

Information Packet for 2024 FPW Annual Retreat at Ferry Beach

This guide is intended BOTH for newcomers to our retreat, and for people who have gone previously. If you have any questions after reading it, please email retreat@walthamuu.org.

We recommend that returning visitors read it, because... things do change.

Very important! Time is of the essence here. Ferry Beach needs a good headcount from us by mid-March, if you're staying overnight.

There is a **10% Discount** for early registration—this will end **Sunday, March 24** (and will be reported to Ferry Beach on Monday, March 25).

There is also a **20% discount for first-time attendees**—this is available until the retreat fills up.

All registration (for overnights, meals, and Saturday commuters) will end **Thursday, May 16**.

There is a lot to say about the retreat—and this is the place to find All Things Retreat! For openers, most people come up on Friday and stay through Sunday afternoon, but you may feel that coming up just for the day on Saturday works best for you (please use the Registration Form for Commuters). Either way...it's all good. And a word about COVID, since people are still concerned about it. For those new to the retreat, we spend a lot of time outdoors (weather permitting). COVID hasn't been a big issue on our retreat in past years, but we use common sense and take precautions as need.

About Ferry Beach



Ferry Beach is a UU Camp, Retreat and Conference Center on the Beach in Saco, Maine. Many of us have found it to be a lovely, very special place—and its location is one reason. A beautiful private beach, a pine forest just steps from the ocean, an outdoor Chapel for Sunday services, and walking distance to Ferry Beach State Park are just some of its features. Visit www.ferrybeach.org for more info and photos.

Sunday service 2022, in the outdoor Chapel

Gary Morrison photo

About our Retreat

This seaside weekend combines social activities with discussions on (improving) First Parish. It's an opportunity for us to get to know each other better as well as consider long-term goals and projects for FPW. Think lots of fun and enriching conversations.

As always, there will be a schedule of activities! Our sessions for adults are intended to be thought-provoking, promote intellectual or spiritual growth, or consider changes to First Parish. We also offer social activities, beach walks, book discussions, bird watching, endless game-playing opportunities, etc. None of the activities are mandatory—you can do what you want.

The Sandcastle contest—with prizes!—is a favorite, for the young and young-at-heart. Hmm... should I create a sea serpent or be a judge? No... you can't do both.



Pam Penton photo (undated)

The general idea is to interact in one way or another and get to know each other better—these bonds make our community stronger, and that's why people go on the retreat.

As of this time, we are the only congregation on the campus this weekend—so we will be leading all the activities. If you would like to help work on this year's program, or if there is an activity you would like to see offered (or one you'd like to lead), please contact the retreat team. You will also be able to indicate this when you sign up. If another congregation signs up, we may plan some activities together.

Accommodations

There are lots of places to stay at Ferry Beach! Many of us still like to stay in “our” dormitory—Rowland Hall. Most rooms in Rowland have double sets of twin bunk beds and it has communal, dormitory-style bathrooms—for Buoys and Gulls. Some people like to camp in the lovely pine grove. We also have the option of smaller cabins and cottages. The past few years, we have stayed all over the campus, but Rowland continues to be our home base. The Friday night pizza party in its big central room kicks off the weekend perfectly (and deliciously).

Please note cottages are rented as a whole, not by room. If we don't fill ALL rooms in a Cottage, either the occupants will split the entire cost (pay more)—or move to the dormitory. This has not been an issue in the past—the Cottages are very popular—but it is a possibility.

Accommodations are generally handled on a first-come, first-served basis but there may be exceptions for mobility-impaired folks. Rest assured, I will try to make sure everyone is happy.

Check in to rooms is 4PM, checkout of rooms is 10AM.

Use of the campus prior to 4PM on Fri and until 4PM on Sunday is absolutely fine.

Please review the options in the Accommodations Addendum at the end of this packet to select what works best for you. If you have any questions please email retreat@walthamuu.org.

Cancellation Policy

The Registration Form will ask you to indicate that you've read the Cancellation Policy.

For Accommodations, Ferry Beach requires 90 days for a full refund—that means by March 2.

We want people to go on the retreat (of course we do, it's wonderful!), but please think carefully before signing up, because you could be on the hook for the Accommodation cost if you cancel.

It can work out (and usually does) that people who sign up later in the Spring take over a room for someone who signed up earlier and needs to cancel, and the First Parish Retreat Coordinator will help with this as much as possible—but there are no guarantees.

Full refunds for Meals are given up to Thursday, May 16 (2 weeks before our retreat).

