

# First Parish Church

Congregational

United Church of Christ

180 York Street, York, Maine; [www.firstparishyork.net](http://www.firstparishyork.net)



First Parish is a quintessential New England church in the heart of historic York Village within two miles of the York River and the open sea. The 116-acre campus includes the Church, a parsonage; Fellowship Hall; Parish House (offices for pastors and church staff); two cemeteries; parking lots; open space for recreation, reflection, and conservation.

From seeds of faith lovingly planted in the 17th century and diligently nurtured over time, an abundant harvest nourishes body and spirit through vibrant and inspirational ministries and mission.

***“No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.”***

This phrase of inclusion and welcome to all is declared by the pastors at the beginning of each of our worship services. We are an Open and Affirming Church and for us that means creating a safe and welcoming space to worship together, work together, and play together. *“We honor the guiding principle that discrimination is incompatible with Christ’s message of unconditional love.”* Members and visitors to First Parish come from near and far. Individuals, couples, and families alike are drawn to York’s quality of life, outdoor recreation, ever-changing seascapes and small-town “feel” and are enthusiastic about opportunities to become actively involved in the life of the church and community. Local schools are outstanding, and the region offers rich cultural life. Older members, many of whom have been members for decades, enjoy lifelong friendships and appreciate the support and care they receive from the congregation. In the spring of 2018, active members numbered 454; since then 19 adults and youth have become members.



*“we celebrate inspirational worship”*

At First Parish, worship is a collective expression of shared faith in God, gratitude for His blessings, and joy in sharing the journey. Sunday service combines traditional liturgy, exceptional and spirit-filled vocal and instrumental music, fun-filled children’s moments, inspirational and relatable sermons, heartfelt prayer, and witness to faith in action. We hope to live stream the services soon.



*“create life-changing experiences for children, youth, families, and individuals”*

We believe that once your eyes are open, you see God everywhere. Our job is to open eyes by providing the opportunities, education add a good mixture of people, and watch the transformation take place.





Transformation has many faces: † the young man who wrote “please protect my children” on his prayer flag, at a special event, then revealed they had fled from Chicago to escape gang violence; † the septuagenarian who reclaimed her mobility at Fit for Life, our low-cost daily exercise classes; † the youngster with autism who was able to experience summer camp for the first time when we re-imagined Kids Camp and created the Nook, a quiet comfy space with self-directed activities available for all kids; † the Confirmants who were moved to create a Peace Pole and those who folded origami cranes for the dedication † and the kids who learn the parables in Sunday School and realize that “*God is still speaking*” today and to them.



***‘we courageously advocate for justice and mercy’***

First Parish Church voted at a congregational meeting in June 2018 to become an Open and Affirming Church of the UCC after a year-long study and discernment. 95% of those attending voted in favor of the Covenant.

***“He has told you, O mortal what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8)***

***“intentionally respond to the needs of our community and the world”***



Over the course of the past three years, the Mission Board has led the congregation in becoming recognized in the community and well beyond as a mission focused Church, changing lives through volunteer participation and financial support of local, regional, national and international mission and outreach programs. Independently and in collaboration with other organizations, we help meet the most basic human needs of food, shelter and clothing. In the past, as part of the Dress a Girl Around the World initiative, we host sew-a-thons; in 2017 we crafted over 300 dresses which church members brought to girls in Tanzania and the Dominican Republic. We gather food for the York Food Pantry and End 68 Hours of Hunger. We partner and provide space for Table of Plenty each Tuesday, providing nutritious meals at no cost to our guests. We travel near and far on mission trips.

We provide space for non-profit organizations that also faithfully meet community needs. *“Hope is rising from this place. My heart is filled with love. Divine wisdom, amazing grace. My heart is filled with love.”* (Joyce Andersen, singer/songwriter and member)

Go to [www.firstparishyork.net](http://www.firstparishyork.net) and click on Community/World for a complete list of First Parish’s missions.



### *Stewardship*

We believe stewardship is the understanding that all we have and all we are come from God. Stewards recognize God's unmerited love for each and every individual. Stewards also recognize that God's unmerited love calls for love of neighbor. Stewardship of time, talent, money, and other resources is a tangible way to express love for God and love for others.

### *Staff*

First Parish Church is blessed with a capable and committed team of staff members and volunteers who work in faithfully supporting our shared ministry. They include a full-time Senior Pastor, a full-time Associate Pastor, and a full-time Office Manager. Part-time positions include Director of Music Ministries, Music Associate, Church School Coordinator, and Sexton. The positions of Receptionist, Treasurer and support staff, and Financial Secretary are filled by volunteers.

### *Governance*

In 2013, we held our first Leadership Retreat in preparation for the exciting period of dreaming and visioning to follow. In the ensuing years, we have met in small group “Dream Teams”, in committees and boards, in Congregational Meetings and retreats, and in consultant facilitated workshops. Along the way, we have discerned what it means to be “congregational” and created an inclusive and responsive goal setting and implementation process. Together, we have accomplished: crafting and approving Vision and Mission Statements; merged the Church and the Parish and obtained 501(c)3 status. We have re-written the Church By-Laws and created a Church Council and organizational structure. We effectively manage our assets and we have forged strong relationships with the town offices, residents and community partners.

God has brought us to this place, and while we have accomplished much, much work remains. We have faith that God will continue to show us the way.



## For More Information

<http://www.firstparishyork.net>

<http://www.yorkmaine.org/>

<http://www.yorkschoools.org>

<http://gatewaytomaine.org>

<http://www.york.lb.me.us/>

<http://www.yorkhospital.com>

<http://oldyork.org>

<http://www.yorkkartassociation.org>

<http://www.yorkparksandrec.org>

<http://www.visitportsmouthnh.com>

<http://www.visitportland.com>





