

# GETTING INVOLVED

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Sunday Morning and Beyond



March 2017



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## GETTING INVOLVED – SUNDAY MORNING AND BEYOND

There are many ways to be involved at First Parish, not only by attending the Sunday morning service, but by being active beyond Sunday mornings. Through our many Call-Based and Task-Based ministries, we offer a range of activities. Some are spiritual, some are social. Some help nurture and support our church, others reach out to the wider community. Many are open to all, regardless of whether you are a member of our church or not.

The information in this document describes what goes on here, week to week, month to month. If you have an idea for an activity that you do not see here, consider starting it as your own ministry.

For more information about First Parish, our beliefs, and our missions, please check our website at [firstparishyarmouth.org](http://firstparishyarmouth.org) or contact the church office or our pastors at 846-3773. For information about the actual timing of events, check the monthly newsletter, the website, and the Sunday bulletins.

## **TASK-BASED and CALL-BASED MINISTRIES**

Often we tend to think of “ministry” as work done by others in our lives – pastors, missionaries, church leaders – but not ourselves. Webster’s online dictionary defines ministry as “the act of ministering; ministrations; service.” Put simply, ministry is any act that pleases God and serves others. Ministry is something that each one of us can do every day if we choose.

At First Parish, we have many church-wide ministries that serve the needs of our church in terms of our parishioners and our community, and many that also meet the needs of individuals who wish to serve others. We have chosen to formalize our church-wide ministries under two broad categories: Task-Based and Call-Based.

### **Task-Based Ministry**

A Task-Based ministry is any committee defined in the First Parish By-Laws as a Standing Committee (a permanent committee created to serve a specific purpose), or any other activity or committee that the church Council decides must exist because it supports the running of the church. If a situation arises where there are insufficient volunteers to fill these ministries, the Council is responsible for finding a way to address the vacancies, as necessary. Members of Task-Based ministries are elected at Annual Meeting or appointed by Council, and some ministries are restricted to church members.

Examples of Task-Based ministries at First Parish include the Board of Trustees, the Pastoral Relations Committee, the Nominating Committee, and the Clam Festival committee, to name just a few.

### **Call-Based Ministry**

A Call-Based ministry is any activity or committee that is *called* into existence out of the passion of one or more individuals. For example, you might decide to form a ministry to support the work of the American Cancer Society through its Relay for Life. You determine the leaders and define their responsibilities, in this case, to coordinate people to walk during the Relay and to raise funds for it through individual supporters. You then submit your proposal for a “Relay for Life Ministry” to the Council.

The Council approves all Call-Based ministries and monitors them for as long as they exist. For example, the Relay for Life ministry may be a single-year effort, or it may persist year after year. Once a Call-Based ministry’s lifecycle ends, it is discontinued, thus allowing the church’s time and energy always to be focused on activities where there is spirit and enthusiasm.

Examples of Call-Based ministries at First Parish include the Flower Committee, No Strings Attached, Earth Stewardship, and Men’s Spirituality, to name just a few. We encourage the formation of new Call-Based ministries at any time, and they are open to all.

## **THE WORSHIP SERVICE**

Worship at First Parish involves the gathered people. That means it takes your presence during the worship service to make it work. We need people in the pews, and we need people to help with all aspects of the service. If you would like to be involved beyond sitting in the pew, there are many opportunities for you. These activities are open to all.

### **Music**

At First Parish, you are always invited to make a joyful noise, regardless of your musical background or ability. We currently offer three ways:

*Choir* – Open to young and old, the Choir rehearses one evening a week and participates in three church services per month. We encourage anyone to join, even if you have never sung in a group before. You already sing hymns during the worship service; why not consider joining us at the front of the church?

*Hand Bell Choir* – The Hand Bell Choir is open to all ages and abilities and meets one evening a week to rehearse for special occasions, most notably Christmas Eve, as well as other selected times. Most ringers are responsible for only two bells – one for each hand. If you have two hands, come and see what it's all about!

*Special Music* – We invite those of any age with musical talents to participate in our church service on those Sunday mornings when the choir does not perform, or when the music director would like to augment the choir with instrumentation. All instruments, instrumental groups, and vocalists are welcome.

