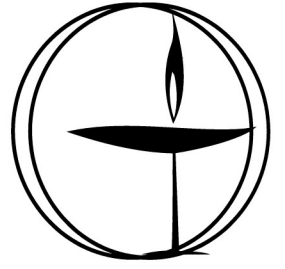


BRIDGING



Newsletter of the First Parish Church, Bridgewater, MA, Unitarian Universalist

March 2015

From the Minister...

"Listening Deeply"

Oh, the weather outside is frightful,
But the fire is so delightful.
And since we've got no place to go,
Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!

Denise ended our last service in February with a postlude of "Winter Wonderland," a song we most often hear around Christmas but one that seems especially apt this year after this endless, record-breaking, repetitious month of snow and snow and more snow. I had the thought of putting an ironic chorus of "Let It Snow" in the service somewhere, but then I realized that something in the universe might take it as a request rather than an ironic commentary. Even the kids are fed up with the snow, despite the days off from school. One of our neighbors penned this appeal to the universe in paint on the snow pile next to the road: "UNCLE!"

I've been learning about new and unexpected hazards from the weather. The Town of Scituate has been sending out warnings to make sure that our gas meters are safe from falling icicles and other hazards; that vents must be inspected and kept clear, and that ice dams can result in leaks. Then there was the panic last week about warm days followed by freezing days and the risk of leaks and roof collapses if the snow is not removed from the roof; but not to use a ladder to do it, because both your boots and the ladder could freeze; but also not to add your weight to the roof unless a structural engineer approved; and really to hire someone rather than do it yourself. I had to be content with using a snow broom to clear the lower roofs and the garage and then hoping nothing would go wrong after all.

Still, there was something entrancing about seeing huge, beautiful snowflakes out the big windows in our sanctuary on Sunday, even though their accumulation might portend still more work to be done after the service. There is some risk to the preacher if the snow prove more beautiful than the words from the pulpit. Ralph Waldo Emerson said this of his minister in Concord, Barzillai Frost:

I once heard a preacher who sorely tempted me to say, I would go to church no more.... A snow storm was falling around us. The snow storm was real; the preacher merely spectral; and the eye felt the sad contrast in looking at him, and then out of the window behind him, into the beautiful meteor of the snow. ("Divinity School Address")

But for all the tedium that this season has entailed, it has also offered opportunities for quietness, for accepting that all is not within our control, for simple contemplation. We are forced to listen and to find resources within ourselves to bear and – hopefully – enjoy these days we have been given.

This may have been an opportunity for some of us to listen more deeply to one another. By "deep listening" – the theme for our services in March – I mean the practice of listening to someone without rehearsing your response or your judgment – listening so that the other person is free to speak from the heart, listening in a way that helps give birth to new thoughts within him or her. There's skill to being such a listener, but I believe it holds promise for healing relationships, for deepening our understanding of one another, and even for reducing some of the polarization in our society. If we can learn to do that in this season – then let it snow!

In Faith for the Journey,

Rev. Paul

Minister

Rev. Paul Sprecher
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dre.bridgewater@gmail.com

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Kat Gillespie
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Worship Services March 2015

The Theme of the Month: **Deep Listening**

March 1— with Rev. Paul Sprecher; Lay Worship Leader David Wilson;
Ushers David Page & Ginger Irish

March 8 —“Following the Rainbow” with the Social Justice Cmte on GLBT issues;
Worship Leader Rev. Rachel Tedesco; Ushers Diane Roza and Susan Irish

March 15—with Rev. Paul Sprecher; Lay Worship Leader Kat Gillespie;
Ushers Kathy Keenan & Dan Howard

March 22 – with the Stewardship Committee; Lay Worship Leaders Frank
Yeatman & Jenny Donahue; Ushers Paul & Lisa Foos

March 29 – Rev. Paul Sprecher; Lay Worship Leader Andrew Harding;
Ushers Matt Foster & James Hayes-Bohanan

The Usher Schedule through mid-May follows:

April 5: Lauren Foster & Keir Manchester-Howell

April 12: Tom & Sue St. Thomas

April 19: Debbie & Sam Baumgarten

April 26: Kat & Scott Gillespie

May 3: Louella Mann & Ann Thomas

May 10: Pat & Jack Hart

If you cannot usher on your date, please try to find a substitute and let Rev. Rachel know as soon as possible. Call her at 508-378-3904 or email at revrayted@comcast.net. Mary Hatfield has retired from the usher coordinating position. The Worship Committee wishes to thank Mary for her dedication.

