

FIRST PARISH OF WESTWOOD, UCC

Growing Faith + Sharing Love + Grounding Lives



We are an Open & Affirming Church

First Parish of Westwood affirms the dignity and worth of every person regardless of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical or mental ability, family structure, education level, economic circumstance and faith or religious tradition.

November 28, 2021

Join us today at 10am. First Parish Church is holding an in-person worship service on this **First Sunday in Advent**. We continue to live stream worship services every Sunday in addition to having in-person worship.

The service will also be live streamed on our Facebook page. To access the Facebook page, please [click here](#).

Note: To view the Order of Service for this morning's service, please [click here](#).



There will be no Sunday School today. However, families are encouraged to attend this First Sunday in Advent worship service.

See COVID protocols below.

Graphic Design by Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman | Original photography by Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org



Advent Devotionals & Advent Calendars

The season of Advent begins Sunday and marks a time to pause, watch, wait, anticipate, and prepare for the Christ child to enter the world once again. This season, to help you prepare, we have a few resources that flow with our theme this Advent: *Close to Home*.

Our Advent devotional booklets provide an opportunity to pause every day with a reading to help you connect with your faith more deeply this season. Our Advent calendars serve as inspiration to put your faith into action as an individual or as a family every day throughout the season. Both the devotional booklets and calendars are available now in the lobby.

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The First Sunday of Advent Homesick (HOPE) Luke 21:25-36

The following poem will serve as an opening reflection for this Sunday's worship service.

How do you describe homesickness to a child? You don't.

They know.

Children know the feeling of being away from home.

*It's fear, dipped in loneliness,
that "What if I've been forgotten?" sonnet,
or the "What if I can't go back?" refrain.
Even a healthy, scrubbed-clean,
showered-with-love child
knows the longing of home.*

But if I had to.

If I had to describe

that aching feeling, I would say:

*"Homesickness is when longing and grief
wrap themselves around you like a blanket.*

It's the door to comfort thrown open.

*It's an eye on the horizon for what could be
and the only way out is to keep walking,*

to keep dreaming,

to keep looking

for signs that will point you back home."

*And if you tell that to a child,
you just may realize
that a part of your spirit
has shoes on*

*and has always been walking,
always been dreaming,
always been looking
for the home that could be.*

*The door to comfort has been blown
open.
Tell God I'm homesick.
I'm on my way.*

Prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC
sanctifiedart.org



Stewardship 2022 Update

Thank you to everyone who has already turned in their pledge cards. As of Tuesday, November 23rd, the church has received 30 pledge cards, representing pledges of \$103,395. This reveals an increase of \$16,196 among these pledging units, including two new pledging units!

If you have not yet returned your pledge card, we look forward to receiving it soon. Stewardship is vital to our church as we navigate forward to wherever the winds of God propel us, and the initial returns of our stewardship season surely do represent a breath of fresh air present at First Parish.

Please contact the church office if you need a pledge card. Completed cards can be mailed to the office, dropped off during church office hours or emailed to:
asst_treasurer@firstparishwestwood.org



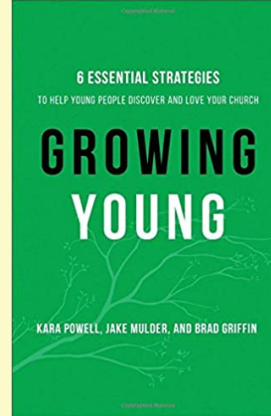
Donate Greens!

Preparation of beautifully decorated wreaths is underway. If you can donate clippings from evergreens that can be used in the wreaths, please drop them off at church today, Monday or Tuesday.

Christian Education Book Discussion

This winter, our Sunday School leaders will be dreaming about an exciting new direction for our Christian Education program. To start, they'll be having a discussion using the book [Growing Young: Six Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church](#) as a guide. They want to invite everyone in the

church to be a part of the conversation, so if you are interested please contact the church office at office@firstparishwestwood.org by December 1 and we'll order a book for you.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Christmas Fair and Silent Auction Saturday, December 4th 9am - 1pm

First Parish is again holding its traditional Christmas Fair and Silent Auction on Saturday, Dec. 4th from 9 am to 1 pm. This is an important fundraiser and community builder for our church.

Would you be able to help with a donation of an item to our silent auction?

Past donations have included restaurant and service gift certificates, retail gift cards, event/concert tickets, museum passes, club memberships, artwork, autographed memorabilia, fine wine, jewelry, toys, and themed gift baskets. Other ideas are offering a service-of-the-month, experiences like a spa visit, vacation getaway, or a lesson in your area of expertise (e.g., cooking, arts and crafts, business, music). We appreciate donations of any type or value!