For more information on any of these activities, contact the Music Director through the church office at 846-3773.

### **Lector**

The Lector reads the scriptures during Sunday morning service and can be any age. The scripture readings are determined by the pastors, who are available ahead of time to help with your understanding of the readings. Many Lectors add their own notes to put the readings in context.

If you would like to serve as a Lector, contact either of the pastors through the church office at 846-3773.

### **Peace Candle Reflection**

During each Sunday morning service, time is set aside for a peace candle reflection, given by a lay person. We invite all – young or old, member or nonmember, or community member – to take part. The reflection is a personal story. Some choose to tell how their faith has been strengthened or how they have overcome vulnerability or some other obstacle. Some might describe an organization or a service that is meaningful to them. The reflection can be any personal experience or observation that the individual wants to share with the church.

If you would like to give a peace candle reflection, or to learn more about this part of the service, contact either of the pastors through the church office at 846-3773.

## **Acolyte**

At the beginning of each Sunday service, an Acolyte lights the candles at the front of the church during the first hymn, and then leads the congregation in the Prayer of Invocation and the Lord's Prayer. At the conclusion of the service, the Acolyte extinguishes all the candles except for the candlelighter itself, and carries that light out of the church. All ages are welcome.

If you or your child would like to serve as an Acolyte, contact the Deacons through the church office at 846-3773.

## **Ushers/Greeters**

Each Sunday, two Greeters welcome people as they enter the church, and two to four Ushers ring the church bell, hand out bulletins and help with the offering. The Ushers count church attendance during the service, and following the service, they check the pews to make sure that they are tidy and to collect the attendance records. Greeters and ushers can be any age. You should plan to arrive at the church at least 30 minutes before the service starts.

If you would like to serve as a Greeter, contact the Hospitality Committee through the church office at 846-3773. If you would like to serve as an Usher, contact the Deacons through the church office at 846-3773.

## **Flowers and Steeple Lighting**

The church welcomes contributions of flowers or floral arrangements to appear at the front of the church during the Sunday service. The church also welcomes donations to fund the lighting of the church steeple for a specific week. Contributions and donations can be in memory of a loved one, in honor of someone or something, or for no reason at all. Your gift will be cited in the Sunday bulletin for the week you choose.

To contribute flowers, sign the Flower Book in the vestry and bring your own arrangement to the church before the service. You can also ask the Flower Committee to purchase an arrangement for you; in this case we recommend a minimum contribution of \$25.00. At the conclusion of the service, you are welcome to take your arrangement home. Contact the Flower Committee ministry leaders through the church office at 846-3773.

To fund the steeple lighting for a specific week, sign the Flower Book in the vestry and contact the church office at 846-3773. The donation for the steeple lighting is \$15.00, payable through the church office.

## **Coffee Hour**

Each week following the Sunday morning service, parishioners are invited into Fellowship Hall for coffee and treats. All are invited. Typically the coffee hour lasts about 45 minutes and is an opportunity for people to socialize and share information.

The coffee hour is overseen by the Hospitality Committee, which schedules coffee servers well in advance. The coffee servers arrive at the church early enough to set up tables and arrange tablecloths, make several pots of coffee and lemonade, and set out treats. Usually, the coffee servers leave the service during the last hymn so that they have time to finalize preparations. After coffee hour, the servers clean up and wash any dishes used.

For more information or to volunteer to be a coffee server, contact the Hospitality Committee ministry leaders through the church office at 846-3773.

## **Flower Committee**

The Flower Committee oversees the gifts of flowers that beautify the sanctuary each Sunday morning. The committee also coordinates the placement of holiday decorations and the ordering of flowers for special occasions like Christmas, Easter, and Memorial Day, and orders the palms for Palm Sunday.

For more information, contact the Hospitality Committee ministry leaders through the church office at 846-3773.

## **Hospitality Committee**

The Hospitality Committee organizes greeters and coffee servers for each Sunday service and keeps track of the kitchen supplies needed for the coffee hour. The committee also plans special events such as the Christmas Tea and the Easter breakfast, and other major celebrations as the need arises.

