

BRIDGING

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

February 2017

From the Minister...

What does it mean to be "A Community of Identity?"

Afraid that our inner light will be extinguished or our inner darkness exposed, we hide our true identities from each other. In the process, we become separated from our own souls. We end up living divided lives, so far removed from the truth we hold within that we cannot know the "integrity that comes from being what you are." ~Parker Palmer

Adolescence is a time in our lives when we are supposed to discover who we really are. Most of us struggled in those years with trying to find what group we belonged to – jocks, geeks, rebels, poets, Goths and so many other potential identities. More importantly, we struggled with our sexual, ethnic and racial identity: what does it take to be a man or a woman or gay or straight or queer or Black or white or Jewish or Christian or German or Irish or Asian or Hispanic or ... so many other aspects of where we come from and who we might become.

Often our parents have formed our identities in significant ways, often from the moment we were named – after a member of the family, or an aspiration, or a fear. They have given us many messages of encouragement and discouragement: "You're stupid" or "You're smart" or "You're a sissy" or "Big girls don't cry" or "You can be anything you want to be" and endless other indicators of who we are or might become. One of the aspects of contemporary life that disturbs some of our contemporaries is that our lives are not as firmly limited by where we come from and who we are than they were in the past. When my mother was a young bride, she never considered being anything but a housewife, and most of her contemporaries who worked felt they were limited to careers like being a nurse, a teacher or a secretary. African Americans had severely limited life choices; homosexuality was regarded as a dangerous aberration; and men were not supposed to show their emotions.

The strict separation of identities crippled the possibilities anyone could imagine for himself or herself. I think it's more confusing now because many (though not all) possibilities are open to our adolescents. But that very widening of possibilities for some highlights the limitations placed on others: the discrimination that women still face in workplaces; the disproportionate level of violence against and between young Black men; the identification of all Muslims with radical Islamist terrorism, and so on.

Which is where Unitarian Universalism comes in. We see and acknowledge that our identities are not formed once and for all in adolescence or that they are limited to a fixed set of choices. In turn, that means that we are seekers through our whole lives, exploring both where we come from and where we might go; what new possibilities rest within us to be nurtured and cherished; and what we are called to do in this moment given who we are and have become. It is precisely because we Unitarian Universalists welcome diversity that we have the ability to walk together for our whole lives, discovering with others different from ourselves those things that we may have overlooked in establishing our own identities. We are all seekers together, finding who we truly are and how we should fulfill our calling given that we are embraced in the "Love [that] is the spirit of this church." And we are challenged to find our part in fulfilling the "Service [that] is its gift."

Please consider signing up for Connections, which will be an opportunity to explore these and other aspects of identity using spiritual practices and deep conversation. This will be a place where all of us to seek what Parker Palmer refers to in the quotation above as the "integrity that comes from being what you are."

In Faith,

Rev. Paul

Minister

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Worship Services in February

The theme for the month is "Identity"

February 5 – Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher: "Blurring the Lines" -- There was a time when roles in our society were clearcut, when boys preferred trucks and the color blue and girls preferred dolls and the color pink. As lines have blurred, some welcome the changes and others resist. Tough conversations ensue.

February 12 – Worship with the Green Sanctuary Committee: "A Day in the Life". The service will explore, with original music and skits, the contrast of life in the early 1700s and today.

February 19 – Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher: "Our UU Identity" -- As members of a religious tradition that welcomes diversity and openness, we can sometimes lose sight of the fundamental commitments that unite us. Tolerating differences does not mean that you can believe whatever you want, or that anything goes.

February 26 – Worship with Rev. Richard Trudeau: "Lucky Mud" - When you get right down to it, who ARE we humans, anyway? I mean, when you get way, way, WAY down to it?

The next Worship Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 16 at 7:30 p.m. in the church office. Our meetings are open to all.

Worship Committee members: Rev. Rachel Tedesco, Chair; Denise Haskins, McKayla Hoffman, Stefan Michaud, Tom St. Thomas, Tony Winters and Rev. Paul Sprecher.

"NEW UU" CLASSES IN UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM

We have been fortunate to have seen many new faces at First Parish since the start of the church year this fall. We are happy that you chose First Parish and the Unitarian Universalist faith as part of your spiritual journey. If you are interested in becoming an Active Member of our church (with voting rights), we will be offering classes in Unitarian Universalism on Sunday February 12 and Sunday March 12 after the regular church service. Led by Reverend Paul, these classes offer instruction in the history of Unitarian Universalism and its principles. The first class on 2/12 will be centered around the text "The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide" which will be provided to each participant before the classes meet. The second class on 3/12 will offer insight into how First Parish functions and how you can participate more fully in the work of the church. If you are interested in becoming a member of First Parish or would just like more information about Unitarian Universalism and our church, please contact Jan Thompson of the Membership Committee JaniceThompson22@comcast.net (508) 697-2492

DID YOU KNOW THAT FIRST PARISH HAS A PAYPAL ACCOUNT?



