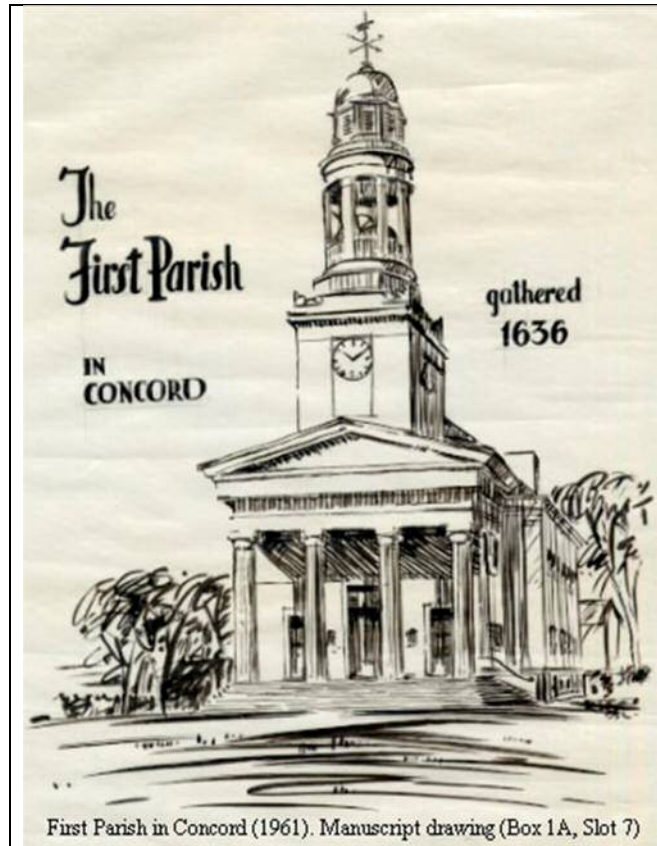


Meeting House News

September 2015



First Parish in Concord (1961). Manuscript drawing (Box 1A, Slot 7)

Please note that some email programs truncate long newsletters. To access the entire newsletter, scroll to the end. Then click on "view entire message." The newsletter is available as a PDF on the website as well (Home page, far right column).

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Photo by Douglas Baker

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Worship This Month

All Sunday Worship Services are held at 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, September 6 – “Labor Day”

Led by Rev. Howard N. Dana

Nancy Ackerman, clarinet; Eric Huenneke, keyboard

Sunday, September 13 – “Home Rituals,” Intergenerational Worship

Led by Rev. Howard N. Dana and Rev. Amy Freedman

First Parish Choir, Children’s Choir and Gospel Choir

Sunday, September 20 – “Ignoring the Psalms”

Led by Rev. Howard N. Dana

First Parish Choir

Sunday, September 27 – “A Spiritual Practice of Forgiveness/Atonement”

Led by Rev. Marion Visel

First Parish Choir

Sunday, October 4 – “Ours to Follow-Lucy Stone”

Led by Rev. Howard N. Dana

First Parish Choir and Childrens Choirs

First Parish Café

The First Parish Café will resume on Homecoming Sunday, September 13, 9:00 a.m..

Homecoming Celebration

Sunday, September 13, 5:30 p.m.

Music, Picnic and Potluck Dessert

All ages. All First Parish. Bring your whole family. Visit with your friends, catch up on the summer news and meet other First Parish folk. Enjoy the music, labyrinth, potluck dessert and Rise Up Singing. This is an evening for everyone.

Please bring:

- A finger food dessert to share
- Your own picnic, food and beverage
- Lawn chairs and blankets

The party will be on the lawns of First Parish, weather permitting; in the Parish Hall in case of rain. No admission charge. Mark your calendar now.



MUUsings

I like to spend my vacation time hiking in the mountains. This summer, my husband Peter and I revisited some favorite peaks in western Maine and the White Mountains and added a few new ones. The energy I expend in these hikes almost always rewards me with a “summit experience” – new perspective on the scenery around me and on my own strength and stamina.



Similarly, summertime affords opportunities to gain perspective on the landscape of our UU faith and my own role in it as a music leader. This year, General Assembly and the UU Musicians Network conference both offered challenging perspectives on UU responses to the issues of racial justice in our society. At GA, I intentionally focused the workshop time I had (when not rehearsing music!) on sessions having to do with building multicultural UU communities and the Black Lives Matter movement. I was able to learn best practices from leaders of multicultural UU congregations and hear first-hand the stories of UU's in the St. Louis area and their response to Ferguson. All of these workshops gave me new “lenses” to apply in building my own capacity for intercultural work and the struggle for racial justice.

It was a pleasure to welcome UU musicians from all over the continent to the Boston UUMN conference. I was proud of the leadership the Concord music staff provided: Eric Huenneke led an “organ crawl” for 20 UU organists, and Gail Carey co-led a workshop on building a contemporary vocal ensemble. I co-led a class in building multicultural competence and served on the conference planning committee. Our choral clinician, Dr. Brainerd Blyden-Taylor, shared his expertise in Afro-centric choral music, and conducted our glorious 150-voice choir in a beautiful morning worship service! Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison-Reed, author of *The Selma Awakening: How the Civil Rights Movement Tested and Changed Unitarian Universalism*, offered a fascinating and unsettling view of our denomination's engagement with cultural diversity through a history of our hymnals. As you can imagine, I came back from these conferences with a wider perspective from which to view our ministry here in Concord.

First Parish has generously supported the professional and spiritual development that staff members gain from these conferences. We are grateful for this support; and I hope that the learning, perspective and inspiration we gain from these “summit experiences” brings inspiration to you as well.

Blessings,
Beth Norton, Director of Music, music@firstparish.org

UU Musicians Network

Volunteer Hall of Fame and Beth Norton!



