



The Meeting House News

February 2015

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Greetings!

Welcome to the February *Meeting House News*.
Enjoy!

Worship Services

Sunday, February 8, 10:00 a.m.

Coming of Age Service
Rev. Howard Dana, Youth Gospel Singers and Youth Musicians
This service will be 90 minutes. We have twenty youth credos!

Sunday, February 15, 10:00 a.m.

"Loving the Hell Out of the World"
Brian Chenowith and the First Parish Choir

Sunday, February 22, 10:00 a.m.

"Shaking Hands with the Dragon"
Rev. Howard Dana and the Lincoln Ringers

Sunday, March 1, 10:00 a.m.

"Celebration Sunday"
Rev. Howard Dana and the First Parish Choirs

All Sunday Worship Services at 10:00 a.m., except as follows:
Two worship services, at 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
Easter Sunday, April 5, 2015

Pastoral Care

Lay Minister

for February
Diane Clapp
781-257-5025
d.clapp@comcast.net

Minister for Pastoral Care

Rev. Marion Visel
978-369-9602, ext. 414
mvisel@firstparish.org

Senior Minister

Rev. Howard Dana
978-369-9602
hdana@firstparish.org

Ministerial Intern

Brian Chenowith
630-877-5371
bchenowith@firstparish.org

Caring Connection

Rides

Suzanne Hogan
978-318-9035
suzanne.hogan@comcast.net

Meals Delivery

for February
Pat Kane
978-369-8418
cstmcloth@yahoo.com

First Parish Café

Every Sunday, 9:00 a.m.
Coffee, tea, hot chocolate
and muffins

Events This Month

Bill Claybrook Photography
Exhibit
February 1 – March 1, Altshuler
Gallery

MUSings

Since the turning of the New Year, I have found myself describing what I have come to call, rather flippantly, “retail epiphanies.” These are experiences of startling clarity and spirit that have happened to me while shopping. Really. In January, at our Martin Luther King weekend service, I described a brief encounter with a young black employee at the Acton Kmart that brought my privilege as a white woman into clear focus and sharpened my perspective on the lived experience for people of color in our society.



Another retail epiphany (and there are several, I assure you) that I found myself describing to the choir one night, occurred in the grocery store on a December afternoon several years ago. The Madrigal Singers from Acton-Boxborough high school were caroling in Roche Brothers, bringing holiday cheer to busy shoppers. As I shopped, I listened to the familiar songs with professional ears, admiring the group’s beautiful sound, their precision, the clarity of their young voices.

And then they began an exquisitely beautiful a Capella arrangement of “Precious Lord, Take My Hand,” the moving prayer written by Thomas Dorsey after the death of his wife and infant son. It is a hymn that stirs me deeply when we sing it in worship; in the grocery store, so out of context, and sung by those pure voices, it hit me with even greater power. It was astonishingly beautiful. Looking at the shoppers around me, busy checking out or packing groceries, I wanted to yell, “Stop! Listen! Pay attention! Don’t you hear?” I stood, rooted to the floor, and listened, and wept. Of course, when I got home, wearing my professional hat again, I contacted the choral director and asked her for the arrangement. But that moment of exquisite and heart-stopping beauty has remained vivid for me.

I have wondered about these “retail epiphanies.” How is it that such simple, seemingly random encounters, in such ordinary places, have been so powerful for me? What other epiphanies are there to discover if I listen to my own, inner voice: “Stop! Listen! Pay attention! Don’t you hear . . .?”

Perhaps, as we transition in to February, I have stumbled on a kind of New Year’s resolution. I am not disciplined about these things. This year, I hope to stop more, listen more and pay attention. Who knows what epiphanies lie ahead?

Blessings,
Beth

Concert
 Sunday, February 1, 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday Group (65+) Meeting
 Tuesday, February 3, 1:30 p.m.

Arts Council Meeting
 Wednesday, February 4, 6:00 p.m.

You're invited....Come cook
 Wednesday February 4, 9:00 a.m.

Concord Area Humanists
 Wednesday, February 4, 7:00 p.m.

By Your Side Singers
 Thursday, February 5, 7:30 p.m.

Adult Contemporary Vocal Ensemble
 Start date: Sunday, February 8, 11:30 a.m.

Funderburg Scholars Dinner
 Saturday, February 7, 6:30 p.m.

Standing Committee Meeting
 Sunday, February 8

Denominational Affairs Meeting
 Monday, February 9, 7:30

Shawl Ministry
 Tuesday, February 10, 2:00 p.m.

Chocolate tasting and Vegan Potluck Dinner
 Tuesday, February 10, 6:30 p.m.

Partner Congregation Meeting
 Thursday, February 12, 7:00 p.m.