For more information, contact the Hospitality Committee ministry leaders through the church office at 846-3773.

## **YOUTH PROGRAMS**

First Parish is committed to providing faith formation opportunities for all ages; our programs are open to all youth and their families in the church and the local community.

While we believe it is important to provide age-specific programming, we also believe that intergenerational experiences help strengthen relationships that can support our young people's faith formation in the larger context of community. Additionally, we acknowledge that parents are the most important component of a child's faith formation, and we hope to provide helpful resources and ideas that can be used throughout the week to augment what we do at First Parish on Sundays.

On Sunday mornings, youth are always welcome to join our morning worship. On most Sundays, there is an opportunity for them to take some time away from the service and engage the day's focus on scripture in a more kid-friendly manner. Some youth, however, prefer to attend the entire service with their family. Activity sheets and fidget toys are available at the rear of the sanctuary, and children who become restless in the pew should feel free to get up and get them at any time.

Youth and families are invited and encouraged to help with Sunday morning worship. Volunteer opportunities include greeting people (Greeters), lighting the candles and leading the prayer of invocation (Acolyte), reading scripture (Lector), sharing a peace candle reflection, taking the offering (Ushers), singing in the choir, and helping with coffee hour.

### **Nursery**

Every week during the program year (the first Sunday after Labor Day until the second Sunday in June), First Parish offers nursery care for our youngest friends, from infant to Pre-K. Nursery care is provided during worship and you are welcome to drop your young ones off before worship begins or anytime during the service.

For more information, contact the church office at 846-3773.

### **Church School**

The Christian Education program serves all youth from kindergarten through grade 8. Programs vary from year to year depending on attendance. The goal of church school is to help youth become familiar with and learn the Bible stories – the same stories we are focusing on in worship. Time spent in church school often includes sharing joys and concerns, reading and reviewing the week's scripture story, and some fun as well.

Youth begin in worship with their parents. They leave for church school during the Passing of the Peace. On Communion Sundays (the first Sunday of the month), youth who wish to attend church school go directly to the chapel before worship begins. They then join the congregation in worship during the communion hymn so that they can be present for communion.

For more information, contact the Associate Pastor through the church office at 846-3773.

## **Justice Makers**

Justice Makers is a program for 5th and 6th grade youth that teaches them about qualities found in people who make a difference in the world. Its goal is to increase their awareness of social issues and show them how they can influence change. Topics include awareness, empathy, leadership, and joy. Justice Makers is based on a curriculum created by the Unitarian Universalist church; it does not contain religious content. The group meets one day a week, usually in October and March.

For more information, contact the Associate Pastor through the church office at 846-3773.

## **PeaceJam**

PeaceJam is an international education program conceived over 20 years ago by the PeaceJam Foundation and built around leading Nobel Peace Laureates. Its goal is “to create young leaders committed to positive change in themselves, their communities, and the world through the inspiration of Nobel Peace Laureates who pass on the spirit, skills, and wisdom they embody.” PeaceJam at First Parish is aimed at 7th grade youth and is based on the PeaceJam Leaders curriculum. Participants learn about Nobel Peace Prize winners and create their own social justice project to affect positive change in the world. PeaceJam is open to all grade 7 youth at First Parish and in the community and is not religious.

For more information, visit the PeaceJam website at [www.peacejam.org](http://www.peacejam.org), or contact the Associate Pastor through the church office at 846-3773.

## **Confirmation**

First Parish offers an annual confirmation program for youth in grade 8 or up. This program is open to First Parish families and their friends. Our curriculum includes Echo the Story (a 12-week overview of the Bible), background on the history of the Christian church and First Parish, visits to other faith communities, community service, and a brief introduction to world religions. All confirmation students are matched with an adult mentor who works with them throughout the year.

Starting in the fall, Confirmation meets one evening a week throughout the year. It is a closed group; once class begins we cannot accept new members until the next cycle.

For more information, contact the Associate Pastor through the church office at 846-3773.

## **Preble Street**

Preble Street is an organization, located on Preble Street in Portland, that offers shelter and services to those in need in the greater Portland area. Its mission is “to provide accessible barrier-free services to empower people experiencing problems with homelessness, housing, hunger, and poverty and to advocate for solutions to those problems.”