This summer Beth Norton was inducted into the UU Musicians Network "Volunteer Hall of Fame" in appreciation for her years of leadership and service to the professional organization for UU musicians. She was honored along with colleague and friend Dr. Keith Arnold, Minister of Music at Jefferson Unitarian Church in Golden, Colorado.

In the picture: (l.-r.) Beth Norton, Tim Anderson (UUMN President), and Keith Arnold.

REflections

I am honored to be joining First Parish in Concord as your Minister of Religious Education. I have actively served UU congregations since 1996. Most recently, I served First Church in Boston as a Consulting Minister. Religious education, worship and the creative arts have always been an important part of my ministry. I am thrilled to be able to offer my gifts to such a vibrant congregation and to focus on Family Ministry.



This summer my family returned to Star Island to participate in the Lifespan Religious Education (LRE) Week. If you have been to the Isles of Shoals in New Hampshire, you know it is a magical place. There is a long tradition of people gathering on this beautiful 43-acre island for renewal, education and community.



This time was even more significant as I had just accepted the offer to be your Minister of Religious Education. Imagine my surprise when Bethany Lowe introduced herself to me as we waited for the ferry at Gosport Harbor! Dawn Van Patten and her daughters also attended LRE Week. Bethany, Dawn and I attended the UU Identity Renaissance Module together. This is an enrichment program designed by the UUA for both professional and volunteer Religious Educators. I am grateful we had the opportunity to meet and share this

experience. Together we explored how religious education shapes Unitarian Universalist identity through lessons, stories, relationships and traditions over a lifetime.

I am a lifelong Unitarian Universalist. My home congregation was another First Parish not far from here. My family were active members and lay leaders of First Parish in Waltham, Mass. Belonging to that community helped shape my character and beliefs. My paternal side is Jewish and my maternal side is Catholic, so our liberal religion that accepted my interfaith family and draws from many sources for inspiration is my foundation. I know the value of being loved and supported by a community of all ages and stages of life.

The year ahead promises to be filled with religious exploration, personal growth and community building! If you have not done so already, please take a moment to register online for our religious education program and children's choirs. Stay tuned for some new opportunities for all ages to learn, play and take action together.

I look forward to meeting you!

Blessings,
Rev. Amy Freedman, Minister of Religious Education, afreedman@firstparish.org

Pastoral Care

Walking with One Another through the Changes Life Brings.

Minister for Pastoral Care, Rev. Marion Visel
Email: mvisel@firstparish.org
Church: 978-369-9602, ext. 414
Cell: 203-931-5329



Senior Minister, Rev. Howard N. Dana
Email: hdana@firstparish.org
Church: 978-369-9602, ext. 411
Cell: 717-412-8543

September Pastoral Care Lay Minister, Diane Clapp
Email: dianebamclapp@gmail.com
Phone: 781-257-5025

September Meal Delivery, Marian Stanley
Email: marian.stanley@gmail.com
Phone: 978-369-2008

Dream Work Group

September 28 – November 9 on Mondays, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Chapel
Want to learn more from your dreams? Rev. Marion Visel, Minister for Pastoral Care, will facilitate a Dream Work Group on seven Monday evenings (Sept. 28 – November 9) from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Chapel. **Regular attendance is required.**

The group will use the techniques of UU minister Rev. Dr. Jeremy Taylor. He believes that the group projective "if it were my dream" technique is the best foundational practice to use in exploring the deeper meanings of dreams. All dream group

participants must agree at the outset to maintain anonymity in all discussions of dream work outside the group. For more information on this style of dream work, go to <http://www.jeremytaylor.com/> . Marion has considerable experience in facilitating dream groups.

Sign-up is limited to 10 participants so sign up soon. A sign-up sheet is located in the Front Office, or email mvisel@firstparish.org .

Small Group Ministry

Top Ten Things People Love about Small Group Ministry

This year we'll experiment with a variety of ways of doing Small Group Ministry (SGM). Facilitated SGM groups provide the opportunity for spiritual growth and getting to know others on a deeper level. These shorter-term groups will usually be limited to 8 to 12 participants. *Watch for Small Groups throughout the year!*

Top ten things people love about Small Group Ministry (from participants' comments):

1. Nurturing myself spiritually in my own beloved community.
2. A scheduled chance to stop, breathe and focus on big questions and topics that I wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity to explore.
3. Feeling continuity, ritual, and emotional/spiritual nourishment.
4. The safety of a group with an agreement on how we will be together.
5. Learning how to listen (I thought I knew but I didn't!).
6. Finally knowing some important things about some wonderful folks.
7. Stimulating and thought-provoking topics that help me explore my own beliefs and experiences.
8. Hearing others' beliefs and experiences that challenge my thinking.
9. Knowing people's stories, which give me a deeper connection to them and the church itself.
10. Liking that I now know a few others and they know me!

Closing Fiscal Year 2015

We ended Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15: July 2014-June 2015) with a net loss of \$44,000. This was \$11,000 better than expected. We repaid the balance (\$60,000) of the Capital Campaign loan in June 2015. After repayment of the loan and the net loss, we ended the year with \$59,000 "available" cash (aka savings). To see these reports, go to <http://www.firstparish.org/cms/about-first-parish/budget-and-financials> .

As of 6/30/15, 6% of FY15 pledges remained unpaid—we are still accepting FY15 pledge payments. We start FY16 with \$176,000 in prepaid pledges and non-pledge contributions.

Fifi Ball, Director of Operations, fball@firstparish.org



Social Action Community

Though the church was relatively quiet this summer, there has been a buzz going on around social action at First Parish. Members of the Social Action Community (SAC)



Council and I have had over 40 one-on-one conversations with leaders in our congregation, and leaders of social action programs that are important to the congregation. We have been gathering information about what has inspired people to do social action, the biggest needs in our community and world at large, and how First Parish in Concord can start to address those needs more intentionally, and with more transparency.

