

First Parish Congregational Church  
 One Church, Street  
 Wakefield, MA 01880  
<http://www.fpccwakefield.com>  
 Email: [fpccx1644@aol.com](mailto:fpccx1644@aol.com)



VOLUME LXXIII, No. 22  
 November 27, 2009

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2009**

**Morning Worship Services  
 With Holy Communion—9:00 & 10:30**

Sermon: Abram Kielsmeier-Jones

*Prepare the Way*

Scripture: St. Luke 3:1-6

- Calendar for Sunday, December 6  
 9:00 am Chapel Worship Service  
 10:30 am Sanctuary Worship Service  
 (infant and toddler care provided)  
 10:30 am Church School Classes  
 (Pre-K – Grade 7)  
 11:30 am Fellowship Hour  
 12:00 n Junior Choir Rehearsal

**THE MEMORIAL FLOWERS** on the left will be given in loving memory of Margaret M. Gardner by her family; the flowers in the center will be given in celebration of the marriage on December 5 of Kristen Casey and Christopher Reino; those on the right will be given in loving memory of Richard Sackett by Leith, Janice, Lillian and Leith.

**Greeters:** Patrick and Donna Conlon.

**Ushers:** Joseph D’Agostino, Stephen Gates, Kathryn Millheim, Marcia Phinney, Scott Mitchell, Linell Nester, Linda Byam, Jennifer Byam, and Linda D’Agostino (captain).

**Minister’s Reception Line Volunteer:** Alwyn Van Cor.

**Coffee Hour Hosts:** Susan and David Frey.

**UPCOMING CHRISTMAS EVENTS**

**Living Nativity on Town Common**  
 Saturday, December 12, 5 pm  
 Complete with live animals  
 Cocoa and cookies in the vestry

**Christmas Open House at the Parsonage**  
 With Pastor Rich and Pat Weisenbach  
 Sunday, December 13, 3-8 pm

**Community *Messiah* Sing**  
 Friday, December 18, 7:30 pm

**Christmas Eve Services**  
 5:00 pm Children’s Pageant  
 Children of the church reenact the Manger Scene  
 11:00 pm Carols, Communion, Candlelight

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2009**

**Morning Worship Services—9:00 & 10:30**

Sermon: The Rev. Richard A. Weisenbach,  
 D. Min.

*God Becomes Small*

Scripture: St. Luke 1:26-38

- Calendar for Sunday, December 13  
 9:00 am Chapel Worship Service  
 10:30 am Sanctuary Worship Service  
 (infant and toddler care provided)  
 10:30 am Church School Classes  
 (Pre-K – Grade 7)  
 10:30 am Confirmation Class  
 11:30 am Fellowship Hour  
 12:00 n Junior Choir Rehearsal  
 3 – 8 pm Open House at Parsonage

**THE MEMORIAL FLOWERS** will be given in loving memory of Pauline Toothaker by her husband George and family.

**Greeter:** Elaine Thibodeau.

**Minister’s Reception**

**Line Volunteer:** Joyce Langone.

**Coffee Hour Host:** open.

**CHURCH ATTENDANCE**

	Chapel	Sanct.	Total
Sunday, November 15	29	169	198
Sunday, November 22	36	157	193
<b>Church School</b>			
Sunday, November 15	76 students		
Sunday, November 22	73 students		

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# UpComing Events

## Pie Social

Friday, December 4, 6 - 8 pm  
In the church vestry

Great Fellowship!  
Hot Coffee!

Pie, Bell Ringing, Christmas Music, and  
Shopping for one-of-a-kind gifts!

Don Hodgkins, our Music Director, will provide piano music in the vestry and organ music in our sanctuary. Kelly O'Brien will play the violin in the vestry starting at 7:15 pm.

There is also the opportunity to do some one-of-a-kind Christmas shopping. We still have some wonderful Christmas decorations, hand knits, and gift baskets.

So, after you see Frosty the Snowman and see the Christmas Tree lit at the Rockery, head over to First Parish for hot coffee, pie, and great fellowship.

