

*First Parish Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
York, Maine*



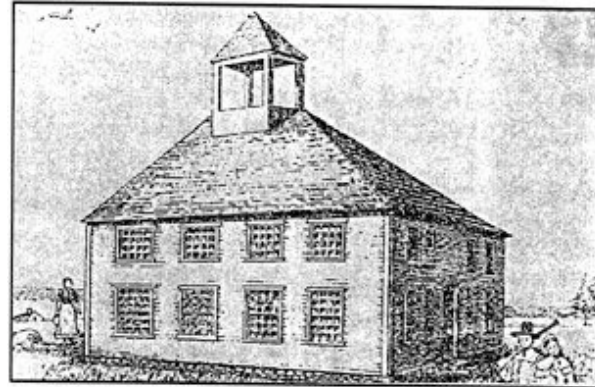
Mission Statement

The mission of our church is to create a fellowship that celebrates and reflects the presence of Christ. Through worship and spiritual growth we will equip ourselves and go forth to share God's love in word and deed within our community and throughout the world.

Our History

Our congregation is blessed to worship in an historic treasure. First Parish Church in York has its roots in the 1630s, making it the oldest congregation in continuous existence in Maine. Our church was founded in the Anglican tradition by York's first settlers. In 1636, the first church, an oratory or meetinghouse, was erected on land granted by the Church of England to Sir Ferdinando Gorges. The oratory was to be built for the purpose of worship. This meetinghouse was located in York Harbor near the site of St. George's Episcopal Church today. In 1667, a second meetinghouse

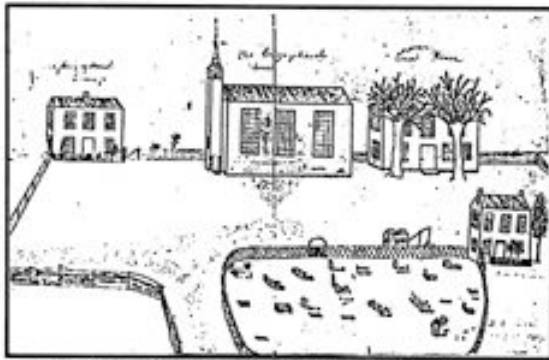
was constructed using all new materials with the exception of the seats from the previous meetinghouse. In colonial times, the meetinghouse was also used for civic purposes. Public meetings were held in the building as well as meetings for the provincial government. By 1710, the second meetinghouse was deemed unsafe and out of repair. A special town meeting was held and it was decided to construct a new meetinghouse on the north side of the



Second Meetinghouse, erected 1667.

old burying ground, our current location. The classic New England church in which we worship today is the fourth meetinghouse to be erected by the parishioners. Constructed in 1747, the building faced west in the direction of the present parish house. In 1882, it was decided that the building would look better facing the road and the village green. The church was lifted up, turned, and set back 20 feet to its

present location. The beautiful steeple, the most notable architectural feature, was also added in 1882. Recently the steeple has undergone renovation including repair work on the clock face and restoration of the base and belfry. Our classic New England church is a prominent and beautiful part of York.



A primitive drawing of York Village Center, circa 1820.

Historic changes in our congregation's religious affiliations have also occurred in our church's 375 year history. As the Puritan Congregational movement spread throughout the colonies, the congregation left the Anglican tradition behind. In 1673 the Reverend Shubael Dummer was ordained as the church's first Congregational minister. In 1957 the Congregationalists became part of the United Church of Christ. Today we are joined together in ministry with the other 172 Congregational, United Church of Christ, churches here in Maine.

Our Community

Composed of what were once four smaller communities, Cape Neddick, York Harbor, York Village and York Beach were formed under one government to create our beautiful and diverse town. Within our borders are sandy beaches, parks, a working harbor, wildlife preserves and many more jewels of natural beauty.

Located on the coast in the southwest corner of Maine, York is an hour and fifteen minutes from Boston and an hour and a half from New Hampshire's White Mountains. York was primarily a fishing town for much of its post American Revolution history. It remained a quiet town until the middle of the twentieth



century when tourism began to increase in the area. Though we welcome many summer visitors, York is a vibrant year-round community. We are fortunate to have an excellent school system comprised of two elementary schools, a middle school and a high school. Our current public library was opened in 2001 to provide our community with an extensive lending library, a center for community education, events, and access to technology. York Hospital serves our community and beyond and is known for its excellence in care and service throughout New England. York is rich in history. The Museums of Old York oversees nine historic buildings, many of



which are in the heart of the village adding charm and character to our town. In all seasons there are family events and festivals including the lighting of the Nubble Lighthouse at Christmas time, Harvest Fest and

Market Fest in the fall, and York Days in the summer. York and the surrounding area have much to offer its residents and visitors alike.



Our Ministries and Church Life



First Parish Church of York, Maine is blessed with a strong sense of ministry and a rich church life. Our church staff and family strive toward creating a fellowship that celebrates and reflects the presence of Christ. At the heart of First Parish Church are our clergy and music ministry. Our church life might best be explained by providing a snapshot of our church in action throughout the year.



During the spring months you will see teens and adults getting ready to hold its annual service auction that benefits the Senior High mission trip. You will hear Bible study groups and book groups discussing topics related to Christian life. And you will also find us filling Amigos buckets with food

and school supplies for children in Honduras.



The summer at First Parish is buzzing with children participating in Vacation Bible School: singing, making crafts and celebrating the Bible's stories and teachings with friends and clergy. We also enjoy family picnics on the back lawn and caravanning to Portland to watch the Sea Dogs play baseball.



During the fall months teachers are busy creating lessons for church school attendees. Women's Fellowship is making handmade items for Market Fest, while other church members are preparing to feed community members at the Table of Plenty.



Winter at First Parish is a special time of year as countless church members prepare for and participate in our Drive-thru-Nativity that attracts hundreds of visitors throughout York County. Youth Groups prepare food baskets for people in need. Following the holidays you might notice groups of men and women attending spiritual retreats for rest, relaxation, and prayer.

May all who love this house of faith find the inspiration of their labor and rejoice in the power and love of God, that His blessing may rest on you both in your going out and coming in.

~ Twelfth Century Old -English Passage

Our Missions and Outreach - Beyond our Walls

Welcome Statement

First Parish Church of York is a community church in the Congregational tradition of the United Church of Christ. Participation is open to all people who wish to share in the worship of God.



Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit our mission and outreach extends beyond our walls. We partner with our fellow churches to serve our neighbors through the weekly Table of Plenty meal, community AIDS walk, and a Thanksgiving in July meal for summer workers from abroad. Our church supports a Senior High Service Auction to raise funds for a yearly Senior High



Mission Trip and we have supported a yearly adult Mission Trip to New Orleans. We are committed to increasing and

broadening our mission and outreach and to live out the words of Micah 6:8- "*He hath showed thee, O man, what is good: and what does the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*"

Other Mission Projects

Boston Project
Pilgrim Lodge
Media Ministry
York Food Pantry
Caring Unlimited

Maine Seacoast Mission
Christmas Giving Tree
Neighbors in Need
Fair Tide Housing
Book & Bible Study Group



Our Vision for the Future

Over the next several years, we want to build on our welcoming spirit and our broad offering of activities for all ages focusing especially on outreach to the two demographic groups predicted to grow in our community: young families and people over 55 years of age. We want to live out our vision statement: "First Parish Church: A Fellowship Celebrating Christ and Serving All."

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