Meals

Ferry Beach offers a variety of quality food, served cafeteria buffet-style. Generally, they can accommodate dietary allergies, food sensitivities and restrictions such as gluten-free, dairy-free, vegetarian/vegan. With some exceptions, all guests are expected to purchase a meal plan—and eating together is part of why we go! The 2024 meal plan will cover 4 meals (Saturday B / L / D and Sunday B). Sunday lunch is a possibility if enough people are interested. The Registration form will give you the option to select this. Generally, people have tended to split up and explore options in town for Sunday lunch.

We organize a group pizza purchase for dinner Friday night. The time is flexible, but we get it going generally between 6 and 7, once enough folks have arrived. We're usually still eating, laughing and conversing as hungry latecomers arrive and join us. Other off-campus dinner options may also be available. All of this is optional. More info on this as it gets closer.

Please note: Cottage kitchens cannot be used for personal meals on church retreats UNLESS you have EXTREME food sensitivities/allergies and have discussed this with the retreat coordinator.

Also note: "Outside" food cannot be brought into the DeWolfe Dining Hall *at any time* with the exception of commercially-packaged snack-type food like chips and cookies.

Other things to be aware of regarding food and meals...

- As in the recent past years, DeWolfe Dining Room is closed on Friday night.
Most likely, there will also be NO ACCESS to DeWOLFE, *INCLUDING the PORCH* after breakfast on Sunday, but stay tuned (another group is expected to use DeWolfe on Sunday).
We can gather/check-in/eat pizza/play games in Ziegler, Dolphin, DeWolfe porch (on Friday night), and possibly other spaces. DeWolfe restrooms are accessible Friday night and possibly Sunday until 4PM.
- No use of refrigerators in DeWolfe for any personal items, period.
This is due to insurance (alcohol), and the cleaning that would be required due to COVID.
However, all the cabins and cottages have at least mini-fridges, and are available for personal use, if folks are opting to stay in those spaces.
- There is NO ALCOHOL ALLOWED in ANY fridge in common/shared space.
Any alcoholic products you bring must be stored with your personal effects in your room.
- The buffet line at meals is no longer self-serve, since COVID.
Serving will be done cafeteria-style—servers will put your desired items on your plate.

Costs

All rooms must be rented for (2) nights; one night rentals are not an option (unless camping).

If you only stay for one night, you will still be charged for 2 nights (except for camping).

If you are sharing a room with others, the room cost will be split by all occupants—so if you have a roommate (or mates), your cost is one-half or one-third of the room.

If you are in a cottage with multiple rooms, you are entitled to exclusive use of the room(s) you have paid for and SHARED USE—with other cottage occupants—of bathroom(s) and common spaces in the cottage.

Linens are included for guests in all cottages/cabins.

They can also be added on to any cottage or dorm room for \$45.00 per bed.

Linens include sheets, towels, pillow(s) and a warm blanket.

Most dormitory guests bring their own towels and bedding (sleeping bag or sheets/blanket and pillow). This is just a heads-up—we will suggest a list of what to bring when it gets closer.

All HOUSING rates are for ****2 nights**** and do NOT include meals

Rowland Dorm (each room)	\$ 180.00
Quillen and Underwood Dorms--if available (each room)	\$ 180.00
Cross Cottage (each room)	\$ 270.00
Clafin, Kelley and Morris Cottages (each room)	\$ 200.00
Metz (each cabin)	\$ 310.00

CAMPING rates do NOT include meals

Ferry Beach allows campers to stay one night, as there is no room cleaning involved.

	1 Night	2 Nights
Ground or platform camp site	\$ 45.00	\$ 90.00
Small RV site	\$ 50.00	\$ 100.00

MEAL PLAN (4 meals)

Adults and kids 18+	\$ 72.00
Kids 14-17	\$ 58.00
Kids 9-13	\$ 46.00
Kids < 9	No charge

PLEASE NOTE: To encourage participation and keep the weekend affordable, the retreat is subsidized by First Parish. If you feel able to help defray this cost to the church, please consider adding a donation to reduce the subsidy. You will be able to do this when you register.

EQUALLY IMPORTANT: If you need a scholarship or financial assistance to attend the retreat, please inform the retreat coordinator or Minister. We never want people to skip the retreat for financial reasons!

Ferry Beach and COVID

Here is a link to the Ferry Beach COVID information page, but please note it hasn't been updated since March 2023. There are no requirements at this point (beyond staying home if you are ill), but that can change.

