



BRIDGING

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

June 2018

From the Minister...

What Does It Mean to Be a People of *Blessing*?

To bless is to put a little bit of yourself into something.

– Macrina Wiederkehr & Joyce Rupp

A people of blessing will offer blessings and be blessed in turn. These two “sides” of blessing are of course reciprocal in many cases – but in many cases we are not “blessed” in some active sense by another person but by the world around us. We are blessed by our ancestors – specifically our parents – with the capacities we are born with; by those around us who have nurtured and stimulated and encouraged us – I personally think especially of teachers; by nature and animal companions and flowers and so much more; and by being alive at all!

An old gospel hymn I learned while I was growing up says:

Count your blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

Not all of us would feel comfortable singing the last line, but all of us can recognize that most of the blessings we experience come from outside ourselves through no particular merit of our own. The hymn’s verses urge us especially to count our blessings especially in hard times, for example “When upon life’s billows you are tempest-tossed, When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost.” As has been said many times, the best antidote for depression and sadness and discouragement is gratitude for what we have received, what we have been blessed with. These blessings come to us through grace – we haven’t earned them and we can’t create them. Hence, gratitude.

And then there is, of course, the more active side of being a people of blessing – when we give a blessing to others. In our recent “Blessing of the Animals” service, Rev. Eliza Blanchard offered blessings on our many animal companions, whether in the flesh or via photos – like cats, who are a little tough to herd to blessing ceremonies. The act of offering a blessing like that expresses an intention to recognize the recipient as a valuable being, beloved and worthy. You could say that the song we sing as the children to their classes is a way we are offering a blessing to them.

One of my colleagues who serves a congregation in a small town mentioned recently that she is asked to bless all sorts of things; she mentions as examples a new post-office, a child, an elder reaching the end of life, the addition to a house. Ministers are especially called on to “do a blessing” – of a shared meal, for example, but blessing is something all of us can do. Try it out. Offer thanks in a way that really recognizes the person as a wonder of creation. Express your wishes for the well-being of the person you’re having lunch with. Offer a blessing of gratitude to the things of beauty that catch your eye. We can all bless even as we are all blessed by others.

In Faith,

Rev. Paul

Worship Committee News June 2018



This month's worship theme is **Blessing**.

T'hillah

A selection by Mark L. Belletini

Like a lacewing barely floating
on the tip of a small blade of green grass is my life
from beginning to end, a short footnote to
a vast essay of stars and space unbounded,
an essay neither signed nor finally symbolic.
And yet this truth, your truth,
is no sadness, but a joy,
no lack, but a blessing,
like the sight of a child at play,
totally absorbed in the moment, and glad.

JUNE WORSHIP SERVICES

June 3 – Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher: "Being a Blessing" - When we bless someone, we affirm it's being and help to unleash potential. Noticing the blessings we receive helps us to pass on blessings to others.

June 10 – RE Sunday: Celebrate the end of the Religious Education program year with the students and teachers.

June 17 – Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher: "Blessing our Flowers" - We gather at the end of our regular church year to share the beauty of flowers and to bless our community. **Please bring a flower with you** (or two, or a few) to share in our communal vase. Lay Worship Leader: Eileen Hiney.

No Worship Committee meeting is scheduled for June. We're planning a committee retreat in August and will return to our regular meetings in September.

Summer Services begin on July 8 in the Upper Parish Hall, starting at 9:30am.

JULY WORSHIP SERVICES

July 8 – Eileen Hiney & McKayla Hoffman: Report on General Assembly 2018

July 15 – The Peace Committee

July 22 – Kathy Keenan

July 29 – Gordon Hatfield

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

Minister

Rev. Paul Sprecher
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Directory of Religious Ed

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Parish Committee

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Clerk: Stefan Michaud

Treasurer: Kat Gillespie
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Members at Large:

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David Wilson

Registrar

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Jenny Donahue
Sonia D'Alarcao

Karen Reed-Messing

Community Minister

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Membership Committee

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Green Sanctuary Committee

Chairs: Pat Hart & Deb Baumgarten
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First Principle Project

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**The First Parish Annual Meeting
will be held at 12noon, Sunday, June 3, 2018
in the First Parish Sanctuary, 50 School Street**

Please plan to attend this important meeting.