We heard, over and over, how important social action is to our members here. It is part of our Unitarian Universalist identity. And yet, over the past few years, SAC hasn't always been a reflection of the congregation's interests. We're hoping that will change this year, and going forward.

Starting this month, the Standing Committee, the SAC Council and I will be working together to start a congregation-wide conversation about social action at First Parish, culminating in a proposal to the congregation in June. We will kick this off with a series of SAC Listening Sessions this fall. In November, we will publish an online survey to gather more information about your past experience with social action at First Parish. We hope you will participate, and that we will hear from you! Listening Session dates follow this article.

Following the SAC Listening Sessions and survey, the SAC Council has committed to promoting a series of social action events in the spring. We hope that these events will reflect the opportunities that you expressed interest in in the fall. Also in the spring, the SAC Council and Standing Committee will work together to draft and redraft a proposal that will set some clear guidelines for how we will do social action at First Parish, going forward. We hope to address how we engage in social action financially, personally, and on a denominational level. Roselyn Romberg has talked to over 50 UU congregations about how they do social action, so the team drafting the proposal will have some excellent data to use as they create a new vision of our Social Action Community.

So why now? We all know that our congregation has gone through many changes in the past five years. Many members of the SAC Council feel that, just as we closely examined our ministerial leadership and religious education program, we also need to examine our social action community. Also, our culture is changing, and so are our methods of engaging in social action. The current movements for environmental and racial justice are moving quickly, and it will require our church to use different tactics to respond and engage.

Through this year-long series of conversations and actions, we hope to have the social action community become more reflective of the congregation. Further, by institutionalizing communication and feedback between social action leaders and you, we hope that it will continue to be reflective going forward. We also hope to talk about some of the key controversies surrounding social action: What is the purpose of the 7.5

percent contribution? Do we support many programs, or just a few? How do new SAC groups get started? What causes are we most passionate about? How do we make social action a priority in our already busy lives?

The work we are doing this year will influence the way we engage in social action for years to come. This may all seem like a lot, and it is. But it's important work. As our world around us seems more chaotic and filled with injustice, we Unitarian Universalists are called to respond. We cannot sit back. We have to work together to make a positive difference in the world. There is simply not another option.

I hope you'll join us this year. We need your voice.
Bethany Lowe, Social Action Director and Youth Program Director

Listening Sessions:

Sunday, September 20, 11:30 a.m.

Monday, September 21, 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, September 23, 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, September 27, 11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, September 29, 11:00 a.m.

Thursday, October 1, time TBD

Denominational Affairs

As UUs, we wish to build our faith in our personal lives, congregations, communities, and the world. When the UUA president and our minister speak about an issue we care about, they are heard and make a difference.

We invite you to learn more:

- Attend a Denominational Affairs Committee (DAC) meeting to share and discuss concerns and spread our principles, held the third Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the Brooks Room
- Look for our upcoming speakers
- Elsewhere in the *Meeting House News*, see Fred van Deusen's invitation to view the movie *Pay 2 Play: Democracy's High Stakes* about our Congregational Study/Action Issue (CSAI) focusing on escalating inequality
- Contact Paula Vandever at VandeverP@aol.com



Doug Thanks First Parish

I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to the entire congregation for the wonderful reception and very generous gift given to me on June 7. My interview as a part of the children's story with the Reverend Howard Dana was a lot of fun!



People come to First Parish seeking higher spiritual, moral and ethical values in the presence of other people seeking the same. As a result, I don't think there are many other jobs where I could have come to know so many wonderful people. That has been the greatest reward for my time at First Parish, and also my greatest pain. Having been here for so long, many of those people eventually leave; some move away to new jobs, some move away to retire and yes some pass away.

Douglas Baker, Sexton & Curator

Standing Committee

It is homecoming time again at First Parish in Concord. Welcome to all.

Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Update

The First Parish Annual Meeting, held on June 14, 2015, passed a budget for FY16 of \$1,195,806. Even though the budget is about \$10,000 less than FY15, it largely preserves funding for programs and services at the same level as last year, and additionally provides 2 percent salary increases to staff members. A number of changes were made that allowed this to happen. The Director of Membership and Communications position, recently vacated by Rachel Baker, will not be filled and many of her duties will be generously performed by volunteers. Also, a fundraising event, such as an auction, will be added to our event calendar.

Membership

The Standing Committee welcomed two new members, Clerk Peter Nobile and former RE Council chair Jeff Brainerd. Former First Parish Clerk Kristin Haddad also joined us as an at-large member. And we said good-bye to six-year member Jake Nunes. We are grateful to all of these people for their past and future efforts in support of First Parish.

Evaluation

The Standing Committee annual self-evaluation was completed in June. This evaluation, combined with the congregation's response to our mid-year survey, will guide us in our goal setting for next year. The evaluation is included in the meeting minutes for June 14, 2015.

Calendar and Activities

During June and July, members of the Standing Committee gathered to lay out a calendar and agenda for the coming year. It will be a busy year, as among other things, we support Rev. Howard Dana and the congregation in discussions about the future of our Social Action programs. In addition to our existing Standing Committee subgroups,

we'll be adding a governance subgroup that will work to ensure that our governance policies and procedures are relevant and effective. We'll also be establishing liaisons to observe and participate in social action discussions, and engage with groups such as Denominational Affairs, the RE Council, and a newly energized Membership Committee. Standing Committee members will also participate in planning the auction fundraising event and the annual pledge campaign.

General Assembly

In June, I attended my first General Assembly, held in Portland, Oregon. It was a wonderful experience, in which I learned much about our denomination and came to a deeper understanding of the broad range of beliefs it encompasses. Each day, UU's gathered together to make music and to discuss and take action on important topics facing our world. Perhaps the most special moment of the week for me was the rush of joy I felt during the general session when the U.S. Supreme Court decision on same sex marriage was announced. In a hall filled with many people who have been working for years on the issue, the announcement was met with a brief hush that quickly swelled to a roar of happiness. Next year's General Assembly will begin June 22, 2016, in Columbus, Ohio. Put it on your calendar!