First Parish is now capable of accepting donations and other payments by way of PayPal. Just install the PayPal app on your smartphone or computer. Once logged in, choose "SEND MONEY". Enter the church's email address, firstparishbridgewater@hotmail.com, and follow the instructions from there.



LET'S *Grow* TOGETHER

IDENTITY

"Who am I? My answer: I am everyone whose being-in-the-world affected was affected by mine. I am anything that happens after I've gone which would not have happened if I had not come. Nor am I particularly exceptional in this matter; each 'I', every one of the now-six hundred-million-plus of us, contains a similar multitude. I repeat for the last time: to understand me, you'll have to swallow the world."

~ Salman Rushdie

Check out some photos from January:



IMPORTANT DATES

February 5	RE Classes
February 12	One Room Schoolhouse: Valentines!
February 19	One Room Schoolhouse
February 26	RE Classes

PLAYGROUP | YOUTH GROUP

February 12	Playgroup (0-4) during coffee hour
February 12	Youth Group 6-8pm in the Hive!

Hello Everyone!

In January we reconnected with our friends and settled back into our Religious Education classes. The elementary and junior high groups discussed the theme of prophecy, connecting the theme to their lives and learning about some important historical events and people.

I'm looking forward to what the month of February brings as we discover our **Identity** together as an intergenerational community.

Sara



I've considered myself a Unitarian Universalist for only a few short years. What brought me to First Parish Bridgewater wasn't my identification with the religion but an abstract understanding of the values that would be promoted at the church. A community who would allow me to show my daughter that giving into passivity may be easy, but not in line with our personal beliefs, or at least the beliefs I wanted to pass down to her. As I learned about UUism, I realized that my values are put into practice when following our seven principles.



Saturday, January 21st was the Boston Women's March. I was fortunate to be one of several fellow church members, people from Messiah Baptist Church, librarian colleagues, and several UU organizations throughout the state. Over 150,000 people were there to "show the world that we stand for dignity, equal rights and freedom from discrimination for all." Between the Boston march and the protest in Bridgewater, First Parish had over thirty people represented.

Church provides so many of these opportunities which help me to more easily participate in activities that promote our principles. Just last year alone, our Social Justice Committee worked to support groups who are often marginalized. Some activities included preparing lunches for MainSpring House, working with Bridgewater State to host a social gathering for the LGBTQ community, and hosting an author discussion about undocumented immigrants. With Rev. Rachel, our Brockton Interfaith Community liaison, our congregation helped get the Fair Share Amendment on the 2018 ballot and spoke with state reps to promote the Jobs Not Jails campaign, that worked to help pass the Justice Reinvestment Act, "an omnibus bill aimed at ending incarceration and increasing programs which help people stay out of prison and become productive members of society".

UUs have a very long history of standing on the side of love and fighting for social justice. Our church is our spiritual gathering place to share in community, and it is also our headquarters where we organize for action. We need to continue maintaining our physical building, which is so much more than wood and plaster, to carry our principled legacy into the future. Make No Little Plans

Laurie Lessner, on behalf of the 2017 Stewardship Team



Off the Common Coffeehouse

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



Saturday, February 4, 2017 at 7:30pm

Potluck dinner at 6:30pm

featuring
Don White

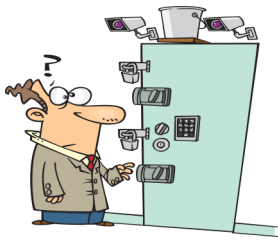
Coming Attractions

February 4 - Don White
March 4 - The Boxcar Lilies with Sparrow Blue
April 1 - Bill Staines
May 6 - The Heather Pierson Acoustic Trio with Emily Mure

Admission: \$15

*Enjoy our homemade
Refreshments*

Sign up for open mike!



BUILDING CARE

Just a reminder that if you are the last one out of the church building, you need to check on a few things before setting the alarm and leaving. Be sure the sanctuary and office doors are locked, the heat is down to L in the office and down in both the UPH and LPH, and all lights are off. At night you can set the patio light for 10 minutes while you make your escape. Many thanks.

SHARE THE PLATE

The Share the plate charity for Feb. and March will be UU Mass Action our state social action organization. "UU Mass Action believes that our faith calls us to change the world. Grounded in democracy, powered by hope, they organize and mobilize Unitarian Universalists to overcome injustice."