**First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church —Bridgewater, MA
Notice of Annual Meeting
12:00 noon, Sunday, June 3, 2018
Sanctuary, 50 School St.**

Agenda

1. Call to Order by the President of the Parish Committee, Eileen Hiney
Quorum Check by Registrar, Jan Thompson
2. Lighting of Chalice & Opening Words - Rev. Paul Sprecher
3. **Approval of Minutes of Previous Annual Meeting - Stefan Michaud, Clerk
4. Minister's Report
5. Reports of Officers, Trustees, and Committees. (Oral reports, if requested. Otherwise reports are as printed in Annual Report Booklet distributed by email prior to the meeting. Limited paper copies available at the meeting.)
6. Elections
 - a. Nominating Committee Report
 - b. ** Election of Nominating Committee Slate (or floor nominations)
 - Parish Committee Officers and Members
 - Trustees
 - Registrar
 - Nominating Committee Members
7. Financial Reports
 - a. **Review, Discussion, and Vote on the 2018 Fiscal Year Budget
 - b. Review of Capital Campaign Receipts and Projects (Parish Committee separate report)
8. New Business:
 - ** Approval of contract for painting of exterior of Parish Hall
 - ** Approve contract or expenditure for repair of Sanctuary doors
 - **Approve contract or expenditure for [renovation and painting of hallway between Sanctuary and Upper Parish Hall](#)
9. New Business: **Approval of delegates to UUA 2018 General Assembly
10. New Business: **Possible sale of historical artifact: facsimile of Declaration of Independence
11. Adjournment

*** denotes items requiring a vote*



LET'S *Grow* TOGETHER

SARA WILLIAMS DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

UPCOMING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CALENDAR:

- June 3: Religious Education Classes for preschool and elementary classes
- June 10: Intergenerational Service: RE Sunday
- June 17: Intergenerational Service: Flower Communion

SECRET PALS!

Twenty children, youth, and adults participated in Secret Pals during the month of May

The RE Committee is excited to wrap up the church year with this fun intergenerational activity!



RE SUNDAY

RE Sunday is June 10th, and each class will be sharing what they take away from this year's curriculum.

Join us to share in our dynamic religious education program!





NEW MEMBERS

At the **New Member Ceremony** held during our service on Sunday May 6, we celebrated 6 new members who have joined First Parish as Active Members in 2017 and 2018. Here is a little bit about each of them. Please welcome and, as always, support them on their spiritual journeys.

Sara Williams was raised Lutheran in Maynard, MA where she learned the importance of being involved in a church community. She began questioning her religious convictions as a teenager, and eventually found Unitarian Universalism right here at First Parish Bridgewater. Sara has a degree in Early Childhood Education, and has worked in progressive private schools as both a teacher and director. Three and a half years ago, Sara accepted the Director of Religious Education position when she was nine months pregnant with Matteo. In addition to her role as DRE, Sara has been involved in choir and the First Parish Players. Sara is so happy that this is the spiritual home for her family, and to be involved in this loving community.

Frank Baxter was raised a Catholic in Long Island, New York. He moved to Massachusetts in 1987. He married in 1991, and raised 3 sons with his wife, Diane. They split in 2007, and he shortly thereafter started attending First Parish Church, as part of an effort to reorient himself and find a new life. He is a member of the First Parish choir and the "UU"rning Leaves Book Club, and will shortly be seen in the First Parish Players original production, "SWINE!" He is glad to have found a community where his knowledge of the arts can be turned into a contribution that is valued by others.

Linda Dunphy grew up in Scituate, MA and is the oldest of ten in the original, not for TV version of Modern Family. She is the mother of three children: Jessica, Alexander and Brenna, and has lived in Raynham for the last 16 years. She is also the proud grandmother of three beautiful grandbabies, Natalie, Meadow and Joshua. Linda has a master's degree in social work and has worked at UMass Boston for most of the last thirty-years, currently as Director of Health Education and Wellness, and also teaches in the college of nursing. Linda was initially introduced to First Parish many years ago by her daughter Jessica, who was a member here before she moved out of the area. Just over a year ago she started to attend regularly with her partner, Tom Springhetti. She has been very happy to find such a warm and welcoming community and has felt at home at First Parish in way that she had not experienced in the church of her childhood, or in any church since. Linda is currently a member of the Stewardship committee and attends the monthly Connections group and Women's Spirit.

