

The Foreside Community Church United Church of Christ

January 2024

Connecting to God ~ Nurturing Community ~ Discovering how our Lives Make a Difference



"Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:3 (see pg. 4 for more)

THE FORESIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH, UCC
340 Foreside Road
Falmouth, Maine 04105-1428

Pastor: The Reverend Geoff Parker
Choir Director: Trevor Lavenbein
Organist/Accompanist: David Bartoletti
Youth & Family Director: Tori Curtis
Office Manager: Christina Sklarz

Office: 207-781-5880

E-mail: info@foresidechurch.org Web: www.foresidechurch.org

PASTORAL NOTES

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

Worship in the sanctuary & where to find past sermons

UPDATES, REPORT OUTS, & UPCOMING EVENTS

Writing workshop on Lenten themes announced
The children present during Advent
"More Ways to Love the Earth" a Green Team series
Travelogues returning in January
Maine Historical Society event joined by FCC
Tuesday Morning Study Group back
Christmas Angels project the best yet
The Foreside Book Club announces next book
FCC joins Falmouth Congo at State Street Shelter
January birthdays to celebrate
Women's and Men's December Breakfast Schedules
February *SteepleNotes*' deadline

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Star Island again calls for summer help

JANUARY 2024 CALENDAR-AT-A-GLANCE

DAILY LECTIONARY READINGS FOR JANUARY 2024

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Pastoral Notes

Dear Foreside Friends,

I am here in the glow of Christmas season, after the joy of our Advent and Christmas Eve celebrations, for which I give thanks. Above all, I have been thankful for the ways in which our gathering showed our commitment to holding, and passing down, the Christmas tradition from one generation to the next.

For most of my life, the final turn from Advent to Christmas was celebrated by gathering with my family in Memorial Hall at Harvard and hearing this poem at the *Christmas Revels*:

The Shortest Day

*And so the Shortest Day came and the year died
And everywhere down the centuries of the snow-white world
Came people singing, dancing,
To drive the dark away.
They lighted candles in the winter trees;
They hung their homes with evergreen;
They burned beseeching fires all night long
To keep the year alive.
And when the new year's sunshine blazed awake
They shouted, reveling.
Through all the frosty ages you can hear them
Echoing behind us – listen!
All the long echoes, sing the same delight,
This Shortest Day,
As promise wakens in the sleeping land:
They carol, feast, give thanks,
And dearly love their friends,
And hope for peace.
And so do we, here, now,
This year and every year.
Welcome Yule!*

That tradition has been held for me, gently passed to me, and now Julia and I keep it for Grace. (Though for now we just read the poem to her, rather than taking her to Cambridge... that will come.)

The author and poet Susan Cooper wrote *The Shortest Day* for the Revels in the 1970's. In her mind, it

echoed her childhood in England during the bombing raids of World War II. She remembered reading with her mother by candlelight... even as the candle shook from the reverberations of explosions.

Today we linger in this mysterious brief time between the shortest day and the first day (of the year), as we mourn or release what may have been hard, celebrate what has been joyful, and look forward in hope to what will be. We remember our own Christmas story invites us to know God arrives at the intersection of the past and future—and on the border of great sorrow and great joy—strengthening us to sing that God's light among us does not go out.

So, as we begin a new year, I am most grateful for huge scale of this holy season just passed: how we hold the candle for each other from one season to the next... how we hold and pass the light as new friends and members join our midst... and how we invite each new generation into the circle of light and belonging in Christ.

And then... I am thankful: for Fair organizers and workers, for caroling coordinators, for sheep and donkey wranglers, coffee hour hosts both new and old, for ringers and singers and those who join the song, for proclaimers of scripture, lighters of candles, hangers of greens and of the very stars, folders of bulletins, cheerful givers and counters of faithful gifts to serve our Neighbors in Need... and all those Faithful who came, joyful and triumphant, to glory in God and God's gift of community and worship here in the last month.

All of it; all these tasks—part of how we rejoice and weave our lives into that promise which wakens in the sleeping land this Christmas season: *Unto us a Child is Born*.

