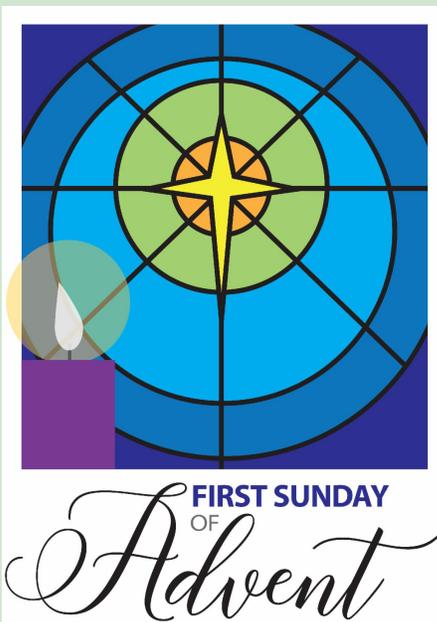


Steeple Chat

The weekly update from your church



In our ONLINE Church this Sunday, November 29, 2020 The First Sunday of Advent



10:00 a.m.

ONLINE Service

Prelude Music begins at 9:50 a.m.

Message by Pastor
Paige Besse-Rankin
Isaiah 64: 1-9

Advent Wreath Candlelighting

Children's Message
by Pastor Paige

An Advent Zoom Fellowship Time
follows the service; please see
details below.

OUR ONLINE Ministry of Music

The First Parish Chorale:

Come to the Light

A Celtic Advent Song

Words and Music

by Joseph M. Martin

Jeannie Goodwin, accompanist;

Rick Gremlitz, director;

Emily Grondin, video production and
editing

Please click this link to join the
webinar service

online: <https://zoom.us/j/825890693>

OR: phone in using this number: 1 929
205 6099.

When asked, use our Webinar ID: 825 890 693.



In Steeple Chat this week:

- *Sunday Worship
- *Sunday School
- *Fellowship Hours
- *Pastor Paige's
Corner
- *Prayer List
- *Lunchtime
Devotions
- *Council Corner
- *Advent Wreaths
- *Sacred Space
- *Advent Buddies
- *Christmas Candle
Fund
- *White Gifts 2020
- *Building Access
- *Help for the
Homeless
- *Shoebox Project
- *Thrift Shop
- *Your Offerings
- *Recordings Sign-up
- *Thrift Shop Hours
- *Stephen Ministry
available
- *ONA Covenant



**Sunday
School
THIS
Sunday
at 9:15
am!**

Virtual Sunday School.

*Our Sunday School is based
on the Living Arts program.*

*We will connect via Zoom for
about 15 minutes prior to
worship each Sunday to touch
base, talk about what we've
learned and to show our art
work.*

*Each Sunday morning Ingrid will
open virtual Sunday School at 9:30
am if you want to pop in early.*

*Sunday School will begin at 9:35
am. We will meet for 10-15
minutes, and plan to finish Sunday
School by 9:50 am so we can take a
short break before worship.*

**Join us on Zoom for virtual
Sunday School.
Here is the link:**

**[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81
872238147?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81872238147?)**

pwd=UTFHRog1Y1JyaGhMUM
U2eVlscDZWZz09

Meeting ID: 818 7223 8147
Passcode: 836687

Fellowship Hour returns for Advent!

When we ask kids about their favorite part of church, they often say it is Fellowship Hour – and we know they aren't alone. So during Advent, we will be offering a virtual Fellowship hour 5 minutes after the Postlude ends. So grab your



favorite drink and a goodie from your kitchen and join us. This is a Zoom meeting where people can be seen and heard and we will be using breakout rooms with small groups so you can actually chat with some folks! Since Webinar doesn't offer this feature, you will have to log off from worship and log on with the link below:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82849698877?
pwd=N3FyR3BxUmZ3bXVkbUdjRmJ6NzV4UT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82849698877?pwd=N3FyR3BxUmZ3bXVkbUdjRmJ6NzV4UT09)

Meeting ID: 828 4969 8877 - Passcode: 886063

REV PAIGE'S CORNER



PASTOR PAIGE'S CORNER Advent Yearnings

Advent is hear again and we once again listen to words of ancient peoples who are yearning for a different sort of world and for connection with the Holy. Isaiah 64 begins with the cry “God, tear open the heavens and get down here!” (only slightly paraphrased.) We here the words of people in crisis times, people who are desperate for hope, people calling us to world

transformed. And while they are separated from us by thousands of years and lots of miles, this year particularly they echo our own yearnings!