First Parish offers a regular opportunity to our Senior High youth (grades 9 through 12) to help the staff at Preble Street. The first Sunday of the month, from 10am until about 1pm, our youth work in the Preble Street kitchen prepping food, and then they help serve lunch, and clean up.

For more information, contact the Associate Pastor through the church office at 846-3773.

## **Summer Mission Trip**

Every summer First Parish offers at least one week-long mission trip opportunity for youth who have completed a senior high grade (grades 9 through 12). The trips vary from year to year and are currently on a three year cycle: local, domestic, and international. First Parish organizes fundraisers to help support the costs of the trips.

For information about future trips, contact the Associate Pastor through the church office at 846-3773.

## **SOCIAL FELLOWSHIP**

At First Parish, we know that our church community is strengthened when people spend time together, get to know each other, and build relationships. To that end, we have many ministries that are strictly social and are for the purpose of creating and nurturing friendships. Their activities are primarily to strengthen bonds among our parishioners, but any member of the community is invited to join in.

### **No Strings Attached**

The No Strings Attached fellowship is for all women of the church and our community, and meets from 10:00am to 12:00pm on the third Friday of every month in Fellowship Hall. Coffee and goodies are always available, and there is no agenda. You can come to socialize, come to share, come to listen, but just come! Note that the group does not meet in July or August.

The First Parish Knitters also meet at this time, joining No Strings Attached in Fellowship Hall.

For more information, contact the No Strings Attached ministry leaders through the church office at 846-3773, or just show up.

### **First Parish Knitters**

The First Parish Knitters meet on the third Friday of every month, joining the No Strings Attached group from 10:00am to 12:00pm in Fellowship Hall. The knitters work on projects for the December Christmas Fair, knit prayer shawls, work on their own knitting projects, and enjoy each other's company. There is plenty of donated yarn and patterns for those who are looking for a project. All women of the church and the community are welcome.

For more information, contact the No Strings Attached ministry leaders through the church office at 846-3773, or just show up.

### **Women's Coffee Fellowship**

The Women's Coffee Fellowship meets on the second Friday of every month from 4:00pm to 6:00pm at Clayton's Café in Yarmouth. The ladies purchase their own coffee and snacks and then sit together to discuss anything and everything, from food and gardening to books and vacations. The group is open to all women in the church and our community.

For more information, contact the Women's Coffee Fellowship ministry leaders through the church office at 846-3773, or just show up.

## **Crafters**

During the year, volunteers spend time together each month making crafts to sell at the December Christmas Fair. The group focuses on recycling items and using natural items whenever possible.

Meetings are the first Wednesday of the month, except for July and August, and are held in Fellowship Hall from 10:30am to 1:00pm. Crafters are welcome to bring their lunch. Please join us – no experience is necessary and the activity is open to all members and nonmembers. If you are unable to meet, please create at home and share your items at the fair.

For more information, contact the Crafters ministry leaders through the church office at 846-3773, or just show up.

## **Collators**

The collators meet once month, usually on a Monday at 1:00pm, to collate, seal, and label the monthly newsletter. All are invited to participate.

Contact the church office at 846-3773 to be put on the “on-call” list for volunteers.

## **SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT**

There are many opportunities at First Parish to meet in small groups to study and share spiritual topics. Some are focused on the study of scripture and the Bible and follow a set agenda, while others are free form and let the discussion take itself where it will. These ministries are aimed at adult participation.

### **Bible Study**

Every Thursday morning from 9:30am to 10:30am join our Senior Pastor at the church to study the scripture passages that will be used in the next Sunday's service. Goodies are usually available and a Bible quiz starts the meeting. The group meets September through May, and there is room for all.

For more information, contact the Senior Pastor through the church office at 846-3773, or just show up.

### **Men's Spirituality**

The Men's Spirituality Group meets monthly from September through May, alternating between a Saturday morning for breakfast one month and a Sunday evening for dinner the next. All adult men are welcome. During our time together, we discuss a range of issues, including our faith, our sense of belonging, and our successes and failures. Conversations are profound at times and profane at others, but always meaningful.