<https://www.ferrybeach.org/covid-19.html>

Ferry Beach was extremely careful and diligent during COVID (they opened to guests in 2020 as soon as the Governor allowed it and remained open throughout the entire pandemic). They have re-instated COVID protocols from time to time—such as a mask requirement in the Dining Hall—when they see a need for this. The goal is to keep everyone safe (or at least, safer), including the kitchen and Dining Hall staff.

We will keep people informed as policies change.

Registration

Ferry Beach registration is digital at this point--meaning via computer, not paper.

If you need assistance with this, please contact retreat@walthamuu.org.

There are two forms—one for Weekend Guests and one for Saturday Commuters.

Commuters should fill out the form even if you're just thinking about it.

That way we can hook you up with each other (for carpooling, etc.), which might help everyone make decisions more quickly.

NOTE:

The links don't work in all browsers.

If clicking the link below doesn't work, you will need to copy it:

Select it and choose “**Copy Hyperlink.**”

Paste into your browser's address field (where the url is displayed) and hit **Enter.**

Links:

[Weekend Registration Form](#)

Payment

Once registration is complete and I know where everyone is staying, I will send out invoices. This will likely happen in early May—no need to worry about payment until then. Payment is expected at that time however—and certainly before the retreat—as First Parish is expected to pay Ferry Beach BEFORE our retreat.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Addendum A: Ferry Beach Accommodations

For more info and photos, please go to <https://www.ferrybeach.org/lodging.html>

Reminder: All guests are expected to purchase a meal plan. Cottage kitchens cannot be used for personal meals on church retreat weekends unless you have extreme food sensitivities/allergies and have discussed this with the retreat coordinator.

Ferry Beach has many options for guests with mobility issues or those trying to avoid stairs. Please see Cross Cottage below or talk to retreat coordinator for other possible spaces.

Linens are included for all cabins/cottages. Linens include sheets, towels, pillow(s), and a warm blanket. Pillows are NOT provided for dormitory guests.

For families with 3 children, feel free to contact Dan Taylor or Joan Smith. They have a lot of experience getting 5 people into a dorm room with 4 beds.

Rowland Hall (our usual dormitory)	\$ 180.00
<i>All bedrooms are UPSTAIRS on the second floor. Communal dormitory-style boys' and girls' bathrooms.</i>	
12 rooms with (2) sets of twin bunk beds (sleeps up to 4).	
3 smaller rooms with (1) set of twin bunk beds (sleeps up to 2).	
2 rooms with (1) queen bed <i>these are farthest from the bathrooms</i>	

Cross Cottage	\$ 270.00
<i>4 "hotel-style" rooms on 2nd floor (accessible via ramp), each with private bathroom, heat and A/C, also mini fridge and coffee maker. These rooms are more private, but they are also ideal for elderly guests and those with mobility issues. ** Thus, priority is given to guests who need them. **</i>	
2 bedrooms w/queen bed and twin pull-out (Rooms 1 & 2) Note: access is via flight of stairs OR the ramp (no stairs)	
2 bedrooms w/full bed and ADA bathrooms (Rooms 3 & 4) Note: access via ramp (no stairs).	

Morris Cottage	\$ 200.00
<i>4 bedrooms, sleeps up to 8, heated. 3 small stairs to enter</i>	
1 bedroom w/queen bed and (1) twin bed	
1 bedroom w/full bed and (1) twin bed	
2 bedrooms have (1) twin bed	
Living room with working fireplace	
Full kitchen including dishwasher	
1 private bathroom w/shower, also outdoor shower.	

Addendum A: Ferry Beach Accommodations

Kelley Cottage (2nd floor)	\$ 200.00
<i>3 bedrooms, sleeps up to 6. Access to rooms is via EXTERIOR STAIRS only.</i>	
1 bedroom w/queen bed	
2 bedrooms have (2) twin beds	
Full kitchen with small seating area/living room	
2 private bathrooms w/showers	

Claffin Cottage (2 floors)	\$ 200.00
<i>4 bedrooms, sleeps up to 8. Note: Bedrooms are UPSTAIRS!</i>	
2 bedrooms w/queen bed (one has ocean view)	
2 bedrooms have (2) twin beds (one has ocean view)	
Indoor lounge area with ocean view	
Wrap-around porch with swinging bench	
Mini fridge and microwave	
1 private bathroom w/2 sinks, 2 showers and 1 toilet.	

