



BRIDGING

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

September 2017

From the Minister...

You are WELCOME Here! Come, Yet Again, Come

Come, come, whoever you are.

Wanderer, worshipper, lover of living, it doesn't matter

Ours is not a caravan of despair.

Come even if you have broken your vow a thousand times,

Come, yet again, come, come.

As quoted in *Rumi and His Sufi Path of Love (2007)* by M Fatih Citlak and Huseyin Bigul, p81.

Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī, the Persian-speaking author of this poem, was born in Afghanistan on September 30, 1207. His family fled to Turkey when their city was sacked by Genghis Khan and his Mongol hordes in 1221. As a Sunni Muslim poet, jurist, Islamic scholar, theologian, and Sufi mystic, he might not be welcome to “Come, yet again, come” to the United States if he were alive today. The poem is, of course, the basis for one of our favorite opening hymns.

Our Soul Matters theme for September is “What does it mean to be a people of welcome?” Our Order of Service each week declares:

We are a Welcoming Congregation

Welcoming and Celebrating Lives:

Gay, lesbian, straight, transgender, and bisexual

Our welcome words from our lay leader reiterates this and also says:

Unitarianism Universalism is a non-creedal religion. There is nothing you are required to believe in order to be a member. Rather, we are united by the seven principles stated in the front of your hymnal which espouse universal values such as democracy, compassion, equity and freedom. We all develop our own theologies or philosophies of life, based on our understanding of these principles.

As we think about being a people of Welcome during this month, we might consider some of the ways we might NOT seem to be welcoming. For example, our worship committee began struggling with the question of whether our worship is or should be more multicultural in order to be more welcoming to people of color. Are we really theologically welcoming? Are we equally welcoming to theists and atheists? Can Christian Unitarians feel welcome at First Parish? How about class and education, hand work vs. head work? Is a certain level of education or material comfort necessary to feel welcome among us? What political opinions are more welcome? Can you be a conservative member and feel welcome at First Parish? Progressive? Liberal? Do we have “litmus tests” for particular issues that make guests feel unwelcome if they don’t share them?

As I have said in several sermons during the past year, I worry that our country is becoming dangerously divided politically. I think First Parish can play a part in stimulating deep conversations that overcome some of the suspicion and antagonism that have become all too prevalent in our political disagreements. However, such conversations will of necessity involve deep listening on all sides if we are to really understand one another. I’m planning to lead discussion groups of books by conservative writers this fall, including *Hillbilly Elegy* by J.D. Vance and *The Fractured Republic: Renewing America's Social Contract in the Age of Individualism* by Yuval Levin. I hope to attract readers from a broad range of perspectives to learn from one another.

THE FIRST BIG WELCOME is our Ingathering/Water Communion service on September 10th. **Bring some water** from wherever you’ve been this summer, whether home or away, and we’ll share it together as a symbol of our unity in diversity – and of welcome to all! Come, come, whoever you are!

In Faith,

Rev. Paul

Minister

Rev. Paul Sprecher
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Worship Committee News

The theme for the month of September is Welcome. We warmly welcome back our members and friends as well as welcome newcomers to our congregation and community.

Worship Services:

September 10 – Water Communion Service with Rev. Paul Sprecher.

REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR WATER!

If you have collected water from places you've visited over the summer, please don't forget to bring a small container to pour into our communal bowl. This ceremony symbolizes all the places... far or near... we've been to. It also symbolizes the joy of gathering together again. Note that this is an intergenerational service so our children and youth are invited to come up with their families and share something of their summer as their water is poured into the bowl.

September 17 – Worship with Matt Meyer: "Love the Hell out of this World"— When the culture around us doesn't encourage us to our best selves, how do we model the kind of world we want to live in? Matt will reflect on the good and bad of middle school, the time he picked the very best costume for a high-stakes 5th grade costume party, & how we find the skills for beloved community.

Matt is a musician and community organizer who has led hundreds of services for UU congregations across the country. He has a degree in music and has studied abroad in Cuba, Ghana and Central America. Matt serves as Director of Community Life for Sanctuary Boston and is a founding resident of the Lucy Stone Cooperative in Roxbury.

September 24 – First Parish will hold its annual Peace Celebration in conjunction with the United Nations Day of Peace. Peter Jansen, our very special guitarist, will play Gathering Music for 10:00 - 10:30 am as well as the offertory. The morning program will include Opening and Closing at the Peace Pole on the front lawn of the church and processing with our Peace Dove. Come join us while we contemplate "How to Find Inner Peace in a Distressful World."