For more information, contact the Men's Spirituality ministry leader through the church office at 846-3773, or just show up.

### **Soul Spa**

Soul Spa is a woman's spiritual ministry that meets on Saturday mornings in the chapel two times a year, in October/November and February/March, for a four-week session. The leaders choose a theme for each session, and participants then share their experiences and thoughts, or something tangible that is pertinent to the theme. For example, one selected theme focused on the poem "Where I'm From" by George Ella Lyon. Over the course of the session, participants shared pictures, family heirlooms, mementos, and recipes from their past.

For more information, contact the Soul Spa ministry leader through the church office at 846-3773, or just show up. All women are welcome.

### **Library Committee**

Through the planning of the Library Committee, the wider church is able to participate in discussions based on topics addressed by books, articles, videos, or speakers selected by the committee. Past events have included all-church book reads, collaborations with the Merrill Memorial Library, and speakers and story tellers. All adults, including the greater Yarmouth community, are invited to participate in the readings and discussions. The Library Committee announces their events as they happen.

For more information, contact the Library Committee ministry leader through the church office at 846-3773, or just show up.

## **Book Group**

The Book Group meets monthly at 10:00am on a Wednesday morning. Books, both fiction and nonfiction, are read at home and then discussed during the meeting. Examples of past titles that have been chosen include "The Boston Girl" by Anita Diamant, "The Wright Brothers" by David McCullough, and "Lila" by Marilynne Robinson. Books are chosen by the group and are available through the church at a discounted rate. All are welcome.

For more information, contact the Book Group ministry leader through the church office at 846-3773, or just show up.

## **OUTREACH AND MISSION**

One of the main focuses at First Parish is fostering support for our community and beyond through projects that reach out and lend a hand. Ministries have coalesced around caring for those who are less fortunate both physically and financially, providing companionship to those who are lonely or troubled, offering resources and support to our neighbors locally and abroad, and caring for our planet. We are always seeking new ways and opportunities to make a difference in our world. These activities are open to all.

### **Adult Mission**

The Adult Mission group tries to provide a variety of trips locally, nationally, and internationally for adults who like to participate in these types of missions. Past trips have included visiting New Orleans and New Jersey to offer disaster relief help; South Dakota to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation to do service projects such as wheelchair ramp construction and production of earth bricks (used in the construction of houses); and local Habitat for Humanity builds. Often, these trips offer cultural exchange, touring, and educational opportunities for participants. The church provides some support in defraying costs and occasional scholarships for people who might not otherwise be able to participate.

For more information, contact the Adult Mission ministry leader through the church office at 846-3773.

### **Caring Connection**

Caring Connection is a group of caring adults who provide support to shut-ins and those in rehabilitation or assisted living facilities through visits, phone calls, and cards. Their companionship often comes with cookies. The group also welcomes church visitors and new members, and delivers prayer shawls to those who are undergoing a difficult time. Part of the Caring Connection activities involves making meals for those who cannot do so themselves due to illness or some other incapacity. Caring Connection can also host funeral receptions if requested. Caring Connection is led by the pastors.

For more information, contact the pastors through the church office at 846-3773.

### **Earth Stewardship**

Earth Stewardship is a group of like-minded individuals from the church and the community who care about the resources of our earth. Through collaborations with public and private organizations, the group educates the public, connects people to work together on specific projects, and raises money to fund their work. The group's current effort has been to raise awareness of the Royal River ecosystem, including its life and natural processes, the conserved land along its banks, its connections to Casco Bay, and the current fisheries management.

For more information, contact the Earth Stewardship ministry leaders through the church office at 846-3773.

## **Bean Supper**

Bean Suppers are held regularly throughout the year at First Parish. We do not view these suppers as fundraisers, but rather as opportunities to invite the public into our church to share a meal and fellowship. The suppers are moderately priced and served family style. Leftovers provide meals for shelters and goods for the Yarmouth Food Pantry.