Standing Committee are always available to talk with First Parish members and friends about issues of interest and concern. Please reach out to any of us, at coffee hour, at an event, or by phone or email, to talk about your First Parish experiences. If you have an account for the First Parish website, you can go to the Standing Committee Web page and view minutes of our meetings, and our contact information, meeting schedule and governance policies.

Mark Russell Prior, chair

Please see our bulletin board display in the downstairs hallway.

Members

The Standing Committee members include the following:

Jeff Brainerd	978-243-0101	jeffbrainerd@gmail.com
Kate Crosby	978-263-7326	Kate_crosby@newview.org
Dave Elwood	978-369-2237	daveelwood@hotmail.com
Kristin Haddad	978-254-5012	kristin.haddad@gmail.com
Peter Nobile, clerk	978-369-5857	peter.nobile@gmail.com
Patty Popov	978-369-1990	ppopov@nichols-pratt.com
Mark Russell Prior, chair	978-369-4901	mark.russell.prior@comcast.net
Toby Smith Ropeik	978-369-0007	tsr@tobyasmith.com
Lora Venesy	978-254-5433	venesy@comcast.net
Alec Walker	978-227-4031	alecwalker@aol.com
Tom Wilson, treasurer	978-254-5906	twilson@wilsongroup.com

Finance Committee

Summary of Finance Committee Annual Report, August 2015

At the 2013 Annual Meeting, the membership approved a motion to recommend the formation of a Finance Committee for the purpose of supporting the ongoing financial management and the annual budget planning process of First Parish. After careful analysis of First Parish financial processes, the Standing Committee decided there was sufficient need to justify the creation of a Finance Committee and approved a charter for the committee, effective September 2014. The purpose of the Finance Committee is to assist the Treasurer and Standing Committee in their efforts to support the Head of Staff and the Director of Operations.

The Standing Committee appointed the following church members to serve as the initial members of the Finance Committee:

Tom Wilson, Treasurer and Chair of Finance Committee
Gib Metcalf
Patty Popov
Carol Smith
Fred Van Deusen
Fifi Ball, ex officio as Director of Operations and nonvoting
Mark Russell Prior, ex officio as chair of Standing Committee and nonvoting

The committee has generally met monthly and has balanced its activities between organizing its work and thinking through how it can be most useful to the Standing Committee and staff. The committee accomplishments include the following:

1. The committee set up a page on the church website to report on its activities and keep the congregation informed of its work.
2. In October, the committee held two congregational meetings to review the budget and the budget-making process, and to solicit input about congregational priorities. Those priorities were written up and provided to the Standing Committee for its review. The presentation handout was posted on the Finance Committee's Web page as well.
3. During the fall, the committee reviewed the recent audit of church finance procedures and assisted the Director of Operations in developing improved protocols for one of the concerns raised in the audit.
4. The committee continued its efforts around improving transparency in finance reporting by recommending a number of changes to the Financial Documents Web page on the church website. The current year budget is now prominently displayed at the top of this Web page. We also produced two new documents posted on the site – a “primer” on reading the monthly financial reports, which guides the interested reader through the various reports posted on the website and a “who's who” in finance at the church.

Finance Committee, continued

5. We worked with the Treasurer and Standing Committee to address some specific issues:
 - a. Recommendations regarding transfer of the Coan House from the Trustees to the Church for use as a parsonage
 - b. Analysis of and recommendations for paying off the capital campaign loan from the Trustees
 - c. Analysis of financial implications of the adoption of the divestment proposal brought to the Annual Meeting by the Environmental Leadership Team
6. In May, the Finance Committee worked with the Director of Operations to review the draft budget that would go before the Standing Committee at the end of the month.
7. In early June, prior to the Annual Meeting, members of the Committee held congregational meetings to review the proposed budget for the next fiscal year (FY16) to help church members become familiar with, and to answer questions about, the budget.

Key Areas of Focus

The Finance Committee has focused on activities in the following areas:

- Increasing transparency and understanding of church finances
- Serving in an advisory capacity to the Standing Committee on financial matters
- Supporting staff in financial policy areas

The committee has made great strides in each of these areas. With one year under our belt, committee members look forward to next year and to building on the successes of this first year.

Tom Wilson, Treasurer and Chair of Finance Committee, twilson@wilsongroup.com

The Arts at First Parish

Fostering Community through the Arts

Each month the First Parish Arts Council will highlight arts events for the upcoming month 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

- **Wednesday, September 2, 6:00 p.m.:** Arts Council Meeting
- **Saturday, September 12, 9:00 a.m.:** Photo Club, open to all First Parish adults
- **Friday, September 25, 7:30 p.m.:** Rise Up Singing, First Parish's monthly song circle
- **Saturday, October 3, 7:30 p.m.:** Brazilian Jazz Cabaret



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.

For more information, contact Susan Page, chair, at srpage10@verizon.net .

Choir Rehearsal Schedule

Fall 2015

Keep this information handy as you make plans for fall, and consider joining a choir!

First Parish Choir

Wednesdays, 7:45-9:30 p.m.

Beginning Wednesday, September 9, in the Sanctuary

Beth Norton, director

Contemporary Vocal Ensemble

Sundays, 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Beginning Sunday, September 20, in the Chapel

Gail Carey, director

Gospel Choir

(Youth in grades 7-12)

Wednesdays, 5:15-6:15 p.m.

Beginning Wednesday, September 9, in the Sanctuary

Anderson Manuel, director

Junior Choir

(Grades 1-3)

Wednesdays, 4:30-5:00 p.m.