The next Worship Committee meeting is Thursday, March 19 at 7:30 p.m. in the church office. Members and friends are cordially invited to attend.

Committee members: Rev. Rachel Tedesco, Chair; Denise Haskins, Stefan Michaud, David Page, Tom St. Thomas and Rev. Paul Sprecher.

MINISTER'S OFFICE HOURS

Rev. Paul is on site in Bridgewater on the second, third, and fourth Tuesday and Thursday of every month and the first, third (and fifth) Sundays of every month. On the first full week of the month, Rev. Paul is off. Also, staff meetings are held each Tuesday from 12:30 –2:30pm.

All regular business should be handled before or after the first week. Emergencies of course come up, and he understands that. You can reach Rev. Paul by email (psprecher@uuma.org) phone (home: 781-210-2016, cell: 781-774-0086).

Your help in protecting his time is appreciated.



>>hello MARCH

Everybody's Birthday Party!!!

Everyone has a birthday. Let's celebrate them all at once! We're having the Everybody's Birthday Party on March 14th at 5:30 pm. The location will probably be at Messiah Baptist. Final details are being worked out but we will carpool from First Parish. If anyone wants to join in the carpool, email laurie@yabroudy.com.

This will also be a potluck. Again, email laurie@yabroudy.com with a dish you'd like to share. It would be most fun to share a family favorite. If you want to say why it's a family favorite, we'll pass along that information with the group, probably on a card next to the dish. It would be a fun way to get to know each other better.

Come and have a fun time finding out who shares your birth month by dining and decorating your table's very own birthday cake, eating favorites foods and meeting new friends.



"BRING A FRIEND SUNDAY" MARCH 15, 2015

Many of us at First Parish consider our church to be a second home and the people here to be like family. We all may have had very different reasons for coming to First Parish but we have all stayed for the sense of community we feel here. Wouldn't it be nice to offer this feeling of acceptance and encouragement toward spiritual growth to others in our lives who might benefit from them? Has someone you know asked you about Unitarian Universalism or about which church you attend and why you chose First Parish? The best answer might be to show them! We would like to encourage all of you to bring a friend with you to any of our Sunday services but especially on "Bring a Friend Sunday" on March 15. They will find a welcoming atmosphere and support for them in their spiritual journey. What better gift can you offer a friend?



Off the Common Coffeehouse

*Located in the Upper Parish Hall at First Parish Church
50 School Street, Bridgewater*



March 7, 2015 at 8pm

Potluck dinner at 6:30pm

featuring

Les Sampou with Annalise Emerick

Coming Attractions

April 4 — Girls Guns and Glory (tickets \$15.00)

May 2 — The Rafters and Lori Diamond & Fred Abatelli (Split bill)

Admission: \$15

*Enjoy our homemade
Refreshments*

Sign up for open mike!

CLASSES IN UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM FOR NEW MEMBERS

(or a Refresher for the Rest of Us)

We are offering a 2 session class in Unitarian Universalism geared toward those folks who are considering joining First Parish as Active Members. Active Members have full voting rights at all meetings in which decisions regarding the management of the church are made. Information covered in the classes will include the history and principles of Unitarian Universalism as well as information regarding the management of First Parish. A text "The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide" will be used for this class. The first class was held on Feb 17, but there is still time for you to catch up on the material covered and then attend the second session on Tuesday March 17 from 7:30 - 9 pm. All are welcome. Whether you are new to First Parish or a long time member or friend, please contact Jan Thompson of the Membership Committee JaniceThompson22@comcast.net (508) 697-2492 if you are interested in taking the class and would like a free copy of the UU Pocket Guide reserved for you. If you are interested in becoming a member of First Parish but are unable to attend the class, please talk to Jan Thompson. We would like to find a way to accommodate you.