Photography Club meeting
 Saturday, February 14, 9:00 a.m.

Membership Team
 Sunday, February 15, 11:30 a.m.

Amnesty International Group 15
 Tuesday, February 17, 7:00 p.m.

Diversity Committee Meeting

Religious Education

Hello to everyone as the Interim Director of Religious Education! I am thrilled with the warm welcome I have received at First Parish. I have gotten reacquainted with old friends and met many wonderful new families. If I haven't met you yet, please introduce yourself!

As many of you know, my husband and I raised our two daughters at First Parish, we were active RE teachers, and I was involved with Coming of Age for three years. I haven't been active in Concord for a number of years, but have been pursuing my career as an artist, community builder, and teacher. This winter I cleared out much of my schedule thinking I would create time to focus on a new body of work. Then, as often happens with "best-laid plans," another, compelling direction presented itself. First Parish, a community I hold in my heart, was going through a transition. I felt "called" to throw my hat in the ring to see if my skills would be of use to help facilitate congregational conversations and envision the future of religious education. Happily, my talents and your needs mesh. Together we have a special opportunity to practice our Unitarian Universalist values while shepherding each other through a transition of spiritual leadership as First Parish searches for a new Director of Religious Education.

My impressions of today's First Parish are of continued strengths: a thriving community, a caring and talented staff, and a rich Religious Education legacy. Alongside the very capable Dawn Van Patten, the inspirational Bethany Lowe, the hands-on RE Council, and the many parent teachers and volunteers I will be working to keep a vibrant RE program on course. In addition, I am excited about collaborating with Rev. Howard Dana, the RE Council, staff, and parishioners to create opportunities for the Parish to envision the future of Religious Education. Stay tuned for invitations to sharing events. I urge you to lend your voice!

Merill

Social Action Community

At our intergenerational service on Martin Luther King Day weekend, I reflected the following to the congregation. For me, this sums up the work that I have been doing personally this fall, and also the work I hope to do in the world in the years to come.



"Sometimes, love is all around us, even in seemingly opposing places. And what we are asked to do, then, is live in a tension between two places where love exists. Love is with the Muslim community in Europe right now, and also the Jewish community. Love is with those who put their lives on the line by stepping out their front door into their violence-ridden neighborhoods, and love is with those law enforcement officials who put their lives on the line by stepping into violence-ridden neighborhoods. Love is with those who shout that black lives matter, and also with the police who

Tuesday, February 17, 7:00 p.m.

By Your Side Singers

Thursday, February 19, 7:30 p.m.

Jewish Awareness Group

Friday, February 20, 7:00 p.m.

Orientation: New to Unitarian

Universalism

Sunday, February 22, 11:30 a.m.

Social Action Reflection Group

Sunday, February 22, 4:00 p.m.

First Parish Cooperative Seder

Planning Meeting

Monday, February 23 at 7:30 p.m.

WPA Luncheon Meeting

Wednesday, February 25, 11:30
a.m.

Finding Meaning through

Reflection in Later Life

Beginning Thursday, February
26, 1:00 p.m.

Rise Up Singing

Friday, February 27, 7:30 p.m.

11th Annual Forum on Family
Homelessness

Sunday, March 1 at 2:30 p.m.
offsite

Registration Opens for

General Assembly 2015

Sunday, March 1

Orientation: New to First Parish in

Concord

Sunday, March 8, 11:30 a.m.

Save the Date:

Ordination of Rachel Baker

Sunday, March 15, 4:00 p.m.,
offsite

Every Week

Worship Sharing Circle

Sunday, 11:10 to 11:30 a.m.

Rev. Howard Dana's study

are doing the best they can to keep all communities safe. Love might be a place where we are comfortable. And love might also be a place where we are uncomfortable.

Our job as Unitarian Universalists is to identify love and be with it wherever it is. It's a big task, but it can start small. It can start by smiling at the woman asking for spare change on the street, or listening to a friend with whom you disagree.

Are you up for it? I hope you will try it with me."

In faith, Bethany

Pastoral Care Team

Walking with One Another through the Changes Life Brings

Minister for Pastoral Care: Contact Rev. Marion Visel at mvisel@firstparish.org, or by calling her cell phone at 201-931-5239, or the church at 978-369-9602, ext. 414.

Senior Minister: Contact Rev. Howard N. Dana at hdana@firstparish.org, or by calling the church at 978-369-9602, ext. 411, or his cell phone at 717-412-8543.

Ministerial Intern: Contact Brian Chenowith at bchenowith@firstparish.org, or by calling the church at 978-369-9602, ext. 412, or his cell phone at 630-877-5371.