Beginning Wednesday, September 9, in the Parish Hall

Gail Carey, director

Chalice Choir

(Grades 4-6)

Wednesdays, 5:15-6:00 p.m.

Beginning Wednesday, September 9, in the Parish Hall

Gail Carey, director

By Your Side Singers

1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month, at 7:30 p.m.

Beginning Thursday, September 3, in the Parlor

Beth Norton, director



For more information, contact Beth Norton at 978-369-9602, x420, or music@firstparish.org.



Choirs for Children and Youth

Next rehearsal: Wednesday, September 9.

Please see the following for times.

Our choirs for children and youth will be resuming on Wednesday, **September 9**. All are welcome. There is no need for any singing experience.

Junior Choir (grades 1-3) meets Wednesdays from 4:30 to 5:00 p.m..

Chalice Choir (grades 4-6) meets from 5:15 to 6:00 p.m..

Both choirs are in the Parish Hall. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Gail Carey, Music Ministry Associate, at gcarey@firstparish.org. You are also welcome to let your child "try it out" for September.

Gospel Choir (grades 7-12) meets Wednesdays from 5:15 to 6:15, in the Sanctuary. We welcome new members with open arms and hope that you are ready to inspire and be inspired. On September 9, we will meet a little early, at **5:00 p.m.**, for refreshments and catching up. We will do some reggae, blues, gospel and a little contemporary gospel flair just to spice things up. For more information, contact Anderson Manuel at AManuel@firstparish.org.

Please note: Registration for choirs is combined with RE registration this year and may be completed online: <http://www.firstparish.org/cms/religious-education/re-registration>. Our children's and youth choirs offer a wonderful way for new families to build friendships. During the rehearsals, family members may gather for informal tea in the Parlor. Families tend to bring informal snacks to share.

See you on the 9th!

By Your Side Singers

Next rehearsal: Thursday, September 3, at 7:30 p.m.

By Your Side Singers, First Parish's pastoral choir will begin a new season on Thursday night, September 3, at 7:30 p.m. *By Your Side Singers* welcomes adults who love to sing and long to serve through music. We sing to deepen our experience of music's comforting power. When invited, singers go to parishioners' homes or hospital or nursing home rooms in small groups to sing with people seeking comfort and strength during times of illness or transition. *By Your Side Singers* meets on the first and third Thursdays of each month. For more information, contact Beth Norton at 978-369-9602 or music@firstparish.org.

First Parish Choir

Open Rehearsals in September

Wednesday, September 9, 7:45-9:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary

The First Parish Choir begins each season with “open rehearsals” on Wednesday nights. This year, we start our season on Wednesday, **September 9**. Rehearsals are from 7:45 to 9:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Adult and teen singers of all voice parts are welcome to attend *with no obligation* during this time. The choir will sing in worship for the first time on Sunday, September 13, at 10:00 a.m. If you plan to attend a rehearsal, or have any questions, please contact Beth Norton at 978-369-9602, x420, or email music@firstparish.org.

Women’s AM/PM Book Group

New Schedule! 2015-2016

Welcome to a new year of book discussions with the First Parish Women’s AM/PM Book Group! All women of First Parish are warmly invited to read the current book and join a discussion of the Women’s AM/PM Book Group. Please note that we are always open for drop-ins and you never need to sign up. Just come any month to either the Monday evening session, 7:30-9:00 p.m., or the Tuesday morning session, 9:30-11:00 a.m., at First Parish in the Brooks Room. If you would like to be added to the Women’s Book Group email list, please contact Darien Smith at darien@smithquest.com.



Dates and Books for 2015-2016

- Sept. 28/29 - *Delta Wedding*, Eudora Welty
- Oct. 26/27 - *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End*, Atul Gawande
- Dec. 7/8 (Nov & Dec) - *Poems, New and Collected*, Wistawa Szymborska
- Jan. 25/26 - *The Invention of Wings*, Sue Monk Kidd
- Feb. 29/Mar 1 - *Prague Winter: A Personal Story of Remembrance and War, 1937-1948*, Madeleine Albright
- Mar. 28/29 - *Me Before You*, Jojo Moyes
- April 25/26 - *Shakespeare Saved My Life: Ten Years in Solitary with the Bard*, Laura Bates
- May 23/24 - *All the Light We Cannot See: A Novel*, Anthony Doerr



Religious Education (RE) News

Online Registration

Whether you are a returning family or new to First Parish, we'd like to encourage you to register your child(ren) and youth for the Religious Education program. It's easy to find and quick to complete! You can find the yellow "RE Registration" button on the front page of the website: www.firstparish.org. Please register as soon as possible so we will be better able to serve our community. If you have questions or ideas to share, contact Rev. Amy Freedman: afreedman@firstparish.org.

Homecoming Service

"Welcome Home!" The first Sunday after Labor Day, September 13, marks our Homecoming Sunday. All ages will join together for a fun and meaningful service. Our theme will be home rituals – simple practices for us to create moments and savor life every day. Our service will include a Water Communion ritual. Children or families are invited to bring to the service small amounts of water from a special place to pour into our common container. This is a symbol of how our lives come together in community.

A Special Invitation

All members and friends of First Parish in Concord are invited to participate in the Religious Education program. Please consider if you would like to teach, advise, mentor, offer a one-time activity, assist with a project or tell a story. Some of the most significant learning happens when adults share their insights, skills and time with young people. To explore volunteer opportunities in children's or youth programs, contact Rev. Amy Freedman: afreedman@firstparish.org.

RE Fall Program

Our program is designed for children, youth and their adult mentors to explore big questions, to celebrate life, to build character, and to grow spiritually. Through hands-on activities, spiritual practices, sharing and social justice projects, our young people experience how to bring more love and understanding into the world. Regular attendance is strongly encouraged to support community building and a sense of belonging.