## Living Nativity

Again this year, we will be presenting our community of Wakefield a "Living Nativity", complete with animals. We have gained permission to use the commons on Saturday, December 12th, at 5:00 pm.

After the reading of the Christmas story, the animals will remain for all to meet up close and personal. This is followed by hot cocoa and cookies in our meetinghouse.

Would you like to help? We need Mary, Joseph, and the Christ Child, shepherds, wise men and angels. No speaking parts - just costumes. We also need a sound system, bakers and servers. Please let Pastor Rich know of your interest and plan to join us for this true Christmas experience.

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# UpComing Events

## MUSIC IN DECEMBER

With December already here this week, I want to remind you about a few different music opportunities which the Advent/Christmas season brings here at FPCC. Music is obviously a big part of this season, and there are many ways you can get involved and help us make it yet another memorable Christmas!

- 1) The Sanctuary Choir always welcomes “temp singers” for our Christmas Sunday (12/20) and Christmas Eve services. This is an opportunity for you to sing with us for a short period of time without making a commitment for the whole year. I have several exciting anthems planned for these services, and would love to have you join us to make them sound even better! Please plan to come to rehearsal on December 9 at about 8 PM, then December 16 and 23 at 7:30. No need for “reservations,” just come and have some fun singing some joyous Christmas music and helping our Sanctuary Choir make our worship even more celebratory!
- 2) We have an opportunity for the kids too! The prelude for our early (5 PM) Christmas Eve Family Service has traditionally been played by music students on their particular instrument, be it piano, flute, trumpet, sax, etc. This is a great chance for kids to share their talent in a non-threatening, friendly environment, so please encourage your child(ren) to consider playing for us; they can either play by themselves, with a friend, or accompanied by me. Just let me know in person, phone, or email ([Donhodg@aol.com](mailto:Donhodg@aol.com)) if your family member is willing to be part of our prelude that evening so I can plan accordingly.
- 3) If it isn't already on your calendar, please put this year's *Community Messiah Sing* on it for Friday, December 18 at 7:30. This is an event we host at First Parish for Wakefield and the surrounding communities in which you're welcome to either sing along with Handel's *Messiah* or just listen and enjoy. With the help of the Upham Fund, we've been able to expand this event to include an orchestra as well, so please plan to come to sing or listen, and bring along some friends too. This is a free event, but we'll take an offering to defray expenses beyond what the Upham Fund covers, and also to fund our annual donation to the local charity *Housing Families*, which we've done since the inception of this event in 2005 (in recognition of the fact that Handel originally composed *Messiah* as a fundraiser for a London orphanage). Hope to see you there!

One last note: I've just confirmed that we will have the Steeple Brass Quintet with us to help celebrate Christmas before and after our worship service on December 20. They will play an extended prelude out on our front porch (weather permitting) and will also join me for the postlude. Be sure to plan to celebrate with us on this upcoming festive Christmas Sunday!!

Don Hodgkins, Director of Music Ministries

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# News

## STEWARDSHIP – THE JOURNEY

Fall 2009

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The time has come to engage in a new journey of stewardship here at First Parish Congregational Church for 2009 into 2010. It is my joy to encourage you along the way. We worship an awesome God. God gives us a survival kit for life's adventure. In it we'll find: 1. Love: by His love we have fellowship which enables us to reach out to others; 2. Light: by His word shining the way through His truth taught every Sunday from the Pulpit and at our weekly Bible studies; and 3. Guidance: by His ever present Holy Spirit that seeks a personal relationship with us. He is always listening, always protecting, always hoping for us to respond to Him. The most amazing relationship you will have this side of Heaven is with the Living God, Jesus, the Christ. I am learning that Stewardship is how we live out that relationship. Stewardship is what we do with what God gives us. He promises to give us more than we can ask or imagine. I believe Him. When we give, we receive. Luke 6:38 tells us God promises overflowing abundance, more than we can hold. It's supposed to spill over so we can share. Not long ago, I passed by a garden sculpture of a girl carrying two empty baskets. I thought, "They need to be filled." I began to see her as a reminder of how we can come to the Lord empty. He is the only one who can fill us. She stands as a daily reminder of our dependence on God. Thank you, Lord.