And all the long echoes sing that same delight, friends...

Merry Christmas.

Geoff



NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

You are hereby notified that the Annual Meeting of The Foreside Community Church, UCC will be held in the sanctuary at 340 Foreside Road, Falmouth, Maine on Sunday, January 28, 2024, immediately following the 9:30 a.m. worship service, for the following purposes:

Approval of Spring Meeting Minutes for May 21, 2023

Review and approval of 2023 Financial Report

Review and approval of 2024 Budget

Brief remarks by Pastor Geoff Parker and Moderator Cynthia Beggs

To conduct any other business that may properly come before this meeting

Janette Gustafson
Clerk

Worship in the sanctuary...

...and attendance on Sundays is open to all with the following protocols in place:

- Mask wearing is voluntary (a supply can be located in the narthex).
- We ask households to give each other good social distance.
- Windows will be opened enough to increase ventilation.
- Worship continues to also be live-streamed for attending convenience by going to:

[https://www.youtube.com/
ForesideCommunityChurch](https://www.youtube.com/ForesideCommunityChurch)

Bulletins for each service, including words to that day's hymns are also posted at the above website address.

On the road and missing a sermon? Want to go back and re-visit any one sermon? Want to share a sermon with a friend or family member? Pastor Geoff's sermons in both written and audio form from May 2019 to the present (minus "Prayers on the Patio" can be viewed and/or heard on FCC's website at:

[http://www.foresidechurch.org/
index.php/category/sermons/](http://www.foresidechurch.org/index.php/category/sermons/)

UPDATES, REPORT OUTS, AND UPCOMING EVENTS

WRITING WORKSHOP ON LENTEN THEMES

What has to die or be set aside for us to truly thrive? How does allowing ourselves to be empty and attentive encourage new growth? What choices offered us tempt us to live as less than our higher selves? How can we commit to honoring and offering our particular gifts so they can contribute to healing the world's ills? These are some of the questions the Lenten season poses to us. We will read poems by other poets that deal with these themes (and others), discuss the effectiveness (or not!) of how they are made, and let parts of these poems act as springboards for our own work. Those who wish to share what they have written with the group will be given the opportunity, but sharing is not a requirement. We will meet from 10:45-12:30 on three Sundays: February 18, 23, and March 3. Please contact Geoff at gpar-ker@foresidechurch.org to register in advance.

Susan Deborah King, MDiv has published seven books of poetry and edited two anthologies. Following a stint as a parish minister, she has led retreats on creativity and spirituality and taught creative writing in many different institutions for people from elementary school age to all ages that follow. She lives in Cumberland Foreside and on Great Cranberry Island with her husband, James Gertmenian.



On Sunday Dec 10th, 12 children joined the choir in a delightful rendition of "Away in the Manger," filling our church with seasonal cheer! Pastor Geoff led the children in setting up a nativity scene, bringing the story to life. The event was a heartwarming success, uniting our congregation in joy and celebration. A big thank you to the children, choir, Pastor Geoff, and everyone who made this Sunday so special. Let's continue spreading warmth and goodwill as we embrace the holiday season together!

T. Curtis

UPDATES, REPORT OUTS, AND UPCOMING EVENTS (cont.)**“More Ways to Love the Earth”**

A Four-Week Series Wednesday Evenings 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, January 17

Christianity and Nature 101: Where Did We Go Wrong?

FCC member and naturalist the Rev. Susan Gilpin will present and facilitate a conversation on a theological framework for being in right relationship with the natural world and discuss how Christianity adopted the problematic notion of human dominion over all other life on earth.

Wednesday, January 24

Caring for Ourselves and For Others in an Age of Eco-Anxiety

The Rev. Dr. Allen Ewing-Merrill, Executive Director of the Portland-based BTS Center — <https://thebtscenter.org/> — will offer strategies for cultivating active hope and resiliency as we face a climate-changed world.

Wednesday, January 31

The Problem of Plastics, Plastics and More Plastics

This program will focus on practical considerations for reducing and eliminating our reliance on plastics in everyday life and local efforts underway by the Town of Falmouth’s Conservation Commission — <https://www.falmouthme.org/conservation-commission>.