There are many opportunities for volunteering to help at the suppers. We always need bean makers, as well as biscuit, coleslaw, and mac and cheese makers; pie makers; coffee servers; waiters and waitresses; dish washers; and folks to help with cleanup. This is a great way to get to know others in the church, as well as serve the public.

For more information, contact the Bean Supper ministry leader through the church office at 846-3773. To help at an upcoming bean supper, add your name to the Bean Supper sign-up sheet in the vestry.

## **Friendship House**

Friendship House is an organization in South Portland that is committed to helping men who are trying to overcome their addictions. They provide guidance, encouragement, and a family atmosphere in a home setting that is staffed by individuals who understand addiction and live with the guests. First Parish supports Friendship House by providing them with a meal once a month.

Each month, you can use the Friendship House sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the church vestry to volunteer to make part of the meal. One of the committee members then delivers the meal. The group always needs cooks and drivers.

For more information, contact the Friendship House ministry leader through the church office at 846-3773.

## **Project Holiday**

Project Holiday happens during Advent, when a tree is set up in Fellowship Hall displaying cards that reflect the gift wishes of local families in need for the holidays. Parishioners are invited to take cards from the tree and purchase the items they describe. They then wrap the gifts and return them to the church for distribution to the families. This is a holiday ministry for all ages.

For more information, watch for announcements in December, or contact the Project Holiday ministry leader through the church office at 846-3773.

## **Yarmouth Food Pantry**

First Parish houses the Yarmouth Food Pantry, which is located in the lower level of the church near the rear entrance. While not directly affiliated with First Parish, the Food Pantry is a great way for our parishioners to get involved with the community. Open several days a week to residents of Yarmouth, North Yarmouth, Cumberland, Pownal, and Freeport, the Pantry is staffed, supported, funded, and operated as a volunteer effort by members of those communities. All are invited to contribute goods, money, and time to this effort.

For more information, see the website <http://www.firstparishyarmouth.org/yarmouth-community-food-pantry/> or contact the church office at 846-3773.

## **FUNDRAISING**

Formal fundraising at First Parish occurs as two major events: the Clam Festival in July and the Christmas Fair in December. Both involve multiday efforts that require a tremendous amount of preparation and participation, but also provide enormous rewards for those who are involved. They are truly a way to get to know the people who sit next to you in the pews, to feel the spirit and energy of First Parish, and to do something wonderful for the community. Participation is open to all.

### **Clam Festival**

Each year in July, the entire town of Yarmouth turns out for the Clam Festival, which is known throughout the state and even across the country as one of the premier Maine summer events. Given our location on Main Street, First Parish is well situated to be part of the festivities. For the three days of the festival, we sell used books and white elephant items, and we serve all kinds of food, including pancake breakfasts, lobster and crabmeat lunches, strawberry shortcakes, and PIES.

We have a wide reputation for our pies, and we make them by the dozens. Well before the festival starts, volunteer bakers are busy making and freezing pies. Others are collecting and storing items for the white elephant sale. Days before the festival, many hands are needed to set up structures and move items from storage out onto the lawn and across the street where the white elephant sale takes place. During the festival itself, we need dozens of volunteers to put together the sandwiches and other food items being sold and to staff the booths. After the festival is over, people are needed to break down structures and move unsold items back into the church for storage.

The Clam Festival is our biggest and best fundraiser. While all agree that it is a lot of work, being a part of this effort will give you a sense of community spirit like no other.

For more information, listen for announcements and sign-up sheets in June, or contact the Clam Festival ministry leaders through the church office at 846-3773.

### **Christmas Fair**

The Christmas Fair is our second largest fundraiser and occurs in early December. During the year, the knitters have been knitting (see Social Fellowship — Knitters) and the crafters have been crafting (see Social Fellowship – Crafters) to make items for the Christmas Fair.

In the weeks before the fair, we ask everyone to identify items at home, such as old Christmas decorations, kitchen items, paintings, and attic treasures, that can be sold at the fair or put in the silent auction. We need volunteers to bake cookies for the cookie walk and other goodies to sell at the baked goods table. Volunteers are needed to gather at the church just before the fair to make and decorate wreaths and boxwood trees. It starts to look and smell like Christmas at First Parish.