As we journey through life, encountering its challenges, how do we let go and open our hands to give? The most essential element is a leap of faith to trust Him for our provisions. This was vividly depicted in a motion picture I once saw. The man came to a place where he was trapped at the edge of a precipice. His attackers were closing in. He had nowhere else to go. At this crossroad he had choices. He was directed to take a leap of faith into the chasm and a pathway would appear. He took that leap literally. While he was in midair, the pathway appeared as he landed on it, which took him safely to the other side. I have always remembered that clear image of what taking a leap of faith is like. We may not want to. There is fear and apprehension present. You are unsure of the outcome. What is sure is God will see you through. Mark 10:27 tells us that all things are possible with God. As we grow, our daily choices call us to take a leap of faith.

Sometimes it's the little steps that show us, even in our own giving how we grow to trust Him. About 20 years ago, as I began my walk as a new Christian, God began nudging me to grow in my giving. I started to give more than I pledged. God showed me I could. But I was afraid to commit to the higher amount. As time went on, I could hear Him whisper, "Do you think you can pledge it now?" I bowed my head and said, "Yes Lord." I thought *what else did He have to do to prove it to me?* Nothing, I was the one who had to do something. Commit at a higher level. When you feel those same nudges, trust Him. May you allow Him to prove it to you. Day by day, as we move forward in faith and obedience, we reach for the extended hand of God. We stretch. We grow. The result, we give more than we have before of ourselves and of our finances. When we allow Him to work in our everyday moment to moment lives, God proves to us that He oversees the details. As we increase our own personal goal, our church goal is set higher as well. I believe God is hoping we step out and do that which is pleasing in His sight. Our stewardship goal is \$260,000. Please prayerfully decide your pledge gift. Pledge cards and envelopes can be found on the Williams Table at the rear of the church or by calling the church office 781-245-1539. You may place your pledge card in the offering plate on a Sunday morning or you may mail it to Eleanor Elliot, our Collector. Thank you for your commitment to the Lord and to First Parish. I recently saw a sign that read, "Jesus loves me and I know it." May we all imprint this on our hearts, because He truly does. May He bless you and your family.

Trust, Faith, Peace and Love for the journey,  
Ruth Ross for Stewardship

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## A PIECE OF MY HEART

November 2009

Boy oh boy. How does Stewardship and losing your job tie together? I suppose first I must tell you about the blue jay lesson God taught me. At one time, I tried to get my husband Fred to go to a class with me, but I couldn't budge him. I was extremely frustrated. I wasn't getting through, I thought. One beautiful day he was sitting outside and called me to come out. He said, "Look at that blue jay and how beautiful it is." I agreed. He said, "All my life I have always looked at that bird as an annoyance, with that awful caw, but I never really looked at one so closely and my gosh, they're beautiful." "I never saw that until now." I immediately understood God was speaking to him. I told him that God got him to see an old thing in a new way, it's like seeing something with new eyes. That's what God does. It's amazing grace. Well, I was grateful for the lesson Fred received that day, but the lesson continued for me, because God reminded me that *He* taught Fred that lesson. I had felt so defeated because I wasn't getting the message through and God said, "Don't you think *I* can show him something?" I laughed out loud at the realization that I thought if it wasn't learned through me, it wouldn't happen. God was saying to me, "Let Me be God." Trust Me. God is in control. So, to this day, whenever I see a blue jay it reminds me to put my trust in the Lord.