Sunday Services

Kindergarten through Grade 7 begin with their families in the Sanctuary. Following the "Message to Children," teachers accompany children to their classrooms. All groups will meet until 11:15 a.m. this year to allow for an hour-long session. Parents of infants to Grade 3 are asked to pick up their children in the classrooms at 11:15 a.m.. Older kids will be dismissed to coffee hour.

Infants to 4-year-olds

Little RE

The youngest children are warmly welcomed by Dawn Van Patten, our Assistant Director of RE, parent teachers, and our dedicated teen assistants in our nursery/toddler classrooms on the lower level. Parents are invited to bring their children to the classroom fifteen minutes before worship service begins (at 9:45 a.m.).

Kindergarten and First Grade

Spirit Play

Spirit Play is an engaging approach to religious education based on the Montessori method and the UU Principles. Children are told a story and then encouraged to explore “wondering questions” through learning centers and art activities. These stories will draw from our Unitarian Universalist values, principles and history, as well as stories from science and world religions.

Second and Third Grades

Moral Tales

What does it mean to be “good”? How do we know what is “right”? Every day our children are faced with difficult decisions and dilemmas. The stories and activities woven through “Moral Tales” offer ethical and spiritual tools to empower children to see themselves as agents of justice and goodness.

Fourth and Fifth Grades

Windows and Mirrors

Unitarian Universalism views our members’ multiple perspectives as a blessing. “Windows and Mirrors” nurtures children’s ability to identify their own experiences and perspectives and to seek out, care about and respect those of others. Each session unpacks topics that lend themselves to diverse experiences and perspectives – for example, faith heritage, public service, antiracism and prayer. The program teaches that there are always multiple viewpoints and everyone’s viewpoint matters.

Sixth and Seventh Grade

Neighboring Activists

We have a legacy of “deeds not creeds.” Our teens in grades 6 and 7 will focus on a social justice curriculum and projects. They will participate in the CROP Walk for the Hungry on Sunday, October 25th, the Bucket Brigade, and other hands-on projects. Together, they will put their UU values into practice and experience faith in action.

Eighth Grade

Stay Tuned!

First Parish in Concord has a long-standing tradition of a grade 8 play. When this newsletter went to press, no play director had yet been identified. Rev. Amy Freedman will be in touch with the youth and families to discuss whether there is interest in a theatrical production or other ideas for fun and meaningful programs for the grade 8 this Fall term. Stay tuned for more details in RE Announce.



Moms Night Out

Friday, September 25, at 7:30 p.m.

The First Parish Moms Night Out (MNO) group is hosting its First Annual MNO Back-to-School Gathering on Friday, September 25, at 7:30 p.m. Come join other FP moms as we kick off the school year with a casual gathering. MNO was created by FP moms as a way to socialize, build a support network, and share resources and ideas about raising kids in today's world. All FP moms are welcome! For details on this and other upcoming MNO gatherings, please join the *MNO listserv* by sending an email to valvallancourt@gmail.com.



Women's Parish Association (WPA)

The WPA will begin the church year with a luncheon program on Wednesday, September 16, at 11:30 a.m., followed by its Annual Meeting, at which the annual report, budget and slate of officers will be voted on. Several evening events are now scheduled! First is a Brazilian Jazz Cabaret, Saturday, October 3, followed by the first in a series of *Friday Nights with Friends* on November 13, during which you can enjoy a simple supper, time to visit with friends and learn something new. Visit our table at coffee hour to learn more, or contact Marilyn Lowitt at marilyn.lowitt@verizon.net, or Dian Pekin at Pekindc@comcast.net.

Luncheon Meeting

September 16, 11:30 a.m.

Join old and new friends and enjoy a delicious, catered meal and a fascinating program at the Women's Parish Association luncheon meeting on Wednesday, September 16! Ben Elliott, owner of Saltbox Kitchen and Saltbox Farm, will speak about his latest venture – Saltbox Kitchen, Concord's newest restaurant. Social time: 11:30 a.m. Lunch: 12:00 p.m., followed by the program and annual meeting. Luncheon cost: ten dollars. Contact the office or Dian Pekin at Pekindc@comcast.net by September 11 to make reservations and to communicate food requirements. All women and men are cordially invited.

Brazilian Jazz Cabaret

October 3 from 7:30-10:00 p.m.

Come to a festive cabaret of fantastic Brazilian jazz on Saturday, October 3 from 7:30 to 10:00 p.m., presented by the Women's Parish Association. Munchies, hors d'oeuvres and dessert will be served with a cash bar. The world-famous Fernando Holz Quartet charms everyone with sambas, bossa novas, Brazilian- and Latin-inspired American pop, and intricate Brazilian jazz. All First Parish men and women and their friends are enthusiastically invited. Charge: \$12.50. This is sure to be a sold-out event. Advance tickets will be sold at coffee hour and in the church office. Charge for remaining tickets at the door: \$15.00.



Transylvania Partnership News

September 26: Thank You to Scholarship Program Donors

One of the essential elements of our ongoing relationship with our partner congregation in Székelykeresztúr (in the Transylvanian region of Romania) is our donations to support the Keresztúr Scholarship Program. It's again time to start thinking about donations for the coming school year. Look for upcoming announcements from the Concord Scholarship Team, which includes Dana Booth, Linda Benua, Ellen Crompton, Tim Jacoby, Marilyn Lowitt and Bill Maxwell, who divide the responsibilities of the program, and who will also be reaching out to new donors.



On the evening of September 26, the PCC (Partner Congregation Committee) will host an event to thank those who have sustained the program with their donations, and to provide information for potential new donors. Look for more details in FP Announce and the *Sunday News*, and please consider joining us.

Diversity Committee Meeting

Tuesday, September 22 at 7:00 p.m.