Metz Cabins	\$ 310.00
<p><i>These are 3 cabins arranged around a shared patio/deck. Access to "Metz Village" is via STAIRS or RAMP; each cabin has one step at entrance. Each cabin sleeps 4, and they are heated / air conditioned. Each cabin has 1 private bathroom w/shower. All cabins have mini fridges and coffee makers. Metz Cabins do NOT have kitchens. Each cabin is configured slightly differently—please see below. Rental price is PER CABIN.</i></p>	
Metz #3: 1 bedroom w/queen bed, living room has full size pullout couch	
Metz #4: 1 bedroom w/full bed, living room has queen size futon	
Metz #5: 1 bedroom w/full bed, living room has full size pullout couch	

Addendum B: Ferry Beach Rules and Policies

Ferry Beach has been asked by their insurer and the City of Saco to make guests more aware of their policies, as well as Maine state laws and Saco regulations. Most of these are not new (and are common sense) and have never been a problem for us. However, there have been recent occurrences of unsupervised children and teens causing damage, and Ferry Beach is asking everyone's cooperation to prevent this in the future.

We ask that everyone be aware of the rules and policies below and abide by them.

- ◆ **Smoking:** There is no smoking in any Ferry Beach building or on porches. Smoking is restricted to a designated area in the Grove, across from Morris Ave. You must be 18+ years of age to smoke in Maine.
- ◆ **Open Flames:** Except for buildings that have fireplaces, fire, flame, incense, candles, etc. are prohibited in all spaces at all times. A fire pit in the Grove is the only place where a fire is allowed on campus. Please make sure the fire is fully extinguished by spraying with water from the hose provided.
- ◆ **Space Heaters/AC:** Space heaters or air conditioners provided by guests are not allowed in any buildings. Fans for guest rooms may be used; Ferry Beach can provide them (subject to availability) or bring your own.
- ◆ **Alcohol:** Alcohol may be served as long as it is supervised. The possession and/or use of alcoholic beverages by anyone under 21 years of age is prohibited by Maine state law. There is no storage of alcohol in Ferry Beach refrigerators—EXCEPT if you are staying in a cottage/cabin with a fridge. Your own dorm room is also OK.
- ◆ **DeWolfe Dining Hall:** Wristbands must be worn for meals. Shirts and shoes required at ALL times. Due to health safety regulations, as a general rule, food from outside, and food that requires preparation, is not allowed in the dining hall, and must never be in contact with Ferry Beach bowls/plates/utensils. Day visitors who bring their own meals should plan to eat on the porch—or in Dolphin if weather is inclement. Pre-packaged “snack-type” food is permissible in the dining hall between and after meals, as long as no preparation is required and no Ferry Beach dishes/utensils are used. People with severe allergies may be exempt from these policies—please see coordinator.
- ◆ **Good Neighbors:** Ferry Beach is surrounded by private homes, please respect their property. Quiet Hours at Ferry Beach are 11PM to 7AM—no exceptions! At all times, headphones should be used when listening to radios or other devices. No night-time sleeping in public spaces or on the beach by City of Saco regulations.
- ◆ **Beach:** There are no lifeguards—swimming is at your own risk. It is best not to swim alone—go with a buddy. Swimming is not permitted after dark. No rough play in the water. The lifeguard chair is for certified lifeguards only. Please stay off the fragile dunes. Fires are not allowed on the beach per City of Saco regulations. Do not dig deep holes in the sand, and shallow holes should be filled in before leaving the beach. Please keep the beach “tidy;” if you bring it, take it with you. Please use proper receptacles for all trash and recycling.
- ◆ **Children and Teens:** No children under 18 will be permitted to be in any building or on the beach without an adult designated as supervisor. Adults are cautioned against having one-on-one conversations with children in secluded locations, and unrelated adults should never take a child off-campus for any reason unless accompanied by another adult and with the permission of the parent/guardian.
- ◆ **Street Safety:** All the side streets that bisect the Ferry Beach campus (Morris Ave., Ferry Park Ave., Island View Ave.) and Seaside Ave. (Rte. 9) are public streets, use care when crossing or walking along those streets. Seaside Avenue is an extremely busy road! The side streets can also have “traffic,” as locals drive down looking for parking spaces.
- ◆ **Parking:** Parking lots are available adjacent to most buildings, and a large lot is available in the Grove. Do not block fire lanes, doorways or access ways. Please observe “No Parking” signs. ADA Accessible spots are marked, and ADA plates/placards are required for their use.
- ◆ **Stewardship:** Please exercise best practices in helping to preserve the facility, and taking care of the environment by turning off lights that are not in use, taking short showers, turning off faucets, cleaning up, and staying off the dunes. Please maintain the facilities in good, neat, and sanitary order, so we leave them in the same condition that we found. Report any maintenance needs immediately.
- ◆ **Firearms:** I'm not sure this needs to be said, but... no firearms are allowed on campus or in cars, period.

Revision History

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