They are involved in many of the issues that are near and dear to many folks here at First Parish. These include Jobs not Jails, Immigration issues, and Environmental concerns. You may donate specifically by making out a check to First parish with UU Mass Action in the memo line.

SOCIAL JUSTICE MEETING

Thursday, February 2 at 7pm the Social Justice Committee will meet at the church to discuss future plans for Black Lives Matter and Black History events at Bridgewater State University. Watch for more notices about the BSU events.

MAINSRING HOUSE LUNCHES

Monday, February 6 at 8:45 am 50 MainSpring House lunches will be made in the LPH. Donations and volunteers always welcome. Speak with Betty Gilson to offer help

T"UU"RNING LEAVES BOOK CLUB

Friday, February 24 at 7pm location TBD the T"UU"rning leaves Book Club will meet to discuss the Feb. selection. *Devil in a Blue Dress* is a 1990 hardboiled mystery novel by Walter Mosley, his first published book. The text centers on the main character, Ezekiel "Easy" Rawlins, and his transformation from a day laborer into a detective. It is the first of a series featuring Easy.



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 **MAINSRING 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.



GREEN SANCTUARY COMMITTEE'S GREENTIP OF THE MONTH

Ever wonder how First Parish's use of real dishware and cloth napkins and towels adds up for our environment? The Green Sanctuary Committee has explored a number of articles researching the pros and cons of real vs. disposable ware and cloth vs. paper. The conclusion based on this research points to sustainable products as the better choice for the environment and the wallet. The following excerpt provides information on how disposable dishware products stack up. Although not included here, research on cloth vs. paper also confirms that cloth products are a better choice, when viewed over the entire life cycle (materials, manufacture, use and end of life - including transport, dispenser, waste bins and bin liners). The Green Sanctuary Committee hopes you find this information useful in choosing products for your personal use as well as in affirming our choices for the church community. For a complete list of the articles reviewed, please contact Debbie at catsmeow908@verizon.net.

Why is reusable dishware the most sustainable option?
(<https://portlandoregon.gov/sustainabilityatwork/article/507480>)



Ceramic, glass, metal and heavy duty plastic can all be washed and reused over and over again.

♦ **It's the best environmental option.**

1. Reusable dishware will use far less energy and resources over its lifetime than its disposable counterparts (details below).
2. Even with the energy and water needed to wash items, the overall environmental impact is substantially less than single-use, throw-away items.

♦ **It's cheaper in the long run.** Over time, many businesses save money by switching to reusables.

♦ **It's healthier.** Many disposable products have human health impacts during production. The chemical fertilizers and pesticides used in growing some plant-based products can create water and air pollution [2]. Refining fossil fuels used in plastic products can create air pollution [2]. Additionally, some plastic products leach chemicals that can be harmful to people [2].

♦ **It may be easier than you think.** Are your waste containers filled with cups and containers? If they are, your customers (or office mates) are consuming food onsite, and could be using "real" dishware instead.

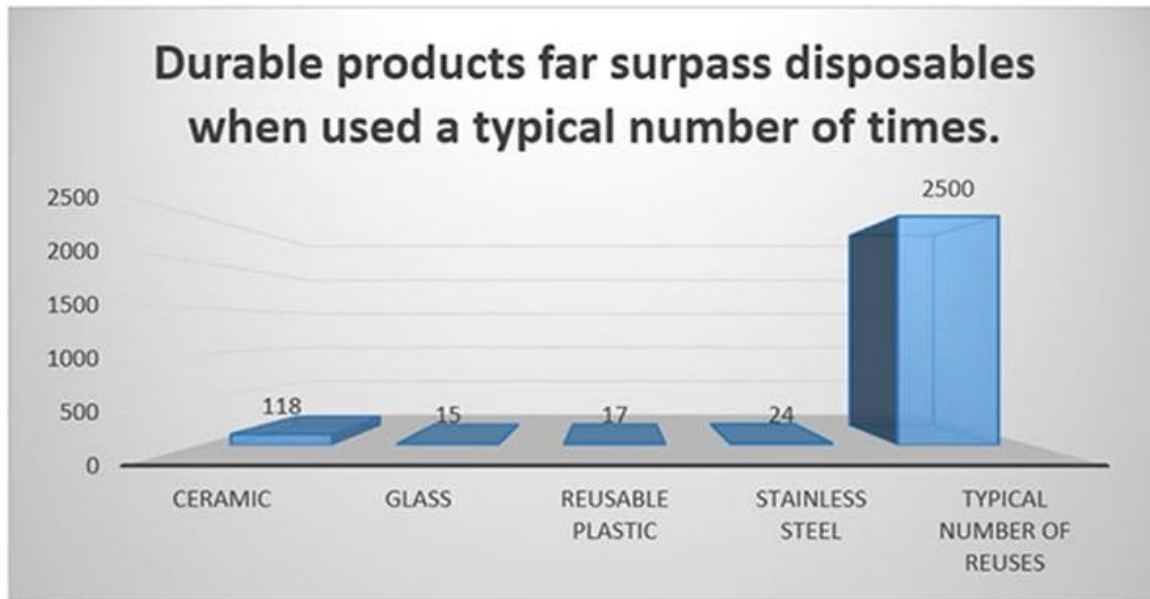
How many times do you have to reuse durable dishware before it becomes more sustainable than disposables?