The Advent planning team reflecting on our circumstances this year lifted up one strong yearning – the longing for connection. And so we have built our Advent plan around opportunities to connect – with the Holy, with one another, with our neighbors, and even with our sacred space. We know that these are difficult times and that many of our beloved Christmas traditions will not be fully possible this year. But we also believe that it is in these sorts of moments that God shows up in as ways unexpected as being born to a poor couple as a baby in manger. We believe it is possible for this advent



to be a time of meaning and connection in spite of everything. So we hope you will find ways to connect!
With blessings, *Rev Paige*



Our Prayer List is published weekly as a link here in Steeple Chat.

If you have prayer concerns that should be included in our weekly listings, please contact the church office at 742-5664 or by email at: firstparish@comcast.net.

For the latest Prayer List, click here: [Prayer List.](#)

**Lunch Time Devotions:
Tuesdays and Thursdays at
12:00 noon**

We offer devotions on Tuesdays and Thursday each week. This is open for everyone on a drop in basis. Come when you feel like it! What will you find when you join us? We spend a few moments greeting each other and catching up, we hear a scripture reading and a brief reflection on that reading. Then we listen to a song. We share people and situations we want to lift up in prayer and finally we pray together. Please join us Tuesdays and/or Thursdays and ground your day in prayer. You can find us here:

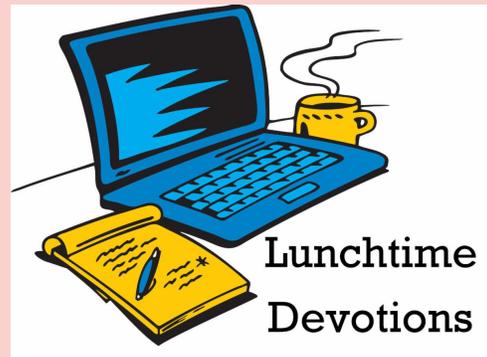
Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/92409379536?
pwd=RUXZaFFBK3JOUWplRTRLaWFBaVRkQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/92409379536?pwd=RUXZaFFBK3JOUWplRTRLaWFBaVRkQT09)

Dial: 1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 924 0937 9536

Password: 835028



**Lunchtime
Devotions**



Greetings from your First Parish Church Council!

We have had a busy month, and would like to update you on our plans for the upcoming year.

The purpose of the Church Council is to coordinate the activities of the church, discuss issues and opportunities that arise, and guide our church as we listen and respond to God's call. We realize that we are in unprecedented times, and it's important to continue our work, even though we are remote. The church has proven it can continue – thrive even – as we operate in new ways and navigate these waters.

With that in mind, we have established three goals for the 2020-2021 year:

1. Navigate the church through the pandemic, to evaluate what we're doing, and examine the new needs that are evolving.
2. Work with the CL21 team to focus on our long-term vision and the learnings that are coming out about 'being church' in the 21st century.
3. Create a road map about how we're going to engage the congregation in discussions that will ultimately result in revised by-laws.

Our first goal is based upon guidance we have received from the NH Conference, recommending the discontinuation of in-person public worship and all other indoor public gatherings through the end of 2020 (and likely beyond). Our ministerial staff and diaconate are working diligently to develop meaningful virtual worship services, and much of our church business will also need to take place online or by phone. We want to make sure our boards, committees, and small group ministries are keeping our congregants connected and cared for.