Lay Minister for February: Contact Diane Clapp at d.clapp@comcast.net or 781-257-5025.

Meals Delivery for February: Pat Kane at cstmcloth@yahoo.com or 978-369-8418.

The above information is always available as the first item in the left-hand column of the Meeting House News for easy access.

February Caregiver Prayer

Dear You,

Dear winter caregiver, my Northern Hemisphere sleet-and-snow companion, you sliding on tiny, bouncing, translucent balls of ice in the Stop 'N Shop parking lot on your way to collect loaves and fishes for my dinner and yours, may you steer your way through the grocery aisles with my blessing.

In times past, I ran this errand for myself and my loved ones -- able to run freely, then, though not during ice storms, remembering their preference for golden raisins or pumpernickel bread, wheeling my cart past the lettuces (now a swallowing hazard), stopping in the frozen treats department to scan for sugar-free ice cream.

Buddhist Group
Wednesday, 9:30 a.m.
Thursday, 7:30 p.m.

Additional details elsewhere

Members of the Standing Committee

Kate Crosby
kate_crosby@newview.org

David Elwood
daveelwood@hotmail.com

Kristin Haddad, Clerk
kristin.haddad@gmail.com

Jake Nunes
Jake_Nunes@shs.org

Patty Popov
ppopov@nichols-pratt.com

Mark Russell Prior, Chair
mark.russell.prior@comcast.net

Kitsy Rothermel
kitsy.mcr@icloud.com

Toby Smith Ropeik
tsr@tobyasmith.com

Lora Venesy
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Alec Walker
alecwalker@aol.com

Tom Wilson, Treasurer
twilson@wilsongroup.com

Ministers & Staff

Rev. Howard N. Dana
Senior Minister
hdana@firstparish.org

Rev. Marion Visel
Minister for Pastoral Care

Once I gave. Now I receive. All I have left to give you is gratitude, that and clear direction, a shopping list printed with my wavering pen in hand, and forgiveness for any lapses in concentration.

Pace yourself, dear winter caregiver. Whatever the results of tomorrow's biopsy, I'm stuck with the durable truths of life, that sleet falls in every New England winter, that daybreak rises from the bed of night, that night will fold me in her arms, one night, forever, that we all sleep, sometime, folding our bodies into the good earth with one last act of generosity.

Mary Ann Barton BA CA, Certified Nursing Assistant

Coping With the Challenges of Caregiving

Providing care for a family member is an age-old act of kindness, love and loyalty. You may be caring for an aging parent, disabled spouse; or a child with a physical, mental or addiction disorder. With the right help and support, you can be a good caregiver without sacrificing yourself in the process. Please join others who are faced with this challenge, so that we may support each other and learn some valuable skills to help make the task a little easier.

In this two-session workshop, (Saturdays, February 21 and February 28, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.) participants will learn how to tame their own stress response; helping to control stressful caregiving situations before they arise by using a variety of cognitive (thinking/doing) approaches along with a number of intuitive (self-hypnosis, autosuggestion, and imagery conditioning) techniques.

You'll learn how to disarm that part of the personality that triggers anger, frustration, resentment or any other health threatening response to stressful events, as well as how to reframe our view of events so that they become objective challenges rather than destructive distractions.

Lou Fackert will facilitate the workshops. She has extensive experience in counseling, education and training, teaching emotionally disturbed children and teens, those with developmental disabilities, mental illness, addiction disorders and homelessness. She developed and leads groups, Caregiver Supports, Stress Management and Crisis Prevention.

To sign-up contact Fred Van Deusen
fredvandeu@gmail.com 978/369-0435.

There is also a sign-up sheet next to the Volunteer Desk in FP Front Office.

Volunteers Needed for Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is in need of additional volunteers. Forms are available on the Pastoral Care bulletin board. Fill out a form and place it in the pastoral care mailbox (bottom shelf) in the office.

Plant Delivery

Thank you Caitlin Selle for distributing the Christmas poinsettias to those on the pastoral care list. Caitlin remarked that "This year was a

mvisel@firstparish.org

Brian Chenowith
Ministerial Intern
bchenowith@firstparish.org

Fifi Ball
Director of Operations
fball@firstparish.org

Rachel Baker
Director of Membership
and Communications
rbaker@firstparish.org

Bethany Lowe
Social Action Director and
Youth Program Director
blowe@firstparish.org

Cassy Bosworth
Church Administrator
cbosworth@firstparish.org

Tina Storey
Assistant to the
Director of Operations
tstorey@firstparish.org

Doug Baker
Sacristan and Curator
dbaker@firstparish.org

Beth Norton
Director of Music
music@firstparish.org

Eric Huenneke
Parish Organist
music@firstparish.org

Gail Carey
Music Ministry Associate
music@firstparish.org

Anderson Manuel
Director of Youth Gospel Choir
music@firstparish.org

Merill Comeau
Interim Director of
Religious Education
mcomeau@firstparish.org

Dawn Van Patten

huge success. Almost everyone was home, and they invited me in, and I had a lovely pastoral care visit. All were very touched for the flowers and with the visit. I am so inspired by their bravery and gratitude." The remaining plants were taken to the Walden Rehabilitation Center and the Bedford VA Hospital. They were gratefully received and added much cheer to several entrances.