Sean Cooper is pleased to be joining as a member of the Bridgewater Unitarian Universalist Church. Sean had been active in his church in Sanford for many years, including a couple of terms serving on the board. Some personal setbacks led to a number of years in the spiritual wilderness since then. He is glad to be involved with a Unitarian Universalist congregation and hopes to be a productive and contributing member and is grateful to all the fellowship and support he has received from the congregation and looks forward to years of association with the church.

Joanna Elsmore had been going to Christian churches most of her life and had been looking for something different when she began coming to First Parish almost a year ago. She is a retired nurse and lives in East Bridgewater with her husband, her daughter and grandson. She has been active in environmental projects in the past and likes to garden and swim. She enjoys being part of Women Spirit at First Parish.

Cordelia Winters is a sweet shy person with an incredible sense of humor. She enjoys hiking and exploring small shops and local businesses with her fiancé Yasmeen. The two are happy to grow into their relationship with each other and Unitarian Universalism together.



July 4 Already?!?

There are several wonderful opportunities to volunteer for the First Parish Fourth of July festivities. Please email laurie@yabroudy.com to let the Events Committee know you are able to help in one or more of the following ways. They are not prioritized, so please read them all and pick the ones that interest you and most meet your special expertise. We'll have more details soon but wanted to get this in Bridging so everyone starts thinking about it. It's coming up fast!

BOOKS - Scott Gillespie will be selling and coordinating the book sale and can use a hand or two to help organize and clean up. We will also want your books!

RE Expertise at the BSU Quad - For the past several years, David and Rachel Tedesco staffed the FP booth at the BSU quad, and they get a lot of questions about RE, so would someone with RE knowledge be able to be there to answer questions during peak times.

BSU Quad FP Tent - we also need someone with knowledge of the church to be on hand at the tent to offer water to various beings, answer questions about our church and hand out info to interested people.

Ice - 32 oz yogurt containers are the perfect size to make ice for the snack bar coolers. If you have any to spare, please save them to either bring to church before July 4 or better yet, if you care to make ice at home and bring it in on the day of.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Pop up canopies; especially at least one that uses weights, not stakes or spikes which are not allowed on the BSU Quad

Large coolers, labeled with your name so you get the right one back

COOKIES AND FOOD

Cookie and bar bakers for the Baked goods table.

We need a few people person to make lots of Wraps for the Food Table - recipes and directions are available

Someone to saute a lot of peppers & onions

Helping at the Food Table and Bake Table as - cashiers, order takers, runners

Two people to run the grill

Possibly someone to run the Lemonade Stand and several people to squeeze the lemons!

During the day we need folks for a lot of jobs:

Set up from 8:00 am on.

Take down starting about 2:30 pm

Cleaners to keep the outside area neat and clean

Relief for those at Rummage and Books

Someone with a truck or van to bring leftover rummage to the Salvation Army

Let Laurie know if you are available for any of these jobs.

As always, Thank You!

Laurie Lessner & the Events Committee



MESSAGE FROM THE SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE – May 4, 2018

The First Principle Project Returns to the Social Justice Committee

At our May 3rd meeting, it was decided that the First Principle Project would be returned to the core Social Justice Committee. Since the FPP's inception in 2009, nearly a decade ago, it has achieved some notable successes. Among these were: presenting a series of four workshops on anti-racism issues such as White Privilege; raising funds to provide training for a Bridgewater elementary teacher in the *Open Circle* curriculum; establishing a relationship with Messiah Baptist Church in Brockton; and creating the *Read to Me, Father* program at Old Colony Correctional Center. Kudos to the FPP and all involved! Well done!

Recent successful projects have been joint efforts of both the FPP and the Social Justice Committee. Prime examples are the Black Lives Matter film series; the adoption of banners such as "At First Parish Bridgewater We Believe:" and "Standing on the Side of Love"; and the GLBTA luncheons with the BSU Pride Center.