About Worship Associates, Lay Worship Leaders & Ushers. We hope all members who are physically-able can fulfill at least one of these tasks twice a year. If you have a particular date you'd like to volunteer, please tell us in advance and you'll likely get your choice. Otherwise, if you are a church member and can do this, but haven't volunteered, expect to be asked to fill a couple of dates.

A worship committee member will be calling people during the week to remind them of their assigned dates. But if you cannot fulfill the role on this date, please try to find a substitute and let Rev. Rachel know as soon as possible. You may phone her at: 508-378-3904 (home phone) or 508-944-6436 (cell) or email revrayted@comcast.net.

Next Worship Committee meeting: The next regular meeting of the Worship Committee is scheduled for **Tuesday, September 19** at 2pm in the church office. Members and friends are cordially invited to attend. You may share your ideas with us about worship... or simply sit and observe the meeting.

**DON'T FORGET TO BRING YOUR SUMMER'S
COLLECTION OF WATER TO THE SEPTEMBER
10TH WATER CEREMONY.**





LET'S *Grow* TOGETHER

SARA WILLIAMS DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2017-2018

This year's curriculum:

Preschool-First Grade

Celebrating Me and My World:
Learning about ourselves and
the world around us.

Elementary Grades

Soul Matters Sharing Circle:
Exploring the monthly themes of
the church in depth through
exciting and fun activities.

Jr. / Sr. High Youth

The Fifth Dimension: A study of
social justice topics through
episodes of *The Twilight Zone*.

WELCOME!

Welcome, welcome! I am excited to see familiar faces this fall, and I am thrilled to meet new families and make new friends this year! We have an exciting Religious Education program lined up with fun opportunities for learning, play, and growth for all ages. Here's a sneak preview of a guided meditation from the Elementary class curriculum:

Mindfulness

The Path of Forgiveness

When do you atone, apologize, for past hard things you have caused? What would it be like to welcome the opportunity to clear the air, to become right with the world again? Get into a comfortable position, lying down if you'd like, and close your eyes. Take a trip with me in your mind...

You'll have to come to class to hear the rest. Can't wait to see you!

Sara

CHILDCARE is available every Sunday morning during church services for young children.

PARENT NIGHTS

We hosted our first parent get-together in July! Parents and kids enjoyed playing, bonding, and sharing a barbecue together. Keep your eye out for more parent nights hosted at RE Committee members' homes!



CAMPAIGNING AGAINST ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

The Coalition for Social Justice (CSJ) is working on a campaign to address the extreme and growing problem of economic inequality in Massachusetts. They are working in coalition with many other organizations around the state in the Raise Up Massachusetts coalition. We at First Parish have been invited to become involved with the campaign, which will last from mid-September to mid-November. Here are the two issues of this fall's campaign:

Paid Family and Medical Leave. This legislation will establish job-protected paid leave for workers to recover from a serious illness or injury, to care for a seriously ill or injured family member, or to care for a newborn, newly adopted, or new foster child.

Fight for 15. This legislation will build on the successful Raise-Up Massachusetts campaign that increased the Mass. Minimum wage to \$11/hour. It would establish a \$15 minimum wage for workers in the state, to be phased in over 4 years, and increase the sub-minimum wage for tipped workers, currently at \$3.75 per hour to \$9 per hour.

The coalition will be gathering signatures to qualify both these issues for the 2018 ballot. If the legislature does not pass these laws, the coalition will be ready to take these issues to the voters in November 2018.

Rev. Rachel Tedesco will be asking people to **volunteer** to collect voter signatures for these two issues after Labor Day. Hopefully, we will have enough volunteers to organize teams of 2 or 3 to collect signatures on weekends at the Market Basket in West Bridgewater, much as we did two years ago for the Fair Share Tax Amendment. (Note that this amendment is already qualified for the 2018 ballot.) For more information or to sign up, please contact Rev. Rachel at 508-378-3904 or via email at revrayted@comcast.net. Or talk to her at church.



Off the Common Coffeehouse

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

Saturday, October 7, 2017 at 7:30pm

Potluck dinner at 6:30pm

featuring

Susie Burke & David Surette

Coming Attractions

October 7 – Susie Burke & David Surette
November 4 – Cormac McCarthy
December 2 – Greg Greenway
January 6 – The Kennedys with Quentin Callewaert
February 3 – Bernice Lewis
March 3 – David Roth
April 7 – The Monica Rizzio Band
May 5 – Chris & Meredith Thompson

Admission: \$15

*Enjoy our homemade
Refreshments*

Sign up for open mike!