To donate, contact Mary Masi Phelps at mary.masiphelps@gmail.com or Darlene Wong Cancell at promodw@gmail.com to discuss or arrange a pick-up/drop-off of your item. Or stop by with your donation during office hours. Making your donation on or before Friday, November 26, 2021 will enable us to present it in the best light for the auction. Thanks for your attention! Thank you!

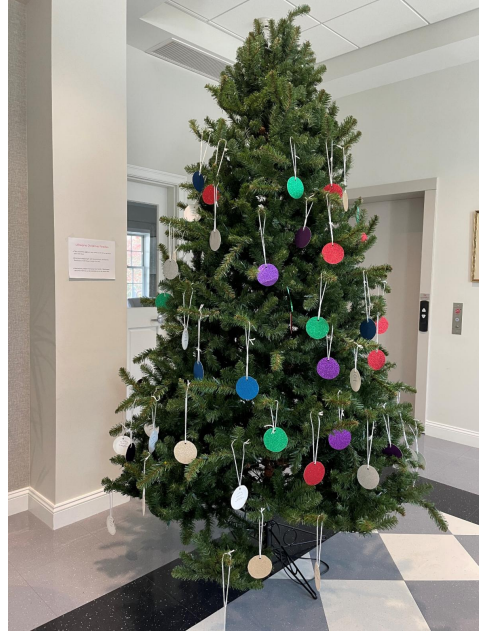
Lifeworks Christmas Family Gift Tree

Please join us in our annual tradition of making Christmas brighter for families facing challenging circumstances this holiday season. We have a Christmas tree in the lobby

with ornaments color coded for the six families. Each ornament represents a gift for a member of the family.

Please select an ornament (or several) AND put your name on the list on the clipboard by the tree. Bring back your wrapped gift with the ornament attached to the outside of the gift by December 12th and leave it under the tree.

Alternatively, if you are not able to shop, you can donate money so our elves can do the shopping for you! Send your donations to First Parish and indicate Christmas Families on the envelope or memo line of your check.



Food Drive Such a Success!!

The final tally is in. Thanks to all who donated and contributed almost 300 items to the church school food drive. This past Sunday, those in church school counted the items and sorted the donations for the Norwood and Westwood Food Pantries. Well done!!!



Family/Individual Photos by Doug Hyde

Doug Hyde is offering family and individual photo sessions again this year. To schedule a photo session between Saturday, November 27th and Sunday, December 5th (including during the Christmas Fair), please email Doug at dkhphotosma@gmail.com. A typical session lasts a half hour. The cost is \$50 with half of the proceeds going to First Parish.

First Parish is a supported charity on
AmazonSmile!

You can now support First Parish of Westwood when you shop at smile.amazon.com at no extra cost to you. Simply go to your Amazon account; on the bar on the left - go to **Programs and Features** to find AmazonSmile. There you can choose the charity of your choice (hopefully First Parish of Westwood). 1/2% of your purchase amount will come to First Parish.



Electronic Giving - So Easy!



indicate on your pledge card if you would like to start. The Assistant Treasurer, Barb Delisle, will send you information to make this happen.

As many of you know, First Parish uses Vanco to implement our electronic giving. It is safe, reliable and flexible and it provides the church with a reliable monthly cash flow. It also helps to avoid the year end rush to find out how much is outstanding on your pledge!

During the month of December, we will be introducing laminated cards in the pews so electronic givers can put a card in the offering plate to indicate they give electronically. If you are not currently an electronic giver, please



Important Dates at a Glance

November

- Sunday, Nov. 28 - 1st Sunday in Advent

December

- Wednesday, Dec. 1 - Deadline to order book for Christian Ed.
- Saturday, Dec. 4 - Christmas Fair
- Sunday, Dec. 5 - 2nd Sunday in Advent
- Sunday, Dec. 12 - 3rd Sunday in Advent
- Sunday, Dec. 12 (afternoon)- Fellowship Event. Churchwide caroling outing. Details to follow.
- Sunday, Dec. 19 - 4th Sunday in Advent/Music Sunday. Special Christmas cookie reception following worship
- Friday, Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve Services Details to follow
- Sunday, Dec. 26 - At home worship



COVID Protocols:

****We are continuing to open windows in the sanctuary during Sunday services as long as

temperatures allow. We have blankets available for anyone who needs one. We also encourage people to dress warmly as we head into late fall/winter.****

Everyone who attends in-person worship should wear a mask and will be asked to sign-in upon arrival. Should it be too cold to have windows open during service, seating in pews will be spaced. The balcony is also available to anyone who would like to be seated there.



Office Hours

Monday 9 am - 1 pm

Tuesday 1 pm - 3 pm

Wednesday 9 am - 1 pm

In order to have everything ready for Sunday's service bulletin each week, all information should be submitted to the church office by Tuesday morning.

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STAY CONNECTED