GREEN SANCTUARY COMMITTEE'S

Green Tip of the Month

Coming soon to a bathroom near you!

In the coming weeks, the Green Sanctuary Committee will be replacing the air fresheners in the church restrooms with home-made non-toxic varieties. There are many "recipes" you can find online. Here's the one we will be trying here at church:

Ingredients:

Distilled water

1 Tbs. Baking soda

2-3 drops of your favorite essential oil (optional)

Directions:

1. Pour the baking soda into a small dish and add the drops of essential oils (if adding). Mix well with a spoon.
2. Pour baking soda into the empty spray bottle and fill it to the top with water. Shake well to mix the baking soda and water. You can use this to freshen the air in a room. You can also use it on carpets, couches, shoes, etc. <http://www.thankyourbody.com/>

Let us know what you think!



GOT METAL??

It's not too early to start saving your metal for our sixth annual town-wide METAL RECYCLING DAY, Saturday, May 2 from 9am to 12 noon. Metal of all sizes, shapes and composition will be accepted at our roll-off container in the church parking lot. Contact Debbie at 508-697-6848 or catsmeow908@verizon.net for more info. Tell your friends and neighbors!! All proceeds benefit the Bridgewater Food Pantry. (Co-sponsored by non-profit Keyforhope)

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

There will be a meeting of the Science and Religion Discussion Group on Wednesday, March 18 at 7pm in the Upper Parish Hall. All are welcome.

MARCH/APRIL SHARE THE PLATE CHARITY

For the upcoming months of March and April, the proceeds of half of the offertory plate will again be for a project you are familiar with. It will be our very own "Kids to Camp" scholarship program which the Green Sanctuary Committee will be kicking off for the seventh year at their April 12th service.

As most of you are aware, Kids to Camp is the Green Sanctuary's ongoing environmental justice project to send as many children from low-income families as possible to Sheep Pasture Nature Camp in Easton. Thank you for sharing for this worthwhile project.

MAINSRING HOUSE LUNCHES

Monday, March 2 at 9am MainSpring House Lunches will be made in the LPH. Donations and volunteers always welcome. Speak to Betty Gilson.

WORSHIP SERVICE MARCH 8

March 8 will be our annual Justice Sunday Service organized by the Social Justice Committee. This year's theme is "Following the Rainbow", exploring how far we've come and where we need to go as a Welcoming Congregation.

CARING COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, March 16 at 7pm the Caring Committee will meet at the home of Mary Hatfield. If you know of joys or concerns that the committee should address, please contact a member.

Lisa Foos, Betty Gilson, Andrew Harding, Mary Hatfield, Louella Mann, Jan Thompson, Korin Zigler

T"UU"RNING LEAVES BOOK CLUB

This month's selection is "The Moon Is Down" by John Steinbeck. This is a story of wartime resistance and heroism, based on real events in Norway during World War II. An invading army occupies a small town, but the commander of the occupying forces slowly has to face the truth: you can destroy people's lives, but you can't break their spirit.

MUSIC READING CLASS

Would you like to learn to read music?

Denise Haskins will be offering a free class in reading music, with emphasis on sight reading and rhythms, at First Parish. These classes will be held on four Monday evenings in March from 7 to 8 PM. The dates will be March 9, 16, 23 and 30. Whether you are a rank beginner with no clue how music notation works or a choir member who knows at least the rudiments, this class should have some value for you.

If you are interested, please contact Denise at denisehaskins@comcast.net.





MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Connie Page, Lena Page
- 4 Deb Giokas
- 9 Joe Risko
- 10 Rosalynn D'Alarcao-Litchfield
- 11 Jan Thompson
- 15 John Dye
- 17 David Hirschy
- 24 Joe Snyders
- 27 Josselyn Donahue,
Evie Manchester-Howell
- 28 Ellen Crompton
- 29 Lynda Mullen

Adult Religious Education

for links to more details,
see our web site under "Religious Education"

"Beyond Polarization" Reading/discussion of *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*, by Jonathan Haidt. Haidt helps us understand why liberals (religious and political) have difficulty understanding their conservative friends, neighbors and relatives.