From the Social Justice Committee:

Share the Plate Donations. For the month of September, we will be supporting School on Wheels of Massachusetts (SOWMA) through our Share the Plate contributions as well as with donations of school-supply backpacks. The mission of SOWMA is to educate children impacted by homelessness by providing academic support and one-on-one mentoring so children can reach their full potential. For more information, visit the SOWMA website at www.sowma.org.

Upcoming Meetings for the month:

Thursday, September 7 at 7pm - Join members of our congregation for a meeting at Messiah Baptist Church to learn about the Brockton Interfaith Community and its new plans for faith-based community organizing. Guest speaker: Will Dickerson, Executive Director of BIC, who will present its new campaign and the first step, "School of the Prophets" training in church and community-organizing. The training will be offered one Sunday in October (date TBA), and is free and open to all interested parties. Messiah Baptist is located at 80 Legion Parkway, Brockton.

Thursday, September 14 at 7pm - Meeting of the Social Justice Committee and all its "branches" in the UPH. Come to learn about the exciting possibilities for programs and actions this coming year. All FPC members and friends are invited to attend.

"Strike a Pose!"

First Parish is working with Lifetouch Church Directories and Portraits to produce a photo directory of First Parish congregants this fall. Professional portraits will be taken of First Parish members, friends and attendees (regular or occasional, we want everyone included!) on Thursday October 26 and Friday October 27 from 2 – 9pm and on Saturday October 28 from 9am-5 pm. Look for details about how to sign up for your photo shoot in upcoming weekly e-mails and in the October "Bridging".

All families will receive a free 8 x 10 professional portrait and a free church photo directory for participating. You will also have the option of purchasing additional portraits, frames, and personalized greeting cards in time for the holidays. Please plan on your portrait sitting (prep, photo shoot and choosing of your portrait) to take approximately 1 hour.

Your portrait can be casual or dressy and can include any personal items you'd like to bring. Are you musical? Bring your instrument! A gardener? Bring veggies or flowers from your garden, or even a rake or hoe! We can even accommodate pets, just give us advanced notice when you sign up. The photo directory will help us connect names with faces and enhance our connections with each other. Our photo directory won't be complete without you, so please remember to save one of the dates for your photo shoot!



WOMENSPIRIT

Especially in times like this, it is important to remember the sentiment of Audrey Hepburn: "The best thing to hold onto in this life is each other."

First Parish's Women's Spirituality group, WomenSpirit, will meet on Tuesday, September 19 in the Upper Parish Hall at 6:30pm. If you have never been, we hope you will come. If you have always been, we hope you will come. If you need child care, please let Susan Holton know by September 11th. Some of you have talked with McKayla and/or Susan about a possible focus for the group. If you want to work with them to develop a theme, please call McKayla or Susan.



As always, feel free to bring some food or beverage to share with the group. Some of the food brought has been delectable! For more information, or to discuss ideas, please call McKayla Hoffman, (mckaylahoffman@gmail.com or 508-813-0575) or Susan Holton (holtonsusan@gmail.com or 508-821-2034).

Bridgewater Community Dance Series Starting Seventh Season

The Bridgewater Community Dance Series will be starting its seventh year this coming September, featuring a mix of international folk dance and New England squares and contras. We have a steady group of 20-30 dancers, who not only enjoy the dancing (it's great exercise!), but also enjoy the opportunity for joyful interaction with others. For 2017/2018, dancers may sign up for an eight session fall series, a thirteen-session winter/spring series, all 21 sessions, **OR** may attend any dance without committing to the series. No prior experience is required, all dances are taught, and **first-time attendees get a free night!** Dances are held on alternating Fridays—with some exceptions—from 7:30-9:30pm, at the Bridgewater Senior Center. (Note: This is not a seniors' only event.) Dates for the fall are September 8 and 22, October 6 and 20, November 3 and 17, and December 8 and 15. Dates for the winter/spring series are: January 5 and 19, February 2 and 16, March 2, 16, and 30, April 6 and 20, May 4 and 18, and June 1 and 15. Session fees, per person, are \$48 for the fall, \$78 for the winter/spring, or \$105 (\$21 savings) to sign up for both. Single night attendees will be charged \$8 per dance. Dance leader, Sam Baumgarten, professor emeritus at Bridgewater State University, has over 40 years of teaching experience and continues to teach classes at BSU in folk, square, and contra dance. To obtain a registration form or for more information, contact Sam at 508-697-6848, or 774-208-2933, or sbaumgarten@verizon.net. Don't be afraid to try it out, maybe get out of your comfort zone. You won't be disappointed!