Our second goal relates to the work that the CL21 (Creating and Leading the 21st Century Church) team has been undertaking in the past year. You may remember taking the congregational assessment survey that helped us gain an understanding of who we are, consider where we would like to go in the future, and uncover potential resources. Last winter, the CL21 team conducted Mystery Party small group gatherings, where we discussed the results. Your Council and the CL21 team are now planning to expand this long-term visioning so the congregation can provide input regarding what it means to 'be church' in the 21st Century. More soon!

Our third goal will ultimately lead to establishing a process for review and revision of our church by-laws. Before we do that, we need to honor our congregational polity by clarifying what we value as a congregation, how we want to operate, and how we move forward on the most significant issues in the life of our church. In order to do that, we need to create a plan that helps us hear the desire of the congregation.

God is calling us to be the church in wondrous ways. Your Church Council is humbled to serve, and welcomes your comments and questions.

Blessings,
Joyce Tugel, First Parish Church Council Chair



Do You Have Your Advent Wreath ready?

In worship each week during Advent, we will be lighting candles on our Advent Wreaths during worship and inviting you to do the same. Some of the congregation will be on screen lighting the candles of their wreaths at home as we light the candles in the sanctuary, but we would love as many as possible to join us. So get your Advent Wreath ready!

If you do not have a wreath, there are lots of different ways to make or purchase one. Jane Kennedy is putting together kits to be requested or the web has lots of ideas for homemade wreaths. Contact us if you would like some help!

Connect with Sacred Space

We know many have missed the opportunity to spend time in the sanctuary each week. Although the Pandemic prevents us from worshipping together, we will be opening the sanctuary during Advent to those who would like to come and spend time in meditation or participating in special advent activities.



We are asking you to reserve times so we can be sure there is someone to let you in and so we don't have more than one household at a time. Here is the link: <https://signup.com/go/braepYz>

There will be special activities set up each week that you can select among. In the first week, we invite you to bring an ornament and hang it on our sanctuary trees so we can have a little bit of each of our households present through the season. If you are bringing a white gift, you can bring them and present them during the first week. There will also be a station set up in the Atrium to help paint our new outdoor nativity scene (helping us connect with our neighbors.) This is "paint by number" and doesn't require artistic skill. Finally, there will be a station to write invitations and notes of comfort for those who are struggling this year and might appreciate the opportunity to participate in our Blue Christmas service on December 13.



Sign up for Advent Buddies!

For Advent this year, we are matching up Advent Buddies! Buddies can be of all ages and will include our Sunday school students including the New Testaments, those who are homebound and people of all ages and stages in life.

We would like Advent buddies to pray for one another and to offer at least 3 contacts through the season by mail, phone, text, email, facetime, or whatever else will work. Share cards, jokes, pictures, memes, words of comfort, a prayer, hopes, and laughs. Get to know each other. This is a time to connect when the pandemic is keeping us apart. Sign up for your Advent Buddy using this link: <https://fpcedover.breezechms.com/form/7782e8>

Christmas Candle Fund

This advent, we are focusing more on decorating the outside of our church instead of the inside! We need your help with this project.

One aspect will be memorial trees on the front steps of the church. We will be using battery operating candles in memory of the victims of the pandemic and of others we want to honor. We haven't done this before, so we need to invest in an additional artificial tree and many candles. The Deacons have proposed that rather than memorial poinsettias this year, we offer memorial candles. (Don't fret: we will have a few poinsettias in the sanctuary, but we don't need many to fill the camera view.)



If you would like to donate to the Christmas Candle Fund in memory or in honor of particular people or of those lost to the pandemic, please go to www.firstparishdover.org and use the "Donate" button to give to that fund. You can also send a donation by mail along with any names you would like on the memorial list. A mailing about Advent programs will be coming next week with a return form, as well. Candles will be lit for the first time as part of the Blue Christmas Service on December 13 and will be lit nightly through Christmas. There will be some other new surprises around the outside of our building from our Advent Planning Team, as well. Our hope is to connect with our neighbors in some new ways.