Wednesday, February 7:

Green and Healthy Homes

Presenter Fred Horch of Sustainable Practice, a new Maine non-profit educational group — <https://sustainablepractice.life/> — will discuss other practical “pathways to sustainable” lifestyles and the best practices that support a healthy environment.



Each program will follow our 6 p.m. Evening Prayers service.

In the event of a snow cancellation, we have reserved Wednesday, February 21.

For more information, contact Janette Gustafson, rg787878@hotmail.com

UPDATES, REPORT OUTS, AND UPCOMING EVENTS (cont.)

Travelogues are returning in January!!!

On January 11th at 7:00 p.m. we will be starting what we hope will be a series of four monthly travelogues. Here is a sneak preview of what looks like a most interesting and close to home January travelogue.

Join us, Susan and Clifford Gilpin, as we paddle for 3 summer days down the Penobscot River with Penobscot guides. Canoes, paddles, and lean-tos on Sugar Island are provided, along with meals, talks, and demonstrations by Penobscot cultural leaders. We made this trip last July with James Francis, Penobscot linguist and cultural historian, and his friends. Come join us for fiddleheads, marinated moose meat, and blueberry pie. Mark your calendars now so you don't miss it!



L. Ventre

Maine Historical Society Christmas Event Shines with FCC Talent

On the evening of Nov 27, an ensemble of three bell-ringers from FCC and four from Cumberland Congregational Church performed a concert of Christmas music at the First Parish Church in Portland. The event was hosted by the Maine Historical Society. Debra Coyman, Sue Priest and Dana Humphreys were joined by Nita Dehais, Jim Harper, Nicki Piaget and Joy Toll-Chandler and played arrangements of twelve familiar Christmas songs. About 50 people attended the concert, including several wonderful supporters from Foreside Church.

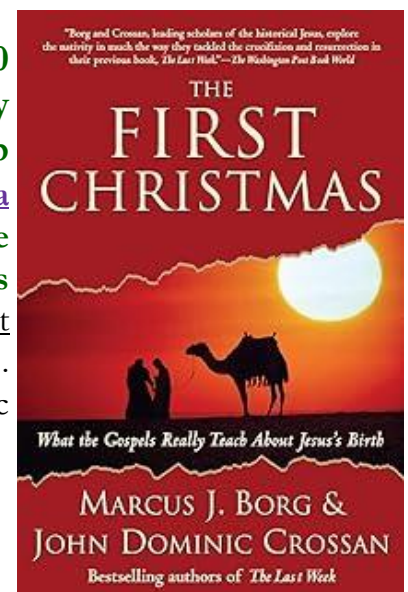
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and his family worshipped at First Parish Church. In 1863, he wrote the poem "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day," and which was later arranged to music. It was fitting, therefore, that the concert opened with an audience singalong of the hymn and concluded by an arrangement played by the ringers. There was also frivolity during the concert when audience members volunteered (or were conscripted) to come forward to enact The Twelve Days of Christmas while the bells rang behind them. A few brave Foreside Church attendees were among the enactors, and one performer

earned himself a new nickname (you can now refer to Pete Ventre as "Goose.")

The two churches benefitted from the concert as the Historical Society paid an honorarium of \$125 to each church in appreciation for their performance. It was a wonderful way to start the Christmas season!



On January 2 at 9:00 a.m. The Tuesday Morning Book Club will reconvene via Zoom and continue discussions around The First Christmas by Marcus J. Borg & John Dominic Crossan.

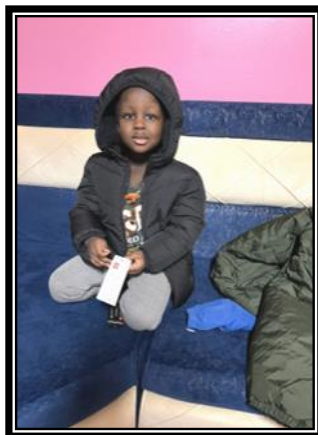


It is never too late to join.