We need help setting up for the fair and taking down afterward. On the day of the fair we need volunteers to welcome guests, staff the booths and serve the luncheon of sandwiches, fish chowder, and mac and cheese. We need help cleaning up the kitchen.

The community loves our Christmas fair and, with your help, we can make it a yearly success.

For more information, listen for announcements and sign-up sheets in November, or contact the Christmas Fair ministry leaders through the church office at 846-3773.

## **FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT**

The First Parish By-Laws describe several committees that are required in order to address the financial needs of the church. These committees are made up of church members and are responsible for acquiring pledges and endowments from parishioners, and for overseeing the use and investment of funds needed to keep the church solvent and functioning smoothly.

### **Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees is a Standing Committee that is responsible for managing how funds are spent at First Parish. They prepare the annual budget for presentation and acceptance at the Annual Meeting, are responsible for maintaining the church building and infrastructure, approve and schedule contractors, and oversee any projects that require spending money. Such projects can range from purchasing yard equipment to installing solar panels on the church roof. Most projects that require funding are approved at the Annual Meeting. When necessary, the Trustees will present a project that represents a change to the approved budget at a Special Meeting for church member approval. The chair of the Board of Trustees is an officer of the church.

The Board of Trustees has nine members, three of which are replaced yearly by election at the Annual Meeting.

If you are interested in a future position as a Trustee, contact any Trustee or the Moderator through the church office at 846-3773.

### **Stewardship**

The Stewardship Committee organizes two annual campaigns: the pledge campaign that asks parishioners to help fund the church's financial goals by pledging a regular, fixed amount, and the fall drive requesting gifts to the Endowment Fund.

Starting in the spring, the committee plans a series of informational presentations that acquaint parishioners with the stewardship goals for the coming year, often through personal stories of what giving means individually and to the church. We also use the opportunity to remind parishioners that stewardship comes in many forms: in addition to financial support, stewardship takes place whenever a person donates their time or talents.

The Stewardship Committee is coordinated by the Council and there is no set number of members or term limits. If you are interested in a future position on the Stewardship Committee, contact the Moderator through the church office at 846-3773.

### **Trust Fund Investment Committee**

The Trust Fund Investment Committee is a Standing Committee that oversees and manages the church's endowment and dedicated long term funds and investments. With the approval of the Council and the Board of Trustees, the committee establishes specifically designated funds for defined purposes, and ensures that each fund is managed consistent with the terms adopted at the time the fund was established.

The committee has seven members, two of whom are appointed by the Board of Trustees, and five who are elected at the Annual Meeting. Approximately one third of these committee members are rotated yearly for a term of three years.

If you are interested in a future position on the Trust Fund Investment Committee, contact any member of the Trust Fund Investment Committee or the Moderator through the church office at 846-3773.

### **Collector**

The Collector collects, counts, and reports pledge payments and plate or other collections received by the church during worship services. The Collector is bonded and can appoint others to assist in these duties. The Collector is elected at the Annual Meeting for a term of two years and is an officer of the church.

If you are interested in a future position as the Collector, contact the Moderator through the church office at 846-3773.

## **SPIRITUAL OVERSIGHT**

The First Parish By-Laws define two committees that are required to address and sustain the spiritual needs of the church. The committees work closely with the pastors to ensure that the spiritual life of the church is healthy and vibrant, and that there is a means for good communication between the pastors and the congregation. Committee members must be church members.

### **Board of Deacons**

The Board of Deacons is a Standing Committee that helps provide spiritual leadership to the First Parish worship community, and also assists the pastors in various activities that are part of our spiritual life. Deacons prepare the sanctuary for worship each Sunday, prepare and serve Communion, organize the Ushers and Acolytes, assist at baptisms, weddings, funerals, and the installation of new members, and administer the use of the Spiritual Life Fund (established in 2006 to support efforts that broaden and deepen the spiritual life of the church). Deacons have the opportunity to lead the worship service when called upon. They also provide feedback into the planning of special services and are there to listen to the pulse and feedback of the church community. The chair of the Board of Deacons is an officer of the church.

The Board of Deacons has at least ten members, one-third of which are replaced yearly by election at the Annual Meeting.

