast.net



to Herb Brown on his 98th birthday
on May 6th
Best wishes to you Herb from FPC!

In Sympathy



We mourn the loss of our dear friends, called home by God to share in the everlasting kingdom of Heaven...

Amber Lajeunesse ~

Cindy Thompson's cousin

Esther Rhine ~

Fred Rhine's mother

Kim Rhine's grandmother

Marion Wright ~

The Late George Wright's wife

Adult Discussion

The Sunday morning Adult Discussion class with Pastor Mike meets from 8:50 to 9:40 a.m. The group will continue their discussion on the Gospel of Matthew. All are welcome--each week or any week!

Mike Bennett

Pastor and Teacher

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www.firstparishdover.org

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Office hours: M-F 9am-3pm

(603) 742-5664;

Rev. Michael Bennett, Pastor & Teacher

msb@firstparishdover.org

Rick Gremlitz, Church Administrator

rickgremlitz@yahoo.com

NH UCC: www.nhcucc.org

Bulletin Deadline: Tuesdays by 9:00 am

Chimes Deadline: The 15th of every

month ~ Please email bulletin and

chimes information to Joanne at

firstparish@comcast.net



Church Supper

Saturday, May 6th

Ham 'n beans, homemade breads, cole slaw, string bean casserole, desserts and a few culinary surprises!

Adults \$10.00; Children under 12, \$5.00.

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT WHILE YOU EAT!

Musical entertainment while you dine with *Sally Gallagher* and *Jean Ellison*, vocalists, and *Rick Gremlitz* at the Hammond organ!



Return Service Requested

The Chimes
The First Parish Church Congregational
The United Church of Christ
218 Central Avenue
Dover, New Hampshire
03820