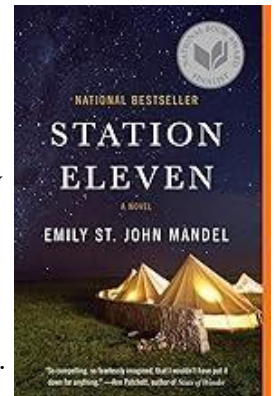
FMI Liz Ventre

UPDATES, REPORT OUTS, AND UPCOMING EVENTS (cont.)

The outpouring of generosity for the Foreside Community Church "Christmas Angels" has provided winter warmth and joy to 70 children in our local communities. Your response was beyond enthusiastic, and every single package arrived at church on time and beautifully wrapped or bagged. This year the majority of the gifts were delivered by the Food Pantry Partners- many who are members of FCC! These partners are the volunteers who visit specific families each month with boxes and bags of groceries. The happiness expressed by the parents and children who received your gifts reflects not only their need for this help but it is also an expression of how you have touched their hearts. Thank you on behalf of Justice & Outreach for your outpouring of kindness. **D. Blanchette**



The Foreside Book Club will kick off 2024 by reading *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel. **We will be meeting by Zoom** for the winter months to allow for everyone to participate from home and not have to worry about driving in bad weather. The discussion will be on Wednesday, January 17 from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. at the latest. The summary follows:



"Set in the days of civilization's collapse, *Station Eleven* tells the story of a Hollywood star, his would-be savior, and a nomadic group of actors roaming the scattered outposts of the Great Lakes region, risking everything for art and humanity. One snowy night a famous Hollywood actor slumps over and dies onstage during a production of *King Lear*. Hours later, the world as we know it begins to dissolve. Moving back and forth in time—from the actor's early days as a film star to fifteen years in the future, when a theater troupe known as the Traveling Symphony roams the wasteland of what remains—this suspenseful, elegiac, spell-binding novel charts the strange twists of fate that connect five people: the actor, the man who tried to save him, the actor's first wife, his oldest friend, and a young actress with the Traveling Symphony, caught in the crosshairs of a dangerous self-proclaimed prophet." (*quote from Book-Browse*) I hope you will be able to join us to discuss this sometimes frightening yet riveting story. **FMI: mimi-hinkle@gmail.com**

State Street shelter reopening in February

After some renovations, the shelter for unhoused families will be ready to open in the new year. As a church, we are going to work collaboratively with Falmouth Congregational Church to cover two separate weeks. The proposed weeks are **February 18-24**, and **March 17-23**, but have not been confirmed as of yet. Each night will require one person from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (working with a rep from State Street) and two people from 8:30 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. **A video orientation will be provided.** Please stay tuned to further announcements in the weekly updates and bulletins. FMI, contact **[Pastor Geoff](#)**, J & O, or **[Carrie Penrose](#)**.

UPDATES, REPORT OUTS, AND UPCOMING EVENTS (cont.)

January Birthday Greetings

Capricorn ~ Climbing the mountain straight to the top and knowing that patience, perseverance, and dedication is the only way to scale, Capricorn is the last earth sign of the zodiac. Capricorn is represented by the sea-goat, a mythological creature with the body of a goat and the tail of a fish. Accordingly, Capricorns are skilled at navigating both the material and emotional realms.

Rev. Geoff Parker ~ 5

Susan Gilpin ~ 9

Beth Penrose ~ 10

Kathy Hillman Reed ~ 13

Sandy Panenka ~ 13

Bill Maynard ~ 16

Aquarius ~ Despite the "aqua" in its name, Aquarius is actually the last *air* sign of the zodiac. Innovative, progressive, and shamelessly revolutionary, Aquarius is represented by the water bearer, the mystical healer who bestows water, or life, upon the land. Accordingly, Aquarius is the most humanitarian astrological sign. At the end of the day, Aquarius is dedicated to making the world a better place.

Aiden Lacombe ~ 20

David Clark ~ 21

Eric Tracy ~ 29

Janet Clough ~ 28

Let's do (a continental)

Breakfast Ladies!