On Tuesday, September 22 at 7:00 p.m., the Diversity Committee will meet to plan upcoming initiatives and events on anti-racism work, LGBT advocacy, and inclusion/disability projects. All who are interested are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please contact Sara Ballard at sara@sb.org with any questions.



35th Annual Crop Walk

Sunday, October 25, at 1:30 p.m. at First Parish



The 35th Annual Concord Crop Walk for the Hungry will take place at First Parish on Sunday, October 25; registration is at 1:30 p.m., with the step-off at 2:15 p.m. The Crop Walk raises funds for nine local area food pantries and suppers, as well as the global disaster relief and development projects of Church World Service.

You may pick up a registration form or make a donation for a walker at coffee hour, starting in mid-September, or go online to join the First Parish Team, or make a donation at <http://tinyurl.com/nwrwrpb>. Look for more details in next month's newsletter; you can find more information at www.concordcrop.org. Contact Sara Ballard at sara@sb.org with any questions, or to offer your help at coffee hour or on the day of the walk.

Rachel's Box Project

September 15, from 4:30-5:30 p.m. – 20 Anniversary

Rachel's Box Project is celebrating its 20 anniversary on September 15, from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. at Trinitarian Congregational Church, 54 Walden Street in Concord Center. Rachel's Box Project maintains an active part of the Concord area domestic violence

prevention efforts, offering material in a wooden box available to assist victims of abuse or violence. The event welcomes the public. For more information, please contact Nancy James, npjames@npjames.com 978-369-2771.

Jewish Awareness Affinity Group

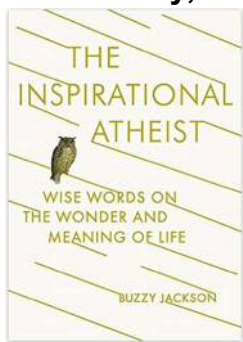
Meets Friday, September 18, at 7:00 p.m.

Septembers Jewish Awareness Affinity Group meets Friday, September 18, at 7:00 p.m. at First Parish. Dana and Jim Snyder-Grant will show folks the Hebrew alphabet and key words, along with the Sabbath blessings. Let's start September at the very beginning! All are invited. Any questions, please contact Dana at [978.760.1129](tel:978.760.1129).



Humanists

Wednesday, September 9, at 7:00 p.m., in the Parish Hall



Buzzy Jackson will present, and we will discuss, her new book, *The Inspirational Atheist*. Atheists are as interested as anyone in making sense of life's Big Questions – but don't expect divine guidance. This book will be important for the growing number of us who are “spiritual but not religious,” who trust that life has meaning when lived meaningfully. Buzzy Jackson is the award-winning author of *Shaking the Family Tree . . .* and *A Bad Woman Feeling Good*. She lives in Colorado with her family and a freethinking dog named Ralph. More at www.ConcordAreaHumanists.org.

Thoreau Bicentennial

The bicentennial of Henry David Thoreau will take place during 2017, and we are right in the middle of Thoreau Country! This is an exciting opportunity to plan classes, presentations, nature walks, literary events, and celebrations of all kinds. If you'd like to be involved in planning for thoreau200, please contact Dianne Weiss at diannemcweiss@comcast.net.



H.W. GLEASON, MAP OF CONCORD, WRITINGS OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, VOL. 20 (HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN, 1906), 349.

Amnesty International

Tuesday, September 15, 7:00 p.m. – Group 15 Meeting

In July, the two imprisoned Swazi human rights activists we had been supporting won their appeal, thankfully, and we'll choose another case to focus on. The issue of solitary confinement in Massachusetts was a new undertaking for us last year, and we will map out strategies for the coming months. We will continue advocating against the death penalty in the United States, violence against women, and worldwide abuses against individuals.



The AI Group 15 meets on the third Tuesday of each month from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the Greeley Room, and all are welcome to join us. If you'd like more information, contact Kathy Taylor at Kly.taylor@gmail.com or 781-718-7640.

Movie “Pay 2 Play”

Thursday, October 8, 7:30 p.m.– Democracy’s High Stakes



The Americans for Economic Fairness group was started here at First Parish to raise awareness and take actions on the UUA study action issue Escalating Inequality. We, together with Denominational Affairs and the Social Action Community, invite you to a screening of the film *Pay 2 Play: Democracy’s High Stakes* about the corrosive effects of Big Money on our elections. This entertaining documentary follows political newcomers, uncovers intrigue and corruption, and suggests actions we can all take to address these issues. The film will be followed by homemade refreshments and a group discussion about the issues and actions we should consider taking as a group.

Ride for Food

September 20

Are you passionate about the quest to help stamp out hunger? Can you ride a bike? Join Open Table volunteers in the *Ride For Food* on September 20, raising awareness and funds for area food pantries. There are three distances to choose from: 10, 25 and 50 miles. See www.therideforfood.org and click on “Team Open Table.” For more information, please contact Susan Evans at susan_819@comcast.net.



Photo Directory

Scheduling your photo session

Register for your 30-minute photo session in one of these three ways:

1. Online at <http://tinyurl.com/FPphoto>
2. At coffee hour on Sunday
3. By calling the office at 978-369-9602; Cassy Bosworth will assist you.



Photos will be taken at First Parish. Choose a day and time:

- Thursday, October 22, 2:00 - 9:00 p.m.
- Friday, October 23, 2:00 - 9:00 p.m.
- Saturday, October 24, 10:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.
- Thursday, November 12, 2:00 - 9:00 p.m.
- Friday, November 13, 2:00 - 9:00 p.m.
- Saturday, November 14, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Ushers and Sound

Thank you! Many thanks and deep gratitude go out to our wonderful ushers and sound operators of First Parish. This team of volunteers does some of the most important work each Sunday during worship. They are often the very first people visitors meet when they walk through the front and side doors, and they are the people visitors turn to with questions about the congregation. To volunteer, please contact Maile Hulihan, email mailehulihan@earthlink.net



Events at-a -Glance

The following information was taken from the Church Calendar, available 24/7 on our website. The events listed reflect the timeframe of this Newsletter issue.