Thinking of You Cards

Have you noticed the Pastoral Care bulletin board in the lower level hallway? There is a lovely display of the Thinking of You Cards. These are available every Sunday at coffee hour with a list of those on the Pastoral Care List. The office will mail the cards for you.

First Tuesday 65+ Group

The Tuesday Group meets the first Tuesday of the month 1:30-3:00 p.m., don't worry about your age, all welcome, you determine whether the topic is for you. Hope to see you there!

Tuesday Group Steering Committee: Berni Jenkins (Contact Person): berni.jenkins@verizon.net 978/369-2876, Bob Andrews, Mary Clark, Dave Dawson, Susan Dobbie, Patricia Ellis, Bill Maxwell, Jack Nevison and Virginia Taylor

You're invited....Come cook

As you know, the Caring Connection of First Parish provides delicious meals for parishioners during times of transition (often from illness or family loss) as part of our shared pastoral care outreach. We are going to cook and you're invited. Come help! No experience or skills necessary; we provide recipes and provisions. Breakfast snacks will be served!

Date: Wednesday, February 4

Time: 9:00 – 12:00 noon

If we have many volunteers we may do two shifts (please indicate your interest or availability):

Prep and Cooking: 9:00 - 10:30 a.m.

Finishing Cooking, Packaging, Labeling, & Stocking Freezer 10:30 - 12:00 noon

Place: First Parish kitchen

Come help out, enjoy some breakfast, and connect to others. Please RSVP to Tracey Hurd at thurd@aol.com or 978-369-2366. Please indicate if you are interested in one or both shifts.

Call for Friendly Visitors

Would you like to be in regular contact with one or more Members/Friends of FP who aren't able to be here as much as they would like? Our Pastoral Care, Caring Connection program is starting a Friendly Visitors contingent of folks who will be referred to folks who would like visitors. Friendly Visitors will call, email, send cards and visit, helping those they visit to stay connected to First Parish.

A one-hour orientation for Friendly Visitors will be held later in February. If you would like to know more please contact Rev. Marion Visel, Minister for Pastoral Care, mvisel@firstparish.org or 978/369-9602 ext. 414.

Assistant Director of
Religious Education
dvanpatten@firstparish.org

Gary E. Smith
Minister Emeritus

David Huston
Music Director Emeritus

Contact First Parish

Office Hours:

Tuesday – Friday
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Address: 20 Lexington Road
Concord, MA 01742

Phone: 978-369-9602

Fax: 978-369-8701

Email: FPCConcord@firstparish.org

Website: www.firstparish.org

Church Calendar:

<http://www.firstparish.org/cms/about-first-parish/hours-directions-services/church-calendar>

Sign-Up for Emailed First

Parish Announcements:

<http://www.firstparish.org/cms/about-first-parish/e-mail-lists>

"Like" Our Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/First-Parish-in-Concord-Unitarian-Universalist/343822177494>

Reserve a Room:

<http://www.firstparish.org/cms/reserve-a-room>

Winter Storms

Closures and Cancellations

The Meeting House will be closed if the Concord Public Schools are closed. Church will be cancelled in the event of a serious

Finding Meaning through Reflection in Later Life

This six-week program sponsored by First Parish "First Tuesday Group (65+)" is based on the book *Lasting Words* by Claire Willis, who led a Sunday Forum at First Parish this fall. The book focuses on spiritual issues of common concern, suggesting questions for reflection through discussion and writing.

The group will take the form of guided conversations using the book chapters as springboards for reflection. Discussion will be facilitated by Sue Dobbie and Virginia Taylor. We will meet on six consecutive Thursdays from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. in the Emerson Room beginning February 26 and continuing through April 2.

In order to ensure a meaningful group experience, the program is open to a maximum of 16 participants. Participants will be expected to attend every session (except, of course, in emergencies.)

Lasting Words: A Guide to Finding Meaning toward the Close of Life provides helpful background, including poetry and quotations to stimulate our own thoughts and words, but it is not required to participate in the program. The book is available to buy through Amazon or to borrow from the Pastoral Care library. (ISBN: 978-0-9899838-0-8).