Women of the church, members and friends are invited to breakfast on

Wednesday, January 17, 2024 @ 8:30 a.m.

in the FCC coffee area,

we'll provide the food,

you bring your appetite.

~ good food, good conversation ~

it's a great way to start your day!

Please RSVP to

deborah.gray48@gmail.com

or 952-4041 by January 15,

so we can plan accordingly.

See you there!

The Men's Breakfast...

will be gathering on

Saturday, January 13, 2024 @ 8:30 a.m.

at the church

An enjoyable repast and

lively discussions are always on the menu!

FMI John Bischof

jegbischof@gmail.com or 781-2391

The February edition of *Steeplenotes*

material submittal deadline is

Friday January 26, 2024

Submitted articles should be final and print ready, pictures complete with captions.

Thank you.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

LIVE & WORK ON AN ISLAND THIS SUMMER!

We're hiring for the summer! Work as a "Pelican" on Star Island, one of the Isles of Shoals off the coast of Portsmouth, NH. Kitchen, wait staff, and housekeeping positions are available as well as positions requiring customer service and cash handling skills.

Working on Star is an amazing experience with an incredible community in an extraordinary place.



Star Island
Isles of Shoals, NH

Learn more and apply at
starisland.org/working/



Star Island is looking for summer staff applicants. If you are not already familiar with Star Island, we run a seasonal religious and educational conference center, rooted in the UU and UCC faiths, off the New Hampshire coast and hire approximately 100 people (18 or older) to work from mid-June to mid-September. Working on Star Island offers a unique employment opportunity in a beautiful location. Staff enjoy an enriching learning experience that, in many cases, shapes future careers. The words "best job ever" are often used to describe working on Star Island. Will you help us spread the word about this opportunity by sharing the attached flyer with your congregation? It can be printed and hung up or shared as a graphic in your newsletter or on your social media pages.

The priority deadline to apply is January 22.

For more information about working on Star Island, please visit our [website](http://starisland.org/working/) or feel free to contact us with questions.

Kate Brady (she/her)
Office Manager
Star Island Corporation
30 Middle St
Portsmouth, NH 03801
(603) 430-6272

SIC off-season office hours: 10:00a.m.-4:00p.m. Monday -Thursday

January 2024

Be sure to check the calendar at The Foreside Community Church's website
www.foresidechurch.org for any updates or changes.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 6:30 p.m. Green Team Committee Mtg.	4	5	6
7 9:30 hybrid service w/ Rev. Susan Gilpin (see pg. 3 for details)	8	9 9 a.m. Tues Study Grp 12 p.m. Knitters 6:15 p.m. Choir 6:45 p.m. AA 7:15 p.m. Bells	10	11 9 a.m. Bells of Casco Bay 7:00 p.m. Travelogue (see pg. 5 for details) 6 p.m. AA	12	13 8:30 a.m. Men's Monthly Breakfast (see pg. 8 for details)
14 9:30 hybrid service (see pg. 3 for details)	15 Office closed in observation of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Federal Holiday	16 9 a.m. Tues Study Grp 12 p.m. Knitters 6:15 p.m. Choir 6:45 p.m. AA 7:15 p.m. Bells	17 8:30 a.m. Women's Breakfast (see pg. 8) 4:00 p.m. FCC Book Club (see pg. 7) 6:30 p.m. Green Team (see pg. 5)	18 9 a.m. Bells of Casco Bay 6 p.m. AA	19 Deadline for February <i>Steeplenotes</i> material into office	20
21 9:30 hybrid service (see pg. 3 for details) Mission Moment	22	23 9 a.m. Tues Study Grp 12 p.m. Knitters 6:15 p.m. Choir 6:45 p.m. AA 7:15 p.m. Bells	24 3:00 p.m. Justice & Out- reach Mnthly Mtg 6:00 p.m. Evening Prayer 6:30 p.m. Green Team (see pg. 5)	25 9 a.m. Bells of Casco Bay 6 p.m. AA	26	27
28 9:30 hybrid service (see pg. 3 for details) ANNUAL MEETING (details to follow)	29	30 9 a.m. Tues Study Grp 12 p.m. Knitters 6:15 p.m. Choir 6:45 p.m. AA 7:15 p.m. Bells	31 6:00 p.m. Evening Prayer 6:30 p.m. Green Team (see pg. 5)			