If you are interested in a future position as a Deacon, contact the Council or any Deacon through the church office at 846-3773.

### **Pastoral Relations Committee**

The Pastoral Relations Committee is a Standing Committee that meets with the pastors at least twice a year, and at additional times whenever the pastors or the committee feels it is necessary. The committee meets with members of the church as necessary to consider special needs of the congregation with respect to their relation with the pastors.

The committee has four members, one appointed by the Board of Trustees from its members, one by the Board of Deacons from its members, one by the Senior Pastor, and one by the Associate Pastor. The terms of office are open-ended, with the goal of creating a stable and compatible group.

If you are interested in a future position on the Pastoral Relations Committee, contact the pastors through the church office at 846-3773.

## **CHURCH ORGANIZATION**

The First Parish By-Laws define several committees and positions that are needed for managing the organizational and day-to-day functions of the church. These committees oversee all activities that are taking place in the church or by the church, maintain the church's official financial and organizational records, oversee the Annual Meeting and any Special Meetings of the church, and represent the church at state and local conferences of the United Church of Christ (UCC). These positions, which are open to church members, are elected yearly at the Annual Meeting.

### **Council**

The Council is the Executive Committee of the church. It is responsible for long range planning, convening a Nominating Committee to present candidates for open positions at the Annual Meeting, filling positions that become vacant during the year, appointing a pastoral search committee when necessary, approving and supporting the church budget and fundraising activities, and fostering effective communication among the Council, ministries, and membership.

The Council has 14 members, consisting of the Moderator, Vice Moderator, Treasurer, Clerk, one representative from the Board of Deacons, one representative from the Board of Trustees, the Senior Pastor, Associate Pastor, and six at-large members each serving a three-year term, two of which are replaced yearly by election at the Annual Meeting. The Church Moderator chairs the Council.

If you are interested in a future position as an at-large member of the Church Council, contact the Moderator or the pastors through the church office at 846-3773.

### **Clerk**

The Clerk serves as secretary for all Council, Annual, and Special Meetings of the church. The Clerk is responsible for providing proper notice of Annual and Special Meetings, handling church correspondence, and maintaining the official records of the church regarding baptisms, funerals, weddings, and membership. The Clerk is elected at the Annual Meeting for a two-year term and is an officer of the church.

If you are interested in a future position as Clerk, contact the Moderator or the pastors through the church office at 846-3773.

### **Moderator and Vice Moderator**

The Moderator presides at the Annual Meeting, Special Meetings, and Council meetings. In addition, the Moderator serves as a nonvoting ex-officio member of all committees. The Vice Moderator serves in the absence of the Moderator. Both are elected at the Annual Meeting for a two-year term and are officers of the church.

If you are interested in a future position as Moderator or Vice Moderator, contact the Moderator or the pastors through the church office at 846-3773.

## **Delegates**

Delegates represent First Parish at meetings of the Cumberland Association (one of eight regional Associations within the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ (UCC)), which meets annually in April and September; the Maine Conference of the UCC (representing UCC congregations throughout Maine), which meets annually in October; and the Tri-Community Interfaith Council made up of churches from Yarmouth, North Yarmouth, and Cumberland, which meets monthly.

The number of delegates required is based on church membership numbers, and the terms served are open-ended.

If you are interested in a future position as a Delegate, contact the Moderator or the pastors through the church office at 846-3773.

## **Treasurer**

The Treasurer executes the financial transactions of the church, including disbursing funds according to the approved budget and maintaining complete and accurate records of all transactions. The Treasurer also supports the activities of the Board of Trustees, the Stewardship Committee, and Trust Fund Investment Committee in a non-voting, advisory capacity. The Treasurer is bonded and is elected at the Annual Meeting for a two-year term. The Treasurer is an officer of the church.

If you are interested in a future position as Treasurer, contact the Moderator or the pastors through the church office at 846-3773.

## **Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee is determined annually by the Council. Its responsibility is to present a slate of candidates for all open positions to be voted upon at the Annual Meeting.

If you are interested in a future position on the Nominating Committee, contact the Moderator or the pastors through the church office at 846-3773.