Sign up for this program on the clipboard in the Front Office next to the Volunteers' Desk or by contacting Sue Dobbie at 978-501-6969 or susandobbie@gmail.com

Conversation 1: February 26 (Introduction, Chapters 1, 2 and 3)
Your Words Matter: Moving toward Reflection through Discussion and/or Writing

Conversation 2: March 5 (Chapter 4)
Remembering Life's Journey

Conversation 3: March 12 (Chapters 5 & 6)
Cultivating Gratitude and Redefining Hope

Conversation 4: March 19 (Chapter 7)
Arriving at Forgiveness

Conversation 5: March 26 (Chapter 8)
Discovering Wisdom and Communicating through Prayer and Reflection

Conversation 6: April 2 (Chapter 9)
Endings: Lasting Words

Snow Day: April 9 (In case a session is cancelled because of weather)

Standing Committee

The Standing Committee often receives questions from parishioners wondering who they should talk to, or who makes decisions, about certain issues. To help address these questions, the Standing Committee has developed a one-page description of the First Parish governance model. Approved at our January meeting, this document is a first effort to illustrate our collaborative leadership model, the foundation of which is our collection of bylaws, Standing Committee and operational policies and procedures. The document displays the working relationship between the Standing Committee, the Senior Minister as Head of Staff, and the Congregation. It has been posted on the Standing Committee's Bulletin Board, as well as on our

snowstorm; a decision will be made by the Senior Minister and the Director of Operations by 8:00 p.m. on Saturday evening. A notice will be placed on the website, an email will be sent out on the FP-Announce list, and there will be a message on the church telephone. Please use your judgment to ensure your safety and that of your family.

Reports web page where it is available to all who have member accounts on the First Parish web site. [All members and friends of First Parish in Concord are welcome to create a member account for the website. See the left-hand column on the homepage of the website for information or contact Rachel Baker, Director of Membership and Communications for assistance.]

The Standing Committee welcomes Merill Comeau, our new Interim Director of Religious Education (DRE). Merill has already begun working with Rev. Dana, the RE Council and members of the congregation to identify our Religious Education program needs and prepare for a search for a new DRE. The Standing Committee would like to formally express our gratitude to members of the RE Council, staff and other congregation members who have worked so hard to support our RE program and bring about a smooth transition. Our children are in good hands!

Watch your email for a mid-year congregational survey offering First Parish members and friends an opportunity to comment on how the Standing Committee is doing on its annual goals. This brief survey will be distributed by way of the First Parish Announce and RE Announce emailing lists.

Standing Committee members are always available to talk with First Parish members and friends about issues of interest and concern. We'd also like to hear about the things big and small that please and inspire parishioners. So please feel free to reach out to any of us, at coffee hour, or at an event, or by phone or email, to talk about your First Parish experiences. If you don't know us yet, our faces and contact information are available on our bulletin board.

Mark Russell Prior, chair, First Parish Standing Committee

The Standing Committee Needs Your Input!

Please fill out the brief anonymous survey, which will be sent out in an upcoming FP-Announce. Your answers will help us evaluate ourselves. If you'd like to discuss anything further, feel free to add your contact information at the end.

Nominations for the First Parish Nominating Committee

The Standing Committee is looking for people who would like to be considered for nomination to the Nominating Committee. There are two upcoming openings. We are looking for people who are "connectors" and like to participate in many aspects of church life. This year we have a specific need to have people with a strong sense of the workings of the current Standing Committee. The primary function of the Nominating Committee is to solicit and nominate candidates for any open positions on the Standing Committee and openings for the Treasurer, Clerk and Moderator positions. The term is three years, with an option to do two consecutive terms. The NomCom meets monthly on Sunday mornings, and the time commitment is two to three hours a month. Please let us know by Sunday, February 22 about people who might be interested in and qualified for these positions by contacting Patty Popov at ppopov@nichols-pratt.com or 978-369-1990.

The Arts

Fostering Community through the Arts

Each month the First Parish Arts Council will highlight arts events that offer opportunities to participate in the ministry of the arts at First Parish. Unless otherwise noted, questions may be directed to music@firstparish.org.

February 1 – March 1 – Bill Claybrook Photography Exhibit - Altshuler Gallery
February 1 at 7:00 p.m. – Sarasa Chamber Music Concert – “Haydn’s Genius”
February 4 at 6:00 p.m. – Arts Council Meeting
February 14 at 9:00 a.m. – Photography Club meeting – open to all First Parish adults
February 27 at 7:30 p.m. – Rise Up Singing, First Parish’s monthly song circle.

For more information on these events, check this *Meeting House News*, FP Announce, and the *Sunday News*.