Two weeks ago I returned my pledge card increasing my pledge for next year. I did this earlier than usual, (*may I encourage you to send in yours*). I believe that is part of the journey as well. I am learning how to trust God more and more. On Monday, November 16, I was called to a meeting where I presently work and was told that my services as of December 4 would not be utilized. That news hits you like a ton of bricks. Bricks that get thrown a few at a time, bricks you keeping dodging in your mind because you don't want it to sink in. As the news began to settle in, it didn't make a lick of sense as to why they would do this. God whispered, "Don't justify it, just accept it." I began to think of what Joel Osteen had preached about for such an instance. He said, "Praise the Lord," because He has just promoted you. God has a new assignment somewhere else where your services are required. A door closes, so a window can open. Even though the news is tender and still painful because of all that I will miss, I do look forward to what is to come. I do trust in the Lord for my direction. Reassigned by God! I don't know exactly where He will assign me, but I trust also that it is better in some way. God is always stretching us to grow, but for the good. Romans 8: 28 tells us He uses all things for good for those that love Him.

When I arrived home that day after receiving the news, I sat at my kitchen table having a cup of coffee and a delicious brownie my friend Jenny made. Something caught my eye in the yard. I looked more keenly through the window and there on the ground pecking away at the grass was a blue jay. I immediately thought, "Thank you God, I will trust you." I saw another. I thought, wow, two of them. I got excited, and as I looked still further, there was a third blue jay. I was filled with joy and amazement of how God makes Himself known. Never in my life have I witnessed three blue jays together. Three represents the Trinity. He is always present, in all ways. The blue jay for me had become a symbol of trusting the Lord. But, here in this small space in my backyard, were three blue jays. He sent me an amazing confirmation of His presence and encouragement to trust Him. It will be ok. It will be awesome.

Ruth Ross for Stewardship

Pledge Goal through October \$208,333.33  
Pledges rc'd through October \$208,344.50

Plate Goal through October \$37,500.  
Plate Gifts received to date \$37,981.36

*Praise the Lord. To God be the Glory, Thanks be to God...*

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# News

## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Operation Christmas Child is an organization of Samaritan's Purse that sends shoeboxes filled with gifts to underprivileged children of the world. In 2008, Samaritan's Purse distributed approximately 2.7 million shoeboxes. These shoeboxes not only come with gifts that will lift the spirits of these children, but with the promise of God's love for them. First Parish has proudly been a part of this mission for the past few years and once again it is time to fill those shoeboxes.

Shoeboxes will be available in the vestry starting November 1. They must be returned by November 22 in order to begin their journey.

Respectfully submitted in His Name,  
Kristen Mitchell

## ANTIQUES SHOW NEWS

The Antiques Show Committee would like to remind you to start putting aside any old paintings, prints, Hummels, oriental rugs, old furniture (75 years or older), bone china, porcelain, silver, jewelry, coins, old clocks, etc. Please donate only items in good condition. Pick ups of large items can be arranged—please notify the church office.

If leaving items on the lower level of the church please clearly label for the Antiques Show.

Thank you,  
The Antiques Show Committee  
Ray Toothaker – 781-718-6840  
Phil Gindi – 781-665-3122  
Joan Potter – 781-665-4158  
Mary Ellen Dee – 781-248-6948

Dates for the Antiques Show are March 26 and 27, 2010.

## SALVATION ARMY HOLIDAY SHOP

First Parish will be collecting new toys and clothing on behalf of the Salvation Army to be distributed to needy Wakefield children.

Items can be left in the vestry on the stage on November 22 and 29, and also December 6. Items for teenagers are especially appreciated as this group is often overlooked. Items should be left unwrapped, although wrapping paper can also be donated. If you have any questions, please call Linda D'Agostino (781-245-0243). Thanks for helping out.

## WE NEED YOUR HELP

**The C.H.A.T. survey has been extended until December 20th.** Please share your opinions with us, we really value your input!

Take survey before December 1, 2009

Go to: [www.HealthyChurch.net](http://www.HealthyChurch.net)  
Click on: CHAT Survey "Login" button on the left side of the screen  
Login: firstparishcongregational  
Password: Covell1644

It will take 25-30 minutes to complete the survey.