At this time, we have a lot of social actions that we're working on (or hope to work on) and simply too few members involved in planning and organizing them. In order to address these all effectively, we need new, enthusiastic volunteers. So all interested parties are invited to come to our next SJC meeting on June 7 at 7:00 pm at First Parish.

Here are some of the goals we have for the next church year: (1) continue with the Black Lives Matter film series; (2) become more pro-active in the BLM movement, working with a committee of expert advisors from BSU to plan broader congregational involvement; (3) strengthen our connections to the BSU Pride Center; (4) reinvigorate our Welcoming Congregation Program; and (5) develop liaisons with social justice groups in the area, particularly with UU Mass Action and the Coalition for Social Justice.

Please contact Betty Gilson and/or Rev. Rachel Tedesco to get more information or to volunteer to be a part of the organizing team.

Science and Religion Group

Are you interested in the cutting edge of the latest discoveries in science? Do you ever wonder how these advances sit within the ethical or moral context of religion? Join us on Wednesday, June 20 for lively discussion on this month's text which is "Scale" by Geoffrey West. Here is what the book is about: "The universal laws of growth, innovation, sustainability, and the pace of life of organisms, cities, economies and companies." We will also discuss the latest political developments and current events in general. We meet every 3rd Wednesday, in the HIVE at 7pm.

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 50 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.

Rosalynn D'Alarcao-Litchfield is graduating from Bridgewater-Raynham Regional High School. She will attend the University of New Hampshire in the Fall.

Joseph Risko is graduating from Bridgewater-Raynham Regional High School. Joseph was accepted into the Moreau Honors Program at Stonehill College.

Lily Jacobson is graduating from East Bridgewater High School. She plans to attend Worcester State University to study Nursing.

Josselyn Donahue is graduating from Bridgewater-Raynham Regional High School. She will attend Westfield State University in the Fall.

Drew Doulette is graduating from Bridgewater-Raynham Regional High School. She was accepted into the honors Nursing program at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, CT.

Sage Michaud is graduating from Wheaton College.



THANK YOU, RINGERS!

A heart felt thank you to the lovely ladies who committed their time, patience and talents for the current church year - in bring melodies from the rafter for morning Preludes: Debbie Baumgarten, Kat Gillespie, Ginger Irish, Laurie Lessner, Jan Thompson, Shara Yabroudy - and our Ringer Ringer, Denise Haskins. Hope to see you in the fall.... Fondly, Lisa Rue :)

SHARE THE PLATE

The Share the Plate Charity for June will be the Bridgewater Fund. At the Water Service earlier this year we heard from Claudio, BSU student who was having a difficult time financially. Some students are struggling with rising costs. They need opportunities such as internships to make them more marketable after graduation and with state funding declining, times are even tougher. Your donation to the Bridgewater Fund will provide financial assistance to hard-working and deserving BSU students struggling to find a balance between work and school. Your gift today has the power to change a life.

To make a specific donation to this charity, write a check to First Parish and put Bridgewater Fund in the memo line.

MAINSRING HOUSE LUNCHES

Monday, June 4 at 8:30 am 100 lunches will be prepared in the LPH for Mainspring House Homeless Shelter in Brockton. Volunteers and donations are always welcome. Speak to Betty Gilson to offer help.

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, June 7 at 7pm the Social Justice Committee will meet at the church to discuss plans for fall activities. New members and ideas welcome. Speak with Rev. Rachel Tedesco or Betty Gilson for more information.

T"UU"RNING LEAVES BOOK CLUB

Friday, June 22 at 7pm at the church the book club will discuss *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe. It is the first of three novels in his critically acclaimed African Trilogy. It is a classic narrative about Africa's cataclysmic encounter with Europe as it establishes a colonial presence on the continent. Told through the fictional experiences of Okonkwo, a wealthy and fearless Igbo warrior of Umuofia in the late 1800s, *Things Fall Apart* explores one man's futile resistance to the devaluing of his Igbo traditions by British political and religious forces and his despair as his community capitulates to the powerful new order.



GREEN SANCTUARY COMMITTEE'S GREEN TIP OF THE MONTH

The pleasure of Spring—when the earth is reborn and the leaves reappear.