The purpose of the First Parish Arts Council is to further the mission of First Parish through facilitating, promoting and coordinating a diverse arts ministry that inspires and celebrates creativity and connection. The council is open to all interested parishioners. Contact Susan Page, chair, for more information: srpage10@verizon.net.

Adult Contemporary Vocal Ensemble Meets Again

Our contemporary vocal ensemble resumes again on February 8. Do you have a passion for singing? Do you love gospel, jazz, folk? Do you enjoy singing but feel unable to make a weekly commitment to a choir? Do you long to share your voice in the music ministry here at First Parish in Concord? If so, the Contemporary Vocal Ensemble may be just what you are seeking. If you have sung with us before, spread the word. Come experience the power and joy that comes of shared song! Unless otherwise noted, we will be rehearsing on Sundays in the chapel from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Singers commit by the service.

We will next be singing in the March 8 Sunday service. Weekly rehearsals preparing that service begin on Sunday, February 8. We will always plan to warm up and run through pieces the morning of the service as well. If interested, contact Gail Carey, Music Ministry Associate (improvgail@gmail.com).

First Parish Choirs

For information about singing with the choirs at First Parish, contact Beth Norton, Music Director, at music@firstparish.org.

Re-membership

Membership Team

The new and revitalized Membership Team has come together! All are welcome to meet on the third Sunday of every month through June. We will be thinking creatively about how to be the most welcoming congregation we can be. We will step up to do the actual work of welcoming new people onto the path towards membership. Would you like to be present at the Welcome Table during coffee hour to answer questions about the congregation? Would you like to learn how to lead a visitor reflection circle? Curious about how to get involved? Come get involved on February 15, 11:30-12:30! I invite you to think about why you came back to First Parish a second, third, and fourth time. Was it because someone greeted you warmly? Were you introduced to another? Was it because you participated in a small group reflection? Was it because the coffee tasted good? Because your children found friends with a similar worldview? Come share your experiences, offer ideas, and then volunteer your time.

New to Unitarian Universalism? New to First Parish in Concord? Considering membership?

Come learn more about Unitarian Universalism, First Parish in Concord, and what it means to become a member at two orientations!

New to Unitarian Universalism Orientation

Sunday, February 22, 11:30 – 12:30 p.m.

Participants will learn about the rich history of our Unitarian Universalist faith, gain an understanding of congregational polity, and better understand the role of the UU principles and sources in our values-driven religious movement. Childcare is available.

RSVP to rbaker@firstparish.org by Wednesday, February 18.

New to First Parish in Concord Orientation

Sunday, March 8, 11:30 – 12:30 p.m.

Participants will hear from the ministerial team, staff, and lay leaders, find out how to become engaged in congregational life at First Parish, and have the option to sign the membership book. Childcare is available.

RSVP to rbaker@firstparish.org by Wednesday, March 4.

RE News

Seeking a Garden Coordinator for 2015

Are you a gardener? Would you like to take on coordinating our First Parish plots in the Hugh Cargill Community Garden? We are hoping to be able to continue this 'hands-on' spiritual practice that supports or social justice and environmental mission. If you are interested, please contact Dawn Van Patten dvanpatten@firstparish.org

Teachers Needed

Teachers are needed for the upcoming Winter and Spring terms to teach elementary-age RE classes. Teaching commitments are for four non-consecutive weeks. Please contact Dawn Van Patten dvanpatten@firstparish.org for more information.

SAC Action

Funderburg Scholars Dinner

Join us on Saturday, February 7 for the Funderburg Scholars fundraising dinner at church. Help Roxbury youth attend and graduate from college – while you enjoy a nice meal with great company! These engaging students will tell stories about their college experiences. No fixed "price" - donate what feels right to you at the dinner. Reserve your place at dinner at coffee hour today, by calling Loretta Ho Sherblom's cell at (508) 935-6750 or e-mailing her at Loretta@LHSBenefits.com. Join us for wine and cheese at 6:30 p.m., dinner by Sven Olson at 7:15 p.m.

Amnesty International Group 15 Meeting

AI Group 15 meets regularly on the third Tuesday of each month from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in the Ripley Room at First Parish in Concord. Our next meeting is Tuesday, February 17. In addition to signing letters and petitions in support of human rights activists and prisoners of conscience worldwide each month, we also focus on several other issues including solitary confinement in Massachusetts, the death penalty in the U.S., and global violence against women. We welcome all to join us in February and beyond. If you'd like

more information about Group 15, please contact Kathy Taylor, the group's coordinator, at Kly.taylor@gmail.com or 781-718-7640.