In a typical restaurant setting, reusable dishware will use far less energy over its lifetime than its disposable counterparts.

Why? Because the typical restaurant reuses its dishware 2,500 times, and even the most energy intensive durable (ceramic) surpasses its "break-even point" with disposables after 120 uses [3].

The "break-even point" of reusables and disposables varies for different materials, as shown in the graph below, but all quickly pass their break-even points in a restaurant setting.

(continued on next page)



Graph shows how many times each type of durable dishware needs to be used – all under 120 times - before it reaches the environmental break-even point with its disposable counterpart. Final column shows the typical number of times durable dishware is reused in a restaurant setting – almost 2500 – which far surpasses the breaking point of all types of durable dishware [3,4,5,7,8].

References

- 1] "Sustainable, Disposable Foodservice Products." *Sustainable Foodservice: Disposable Products*. Sustainable Foodservice, n.d. Web. 18 June 2014.
- 2] Yepsen, Rhodes. "Compostable Products." *Bio-Cycle* (June 2008): 41-43. Print.
- 3] Denison, Richard A. *Environmental Comparison of Reusable Ceramic Mugs vs. Disposable Cups Made from Polystyrene or Virgin Bleached Paperboard*. Rep. Boston: Alliance for Environmental Innovation, 1998. Print.
- 4] Hocking, Martin B. "Reusable and Disposable Cups: An Energy-Based Evaluation." *Environmental Management* 18 (6), 1994, pp. 889-899.
- 5] Harnoto, Monica F. *A Comparative Life Cycle Assessment of Compostable and Reusable Takeout Clamshells at the University of California, Berkeley*. Rep. University of California, Berkeley, 2013. Web. 18 June 2014.
- 6] Carbon Clear. *Disposable Cups vs. Reusable Cups: Solving the Carbon Intensity Question*. Issue brief. Carbon Clear, n.d. Web. 18 June 2014.
- 7] Garrido N, Alvarez del Castillo MD (2007): Environmental Evaluation of Single-Use and Reusable Cups. *Int J LCA* 12 (4) 252-256
- 8] Bosque, Tomas. "Battle of the Reusable Bottles: Plastic vs. Aluminum vs. Stainless Steel." *Battle of the Bottles*. N.p., 12 May 2010. Web. 19 June 2014.
- 9] Triple Pundit. "Disposable Cups vs. Reusable Mugs." *Triple Pundit: People, Planet, Profit*. N.p., 17 Dec. 2007. Web. 19 June 2014.
- 10] "Energy, Emissions and Water Comparison between Bagasse, Paper and Styrofoam." *Making Bagasse*. World Centric: Zero Waste Solutions, n.d. Web. 18 June 2014.



February 2017 CALENDAR

Thursday, February 2

7pm Social Justice Committee will meet at First Parish

Saturday, February 4

7:30 Off the Common Coffeehouse featuring Don White

Sunday, February 5

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am "Blurring the Lines" with Rev. Paul Sprecher

Monday, February 6

9am MainSpring House lunches prep at FP

Wednesday, February 8

6:30pm Sangha

Sunday, February 12

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am "A Day in the Life", with the Green Sanctuary Committee

Monday, February 13

1pm Green Sanctuary Committee Meeting at Janet Dye's

Wednesday, February 15

6:30pm Sangha

7pm Science and Religion Discussion Group at FP

Thursday, February 16

7:30pm Worship Committee meeting

Sunday, February 19

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am "Our UU Identity" with Rev. Paul Sprecher

Wednesday, February 22

Thursday, February 23

7:30pm Parish Committee Meeting

Friday, February 24

7pm T"UU"rning Leaves Book Club—location TBD

Sunday, February 26

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am "Lucky Mud" with Rev. Trudeau

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