ALL-CHURCH CLEAN-UP

The Facilities Committee will be hosting a "Clean-Up Day" to prepare for the next church year on Saturday, September 9th.

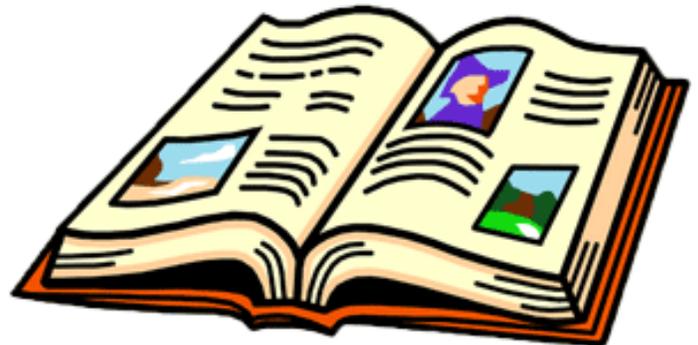


CHURCH CLEAN-UP

There will be two shifts for volunteers to choose from. The early shift is 8am to 11am. The second shift is 12noon to 3pm. Please bring yard tools if you have them. We will also make a strong attempt to clean the basement of unwanted items that have accumulated from past RUMMAGE SALES.

SCRAPBOOK MATERIAL NEEDED

Three First Parish Church Scrapbooks are being updated. If you have any newspaper articles, church announcements, or anything pertaining to church activities that should be saved, please give them to Louella Mann.



T"UU"RNING LEAVES BOOK CLUB

The T"UU"rning Leaves Book Club will meet on Friday, September 29 at 7pm at the church to discuss *Silas Marner* by George Elliot.

Silas Marner: The Weaver of Raveloe is the third novel by George Eliot, published in 1861. An outwardly simple tale of a linen weaver, it is notable for its strong realism and its sophisticated treatment of a variety of issues ranging from religion to industrialization to community.

SHARE THE PLATE DONATIONS

For the month of September, we will be supporting School on Wheels of Massachusetts (SOWMA) through our Share the Plate contributions as well as with donations of school-supply backpacks. The mission of SOWMA is to educate children impacted by homelessness by providing academic support and one-on-one mentoring so children can reach their full potential. The SOWMA vision is that all children have the academic support necessary to achieve a bright and productive future that will help end the cycle of homelessness. For more information, visit the SOWMA website at www.sowma.org.

MAINSRING HOUSE LUNCHES

Monday, September 4 (yes, Labor Day) at 8:30 am 100 MainSpring lunches will be prepared. Volunteers and donations are always welcome. Contact Betty Gilson to offer help. gillyflower@verizon.net

FULL SOCIAL JUSTICE MEETING

Thursday, September 14 at 7pm the Full Social Justice Committee will meet at the church for brief reports from the branches and to discuss plans for the coming church year. New members are always welcome.

ANNUAL PEACE CELEBRATION

Sunday, September 24 First Parish will hold its annual Peace Celebration in conjunction with the United Nations Day of Peace. Peter Jansen, our very special guitarist, will play Gathering Music for 10 - 10:30 am as well as the offertory. The morning program will include Opening and Closing at the Peace Pole on the front lawn of the church and processing with our Peace Dove. Come join us while we contemplate "How to Find Inner Peace in a Distressful World".

CARING COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, September 25 at 7pm the Caring Committee will meet at the church. if you know of joys or concerns that we should address, please speak with one of the committee members.

Debbie Baumgarten, Betty Gilson, Mary Hatfield, Louella Mann, Jan Thompson, Korin Zigler

SCIENCE & RELIGION

If you have an inquiring mind and enjoy lively discussion then join our small group (currently six) and participate in a meeting of the 'Science and Religion Discussion Group on Wednesday, September 20 at 7pm in the "Hive". The text we are reading is "On the Nature of Things" by Lucretius.

FREEDOM FOOD FARM CSA

Some of you attended the Green Sanctuary summer service a couple of weeks ago. Chuck and Marie, managers of holistically grown food at their Freedom Food Farm in Raynham, told us about their organic regenerative farming practices and their focus on social justice to the underserved and future of our earth. They are offering CSA shares this fall and winter. Visit their web site and get yourself a share. <http://www.freedomfoodfarm.com/sign-up/>.