Daily Lectionary Readings for January 2024

Mon., Jan. 1

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
Psalm 8
Revelation 21:1-6a
Matthew 25:31-46

Tues., Jan. 2

Psalm 148
Proverbs 1:1-7
James 3:13-18

Wed., Jan. 3

Psalm 110
Proverbs 1:20-33
James 4:1-10

Thurs., Jan. 4

Psalm 110
Proverbs 3:1-12
James 4:11-17

Fri., Jan. 5

Psalm 110
Proverbs 22:1-9
Luke 6:27-31

Sat., Jan. 6

Epiphany
Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
Ephesians 3:1-12
Matthew 2:1-12

Sun., Jan. 7***The Baptism of Christ***

Genesis 1:1-5
Psalm 29
Acts 19:1-7
Mark 1:4-11

Mon., Jan. 8

Psalm 69:1-5, 30-36
Genesis 17:1-13
Romans 4:1-12

Tues., Jan. 9

Psalm 69:1-5, 30-36
Exodus 30:22-38
Acts 22:2-16

Wed., Jan. 10

Psalm 69:1-5, 30-36
Isaiah 41:14-20
John 1:29-34

Thurs., Jan. 11

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
Judges 2:6-15
2 Corinthians 10:1-11

Fri., Jan. 12

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
Judges 2:16-23
Acts 13:16-25

Sat., Jan. 13

Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
1 Samuel 2:21-25
Matthew 25:1-13

Sun., Jan. 14

1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20]
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18
1 Corinthians 6:12-20
John 1:43-51

Mon., Jan. 15

Psalm 86
1 Samuel 9:27—10:8 2
Corinthians 6:14—7:1

Tues., Jan. 16

Psalm 86
1 Samuel 15:10-31
Acts 5:1-11

Wed., Jan. 17

Psalm 86
Genesis 16:1-14
Luke 18:15-17

Thurs., Jan. 18

Psalm 62:5-12
Jeremiah 19:1-15
Revelation 18:11-20

Fri., Jan. 19

Psalm 62:5-12
Jeremiah 20:7-13
2 Peter 3:1-7

Sat., Jan. 20

Psalm 62:5-12
Jeremiah 20:14-18
Luke 10:13-16

Sun., Jan. 21

Jonah 3:1-5,
10 Psalm 62:5-12
1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Mark 1:14-20

Mon., Jan. 22

Psalm 46
Genesis 12:1-9
1 Corinthians 7:17-24

Tues., Jan. 23

Psalm 46
Genesis 45:25—46:7
Acts 5:33-42

Wed., Jan. 24

Psalm 46
Proverbs 8:1-21
Mark 3:13-19a

Thurs., Jan. 25

Psalm 111
Deuteronomy 3:23-29
Romans 9:6-18

Fri., Jan. 26

Psalm 111
Deuteronomy 12:28-32
Revelation 2:12-17

Sat., Jan. 27

Psalm 111
Deuteronomy 13:1-5
Matthew 8:28—9:1

Sun., Jan. 28

Deuteronomy 18:15-20
Psalm 111
1 Corinthians 8:1-13
Mark 1:21-28

Mon., Jan. 29

Psalm 35:1-10
Numbers 22:1-21
Acts 21:17-26

Tues., Jan. 30

Psalm 35:1-10
Numbers 22:22-28 1
Corinthians 7:32-40

Wed., Jan. 31

Psalm 35:1-10
Jeremiah 29:1-14
Mark 5:1-20



STEEPLENOTES

A Newsletter of

The Foreside Community Church, UCC

General Office Hours:

Monday through Friday
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

or unless otherwise posted

Office: 207-781-5880

E-mail: info@foresidechurch.org Web: www.foresidechurch.org

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