SAVE THE DATE: Sunday, March 1, 2:30 p.m., First Parish in Bedford, MA
11th Annual Forum on Family Homelessness

Never have there been more homeless families in Massachusetts. Each night, nearly 3,100 families are in shelters and 1,850 more families are in motels with great risk to their children's health and development. This 11th Annual Forum by the Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness will focus on communities that are reaching out to support homeless families. Join us to understand more about this crisis, and what is being done in the Bedford area to help homeless families in a motel. Learn how barriers to employment are eliminated. Find out how you can focus your advocacy efforts to have the greatest impact. The free forum, organized by The Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness, is open to all. See www.endfamilyhomelessness.net. The Forum will be held at First Parish in Bedford, 75 Great Rd., Rt. 62, Bedford Center on Sunday, March 1, 2:30 p.m.

Social Action Reflection

Getting from here to there. Consider joining the Social Action Reflection Group! SARG is a fellowship for discussion of the moral and spiritual basis for social action. The next meeting is on February 22 at First Parish, at 4:00 p.m. in the Parlor. SARG will use *A Path Appears*, by Nick Kristoff and Sheryl WuDunn as the take off point for the discussion. Read the book and be a part of this community of support and exploration! For more information, contact Mark Richards markr@upriverministries.org.

Partner Congregation

Our partner church in Székeleykeresztúr received one third of the collections from our Christmas Eve Services. We were able to send \$2,817.66 for them to use for the social service work of their congregation. On January 25, the PCC hosted a gathering for the congregation where the pilgrims from our Harmony & Heritage tour to Keresztúr last fall shared highlights of our trip. It featured inspiring stories from our travelers, songs, pictures, and Hungarian desserts. The Partner Church Committee will hold our next meeting at First Parish on Thursday, February 12 from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. We invite all who are interested in our partnership to attend; we will serve dessert!

Vegan Potluck

Chocolate tasting and Vegan Potluck Dinner

Enjoy fair-trade chocolate tasting and a delicious pot-luck dinner in Parish Hall, Tuesday, February 10, at 6:30 p.m. hosted by Reverence for Life and the Environmental Leadership Team. Please bring your own beverage and a dish (4-6 servings) to share that is free of meat, fish, eggs, honey, and dairy. Please also bring your own place setting to reduce paper waste and clean up. Also, attach a card with the ingredients of your dish, to help out those with allergies or special diets. Children welcome! Creative fun at children's craft table provided. Need a recipe? Contact Lyell Slade at 978-369-0636 or lslrsvd@netscape.net.

Jewish Awareness Affinity Group

The Jewish Awareness Affinity Group meets on the third Friday of every month. We are open to all, including Jews, non-Jews, people related to Jews, fans of Jews, etc. We typically start with short Sabbath blessings over wine and challah, and then chat about a topic related to Judaism, watch a movie, or listen to someone who has prepared a short talk. We are more about questions than answers, and more about curiosity than closure. No credentials or special knowledge necessary.

Passover Seder

First Parish Cooperative Seder, Planning Meeting Scheduled

This year's Passover Seder is going to be Saturday, April 11. All are welcome, and everyone that comes helps make it happen. We could also use your help in organizing the event. A planning meeting will be held on Monday, February 23 at 7:30 p.m. at First Parish. Please let me know if you can help with organizing, and if you can come to the meeting on, and what areas you could help organize. To get you thinking about how you might help, here's a partial list of areas that need organizing: ticket creation, ticket sales (coffee hours), money tracking, menu, shopping, cooking, service planning, setup and take-down, communications and sharing information

For more information, or to RSVP for the planning meeting, please contact Jim Snyder-Grant at 508-572-2985 or jimsg@newview.org.

WPA

Women's Parish Association

WPA Luncheon Meeting

Enjoy a delicious meal and an interesting program at the Women's Parish Association's luncheon meeting on Wednesday, February 25. Social time: 11:30 a.m. Lunch: Noon followed by the program. Cuba, a place so near and yet so far away has been a fascination for many people over the years. First Parish members who have travelled to Cuba will give a slide presentation of their various visits as general tourists and visitors to a music festival. Cost of the luncheon is ten dollars. Contact the office or Dian Pekin at Pekindc@comcast.net by February 22 to make reservations and to communicate food requirements. All women and men are cordially invited!

Women's Book Group

For February, the Women's Book Group will be reading *Main Street* by Sinclair Lewis. The evening discussion will be Monday, February 23, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.; and the morning discussion on Tuesday, February 24, 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. Both groups meet in the Brooks Room at First Parish.

All women of First Parish are warmly invited to read the current book and join one or both of these discussions. If you would like to be added to the Women's Book Group email list, please contact Darien Smith at darien@smithquest.com or 978-369-1471.