Schedule: 2nd, 4th & 5th Tuesdays Feb. 10-Apr. 28, 7:30pm.

Books can be borrowed from the library, downloaded as a Kindle eBook, or purchased new or used. We will be using the paperback edition (pagination differs in the hardcover). I am happy to buy copies for \$10 for anyone who wishes. Let Rev. Paul know that you want a book by email (see below), the signup sheet in the Upper Parish Hall, or via our FaceBook pages.

Assignments: Mar. 10: Read to p. 108 (Chapters 3 & 4)
 Mar. 24: Read to p. 179 (Chapters 5-7)
 Mar. 31: Read to p. 255 (Chapters 8-9)
 Apr. 14: Read to p. 318 (Chapters 10-11)
 Apr. 28: Read to p. 372 (Chapter 12 & Conclusion)

Helping the Hungry

Our **Social Justice Committee** collects non-perishable food items for the local food pantry. We invite you to help the hungry in our local area by bringing canned and packaged foods on the first Sunday of each month. A box is placed at the front of the sanctuary, near the piano, to receive the items, which the Social Justice Committee members gather and bring to our local food pantry.



Feeding the Homeless*

Our church volunteers provide lunches for **MainSpring House** shelter for the homeless in Brockton. We gather on the **first Monday* of each month at 9 a.m. in the lower parish hall** to prepare and wrap 100 bag lunches, which are then brought to the shelter by one or two of our volunteers.



You can help in many ways, including joining us at the above gatherings, donating baked goods, other food items, and paper goods as needed, taking home some of the fixings and preparing parts of the lunches (such as tuna or egg salad) at home for the volunteers to assemble at the church, or simply donating money toward the cost of the lunches, which is about \$100 per month for 100 lunches.

Please contact Betty Gilson (774-226-0942) for further information, or just drop by that morning to help.

**The lunches are prepared on Mondays to be eaten on the first Tuesday of each month. If the first Tuesday falls on the first day of the month, the lunches are made on the final Monday of the previous month.*

MARCH 2015 CALENDAR

Sunday, March 1

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher
6-9pm Board Game Night at First Parish

Monday, March 2

9am MainSpring House lunches prep at FP
7:30pm Facilities Committee meeting

Saturday, March 7

8pm Off the Common Coffee House featuring Les Sampou with Annalise Emerick

Sunday, March 8

Daylight Savings Begins—Spring ahead by 1 hour
9am Choir rehearsal
10:30am Worship with the Social Justice Committee
6pm Game Night at First Parish

Monday, March 9

7pm Music Reading Class at First Parish
7:30pm Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting at the home of Janet Dye

Tuesday, March 10

7:30pm Adult RE Classes at First Parish

Saturday, March 14

5:30pm Everybody's Birthday Party at First Parish

Sunday, March 15

9am Choir rehearsal
10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher ("Bring a Friend Sunday")

Monday, March 16

7pm Music Reading Class at First Parish
7pm Caring Committee with meet at the home of Mary Hatfield

Tuesday, March 17

7:30pm New/Renew UU Classes at First Parish

Wednesday, March 18

7pm Science and Religion Discussion Group at FP

Thursday, March 19

7:30pm Worship Committee meeting

Friday, March 20

First Day of Spring!!

Sunday, March 22

9am Choir rehearsal
9:30am Tone Chimes practice
10:30am Worship with the Stewardship Committee

Monday, March 23

7pm Music Reading Class at First Parish

Tuesday, March 24

7:30pm Adult RE Classes at First Parish

Sunday, March 29

9am Choir rehearsal
10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher

Monday, March 30

7pm Music Reading Class at First Parish

Tuesday, March 31

7:30pm Adult RE Classes at First Parish

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