From the Green Sanctuary Committee....

Be Green for Back to School!

Here are a few ways you and your family can help the planet, stay healthy, and save money while heading back to school this year!

Pack a lunch.

Did you know that the average elementary school disposes of **20,000** pounds of lunch waste every year? *That's 10 tons of trash per school!* Help your children pack nutritious lunches, using foods of your and their choice. Use earth-friendly reusable containers and a reusable bottle or thermos for water or milk, which will reduce the amount of packaging and food waste your family produces. Don't buy pre-packaged "single-serve" items. Talk with your children about how the choices we make affect our planet.



Don't idle your car in front of school.

Idling vehicles are a **major** source of smog. Smog is particularly an issue at schools because many bus drivers and parents sit with their vehicles idling while waiting to pick up children, creating a huge cloud of pollution for students to walk into as they leave the building.

Smog has been found to:

- aggravate asthma, leading to more frequent and severe asthma attacks;
- increase the number of respiratory infections;
- aggravate and induce allergies;
- increase school day absences; and
- increase emergency room visits, hospital admissions and premature deaths.



If you are going to be stopped for more than 30 seconds (except in traffic), it's always best to turn off your engine. Idling your vehicle for longer than 10 seconds uses more fuel than it would take to restart the vehicle, saving you money, too.

Excerpted from:

<https://www.smallfootprintfamily.com/10-green-back-to-school-tips>

<http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/back-school-can-cool/>

RIDE FOR A GOOD CAUSE

On September 23rd to 25th, Sean Cooper will be participating in the "Autumn Escape" ride for the American Lung Association which is a three-day ride from Plymouth to Provincetown to raise money for the ALA. This is Sean's third ride for the ALA this year and so far he has raised \$1225 so far. To meet his goal he needs to raise \$350 more by mid-September.

Follow this link:

http://action.lung.org/site/TR?px=4233112&pg=personal&fr_id=15463&s_src=boundlessfundraising&s_subsrc=bfemailbadge

to donate to his effort or follow the link on the Bridgewater UU page on Facebook. Sean offers the following incentives to donors. For each \$25 you donate, you enter the chance to win an original drawing by Minneapolis cartoonist Phil Juliano in the fantastical setting of your choice. For every donation of \$100 you enter the chance to win a hand-made queen sized quilt made by Sean's mother-in-law Janice Babcock. Pictures of her work will be included on the Facebook page. Please contact Sean by email at seanrcooper@gmail.com or text or call him at 207-756-5789 if you have any questions. I will try to reciprocate all donations for causes near and dear to your heart upon request. thanks.

Sean R Cooper



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 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.

SEPTEMBER 2017 CALENDAR

Sunday, September 3

6pm Game Night at First Parish

Monday, September 4

8:30am MainSpring House lunches prepared and delivered

11am Coalition of Social Justice rally, Boston Common

7:30pm Facilities Committee meeting

Wednesday, September 6

6:30pm Meditation Group UPH

Thursday, September 7

7pm BIC meeting at Messiah Baptist Church in Brockton

Friday, September 8

7:30pm Bridgewater Community Dance Series at the Bridgewater Senior Center

Saturday, September 9

8am First Parish Clean-Up Day

Sunday, September 10

9am Choir Practice

10:30am Water Communion Service with Rev. Paul Sprecher.

Monday, September 11

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

7pm Committee Council Meeting at First Parish

Thursday, September 14

7pm Full Social Justice Committee will meet at First Parish

Sunday, September 17

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am Worship with Matt Meyer: "Love the Hell out of this World"

Tuesday, September 19

2pm Worship Committee will meet in the church office

6:30pm WomenSpirit group will meet in the UPH

Wednesday, September 20

6:30pm Meditation Group UPH

7pm Science and Religion Discussion Group at FP

Friday, September 22

7:30pm Bridgewater Community Dance Series at the Bridgewater Senior Center

Sunday, September 24

9am Choir rehearsal

10:30am First Parish Annual Peace Celebration in conjunction with the United Nations Day of Peace

Monday, September 25

7pm Caring Committee will meet at the church

Tuesday, September 26

6:30pm Events Committee meeting at First Parish

Thursday, September 28

7pm Parish Committee meeting

Friday, September 29

7pm T"UU"ring Leaves Book Club will hold its monthly meeting

**First Parish Church
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