It's a good time to plant a tree and reap the benefits they provide:

- Clean water—Trees provide a natural filtration and storage system for water
- Clean air -- Trees remove pollution from the atmosphere, improve air quality and produce oxygen.
- Carbon Sequestration—Burning of fossil fuel can put carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and cause climate change. A tree can absorb as much as 48 pounds of carbon dioxide per year and 1 ton by 40 yrs of age.
- Temperature control—Planting trees helps reduce “heat island effect” and reduces cooling cost in the summer.
- Wildlife Habitat—Wildlife use trees for food, shelter and nesting.
- Flood Control—Trees hold vast amounts of water and are important in storm management.
- Mental Health—**Take a walk in the woods!** Studies have found that access to nature yields greater mental health .
- Diversity the species of trees to keep them more resistant to disease.

Go to **Arbor Day Foundation** website for a variety of tree ideal for this area at a reasonable price.

“He that plants trees loves others besides himself”.—Thomas Fuller

Green Sanctuary Committee



PREVIEW 2018-19 SEASON



Off the Common Coffeehouse

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

Saturdays at 7:30pm

Potluck dinner at 6:30pm

October 6 - Cosy Sheridan with Charlie Koch
November 3 - Cliff Eberhardt with Louise Mosrie opening
December 1 - Greg Greenway
January 5 - Cold Chocolate
February 2 - The Boxcar Lilies with Ric Allendorf opening
March 2 - Emily Mure and The Whispering Tree (split bill)
April 6 - Caroline Cotter and Emilia Dahlin (split bill)
May 4 - Grace Morrison

*Admission: \$15
Enjoy our homemade
Refreshments
Sign up for open mike!*

JUNE 2018 CALENDAR

Sunday, June 3

9am Choir Practice

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher: "Being a Blessing"

12noon FIRST PARISH ANNUAL MEETING in the UPH

Monday, June 4

8:30am MainSpring House lunches prep at FP

1pm Green Sanctuary Committee will meet at Janet Dye's

7:30pm Facilities Committee meeting

Tuesday, June 5

5pm RE Committee Meeting

Thursday, June 7

7pm Social Justice Committee Meeting at First Parish

Friday, June 8

6:30pm First Parish Players present "Swine!: A Dinner Theater Experience"

Saturday, June 9

6:30pm First Parish Players present "Swine!: A Dinner Theater Experience"

Sunday, June 10

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am RE Sunday

Sunday, June 17

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Rev. Paul Sprecher: "Blessing our Flowers" -

Wednesday, June 20

7pm Science and Religion Discussion Group in the FP Hive

Friday, June 22

7pm T"UU"rning Leaves Book Club will meet at First Parish

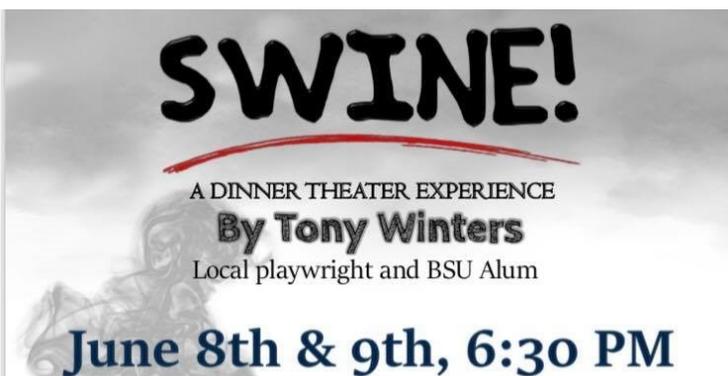
Sunday, June 24

NO SERVICE

Thursday, June 28

7pm Parish Committee meeting

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The First Parish Players Present: "Swine!" A Dinner Theater Experience – Friday, June 8th & Saturday, June 9th @ 6:30 PM Miss Julia Iverson invites you to witness a night of strange happenings at an old biotech lab. But everything is not as it seems in this place – as you are immersed into a mystery of lofty and epic proportions, you'll be asking yourself, who is the hero in our story? Who is the Swine? Dinner included. \$20 for adults, \$15 for all students, \$10 for children 13 and under. Get your tickets online at bit.ly/FPplayersSwine