Books and Dates for 2014-2015

February 23/24: *Main Street*, Sinclair Lewis

March 30/31: *The Art of Travel*, Alain De Botton

April 27/28: *The Orphan Train: A Novel*, Christina Baker Kline

June 1/2: *Moloka'i*, Alan Brennert

Conversations in the Parlor

At the First Parish Café (before the service) and during coffee hour (after the service) the Humanist Council will host conversations in the Parlor most Sundays. These informal meetings are open to everyone no matter your theological leanings, lifestance, or worldview. This is an opportunity to learn more about a humanistic lifestance, discuss various social justice topics such as the UUA General Assembly Study/Action issue Escalating Inequality, and to join the Humanist Council, if you are interested.

Ordination Invitation

Invitation to the Ordination of Rachel Baker

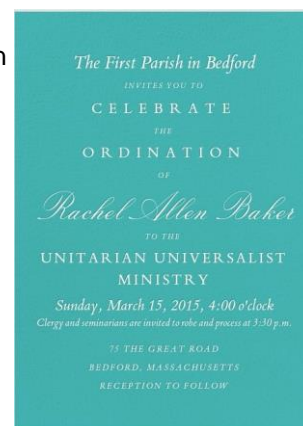
First Parish in Bedford cordially invites the members and friends of First Parish in Concord to witness and celebrate the Ordination of Rachel Allen Baker to the Unitarian Universalist Ministry.

Sunday, March 15, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.

Clergy and seminarians are invited to robe and process at 3:30 p.m.

75 The Great Road, Bedford, Massachusetts 01730

Reception to follow.



Concord Area Humanists

Concord Area Humanists (CAH) meet the first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Additional information is available on the website, www.concordareahumanists.org, under "Events." Questions to pne@aol.com.

Concord Area Humanists will sponsor Peter Lowitt speaking on Green Roofs for Healthy Cities, Wednesday, February 4, at 7:00 p.m., in the Parish Hall. Do we use resources efficiently? Peter has for years worked, published, and lectured internationally promoting vegetated roofs as resources. He was founding Chair of Green Roofs for Healthy Cities. See www.greenroofs.org. As Director & Land Use Administrator for Devens Enterprise Commission, he focuses on sustainable redevelopment of the 4400-acre former army base, and will include this. Peter has a B.A. from Brown University (1979) and M.A. in Community Economic Development from Tufts University. For more, see www.ConcordAreaHumanists.org and click on 'Events'

General Assembly

It is time to begin thinking about General Assembly 2015. Learn more about the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association here: <http://www.uua.org/ga/>

If you would like to learn more about becoming a delegate for the UUA GA this June in Portland, Oregon, please contact Alice Van Deusen (alicevandeusen@gmail.com), chairperson of the Denominational Affairs Committee.

Early registration and volunteer applications begin on March 1. Housing reservations begin on March 2.

UU World

Visit Alaska

Have you ever dreamed of visiting Alaska? Would you like to meet Alaskan UUs? Do you enjoy getting to know your fellow travelers? If so, WhaleCoast Alaska 2015 is for you! Four Alaskan UU fellowships invite you to experience our eco-cultural and spiritual program this summer as we celebrate our 19th year! See Alaska through the eyes of local UUs in Sitka, Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau with friendly homestays and unique tour activities. See wildlife including moose, bear, whales, bald eagles, seals, and caribou. Visit Denali National Park. Experience Native Alaskan culture. Enjoy all our beautiful state has to offer.

Programs led by Dave Frey. Visit www.WhaleCoastAK.org, call 907-322-4966 or email dfrey@whalecoastak.org.

Concord Area

World Day of Prayer

Women, men and children in more than 170 countries and regions will celebrate World Day of Prayer, Friday, March 6. This year, the women of the WDP Committee of the Bahamas will remind participants in the service that transformative radical love comes from deep humility, compassion and commitment to serving those in need. Concord's 2015 Commemoration of World Day of Prayer will take place at 11:00 a.m. at Holy Family Parish in Concord Center. A festive luncheon celebrating the people and cultures of the Bahamas will follow the service. Reservations are not required. Contact Dian Pekin at Pekindc@comcast.net if you have artwork or decorations from the Bahamas that you could lend for the event.

Editor's Notes

Next Meeting House News deadline:

Tuesday, February 17, 11:59 p.m. (yes, the middle of the night)

Email submissions, either in the body of the email or as an attached Word document (not a PDF), to Rachel Baker at rbaker@firstparish.org. Inserts will no longer be possible, due to the new format.

Next publication date:

Tuesday, March 3, 2015

First Parish in Concord, Massachusetts, is a welcoming congregation seeking ways to deepen spiritually, build community, and make a positive difference in the world.

A Member Congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Association.