Contact our moderator, Earl Sheaff if you need a copy on paper: 781-245-8018

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## **R.A.W. MATERIAL**

The Bible promises that our Savior, Jesus Christ, will be with us in every circumstance. Our family is particularly grateful for that promise and can testify with fresh assurance that those many promises are true! This season of Thanksgiving will remain in our memory for a long time.

It started early Saturday morning, November 21. Our son-in-law, Gadar, awoke with severe chest pain, sweating and tingles in his left arm. Most everyone would recognize these signs as insufficient blood supply to the heart caused by some blockage in the arteries. He and Pam took an ambulance ride to Melrose-Wakefield Hospital. His doctor immediately recognized that a catheterization should be administered to determine the extent of the problem.

By Monday morning we knew that the situation was serious. He was taken to Mass. General right after the catheterization to be scheduled for open-heart surgery. We waited till Wednesday the 25<sup>th</sup> when he was able to be scheduled for the operation.

Pat and I arrived just in time to see him being wheeled off to the OR. We waited together till after 11:00 pm, when we decided to wait at home. The doctor called Pam after midnight to tell her the best news she has heard in a long time! "All went well. He should have a bright future." Pat and I, along with daughter Kim, quickly surrounded Pam in a tearful, grateful embrace.

Throughout this past week God has been our sustainer and helper. There were several indications of God's gracious presence throughout this whole ordeal. First and foremost is the fact that Gadar is still alive. The doctor told Pam that his blockages were severe—six in all—and it was a gift of God's grace that his experience on Saturday last was a "wake-up" call and not a "come home" call. God has given Gadar a very good reason—a life-changing reason—to make the necessary life-style changes to deal with his family history of heart issues. And, again by God's grace, Gadar has responded whole-heartedly—pun intended—to God's offer.

We live day by day, don't we? I did not anticipate this. Gadar is 46 years old, he seemed healthy and active. But, God knows our beginning and our ending; we are always within the sphere of His love and care.

We did talk about the possibility of Gadar's death and how we would need to trust even more in God's love. We concluded that God's care would extend that far, and would enable us to meet every circumstance. But, Praise the Lord, God is gracious and we are loved with an everlasting love. (Jer. 31:3) Thank you for your faithful prayer support during this past week and into the weeks ahead.

R.A.W.

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT  
CHURCH HERALD  
Thursday, December 10, 2009  
(will cover December 20, 2009 – January 2, 2010)**

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*Thank you very much for the bouquet of flowers. They really cheered me up while I was recovering from my surgeries. Also, thank you for all your prayers, you can never have too many.*

*God bless,  
Ruth Jackson*

*I would like to thank you for the beautiful bouquet of flowers that you sent to me at my new home, Longwood Place. It is always nice to be remembered.*

*I have placed them in the Great Room so the other residents may also enjoy them. My new address is:*

*Longwood Place, 75 Pearl Street, Suite 116,  
Reading, MA 01867*

*Walter Morton*

## **IN MEMORIUM**

**BETTINA R. COPELAND**

November 15, 2009

Joined First Parish Congregational Church  
April 12, 1936

*May you find strength and hope in His  
Abiding love.*

*Once again the ladies from Reading want to thank you for the delicious turkey dinner served last Sunday, the 22<sup>nd</sup>. It's the third year that we have attended and enjoy it more each year. The crew is so friendly and accommodating that we have to keep coming back even though we are not homeless—just widows. Thank you again for your generosity—I even received a plant. Have a nice holiday!*

*Sincerely, Priscilla Lynn and friends*

*There are no adequate words to thank you and the congregation for all you've shown over the past several months. We found ourselves in an impossible situation and are forever grateful to all of you for your prayers and love. We understand how much this has affected my recovery. I have been given a gift some people never experience. It seems as if my life has started over, and there is so much joy, it fills me up.*

*The party was lots of fun! I thought I was going to be nervous, but everyone put me at ease, and John and I really enjoyed ourselves. Thank you for all your hard work and contributions. Your kindness and generosity will stay with me forever.*

*With love, Joy Robbins*