White Gifts 2020 Celebration

It's time to deliver your White Gift to Church! Please bring it next week Monday-Thursday (November 30 – December 3) between 12-2 pm.

Remember to wrap your gift in white and include the person's name, room number and residence on the gift.

The gifts will be blessed by Pastor Paige on Sunday, December 6th

Thank you to all the volunteers who have generously agreed to give gifts or food for our annual White Gifts Celebration!

Reduced Church Building Access with Pandemic Numbers Increasing

As the Covid case numbers are going up in our area, we are going to request that folks use care when coming into the church building. If it is possible to do your church business online or by phone, we would appreciate that. We want to keep the risk to staff as low as possible in these days so the work of the church can continue. If you do need to come into the building, please use care to mask and keep your distance physically.





Help for the Homeless

Boots, Bags, and Tents, AND WINTER COATS!

Do you have a **gently used sleeping bag, tent, boots, or winter coat** that you no longer use? If so, please place them in the box in the Church Atrium. Your Mission and Action Board will deliver them to our contact person at Community Action Partnership of Strafford County. (CAPSC) She will relay them to those in need, those who face winter weather without permanent shelter. Your

donations will make a huge difference in the lives of some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Could you donate a few **small denomination (\$5 or \$10) fast-food restaurant gift cards** (Dunkin Donuts, McDonald's, Burger King, or Wendy's)? CAPSC can relay these gift cards to the needy so they can secure food and shelter from the cold weather, even if only for a couple hours. Please drop off a few gift cards in the Church office, care of Ingrid, so we can get them into the hands of those who need them.

Thank you for your support of this important mission!

Christmas Shoeboxes project:

This year First Parish is partnering with CAP-Community Action Program to provide Christmas Shoeboxes for the children of the Dover community.

CAP indicates a need for 32 Pre-school boxes for ages 3-4, and Items for Infants & Toddlers are also needed such as: Diapers, wipes, socks & books were requested.

Click here for the [visual list](#) of items CAP requested for the children ages 3-4. No candy please. This year, please provide your own shoeboxes.

Christmas boxes are due at First Parish Church on Friday December 11th.



The ***Find It At The First Thrift Shop*** is OPEN on Thursdays from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. AND on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

Donations are now welcome during regular Thrift Shop hours.

Please come into to say hello! Masks are required.



YOUR OFFERINGS
For those who are able, we strongly invite ongoing sharing of pledges and offerings. Offerings may be made from



through the church webpage here: [Donate](#); or by mail, or through electronic giving.

An additional option for giving to your church is through the QR Code box reproduced here.

To use: Hold your iPhone or iPad camera up to the QR Code box and a link should appear on your screen. Click on that link which will take you to the FPC donate area.



VIDEO Recordings of ONLINE Sunday Services

During this time of live-streamed services, we record the video (and audio) of our Sunday online services. These recordings are now available as mp4 video files through our Basecamp software program.

If you do not already have access to Basecamp, you may register by filling in the registration form posted on the Breeze program. Here is the link to sign-up:

<https://fpcdover.breezechms.com/fo>

[rm/55811a](#)



Find it at the First Thrift Shop:

The Thrift Shop is open Thursdays from 1 to 4 pm and Saturdays, from 10 am until 1 pm.

Donations are now welcomed during regular operating hours.

Masks are required for entry to the Thrift Shop.

First Parish is a **Stephen Ministry Church** that provides weekly individual and confidential spiritual care for those in need. Please contact one of the following to get connected: Judy Edwards, 603-978-4789 or Dave Dickson, 603-781-9791.

First Parish Church is Open and Affirming,

welcoming all to participate fully in the life of our church family, its ministries, fellowship, leadership, rites and sacraments, regardless of ability, race, ethnicity, social or economic situation, sexual orientation or gender identity.

ALL are Welcome Here!

See you ONLINE!

First Parish Church Congregational

United Church of Christ
218 Central Ave
Dover, New Hampshire 03820
(603) 742-5664
Visit our website: www.firstparishdover.org



First Parish Church | 218 Central Ave, Dover, NH 03820

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