Date	Time	Event
9/1	7:30 p.m.	Finance Committee Meeting
	7:00 p.m.	Americans for Economic Fairness
9/2	9:30 a.m.	Buddhist Group
	7:00 p.m.	Concord Area Humanists
9/3	7:30 p.m.	Buddhist Group
	7:30 p.m.	By Your Side Singers
	7:30 p.m.	Forum Committee Meeting
9/6	10:00 a.m.	Sunday Worship
9/8	9:30 a.m.	WPA Board Meeting
9/9	9:30 a.m.	Buddhist Group
	4:30 p.m.	Junior Choir
	5:15 p.m.	Chalice Choir
	5:15 p.m.	Gospel Singers
	7:45 p.m.	Adult Choir
9/10	7:30 p.m.	Buddhist Group
9/12	9:00 a.m.	Photography Club
9/13	10:00 a.m.	Homecoming Sunday
	5:30 p.m.	Homecoming Picnic
9/15	7:00 p.m.	Amnesty International Meeting
9/16	9:30 a.m.	Buddhist Group
	11:30 a.m.	WPA Luncheon

Date	Time	Event
	4:30 p.m.	Junior Choir
	5:15 p.m.	Chalice Choir
	5:15 p.m.	Gospel Singers
	7:45 p.m.	Adult Choir
9/17	7:30 p.m.	Buddhist Group
	7:30 p.m.	By Your Side Singers
9/18	1:00 p.m.	Tai Chi
	7:00 p.m.	Jewish Affinity Group
9/20	10:00 a.m.	Sunday Worship
	10:15 a.m.	RE: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7, and 8 Grades
	11:15 a.m.	Sample Small Group Ministry Session
	11:30 a.m.	Ministerial Intern Committee
	11:30 a.m.	SAC Listening Session
	11:30 a.m.	Sunday Forum in Sanctuary
9/21	7:00 p.m.	SAC Listening Session
	7:30 p.m.	Denominational Affairs Committee
9/22	7:00 p.m.	Diversity Committee Meeting
9/23	9:30 a.m.	Buddhist Group
	4:30 p.m.	Junior Choir
	5:15 p.m.	Chalice Choir
	5:15 p.m.	Gospel Singers
	6:30 p.m.	SAC Listening Session
	7:45 p.m.	Adult Choir
9/24	7:30 p.m.	Buddhist Group
9/25	7:30 p.m.	Rise Up Singing
9/26	9:30 a.m.	Small Group Ministry
	6:30 p.m.	PCC Dinner for Scholarship Donors
9/27	10:00 a.m.	Sunday Worship
	10:15 a.m.	RE: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7, and 8 Grades
	11:30 a.m.	SAC Listening Session
	11:30 a.m.	Sunday Forum in Sanctuary
9/28	7:00 p.m.	Dreamwork Group
	7:30 p.m.	Women's Book Group Discussion
9/29	9:30 a.m.	Women's Book Group Discussion
	11:00 a.m.	SAC Listening Session
9/30	9:30 a.m.	Buddhist Group
	4:30 p.m.	Junior Choir
	5:15 p.m.	Chalice Choir
	5:15 p.m.	Gospel Singers
	7:45 p.m.	Adult Choir
10/1	7:30 p.m.	Buddhist Group
	7:30 p.m.	By Your Side Singers
	7:30 p.m.	Forum Committee Meeting
10/3	7:30 p.m.	WPA Concert – Brazilian Jazz Cabaret
10/4	10:00 a.m.	Sunday Worship
	10:15 a.m.	RE: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7, and 8 Grades

Date	Time	Event
	11:15 a.m.	Sample Small Group Ministry Session
	11:30 a.m.	Sunday Forum in Sanctuary
10/5	7:00 p.m.	Dream Work Group
10/6	1:30 p.m.	First Tuesday Group
	7:00 p.m.	Americans for Economic Fairness
	9:30 a.m.	Buddhist Group
	3:00 p.m.	Music Class
10/7	4:30 p.m.	Junior Choir
	5:15 p.m.	Chalice Choir
	5:15 p.m.	Gospel Singers
	7:00 p.m.	Concord Area Humanists
	7:45 p.m.	Adult Choir
10/8	7:30 p.m.	Buddhist Group
	7:00 p.m.	Movie "Pay 2 Play"
10/9	1:00 p.m.	Tai Chi
10/10	9:00 a.m.	Photography Club

Website Wonder

Ever wondered about *Volunteer Opportunities, Committees, and Programs* at First Parish? Well, there is a really amazing webpage on the First Parish website. Take a look. Log in and notice in the upper left of the page is the *Main Menu*. Click on *Volunteer Opportunities, Committees, and Programs*. Wow! What a cool page! Notice, too, that the Menu has expanded: select, scroll and explore. Wondrously magical!

Editor's Notes

Next *Meeting House News* **deadline: September 15, 2015**

Next publication date: **September 29, 2015**

Please email newsletter submissions with the word "newsletter" on the subject line to Wendy Wolfberg at wolfberg@post.harvard.edu. Guidelines and House Style information are available in the June 2015 MHN, which can be downloaded from the website. Please adhere to recommended word limits.

Several people make the newsletter happen, so please make note of the deadline, and if you can, be early. Thank you.

First Parish Contacts

Office hours: Regular office hours resume on Tuesday, September 2

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

The building is closed Mondays. Meetings and events may be scheduled on Monday evenings.

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>

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

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FPC MHN September 2015*

Add us to your address book.



**Sunday, September 13, 5:30 p.m.
Music, Picnic and Potluck Dessert**

